



**CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY 23 APRIL 2024**

| No | Item | Summary of Key Recommendations |
|-----------|---|---|
| 1. | Apologies | <i>Alderman Coyle</i> |
| 2. | Declarations of Interest | <i>Nil</i> |
| 3. | Minutes of Corporate Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held Thursday 21 March 2024 | <i>Confirmed as a correct record</i> |
| 4. | Minutes of the Implementation Oversight Panel meeting held Monday 8 April 2024 | <i>To recommend that the Minutes of the Implementation Oversight Panel Meeting held 8 April 2024 are adopted and recommendations therein approved</i> |
| 5. | Civic Building and Town Hall Room Hire Charges | <i>To recommend that Council freeze the room hire charge for the Shiels room in Ballymoney Town Hall and approve an increase of 5% on all other room hire charges for Sheskburn House and the Town Halls for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 1 with the caveat to bring a paper back with a strategy for targeted advertising and promotion of what facilities Council have and how much they cost.</i> |
| 6. | Provision of Council Insurance 2024/25 | <i>To recommend that Council note the report.</i> |
| 7. | D-Day 80 Anniversary | <i>To recommend that Council approve Council's plans to</i> |

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|-------------|---|--|
| | | commemorate the D Day 80 Anniversary event. |
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| 8. | Notes of the Elected Member Development Working Group held Monday 15 April 2024 | <i>To recommend that the notes of the Elected Member Development Working Group held Monday 15 April 2024 are adopted and actions therein approved.</i> |
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| 9. | Complaints Handling Procedure | <i>To recommend to Council that the amendments detailed in the report in relation to reference to NIPSO guidance documents, timescales for escalating a complaint, wording throughout to be in line with the final published Model Complaints Handling Procedure and provisions in relation to supporting the customer be approved and the Complaints Handling Procedure amended accordingly.</i> |
| | | |
| 10. | Request to host NILGA Executive Meeting | <i>To recommend that Council approve the request to host the NILGA Executive Meeting on Friday 9th August 2024 in The Council Chamber, Civic Headquarters, catering costs to be met by NILGA.</i> |
| | | |
| 11. | ODHR Policies and Procedures – Social Media Policy | <i>To recommend that Council approve the Social Media Policy.</i> |
| | | |
| 12. | Conferences | |
| 12.1 | Employment Issues and Negotiation with Trade Unions | <i>Noted</i> |
| | | |
| 13. | Consultation | <i>Nil</i> |
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| 14. | Correspondence | |

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|------|---|---|
| 14.1 | Anthony Carleton, Director Local Government & Housing Regulation, Department for Communities, dated 28 March 2024 | Noted |
| 15. | Matters for Reporting to the Partnership Panel | Nil |
| | 'In Committee' (Items 16-22 inclusive) | |
| 16. | Appointment of Consultant(s) to undertake independent research on the New Dwellings Requirement for the Borough to inform the preparation of the Local Development Plan | To recommend that Council agree to the appointment of consultant(s) to undertake independent research on the New Dwellings Requirement for the Borough to inform the preparation of the Local Development Plan, and agree the Draft Tender TOR attached at Appendix 1. |
| 17. | Corporate Services Management Accounts Month 11 | Noted |
| 18. | Minutes of the Land and Property Sub Committee meeting held Wednesday 10 April 2024 | To recommend that Council adopt the Minutes of the Land and Property Sub Committee meeting held Wednesday 10 April 2024 and recommendations therein approved. |
| 19. | Renewal of Microsoft 365 Contract | To recommend that Council approve the tendered bid from BT to renew the Microsoft 365 contract for another 3 years. This is the only feasible option for continuity of service. |
| 20. | Transformation Programme Recommendations – Records Management and Information Governance | Noted |
| 21. | Renewal of Agency Contract | To recommend that Council approve the renewal of the recruitment agency contract for a further period of 12 months. |

