



Title of Report:	Correspondence
Committee Report Submitted To:	The Council Meeting
Date of Meeting:	3 December 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

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	N/A
Included in Current Year Estimates	N/A
Capital/Revenue	N/A
Code	N/A
Staffing Costs	N/A

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 correspondence for Members' consideration.

1.2 The following correspondence has been received:

2.0 **Brenda Kilpatrick, Engagement Development Worker, Voice of Young People in Care, dated 11 October 2024** (copy attached)

Extract

2.1 *CARE DAY is the world's biggest celebration of children and young people with care experience. This group includes children and young people who are or were cared for by foster carers, or other family members, and those who live in children's homes. They deserve to be celebrated, on CARE DAY, and every day.*

2.2 *CARE DAY in the UK and Ireland is a joint initiative across five children's rights charities, and led in Northern Ireland by VOYPIC – Voice of Young People in Care. CARE DAY 25 will take place on Friday 21 February, and will be the tenth CARE DAY in the UK and Ireland.*

2.3 *To celebrate this milestone, we are asking your council to mark the occasion with the following activities:*

1. *We would be grateful if your council would light civic buildings on the evening of Friday 21 February 2025. Where possible, we would ask it to be multi-coloured, to reflect the Care Day halo. If this is not possible, we would ask it to be yellow, the main colour of the VOYPIC logo.*

2.4 *2. In recognition of this being the tenth CARE DAY, we are asking councils to plant a tree in a public space, in honour of the care experienced community. This includes those currently in care, those who have been in care, and those who will experience care in the future.*

2.5 *I would be grateful if these requests could be shared with members of your council at your meeting of 5 November, just following Care Leavers' Week (23 October – 3 November 2024).*

2.6 *VOYPIC is the charity for children and young people with lived experience of care in Northern Ireland. Created in 1993 by a group of young people in care and the professionals that supported them, VOYPIC has over 30 years of experience promoting the rights and voice of children in care and care leavers.*

2.7 *We work to ensure every child in care feels safe, valued and loved, and that every young person leaving care does so with dignity and respect, and thrives into adulthood.*

2.8 *I would like to thank you for your consideration of our request, and for your support for our work and the young people we serve.*

3.0 Jennifer Macrory, Public Appointments Unit, Department for Infrastructure, dated 19 November 2024 (copy email available on request) (application documentation attached)

3.1 Further to the Minister's letter of 30 September 2024 (attached), the Department is reviewing again the status of Councillors on the Drainage Council of Northern Ireland and are seeking further nominations from the Council. Department for Infrastructure currently still hold two vacancies with another three appointments terms due to end on 31 December.

3.2 Councillor Mervyn Storey's application is currently being held due to unavailability during the last round of interviews was being held. Councillor Dermot Nicholl was successful previously in being appointed to the Drainage Council.

3.3 Jennifer Macrory has requested that this opportunity be recirculated amongst Council Members urgently with a view to nominate any other councillor who may be interested as soon as possible so interviews can be arranged.

3.4 Previous decisions of Council

At the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee 25 June 2024 / Council Meeting 27 June 2024, Council resolved to approve the nomination of Councillor Mervyn Storey (DUP) and Councillor Dermot Nicholl (Sinn Féin) to be put forward to apply to the Drainage Council for Northern Ireland.

4.0 Susie McCullough, Chief Executive, Ards and North Down Borough Council, dated 12 November 2024 (copy attached)

Extract

4.1 *At the meeting of Ards and North Down Borough Council on 30th October, Council stated a position that it was strongly opposes the UK Government's recent Winter Fuel Payment policy change.*

4.2 *Further, Council has agreed to write to the Prime Minister to urge the Government to reverse this harmful decision, which will have a far-reaching and devastating impact on pensioner households across the UK. It also seeks assurance that, at the very least, the Pension Credit minimum income guarantee will be increased, ensuring that more low-income pensioner households, particularly those who narrowly miss out, become eligible for pension credit.*

4.3 *Council have also resolved that I write to the other Councils in Northern Ireland urging them to do the same. I would therefore ask if you would report this request to your elected Members for consideration. I would also welcome a response to this request so that I may report back to our Members in due course.*

5.0 **The Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Office, dated 21 November 2024** (copy attached)

Extract

5.1 *Thank you for your letter dated 30 September regarding the pause of the Causeway Coast and Glens Growth Deal. I apologise for the delay in responding.*

5.2 *As you may have seen, I was delighted that during her Budget statement on 30 October the Chancellor confirmed that the short pause on the UK Government's contribution to the Mid South West and the Causeway Coast and Glens Growth Deals has been lifted.*

5.3 *As you know, in the weeks running up to the Budget I met with councils and local representatives and I am grateful to all those who have provided detail on the deals and their intended impact on regional growth. I look forward to working with the Department of Finance and delivery partners as the deals progress through the necessary steps towards implementation, collectively ensuring that they continue to deliver growth in Northern Ireland.*

5.4 *This Government is committed to working with the Northern Ireland Executive and businesses to make the most of the huge economic opportunities that now lie ahead.*

6.0 **Recommendation**

It is recommended that Council consider the correspondence.



