

**CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2023**

No	Item	Summary of Key Recommendations
1.	Apologies	None
2.	Declarations of Interest	None
3.	Corporate Policy and Resources Committee Terms of Reference	<i>to recommend that Council adopt the Terms of Reference as set out in this report</i>
4.	Minutes of Corporate Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held 27 June 2023	<i>Confirmed as a correct record</i>
5.	Performance Improvement 2023/24	<i>to recommend to Council the adoption of this 2023/24 Performance Improvement Plan, as set out in Appendix 1, and the Improvement Objectives contained within it.</i>
6.	Self-Assessment of Performance 2022/23	<i>Noted</i>
7.	Elected Member Development	<i>to recommend that Council approve the Elected Member Development report and recommendations therein</i>
(i)	In Professional Development (IPD), dated 15 June 2023	
(ii)	Alison Allen, Chief Executive, NILGA, dated 18 August 2023	
(iii)	Allison Allen, Chief Executive, NILGA, dated 31 August 2023	
(iv)	Annual NI Economic Conference 2023	
8.	Community Planning Update	<i>Noted</i>
9.	Annual Remembrance Services	<i>to recommend that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor decide which event they wish to attend on Remembrance Sunday and that the other Elected Members be nominated to represent Council by Party Leads using D'Hondt. It is further recommended that</i>

		<i>this process is applied annually for the four year term of this Council</i>
10.	Standing Orders Update	<i>Noted</i>
11.	Model Complaints Handling Procedure	<i>to recommend that the attached Model Complaints Handling Procedure is adopted and that it is personalised to the Council.</i>
12.	Conference	
(i)	NILGA – Audit Committee training	<i>Noted</i>
13.	Consultations	<i>None</i>
14.	Correspondence	
(i)	Karen Smyth, Head of Policy & Governance, NILGA, dated 14 August 2023	<i>to recommend that consideration is deferred to the Council meeting, following clarification of the matters raised</i>
(ii)	Cahir Hughes, Head of Electoral Commission Northern Ireland, dated 13 September 2023	<i>Noted</i>
(iii)	Cahir Hughes, Head of Electoral Commission Northern Ireland, dated 18 September 2023	<i>Noted</i>
(iv)	Anthony Carleton, Director, Local Government & Housing Regulation, dated 21 September 2023	<i>Noted</i>
(v)	James McCorkell, Lead Volunteer, For Limavady Outreach Centre/Fmani (Fibromyalgia Awareness), email dated 1 August 2023	<i>to recommend that Council bring a report back on the request to loan a WW1 Beacon permanently, including detail of the previous decision of Council, prior to agreeing to the request</i>
15.	Matters for Reporting to the Partnership Panel	<i>None</i>
	<i>'In Committee' (Items 16-22 inclusive)</i>	
16.	Insurance Report	<i>Noted</i>
17.	Legal Services Business Plan	<i>to recommend that Council proposes the acceptance of the Legal Services business plan</i>

18.	Legal Services - Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Derry City and Strabane District Council for external legal advice	<i>to recommend that Council proposes the acceptance of the Service Level Agreement for a period of two years from 1st April 2023</i>
19.	Population of the Organisation Structure Progress report	<i>Noted</i>
20.	Corporate Services Management Accounts Month 4	<i>Noted</i>
21.	Minutes of the Land and Property Sub Committee meeting held Wednesday 6 September 2023	
(i)	Approval of Adoption of the Minutes	<i>to recommend that Council adopt the Minutes of the Land and Property Sub Committee meeting held Wednesday 6 September 2023 and recommendations therein approved</i>
22.	Any Other Relevant Business (notified in accordance with Standing Order 12(o))	
(i)	Limepark, Armoy (Councillor Watson)	<i>to recommend that Council approve the process as outlined by the Chair, Councillor Nicholl above</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 26 SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 7.00PM**

- In the Chair:** Councillor Nicholl (C)
- Present:** Alderman Boyle (C), Coyle (C), Knight-McQuillan (C)
Councillor C Archibald (C), Huggins (C), Jonathan
McAuley (C), McCully (C), McShane (R), Peacock (R),
Storey (C), Wallace (R), Watson (R), Watton (C), Wilson
(R)
- Non Committee
Member Present:** Councillor Chivers (R)
- Officers Present:** M Quinn, Director of Corporate Services (C)
A McPeake, Director of Environmental Services (R)
D Hunter, Senior Council Solicitor (R)
J Mills, Council Solicitor, Land and Property (R)
J McCarron, Performance Officer (C)
- S Duggan, Civic Support & Committee and Member
Services Officer (C)
- In Attendance:** A Lennox, Mobile Operations Officer (C)
C Thompson, ICT Officer (C)
- Press 1 no. (C) and 1no. (R)
Public 1 no. (R)
- Key:** (C) Attended in the Chamber
(R) Attended Remotely

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

The Director of Corporate Services undertook a roll call.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were recorded for Alderman Fielding.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

