

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD THURSDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2025

No	Item	Summary of Key Recommendations	Estimated Timescale for completion
1.	Apologies	Alderman Callan, Councillors McGlinchey, Peacock, Schenning	n/a
2.	Declarations of Interest	Alderman Scott	n/a
3.	Minutes of Finance Committee meeting held Thursday 12 June 2025	Confirmed as a correct record	n/a
4.	Management Accounts Period 4	Noted	
5.	Prompt payments	Noted	
6.	APP Forecast	Noted	
7.	DRG Q1 Monitoring	Noted	
8.	Finance Committee	To recommend that Council approve the Terms of Reference as set out in this report.	
9.	Banking Services	To recommend that Council approve the extension of the appointment of Bank of Ireland as the provider of banking services to council for a further three-year period.	

10.	Cash Collection Services	<i>To recommend that Council approve the appointment of Pivotal to provide Cash collection services to council for a three-year period.</i>	
11.	Shared Cost AVC Scheme	<i>To recommend that Council approve the implementation of a shared cost AVC scheme to provide extra benefits to NILGOSC members and that My MoneyMatters be appointed to administer the scheme.</i>	
12.	Finance Software Contract Extension	<i>To recommend that Council approve the extension of the contract for the finance software with Technology One Ltd to ensure no interruption to finance systems for one year.</i>	
13.	Travel and Subsistence Policy	<i>To recommend that Council approve the updated Travel and Subsistence Policy as attached at Appendix A</i>	<i>September 2025</i>
14.	Under-over payments Policy	<i>To recommend that Council approve the Over-Under Payments Policy as attached at Appendix A.</i>	<i>September 2025</i>

15.	Loan Redemption	<i>To recommend that Council retrospectively approve the repayment of the loan facility in full taking £2m from the sinking fund for that purpose and paying the accrued interest to date which has been budgeted for and can therefore be charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.</i>	
16.	Correspondence		
16.1	Letter from Minister of Finance to SOLACE - Publication of Terms of Reference for Strategic Review of Rating	Noted	
16.2	Strategic Review of Rating - Terms of Reference		
16.3	Covering letter - Record of Councillors Allowances Funded by Council 2024-25		
	In Committee (Items 17-20 inclusive)		
17.	Debt Management	Noted	
18.	Minutes of FMT meeting Tuesday 13 May 2025	Noted	
19.	Rates Estimates 2026/27	<i>To recommend that Council agree the level of assumptions discussed for inclusion in the estimates</i>	
20.	Environmental Services Directorate Budget Presentation	<i>To recommend that Council agree the level of assumptions</i>	

		<i>discussed for inclusion in the estimates.</i>	
21.	Any Other Relevant Business (notified in accordance with Standing Order 12 (0))	<i>None</i>	<i>n/a</i>

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AND VIA
VIDEO CONFERENCE,
ON THURSDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2025 AT 7.00PM**

In the Chair: Councillor Kyle (C)

Members Present: Alderman Coyle (C), Knight-McQuillan (R), Scott (C)
Councillors Holmes (R), Huggins (C), Kane (C),
McQuillan (R), Mairs (C), Nicholl (C) Schenning (R),
Wilson (R), Wisener (R)

Officers Present: A McPeake, Director of Environmental Services (C)
D Wright, Chief Finance Officer (C)
J Culkin, Management Accountant (C)
J Keen, Committee & Member Services Officer (C)
A Lennox, ICT Officer (C)
M Kennedy, ICT Officer (C)

In Attendance: Press 1(no)

The Chief Finance Officer undertook a roll call.

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

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were recorded for Alderman Callan, Councillors McGlinchey, Peacock, Schenning¹

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Interest were recorded for Alderman Scott for Item 9 Banking Services. Alderman Scott stated his wife is a Bank Manager in the Bank of Ireland. Having declared an interest, Alderman Scott left the meeting during consideration of this item and did not vote.

