

Title of Report:	ODHR Policies and Procedures – Secondment Policy Payment of Professional Fees Policy
Committee Report Submitted To:	Corporate Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	27 January 2026
For Decision or For Information	For Decision
To be discussed In Committee YES/NO	N/A

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)	
Strategic Theme	Innovation and Transformation
Outcome	Improve Service Delivery
Lead Officer	Director of Corporate Services

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	n/a
Included in Current Year Estimates	n/a
Capital/Revenue	n/a
Code	n/a
Staffing Costs	n/a

Legal Considerations	
Input of Legal Services Required	YES/NO
Legal Opinion Obtained	YES/NO

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

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present Members with the following policies for consideration and approval:

- Secondment Policy (Appendix A)
- Payment of Professional Fees Policy (Appendix B)

- 1.1 OD/HR have responsibility and delegated authority to create policies and procedures in line with legislative requirements and best practice. The policies to be considered for approval have been reviewed in line with these requirements, considering also benchmark information from other local Council entitlements and existing legacy arrangements where applicable.
- 1.2 The policy arrangements detailed in the final draft policies are deemed to be appropriate and reflective of all such considerations.
- 1.3 Consultation has been conducted between Management and Trade Unions. Trade Unions have in turn consulted with and provided feedback on behalf of their members which has been incorporated into the policies. The final draft policy documents have been accepted by UNITE, NIPSA and GMB.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 An interim Secondment Policy (Appendix A) has been in place since 2019, detailing secondment arrangements for Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council staff, in addition to remaining legacy Council arrangements.
- 2.2 This policy is to harmonise legacy arrangements relating to secondments to ensure a fair and equitable approach across all Council staff. The policy acknowledges the value of internal and external secondments as they increase employee knowledge, develop new skills and abilities and broaden experience within the organisation (internal secondment) or to a separate organisation (external secondment). This in turn helps to create a more flexible workforce within our own organisation and can support valuable and rewarding relationships with external organisations.
- 2.3 The Payment of Professional Fees Policy (Appendix B) is new, being introduced to recognise the value of professional qualifications, memberships, and registrations in supporting continuous professional development, maintaining high standards of service delivery and the attraction and retention of a skilled workforce.

3.0 Purpose of the Policy

3.1 The **Secondment Policy** provides a framework for consistent and fair application of both internal and external secondments, including application, eligibility, duration and associated arrangements.

3.2 The policy aims to:

- Provide an opportunity to utilise the knowledge, skills and experience of staff across the organisation and within partner organisations.
- Enable the movement of employees to areas requiring a short-term resource.
- Support employee development and encourage flexibility of employment.
- Strengthen the culture of flexibility.
- Ensure effective communication and accountability arrangements are in place for all seconded staff.

3.3 The Secondment Policy applies to all directly employed permanent employees within the Council.

3.4 The **Payment of Professional Fees Policy** aims to detail the roles within Council which are eligible for reimbursement, and the procedure to apply for reimbursement for qualifying roles.

3.5 The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure consistency and transparency in the payment of professional fees.
- Support employees in maintaining professional standards and statutory compliance.
- Align with the Council's strategic objectives and operational requirements.

3.6 The Payment of Professional Fees Policy applies to all Council employees, including permanent, temporary, and fixed-term staff for whom the tenure of their contract extends beyond the cycle of membership, where professional registration or membership is an essential requirement for the performance of their role.

4.0 Consultation

4.1 The draft policies have been considered and agreed by the Senior Management Team and the Trade Unions through the Action Group and Joint Consultative and Negotiating Committee (JCNC).

5.0 Equality Screening

5.1 In accordance with Council's duty under Section 75 Equality Legislation, the policies have been screened and the result is that they were screened "out".

6.0 **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee recommends to Council that the Secondment Policy and the Payment of Professional Fees Policy are approved.



SECONDMENT POLICY

Policy Number	
Version Number	
Author	Head of OD/HR

Screening Requirements			
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:

INDEX

SECONDMENT POLICY

	<u>Page No</u>
1. Introduction	3
2. Policy Statement	3
3. Definitions	4
4. Accountability and Responsibilities	4
5. Types of Secondment	6
6. Management Considerations	6
7. External Secondments	7
8. Incoming Secondments	10
9. Internal Secondments	12
10. Duration of Secondments	13
11. Consultation Process	14
12. Terms of Secondments	15
13. Secondment Agreements	16
14. Assistance to Study	16
15. Resulting Vacancies	17
16. Contact During Secondments	17
17. Secondment Funding	17
18. Evaluation and Review of the Policy	17
19. Section 75 Equality and Good Relations	17
20. Contact Details	17

Appendices:

1. INTRODUCTION

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council recognise the value of internal and external secondments as they increase employee knowledge, develop new skills and abilities and broaden experience within the organisation (internal secondment) or to a separate organisation (external secondment). This in turn helps to create a more flexible workforce within our own organisation and can support valuable and rewarding relationships with external organisations.