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

Purpose of Report

Council agreed Terms of Reference for the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee in June 2023. (Appendix 1, previously circulated)

Corporate Services Directorate, Performance Services and Legal Services all report through the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee

Planning Committee Terms of Reference were approved in August 2023, and it was resolved that approval of future changes to the organisational structure of the Planning Department and associated budget implications will fall within the remit of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

Background

The Corporate Policy and Resources Terms of Reference have been updated in section 2.0 to reflect this update. (Appendix 2, previously circulated)

The future development of the organisational structure for the Corporate Services Directorate, Performance Legal Services and Planning;

Recommendation

It is recommended that the revised Terms of Reference as set out in this report (Appendix 2) are approved and recommend to Council to adopt the Terms of Reference.

Proposed by Alderman Boyle
Seconded by Alderman Coyle and

AGREED – to recommend that the revised Terms of Reference as set out in this report (Appendix 2) are approved and recommend to Council to adopt the Terms of Reference.

4. MINUTES OF CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD TUESDAY 27 JUNE 2023

AGREED – to recommend that the Minutes of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee meeting held Tuesday 27 June 2023 are confirmed as a correct record.

5. PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT 2023/24

Report, previously circulated, was presented by the Performance Officer.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present to Members, for decision, Council's 2023/24 Performance Improvement Plan.

Background

The annual Performance Improvement Plan is usually submitted to Councils in June, but direction from the Department for Communities (DfC) stated that in light of the Local Government Elections in 2023, and subsequent recess and formation of new Councils, that in 2023 the process should be delayed to September.

The Corporate Performance Improvement Plan (the Plan) is a requirement within the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 (the Act). Elected Members agree the annual Plan and progress updates are provided periodically to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and full Council.

The Plan is subject to an annual external audit process by the Local Government Auditor. There is a guidance document specifically written by Central Government that sets out the process and requirements of the Council when developing the Plan and reporting progress.

The Plan includes some of Council's key performance measures, and the targets and outcomes that are applicable to them.

Updates against this Plan will be brought to Committee in November 2022 and then in May 2023.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee recommends to Council the adoption of this 2023/24 Performance Improvement Plan, as set out in Appendix 1, and the Improvement Objectives contained within it.

Councillor Watton sought an update on the filling of Estates Services posts and whether it would be completed by 2024. Councillor Watton queried the requirement for a General Operative to now hold a Driving Licence.

The Performance Officer clarified work was being undertaken with Human Resources and Environmental Services Departments, who were confident the date would be met. The Performance Officer agreed to come back to Councillor Watton on his further query.

Proposed by Councillor Watton
Seconded by Alderman Knight-McQuillan and

AGREED – to recommend to Council the adoption of this 2023/24 Performance Improvement Plan, as set out in Appendix 1, and the Improvement Objectives contained within it.

6. SELF-ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE 2022/23

Report, previously circulated, was presented by the Performance Officer.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present to Members, for information, Council's 2022/23 Self-Assessment of Performance Report.

Background

The Local Government Act (NI) 2014, Part 12, sets out the key responsibilities that each Council has in relation to the Performance Duty. One of these key responsibilities is that in September of each year Council must make arrangements for the publication of its assessment of its performance during a financial year. Please find Council's self-assessment of performance for

2022/23 attached at Appendix 1 (previously circulated).

The key outcomes that are listed and assessed within this document relate to Performance Improvement Objectives, Statutory Indicators and Self-Imposed indicators. Furthermore, Council takes this opportunity to assess the mechanisms and systems that it has to ensure compliance with the Duty including national benchmarking outcomes and the arrangements that we have in place to achieve continuous improvement.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Corporate Policy & Resources Committee approves the request from NILGA to host the NILGA Executive Meeting on Friday 11th August 2023 in The Council Chamber, Civic Headquarters, catering costs to be met by NILGA.

Committee NOTED the report.

7. ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

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

Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to present correspondence/courses regarding Elected Member Development for Members' consideration.

The following correspondence has been received:

- (i) In Professional Development (IPD), dated 15 June 2023 (copy email available)**

Re: CMI Level 7 Award in Strategic Leadership and Management

In the previous Council Term, from February 2023 to May 2023, four Councillors undertook the CMI Level 7 Award in Strategic Leadership and Management.

Correspondence has been received to advise that Alderman Knight-McQuillan, Councillor C McShane, Councillor Schenning and former Councillor Mulholland completed the Award and Certificates of Achievement have been issued.

Recommendation

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

The Director of Corporate Services congratulated the Elected Members.

- (ii) Alison Allen, Chief Executive, NILGA, dated 18 August 2023 (copy attached)**

Re: Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO) Branch in NI Extract

At the NILGA Elected Member Development Network meeting in January 2023, the Network requested that a letter be addressed to Council Chief Executives regarding the establishment of an ADSO branch in NI, supported by a report detailing what an NI branch would mean for councils here. I have enclosed this report for your consideration.

