



**CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2020**

No	Item	Summary of Key Recommendations
1.	Apologies	Alderman Fielding and Councillor C McShane
2.	Declarations of Interest	Noted
3.	Minutes of Meeting held Tuesday 27 October 2020	Confirm
4.	Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor McCaw, seconded by Councillor Mulholland <i>(In the wake of the economic crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic, this Council recognises the need for a reformed, fairer welfare system that protects everyone in society. It recognises the need to provide economic security for all and invest in people to protect livelihoods and kick-start the economy. Therefore, it calls on the Departments for Communities and Finance and the UK Treasury to design and deliver a recovery Universal Basic Income (UBI) for Northern Ireland. Additionally, recognising the need for a radical overhaul of the welfare state and the positive impact this would have on poverty alleviation, inequality and mental health in particular. Council will commit to producing a plan for how a pilot of a full UBI would be implemented within the District, and formally expresses its support for said pilot)</i>	Amendment: Write to Minister for Finance and Communities re UBI recovery plan; Remove final paragraph 'Council will commit.....'
5.	Women's Group	Defer to Full Council
6.	Council Chamber Audio Visual Modernisation	Amendment: Purchase projector and controls only

7.	Prompt Payment Statistics	Noted
8.	Scheme of Allowances	Defer to January Corporate, Policy and Resources Committee <i>Liaise with Party leads in advance</i>
9.	Scheme of Delegation	Approve
10.	Review of Council Constitution	Approve
11.	Corporate Policies – ODHR 11.1 Flexible Working 11.2 Mediation 11.3 Domestic Violence and Abuse	Approve
12.	Conferences	Nil
13.	Correspondence	Note
14.	Consultations	Note
15.	Matters for Reporting to Partnership Panel	Write to the Minister's for Finance and Economy to lobby for the expedition of business grant funding for struggling business in this borough
	In Committee (Items 16-21 inclusive)	
16.	Debt Management	Note
	16.1 Debt Recovery Case	Recommend Serving of Writ on debtor
17.	Minutes of Land and Property Sub-Committee Meeting held Wednesday 4 November 2020	-
	17.1 Matters Arising – Portstewart Town Hall	Note
	17.2 Land and Property Disposal of Land D1	Approve Option 4.1
	17.3 Approval of Land and Property Sub-Committee Minutes 4 November 2020	Approve

18.	Appointment of Insurance Broker	<i>Approve</i>
19.	Review of Planning	<i>Approve</i>
20.	Populating the Organisation Structure	<i>Defer to Council</i>
21.	Any Other Relevant Business (notified in accordance with Standing Order 12 (o))	<i>None</i>

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE
CORPORATE POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC HEADQUARTERS,
AND VIA VIDEO-CONFERENCE ON
TUESDAY 24 NOVEMBER AT 7.00 PM**

- In the Chair:** Alderman Hillis (C)
- Present:** Alderman Baird (R), Sharon McKillop (R); Duddy (C)
Councillors: Beattie (R), Chivers (Vice-Chair) (R), Dallat
O'Driscoll (R), Knight-McQuillan (C), McCaw (C), McGurk
(R), McLean (C) Wilson (C)
- Members in Attendance:** Councillors: Mulholland (R), Callan (R)
- Officers Present :** D Jackson, Chief Executive (R)
M Quinn, Director of Corporate Services (C)
A McPeake, Director, Environmental Services (R)
A Ruddy, Audit, Risk and Governance Officer (R)
D Dickson, Head of Planning (R)
P Donaghy, Democratic & Central Services Manager (R)
P McColgan, Head of ICT (R)
J Richardson, Head of Infrastructure (R)
S McMaw, Head of Performance (R)
I Owens, Committee and Member Services Officer (C)
- In Attendance:** C Thompson, ICT Operations Officer (C)
A Lennox, Mobile Operations Officer (C)
J Winfield, ICT Operations Manager (R)
- Press (3 No.) (R)
Public (1 No.) (R)

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

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were recorded for Alderman Fielding and Councillor C McShane.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Interest were recorded as follows:

- Councillor Knight-McQuillan in Item 20 – Populating The Staffing Structure. Councillor Knight-McQuillan left the Chamber during consideration of the Item.

- Alderman McCorkell in Item 4 – Notice of Motion. Alderman McCorkell left the meeting during consideration of the Item.
- Alderman Sharon McKillop in Item 15 – Matters For Reporting to Partnership Panel. Alderman Sharon McKillop left the meeting during consideration of the Item.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD TUESDAY 27 OCTOBER 2020

The Minutes of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on Tuesday 27 October 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

Alderman Baird asked for an update on Item 20.5 - Filming at Ballintoy Harbour. The Director of Corporate Services confirmed that the company had been billed for costs and that the Director of Environmental Services would ensure the area was made safe.

AGREED – To Change the Order of Business and take Agenda Item 15 - Notice of Motion next.

Alderman McCorkell, having declared an interest did not take part in Item 4.

