

**CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY 20 FEBRUARY 2018**

No	Item	Summary of key Recommendations
2	Declarations of Interest	<i>Nil</i>
3	Minutes of Meeting held Monday 22 January 2018	Information
4	Meeting of Centenary End of Great War Working Group held 6 February 2018	Approve
5	Loan Repayment	Approve
6	Notes of Elected Member Development Charter held Wednesday 31 January 2018	Confirmed
7	Prompt Payment Statistics	Information
8	Conferences	<i>Nil</i>
9	Correspondence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NILGA Response to the Briefing on Budgetary Outlook 2018-2020 • NILGA Code of Conduct Refresher Information Session 	Agreed
10	Matters for Reporting to Partnership Panel – Local Government Side	<i>Nil</i>
11	Debt Management	Information
12	Minutes of the Meeting of the Land and Property Sub-Committee held Wednesday 7 February 2018	

	Matters Arising 12.1 (Ref 10/18) Use of Council Land at the Promenade Castlerock to park the Action Cancer Big Bus on 1 st & 2 nd March 2018 / 26 th April 2018	<i>Delegate Authority to Officers on routine matters similar to the Action Cancer Bug Bus.</i>
	12.2 Correspondence – North West Hotel Development, lands at Ballyreagh Road, Portstewart – Request for further Easement (Minute Item 6.1)	<i>Defer to next Land and Property Sub Committee meeting</i>
	12.3 Correspondence – North West Hotel Development, Lands at Ballyreagh Road, Portstewart, NIE Access Request (Minute Item 6.2)	<i>Defer to next Land and Property Sub Committee meeting</i>
	12.4 Confirmation of the Minutes	<i>Confirmed; including 12.1, 12.2 and 12.3 above</i>
13	Minutes of the Efficiency Sub-Committee held 14 February 2018	<i>Confirmed</i>
14	Citizens' Newsletter – Spring 2018 Edition	<i>Information Amendments submitted</i>

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE
CORPORATE POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC HEADQUARTERS
TUESDAY 20 FEBRUARY 2018 AT 7:00 PM**

- In the Chair** : Councillor Knight-McQuillan
- Present** : Alderman Hillis;
Councillors Baird, Beattie, Blair, Clarke, Deighan,
Duddy, Holmes, Knight-McQuillan, McCorkell,
McLaughlin, Quigley and Wilson
- Non Committee Members Present** : Councillor P McShane
- Officers Present** : M Quinn, Director, Corporate Services
D Wright, Chief Finance Officer
S Duggan, Committee and Member Services Officer
- In Attendance** : Councillor Watton
Press (1 No.)
Public (1 No.)

SUBSTITUTION

In accordance with Standing Order 22 (4), Alderman Hillis gave notice of the substitution of Councillor McCandless with Councillor Holmes.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were recorded for Councillors McCandless, C McShane and Nicholl.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD MONDAY 22 JANUARY 2018

The Chair advised the Minutes of the above meeting would be presented to the 27th February 2018 Council Meeting.

4. MEETING OF CENTENARY END OF GREAT WAR WORKING GROUP HELD 6 FEBRUARY 2018

Report of Meeting No 3. held 6th February 2018 was circulated.

The Working Group set up by Council to plan and co-ordinate the Borough's participation in commemorating the end of the Great War met on 6th February 2018. The notes of the meeting were circulated.

The previously agreed Terms of Reference for the Working Group task the Group with recommending a programme of local events in the Borough to commemorate the Centenary and to recommend a level of budgetary provision for the delivery of events.

The 4 Royal British Legions (Ballymoney, Coleraine, Ballycastle and Limavady) presented an outline programme of events including costs, where available, at the meeting which are included with the notes of the meeting.

The costs provided were in relation to those which are quantifiable at this stage but do not include administration associated with delivery of the events.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that

- (i) Council considers the draft programme of events and budgetary provision for delivery.

Proposed by Councillor Duddy

Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

AGREED – to recommend that Council approve the draft programme of events and budgetary provision for delivery.

5. LOAN REPAYMENT

Report circulated.

Council currently manages a substantial debt portfolio made up of a variety of loans taken out over time to finance numerous capital projects across the borough.

At 1st February 2018 the total value outstanding on the loans portfolio was £69.09m. The annual cost of financing this debt is currently budgeted at £9.67m which equates to approximately one sixth of

councils annual expenditure. The majority of these loans are at a fixed rate for a fixed term through the Government Accounts Branch however Council does have a number with commercial banks. The commercial loans are for agreed terms but three loans with Danske Bank now have a break point whereby they can be repaid in full without any penalty at 3 April 2018.

