

July 28th, 2025

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are requested to attend a meeting of the

Mid and East Antrim Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee

to be held on **Monday, 28th July 2025 at 6:30 pm** in **Council Chamber, The Braid, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena and via remote access.**

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Valerie Watts", with a horizontal line drawn underneath it.

Valerie Watts
Interim Chief Executive, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

Agenda

1 NOTICE OF MEETING

2 APOLOGIES

3 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Members and Officers are invited to declare any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests, including gifts and hospitality, they may have in respect of items on this Agenda.

4 ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION / DECISION

4.1 Policy Briefing - circulated

 *Policy Briefing.pdf*

Page 1

 *Appendix 1 - Consultation Summary Report.pdf*

Page 4

4.2 NIE Substation – Glenariff Crescent, Ballymena - circulated

 *NIE Sub-station Glenariff Crescent, Ballymena.pdf*

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 *Appendix 1 - Map- Proposed NIE SS at Glenariff Crescent.pdf*

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4.3 Absence Management - circulated

 *Absence Management.pdf*

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4.4 ****WITHDRAWN**** (28.07.25) Constitution – Annual Update - to follow

4.5 Advertising in Specialised Brochures - circulated

 *Advertising in specialist brochures.pdf*

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 *Appendix 1 - Correspondence from Royal British Legion_Redacted.pdf*

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4.6 Gallipoli Invitation (additional item) - circulated (23.07.25)

 *Gallipoli Invitation.pdf*

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5 ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

6 TABLED QUESTIONS

Closed Committee - In accordance with Council policy, representatives of the Press will not be in attendance for this section of the Meeting.

7 ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION / DECISION – CLOSED COMMITTEE

7.1 Springwell Street Multi-Storey Car Park, Ballymena - circulated

📎 *Springwell Street Multistorey car park.pdf*

Not included

📎 *Appendix 1 - MEABC Springwell St car park EA 7 March 2025.pdf*

Not included

7.2 VAT Compliance Review Update - circulated

📎 *VAT Compliance Review Update.pdf*

Not included

7.3 Procurement Update - circulated

📎 *Procurement Update.pdf*

Not included

7.4 Suggested Corporate Approach to Artificial Intelligence (AI) - circulated

📎 *Suggested corporate approach to AI (Artificial Intelligence).pdf*

Not included

📎 *Appendix 1 - MEA staff guidance - Socitm.pdf*

Not included

7.5 IT Cyber Security Update - circulated

📎 *IT Cybersecurity Update Report.pdf*

Not included

📎 *Appendix 1 - Four Areas of the Cyber Assessment Framework.pdf*

Not included

📎 *Appendix 2 - Cyber Assessment Framework.pdf*

Not included

8 ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL – CLOSED COMMITTEE

Open Committee

9 FORWARD PLAN FOR CORPORATE RESOURCES, POLICY & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - circulated

📎 *Forward Plan.pdf*

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Council/Committee:	Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee
Date:	28 July 2025
Report Title:	Policy Briefing
Publication Status:	Open
Author:	Laura-Jane McCloy, Policy, Performance & Partnership Manager and Simon Hope, Interim Assistant Director Citizen Focus
Approver:	Laureen Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate & Support Services

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to update Elected Members on matters in relation to consultations, information governance, complaints and equality, diversity and inclusion.

2. Background

- 2.1. To date the Policy team have been responsible for managing Council's responsibilities in relation to information governance (Freedom of Information, Environmental Information Regulations and Data Protection/UK GDPR), complaints, public consultations, equality & diversity and rural needs.
- 2.2. Moving forward responsibility for these areas of work will change as part of the restructure of the Corporate & Support Services Directorate.

3. Key Issues for Consideration

- 3.1. Public Consultations

Public consultations published by the NI Executive are centrally registered and considered by the relevant service areas, with responses drafted to those that are relevant to Council and/or the borough. Draft consultation responses are submitted to the most relevant Committee for Elected Members to review and approve prior to submission where relevant.

A summary of these consultations is produced to this committee each month. This month's consultation summary is set out in Appendix 1.

A dedicated Consultation & Engagement Officer has recently been appointed as part of the directorate restructure. A Consultation & Engagement Strategy will be developed for Council.

3.2. Information Governance

As part of the directorate restructure Information Governance is under the remit of a dedicated team and Members will be updated through reporting arrangements as outlined in the Information Governance Framework.

The Information Governance Manager & DPO was appointed in January and recruitment is underway for the Information Governance Officers.

3.3. Complaints

A summary of Council's complaints data is reported quarterly to this committee and published annually at each year end. The report for the first quarter of 2025/2026 will be presented in September 2025.

There is a dedicated Complaints Officer post within the directorate restructure.

3.4. Equality & Diversity and Rural Needs

Council's internal EDI Network of officers continues to meet on a quarterly basis to help report on progress of Council's Equality and Disability Action Plans. The network provides a forum for discussion, collaboration and best practice sharing. The network also feeds into the Inclusion & Equality Sub-Committee.

Recruitment is underway for an Inclusion & Equality Manager as part of the directorate restructure.

4. General Considerations / Implications

- 4.1. This programme of work aligns with the *Performance* pillar of the Corporate Plan 2024-2028. It will help meet the objective of:

"Develop our key support services to help us achieve our goals, underpinning and enabling us to operate effectively and meet our core, statutory and regulatory obligations."

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1. A report will be brought to Elected Members in September laying out the proposed new reporting methods based on the new areas of responsibility under the Corporate & Support Services Directorate restructure.

6. Recommendation or Decision

- 6.1. Elected Members are asked to note this update, including the consultation summary report.

