

June 16th, 2025

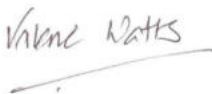
NOTICE OF MEETING

You are requested to attend a meeting of the

Mid and East Antrim Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee

to be held on **Monday, 16th June 2025 at 6:30 pm** in **Council Chamber, The Braid, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena and via remote access.**

Yours sincerely



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 Terms of Reference for Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee - circulated

▢ *Terms of Reference for Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee.pdf* Page 1

4.2 Performance Improvement Plan 2024/25 Year - end Update - circulated

▢ *Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25 Year-End Update - CRPG.pdf* Page 5

▢ *Appendix 1 Performance Improvement Plan (24-25) Year-end Update.pdf* Page 7

4.3 Policy Briefing - circulated

▢ *Policy Briefing - CRPG 16 June 2025.pdf* Page 22

▢ *Appendix 1 Consultation Summary Report.pdf* Page 24

4.4 Annual Equality Commission NI and DAERA (Rural Needs) Submissions - circulated

▢ *Annual Equality Commission NI and DAERA (Rural Needs) Submissions.pdf* Page 26

▢ *Appendix 1 - ECNI Equality Annual Progress Report 2024-2025.pdf* Page 28

▢ *Appendix 2 - DAERA Monitoring Report 2024-2025.pdf* Page 60

4.5 Title Rectification at Sunnylands, Carrickfergus - circulated

▢ *Title Rectification at Sunnylands, Carrickfergus.pdf* Page 70

▢ *Appendix.pdf* Page 72

4.6 Update on National Pay Award - circulated

- ▢ *Update on National Pay Award.pdf* *Page 73*

- ▢ *App 1 NJC Pay Claim 2025-26.pdf* *Page 76*

- ▢ *App 2 Emps to NJC TUs pay offer 22Apr25.pdf* *Page 97*

- ▢ *App 3 Emps to CO TUs pay offer 22Apr25.pdf* *Page 99*

- ▢ *App 4 Emps to ALACE pay offer 22Apr25.pdf* *Page 100*

5 ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

5.1 Standing Orders (Additional Item) - circulated (16.06.25)

- ▢ *Council - Standing Orders.pdf* *Page 102*

- ▢ *Appendix 1 - Standing Orders - June 2025.pdf* *Page 105*

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 Lease to Ahoghill Pigeon Club - circulated

- ▢ *Lease to Ahoghill Pigeon Club, Ahoghill Community Centre Car Park, Ballymena.pdf* *Not included*

- ▢ *Appx 1 Ahoghill Pigeon Club A4.pdf* *Not included*

7.2 Procurement Update - circulated

- ▢ *Procurement Update.pdf* *Not included*

7.3 Fraud & Bribery Policy and Fraud Response Plan - circulated

- ▢ *Fraud & Bribery Policy and Fraud Response Plan.pdf* *Not included*

- ▢ *Appendix 1 - Fraud & Bribery Policy May 25.pdf* *Not included*

- ▢ *Appendix 2 - Fraud Response Plan May 25.pdf* *Not included*

8 ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL – CLOSED COMMITTEE

Open Committee

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

 *May CRPG Forward Plan.pdf*

Page 185

Council/Committee:	Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance
Date:	16 June 2025
Report Title:	Terms of Reference for Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee
Publication Status:	Open
Author:	Sarah Williams, Assistant Director of Business Support
Approver:	Laureen Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate Services

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This report outlines the areas of business that fall within the remit of this Committee. It is important to highlight that Members have a clear responsibility to integrate strategy and service delivery within this Committee's remit. Additionally, Members contribute to achieving the priority outcomes set forth in the Corporate Plan. It is therefore proposed that the service planning, allocation of resources, performance, and service opportunities will be all reported to the Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee.
- 1.2. This is in line with the decisions taken at Council on 13 May 2024 with regards to good governance changes and the Scheme of Delegation. The focus of this is to ensure that Council and Committees, through all Members, can drive the strategic direction and resource allocation against priorities but enabling officers to deliver services on a day-to-day basis in a streamlined and seamless way.

2. Background

- 2.1. The following are the service functions that fall within the remit of the Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee:

Key Functions (with Consultation & Engagement and Complaints added for clarity):

- Finance and Revenue Budget Management;
- Governance including Council Constitution, Scheme or Delegation and Standing Orders;

- Communication, PR and Marketing; and
- Corporate Policy Framework
- Consultation & Engagement
- Complaints
- Procurement
- Insurance
- ICT and Digital Strategy
- Legal
- Assets and Facility Management (excluding Harbours and Marinas Service)
- Risk Management processes

2.2. Key Service Areas

- Finance
- Procurement
- Legal and Democratic Services
- Assets and Facility Management
- Strategy and Policy
- Information Governance
- Insurance
- ICT and Digital
- Risk management processes

2.2.1. Current Delegated Powers

- Writing off a loss of money (including bad debts) and loss of stores, obsolete equipment and materials in accordance with Financial Management Policy to the values determined by Council policy (any individual amount in excess of £3,000).

3. Key issues for Consideration

3.1. The role of the Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee is the following:

- The monitoring of the revenue financial budgets of the Council following Councils approval for Medium Term Financial Planning (MTFP)
- Write off any debt in excess of £3,000 where it is recommended to do so
- Oversight of procurement and contract management
- Oversight and assurance of Value for Money (VFM)
- Overview and monitoring of Corporate Policies and Procedures to ensure delivery in line with Corporate Priorities

- To review Corporate Performance, making recommendations for course correction when performance is not meeting targets
- To consider opportunities for innovation and best practice to ensure continuous improvement and quality service delivery
- To direct available resources within existing budgets and within the remit of the Committees key functions if services fail to achieve effective improvement outcomes
- Approving and overseeing the delivery of any relevant service strategies for the following Council functions (with Consultation & Engagement and Procurement added for clarity):
 - Communications
 - Customer Service
 - Consultation & Engagement
 - Human Resources and Workforce Development
 - Governance
 - ICT and Digital Strategy
 - Performance
 - Procurement
 - Risk
 - Finance

4. General Considerations/implications

- 4.1. Committees of Council can carry out decision making on behalf of Council to ensure the business of Council is transacted in a timely and efficient manner.
- 4.2. This report is clarifying that this Committee has delegated authority to make and implement decisions on the following, after which the decisions are notified to Council:
 - Writing off any loss of money (including bad debts) and loss of stores and obsolete equipment and materials in accordance with Financial Management Policy up to the values determined by Council policy (any individual amount in excess of £3,000)
- 4.3. Aside from the delegations listed in 4.2 above this Committee will make recommendations to Council, which are then approved, adopted, and ratified by Council and become a decision of Council.
- 4.4. Additional powers can be delegated to this Committee to make decisions rather than recommendations only. Any further delegations will need to be proposed and agreed by Council.

- 4.5. To note: This Committee cannot make decisions in relation to the outright disposal or acquisition of property/land however if time permits, officers may take a report to the Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee with a recommendation to Full Council for final decision.

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1. Elected Members note the remit of the Committee and over the next 12 months the Committee may require further delegations, subject to Council approval.

6. Recommendation or Decision

- 6.1. Elected Members are asked approve the key functions and service areas the Committee will consider and this will operate as the Terms of Reference for the Committee and a further report will be provided if further delegations are required.

Council/Committee:	Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance
Date:	16 June 2025
Report Title:	Performance Improvement Plan 2024/25 Year-end Update
Publication Status:	Open
Author:	Simon Hope, Interim Assistant Director Citizen Focus
Approver:	Laureen Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate & Support Services

1. Purpose

- 1.1. To provide Elected Members with the Performance Improvement Plan 2024/25 Year-end Update report for scrutiny, and to seek approval to publish the report on the Council's website.

2. Background

- 2.1. Under the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, councils have a duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions. Councils must set Improvement Objectives and publish them within a Performance Improvement Plan by 30 June each year.
- 2.2. Oversight of the Council's performance improvement responsibilities is provided by the Corporate Resources, Policy, and Governance Committee. The role of the Committee is to:
 - Review performance and make recommendations for course correction when performance is not meeting targets, and
 - Consider opportunities for innovation and best practice to ensure continuous improvement and quality service delivery.
- 2.3. The Performance Improvement Plan 2024/25, included at [Hyperlink 1](#), was approved by Council on 13 May 2024.

3. Key Issues for Consideration

- 3.1. The Improvement Objectives for 2024/25 were:
 - **People:** We will work with partners to improve the lives of citizens.
 - **Place:** We will maintain and improve our local areas.
 - **Planet:** We will reduce our environmental impact and improve sustainability.

- 3.2. The plan also included the statutory indicators and standards, as specified by the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (NI) 2015, and ongoing actions from prior year Performance Improvement Plans.
- 3.3. The Year-end Update report is included as Appendix 1. A detailed qualitative description of performance is included within the report. On a quantitative basis, of the 56 measures used to track progress:
- 88% were achieved or on track
 - 11% were delayed but progressing
 - 1% was not achieved
- 3.4. Where progress was delayed or not achieved, explanatory notes have been included within the main body of the report.

4. General Considerations / Implications

- 4.1. Our arrangements to secure continuous improvement are subject to an annual audit and assessment by the Northern Ireland Audit Office. Non-compliance with legislation and guidance may lead to poor service delivery, poor audit results, and reputational damage.

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1. The report will be published on the Council's website following approval by Elected Members, and ratification of the minutes of this meeting by Council.

6. Recommendation or Decision

- 6.1. Elected Members are asked to scrutinise the Performance Improvement Plan 2024/25 Year-end Update report, and to approve it for publication on the Council's website.

7. Appendices / Link

Hyperlink 1: [Performance Improvement Plan 2024/25](#)

Appendix 1: Performance Improvement Plan 2024/25 Year-end Update

A man and a woman are climbing a rock face. The man is wearing a red long-sleeved shirt and a blue helmet. The woman is wearing a purple long-sleeved shirt and a blue helmet. They are both smiling and looking towards the camera. The rock face is dark and textured. There are metal chains and ropes attached to the rock face.

Performance Improvement Plan 2024 - 2025

Year-end Update

April 2024 to March 2025

www.midandeantrim.gov.uk



**Mid & East
Antrim**
Borough Council

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Other formats:
 If you would like this publication in an alternative format, such as large print, or another language, please email us at:
communications@midandeantrim.gov.uk



Welcome

Welcome to our final update on our Performance Improvement Plan for 2024-2025.

Our Performance Improvement Plan is part of our arrangements to secure continuous improvement.

This update highlights key milestones from the past year and reaffirms our commitment to improving the quality of life for all.

It focuses on some of the issues affecting our borough, whilst working alongside the Mid and East Antrim Community Plan and our own Corporate Plan, to deliver the best outcomes for our citizens, communities, businesses, and visitors.

I hope you find this update both informative and inspiring. Thank you for your continued support, it plays a vital role in our success.



Valerie Watts
Interim Chief Executive



Our Vision
Mid and East Antrim will be a strong, vibrant, safe and inclusive community, where people work together to improve the quality of life for all

Duty to Improve

Under the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, councils have a duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions.

Improvement means an activity that enhances the sustainable quality of life and environment for ratepayers and communities. It means more than gains in service outputs, efficiencies, or internal effectiveness.

For each financial year, councils must set Improvement Objectives, and have in place the arrangements to achieve them.

These objectives must be framed to bring about improvement in at least one of the following aspects:

- Strategic effectiveness
- Service quality
- Service availability
- Fairness
- Sustainability
- Efficiency
- Innovation

A Performance Improvement Plan, setting out these objectives, must be published by 30 June each year.

To view our plan in full, please visit: www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk/performance

Arrangements to Secure Continuous Improvement

Our arrangements to secure continuous improvement are outlined within our Performance Management Framework.

This framework drives performance at all levels within the organisation by linking our corporate strategies, aims, and objectives to each employee's individual work plan.

These arrangements are audited by the Northern Ireland Audit Office each year.



Our Improvement Objectives

1



People

We will work with partners to improve the lives of citizens.

2



Place

We will maintain and improve our local areas.

3



Planet

We will reduce our environmental impact and improve sustainability.

Year-end Performance Summary

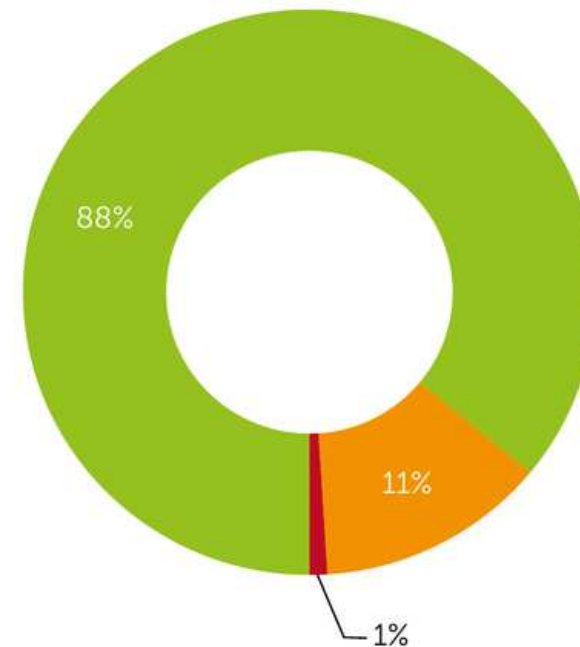
The following pages outline what we achieved through the delivery of our Improvement Objectives.

We used a series of Outcomes (what we achieved) and Measures (key performance indicators) to track progress. Our performance against our 56 measures is summarised below.

Progress Key

- Achieved or on track
- Delayed but progressing
- Not achieved

Greater detail on each objective is provided throughout the remainder of this report.



People

We will work with partners to improve the lives of citizens.

By:

- Fostering local enterprise and economic growth.
- Supporting skills development and improving employment outcomes.
- Helping citizens lead healthy and active lives.
- Supporting people who are vulnerable or marginalised, and promoting an equal, diverse, inclusive, and accessible borough.

Who is responsible:

- Director of Community
- Acting Director of Development
- Interim Director of Corporate and Support Services



Why?

- The actions set out to achieve this objective align with the key priorities identified through public consultation. They support priority groupings, and provide opportunities for skills development and employment progression. They offer both health and wellbeing support and help to improve equality of opportunity, accessibility, and inclusivity.
- Developing skills and job prospects, and support to reduce poverty, were two of citizens' top five priorities for making the borough a better place to live in. Only 28% agreed the area is a good place for job opportunities (MEABC Citizens Survey 2022).
- With the rising cost of living and the impact of the pandemic, the number of financially insecure households is increasing. Anecdotal evidence indicates that poverty is impacting families across the whole borough. Our Citizens Survey (2022) found on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being not at all satisfied, half of respondents rated their satisfaction level with their financial health as being 5 or less.
- This objective aligns with the Department for the Economy's vision for Northern Ireland of creating jobs, increasing incomes, improving productivity, and providing opportunities for all.
- In terms of wellbeing, almost 50% of citizens said they want to see more support services for children and families, and/or people with disabilities (MEABC Citizens Survey 2022).
- The issue of inclusion was highlighted during the review of the Community Plan (2022), particularly for people with disabilities and learning difficulties. People from ethnic minority backgrounds, young people, and older people were also identified as being 'at risk'.

What you'll see

Outcome 1	Opportunities to start your own business.
Measure 1	240 participants supported through start-up assistance via Go Succeed by 31 March 2025.
Status	Across the year, there were 325 participants supported through Go Succeed. (These figures are subject to quality assurance and may change).
Measure 2	107 jobs promoted through business start interventions by 31 March 2025.
Status	Across the year, there were 144 jobs promoted through business start interventions. (These figures are subject to quality assurance and may change).
Outcome 2	An active Mid and East Antrim Manufacturing Task Force.
Measure 1	At least 3 new Manufacturing Task Force members by 31 March 2025.
Status	Across the year, 4 new organisations joined the Task Force.
Measure 2	£40,000 of Task Force members' in-kind time contributions by 31 March 2025.
Status	Across the year, members' collective time contribution was valued at £43,560.
Outcome 3	Opportunities to take part in skills and employability programmes.
Measure 1	200 people participating in employment and skills programmes by 31 March 2025.
Status	Across the year, 365 people participated in various programmes, academies and upskilling courses, including Manufacturing, Transportation, Fibre Skills, Investor, Excel, Classroom Assistant, and more. Some courses will run until June 2025, with Childcare Upskilling, GP Administration, Phlebotomy, Cleantech Hydrogen and Welding, all underway. Future updates on these programmes will be provided to the Council's Environment and Economy Committee.
Measure 2	100 participants gaining employment via employment academies by 31 March 2025.
Status	Despite a late start due to delayed funding, 83 participants have already gained employment, with further outcomes expected later in 2025/26 as academies conclude. Future updates will be provided to the Council's Environment and Economy Committee.
Measure 3	150 participants securing qualifications by 31 March 2025.
Status	Across the year, 377 qualifications were secured with more expected by the end of June 2025. These range from Excel, Mathematics, and Personal Finance to Pediatric First Aid, Safeguarding, Classroom Assistant, Customer Service and Food Hygiene, HGV, Telehandler, and more. Future updates will be provided to the Council's Environment and Economy Committee.

Outcome 4	Support to lead a healthy and active life.
Measure 1	MEAqua Strategy and Year 1 Action Plan (including the expansion of toddler and disability sessions) delivered by 31 March 2025.
Status	Several improvements were made to the MEAqua programme during the year, including the expansion of swimming classes for parents and small children, and the provision of Disability Swimming lessons in our 3 leisure centres. Our development plan for 2024-2027 will see further expansion for all age groups and abilities, from toddlers and learners to high-performance groups. Future updates will be provided to the Council's Neighbourhoods and Communities Committee.
Measure 2	12 outdoor events to involve a wide range of abilities by 31 March 2025.
Status	There were 150 events delivered during the year, with over 6,500 participants. These ranged from festive trails, petting farms, crafting, bird box building and tree giveaways, to food and walking events, grandparent days, spring events, orienteering, and more.
Outcome 5	A borough that values, engages, and supports everyone.
Measure 1	MEA Age-Friendly Strategy and Year 1 Action Plan launched by 30 June 2024.
Status	The Age-Friendly Strategy and Action Plan for 2024-2027 was launched in September 2024, marking a key milestone in our commitment to supporting older people.
Measure 2	An Older Person's Forum established by 31 December 2024.
Status	The Agewell Lived Experience Group will act as the Older Person's Forum and will attend meetings of the Age-Friendly Alliance, ensuring the voices of older people are heard right across the borough.
Measure 3	MEA Age-Friendly Year 2 Action Plan confirmed by 28 February 2025.
Status	The Year 2 Action Plan was agreed at a workshop in January 2025.
Measure 4	Autism-Friendly Action Plans implemented in 4 Council venues by 30 September 2024.
Status	Over the past year, we've made strong progress in making our services and spaces more accessible and welcoming for autistic people. Our Arts and Museums centres are the latest of our services to take action to achieve this by introducing sensory spaces, and developing accessible signage and pre-visit guides. It is hoped these venues will complete their action plans and achieve the Autism Impact Award by summer. Future updates will be provided to the Council's Neighbourhoods and Communities Committee.
Measure 5	4 additional Autism Champions developed within Council by 30 September 2024.
Status	With 4 staff members accredited in September 2024, there are now 17 Autism Champions within our Parks, Museums and Arts centres, and Leisure Services. These individuals are trained and dedicated to ensuring positive experiences for autistic people and their families by providing support to anyone who needs it.

What you'll see

Measure 6	An Autism-Awareness initiative Communications Plan developed by 30 September 2024.
Status	We have developed and launched an Autism-Awareness Communications Plan, which includes the promotion of Quiet Hours in our parks and new resources for Autism Acceptance Month, such as an Employability Guide and Training Model, developed in partnership with the Northern Area Autism Forum.
Measure 7	4 arts and culture events delivered to address loneliness and improve accessibility by 31 March 2025.
Status	A range of events were delivered during the year, including the Rural Engagement Arts Programme, an Arts and Older People Programme, exhibitions, reminiscence sessions, an arts and nature-based workshop, and a film screening. Autism-Friendly pre-visit guides are also being developed for our Museums and Arts centres.
Measure 8	8 Council-managed community centres connected to full-fibre broadband by 31 March 2025.
Status	All Council-managed community centres now have working internet and Wi-Fi.
Outcome 6	Collaboration with the Mid and East Antrim Poverty Action Group.
Measure 1	Attendance at Poverty Action Group meetings and support of initiatives.
Status	<p>This objective is partly achieved. Although the group did not formally meet during the year, members remained active in supporting families and individuals across the borough through financial advice, food distribution, essential resources, and wellbeing programmes.</p> <p>With group support, we successfully delivered the School Uniform Scheme, providing vital assistance ahead of the new school year.</p> <p>To improve coordination, the Council will take on facilitation and assign a dedicated staff resource to resume regular meetings, ensuring more effective partnership working and ongoing support for vulnerable residents.</p>



Place

We will maintain and improve our local areas.

By:

- Enhancing our amenities, parks, and open spaces.
- Bolstering our town centres.
- Nurturing community-led tourism.
- Delivering an effective and efficient Planning Service.

Who is responsible:

- Director of Community
- Acting Director of Development
- Interim Director of Operations



Why?

- The actions set out to achieve this objective align with the key priorities identified through public consultation. Improvements to playparks and provision for outdoor recreation (particularly for young people) was a high priority for citizens. Actions will also support, improve, and revitalise the borough's town centres.
- Supporting and developing activities for children and young people, delivering clean and attractive streets and towns, and supporting our parks, green spaces and the natural and built environment, were within citizens' top five priorities for making the area a better place to live in (MEABC Citizens Survey 2022).
- More than a third of citizens would like to see more access to green spaces, such as parks and forests (MEABC Citizens Survey 2022).
- Community tourism can help boost local economies by encouraging visitor footfall, increasing jobs, and generating revenue for local businesses. This can help increase civic pride in a local area and develop more sustainable and prosperous communities.



What you'll see

Outcome 1		New or improved playparks.
Measure 1	Marine Gardens playpark completed by 31 August 2024.	
Status	This playpark is now a vibrant and exciting space for children of all ages and abilities, with an impressive ship, a zipline, swings, and climbing opportunities.	
Measure 2	Larne Skate Park completed by 31 October 2024.	
Status	Officially opened in October 2024, this park is designed to cater to all skills levels and abilities. It accommodates a range of wheeled sports, from skateboarding and BMX, to scootering and inline skating.	
Measure 3	2 additional new or refurbished playparks completed by 31 March 2025.	
Status	A brand-new playpark has officially opened in Fisherwick Ballymena. Developed following community consultation, the park includes senior and junior multi play units, an inclusive roundabout, swings, summer seating and an accessible picnic bench. The Knockan Road play park was partially refurbished, and Oakfield playpark in Carrickfergus completed in May 2025. Bardic Drive playpark is due to complete before summer.	
	Future updates will be provided to the Council's Neighbourhoods and Communities Committee.	
Outcome 2		Greater provision for outdoor recreation.
Measure 1	Carnlough, Glynn and Portglenone MUGAs or kickabouts completed by 30 June 2024.	
Status	All 3 areas completed in summer 2024.	
Measure 2	Carrickfergus Amphitheatre 2G pitch upgraded to 3G by 31 July 2024.	
Status	The pitch upgrade is complete.	
Measure 3	Phase 1 of the Cullybackey to Galgorm Greenway completed by 30 September 2025.	
Status	The design consultants were appointed in June, and following necessary revisions to the proposed route, outline designs were approved by the project board in November 2024. A phased delivery approach has now been agreed, with funding departments supportive of our revised plan. The project remains under review to assess the impact of design changes on the overall timeline. The submission of the planning application is expected by summer 2025, after which a revised completion date for Phase 1 will be confirmed.	
	Future updates on this project will be provided to the Council's Environment and Economy Committee, and the Neighbourhoods and Communities Committee, as relevant.	
Measure 4	Development of Carnfunnock Country Park completed by 31 March 2026.	
Status	Public consultation has been completed, and planning approval has been secured. The tender process is underway, however returned tenders identified a budget shortfall. In response, the project has undergone a detailed review to identify potential cost savings and explore opportunities for additional Council funding. A re-profiling exercise is underway to support this, with outcomes to be presented to Elected Members and approval sought to progress to tender award stage.	
	It is anticipated the project will progress and a contractor will be on site during summer 2025 with a delivery period of 18 months. The funders have extended the project window until 31 March 2027 to reflect the updated delivery timeline.	
	Future updates will be provided to the Council's Environment and Economy Committee, and the Neighbourhoods and Communities Committee, as relevant.	

Outcome 3		Delivery of the Town Centre Revitalisation Scheme.
Measure 1	Sound systems installed in Ballymena and Carrickfergus town centres by 30 June 2024.	
Status	It is hoped the sound systems will be in place by summer, pending the agreement of property owners.	
	Future updates on this project will be provided to the Council's Environment and Economy Committee.	
Measure 2	2 street art schemes in Ballymena and Larne town centres by 31 July 2024.	
Status	A Street Art Festival in Larne and 3 murals in Ballymena have been delivered, including an abstract piece in Ballymoney Street, a giant Flamingo in Greenvale Street, and an outdoor adventurer in Church Street. The feedback received from the public has been positive.	
Measure 3	Feature lighting installed in Ballymena and Larne town centres by 30 September 2024.	
Status	Ballymena, Larne and Carrickfergus all received new Christmas Trees for the 2024 festive season. Gobo projectors have also been installed in Pat's Brae Ballymena and Carrickfergus Civic Centre. Larne will benefit from new festive lighting in 2025/26.	
Measure 4	Additional funding application submitted to the Department for Communities by 30 September 2024.	
Status	Funding of £105,000 has been awarded for artificial Christmas trees in the 3 main towns, £315,000 for Revitalise 2 (Shop Front Grant Scheme and Marketing Campaign), £135,000 for Enhanced Seasonal lighting in each town centre and a Seasonal Lighting Trail in Carrickfergus, and almost £154,000 for a Pop-Up Park in Larne town centre.	
Measure 5	25 groups utilising Pop-Up Shop opportunities by 31 March 2025.	
Status	The Pop-Up Shop initiative exceeded expectations, with 31 community groups and entrepreneurs making use of available spaces. Several events were also held in the properties throughout the year.	
Measure 6	15 events or activities held within Ballymena, Carrickfergus, and Larne town centres by 31 March 2025.	
Status	A total of 50 events and activities have been delivered to encourage town centre footfall and support our local businesses, including festive events, markets, craft fairs, and more.	
Outcome 4		Delivery of the Carrickfergus Townscape Heritage Initiative Scheme.
Measure 1	10 buildings of historical and architectural interest restored in Carrickfergus by 31 July 2024.	
Status	With the completion of the final property in January, 10 buildings have been restored to the highest of conservation standards.	
Measure 2	Increased floor space for retail, commercial or residential use in Carrickfergus by 31 July 2024.	
Status	There were 12 residential properties and 2 derelict buildings restored, an increase of almost 900 square feet, nearly 2.5 times the original footage. A historic exhibition space was also created.	
Measure 3	Closing event and publication issued on the Carrickfergus Townscape Heritage Initiative by 31 July 2024.	
Status	A celebration event was held in the Dobbins Inn in November, where a booklet telling the story of the initiative was shared.	

What you'll see

Outcome 5	Locally led tourism.
Measure 1	Neighbourhood Tourism Scheme launched by 31 October 2024.
Status	The Neighbourhood Tourism Scheme was successfully launched, enhancing visitor experiences in Gracehill, Cullybackey, Broughshane, Carnlough, and Whitehead through the installation of branded visitor information stands, digital marketing materials, and interactive iPads.
Measure 2	3 local Neighbourhood Tourism participants by 31 March 2025.
Status	The Old School House Gracehill, The Hub Cullybackey, Broughshane House Broughshane, The Heritage Hub Carnlough, and the Whitehead Centre are all participating in the initiative.
Outcome 6	Achievement of our statutory Planning Service targets.
Measure 1	A processing time for major planning applications within an average of 30 weeks by 31 March 2025.
Status	<p>Between April and December 2024, our average (median) processing time for major planning applications was 53.6 weeks. This is an improvement on the same period last year, at 67.4 weeks, but remains above both the statutory target of 30 weeks and the Northern Ireland average of 39.7 weeks, and places us in a position where further improvement is required.</p> <p>Within the reporting period we processed 8 major planning applications to a conclusion. Of these, only 1 was decided within the statutory timeframe. The difficulty in meeting the target is an issue that affects Northern Ireland as a whole, and is not exclusive to us. Our processing time reflects a combination of stakeholder delays and particularly complex applications, set within the context of a relatively new two-tier planning system.</p> <p>We are actively exploring a range of measures to improve performance and address challenges impacting our ability to meet this target. One option currently being progressed is the implementation of a Planning Application Validation Checklist, in line with legislative changes introduced by the Department for Infrastructure. The purpose of the checklist will be to clearly set out the specific information and supporting documentation required for different types of planning applications, helping to reduce delays caused by poor quality or incomplete submissions. By ensuring applications are valid and complete at the point of submission, the checklist will support more efficient processing, quicker consultee responses, and improved decision-making times. We are now in the final stages of developing our draft checklist which we hope to finalise and publish in the coming months.</p> <p>Verified data up to the end of March 2025 is not yet available for all 3 statutory Planning indicators, and will be reported through our Performance Improvement Plan for 2025/26.</p>
Measure 2	A processing time for local planning applications within an average of 15 weeks by 31 March 2025.
Status	Between April and December 2024, we decided 476 local applications with an average (median) processing time of 6.2 weeks, with 82% of cases processed within the target 15 weeks, placing us as the top performing council for this measure. The average processing time across all NI councils was 19.2 weeks, with 42% of cases processed within the target 15 weeks.
Measure 3	At least 70% of enforcement cases concluded within 39 weeks by 31 March 2025.
Status	Between April and December 2024, we concluded 120 enforcement cases, 82.5% of which were concluded within the target 39 weeks. The average across all NI councils for this period was 70.3%.



Planet

We will reduce our environmental impact and improve sustainability.

By:

- Moving towards cleaner energy and reducing our consumption.
- Delivering an effective and efficient Waste Management Service.
- Supporting biodiversity.
- Reaching environmental standards and targets.
- Sharing learning and best practice.

Who is responsible:

- Director of Community
- Interim Director of Operations



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Why?

- The actions set out to achieve this objective align with the key priorities identified through public consultation. They demonstrate how the Council is leading by example, whilst also working to engage and educate on sustainability. They assist the development of the borough's electric vehicle charging network, they focus on providing an effective and efficient waste management service, and they demonstrate support for biodiversity within the borough.
- Our citizens identified help to reduce consumption, waste and litter, and awareness and assistance in tackling climate change as the two most important things the Council could do to be more environmentally friendly. Adopting environmentally sustainable transport ranked third and protecting plants and animals ranked fourth (MEABC Citizens Survey 2022).
- Measures to address climate change, environmental awareness, and the importance of respect for the local and natural environment, were points raised throughout the Community Planning Review (2022) consultation.
- The phase out date for the sale of new petrol and diesel cars is 2035.