4. NOTICE OF MOTION PROPOSED BY COUNCILLOR MCCAW, SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR MULHOLLAND (REFERRED FROM 4 AUGUST COUNCIL MEETING)

'In the wake of the economic crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic, this Council recognises the need for a reformed, fairer welfare system that protects everyone in society. It recognises the need to provide economic security for all and invest in people to protect livelihoods and kick-start the economy. Therefore, it calls on the Departments for Communities and Finance and the UK Treasury to design and deliver a recovery Universal Basic Income (UBI) for Northern Ireland. Additionally, recognising the need for a radical overhaul of the welfare state and the positive impact this would have on poverty alleviation, inequality and mental health in particular. Council will commit to producing a plan for how a pilot of a full UBI would be implemented within the District, and formally expresses its support for said pilot'

Councillor McCaw proposed and spoke in support of his Notice of Motion and read from a prepared statement.

Councillor Wilson felt that the proposal in the Notice of Motion was above and beyond the remit of this Council and to undertake would have a cost implication in terms of staff resource. He further commented that it was important to lobby Stormont with regard to this matter.

Alderman Baird referred to unacceptable poverty levels in Northern Ireland and suggested that Council lobby Stormont.

Alderman Duddy also felt this was not a matter for Council and referred to current pilot schemes on Universal Credit being undertaken by central government.

In order to facilitate a member who was having technical issues a recess was called.

- * **The Chair declared a recess at 7.30 pm.**
- * **The meeting reconvened at 7.35 pm.**

Amendment:

Proposed by Alderman Baird;

Seconded by Alderman Duddy and

Recommended to Council that the Motion be amended to include 'that Council write to the Department of Communities/Finance in relation to a recovery plan on the impact of Universal Basic Income (UBI) for Northern Ireland.'

It was further recommended to Council that the final paragraph of the Notice of Motion be removed 'Council will commit to producing a plan for how a pilot of a full UBI would be implemented within the District, and formally expresses its support for said pilot'.

Councillor McCaw indicated that he accepted the amendment to his Notice of Motion, accepted there was a financial resource impact on his original Notice of Motion and welcomed the move to write to the Finance and Communities Department as a move towards alleviating poverty in the borough.

The Chair put the Motion to a vote:
10 voted for, 0 voted against and 2 abstained.
The chair declared the Motion Carried.

5. WOMEN'S GROUP

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

Introduction

The purpose of this report is for Committee to consider the Structure, Membership and Representation on the Women's Sub-Group to enable arrangements to be made for the first meeting. A provisional date of Thursday 7th January 2021 has been booked in the Corporate Calendar.

Background

The following Notice of Motion was agreed by Council at the meeting on 1st September.

‘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’

An extract from the minutes relating to the Notice of Motion is included in Appendix 1 (previously circulated) for ease of reference.

In terms of structure, numbers and representation of the group, an extract from

the minutes reads

“..., 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...” and

...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”

Considerations

Council needs to agree on both the structure of the Group and the number/representation on the Group before the first meeting of the Group can be arranged

- Structure of the Group ie Sub Committee or Working Group
- Method of appointment
- Representation on the Group (Members and Officers)

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Committee consider the structure, method of appointment and representation on the Women’s Group to enable scheduling of the first meeting.

Discussion ensued regarding whether the group should be a ‘Sub-Committee’ of Corporate, Policy and Resources Committee and whether the group should be restricted to membership of that committee or alternatively if the group should be set up as a ‘Working Group’.

The Director of Corporate Services confirmed that a ‘Sub Committee’ was bound by the guidelines of ‘Committees’ in terms of Agenda issue, minutes whereas a ‘Working Group’ is less formal.

Proposed by Alderman Duddy;

Seconded by Councillor Knight-McQuillan and

Recommended that the decision be deferred to Full Council where a fuller discussion on the structure of the group can be further explored.

All members in attendance were in agreement.

6. COUNCIL CHAMBER AUDIO VISUAL MODERNISATION

Report, previously circulated, presented by The Head of ICT along with a power point presentation.

Introduction

Since March 2020, the Covid 19 pandemic has resulted in Council not being able to facilitate full meetings in the Chamber. The new arrangement means that Members have either fully virtual meetings or have a small number of Members in the Chamber and other Members at home in a hybrid setup. A limited number of Members and officials are located, primarily in the Council Chamber, to facilitate both setups.

Given that there is unlikely to be change in this new working environment for the foreseeable future, Members may wish to examine ways in which further equipment may be acquired to improve the smooth running of these meetings. This report makes recommendations on the acquisition of such kit.

Background

Since the Council's inception in 2015, the Chamber has been equipped with a number of technologies to aid the effectiveness of meetings. These include the Bosch speaker system and data projectors to illustrate various documents, with a multi-control unit to manage these technologies and other peripheral kit such as lighting and curtains.

In March 2020, in response to the Covid 19 crisis, Council acquired computer software product Microsoft Teams to facilitate Member virtual meetings. In addition, 2 cameras were also purchased to allow other Members to link into the meeting from a home environment. One camera focuses on the top table of the Chamber, specifically on the Chair of the meeting and Council officials. The second camera focuses on the other Members who are physically attended the meeting.

