

**CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING TUESDAY
25 AUGUST 2020**

No	Item	Summary of key Recommendations
3.	Minutes of Meeting held Tuesday 25 February 2020	Confirm
4.	Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Peacock, seconded by Councillor C McShane (Women's Sub-Committee)	Support The Notice of Motion
5.	Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Callan, seconded by Alderman McCorkell (Review of Planning Department)	Support the Notice of Motion, as amended
	'In Committee' (Item 6)	
6.	Investigation Report Into a Complaint	Defer consideration until Legal and HR Advice have been received
7.	Corporate Strategy	Accept the suggestions as outlined and utilise these suggestions to draft a Corporate Strategy for Council which would be brought back to the Committee for further consideration
8.	Remote Meeting Protocol	Approve
9.	Prompt Payment Statistics	Information

10.	Conferences	<i>Nil</i>
11.	Correspondence	
	11.1 National Association of Councillors	<i>Approve subscription fee for 2020-2021 of £3,200.</i>
	11.2. NILGA Council Bulletin March 2020	<i>Note</i>
12.	Consultations	<i>Nil</i>
13.	Matters for Reporting to Partnership Panel	<i>Nil</i>
	'In Committee' (Items 14 - 16.1 inclusive)	
14.	Debt Management	<i>The debt listed at 4.2 (of the confidential report, circulated) is authorised for write off</i>
15.	APP Forecast	<i>Note</i>
16.	Any Other Relevant Business (notified in accordance with Standing Order 12(o))	
	16.1 Suspected Breach of Confidentiality	<i>The Director of Environmental Services to investigate the suspected breach of confidentiality on social media</i>

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE
CORPORATE POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC HEADQUARTERS,
VIA VIDEO-CONFERENCE ON
TUESDAY 25 AUGUST AT 7.00 PM**

- In the Chair** : Alderman Hillis (C)
- Present :** Alderman Baird (C), Fielding (C), S McKillop (C);
Councillors Beattie (C), Callan (C), Chivers (Vice-
Chair), (C), Dallat O’Driscoll (C), Knight-McQuillan
(C), McCaw (C), McGlnchey (C), McGurk (C),
McLean (C), C McShane(C) and Wilson (C)
- Non-Committee
Members
In Attendance** Councillors Holmes (R), McLaughlin (R), Peacock (R),
P McShane (R).
- Officers Present :** M Quinn, Director of Corporate Services
A McPeake, Director, Environmental Services
S Duggan, Civic Support & Committee & Member Services Officer
- In Attendance :** G McDowell, Happy Raspberry HR (C) } Item 6
J Lyttle, Happy Raspberry HR (C) }
- C Thompson, ICT Operations Officer
A Lennox, Mobile Operations Officer
- Press (1 No.) (R)
Public (2 No.) (R)

Key: (C) Attended in the Chamber
(R) Attended Remotely

SUBSTITUTION

Councillor Callan substituted for Alderman McCorkell.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were recorded for Alderman Duddy and McCorkell.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD TUESDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2020

The Minutes of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee meeting held Tuesday 25 February 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

AGREED – To Change The Order of Business.

4. NOTICE OF MOTION PROPOSED BY COUNCILLOR PEACOCK, SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR C MCSHANE

'That this Council establishes a stand-alone 'Women's sub-committee' made up of female representatives of this council to discuss and promote women's issues, to build the skills and confidence of female representatives and to promote women getting involved in local politics to aim to achieve proportionality'.

Councillor Peacock spoke in support of her Notice of Motion and read from a prepared statement:

"Thank you Chair and thank you for indulging me at the beginning of tonight's meeting.

Only 26% of all councillors in the north are female, this is well below the European average of 33% despite more than half of the population being female. While I am proud that Causeway Coast and Glens Council has the highest % of female elected representatives of all the councils- a lot of work still needs to be done.