What you'll see

Outcome 1	Energy-saving and clean energy projects within Council buildings.
Measure 1	6 energy-saving projects delivered by 31 March 2025.
Status	We successfully delivered 8 energy saving projects this year, exceeding the target of 6. These included LED lighting upgrades at facilities such as the Showgrounds, Larne Leisure Centre, People's Park, Oakfield Community Centre, Carrickfergus Civic Centre, Carrickfergus Town Hall, and Sir Thomas Dixon building.
Measure 2	4 clean-energy projects delivered by 31 March 2025.
Status	Solar PV installations were delivered at the Sullatober Depot and Portglenone Marina, while battery storage systems were installed at Springwell Street Car Park and Sullatober Waste Transfer Station. Data logging technology and analytics platforms were also added to the Showgrounds, Carrickfergus Civic Centre, Larne and Carrickfergus Leisure Centres, Portglenone Marina, Springwell Street Car Park, and Sullatober sites to inform future investment opportunities in renewable generation and storage.
Measure 3	Approximately 77,000kg CO ₂ e savings by 31 March 2025 (lifecycle saving - 1.5m kg).
Status	A carbon reduction of 77,301kg CO ₂ e has been achieved.
Measure 4	Approximately £80,000 savings through energy projects by 31 March 2025 (lifecycle savings - £1.6m).
Status	Annual financial savings have increased to £85,756.
Outcome 2	Expansion of electric vehicle chargepoints within the borough.
Measure 1	12 fast chargers procured through the On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) by 30 September 2024.
Status	The contract was awarded in December 2024.
Measure 2	Installation date for ORCS chargers confirmed by 31 March 2025.
Status	This project is expected to be completed by September 2025. Future updates on this project will be provided to the Council's Environment and Economy Committee.
Measure 3	6 upgraded charge stations through ESB by 31 March 2025.
Status	All 6 charge stations are installed. The locations are Tower Road Larne, Narrow Gauge Larne, Havelock Carnlough, Coast Road Glenarm, Larne Link Road Ballymena and Henry Street Ballymena. A supercharging hub was also installed in Larne.
Outcome 3	Achievement of our statutory Waste Management targets.
Measure 1	At least 50% of household waste collected sent for recycling by 31 March 2025.
Status	From April to December 2024, 52.67% of household waste collected was sent for recycling. Verified data up to the end of March 2025 is not yet available for all 3 statutory Waste indicators, and will be reported through our Performance Improvement Plan for 2025/26.
Measure 2	A maximum of 16,387 tonnes of biodegradable collected municipal waste sent to landfill by 31 March 2025.
Status	From April to December 2024, 11,566 tonnes of biodegradable collected municipal waste was sent to landfill.

Measure 3	Less than 75,797 tonnes collected municipal waste arisings by 31 March 2025.
Status	From April to December 2024, there were 58,405 tonnes of collected municipal waste arisings.
Outcome 4	Delivery of our Tree and Woodland Management Strategy.
Measure 1	5,000 trees planted within the borough by 31 March 2025.
Status	Almost 370,000 trees were planted or distributed for planting across the borough last year.
Outcome 5	Achievement of environmental targets and accreditations, where viable.
Measure 1	Re-certification of International Management Standard ISO14001 by 31 August 2024.
Status	Re-certification was obtained for another 3 years in August. No non-conformances or observations for improvement were identified.
Measure 2	A minimum of Gold Status in the NI Benchmarking Survey by 30 November 2024.
Status	We achieved Platinum level, and were the top performing council in Northern Ireland.
Measure 3	Gaps identified in the 2023 NI Environmental Benchmarking Survey addressed by 31 October 2024.
Status	We have taken various steps to address the gaps identified, including the development and agreement of waste harmonisation plans to improve recycling performance. LED and solar PV installations to increase our renewable energy generation, and flood-risk mapping. We also monitor and report on Scope 1, Scope 2, and four categories of Scope 3 carbon emissions. Several biodiversity projects were also progressed. Our most recent initiative in Larne Town Park is beginning to take shape as the pilot site for our new Nature Recovery Plan. Here, we're combining habitat restoration with community action. Volunteers and local schools have created a thriving community orchard and introduced new wildflower planting, while grassland areas are being left uncut in summer to benefit pollinators and small wildlife. Woodland edges are being carefully restored by gradually removing invasive species and planting native trees to support long-term ecological health. Plans are also underway to develop a looped nature trail, making the park even more accessible for people to experience nature up close. Once the pilot is complete, the Nature Recovery Plan will go to public consultation ensuring that our long-term vision for biodiversity is shaped by those who use and care for these spaces most.
Outcome 6	Opportunities to engage in environmental education programmes.
Measure 1	10 community engagement sessions held on Waste and Recycling, and Climate and Sustainability by 31 March 2025.
Status	By December, we had delivered 10 community engagement sessions. In January, we also engaged with local businesses as they developed their Climate Action Plans, through the Collaborative Growth Network.
Measure 2	Support for the Eco-Schools programme, with a 5% increase in the number of schools with Green Flags by 30 June 2025.
Status	The number of Eco-Schools with Green Flag status has increased by 5%. An awards ceremony will take place in June to recognise participating schools.
Measure 3	Delivery of 5 circular economy waste initiatives by 31 March 2025.
Status	We delivered 5 key initiatives to promote sustainability, reduce waste, and support our local communities, including the School Uniform Scheme, Christmas Toy Container Scheme, Community Fridges, Community Repaint Scheme, and the Spectacle Reuse Scheme.

Get Involved

We would like your input, views, and feedback.

If you would like to tell us about something that you think needs to be improved, you can do so at any time throughout the year.

Please contact us by any of the following methods:

@ performance@midandeantrim.gov.uk

☎ 0300 1245 000

✉ Corporate Performance and Improvement Team
Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
1-29 Bridge Street
Ballymena
BT43 5EJ

If you live, work or study in Mid and East Antrim you can also submit questions directly to our Elected Members and Officers by completing a short form.

More details can be found at:
midandeantrim.gov.uk/publicquestions

Closing Remarks


As I reflect on the past year, I am incredibly proud of the collective efforts made by Council officers and our partners in delivering our Performance Improvement Plan.

While we may not have achieved everything we set out to, I am confident that, after reading this update, you can clearly see the positive impact we have had across the borough.

Addressing the needs of Mid and East Antrim remains our highest priority. We will continue to make improvements, where we can, to improve the quality of life and environment for our ratepayers and communities.

Working in partnership with our citizens and other stakeholders will help to shape a future that reflects our shared values and ambitions, ensuring a prosperous and sustainable borough for the generations to come.

As we prepare to launch our Performance Improvement Plan for 2025/26, I encourage you to stay connected with us through our website and social media channels, where we will be sharing regular updates.



Valerie Watts
Interim Chief Executive



For further information contact us at:

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
1-29 Bridge Street
Ballymena
BT43 5EJ

Tel: 0300 1245 000
Email us at: enquiries@midandeastantrim.gov.uk
Visit our website: www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk

Other formats

If you would like this publication in an alternative format, such as large print, or another language, please email: communications@midandeastantrim.gov.uk

Council/ Committee:	Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance Committee
Date:	16 June 2025
Report Title:	Policy Briefing
Publication Status:	Open
Author:	Simon Hope, Interim Assistant Director – Citizen Focus
Approver:	Laureen Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate and Support Services

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to update Elected Members in respect of matters that fall within the remit of the Policy Team.

2. Background

- 2.1. Within the Corporate and Support Services directorate, the Policy team is 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. Policies and guidance for Elected Members are available in the 'Policies' section of MinutePad.

3. Key Issues for Consideration

3.1. Public Consultations

Public consultations published by the NI Executive are centrally registered by the Policy team 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 the response prior to submission.

A summary of these consultations is produced to the Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance Committee each month. This month's consultation summary is set out in Appendix 1.

3.2 Information Governance

A programme of work has been designed to ensure Council's compliance in all areas of information governance. The redesign of the Corporate and Support Services Directorate will support the team in taking forward this significant programme of change.

3.3 Complaints

Council implemented NIPSO's Model Complaints Handling Procedure from 1st January 2024. A summary of Council's complaints data will be reported quarterly to CRPG and published annually at each year end.

The quarterly complaint report for quarter 1 of 2025/2026 will be presented at the CRPG meeting in July.

3.4 Equality & Diversity and Rural Needs

Council is committed to the statutory reporting duty to both the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) and Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in respect to equality screening and rural impact screening. Both duties require Council to submit annual reports to both agencies.

A separate report to CRPG provides details of Council's draft annual submission to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and DAERA for Members' review and approval.

4. **General Considerations / Implications**

- 4.1 Responding to relevant public consultations is necessary for Council to publicly demonstrate its policy position and work towards achieving optimum outcomes on behalf of the residents of the Borough.

5. **Proposed Way Forward**

- 5.1. N/A

6. **Recommendation or Decision**

It is recommended that Elected Members:

- (i) Note the Public Consultation summary report.

7. **Appendices / Links**

Appendix 1 Consultation Summary Report



Consultation Register Summary Report Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance Committee

16th June 2025

a) Consultations where Council is the stakeholder

Title and Closing Date	Consulting Department/Organisation	Proposed Dept and Committee
Consultation on the HSC Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Framework Deadline: 28/08/2025	Department of Health	TBC
Consultation on the HSC Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Framework Deadline: 25/08/2025	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs	Neighbourhoods & Communities Committee 29/07/2025

b) Consultations being conducted by Council

Title	Consulting Department	Comments/Link to Consultation Documents
Public Consultation on Pedestrian-Only Access to Greenisland Foreshore Deadline: 13/06/2025	Parks and Open Spaces	Council are asking local residents of their views on the possibility of opening pedestrian-only access to Belfast Lough foreshore, between 103 and 103a Shore Road, Greenisland. https://www.midandeantrim.gov.uk/council/policies-and-documents/consultations/public-consultation-on-pedestrian-only-access-to-

Appendix 1

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		greenisland-foreshore
Play parks in Whitehead Deadline: 23/6/2025	Parks and Open Spaces	<p>Our 'Out to Play' strategy is focused on providing opportunities for play for children and young people across the Borough.</p> <p>This consultation is about play provision in Whitehead and how we can ensure it is meeting the needs of the children and young people who live and visit there.</p> <p>https://www.midandeantrism.gov.uk/council/policies-and-documents/consultations/play-parks-in-whitehead</p>

Council/ Committee:	Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance Committee
Date:	16 June 2025
Report Title:	Annual Equality Commission NI and DAERA (Rural Needs) Submissions
Publication Status:	Open
Author:	Simon Hope, Interim Assistant Director – Citizen Focus
Approver:	Laureen Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate Services

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is for the Elected Members to review Council's annual equality and diversity submission to the ECNI prior to submission.

2. Background

- 2.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across a range of categories outlined in the Act.
- 2.2 The 'Disability Duties' under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006) outline that Council are required to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage participation by disabled people in public life.
- 2.3 Council outlines how it will achieve these statutory duties in its Equality Scheme and its Disability Action Plan.
- 2.4 The NI Equality Commission requires public authorities to submit their annual review of progress.
- 2.5 The Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 places a statutory duty on public authorities to have due regard to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas in the development, implementation, revision and adoption of policies, strategies and plans and in the design and delivery of public services.
- 2.6 The Act also requires public authorities to compile and submit information on how they have exercised the due regard duty to DAERA who publish that information in an annual report which is laid before the NI Assembly.

3. Key Issues for Consideration

- 3.1 Attached at Appendix 1 is the proposed draft of Council's annual ECNI submission which demonstrates the progress Council has made in the year 2024-2025 in relation to its statutory equality and diversity duties. Part A of the report is in relation to Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Council's Equality Scheme. Part B of the report is in relation to Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Council's Disability Action Plan.
- 3.2 Attached at Appendix 2 is Council's annual DAERA submission which outlines the actions Council has undertaken to demonstrate due regard to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

4. General Considerations / Implications

- 4.1 Failure to submit these annual reviews would result in Council breaching its statutory obligations.

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1 Once approved by the Elected Members, officers will submit both reports to the respective agencies in order to demonstrate Council's fulfilment of its statutory duties.

6. Recommendation or Decision

- 6.1 Elected Members are asked to:
 - i. Review and note the contents of the annual reviews at Appendices 1 and 2.
 - ii. Approve the reports for submission to the ECNI and DAERA.

7. Appendices / Links

Appendix 1 – ECNI Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report 2024 - 2025

Appendix 2 – DAERA Annual Public Authority Statutory Duty Monitoring Report 2024 - 2025

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council



Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties

Annual Progress Report

Contact details:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme 	Name: Simon Hope Telephone: 0300 124 5000 Email: simon.hope@midandeantrim.gov.uk
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan 	As above <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Name: Click or tap here to enter text. Telephone: Click or tap here to enter text. Email: Click or tap here to enter text.
Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:	https://www.midandeantrim.gov.uk/council/equality-good-relations/equality-scheme-with-equality-action-plan-2023-2027/
Signature:	

This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the Equality Commission.

It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties, and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and Disability Action Plans.

This report reflects progress made between April 2024 and March 2025

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PART A – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Scheme**Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice**

- 1 In 2024-25, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.

Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.

This reporting year (2024-2025) covers Year 2 of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council's current Disability Action Plan 2023 - 2027.

Council have continued to progress and introduce several initiatives aimed at making Mid and East Antrim an inclusive and accessible Borough. Below are some examples for the reporting year.

- **Autism Friendly Borough**

As a result of the information sessions of autism awareness, Council alongside the Northern Area Adult Autism Reference Group have developed a 'Train for Training' version of the information sessions to enable organisations to roll this out across their service. This initiative will significantly increase the organisation's ability to meet the needs of our autistic community through cost effective, accessible training solution, managed by the Council and the Northern Trust.

In partnership with The Northern Area Autism Employability Working Group and the Northern Area Autism Reference Group, Council developed an employability guide to enable more autistic people to progress into and within employment by equipping employers with skills and knowledge to understand their needs. The guide provides tools for employers to help support autistic people into roles within their workplace. It aims to help autistic people entering the workplace, to be understood, to reduce anxiety associated with a new role, and enable all candidates to demonstrate their abilities with confidence.

Leisure facilities and visitor attractions owned and operated by Council have been awarded the Autism NI Impact Award. This Award was developed by Autism NI to support organisations wishing to create a more 'autism friendly environment' for their customers. Autism NI define an autism friendly organisation as one that "strives to ensure every autistic individual feels welcome and comfortable accessing the range of services and facilities offered". Our three Leisure Centres, Carnfunnock Country Park, Ballymena's People's Park and The Gobbins Visitor Centre at Islandmagee, have all achieved 'Autism Impact Award' accreditation. The Council's Arts Centres and Museums are currently working towards accreditation.

Following the training programme, positive practical adjustments were made, including the production of online pre-visit guides, new signage, and 'quiet spaces' at

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several venues. All locations have developed new signage, which includes information, so families know more about what to expect, for example smell and noises at the location, and pre-visitor guides that explain in plain language about the environment, who you are likely to meet, and busy times.

Resulting from the awareness raising within the teams, Council was successful in a bid for £30,000 from the Department for Communities to upgrade the lighting system at McNeill Theatre to enable Autism-Friendly relaxed performances.

Autism Champions have also been identified and are located across Council and Trust to support autistic individuals and their families in accessing services. Our Champions are located within Parks, Museums, and Leisure Services. They have all received Autism Awareness training and are responsible for ensuring that the services provided by their department are accessible to all. Autism Champions can be identified by their lanyard.

- **Age Friendly Strategy & Positive Ageing Month**

During this reporting year Council have established an internal working group with members receiving Age Friendly Awareness Reflective Training, including Age Simulation equipment. Using this training they have completed an Age Friendly self-assessment for their service area and associated buildings. The findings of which have been collated with recommendations made.

Council also launched its first Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan. This comprehensive strategy aims to create an inclusive environment where older residents can thrive and contribute actively to their communities.

The Age Friendly Strategy is the culmination of extensive collaboration between the Council and its valued Age Friendly Alliance partners. Through initial surveys and ongoing consultations, the strategy addresses key areas identified by older residents as priorities for improvement.

The launch of the Age Friendly Strategy aligned with Positive Ageing Month in October. This year's theme, 'The Part We Play', celebrates the integral role of older people in our communities. A number of partners, including Council, Northern Health and Social Care Trust, Public Health Agency, Mid and East Antrim Agewell Partnership, have organised a diverse range of events and workshops to highlight the support systems available.

The Positive Ageing Month programme features both in-person and virtual events across the Borough and Northern Ireland, showcasing the support available to promote healthy ageing and active participation in community life.

- **MEA Loneliness Network & Loneliness Awareness Week**

The MEA Loneliness Network brings together statutory, voluntary/community groups to combat loneliness. The network introduced a further two 'Chatty Benches' in the Borough during loneliness Awareness week in June 2024. The 'chatty benches' are

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designed to help tackle loneliness which can happen to all ages with different backgrounds, they also support positive mental health within the community. In total there are 18 chatty benches across the Borough and hope that more will follow soon.

- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2024-25 (or append the plan with progress/examples identified).

- **Sensory Parks**

The sensory areas at People's Park and Carnfunnock Country Park were designed by officers in collaboration with Councillors to create spaces away from the main play areas that engage the senses and promote a calming atmosphere.

A variety of equipment suitable for children of all abilities has been installed, alongside new accessible pathways and picnic benches.

The winding walkways guide visitors through the area, while the addition of different types of trees, textures, and musical instruments further enrich the experience.

These sensory areas were funded by the Department for Communities, with £30,000 awarded to each site through their Access and Inclusion Fund to purchase accessible and inclusive equipment, and a £3,000 contribution from Council.

Council's Parks staff are using the Mae Murray Foundation 'Adapt My Play' Toolkit for help designing the new/refurbished play parks to ensure we are as inclusive as possible.

- **Quiet Hour at our principal Play Parks**

The Autism Friendly team have worked with the Parks and Open Spaces to have a dedicated quiet hour at the following parks: People's Park in Ballymena, Carnfunnock Country Park and Town Park in Larne, and Marine Gardens playpark in Carrickfergus.

This is a regular slot when machinery will not be used by Council, and we are asking parents to consider this time when planning their visits to the park.

- 3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2024-25 reporting period? (tick one box only)

Yes

No (go to Q.4)

Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

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Click or tap here to enter text.

3a With regard to the change(s) made to policies, practices or procedures and/or service delivery areas, what **difference was made, or will be made, for individuals**, i.e. the impact on those according to Section 75 category?

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

3b What aspect of the Equality Scheme prompted or led to the change(s)? *(tick all that apply)*

As a result of the organisation’s screening of a policy *(please give details):*

Click or tap here to enter text.

As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise *(please give details):*

Click or tap here to enter text.

As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact *(please give details):*

Click or tap here to enter text.

As a result of changes to access to information and services *(please specify and give details):*

Click or tap here to enter text.

Other *(please specify and give details):*

Click or tap here to enter text.

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Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme commitments and action plans/measures**Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)**

4 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2024-25 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Line Managers

- Promote and ensure equality of opportunity, good relations and diversity in service delivery and employment by adhering to the Council's Equal Opportunities in Employment policies and procedures and avoiding all forms of discrimination both as an employer and a service provider.
- Assist your line manager in ensuring the Council meets all statutory obligations and ensure that the highest standards of probity and good conduct are maintained at all times.

All Staff

- Contribute to Mid and East Antrim Borough Council in fulfilling all of its commitments in relation to anti-discrimination practices, its Equality Scheme and under the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2024-25 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs

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- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Throughout the 24/25 financial year, significant efforts were made to enhance equality awareness and training within our workforce. Central to these efforts was our commitment to fulfilling duties under Section 75, ensuring that equality considerations are embedded in all aspects of our operations.

Organisational Commitment: 'To ensure equality is at the forefront of all aspects of our organisation, we have established this as a core Learning and Development (L&D) requirement. Addressing equality awareness and training is part of our strategic objectives to create a diverse and inclusive working environment. This should include taking structured opportunities to ensure that equality considerations are being given appropriate recognition in policies, procedures and decision-making processes - in guidance, training or terms of reference for specific projects/events.

Face-to-Face Provision: To complement our digital strategy, we will reinstate a programme of periods of face-to-face learning, which will offer learners the opportunity to learn in a more social and group-oriented way, which is preferred by some individuals.

Budget Allocation: We are aware that this aspect is of great significance, but we have ensured that the budget allocation we received will facilitate the success of the EDI training roll-out projects.

Policy Integration: We have continued to integrate equality considerations into our policies, procedures, and decision-making processes, ensuring that equality remains at the forefront of our organisational agenda.

Despite our efforts, we encountered challenges during the reporting period, primarily related to budget constraints impacting our ability to deliver comprehensive Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) training as planned. These financial limitations posed a temporary setback in our training initiatives under the L&D framework.

To sum up, despite the obstacles presented in the 24/25 financial year, it again exhibits our responsibility of being able to stress on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion to our Council. By bringing in new Strategic Plans, more sufficient financial investment and resources and making even more effective use of Technology, we will certainly focus on being inclusive at our workplace to make every team member feel significant.

Looking ahead to the 25/26 financial year, we are fully committed to addressing these challenges and advancing our EDI agenda. Key initiatives planned include:

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Implementation of LMS: We are set to leverage our new Learning Management System (LMS) to facilitate the delivery of E-Learning, and we will be working with the Equality & Inclusion Manager to design and develop the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion training modules. This platform will enhance the accessibility and scalability of training opportunities across our workforce.

Face-to-Face Provision: Complementing our digital strategy, we will reintroduce face-to-face training sessions, providing interactive and tailored learning experiences that cater to diverse learning preferences.

Budget Allocation: Recognising the critical importance of adequate resources, we have actively worked to secure the necessary budget allocation to support the successful implementation of our EDI training initiatives.

In conclusion, while the 24/25 financial year presented challenges, it also underscored our steadfast commitment to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion within our Council. Through strategic planning, enhanced resource allocation, and leveraging technological advancements, we are poised to make significant strides in fostering an inclusive workplace culture where every individual feels valued and respected.

We look forward to the continued support and collaboration of all stakeholders as we embark on this journey towards organisational excellence in EDI.

- 6 In the 2024-25 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*

- Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- Yes, in some departments/jobs
- No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's corporate plan
- No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2024-25 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Corporate Plan 2024-2028

In striving to achieve our vision our Corporate Plan is delivered under 4 key pillars of People, Place, Planet and Performance. The aim of plan is to ensure Mid and East Antrim

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will be a safe, inclusive and welcoming Borough where diversity and cultural differences are celebrated, and communities live in peace.

People

- Work in partnership with employers and stakeholders to support those seeking employment, provide upskilling support, improve access to the labour market for those with disabilities and promote skills pathways.
- Support and deliver opportunities for our citizens to improve their physical, mental and emotional health.
- Explore ways to help vulnerable and marginalised individuals feel welcomed and supported in their local communities, removing feelings of isolation or exclusion.
- Lead by example to improve equality, accessibility and inclusion across the borough by embedding it into everything we do.
- Work alongside partners to encourage good relations, enhance community pride and reinforce a strong sense of belonging in our communities.

Place

- Enhance and expand our amenities, parks, open spaces, and build heritage, making sure they meet the needs of all, while encouraging their respectful and mindful use.

Performance

- Prioritise employee health and wellbeing, encompassing physical, mental and emotional health, creating an environment where everyone feels valued, motivated and confident, enabling them to thrive personally and professionally.

Performance Improvement Plan 2024-2025

- Our Performance and Improvement Plan sets out three objectives – People, Place and Planet.

People

- We will work with partners to improve the lives of citizens by supporting people who are vulnerable or marginalised and promoting an equal, diverse, inclusive, and accessible borough.

Place

- Enhancing our amenities, parks, and open spaces with new or improved play parks.

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2024-25 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:

9

Actions ongoing:

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5

Actions to commence:

3

Please provide any details and examples (*in addition to question 2*):

2024/2025 was Year 2 of our current Equality Action Plan (2023-2027)

Action: Hold internal Equality Diversity & Inclusion Network meetings

Progress: Quarterly meetings have taken place throughout the year and will continue indefinitely.

Action: Promote availability of information leaflets at Waste facilities detailing amenities on offers such as assistance services, braille bin collection calendars and print available in various languages.

Progress: The HRC leaflets are available, and we have a means of doing braille versions when requested.

Action: Establish, support, and develop a Council Internal Age Friendly Working Group to assess, identify and make improvement where possible in Council services.

Progress: Council's Age Friendly Internal Working Group has been established since 2023 to date and 75% of members have taken part in Age Friendly Awareness Sessions delivered by Age Friendly Co-ordinator, as well as a tailored session delivered to Museum staff in September 2024. Age Friendly self-assessment of 23 service areas has been completed and findings compiled. To maintain contact and encourage engagement, the Age Friendly Co-ordinator regularly shares relevant information and materials with Council officers. In the MEA Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan 2023-27 there is the opportunity for partnership working with Parks and Open Spaces on Walking Audits (EDI) and with Economic Development on Age Friendly business pilot.

Action: Continue to engage with special needs schools and employers to promote career opportunities, skills and activities associated with the Science Summer School.

Progress: Council launched the Primary Hospitality Programme. Each school has a partner business holding a series of activities. The Science Summer School was held in January 2025. There are further events planned until the end of May.

Action: Conduct Induction Training for all new employees:

Introduction to the Equality Scheme with appended Equality Action Plan, the Disability Action Plan, and both the Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work policies and procedures.

Progress: Induction training has been rolled out to new staff and includes a slide on Equality & Diversity, the Equality Scheme, the Disability Action Plan and Dignity & Respect at Work.

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- 8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2024-25 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

Not applicable.

- 9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2024-25 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)

- Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality
- Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way
- Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities
- Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

- 10 Following the initial notification of consultations, a targeted approach was taken – and consultation with those for whom the issue was of particular relevance: (*tick one box only*)

- All the time
- Sometimes
- Never

- 11 Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2024-25 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

Details of all of Council's consultations are heavily promoted through the usual channels such as our website, social media, and the Northern Ireland Executive webpage.

Additionally, a report flagging live Council and external consultations goes before the Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance Committee every month to ensure Elected Member input to live consultations and their approval of Council responses.

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Council also maintains a Section 75 mailing list that consists of organisations and individuals with an invested interest in Section 75 therefore all Council consultations are circulated to this list with the intention to increase participation in focus groups, face to face meetings, questionnaires and the MEA citizen survey resulting in Council gathering an equal and diverse range of viewpoints about the particular policy under consultation.

12 In the 2024-25 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: *(tick all that apply)*

- Face to face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Questionnaires
- Information by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
- Internet discussions
- Telephone consultations
- Other *(please specify)*: Click or tap here to enter text.

Please provide any details or examples of the uptake of these methods of consultation in relation to the consultees' membership of particular Section 75 categories

Our experience reflects those consultees within the category of 'people with disabilities' were keen to engage in face-to-face consultation, as were consultees within the category of 'people with dependants'. These categories of consultee were also keen to receive information by email and as such have benefitted greatly from our "Section 75 Consultee Mailing List".

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2024-25 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes

PART A

No

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

To raise awareness the reviewed Equality Scheme and appended Equality Action Plan for 2023-2027 was circulated around the Section 75 mailing list and published on Council's website.

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2024-25 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes

No

Not applicable – no commitment to review

Arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

[Equality Scheme to accompany the Disability Action Plan 2023-2027 | Mid and East Antrim Borough Council](#)

15 Please provide the **number** of policies screened during the year (*as recorded in screening reports*):

14

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2024-25:

Click or tap here to enter text. Policy consultations conducted with **screening** assessment presented.

Click or tap here to enter text. Policy consultations conducted **with an equality impact assessment** (EQIA) presented.

PART A

Click or tap here to enter text.Consultations for an **EQIA** alone.

0

- 17** Please provide details of the **main consultations** conducted on an assessment (as described above) or other matters relevant to the Section 75 duties:

Not applicable.

- 18** Were any screening decisions (or equivalent initial assessments of relevance) reviewed following concerns raised by consultees? (*tick one box only*)

Yes

No concerns were raised

No

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

During a price review of a local amenity, it was proposed to increase prices, however after consultation and feedback from the key stakeholders, this decision was reversed.

Arrangements for publishing the results of assessments (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

- 19** Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2024-25 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes

No

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

There were 3 screenings published during this reporting year; however, Council is currently coming to the end of a restructuring phase which will result in a unit specifically responsible for ensuring all screenings are published.

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Arrangements for monitoring and publishing the results of monitoring (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

- 20** From the Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements, was there an audit of existing information systems during the 2024-25 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

- Yes
- No, already taken place
- No, scheduled to take place at a later date
- Not applicable

Please provide any details:

This audit remains ongoing.

- 21** In analysing monitoring information gathered, was any action taken to change/review any policies? (*tick one box only*)

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The audit has not yet been completed, any actions arising from the audit will be addressed accordingly.

- 22** Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2024-25 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

Not applicable.

PART A

- 23** Please provide any details or examples of monitoring that has contributed to the availability of equality and good relations information/data for service delivery planning or policy development:

Council established an internal Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Network which consists of representatives across all relevant service areas. The purpose of the EDI Network is to enhance Council's cohesive approach to equality and good relations by sharing information/data and good practice with the objective of positively impacting service delivery planning and policy development.

Council also runs an Equality & Inclusion Sub-Committee which has the same objective and information is reported directly to the sub-committee from the EDI Network meetings which are held quarterly.

Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)

- 24** Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2024-25, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

The following arrangements are in place to ensure all our staff and Elected Members are aware of and understand our equality obligations.

- The Equality Scheme and the appended Equality Action Plan is available on intranet and therefore available to all staff.
- The Section 75 and disability duties have been included in induction training for all new staff.
- The ECNI training video on equality screening requirements was shown to all members of the EDI network with a Q&A session afterwards.
- Additionally, Council developed a delivered a number of training modules that include bi-monthly sessions on what is expected from staff regarding equality screening. The training looks at best practice, what not to do, and is aimed to provide staff with the tools to conduct meaningful screening exercises. All sessions have been well attended with positive feedback.

- 25** Please provide **any examples** of relevant training shown to have worked well, in that participants have achieved the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the stated objectives:

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The Learning Management System (LMS) has been built; all data has been uploaded the modules have been amended to fit the NI local government context to ensure it is fit for purpose.

A renewed awareness of JAM training has been released.

Induction training has been rolled out to new staff and includes Equality & Diversity, the Equality Scheme, the Disability Action Plan and Dignity & Respect at Work.

Public Access to Information and Services (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 6)

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2024-25, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

Not applicable.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

- 27** How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2024-25?

Insert number here: 0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

Not applicable

PART A

Section 3: Looking Forward

28 Please indicate when the Equality Scheme is due for review:

The Equality Scheme was reviewed in 2023, therefore it not due for another review until 2028.

29 Are there areas of the Equality Scheme arrangements (screening/consultation/training) your organisation anticipates will be focused upon in the next reporting period? *(please provide details)*

Yes, Council has been undergoing a restructure over the past 6 months, once complete Council will have an Inclusion & Equality Manager and a Consultation and Engagement officer who will focus on improving consultation practices, complete an audit of screenings and review the screening requirements training already in place.

30 In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

- Employment
- Goods, facilities and services
- Legislative changes
- Organisational changes/ new functions
- Nothing specific, more of the same
- Other (please state):

Click or tap here to enter text.