This technological arrangement, constructed in a period of uncertainty and disruption, was adequate in the short term. However, there is a growing appreciation that further technology would result in a more professional experience, particularly important if Council decides to live stream the full Council and Committee meetings.

Challenges

1. Cameras

Currently a temporary setup with two conference cameras in the Council Chamber, one pointing to the top table and a second wide-angle camera covering the rest of the room (see Appendix 1, previously circulated).

These cameras are:

- Limited in quality, functionality and ability due to the conference camera features.
- Purpose built for a small/medium size meeting room.
The wide-angle camera does not show enough detail of the room or participants in the meeting.

The cameras are located some 10 metres from their subjects to encapsulate either the top table or the other Members. This means that the quality of the imagery is limited.

2. Sound Quality

The Chamber Bosch speaker system allows the Chair to provide permission for contributors to speak. Separately, in a home environment, Members who wish to speak indicate to the Chair via the Teams chat feature. However, there is minimal integration between these 2 systems, making the role of chairing meetings more challenging.

There is also an interference noise, both before and during the meeting.

3. Data Projectors

Data Projectors are not directly linked to the issues of virtual meetings. However, given the likely integration of all the technologies, it would be timely to consider this issue. The complexity of imagery increasingly requiring to be displayed in the Chamber means that the current Data Projectors are no longer fit for purpose.

The above factors make the role of the Chair substantially more challenging than in the previous full Chamber experience.

Recommended Solutions.

Acquisition of Sony cameras, Bosch speaker enhancements and associated technologies that allows integration between the Bosch system and MS Teams.

Acquisition of enhanced Panasonic data projectors and associated cabling to improve the quality of imagery in the Chamber.

Costs

1. Initial Costs

Camera and Speaker System - £23,567.70 (breakdown of costs previously circulated)

Projectors and Controls - £23,602.60 (breakdown of costs previously circulated)

2. Ongoing Costs

£1178.00 and £1180.00 per annum for maintenance and support for the Camera/ Speaker System and Projectors/Controls respectively.

Recommendation

That Council acquires aforementioned hardware and software for Council. Members sought clarity from the Head of ICT around the durability of current equipment and the efficiencies of new equipment from an ICT perspective. The Head of ICT explained that the new cameras would have rotating features and sharper images, with clearer sound and that projectors would enhance the viewing of images for those in the Chamber and attending remotely.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Alderman Duddy and

Recommended to Council that only the projectors and controls to enhance viewing of maps and imagery are purchased at this time and re-visit at a later date the purchase of a camera and speakers system.

Councillor McGurk and Councillor Chivers felt it would be a good investment to acquire the camera and speakers system now as it would be beneficial to remote users and the cost was reasonable and justified.

At the request of members, the Head of ICT agreed to report back to committee on use of the voting feature in situ in the Council Chamber.

The Head of ICT confirmed at the request of a member that if this feature was used every vote would be considered a recorded vote.

Alderman Baird raised issues with connectivity and felt that there was a distinct disadvantage to those with broadband issues wishing to fully avail hybrid meetings.

Amendment:
Proposed by Councillor McGurk;
Seconded by Councillor Chivers and

Recommended that Council acquires aforementioned hardware and software for Council, both systems

The Chair put the Amendment to a vote:
4 voted for, 8 voted against and 1 abstained
The Chair declared the Amendment Lost.

The Chair put the Substantive Proposal to a vote:
Committee voted unanimously in favour.
The Chair declared the Substantive Motion Carried.

7. PROMPT PAYMENT STATISTICS

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

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 (previously circulated) detail Council's performance since April 2017 the latest data being for quarter 3 of 20/21 year being up to and including end of October 2020(Quarter 3 not yet complete). Q3 performance has improved significantly from the previous year with 75.62% of invoices paid within 10 working days and 89.60% paid within 30 calendar days, there is a number of factors impacting on this as follows. Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic Council are currently processing a significantly lower number of invoices. Many staff are 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. The Accounts Payable team have changed some of their working practices and staff have been allocated specific suppliers to look after and therefore when supplier invoices are out for approval for more than 10 days the staff member responsible is chasing the budget holder to approve these.

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.

At the request of Alderman Baird, the Director of Corporate Services agreed to provide further details on disputed invoices.

AGREED: to recommend that Council note the report.

8. SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES

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

Purpose of Report

It was agreed to defer the decision on the Scheme of Allowances from the October Corporate Policy and Resources Committee to the November Committee to allow members to give further consideration to the report.

Appendix 1 provides further details and analysis in terms of arrangements across some of the other Council's. (previously circulated by email on 28th October)

Background

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council has established a scheme of allowances payable to Members for the current period. The scheme provides for the payment of allowances to Councillors on the basis that:

1. The maximum level of basic allowance as determined by the Department for Communities (DfC) is paid
2. The maximum level of carers allowances as determined by the DfC are paid
3. The maximum level of mileage rates as determined by the DfC are paid
4. Councillors' payments are made on the third last banking day of each month

Detail

The updated scheme of allowances, a copy of which has been included with this report, takes into account a number of factors:

- Basic allowance – budget allows for 2% increase, 2.75% increase to be applied but not yet notified
- Mileage rates
- Rates for dependant carer's allowance
- Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA)

The four items are in keeping with the normal periodic update of the scheme of.