3. MINUTES OF FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD THURSDAY 12 JUNE 2025

Copy previously circulated.

¹ Councillor Schenning later joined the meeting

AGREED –the Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held Thursday 12 June 2025 were confirmed as a correct record.

4. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS PERIOD 4

For information report, previously circulated presented by the Management Accountant.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present the current management accounts to Council for information and analysis.

Background

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council (CC&GBC) provides a range of services to the Borough of Causeway Coast and Glens which stretches from Lough Foyle in the west to the Glens of Antrim in the east covering an area of 1,968 square kilometres and with a population of approximately 145,000. The council is currently made up of 3 directorates (Leisure and Development, Environmental Services, Corporate Policy and Resources) and includes a Planning, Finance and Legal department, that are reported separately in this report. The Annual Budgeted Spend for 2025/26 controlled by the Directorates is £86.408m (excludes depreciation, actuarial adjustments, provisions, accumulated absences, and it is these figures that change the figures in the Audited Accounts). Gross Income is budgeted at £86.408m meaning a balanced budget was approved for the year.

Financial Overview by Directorate

The table circulated detailed a draft summary of the financial position at period 4 (up to and including 31 July 2025).

Council is showing a favourable variance against budget at period 4 amounting to £1,165,847 however it should be noted that this contains an exceptional income item relating to Leisure VAT of £371,681. Adjusting for this the operational variance at period 4 is £794,166 (Period 3 - £690,663), an increase of £103,503 therefore should this position be maintained throughout the year Council would be in surplus operationally, increasing reserves by this amount. The most significant contributor to this position is Leisure & Development.

Income and Expenditure Analysis

The overall position with regards staffing costs was circulated in a table by Directorate.

Council is currently slightly adverse against budget in terms of staffing; this is after adjusting for the impending pay award which had been budgeted for at

3%. At the time of writing this report it had just been announced that a 3.2% pay award had been agreed and this will be implemented in September thereby being included from period 6 onwards, it is anticipated that the payroll budget should be sufficient to meet the year's total pay bill.

A table was circulated which sets out the budgetary position of all other areas of expenditure against budget by Directorate.

At period 4 this is £298k (Period 3 £253k) adverse. It should be noted that the Funding Unit (£178k) relate mainly grant expenditure, which is externally funded, and these adverse variances will be offset by income. Estates (239k) is adverse mainly due to maintenance materials and equipment. Another area currently showing adverse is the Chief Executive Directorate due to the recent Joey Dunlop Memorial event.

Income levels remain strong for period 4 following on from 2024/25 and the position is as detailed in the table circulated by Directorate.

As mentioned previously above the main contributor to this position is Leisure & Development with the excellent income generation from our Leisure Centres continuing into 2025/26, despite significant increases in budgeted income the service continues to exceed budget at this stage. In addition, the income for Prosperity & Place and the Funding Unit are favourable, Funding Unit as indicated above offsetting the adverse expenditure variances in this area. Also performing well at period 4 are Planning (£117k favourable) and investment income (£150k favourable), it is anticipated that Investment Income will exceed the annual budget for the year. The previous reported adverse variance for Rates Support Grant which, due to the late budget agreement for Stormont departments, was not paid for the first quarter, has now been rectified when the first 2 quarters' grant was received together in period 4.

Commentary was provided on the overall income per Directorate.

Summary

This report represents steady performance following a solid start to the financial year, especially again with regards some of our income streams however it is imperative that Council remains vigilant over the coming months to ensure the performance is maintained.

In response to questions related to spending for supplies and services increasing the Chief Finance Officer advised that this would be analysed by Officers to see if there are any trends. The Chief Finance Officer confirmed that comparisons to the previous month's Management Accounts can be provided in the report going forward. The Chief Finance Officer further advised that the

increase in wages could be due to seasonal staff, and the the pay rise will be reflected in Period 6 Accounts. The Chief Finance Officer advised that the income offsets the expenditure in the Funding Unit.