7. Appendices / Link

Appendix 1 Consultation Summary Report



Consultation Register Summary Report **Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance Committee**

28th July 2025

a) Consultations where Council is the stakeholder

Title and Closing Date	Consulting Department/Organisation	Proposed Dept and Committee
Public Consultation on proposed new rules for the sale and supply of puppies and kittens in Northern Ireland Deadline: 15/09/2025	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs	Public Protection, Health and Wellbeing Neighbourhoods & Communities Committee 29/07/2025
Consultation for EIA Scoping Opinion on Marine Licence application ML2023010 for North Channel Wind Deadline: 28/07/2025	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs	Facility Management & Maintenance Environment & Economy Committee 23/06/2025
Third Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme (NICCAP3) Public Consultation Deadline: 04/08/2025	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs	Neighbourhood Services Environment & Economy Committee 04/08/2025
Public Consultation on Northern Ireland's draft Climate Action Plan 2023-2027 Deadline: 08/10/2025	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs	Neighbourhood Services Environment & Economy Committee 15/09/2025

b) Consultations being conducted by Council

There are currently no consultations being conducted by Council.

Council/Committee: Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance Committee
Date: 28 July 2025

Report Title: NIE Sub-station – Glenariff Crescent, Ballymena

Publication Status: Open

Author: Cathy Grant – Acting Corporate Solicitor
Approver: Laureen Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate Services

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to a lease and right of way for a new Northern Ireland Electricity Networks Limited (NIE) Sub-station at Glenariff Crescent, Ballymena.

2. Background

- 2.1. NIE have approached Council regarding the siting of a new Sub-station at Glenariff Crescent measuring 24.75sqm in accordance with the map attached at **Appendix 1**. Relevant officers have no objection to the proposal and the lands have been valued by Land and Property Services (LPS) at £1500.

3. Key Issues for Consideration

- 3.1. Council has a number of lease agreements with NIE across the Borough. Council typically enters a 99 year lease with standard provisions for sub-stations and NIE pays a premium usually determined by LPS valuers. All new agreements relating to land require Council approval.
- 3.2. The proposed Sub-station is a replacement for a previous Sub-station on the lands. The lands have no development potential and Council has no requirement for the lands for any other proposed use.

4. General Considerations / Implications

- 4.1. Financial implications: the lands have been valued independently by LPS on behalf of NIE and meets with Council Officers' approval.
- 4.2. Human Resources: the matter will be progressed by Legal Services.
- 4.3. Equality Screening: N/A
- 4.4. Assets: An agreement regularizes the position.
- 4.5. Alignment with Corporate Priorities and Link to Corporate Plan: N/A
- 4.6. Rural Proofing and Environmental Impact: N/A

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1. It is proposed that Elected Members should agree to approve a lease and right of way for a new NIE sub-station at Glenariff Crescent, Ballymena.

6. Recommendation or Decision

6.1 That Council:

- (i) agrees to enter into a new Lease and right of way with NIE for a new sub-station at Glenariff Crescent, Ballymena as outlined in Appendix 1; and
- (ii) authorises the Chief Executive and the Mayor to execute and seal the new Lease and right of way.

7. Appendices / Links

Appendix 1 – Map proposed lease and right of way

LEGEND

 NE NETWORKS LEASE AREA

 NE NETWORKS UNDEFINED RIGHT OF WAY FOR ACCESS FROM PUBLIC ROAD

Council/Committee: Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance Committee

Date: 28 July 2025

Report Title: Absence Management

Publication Status: Open

Author: Gillian Forster, HR Manager (Policy and Projects)

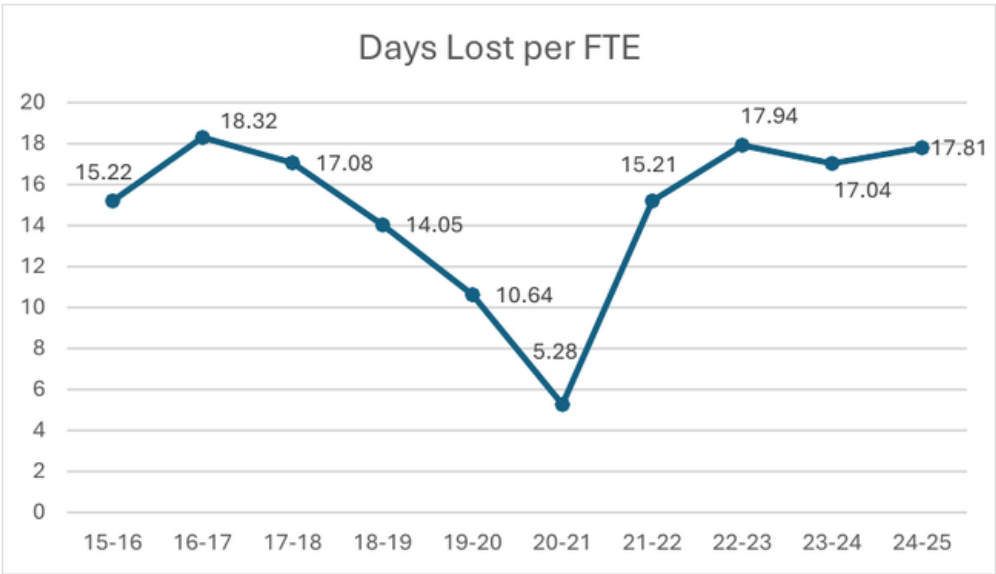
Approver: Laureen Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate Services

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to update Elected Members on absence management from the period 01 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 and to highlight actions Officers continue to implement in order to support a positive attendance culture.

2. Background

- 2.1. Absence levels in Mid and East Antrim Borough Council have previously been amongst the highest across all Councils. Following a period of focused management and interventions including a new Attendance Policy introduced in April 2019, the absence management levels began to fall but have increased during the last two financial years.
- 2.2. The chart below shows the Council absence rates from 2015/16 onwards.