More and more frequent reports from around the world indicate that when women step forward to claim their right to participate in politics, they are met by a backlash that encompasses harassment and abuse both online and offline, many local cases have been publicised recently. Such widespread attacks against politically active women are a clear indicator of the negative impact of unequal gender norms on the democratic health of our societies. This is the case not only here, but across the world.

Over the last century, significant progress has been made in women's numerical representation in politics around the world. But all too often, this has not directly translated into greater political influence. Political equality remains a distant goal. Efforts to improve female representation in politics have often focused on quotas and reserved shares. What is really needed is a nuanced approach that tackles the underlying, interconnected barriers that women face in getting nominated for elected office, conducting successful campaigns and becoming effective, respected political representatives. For example in my DEA Ballymoney, I was the only female candidate out of 12 on the ballot paper. I do not accept that this is good enough and we have to ask ourselves why are our women not putting themselves forward and more importantly we have to do something about it.

Some social scientists cite traditional family arrangements that limit women's career choices. Researchers at the Brookings Institution have found what might be called an ambition gap, generally within the population with women underestimating their abilities and chances for success. It makes them generally less likely than men to even consider seeking public office, or to have political professionals encourage them to run. This needs to change."

Research has suggested that lack of confidence and self-assurance is a key issue for women in political life or those with an interest in entering political life and this prevents many from entering the male dominated sphere of politics. We must provide a vehicle to change this.

Training and mentoring programmes which focus on helping women attain the knowledge, skills and confidence to stand for election and become effective respected, representatives once elected have been identified as one potential way to break down some of the barriers for political representatives and potential candidates.

There has been evidence from social scientists that in the general population there is a particular crisis for women—a vast confidence gap that separates the sexes. According to research, Compared with men, women don't consider themselves as ready for promotions, they predict they'll do worse on tests, and they generally underestimate their own abilities. This disparity stems from factors ranging from upbringing to biology to social norms bearing in mind that women only garnered the right to vote and stand for election just over 100 years ago, it appears that change in politics, acceptance for women in the arena and confidence has seen slow progress In this time.

A growing body of evidence shows just how devastating this lack of confidence can be. Success in every walk of life, it turns out, correlates just as closely with confidence as it does with competence. No wonder that women, despite all our progress, are still woefully underrepresented at the highest levels.

While we have some of the most confident, politically astute female representatives in this chamber a lack of confidence can impact us all or indeed some more than others on occasion and in particular those outside this chamber who have not, but may have considered, putting themselves forward for political office, as community representatives or other key figures in the wider political and civic landscape. As political representatives, We are supposed to be leaders in our society, role models to young women and yet are not very often afforded adequate training and development which gives thought to differing learning styles and differing approaches identified in research as being important for most women and the different styles and approaches more comfortable for some women. This results in limited opportunities to fulfil our own potential and bring other women with us. We are political representatives. We have a duty to challenge and change the unequal, unspoken and sometimes un noticed gender norms that exist within political life and whether we want to admit it or not exists within this council and every other sphere of political influence here and indeed worldwide.

How many times have we sat in a meeting with an agency or individual to find that the person we are meeting directs their attention to the male in the room despite you being the party, group or individual leading on the issue? This has happened me and no doubt many of my female colleagues many many times. Some of these gender norms are unconscious and entirely unintended, however, we have a duty to identify and challenge these at every opportunity.

I am a young female, relatively new, elected representative of 30 years old and I am determined to make political life and indeed the linked community and civic life more accessible and equitable for fellow women.

I do not accept the unequal gender norms or the lack of confidence that many women within every walk of life including ours suffer or the unequal political influence that exists, according to research, in political life and I will not accept the fact that female representatives are faced with more harassment and abuse than our male counterparts and I am determined to do something about it. I am pleased to bring forward this motion that will bring together our representatives from all parties and none to look specifically at these issues and indeed many others to educate and empower.