Committee NOTED the report.

* **Councillor Schenning joined the meeting remotely at 7:11pm**

5. PROMPT PAYMENTS

For information report, previously circulated, was presented by the Management Accountant.

Background

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 2023 the latest data being for quarter 2 of 25/26 year, up to and including end of August 2025.

Analysis

The statistics will be continually monitored to ensure the performance levels are maintained and where possible improved. Council's self-imposed target remains at 90% of invoices being paid within 30 days. During August 84.77% (July 90.05%) of invoices were paid within 30 days. This drop in performance is disappointing and finance staff are looking into possible explanations with a view to restoring previous levels, especially given our year to date performance is well short of last year.

Prompt Payment Statistics 2023/2024					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Total No of Invoices	6512	7263	6847	7031	27653
Total amount paid	£ 23,864,802	£ 17,139,245	£ 13,837,183	£ 13,491,210	£ 68,332,440
Number of invoices paid within 10 days	3675	5233	5444	5774	20126
% of invoices paid within 10 days	56.43%	72.05%	79.51%	82.12%	72.78%
Number of invoices paid within 30 days	5398	6232	6215	6301	24146
% of invoices paid within 30 days	82.89%	85.80%	90.77%	89.62%	87.32%
Number of invoices paid outside 30 days	1114	1031	632	730	3507
% of invoices paid outside 30 days	17.11%	14.20%	9.23%	10.38%	12.68%
No. of Disputed Invoices	33	162	35	169	399
% of disputed invoices	0.51%	2.23%	0.51%	2.40%	1.44%
Average Payment Days	18.71	15.59	11.36	13.58	14.64
Prompt Payment Statistics 2024/2025					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Total No of Invoices	6890	7030	7234	6931	28085
Total amount paid	£ 15,645,094	£ 14,616,411	£ 13,040,366	£ 11,221,971	£ 54,523,842
Number of invoices paid within 10 days	5304	5316	5820	5220	21660
% of invoices paid within 10 days	76.98%	75.62%	80.45%	75.31%	77.12%
Number of invoices paid within 30 days	6274	6336	6813	6208	25631
% of invoices paid within 30 days	91.06%	90.13%	94.18%	89.57%	91.26%
Number of invoices paid outside 30 days	616	694	421	723	2454
% of invoices paid outside 30 days	8.94%	9.87%	5.82%	10.43%	8.74%
No. of Disputed Invoices	37	54	40	42	173
% of disputed invoices	0.54%	0.77%	0.55%	0.61%	0.62%
Average Payment Days	11.86	11.64	9.84	12.60	11.47
Prompt Payment Statistics 2025/2026					
	Q1	Q2*	Q3	Q4	Total
Total No of Invoices	6819	4619			11438
Total amount paid	£ 15,915,510	£ 13,166,637			£ 29,082,147
Number of invoices paid within 10 days	5003	3380			8383
% of invoices paid within 10 days	73.37%	73.18%			73.29%
Number of invoices paid within 30 days	6112	4045			10157
% of invoices paid within 30 days	89.63%	87.57%			88.80%
Number of invoices paid outside 30 days	707	574	0	0	1281
% of invoices paid outside 30 days	10.37%	12.43%			11.20%
No. of Disputed Invoices	30	25		42	97
% of disputed invoices	0.44%	0.54%			0.85%
Average Payment Days	12.59	14.28			-10.03
*Incomplete period					

Finance Committee NOTED the report.

6. APP FORECAST

Report, previously circulated, was presented by the Management Accountant.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to inform members of the latest Actual Penny Product (APP) forecast supplied by Land and Property Services (LPS).

Background

LPS has issued to Councils the first quarter's in year forecast as at 30 June 2025. The forecast for Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council has been based on in year assumptions:

Monthly Analysis

Month	Jun
Forecast	£(21)

All figures £'000

Additional analysis

The figures indicate a small projected clawback in terms of rates income for Council however it is too early to place any major reliance on the figures. It is worth noting that costs of collection have increased significantly due to back date pay awards for civil service staff.