- 2.3. The Council recognises that absence during the 2020/21 financial year was heavily influenced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting a record low level of absence. In 2021/22 there was an increase in absence levels and this was in line with other Councils in Northern Ireland and also the general working population.
- 2.4. As previously reported in January 2024, according to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development’s Health and Wellbeing at Work survey published in September 2023, absence levels across the UK reached their highest in a decade. When examining the potential reasons for increased absence levels in Council, sadly it is once more the case a number of employees have been diagnosed with various types of cancer during this financial year. This absence is recorded across a number of categories as set out in section 3.6 of this report. In addition, some staff have experienced other very serious health events such as strokes or been involved in road traffic accidents that have resulted in significant injuries. These types of absence are usually long term in nature.
- 2.5. Following a scrutiny review into the issue of sickness absence, a part-time Invest to Save funded 6 month fixed term post to focus on compliance with sickness absence policy e.g. monitoring current absences and compliance of managers of each stage of absence actions / oversight of every absence case requiring managers to provide regular data. This post was filled in June and the process of enhanced and more regular reporting of sickness absence to SMT to provide full, corporate oversight of how each absence case is being managed has now begun.

3. Key Issues for Consideration

- 3.1. The table below shows the days lost to sickness absence per FTE for the period 01 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 against target:

Month / Days Lost	12 months 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025
Actual	17.81
Target	15.00

No absence

In line with the trends in recent years, a relatively high percentage of staff, **60.47% had no absence during 2024/25**. Although this figure has decreased since last year (64.37%), the metric still compares favourably with other Councils and continues to demonstrate that a comparatively small number of staff have taken sickness absence leave during the year and of those who have, in many cases the duration of absence has been lengthy.

- 3.2. **Long term absence**
85% of staff absence is long term. This is defined as absence that is for 20 continuous working days or more. There have been 124 long term absences during the reporting period with a total of 32 staff absent for 100 days or more due to serious health issues, including cancer, debilitating

musculoskeletal issues and other significant health issues. At the time of writing, of these 32 long term absentees, 14 have left Council employment due to resignation, retirement (including ill health retirement), dismissal on capability grounds or voluntary severance, a further employee has been approved to leave via ill health retirement and will do so in the coming weeks, 13 staff have successfully returned to work, leaving 4 employees on continued absence.

- 3.3. In relation to long term absence, regrettably staff continue to experience significant delays in line with the general population in accessing initial NHS Consultant appointments, diagnostic procedures and other surgical interventions and treatments. This means that in some cases the employee's condition is deteriorating to the extent that they are unable to work until surgery has been completed. This has continued to contribute towards higher levels of absence during 2024-25. Staff are able to avail of a free Health Cash Plan that provides some monetary support if they wish to avail of private healthcare to access an appointment with a Consultant or to access diagnostic imaging such as CT and MRI scans or X-rays.

Breakdown of Absence by reason

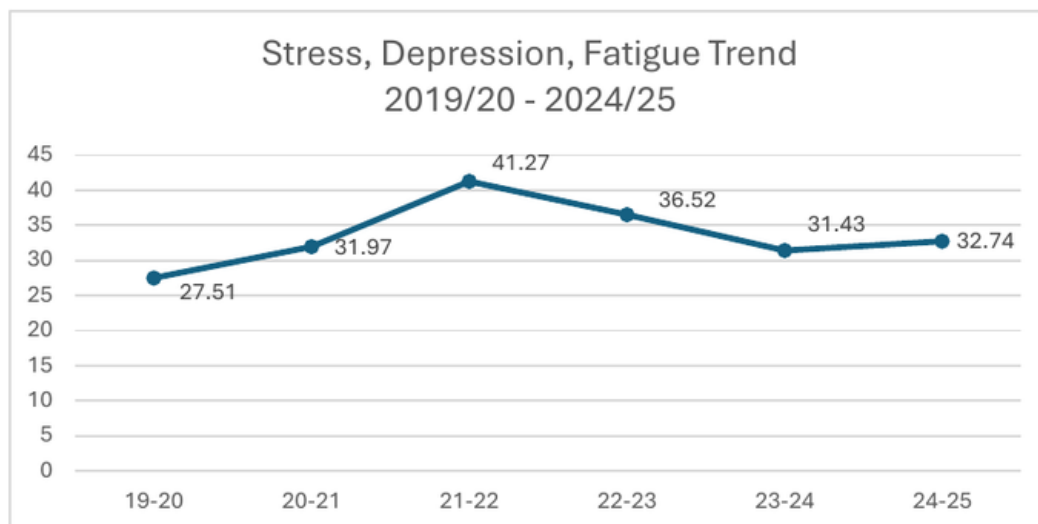
3.4. **Absence reasons.**

The table below provides a percentage breakdown of absence, by reason, for the period 01 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 (as defined by the local government auditor standards):