- 1.1 This policy applies to all directly employed permanent employees within the Council.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is committed to providing secondment opportunities when deemed appropriate. Such arrangements will be supported by fair selection processes and will be underpinned by the selection criteria as outlined in the relevant Person Specification.

This policy provides a framework for consistent and fair application of both internal and external secondments, including application, eligibility, duration and associated arrangements.

- 2.2 The policy aims to:

- Provide an opportunity to utilise the knowledge, skills and experience of staff across the organisation and within partner organisations.
- Enable the movement of employees to areas requiring a short-term resource.
- Support employee development and encourage flexibility of employment.
- Strengthen the culture of flexibility.
- Ensure effective communication and accountability arrangements are in place for all seconded staff.

This policy does not form part of an employee's contract of employment and Council may amend it at any time.

(The policy statement should be signed and dated as follows by relevant Council representatives and Trade Union representatives)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Mayor
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Chief Executive
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

3. DEFINITIONS

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Employee - an employee is any person under a current contract of employment with Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.

The Council - is the employing authority and is represented by Management.

Management/ Line Manager/Head of Service - are those employees charged with line management responsibility for Council employees and accountable for service provision, administration and implementation of Council's business.

OD/HR Representative - is an employee of the OD/HR Department who provides guidance and support in the implementation of this policy.

Employee/Trade Union Representative - is a fellow employee of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council or an official employed by a Council recognised Trade Union, or a Council recognised lay Trade Union official (who has been reasonably certified in writing by their union as having experience of, or as having received training in, acting as an employee companion).

Secondment - A secondment is the temporary placement of an employee to another organisation (external secondment) or to a different part of the Council (internal secondment) for a specific purpose and specific time to the mutual benefit of all parties.

Seconded is a person who is transferred temporarily to alternative employment (or seconded).

Host Organisation is an organisation receiving a secondee into their workplace for a temporary period, usually to undertake a project or specific piece of work.

4. ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Corporate Responsibility

- The Chief Executive, on behalf of Council, carries overall responsibility for ensuring the appropriate processes are in place which adequately and appropriately supports its employees regarding secondments.
- Directors are responsible for establishing their own arrangements to ensure:
 - Effective implementation of the policy
 - Continued service delivery; and
 - Consultation with their employees on these arrangements

- Directors will provide final authorisation of the secondment and liaise with the Service Manager regarding the implementation of this policy including delegating authority to Heads of Service/Line Managers to act under this policy, as appropriate.
- The Director / Head of Service is responsible for ensuring appropriate funding is in place to cover the costs of the secondment.

4.2 Management Responsibilities

Line Managers and Heads of Service are responsible for:

- Ensuring they comply with this policy and procedure, and apply it effectively, fairly and consistently within their area of responsibility.
- Ensuring all employees are made aware of this policy and their rights and their responsibilities, as outlined in the procedure.
- Referring to and complying with other relevant Council policies, procedures and guidelines which impact on secondments.
- Being flexible, open and constructive in discussing and agreeing secondment arrangements, remaining focused on the needs of the service
- Ensuring their actions do not expose the Council to any unnecessary financial, legal or contractual risk.
- Ensuring effective management of secondments, including:
 - Considering all secondment requests promptly and fairly
 - Ensuring accurate secondment records through agreed systems
 - Ensuring operational and service needs are considered in line with secondment requests.
 - Ensuring appropriate operational cover during periods of agreed secondment.
 - Providing justifiable reasons for declined secondment requests.
 - Obtaining, where appropriate, approval, advice or guidance from OD/HR on the application of the Policy.
 - Ensuring that all incoming secondments are provided with full induction and department specific training.
 - Ensure that all incoming secondments are managed in line with secondment agreements, liaising with the employing organisation as required.

4.3 Employee Responsibilities

Employees are responsible for:

- Complying with this policy and procedure in a reasonable, constructive and appropriate manner

- Being flexible, open and constructive in discussing and agreeing secondment arrangements
- Working within the agreed guidance for secondment arrangements
- Ensuring effective management of secondments taking responsibility for:
 - Discussing secondment opportunities with line managers, gaining approval prior to application
 - Providing appropriate notice of secondment requests
 - Adhering to secondment agreements

5. TYPES OF SECONDMENT

5.1 A secondment is an opportunity for an employee to voluntarily undertake a different role to that of their substantive post. There are three types of secondment:

- Internal Secondment: An employee working temporarily in a different role within Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
- External Outward Secondment: An employee working temporarily in a different organisation whilst retaining their substantive post within the Council
- Incoming Secondment: A Council post that is filled temporarily by an employee from an external organisation who remains substantively employed by that organisation

6. MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Requests for secondments will be considered favourably wherever possible, however there may be occasions when operational demands may result in refusals.