The NILGA Elected Member Development Network seeks endorsement from the eleven councils for the establishment of a branch of ADSO in NI. In doing so, Councils are committing to the following:

- Representation on the National ADSO Board
- Establishing an NI ADSO branch
- Democratic Services Officer ADSO Membership and Membership fee

This will require a commitment from the appropriate democratic services team member to participate in a quarterly meeting that will be aligned to the NILGA Elected Member Development Network schedule of meetings.

Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO) Membership

Membership rate from 1 November 2023 onwards is £55 per person plus VAT for full members, reduced to £30+VAT for part time members (people working under 35 hours per week) with discounts for Authorities who pay subscriptions on behalf of members on the following basis:

- 2 to 5 members – 10% overall reduction
- 6 to 10 members – 15% overall reduction
- 11 members or more – 20% overall reduction

There are 3.5 FTE Democratic Services' Officers within Council.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Corporate Policy and Resources Committee consider the correspondence from NILGA that the Elected Member Development Network seeks endorsement from the eleven councils for the establishment of a branch of ADSO in NI. In doing so, Council is committing to the following and that consideration is also made of allocating the budgetary provision.

- Representation on the National ADSO Board
- Establishing an NI ADSO branch
- Democratic Services Officer ADSO Membership and Membership fee.

**(iii) Allison Allen, Chief Executive, NILGA, dated 31 August 2023 (copy attached)
Re: NILGA Regional Programme for Elected Member Development**

Summary

Accredited provision is available to elected members related to (i) Leadership and (ii) Planning.

Leadership Programme

NILGA is delivering CPD Standards, 8 Module Accredited Leadership Programme for elected members, which aims to develop the practical skills necessary for a strategic understanding of the context within which councillors work (people, place and systems) and the capabilities they need, using relevant models and concepts to help them improve their strategic leadership approach in a local political environment. The Leadership Programme will commence on the 20th October 2023 and will run each month up until May 2024. NILGA seeks nominations based on Council's own determinations.

Planning Programme

The NILGA Local Planning Programme is an ILM (recognised award), 5 Module Programme, commencing on the 17th November 2023 and will convene once every month. NILGA seeks nominations based on Council's own determinations. There is considerable scope for a larger cohort for this programme as NILGA can accommodate up to 40 councillors. Can you please put forward at the earliest possible full council meeting to seek your core nominations (together with any additional potential participants) by the 29th September 2023.

NILGA Accredited Learning provision 2023/2024 – Indicative Costs

NILGA Leadership Programme for Councillor Development 2023/24
Programme Cost £675
Accreditation Cost £540

Indicative Total Cost per participant £1,215

NILGA Local Planning Leadership Programme for Councillors 2023/24
Programme Cost £364
Accreditation Cost £258

Indicative Total Cost per participant £622

Recommendation

It is recommended that Corporate, Policy and Resources Committee consider the correspondence from NILGA regarding nominating to the Leadership Programme, at an indicative cost of £1,215 per participant and Planning Leadership Programme at an indicative cost of £364 per participant (plus Study Trip costs tbc); and that in doing so, consideration is also made of allocating the budgetary provision.

(iv) Annual NI Economic Conference 2023

- Wednesday 6 December 2023, Hilton, Templepatrick
- <https://www.nieconomic.agendani.com/>

Cost: Discounted rate for voluntary/community/councils
£165+ VAT = £198

To date, Alderman Callan and Councillor Holmes have expressed an interest to attend the Conference.

Elected Members wishing to attend should contact Democratic Services.

Recommendation

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

Proposed by Alderman Knight-McQuillan
Seconded by Councillor Huggins and

AGREED – to recommend that Council approve the Elected Member Development report and recommendations therein.

8. COMMUNITY PLANNING UPDATE

For Information report, previously circulated, presented by the Director of Corporate Services.

Introduction

The Community Plan is a long-term plan (from 2017 to 2030) based on sound, robust evidence with a focus on improving social, economic and environmental well-being and contributing to sustainable development.

The Community Plan is a strategic planning tool for the Causeway Coast and Glens area and it is the key over-arching framework for partnerships and initiatives in the Council area. It is not seen as an additional or parallel process to structures already in place.

Phase 1 of the community planning process was the development of a Strategic Framework for the Community Plan. This document was finalised in April 2017 and officially launched in June 2017. It outlines the high-level outcomes identified for the Causeway Coast and Glens area based on an extensive public consultation process and a statistical analysis of the area.

Phase 2 of the community planning process was the development of a comprehensive Delivery Plan in 2018 which put in place 44 practical actions and activities to achieve the outcomes identified in the Strategic Framework. This Delivery Plan was reviewed in 2022 and now contains 34 actions covering four thematic areas (1. Health and Wellbeing; 2. Community/Community Safety; 3. Infrastructure/Environment; 4. Economy/Education/Tourism).