Celebrating and connecting the
care experienced community



T: 028 9024 4888
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Ballymena BT43 6EH

DERRY-LONDONDERRY

9 Queen Street
Derry-Londonderry
BT48 7EG

LURGAN

Flat 12, Mount Zion House
Edward Street
Lurgan BT66 6DB

Cllr Ciaran McQuillan

Mayor

Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

CARE DAY 25 - Request

Friday 11 October

Dear Mayor

CARE DAY is the world's biggest celebration of children and young people with care experience. This group includes children and young people who are or were cared for by foster carers, or other family members, and those who live in children's homes. They deserve to be celebrated, on CARE DAY, and every day.

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I would like to thank you for your consideration of our request, and for your support for our work and the young people we serve.

Yours sincerely



Brenda Kilpatrick
Engagement Development Worker
brenda.kilpatrick@voypic.org / 078 5425 5554

cc: Mr David Jackson, Chief Executive
All Elected Members

From the office of the Minister for Infrastructure
JOHN O'DOWD MLA

Causeway Coast and Glens District Council

Chief Executive, David Jackson

david.jackson@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

Private Office, 3rd Floor,
James House, Gasworks Site,
2 - 4 Cromac Street,
Belfast, BT7 2JA
Telephone: (028) 9054 0540
Email: Private.office@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Your reference:
Our reference: DFI-SUB-1550-2024
30 September 2024

David, a chara,

APPOINTMENT OF COUNCILLOR MEMBERS TO THE DRAINAGE COUNCIL NI

Thank you for submitting 2 nominations from your Council for consideration for appointment as Councillor Non-Executive Members for the Drainage Council of Northern Ireland. Councillor Storey has yet to be interviewed due to diary commitments.

I am writing to tell you that, after due consideration, I am minded to offer the following Councillor an appointment, subject to the satisfactory conclusion of the remainder of the appointment process.

- Mr Dermot Nicholl

A copy of a Press Release which provides full details of the appointments will be sent to you in due course.

Is mise le meas



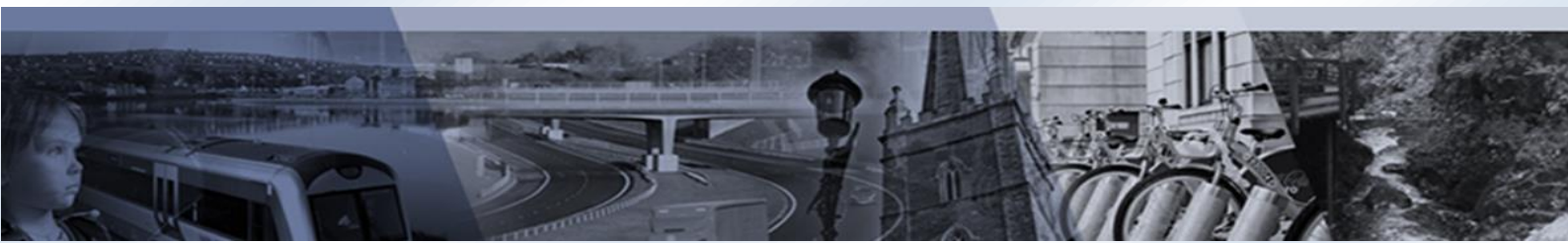
JOHN O'DOWD MLA
Minister for Infrastructure

APPOINTMENT OF TEN COUNCILLORS TO THE BOARD OF DRAINAGE COUNCIL NORTHERN IRELAND

Completed applications must be returned to DfI Public Appointments no later than 12 noon on Friday 19 July 2024

Jennifer Macrory
Public Appointments Unit
Department for Infrastructure
1st Floor, James House
2-4 Cromac Avenue
Belfast BT7 2JA

CPANI
The Commissioner
for Public Appointments
Northern Ireland



The Department for Infrastructure invites applications for ten Non-Executive Councillor Members to the board of Drainage Council NI. Seven of the appointments will be effective immediately and a further three from 01 January 2025 and will be for a period of up to four years.

This information booklet can be made available in other formats, such as Braille, large print, audio etc.

To request this or any other information on the appointment process please contact:

- Tel: 028 9054 0994
- Text relay service 18001 028 9054 0994
- E-mail your request to: publicappointmentsunit@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk
- Public Appointments Unit, Department for Infrastructure,
1st Floor, James House
2-4 Cromac Avenue
Belfast BT7 2JA

Privacy Notice

The Department for Infrastructure will only process the personal data you provide us for the purpose of recruiting members to the Board of Drainage Council Northern Ireland and in line with the Commissioner for Public Appointments NI Code of Practice. For more information, please see our Privacy Notice at [GDPR Privacy Notices for DfI Business areas | Department for Infrastructure \(infrastructure-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

CONTENTS OF THIS BOOKLET

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Section 2	Role Profile - Councillors to the Board of Drainage Council NI
Section 3	Application and Selection Process
Section 4	Equal Opportunities Monitoring and Complaints Procedure
ANNEX	Probity and Conflicts of Interest Guidance

KEY APPOINTMENT PROCESS STAGES

Stage in Process	Timescale
Closing Date for applications	19 July 2024
Interviews	5, 6 and 8 August 2024
Date of appointments	Seven of the appointments will be effective immediately and a further three from 01 January 2025