6.2 Managers should consider the following matters prior to agreeing to a secondment arrangement for an employee from your team.

- Benefits to the employee for undertaking the secondment
- Benefits to the Service area
- Benefits to the Council
- Financial implications
- Cover for the main duties and responsibilities of the secondee:
 - Can these be accommodated?
 - Redistribution of work?
 - Recruiting replacement?
 - Any additional costs? (training requirements)
 - Impact on service provision?
- Potential impact that the secondment has on current operational priorities/resources

- Are there any planned organisational changes to effect?
- The start and end dates of secondment, and the impact of these dates
- The ability to monitor the secondment
- Alternative options if the request is refused
 - Could the secondment be part-time?
 - Could the start/end date change to suit originating area?

6.3 Line managers should give consideration to all of these factors before they agree to release an employee to complete a secondment arrangement.

7. EXTERNAL SECONDMENT

7.1 External secondments should be used as an opportunity for professional development to develop both the employee's and the organisation's skills and expertise.

An external Secondment involves the temporary transfer of an employee to an external Organisation. Council remains the employer and the employee remains under contract with Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council but is based in another organisation for a defined period of time. The secondee will continue to be subject to Council's policies and procedures. External secondments are opportunities which exists within an external partner organisation, such as another public authority, Northern Ireland Civil Service or the voluntary sector.

The above are examples and should not limit the ability of employees and/or managers in identifying suitable secondment opportunities.

7.2 External Secondment Opportunities

External secondment opportunities can be initiated by:

- An external partner organisation
- An employee, having identified a publicly advertised secondment opportunity

7.3 Eligibility & Application Procedure

7.3.1 In order to apply for an external secondment, an applicant should fulfil all of the following criteria:

- Be a permanent employee of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
- Have completed 1 years' continuous service with Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
- Not be subject to current disciplinary sanctions, performance management procedures or formal absence management procedures. Where this is the case individual circumstances will be reviewed to decide the appropriateness of the secondment.

Have gained approval from their substantive line manager by submitting their formal request, giving a minimum of two months' notice (except in exceptional circumstances) using the following form:

- **RS7: Request for External Secondment Form (Appendix 1)**

Requests for secondments must clearly indicate the purpose of the secondment, the benefit to the employee and the organisation and the period of time for which it is sought.

- 7.3.2 Whilst the Line Manager is not responsible for making the final decision, as to whether the request can be granted or not, they should endorse or oppose the application. It is the responsibility of the Line Manager to forward the Request for External Secondment Form to the appropriate Head of Service and Director for a final decision. The Head of Service and Director will complete the appropriate section of the request form and return to OD/HR for confirmation of decision.
- 7.3.3 A secondment is not an automatic entitlement. Approval is subject to the eligibility requirements being satisfied, operational requirements and the Council's ability to resource the vacant post whilst the substantive employee is on secondment. **The Director's decision will be final.**
- 7.3.4 This is in addition to the eligibility criteria described in the secondment opportunity/advertisement. If approved, the onus remains with the employee to ensure that their application to the external organisation is submitted on time.
- 7.3.5 If the employee is successful in being selected and is offered the secondment opportunity, they must notify their Line Manager and OD/HR immediately. This is to ensure that the necessary documentation is received from the external organisation and arrangements are agreed in advance of the employee taking up the secondment.

7.4 Terms & Conditions for External Secondment

Remuneration & Salary

- 7.4.1 External secondees will be subject to the salary scale advertised for the secondment post. Council will continue to process payroll for the Secondee on an external secondment and will invoice the Host organisation for reimbursement.
- 7.4.2 The Employer remains responsible for making appropriate salary payments to the Secondee, PAYE deductions for income tax and National Insurance contributions.
- 7.4.3 The Host organisation should advise of any pay increases which should be applied during the secondment duration. On conclusion of the secondment agreement, the Secondee's salary will revert to that payable under the Employer's contract.

7.4.4 Council employees will continue to qualify for any relevant pay awards/increments (subject to eligibility) in line with their Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council terms and conditions of service.

7.4.5 Seconded employees should note that certain terms, such as essential car user payments, may not be applicable within a host organisation and such arrangements will be paused during the secondment duration.

Pension Arrangements

7.4.6 As the employee remains employed by the Council during the secondment, membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme for the duration of the secondment is unaffected. If the employee chooses to opt-out of the pension scheme, the Payroll department in releasing employer must give the employee a written statement of the effect of that choice upon his or her pension arrangements. Any queries relating to how the secondment may affect the Seconded employee's pension should be referred to the Payroll Department.