APP analysis

The tables below (previously circulated) set out the analysis of the APP forecast for the current financial year in terms of both domestic and non-domestic properties.

Revaluations

There are still a number of outstanding revaluation challenge cases and whilst they could impact on our future rates income most of the significant challenges have by now been dealt with.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council note the report.

Committee NOTED the report

7. DRG Q1 MONITORING

Report, previously circulated, was presented by the Management Accountant.

Background

De-rating is a central government policy which reduces the rating burden on a number of sectors, the most notable being manufacturing. The effect of this policy is that less rates are collected than would be expected applying the district and regional rate factors to a property's Net Annual Value (NAV) consequently there is a reduction in the income to Council from rates.

Detail

As Council has no operational influence in the application any such policy De-Rating grant is a statutory mechanism through which central government compensates the local Councils for any loss incurred as a result of the central policy. The grant is linked to the NAV's of those non-domestic properties where de-rating applies and is therefore affected by any increase in the District Rate factor as set by Council annually.

Quarterly Analysis

Land and Property services have provided us with the first quarterly projection for de-rating grant for 2025/26. This indicates a negative forecast of approximately £3k. The tables in the Appendix A to this report show some analysis of the de-rating grant for all Councils.

Committee NOTED the report.

8. FINANCE COMMITTEE

Report, previously circulated, was presented by the Chief Finance Officer.

Background

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council adopted the traditional committee system as its preferred form of governance and, at its Special Council Meeting in September 2019, decided to form a Finance Committee. This report sets out the Terms of Reference for that Committee. Part of the implementation of the extraordinary audit requires that these terms be reviewed annually, the last review occurred at the June 2024 committee.

Scope

The Finance Committee ("the Committee") will be responsible for recommending to Council the key decisions and actions required to be taken specifically in relation to the work of the Finance function within Council. This will include:

Finance

- Recommendations on financial policies and guidelines, overseeing financial management and control, and ensuring compliance with relevant regulations.
- Assess financial risks or concerns that may impact materially on the financial performance or position of Council
- Co-ordinating/Consider/Review the annual Rates Estimate setting process, including recommendation of an annual budget and Capital Plan to the February Council rates strike meeting;
- Monitor the Council's financial performance and position against Plan and budget via Monthly review of the management accounts; to include a summary by service area of both Capital and Revenue income and expenditure, with commentary of positive or negative variances on budgets, and projected year-end position (after period 6);
- To implement and review a 4-year business plan and supporting financial plan and forecast
- Oversee and make appropriate recommendations to Council on matters pertaining to the:
 - a) Financial strategy and management;
 - b) Capital structure and funding;
 - c) Matters or business activities that may have a material impact on the Council's financial position.

Investment

- Recommend for approval the Council's overall Investment strategy and Investment principles including the Investment Governance Framework, and Investment Policy.
- Monitor the governance, and management and performance of the Council's investment portfolio. Consider changes to the Investment Strategy and make appropriate recommendations as required.
- Banking – Review banking arrangements/supervision of Council's banking arrangements/ approve signatories on the Council's Bank Accounts

Other

- Setting key finance targets and monitoring their delivery, including efficiency and income generation;
- All capital and resource expenditure to be reviewed by the committee before going to full council

Procurement

- To revise and manage the limits of authority on Officer spend;
- To consider and award contracts as required
- To investigate, review and set targets for efficiencies and income for each department.