Section 1 – Information about DfI Rivers and the Drainage Council NI

DfI Rivers Vision and Responsibilities

1. Our vision is to manage flood risk both now and into the future, to maintain and create sustainable living places and support economic development.
2. To support this vision, Rivers aims:
 - to reduce the risk to life and the damage to property from flooding from rivers and the sea; and
 - to undertake our work in a sustainable manner.
3. In support of these aims, Rivers' objectives are to:
 - implement and inform sustainable flood risk management policies to meet society's social, environmental, and economic needs, whilst taking account of climate change;
 - implement the requirements of the Water Environment (Floods Directive) Regulation (Northern Ireland) 2009 for the assessment and management of flood risks;
 - inform new development decisions from a flood risk perspective;
 - reduce the number of properties currently at risk of flooding from rivers and the sea;
 - sustainably maintain flood defences, drainage infrastructure and the designated watercourse network;
 - discharge lead Department responsibilities for the emergency response to flooding;
 - communicate flood risk through flood mapping and community engagement;
 - deliver the Rivers element of the Living with Water Programme;
 - prepare for the further commencement of the Reservoirs Act (Northern Ireland) 2015;
 - support and develop all staff to achieve our objectives; and
 - deliver quality services for our customers and stakeholders in a fair and equitable way.
4. We also provide secretariat and administrative support to the Drainage Council for Northern Ireland, a non-Departmental Public Body which carries out a general scrutiny role on the drainage functions of the Department.
5. The DfI Rivers are not responsible for coastal erosion or water quality and pollution issues.

Drainage Council

6. The Drainage Council exists to perform a general scrutiny role in relation to the Department's drainage functions and has a statutory duty to ensure uniformity of treatment on drainage issues throughout Northern Ireland.

Key Priorities

7. The Key Priorities include:
 - determining which watercourses and sea defences should be designated for maintenance by DfI Rivers at public expense. Recommendations for designation may be put forward either by DfI Rivers or by any other Government Department or person;
 - making informed determinations if an Environmental Impact Assessment has been undertaken for a scheme, whether proposed drainage works should be approved;
 - ensuring equality of treatment in accordance with Government policies on fairness and equality (Section 75);
 - considering the Department's proposals in relation to flood defences, drainage schemes or variations to schemes;
 - considering the Department's proposals in relation to Byelaws associated with drainage works;
 - acting in a consultative capacity on other flood protection and drainage related matters such as the Department's annual maintenance programme and in the environmental assessment of proposed drainage works; and
 - examining information presented in Environment Statements prepared by DfI and reaching a reasoned conclusion (informed decision) on the significant effects of the drainage scheme on the environment. This reasoned conclusion is included in the decision for approval of a scheme.

Constitution

8. By Statute, the Council's membership of 18 consists of 10 representatives from Councils, a specialist adviser on drainage matters, an officer of the Department representing drainage, a representative of fishery interests, a representative from each of industry, tourism, agriculture

and conservation interests and a representative from the Department to represent Planning interests.

9. A Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson are elected by members at the opening meeting of each new Council term.

Governance Arrangements

Accountability

10. Drainage Council as a corporate body, is responsible to the Minister of the sponsoring Department (DfI), who is in turn accountable to the public on the extent to which it fulfils its statutory duty and meets its objectives and general standards to public service.

Liability of Drainage Council Members

11. Drainage Council members have a corporate responsibility for all their actions. An individual member who has acted honestly and in good faith will not have to meet out of his/her own personal resources any personal civil liability which is incurred in the execution or purported execution of his/her Council functions, save where the person has acted recklessly.
12. For further information on the relationship between The Drainage Council and DfI Rivers please see the following link: [Memorandum of understanding between DfI and Drainage Council NI](#)

Section 2 – Role Profile

13. Applicants for these appointments will be a local Councillor currently serving on one of the eleven local Councils of Northern Ireland.
14. Applicants will be expected to be able to demonstrate an understanding of the representative role of local councils in the context of the development of drainage and flood defence schemes.
15. Members of the Drainage Council for Northern Ireland, including the Chair, have corporate responsibility for ensuring that the Drainage Council for Northern Ireland complies with all relevant statutory or administrative requirements including requirements in respect of the use of public funds.
16. The role of the members of the Drainage Council is as follows:
 - Make informed determinations regarding designations undertaken for maintenance by DfI Rivers at public expense;
 - ensure all applications are treated impartially and equally in accordance with Government policies on fairness and equality (Section 75);
 - consider the Department's proposals in relation to flood defences, drainage schemes or variations to schemes;
 - examine information presented in Environment Statements prepared by DfI and reach a reasoned conclusion (informed decision) on the significant effects of the drainage scheme on the environment. This reasoned conclusion is included in the decision for approval of a scheme;
 - consider the Department's proposals in relation to byelaws associated with drainage works; and
 - acting in a consultative capacity on other flood protection and drainage related matters such as the Department's annual maintenance programme and in the environmental assessment of proposed drainage works.

Training

17. Appropriate induction training will be provided to the appointee.

Time Commitment and Remuneration

18. The new appointees will be expected to attend the Drainage Council meetings and other ad hoc meetings as required. Three to four Drainage Council meetings are held per year, depending on the volume of Drainage Council business to be considered. Meetings are held in such locations within Northern Ireland as the Council may determine. Drainage Council meetings may vary in time commitment, but meetings are generally inside normal working hours. Members of the Drainage Council can claim reasonable travel expenses incurred on Drainage Council business but receive no other remuneration.