A group that may be able to reach out to other organisations, sectors, our young women and girls and those employees of local government. We may be able to harness experience and expertise to share experience, skills and find a way to tackle some of the serious issues impacting women in our society in political life and outside it.

I reiterate, any sub-committee should be non-restrictive of numbers and encompass all parties and none and be able to engage with particularly but not solely female leadership figures in our own council ranks and beyond. These skills, experiences and policy discussions should be open and welcoming to all.

The vision is that this will be of informal structure and a group comprised of female representatives but also importantly our male allies who should also be encouraged to attend and become champions and allies on women's issues. A group of elected representatives engaging our own organisation, other organisations, seeking training, education, confidence building, networking and expertise and empowering each other both inside this chamber and within the community that we represent.

I am passionate about this issue and I call on the support of you all- our male allies included- to bring this about and to help empower our female colleagues setting an example to other organisations and leading the way on this issue.

Thank you all for taking the time to consider this motion, many thanks Mr Chair".

The Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor C McShane, she advised this was an opportunity to work together, to recognise and celebrate the achievements of women, personal development and to advocate change.

All Parties stated their respective support for the Notice of Motion.

Councillor Peacock clarified she envisaged an informal structure, welcoming female representatives and male allies, to provide an opportunity to champion women's issues.

The Chair put the Notice of Motion to the Committee to vote. Committee voted unanimously in favour. The Chair declared the Notice of Motion carried.

* **Councillor Wilson left the meeting at 7.32PM.**

**5. NOTICE OF MOTION PROPOSED BY COUNCILLOR CALLAN,
SECONDED BY ALDERMAN MCCORKELL**

“Given the strategic significance of planning to Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council – we ask that the Chief Executive bring in outside planning consultants from an exemplar planning authority to carry out a full review of our planning functions and processes. This is to be completed within a 3month period on the passing of this motion.”

Councillor Callan proposed the Notice of Motion and spoke in support. Councillor Callan stated a review of the performance of Planning, as a major function of Council was required. He advised Planning was the most important Committee that impacted economically and on the social welfare of the Council area. Councillor Callan stated processes cost delays for Applicants, whilst Council obtain a Planning income. He stated regular engagement with Agents and Applicants and an open door Policy was required.

* **Councillor Wilson re-joined the meeting at 7.36PM.**

Councillor Callan stated there was a perception that Planners began with issuing refusals and there was a need to review the negative perception of Planning. Councillor Callan advised Planning Committee very busy with referrals, this was an issue and part of the problem, he stated Causeway Coast and Glens had a higher rate of refusals than any other Council area, whilst not wishing to remove the Democratic process, he considered this was an issue. Councillor Callan advised he had been Involved in Office meetings and he considered Planning was unresponsive to the needs of Applicants and Agents.

Councillor Callan stated Planning Department had been in operation as a function for 5 years, he considered it timely to bring an English/Scottish or relevant jurisdiction to review the Planning processes and provide a list of recommendations going forward. Councillor Callan advised other Departments within Council had been reviewed and it was right that Planning Department was now reviewed.

The Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Knight McQuillan in consideration of helping to build relationships with Planners, Agents and Applicants, to resolve conflicts and any negative perception and to encourage business to grow in the area.

Councillor McGurk welcomed the Notice of Motion and suggested amending its wording; and to include Services Users, Agents and Applicants, but to remove the timescale associated, due to the pandemic:

Given the strategic significance of planning to Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council – this Council calls for a full Independent review of Planning processes by an appropriate qualified Body or Group, to include Services Users, Agents and Applicants.

Councillor McCaw supported the amended wording, which provided a broader scope and for the review to take place during a normal working period.

Councillor Dallat O'Driscoll advised of the approval rate of Major Applications of 100% and minor applications of 92.7%. She advised the Head of Planning required adequate stable staffing resources, there were vacant posts that required filling.