Amendments

In October 2019 Council formed a new Finance committee which was not provided for in previous schemes of allowances therefore the Chair was not allocated any SRA. This new scheme does allocate the same SRA to the Finance Committee chair as to the other main committees (£3,000 p.a). This does however present a problem in that there are now 22 positions of responsibility and regulation only permits 20 members to be in receipt of SRA.

Until now we have dealt with this issue by making the Partnership Panel representative a member of the Planning committee thereby creating a double responsibility but only one SRA can be received, the higher of the 2 being applicable.

Current positions of responsibility

The current positions of responsibility which are governed by the 20 member limit are as follows:

- 1 CP&R Committee Chair
- 2 L & D Committee Chair
- 3 ES Committee Chair
- 4 Planning Committee Chair
- 5 Finance Committee Chair (to be agreed)
- 6 Audit Committee Chair
- 7 Partnership Panel Representative
- 8 -22 Planning Committee Member (15)

The current potholders of the above positions include 2 members with dual roles therefore currently only 20 payments will be made under the current regulations.

Rates of Special Responsibility Allowance

The current rates of SRA are as follows:

Committee chair (except Audit)	£3,000 (x5)
Audit Committee chair	£ 750
Planning Committee Member	£1,200 (x15)
Partnership Panel rep.	£1,000

Application

The new scheme of allowances will be effective from 1st of the month of approval by Council until 31 March 2021 unless previously amended or updated.

Previous decision

This report was previously tabled at this committee on 28 January 2020 at which time the decision was to defer the decision regarding the scheme of allowances until an application was made to DfC for council to be allowed to pay SRA to a number of members in excess of the statutory limit (50% of members i.e. 20).

Department application

An application was made to DfC in February seeking permission for Council to pay SRA to up to 22 members based on the breakdown of SRA in 1.4 above. DfC issued a response in March 2020 which is copied below:

Thank you for your email of 26 February 2020 applying for permission, under regulation 5 of the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations

(Northern Ireland) 2019, to pay Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) to more than 50% of the councillors in Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.

As Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council has 40 elected members the 50% limit would be 20 (excluding any SRA payable to Mayor/Deputy Mayor). You have requested that SRA be payable to 22 out of 40 councillors which is 55% of the councillors.

The intention of the special responsibility allowance is to recognise greater commitment by councillors and should only be paid to those councillors who have significant additional responsibilities, over and above the generally accepted duties of a councillor. The essential intent of the legislation is to limit the number of councillors in receipt of SRA within the maximum limit of 50% of a council's total number of councillors. The Department has flexibility to increase the limit, for a short period of time, where a council has exceptional circumstances.

This restriction has been an operational policy from 2006 and was considered by the independent Northern Ireland Councillor's Remuneration Panel in 2014. That Panel had recommended that this allowance be further restricted to a maximum of 10 councillors per council. The then Minister of the Department of the Environment did not accept this recommendation. The intention of the limitation is to support payment of the allowance only where a councillor has undertaken considerable extra responsibility. The basic allowance for councillors was greatly increased from 1 April 2015 following the Panel's report and this took into account the extra duties the reform of local government and transfer of functions placed on councillors from that date.

The circumstances set out below may be considered to be exceptional in that there may as you have stated be a significant reshaping of the governance structure of your Council due to the current situation. However, you have stated that 15 members of the planning committee receive SRAs. As stated in paragraph 4 the basic allowance was greatly increased from 1 April 2015 to take account of the extra duties the reform of local government and the transfer of functions placed on councillors. You will be aware of course that the additional responsibilities that your council decides attract SRA can be rotated during the year.

Before the Department could consider approving the additional SRA allowances above the 50% maximum currently allowed, the Council should first consider whether the SRAs for all the members of the Planning Committee (taking into account the intention of the enhanced basic allowance) are paid to councillors who have significant additional responsibilities, over and above the generally accepted duties of a councillor.

Therefore at this stage the Department could not agree to the increase of 5% above the maximum 50% limit for SRA but will reconsider the Council's application if more information is provided. (If the Department were to

consider additional information and then decide to agree to any increase it is likely that this would only be for a limited time period (probably one year) and the council would have to re-apply for permission).

Consideration

DfC's refusal of the application now leaves Council with a decision to make regarding the allocation of SRA specifically about ensuring that the maximum number of 20 is not exceeded. This position is further complicated in that the existing SRA positions have continued to be paid at the rates detailed in 1.5 above since 1 April 2020, subject to the application of regulations where a member holds more than one position of responsibility, therefore any decision will affect the application of SRA from the date of approval of this scheme until 31st March 2021 meaning potentially a recipient of SRA up to this point may no longer receive it dependant on Council's decision. As stated 1.4 the current list of postholders does include 2 members with dual roles therefore under the current regulations only 20 payments would be made, this position however cannot be guaranteed to occur every year therefore the scheme does require amendment so that in the event all positions of responsibility are occupied by different members then the 50% (20 member) limit would not be breached. The Council could decide to dual two roles in the Planning Committee with for example, Audit Chair and Partnership Panel rep, with an increased allowance, to comply with the 20 payment allowance.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Members consider the allocation of positions of responsibility and associated special responsibility allowance so that the new scheme of allowances can be approved.

