



COUNCIL MEETING TUESDAY 12 MAY 2020

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No	Item	Decisions
1.	The Mayor's Business	Received
2.	Apologies	Councillors Dallat O'Driscoll, McGlinchey and McMullan
3.	Declarations of Members' Interests	
	Community Development Support Grants	Alderman Fielding, Councillors Anderson, Beattie, Chivers, McKillop MA, McQuillan, Mulholland, Quigley and Schenning
	Community Festivals Fund	Alderman Fielding, Councillors Baird, McAuley, McKillop MA, McQuillan, Mulholland, Schenning and Wallace
	Social Inclusion Grant	Alderman Fielding, Councillors McQuillan, Quigley and Schenning
4.	Verbal Update from Chief Executive	Received
	IN COMMITTEE (ITEMS 5 – 8 INCLUSIVE)	
5.	Corporate Policy and Resources Committee Report	
5.1	Financial Impact of COVID 19	Information

5.2	Financial Impact of COVID 19 on Corporate Services Directorate, Planning Services, and Performance as at 8 th May 2020	Information
5.3	Land and Property Section 83: protection from forfeiture of Business Tenancies for non-payment of rent – Deferral of Rent Payments	Agreed - that Council grants a temporary payment holiday to tenants, if required, with guidance on the letter provided by Legal services.
6.	Environmental Services Committee Report	
6.1	Update on Environmental Services	Noted
6.2	Reopening of Household Recycling Centres	Agreed - that householders now be allowed to deposit garden waste and cardboard, in addition to excess waste normally deposited in the black bin, at household recycling centres
7.	Leisure and Development Committee Report	
7.1	Tourism and Recreation Event Grant Programme	Agreed - to defer a decision on the Tourism and Event Grant Programme and for the Funding Unit and Director of Leisure and Development to prepare a report for presentation to Council Meeting at its next meeting in June providing detail on potential revised criteria, eligible funding and costs

7.2	Community Development Grants – Allocation of Funding	
	Community Development Support Grant (CDSG)	<i>Agreed – Council to approve awards for funding through Community Development Support Grant, as detailed in the report annexe, subject to the necessary funding being available from DfC</i>
	Social Inclusion Grant (SIG)	<i>Agreed - Council to approve awards for funding through Social Inclusion Grant, as detailed in the report annexe, subject to the necessary funding being available from DfC</i>
	Community Festival Fund	<i>Agreed - Council to approve awards for funding through Community Development Support Grant, as detailed in the report annexe, subject to the necessary funding being available from DfC</i>
7.3	Delivery Options for Tourism and Recreation Council Manged Events (July to September 2020)	<i>Agreed - that Council considering the unprecedented circumstances and the challenges of forward planning at this stage does not proceed with Council Managed</i>

		<i>Events 2020 July to September as outlined in Option 2 in the report to Council</i>
7.4	Leisure and Development Summary Position (Staff and Finance) as a Consequence of Covid 19 Pandemic	<i>Agreed - that, subject to the agreement, from the individual member of staff, Council proceeds to furlough 61 eligible employees, who are normally employed in a facility or service area that has ceased to operate, is unable to work from home and is not redeployed to another function within Council at 80% of their salary</i>
8.	NI Planning IT System – Distribution of Local Government Costs	<i>Agreed - that Council agrees to sign up to the Full Business Case and support the preferred option set out in the FBC and contribute up to £1.7m over 20 years towards the new Regional IT System</i>

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD REMOTELY ON
TUESDAY 12 MAY 2020 AT 7:00PM**

In the Chair : The Mayor, Councillor Bateson

Members Present : Alderman Boyle, Duddy, Fielding, Finlay, Hillis,
McCorkell, McKeown, McKillop S and Robinson

Councillors Anderson, Baird, Beattie, Callan, Chivers,
Holmes, Hunter, Knight-McQuillan, McAuley, McCandless,
McCaw, McGurk, MA McKillop, C McLaughlin, McLean,
McQuillan, McShane C, McShane P, Mulholland, Nicholl,
Peacock, Quigley, Schenning, Scott, Wallace, Watton and
Wilson

Officers Present : D Jackson, Chief Executive
M Quinn, Director of Corporate Services
A McPeake, Director of Environmental Services
R Baker, Director of Leisure & Development
D Hunter, Council Solicitor
J Mills, Council Solicitor
P Donaghy, Democratic Services and Central Services
Manager
P McColgan, Head of ICT
J Winfield, ICT Operations Officer
G Dunlop, ICT Officer
D Allen, Committee & Member Services Officer
S Duggan, Committee & Member Services Officer

1. THE MAYOR'S BUSINESS

The Mayor opened the meeting and extended thanks on behalf of all Elected Members to Council staff working under difficult circumstances to provide critical services to ratepayers; to those within waste collection, Registration, those at the Community Coordination Hub helping the most vulnerable and to Senior Officers and all staff working tirelessly over the last number of weeks.

The Mayor thanked Elected Members for their work within local communities and also offered gratitude to community organisations supporting those in most need.

The Mayor offered sincere condolences to the bereaved family of John Dallat, MLA and former Mayor and Councillor on Coleraine Borough

Council. He extended sympathy to Mr Dallat's daughter, Councillor Helena Dallat O'Driscoll.

The Mayor also offered sincere condolences to Councillor Oliver McMullan and family on the passing of his daughter, Tierna.

The Mayor welcomed Councillor McGurk to the meeting, following her period of maternity leave.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were recorded for Councillors Dallat O'Driscoll, McGlinchey and McMullan.

3. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Declarations of Interest were recorded by the following Elected Members in the Leisure and Development Report – Community Development Grants - Allocation of funding.

The Members did not leave the meeting during the discussion.