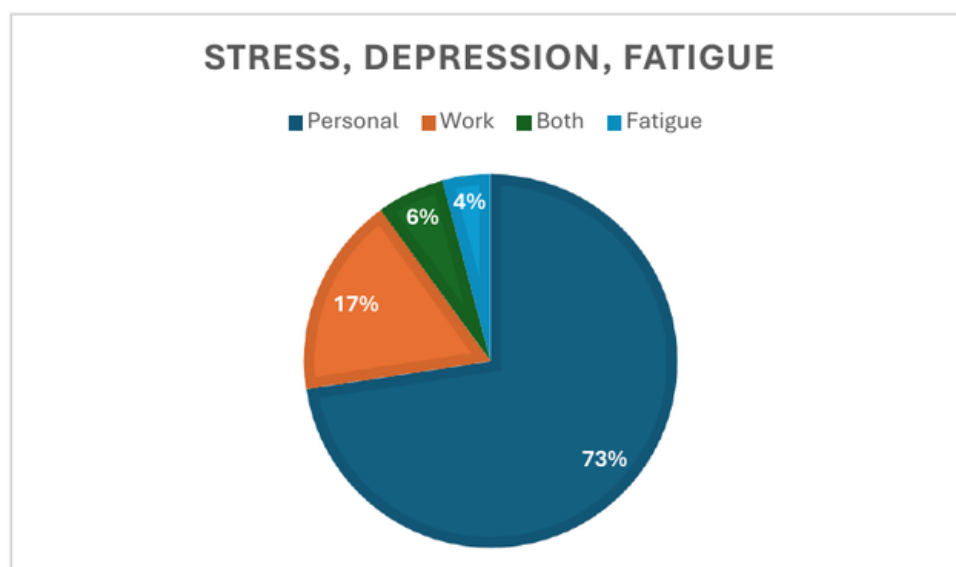
Absence Reason	Number Of Days	%	No of Absentees
Stress, depression, fatigue	3,388.5	32.74%	72
Back and Neck problems	1,493.5	14.43%	26
Musculo-skeletal ex back+neck	1,014.5	9.80%	44
Stomach, liver, kidney	993.5	9.60%	63
Heart, blood pressure	935	9.03%	17
Chest and respiratory	689	6.66%	47
Other	473	4.57%	11
Genito-urinary/Gynae	472	4.56%	14
Infections	393.5	3.80%	69
Neurological	314	3.04%	16
Eye, ear, nose and mouth	183	1.77%	16
Grand Total	10,349.5	100.00	395

3.5. Mental Health related absence.

Mental Health related absence continues to be the main reason for absence, with 32.74% of all absence attributed to the Stress, Depression and Fatigue category. However, it should be noted that a reduction in this absence category has been maintained since its recent peak during 2021-22, albeit there has been a modest increase since last year as demonstrated in the chart overleaf:



3.6. Upon further examination of this absence reason category, **73% was due to personal related reasons** such as bereavement, family illness. The chart below provides a further breakdown. Council has continued to implement a positive mental health and well-being action plan to support staff.

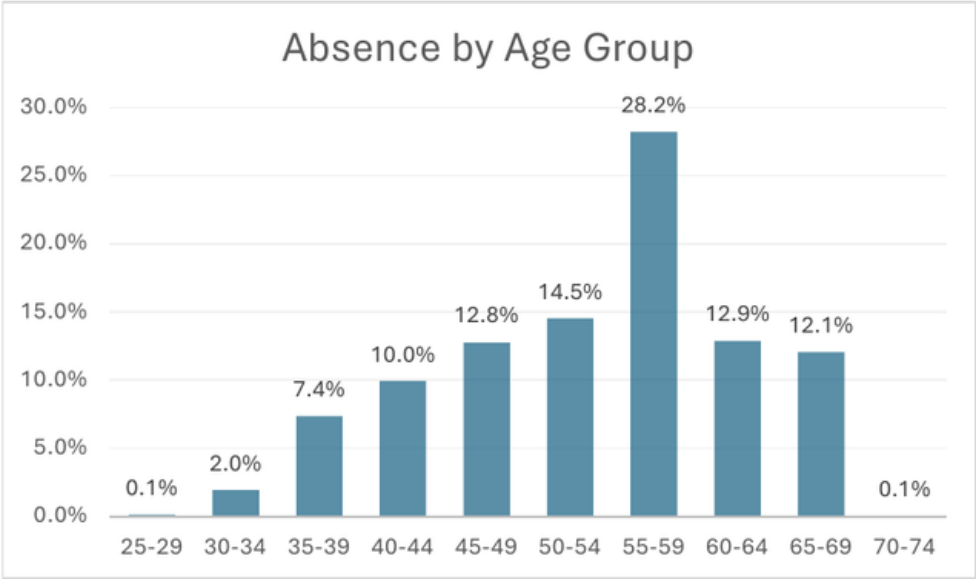


Support being provided for staff

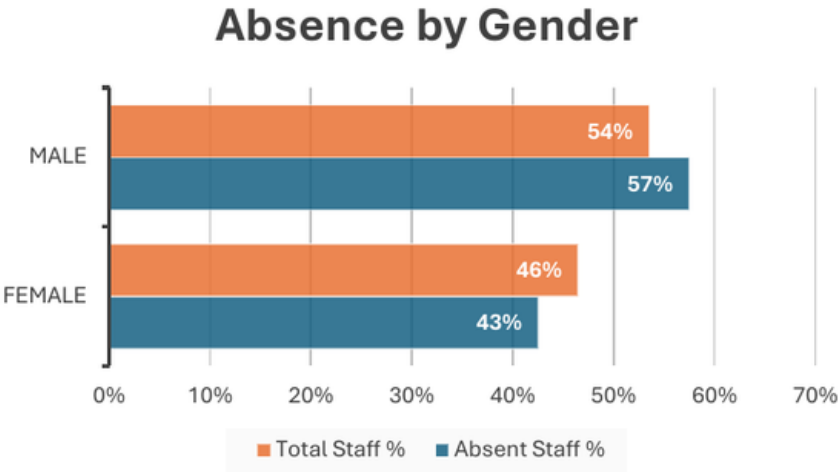
- 3.7. A suite of health and wellbeing measures continue to be made available to staff so that they can access the help that they need to improve their health and wellbeing. Such initiatives include:
- Provision of an **Employee Assistance Programme** which incorporates a confidential counselling service
 - A **Health Cash Plan** Staff that provides some financial assistance towards physiotherapy, podiatry and optometry services, as well as diagnostic tests and scanning and a confidential telephone counselling service;
 - A network of 13 **Mental Health Champions** who have all been trained in Mental Health First Aid.
 - Circulation of **information from external stakeholders**, detailing free webinars and other initiatives that focus on health and wellbeing topics including mental health, financial health, achieving work life balance, and more specific advice relating to both men's and women's health.
 - Access to information on **two different wellbeing hubs** (Inspire and Stay Well), where all staff can find information, advice and signposting that may assist them with challenging circumstances. Line managers also have access to wellbeing information in a dedicated area.
 - A new **Employee Inclusion and Wellbeing Officer** has been appointed as part of the Corporate and Support Services restructure during the first quarter of this year. This post will focus on the development and implementation of an employee wellbeing action plan which will promote wellbeing initiatives as well as provide training to line managers on recognizing wellbeing issues.
- 3.8. **Highest absence incidents.** As may be expected the highest number of incidents of absence (75) was due to infections. This category includes, colds, influenza and shingles related absence and accounts for a relatively low % of overall absence at 3.83%. The next highest number of absence incidents related to the 'Stomach, liver and kidney' category, with reasons for absence ranging from staff who have cancer to those who have taken a short period of absence due to an upset stomach.