Proposed by Alderman Duddy;
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and

Recommended that the matter be deferred to next Corporate, Policy and Resources Committee to enable Group Leads, Chief Executive and Director or Corporate Services to explore further the outworking's of appointments.

The Chair put the Motion to a vote.
Committee voted unanimously in favour.
The Chair declared the Motion Carried.

Alderman Baird felt that there was lack of financial incentive to the youth who may wish to enter Local Government and there was a need to have a pragmatic but prudent view when agreeing the Scheme of Allowances.

9. SCHEME OF DELEGATION

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

Introduction

Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council is committed to setting and securing the highest standards in its decision making and this Schedule of Delegation provides the framework and guidance for the delegation of powers to senior officers within the Council.

This Scheme of Delegation is made pursuant to the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 Section 7 and by reference to the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014 Section 2 and the Local Government Act 2000 Section 14 and all other enabling powers and the proper officer appointments made under the relevant provisions.

Background

The Draft Scheme of Delegation was discussed previously at the Governance Working Group, and has now been updated to include the following:

- Reference to the Finance Policy Manual (agreed in June 2020)
- The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 (included in Appendix 1, previously circulated)
- Scheme of Delegation for the Planning Department (effective from 01 May 2020) The revised Scheme of Delegation for the determination of planning applications was approved by the Department for Infrastructure on 30 March 2020.

A copy of the Draft Scheme of Delegation is attached in Appendix 1 (previously circulated).

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee recommend to Council approval of the Draft Scheme of Delegation.

Proposed by Councillor McLean;
Seconded by Councillor Knight-McQuillan and

Recommended to Council, the approval of the Draft Scheme of Delegation.

All those in attendance were in agreement.
13 voted for, 0 against

10. REVIEW OF COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

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

Introduction

A Council is required, under section 2 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, to prepare and keep up-to-date a Constitution.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council agreed their new Constitution in October 2015. This governs how the Council operates, how decisions are

made, and the procedures which are to be followed to ensure efficiency, transparency and accountability to local people. Some of these processes are required by the law, while others are a matter for the Council to choose.

The Council's Constitution is divided into sixteen Articles which set out the basic rules governing the Council's business. More detailed procedures and codes of practice are provided in separate Rules and Protocols at the end of the document.

Proposed Amendments to Council Constitution

Please see below proposed amendments to the Council Constitution:

Item	Proposed Amendment
Part 2 – Annex 4 Scheme of Delegation	Insert Scheme of Delegation when finalised and approved by Council.
Part 3 – Rules of Procedure 3.5 Financial Procedure Rules	Insert copy of Financial Policy Manual as approved by Finance Committee and Council.
Part 3 – Rules of Procedure (3.4 Standing Orders)	Replace link to Standing Orders with link to revised Standing Orders.
Part 5 – Members Allowance Scheme	Replace Scheme of Allowance Payable to Councillors with revised Scheme of Allowance when finalised and approved by Council.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee recommend to Council approval of the proposed amendments to the Council Constitution as outlined in item 2.1 (previously circulated).

Proposed by Councillor Wilson;
Seconded by Councillor Knight-McQuillan and

Agreed to recommend that Council approve the proposed amendments to the Constitution as outlined.

All members in attendance were in agreement.
13 voted for, 0 vote against

11. CORPORATE POLICIES – ODHR

11.1 Flexible Working

11.2 Mediation

11.3 Domestic Violence and Abuse

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

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present Council with 2 new draft policies, and 1 revised policy as detailed below:

- Flexible Working Policy
- Mediation Policy
- Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy (revised policy)

Flexible Working Policy

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council currently have a range of policies and procedures in place for Flexible Working across the legacy councils and the transferred NI Civil Service Planning staff. The CCG Flexible working Policy will ensure consistency of approach across Council for all staff.

Mediation Policy

Causeway Coast and Glens do not currently have a Mediation Policy in place in any of the legacy councils. The Mediation Policy is to formalise a process which is currently offered to employees during disputes.

Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy

Causeway Coast and Glens have reviewed the existing policy and have made revisions to ensure clarity around the roles and responsibilities, and timeframes.

Over the past number of months, the OD/HR team has designed, developed and revised the policies which will be used for all employees going forward, thus ensuring a consistent and equitable approach.

The draft policies has been considered at the Senior Leadership Team and also the Trade Unions through the Action Group and Joint Consultative and Negotiating Committee (JCNC).

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".

Once the policies has been approved, any required training will be provided.

A copy of the 3 policies are attached. (previously circulated)

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Corporate, Policy and Resources Committee approves the Mediation Policy, Flexible Working Policy and the Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy.

The Director of Corporate Services agreed to provide members with a further detail of Working Patterns (4.3 on the Flexible Working Policy) currently in place within the structure of the organisation.