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|-------------------|---|--|
| <p>22.</p> | <p>Portballintrae, Seaport Avenue, Claim of Right of Way, Legal Dispute. Update of Senior Counsel Opinion</p> | <p><i>To recommend that Council amends its position of 10th January 2024 regarding the claim by the owners of number 14 Seaport Avenue of a right of way, both vehicular and pedestrian to access their property, over that part of the laneway owned by Council at Seaport Avenue, Portballintrae, to a neutral position,</i></p> <p><i>and confirms continued delegated authority for Legal Services Officers to act until the conclusion of legal proceedings.</i></p> <p><i>Legal Services Officers will provide updates to the Land and Property Subcommittee.</i></p> |
| <p>23.</p> | <p>Any Other Relevant Business (notified in accordance with Standing Order 12(o))</p> | <p><i>Nil</i></p> |

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE
CORPORATE POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC HEADQUARTERS,
ON TUESDAY 23 APRIL 2024
AT 7.00 PM**

- In the Chair:** Councillor Nicholl
- Present:** Alderman Boyle¹, Fielding, Knight-McQuillan
Councillors C Archibald, Huggins, McCully, MA McKillop,
Peacock, Watson, Watton
- Officers Present:** M Quinn, Director of Corporate Services
D Jackson, Chief Executive
D Dickson, Head of Planning
J Mills, Council Solicitor (Land and Property)
J Keen, Committee and Member Services Officer
- In Attendance:** C Thompson, ICT Operations Officer
- Substitution:** Councillor MA McKillop substituted for Alderman Coyle

Press 2 no. (R)

Key: (R) Attended Remotely

The Chair advised Committee of its obligations and protocol whilst the meeting was being audio recorded.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received for Alderman Coyle. (Councillor MA McKillop substituting)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. MINUTES OF CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD THURSDAY 21 MARCH 2024**

AGREED – that the Minutes of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee meeting held Thursday 21 March 2024 are confirmed as a correct record.

**4. MINUTES OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OVERSIGHT PANEL MEETING
HELD MONDAY 8 APRIL 2024**

Proposed by Alderman Boyle

¹ Amended at CM 240507

Seconded by Councillor Peacock and

AGREED – to recommend that the Minutes of the Implementation Oversight Panel Meeting held Monday 8 April 2024 are adopted and recommendations therein approved.

- * **Alderman Knight McQuillan joined the meeting at 19.04pm during consideration of this item.**

5. CIVIC BUILDING AND TOWN HALL ROOM HIRE CHARGES

Report, previously circulated, was presented by the Chief Executive.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek Elected Member approval to increase the room hire charges in relation to the Civic Buildings. Rooms are available for hire in Sheskburn House, Ballymoney Town Hall, Coleraine Town Hall, Portrush Town Hall and Kilrea Town Hall. Rooms are not available for hire in any of the other Civic Buildings.

Background

The cost of operating Buildings has increased particularly in relation to Staffing and Energy. Post Covid the rooms in Sheskburn House and the Town Halls were popular with community groups for meetings as the rooms enabled social distancing. No room hire charge increases were applied in 2023/24 to support those requiring this additional safe space.

The income and expenditure relating to Sheskburn House and the Town Halls is listed below and covers the financial year 2023/2024. Sheskburn House is primarily used as staff office accommodation and is also a designated site for Registration Services.

| Facility | Expenditure 2022/2023 | Income 2022/2023 | Net Expenditure |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Sheskburn House Ballycastle | 170,604 | (6,908) | 163,703 |
| Ballymoney Town Hall | 96,208 | (6,785) | 89,423 |
| Coleraine Town Hall | 98,172 | (3,846) | 94,326 |
| Portrush Town Hall | 65,502 | (19,563) | 45,938 |
| Kilrea Town Hall | 26,188 | (2,473) | 23,715 |

It is the intention to bring back a report on the potential future use of the Civic Buildings to Council in September 2024. Some Elected Members will recall that a workshop was held some years back in relation to the Civic Buildings and it is intended to revisit this.