Alderman Baird stated the Planning Department worked extremely hard, and never had their full complement of staff, Causeway Coast and Glens had the highest number of applications, sitting behind Belfast. The area had the highest number of AONB's, ASSI's and a World Heritage Site, the Environment needed to be protected. Alderman Baird advised of a 2-way process with Applicants, Agents and Council. Alderman Baird supported Councillor McGurk and Councillor McCaw in waiting until the crisis was over, before commencing a review.

Councillor McGlinchey advised there had to be a more open, timely, streamlined approach, he commented on a high case officer staff turnover.

Councillor Callan stated he was content with the suggested amendments; Committee agreed a timescale of six months.

The Chair put the Notice of Motion to the Council to vote:
Proposed by Councillor Callan
Seconded by Councillor Knight-McQuillan and

AGREED - Given the strategic significance of planning to Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council – this Council calls for a full Independent review of Planning processes by an appropriate qualified Body or Group, to include Services Users, Agents and Applicants; and for this to be carried out within a 6 months' timescale.
Committee voted unanimously in favour.

- * **Director of Corporate Services left the meeting at 8.07PM.**
- * **Director of Environmental Services joined the meeting at 8.07PM.**
- * **Press / Public disconnected from the meeting.**

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN COMMITTEE'

Proposed by Alderman Baird
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and

AGREED – to recommend that Committee move *'In Committee'*.

- * **G McDowell and J Lyttle joined the meeting at 8.07PM.**

6. INVESTIGATION REPORT INTO A COMPLAINT

Confidential, redacted report, previously circulated to Elected Members, upon appointment only.

The Director of Environmental Services provided a timeline and background to the Investigation report which, he advised, had been as the result of a complaint. He outlined Council's Comments and Complaints procedure and invited G McDowell and J Lyttle to present their report to Committee.

G McDowell provided information to Committee on the Terms of Reference for the Investigation, on the substance of the complaint, she outlined the facts, findings, conclusions and recommendations to Committee.

The Director of Environmental Services and G McDowell responded to questions. During considerations, several proposals were put. The Chair rounded discussion to incorporate a consensus from Committee.
Proposed by Councillor Wilson

Seconded by Councillor C McShane and

AGREED - to recommend that Council defer consideration on the Investigation Report into a Complaint, until Council receives further Legal and HR Advice.

The Chair put the motion to Committee to vote.

15 Members voted For; 0 Members voted Against; 0 Members Abstained The Chair declared the motion carried.

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN PUBLIC'

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Alderman Fielding and

AGREED – to recommend that Committee move '*In Public*'.

* **G McDowell and J Lyttle left the meeting at 9.19PM.**

The Chair declared a recess at 9.19PM.

* **Councillors McGlinchey and C McShane left the meeting.**

* **Non-Committee Members - Councillors Holmes, McLaughlin and Peacock did not re-join the meeting.**

* **The Director of Corporate Services re-joined the meeting.**

* **The Director of Environmental Services left the meeting.**

* **The meeting reconvened at 9.38PM.**

7. CORPORATE STRATEGY

Report, previously circulated, presented by the Director of Corporate Services.

A Corporate Strategy (Corporate Plan) was previously developed for Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council for the period 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2019. A copy of the previous Corporate Strategy was circulated.

A new Corporate Strategy is therefore required, particularly as a new Council was elected in May 2019.

The aim of the Corporate Strategy is to enable the Council to define and agree its priorities and strategic direction for the next four years.

Background

In 2017 a Community Planning Strategic Framework was developed for the Causeway Coast and Glens area – a copy of this Framework was circulated. This document put in place a long term vision and plan for the area based on an analysis of needs, priorities and opportunities within the Causeway Coast and Glens area. This Community Plan has been supported by a Delivery Plan (a copy of this document was circulated with a Statement of Progress on the delivery of the Community Planning outcomes published in November 2019 (copy circulated)).

