

Title of Report:	Correspondence
Committee Report Submitted To:	Corporate Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	26 November 2024
For Decision or For Information	For Decision
To be discussed In Committee	No

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)

Strategic Theme	Cohesive Leadership
Outcome	Council operates as one effective and efficient corporate unit with a common purpose and culture
Lead Officer	Director of Corporate Services

Estimated Timescale for Completion

Date to be Completed	N/A
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Budgetary Considerations

Cost of Proposal	
Included in Current Year Estimates	
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	

Legal Considerations

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

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

1.0 **Purpose of Report**

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

2.0 **Margaret Kelly, NI Local Government Commissioner for Standards, correspondence dated 18 October 2024 (copy attached)**

2.1 **Extract**

The Code came into effect in May 2014 and my office issued procedures for adjudication at that time and subsequently revised them in 2022. Over the last two years my office has undertaken a substantial level of engagement with councillors and council senior staff. Last year we undertook a significant survey of councillors focused on their understanding and knowledge of the Code as well as their interactions with my office. Further we surveyed council senior staff and asked about their knowledge of the Code and how willing they were to use the Code to guide behaviour and approach. Over the last 18 months we have continued that engagement and in 2023/2024 had direct contact with over 38% of councillors and engaged with all 11 local councils.

2.2 *One aspect of the feedback from surveys and engagement was the need for procedures and information about the Code to be clearer, simpler and more straightforward to understand. In response to that I have updated the adjudication procedures and sanctions guidelines to make them more straightforward and emphasise the inquisitorial rather than adversarial nature of the process.*

2.3 *Please find embedded below a link to both the updated adjudication procedures and to the sanctions guidelines:*

- <https://www.nipso.org.uk/nilgcs/publications>

3.0 **Recommendation**

It is recommended that Council consider the correspondence from Margaret Kelly, NI Local Government Commissioner for Standards, dated 18 October 2024.

4.0 **Councillor Robert Irvine, Northern Ireland Local Government Partnership on Traveller Issues (NILGPTI), email correspondence dated 24 October 2024 (copy email available)**

4.1 **Re: Review of Annual Membership 2024-2025**

- 4.2 Correspondence has been received from Councillor Robert Irvine enclosing the Invoice for Council's Annual subscription of membership of the Partnership for April 2024-March 2025 of £500.00 (VAT not applicable).

5.0 **Recommendation**

It is recommended that Corporate Policy and Resources Committee consider the correspondence from Northern Ireland Local Government Partnership on Traveller Issues - Annual Subscription of **£500** April 2024-March 2025.

6.0 **Valerie Watts, Interim Chief Executive, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, email correspondence dated 31 October 2024 (copy correspondence available)**

6.1 **Re: Knockagh Monument Joint Committee Partner Contributions 2024/25**

- 6.2 Correspondence has been received from Valerie Watts regarding partner contributions to the Knockagh Monument, advising that notice had been given last year of some remedial works required to the monument within the next 2-3 years. The works are estimated to cost in the region of £40,000, which will be shared across the four partner Councils.

6.3 **Extract**

At the Knockagh Monument Joint Committee Meeting held on 22 October 2024, it was agreed that over the next two years the partner Councils of the Joint Committee should make an annual contribution of £2200 towards the general upkeep of the Knockagh Monument and costs of the Annual Service of Remembrance held in June each year, with a further £2800 towards the remedial works in advance of the work being undertaken.

- 6.4 *An invoice will be issued shortly for £5000 for your Council's contribution for the year 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025.*

6.5 **Previous decisions of Council**

- 6.6 At the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee meeting held 28 November 2023, Council was advised of forthcoming increased contribution costs to £2,200 and charge of an additional £2,500 per annum ([link to minute](#)).

7.0 **Recommendation**

It is recommended that Corporate Policy and Resources Committee consider that over the next two years, Council, as a partner of the Knockagh

Monument Joint Committee, should make an annual contribution of **£2,200** towards the general upkeep of the Knockagh Monument and costs of the Annual Service of Remembrance held in June each year, and a further **£2,800** towards the remedial works in advance of the work being undertaken.

18 October 2024

Dear Chief Executive,

As you aware the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 provides my office with the power to investigate and if necessary, adjudicate on allegations that local councillors in Northern Ireland have failed to comply with the NI Local Government Code of Conduct.

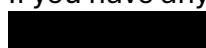
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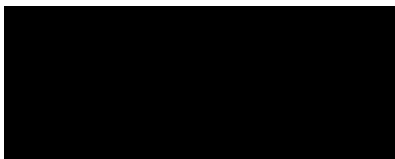
Please find embedded below a link to both the updated adjudication procedures and to the sanctions guidelines:

<https://www.nipso.org.uk/nilgcs/publications>

I would be grateful if you would ensure this is brought to the attention of councillors in your council area.

If you have any queries or questions could you in the first instance contact  [@nipso.org.uk](mailto: [redacted]@nipso.org.uk)

Yours Sincerely,



Margaret Kelly

NI Local Government Commissioner for Standards