Phase 3 of the community planning process put in place mechanisms to monitor and report on performance against the Community Plan objectives/outcomes. An Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) process is utilised to monitor and report on performance with Action Leads using report cards to provide information on the following areas in relation to each of the actions within the Delivery Plan:

- What did we say we would do?
- How much did we do?
- How well did we do it?
- Who is better off?

Progress on Delivery Plan - Quarterly Summary of Progress Report (copy attached)

The monitoring and reporting process used by the Partnership requires quarterly reports to be submitted by Action Leads and these are then reported on by the four thematic leads to the next Partnership meeting.

A summary report is circulated to all Partnership members on progress in relation to the 34 actions contained in the Delivery Plan and a copy of this summary report for the period April 2023 to June 2023 is attached for your information.

Statement of Progress 2023

The Northern Ireland Act 2014 requires the Community Planning Partnership to produce a Statement of Progress on the Community Plan every two years. The next Statement of Progress is due in November 2023.

Work has begun on compiling the data and information required to produce this report and a draft Statement of Progress report will be prepared for the next meeting of the Partnership on 1st November 2023.

Other Business

Presentation on Homelessness by NIHE – the Community Planning Partnership received a presentation by the NIHE on Homelessness in the Causeway Coast and Glens area and a copy of this presentation has been circulated to all Councillors.

Community Engagement Platform - a Community Engagement Platform event focussing on Health and Well Being took place on 24th February 2023 in the Lodge Hotel, Coleraine. This event took the form of a “Speed dating” event with participants able to spend time talking face-to-face with representatives from the statutory agencies leading out on the Health and Well Being actions in the Delivery Plan.

Seventy-two people attended in total with 56 representing the community and voluntary sector in Causeway Coast and Glens. 86% of participants felt that the event had increased their knowledge of the Health and Wellbeing actions in the Delivery Plan and 92% of participants felt the event had been useful.

Review of Community Planning – In 2019 the Gallagher Report reviewed how community planning was operating across all 11 Councils and the recommendations contained in the report resulted in an implementation plan on what was needed to progress and improve the community planning process.

A Community Planning Working Group (CPWG) was set up to follow through on the implementation Plan and on 18 May 2023 the CPWG wrote to all Community Planning Partnerships requesting that each Partnership:

- (a) Nominate representative(s) to participate in a Community Planning Data Working Group;
- (b) Take forward Actions 3, 24, 29, and 35 of the implementation plan (set out below) within the next 12 months, reporting progress in Autumn 2023 and Spring 2024.

Table circulated within the report.

Causeway Coast and Glens Community Planning Partnership considered the four actions outlined above and were agreed that the requirements of actions, 24, 29 and 35 were already met by the Partnership. Action 3 was formally adopted by the Partnership.

Integrated Care Services NI – The Partnership noted that an approach had been received from the Department of Health offering to provide an update on progress on the implementation of the Integrated Care system to be launched on 1st April 2024. It was agreed that, if appropriate, a special session of the Partnership would be called in September specifically to receive this update.

Committee NOTED the report.

9. ANNUAL REMEMBRANCE SERVICES

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

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to consider and agree Council representation at the annual Remembrance Sunday services across the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area (see draft schedule below).

In its previous term, Council agreed that attendance at Remembrance Services would be as follows:

“The Mayor and Deputy Mayor decide which event they wish to attend on Remembrance Sunday and that the other Elected Members be nominated to represent Council by Party Leads using D’Hondt.”

The above process has been followed with Elected Members attending services in the area of their choice.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor decide which event they wish to attend on Remembrance Sunday and that the other Elected Members be nominated to represent Council by Party Leads using D’Hondt. It is further recommended that this process is applied annually for the four year term of this Council.

Table was circulated within the report.

Proposed by Alderman Knight-McQuillan
Seconded by Councillor Huggins and

AGREED – to recommend that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor decide which event they wish to attend on Remembrance Sunday and that the other Elected Members be nominated to represent Council by Party Leads using D’Hondt. It is further recommended that this process is applied annually for the four year term of this Council.

10. STANDING ORDERS UPDATE

Report, previously circulated, was presented by the Chair.

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to present a previously agreed amendment to Council's Standing Orders, Protocol for the Operation of the Planning Committee, Annex D and proceed to update the document.

Background

At the Planning Committee meeting held 23 August 2023, Committee resolved to amend The Protocol for the Operation of the Planning Committee, (as outlined below) Annex D within Council's Standing Orders, and this took effect from 01 September 2023 (attached Appendix 1).

That Planning Committee amend the Planning Committee Protocol, in order that speaking rights can be requested, if there is a further deferral, even if they have not registered for the initial Planning Committee meeting.

That paragraph 11.10 is reworded as follows

Members of the Planning Committee should be mindful when making decisions that decisions and their reasoning may be appealed to the Planning Appeals Commission with the potential for award of costs against Council or challenged through a judicial review.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council note the amendment to Council's Standing Orders, Protocol for the Operation of the Planning Committee, Annex D and update the document (attached Appendix 1).