Capital Structure and Funding

- Recommend the annual limit of capital expenditure and reviewing debt/borrowing on a quarterly basis;
- To raise loans and other financial arrangements as required and subject to Full Council approval.
- Oversight of Council's treasury management;
- Seek external expertise as required;

Finance (Operations)

- The future development of the organisational structure for the Finance Service;
- Approving and overseeing the delivery of any relevant service strategies for the Finance Service;
- Approving relevant policies and procedures for the Finance Service;
- Monitoring and reviewing business and service delivery plans for the Finance Service;
- To wire funds between budget allocations, except staff costs, and bring forward funds from reserves as necessary
- Approving the establishment of external partnerships where considered relevant to the Finance Service, including procurement of advice, review and investigation of Council finances, recommending efficiencies where appropriate;
- Approving and monitoring the implementation of any capital projects by the Finance Service, including related ICT systems;
- Approving and monitoring funding sources and mechanisms to assist with various initiatives, projects and actions within the remit of the Finance Service;
- Recommending to Council the resolution of any associated issues;
- Considering the resource implications of any recommendations;
- To review the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the Council;
- Require the attendance of any officers as required;
- Receive a rolling programme of finance related presentations from all service areas.

Membership

The Committee is comprised of the sixteen Elected Members appointed to the Committee using the quota greatest remainder formula.

Chair

The Committee will be chaired according to the D'Hondt formula for positions of responsibility. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Committee will be chaired by the Deputy Chairperson. In the absence of the Deputy Chairperson, a chair for the meeting will be agreed by the Members present.

Meetings

Meetings of the Committee will be held on 2nd Thursday of each month.

All meetings of the Committee will be governed by the Council's Standing Orders and the Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors.

Communication and Reporting

The Minutes of the Committee will be noted and confirmed at each meeting of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council by the Chair of the Committee.

Review of Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference are to be reviewed after on an annual basis.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Finance Committee approve the Terms of Reference as set out in this report.

Proposed by Alderman Scott

Seconded by Councillor Kane and

AGREED – to recommend that Council approve the Terms of Reference as set out in this report.

- * **Alderman Knight McQuillan joined the meeting remotely at 7:17pm**
- * **Having declared an interest in the following item Alderman Scott left the Chamber at 7:17pm**

9. BANKING SERVICES

Report, previously circulated, was presented by the Chief Finance Officer.

Purpose of Report

To seek approval to extend the appointment Bank of Ireland as councils banking supplier

Background

Council has used Bank of Ireland for the last 10 years to provide banking services.

Banking services were tendered for in 2022 with Bank of Ireland submitting the most advantageous quotation with the current contract ending on 5th December 2025.

Premarket engagement was conducted between April and May 2025 with 5 banks, HBSC, Barclays, Santander, Bank of Ireland and AIB.

The premarket engagement has indicated that the current offering by Bank of Ireland remains extremely competitive and therefore the potential saving to Council from retendering Banking services is minimal.

The potential upheaval in implementing a new banking provider is significant and this effort when taken in conjunction with the minimal potential saving available from a new tender process, not to mention the cost of running the tendering process, officers recommend an extension to the current arrangement.

Bank of Ireland has offered to extend the terms of most advantageous quotation from the previous exercise which equates to approximately £ 6,000 per annum variable depending on demand for particular products for a term of 3 years.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council approve the extension of the appointment of Bank of Ireland as the provider of banking services to council for a further three-year period.

Proposed by Councillor Huggins
Seconded by Councillor Mairs and

AGREED – to recommend that Council approve the extension of the appointment of Bank of Ireland as the provider of banking services to council for a further three-year period.

* **Alderman Scott rejoined the meeting in the Chamber at 7:19pm**

10. CASH COLLECTION SERVICES

Report, previously circulated, was presented by the Chief Finance Officer.

Purpose of Report

To seek approval to appoint Pivotal as Councils supplier of cash collection services.

Background

Council has used Pivotal for several years as its supplier of cash collection services.

A tender exercise was completed which returned no responses in April 2025, a second competition was completed in August to which Pivotal responded, no other submissions were received.

Council currently spends £ 22,000 per annum on cash collection from leisure centres and other council properties, the collection rates submitted have not changed from 2024/2025 rates at 45p per £100 for collection of notes and 45p per £100 for collection of coins, cash in transit charge remains unchanged at £20.91.