Elected Members are now asked to consider increasing the room hire charges for 2024/2025. The proposed increase is 5%. The impact of the proposed price increase is detailed in Appendix 1 (circulated).

It is proposed to freeze the price of the George Sheils Room in Ballymoney Town Hall for the medium term to enable rationalisation of pricing. This would have been addressed at an earlier stage but as highlighted previously, the pricing structure was not reviewed over the Covid period in support of community group safe space.

The Town Halls and Sheskburn House are staffed when in use between 9.00am and 5.00pm. Bookings requested outside these hours require a caretaker to open up and be in attendance in addition to their normal working hours and there is a minimal two hour booking required. There is also a 20% discount applied for 10 or more bookings.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee freeze the room hire charge for the Shiels room in Ballymoney Town Hall and approve an increase of 5% on all other room hire charges for Sheskburn House and the Town Halls for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 1.

Councillor Wilson stated broad agreement with the increases in the charges for room hire and there could be more done to advertise that rooms in the Civic Building and Town Halls can be hired.

In response to questions, the Chief Executive advised that there are running costs for Sheskburn House as it is operating as Civic Headquarters, there is a leisure facility within the building and it is an old building. The Chief Executive advised the recommendation is that there is a 5% increase in room hire charges, with the charges in Ballymoney Town Hall being frozen. The Chief Executive confirmed advertising can be done to promote hall hire, as some Members were unaware of the availability of hire of halls as a meeting venue. The Chief Executive advised consideration can be given to the use of Portnagree House in Ballycastle in relation to hiring rooms. It was also advised that if Council is doing an advertising campaign, it would be good to show usage figures for the civic buildings and town halls. The Chief Executive acknowledged the points made for improvement regarding promoting the use of town halls and civic buildings; and the social aspect in respect of providing affordable meeting space for the local community.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Alderman Boyle and

AGREED – to recommend that Council freeze the room hire charge for the Shiels room in Ballymoney Town Hall and approve an increase of 5% on all other room hire charges for Sheskburn House and the Town Halls for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 1 with the caveat to bring a paper back with a strategy for targeted advertising and promotion of what facilities Council have and how much they cost.

6. PROVISION OF COUNCIL INSURANCE 2024/25

Report, previously circulated, was presented as read by the Chair.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update Elected Members on the annual Council insurance renewal post European Journal procurement exercise.

Background

Annually the Council has in place a range of 16 insurance policies that are procured by the Broker via the European Journal. There have been a range of issues over the last number of years such as lack of market competition and price increases.

The insurance market is difficult to predict in terms of trends and cost increases and a budget was set for 2024/25 of £1,635,679.00. The result of the European Journal procurement exercise is a number of cost fluctuations across the insurance policies, but the actual overall increase is 4.35%, much lower than predicted.

Each year the Council liaises with the insurance broker to assess the financial position with regard to control of costs and as part of this review the option of self- insurance is considered. This review will take place in September 2024.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee recommends to Council that this Report is noted.

AGREED – to recommend that Council note the report.

7. D-DAY 80 ANNIVERSARY

Report, previously circulated, was presented as read by the Chair.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update Members with plans to mark the 80th anniversary of the D Day landings in Normandy on 6th June 2024.

Background

D Day 80 is being organised throughout the United Kingdom, Channel Islands, Isle of Man, UK Overseas Territories and on Gold Beach, Normandy to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the D Day landings, which ultimately led to the end of WWII. It will also act as a collective tribute to those who took part in the landings to ensure the freedom that we enjoy today.

Council has received the official 'Guide to Taking Part in D Day 80 on 6th June 2024' from pageantmaster Bruno Peek which outlines the various activities and the reasons for them. The full 69 page guide can be viewed via the following link: <https://www.d-day80beacons.co.uk/>

On 5th December, Council agreed to

- Register its involvement in D Day 80 by lighting a beacon at East or West Strand, Portrush;

- His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant, accompanied by the Mayor/Deputy Mayor, is invited to light the beacon;
- Invitation be extended to Royal British Legion Group 10 members which includes all groups in Causeway Coast and Glens Borough area;
- Purchase one additional Beacon

Progress and Outline of the Event

The beacon has been ordered and will be delivered in May.