Committee NOTED the report.

* **Councillor Chivers joined the meeting at 7.14pm.**

11. MODEL COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE

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

Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to present the final draft of the Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP) for the Local Government sector, attached at Appendices 1 – 3, and to seek Committee's approval to adopt the Model Complaints Handling Procedure and to proceed to personalise the procedure to Council.

Background

For the Council to effectively and consistently handle complaints and enquiries, it is essential that it has a corporate complaints procedure in

place and that this is communicated across all the Council's departments and be made available to the public. The Council's adherence to a formal procedure will protect it in the event of any challenge made by a customer or resident to the Northern Ireland Ombudsman's Office (NIPSO) on how a complaint has been handled.

Council was provided with a report on the Model Complaints Handling Procedure in October 2022 which outlined the process and next steps to develop the MCHP. The Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) issued the final draft in June 2023 following a period of public consultation and the involvement of Local Government Officers on an operational network.

The document is to assist public sector organisations implement a standardised and streamlined approach to managing and learning from complaints. Part 3 of the Public Services Ombudsman Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 (the legislation) provides the legislative basis for NIPSO to publish MCHPs for public bodies within its jurisdiction.

NIPSO's MCHP Parts 1-3 takes account of NIPSO's research report on Complaints Handling in the public sector in Northern Ireland (NI) published in June 2021. The aim of the research was to gain greater understanding of the complaints processes, procedures and practices of a range of public bodies within NIPSO's jurisdiction. Parts 1-3 also reflect NIPSO's Complaints Handling Statement of Principles approved by the NI Assembly on 19 January 2022. These documents take account of stakeholder views expressed through NIPSO's public consultation from June - September 2021.

The purpose of the MCHP is to provide a standardised approach to dealing with customer complaints across the public sector in NI. In particular, the aim is to implement a standardised and consistent process for customers to follow which makes it simpler to complain, ensures staff and customer confidence in complaints handling and encourages public bodies to make best use of lessons learned from complaints.

The MCHP applies to all public bodies within NIPSO's jurisdiction as listed in Schedule 3 of the NIPSO Act 2016. This includes Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council. Once fully implemented all organisations delivering public services in NI will be required to have in place a complaint handling procedure which meets the requirements of the MCHP relevant to that public sector. NIPSO will publish a MCHP for public sectors which complies with its complaints handling Statement of Principles.

Part 2, the Organisational Guide, is intended to be adopted as an internal procedural document. It provides staff with clear operational guidance on how to implement the MCHP. It is important that the information contained in NIPSO's MCHP Parts 1-3 is adopted in full by the Council to ensure it meets NIPSO's MCHP test of compliance.

NIPSO recognises the importance of providing scope to adapt the MCHP to reflect, for example, the organisation's structure, operational processes and corporate style. Therefore, further in this Organisational Guide, areas/text

are highlighted in yellow italics to provide such scope. These areas will be adapted by the Council to provide additional guidance or reference to local processes.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the attached Model Complaints Handling Procedure is adopted and that it is personalised to the Council.

Proposed by Councillor Watton
Seconded by Councillor McCully and

AGREED – to recommend that the attached Model Complaints Handling Procedure is adopted and that it is personalised to the Council.

12. CONFERENCES

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

(i) NILGA – Audit Committee training

Date: Friday 6th October 2023, 12.30 – 2pm
Venue: Digital/Online
Delegate Fee: Free

In the interests of good governance, financial sustainability and risk management, council audit committees play a vital role. Councillors meaningful participation, oversight and scrutiny on these committees are key to ensuring statutory obligations are met and challenges anticipated and mitigated against.

To fulfil this role, audit committee councillors need to scrutinise and challenge pertinent matters contained in numerous reports, which are presented to the Audit Committee. This involves having a good knowledge and grasp of the issues and feeling confident to scrutinise and challenge where needed.

In collaboration with the Local Government Auditor, NILGA is coordinating a lunchtime session for councillors involved in audit committees.

Delivery of this session will be interactive, allowing councillors to learn by asking questions regularly and recounting their own experiences. Learning and discussions will be relevant to the councillor unique role and participation aims to improve understanding of what audit committee oversight and scrutiny is, why it's important, how to do it and what support is available.

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

Interested members should contact Fiona Douglas: f.douglas@nilga.org

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council consider the Conference report.

Committee NOTED the report.

13. CONSULTATIONS

There were no Consultations.

14. CORRESPONDENCE

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

Purpose of Report

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

The following correspondence has been received:

(i) Karen Smyth, Head of Policy & Governance, NILGA, dated 14 August 2023

At the NILGA Executive Committee NILGA on 23rd June, it was agreed to form a Strategic Policy Network. A Terms of Reference for this Network (attached) was agreed by the NILGA Executive on 11th August 2023.