Expenses

19. Following appointment, reasonable travelling expenses and subsistence will be paid to attend meetings in accordance with the Drainage Council's processes. Any additional costs associated with childcare, dependents or having a disability will also be considered to enable the Member to attend evening meetings. All remuneration and expenses are subject to deduction of income tax and national insurance.
20. The appointment is not pensionable.

Period of Appointment

21. Seven of the appointments will be effective immediately and a further three from 01 January 2025 and will be for a period of up to four years. If the appointee ceases to be a member of the local council, they will cease to be a member of the Drainage Council, but no such cessation shall take effect until that person's successor is appointed.
22. It is the current policy of the Department of Infrastructure that there is no appointment or re appointment without an open competition taking place. Current appointees on their first term may apply in competition for a second term, subject to evidence of an appropriate standard of performance having been achieved during the initial period in office and evidence of continued adherence to the seven principles of public life.

Code of Practice

23. A Code of Practice governs the activities of the Board. To ensure that public service values remain at the heart of the Drainage Council, Members are required, on appointment, to

demonstrate high standards of corporate and personal conduct and to subscribe to the Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies.

- 24.** Councillors when appointed will be expected to demonstrate a high standard of probity and integrity and commitment to the seven principles underpinning public life.

Section 3 – Application and Selection Process

- 25.** The Department for Infrastructure is committed to the principles of public appointments based on merit, with independent assessment, openness, and transparency of process. The Department is also committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes application forms from all suitably qualified applicants irrespective of religious belief, gender, race, political opinion, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or whether they have dependants.
- 26.** The Department for Infrastructure is committed to improving the diversity of the Boards to which it makes appointments and wants to encourage more women, younger people, people from ethnic minorities and people with disabilities to apply for appointments. Applications from these groups would be particularly welcome.
- 27.** These appointments are regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPA NI) and the competition may be examined by CPA NI for compliance with the Commissioner's Code of Practice.

Application Procedure

- 28.** Application forms or further information about the process can be obtained from the Public Appointments Unit at the address on the cover of this document or by e-mailing a request to: publicappointmentsunit@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk
- 29.** Hard copy or electronic versions of the application form are acceptable. You must not reformat the electronic application form. CVs, letters, or any other supplementary material in place of, or in addition to, completed application forms will not be accepted.
- 30.** Applications must be completed fully and clearly, using black ink or typescript minimum font size 12. It is strongly recommended that you read the guidance notes on the completion of the application form.
- 31.** All sections of the application form must be completed in full.
- 32.** Information Documents and Application Forms can be provided in alternative formats. Any applicants who require assistance should contact the Public Appointments Unit. All

reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate the needs of applicants/candidates with a disability.

33. Application forms should be submitted by post, email or in person to arrive with the Public Appointment Unit by **Noon, Friday 19 July 2024** (see contact details on cover sheet).
34. Please check your application form before submitting to the Department, as failure to provide a fully completed application may result in your application form being excluded from the process.
35. Applications made to the Department will be acknowledged within three working days of receipt. If receipt is not acknowledged, applicants should contact the DfI Public Appointments Unit (028 9054 0994).
36. Candidates invited for interview will be eligible to claim reimbursement of reasonable travelling expenses incurred within the UK and Republic of Ireland in attending for interview. Travel claims will usually be paid at public transport rates. Any other appropriate expenses, such as particular costs associated with disabilities or childcare, can also be claimed.

Selection Process

37. All Councillors who have been nominated by their Council will be invited to interview. The selection Panel will comprise Gary Quinn, Director of Rivers Operations, Alan Strong, Chair of the Drainage Council and Catherine Magee, an Independent Member from the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments NI.
38. At interview, Councillors will be expected to demonstrate that they have knowledge, experience, and capacity in the following:
 - Contribution to Council or Public Life - examples of the type of evidence the panel will be looking for are listed below. You will not be expected to meet each one of the examples.
 - a positive contribution to public life and the wider Local Government sector for the benefit of the general public;
 - ability to challenge or scrutinise appropriately when necessary;
 - able to align policy and delivery considerations; and

- an understanding of the role of DfI Rivers.
- Effective Communication skills – examples of the type of evidence the panel will be looking for are listed below. You will not be expected to meet each one of the examples.
 - excellent communication and interpersonal skills;
 - the ability to communicate effectively with colleagues, other senior leaders and the public;
 - ability to work collaboratively; and
 - experience in applying influencing and negotiating skills to achieve mutually acceptable outcomes.

39. Those Potential or perceived Conflicts of Interest, along with probity and integrity will be reviewed with candidates at interview.
40. The panel will also check with the applicant that they can meet the time commitment involved with the appointment role.
41. At interview, all candidates must satisfy the panel that they adequately meet all recruitment aspects of the appointment. The Minister for Infrastructure will take the final decision on who to appoint.
42. A written record will be made of the discussions and an applicant summary will be prepared by the selection panel. The applicant summary will provide the Minister with an objective analysis of each candidate's skills and experience based on the information provided by the candidate at interview.
43. The Minister may decide to create a reserve list to cover any unforeseen vacancies that arise within 12 months of the date of the Minister's decision.