Col Dr Stephen Bailie, TD, DL will attend from the Co Antrim Lieutenancy.

The recommendation from officers is that the event should be held at East Strand, Portrush (Mayors office have met with Coast and Countryside and Estates team)

There are opportunities for wider involvement in the event, with the Pipes and Drums of 152 RLC Regiment. Initial contact has been made with 152 RLC Regiment to establish their availability for the event.

Officers will make contact and liaise with president of Group 10 RBL, further details to follow.

Format of the event would be similar to the Poppy drop at East Strand as part of the Airshow.

Suggested format of the day will be to light the beacon and read the International Tribute, suggest this is done by Col Dr Stephen Bailie along with Mayor/Deputy Mayor and the President of Group 10.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Committee consider and approve Council's plans to commemorate the DDay 80 Anniversary event.

In response to questions, the Director of Corporate Services advised the Sea Cadets and Army Cadets could be included in the invitation to the D Day 80th anniversary event and that publicity for the event will also be considered.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson

Seconded by Alderman Knight McQuillan and

AGREED – to recommend that Council approve Council's plans to commemorate the D Day 80 Anniversary event.

8. NOTES OF THE ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP HELD MONDAY 15 APRIL 2024

The Chair advised members that the notes from the Elected Member Development Working Group have been provided for information.

Proposed by Councillor Peacock

Seconded by Councillor C Archibald and

AGREED - to recommend that the notes of the Elected Member Development Working Group held Monday 15 April 2024 are adopted and actions therein approved.

9. COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE

Report, previously circulated, was presented as read by the Chair.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to present some minor amendments to the previously adopted Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP).

Background

The Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) issued the final draft of the Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP) in June 2023 following a period of public consultation and the involvement of Local Government Officers on an operational network. Following Council approval of the MCHP the Council adopted the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Complaints Handling Procedure Parts 1, 2 and 3 in October 2023.

Amendments to the Complaints Handling Procedure

NIPSO and officers from the 11 Councils sit on a Best Practice Network during the implementation phase of the new policy. NIPSO has advised Councils that compliance checks will be carried out in June 2024 to ensure that local councils are complying with their obligations in terms of implementing the complaints handling policy.

As part of the pre-compliance checks a few issues have been highlighted and Councils have been asked to ensure that their CHPs reflect the wording in the final Model Complaints Handling Procedure.

The following amendments are required and are as follows:

References to guidance documents: CHPs should not include reference to unpublished NIPSO guides. The only reference which can be included is 'Issuing An Apology'.

Timeframes for escalating a complaint: In terms of the timeframe for escalating a complaint from Stage 1 to Stage 2 to ensure consistency within and between sectors NIPSO requires a minimum period of 30 working days be provided to enable a person to consider whether to continue with their complaint. NIPSO advises organisations to apply the 30 days timeframe.

Wording in different versions of the MCHP: NIPSO has asked organisations to use the wording in the final published version. The Council's CHP has been amended as advised. The changes required are minor in nature e.g changing Complaints Handler Network to Best Practice Network.

Supporting the Customer: NIPSO asks organisations to add examples of how they are going beyond equality legislation in considering more widely what factors may impact on people's access to complaints handling. Officers will examine ways that this can be facilitated and report further to Committee.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the amendments detailed in the report in relation to reference to NIPSO guidance documents, timescales for escalating a complaint, wording throughout to be in line with the final published Model Complaints Handling Procedure and provisions in relation to supporting the customer be approved and the Complaints Handling Procedure amended accordingly.

Proposed by Councillor Peacock
Seconded by Councillor MA McKillop and

AGREED – to recommend to Council that that the amendments detailed in the report in relation to reference to NIPSO guidance documents, timescales for escalating a complaint, wording throughout to be in line with the final published Model Complaints Handling Procedure and provisions in relation to supporting the customer be approved and the Complaints Handling Procedure amended accordingly.