Council nominations are therefore now being sought, to complement the NILGA nominated Chair and Vice Chair. No specific party membership is required for these nominations.

NILGA is seeking one (1) elected member from each council (who may or may not be one of its NILGA Full members) to participate in the NILGA Strategic Policy Network. This Network will meet on a bi-monthly basis, and it is anticipated that the first meeting will be either 19th or 26th September 2023, depending on member availability.

Council NOTED the above correspondence at its meeting held Tuesday 5 September 2023.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Corporate Policy and Resources Committee consider nominating one Elected Member to participate in the NILGA Strategic Policy Network.

During consideration, Committee Members stated support for the nomination, sought clarification on whether the proposed meeting had taken place and whether Council had previously nominated to the NILGA Strategic Policy Network.

The Chair summarised, the Director of Corporate Services could update Committee on the matters raised, via email.

AGREED – to recommend that consideration is deferred to the Council meeting, following clarification of the matters raised.

(ii) Cahir Hughes, Head of Electoral Commission Northern Ireland, dated 13 September 2023

On 13 September 2023, the Electoral Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) published its report on the May 2023 local elections in Northern Ireland.

Overall, it found voters in Northern Ireland continue to have positive views about how elections are run in Northern Ireland, with satisfaction over the registration and voting processes remaining high. However, the Digital Registration Number (DRN) continues to be a barrier to voters. The report found over 5,000 postal or proxy vote applications were rejected due to a missing DRN.

ECNI continues to call on the UK Government to urgently review the operation of the DRN in Northern Ireland to ensure barriers are removed while also maintaining the integrity of the absent voting process.

The report also found that the capacity and resilience of election administrators, both in Northern Ireland and across the UK, remains a significant challenge. Recruiting and retaining experienced polling station and count staff continues to be difficult. Alongside this, these were the first elections with changes introduced from the Elections Act came into force, and further significant administration changes are expected ahead of the next set of elections.

It is vital the UK Government carefully considers whether the necessary time and resources are available before making final decisions about implementing the remaining Elections Act changes.

ECNI looks forward to hearing from the Council on these matters and would welcome the opportunity to discuss this research, and our recommendations, in further detail at a future meeting.

Committee NOTED the correspondence.

(iii) Cahir Hughes, Head of Electoral Commission Northern Ireland, dated 18 September 2023

On 18 September 2023, the Electoral Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) published its report on the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers.

The ECNI analysis shows substantial improvements have been made to the quality of the electoral registers in Northern Ireland following the last canvass of electors in 2021.

However, almost 300,000 people in Northern Ireland are still either incorrectly registered to vote or missing completely. In particular, young people, private renters, and those who have recently changed address continue to be less

likely to be correctly registered to vote.

This means that almost one fifth (17%) of the eligible voting population in Northern Ireland may not be able to vote if an election was called now.

The study of the 2022 registers found that in Northern Ireland:

- The parliamentary register was 84% complete, and 86% accurate.
- The local government register was 83% complete, and 86% accurate.

Although the improvements in the accuracy and completeness of the 2022 registers highlighted in this research are the result of the 2021 canvass, we have previously seen subsequent declines between canvasses when the continuous registration system is operating.

The registration system continues to struggle to capture population movement in the period between each canvass, and the canvass process itself requires the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland to contact and receive a response from all eligible electors, even if they were registered before the canvass and their details had not changed.

It is therefore unlikely that levels of accuracy and completeness – and therefore the number of eligible people able to have their say at elections – will significantly improve without significant changes to the electoral registration system.

The Electoral Commission is calling on the UK Government to create clear legal gateways for government departments and public bodies to share data on potentially eligible voters Ireland to further improve accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers. Such reform would enable the Chief Electoral Officer to register voters directly, or to send them invitations to register.

The Commission would be pleased to meet with Council to discuss its proposals for reform, should Council find that helpful.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Corporate Policy & Resources Committee considers the correspondence.

Councillor Watton stated one fifth of the eligible population are not registered to vote, and this was a dire situation.

The Chair concurred, the process to get registered to vote required changes, to be streamlined.

Committee NOTED the correspondence.

(iv) Anthony Carleton, Director, Local Government & Housing Regulation, dated 21 September 2023 - Council Remote/Hybrid Meetings

Addendum previously circulated.

Extract

Section 78 (local authority meetings) of the Coronavirus Act 2020 contained provision to provide councils with the flexibility to hold meetings by remote or hybrid means during the Coronavirus emergency. This included an enabling power for the Department to make subordinate legislation regarding remote/hybrid meetings and the Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 were subsequently made and came into operation on 1 May 2020.