The guidelines for community planning envisage the local Community Plan acting as the key over-arching framework for all community planning partners. In Causeway Coast and Glens there are 14 statutory organisations/partners, including the Council, involved in the community planning process and the anticipation is that the local Community Plan will be taken as the starting point by all statutory partners when developing their own organisational strategies and plans.

A process for the development of the new Council Corporate Strategy has been ongoing for some time with a development process established and agreed by the senior management team. Initial research work on gathering qualitative and quantitative evidence in relation to Causeway and Glens Borough Council area was undertaken as the first stage in this process

The second stage was to initiate an internal consultation process to gather views and comments on the contents of a new Corporate Strategy. This was to start with a workshop for Councillors but, unfortunately, for various reasons this workshop did not take place until Saturday 29th February 2020.

Proposals

The six Councillors who attended the workshop explored and generated ideas for a new Vision for Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council; considered the Council's Mission Statement; identified values that should underpin the work of the Council; and considered high level strategic themes for the new Corporate Strategy.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) reviewed and made suggestions in relation to the outcomes of the Councillor Workshop and the out-workings of the workshop discussions and the SLT discussions were previously circulated for consideration by the Committee.

In order to progress work on the development of the Corporate Strategy the following options are suggested for consideration by the Committee:

- The Committee accepts the suggestions as outlined in Appendix 1 and utilises these suggestions to draft a Corporate Strategy for Council which would be brought back to the Committee for further consideration.
- A further workshop for Councillors is arranged in order to broaden discussion and develop the draft attached as Appendix 1.
- Circulate the attached draft to all Councillors seeking further contributions and ideas from them which could then be developed into a further draft for consideration.

It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee recommends to Council the most appropriate option in order to progress work on the Council's Corporate Strategy.

Councillor Callan considered Council should concentrate on outcomes and self-analysis, rather than the process and to include the Community Plan and Local Development Plan.

Proposed by Councillor Callan
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and

AGREED – to recommend that Council accepts the suggestions as outlined in Appendix 1 (Circulated) and utilises these suggestions to draft a Corporate Strategy for Council which would be brought back to the Committee for further consideration.

8. REMOTE MEETING PROTOCOL

Report, previously circulated, presented by The Director of Corporate Services.

The Remote Meetings Protocol details changes required to Council's Standing orders in consequence of The Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 which came into force on 1 May 2020.

The Draft Protocol for the holding of remote Council meeting was presented to Members on 2nd June 2020, and has now been revised to include to feedback at that Council meeting, and other administrative arrangements to assist in the successful operation of the meetings.

Proposed Amendments to Standing Orders

The effect of the Regulations on the Authority's Constitution is to insert what are, in effect, mandatory Standing Orders if the Council wishes to hold meetings remotely, either wholly or partially.

The Regulations, and therefore the Standing Orders, have an automatic amending effect on an authority's existing Standing Orders and can be applied immediately in order to run Council and Committee meetings remotely. However, it is good practice, even with express mandatory standing orders, to have these adopted formally by the full Council at the first opportunity to do so.

Issues raised

In terms of issues raised during remote meetings, the Protocol covers these but it might be worth highlighting the matters which appear to be causing confusion at meetings:

Etiquette (including indicating wish to speak) (5.6)

Members are asked to adhere to the following etiquette during remote attendance at a meeting:

- Committee members are asked to join the meeting no later than fifteen minutes before the start to allow themselves and the meeting facilitator the opportunity to test the equipment.
- 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.
- Mute the microphone when not talking.
- Rather than raising one's hand or rising to be recognised or to speak, Members should avail themselves of the remote process for requesting to be heard:
[e.g., where available]
Members are to use any chat facility to indicate to the Chairperson that they wish to speak. Members will unmute their microphone and turn their cameras on when the Chairperson invites them to speak. The chat facility must not be used for private conversations between Councillors.
- Only speak when invited to by the Chairperson
- Only one person may speak at any one time
- Turn on the microphone and also the video-feed (if available or unless speaking to a diagram, presentation slide or drawing), then state your name before you make a comment
- When referring to a specific report, page, or slide, mention the report, page, or slide so that all members have a clear understanding of what is being discussed at all times.