Contract as tendered is for 3 years to include, 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/8 with two optional performance based further extensions of 12 months.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council approve the appointment of Pivotal to provide Cash collection services to council for a three-year period.

Proposed by Alderman Scott
Seconded by Councillor Huggins and

AGREED – to recommend that Council approve the appointment of Pivotal to provide Cash collection services to council for a three-year period.

11. SHARED COST AVC SCHEME

Report, previously circulated, was presented by the Chief Finance Officer.

Purpose of Report

To inform council of the implementation of a shared cost additional voluntary contribution (AVC) scheme.

Background

AVCs provide an opportunity for employees and Councillors who are members of the NILGOSC pension to pay additional contributions to increase their pension benefits at retirement.

Under NILGOSC the local government pensions scheme, employees may opt to make AVC's which can attract tax relief and build up extra pension benefits.

Under a Shared Cost AVC scheme there are additional benefits for both the employee and employer:

1. You agree to reduce your gross salary by a certain amount

2. Council then pays the same amount directly into your AVC fund on your behalf.
3. Because your gross salary is lower, you may pay less income tax and national insurance contributions on that portion of pay.
4. Because your gross salary is lower, the employer may pay less employer's national insurance.

My MoneyMatters the service supplier has been sourced from the Portsmouth Council's framework agreement and is widely used amongst councils across the UK.

All staff and Councillors who are members of the NILGOSC pension scheme are eligible to join the salary sacrifice AVC scheme.

My MoneyMatters handle all the administration of the scheme ensuring members are fully informed and guided through the process whilst ensuring the operation of the scheme remains compliant with HMRC rules. There is a fee for this service, that fee will be paid out of the saving to Council from employer's national insurance, overall there will be a small saving for Council.

The anticipated launch date will be 1st October 2025 after which existing pension members will be invited to join the scheme.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council approve the implementation of a shared cost AVC scheme to provide extra benefits to NILGOSC members and that My MoneyMatters be appointed to administer the scheme.

In response to questions the Chief Finance Officer advised that employees and Elected Members can join the AVC scheme at any time.

Proposed by Councillor Huggins
Seconded by Alderman Scott and

AGREED – to recommend that Council approve the implementation of a shared cost AVC scheme to provide extra benefits to NILGOSC members and that My MoneyMatters be appointed to administer the scheme.

12. FINANCE SOFTWARE CONTRACT EXTENSION

Report, previously circulated, was presented by the Chief Finance Officer.

Purpose of Report

To seek approval for an extension of contract with our current finance software supplier.

Background

Council replaced the aging Total system with a new more advanced system, Tech One in 2023, futureproofing council with a newer, better finance

system, work on populating the system began in 2021, the 4-year contract is now due for renewal.

The system was purchased under Crown Commercial G-12 software framework, the extension will be using G-14, the updated framework.

It was the intention to extend for a further four-year period but during discussions with the provider a few issues remain unresolved therefore the extension period is for one year to allow for renegotiation of contract KPIs to further favour Councils support needs.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council approve the extension of the contract for the finance software with Technology One Ltd to ensure no interruption to finance systems for one year.

In response to questions the Chief Finance Officer advised that the contract was obtained through the Central Government framework.

Proposed by Councillor Huggins

Seconded by Councillor Kane and

AGREED – to recommend that Council approve the extension of the contract for the finance software with Technology One Ltd to ensure no interruption to finance systems for one year.

* **Councillor Holmes joined the meeting remotely at 7:32pm**

13. TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE POLICY

Report, previously circulated, was presented by the Chief Finance Officer.

Purpose of Report

To inform members of a revision to Council's Travel & Subsistence policy in line with an internal audit recommendation.

Background

The Travel and Subsistence policy was previously updated in October 2018. An internal audit had identified a number of areas requiring updating as well as alignment with other related policies, such as the Essential User Policy, to ensure consistency.