Alderman Baird felt that the limit to one period of flexible working arrangements in any one year period was too restrictive as often sicknesses, especially in children, could reoccur after the initial onset.

Alderman Baird referred to disadvantages to those availing of flexible working arrangements in terms of pension contributions or the possibility of permanent contractual changes.

The Director of Corporate Services explained that flexible working arrangements in place for a trial period did not impact on contracts of employment but when that arrangement becomes formal after consultation the contract would change permanently.

Proposed by Alderman Duddy
Seconded by Alderman Baird and

Recommended that the Corporate, Policy and Resources Committee approves the Mediation Policy, Flexible Working Policy and the Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy.

The Chair put the Motion to a vote.
13 votes for, 0 against
The Chair declared the Motion Carried.

Alderman McCorkell asked if the Unions were in agreement with the recommendation of the above policies. The Director of Corporate Services confirmed that 2 of the 3 Unions had confirmed they were in agreement.

The Director of Corporate Services informed members that one of the issues raised by the Unions was the nominated officer best placed to hear appeals which at present is the relevant Director.

12. CONFERENCES

There were no conferences.

13. CORRESPONDENCE

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

The purpose of the report is to present correspondence for Members' consideration. The following correspondence has been received:

NILGA Local Government Finance Masterclass for Councillors

Training scheduled for 3rd December 2020, 10.30 – 2.30 pm on zoom. NILGA encourages Councillors to attend. This is a real

collaborative effort involving NILGA, SOLACE, Association of LG Finance Officers (ALGFO) and CIPFA to improve understanding and participation in LG Finance among Councillors. Course details were previously circulated. All Councillors interested in attending this session **MUST REGISTER** to receive the zoom link.

The Director of Corporate Services agreed to seek clarification that Alderman Sharon McKillop and Councillor Knight-McQuillan had been already registered for this training by Democratic Services.

AGREED: to recommend that Council note the correspondence report circulated.

14. CONSULTATIONS

The Director of Corporate Services presented the Consultation report, previously circulated:

Nilga - Transformation and Driving Practical Change in Local Government - Submission 11 December 2020.

Department of Communities - Local Government Pension Scheme (NI) Amendments to the Statutory Underpin - Submission 31 January 2021.

DAERA - Disability Action Plan 2019-2024.

AGREED: to recommend that Council note the Consultation schedule circulated.

***Alderman Sharon McKillop, having declared did not take part in Item 15.**

15. MATTERS FOR REPORTING TO PARTNERHIP PANEL

There were no updates for reporting to Partnership Panel.

Councillor Wilson felt this forum was an opportunity for elected members to feed directly into local government and suggested that the Council nominee raise the issue of Covid-19 business grant funding including the speed of the process for issue of financial assistance to struggling businesses. Alderman Duddy concurred with Council Wilson's remarks.

Councillor Wilson also sought clarity on the regularity of the meetings. Alderman Baird clarified that there had been a meeting in the last month and one was scheduled for January and that Alderman McKeown, the Council nominee had been in attendance.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Alderman Duddy and

Recommended that the Council write to the Minister's for Finance and Economy to lobby for the expedition of business grant funding for struggling business in this borough.

All those in attendance were in agreement.

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN COMMITTEE'

Proposed by Councillor Knight-McQuillan
Seconded by Alderman Baird and

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

- * **Members of the Press / Public were ejected from the meeting.**
- * **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.**

16. DEBT MANAGEMENT

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

The report informed members of the current position surrounding debt owed to Council as at 31 October 2020.

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

The tables circulated detailed the status of any debt which was over 90 days in excess of £10 currently (excluding BID accounts):

In accordance with Council's debt management policy, there were no debts under £1,000 this month which the Chief Finance Officer has the authority to write-off.

In accordance with Council's debt management policy, there were no debts in excess of £1,000 for approval.

AGREED: to recommend that Council note the report.

16.1 Debt Recovery Case

Confidential report, previously circulated, was presented by The Director of Environmental Services.

Following invoicing and debt recovery processes and numerous attempts to seek resolution and payment through both legal teams no payment has been made. A reduced offer was made by the debtor.

Members are left with 2 options to consider.

- Approve the serving of a writ on the owner of the debtor and court action taken to retrieve monies owed. This should be considered with the potential court costs of between £15,000 and £35,000.

b) Accept the reduced settlement offer.

Recommendation

Members are asked to consider the options of

1. Approve the serving of a writ on the debtor in order to recover monies owed due to carrying out the Dangerous Structures Notice Works in default.
2. Accept the reduced offer provided by the debtor.

At the debtors request, the Director of Environmental Services provided a verbal summary of the correspondence received from the Solicitor acting for the debtor and further correspondence received from the debtor for Members information.

This summarised the justification from the debtor for not being forthcoming with the total invoiced amount.

Discussion ensued around ensuring that the Council demonstrated robustness when arriving at a decision.

Members asked for the view of the legal team regarding the offer from the debtor and the associated costs of serving a writ on the debtor.