Breakdown of Absence by Age and Gender

- 3.9. **Demographic Breakdown of Absence.** The following chart shows that as would generally be expected, absence was highest amongst the oldest employees in the workforce.



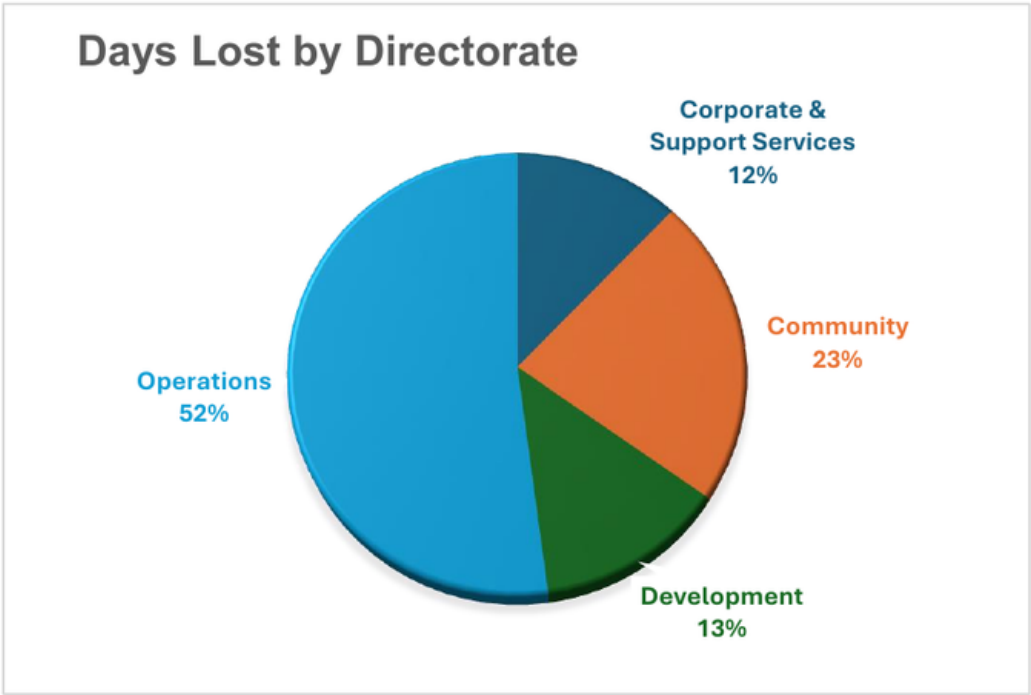
- 3.10. In terms of gender, absence was highest amongst male employees and when compared with the gender breakdown of the overall workforce, the level of absence amongst male employees was higher than expected as was the case last year. Anecdotally it is believed that this is due to a higher number of men working in front line operational roles that are more physically demanding, particularly in the context of an aging workforce.
- 3.11. The chart below sets out the gender breakdown of the full staff population and compares this with the gender breakdown of absentees throughout the year.



Breakdown of Absence by Department

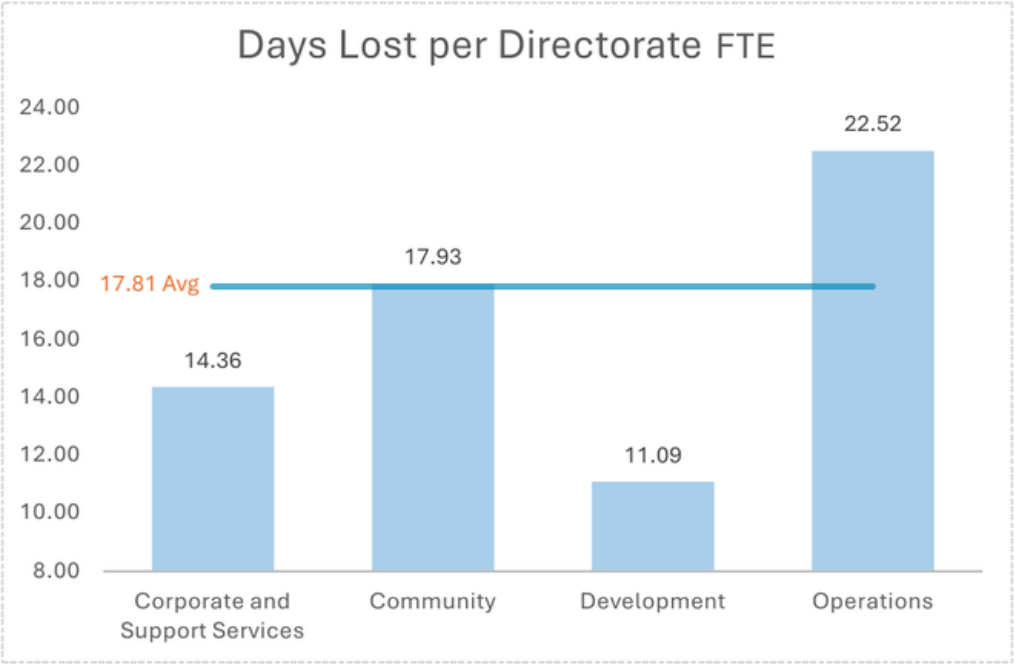
Total days lost by department

- 3.12. In line with a previous request by Elected Members at the Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee in January 2024, the Directorate percentage breakdown of the total days lost is as follows:



Days lost per FTE by Department

3.13. To provide a further breakdown, the following chart sets out the days lost per FTE by Directorate.



4. General Considerations / Implications

- 4.1. Financial - The Council follows the guidance within the NJC Terms and Conditions of employment for Local Government, known as 'Green Book'. The Green Book scheme for sickness absence provides that employees are entitled to occupational sick pay which is determined by length of service. The maximum amount of contractual sick pay after five years local government service is six months at full pay, six months half pay.

There are also the financial costs incurred in relation to the need for temporary cover of short and long-term sickness cases to maintain service delivery.

- 4.2. Human Resources - The Council aims to support staff that experience ill health and to assist them to maintain a good attendance at work. Sickness absence has an impact on the delivery of services to customers and means that duties need to be covered or reallocated to ensure continuity of service delivery. Long periods of absence as well as unplanned short-term periods of absence can cause disruptions and put additional pressure on remaining team members.
- 4.3. Legal - The Council has an obligation to make reasonable adjustments to allow a disabled employee to continue working or to join the organisation. Sickness records are a protected category under the Data Protection Act provisions in relation to employee records.
- 4.4. Equality - Council does employ a number of staff who have medical conditions which are considered to meet the definition of disability. The Council works with its occupational health provider and external agencies to ensure appropriate reasonable adjustments are in place.

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1. Council will continue to benchmark and explore best practice in supporting staff to maintain good attendance levels and equip line managers to fulfil their obligations in managing attendance.
- 5.2. Heads of Service will continue to be briefed on a monthly basis about absence in their service, allowing for key case discussions to be held and actions agreed.
- 5.3. In line with the strategic direction of senior management, Human Resources will continue to encourage and work with line managers to maintain a flexible approach when facilitating adjustments that allow a member of staff to either remain in work or return to work following sickness absence.
- 5.4. As above, following the recent Sickness Absence Scrutiny Review, a Corporate and Support Services Officer (Level 4) has been recruited to provide a specific focus on sickness absence. Current sickness will therefore be monitored at a granular level to ensure compliance and

fortnightly reports will be submitted to SMT to provide full, corporate oversight of how each absence case is being managed.

6. Recommendation or Decision

6.1. Elected Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

7. Appendices / Links

7.1. N/A

Council/Committee:	Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee
Date:	28 July 2025
Report Title:	Advertising in specialist brochures
Publication Status:	Open
Author:	Siobhan Fisher, Assistant Director Citizen Focus and Aisling Maguire, Communications and Marketing Manager
Approver:	Laureen Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate Services

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek Members views on a request from the Royal British Legion asking Council to advertise in the upcoming Festival of Remembrance souvenir programme.

2. Background

- 2.1. Correspondence has been received from the Royal British Legion in Northern Ireland asking Council to consider placing an advert in an upcoming souvenir programme.
- 2.2. Each year, the organisation arranges and manages a Festival of Remembrance, in aid of the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal. The festival will take place this year in the Assembly Buildings in Belfast on Saturday 25th October 2025.
- 2.3. 2025 marks 80 years since the end of the Second World War. This year is also the 100th anniversary of the Royal British Legion on the island of Ireland. Legionnaires throughout the island are planning to commemorate the Centenary of the organisation.
- 2.4. Every year, with the help of sponsors, they produce a professionally printed souvenir programme. The programmes are made available to those attending the Northern Ireland Festival of Remembrance.

3. Key Issues for Consideration

- 3.1. The Royal British Legion in NI has asked Council to consider sponsoring an advertisement in this year's programme. A similar programme is produced each year.

3.2. The costs per advertisement are as follows:

- Full page: £1000
- Half page: £500
- Quarter page: £250

4. General Considerations/Implications

- 4.1. Council does not advertise in souvenir brochures of any kind, with the exception of the local Business Awards brochures (as Council sponsors the Business Awards events locally). There are requests for placing adverts in a range of publications but there is no evidence they are of benefit to the Council.
- 4.2. Adopting a policy of advertising in brochures may attract further requests from external organisations and charities seeking sponsorship and support - which would have a significant effect on budgets if each is treated separately and agreed without the context of value for money and benefit.
- 4.3. Advertising of any kind must represent good value for money for citizens.
- 4.4. The Communications Team have reached out to counterparts in the other Council's across NI. Only one other Council has confirmed they have advertised in this brochure previously.
- 4.5. At present, Council continues to support the Royal British Legion with their annual Remembrance events which take place across the Borough in November. Support includes, and is not limited to, hiring PA systems, photography costs, PR support, staff/marshalling support.

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1 It is proposed that Council continues with the annual support of the Royal British Legion events in November and at this stage does not advertise in the souvenir brochure.

6. Recommendation or Decision

- 6.1. It is recommended that Elected Members:
 - Agree to continue with the current level of Council support of the Royal British Legion events annually in November.

7. Appendices/Links

- 7.1 Appendix 1 – Correspondence from the Royal British Legion



May 2025.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I hope this finds you well.

I am writing to you on behalf of the Royal British Legion in Northern Ireland.

You may know that with the help of our volunteers across the country, we raise vital funds to support our service and ex-service community in times of difficulty, during or after their service to the nation. The RBL is also the nation's custodian of Remembrance.