The three loans are set out below in terms of outstanding principal at 3 April:

Loan 1	£311,727
Loan 2	£948,014
Loan 3	<u>£1,198,508</u>
Total	£2,458,249

The total cost of financing these 3 loans currently amounts to approximately £376k per annum, this figure being included in the annual budgeted Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and interest figure in the rates estimates. The current annual interest on these loans amounts to approximately £61.5k. The loans have a remaining life varying from 20 years to 30 years, it is estimated that over the remaining life of these loans the interest cost would be approximately £867k (at current interest rates).

Council's reserves as at 31 March 2017 were £7,875,812 equating to 15.35% of the Net Operating Expenditure.

Department for Communities (DfC) guidance indicates that the General Fund Level should be between 5% and 7.5% (£2,564,615 and £3,846,921) of the Net Operating Expenditure.

In order to repay these loans at 3 April there would be a reduction in Council's reserves amounting to £2,458,249 due to the fact that the principal of the loan will no longer be charged to reserves on annual basis by way of the MRP charge over the remaining lives of the loans. The effect of this would be to reduce reserves to £5,417,563 which is still well in excess of the DfC prescribed limits.

There would be an annual benefit to the ratepayer by virtue of a reduction of approximately £376k in the MRP and interest figure which is included in the rates estimates.

In terms of cash Council does have the necessary funds to make the repayment on 3 April, with interest rates currently low the return on investments is also low therefore the net benefit will be in council's favour with the interest that could be earned on these funds being less

than the interest payable on the loans. Going forward these loans are variable rate therefore the interest cost will rise as interest rates do thereby negating any increase in investment income at the same time. This would not be the case for other council loans which are at a fixed rate for the term of the loan therefore a rise in interest rates would increase income without the associated increase in the cost of interest being paid.

It is recommended that council approve the repayment of the loans as detailed on 3rd April 2018.

Proposed by Councillor Holmes
Seconded by Councillor Deighan and

AGREED – to recommend that Council approve the repayment of the loans as detailed on 3rd April 2018.

6. NOTES OF ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT CHARTER HELD WEDNESDAY 31 JANUARY 2018

Notes circulated.

AGREED – to recommend that Council confirm the Notes of the Elected Member Development Charter held Wednesday 31 January 2018, and approve the recommendations therein.

7. PROMPT PAYMENT STATISTICS

Information report circulated.

Department for communities (DfC) requires Council to record and publish statistics regarding the payment of supplier invoices with specific reference to two distinct measures namely invoices paid within 10 working days and invoices paid within 30 calendar days.

These figures are published on a quarterly basis by DfC with Councils required to do likewise. The purpose of the statistics is to encourage Councils to support businesses especially those local and/or small businesses for whom cash flow is of vital importance to their continued survival. In addition as part of Council's performance improvement plan for this year the payment of our suppliers has been identified as one of the performance improvement objectives with a target of 90% of suppliers being paid within 30 calendar days. The tables below detail Council's performance since April 2015 the latest data for quarters 1, 2

and 3 of 2017/18 being up to and including December 2017. The Chief Finance Officer was pleased to report that Council are beginning to recover the performance downturn seen in the earlier part of this financial year, this could be attributed to the staff moves now being complete and systems beginning to settle into place and therefore this trend should continue as the year progresses.

Whilst the improved performance in comparison to previous periods is welcome council officers continue to seek improvements to overcome these difficulties and ultimately improve the performance. As previously reported finance staff are continuing with the setting up of electronic systems which will remove the need to have invoices transported around all of our offices for verification and authorisation. It is anticipated that a pilot implementation of this will take place in November with a full roll-out in time for the new financial year, the timescale may seem long however it must be remembered that only one of the four legacy councils used the electronic system that is the basis for what is required therefore this requires and extensive programming, implementation, roll-out and training before it will become fully operational. The electronic system will produce significant improvements in the payment figures.

8. CONFERENCES

Nil.

9. CORRESPONDENCE

Information report circulated.

- Final NILGA Response to the Briefing on Budgetary Outlook 2018-2020;
- NILGA - Code of Conduct Refresher Information Session for Councillors Facilitated by the Local Government Commissioner for Standards.

AGREED – to recommend that Council note the Correspondence Schedule.

10. MATTERS FOR REPORTING TO PARTNERSHIP PANEL – LOCAL GOVERNMENT SIDE

There were no matters for reporting to the Partnership Panel.

Proposed by Councillor Holmes
Seconded by Alderman Hillis and

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN COMMITTEE'

Proposed by Councillor Holmes
Seconded by Alderman Hillis and

AGREED - that the Committee proceeds to conduct the following business 'In Committee'.

* **Press/Public left the meeting at 7.11PM.**

11. DEBT MANAGEMENT

Confidential information report circulated.

Since the implementation of the new debt management policy finance staff have applied the workings of that policy to Council's debt. As a result there are three outcomes:

- 1 Debt is recovered
- 2 Legal proceedings commenced
- 3 Debt written off.

The report set out an update on several debts.

A number of legal actions notices have been issued to individuals/organisations.

In accordance with Councils debt management policy debts under £1,000 which the Chief Finance Officer has the authority to write-off were reported. There was one debt listed this month.