Expenses

7.4.7 All necessary travel and associated expenses, deemed reasonable by the Host and incurred in connection with the Seconded employee's work for the Host, will continue to be claimed from the Employer, at the same rates as the Seconded employee is entitled to claim from the Employer. The Employer will recoup these expenses from the Host. The Seconded employee should seek expenses approval from the Host and follow normal internal procedures to make expenses claims.

Disciplinary Responsibilities

7.4.8 An employee on a secondment must maintain contact with their Line Manager and will remain subject to the Council's Code of Conduct for Local Government Officers.

Council will retain control over the contract of employment where a Host employer identifies any issues regarding discipline. A Host organisation will be restricted to terminating the secondment arrangement and the seconded employee will return to their substantive post within Council. Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council will decide if the employee's actions impinge upon the employment relationship to the extent that disciplinary action (up to and including dismissal) should be considered.

Sickness Absence

7.4.9 The Council will retain the personnel file and sickness absence records of an employee out on a period of secondment.

7.4.10 The seconded employee will retain the terms and conditions relating to sickness leave of that afforded with their employment with the Council. In the event of the seconded employee being off due to sickness absence whilst out on secondment, the

Host must complete and forward any relating documentation to absence@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk.

- 7.4.11 In the event of extended periods of sickness absence the Council's Line Manager will be responsible for maintaining contact with the Seconded. The overall welfare and management of sickness absence of the Seconded on an extended period of sick absence remains the responsibility of the Council including any arrangements for referral to Occupational Health.

7.5. Return to Substantive Post

- 7.5.1 At the end of the secondment duration, or earlier, if termination with agreed notice, the Seconded will return to their substantive post if the return is within the two-year period. If the secondment duration exceeds beyond two years it may not be possible to ensure that the Seconded will return to their substantive post and may return to a same or similar post.
- 7.5.2 The relevant line manager should meet with the employee to review the learning and skills development from the secondment and ensure the seconded has the opportunity to receive an update on the department and relevant operational issues.

8. INCOMING SECONDMENT

- 8.1 Incoming secondments are temporary or fixed-term opportunities within Council. These opportunities are advertised externally to Council through our partner organisations, such as through the Interchange Programme, where there is a requirement to source skills, experience and expertise from outside Council on a temporary basis to undertake a project or specific piece of work. In such circumstances, it will have been identified that the relevant specialist skills and expertise **cannot** immediately be found in the Council.

Such skills, experience and expertise may already exist within a partner organisation and will provide external individuals with the opportunity for development within Council on a temporary basis, whilst still retaining their employment contract.

8.2 Procedure for Implementing an Incoming Secondment

- 8.2.1 Approval to implement an incoming secondment should be sought through the standard Authorisation to Recruit procedure. Management should complete an RS2 Authorisation to Recruit form (link Staff Portal) and submit this to SMT along with an updated Job Description, Person Specification and Terms & Conditions document for the post.

There is a responsibility upon the Council to agree a business need and to record a clear audit trail when identifying a range of external organisations to approach when seeking an inward secondment. This decision must be authorised and signed off by the relevant Director.

- 8.2.2 Once approved, the secondment opportunity will be advertised either in accordance with Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council's recruitment and selection procedures, or via the Interchange Programme detailed at 8.4.

8.3 Appointment & Secondment Agreement

- 8.3.1 Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council will appoint a secondee who will be provided with a Secondment Agreement. The Secondment Agreement will be provided by ODHR in conjunction with the Secondee's management, the Employer organisation and with agreement of the Secondee.
- 8.3.2 A full induction will be provided and the Secondee will be supported with training and development throughout the period of secondment.
- 8.3.3 Incoming Secondees remain a substantive employee of the Employer organisation, inclusive of employment rights and they retain responsibility for payroll matters. The secondment agreement does constitute an employment relationship between the employee and Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.
- 8.3.4 The secondee will be subject to a trial period during the secondment period. This period should be no less than one month in duration.

8.4 Interchange Scheme

- 8.4.1 The NI Interchange Scheme was established as a collaborative arrangement for the sharing of knowledge, ideas and experience of permanent employees of member organisations across the employment sectors (Public, Private and Third) for the benefit of the parties involved: the host organisation, the individual and the parent employer.

It is important to recognise that the Interchange Scheme is not a recruitment tool; it was designed as a staff development tool for individual employees and benefits employers through acquired learning.

- 8.4.2 Member organisations are expected to fully participate in the Scheme by offering opportunities within their own organisation as well as permitting eligible staff ('permanent' employees) to apply for opportunities with outside organisations.
- 8.4.3 The NICS provides a secretariat function: liaising with the host organisation on the secondment detail, publication/circulation of the opportunity and collation of applications.

9. INTERNAL SECONDMENT

- 9.1 Internal secondments are employee development opportunities which exist within Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, which may be within a

different directorate or department to an employee's substantive post, or a different role in the same substantive department.