In Northern Ireland we annually organise the Festival of Remembrance, in aid of the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal. The festival will take place this year in the Assembly Buildings in Belfast on Saturday 25th October 2025.

2025 is a significant year for the RBL and our nation, as it marks 80 years since the end of the second world war. This year is also the 100th anniversary of the Royal British Legion on the island of Ireland. Legionnaires throughout the island are planning to commemorate the Centenary of the organisation.

This year the Festival of Remembrance will focus on these important milestones in the history of the nation and organisation. The entertainment, we hope, will also reflect our shared values as members of the Royal British Legion on this island.

Each year with the help of sponsors, we produce a professionally printed souvenir programme. The programmes are made available to those attending the Northern Ireland Festival of Remembrance. This is where I hope you may be interested in helping us.

On behalf of the Festival of Remembrance committee for 2025, I would like to respectfully ask, if you would consider sponsoring an advertisement for your company/organisation in this year's programme?

The costs per advertisement are as follows:

FULL PAGE: £1000

HALF PAGE: £500

QUARTER PAGE: £250

We are seeking expressions of interest by 15th July 2025, if you are interested in placing an advertisement in this year's programme, please do get in touch at your earliest convenience.

I can be contacted by email at HillsboroughWS.Chair@rbl.community or you can call or text me on 07706 662584. All correspondence will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and I look forward to discussing with you further, should you be interested in supporting us in this venture.

Yours Faithfully,

Joanne Walker. (Mrs)

RBL NI FESTIVAL OF REMEMBRANCE COMMITTEE 2025.

Council/Committee:	Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance Committee
Date:	28 July 2025
Report Title:	Gallipoli Invitation
Publication Status:	Open
Author:	Sarah Williams, Assistant Director, Business Support
Approver:	Laureen Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate & Support Services

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This report brings to your attention an invitation to participate in the 110th anniversary of the landing of the 10th (Irish) Division at Suvla Bay, Gallipoli, during the First World War.
- 1.2. This has come from the Dalaradia Cultural and Historical Society, who are based at Whitehouse, County Antrim, and the invite is for Mid and East Antrim Council to be represented at the event

2. Background

- 2.1. The 10th (Irish) Division was the first Division to be raised throughout Ireland from both main communities, and also the first to see action. The landings at Gallipoli exacted a high price on Allied troops; although only there for a few weeks, the Division suffered 3,500 casualties on the peninsula.
- 2.2. The Dalaradia Cultural and Historical Society, which operates the White House on behalf of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, wishes to commemorate the 110th anniversary through a special commemorative tour to Gallipoli, where a focus will be an Act of Remembrance.
- 2.3. The Society is inviting all councils in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to be represented on this visit, which will include the major battle sites and war cemeteries on the peninsula.

3. Key Issues for Consideration

- 3.1. The tour is being planned for 13-18 October 2025 and the organisers are asking for a response from councils by 31 July 2025.
- 3.2. However the latest advice from the Foreign Office is against all travel to parts of Turkey. In the assessment of the Foreign Office there is a high level of risk globally and a view that terrorists are very likely to try to carry out attacks in Turkey. There have been several attacks involving knives, firearms and explosives within the past year. Events in Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territories have led to heightened tensions in the region and across Turkey.
- 3.3. We are seeking clarification from the organisers on whether this trip is going ahead in light of this travel advice.

4. General Considerations / Implications

- 4.1. Financial implications: the organisers cannot finalise costs definitively until it is clear how many would participate. However, it is likely that cost would be in the region of **£1,650 per person**, to include all travel, hotel accommodation in twin rooms and most meals. Illustrative costs for more than one member are set out below.

Number of people	Indicative cost
2 members	3300
3 members	4950
4 members	6600
5 members	8250
10 members	16500

- 4.2. This has not been budgeted for as we have only become aware of the project
- 4.3. Human Resources: there are sufficient staffing resources in terms of booking any places if required.
- 4.4. Equality Screening: equality screening in terms of the proposal would be undertaken.
- 4.5. Alignment with Corporate Priorities and Link to Corporate Plan: the council's involvement would align with aims to develop Mid and East Antrim as a safe, inclusive, and welcoming borough, where diversity and cultural differences are celebrated, and communities live in peace – this would be reflecting in acknowledging the cross-community nature of the 10th (Irish) Division.
- 4.6. Rural Proofing and Environmental Impact: there is no overt rural aspect to this proposal and environmental impact is minimal

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1. Members are asked to consider the proposal as outlined and as detailed in the appendix and it is not recommended to proceed.

6. Recommendation or Decision

- 6.1. It is not recommended to proceed due to the current unsafe travelling environment and cost

7. Appendices / Links (included with report)

Appendix 1 – Letter from Dalaradia Cultural and Historical Society
 Appendix 2 – detail on the 10th (Irish) Division
 Appendix 3 – Foreign Office advice on travel to and in Turkey

APPENDIX 1

Dalaradia Cultural and Historical Society @ The Whitehouse , 28-34 Whitehouse Park, BT37 9SQ

whitehouseseni21@gmail.com

02890 801690

10 June, 2025

The Chief Executive
Each County Council
Northern Ireland
Southern Ireland

Dear Sir/Madam,

Commemoration of the 110th Anniversary of the 10th (Irish) Division's actions on the Gallipoli Peninsula

This August marks the 110th anniversary of the landing of the 10th (Irish) Division at Suvla Bay on the Gallipoli peninsula during the First World War. The Division was the first volunteer Division to be raised throughout Ireland from both communities and the first to see action. The Division served only a few weeks on the peninsula but suffered some 3,500 casualties.

We would like to commemorate this important common Anniversary by inviting each Council in Ireland and Northern Ireland to be represented on a special commemorative Tour to Gallipoli and participate in an Act of Remembrance. The Tour will visit the major battle sites and war cemeteries on the peninsula and experience the history and culture of Turkey.