10. REQUEST TO HOST NILGA EXECUTIVE MEETING

Report, previously circulated, was presented as read by the Chair.

Purpose of Report

The Purpose of the report is to present a request from the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) to host the NILGA Executive Meeting on Friday 9 August 2024 from 10.30am-12.45pm.

Background

Correspondence has been received from NILGA requesting whether Council can host the NILGA Executive Meeting on Friday 9 August 2024. In previous years Council has agreed to host the meeting, annually.

NILGA requirements

NILGA require the undernoted arrangements in place for their meeting to be held in Causeway Coast and Glens on Friday 9 August 2024:

- Meeting room for up to 20 in-person attendees from 9.30am for set-up;
- Capability for audio/visual set-up to enable remote access for virtual attendees.

Cost to host NILGA

Whether Council are minded to approve the request or otherwise, due to the request for a hybrid meeting set-up, Officers would recommend Council consider the use of The Council Chamber for this meeting.

Civic Facilities have advised there is no room charge for the use of The Council Chamber and supply of tea/coffee. IT staffing assistance will be required for the meeting setup from 9.00am-1.00pm and one Committee & Member Services staff member in attendance to oversee arrangements.

NILGA will meet the cost of the catering.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Corporate Policy & Resources Committee consider the request to host the NILGA Executive Meeting on Friday 9th August 2024 in The Council Chamber, Civic Headquarters, catering costs to be met by NILGA.

Proposed by Councillor Peacock

Seconded by Councillor McCully and

AGREED – to recommend that Council approve the request to host the NILGA Executive Meeting on Friday 9th August 2024 in The Council Chamber, Civic Headquarters, catering costs to be met by NILGA.

11. ODHR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES – SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Report, previously circulated, was presented as read by the Chair.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present Council with the Social Media Policy for consideration.

Background

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidance regarding the acceptable and responsible use of social media both within, and outside, of work. The policy aims to inform staff of their obligations with regard to the use of social media whilst minimising the risks of inappropriate use of social media to our business.

This policy provides advice and guidance to all staff members who are using (or considering using) social media in any capacity. It has been compiled to help staff understand the reputational, legal and ethical implications of engaging in online communication of this nature – and what can happen if social media is misused, whether intentionally or otherwise.

The purpose of this policy is to encourage and enable staff to use social media appropriately. It also makes clear our responsibilities to do so in accordance with the Code of Conduct and sets out the principles that staff are expected to follow when using social media in their personal and professional lives.

This policy covers the use of social media both in and out of work.

This policy applies to all Council employees, including the Chief Executive. It also includes apprentices, agency workers, casual workers and volunteers.

Third parties who have access to Council electronic communication systems and equipment, including consultants and contractors, are required to comply with this policy.

Consultation

The policy has been considered and agreed at the Senior Management Team and also the Trade Unions through the Action Group and Joint Consultative and Negotiating Committee (JCNC).

Equality Screening

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".

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee recommends to Council the Social Media Policy for approval.

Proposed by Alderman Boyle

Seconded by Councillor MA McKillop and

AGREED – to recommend that Council approve the Social Media Policy.

12. CONFERENCES

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

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report is to inform Elected Members of conferences and courses they may wish to attend.

Please see below details for a NILGA Councillors Workshop (attached):

- Employment Issues and Negotiation with Trade Unions, Digital/Online, 9 May 2024 6-8:30pm

Hosted by NILGA with support from the LGTG (Local Government Training Group), these FREE events are open to all Elected Members.

Interested members should contact events@nilga.org

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council consider the Conference report.

Committee noted the report.

13. CONSULTATION

There were no consultations.

14. CORRESPONDENCE

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

Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to present correspondence for Members' consideration.

The following correspondence has been received:

**Anthony Carleton, Director Local Government & Housing Regulation,
Department for Communities – dated 28 March 2024**

Extract

Thank you for your letter of 13 March 2024.

