

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Rates Setting Process and Timetable</b>
<b>Committee Report Submitted To:</b>	<b>Finance Committee</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>13 March 2025</b>
<b>For Decision or For Information</b>	<b>For decision</b>
<b>To be discussed In Committee YES/NO</b>	<b>No</b>

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)</b>	
Strategic Theme	Cohesive Leadership
Outcome	Council has agreed policies and procedures and decision making is consistent with them.
Lead Officer	Chief Finance Officer

<b>Estimated Timescale for Completion</b>	
Date to be Completed	15 February 2026

<b>Budgetary Considerations</b>	
Cost of Proposal	
Included in Current Year Estimates	<b>YES/NO</b>
Capital/Revenue	Revenue
Code	
Staffing Costs	

<b>Legal Considerations</b>	
Input of Legal Services Required	<b>YES/NO</b>
Legal Opinion Obtained	<b>YES/NO</b>

<b>Screening Requirements</b>	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

## **1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to Council an updated Rates Setting process and timetable for 2026/27.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 District councils are obliged under legislation, Section 3 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, as part of the annual budget procedures to submit estimates of income and expenditure of the council for the next financial year. Regulation 3 of the Local Government (Capital Finance and Accounting) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011 states the prescribed date for the annual budget for a financial year beginning on or after 1st April 2012 shall be 15<sup>th</sup> February. This report recommends a process and timetable for the annual Council budget setting.
- 2.2 2025/2026 Rates setting cycle saw the implementation of a new process and timetable.
- 2.3 One minor recommendation has arisen from that process which is a procedural one that had not been anticipated in advance of implementation. This concerns the reporting line of the Finance Committee.
- 2.4 Management have determined that to avoid a repeat of that procedural issue that in January of each year there will be two Finance Committee meetings, one dealing with regular monthly business reporting to the regular Council meeting and a second rates estimates Finance Committee reporting to the Rates Strike meeting. Both meeting can take place on the same evening, the rates estimates Finance Committee meeting occurring immediately after the regular monthly meeting. A revised rates setting process and timetable has been attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

## **3.0 Recommendation**

**It is recommended that** Council approve the revised Rates Setting Process and timetable for the 2026/2027 budget process as set out in Appendix 1.

## Appendix 1

Date	Action	Forum	Remarks
May	<p>Presentation of revised Medium Term Financial Plan and approval</p> <p>Consideration of financial requirements for the next budgetary cycle</p> <p>Capital Programme</p>	<p>Finance Committee</p> <p>Finance Committee</p> <p>Workshop (Full Council)</p>	
June	<p>Consideration of Capital programme</p>	<p>Finance Committee</p>	
September	<p>Overview of financial outlook, including budgetary pressures &amp; cost analysis forecasting.</p> <p>Presentation from Environmental Services Directorate</p>	<p>Finance Committee</p> <p>Finance Committee</p>	
October	<p>Overview of financial outlook, including budgetary pressures &amp; cost analysis forecasting.</p> <p>Presentation from Leisure and Development Directorate</p>	<p>Finance Committee</p> <p>Finance Committee</p>	
November	<p>Overview of financial outlook, including budgetary pressures &amp; cost analysis forecasting.</p> <p>Presentations from Corporate Services Directorate, Chief Executive and Finance</p>	<p>Finance Committee</p> <p>Finance Committee</p>	
December	<p>Finance Committee considers overall budgetary position and makes recommendations for revisions.</p>	<p>Finance Committee</p>	

<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Forum</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
January	Rates Estimates Finance Committee debates Rate strike and recommends draft budget to February Full Council Rate Strike meeting.	Finance Committee	
February	Council considers Rates Estimates Finance Committee recommendation on the rate strike at the Rate Strike Meeting	Full Council	
15 <sup>th</sup> Feb Anually	Council rate due with Department for Communities	DfC	