Leaving a Meeting (5.10)

Members leaving the meeting should use the chat facility or otherwise indicate to the Chairperson that they are exiting the meeting. Failure to do this will lead to an assumption that the Member has dropped out through a technology failure. The meeting may be adjourned to re-establish the remote link. As the technology will make it difficult to monitor drop out at a Council meeting at which 40 Members may be present, a number will be provided enabling a message to be conveyed by text to Democratic Services.

It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee recommend to Council approval of Remote Meetings Protocol and that Council Standing Orders are updated accordingly.

It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee recommend to Council that the Council constitution is updated to reflect the changes in Standing orders, including the Remote Meetings Protocol and the Standing Orders Update re Planning approved by Council 2nd June 2020.

Councillor Wilson thanked Corporate Services and IT Department for their work to date in delivering the remote meetings.

Councillor McGurk echoed the comments of the previous speaker and welcomed access for members of the public.

In response to a question from Councillor McLean the Director of Corporate Services drew Members' attention to Item 3.7, in the case of lost connectivity, Elected Members can use the Dial In Telephone number into the Video-Conference facility.

Alderman Baird felt the elderly and those who could not afford technology were excluded participants.

Some Members detailed their difficulty with a limit on data usage and a software function.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor McGurk and

AGREED – to recommend that Council approve the Remote Meetings Protocol and that Council Standing Orders are updated accordingly; to recommend that the Council constitution is updated to reflect the changes in Standing orders, including the Remote Meetings Protocol and the Standing Orders Update re Planning approved by Council 2nd June 2020.

9. PROMPT PAYMENT STATISTICS

Report, previously circulated, presented by the Director of Corporate Services. Councillor Callan stated he felt an Officer from Finance should be made available for the next Committee meeting, to include the forthcoming Finance Committee Meeting.

Department for communities (DfC) requires Council to record and publish statistics regarding the payment of supplier invoices with specific reference to two distinct measures namely invoices paid within 10 working days and invoices paid within 30 calendar days.

Detail

These figures are published on a quarterly basis by DfC with Councils required to do likewise. The purpose of the statistics is to encourage Councils to support businesses especially those local and/or small businesses for whom cash flow is of vital importance to their continued survival. In addition as part of Council's performance improvement plan for this year the payment of our suppliers has been identified as one of the performance improvement objectives with a target of 90% of suppliers being paid within 30 calendar days. The tables below detail Council's performance since April 2017 the latest data being for quarter 1 of 20/21 year being up to and including end of June 2020. Q1 performance has improved significantly from the previous year with 70.53% of invoices paid within 10 working days and 80.83% paid within 30 calendar days, there is a number of factors impacting on this as follows. Quarter 1 generally has fewer invoices than any other quarter as period 12 remains open for most of April to capture accruals. Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic Council are currently processing a significantly lower number of invoices. In addition, due to many staff working from home we have introduced where possible email approval for those invoices that don't require a purchase order, which has improved turnaround times.

Improvement Actions

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic Council had introduced electronic purchase order processing (POPs) in January 2020, staff were trained and this was working well. For staff to access the system they need access to the Council network which has caused issues for some staff working from home without VPN connection. Many staff enter the council buildings at designated times to raise and approve orders but it is anticipated that as more staff return to the workplace this will improve.

10. CONFERENCES

There were no conferences.

11. CORRESPONDENCE

Report, previously circulated, to present correspondence for Members' consideration.

11.1 National Association of Councillors

The annual membership for the national Association of Councillors, NI region, is due for renewal. The subscription fee for 2020 to 2021 is £3,200 which has remained unchanged since 2015.

It is recommended that Corporate Policy and resources Committee consider approval of the National Association of Councillors subscription fee for 2020-2021 of £3,200.