Council's Travel and Subsistence policy has been redrafted to incorporate these changes into its procedures to maintain consistency with all relevant policies. The revised policy has been attached as Appendix A to this report.

The policy has been consulted on with Unions and agreement has been reached therefore the policy is now before Council for approval.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council approve the updated Travel and Subsistence Policy as attached at Appendix A.

Councillor Huggins identified a typographical error in paragraph 6.1, the Chief Finance Officer confirmed this will be corrected.

Discussion ensued regarding the requirement to have MOT, insurance and car registration in place. The Chief Finance Officer advised this documentation is required to ensure the vehicle being used is road worthy and that legal requirements are met.

Proposed by Councillor Huggins
Seconded by Alderman Scott and

AGREED – to recommend that Council approve the updated Travel and Subsistence Policy as attached at Appendix A

- * **Councillor Holmes left the meeting remotely at 7:43pm during consideration of the following item**

14. UNDER-OVER PAYMENTS POLICY

Report, previously circulated, was presented by the Chief Finance Officer.

Purpose of Report

To inform members of a new policy in relation to Over and Under payments processed through payroll in line with an internal audit recommendation.

Background

The Over-Under payments policy was previously undocumented and this was identified in an internal audit review of payroll leading to a recommendation to document the policy.

Council's Over-Under Payments policy has been drafted to incorporate current payroll practices and comply with the relevant audit recommendation. The policy has been attached as Appendix A to this report.

The policy has been consulted on with Unions and agreement has been reached therefore the policy is now before Council for approval.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council approve the Over-Under Payments Policy as attached at Appendix A.

Proposed by Alderman Scott
Seconded by Councillor Huggins and

AGREED – to recommend that Council approve the Over-Under Payments Policy as attached at Appendix A.

15. LOAN REDEMPTION

Report, previously circulated, was presented by the Management Accountant.

Background

Council makes extensive use of borrowing to finance its capital programme currently holding a loans portfolio amounting to £43.992m this being made up of £35,992m from Government Accounts Branch (GAB) in the Department of Finance (DoF) and £8m with Commercial banks.

Loan Facility

One of the commercial loan facilities is with FMS Wertmanagement to the value of £2m in a Lender Option Borrower Option (LOBO) arrangement which operates on an interest only basis.

Detail

The interest on this facility is payable every 6 months in May and November annually. At each payment point the option exists for the lender to vary the interest rate and for the borrower to accept or reject the alteration, rejecting the alteration automatically means repayment of the loan in full. Correspondence was received from the lender setting out an offer to redeem the loan early at a significant discount. A copy of the communication from FMS offering early redemption of the facility has been attached as an appendix to this report.

Discount

The lender has indicated that they were offering Council the opportunity to redeem the loan at maturity value (£2,000,000) plus accrued interest (£30,378.08) which represented a significant discount on the present value (£2,402,263) of the loan, which still has just over 23 years to run.

Sinking Fund

When operating interest only loan facilities Council is required to create a sinking fund whereby an amount is set aside periodically over the life of the loan facilities so that when the loan matures the cash has been set aside to repay the loan principal in full. The sinking fund currently sits at £5.750m therefore Council has sufficient cash set aside to meet this maturity.

Redemption

Council has the option at this point to repay the loan in its entirety without penalty. Given that the sinking fund currently has the required funds to cover this loan and Council's healthy cash position this is a valid possibility at this point. Since the offer was made during the summer recess and was time bound Senior Management have considered and approved the redemption, this report is therefore for retrospective approval of officer's actions.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council retrospectively approve the repayment of the loan facility in full taking £2m from the sinking fund for that purpose and paying the accrued interest to date which has been budgeted for and can therefore be charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Proposed by Councillor Huggins

Seconded by Alderman Scott and

AGREED – to recommend that Council retrospectively approve the repayment of the loan facility in full taking £2m from the sinking fund for that purpose and paying the accrued interest to date which has been budgeted for and can therefore be charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

16. CORRESPONDENCE

16.1 Letter from Minister of Finance to SOLACE - Publication of Terms of Reference for Strategic Review of Rating

Copy, previously circulated, presented by the Chief Finance Officer.