Proposed by Alderman Duddy

Seconded by Councillor Wilson and

Recommended that Council serve a writ on the debtor in order to recover monies owed due to carrying out the Dangerous Structures Notice Works in default.

The Chair put the Motion to a vote.

13 voted for, 0 against

The Chair declared the Motion Carried.

17. MINUTES OF LAND AND PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2020

Minutes of the Land and Property Sub-Committee meeting held on 4th November 2020 were presented by the Director of Corporate Services.

17.1 Matters arising - Portstewart Town Hall – Item 5

Alderman Duddy questioned the cost associated with engaging the Capital Works Team given the staff resource implication.

17.2 Land and Property Disposal of Land D1

Confidential report, previously circulated, was presented by The Director of Corporate Services. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for Council's preferred option in relation to the release of Council's valuations to prospective purchasers under the Public Sector D1 Disposal of Public Land process.

- Council can release its valuation to potential purchasers (valuation and valuation date only, not valuation report);
- Council can instruct LPS to carry out the valuation and/or negotiation if required;
- Council can insist on purchaser gaining their own valuation, then negotiate and agree a purchase price with either their valuation or with LPS.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council approves Option 4.1, Council can release its valuation to potential purchasers (valuation and valuation date only, not valuation report; and that the Land and Property Policy adopted in February 2020 is updated to include this provision.

Proposed by Councillor Knight-McQuillan;
Seconded by Councillor McLean and

AGREED to recommend that Council approves Option 4.1, Council can release its valuation to potential purchasers (valuation and valuation date only, not valuation report; and that the Land and Property Policy adopted in February 2020 is updated to include this provision.

17.3 Approval of Land and Property Sub-Committee meeting minutes - 4th November 2020

The minutes of the Land and Property Sub-Committee and the recommendations contained therein were recommended for approval..

***The Head of Performance joined the meeting to present Item 18.**

18. APPOINTMENT OF INSURANCE BROKER

Confidential report and a further supplementary report, previously circulated, was presented by Head of Performance.

Background

The current arrangement for Council Insurance Brokerage Services will cease on 1st April 2021. One of the key roles that the Insurance Broker provides is the management and evaluation of the tender process for the various Insurance policies required by the Council. The value of these policies is at a level requiring advertisement in the European Journal.

The purpose of the supplementary report was to inform Elected Members of the tender process for the appointment of an Insurance Broker for the period 1st April 2021-31 March 2023.

Proposals

Only one tender has been received. The assessment of this tender jointly by the three Councils is scheduled for Monday 23 November.

It is hoped to have the successful Insurance Broker appointed by the 7 December 2020 to enable them to prepare and initiate the tender process for each individual Council's Insurance Policies.

Early indication from the Council's current Insurance Broker is that there will be substantial increases across all Insurance Policies primarily due to factors such as Covid-19 and reduced competition in the Insurance Market attributed to the uncertainties relating to Brexit. It is estimated that the 2020-2021 cost of Insurance could rise from £1,085,901.55 to over £1,300,000 for 2021-2022.

It is proposed to appoint the successful Insurance Broker at the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee meeting on the 24 November 2020 at which time a report will be tabled for decision.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee note this report.

The purpose of the supplementary report is to seek approval for the appointment of an Insurance Broker for Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council for a 3 year period with the potential for an additional 1 year extension.

The outcome of the tender process was not completed in time to enable a report to be circulated to Elected Members as part of the agenda items. The date set for opening of the tenders was agreed to accommodate all 3 Councils participating in the collaborative exercise and to hopefully enable award of the Contract at the start of December.

In 2015 Councils in Northern Ireland formed an insurance working group that then was then sub-divided into regions. This was to enable collaborative tendering to achieve best value in the cost of Insurance Brokerage Services. Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council was part a sub-regional group along with Derry and Strabane District Council and Fermanagh and Omagh District Council. The resultant tender process led to an appointment of Council's Insurance Broker at an annual cost of £9,995. Initial background information has been provided in the "For information" report as part of the meeting agenda and papers.

The current Brokerage contract with Willis Towers Watson will end on 31st March 2021. One of the key roles of the Broker is to undertake a

procurement exercise for the range of insurance policies required for the Council to enable it to operate the services that it provides. This process takes approximately 3 months.

The appointment process for Brokerage Services has again been undertaken as a sub-regional procurement exercise involving Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, Derry and Strabane District Council and Fermanagh and Omagh District Council.

Monday 23 November 2020 was scheduled as the date for opening of the submitted tenders with a view to appointing the successful Broker at the start of December. This then enables the successful Broker adequate time to undertake a European Journal procurement exercise for the Council's insurance policies in time to inform the annual estimates process.

Proposal

One tender was received and opened on Monday 23 November 2020. The tender was assessed by Officers representing each of the three Councils against set criteria within the tender submission. The tender received successfully met the standards required.

The fixed tender annual price submitted by the Insurance Broker is £14,950. It is proposed that Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council award the tender for Brokerage Services for a period of three years with the option for a further 1 year extension dependant on satisfactory performance of the service provided.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee approve the award of contract for Brokerage Services an annual cost of £14,950 for a period of 3 years with an option of a 1 year extension subject to satisfactory performance in service delivery.