The expiry date of section 78 (Local Authority Meetings) of the Coronavirus Act 2020 was previously extended to 24 September 2023, thus allowing councils to continue to hold remote/hybrid meetings under the Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council Meetings) Regulations (NI) 2020. This was intended as an interim measure until such time as proposals for more permanent legislation, made under section 2 of the Local Government (Meetings and Performance) Act (NI) 2021, could be considered by a Communities Minister. In the absence of the Assembly, it has not been possible to make permanent appropriate regulations. The Coronavirus Act 2020 (Extension of Provisions Relating to Local Authority Meetings) (No. 3) Order (Northern Ireland) 2023 was made on 21 September 2023.

This extension order has been made to extend section 78 of the Coronavirus Act for a further 6 months until 24 March 2024 which will allow councils to continue to offer a remote/hybrid facility for meetings.

Committee NOTED the correspondence.

- (v) **James McCorkell, Lead Volunteer, For Limavady Outreach Centre/Fmani (Fibromyalgia Awareness)**, email dated 1 August 2023

Addendum previously circulated.

Extract

On behalf of Limavady Outreach Centre and our lead charity Fibromyalgia Awareness NI, I would like to explore the possibility of taking the WW1 beacon on loan from Council permanently.

We are in the process of creating a town centre garden which will be accessible via Main Street and Central Carpark and the beacon would be a perfect addition to the garden and for those using the space.

Ideally we would like to use the beacon specifically to mark certain dates. For example, September is International Pain Awareness month and we will be running a series of events around this. The beacon could be used to be lit to launch these events. It would come under our own public liability insurance.

Recommendation

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

Alderman Boyle stated, given that it was Limavady Outreach Centre and a Charity supporting people with Fibromyalgia, would everyone feel okay about a WW1 Item to be in the garden. Alderman Boyle queried whether Council would need to consider an EQIA.

Alderman Knight-McQuillan advised Groups had requested the use of the Beacons over the years and it had been agreed at the time, the Beacons could be loaned for events. Alderman Knight-McQuillan stated that, if given away permanently, Council do not have that option for organisation who request them.

The Director of Corporate Services advised Council had purchased four Beacons, one was out of use, and three remained. She stated that, if Committee was minded, a report could be brought back to look at the considerations, that would include disposal at less than best value via Department for Communities processes.

Proposed by Alderman Knight-McQuillan
Seconded by Councillor Storey and

AGREED - to recommend that Council bring a report back on the request to loan a WW1 Beacon permanently, including detail of the previous decision of Council, prior to agreeing to the request.

Councillor Storey stated disappointment in the comments from Alderman Boyle on an Equality Assessment on WW1, he stated when all backgrounds gave a life.

15. MATTERS FOR REPORTING TO PARTNERSHIP PANEL

There were no matters for reporting to Partnership Panel.

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN COMMITTEE'

Proposed by Alderman Boyle
Seconded by Alderman Knight-McQuillan and

AGREED – to recommend that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee move 'In Committee'.

* **Press/Public were disconnected from the meeting at 7.34PM.**

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

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

16. INSURANCE REPORT

For information, confidential report, previously circulated, presented by the Director of Corporate Services.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Elected Members with an update in relation to insurance.

Councillor Watton sought clarification on Councillors Code of Conduct Legal Expenses (Appendix 1), regarding premium paid and Policy Excesses in Section 4, also under Councillors Code of Conduct – Legal Protection.

The Director of Corporate Services clarified the terminology.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee recommends to Council that the information be noted.

Committee NOTED the report.

17. LEGAL SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN

Confidential report, previously circulated, was presented by Senior Council Solicitor.

Purpose of Report

The Purpose of this report is to seek Elected Members' approval for the Legal Services Business Plan to include:

- To define Legal Services areas of practice
- To agree a Legal Services Business Plan
- To formalise the process to engage external legal services
- To update Service Level Agreements (SLAs)

This report has been prepared in line with recommendations proposed during an internal audit of Legal Services in December 2021, presented to the Audit Committee of 8th December 2021 and ratified by full Council on 4th January 2022.

In response to a question from Councillor Storey, Senior Council Solicitor advised a previous procurement exercise had not been carried out.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee proposes the acceptance of the Legal Services business plan to the Council.

Proposed by Alderman Knight-McQuillan
Seconded by Councillor Storey and

AGREED – to recommend that Council proposes the acceptance of the Legal Services business plan.

18. LEGAL SERVICES - SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT (SLA) WITH DERRY CITY AND STRABANE DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR EXTERNAL LEGAL ADVICE

Confidential report, previously circulated, presented by the Senior Council Solicitor.

Purpose of Report

The Purpose of this report is to seek Elected Members' approval for the updated Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Derry and Strabane District Council Legal Services for the provision of external legal advice.

This report has been prepared in line with recommendations made during an internal audit of Legal Services in December 2021, presented to the Audit Committee of 8th December 2021 and ratified by full Council on 4th January 2022.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee proposes the acceptance of the Service Level Agreement for a period of two years from 1st April 2023, to the Council.

Proposed by Councillor C Archibald
Seconded by Alderman Knight-McQuillan and

AGREED – to recommend that Council proposes the acceptance of the Service Level Agreement for a period of two years from 1st April 2023.