16.2 Strategic Review of Rating - Terms of Reference

Copy, previously circulated, presented by the Chief Finance Officer.

16.3 Covering letter - Record of Councillors Allowances Funded by Council 2024-25

Copy, previously circulated, presented by the Chief Finance Officer.

Committee NOTED the correspondence item 16.1 – 16.3 inclusive

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN COMMITTEE'

Proposed by Alderman Scott

Seconded by Councillor Huggins

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

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.

- * **Press left the meeting at 7:39pm**
The meeting moved '*In Committee*' at 7:39pm

The Chair reminded Committee of the audio recordings procedure.

17. DEBT MANAGEMENT

For information, confidential report, by virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 was presented as read by the Chair.

Purpose of Report

This report informs members of the current position surrounding debt owed to the Council by its customers.

In response to questions the Chief Finance Officer advised Committee of the legal procedure when final demands are not met. The Chief Finance Officer advised that he would get back to the Elected Members with further details regarding specific debts.

In response to further questions the Chief Finance Officer provided additional information regarding the debt in relation grant funding.

Finance Committee NOTED the report

18. MINUTES OF FINANCE MANAGEMENT TEAM MEETING TUES 13 MAY 2025

For information, confidential Finance Management Team Meeting minutes Tuesday 13 May 2025, previously circulated, were presented as read by the Chief Finance Officer.

Finance Committee NOTED the report.

19. RATES ESTIMATES 2026/27

Confidential report, by virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 was presented as read by the Chair.

Purpose of Report

Councils are required under Section 3 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 to consider the estimates of income and expenditure for the following year, Council may revise those estimates but must ultimately approve and authorise estimated expenditure required to provide the services of Council. Finally, the approved amount of estimated expenditure required to provide these services is fixed by means of a rate on the local ratepayers.

The purpose of this report is to inform members of the pressures being faced by Council in terms of financial budgeting and the setting of the rate for 2026/27 and to seek Council agreement on the setting of general assumptions for inclusion within those estimates.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council agree the level of assumptions discussed for inclusion in the estimates.

Proposed by Alderman Scott

Seconded by Councillor Huggins and

AGREED - to recommend that Council agree the level of assumptions discussed for inclusion in the estimates

20. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DIRECTORATE BUDGET PRESENTATION

For information, confidential report, by virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 was presented by the Chief Finance Officer.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to inform members of the pressures being faced by the Environment Services directorate in terms of financial budgeting and the setting of the rate for 2026/27 and to seek Council agreement on the setting of general assumptions for inclusion within those estimates.

The agreed assumptions will be included in a first draft of estimates to be tabled at the next Finance Committee.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council agree the level of assumptions discussed for inclusion in the estimates.

In response to questions the Director of Environmental Services advised that the income generated from Health and Built Environment enforcement fees is based on previous figures and that the income generated from car parking fees was lower than estimated due to events in those car parks. The Director of Environmental Services confirmed the proposed spend on Christmas trees will have long term savings. The Director of Environmental Services confirmed there are finances available for one off unforeseen circumstances.

In response to questions the Chief Finance Officer advised that any changes in the estimates will be communicated to Elected Members.

Positive comments were received from Elected Members regarding the work of the Town Wardens.

Proposed by Councillor Kane
Seconded by Councillor Huggins and

AGREED – to recommend that Council agree the level of assumptions discussed for inclusion in the estimates.

MOTION TO PROCEED ‘IN PUBLIC’

Proposed by Councillor Huggins
Seconded by Alderman Scott and

AGREED – to recommend that Finance Committee move ‘*In Public*’

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

There were no items of Any Other Relevant Business.

This being all the business, the Chair thanked Elected Members for their attendance and the meeting closed at 8:25pm

Chair