PART B

PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans

1. Number of action measures for this reporting period that have been:

28	9	13
Fully achieved	Partially achieved	Not achieved

2. Please outline below details on all actions that have been fully achieved in the reporting period.

2 (a) Please highlight what **public life measures** have been achieved to encourage disabled people to participate in public life at National, Regional and Local levels:

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs ⁱ	Outcomes / Impact ⁱⁱ
National ⁱⁱⁱ	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Regional ^{iv}	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Local ^v	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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2(b) What **training action measures** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Council will initiate a communications program around the benefits of JAM cards.	JAM Card awareness training continues to be promoted amongst staff.	By increasing JAM Card awareness, Council is improving the use of same which will benefit JAM Card users.
2	Conduct induction training for all new employees.	Induction training has been rolled out when required, both face-to-face and e-learning.	All new employees will be aware of Council's duties regarding disability and equality at the earliest opportunity.
3	Prepare and submit a paper demonstrating the requirement for Accessibility Audit Training for Leisure staff.	Staff across all departments have received the training.	Staff are fully equipped to assist people with disabilities gaining access to the borough's leisure centre.

2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Ensure sufficient notice of a change in the bin collection schedule	The Council website and social media accounts are updated daily with regards to the bin collection schedule.	Increased and sufficient communication of a change in the bin collection has helped positively impact those who require assistance in getting the bins out for the correct day.

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2	Raise awareness of the 'Quiet Hour' available at People's Park and launch 2 sensory experiences in People's Park and Carnfunnock Country Park.	Quiet Hour has been introduced to People's Park on Wednesdays and Sundays, with signage put on play park entrance gates and a Council website post to promote. This is also promoted at Autism Roadshows and word of mouth promoting, info sent out to local schools. Not something that can be policed but signage is up to advise all park users, this is in place. People's Park held a Sensory Experience Official Opening which was attended by pupils from Castle Tower School who enjoyed visiting the experience which was facilitated with play by Sensory Kids NI. Additionally, Carnfunnock Country Park also held a Sensory Experience Official Opening which was attended by the Mae Murray Foundation.	The increase in the availability and promotion of the quiet hour facilities those living with disabilities to equally enjoy the borough's parks.
3	Raise awareness to employers and people living with disabilities of initiatives, projects and training offered by Council, in partnership with others.	Council ran an inclusive entrepreneur event in August which included a number of speakers from the disability sector. An employer event was held in December to promote a more flexible approach to an accessible business. Council also launched the Graduate Build in partnership with Disability Action in November. The programme is aimed at supporting graduates with	Promotion of the initiatives, projects and training offered by Council will increase awareness and increase participation from people living with disabilities.

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		disabilities, who are resident in MEA, to help them find their ideal job or career. Both Graduate Build and Work Connections are recruiting now.	
4	In partnership with external organisations, maintain the social media promotion of training opportunities and events to support autistic families in the Borough	Information regarding training opportunities and events to support autistic families in the Borough are shared via social media and the Autism steering group.	Awareness raising of the events and support to autistic families in the Borough will increase the opportunity for the families to participate.
5	Ensure all major events organized are accessible and promptly communicate a change in availability.	<p>The Events team have been bringing more accessible and inclusive features to events where possible. This includes accessible Portaloos and changing places at all events where there are no facilities already.</p> <p>The next major event is the Friends Goodwill Festival which will be held on 7 and 8 June 2025. Booked Accessible Loos and two wheelchair Portaloos. On Saturday 7 June, there will be a wheelchair viewing platform. Council can't facilitate a quiet hour due to budget constraints, but we are having a quieter area which will include sensory play.</p>	By increasing accessible and inclusive features to events where possible, Council is improving access to Council events for those people living with disabilities.
6	Council will commit to advertising the location of all	Details around mobile changing places available at Council events is communicated in advance of the event	Promotion of mobile changing place's locations before the event allows people living with

PART B

	changing facilities for all corporate events		disabilities and their carers/families to plan for attendance.
7	Council to notify Section 75 consultee mailing list of any Council led consultations.	Details of all Council-led consultations have been emailed to the Section 75 mailing list.	Will increase engagement and subsequently meaningful consultation.
8	Council will send internal job vacancy advertisements out to the Section 75 mailing list.	All vacancy advertisements have been emailed to the Section 75 mailing list.	Will increase applications from those living with disabilities and who belong to the various S75 protected groups.
9	Promote availability of information leaflets at Waste facilities detailing amenities on offer such as assistance services and braille bin collection calendars.	Provision of a new leaflet. Provision of braille version of bin collection calendar upon request	Council has installed signage and used social media and press releases to promote the new leaflet. The leaflets are available, and Council has the means of doing braille version on request.
10	Publication of a schedule of accessible friendly events held by all relevant departments.	All Council run events, along with accessibility features are included on social media, general communications, and PR.	Promotion of accessible friendly events increases the opportunity for people living with disabilities to fully enjoy the events.
11	Council will strive to provide subtitles for online videos across social medial platforms and facilitate remote access to Council meetings.	It is customary practice for all videos published by Council to contain subtitles and for remote access to Council meetings where applicable.	This practice is now embedded within Council procedures, increasing participation from people living with disabilities.
12	Council will maintain and publish text only versions of all communications to enable the use of easy readers.	It is customary practice to maintain and publish text only versions of all communications.	This practice is now embedded within Council procedures, increasing participation from people living with disabilities.

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2 (d) What action measures were achieved to ‘encourage others’ to promote the two duties:

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Additional ‘Autism Friendly’ virtual or in person public sessions for businesses, Council staff or local community.	Positive meeting with the PSNI Neurodiversity Team with regards to the Train the Trainer module we are working on at the moment. PSNI are hoping to roll this out from September to December 2025 to the PSNI trainers Northern Ireland wide. This module has been signed off by the Northern Area Adult Autism Reference Group. The trainer notes are being finalised, and this should be completed by June.	By providing other organisations with the skills to promote autism awareness, Council is actively encouraging other to promote the Section 75 duties.

2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1	Deliver a programme of accessible/inclusive activities during Council’s Love Parks Week.	Number of activities delivered at Love Parks Week.	11 events delivered from Jan – March 2025 with a total of 205 attendees 6x Celtic Spring events funded by Good Relations & Bioblitz in Carnlough funded through Multiply. Normally we have a Love Parks Week but this year it is a Love Parks Summer

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			running over July and August 2025. Team meeting in April to discuss the summer programme. Sensory bags and noise cancelling headphones have been ordered for leaders to take out to events to ensure we are Autism-Friendly.
2	Expand MEAqua Little Stars Pan Disability swim lessons (5-9 years) to all 3 leisure centres within the Borough and increase the number of classes.	Additional classes introduced in Carrickfergus and Larne. An additional member of staff gained who has a Disability Swimming Coach Qualification.	Implementation of classes at further locations will increase opportunity for children living with disabilities to take part in swimming lessons.
3	Develop and deliver a range of inclusive sport and physical activity programmes and events, to increase the skills, knowledge and confidence of people with a disability.	MEActive coaches have been made permanent within the Leisure structure. 33 referrals made to the Move More programme with 36 existing referrals. MEActive coaches have delivered activity sessions to 3398 people with disability/lifelong illness. The delivery model for the Move More programme has been reviewed, and a more efficient model will operate 2025/26.	Stability in staff will ensure continuity of the inclusive sports and physical activity programmes. Furthermore, the efficiencies implemented will increase opportunity for people living with disabilities and/or long-term health issues to take part in sport and physical activity programmes.
4	Establish and integrate Get Out Get Active (GOGA) initiatives into existing MEActive structure	All previous GOGA initiatives have been integrated into the MEActive Programme.	The continued outreach engagement has ensured that hard-to-reach groups and underrepresented

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		<p>MEActive coaches continue to deliver 50+ classes.</p> <p>Continued outreach engagement with community groups in community settings ensures that those who are underrepresented have the opportunity to Get Out and Get Active.</p>	<p>residents have an equal opportunity to access the GOGA initiatives.</p>
5	<p>Continue to develop and deliver PAN Disability Junior and Adult clubs in all 3 leisure centres within the Borough.</p>	<p>Continued delivery of PAN Disability clubs across all our Leisure Centres.</p> <p>Continued delivery of these groups – Adult group delivered in Larne Leisure Centre.</p>	<p>Continuation of the PAN Disability junior and adult clubs across the Borough will increase opportunity for children and adults living with disabilities to take part in PAN disability.</p>
6	<p>Facilitate information gathering sessions between town centre businesses and with various charities.</p>	<p>Council had Pop-up shops in the 3 Town Centres. From March 24-March 25 there were 38 community groups/charities that availed of this opportunity using the shops as information hubs and facilitating workshops for community outreach. Pop-up shops have now ended.</p>	<p>By facilitating information gathering sessions Council can gain an insight into the issues experienced by town centre business and charities. This insight will enable Council to implement improvements that suit the needs to key stakeholders.</p>
7	<p>Council to hold town centre events that are inclusive and accessible for all.</p>	<p>Council has continued to hold inclusive events for all including summer events, monthly markets in Carrickfergus, Halloween and Christmas events. Recently during half term council held a teddy bear hospital, Lego animation workshop and a silent disco which included a relaxed session. Events have been planned throughout this year.</p>	<p>Ensuring that all events are inclusive and accessible for all encourages more participation from those people living with disabilities.</p>

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8	Continue to work with a range of organisations as the Procuring Authority to improve access to employability.	Council continues to work actively with a range of disability organisations to raise awareness to employers and people living with disabilities of initiatives offered by Council in partnership with others. Examples include NOW and Disability action as well as Triangle supporting.	Council's role as the procuring authority will improve access to employability by those people living with disabilities.
9	Continue to engage with special needs schools and employers to promote career opportunities, skills and activities associated with the Science Summer School.	Council launched the Primary Hospitality Programme. Each school has a partner business holding a series of activities. The Science Summer School was held in January 2025. There are further events planned until the end of May.	Continued engagement with special needs schools raises awareness of career opportunities.
10	Council will continue to deliver the commitments of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland Mental Health Charter.	The Wellbeing Officer continues to offer support to Staff through a team of Mental Health Champions who have completed the Mental Health First Aid course.	Continued delivery of the commitments of the ECNI Mental Health Charter enforces Council commitment to the mental health of staff.
11	Continued implementation of screening requirements in relation to new and amended policies.	Training sessions have taken place throughout the reporting year and will continue on a bi-monthly basis into Year 3.	Increase in staff equipped to carry out meaningful screening exercises.
12	Hold Internal Officers Network meetings.	Quarterly meetings have taken place throughout the year and will continue indefinitely.	A one-Council approach to EDI matters.

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3. Please outline what action measures have been **partly achieved** as follows:

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	Commit to standardising policy around extra capacity waste and assisted lifts.	Full screening has been completed, and this will go to May's committee meeting.		This action measure was achieved in May 2025.
2	Use stakeholder engagement to evidence a report around increasing accessibility in parks and open spaces.	Completion of the report is ongoing. The Age Friendly co-ordinator will assist with the stakeholder engagement piece.		This action has been carried forward to Year 3.
3	Promote and re-establish Inclusive Bike Hire sessions in Carrick and Larne	Inclusive bike hire sessions were delivered as part of the MEActive Summer Programme 2024, however, at the moment there is no access to funding for this programme.		Lack of funding.
4	Review the Labour Market Partnership (LMP) Action Plan to consider future Council work experience placements for people living with disabilities.	The Partnership delivers a range of programmes to help our residents gain the work-ready skills, experience or qualifications needed to move into employment or to a better job. The		External delays

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		Action Plan is currently under review for 24/25.		
5	The continued rollout of 'Just A Minute' (JAM) Awareness Training to Council staff	Training is ongoing; however, Council has not yet met the target number for trained staff.		Staff uptake. Further promotion is planned for Year 3.
6	Manage and monitor development of an accessible Corporate Council website and ensure compliance with Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018	Council have sourced a new supplier and are waiting on finalisation.		External delays
7	Roll out of Tourism Access for All booking scheme onto MEA Website.	This is progressing and has been put forward as a KPI for the new financial year.		External delays
8	Develop Tourism Access for All Scheme to have 150 members	Work is ongoing on this action.		Dependant on completion of action 7 above.
9	Facilitate a skills development program for tourism businesses, including one business which facilitates tours for disabled people	The team is currently developing an accessibility program to support businesses to become accessible.		Unexpected delays. The action has been carried forward to Year 3.

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4. Please outline what action measures **have not been achieved** and the reasons why.

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	Commit to pursue relevant external funding to address the issue of disability access and facilities in older buildings from the Access & Inclusion Fund.	There was no funding opportunity this year. Officers will continue to look for this type of opportunity.
2	Dementia Action Week recognised and publicised each year to raise awareness of dementia and local support services.	Currently due to staff shortages there is a gap in this service.
3	Council will commit to ongoing meetings of the Dementia Steering Group which will ensure the Borough remains dementia friendly.	Currently due to staff shortages there is a gap in this service.
4	The Dementia Steering Group to ensure training targets are delivered.	Currently due to staff shortages there is a gap in this service.
5	Council will commit to consider access assistance applications during town centre development disruption.	Currently there are no plans for public realm work, this action will be fulfilled when disruption is planned in the town centre.
6	Council will work with alternative methods of communication such as the Talking Newsletter where appropriate.	No further progress, Council will revisit when positions have been filled in the restructure of the directorate.
7	Create and maintain a database of images to increase visibility of people with disabilities in all Council material.	Staff shortages and directorate restructuring has delayed this action; however, it will be reviewed once the restructure is complete, and positions are filled.
8	Council will publish case studies to promote service area roles and work completed by each department.	Due to the current restructure, there has not been any progress of this action.
9	Scope out merits of purchasing a website content management system to support Council to meet the Accessibility Regulations 2018 for Public Sector Bodies.	This action is dependent on the upload of the new accessible website which has been delayed.
10	Deliver three accessible theatre performances.	Unable to deliver any accessible performances in 24/25 in terms of sign, captions or audio descriptions. Overall, we had fewer performances in 24/25 due to cost increases.

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11	Provide equality and disability training for elected members and all Council staff.	This action will be taken forward as the posts are filled under the directorate restructure.
12	Prepare and submit a paper to review the recruitment and selection policy to become more inclusive.	The Local Government Staff Commission have not yet circulated their updated Code of Procedures. This document will form a key aspect of any wider review of Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy. It remains our commitment to update the policy once the Code has been finalised.
13	Work with the Local Government Equality and Diversity Group to establish a baseline on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Northern Ireland local government.	Council can only achieve this action once the Local Government Equality and Diversity Group establish a baseline.

5. What **monitoring tools** have been put in place to evaluate the degree to which actions have been effective / develop new opportunities for action?

(a) Qualitative

All actions are monitored within the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Network which meets quarterly. The updates provided by key members of staff include both qualitative and quantitative evaluations.

(b) Quantitative

All actions are monitored within the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Network which meets quarterly. The updates provided by key members of staff include both qualitative and quantitative evaluations.

6. As a result of monitoring progress against actions has your organisation either:

- made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or
- taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were **not outlined in your original** disability action plan / any other changes?

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No.

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1	Not applicable.		
2			
3			
4			
5			

7. Do you intend to make any further **revisions to your plan** in light of your organisation’s annual review of the plan? If so, please outline proposed changes?

No.

ⁱ **Outputs** – defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g. Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level.

ⁱⁱ **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.

ⁱⁱⁱ **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments

^{iv} **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

^v **Local** : Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.



A Guide to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 for Public Authorities
(Revised) April 2018

Appendix 2 - Template for Information to be Compiled

Information to be compiled by Public Authorities under Section 3(1)(a) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

(To be completed and included in public authorities' own annual reports and submitted to DAERA for inclusion in the Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report).

Name of Public Authority:

Reporting Period: April 20 to March 20

The following information should be compiled in respect of each policy, strategy and plan which has been developed, adopted, implemented or revised and each public service which has been designed or delivered by the public authority during the reporting period.

<i>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016¹.</i>	<i>The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to².</i>	<i>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service³.</i>
Science Summer School Initiative 2024/2025	Education	This is an activity being carried out with pupils within MEA Borough. The activities will not have any impact on people in rural areas. The schools already have in place mitigation measures to facilitate the participation of young people from rural areas, e.g., bus services.
STEM Interventions Program (April – Sept 2024)	Education	This is an activity being carried out with pupils within MEA. The activities will not have any impact on people in rural areas.

NOTES

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		<p>As the program is being delivered in schools, the schools already have in place mitigation measures to facilitate the participation of young people from rural areas, for example bus services, etc. All post primary schools in MEA invited to participate will receive workshops in school.</p> <p>In the cases of workshops being delivered at the Braid and Larne Leisure Centre, transport will be provided for the school and the events will be completed on time to allow pupils to return to school on time to get the school bus home.</p>
<p>Policy and Procedures for the Provision & Management of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)</p>	<p>Health / Social Care</p>	<p>Mid and East Antrim Council (Council) is committed to working with partners to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for its population, and to reducing health inequalities. It has developed this policy to support actions within the Community Plan and to take forward implementation of the Community Resuscitation Strategy for Northern Ireland within the borough using a multi-agency partnership approach. This policy is not likely to impact people in rural areas more or less than people of urban areas.</p>
<p>Change of delivery model for Physical Activity for those MEA Citizens living with cancer</p>	<p>Health</p>	<p>The aim of this delivery model change is to ensure not only a continuity of service to those living with Cancer but to have a more effective and efficient service by</p>

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		<p>having more staff trained and able to deliver physical activity to those living with Cancer.</p> <p>The change in the service delivery model for Physical Activity for those living with Cancer is not likely to impact people in rural areas more or less than people in urban areas.</p>
Indoor Leisure Pricing Review 2025/2026	Health	<p>The Indoor Leisure Pricing sets out the framework of pricing structure and concession pricing for council owned and directly managed leisure Centre facilities within the context of the overarching corporate principles set out in the Corporate Pricing Policy Framework.</p> <p>This policy reviews the indoor leisure pricing policy for 2025/2026 which will apply equally to both rural and urban service users, therefore, no specific rural needs were identified.</p>
MEAqua Development Plan 2024-2027	Health	<p>The aims of the MEAqua Academy Development Plan are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth and Retention • Programme Development • Workforce Development • Raising Standards <p>This MEAqua Policy 2024 27 will implement measures</p>

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		<p>to improve the service equally to both rural and urban service users, therefore, no specific rural needs were identified.</p>
<p>Performance Improvement Plan 2024/25</p>	<p>Business Tourism Jobs / Employment Education / Training Broadband / mobile communication Transport services / Infrastructure Health or Social Care Poverty Deprivation Crime / Community Safety Development</p>	<p>Our Improvement Objectives for 2024/25 relate to improving our functions and services, and include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. People: We will work with partners to improve the lives of citizens. 2. Place: We will maintain and improve our local areas. 3. Planet: We will reduce our environmental impact and improve sustainability. <p>The plan outlines Council's priorities for improvement throughout the Borough.</p> <p>Place: We will maintain and improve our local areas – Improvements to playparks (Clough), improved provision for outdoor recreation (Carnfunnock Country Park, Phase 1 of the Cullybackey to Galgorm Greenway, and Carnlough, Glynn and Portglenone MUGA's/kickabouts), and the Neighbourhood Tourism Scheme (participants may be rural).</p> <p>Planet: We will reduce our environmental impact and</p>

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		<p>improve sustainability – Up to 4000 trees may be planted in rural areas, and environmental community engagement sessions are tailored to the receiving community group, which can have a rural or urban focus.</p>
<p>Corporate Plan 2024-2028</p>	<p>Business Tourism Jobs / Employment Education / Training Broadband / mobile communication Poverty Deprivation Rural Crime / Community Safety Rural Development</p>	<p>The Corporate Plan steers our strategic direction, shapes our services, and sets the performance targets against which we will measure our success.</p> <p>As this is a high-level strategic plan there are no objectives that will directly impact rural communities, however there are some which may indirectly impact rural communities.</p> <p>By achieving objectives that have been set, people in rural communities may be positively impacted although they may not have been specifically targeted.</p>
<p>Development of a Tourism, Arts and Culture Interim Plan for 2024-2027</p>	<p>Rural Business Rural Tourism Jobs / Employment</p>	<p>Mid and East Antrim Borough Council want to grow and develop a thriving Tourism, Arts and Culture offering for the benefit of citizens, businesses, and visitors alike. To create opportunities for learning and experiences that enrich the lives of those who live here, work here and visit here.</p>

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		<p>The Tourism, Arts and Culture Interim Plan Core Focus and Product Development have been outlined as below, the impact that this will have once delivered will be positive and beneficial to people in rural areas. Increasing visitor numbers and in turn, visitor spending will benefit the local economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm Welcomes - World-class welcome and skills development across the Borough. This focuses on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Neighbourhood tourism and Visitor Information Centre services. Development of Neighbourhood Visitor Information Points for Broughshane, Cullybackey, Gracehill and Portglenone, Carnlough and Whitehead. <p>Innovative Stories & Attractions - Focus on culture, people and place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This focuses on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development of talks, tours and trails that bring destinations to life ○ Improvement of wayfinding signage and interpretation at key locations • Includes development of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gracehill Village UNESCO Experience ○ Whitehead / Islandmagee Experience Hub ○ Glenarm / Carnlough Experience Hub

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		<p>Landscapes & Nature - Immersive and authentic experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This focuses on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Infrastructure improvements – easy to visit ○ Walking trails and route planners ○ Itineraries • To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Causeway Coastal Route ○ Slemish Mountain ○ Sallagh Braes ○ Cranny Falls ○ Gleno Waterfall ○ Antrim Appalachian Trail <p>Active Outdoors - Promotion of existing outdoor product and development of new assets and lesser-known locations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This focuses on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Forests, parks and gardens ○ Walking trails ○ Water based activities ○ Marinas ○ Camping & caravanning ○ Unique accommodation • Key focus includes:

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Carnfunnock Country Park ○ Portglenone Marina & Forest ○ Carrickfergus Marina & Cycle Path ○ Glenarm Castle, Village & Marina <p>Heritage & Tradition - Immersive experiences that tell our story and tales of the past.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This focuses on; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Festivals and Events ○ Ulster Scots connections ○ Military connections ○ Faith tourism - Church access, talks and tours ○ DNA tourism – genealogy, historical records ○ Food and drink – markets, craft fairs, local produce, food traditions ● Key focus includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Arthur Cottage, Cullybackey ○ Andrew Jackson Cottage & US Rangers Museum, Carrickfergus ○ Food Product Development <p>Culture Venues & Landmarks - Places of interest, things to see and do.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This focuses on; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enhanced visitor experiences ○ Animation

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Festivals and events ● Key focus includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gracehill Village UNESCO Experience ○ Whitehead Lighthouse ○ Slemish - St Patrick's Trail and Visitor Experience
Dry Recycling Waste Harmonisation Service	Agri-Environment	<p>The purpose of this project is to introduce a standardised comingled household dry recycling service to all householders within the Mid and East Antrim Borough.</p> <p>This is a standardised comingled dry recycling collection service with the aim of providing a simpler recycling model for the residents of the Borough. An identical service will be implemented to rural and urban domestic properties within the Borough.</p>
Tree Strategy	Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizes that well planted, managed and enhanced tree and woodland cover can deliver vital environmental, social and economic benefits now and into the future • Increase tree cover within the borough, appropriate to people and places • Maximise the benefits of trees to people

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise the holistic benefits of trees, e.g. nature recovery, lower urban temperatures, flood protection • Standardise tree management practices across the borough • Provide opportunities for residents to get involved with trees and woodland within the borough <p>Rural areas will benefit from tree planting in appropriate places, tree maintenance for health and safety and community engagement around trees and woodland. Any increased tree cover will have a positive impact on both rural and urban areas where appropriate.</p> <p>The strategy will further develop the opportunities for both urban and rural communities to get involved in tree planting initiatives, enjoy improved air quality or where applicable experience additional access to woodland areas.</p>

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Council/Committee:	Corporate, Resources, Policy & Governance Committee
Date:	16 June 2025
Report Title:	Title Rectification at Sunnylands, Carrickfergus
Publication Status:	Open
Author:	Cathy Grant, Acting Corporate Solicitor
Approver:	Sarah Williams, Assistant Director - Business Support

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this Report is to seek approval from Elected Members to rectify title at Sunnylands, Carrickfergus.

2. Background

- 2.1. Council leases lands at Sunnylands from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) by virtue of a Lease dated 04 September 2013, and these lands are registered to Council in Land Registry. The lands comprise a community centre, car parking, play park, a community garden, and open green space. The leased lands are shaded green on map in Appendix.
- 2.2. Council's Legal Services department recently came upon an original deed dated 26 January 1978 between NIHE and the legacy Carrickfergus Borough Council conveying the freehold interest in lands to Council as shown outlined in red on the map in the Appendix. It would appear that when the lease was being prepared in 2013, neither the solicitor acting for Council nor NIHE's solicitor were aware of the existence of this 1978 deed. The lands in the 1978 deed now form part of the car park associated with the community centre.
- 2.3. NIHE's freehold interest in lands in this vicinity is now registered in Land Registry and this includes the lands which were conveyed to Council in the 1978 deed.

3. Key Issues for Consideration

- 3.1. Legal Services contacted NIHE to ascertain if they would be agreeable to rectify the situation.
- 3.2. This would necessitate effecting deeds to exclude the lands outlined in red in the map in the Appendix from the 2013 Lease, given that Council was conveyed the freehold interest in this land in 1978.
- 3.3. NIHE's freehold interest in the lands outlined in red in the map in the Appendix would also need to be removed in Land Registry records, and Council's freehold interest in the said lands duly registered in Land Registry.

- 3.4. NIHE is agreeable to execute the relevant deed/s to rectify the title situation at Sunnylands, Carrickfergus.

4. General Considerations / Implications

- 4.1. Financial implications: there will be no cost to Council other than Land Registry's rectification fee.
- 4.2. Human resources: this matter will be progressed by Legal Services.
- 4.3. Equality Screening: N/A
- 4.4. Assets: the execution of appropriate deed/s will perfect Council's title to this asset.
- 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 rectifying the title situation at Sunnylands, Carrickfergus.

6. Recommendation or Decision

- 6.1. Elected Members are asked to -
 - (i) agree to rectify the title position with NIHE in respect of lands at Sunnylands, Carrickfergus; and
 - (ii) authorise the Mayor and Chief Executive to execute the relevant deeds.

7. Appendices / Links

- Appendix: Map showing lands within 2013 Lease (shaded green), and lands within 1978 deed (outlined in red).



Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
 Lands at Sunnylands, Carrickfergus



- Boundary
- Lease to Council

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Council/Committee:	Corporate Resources Policy & Governance
Date:	16 June 2025
Report Title:	Update on National Pay Award
Publication Status:	Open
Author:	Denise Stevenson, HR & OD Manager
Approver:	Laureen Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate Services

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to update Members on the 2025-26 Pay Award negotiations in respect of:
- Staff covered under the National Joint Council (NJC) remit
 - Chief Officers
 - Chief Executives

2. Background

- 2.1. On 4 February 2025, the Trade Union side of the National Joint Council for Local Government Services submitted the NJC Pay Claim 2025-26 as follows:
- An increase of at least £3,000 across all NJC spinal column points
 - In addition to the pay claim, they also submitted the following:
 - A clear plan to reach a minimum pay rate of £15 an hour
 - One extra day of annual leave for all staff
 - A reduction in the working week by two hours, with no loss of pay
 - The ability for school staff to take [at least] one day of their annual leave during term time, with no loss of pay
- 2.2. The National Employers made pay offers to each negotiating body on 22 April 2025.
- 2.3. The offer for a) staff covered under the National Joint Council was as follows:
- With effect from 1 April 2025, an increase of 3.20 per cent to be paid as a consolidated, permanent addition on all NJC pay points 2 to 43 inclusive and on all pay points above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer.

- With effect from 1 April 2025 an increase of 3.20 per cent on all allowances
 - With effect from 1 April 2026, the deletion of pay point 2 from the NJC pay spine
- 2.4. The offer for JNC Chief Officers (For Mid and East Antrim Borough Council this is for all Directors) was as follows:
- With effect from 1 April 2025, an increase of 3.20% on basic salary
- 2.5. The offer for Chief Executives was as follows:
- With effect from 1 April 2025, an increase of 3.20% on basic salary

3. Key Issues for Consideration

- 3.1. NJC
- It should be noted that the proposal to remove pay point 2 will have no impact on the Council as the starting SCP is pay point 3.
 - Each union has confirmed that they are running consultative ballot between May 2025 and June 2025 with a recommendation to reject the pay offer.
- 3.2. Chief Officers – GMB will consult without a recommendation, (i.e. neutral).
- 3.3. Chief Executive – ALACE has welcomed the offer but will not settle until the NJC pay deal has been agreed.
- 3.4. A further update from the National Employers is expected following the results of each ballot.

4. General Considerations / Implications

- 4.1. Financial – Finance budgeted 2.8% for Pay Award in rate setting for FY25/26. However, to bridge the gap, £335k has been set aside from the 2024/25 underspend, to allow for a higher pay award for 2025/26. It should be noted that this will create a baseline pressure for 2026/27 as the uplift from 2.8% to the higher amount will need to be carried forward to rate setting for FY26/27 before factoring in any further increases.
- 4.2. HR will continue to update members with any further information regarding the NJC Pay Award 2025-26.
- 4.3. Equality Screening – N/A

4.4. Assets – N/A

4.5. Alignment with Corporate Priorities and Link to Corporate Plan
Rural Proofing and Environmental Impact – N/A

5. Recommendation or Decision

5.1. It is recommended that members note the content of this report.

6. Appendices / Links

Appendix 1 - Joint Trade Union Side NJC Pay Claim 2025-26

Appendix 2 - National Employers Circular for NJC Pay Offer 2025-26

Appendix 3 - National Employers Circular for Chief Officer Pay Offer 2025-26

Appendix 4 - National Employers Circular for Chief Executive Pay Offer 2025-26



**Trade Union Side of the National Joint Council for Local Government Services:
England, Wales and Northern Ireland**

NJC PAY CLAIM 2025-26

This NJC pay claim for 2025-26 is made by the Joint Trade Union Side (UNISON, GMB and UNITE) to the NJC National Employers.

Our claim is for:

- An increase of at least £3,000 across all NJC spinal column points

In addition:

- A clear plan to reach a minimum pay rate of £15 an hour
- One extra day of annual leave for all staff
- A reduction in the working week by two hours, with no loss of pay
- The ability for school staff to take [at least] one day of their annual leave during term time, with no loss of pay

31 JAN 2025

CONTENTS

- 1. KEY POINTS IN OUR CLAIM
- 2. CONTEXT OF OUR CLAIM
- 3. ECONOMIC BACKGROUND
- 4. COMPARING NJC PAY
- 5. ACHIEVING A £15 PER HOUR MINIMUM RATE
- 6. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION CRISIS
- 7. PAY-RELATED CONDITIONS OF WORK
- 8. EQUALITY IMPACT
- 9. CONCLUSION

1. KEY POINTS IN OUR CLAIM

ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

- **Cost of Living Crisis:** Household costs, including mortgage interest, energy bills, and childcare, have significantly outpaced NJC pay increases
- **Real Wage Decline:** NJC staff have lost approximately 25% of their pay's value since 2010
- **Debt and Financial Strain:** Many NJC workers rely on credit cards and loans to make pay household bills and make ends meet
- **Government Savings:** Increasing local government pay would result in significant savings for central government through higher tax receipts and reduced benefit expenditure.