Timetable / Time Frame

44. The deadline for receipt in all cases is **Noon, Friday 19 July 2024**. It is the responsibility of the applicant, considering their chosen method of delivery, to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for their application to arrive with the Department on or before the deadline. **Late applications will only be considered in exceptional circumstances**. Please ensure that posted applications bear the correct amount of postage as any shortfall may lead to a delay in delivery, causing you to miss the deadline. Applicants who send their application form electronically are also required to meet the closing deadline for receipt in this office. If the timetable is varied, applicants will receive notice and an explanation of any variation which may affect them.
45. Interviews are expected to be held on **5, 6 and 8 August 2024**.

Disqualified Candidates

46. Under the terms of the House of Commons Disqualifications Act 1975, and the Northern Ireland Assembly Disqualification Act 1975, existing MPs and MLAs cease to hold their elected office if they take up an appointment to a public body listed in the legislation.
47. If an individual holding a public appointment decides to stand for election as an MP or MLA, it is their responsibility to check whether the public body to which they belong or the office that they hold is listed in the appropriate Disqualification Act.
48. If the public body to which an individual belongs or the office that they hold is listed in the Disqualification Act they must immediately notify the Department of their intention to stand for election. To avoid any disqualification issues from arising later they should resign their appointment before submitting their nomination as candidate in an election. If they have not resigned their public appointment before submitting their nomination as a candidate and are subsequently elected as an MP or MLA their election will be void.

Conflicts of Interest and Probity

49. The Department must ensure that any individual appointed is committed to the seven principles of conduct underpinning public life and values of public service. **These principles are: Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership.**

The successful candidate will be asked as part of their appointment to sign a declaration committing to the seven principles.

50. The information pack includes copies of the leaflets entitled “Probity and Conflicts of Interest – Guidance for Candidates” and an information leaflet from the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (NI) about “Conflicts of Interest, Integrity and Making a Complaint”. These provide information on these issues, including some examples to help applicants evaluate whether they have a real, perceived, or potential conflict.
51. The Department must take account of any actual or perceived conflict of interest. Therefore, applicants, in their application form, must disclose information or personal connections which, if they were to be appointed, could lead to a conflict of interest, or be perceived as such. Failure to do so could lead to the appointment being terminated.
52. It is very important that all applicants provide appropriate details on their application form of any interests which might be construed as conflicting with the appointment for which they have applied. If it appears, from the information provided on the form, that a possible conflict might exist, or arise in the future, this will be fully explored with the applicant with a view to establishing whether it is sufficiently significant to prevent the individual from carrying out the duties of the post. The Panel will do this at interview stage.
53. You will also be asked on your application and at interview to declare whether you are involved, or have been involved, in activities that could call into question your own reputation and/or damage the reputation of the body to which you are applying for. In this regard, the Department may carry out probity checks with the Insolvency Service to determine if applicants are recorded on the Disqualification of Directors or Bankruptcy registers. Any potential probity issues detailed in your application form or of which the panel is aware will not prevent you from being called for interview but will be explored with you at the interview to establish how you would address the issue should you be successful in your application.

Other Public Appointments

54. Departments have a duty to satisfy themselves, as far as practicable, that those they appoint to the Boards of public bodies will carry out their duties in an efficient and effective manner.

The Department for Infrastructure will, therefore, be checking with other Departments if there are any probity or performance issues associated with applicants who hold other public appointments. Similar information will be provided by this Department to other NICS Departments on request about all associated board members.

The Two Terms Rule

55. In accordance with the CPANI Code, those who have served two terms in the same position on the same board cannot apply through open competition for a third term. If any applicant has served two terms in this position, his/her application will be discounted at the sift stage.

Double Paying

56. Applicants who already work in the public sector need to be aware that:
- if appointed, they will be asked to obtain confirmation from their employer that any remuneration due and time worked for this position are truly additional to their existing job role and is not a duplication with salaried employment (unless allowed under the terms and conditions of employment).
 - In the interests of minimising the potential for double paying to occur the Department reserves the right to contact your employer regarding your candidature.
57. Former Civil Servants are subject to rules on the Acceptance of Outside Business Appointments, Employment or Self-Employment for a period of up to two years after leaving the NI Civil Service. Individuals in this category, who wish to apply, should check their eligibility to do so with their former Department.

Publicising Appointments

58. A Press Release will be published to announce the appointments. The Commissioner for Public Appointments also requires that announcements about successful candidates should contain details of any recent political activity. Consequently, should you be appointed, you will be required to complete a political activity form. Details of any political activity, together with some of the information that you have provided in your application form, will be made public in the press announcement. This applies particularly to any other public appointments you may hold and to any significant political activity recently undertaken by you. The Press Release will include:

- Your name;
- A short description of the body to which you have been appointed;
- A brief summary of the skills and knowledge you bring to the role;
- The period of appointment;
- Any remuneration associated with the appointment;
- Details of all other public appointments held and any related remuneration received;
and
- Details of any political activity declared in the last 5 years.

Section 4 - Equal Opportunities Monitoring and Complaints Procedure

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

59. The Department is committed to providing equality of opportunity. The Department monitors applications to ensure that equal opportunities measures are effective in its appointments processes. Applicants are therefore asked to complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form attached to the application form. The information is purely for monitoring purposes. It is **not** made available to the selection panel and does **not** play a role in the decision-making process. The information will be analysed independently by staff in the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and will be treated in strict confidence.