Proposed by Alderman Baird
Seconded by Councillor Knight-McQuillan and

Recommended that Council approve the award of contract for Brokerage Services an annual cost of £14,950 for a period of 3 years with an option of a 1 year extension subject to satisfactory performance in service delivery.

All in attendance were in agreement.

19. REVIEW OF PLANNING

*** The Chief Executive joined the meeting during consideration of this item.**

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

Background

Following a Council decision, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council sought an appropriately qualified person to provide a full independent review of the Council's Planning functions and processes, to include services users, agents and applicants. The aim of this work is to provide impartial advice by way of a report and presentation to Councillors. Given the strategic significance of Planning to the Council, this work will help to ensure that the Council service delivery is responsive to the needs of all of its citizens and can adapt and transform to the changing environment within which it operates. It is expected that this work would be completed by 28 February 2021.

Proposal

Having sought interest from a number potential providers the submission from the provider is deemed suitable to meet the requirement set out by the Council. The proposal is at Appendix 1 (previously circulated) and biographical notes are at Appendix 2 (previously circulated)

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council makes a direct award contract at a cost of £15,000.

The Chair of Planning, Councillor Dallat-O'Driscoll questioned the timing of the review and the appointment method for the direct award contract provider and felt that there was the potential for duplication of work being undertaken by the Northern Ireland Audit Office. Councillor Dallat-O'Driscoll also paid tribute to the hard work of staff. Councillor McGurk concurred with Councillor Dallat-O'Driscoll's remarks.

Alderman Baird wished to have recorded her opposition to this review.

Councillor Knight-McQuillan commented that the review was not on staff performance but procedural methods within the Planning Department.

The Chief Executive outlined to members that the proposed provider came highly recommended, based on engagement with other Chief Executives and that he had secured a fair price. He further confirmed that if undertaking this review went out for tender it would come in at a higher cost and the recommended provider would be unlikely compete. In terms of the reference to potential duplication the Chief Executive confirmed that there would not be an overlap as the Northern Ireland Audit Office had a completely different role.

Amendment

Proposed by Councillor McGurk;

Seconded by Councillor Chivers and

Recommended that Council defer the review to April 2021.

Proposed by Alderman Duddy;

Seconded by Councillor Knight-McQuillan and

Recommended that Council makes a direct award contract at a cost of £15,000

The Chair put the Amendment to a vote.
2 voted for, 8 voted against and 1 abstained.
The Chair declared the Motion lost.

The Chair put the Substantive Motion to a vote.
8 voted for, 2 voted against and 2 abstained.
The Chair declared the Motion Carried.

*** Having declared an interest, Councillor Knight-McQuillan left the meeting before consideration of this item at 10.50 pm.**

20. POPULATING THE ORGANISATION STRUCTURE

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

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update in terms of progress on populating the Organisation Structure, and to provide plans and timescales to fill current permanent vacant posts.

The Director of Corporate Services referred to the high level Organisational Structure as shown in Appendix 1, previously circulated which covers Tiers 1,2,3 and 4, across the different Directorates.

Table 1 – Organisational Structure Analysis, provides a summary of posts in Tier 1,2,3,4 and 5.

Table 2 – Organisational Structure Analysis, Tier 6 and 7 in Environmental Services (ES).

Table 3 – Organisational Structure Analysis – Tier 6 and 7 in Leisure and Development (L&D).

Each table provides details of posts filled, and posts where the current post holder has not yet been assimilated over into a new post within Causeway Coast and Glens, and also posts which are currently vacant. A significant number of vacant posts are currently being filled by Agency Staff. (Appendix 2, previously circulated) summarised the Agency Staff Analysis as at September 2020.

Other posts have become vacant through staff leaving (retirement, illness), staff undertaking secondments or acting up in other areas, and some vacant posts have been placed 'on-hold' pending service reviews and budgetary constraints.

Considerations

As outlined above, there is a considerable amount of work involved in populating the remainder of the structure, particularly at Tiers 6 and 7. Alongside the drafting and finalising of the Job Details, there is a significant amount of work required in terms of auditing the existing terms and conditions across the 4 legacy Councils, highlighting the differences, and drafting a costed recommendation going forward. Considerations will include TUPE, service requirements and budgetary constraints, alongside legislative requirements.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee recommend to Council approval of additional resource in the form of ODHR support, for a one year period, in order to lead, co-originate and expedite the progression of population of the Organisation Structure, particularly in relation to Environmental Services.

Alderman Duddy raised the issue around some of the lowest paid staff in Council, having worked as Agency Staff for some years being disadvantaged in terms of being able to secure financial security.

Proposed by Alderman McCorkell
Seconded by Councillor McCaw and

To recommend that Council defer decision to Council Meeting

The Chair put the motion to a vote.
9 voted for, 0 voted against and 1 abstained.
The Chair declared the motion carried.

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

There was no other business.

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN PUBLIC'

Proposed by Councillor McCaw
Seconded by Alderman Duddy and

AGREED: to recommend that Committee move 'In Public'.

There being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 11.20pm.

Chair