COMPARING NJC PAY

- **Private vs. Public Sector Pay:** Pay settlements in the private sector have generally outpaced those in the public sector since 2010.
- **National Minimum Wage:** The NJC pay spine is close to the new statutory minimum wage, highlighting the need for significant pay increases.

ACHIEVING A £15 PER HOUR MINIMUM RATE

- **£15 p/h is fast becoming a necessity:** Inflation and cost of living rises have made calls for a £15 per hour minimum rate stronger than ever
- **In-work poverty:** £15 p/h would lift the lowest paid NJC workers out of in-work poverty
- **Achieving £15 p/h for the NJC:** The 2025-26 NJC pay claim would lift SCP2 to £13.82. A subsequent pay award of the same value would lift SPC2 to £15 p/h by 2026
- **The TU side asks national employers:** to prioritise a route to achieve a £15 per hour minimum for the NJC, as quickly as possible.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION CRISIS

- **Shrinking LG workforce is a long term trend:** The County Councils Network (CCN) Survey reveals that the number of employees in England's councils has reduced by 552,000 (31.5%) since 2012
- **Unemployment:** Remains low nationally at just over 4%, through to October 2024 – lower than at almost any point in the last 40 years
- **Solving the Recruitment and Retention Crisis:** Low pay is routinely given as the reason for leaving – a boost to NJC pay would help to prevent further loss of staff, in addition, better training and clear career pathways would help to retain younger employees

PAY-RELATED CONDITIONS OF WORK

- **A clear plan to reach a minimum pay rate of £15 an hour**
- **One extra day of annual leave for all staff**
- **A reduction in the working week by two hours, with no loss of pay**
- **The ability for school staff to take [at least] one day of their annual leave during term time, with no loss of pay**

EQUALITY IMPACT

- **Gender Pay Gap:** Women in English local authorities were paid 3.5 per cent less than men according to mean pay and 1.7 per cent less than men according to median pay.
- **Ageing workforce:** Local government has an ageing workforce and in certain key professions this is reaching a crisis point

2. CONTEXT OF OUR CLAIM

NJC staff have lost (on average) 25% from the value of their pay since 2010. This long term decline has been compounded by more recent economic events, including the latest Cost of Living Crisis.

Over the course of 2024, our members in local government have seen their household costs, including mortgage repayments, energy bills, and childcare, significantly outpace NJC pay increases.

The bottom end of the NJC pay spine is close to the new statutory minimum wage, highlighting the need for significant pay increases – to reverse this trend and to recover years of lost value in local government workers' pay.

Employers have also felt the effects of this decline - the County Councils Network survey, published in 2024, reveals that the number of employees in England's councils has reduced by 552,000 (31.5%) since 2012 and low pay is routinely given as a key reason for staff leaving. Meanwhile, nationally unemployment remains lower than at almost any point in the last 40 years. With a vibrant jobs market, overworked and underpaid local government staff are being lured away to better paying, less demanding jobs.

While an overall pay boost is needed for the whole pay spine, it is lower paid staff who have felt the worst impact of the cost of living crisis, with many driven into significant personal debt just to make ends meet. **This is why the TU side are renewing our calls to deliver a £15 per hour minimum rate in the NJC as soon as possible.**

It is encouraging that the new government has recognised the issue of local government funding as a key factor in restoring our broken public services and encouraging growth within local economies and communities. Proposals to move towards multi-year funding settlements for local government will bring more stability and certainty to local authorities.

The importance of the national funding settlement for local government is demonstrated clearly in our commissioned research, showing that around half the cost of this pay claim would actually be recouped by central government. With the new government's focus on local government funding, the TU side feels that now is the right time for the employers to join us in making the case directly to government for more central funding to support better services and a fully funded pay award.

Our headline claim for an increase of at least £3,000 on all spinal column points would begin to restore over a decade of lost value in NJC pay. Our headline claim is supported by some additional conditions:

- **One extra day of annual leave for all staff**
- **Reduction in the working week by two hours**
- **The ability for school staff to take [at least] one day of their annual leave during term time**

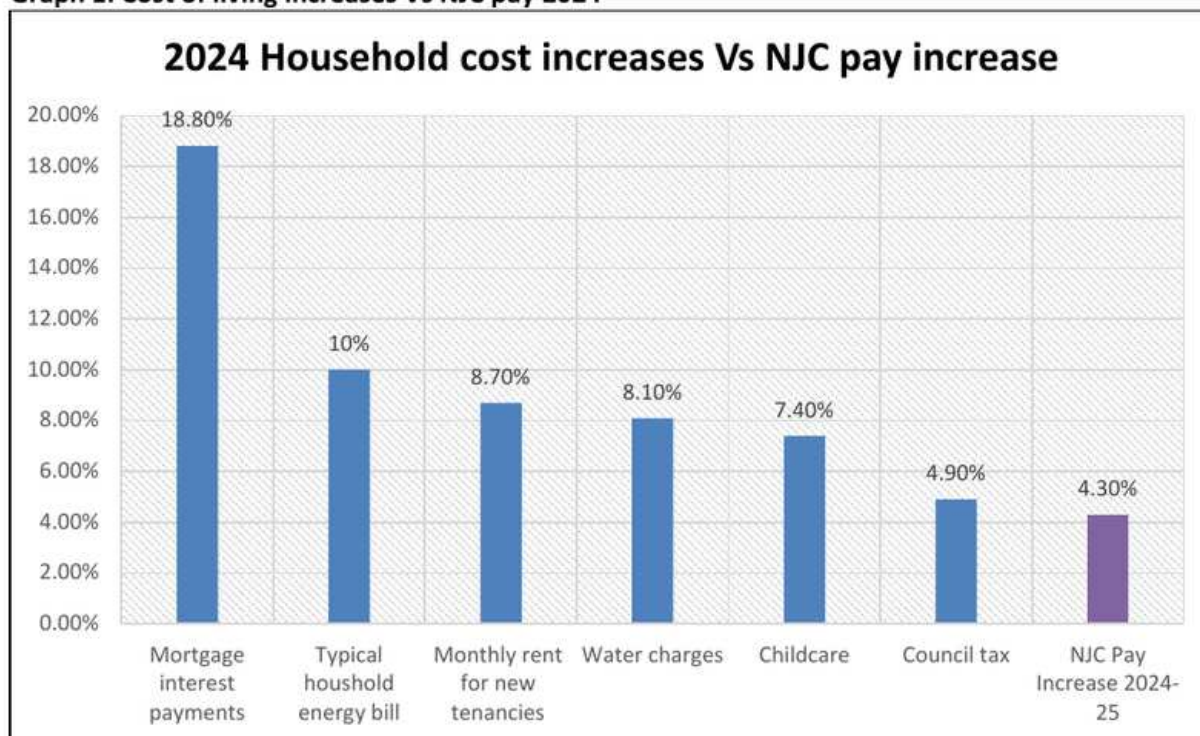
The TU Side believes our headline claim is fair and appropriate - and we expect meaningful negotiations on our claim.

3. ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

3.1 Cost of living crisis continues

Over 2024, household costs continued to overtake NJC pay increases for the same period. Mortgage interest payments led the way, jumping by 18.8% over the past year¹, followed by the typical household electricity and gas bill, which rose almost 10%. Water charges increased by 8.1% and the average cost of a part time (25 hours a week) childcare place for a child under two in a nursery rose by 7.4% to £7,569 per year (for a two-year-old that cost has jumped 6.2%)². Council tax rose by 4.9%. Over the same period, NJC pay rose only 4.3% (on average, across all spinal column points), as shown in the graph below:

Graph 1: Cost of living increases Vs NJC pay 2024



These increases have left many NJC workers reliant on credit cards and loans to make ends meet – incurring debt that is carried forward month to month. Despite inflation rates returning to more conventional levels, this debt burden is one of the many reasons (along with historic loss in value) why NJC pay needs to rise above inflation.

3.2 Value of NJC pay

When measured against the overall rise in inflation since 2009/10, NJC staff are losing out. On average, staff have lost approximately 25% from the value of their pay since 2010.

When analysed by job role, even those on lower incomes (who have benefited from bottom loading in some pay awards), are worse off than they were in 2009/10.

¹ Office for National Statistics, Private Rent and House Prices UK, November 2024

² Coram Family and Childcare Survey, March 2024

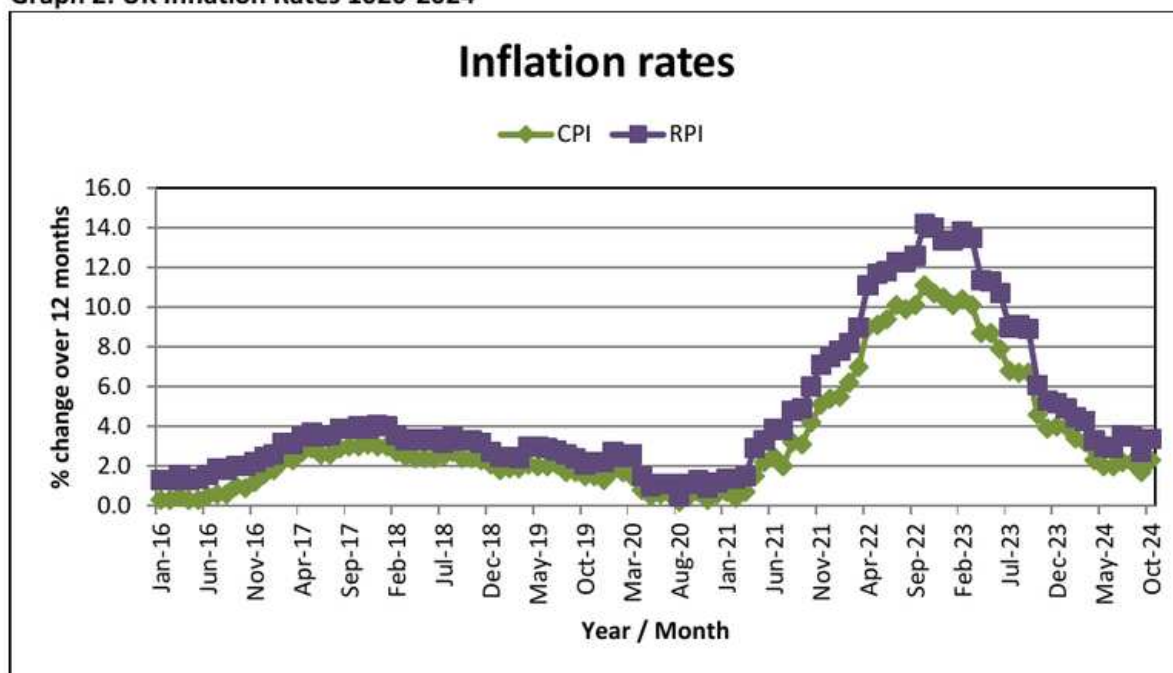
Table 1: Real (RPI) changes to selected spine points 2009/10 to 2023/24

Real (RPI) changes to selected spine points 2009/10 to 2024/25					
Occupation	Old Spine Point	2009/10	2024/25	New Spine Point	Real change (%)
Cleaner	6	£12,489	£23,656	2	-4.80
Customer Services Officer	11	£14,733	£24,027	3	-13.4
Refuse And Recycling Collector	13	£15,444	£24,404	4	-16.1
Library Assistant	16	£16,440	£25,183	6	-18.7
Teaching Assistant (Level 2)	17	£16,830	£25,183	6	-20.6
Crematorium Officer	18	£17,161	£25,584	7	-20.9
Qualified Residential Care Worker	21	£19,126	£27,269	11	-24.3
HLTA	28	£23,708	£32,654	22	-26.9
Librarian	31	£26,276	£35,235	25	-28.8
Environmental Health Officer	34	£28,636	£37,938	28	-29.7
Access to Housing Officer	38	£31,754	£41,511	32	-30.6
Social Worker	36	£30,011	£39,513	30	-30.1
Accountant	41	£34,549	£44,711	35	-31.3
Children's Residential Manager	46	£38,961	£49,764	40	-32.2

3.2 Falling value in NJC Pay

Inflation exploded over 2021 and into 2022, hitting the highest rates seen across the economy in four decades. Over most of 2023 and into 2024, rates were in decline and by August 2024 the RPI rate stood at 3.4% and the CPI rate at 2.3%.

Graph 2: UK Inflation Rates 1026-2024³



³ Office for National Statistics, UK Consumer Price Inflation: November 2024

Between the start of 2010 and the end of 2024, the cost of living, as measured by the Retail Prices Index, rose by 57.6%. Over the same period, NJC pay rose by 21.2%.

3.3 Impact on real wages

Recent years have seen the steepest rises in the cost of living facing workers in over 40 years - 11.6% in 2022 and 9.7% in 2023⁴. This has accelerated the decline in the value of NJC pay.

NJC workers have seen a decline in their wages of 25% since 2010, which means that 2024 wages are worth approximately £12,000 less than in 2010.

Table 2: NJC Pay Awards Vs Rise in cost of living (RPI)⁵

Year	Annual Growth in RPI	NJC Pay Award
2010	4.6%	0.0%
2011	5.2%	0.0%
2012	3.2%	0.0%
2013	3.0%	1.0%
2014	2.4%	1.1%
2015	1.0%	1.1%
2016	1.8%	1%*
2017	3.6%	1%*
2018	3.3%	2%*
2019	2.6%	2%*
2020	1.5%	2.8%
2021	4.1%	1.8%
2022	11.6%	7.0%
2023	9.7%	6.4%
2024	4.3%	3.6%

3.4 Main factors affecting inflation

The changes in the price of components of the Retail Prices Index over the year to October 2024 are shown in the table below.

Table 3: Price changes to RPI commodities over the year to Oct 2024

Item	Average % increase to October 2024
Personal expenditure	4.9
Alcohol and tobacco	4.8
Housing and household expenditure	4.2
Food and catering	2.8
Consumer durables	2.2
Travel and leisure	1.4
All goods	1.0
All services	5.0
All items	3.4

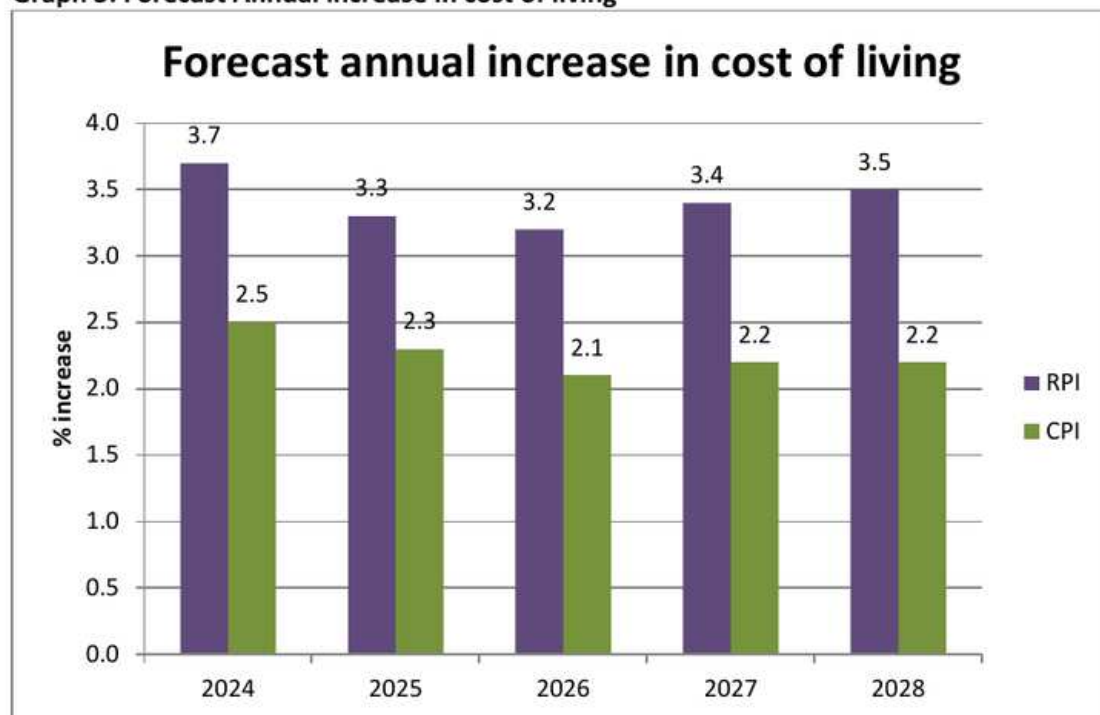
⁴ Office for National Statistics, UK Consumer Price Inflation: December 2024

⁵ Incomes Data Research, 2024

3.5 Forecast inflation rates

The Treasury average of independent forecasts states that RPI inflation will average 3.3% over 2025 and then remain around that level over subsequent years, as per the pattern shown in the graph below. These annual rates show the rate at which pay rises would be needed for wages just to maintain their current value.

Graph 3: Forecast Annual increase in cost of living⁶



3.6 Economic benefits of increasing local government pay

Research conducted by Landman Economics finds that the gross cost to local government of meeting the 2025/26 NJC pay claim for local government workers is £1,830m in total. This includes £1,592m in salary costs, plus an additional cost of £239m in higher employer NICs.

Central government receives the £239m in higher employer NICs. Central government also benefits from additional receipts of employee NICs (£118m) and income tax (£349m) as well as reduced benefit, tax credit and Universal Credit expenditure (£62m). In total, central government saves £769m.

The net cost to the public sector as a whole (both local and central government) would be £1,062m. If indirect taxation is then factored in, central government recoups a further £170m, reducing the net cost to £892m. In total, just over half (51%) of the cost to local government of meeting the pay claim accrues to central government.

⁶ HM Treasury Forecasts for the UK Economy, November 2024

Table 4: Cost of meeting the 2024/25 NJC pay Cost/Saving⁷

	Cost/Saving
Gross cost to local government	£1,592m
+ Employer's National Insurance	£239m
= Total cost to local government	£1,830m
Employer's National Insurance (as above)	£239m
+ Employee's National Insurance	£118m
+ Income Tax	£349m
+ Reduced benefit/tax credit/Universal Credit expenditure	£62m
= Total central government savings	£769m
Net public sector cost:	
= £1,830m - £769m	£1,062m
+ Indirect taxes	£170m
Net public sector cost after indirect taxes:	
= £1,062m - £141m	£892m

This research demonstrates the significant savings to government of increasing local government workers' pay. Increased tax contributions along with reduced benefit expenditure result in central government recovering around half of the cost borne by local government.

With just over half the cost of this pay claim recouped by the government, the logic in properly funding local government pay is clear. This reinforces our calls for proper local authority funding for pay from central government. The TU side hopes that the national employers will join us in directly making the case to central government for proper local authority funding.

⁷ Landman Economics, 2025

4. COMPARING NJC PAY

4.1 Pay settlements

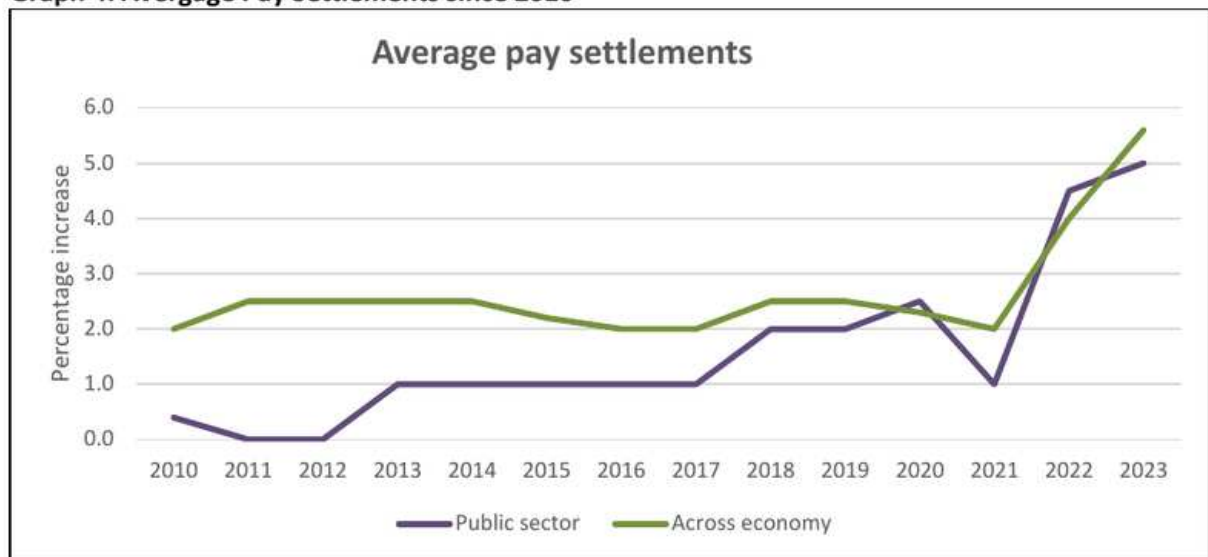
Pay settlements in the private sector have almost consistently run ahead of the public sector since 2010. While the pay freeze was in place across the public sector (2011-12), the private sector saw average rises around 2.5%, and the private sector continued to outpace the public sector by at least double the public sector rate during the ensuing period of the 1% pay cap (2013-17).

Since 2018, the gap started closing and over 2020 the public sector briefly overtook the private sector for the first time in approximately a decade.

The state’s imposition of a pay cap pushed the public rate back down to half the economy average again in 2021.

Since then, the rates have maintained approximate parity as per the graph below. However, public sector ad NJC pay are now carting a decade’s worth of lost value – which only a significant, above inflation pay award could seek to recover.

Graph 4: Average Pay Settlements since 2010⁸



The table below shows how average pay settlements compare with NJC pay awards. Between 2010 and 2019, NJC pay awards fell significantly behind average pay awards across the whole economy. There was some improvement after this, specifically in 2020, 2022 and 2024 - but has not been enough to recover the cumulative loss endured between 2010 and 2019 (a cumulative loss worth 18% when measured against average pay awards across the whole economy).

Table 5: Average pay settlements VS NJC Pay Awards, 2010-2023

Year	Average pay settlements	NJC Pay Awards
2010	2.0%	0.0%
2011	2.5%	0.0%
2012	2.5%	0.0%

⁸ Incomes Data Research, 2024

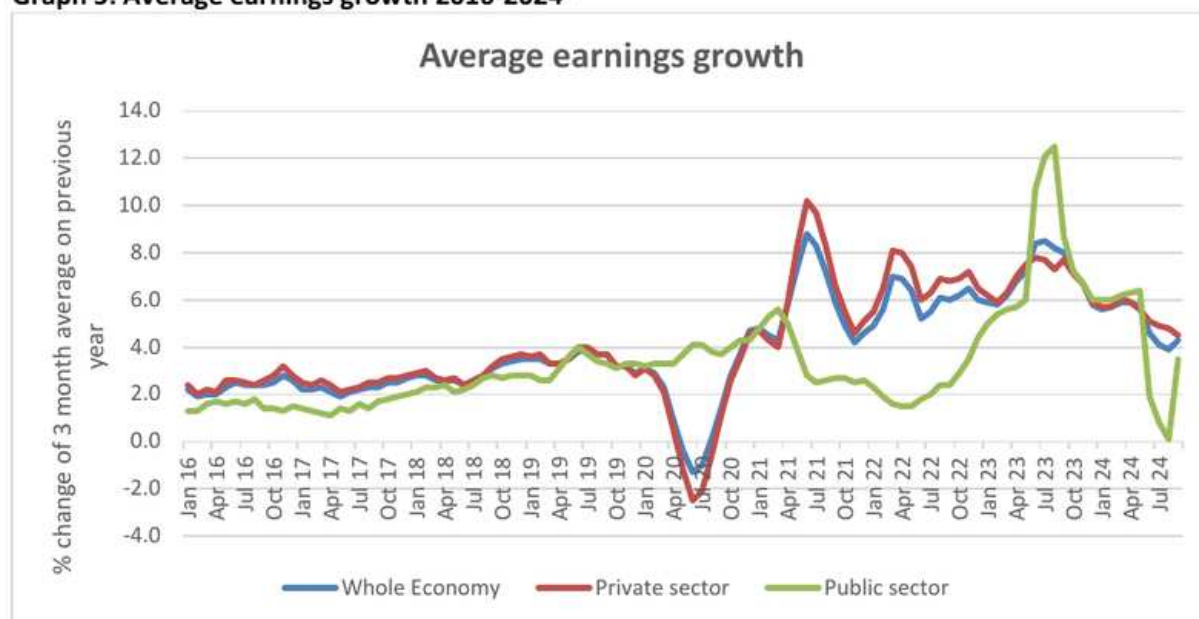
2013	2.5%	1.0%
2014	2.5%	1.1%
2015	2.2%	1.1%
2016	2.0%	1%*
2017	2.0%	1%*
2018	2.5%	2%*
2019	2.5%	2%*
2020	2.3%	2.8%
2021	2.0%	1.8%
2022	4.0%	7.0%
2023	5.6%	6.4%

4.2 Average earnings

Since 2021, average earnings growth has been running at relatively high rates and average earnings growth across the economy hit 4.3% in October 2024⁹.

As in the case of pay settlements, a gap between public and private rates has been a persistent feature of the economy for more than a decade. 2020 saw the first sustained period since 2010 when the public sector has been running ahead of the private sector. But faster growth in the private sector reasserted itself strongly over 2021 and 2022, before falling back. Latest figures show the public rate at 3.5% in October 2024 against private sector earnings growth of 4.5%.

Graph 5: Average earnings growth 2016-2024¹⁰



The Office for Budgetary Responsibility Economic and Fiscal Outlook published in October 2024 estimated that earnings growth will average 3.6% over 2025.

⁹ ONS, Labour Market Overview, November 2024

¹⁰ Source: Office for National Statistics, Labour Market Overview UK, November 2024

4.4 NJC pay vs the wider labour market

The value of the UK economy (GDP) is predicted to show a small annual growth of 0.9% over 2024 and then 1.3% over 2025.¹¹

The unemployment rate has been in decline from a peak of 8.5% in 2011 to 4.3%¹² in the three months to September 2024 (rates over recent years have been at the lowest level for almost 50 years).

Forecasts now put the average unemployment rate at 4.4% in 2024 and 4.5% in 2025, though outside of recent years this level would still be a rate only last consistently experienced in the mid-1970s.

Meanwhile, the Office for National Statistics indicates that the vacancy rate across the economy was running at 2.6% in the three months to October 2024¹³.

The number of unemployed people per vacancy was running at 1.8 by September 2024¹⁴ - the trough in this rate over recent years has seen the lowest levels recorded in more than two decades and represents a dramatic decline from 5.8 in 2011.

Sector analysis shows that human health and social work retains one of the highest vacancy rates across the economy at 3.2%, while the other sectors most closely aligned with UNISON membership show rates of 2.4% for public administration, 2.2% for education, 3.8% for electricity and gas (the highest sectoral vacancy rate across the economy) and 2.6% for water supply.¹⁵

The acute issues that have been facing the health and social work category are reflected in publications showing that the adult social care sector has a vacancy rate of 8.3% and a turnover rate of 24%.¹⁶

The impact of better wages and improved terms and conditions can be seen in the contrast between figures for local authority and outsourced social care staff. The mean hourly pay of local authority care worker staff was £12.43 in 2024, compared to £11.23 in the outsourced sector, contributing to a turnover rate of 13% among local authorities, which was half the 26% displayed among the adult social care sector's outsourced providers¹⁷.

The proportion of employers reporting "hard to fill" vacancies is running at 36% across the economy. Sectors with particular problems include "care, social work and other healthcare activities" at 45% and compulsory education at 44%¹⁸. Turnover rates were averaging 14.4% across the economy in 2023¹⁹.

¹¹ HM Treasury, Forecasts for the UK Economy, November 2024

¹² Office for National Statistics, Labour Market Overview, November 2024

¹³ Office for National Statistics, Labour Market Overview, November 2024

¹⁴ Office for National Statistics, Labour Market Overview, November 2024

¹⁵ Office for National Statistics, Labour Market Overview, November 2024

¹⁶ Skills for Care, The State of the Adult Social Care Workforce in England, October 2024

¹⁷ Skills for Care, The State of the Adult Social Care Workforce in England, October 2024

¹⁸ CIPD, Labour Market Outlook, Autumn 2024

¹⁹ XpertHR, Labour turnover rates 2023

4.6 National Minimum Wage

The legally enforceable National Minimum Wage (NMW) sets the floor for any pay scale. The minimum hourly rates that are due to come into force from 1 April 2025 and the change from the previous rates are set out below.

Category of staff	Aged 21 and over	Aged 18 - 20	Aged 16 - 17	Apprentices
Rate from April 2025	£12.21	£10.00	£7.55	£7.55
% increase on 2024	6.7%	16.3%	18%	18%
Rate from April 2023	£11.44	£8.60	£6.40	£6.40

NJC SCP 2 currently sits at £12.26 – just 5p above the new £12.21 minimum due to be introduced in April²⁰. This is dangerously close to the new statutory rate and leaves the NJC pay spine once again playing cat and mouse with the legal minimum wage.

4.7 The Real Living Wage

The Living Wage has become a standard benchmark for the minimum needed for low-paid staff to have a “basic but acceptable” standard of living. The rates, announced annually by the Living Wage Foundation, are currently £12.60 an hour outside London and £13.85 an hour in London²¹.

Studies supported by Barclays Bank have shown Living Wage employers report an increase in productivity, a reduction in staff turnover/absenteeism rates and improvements in reputation.

Consequently, there are now over 15,000 employers accredited as Living Wage employers by the Living Wage Foundation, including almost half of the largest companies listed on the UK Stock Exchange and household names such as Aviva, Barclays, HSBC, Nationwide, Google and IKEA are among them.

Within the public sector, the Living Wage has now long been set as the minimum pay rate across all Scotland’s public sector organisations and this was extended to social care workers in Scotland’s private and voluntary sector from October 2016. Similarly, the Welsh Government has committed to achieving a Living Wage minimum in social care by 2024.

These latest Foundation Living Wage rates mean that Local Government is now competing in a labour market where many comparable employers are paying more to entry level or low paid staff – with SCP 2 and 3 currently falling below the £12.60 UK Foundation Living Wage rate (SCP 1 was deleted from 1 April 2023):

Table 8: NJC SCPs Vs the Foundation Living Wage

SCP*	2024 Annual	2024 Hourly
2	£23,656.00	£12.26
3	£24,027.00	£12.45
4	£24,404.00	£12.65

*SCP 1 deleted from 1 April 2023

²⁰ UK Government, 2025 national minimum wage rates, announced 2024

²¹ Living Wage Foundation, 2024

5. ACHIEVING A £15 PER HOUR MINIMUM RATE

Despite the legal national minimum wage increasing to £12.21 per hour in April 2025, years of rampant inflation and cost of living rises to core household outgoings (like food, housing and energy) mean that calls for a £15 per hour minimum rate are stronger than ever²². For local government workers, this would bring many benefits, including a significant boost to those struggling with the low pay, lifting people out of in-work poverty and providing a direct boost to the lowest paid workers. This level of increase would lead to higher job satisfaction, reducing turnover rates and the costs associated with hiring and training new employees.

If answered in full, our NJC pay claim for 2025-26 would lift the lowest pay point to £13.82. A subsequent pay award of the same value in the following year would lift SPC2 to £15 p/h/ by 2026 – a significant achievement for a pay spine that has (in recent history) skirted minimum wage rates.