Internal secondment opportunities may arise through a variety of circumstances including:

- Where there is a short-term vacancy or as a result of operational requirements within departments.
- To complete a specific project of limited duration.
- To provide retraining opportunities for staff affected by change.

9.2 Internal Secondment Opportunities

9.2.1 Where short-term vacancies arise, temporary posts may also be filled via Agency, and this will be subject to management and ODHR discussion and Director approval.

9.2.2 OD/HR and the line manager will agree the appropriate recruitment procedure in accordance with the operational requirements and the requirements of the Local Government Staff Commission Recruitment & Selection Code of Procedures.

9.2.3 The Council may need to use an alternative recruitment method such as secondment to cover for maternity leave, development opportunities or for temporary project work. In this instance, an internal trawl outlining the detail of the secondment, inclusive of person specification requirements, will be issued to all employees.

9.2.4 Normal recruitment and selection processes will be used to shortlist and interview suitably qualified and/or experienced candidates. Thereafter an offer may be made.

9.2.5 Internal secondments to another department or directorate are permitted but only for a maximum secondment duration of up to two years. Extensions to agreed durations should be agreed between substantive and host managers.

9.3 Eligibility & Application Procedure

9.3.1 In order to apply for an internal secondment, an applicant should fulfil all of the following criteria:

- Be a permanent employee of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
 - Have completed 1 years' continuous service with Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
 - Not be subject to current disciplinary sanctions, performance management procedures or formal absence management procedures
- Have gained approval from their substantive line manager by submitting their formal request, giving a minimum of one months' notice (except in exceptional circumstances) using the following form:

- RS6: Request for Internal Secondment Form (Appendix 2)

Requests for secondments must clearly indicate the purpose of the secondment, the benefit to the employee and the organisation and the period of time for which it is sought.

- 9.3.2 An employee who wishes to apply for an internal secondment should discuss the matter with their Line Manager for endorsement. The line manager should discuss this request with their Director/Head of Service before agreement is given.
- 9.3.3 Secondment is not an automatic entitlement. Approval is subject to the eligibility requirements being satisfied, operational requirements and the Council's ability to resource the vacant post whilst the substantive employee is on secondment. The Head of Service/Director's decision will be final.

9.4 Salary and Pay Arrangements for Internal Secondments

- 9.4.1 Internal secondees will be subject to the salary scale advertised for the secondment post, determined by the Council in line with that set out by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services.
- 9.4.2 Where an internal employee accepts a secondment post at a higher or lower pay scale than their substantive post, the starting salary is the minimum scale point of the pay scale advertised. In circumstances where an employee accepts a secondment post at the same pay scale as their substantive post, the employee may retain their current scale point.

9.5 Internal Secondment Agreement

All internal secondments will be subject to secondment agreements, signed and agreed by all parties. Internal secondment arrangements will be formalised with the appropriate terms and conditions applicable to the temporary secondment post.

10. DURATION OF SECONDMENTS

- 10.1 The duration of a secondment will be agreed between all parties prior to the commencement date and will depend upon the nature and purpose of the secondment. A secondment duration will be dependent on the individual circumstances of the secondment offered including the duration of the short-term vacancy or project. A secondment should last for as long as the project or the task to be completed takes.
- 10.2 A secondment will be no less than 3 months, and must be reviewed on an annual basis, or prior to the originally stated secondment end date, whichever is sooner.
- 10.3 Secondment opportunities should be allowed to continue for the agreed duration, up to a maximum of 2 years. However, in exceptional circumstances

the employer reserves the right to recall staff to their substantive post prior to the agreed end date if required, or if there is a change to the secondment circumstances e.g. cessation of funding.

- 10.4 Any request from an applicant who wishes to return to work prior to the agreed end date will be considered, taking into account the reason(s) for this request, the need of the service and their need to be fair and equitable in the treatment of the temporary replacement covering their substantive post. Any early termination of a secondment agreement will be subject to the agreed notice periods contained within the secondment agreement.
- 10.5 If secondment extensions are being considered, line managers should discuss this initially with their Head of Service and ODHR to discuss available options and seek approval. Should an extension be required, this should be negotiated by all parties. Extensions to secondment durations should be considered in advance of the scheduled end date, to allow for consideration of all relevant parties to be made in a timely manner and to minimise the impact of backfill posts.
- 10.6 Please note an application to be seconded externally directly from Council can only be made once every 2 years. When an employee returns from an external secondment, they may not apply for a further new secondment in the next 2 year period.
- 10.7 Should a secondment position become available on a permanent basis, the Seconded does not have an automatic right to be offered the post. The normal recruitment and selection process will apply in these circumstances.

11. CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 11.1 The decision to agree to an employee applying for an internal or external secondment will rest with the applicant's Line Manager and Director/Head of Service in consultation with OD/HR.
- 11.2 In considering whether an employee can be approved to participate in a secondment, the line manager should consider the factors detailed at Section 6.
- 11.3 Where an application is approved, and a secondment opportunity is offered, the date on which the secondment commences will be a management decision taking into consideration the circumstances of the application and any anticipated processes required to fill the resulting vacancy.
- 11.4 Responses to a secondment application should be provided to the employee within 10 working days of receipt of the application.
- 11.5 Should an application not be approved, the reasons for refusal must be clearly stated on the form and returned to the employee. The line manager should discuss with the employee why their secondment is not being approved and provide information as to why, such as budgets or operational/staff constraints.

12. TERMS OF SECONDMENT

- 12.1 An employee on a period of external secondment continues to be an employee of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, and as such their employment terms and conditions remain unchanged. A secondment does not terminate an employee's contract of employment; the contract continues to subsist during the period of secondment, and a key principle of the arrangement is that the employee is expected to return to their substantive post when the secondment ends.
- 12.2 As the employment contract will continue for the period of secondment, continuity of employment will be preserved for the purposes of computing service-related entitlements and statutory employment protection rights.
- 12.3 The effect of a secondment agreement is to vary certain terms of the employment contract for the duration of the secondment. Accordingly, the employee's agreement to the secondment, and therefore to any variation of the employment contract, must be obtained before a secondment can commence.
- 12.4 During the period of secondment, the usual intention of the parties is that the employee will undertake duties for the organisation to which they are seconded and will not be in a day-to-day management relationship with the releasing Employer or department.

13. SECONDMENT AGREEMENT

- 13.1 In the circumstances of an external secondment the Council will complete a secondment agreement with the Host organisation. In the circumstances of an internal secondment the Council will confirm the details in writing to the employee.
- 13.2 Prior to a period of secondment starting, the terms of the secondment will be agreed with the Host organisation, and all details will be confirmed in writing. This will include administrative arrangements to cover salary and/or additional costs (which must be specified), these details will be outlined in the **Secondment Agreement (SEC-003)** Appendix 3. Any subsequent changes to the agreed terms and conditions, must be agreed in writing by the employee, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council and the Host Organisation.
- 13.3 While on secondment employees will not be eligible to apply for a further secondment (elsewhere). They should return to the Council for a minimum of 2 years before being eligible to apply for another secondment.

14. ASSISTANCE TO STUDY

- 14.1 In circumstances where an employee has been approved for Assistance to Study arrangements such as funding assistance or day release, assistance arrangements may be reviewed to consider their impact during a secondment.

- 14.2 Host organisations and departments will need to consider if they are able to accommodate study arrangements in relation to day release alongside operational needs of the role. Every consideration should be given to allow study arrangements to progress, however, where this may not be operationally feasible, circumstances will be discussed individually with employees. The Host will have to be made aware of any agreements made within this Assistance to study such as day release or upcoming exams.
- 14.3 Assistance will be provided by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council to the end of the current financial year. If funding is required for further years, this will be the host employer or department responsibility, if agreed. Consideration should be given to study assistance applications during extended secondments where the employee will not be operational within Council during this period.

15. RESULTING VACANCIES

Vacancies arising when the employee takes up a secondment will be filled on a non-permanent basis in accordance with the Local Government Code of Procedures on Recruitment & Selection and internal recruitment processes. Temporary posts may also be filled via Agency, and this will be subject to management and ODHR discussion and Director approval.

16. CONTACT DURING SECONDMENT

An employee on a secondment must maintain contact with their Line Manager and will remain subject to the Council's Code of Conduct for Local Government Officers and all relevant terms agreed to within the secondment agreement. Line Managers should ensure that the Seconded is kept informed of any relevant Council information that may arise during the course of the secondment.

17. SECONDMENT FUNDING

The hosting Directorate or organisation will meet the costs of secondment.

18. EVALUATION AND REVIEW OF THE POLICY

Council will keep this Policy under review as required and may make changes in line with legislation. This policy does not form part of an employee's contract of employment and Council may amend it at any time.

19. SECTION 75 EQUALITY AND GOOD RELATIONS

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is fully committed to meeting its obligations in relation to Equality and Good Relations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act. In this regard this policy will be screened using Section

75 guidelines and will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment if found necessary as a result of the screening process.