In accordance with Councils debt management policy the Chief Finance Officer would seek Council approval to write off any debts in excess of £1,000. There were no such debts for recommendation this month.

Councillor Holmes suggested the Chief Finance Officer also bring a report to committee on 30 day, 60 day, 90 day and 120 day debtors. The Officer confirmed a future report would be brought.

12. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LAND AND PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE HELD WEDNESDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2018

Matters Arising

12.1 (Ref 10/18) Use of Council Land at the Promenade Castlerock to park the Action Cancer Big Bus on 1st & 2nd March 2018 / 26th April 2018 (minute Item 3.5)

Councillor Duddy considered the sub-committee had also agreed to Delegate Authority to Officers on routine matters similar to the Action Cancer Big Bus.

AGREED – to recommend that Council Delegate Authority to Officers on routine matters similar to the Action Cancer Big Bus.

12.2 Correspondence – North West Hotel Development, lands at Ballyreagh Road, Portstewart – Request for further Easement (Minute Item 6.1)

The Director of Corporate Services updated committee and advised clarification on the outstanding matters had not yet been received.

AGREED – to recommend that Council defer the matter to the next Land and Property Sub Committee, pending clarification on outstanding matters.

12.3 Correspondence - North West Hotel Development, Lands at Ballyreagh road, Portstewart – NIE Access Request (Minute Item 6.2)

The Director of Corporate Services update committee and advised clarification on the outstanding matters had not yet been received.

AGREED – to recommend that Council defer the matter to the next Land and Property Sub Committee, pending clarification on outstanding matters.

12.3 Confirmation of the Minutes

Proposed by Councillor Duddy
Seconded by Councillor Quigley and

AGREED – to recommend that Council confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Land and Property Sub Committee held Wednesday 7 February 2018 and recommendations therein; including Items 12.1, 12.2 and 12.3 above.

13. MINUTES OF THE EFFICIENCY SUB-COMMITTEE HELD 14 FEBRUARY 2018

AGREED – to recommend that Council confirm the Minutes of the Efficiency Sub Committee held 14 February 2018 and approve the recommendations therein.

14. CITIZENS' NEWSLETTER – SPRING 2018 EDITION

Confidential report circulated.

Council agreed in October 2016 to 'produce two news sheets annually to be distributed to each household in the Borough'. The first edition of the newsletter was distributed in spring 2017, followed by the second edition in autumn 2017. At the request of Members, the pagination of the second edition was increased from 8 pages to 12 pages.

Preparation is now underway for the Spring 2018 edition (draft circulated at the meeting), scheduled for distribution end of March 2018.

Following feedback from Elected Members and Council Directorates, the 12-page newsletter will feature information and articles including:

- A welcome message from the Mayor
- Contact details for Council offices and other useful numbers
- Recycling, including the planned brown bin roll out
- Food waste initiatives
- Upcoming events
- Council members' contact details
- Planning
- Performance improvement
- Local development plan
- Business support opportunities
- Community Planning Update
- Zomba Action Project

The concept of the citizen's newsletter has been well received by rate-payers, and across Council directorates who recognise it is an efficient method of communicating with residents and ratepayers.

It provides an avenue of engagement and reach for departments who may otherwise have to explore other communication options, including paid-for advertising or individual leaflet drops with their own associated design, print and distribution costs.

It allows the ratepayer to gain a rounded overview of Council business, highlighting its various strands and showcasing how Council is working for the benefit of the ratepayer.

Distributing the newsletter to each household in the Borough has presented challenges due to the extensive geographical area and the large Council boundary which has a border with three other council areas.

The cost of the first two editions was £17,998.82 and £16,291.24 respectively broken down as follows:

Edition 1 (63,000 copies, 8 pages)
Design and print: £4340 + £125 art work
Delivery Cost: £13,533.28

Edition 2 (61,500 copies, 12 pages)
Design and print: £6200 + £140 art work
Delivery Cost: £9951.24

As part of the review, the Spring edition of the newsletter will contain an option for rate-payers to receive the newsletter digitally or not at all. Officers have also been working with distribution providers to refine the data in terms of postcodes to ensure efficient delivery in boundary areas.

Elected Members put forward amendments to the draft copy circulated:

- Page 2 the word “copy” had been omitted;
- Front Cover to feature a scenic image of the Borough;
- Page 8, remove the *pence*;
- Highlight the ‘Get In Touch’ feature more visibly;
- Some features to reduce the word count;
- Ensure residents are not omitted ‘by default’ of not availing of the ‘*Getting in Touch*’.

The Director of Corporate Services also agreed to bring a report back on offsetting the costs with advertising.

MOTION TO PROCEED ‘IN PUBLIC’

Proposed by Councillor McCorkell
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

AGREED - that the Committee proceeds to conduct the following business 'In Public'.

There being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 7:37 PM.

Chair