I acknowledge the short notice given to councils and understand the potential impact that the temporary removal of provisions to allow councils to hold meetings by remote or hybrid means may have.

To be clear, from 7 March 2024, the legislation which provided councils with the power to hold remote/hybrid meetings, made under the Coronavirus Act 2020, ceased to have effect. It will require new legislation to reintroduce arrangements for hybrid/remote meetings.

Minister Lyons has indicated that emergency legislation made under the Coronavirus Act 2020 is not the right mechanism to provide councils with powers to hold remote or hybrid meetings. He is committed to giving councils the flexibility to hold remote/hybrid meetings and intends to bring forward regulations, within as short a timeframe as possible, using enabling powers in the Local Government (Meetings and Performance) Act (NI) 2021.

Officials have been in contact with all council Chief Executives regarding the preparation of the new regulations and will continue to engage and update councils regularly on this matter.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Corporate Policy and Resources Committee consider the correspondence.

Committee noted the report.

Councillor McShane welcomed the correspondence and stated it was hoped things would be expediated to promote hybrid meetings.

Councillor Storey expressed concern regarding the timescale to implement the required legislation.

Councillor Peacock noted that remote attendance at meetings is an option for MLA's and not local Councils.

15. MATTERS FOR REPORTING TO THE PARTNERSHIP PANEL

There were no matters to report to the Partnership Panel.

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN COMMITTEE'

Proposed by Alderman Knight McQuillan
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and

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

*** Press were disconnected from the meeting at 7.26pm.**

The information contained in the following items is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

The Chair advised Committee of its obligations and protocol whilst the meeting was being audio recorded, and with the remote meetings protocol.

16. APPOINTMENT OF CONSULTANT(S) TO UNDERTAKE INDEPENDENT RESEARCH ON THE NEW DWELLINGS REQUIREMENT FOR THE BOROUGH TO INFORM THE PREPARATION OF THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Confidential report, previously circulated, was presented as read by the Chair.

Confidential by virtue of paragraph(s) 1,2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Background

The Council has a statutory duty to prepare a Local Development Plan (LDP). Prepared within the context of the Council's Strategy and its Community Plan, the LDP is a spatial land use plan for the sustainable growth and development of the Borough, up to 2038.

The main purpose of the LDP is to inform the public, statutory authorities, service providers, developers and other interested parties of the policy framework and land use proposals that will implement the LDP Strategic Objectives and guide decisions on planning applications within the Borough.

The LDP aims to provide sufficient land to meet the anticipated needs for housing, employment, and services; all supported by adequate infrastructure, over the Plan period.

The LDP comprises two publication documents (following two separate preparation stages), as follows:

- Plan Strategy; and
- Local Policies Plan

Each stage comprises a formal consultation period, independent examination, and publication of a final Plan document with a suite of accompanying assessment and background reports.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Members agree to the appointment of consultant(s) to undertake independent research on the New Dwellings Requirement for the Borough to inform the preparation of the Local Development Plan, and agree the Draft Tender TOR attached at Appendix 1.

The Head of Planning noted comments made regarding getting the balance with urban and rural development and ensuring rural development is not inhibited by restrictive policy. The Head of Planning confirmed the thrust of the independent research is to gain an overall view; to gather information from across the Borough to ascertain urban and rural needs.

Proposed by Councillor C Archibald
Seconded by Alderman Boyle and

AGREED – to recommend that Council agree to the appointment of consultant(s) to undertake independent research on the New Dwellings Requirement for the Borough to inform the preparation of the Local Development Plan, and agree the Draft Tender TOR attached at Appendix 1.

17. CORPORATE SERVICES MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS MONTH 11

Confidential report, previously circulated, was presented as read by the Chair.

Confidential by virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report to provide Members with information on the current financial position of Corporate Services Directorate at the end of Period 11.

Background

Council has approved the annual budget for Corporate Services and delegated authority to officers to utilise this budget in the provision of services to the rate payers. Corporate Services budget for 2023/24 is £ 5,869,506, and the Planning Budget is £1,468,846.00.