Table 12: Roadmap to achieving £15 per hour minimum rate for the NJC pay spine by 2026

SCP	2024-25			2025-26			2026-27	
	Annual	Hourly	Increase	Annual	Hourly	Increase	Annual	Hourly
2	£23,656	£12.26	£3,000	£26,656	£13.82	£3,000	£29,656	£15.37
3	£24,027	£12.45	£3,000	£27,027	£14.01	£3,000	£30,027	£15.56
4	£24,404	£12.65	£3,000	£27,404	£14.20	£3,000	£30,404	£15.76
5	£24,790	£12.85	£3,000	£27,790	£14.40	£3,000	£30,790	£15.96

The TU side therefore asks the national employers to develop a clear plan to reach a minimum pay rate of £15 an hour for the NJC, as quickly as possible.

²² TUC, 2024

6. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION CRISIS

6.1 Recruitment and retention overview

Local authorities are experiencing significant recruitment and retention challenges, particularly in education and social services. This crisis is exacerbated by low pay, high workloads, and budget cuts.

Local Government Employment decreased by 6,000 (0.3%) from June to September 2024, and by 11,000 (0.6%) from September 2023²³. Nationally, unemployment remains low at just over 4%, through to October 2024 – lower than at almost any point in the last 40 years. With low unemployment and a vibrant jobs market, local government employers are struggling to compete with employers who often pay more for less demanding work (such as administrative, retail and hospitality).

Within the education sector, 1 in 5 Teaching Assistants posts routinely go unfilled, with 18% of positions vacant in local authority-maintained schools²⁴. A majority of schools struggle to recruit support staff, with vacancies remaining unfilled for over two months, especially in special schools.

The reasons local government staff give for leaving are primarily low pay, followed by poor job satisfaction and low morale²⁵. Many report unmanageable workloads due to unfilled posts and budget cuts.

6.2 Workforce survey data

The latest LGA Workforce Survey, tells us that the Total Gross Council Pay Bill for 2023/24 was £18.6bn, down 24% from 2014/15. The average FTE Salary in local government is £28,900 – well below average, annual full-time earnings for 2024 in the UK (approximately £37,430).

The survey also reports that 94% of councils have recruitment and retention difficulties. 90% report at least one capability skills gap and 83% report at least one capacity skills gap.

This shrinking workforce is sadly a long term trend. The County Councils Network (CCN) Survey reveals that the number of employees in England's councils has reduced by 552,000 (31.5%) since 2012. 26% of local government workers plan to work there for less than four years, with only 46% expecting to stay for over 10 years. 64% believe local government is not perceived as an attractive employer, and 42% feel they will not receive enough training to future-proof their skills.

6.3 Solving the Recruitment and Retention Crisis

All of the above evidence shows that improving pay will go a long way towards addressing the recruitment and retention crisis in local government. However, this must be addition to other key measures including: improving working conditions and job satisfaction, providing adequate training, offering clear career pathways to retain young employees and improving the perception of local government as an employer.

²³ LGA workforce survey, 2024

²⁴ Freedom of Information requests by TU side, 2024

²⁵ Low Pay Commission, 2023

7. PAY-RELATED CONDITIONS OF WORK

7.1 Workload and Stress

Over the past decade and a half, the local government workforce has decreased significantly, leading to increased workloads for remaining employees.

Public sector workers overall are performing a substantial amount of unpaid overtime, with 16.7% of them doing so in 2023, compared to 11.9% in the private sector.

Long hours and stress are contributing to serious mental and physical health issues, including stress, depression, and anxiety. In 2023/24, 1.7 million workers reported work-related ill health, with nearly half of these cases related to mental health issues. Taking holidays and reducing working hours have been shown to improve morale, health, and productivity.

The Trade Union Side is therefore calling for:

- **One extra day of annual leave for all staff**

7.2 Reduction in Working Time

Reducing working hours can lower unemployment, increase productivity, reduce carbon emissions, and improve overall well-being. The standard NJC working week is 37 hours (36 in London), but some local authorities have reduced this to 35 hours without negative impacts on services.

Some employers have gone further, with over 200 UK companies have committed to a permanent four-day working week without reducing employee pay²⁶. Companies moving to this model argue that the traditional five-day workweek is outdated and that a four-day week can enhance work-life balance, increase employee satisfaction, and maintain productivity. The move is particularly popular among younger workers, with many prioritizing mental health and well-being. In January 2023, South Cambridgeshire District Council become the first local authority to trial the 4 day week (with no loss in pay). Their initial results were positive, particularly on retention and recruitment.

The TU side recognises the complexities involved in reducing working time for some groups of staff, and we look forward to discussing them with the employers as part of meaningful negotiations.

The Trade Union Side is therefore calling for:

- **A reduction in the working week by two hours, with no loss of pay** (and a longer-term view of supporting the 4-day working week)

7.3 Paid personal day for school support staff

Members working as school support staff are seeking at least one guaranteed paid personal day each year, to use as they want. This is not a claim for an additional annual leave day, simply the ability to take at least a day's leave during the school term. Many schools and academies already implement this policy. If applied universally, this will help raise the job satisfaction and work-life-balance of school support staff.

The Trade Union Side is therefore calling for:

- **The ability for school staff to take [at least] one day of their annual leave during term time, with no loss of pay**

²⁶ 4 Day Week Foundation, 2025

8. EQUALITY IMPACT

8.1 Gender Pay Gap

Low pay in local government disproportionately affects workers with protected characteristics under the Equality Act, particularly women workers²⁷.

On average, women in English local authorities were paid 3.5 per cent less than men according to mean pay and 1.7 per cent less than men according to median pay. This compares to 6.1 per cent and 4.0 per cent respectively in 2018/19.

Women were, on average, paid less than men in 167 authorities, in 25 the pay gap was zero, and in 101 women were paid more than men (according to median pay).

The proportion of women was highest in the second-lowest pay quartile (63.4 per cent) and lowest in the highest quartile (57.2 per cent), a similar picture to 2018/19.

8.2 Ageing workforce

An ageing workforce and job market competition across numerous sectors continues to be recognised by industry voices as one of the fundamental challenges facing local government. The Local Government Association continues to recognise that “Local government has an ageing workforce and in certain key professions this is reaching a crisis point in an increasing number of councils.”

As reported in the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) in 2021, “With an ageing workforce and competition from places like retail, for jobs that are paying better with less stress, it is little wonder that care worker shortages are being acutely felt in local authority care services” and in APSE’s survey of local councils for that year, 86% of councils responding believed that an ageing workforce presented a high to medium risk to recruitment and retention of the workforce²⁸.

²⁷ The gender pay gap in local government 2023/24, LGA, 2024

²⁸ Local government: Skills shortages and workforce capacity, ASPE, 2021

9. CONCLUSION

Our 2025-26 NJC pay claim demonstrates the crisis facing both NJC workers and local authorities. Historic low pay has eroded the value of NJC pay by 25% since 2010. This has happened against a backdrop of both increased stress/workload among local government workers and rampant inflation across the economy.

Our members' household costs have become almost unaffordable for many, especially those on the lowest pay points. These low paid members are now seeing their pay drawing worryingly close to the new legal minimum - and falling well below the foundation living wage (and even further below a £15 per hour minimum).

Local government employers clearly recognise this situation as unsustainable, as they continue to report difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff. Many workers have already left for less stressful and better paying jobs outside of local government (in many cases outside of the public sector entirely).

With a new government bringing a new outlook to public services and local government investment, the TU side believes that now is the time for the employers to join us in making the case for decent pay and funding directly to central government. Our TU side research already shows that approximately half the cost of this pay claim would be recouped by central government through increased tax revenue and reduced welfare spend. This fact could be the starting point in a joint approach to government.

The TU Side believes our headline claim increase of at least £3,000 on all spinal column points is fair and appropriate - and we expect meaningful negotiations on our claim and the included conditions.

APPENDIX 1: NJC SPINAL COLUMN POINTS - REAL TERMS CONVERSION*

NJC SPINAL COLUMN POINTS - REAL TERMS CONVERSION*						
Old SCP	2009/10	2024/25	New SCP	Old SCP if inflated by RPI to April 2025	Real-terms change (£)	Real-terms change (%)
8	£13,189	£23,656	2	£24,849	-£1,193	-4.80%
9	£13,589	£23,656		£25,602	-£1,946	-7.60%
10	£13,874	£24,027	3	£26,139	-£2,112	-8.10%
11	£14,733	£24,027		£27,758	-£3,731	-13.40%
12	£15,039	£24,404	4	£28,334	-£3,930	-13.90%
13	£15,444	£24,404		£29,097	-£4,693	-16.10%
14	£15,725	£24,790	5	£29,627	-£4,837	-16.30%
15	£16,054	£24,790		£30,246	-£5,456	-18.00%
16	£16,440	£25,183	6	£30,974	-£5,791	-18.70%
17	£16,830	£25,183		£31,708	-£6,525	-20.60%
18	£17,161	£25,584	7	£32,332	-£6,748	-20.90%
19	£17,802	£25,992	8	£33,540	-£7,548	-22.50%
20	£18,453	£26,409	9	£34,766	-£8,357	-24.00%
		£26,835	10			
21	£19,126	£27,269	11	£36,034	-£8,765	-24.30%
22	£19,621	£27,711	12	£36,967	-£9,256	-25.00%
		£28,163	13			
23	£20,198	£28,624	14	£38,054	-£9,430	-24.80%
24	£20,858	£29,093	15	£39,297	-£10,204	-26.00%
		£29,572	16			
25	£21,519	£30,060	17	£40,543	-£10,483	-25.90%
		£30,559	18			
26	£22,221	£31,067	19	£41,865	-£10,798	-25.80%
27	£22,958	£31,586	20	£43,254	-£11,668	-27.00%
		£32,115	21			
28	£23,708	£32,654	22	£44,667	-£12,013	-26.90%
29	£24,646	£33,366	23	£46,434	-£13,068	-28.10%
30	£25,472	£34,314	24	£47,990	-£13,676	-28.50%
31	£26,276	£35,235	25	£49,505	-£14,270	-28.80%
32	£27,052	£36,124	26	£50,967	-£14,843	-29.10%
33	£27,849	£37,035	27	£52,469	-£15,434	-29.40%
34	£28,636	£37,938	28	£53,951	-£16,013	-29.70%
35	£29,236	£38,626	29	£55,082	-£16,456	-29.90%
36	£30,011	£39,513	30	£56,542	-£17,029	-30.10%
37	£30,851	£40,476	31	£58,125	-£17,649	-30.40%
38	£31,754	£41,511	32	£59,826	-£18,315	-30.60%
39	£32,800	£42,708	33	£61,797	-£19,089	-30.90%
40	£33,661	£43,693	34	£63,419	-£19,726	-31.10%
41	£34,549	£44,711	35	£65,092	-£20,381	-31.30%

42	£35,430	£45,718	36	£66,752	-£21,034	-31.50%
43	£36,313	£46,731	37	£68,415	-£21,684	-31.70%
44	£37,206	£47,754	38	£70,098	-£22,344	-31.90%
45	£38,042	£48,710	39	£71,673	-£22,963	-32.00%
46	£38,961	£49,764	40	£73,404	-£23,640	-32.20%
47	£39,855	£50,788	41	£75,089	-£24,301	-32.40%
48	£40,741	£51,802	42	£76,758	-£24,956	-32.50%
49	£41,616	£52,805	43	£78,406	-£25,601	-32.70%

*Calculations are based on the change in the RPI rate between April 2009 and April 2024, which was then inflated by 3.5 per cent (the OBR October 2024 forecast for RPI growth in 2025). Inflation values are taken from ONS Consumer Price Inflation timeseries data publication (03 January 2023). Figures are rounded.

APPENDIX 2: £3,000 increases applied to NJC Pay Spine

SCP	2024-25		Increase	2025-26	
	Annual	Hourly		Annual	Hourly
2	£23,656.00	£12.26	£3,000.00	£26,656.00	£13.82
3	£24,027.00	£12.45	£3,000.00	£27,027.00	£14.01
4	£24,404.00	£12.65	£3,000.00	£27,404.00	£14.20
5	£24,790.00	£12.85	£3,000.00	£27,790.00	£14.40
6	£25,183.00	£13.05	£3,000.00	£28,183.00	£14.61
7	£25,584.00	£13.26	£3,000.00	£28,584.00	£14.82
8	£25,992.00	£13.47	£3,000.00	£28,992.00	£15.03
9	£26,409.00	£13.69	£3,000.00	£29,409.00	£15.24
10	£26,835.00	£13.91	£3,000.00	£29,835.00	£15.46
11	£27,269.00	£14.13	£3,000.00	£30,269.00	£15.69
12	£27,711.00	£14.36	£3,000.00	£30,711.00	£15.92
13	£28,163.00	£14.60	£3,000.00	£31,163.00	£16.15
14	£28,624.00	£14.84	£3,000.00	£31,624.00	£16.39
15	£29,093.00	£15.08	£3,000.00	£32,093.00	£16.63
16	£29,572.00	£15.33	£3,000.00	£32,572.00	£16.88
17	£30,060.00	£15.58	£3,000.00	£33,060.00	£17.14
18	£30,559.00	£15.84	£3,000.00	£33,559.00	£17.39
19	£31,067.00	£16.10	£3,000.00	£34,067.00	£17.66
20	£31,586.00	£16.37	£3,000.00	£34,586.00	£17.93
21	£32,115.00	£16.65	£3,000.00	£35,115.00	£18.20
22	£32,654.00	£16.93	£3,000.00	£35,654.00	£18.48
23	£33,366.00	£17.29	£3,000.00	£36,366.00	£18.85
24	£34,314.00	£17.79	£3,000.00	£37,314.00	£19.34
25	£35,235.00	£18.26	£3,000.00	£38,235.00	£19.82
26	£36,124.00	£18.72	£3,000.00	£39,124.00	£20.28
27	£37,035.00	£19.20	£3,000.00	£40,035.00	£20.75
28	£37,938.00	£19.66	£3,000.00	£40,938.00	£21.22
29	£38,626.00	£20.02	£3,000.00	£41,626.00	£21.58
30	£39,513.00	£20.48	£3,000.00	£42,513.00	£22.04

31	£40,476.00	£20.98	£3,000.00	£43,476.00	£22.53
32	£41,511.00	£21.52	£3,000.00	£44,511.00	£23.07
33	£42,708.00	£22.14	£3,000.00	£45,708.00	£23.69
34	£43,693.00	£22.65	£3,000.00	£46,693.00	£24.20
35	£44,711.00	£23.17	£3,000.00	£47,711.00	£24.73
36	£45,718.00	£23.70	£3,000.00	£48,718.00	£25.25
37	£46,731.00	£24.22	£3,000.00	£49,731.00	£25.78
38	£47,754.00	£24.75	£3,000.00	£50,754.00	£26.31
39	£48,710.00	£25.25	£3,000.00	£51,710.00	£26.80
40	£49,764.00	£25.79	£3,000.00	£52,764.00	£27.35
41	£50,788.00	£26.32	£3,000.00	£53,788.00	£27.88
42	£51,802.00	£26.85	£3,000.00	£54,802.00	£28.41
43	£52,805.00	£27.37	£3,000.00	£55,805.00	£28.93

National Employers for local government services

Mike Short, Kevin Brandstatter, Clare Keogh
Trade Union Side Secretaries
NJC for Local Government Services
c/o UNISON Centre
130 Euston Road
London NW1 2AY

22 April 2025

Dear Mike, Kevin and Clare

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY 2025

Thank you for your pay claim, which was received on 31 January. Following its receipt, the National Employers consulted councils and met initially on 24 March to discuss the key themes to come out of those sessions. They then adjourned for private political discussions before reconvening today.

The National Employers sought councils' views at the regional pay consultation briefings regarding your request that their offer should not be badged as '*full and final*'. Broadly speaking, whilst there was sympathy with your request for meaningful negotiations, a majority understood the pragmatic reasons behind making a '*full and final*' offer and the imperative of transparency and implementing the pay award as soon as possible and therefore were in favour of that being the approach taken again this year for all the negotiating bodies for which the National Employers have responsibility¹.

Accordingly, the National Employers have agreed that making such an offer would again provide certainty from the outset to yourselves, your members, the wider workforce and local employers that their offer, set out below, is the maximum they are able to make.

However, as you will be aware, on 11 June the government will be announcing the details of its spending review, and we are hopeful it will provide councils with a three-year funding settlement. A longer-term settlement would provide more financial planning certainty for councils which in turn could, from 2026 onwards, enable the employers to consider alternatives to the one-year pay offers of recent years. Multi-year pay offers / deals would by necessity require meaningful negotiations and once agreed, would allow the breathing space we need to concentrate our joint efforts on reviewing the pay spine and preparing for the transition of significant numbers of NJC staff into the two new national negotiating bodies being established by the government.

The National Employers wish to make the following full and final, one-year (1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026) offer:

- **With effect from 1 April 2025, an increase of 3.20 per cent to be paid as a consolidated, permanent addition on all NJC pay points 2 to 43 inclusive and on all pay points above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer (*in accordance with Green Book Part 2 Para 5.4*)²**

¹ NJC for local government services; JNC for local authority Craft & Associated employees; JNC for local authority Chief Officers; and JNC for local authority Chief Executives

² The Green Book Part 2 Para 5.4 provides that posts paid above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer are within scope of the NJC. The pay levels for such posts are determined locally, but once fixed are increased in line with agreements reached by the NJC.

- **With effect from 1 April 2025 an increase of 3.20 per cent on all allowances (as listed in the 2024 NJC pay agreement circular dated 22 October 2024)**
- **With effect from 1 April 2026, the deletion of pay point 2 from the NJC pay spine**

Once again, the most important factor in formulating this response has been affordability. We have a duty to balance your claim against the interests of local residents, in terms of the level and quality of services provided by local authorities. The proposed increase will again be very difficult to fund in a number of local authorities and anything beyond that would take many more authorities well beyond their level of affordability. In response to other elements of your claim:

- ***A phased approach to reaching a minimum pay rate of £15 an hour in a maximum of two years, sooner if possible***

The Employers reject this element of the claim. In order to achieve this objective would require increasing the bottom pay point by 22.35 per cent over the period 2025-27. That, plus the subsequent knock-on effect of increases to all subsequent pay points would be prohibitively expensive for councils at any time, not least during the current difficult financial circumstances.

- ***One extra day of annual leave for all staff***

The Employers reject this element of the claim. All NJC employees currently receive a minimum of 23 days' leave (with a further three days after five years' service), plus two extra statutory days, plus public holidays. Many councils have a more generous basic leave entitlement.

- ***A reduction in the working week by two hours, with no loss of pay***

The Employers reject this element of the claim in relation to a proposed 35-hour week (34 in London). Such a reduction would be out of line with norms in local government and would result in an increase in costs that would adversely affect local authority services.

- ***The ability for school staff to take [at least] one day of their annual leave during term time, with no loss of pay***

The Employers reject this element of the claim. With the impending reinstatement of the School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB), that will have responsibility for considering changes to pay and conditions for this group, we believe school employers in particular would have concerns about the NJC reaching a national agreement that gave all their non-teaching NJC employees the right to take "[at least] one day" off in term time. The cost of having not only to pay for that day but also for cover, would be significant at a time when schools are struggling financially and there is significant uncertainty about the SSSNB's remit and timetable.

The National Employers of course respect that each of your unions will have its own processes and procedures to follow, but we urge you all to please try and synchronise the timing and duration of your membership consultations, as you did last year, in order that a final agreement is reached and employees, who continue to provide such critical support to their communities, can receive this award as soon as is practicable.

A prompt settlement this year would give us the necessary opportunity to focus our efforts on negotiating a redesigned national pay spine, as well as continuing to discuss other complex issues, for example, the reinstatement (in England) of the School Support Staff Negotiating Body.

Yours sincerely,

Naomi Cooke

**Naomi Cooke
Employers' Secretary**

National Employers for local government services

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George Georgiou
Officers' Side Secretary
JNC for Chief Officers of local authorities
GMB Mary Turner House, 22 Stephenson Way
London NW1 2HD

22 April 2025

Dear George

CHIEF OFFICER PAY 2025

Thank you for your pay claim, which was received on 31 January. Following its receipt, the National Employers consulted councils and met initially on 24 March to discuss the key themes to come out of those sessions. They then adjourned for private political discussions before reconvening today.

The National Employers sought councils' views at the regional pay consultation briefings on whether their offer should be badged as '*full and final*'. Broadly speaking, whilst there was sympathy with the unions' request for meaningful negotiations, a majority understood the pragmatic reasons behind making a '*full and final*' offer and the imperative of transparency and implementing the pay award as soon as possible and therefore were in favour of that being the approach taken again this year for all the negotiating bodies for which the National Employers have responsibility¹.

Accordingly, the National Employers have agreed that making such an offer would again provide certainty from the outset to yourselves, your members, the wider workforce and local employers that their offer, set out below, is the maximum they are able to make.

However, as you will be aware, on 11 June the government will be announcing the details of its spending review, and we are hopeful it will provide councils with a three-year funding settlement. A longer-term settlement would provide more financial planning certainty for councils which in turn could from 2026 onwards enable the employers to consider alternatives to the one-year pay offers of recent years.

The National Employers wish to make the following full and final, one-year (1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026) offer:

- **With effect from 1 April 2025, an increase of 3.20 per cent on basic salary²**

The National Employers hope this full and final offer can promptly form the basis of an agreement between the two Sides so that Chief Officers, who continue to provide such critical support to their communities, can receive this award as soon as is practicable.

Yours sincerely,

Naomi Cooke

Naomi Cooke
Employers' Secretary

cc Mike Short, UNISON

¹ NJC for local government services; JNC for local authority Craft & Associated employees; JNC for local authority Chief Officers; and JNC for local authority Chief Executives

² Basic salary should exclude other separately identified payments such as Returning Officer fees etc

National Employers for local government services

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Kathryn Hall
Honorary Secretary ALACE
Officers' Side Secretary
JNC for Chief Executives of Local Authorities

22 April 2025

Dear Kathryn,

CHIEF EXECUTIVE PAY 2025

Thank you for your pay claim, which was received on 20 January. Following its receipt, the National Employers consulted councils and met initially on 24 March to discuss the key themes to come out of those sessions. They then adjourned for private political discussions before reconvening today.

The National Employers thank you and Tracey for taking the time today to set out the Officer Side's case.

The National Employers sought councils' views at the regional pay consultation briefings regarding your request that their offer should not be badged as '*full and final*'. Broadly speaking, whilst there was sympathy with your request for meaningful negotiations, a majority understood the pragmatic reasons behind making a '*full and final*' offer and the imperative of transparency and implementing the pay award as soon as possible and therefore were in favour of that being the approach taken again this year for all the negotiating bodies for which the National Employers have responsibility¹.

Accordingly, the National Employers have agreed that making such an offer would again provide certainty from the outset to yourselves, your members, the wider workforce and local employers that their offer, set out below, is the maximum they are able to make.

However, as you will be aware, on 11 June the government will be announcing the details of its spending review, and we are hopeful it will provide councils with a three-year funding settlement. A longer-term settlement would provide more financial planning certainty for councils which in turn could from 2026 onwards enable the employers to consider alternatives to the one-year pay offers of recent years.

Therefore, the National Employers wish to make the following full and final, one-year (1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026) offer:

- **With effect from 1 April 2025, an increase of 3.20 per cent on basic salary²**

Despite rejecting the same request in previous years, the employers again considered the claim for, "*...a direct and immutable link for increases for April 2025 onwards, to ensure that chief executives receive the same percentage increase as the top point on the NJC scale.*"

However, for the same reason given previously, namely the employers' wish to retain the existing flexibility that allows them to consider pay claims for each distinct group, the National Employers again reject this element of the claim.

¹ NJC for local government services; JNC for local authority Craft & Associated employees; JNC for local authority Chief Officers; and JNC for local authority Chief Executives

² Basic salary should exclude other separately identified payments such as Returning Officer fees etc

National Employers for local government services

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The National Employers hope this final offer can promptly form the basis of an agreement between the two Sides so that Chief Executives, who continue to provide such critical support to their communities, can receive this award as soon as is practicable.

Yours sincerely

Naomi Cooke

Naomi Cooke
Employers' Secretary

Council/Committee:	Full Council
Date:	9 June 2025
Report Title:	Updated Standing Orders 2025-26
Publication Status:	Open
Author:	Sarah Williams, Assistant Director – Business Support
Approver:	Laureen Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate Services

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for recommended amendments to the Standing Orders.

2. Background

- 2.1. Council previously reviewed the Council Constitution in June 2023 at the AGM with Standing Orders last reviewed in November 2023. At Council's meeting in June 2024, it was agreed that the Standing Orders Sub-Committee should be convened to carry out a comprehensive review of the Standing Orders.

3. Key Issues for Consideration

- 3.1. The Standing Orders Sub-Committee has met on four occasions:
 - 20 August 2024
 - 18 September 2024
 - 6 March 2025
 - 29 May 2025
- 3.2. The revised document contains amendments to address typographical errors and other minor administrative updates or corrections including:
 - reference to 'six-weekly' meetings schedule
 - reference to 'decisions log'
 - reference to 'action minutes'
 - reference to 'Vice-Chairs'
 - update the names of Committees where relevant
 - adding appendices approved by Council
 - reference to Clerk & Chief Executive Officer where relevant
 - language to reflect remote and hybrid meetings were appropriate

- 3.3. In addition, some of the text has been simplified to make it easy to understand.
- 3.4. Key changes to highlight to Members are as follows (please note that some of the numbering has changed in the updated versions but tracked changes have been used for clarity):
- Standing Order 2.15 has been amended to clarify that it is five Members required to sign a requisition to request a meeting of Council. A specific requisition form is being designed for Members to use.
 - Standing Order 2.21 has been strengthened so that items and their accompanying reports may only be added to the agenda with the agreement of the Chairperson of the Committee
 - Standing Orders, previously numbered, 2.26, 2.33 and 2.46 have been removed to reflect current practice
 - Standing Order 2.46 (new numbering) has been re-worded to reflect current practice
 - Standing Order 2.59 includes a Committee agenda item 'for noting'
 - Standing Orders 3.9-3.11 clarify the approval of Committee Minutes by Council
 - Standing Order 3.12 is a new Standing Order to provide for Council to agree for a decision to be referred back to a Committee. This would exclude any quasi-judicial / regulatory decisions
 - Standing Order 3.14 has been reworded to provide clarity
 - Standing Order 3.15 is a new Standing Order to reference the call-in procedure for clarity
 - Section 4 Motions has a new paragraph defining a motion and has been reworded to reflect current practice regarding Notices of Motion
 - Standing Order 4.2 provides that for any Notice of Motion deemed to be ultra vires or outside the legal competence of the Council, the proposer and seconder will be notified by the Chief Executive in writing as is current practice
 - Standing Order 4.9 has been updated to reflect current practice
 - Standing Orders in Section 5 Amendments have been updated for clarity and smooth running of the meeting
 - Standing Order 6.2 has been updated to, ideally, allow for sufficient time for officers to prepare this information
 - Standing Orders 7.7 and 8.3 have been updated to reflect current practice
 - Standing Orders 9.1 and 9.2 have been updated to reflect legal advice following the Hartlands judicial review that any Council decision is subject to call-in and in addition the references to 'Executive' and 'joint arrangements' have been removed as not relevant to MEA

- 3.5. Training for all Elected Members on the Standing Orders is being arranged for late June / early July. Details are being finalised and will be sent out to Members.

4. General Considerations / Implications

- 4.1. Financial implications (provide details of budget required and if budget has been allocated already or if this is new spend): no direct financial resource
- 4.2. Human Resources (are there sufficient staffing resources or will additional resources be required – financial impact will need to be provided): no direct staffing resources
- 4.3. Equality Screening: Any equality implications will be identified using the Council's screening process
- 4.4. Assets: no direct asset impact
- 4.5. Alignment with Corporate Priorities and Link to Corporate Plan: aligned with corporate objectives
- 4.6. Rural Proofing and Environmental Impact: any rural needs implications will be identified using the Council's screening process

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1. Council is asked to approve the amendments to the Standing Orders

6. Recommendation or Decision

- 6.1. Council is asked to approve the amendments to the Standing Orders

7. Appendices / Links

Appendix 1 – Updated Standing Orders 2025-26

Standing Orders



Last approval Date	Presented 5 June 2023
Review Date	22 July 2024
Related Legislation/Applicable Section of Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014; Local Government (Executive Arrangements) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014; Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000; Local Government Finance (Northern Ireland) Act 2011.
Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines, Standards, Frameworks	Scheme of Delegation Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors Council Constitution Protocol for Presentations to Council Protocol for the Operation of the Planning Committee Protocol for the Establishment of a Sub-Committee Council Decision Making Process Protocol for Public Questions Protocol for the Recording and operation of Remote Meetings
Replaces	Standing Orders – 05 June 2023
Policy Lead	Chief Executive Interim Director of Corporate Services
Sponsor Directorate	Chief Executive’s Office
Version	14

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INTRODUCTION

Standing Orders are the written rules of the Council. Their primary purpose is to ensure that the business of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and its Committees is properly regulated and conducted in an efficient, fair and legal manner.

These Standing Orders should be read and applied in conjunction with Council's Scheme of Delegation and Financial Regulations ([Available on Council's website](#)). Where any conflict arises in relation to these documents, the Standing Orders will prevail.

Where ~~there is conflict between the legislation and should dictate otherwise than~~ Standing Orders, legislation will prevail ~~have primacy~~.

1. STANDING ORDERS

- 1.1 No arrangements shall be made whereby a Committee, Sub-Committee or Officer may exercise any power of the Council to vary, revoke or add to these Standing Orders.
- 1.2 Except where it is ~~in accordance with~~ recommended ~~action of~~ by a Committee, any Motion to amend, revoke or add to these Standing Orders, when appropriately proposed, ~~and~~ seconded and carried by a majority vote, shall be - adjourned without further discussion to the next Meeting of the Council, and shall be ~~referred~~ to such Committee as the Council shall direct for report to that Meeting.
- 1.3 A copy of these Standing Orders ~~containing the relevant extracts from enactments regulating the proceedings and business of the Council~~ shall be given to each Member upon receipt of his/her declaration of acceptance of office or as soon as possible thereafter. They shall contain the relevant extracts from enactments regulating the proceedings and business of the Council.
- 1.4 In the interest of transparency and in order to highlight ~~our~~ the governance arrangements for the Council and Committee Meetings to the general public, a copy of Standing Orders will also be available on our website.
- 1.5 In the event of a difference of opinion on the interpretation of any part of the Standing Orders, after a short representation by each concerned party, the ruling of the person presiding at any Meeting shall be deemed to be final and shall not be challenged at that Meeting.
- 1.6 Where the title of Chief Executive is referenced this also includes the title of Clerk.