20. CONTACT DETAILS

Any issues or queries relating to this policy should be addressed to:

Head of OD/HR
ODHR Department
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
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APPENDIX I
APPENDIX II
APPENDIX III

Payment of Professional Fees Policy

Policy Number	
Version Number	1
Author	Head of OD/HR

Screening Requirements			
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
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Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

INDEX

Policy on Payment of Professional Fees

	<u>Page No</u>
1. Introduction	3
2. Policy Statement	3
3. Purpose	4
4. Policy Scope	4
5. Definitions	4
6. Accountability and Responsibilities	5
7. Eligibility	6
8. Eligible Fees	6
9. Exclusions	6
10. Approval Process	7
11. Reimbursement Conditions	7
12. Recovery of Fees	7
13. Evaluation and Review of the Policy	8
7. Section 75 Equality and Good Relations	8
8. Data Protection	8
9. Contact Details	8

Appendices:

I	Professional Fees Application Form	9
II	Approved Professional Membership List	11

1. INTRODUCTION

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council recognises the value of professional qualifications, memberships, and registrations in supporting continuous professional development, maintaining high standards of service delivery and the attraction and retention of a skilled workforce. This policy outlines the circumstances under which the Council may pay or reimburse professional fees incurred by employees in the course of their duties.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is committed to supporting employees in maintaining the professional standards required to deliver high-quality public services. Where professional registration, certification, or membership is essential to an employee's role, the Council will reimburse associated fees in line with this policy. Where registration, certification, or membership is not essential but may be deemed beneficial to the postholder an application should be made via the application process for approval of reimbursement. This ensures compliance with statutory obligations, promotes continuous professional development, and contributes to the effective operation of Council services.

(The policy statement should be signed and dated as follows by relevant Council representatives and Trade Union representatives)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Mayor
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Chief Executive
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure consistency and transparency in the payment of professional fees.
- Support employees in maintaining professional standards and statutory compliance.
- Align with the Council's strategic objectives and operational requirements.

The policy aims to detail:

- The roles within Council which are eligible for reimbursement
- The procedure to apply for reimbursement for qualifying roles

4. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Council employees, including permanent, temporary, and fixed-term staff for whom the tenure of their contract extends beyond the cycle of membership, where professional registration or membership is an essential requirement for the performance of their role.

5. DEFINITIONS

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Employee - an employee is any person under a current contract of employment with Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, including temporary, fixed-term, permanent, full or part-time.

The Council - is the employing authority and is represented by Management.

Management/ Line Manager/Head of Service - are those employees charged with line management responsibility for Council employees and accountable for service provision, administration and implementation of Council's business.

OD/HR Representative - is an employee of the OD/HR Department who provides guidance and support in the implementation of this policy.

Employee/Trade Union Representative - is a fellow employee of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council or an official employed by a Council recognised Trade Union, or a Council recognised lay Trade Union official (who has been reasonably certified in writing by their union as having experience of, or as having received training in, acting as an employee companion).

Professional Fees - Charges levied by recognised professional bodies for membership, registration, certification, or accreditation.

Recognised Professional Body - An organisation that regulates or supports a profession relevant to local government functions (e.g. CIPFA, RTPI, RICS, NISCC).

Mandatory Requirement: A legal or contractual obligation for an employee to hold a specific professional status to carry out their role.

Corporate Membership: Where the requirement for membership applies to a number of generic roles within a section or department the cost and terms of a team/corporate membership should be considered and applied where it represents a saving to the Council over individual membership.

6. ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Corporate Responsibility

- The **Chief Executive**, on behalf of Council, carries overall responsibility for ensuring the appropriate processes are in place which adequately and appropriately supports this policy.

6.2 Management Responsibilities

- **Directors/Heads of Service** are responsible for final approval and ensuring budget availability
- **Line Managers** are responsible for reviewing requests and confirming the relevance of the professional fee to the employee's role.
- **ODHR** is responsible for verifying whether the membership or registration is essential according to the employee's job description and maintaining policy oversight.
- **Finance Department** is responsible for processing payments and maintaining financial records.

6.3 Employee Responsibilities

- **Employees** are responsible for submitting accurate and timely requests, along with all required documentation.

All parties are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy and for cooperating with internal audits or reviews.

7. ELIGIBILITY

7.1 Professional fees may be reimbursed by the Council where:

- The fee is a statutory or contractual requirement of the post to have a professional membership to conduct the role.

- Membership of the professional body is deemed appropriate for the role by Council, specified as an essential criterion in the person specification for the role.
- The professional body is recognised within the UK or Northern Ireland.
- The fee supports the Council's service delivery, regulatory compliance, or strategic priorities.
- Student membership is required where an employee is currently studying towards a qualification through the Assistance to Study Policy.

A list of all posts with a requirement for professional membership of a professional body/association is available at Appendix 2. This list will be reviewed periodically to demonstrate that membership continues to be appropriate.

7.2 Review of Eligibility

Where a professional membership with a recognised body is not an essential criterion within a person specification or is not a clear requirement for an existing or newly created post however could be deemed beneficial to the postholder, an application should be made via the application process detailed at Section 10. In such circumstances, ODHR will advise SMT on the appropriateness of the membership being approved, in consideration of existing eligibility criteria and current arrangements to ensure consistent application of the policy.

An application (Appendix 1) should be submitted to ODHR for submission to SMT for consideration. If approved, the role should be added to the list of accepted posts for professional membership (Appendix 2).