Complaints Procedure

60. The Department is committed to getting this appointment process right first time. However, if you are not entirely satisfied with any aspect of our service, please tell us and we will do our best to resolve the matter. Our aim is to resolve any complaint quickly and you are invited initially to bring any concerns you may have to the official named below. However, if you still feel dissatisfied after this approach, you may initiate a formal complaint in writing.

Please direct your concerns in the first instance to:

Gavin Irwin

Public Appointments Unit, Department for Infrastructure

1st Floor, James House

2-4 Cromac Avenue

Belfast BT7 2JA

Email: gavin.irwin@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

If you remain dissatisfied, you may then write to:

The Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland

Dundonald House, Annexe B, Stormont Estate, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast

BT4 3SB

Email: info@publicappointmentsni.org

PROBITY & CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

GUIDANCE FOR CANDIDATES

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the information contained in the leaflet “CPA NI Guidance on Conflicts of Interest, Integrity and how to raise a complaint” which provides examples of the types of issues that may give rise to conflicts of interests.

Standards of behaviour

Ministers expect that the conduct of those they appoint to serve on the Boards of public bodies will be above reproach. Everyone who puts themselves forward for a public appointment must be able to demonstrate their commitment to the maintenance of high standards in public life.

The Seven Principles Underpinning Public Life

In 1995, the Committee on Standards in Public Life defined seven principles, which should underpin the actions of all who serve the public in any way. These are:

Selflessness - Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or other friends.

Integrity - Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity - In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability - Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness - Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty - Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership: Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and

challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs. A link is provided to the revised principles. [Seven Principles of Public Life](#)

As part of the selection process, you will be tested on your commitment to maintaining high standards in public life with particular emphasis on probity issues and conflicts of interest.

What is a conflict of interest?

Public Appointments require the highest standards of propriety, involving impartiality, integrity, and objectivity, in relation to the stewardship of public funds and the oversight and management of all related activities. This means that any private, voluntary, charitable, or political interest which might be material and relevant to the work of the body concerned should be declared.

There is always the possibility for real or perceived conflicts of interest to arise. Both are a problem, as the perceived inference of a conflict may, on occasions, be as damaging as the existence of a real conflict.

No-one should use, or give the appearance of using, their public position to further their private interests. This is an area of particular importance, as it is of considerable concern to the public and receives a lot of media attention. It is important, therefore, that you consider your circumstances when applying for a public appointment and identify any potential conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived.

Surely a perceived conflict is not a problem, as long as I act impartially at all times?

The integrity of the individual is not in question here. However, it is necessary for the standing of the individual and the board that members of the public have confidence in their independence and impartiality. Even a perceived conflict of interest on the part of a board member can be extremely damaging to the body's reputation and it is therefore essential that these are declared and explored, in the same way as an actual conflict would be. The fact that a member acted impartially may be no defence against accusations of potential bias.

What should I do if I think I have a conflict of interest?

You will find a section on conflicts of interest in the application form for you to complete. This asks you to consider and declare whether you have a real, or perceived, conflict. If you are unsure if your circumstances constitute a possible conflict, you should still complete this section, to give the Selection Panel as much information as possible.

If I declare a conflict, does this mean I will not be considered for appointment?

No - each case is considered individually. If you are short-listed for interview, the Panel will explore with you how far the conflict might affect your ability to contribute effectively and impartially on the Board and how this might be handled, if you were to be appointed. For example, it may be possible to arrange for you to step out of meetings where an issue is discussed, in which you have an interest. However, if, following the discussion with you, the Panel believes that the conflict is too great and would call into question the probity of the Board or the appointment they can withdraw your application from the competition. The summary of the outcome of the interview process, which is put to the Ministers, will include clear written

reference to any probity issues or perceived or actual conflicts of interest connected to any candidate put forward as suitable for appointment. It will include sufficient information to ensure that the Ministers are fully aware of any of these matters and can make an informed decision.

What happens if I do not declare a known conflict, which is then discovered by the Department after my appointment?

Again, each case would be considered on its merits, but the Department may take the view that by concealing a conflict of interest, you would be deemed to have breached the seven principles of conduct underpinning public life and may terminate your appointment.

What happens if I do not realise a potential conflict exists?

This situation may arise where the applicant is not familiar with the broad range of work which a body covers and therefore does not realise that a conflict might exist. In some cases, the Panel, with their wider knowledge of the body, might deduce that there is a potential conflict issue, based on the information on employment and experience provided by the candidate in the application form. They will then explore this at interview with the candidate.

What happens if a conflict of interest arises after an appointment is made?

This could arise for two main reasons. The first is that the member's circumstances may change, for example, they may change jobs and in doing so, a conflict with their work on the board becomes apparent. The second is where a member is unfamiliar with the range of the work of the body, but after appointment, it becomes clear that a conflict exists where none had been envisaged during the appointment process.

In both cases, the issue should be discussed with the Chair of the Board and the Chief Executive of the body concerned, in consultation with the Sponsoring Department, to decide whether the member can continue to carry out their role in an appropriate manner and each case is considered individually.

It may be that the conflict is such that it would be impractical for the member to continue on the board, if they would have to withdraw from a considerable amount of the body's routine business. In such, cases, the member may be asked to stand down from the body.

You may be asked to sign a declaration of commitment to the above principles as a condition of your appointment.

**DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE
APPLICATION FORM**

**NON-EXECUTIVE
COUNCILLORS OF THE
DRAINAGE COUNCIL
NORTHERN IRELAND**

Completed applications must be returned to DfI Public Appointments no later than 12 noon on **Friday 19 July 2024**

Jennifer Macrory
Public Appointments Unit
Department for Infrastructure
1st Floor, James House
2 - 4 Cromac Avenue
Belfast BT7 2JA

CPANI

The Commissioner
for Public Appointments
Northern Ireland

Candidate No: _____

APPLICATION FORM
NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBER OF DRAINAGE COUNCIL COUNCILLOR APPOINTMENTS

The Application Form is in two parts. The closing date for the return of completed application forms is 12 Noon on Friday 19 July 2024.

PART A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

- Typewritten or electronic versions of the application forms are welcome and should be completed in Arial with a minimum font size of 12. Handwritten applications should be completed using black ink.
- If your application is submitted by e-mail, we will require you to sign Part A when you attend interview.
- Please do not staple, tape, or stick additional information to this form. CVs, letters, or any other supplementary material in place of or in addition to the completed application form will not be accepted.
- We would advise you to retain a copy of your application for your own information.
- Applications will not be reviewed until after the closing date.
- We will only process the personal data you provide us for the purpose of recruiting members to the Board of the Drainage Council and in line with the Commissioner for Public Appointments NI Code of Practice. For more information, please see our Privacy Notice at www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/dfi-public-appointments

Please send all both parts of your completed application to:

Jennifer Macrory
Public Appointments Unit
Department for Infrastructure
1st Floor, James House
2 - 4 Cromac Avenue
Belfast BT7 2JA

Or by email to: publicappointmentsunit@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

1. PERSONAL DETAILS

Title (Prof/Dr/Mr/Mrs/Ms/etc):										
Surname:										
Forename(s):										
Former surname(s) (if any):										
National Insurance Number: (if applicable)	<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>									
Permanent address, including postcode:										
Telephone No (including STD code):										
Mobile:										
E-mail address:										
Address for correspondence, including postcode: (if different from above)										
Telephone No of correspondence address (including STD code): (if different from above)										

We will normally contact you by email; however, if you would prefer to be contacted by a different means then please indicate this here.

By Telephone

By Mobile

By Post

2. OTHER INFORMATION

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence (other than minor motoring offences) which is not spent in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974?

Yes No

Are you the subject of any legal, criminal, or statutory investigations or actions, or are any pending?

Yes No

Have you ever been adjudged bankrupt or made a composition or arrangement (such as those set out in Note 1 below) with your creditors over the past 10 years?

Yes No

Were you dismissed from any public office over the past 10 years?

Yes No

Note 1

- Individual Voluntary Arrangements (IVAs) and Fast-Track Voluntary Arrangements (FTVAs);
- Bankruptcy Restrictions Orders or Undertakings (BROs/BRUs);
- Debt Relief Orders (DROs); and
- Debt Relief Restrictions Orders or Undertakings (DRROs/DRRUs)

3. Reasonable Adjustments

Please let us know if you require any reasonable adjustments, or arrangements to enable you to attend for interview or take up an offer of appointment. The selection panel will only be advised of any adjustments they need to know about to manage the interview process.

PART B: PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS

Candidate No: _____

1. **PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS** – please list all current public appointments, giving the name of the public body, the position held, the length of the appointment and any remuneration paid.

Public Body	Position Held	Dates		Remuneration
		From	To	

Have you ever been a member of the Drainage Council Board?

Yes

No

If you have previously served on this board, please indicate when and the positions held	Position Held	From	To

7. PROBITY AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Before you complete this section, it is important that you read the guidance on probity and conflicts of interest contained in your information pack.

a) Are you prepared to abide by the seven principles of public life?

Yes No

b) Have you, your partner, or your immediate family, any business or other interests or personal connections that might be construed as conflicting with the appointment for which you have applied?

Yes No

c) Are there any other probity issues which might cause embarrassment if, in the future, they are raised in public or any other issues you feel the Department for Infrastructure may need to be made aware of?

Yes No

If you answered yes to questions b) and/or c) above, please provide details below.

Any potential probity issues or conflicts of interest detailed above will not prevent you from being called for interview but will be explored with you at that time to establish how you would address the issue should you be successful in your application.

8. DECLARATION

I have read and understood the information provided in the Candidate Information Booklet. I declare that I am available to meet the time commitment required for this role.

I have read the 'Probity and Conflicts of Interest: Guidance for Candidates' information leaflet and I understand that, if appointed, I must raise with the Departmental Permanent Secretary and the Chief Executive of the public body, any probity or conflict of interest issues that might arise during my term of appointment and that my failure to do so could lead to my appointment being terminated.

I undertake to inform DfI Public Appointments Unit in writing of any change in my circumstances which may occur between the date of my application and any possible date of appointment.

I have read the information pack and understand my responsibilities in relation to statutory disqualifications and public appointments. I declare that the information I have given in support of my application is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief and reflects my own individual experience, personal achievements and undertakings and all statements contained therein relate to me personally. I understand that if I am found to have suppressed any material fact, or to have given false answers, I will be liable to disqualification or, if appointed, to dismissal.

I understand and accept that the information I have provided will be processed by the Department for Infrastructure, in accordance with its Data Protection Registration, for the purposes of making these public appointments; and that this may involve disclosing information to other Government Departments, the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland, or anonymously in response to Assembly Questions and other enquiries.