2. MEETINGS

Annual and Monthly Six-Weekly Meetings

- 2.1 In every year which is not a local election year the Council shall hold an Annual Meeting in the month of June.
- 2.2 In any year which is a local government election year, the Annual Meeting shall be held within twenty-one days immediately following the election, at a time agreed by such time as the Council may fix at the offices of the Council or at such other place as the Department¹ may direct.
- 2.3 The Council shall normally meet to conduct general business on the six-weekly cycle. An alternative date may be required due to special circumstances. Other Meetings of the Council for the transaction of general business shall be held as the Council considers necessary.
- 2.4 Meetings of the Council shall not take place ordinarily on a Public or Bank Holiday, a Saturday or a Sunday.
- 2.5 In the event of any civil emergency², during the pre-election period of heightened sensitivity, or any situation in which urgent actions are required and it is either not reasonably practicable to convene a meeting of Committee or Council, or if any such meetings if called is inquorate, the Clerk & Chief Executive³, in consultation with the Group Party Leaders⁴ may exercise all or any of the functions of the Council, except those which are reserved to the Council pursuant to Section 7 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 and Council's Scheme of Delegation.
- 2.6 The Clerk & Chief Executive will advise the Mayor or appropriate Chairperson of the relevant Committee and any decisions taken pursuant to this Standing Order will be reported to the relevant Committee or Council at the next available meeting. This Standing Order is to be read in conjunction with the Scheme of Delegation. Any decisions taken by the Clerk & Chief Executive or any Chief Officer nominated will be regarded as a Key Decisions as defined in the Standing Orders of Council.

Time and Place of Meetings

- 2.7 ~~Except where otherwise fixed by statute or by special summons, the~~ The time of the Meeting of the Council or Standing Committee shall be 6.30 p.m. and the time of the Meeting of with the exception of the Planning Committee, which shall be at 10.00 a.m. except where either are otherwise fixed by statute or special summons.
- 2.8 All Council and Standing Committee Meetings, will be scheduled to finish not later than 10.30 p.m. except for the Planning Committee. It will be the responsibility of

¹ Department for Communities

² Civil emergency is when Council's Emergency Plan has been activated.

³ Chief Executive, or any Chief Officer nominated by her.

⁴ Consultation with Group Party Leaders may include telephone or email.

the person presiding at the Meeting, in consultation with the Clerk & Chief Executive or Senior Officer present, to ensure that the orderly and efficient completion of Council business is achieved. On occasion this may necessitate the prioritisation of the agenda items in order to ensure that the most important or time bounded issues are concluded during the meeting. NOTE: in relation to the 10.30 p.m. close of business, a 15 minute buffer may be applied in order to assist with the completion of business, by agreement with those present.

- 2.9 ~~In the event that circumstances require a meeting to be held remotely, a~~As provided for under the relevant legislation, a remote or hybrid Council or Committee meeting ~~will~~ can be convened. All Elected Members entitled to vote at the regular Council or Committee meeting will retain full speaking and voting rights. The Protocol for remote meetings is set out in Appendix 67 and forms part of the Council's Standing Orders.

Adjournment of Meetings

- 2.10 The Council or Standing Committee may adjourn any Meeting to a later ~~hour~~time on the same day, or to another day and ~~hour~~time.
- 2.11 If any Meeting is adjourned to a specified date the re-convened Meeting shall be deemed a continuation of the original Meeting. If a Meeting is adjourned ~~sine die~~ (i.e. without an agreed date and time to re-convene, any business left unfinished shall be postponed until the next Meeting.
- 2.12 When any Meeting is adjourned to another day, notice of the re-convened Meeting shall be sent by the Clerk & Chief Executive to each Member of the Council or Standing Committee. Normally, only business which was included in the notice convening the original Meeting of which it is an adjournment shall be transacted.
- ~~2.13 However, a~~Additional business may be considered where notice of such business has been delivered or sent by the Clerk & Chief Executive to each Member of the Council or Standing Committee at least three working days prior to such Meetings.

Convening Special Council Meetings

- 2.14 The Mayor ~~of the Council,~~ may call a Meeting of the Council at any time, giving five working days' notice or two working days' notice in the event of the emergency plan being activated.
- 2.15 ~~The Mayor of the Council must call a Meeting of the Council if the Mayor he/she receives a requisition from five Members of the Council he/she must call a Meeting of the Council within 14 days from the date on which the requisition is served, for such a Meeting, signed by five Members or one fifth of the whole number⁵ of Members, whichever is greater on receipt of such a requisition; If he/she~~
- ~~he/she~~ refuses to call such a Meeting; or
 - ~~without so refusing, he/she does not call such a Meeting; or~~

⁵One fifth of 40 members is 8.

- ~~without so refusing, he/she~~ does not call such a Meeting within ~~the period of seven days from the date on which the requisition is served of service of the requisition on him/her;~~

then five Members ~~or one-fifth of the whole number of Members, whichever is the greater,~~ may on that refusal or on the expiration of ~~that period forthwith of the seven days~~ call a Meeting of the Council.

Notice and Summons of Meetings

- 2.16 A ~~physical and electronic~~ notice of the time and place of a meeting of the Council, a Standing Committee ~~or Sub-Committee~~ shall be published at least three working days before the Meeting in a public area of the Council headquarters, The Braid⁶.
- 2.17 Where the Meeting is called by ~~five~~ Members, the notice shall be signed by them and shall specify the proposed business of the Meeting.
- 2.18 A summons⁷ to attend the Meeting, specifying the proposed business and signed by the Clerk ~~& Chief Executive~~ shall be issued to every Member. ~~Failure to serve this summons shall not affect the validity of a Meeting.~~
- 2.19 In extraordinary circumstances should over one half⁸ of Members not receive the summons within three working days, the Chairperson of the Meeting may at their discretion postpone and reconvene the Meeting at a later date.
- 2.20 Except in the case of business required by statute, or where in the opinion of the Chairperson of the Meeting the business should be considered by the Meeting as a matter of urgency, no business shall be transacted at a Meeting of the Council, a Committee or Sub-Committee other than that specified in the relevant summons and agenda. The agenda for meetings will be developed by Democratic Services and agreed with the Chief Executive Officer and/or the Director on the Chief Executive Officer's behalf, and approved by the Chair prior to publication.
- 2.21 ~~Items and accompanying reports should be provided to Members from the date of the summons until the meeting day. may be added to the agenda from the date of service of summons until the meeting day. In exceptional circumstances, item and their accompanying reports should only be added to the agenda with the permission of the Chair. Members of the Council or relevant Committee will also be notified of the amendment, after agreement from the Chair. Any additional item must be dated. However, items should only be added to the agenda on the day of the meeting in exceptional circumstances, and with the approval of the Chair.~~

⁶ Notice will also be published in Carrickfergus Civic Centre and Smiley Buildings, Larne

⁷ Including an electronic summons

⁸ i.e. 21 members

Chair to be Taken

2.22 At each Meeting of the Council, the Chair shall be taken at the time for which the Meeting is convened, and business immediately commenced. (NOTE: the reading of the Notice of Meeting by the Chief Executive or Senior Officer in attendance will officially commence Meeting proceedings).

Allocation of Seats

2.23 Seating of Members in the Council Chamber shall be determined by mutual agreement between the political parties and any independent Members. Where agreement cannot be reached this will be resolved by a simple majority vote.

Chairperson of Meeting – Full Council

2.24 At a Meeting of the Council the Mayor, if present, shall preside.

2.25 If the Mayor is absent from a Meeting of the Council, the Deputy Mayor, if present, shall preside.

2.26 If both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are absent from a Meeting of the Council, the nominating Officer of the political party whose Member is Mayor ~~or Chairperson of the Standing Committee~~ shall nominate a Member to preside in their absence.

~~2.26 This nominee must be agreed by the Members present by simple majority vote.~~

2.27 If the nominating Officer does not nominate, a Member of the Council nominated and chosen by the Members present must preside.

2.28 If discussion arises on the allocation of the position of Chairperson, the Clerk & ~~Chief Executive~~ or Senior Officer shall exercise the powers of the Chairperson to assist in the regulation of that discussion.

2.29 Any power of the Mayor in relation to the conduct of a Meeting may be exercised by the person presiding at the Meeting.

Chairperson of a Meeting – Standing Committee

2.30 At a Meeting of a Standing Committee, the Chairperson of the Committee, if present, shall preside.

2.31 If the Chairperson is absent from the Meeting, the ~~Deputy-Vice~~ Chairperson, if present, shall preside.

2.32 If both the Chairperson and ~~Deputy~~ Vice Chairperson are absent from the Meeting, the nominating Officer of the political party whose Member is Chairperson of the Standing Committee shall nominate a Member to preside in their absence.

~~2.33 This nominee must be agreed by the Members present by simple majority vote.~~

2.33 If the nominating Officer does not nominate, a Member of the Council nominated and chosen by the Members present must preside.

2.34 If discussion arises on the allocation of the position of Chairperson, the Clerk & Chief Executive or Senior Officer shall exercise the powers of the Chairperson to assist in the regulation of that discussion.

2.35 Any power of the Chairperson of the Standing Committee in relation to the conduct of a Meeting may be exercised by the person presiding at the Meeting.

Quorum

2.36 Subject to Standing Order 2.41 no business shall be transacted at a Meeting of the Council or Standing Committee unless at least one-quarter of the whole number of Members are present or one half of membership of the Audit & Committee, Scrutiny Committee and Standards Committee or three members for the Personnel Committee.

2.37 If during a Meeting that Meeting becomes inquorate, the person presiding shall call a 15 minute recess.

2.38 If following the 15 minute recess the person presiding deems it is unlikely that a quorum will be re-established within a reasonable time, he/she shall declare the Meeting adjourned.

2.39 Any uncompleted business on the agenda of a Meeting adjourned under Standing Order 2.38 shall be tabled for discussion at the reconvened Meeting, as per Standing Orders.

2.40 Where more than one-quarter of the Members become disqualified at the same time then, until the number of Members in office is increased to not less than three-quarters of the whole number of Members, the quorum of the Council shall be determined by reference to the number of Members remaining qualified instead of by reference to the whole number of Members. The Decision Making Process (attached as Appendix 65) should be considered to aid Members.

Record of Attendance at Meetings

2.41 The Clerk ~~shall enter in the Minutes the~~ names of the Members present at a Meeting ~~will be recorded in the Minutes and a record shall be kept~~ ~~keep a record~~ showing the number of Meetings attended by Members.

Admission to Meetings

- 2.42 Subject to provisions of this Standing Order, every Meeting of the Council and Standing Committee shall be open to the public.
- 2.43 The public and the press may attend only in those parts of the Council Chamber specifically provided for their accommodation. Exceptions relate to their exclusion from the meeting in accordance with the provisions of Standing Orders 2.454 to 2.479 or as required by the Council to comply with the provisions in relation to fire safety and health & safety.
- 2.44 The admission of the public and the press is upon the understanding that they must continue at all times to be seated and not interrupt or in any way obstruct the transaction of Council or Standing Committee business. If this Standing Order is ignored the Chairperson shall request the relevant person(s) to moderate or improve their behaviour. If this request is ignored the Chairperson may direct the removal of the person(s) from the Meeting as per Standing Orders 15.1 and 15.2.
- ~~2.46 All members of the public and press will be signed into the Meeting to keep an accurate record of numbers.~~
- 2.45 At all times during which a Meeting of the Council is open to the public, accredited representatives of the press/media shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of the Meeting at which they are entitled to be present.
- ~~2.46 Taking photographs or recording of proceedings or the use of any other means by members of the public to enable persons not present to see or hear any proceedings (whether at that time or later) or making any oral or digital report of any proceedings as they take place shall be prohibited unless expressly permitted by Council Taking photographs or broadcasting audio/visual recordings/livestreaming of proceedings by members of the press and/or public is prohibited.~~
- 2.47 Any Elected Member who is not a member of a particular Committee or Sub-Committee is free to attend. Speaking rights may be afforded the Member provided the point raised relates to the business under discussion. He/she may be allowed to remain present during the transaction of an item of business where confidential information may be disclosed. They are not permitted to vote.

Exclusion from Meetings – Closed Council or Committee

One of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council's core values is "Integrity – to support a spirit which enables honesty, accountability and trust throughout". Council can demonstrate this is through open and transparent decision making.

This must be balanced with the Council's legislative responsibilities under the Part 1, Schedule 6, Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014, Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR), Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (GDPR).

If any part of the information disclosed falls under those prescribed exemptions it must be discussed in Closed Council and as such any members of the public and press present will be excluded from the Meeting and broadcasting ceased.

Guidelines have been developed to support Lead Officers in determining which agenda items should be indicated for closed Council, however, the decision to go into closed session is for Council by simple majority vote.

2.48 The public shall be excluded from a Meeting of the Council or Standing Committee whenever it is likely that, during the transaction of an item of business, confidential information would be disclosed to them in breach of an obligation of confidence.

2.49 The Council may by resolution exclude the public from a Meeting of the Council or Committee (whether during the whole or part of the proceedings at the Meeting).

2.50 The resolution to exclude the public from a Meeting of the Council or Committee will be for such special reasons as may be predetermined on the agenda or specified in the resolution, being reasons arising from the nature of the business to be transacted or the proceedings at the Meeting.

~~The Mayor or Chairperson may at any time during the proceedings, if he/she thinks it necessary to secure order, direct the removal of any individual or group of individuals from the Council Chamber, or order the Council Chamber to be wholly cleared of members of the public.~~

2.51 The Council or Committee, having excluded the public, shall only consider the matter referred to it by resolution. If it should be deemed necessary to consider any matter not included in the resolution, the public shall be re-admitted and the Chairperson may ask leave of the Council to consider such additional matters as may be deemed desirable.

2.52 The Council or Committee, having excluded the public, shall not have the power to adjourn its own sitting or to adjourn a debate to a future sitting. If the business referred to in the resolution is not transacted, the Council or Committee may be resumed and a Member of the Council may move that the Council or Committee again exclude the public on a future day to deal with that business.

2.53 When ~~the Council a Committee~~, having transacted business with the public excluded, submits its report to the Council, a Motion for its adoption shall then be moved and put. No questions or discussion shall be permitted on the report or the Motion for its adoption.

2.54 The Mayor or Chairperson may at any time during the proceedings, if he/she thinks it necessary to secure order, direct the removal of any individual or group of individuals from the meeting, or order the meeting room to be wholly cleared of members of the public.

Deputations

- 2.55 Deputations, from any source, shall normally be admitted to address the Council or relevant Standing Committee provided the Clerk & Chief Executive has received **15 working days'** notice of intended Deputation and a statement of its objective. The Clerk & Chief Executive will assess the Deputation in accordance with the Protocol for the acceptance of applications to present to Council and Council Committees (attached as Appendix 2). Please note, representations to the Planning Committee will operate under the Protocol for Operation of the Planning Committee (attached as Appendix 3).
- 2.56 The Deputation shall be confined to the presentation of a statement, or copy of resolutions, and no more than two short addresses will be permitted by any two members of the Deputation. The totality of the address(es) may not exceed **10 minutes**, unless the Council/Committee decide that the Deputation is of strategic significance in which cases the time allowed will be at the discretion of the Council/Committee.
- 2.57 Deputations should not be repetitive and where possible, issues of a similar or linked nature should be contained in one Deputation. Where a Deputation has made a presentation to the Council, the Council may decline to accept another Deputation on the same issue from the same individual or group for a period of six months.

Order of Business - Council

2.58 ~~Subject to any statutory requirements to the contrary, t~~The order of business at every Meeting of the Council shall normally be as follows subject to any statutory requirements to the contrary:

Open Council

1. Formalities and Announcements
 - 1.1 Notice of Meeting
 - 1.2 Apologies
 - 1.3 [Declarations of Interest](#)
 - 1.4 Minutes of Council meeting
 - 1.5 Mayor's announcements
 5. ~~Declarations of Interest~~
2. Questions
 - 2.1 Members
 - 2.2 Public
3. Minutes of Committee Meetings [for approval or ratification](#)
4. Policy Framework and Budget
 - 4.1 Updates /new strategies or policies
 - 4.2 Performance
5. Strategic issues
6. Items for Decision – Open Council
7. Motions
8. [Sealing](#)
9. [Strategic Issues – Closed Council](#)
10. Items for Decision – Closed Council

Order of Business – Committee

2.59 ~~Subject to any statutory requirements to the contrary, t~~The order of business at a Meeting of a Standing Committee shall be as follows, subject to any statutory requirements to the contrary:

1. Notice of Meeting
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Items for [Consideration / Decision](#)
5. Items for Recommendation to Council
- 5.6. ~~Items for Noting~~
- 6-7. ~~Tabled questions~~
- 7-8. ~~Items for [Consideration / Decision](#) - Closed Committee~~
9. [Items for Recommendation to Council – Closed Committee](#)
10. ~~Items for Noting – Closed Committee~~
- 8-11. ~~Forward Plan~~

Order of Business – Planning Committee (Cross-Reference the Protocol for Operation of Planning Committee)

2.60 Subject to any statutory requirements to the contrary, the order of business at every Meeting of the Planning Committee shall be as follows:

1. Notice of meeting
2. Apologies
3. Declaration of interests
4. Introduction of Members and Officers
- 4.5. Minutes of Previous Planning Committee
- 5-6. Schedule of Planning Applications
- 6-7. Local Development Plan issues
- 7.8. Planning Appeals Update
- 8-9. Items for Consideration and Decision
- 9-10. Notifications

3. MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Keeping Minutes as evidence etc.

- 3.1 [Action](#) Minutes of the [proceedings-decisions](#) of a Meeting of the Council, or a Committee, shall be drawn up and kept by the Clerk & [Chief Executive](#) in line with the Protocol for the recording and operation of remote Meetings, Appendix 6, [as applicable](#). Minutes of meetings will be condensed, reflecting key points and succinct actions to be taken. The written record of Council decisions includes the reports, background papers or other documents forming part of those decisions. [Action](#) Minutes will reflect a record of the decisions made and the reasons for the decisions.
- 3.2 No discussion shall take place upon the Minutes of Council except upon their accuracy.
- 3.3 Any signed minute referred to in Standing Order 3.1 shall be received in evidence without further proof.
- 3.4 Until the contrary is proved, a Meeting of the Council or of a Committee or Sub-Committee in respect of the Minutes which have been made and signed shall be deemed to have been duly convened and held. All the Members present at the Meeting shall be deemed to have been duly qualified, and where the proceedings are of a Committee or Sub-Committee, the Committee or Sub-Committee shall be deemed to have been duly constituted and to have had power to deal with the matter referred to in the Minutes.

Signing Minutes

- 3.5 The Minutes of a Meeting of the Council and Standing Committees shall be signed at the next Meeting of the Council by the Chairperson, if approved by that Meeting.

Submission of Minutes

- 3.6 The Council will not consider Minutes of a Committee Meeting for approval if that Meeting is held less than five working days before the date of the Council Meeting. This may be dis-applied where a Committee considers the matter to be of extreme urgency and records such a decision in its minutes.
- 3.7 The Clerk & [Chief Executive](#) will also make available a decision log within five working days of the Council or Committee Meeting.
- 3.8 When a Committee's Minutes are submitted for approval the Chairperson of that Committee, or his/her representative, shall draw the Council's attention to any resolution or matter of an unusual or special character of those Minutes.

Minutes of Committees

- 3.9 A Motion or Amendment shall not be made or proposed, or any discussion allowed on the Minutes of Committees on any matter within the remit of a Committee, for which they exercised delegated powers. ~~The minutes of a Committee will be to either approve and adopt the decisions taken by the Committee under delegated authority or to approve and adopt any recommendations to Council which are then ratified as a decision of Council.~~
- 3.10 The minutes of a Committee referencing decisions taken under delegated authority will be approved for accuracy, the minutes adopted and the decision noted.
- 3.11 The minutes of a Committee referencing recommendations to Council will be approved for accuracy, the minutes adopted and any recommendations to Council may then be ratified as a decision of Council.
- 3.12 Council may choose to adopt and approve the minutes of a Committee or amend a recommendation of a Committee or refer a matter back to a Committee however any regulatory decisions taken by the Planning Committee or the Neighbourhoods and Communities Committee under delegated powers cannot be amended or referred back to Committee.
- 3.13 Any Member wishing to raise an issue regarding any matters appearing in the Minutes submitted to Council for approval must state his/her request in writing to the Clerk & Chief Executive, or relevant Director or Head of Service, to ensure it is received by the Chairperson of the Committee twenty-four hours before the commencement of the Council Meeting. The Member shall then be entitled to a reply from the Chair of the particular Committee.
- 3.14 If an issue is raised at the Meeting regarding any matter in the Minutes, without written notice, discussion of that issue shall only be permitted at the discretion of the Mayor, or in their absence the Deputy Mayor or presiding Member of Council.
- 3.15 Any matter in the Minutes of a Committee on which a request for reconsideration under Section 41 of the 2014 Act (Call-in) has been lodged with the Clerk & Chief Executive of the Council shall be identified and will not be the subject of discussion at that meeting.

4. MOTIONS (RULES OF DEBATE IN STANDING ORDER 7 APPLY)

A motion is about a matter for which the Council has a responsibility or which affects the Borough. It is put before a Council meeting for discussion or debate. The motion can be to adopt a certain course of action, to do an act or to declare a particular attitude.

~~Prior to being included in the papers relating to a Council Meeting Agenda, Following agreement at Council, where relevant, all Notices will be subject to a robust assessment in order to ensure all procedural, and legal and financial issues are fully addressed. This assessment process will be carried out by the Clerk & Chief Executive, supported by the relevant senior officers and/or legal advice. Only when the assessment process has been satisfactorily completed will the Notice of Motion be included in the Agenda papers. This information will be brought back to Council or Committee for final approval consideration.~~

4.1 Every Motion shall:

- (a) be relevant to some matter in relation to which the Council has power or duties; or
- (b) relate to a matter which directly affects the local government Borough or its residents.

4.2 The Council shall not consider or discuss any Motion relating to matters which are:

- (a) ultra vires the duties and responsibilities of the Council; or
- (b) outside the legal competence of the Council⁹.

~~This will be determined by the Clerk & Chief Executive, or Director, and the proposer and seconder of the motion will be notified by the Chief Executive in writing.~~

On Notice

4.3 Notice of every Motion, other than a Motion which may be moved without notice (under Standing Order 4.11), shall be submitted in writing (which includes electronic correspondence¹⁰) under Standing Order 4.1.

It must be signed by the Members of the Council giving the notice, and submitted to the Clerk & Chief Executive a minimum of five working days before the next Meeting of the Council.

The meaning of the Motion must be clear otherwise it shall be rejected. If rejected it can be resubmitted in clear language but not later than five working days before the Meeting.

⁹ The Clerk and Chief Executive should seek legal advice if necessary.

¹⁰ Electronic correspondence must be from the Elected Member's designated Council email address.

- 4.4 A Motion shall be rejected if the wording or nature of the Motion is considered unlawful or improper.
- 4.5 All notices shall be dated and numbered as received, and entered in a register to be kept for that purpose. This register shall be open to inspection by every Member of the Council.
- 4.6 A Notice of Motion shall be entered by the Clerk & Chief Executive in their proper place upon the summons paper in the order in which they are received, subject to compliance with the Protocol to Assess and Process a Notice of Motion. The Clerk & Chief Executive will not ordinarily accept more than two notices per meeting.
- 4.7 If a Motion set out in the summons is not moved either by a Member who gave notice, or by some other Member on his/her behalf, it shall, unless postponed by consent of the Council, be treated as withdrawn and shall not be moved without fresh notice.
- 4.8 If the subject matter of any Motion for which notice has been properly given comes within the remit of any Committee it shall, upon being appropriately proposed, moved and seconded and carried by majority vote be ~~stand~~ referred without discussion to that Committee, or to such other Committee as the Council may determine, for consideration and report. The presiding Chairperson may, if he/she considers it urgent and necessary to the completion dispatch of business, allow the Motion to be dealt with at the Meeting at which it is brought forward.
- 4.9 If a Notice of Motion fails to be considered at a Meeting of the Council, it will only be included on the summons paper for the following Meeting if submitted in writing to the Clerk & Chief Executive by the Member concerned and not later than five working days before the next Council Meeting.
- 4.10 Any Notice of Motion which fails to be considered at two consecutive Meetings will not be accepted for inclusion on the summons paper for a period of six months from the date of the second Meeting at which the matter has failed to be considered, unless in exceptional circumstances.

Without Notice

- 4.11 The following Motions may be moved without notice:
- a) To appoint a Chairperson of the Meeting at which the Motion is moved;
 - b) In relation to the accuracy of the minutes;
 - c) To change the order of business on the agenda;
 - d) To refer an issue(s) to an appropriate body or individual;
 - e) To appoint a Committee or Members thereof arising from an item on the summons for the Meeting;
 - f) To receive reports of adoption of recommendations of Committees or Officers and any resolutions flowing from them;
 - g) To withdraw a Motion;
 - h) To proceed to next business;
 - i) That the question be now put;

- j) To adjourn the debate;
- k) To adjourn a Meeting;
- l) To suspend Standing Orders, in accordance with Standing Order 16;
- m) To exclude the public and the press in accordance with S42 of 2014 Act; and
- n) To not hear further a Member named under Standing Order 14.3 or to exclude them from the Meeting under Standing Order 14.4.

5. AMENDMENTS

- 5.1 When a Motion or a proposal is under debate at any Meeting of the Council, an Amendment or further Motion shall not be received, with the exception of the following:
- a) To amend the proposal; or
 - b) That the Council do now adjourn; or
 - c) That the debate be adjourned; or
 - d) That the question be now put; or
 - e) That the Council do proceed to the next business.

To Amend the Proposal

- 5.2 An Amendment must be legitimate and within the scope of the notice convening the Meeting. It must not be a direct negative and must be relevant to the proposal which it seeks to amend. It also cannot be inconsistent with anything already agreed upon at the same Meeting. An Amendment must relate solely to the proposal, and not be, in effect, a new proposition on a different matter. It must also not place a greater responsibility on the Meeting than the original proposal.
- 5.3 An Amendment to a Motion shall be either:
- a) To refer a subject of debate to a Committee or to an Officer for consideration or re-consideration;
 - b) To leave out words;
 - c) To leave out words and insert others; or
 - d) To insert additional words;
- but such omission, insertion or addition of words shall not have the effect of directly negating the Motion before the Council.
- 5.4
- a) When an Amendment upon an original proposal has been moved, the question to be put shall be "That the Amendment be made".
 - b) Where any Amendment is agreed, the question to be put shall be "That the proposal, as amended, be agreed".
 - c) Where any Amendment is rejected the question of the substantive proposal shall be put.

That the Council do Now Adjourn

- 5.5 Any Member of the Council who has not already spoken to the proposal or Amendment then under debate may move "that the Council do now adjourn". Such a proposal must be seconded by another Member who has also not spoken

~~on the proposal or amendment.~~ The proposal does not ~~but it~~ need to be reduced ~~to submitted in~~ writing. The mover and seconder shall not speak beyond formally moving and seconding the proposal, which shall be put to the vote without debate.

- 5.6 In the event of the proposal for the adjournment being carried, the Chairperson shall (unless stated in the proposal) ~~notify members within two working days~~ ~~dates~~ ~~fix~~ the date for the adjourned Meeting for the continuation of the debate on the proposal or Amendment under discussion ~~at the time of the adjournment~~, and for the transaction of the remaining business (if any) on the agenda for the Meeting so adjourned.
- 5.7 If the proposal is not carried, a second proposal "that the Council do now adjourn" shall not be made within half-an-hour unless, in the opinion of the Chair, the circumstances are materially altered.

That the Debate be Adjourned

- 5.8 Any Member of the Council who has not already spoken to the proposal or Amendment then under debate may move "that the debate be adjourned". Such a proposal must be seconded ~~by another Member who has also not spoken on the proposal or amendment.~~ The proposal does not ~~but it~~ need ~~to not~~ be reduced ~~to submitted in~~ writing. The mover and seconder shall not speak beyond formally moving and seconding it.
- 5.9 Before putting to the Meeting a proposal "that the debate be adjourned", the Chairperson presiding shall call on the mover of the proposal or Amendment under discussion to reply on the question of adjournment and, after such reply, ~~a maximum of 2 minutes, subject to the discretion of the Chair~~ ~~time to be at the discretion of the Chair or a time limit of a maximum of two minutes, such time limit may be extended~~ which will not prejudice the right of the mover of a proposal to reply on the original question, the Chairperson presiding shall put the proposal for adjournment of the debate without further debate.
- 5.10 If the proposal is carried, the Council shall proceed to the next agenda item, and the discussion of the adjourned debate shall be resumed at the next Meeting of the Council unless a special Meeting of the Council shall be called for the purpose.
- 5.11 On resuming an adjourned debate, the Member who moved its adjournment shall be entitled to speak first. A second proposal "that the debate be adjourned" shall not be made within half-an-hour. A Member shall not move or second more than one proposal for the adjournment of the same debate.

That the Question be Now Put

- 5.12 Any Member who has not already spoken to the proposal or Amendment then under debate may move "that the question be now put". Such a proposal must be seconded by another Member who has also not spoken on the proposal or amendment. The proposal does not, but it need ~~to~~ be submitted in reduced to writing. The mover and seconder shall not speak beyond formally moving and seconding it.
- 5.13 If the Chairperson is of the opinion that the subject before the Council has been sufficiently discussed, he/she shall put the proposal "that the question be now put" to the vote without debate. If this proposal is carried, the proposal or Amendment under discussion shall be put to the Council.
- 5.14 If the proposal is not carried, a second proposal "that the question be now put" shall not be made on the discussion of the same question within half-an-hour.
- 5.15 The A- Member who proposed or seconded "that the question be now put" at 5.12 shall not move or second ~~more than one- a further~~ proposal "that the question be now put" on the discussion of the same question.

That the Council do Now Proceed to the Next Business

- 5.16 Any Member of the Council who has not already spoken to any proposal or Amendment then under debate may move, "that the Council do proceed to the next business". Such a proposal must be seconded by another Member who has also not spoken on the proposal or amendment. The proposal does not, but it need ~~to not~~ be reduced-submitted in to writing. The mover and seconder shall not speak beyond formally moving and seconding the proposal which shall be put to the vote without debate.
- 5.17 If the Chairperson is of the opinion that the subject before the Council has been sufficiently discussed, he/she shall put the proposal "that the Council do proceed to the next business" to the vote without debate. if the proposal is carried, the proposal or Amendment under discussion shall be put to the Council.-
- 5.18 When a proposal is carried "that the Council do proceed to the next business", the question under discussion shall be considered as dropped.
- 5.19 If the proposal is not carried, a second proposal "that the Council do proceed to the next business" shall not be made on the same question within half-an-hour.
- 5.20 The A- Member who proposed or seconded "that the Council do proceed to the next business" shall not move or second ~~more than one- a further~~ proposal "that the Council do proceed to the next business" on the discussion of the same question.

Amendment to Regulatory Decisions

- 5.21 No Amendment may be moved to a Minute which is a Regulatory Decision.
- 5.22 For the purposes of these Standing Orders, a Regulatory Decision is:
- a determination of an application for planning permission or any decision, determination, action, direction, order, approval, refusal, or enforcement action in exercise of powers of the Council as a local planning authority; or
 - any application for which the Council is the licensing authority; or
 - any decision made in relation to Council's regulatory functions¹¹.

¹¹ Please reference Protocol for the Operation of the Planning Committee provided as an appendix to Standing Orders.