8. ELIGIBLE FEES

The Council may cover:

- Annual membership or registration fees for statutory regulators.
- Fees for professional bodies where membership is essential for the role.
- Certification or renewal costs for qualifications directly linked to the employee's duties.

9. EXCLUSIONS

The Council will not cover:

- Memberships that are personal, honorary, or not directly related to the essential criteria for the employee's current role, unless agreed as part of the application process detailed at Section 7.2.
- Multiple memberships unless each is justified by distinct job requirements.
- Applications for reimbursement outside of the specified timeframes detailed at Section 11.

- Applications for reimbursement of fees during periods of working in an alternative role or secondment will be reviewed on an individual basis to ensure their continued eligibility during a seconded role.

10. APPROVAL PROCESS

Before a formal request for reimbursement for fees is made the employee should establish the above eligibility criteria are met. Applications for reimbursement of professional fees must follow the below process:

- Employees must submit a written request to their line manager using the Professional Membership Fees Application Form (Appendix 1), with supporting evidence of professional fees paid.
- Line managers must confirm the relevance and necessity of the fee in relation to the employee's duties and in line with the eligibility criteria detailed at Section 7.
- Directors must authorise the application form. Final approval lies with the Director.
- ODHR will verify whether the professional membership or registration is essential as per the employee's person specification. Once verified, ODHR will forward the approved application to the Finance department for reimbursement through Payroll.

11. REIMBURSEMENT CONDITIONS

- It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that their application has been submitted and authorised.
- Claims must be submitted within the same financial year as the payment, and no later than 3 months after the payment has been made. Applications submitted after this date will not be eligible for reimbursement.
- Original receipts and proof of payment are required.
- Reimbursement is subject to prior approval by the line manager, Director and ODHR on verification of eligibility.
- Professional fees can only be reimbursed for membership of one professional body in any given year.
- If the fees are paid by Council, employees cannot include these fees in their self-assessments for tax relief.

12. RECOVERY OF FEES

Council reserves the right to recover the amount paid on a pro-rata basis for the remainder of the membership year where an employee:

- Leaves the Council's employment
- Transfers permanently to an alternative role where the professional membership is no longer required
- Undertakes a secondment, internal or external to Council, where the professional membership is no longer required. Following secondment

on return to the substantive role, if the eligibility criteria is met, an employee could submit an application at their next renewal date. Council will not support any additional payments required such as lapsed membership costs or rejoining fees.

13. EVALUATION AND REVIEW OF THE POLICY

The policy will be reviewed by the ODHR Department if legislation or operational needs change.

14. SECTION 75 EQUALITY AND GOOD RELATIONS

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is fully committed to meeting its obligations in relation to Equality and Good Relations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act. In this regard this policy will be screened using Section 75 guidelines and will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment if found necessary as a result of the screening process.

15. DATA PROTECTION

All personal data collected and processed under this policy will be handled in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

- Data will be collected only for the purpose of administering professional fee payments.
- Information will be stored securely and accessed only by authorised personnel.
- Employees have the right to access and correct their personal data, and to raise concerns with the Council's Data Protection Officer.
- Data will not be shared with third parties unless required by law or with the employee's explicit consent.
- Records will be retained in line with the Council's Data Retention and Disposal Policy.

16. CONTACT DETAILS

Any issues or queries relating to this policy should be addressed to:

Head of ODHR
ODHR Department
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
Cloonavin
66 Portstewart Road
COLERAINE
BT52 1EY

Appendix I: Professional Fees Application Form

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Request for Payment or Reimbursement of Professional Fees

Section 1: Employee Details

Field	Information Required
Name	
Job Title	
Department	
Employee Number	
Line Manager Name	
Contact Email	

Section 2: Fee Details

Field	Information Required
Name of Professional Body	
Type of Fee	<input type="checkbox"/> Membership <input type="checkbox"/> Registration <input type="checkbox"/> Certification <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal
Eligibility	<input type="checkbox"/> Essential Criteria <input type="checkbox"/> Newly created post <input type="checkbox"/> Beneficial to job role/postholder
Amount Requested (£)	
Payment Method	Reimbursement to Employee
Date of Payment (if applicable)	
Reason for Request	Briefly explain why this fee is required for your role

Section 3: Supporting Documentation

- ☐ Copy of receipt
- ☐ Proof of payment (if reimbursement)
- ☐ Job description/person specification (if requested by ODHR)

☐ Any correspondence confirming requirement for membership

Section 4: Approvals

Role	Signature & Date
Line Manager Approval	
HR Verification (Essential Requirement)	

Section 5: Declaration

I confirm that the information provided is accurate and that the fee requested is directly related to my role within the Council.

Employee Signature	
Date	

Section 6: Approval by Director

Director Signature	
Date	

Appendix II: Approved Professional Membership List

XXX

Under Consultation