We are anticipating the Tour being organised for 13 – 18 October, 2025 with flights departing and returning to Dublin. We cannot finalise an itinerary and price until we get a feel for final numbers but we estimate the cost to be in the region of £ 1,650 (E 1,800) to include all travel, hotel accommodation in twin rooms, and most meals.

We would cordially invite your Council to be represented on this unique pilgrimage to honour those from our communities who volunteered for service and to assist the process of reconciliation on our island. It would greatly assist our planning if you could respond by 31 July, 2025 with a deposit of £ 500 or E 500 per person nominated.

Yours faithfully,

Robert Williamson
Chair

Appendix 2 –

Detail on the 10th (Irish) Division at Gallipoli

The Division was raised on August 21 1914, and all of its original contingent of infantry battalions were of Irish regiments. Training took place at Curragh Camp, Newbridge and Kildare, before the Division removed to England and formal orders to travel to Gallipoli came on July 1, 1916.

The Division landed at Suvla Bay in early August 1915 and remained there until September, when it was transferred to the Balkans.

The Division lost 3,500 men killed in action during the time at Gallipoli and in total half of the Division was lost to death, injury or sickness during that period.

The 10th (Irish) Division recruited across Ireland and was not associated with any particular community in the way which the 16th and 36th Divisions were. There were local men who were casualties of the Gallipoli landings, including those who had emigrated to Australia and New Zealand, and were part of the ANZAC forces.

Appendix 3 – Foreign Office Advice on travel to Turkey

Terrorism

There is a high threat of terrorist attack globally affecting UK interests and British nationals, including from groups and individuals who view the UK and British nationals as targets. Stay aware of your surroundings at all times.

UK Counter Terrorism Policing has information and advice on [staying safe abroad](#) and what to do in the event of a terrorist attack. Find out [how to reduce your risk from terrorism while abroad](#).

Terrorism in Turkey

Terrorists are very likely to try to carry out attacks in Turkey.

Most terrorist attacks have occurred in southeast Turkey, Ankara and Istanbul. You should remain aware of your surroundings, keep up to date with local media reports and follow the advice of local authorities.

See [Regional risks](#) for details about the areas in south-east Turkey where FCDO advises against travel.

There have been several attacks involving knives, firearms and explosives. Attacks could be indiscriminate including in places visited by foreign nationals, such as:

- public buildings
- places of worship
- airports
- large public gatherings, including major events, public holidays, religious occasions

There have been a number of recent significant attacks. For example:

- in October 2024, 5 people were killed and 22 injured in an attack on the Turkish Aerospace Industries' facility in Kahramankazan, 40km northwest of central Ankara
- in February 2024, one person was killed in an armed attack on the Çağlayan courthouse in Istanbul by the terrorist group DHKP/C
- in January 2024, one person was killed by two gunmen in the Santa Maria Catholic Church in Sarıyer, in an attack claimed by Daesh
- in 2022, 6 people were killed in an explosion in central Istanbul

Extremist groups based in Syria, including Daesh and Al-Qaeda linked groups, have the capacity to carry out attacks in Turkey. Daesh has previously targeted border crossings and nearby locations on the Syrian side of the border.

Political situation

Regular demonstrations and protests are currently taking place in Istanbul and other cities across Turkey. Demonstrations may become violent. The police response has included use of tear gas and water cannons.

Events in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories have led to heightened tensions in the region and in locations across Turkey. Demonstrations continue to occur outside diplomatic missions connected to the conflict in major cities, particularly Israeli diplomatic missions in Ankara and Istanbul.

Meeting Date	Item	Purpose
19 January 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Briefing • Procurement Update • NIAO Performance Audit & Assessment 2025/26 • Approved Notices of Motion (June to December 2025) • Quarterly Events Update & Autumn Events Review • Sickness Absence Scrutiny Review • Quarterly Budget Monitoring Q2 	For noting For noting For noting For noting For noting For noting For noting
23 February 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Briefing • Procurement Update • Quarterly Complaints Report • Performance Improvement Plan Q3 Update • Treasury Management Annual Outturn Report • Bi-Annual Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Progress Report 	For noting For noting For noting For noting For noting For noting
13 April 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Briefing • Quarterly Communications Update • Procurement Update • Quarterly Budget Monitoring – Q3 • Supplementary Consultation on Domestic Rating Measures 	For noting For noting For noting For noting For approval
18 May 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Briefing • Quarterly Complaints Update • Procurement Update • Health & Safety Annual Report • Notices of Motion Status Update • Bi-Annual Information Governance Report (Q3 & Q4 24-25) • Licences/Agreements enacted under Scheme of Delegation - October 2024 to March 2025 	For noting For noting For noting For noting For noting For noting For noting For noting
June 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Briefing • Annual Equality Commission Submission • Performance Improvement Plan 2025/26 Year End Report • Procurement Update • Fraud Policy & Response Plan • Pay Award Update • CRPG Terms of Reference 	For noting For noting For noting For noting For approval For noting For approval
July 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Briefing • Procurement Update • VAT Compliance Review Update • Sickness Absence Update (Q1 & Q2) • Constitution – Annual Update • Corporate Approach to AI • IT Cyber Security Update 	For noting For noting For noting For noting For noting For noting

3. Items to be Programmed

Item	Purpose
Council Publication Scheme	
Customer & Digital Strategy	
Consultation & Engagement Strategy	
Communications & Marketing Strategy	
Social Value Report	
Annual Investment Strategy	
Annual review: Statutory Equality and Good Relation duties	
Dual Language Street Naming Policy	
Annual Events Programme	
Notices of Motion - Update	
HR Policies / Strategic projects / industrial action as required	
Health and Safety Policies as required	
Staff survey actions (full council?)	
Learning and Development Policies as required	
IT Strategy	