6. QUESTIONS – Elected Members

- 6.1 This Section refers to questions which require research and verification of facts.
- 6.2 Any Member requiring further information regarding any matters appearing in the Reports of Committees submitted to the Council for approval ~~should~~ state his/her request in writing to the Clerk & Chief Executive or relevant Director or ~~relevant Assistant Director or~~ Head of Service three working days in advance of the meeting date. This is to ensure that it shall be in the hands of the Chairperson of the Committee ~~twenty-four-forty-eight~~ hours (two working days) before the commencement of the Council Meeting. Any such request ~~should~~ be entitled to a reply when the proceedings are submitted.
- 6.3 A Member may, if three working days' notice in writing has been given to the Clerk & Chief Executive, ask the Mayor of the Council, or the person presiding at any Committee, any question on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which directly affects the Borough. Questions should be concise, deal with one issue as a single issue and be relevant to the business of the Committee. In exceptional circumstances, more than one question may be submitted by a Member.
- 6.4 Every question shall be put and answered without discussion but the person to whom a question has been put may not be in a position to answer. If this is the case Standing Order 6.6-(d) shall be followed. If the person presiding permits, the Member asking a question may ask one relevant supplementary question which shall be put and answered without discussion. Any follow-up question must be in the context of the primary question.
- 6.5 If the person presiding at a Meeting considers that, due to special circumstances it is desirable that a question shall be asked at that Meeting, although due notice of the question has not been given, and if he/she is satisfied that as much notice as is possible has been given to the person of whom it is to be asked, he may permit the question to be asked.
- 6.6 An answer to a question may be given by the person to whom it is addressed or by a person on his behalf, and may take the form of:
- a) A direct oral answer;
 - b) A written response;
 - c) A reference to information contained in some publication; or
 - d) An answer will be provided to Members at the next appropriate Council or Committee Meeting.
- 6.7 Every question shall be relevant to some matter in relation to which the Council has functions.

7. RULES OF DEBATE

- 7.1 The rules of debate apply to all Council business. A Motion refers to any proposal, recommendation or matter formally submitted to Council with possible adoption as a resolution.

Mode of Address

- 7.2 The established mode of address is for a Member to speak clearly from their allocated position when addressing the [Council's Mayor or Chairperson](#). While a Member is speaking, the other Members should show respect, and rise only to make a Point of Order or in personal explanation.

A Member shall direct his/her speech to the Motion or matter under discussion or to a personal explanation or to a Point of Order.

Precedence in Speaking

- 7.3 Whenever two or more Members indicate to speak, the Chairperson shall decide who has precedence and call them in order.

Place of Member Speaking

- 7.4 A Member when addressing the Chairperson shall speak clearly from the place allocated to him/her in the Council Chamber.

Addressing the Council

- 7.5 Normally only Council Members shall address the Council. ~~However, t~~The Council may give consent to non-Members to make [an address](#)~~es to it~~.

Chairperson Rising During Debate

- 7.6 Whenever the Chairperson rises or otherwise calls the Meeting to order during a debate, any Member then speaking shall cease and the Council shall be silent.

Points of Order

- 7.7 If any Member is called to order while speaking he/she shall ~~resume his/her seat~~ [give way immediately](#). When the point of order has been disposed of, the Member may resume his/her address to Council.
- 7.8 A Point of Order shall relate only to an alleged breach of a Standing Order or statutory provision. The Member raising the Point of Order¹² shall specify the Standing Order or provision and indicate the way in which he/she considers it has been broken.
- 7.9 A Member may raise a Point of Order and shall be entitled to be heard immediately.

¹² A point of order refers to an interjection by a Member who does not have the floor to call to the Chairperson's attention an alleged breach of the Standing Orders.

7.10 The ruling of the Chairperson on a Point of Order shall not be open to discussion.

Motions and Amendments to be Submitted in Reduced-to-Writing and Seconded

7.11 A Motion or Amendment shall not be discussed unless it has been proposed and seconded. Also, unless notice has already been given in accordance with Standing Order 4.3, it shall, if required by the Chairperson presiding, be put into writing and handed to the Chairperson presiding before it is further discussed or put to the Meeting.

7.12 A Member when seconding a Motion or Amendment may, if he/she then declares his/her intention to do so, reserve his/her speech until a later period of the debate.

Alteration of Motion

7.13 A Member may alter a Motion of which he/she has given notice as proposed with the consent of the Meeting. The Meeting's consent will be signified without discussion.

7.14 A Member may alter a Motion which he/she has moved without giving notice with the consent of the Meeting and the seconder. The Meeting's consent will be signified without discussion.

7.15 Only alterations which could be made as an Amendment may be made.

Withdrawal of Motion

7.16 A Member may withdraw a Motion of which he/she has given notice under Standing Order 4.3 at any time after the Meeting has commenced provided that he/she has not moved the Motion or spoken on it and has the consent of the Meeting. The Meeting's consent will be signified without discussion.

7.17 A Member may withdraw any other Motions which he/she has moved with the consent of both the Meeting and seconder. The Meeting's consent will be signified without discussion.

7.18 No Member may speak on the Motion after the mover has asked permission to withdraw it unless permission is refused.

Member Shall Not Speak More Than Once

7.19 A Member who has spoken on any Motion shall not speak again whilst it is the subject of debate, except:

- a. At the Chairperson's discretion;
- b. To speak once on an Amendment moved by another Member;
- c. If the Motion has been amended since he/she last spoke, to move a further Amendment;
- d. If his/her first speech was on an Amendment moved by another Member to speak on the main issue whether or not the Amendment on which he/she spoke was carried;

- e. In the exercise of a right of reply given by Standing Order 7.25;
- f. On a Point of Order.

Duration of Speeches

- 7.20 Except with the permission of the Council, a Member, in introducing a Motion, shall not speak for more than ten minutes and in replying, for not more than five minutes. Any other Member shall not speak for more than 5 minutes.

Only One Motion/Proposal/Amendment May be Moved and Discussed at a Time

- 7.21 Only one Amendment may be moved and discussed at any one time. No further Amendment may be moved until the Amendment under discussion has been disposed of.
- 7.22 If an Amendment is not carried, other Amendments to the original Motion may be moved.
- 7.23 If an Amendment is carried, the Motion as amended takes the place of the original Motion. This becomes the substantive Motion to which any further Amendments are moved.

Chairperson Not to Receive Motion for Direct Negative

- 7.24 The Chairperson shall not receive a Motion for a direct negative to a question but, on the conclusion of the debate, the question shall be put and resolved in the affirmative or negative.

Mover's Right of Reply

- 7.25 The mover of a Motion has a right to reply at the close of the debate on the Motion and on any amendment to the Motion. The Member will speak for no more than 5 minutes in each case. He/she shall not otherwise speak on the Amendment. The mover of the Amendment shall have no right of reply to the Amendment debate.

8. VOTING

Majority

- 8.1 Subject to any statutory provisions to the contrary, any matter will be decided by a simple majority of those Members present and voting.
- 8.2 Regular voting will be taken by a show of hands of those Members present and voting, except resolved otherwise.
- 8.3 Any Member may request a recorded vote during debate and prior to a vote being taken. ~~When a recorded vote is requested this will also be taken by a show of hands.~~ The record shall show whether each Member present and voting gave their vote for or against that question or abstained.

Chairperson's Casting Vote

- 8.4 If there are an equal number of votes for and against, the Chairperson will have a second (i.e. casting) vote.

Qualified Majority (Mandatory)

A qualified majority is defined in the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014, S40(2) as "80 per cent of the votes of the Members present and voting on the decision".

This section applies to Standing Committees as well as Full Council.

- 8.7 A qualified majority shall be required in relation to the Council's decision on
 - a) The adoption of executive arrangements or prescribed arrangements as the Council's form of governance (section 19, 2014 Act);
 - b) The method to be adopted for the filling of positions of responsibility (Schedule 1, 2014 Act);
 - c) The method to be adopted for appointing Elected Members to Committees (Schedule 2, 2014 Act);
 - d) The exercise of the general power of competence in accordance with section 79 of the 2014 Act;
 - e) A Call-In made in accordance with section 41 (1) (b) of the 2014 Act; and
 - f) The suspension of Standing Orders.

9. CALL-IN PROCESS (MANDATORY)

The Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014 S41 requires the Council's Standing Orders to "make provision requiring reconsideration of a decision if 15 per cent of the Members of the Council (rounded up to the next highest number if necessary)" present to the Clerk & Chief Executive a requisition on either or both of the following grounds:

- a) That the decision was not arrived at after a proper consideration of the relevant facts and issues;
- b) That the decision would disproportionately affect adversely any section of the inhabitants of the district.

Decisions Subject to Call-In

9.1 The following decisions may be subject to Call-In in such a manner as is specified in these standing orders:

- a) A decision of the Council;
- ~~a) A decision of the Executive;~~
- ~~b) An executive decision taken under joint arrangements in accordance with section 26 of the 2014 Act;~~
- ~~c)b) A key decision taken by an Officer or Officers of the Council;~~
- ~~d)c) A decision taken by a Committee under delegated authority in accordance with section 7 of the 2014 Act;~~
- ~~e)d) A decision taken by a Committee to make a recommendation for ratification by the Council; and~~
- ~~f)e) A decision of the Council other than a decision to ratify a recommendation of the Committee.~~

9.2 The following decisions shall not be subject to Call-In:

- ~~a) A decision on a regulatory or quasi-judicial function which is subject to a separate appeal mechanism;~~
- b) A decision which is deemed to be the case of special urgency in accordance with regulation 26 of the 2014 Executive Arrangements Regulations;
- c) A decision where an unreasonable delay could be prejudicial to the Council's or the public's interest;
- d) A decision taken by an Officer or Officers which is not a key decision;
- e) A decision by the Executive which services only to note a report from or the actions of an Officer or Officers.

9.3 No decision shall be subject to Call-In more than once for each of the reasons specified in section 41(1) of the 2014 Act.

Call-In Admissibility

- 9.4 A Call-In must be submitted in writing to the Clerk & Chief Executive by 10am on the fifth working day following publication of the ~~decision~~ Decision Log to which the Call-In relates. If a Call-In is received after the specified deadline, it must be deemed inadmissible.
- 9.5 A Call-In shall:
- a) Specify the reasons why a decision should be reconsidered; and
 - b) Subject to Standing Order 9.8, be deemed inadmissible if the reasons are not specified.
- 9.6 Where reasons have not been specified on the requisition, the Clerk & Chief Executive must notify the Members making the requisition that it must be considered inadmissible unless reasons are specified in writing within the deadline.
- 9.7 In the case of a Call-In submitted under section 41(1)(b) of the 2014 Act, Members must state in reasons specified under Standing Order 9.5:
- a) The section of inhabitants of the Borough that would be affected by the decision; and
 - b) The nature and extent of the disproportionate adverse impact.
- 9.8 Within one working day of receipt of a Call-In, the Clerk & Chief Executive must confirm that:
- a) It has the support of 15% of the Members of the Council¹³; and
 - b) The reasons for the Call-In have been specified.
- 9.9 Within one working day of receipt of an admissible Call-In submitted under section 41(1)(b) of the 2014 Act, the Clerk & Chief Executive must seek the opinion of a practising Solicitor or Barrister in accordance with section 41(2) of the 2014 Act.
- 9.10 Where the legal opinion obtained in accordance with section 41(2) of the 2014 Act confirms that the Call-In has merit, the Clerk & Chief Executive must:
- a) Furnish the opinion to Members; and
 - b) Include the decision on the agenda for the next available Meeting of the Council, at which it will be taken by qualified majority.
- 9.11 Where the legal opinion in accordance with section 41(2) of the 2014 Act indicates that the Call-In does not have merit, the Clerk & Chief Executive must:
- a) Furnish the opinion to Members; and

¹³ 15% of 40 members is 6

- b) Make arrangements for the decision to be implemented or tabled for ratification by the Council, as appropriate.

The Call-In Process: Committee Arrangements

- 9.12 For the purposes of reconsideration of a decision pursuant to a Call-In the [minutes Decision Log](#) of a Committee which records a decision:
 - a) Taken under delegated authority; or
 - b) For ratification by the Councilmust be published within five working days of the conclusion of the Meetings.
The date of publication must be regarded as the date of publication for the purposes of Call-In.
- 9.13 If a Call-In is not received by the deadline specified in Standing Order 9.4, the decision specified in:
 - a) Standing Order 9.12 (a) must be implemented;
 - b) Standing Order 9.12(b) must be tabled for ratification by the Council.
- 9.14 The tabling for ratification of a decision specified in Standing Order 9.12(b), or a decision specified in Standing Order 9.12(a), must be postponed (unless the total level of support for the Call-In falls below 15% of the Members) until the Call-In has been resolved. The decision maker may rescind the decision at any time prior to the Call-In being resolved.
- 9.15 If an admissible Call-In is made in accordance with Standing Orders 9.4 and 9.5 and section 41(1)(a) of the 2014 Act, the Council must appoint an ad hoc Committee of the Council, the Membership of which will be:
 - a) The Chairpersons of all Committees of the Council; and
 - b) The Deputy Chairpersons of all Committees of the Councilto consider the process adopted by the original decision-making Committee whose decision is subject to Call-In.
- 9.16 The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Committee which was responsible for the decision which is the subject of the Call-In must not have voting rights at a Meeting of the Committee appointed in accordance with Standing Order 9.15.
- 9.17 The Member who submitted the Call-In, or a Member on their behalf, must be invited to attend the Meeting at which the decision subject to the Call-In is considered and may, upon the request of the Chairperson, address the Meeting, but must not have voting rights.
- 9.18 A Committee appointed in accordance with Standing Order 9.15 may:

- a) Refer the decision back to the decision maker;
- b) In the case of a decision taken under delegated authority, support the decision;
or
- c) In the case of a decision for ratification by the Council, refer the decision to Council.

9.19 Where a decision has been supported in accordance with Standing Order 9.18(b), that decision must:

- a) Be approved;
- b) Be inserted into the Register of Decisions; and
- c) Become operative from the date of the Meeting at which the Committee appointed in accordance with Standing Order 9.15 confirmed support for the decision.

10. POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY¹⁴, etc. – TIME LIMITS (MANDATORY)

- 10.1 Subject to Standing Order 10.2, in relation to positions of responsibility selected in accordance with paragraphs 2(1) and 2(2) of Schedule 1 of the 2014 Act, the period specified for –
- a) The nominating Officer to select a position of responsibility and the term for which it must be held; and
 - b) The person nominated to accept the selected position is 15 minutes.
- 10.2 An extension to the period specified in Standing Order 10.1 may be granted subject to the approval of the Council. Such an extension may be requested by
- a) The nominating Officer;
 - b) The person nominated to hold the selected position; or
 - c) Another Member.

¹⁴ Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014, Part 3, S6(1) – In relation to a Council the following are positions of responsibility:

- a) Chair of the Council;
- b) Deputy Chair of the Council;
- c) Chair of any Committee of the Council;
- d) Deputy Chair of any Committee of the Council;
- e) Member of a cabinet style executive of the Council;
- f) External representative of the Council.

A list of the Council's position of responsibility is maintained by the Clerk & Chief Executive and is made available as an appendix to the Standing Orders.

11. APPOINTMENT OF MORE THAN ONE COMMITTEE (MANDATORY)

- 11.1 Where the Council appoints more than one Committee at the same Meeting in accordance with paragraph 5 of Schedule 2 to the 2014 Act, for the purposes of determining the number of places that must be allocated across the parties and independent Members of the Council, it must agree –
- a) The number of Committees to be appointed; and
 - b) The number of Councillors that shall constitute the Membership of each Committee.
- 11.2 The total number of places to which a nominating Officer of a party may nominate Members who stood in the name of that party when elected must be calculated in accordance with paragraphs 2 to 4 of Schedule 2 to the 2014 Act and any resolution of the Council made thereunder.
- 11.3 A nominating Officer's function under paragraph 2(1)(b) of Schedule 2 to the 2014 Act shall be exercised in such manner as to ensure that –
- a) All Members of a Committee are not nominated by the same nominating Officer;
 - b) A nominating Officer of a party may nominate Members who stood in the name of that party to fill the majority of places on a Committee, if the majority of Members stood in the name of that party; and
 - c) Subject to (a) and (b), the number of Members nominated by each nominating Officer of a party, in so far as reasonably practicable, bear the same proportion to the number of places on that Committee as is borne by the number of Members who stood in the name of that party.
- 11.4 Nominations made in accordance with Standing Order 11.3 shall take into account any positions of responsibility on a Committee held by a Member who stood in the name of the party.
- 11.5 Allocation of Committee places will ordinarily be made at the first Annual Meeting in an election year for the ensuing year until the next Annual Meeting.

12. RESCISSION OF A PRECEDING RESOLUTION

- 12.1 A motion to amend or rescind a decision of the Council or the Committee shall not be valid within six months from the date of such decision unless:-
- a) the motion shall be brought forward as a recommendation of the Committee or Full Council concerned; or
 - b) the notice shall bear, in addition to the name of the Member who submits the motion, the signatures of at least one-quarter of the total number of Members of the Council¹⁵.

¹⁵ i.e. 10 councillors

13. COUNCIL SEAL

- 13.1 The seal of the Council shall be affixed to a document only on the authority of:-
- (a) resolution of the Council;
 - (b) a resolution of a Committee which the Council has empowered to authorise the use of the seal;
 - (c) a decision by the Council, or by a duly authorised Committee or Officer, to do anything where a document under the seal is necessary to complete the action.
- 13.2 The affixing of the seal shall be attested by the Mayor or Deputy Mayor and the Clerk & Chief Executive or Deputy Chief Executive or Director.

14. MEMBERS' CONDUCT

Speaking

- 14.1 When a Member speaks to the Council they must speak from the place allocated to them and address the Meeting through the Chairperson. If more than one Member wishes to speak, the Chairperson will ask one to speak and the others must wait.

Chairperson Standing

- 14.2 When the Chairperson ~~speaks~~ stands during a debate, any Member speaking at the time must ~~give way~~ ~~stop and sit down~~. The Meeting must be silent.

Member Not to be Heard Further

- 14.3 If at a Meeting any Member of the Council engages in misconduct by persistently disregarding the ruling of the Chair, or by behaving irregularly, improperly or offensively or by wilfully obstructing the business of the Council, the Chairperson or any other Member may move "that the Member named be not further heard" within this debate. The Motion, if seconded, shall be put and determined without discussion.

Member to Leave the Meeting

- 14.4 If the Member named continues to behave improperly after such a Motion is carried, the Chairperson or any other Member may move that either the Member leaves the Meeting or that the Meeting is adjourned for a specified period. If seconded, the Motion will be voted on without discussion.

General Disturbance

- 14.5 When the Chairperson is of the opinion that the due and orderly dispatch of business is impossible, he/she in addition to any other powers vested in him/her may, without the question being put to Members, adjourn the Meeting of the Council for such period as he/she in his/her discretion shall consider expedient.

15. DISTURBANCE BY THE PUBLIC

~~Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is committed to open and transparent decision making and where possible will conduct its business in public.~~ Where a member(s) of the public causes a disturbance this may impact on the Council's ability to conduct [its](#) business and the following Standing Order provides a mechanism to deal with such a disturbance.

Removal of a Member of the Public

- 15.1 If a Member of the public interrupts proceedings, the Chairperson will warn the person concerned that their behaviour is not acceptable and will be asked to leave if they continue.
- 15.2 If they continue to interrupt, the Chairperson will order their removal from the Meeting room.
- 15.3 If there is a general disturbance in any part of the Meeting room open to the public, the Chairperson may call for that part to be cleared.

16. SUSPENSION AND AMENDMENT OF STANDING ORDERS

- 16.1 A Member may move a Motion for the suspension of one or more of the Council's Standing Orders. A Motion under this Standing Order shall require the support of a qualified majority vote¹⁶ within the meaning of section 40 of the 2014 Act.
- 16.2 Suspension can only be for the duration of the Meeting and the Minutes of the Meeting must record the reason for the suspension.
- 16.3 Mandatory Standing Orders may not be suspended by Council.

Amendment

- 16.4 Any Motion to, add to, vary or revoke these Standing Orders will, when appropriately proposed, and seconded and carried by majority vote ~~be, stand-~~ adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary Meeting of the Council.

¹⁶ I.e. 80% of those members present and voting.

17. INTERPRETATION OF STANDING ORDERS

- 17.1 In the event of a difference of opinion on the interpretation of any part of the Standing Orders, after a short representation by each concerned party¹⁷, the ruling of the person presiding at any Meeting shall be deemed to be final and shall not be challenged at that Meeting.

¹⁷ In line with Standing Order 7.20 "Except with the permission of the Council, a Member, in introducing a Motion, shall not speak for more than ten minutes and in replying, for not more than five minutes. Any other member shall not speak for more than 5 minutes".

GLOSSARY

2014 Act	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.
2014 Executive Arrangements Regulations	Local Government (Executive Arrangements) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014.
2014 Standing Orders Regulations	Local Government (Standing Orders) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014.
Budget	The expenditure authorised by a Council under S3, Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.
Call-In	A requisition for the reconsideration as provided for in section 41(1) of the 2014 Act – that is a provision within Standing Orders "requiring reconsideration of a decision if 15 per cent of the Members of the Council (rounded up to the next highest number if necessary)" present to the Clerk & Chief Executive a requisition on either or both of the following grounds: a) That the decision was not arrived at after a proper consideration of the relevant facts and issues; b) That the decision would disproportionately affect adversely any section of the inhabitants of the district.
Clerk	Clerk & Chief Executive to the Council appointed under S41 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972.
Committee	Committee appointed under S7, 2014 Act.
Delegated Authority	Discharge of a function under authority fixed by a Council under S7, 2014 Act.
Decision maker	The body or person making an executive decision, a decision under delegated authority or a key decision.
Minutes	The official record of a Meeting, providing a summary of points to be remembered – it need not be verbatim.
Executive	A cabinet-style Executive or a streamlined Committee Executive as provided for in section 21(2) of the 2014 Act.
Executive decision	A decision taken by a decision maker in connection with the discharge of a function which is the responsibility of the Executive of a Council.

Key Decision	Means a decision under executive arrangements which is likely— to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's annual budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or to be significant in terms of the effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral areas in the local government Borough of the Council.
Qualified Majority	Defined in S40(2), 2014 Act as "in relation to a decision of a Council means 80 per cent of the votes of the Members present and voting on the decision". This section applies to Standing Committees as well as Full Council.
Member	Means a Member of the Council/Councillor.
Motion	Refers to any proposal, recommendation or matter formally submitted to Council with possible adoption as a resolution.
Point of Order	Refers to an interjection by a Member, who does not have the floor, to call to the Chairperson's attention an alleged breach of the Standing Orders.
Policy framework	The policies and procedures agreed by Council in relation to the delivery of a function/functions of Council.
2000 Act	Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.
Nominating Officer	The person registered under the 2000 Act as the party's nominating Officers; or A Member of the Council nominated under the 2000 Act for the purposes of Schedule 1 to the 2014 Act.
Party	A party registered under the 2000 Act in the Northern Ireland register.
Working day	A full day (9am – 5pm) – Monday to Friday E.g. three working days would be from 9am Monday until 5pm Wednesday. Please note: public and statutory holidays are not included as 'working days'
Summons of Meeting	The Notice of Meeting and Agenda items, which can include electronic format.

Appendix 1: Scheme of Delegation and Financial Regulations

Both are available from Council's website from the following page:
<https://www.midandeantrim.gov.uk/council/constitution>

Appendix 2: Protocol for the acceptance of applications to present to Council and Council Committees



Protocol for the acceptance of applications to present to Council and Council Committees

Approved Date	06 June 2022 <u>09 June 2025</u>
Review Date	June 202 <u>6</u> 3
Related Legislation/Applicable Section of Legislation	
Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines, Standards, Frameworks	
Replaces	Protocol for the acceptance of applications to present to Council and Council Committees – Shadow Council
Policy Lead (Name/Position/Contact details)	
Sponsor Directorate	Chief Executive's Office
Version	6 <u>7</u> .0

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This protocol defines the process for the acceptance of requests to present to Council by external organisations, groups or individuals.
- 1.2 Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is committed to engaging with communities, groups and individuals to promote open debate and inform service delivery. This engagement, however, must be balanced with the volume of work and decision making required by Council and its constituent committees during public meetings.
- 1.3 This protocol puts in place a process by which Elected Members are enabled to engage with communities, groups and individuals in the most effective and efficient way.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This protocol applies to all external organisations, groups and individuals e.g. community groups, charities, religious organisations, lobbyists, voluntary bodies, statutory bodies.

3. Protocol Detail

- 3.1 Requests to present to Council and/or any Council Committee must be received in writing, clearly stating the purpose and any hoped for outcome(s).
- 3.2 All requests to present to Council or Council Committee will be reviewed by the Chief Executive or the Committee Lead Officer respectively.
- 3.3 Based on the information provided in the application, the Chief Executive/Committee Lead Officer will make recommendation to Council or Committee to:
 - a. invite applicant to make a presentation to Council or relevant committee;
 - b. invite applicant to an engagement event; and/or
 - c. invite applicant to submit a written presentation.
- 3.4 In making this recommendation the Chief Executive or Committee Lead Officer will have due regard to the following:
 - Will the presentation support Council in the delivery of its vision and values?
 - Will the presentation support equality and promote good relations?
and
 - Will the presentation inform strategic debate and/or inform service delivery?

- 3.5 A report detailing all requests to present, along with recommendations, will be provided to Council or the relevant Committee as a standing item.

Elected members, based on this report, will determine whether to:

- a. invite applicant to make a presentation to Council or relevant committee;
- b. invite applicant to an engagement event; and/or
- c. invite applicant to submit a written presentation.

- 3.6 This protocol does not preclude Council's right to invite any organisation, group or individual to make presentation.

**Application to present to Council
Assessment Form**



Presentation requested by:	
-----------------------------------	--

Purpose of presentation:	
---------------------------------	--

Does presentation.....	Yes/No	Please provide reason for decision
Support Council in the delivery of its vision and values		
Support equality and promote good relations		
Inform strategic debate and/or inform service delivery		

Recommendation	Yes/No	Please provide reason for decision
Invite applicant to make presentation to Council/Council Committee		
Invite applicant to engagement event		
Invite applicant to make written presentation		

Signed:	
Dated:	

Appendix 3: Protocol for Operation of Planning Committee

This will be brought as a separate report and an updated version will be added.

Appendix 4: Protocol for the Establishment of a Sub-Committee



Protocol for the Establishment of a Sub-Committee

Approved Date	09 June 2025 22 July 2024
Review Date	June 2025 6
Policy Lead (Name/Position/Contact details)	Director of Corporate Services Chief Executive
Sponsor Directorate	Chief Executive
Version	109

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Mid and East Antrim Borough Council have agreed a committee governance structure to ensure the effective and efficient conduct of Council Business.
- 1.2 Council has the authority to establish committees and sub-committees under S. 7(1) of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council's Committee governance structure is set out below:

Meeting	Membership
Full Council	All 40 Elected Members
Planning Committee	12 Elected Members
Neighbourhoods and Communities Committee	20 Elected Members
Environment and Economy Committee	20 Elected Members
Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee	20 Elected Members
Audit & Scrutiny Committee	8 Elected Member 1 independent Member
Personnel Committee	5 Elected Members
Standards Committee	8 Elected Member 1 independent Member

All Committee Places were allocated to political parties at the Annual General Meeting on a proportional basis using the provisions contained within Schedule 2 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (i.e. Quota Greatest Remainder) and any sub-committee being established will follow the same method.

- 1.3 From time to time, Council or a Committee may decide to establish a sub-committee, to provide a more informal opportunity for discussion and consideration of specific issues outside of the formal committee system.
- 1.4 Council or a Committee may establish a Working Group for a limited time with a clearly defined need and governance arrangements, have specific terms of reference and a start and finish date. All Working Groups will disband once they have achieved their/its goals.
- 1.5 The lifespan of a working group should last for a limited time period. If a longer-term sub-committee is required, this may exist for a number of months or years. Council or Committee may establish sub-committees which will be known as Business and Community Partnership Boards which may include members of the business and community sectors and linked with delivery Corporate Plan objectives. The Sponsor Committee should set a timeframe for the work, which will be subject to regular review.

2. Scope

- 2.1 A sub-committee may be a group of Elected Members, including Council Officers, who are asked to consider specific issues, as defined within their terms of reference, under the direction of Council or a Committee. Membership can include external partners, if agreed by the sponsor committee.
- 2.2 The specific issue will have relevance and importance to Council and establishing a sub-committee would provide more focus to enhance the development of the issue.
- 2.3 sub-committees have no decision-making powers, however they can make recommendations to their sponsor committee for consideration.
- 2.4 The Sponsor Committee retains overall oversight and authority for any sub-committee established under its remit.

3. Proposal to Establishing a sub-committee

- 3.1 A sub-committee may be formed under the sponsorship of Full Council or a Council Committee, when:
 - a. The issue has relevance to the Council;
 - b. Consideration of the issue at a sub-committee would aid and facilitate discussion; and
 - c. The issue is under the remit of the sponsor Committee.
- 3.2 A proposal to establish a sub-committee will be considered by the sponsor Committee/ Council and will be agreed by a simple majority of the Committee/ Council.
- 3.3 A terms of reference and membership arrangements for the sub-committee will be considered by the sponsor Committee/ Council and will be agreed by Quota Greatest Remainder ensuring proportionality. Council should endeavour to ensure appropriate representation, whilst also taking account of the geographical mix. A 'Terms of reference template' is available at Appendix A.
- 3.4 The Terms of Reference should clearly define a timeframe for the lifespan of the sub-committee. This should be subject to regular review.
- 3.5 The Sponsor Committee may feel it appropriate to agree an outline terms of reference and permit the sub-committee to further expand and review these at their inaugural meeting, before reporting back to the sponsor committee to seek approval.
- 3.6 When establishing a sub-committee, the sponsor Committee may wish to agree a Chair and provide an indication of the frequency of meetings, or alternatively leave this to the sub-committee for consideration. Good Practice would suggest

the Chair of the sub-committee should also be a member of the sponsor Committee.⁴ Operation of a sub-committee

- 4.1 A sub-committee meeting shall be called with five working days' notice, via Decision Time¹⁸.
- 4.2 An Action note will be taken of discussions, and presented to the next meeting of the sub-committee, prior to being presented to the next available sponsor committee meeting.
- 4.3 In the case where a sub-committee meets less frequently, to ensure efficient operation the action notes can be circulated to Members for comment and agreement before being presented to sponsor committee

5. Governance

- 5.1 sub-committee's will operate under the direction and guidance of full Council or their sponsor committee.
- 5.2 Any amendment to the terms of reference or membership of the sub-committee must receive prior approval by the sponsor Committee/Full Council.
- 5.3 Upon completion of its terms of reference and specified goals the chairperson of the sub-committee will provide an overview report of the work undertaken by the group and how it has met its goals.
- 5.4 The overview report will include any final recommendations, including the recommendation to disband to the sponsor Committee/Full Council.
- 5.5 The sponsor Committee/Full Council will consider the recommendation to disband and will agree to this by simple majority.
- 5.6 All sub-committee in operation will be reviewed following the AGM, with a position report on their status presented to Council.

6. Monitoring and Review

- 6.1 This policy will be kept under review to ensure compliance with any changes in legislation or best practice.

¹⁸ In circumstances where external partners are included in sub-committee, it may not be suitable to use Decision Time, and papers will be issued via email.