Proposed by Councillor Callan
Seconded by Councillor Dallat O'Driscoll and

AGREED – to recommend that Council approve the National Association of Councillors subscription fee for 2020-2021 of £3,200.

11.2 NILGA Council Bulletin March 2020

'New Decade, New Approach' Must mean new roles and resources for Councils', circulated.

It is recommended that Corporate Policy and Resources Committee note the NILGA Bulletin.

AGREED – to recommend that Council note the NILGA Bulletin.

12. CONSULTATIONS

There were no consultation documents.

13. MATTERS FOR REPORTING TO PARTNERSHIP PANEL

There were no matters for reporting to the Partnership Panel.

14. MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN COMMITTEE'

Proposed by Councillor Chivers
Seconded by Alderman Baird and

AGREED – to recommend that Council move *'In Committee'*.

* **Councillor Wilson left the meeting from 10.07PM-10.15PM.**

15. DEBT MANAGEMENT

Confidential report, previously circulated, presented by the Director of Corporate Services. The Director drew Members' attention to significant outstanding debt within the report.

The report informs members of the current position surrounding debt owed to the Council by its customers. Council implemented a revised Debt Management Policy in February 2017.

The tables circulated detail the status of any debt which was over 90 days in excess of £10 at the previous report but which has now been cleared and any debt which was over 90 days in excess of £10 currently.

In accordance with Councils debt management policy, there were a number of debts under £1,000 which the Chief Finance Officer has the authority to write-off.

In accordance with Council's debt management policy, Council approval is sought in order to write off any debts in excess of £1,000. There was one such debt for recommendation this month.

It is recommended that the debt listed at 4.2 (report, circulated) is authorised for write off.

Councillor Callan requested information on small claims breakdown and success rate.

Councillor Callan queried whether BID had come to a resolution. The Director of Corporate Services advised she would retrieve the information and report back.

Proposed by Councillor Callan
Seconded by Councillor Chivers and

AGREED – to recommend that the debt listed at 4.2 (of the confidential report, circulated) is authorised for write off.

16. APP FORECAST

Confidential report, previously circulated, presented by the Director of Corporate Services. Land and Property Services (LPS) who issue bills and collect rates on behalf of Councils issue in year forecasts on the Actual Penny Product (APP) and projected outturns with regards the amount of rates actually collected.

Detail

LPS has issued to Councils the first in year forecast for the APP based on figures at 30 June 2020. The forecast for Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council indicates that we are on course to receive a positive finalisation in terms of rates income amounting to approximately £458k. The figure has been calculated on the basis of a number of assumptions which were detailed in the report.

AGREED – to recommend that Council note the report.

17. ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS (NOTIFIED IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 12(O))

16.1 Suspected Breach of Confidentiality

The Chair allowed Councillor McLean to raise an urgent Item, relating to Item 15 on the Agenda, Investigation Report Into a Complaint, presented earlier “In Committee”.

Councillor McLean outlined a serious breach of confidentiality, concerning matters raised that had appeared on social media during proceedings.

The Director of Corporate Services advised that, (whilst not involved in this issue, and had left the meeting during discussion of same), arrangements were made in order to protect the integrity of the report and measures were in place to control the sharing of information to ensure its confidentiality. She also referred to The Local Government Code of Conduct, and associated Guidance from The Ombudsman’s Office on the use of Social Media and obligations under Section 48 of the Local Government Act.

The Chair requested the matter be raised with The Director of Environmental Services and IT Department, for investigation.

Proposed by Councillor Knight-McQuillan
Seconded by Alderman McKillop and

AGREED – to recommend that Council task The Director of Environmental Services to investigate the suspected breach of confidentiality on social media

MOTION TO PROCEED ‘IN PUBLIC’

Proposed by Councillor McGurk
Seconded by Councillor Callan and

AGREED: that the Committee move ‘*In Public*’.

There being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 10.33 pm.

Chair