I also understand and accept that, if appointed, my details will be recorded and held within the Public Appointments database and my name will also be published in the Public Appointments Annual Report.

Also, that some of the information I have provided will be included in a press release announcing my appointment and therefore placed in the public domain.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Print Name: _____

PART C- EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES MONITORING

(Return with your application form)

Please ensure that you read the notes for guidance in the Candidate Information Pack before you complete this part of your application form.

The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) is committed to ensuring that all eligible persons have equal opportunity for public appointments on the basis of their ability and aptitude for the role. Monitoring is carried out to help us ensure that our processes and procedures promote equality of opportunity as far as possible and therefore your help in completing and returning this monitoring form as part of your application would be appreciated. Please note the information you provide in this monitoring form will be detached from the information on the application form, held separately and will not be available to selection panels or to anyone else involved in the selection process. The information will be used for statistical purposes only and analysed independently by staff in the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) in the strictest confidence. Thank you for your cooperation.

National Insurance Number

Please enter your National Insurance Number below:

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Gender

Please tick one box:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Male
<input type="checkbox"/>	Female

Age

Please give your date of birth:

Day		Month		Year	

Community Background

Please indicate your community background by ticking the appropriate box below:

<input type="checkbox"/>	I have a Roman Catholic community background
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have a Protestant community background
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have neither a Protestant or Roman Catholic community background

Disability

The Disability and Discrimination Act (DDA) defines a disability as a “physical or mental impairment which has substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities”. Do you consider yourself to have a disability (Please tick one box below)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

Race

Please tick one box to indicate your race:

<input type="checkbox"/>	White	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black African
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bangladeshi
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>	Indian

Are you a member of a Mixed Ethnic Group?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

Are you a member of the Irish Travelling Community?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

If you are of other ethnic origin, please specify

Language

Is English your first language? (Please tick one box below):

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

Sexual Orientation

Please consider the statement below and tick one box:

My sexual orientation is towards someone:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Of the same sex (this covers gay men and lesbians)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Of a different sex (this covers heterosexual men and women)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Of the same sex and of the opposite sex (this covers bisexual men and women)

Marital status

Please indicate your marital status by ticking one box below:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Single, that is never married or in a civil partnership
<input type="checkbox"/>	Married
<input type="checkbox"/>	Separated, but still legally married

<input type="checkbox"/>	Divorced
<input type="checkbox"/>	Widowed
<input type="checkbox"/>	In a civil partnership
<input type="checkbox"/>	Separated, but still legally in a civil partnership
<input type="checkbox"/>	Formerly in a civil partnership which is now legally dissolved
<input type="checkbox"/>	Surviving partner from a civil partnership

Dependants

Do you have personal responsibility for the care of a child, or children, a person with a disability or a dependent older person?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Which sector would you consider best reflects your employment history over the course of your career?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Private Sector
<input type="checkbox"/>	Civil Service
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Public Sector
<input type="checkbox"/>	Voluntary Sector

Other, Please Specify:

--

What is your highest level of educational attainment?

<input type="checkbox"/>	No Qualifications
<input type="checkbox"/>	GCSE/ O-level or equivalent
<input type="checkbox"/>	A-level or equivalent
<input type="checkbox"/>	Degree or higher

12 November 2024

Sent via email only

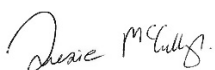
Dear Chief Executive,

At the meeting of Ards and North Down Borough Council on 30th October, Council stated a position that it strongly opposes the UK Government's recent Winter Fuel Payment policy change.

Further, Council has agreed to write to the Prime Minister to urge the Government to reverse this harmful decision, which will have a far-reaching and devastating impact on pensioner households across the UK. It also seeks assurance that, at the very least, the Pension Credit minimum income guarantee will be increased, ensuring that more low-income pensioner households, particularly those who narrowly miss out, become eligible for pension credit.

Council have also resolved that I write to the other Councils in Northern Ireland urging them to do the same. I would therefore ask if you would report this request to your elected Members for consideration. I would also welcome a response to this request so that I may report back to our Members in due course.

Yours sincerely



Susie McCullough
Chief Executive



The Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP

**Secretary of State for
Northern Ireland**

1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

Erskine House
20-32 Chichester St
Belfast
BT1 4GF

E: correspondence@nio.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/nio
Follow us on X @NIOgov

Councillor Ciarán McQuillan
Mayor of Causeway Coast and Glens Council
MayorsOffice@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

21 November 2024
Our reference: MC/24/454

Dear Ciarán,

Thank you for your letter dated 30 September regarding the pause of the Causeway Coast and Glens Growth Deal. I apologise for the delay in responding.

As you may have seen, I was delighted that during her Budget statement on 30 October the Chancellor confirmed that the short pause on the UK Government's contribution to the Mid South West and the Causeway Coast and Glens Growth Deals has been lifted.

As you know, in the weeks running up to the Budget I met with councils and local representatives and I am grateful to all those who have provided detail on the deals and their intended impact on regional growth. I look forward to working with the Department of Finance and delivery partners as the deals progress through the necessary steps towards implementation, collectively ensuring that they continue to deliver growth in Northern Ireland.

This Government is committed to working with the Northern Ireland Executive and businesses to make the most of the huge economic opportunities that now lie ahead.

Yours sincerely,



**THE RT HON HILARY BENN MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**