Appendix 1

Terms of Reference template
Name of sub-committee

The text relates to Environmental health and is for illustrative purposes

1. Purpose

<The purpose of the sub-committee is respond to new legislation in relation to Environmental Health regulation>

2. Objectives

- To identify all new legislation in relation to Environmental Health regulation
- Address policy and resource gaps within Council
- Research best practice in relation to addressing these policy and resource gaps
- Make recommendation to Operations Committee as to how best to address any policy and resources gaps, within a 12 month period

3. Membership

*Chairperson
Deputy Chairperson
Elected Members
Council Officers*

4. Meeting arrangements

<The sub-committee will meet as and when required; weekly; monthly; quarterly>

5. Reporting structure

<The sub-committee will report and make recommendation to the Operations Committee, within a [defined period].

The sub-committee will be required to complete its objectives within [defined time period], and this should be reported to its sponsor committee.

Appendix 5: Protocol for Public Questions 2025



Protocol for Public Questions

Approved Date	May 2025
Review Date	June 2026
Related Legislation/Applicable Section of Legislation	
Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines, Standards, Frameworks	MEA Standing Orders
Replaces	
Policy Lead (Name/Position/Contact details)	Director of Corporate Services Chief Executive
Sponsor Directorate	Corporate Services
Version	2

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Procedure for Submission of Public Questions
3. Assessment of Questions Submitted
4. Presentation and Response to Public Questions in the Meeting

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Protocol outlines the process for the submission, assessment and asking of questions by members of the public at Mid and East Antrim Full Council meetings.
- 1.2 At each Ordinary Meeting of Council (except for the Annual General Meeting) a period of up to 15 minutes will be available to allow questions that have been submitted by members of the public who live, work or study in the Borough.
- 1.3 Any questions which are deemed to constitute either a request for information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or a complaint under the MEA Complaints procedure will be dealt with through the relevant process and the questioner will be notified accordingly.

2. Procedure for Submission of Public Questions

- 2.1 Public questions must be submitted by 12.00pm on the fifth working day prior to the Full Council meeting (normally a Monday) using the relevant form on the Council website. This means that for a Council meeting on Monday, the question must be submitted by 12.00pm on the previous Monday.
- 2.2 If a person is unable to complete the on-line or paper form themselves, they should seek their own support to complete it with the help a friend/family member/representative as Council are unable to assist in completing the form.
- 2.3 Each question must give the name and address of the questioner.
- 2.4 Public questions should be concise and written in no more than 100 words.
- 2.5 No person may submit more than one question to a meeting and no more than one question may be asked on behalf of an organisation at a meeting.
- 2.6 No question may be sub-divided into more than two related parts.
- 2.7 Public questions must relate to matters which fall within the remit of the Council and relate to Council functions.
- 2.8 Questions that have been accepted will be published on the Council's website along with the name of the questioner after the meeting.

3. Assessment of Questions Submitted

3.1 A question may be rejected if it:

- (a) is not relevant to a matter for which the Council has a responsibility or which affects the Borough;
- (b) is illegal, improper, irregular, frivolous or offensive;
- (c) is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the previous six months;
- (d) will, if answered, disclose confidential or exempt information;
- (e) relates to a planning law or licensing application;
- (f) relates to a matter or issue in respect of which a response has already been given under the Council's complaints procedure or which is currently being dealt with in accordance with the complaints procedure or other formal process, such as court or tribunal proceedings or which is the subject of threatened court or tribunal proceedings by the person asking the question or a person or group which they represent;
- (g) relates to a matter or issue of a purely personal concern to the individual asking the question or their family members;
- (h) is a personal opinion;
- (i) is lengthy or a speech; or
- (j) is unintelligible.

3.2 The Chief Executive along with the Mayor/Chair will make a final determination on whether a question submitted may be rejected under Council's Standing Orders.

3.3 If a question is rejected, the reasons will be notified to the questioner in writing.

3.4 The questions will be put to the Council in order of those received, until the 15 minutes slot is used.

3.5 Any question which cannot be dealt with at the meeting, because of lack of time, will be dealt with by a written answer to be sent within five working days of the Council.

4. Presentation and Response to Public Questions in the Meeting

- 4.1 The Mayor will deal with questions at the Full Council meeting in the order in which they were received.
- 4.2 A questioner may attend in person or join the meeting via remote access to ask their question; but they may only ask the question as written and will not be permitted to alter the question any further. Should a questioner not adhere to the Protocol, Council will either ask them to leave the Chamber or remove them from the remote access.
- 4.3 When a questioner does not attend in person an officer will read the question.
- 4.4 Once the response to the question has been read out at the meeting, the questioner is not permitted any supplementary questions.



Appendix 6: Council Decision Making Process

Council Decision Making Process

Approved Date	09 June 2025 22 July 2024
Review Date	June 2026 5
Related Legislation/Applicable Section of Legislation	Local Government Act (NI) 1972 Local Government Act (NI) 2014 NI Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors 2014
Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines, Standards, Frameworks	Constitution and Standing Orders Equality Scheme
Replaces	New
Policy Lead (Name/Position/Contact details)	Head of Corporate Services Interim Director of Corporate Services Chief Executive
Sponsor Directorate	Chief Executive
Version	98

Revision record

Date	Version	Revision Description
	Draft 1	Draft for consideration by Policy & Resources Committee
	1	Approved by Full Council
06.06.17	2	Presented for consideration at AGM 06.06.17 No changes
05.06.18	3	Presented for consideration at AGM 05.06.18
20.05.19	4	Presented for consideration at AGM 20.05.19 No changes
01.06.20	5	Presented for consideration at AGM 01.06.20 No changes
07.06.21	6	Presented for consideration at AGM 07.06.21 No substantive changes
06.06.22	7	Presented for consideration at AGM 06.06.22 No substantive changes
5 June 2023	8	Revisions for AGM
22 July 2024	9	Revisions for Full Council

1. Introduction

Council is required to make careful and reasoned decisions which are lawful and appropriate. Within Council's decision making process Elected Members have a responsibility to acquaint themselves with all the necessary information to allow them to make a decision. If they feel they have not been provided with the necessary information they should ask for it before making their decision.

In order to facilitate the decision making process there are rules and arrangements in place. Some of these are statutory, some are guidance and good practice and some have been agreed by the Council to facilitate the smooth running of decision making processes. The main rules and arrangements are summarised below:

1.1 Statutory Framework

Council cannot exercise any function without holding the appropriate authority in law. If a council acts without authority its decisions or expenditure may be held to be "ultra vires" meaning outside the powers of the Council.

The main legislation setting the context of the decision making authority of Council is:

- Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972
- Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011
- Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011
- Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014

In addition the 2014 Act makes provision for a new ethical standards framework for councillors including a mandatory Code of Conduct for Councillors.

1.2 Council Governance Framework

Good governance arrangements assist the Council to ensure the way it operates is based on sound and effective processes. The Council's agreed Governance Framework is outlined in its constitution. The constitution is available on the Council website and is updated annually following the Annual General Meeting.

The decision making of the Council is shaped by its agreed Governance framework as set out in key documents including:

- Standing Orders;
- Scheme of Delegation;
- Financial Regulations;
- Corporate Plan;
- Community Plan;
- Local Development Plan (in development);

- Equality Scheme;
- Approved Strategies, Policies and Procedures;
- Annual financial plan (estimates) business plans and budgets;
- Performance Improvement Plan; and
- Corporate Risk Register.

These documents are developed and approved by Council and include agreed monitoring and review arrangements.

Workshops and training sessions are organised for Councillors in consultation with the Elected Member Development Charter Steering Group, as required to build their capacity and keep up to date with changes in statutory requirements and/or the wider external environment and its impacts and opportunities for Council strategy.

The Chief Executive is the Council's principal adviser on policy and procedural matters and leads the employees of the Council.

He/she is responsible for ensuring the efficient and effective implementation of the Council's governance arrangements and implementation of its agreed programmes, policies and decisions. This includes the provision of timely and good quality reports and information on which decisions are based. Where a range of options are available, reports should assess the options against overall Council Strategy and duties and assess the risks and long term implications of each option. On occasion the Chief Executive and/or Councillors may request additional specialist or legal advice when dealing with complex or contentious issues.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Process is:

- to provide Elected Members and officers with a summary of the Governance Framework within which decisions are considered; and
- to assist them to critically self-evaluate their own decision making process against recognised good governance criteria and satisfy themselves that decisions made by the Council are lawful and appropriate.

3. Scope

This process is a guidance tool for Elected Members and Senior Officers and does not replace statutory rules or guidance.

4. Decision Making Process

4.1 General

When taking part in council meetings, and when making decisions relating to council business, Elected Members must do so objectively and with an open mind. Members must act fairly and take proper account of the public interest during the decision making process.

Council's decisions must take account of all the relevant facts and policies. Members must be satisfied that they are in possession of all the relevant and material information they need to make a proper decision on the matter before them. If Members feel they require further information they should ask for this to be made available before they make their decision.

Information to inform decision making should normally be provided to Members in writing, in advance of the meeting, so that they have had a proper opportunity to consider it.

In addition, if Members seek advice from, or advice is offered to Members by, council officers under their statutory functions and duties, Members must have regard to that advice before reaching their decision.

4.2 Context

4.2.1 The **Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014** sets the context for decision making:

- Decisions are taken and recorded formally at meetings of Council and its Committees;
- The majority of decisions made by Council are determined by a simple majority of those present at the meeting;
- In the event of equal votes the Mayor/Chair will have a casting vote;
- Certain decisions (as set out in Standing orders) require support of 80% of those present and voting;
- At least 15% of Members may request that a decision is reviewed (known as "call in") if they feel that either not all information has been taken into account or it would adversely affect a section of inhabitants of the Borough. (Procedures to be followed are set out in Standing Orders).

The 2014 Act also provides the discretion for Council to arrange for the discharge of its functions by delegation to a Committee, sub-Committee or Officer. Section 7 (3) sets out functions which may only be discharged by the Council itself.

The Council has determined to operate a committee system as permitted by Paragraph 19 of the 2014 Act.

4.2.2 Council powers are categorised into three areas:

- Express Powers: those which are clearly provided for by legislation;
- Implied Powers: those which can be reasonably read into the legislation;
- Incidental or Consequential Powers: those which can reasonably be said to be necessary companions to the express powers.

An additional statutory power contained within the 2014 Act is the General Power of Competence giving the Council the power to do anything an individual may do, unless specifically prohibited.

4.2.3 The general legal principles derived from case law – *Provincial Picture Houses Ltd v Wednesbury Corporation [1948]*, known as **the Wednesbury Principles** require a local authority in reaching a decision to:

- Take into account all relevant factors;
- Leave out of account all irrelevant factors; and
- Not reach a decision which a local authority, acting reasonably, could not reach.

These principles are enshrined into the decision making frameworks of public organisations.

4.2.4 Part 8 of the Northern Ireland Local Government **Code of Conduct for Councillors**¹⁹ sets out the rules that relate to the conduct expected from Councillors when participating in meetings or reaching decisions regarding the business of the Council as follows:

- (a) do so objectively, on the basis of the merits of the circumstances involved, and in the public interest;
- (b) have regard to any relevant advice provided by your council's officers, in particular, by the Chief Executive, the Chief Financial Officer (where appropriate), or the Council's legal advisors;
- (c) take into account only relevant and material considerations and discount any irrelevant or immaterial considerations;
- (d) give reasons for your decisions, when required to do so, in the interests of fairness, openness and accountability and in accordance with any statutory requirements;
- (e) act in accordance with any relevant statutory criteria;
- (f) act fairly and be seen to act fairly;

¹⁹ Approved by the Northern Ireland Assembly on 27 May 2014

- (g) ensure that all parties involved in the process are given a fair hearing (insofar as your role in the decision making process allows);
- (h) not prejudge or demonstrate bias, or be seen to prejudge or demonstrate bias, in respect of any decision;
- (i) not organise support for, or opposition against, a particular recommendation on the matter being considered;
- (j) not lobby other councillors on the matter being considered;
- (k) not comply with political group decisions on the matter being considered, where these differ from your own views;

Section 4.15 of the [Guidance for Councillors](#) issued by the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Complaints provides more useful information and guidance in respect of the principles which Elected Members should adhere to in making decisions in relation to this.

4.2.5 Article 10 of the **Council Constitution** states that decisions of the Council should be made in accordance with the following principles:

- Proportionality (meaning the action must be proportionate to the results to be achieved);
- Due consultation (including the taking of relevant professional advice);
- Respect for human rights, equality and fairness;
- Presumption in favour of openness;
- Clarity of aims and desired outcomes;
- Due consideration to be given to alternative options;
- Reasons for the decisions to be given provided there is no breach of confidentiality.

4.2.6 **Standing Orders** set out the order of business for meetings of Council and its Committees and each Committee has an agreed Terms of Reference. Minutes are kept and formally approved as the official record of Council business and can be used as evidence in law to verify Council decisions. The Local Government Auditor will also review minutes as part of the annual audit arrangements to ensure that actions taken in the administration of Council business have been properly considered and authorised.

The rules of debate, the conduct expected from Members during meetings and the voting arrangements are also set out in Standing Orders and are managed within the meeting by the Mayor/Chair of the Council or Committee. Voting is generally conducted by a show of hands but on the request of any Member a recorded vote can be taken and recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

- 4.2.7 Arrangements are also in place to facilitate requests to present to Council by external organisations, groups or individuals. Engagement of this nature is useful to promote open debate and inform service delivery, but needs to be balanced with the volume of work and relevance to the decision making process. A protocol defining the process for considering applications to present has been approved by Council as an appendix to Standing Orders. Alternative methods of engagement are also used to gauge public opinion, such as consultations, workshops and public meetings and other communication forums.
- 4.2.8 Some decisions of Council, such as Planning and Licensing are highly regulated and it is important that these decisions are made within the parameters of the relevant regulation and legislation. The Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors sets out specific rules in relation to planning which recognises Councillors' role in representing the views of the local community. There is a requirement to ensure that decisions are not made without balancing all the facts and evidence presented for and against a decision and for ensuring that decisions are based on sound planning considerations. Council includes as an appendix to its Standing Orders a **Protocol for the Operation of Planning Committee** which sets out the specific rules Council has agreed for considering planning applications.
- 4.2.9 Council has an approved **Scheme of Delegation** which provides the framework and guidance for the powers delegated to Committees of Council and to senior officers within the Council and covers the extent of delegation across the Council. This includes:
- Powers which cannot be delegated by Council i.e. must remain with Full Council;
 - Powers delegated to a Committee of Council; and
 - Powers delegated to an Officer of Council.
- Any decision taken under a Delegated Power is considered to be a decision of the Council.

5. Ethical Considerations – Principles and Values

- 5.1 The Councillor Code of Conduct is based on 12 Principles of Conduct intended to promote the highest possible standards of behaviour for Councillors. These are:
- **Public Duty:** uphold the law and act in the interests of the community as a whole;
 - **Selflessness:** act solely in the public interest;
 - **Integrity:** do not allow yourself to be influenced for personal interest;

- Objectivity: make choices based on merit;
- Accountability: be available for scrutiny and clear on your reasoning;
- Openness: give reasons for decisions;
- Honesty: declare any private interests and take steps in relation to conflicts of interest;
- Leadership: lead by example to maintain trust and confidence;
- Equality: promote equality of opportunity;
- Good Relations: promote a culture of respect, equity and trust and embrace diversity;
- Respect: refrain from rude or offensive behaviour or personal attack;
- Good Working Relationships: Between Councillors – abide by Standing Orders; between Councillors and employees – promote professional and courteous relationships and Protocol for Relationships between Councillors and employees

5.2 In addition, Council has agreed its own values to assist with realising its Vision:

- Respect: establishing a culture of openness, trust and value;
- Excellence: striving to be the best we can be by efficiently and effectively managing and deploying resources in order to maximise outcomes;
- A teamwork approach: working together and supporting each other in true partnership to make the vision of Mid and East Antrim a reality;
- Leadership and commitment: through strong leadership we will give direction, provide support and empower everyone to play their role in delivering the vision and strategic priorities for all our people;
- Integrity: to support a spirit which enables honesty, accountability and trust throughout;
- Service innovation: we will empower people to express their ideas and harness their creative skills through supporting them to be transformative; and
- Equality and fairness; to recognise and value diversity and promote opportunity and equal access to services.

In addition each individual will have their own core values and beliefs which need to be balanced with these mandatory and corporate values to ensure conflicts do not arise.

6. Ethical Considerations – Conflict of Interests

- 6.1 A Conflict of Interest arises when there is a conflict between public duty and private interest where the private interest could improperly influence the performance of official duty.

Councillors are required to register personal interests and review this at least annually. They are also required to declare any personal interest at meetings of the Council and Committees where they relate to a matter coming before the meeting.

An interest does not automatically mean there is a conflict with public duty.

- 6.2 A **pecuniary interest** means your business interest, e.g. your employment, trade, profession, contracts, or any company with which you are associated and your wider financial interests, e.g. investments, and assets such as land and property.

- 6.3 A **direct pecuniary interest** is one which you personally (or your spouse or civil partner or family member) may benefit from and an **indirect pecuniary interest** is one where your employer, your partner in a legal partnership, a company in which you have shares, or a body of which you are a trustee or director or member, such as a club or charity, may benefit as a consequence of the decision.

When you declare a pecuniary interest, either direct or indirect, you must not speak or vote on the matter in which you have the interest and you must withdraw from the meeting during the discussion.

- 6.4 A **non-pecuniary interest** can include interests that arise through a position of responsibility in, or membership of, a club, society or organisation. This will be considered significant if, it falls within any of the categories of interest listed in paragraph 5.2 of the Code of Conduct or you anticipate that a decision on the matter might reasonably be considered by a member of the public to benefit or disadvantage you to a greater extent than other Council constituents. The Code makes clear that it is your personal responsibility to determine whether you have a significant non-pecuniary interest.

Generally when you declare a non-pecuniary interest, you must not speak or vote on the matter in which you have the interest and you must withdraw from the meeting during the discussion.

However the Code makes provision for you to remain in the meeting if you consider that it would benefit your Council to do so.

You may speak and vote if:

- At least half of the Council or Committee would otherwise be required to withdraw from the meeting due to their personal interest in the matter, or
- Your withdrawal, together with that of other Councillors required to withdraw due to personal interest would leave the Council or Committee without a quorum.

You should take advice from the Chief Executive or Senior Officer present at the meeting in relation to this.

You may also remain in a meeting and speak on a matter in which you have declared a significant non-pecuniary interest, if your interest arises because you are a member of a public body or a member, or supporter, of a charity, voluntary body or other organisation formed for a public purpose. You must not vote on any matter directly affecting the finances or property of the organisation if you are a member of the organisation's management committee or governing body, except where you have been appointed by your council as a representative.

However if you hold a position of responsibility i.e. Chair / Vice Chair / Treasurer / Secretary on such a body you must not vote.

7. Decision Making

- 7.1 In order to ensure consistency and provide guidance, Council has agreed Policies and Procedures and Protocols for routine and regular issues to assist decision making within agreed parameters. Policies are considered and approved as Council decisions recorded in Council minutes and maintained in a central policy register. All policies are subject to regular review.

Not every situation needs a policy or guideline and they may not cover all circumstances. Policies will also often provide flexibility for a range of options to be considered within defined parameters.

- 7.2 When exercising their discretion in considering decisions it is common that Council policy will reflect the policy of the controlling party and voting will be according to party lines. However the Code of Conduct requires that Councillors must not surrender their individual discretion and must exercise their individual judgement.
- 7.3 In order to ensure Council business is conducted expediently it is important to weigh up the significance and impact of decisions and to act proportionately. It is important to assess whether decisions can be made quickly or can wait.

8. Monitoring, evaluation and review

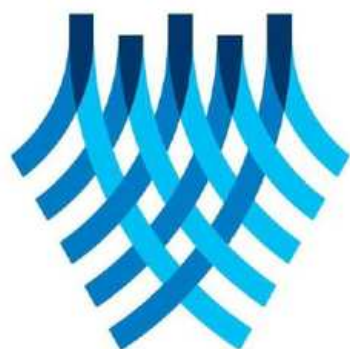
This Process will be reviewed annually at the Annual General Meeting.

9. Definitions and abbreviations

10. Supporting documents

11. References

Appendix 7: Protocol for the recording and operation of remote Meetings



**Mid & East
Antrim**
Borough Council

**Protocol for the Recording and
Operation of Remote Meetings**

Commented [SW1]: Grace - could this be added in. This isn't changing. Just make sure it's the most up to date version.

Commented [GC2R1]: Added

Updated: July 2024

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council's Constitution sets out a number of key governing documents, in particular the Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation, copies available on the following links:

- Standing Orders https://www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk/downloads/Standing_Orders.pdf
- Scheme of Delegation https://www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk/downloads/Scheme_of_Delegation.pdf

The Standing Orders set out the written rules of Council, and ensure business is properly regulated in an efficient, fair and legal manner. The Protocol for remote meetings forms part of the Council's Standing Orders.

This Protocol applies notwithstanding any prohibition or other restriction contained in Standing Orders or any other rules of the Council governing a Council meeting.

The Local Government (Remote Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024 provide Council with the legal powers to hold remote or hybrid meetings. The Regulations enable the Council to hold meetings, without all, or any, of the Members being physically present in a room. They allow for remote meetings through electronic and digital means at remote locations using video and telephone conferencing, live webcast and live interactive streaming.

1. Attendance & Access to Meetings

- 1.1 Members are deemed to be in attendance at a remote meeting if they are able at the time -
 - i) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, the other Members in attendance;
 - ii) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, any members of the public in attendance in order to exercise a right to speak at the meeting; and
 - iii) to be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by any other members of the public in attendance.
- 1.2 The Chairperson of any meeting will confirm they can see and hear all participants and any Member attending remotely will confirm they can hear and see the proceedings.
- 1.3 Any reference to a Member, or a member of the public or press, attending a meeting or being in attendance includes that person attending by remote access.

- 1.4 Members of the public or press may attend a meeting in person, advice will be provided on the Council's website. Those parts of a Council meeting which are open to the public may also be live streamed and accessible via the Council website whenever possible.
- 1.5 Any reference in the Council's Standing Orders to a 'place' where a meeting is held, or is to be held, includes reference to more than one place including electronic, digital or virtual locations such as internet locations, web addresses or conference call telephone numbers.
- 1.6 'Offices of the Council' shall also mean 'or on the Councils website.' Meeting notifications, agendas, minutes and audio recordings of meetings will be published on the Council website.

2. Members' Conduct & Decision Making

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is committed to open and transparent decision making and where possible will conduct its business in public.

- 2.1 The requirement for Members to be present and voting includes Members being present through remote attendance.
- 2.2 Any Member participating in a remote meeting who declares an interest, in any item of business that would normally require them to leave the room, must also leave the remote meeting. Their departure will be confirmed by the Democratic Services Officer or meeting facilitator, who will invite the relevant Member by link, email or telephone, to re-join the meeting at the appropriate time.
- 2.3 If a technological fault occurs with a Member's remote connection during the course of a meeting, the meeting will be adjourned to allow Officers to try to rectify the fault. If Officers cannot rectify the fault within a reasonable period of time (minimum period of 5 minutes) the meeting will continue providing the meeting remains quorate and the public are able to hear. Members are responsible for ensuring they have sufficient connection during the course of a meeting.
- 2.4 In the event of connection failure, the remote Member(s) will be deemed to have left the meeting at the point of failure and if the connection cannot be re-established to those Member(s) before the end of the meeting, then the presumption will be that the meeting should continue to deal with the item/s.
- 2.5 Decisions of the Council are not invalidated due to a technological fault of a Member's remote connection, which cannot be reasonably rectified, which prevents them from either being heard, being seen or voting on an item.
- 2.6 If during the course of a meeting a technological fault occurs with the live stream to the public, the meeting will be adjourned until the fault is rectified. If the fault cannot be addressed after a reasonable period of time (minimum period of 5 minutes) the meeting will continue.
- 2.7 If a technological fault is known prior to a meeting commencing which affects the live audio streaming to the public or the Council's information technology systems, the meeting will be adjourned until the technological fault is rectified. This paragraph does not apply to technological faults with individual Members remote connections.

- 2.8 Decisions of the Council are not invalidated due to a technological fault during the course of a meeting, which cannot be reasonably rectified, which prevents the public from accessing a meeting, or whether there are direct logistical and or technological issues for the members of the public.
- 2.9 Any camera (video-feed) should show a non-descript background or, where possible, a virtual background and members should be careful to not allow exempt or confidential papers to be seen in the video-feed.
- 2.10 If members attending remotely wish to speak on any item it would assist if they could make that known to the Democratic Services Team in advance of the meeting.
- 2.11 The normal quorum requirements for meetings as set out in the Council's Standing Orders will also apply to a remote meeting.
- 2.12 The Chairperson will follow the rules set out in Standing Orders when determining who may speak, as well as the order and priority of speakers and the content and length of speeches in the normal way.

Voting

- 2.122.13 When satisfied that there has been sufficient debate, the Chairperson will ask for a proposer and seconder for the item being discussed and progress to making a decision.
- 2.132.14 Any member attending remotely should be seen and heard. Unless a Recorded Vote is called, the method of voting will be as follows:
 - 2.13.12.14.1 Where there is a clear recommendation(s) in a report, the Chairperson will put the recommendation(s) forward. If there is no dissention then it is taken as agreed; or
 - 2.13.22.14.2 If there is a single amendment to the recommendation(s) or an alternative proposal, the Chairperson will put this forward. If there is no dissention then it is taken as agreed; or
 - 2.13.32.14.3 Where there is dissention or more than one proposal/amendment, these will be dealt with in the normal manner by means of a vote.
 - 2.13.42.14.4 Voting will take place as follows:
an officer will call out the name of each Member present with:
Members stating 'for', 'against', or 'abstain' to indicate their vote when their name is called.

3. Recordings of meetings

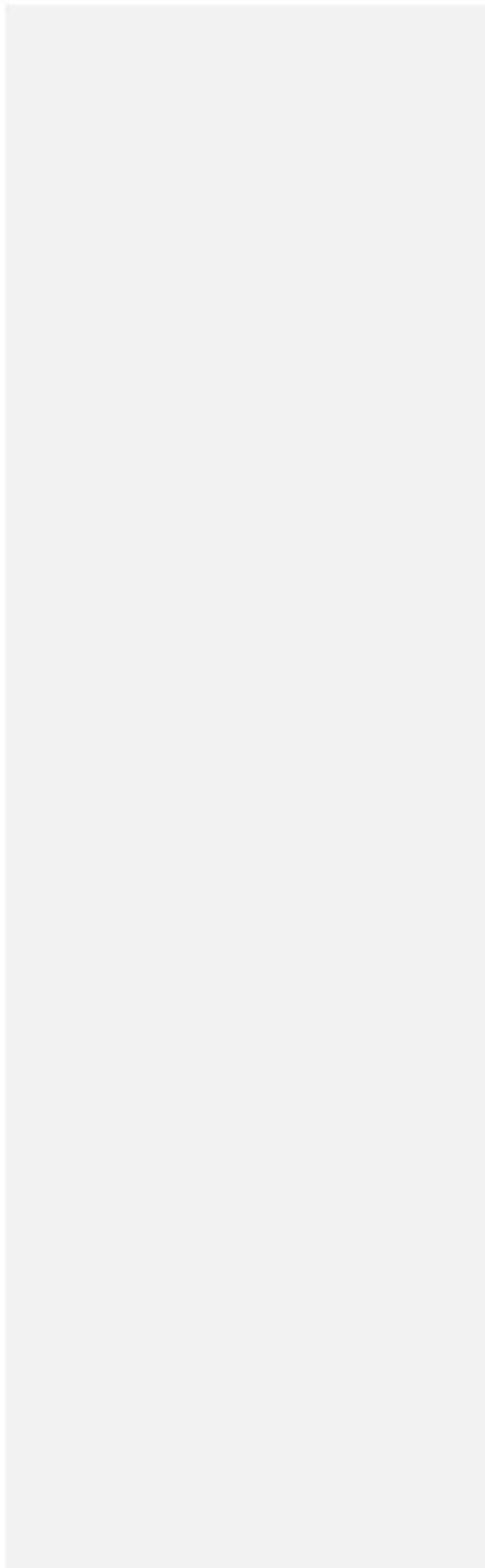
- 3.1 Members of public can attend in person, however to whenever possible the Council and Committee meetings will be live streamed on Council's website.
- 3.2 Council Meetings taking place at the Braid, will be visual and audio, whenever possible. The committee meetings taking place at the Braid,

will continue to be live streamed until the review of technology for all meetings has been completed and any recommendations are implemented.

- 3.3 No recording will take place of a meeting, or those parts of a meeting, where confidential matters or exempt information as described in the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 at s42 and s51 respectively, are being discussed and where the public have been excluded.
- 3.4 The recordings will be made available on the council website for a period of 2 years from the date of the meeting and will be archived and made available at the council offices for a period of 6 years from the date of the meeting.

4. Exclusion of Public and Press

- 4.1 There are times when Council meetings are not open to the public, when confidential matters or exempt information as described in the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 at s42 and s51 respectively, are under consideration. Where the technology is available, the Democratic Services Officer or meeting facilitator will ensure that there are no members of the public in remote attendance or remotely accessing the meeting are able to hear or see the proceedings once the exclusion has been agreed by the meeting.
- 4.2 Each Member in remote attendance must ensure and verbally declare that there are no other persons present who are not entitled to be (either hearing or seeing) consideration of such items, and/or recording the proceedings.



**Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee
Forward Plan**

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1. Planned Agenda Items Next meeting (28 July 2025)

Items	Purpose	Report by:
Policy Briefing	For noting	Simon Hope
Procurement Update	For noting	Michelle Hegarty
VAT Compliance Review Update	For noting	Michelle Hegarty
NIE Substation – Glenariff Crescent, Ballymena	For approval	Sarah Williams
Sickness Absence Update (Q1 & Q2)	For noting	Sarah Williams
Constitution – Annual Update	For noting	Sarah Williams

2. Future Meetings

Meeting Date	Item	Purpose
08 September 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Briefing • Quarterly Communications Update • Procurement Update • Quarterly Complaints Report • Quarterly Budget Monitoring – Q1 • Performance Improvement Plan – Q1 Update • Asset Management Plan • Pay Award Update • Business Cases (if applicable) • Members' Annual Training Programme (including mandatory) • Member Development/Councillor Development Charter 	For noting For noting For noting For noting For noting For noting For noting For noting For noting For noting For approval For noting
20 October 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Briefing • Article 55 Review Report • Procurement Update • IT Cyber Security • Policy Action Plan • Reserves Policy • Information Governance Framework • Bi-Annual Information Governance Report (this will cover Q1 & 2 25/26) • Licences/Agreements enacted under Scheme of Delegation • Sub Committee Terms of Reference • Draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 Consultation Response 	For noting For noting For noting For noting For approval For approval For noting For noting For noting For noting
01 December 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Briefing • Technology One Programme Update • Quarterly Communications Update • Quarterly Budget Monitoring Q2 	For noting For noting For noting For noting

Meeting Date	Item	Purpose
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement Update • Sickness Absence (6 monthly update) • Modern Slavery Policy • Performance Improvement Plan Q2 Update • Events Sub Committee Report • National Pay Award Update • Quarterly Complaints Update Q2 • Article 55 Report • Workplace Charter Domestic Violence – Annual Update 	For noting For noting For approval For noting For noting For noting For noting For noting For noting
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

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	