19. POPULATION OF THE ORGANISATION STRUCTURE PROGRESS REPORT

For information, confidential report, previously circulated, presented by the Director of Corporate Services.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a Progress report on the implementation of the locally agreed terms and conditions and population of the Organisation Structures from the Leisure and Development and Environmental Services Directorates.

Councillor McShane referred to staff from the Glens going to Coleraine, Limavady and Ballymoney and queried why Council struggled to fill posts.

The Director of Environmental Services clarified the posts were vacant however, currently filled with Agency Staff, Council were due to have all posts filled.

Alderman Knight-McQuillan stated the format of the report required another explanatory column and it was good to see the numbers coming down.

Councillor Watton sought clarification a Harbour Master post had been reduced by one and stated dissatisfaction with the recruitment process. Councillor Watton further stated he had voted against a recent report regarding Coleraine Marina.

The Director of Environmental Services clarified it was prudent for one post to remain as Agency, in the event Coleraine Marina asset would be declared surplus.

Recommendation

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

Committee NOTED the report.

20. CORPORATE SERVICES MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS MONTH 4

For information, confidential report, previously circulated, presented by the Director of Corporate Services.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report to provide Members with information on the current financial position of Corporate Services Directorate at the end of Period 4.

Recommendation

That Council note the information presented.

Committee NOTED the report.

21. MINUTES OF THE LAND AND PROPERTY SUB COMMITTEE MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY 6 SEPTEMBER 2023

Copy minutes previously circulated, presented by the Director of Environmental Services.

(i) Approval of the Adoption of the Minutes

Proposed by Alderman Knight McQuillan
Seconded by Councillor McCully and

AGREED – to recommend that Council adopt the Minutes of the Land and Property Sub Committee meeting held Wednesday 6 September 2023 and recommendations therein approved.

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

(i) Limepark (Councillor Watson)

'For council to take on the work that is needed to secure the entrance of Limepark. Adding a pedestrian entrance, removing the cattle grid and widening the gateway to allow traffic to clear quicker to eliminate health and safety concerns'.

Proposed by Councillor Watson
Seconded by Councillor McShane

- To recommend that council to take on the work that is needed to secure the entrance of Limepark. Adding a pedestrian entrance, removing the cattle grid and widening the gateway to allow traffic to clear quicker to eliminate health and safety concerns'.

Councillor Watson stated the Armoy Community Association had now carried out the work required to remove the cattle grid, leaving the widening of the gateway and adding pedestrian access. Councillor Watson detailed the events held at Lime Park which were very well attended and all services provided by volunteers. Councillor Watson stated concern for traffic and health and safety; she advised the Association did not have the funding to carry out the work and asked Council to undertake the work.

Councillor McShane stated she had witnessed the issues for pedestrians and traffic on an approach and exit to the entrance. Councillor McShane stated Armoy historically not received the same investment as other rural communities have had, Limepark Park Run had started a year ago and the, the community had given something back, providing recreational activities Council had not provided. Councillor McShane stated Council should support the work, even if it would mean breaking precedent, or, breaking the protocol Council normally does.

The Director of Environmental Services clarified the area was leased to the Association and maintenance and works associated was the responsibility of the Association themselves. He advised the Association was granted permission to remove the cattle grid. The Director of Environmental Services made Committee aware Council would go against the Lease to do works on leased land and this would set a precedent. He advised there was potential grant aid to undertake Capital Works, for example from Sport NI and Awards For All, and they could be directed towards this.

Alderman Knight-McQuillan advised the Lease had already been agreed and anything else would contravene the Lease. Alderman Knight-McQuillan stated the AORB was a motion, rather than asking a question, that decisions on AORB's could be in breach of Standing Orders.

Councillor McShane stated the Item was placed on the Council Agenda and referred to Committee and the correct process. Councillor McShane stated Council had a Capital Infrastructure Fund which would have been available but was removed in 2019 and was fulfilling a need for Council.

In response to Councillor McShane, Councillor Storey welcomed the admission Armoy was neglected by Moyle Council. Councillor Storey referred to the issues of disposal of land, Audits etc, he stated to commit Capital Spend on an AORB without knowing what it was, to do something contrary to what had been agreed on a lease; he stated he would bring Councillors back to the Law of First Principles and Council would be required to undertake the process in the right way.

The Chair summarised it would be prudent the matter be deferred to the relevant DEA Members and Officers to speak with Limepark residents and outline the Council process and take forward through the relevant Committees eg Land and Property and follow due process.

AGREED – to recommend that Council approve the process as outlined by the Chair, Councillor Nicholl above.

MOTION TO PROCEED ‘IN PUBLIC’

Proposed by Alderman Boyle
Seconded by Alderman Knight-McQuillan and

RESOLVED – that Council move ‘*In Public*’

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

The meeting concluded at 8.09pm.

Chair