Detailed Analysis

The Corporate Services position at Month 11 shows a £261,416 positive variance, as a result of £207k under budget in expenditure and £54K over budget in income.

Table 1, circulated, detailed the Analysis of Expenditure – Corporate Services Months 1-10

Democratic Services (DS)

£59K favourable due to various elements of expenditure being less than budget in Period 11 including the following: Members Mileage, Official and Courtesy Visits and an increase in Registration Income.

Land and Property

£45k favourable at period 11 due to a vacant post within the structure approx. £35k and a favourable balance of £14k on valuation and review costs

Human Resources

£97K favourable in Period 11.

£46k favourable in Programme Management Costs, £15k favourable in Employee Relations and £28k favourable in Legal expenses.

The Staff Training and Conference Costs is currently over 100% spent at Period 11. Staff Recruitment is over budget by £17k at the end of Period 11. This is the recruitment costs for the new L&D Director which was not budgeted for as this was unknown at the time of budget setting last year.

It is envisaged that the savings and underspends in other ODHR codes, will result in overall the ODHR being on target at year-end.

ICT

£80K adverse overall in Period 11, due to a combination of underspends and overspends. The adverse variance in Photocopiers £27k, Computer Maintenance and Support £113k, Computer Licenses £28k and Telephones £50k is reduced by the underspends in Internet and Data Connections £28k, Computer Supplies £17k, Computer Equipment £45k and Financial Consultancy and Advice £27k.

Contributions to other bodies

£3k adverse as at Period 11.

Internal Audit.

£50k favourable as at Period 11.

Internal audit shows an underspend as at Period 11. The reason for the underspend is twofold:

Contract terms were not agreed with the co-sourcing partner until August 2023 which has deferred the commencement of internal audit assignments for the 2023/24 financial year. Audit work commenced in September, and it is anticipated that the Internal Audit expenditure code will be on budget at the year end. As the budget is profiled evenly throughout the year the outturn figure currently shows an underspend. It is expected that approx... £30k will be invoiced post year end for work which relates to the 2023/24 financial year.

Vacancy within the service area remains unfilled. Agency member of staff employed for 4 months of the year.

Centrally Managed

Overall, £60K favourable position at the end of Period 11, due to various underspends, including Telephones £15k, Legal services £13k and other Professional costs £18k.

Policy & Community Planning

Overall, £33K favourable position at the end of Period 11, due to underspends in Programme Management Costs.

Planning

£11k adverse at end of Period 11.

Planning is showing a variance of over £11k adverse position at end of Period 11 based on draft Management Accounts. This is an increase of over £8k from end of Period 10.

The adverse position at the end of Period 11 is due largely to the adverse position in relation to salaries and wages of over £134k. The favourable position of income from planning applications and property certificates remains similar to Period 10 at just under £67k (Budget £1,193,106 v Actual £1,259,836).

The favourable position of income in addition to other expenditure costs of legal and procurement reduces the deficit to just over £11k. The favourable position in the legal expenditure will be reduced in period 12 when payment of legal costs for judicial review cases are paid.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Management Accounts for Period 11 - Corporate Services and Planning - and the associated narrative contained with the report are accepted.

Committee noted the report.

18. MINUTES OF THE LAND AND PROPERTY SUB COMMITTEE MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY 10 APRIL 2024

Copy minutes previously circulated, presented by the Director of Corporate Policy and Resources.

Proposed by Councillor C Archibald
Seconded by Alderman Knight McQuillan and

AGREED – to recommend that Council adopt the Minutes of the Land and Property Sub Committee meeting held Wednesday 10 April 2024 and recommendations therein approved.

19. RENEWAL OF MICROSOFT 365 CONTRACT

Confidential report, previously circulated, was presented as read by the Chair.

Confidential by virtue of paragraph(s) 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Purpose of Report

Approval is sought for the renewal of the Microsoft 365 contract. This is a vital asset in the productivity and collaboration across council. Cloud provision of email and Teams services is an economical and extremely robust solution.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council approve the tendered bid from BT to renew the Microsoft 365 contract for another 3 years. This is the only feasible option for continuity of service.

Proposed by Councillor McShane
Seconded by Alderman Knight McQuillan and

AGREED – to recommend that Council approve the tendered bid from BT to renew the Microsoft 365 contract for another 3 years. This is the only feasible option for continuity of service.

20. TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME RECOMMENDATIONS – RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION GOVERNANCE

Confidential report, previously circulated, was presented by the Director of Corporate Services.

Confidential by virtue of paragraph(s) 3 & 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present an update on the Transformation Action Plan - Records Management and Information Management Procedures.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Action Plan Update is considered and noted.

Committee noted the report.

21. RENEWAL OF AGENCY CONTRACT

Confidential report, previously circulated, was presented as read by the Chair.

Confidential by virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Purpose of Report

To inform members of the committee of an extension to the current recruitment agency worker supply contract.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council approve the renewal of the recruitment agency contract for a further period of 12 months.

During discussion concerns were raised regarding the cost of the agency contract and the effect on the overall financial position for Council. Reference was made to private sector employers who can employ agency members of staff after a period of time and if Council could consider similar. Councillor Wilson wished to put it to the floor to gauge the appetite for the Committee to write to Central Government to give consideration to this.

In response to questions the Director of Corporate Services advised that the next quarterly report which is due in May will show the number of Council staff appointed and the number of agency staff. In response to further questions the Director of Corporate Services advised all local authorities are bound by the Local Government Staff Commission Code of Procedures on recruitment and selection and within that they are very stringent in terms of adherence to equality legislation and employment law. The Director of Corporate Services advised that, given the matters raised, the next report brought to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee will provide further detail of the agency staff usage.

Proposed by Alderman Knight McQuillan

Seconded by Councillor C Archibald and

AGREED – to recommend that Council approve the renewal of the recruitment agency contract for a further period of 12 months.

22. PORTBALLINTRAE, SEAPORT AVENUE, CLAIM OF RIGHT OF WAY, LEGAL DISPUTE. UPDATE OF SENIOR COUNSEL OPINION

Confidential report, previously circulated, was presented by the Council Solicitor for Land and Property.

Confidential by virtue of paragraph(s) 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update members of legal proceedings to which Council has been joined, concerning the claim of a right of way along Seaport Avenue, Portballintrae, County Antrim and to present Senior Counsel's opinion.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee recommends to Council:

Council amends its position of 10th January 2024 regarding the claim by the owners of number 14 Seaport Avenue of a right of way, both vehicular and pedestrian to access their property, over that part of the laneway owned by Council at Seaport Avenue, Portballintrae, to a neutral position, and confirms continued delegated authority for Legal Services Officers to act until the conclusion of legal proceedings.
Legal Services Officers will provide updates to the Land and Property Subcommittee.

During discussion it was considered that Council are in a difficult position and that accepting the recommendation is the best approach for Council.

Councillor McCully acknowledged issues with the Scheme of Delegation have been exposed and expressed interest in the outcome of the Council giving consideration to improvements that will be made.

Proposed by Councillor Peacock
Seconded by Alderman Knight McQuillan and

AGREED – to recommend to Council that amends its position of 10th January 2024 regarding the claim by the owners of number 14 Seaport Avenue of a right of way, both vehicular and pedestrian to access their property, over that part of the laneway owned by Council at Seaport Avenue, Portballintrae, to a neutral position, and confirms continued delegated authority for Legal Services Officers to act until the conclusion of legal proceedings.
Legal Services Officers will provide updates to the Land and Property Subcommittee.

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

There were no items of Any Other Relevant Business.

MOTION TO PROCEED ‘IN PUBLIC’

Proposed by Alderman Knight McQuillan
Seconded by Councillor Huggins and

RESOLVED – that Council move ‘*In Public*’

There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance.

The meeting concluded at 8.05pm.

Chair