- Community Development Support Grants – Alderman Fielding, Councillors Anderson, Beattie, Chivers, MA McKillop, McQuillan, Mulholland, Quigley and Schenning.
- Community Festivals Fund – Alderman Fielding, Councillors Baird, McAuley, MA McKillop, McQuillan, Mulholland, Schenning and Wallace.
- Social Inclusion Grant – Alderman Fielding, Councillors McQuillan, Quigley and Schenning.

4. VERBAL UPDATE FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive provided Members with a verbal update. He advised Members that Council Officers had reviewed business continuity plans in November which had focused on the potential loss of staff through an influenza epidemic.

The Chief Executive advised that the delivery of critical Council services had been at the forefront of Council's response. Officers had prepared for the worst and he stated that the fortitude and robustness of staff had been astonishing in the last few months.

Council initiated the establishment of a co-ordination hub in Flowerfield and the model adopted had been adopted by other Councils. The Chief

Executive advised that the Economic Development Team had developed expertise around the business support available, to offer as much advice as they could to local businesses facing immense challenges as a result of the restrictions imposed as a result of the pandemic.

The Chief Executive stated that Council's Environmental Health Officers, may become involved with enforcement and contact tracing in the next number of weeks and Council would be updated as the situation develops.

The Chief Executive stated that the focus for Council now was the recovery plan including a phased return to work in offices, in line with the direction from the Executive; external socio-economic recovery across the Borough and the Council's financial situation which posed a challenge to all eleven councils facing significant loss of income and the potential impact on the rates base in the next months and years.

The Chief Executive concluded by advising Members that all future deliberations in terms of Council's Recovery Plan would be underpinned by the guiding principle of public safety.

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN COMMITTEE'

It was **AGREED**: that Council move 'In Committee'.

Alderman Finlay requested that all votes during the meeting be taken as recorded votes.

During presentation by the Director of the next item the Mayor requested a brief interlude to allow some Members who had experienced difficulties linking to the remote meeting to access the meeting.

The Mayor and Chief Executive recapped on Items 3 and 4, as above when the other Members had joined.

5. CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPORT

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

5.1 Financial Impact of COVID 19

The Financial Impact of the COVID 19 situation across the 11 Council's is estimated to be in region of £40,551,529 from mid-March until the end of June. The analysis carried out by Council (summarised in the table below) was used to inform a wider piece of work, being carried out across the 11

Councils, for submission to Department for Communities in a bid for additional resources.

Table 1 – Financial Impact of COVID across 11 Councils and CCGBC

	TOTAL	March	April	May	June
Total across 11 Councils	£40,551,529	£4,042,302	£15,184,495	£10,885,755	£10,438,978
CCGBC	£6,329,953	£590,339	£3,437,296	£1,181,257	£1,121,001

The initial financial analysis undertaken, was based on estimated figures and largely based on the assumption that Council will generate no income, like a worst possible scenario situation. It should be stressed that these are estimated figures. As working from home continues, Council will generate income from planning, building control and licensing as applications continue to be processed, albeit this income will be reduced at least in the short-term.

In terms of the loss of income from Mid-March to June, this is detailed in Table 2 – Estimated Income Losses and totals just over £5.6 million. The figure for tourism is significantly high as it includes the caravan income. Council has received a significant amount of this as customers are always asked to pay in March before the season starts therefore at some point in the future all or a proportionate amount may have to be refunded. The other point to note is that the car parking income includes the estimated income that would have been generated at the new chargeable car parks that were agreed as part of the rates strike meeting.

Table 2 – Estimated Income Losses

Leisure facilities	£689,316
Tourism facilities	£2,367,930
Arts/ Culture/ Community facilities	£668,380
Planning & Building Control	£682,514
Off street car parking (including fines)	£578,572
Environmental income (e.g. trade waste, bulky)	£556,169
Licensing/ Enforcement (e.g. dogs, litter)	£39,735
Other	£56,384

In relation to increased costs these are generally increased waste costs (re increased tonnages £144k to June), and to adhere to social distancing the requirement of a hired vehicle to accommodate the third person for operations and estates together with the fuels costs to run these vehicles (£30k to June). Other significant costs would be the community hub and

ICT costs, the purchase of new laptops and the roll out of Microsoft 365 licences, printers and mobile phones.

Regarding utilities there will be a saving in relation to usage (variable costs) but standard fixed costs/charges will still apply. Electricity usage will decrease with the facilities being closed but there is still a requirement for the alarm for insurance purposes and therefore some utility costs will remain.

SOLACE and NILGA are currently lobbying Central Government Departments on Councils behalf, in terms of the financial impact and risks to Councils.

Since publication of the report to Members further financial analysis has been undertaken. Each Directorate is looking at Income and Expenditure for the three months ending June, and then for the full financial year. As at 8th May, there is an estimated loss of income in the region of £11.1 million, £5.2 mitigating expenditure, resulting in an overall deficit of £5.9 million. This information will be refined as further information becomes available, and is subject to continual review.

Mitigating Steps

In the interim there are a number of actions currently ongoing:

- Seek Government support, regional proposal has been submitted to Department for Communities.
- Release non-essential agency staff – to be furloughed by agency.
- Consideration of Furloughing of permanent staff who work in income generating service areas.
- Covid Financial Plan being developed urgently with directorates to identify financial losses and cost savings, alongside a Corporate wide recovery plan and phasing, in line with current guidance and regulations
- Preparation of year-end accounts, monitor and review reserves and cash flow, draw down additional loans.

Potential to Furlough Permanent Staff

It is likely the Council will be able to avail of the Government Job Retention Scheme and will therefore be able to furlough those staff that work in income generation facilities such as Leisure Centres. Council have currently identified 61 staff that could be furloughed, 54 in Leisure & Development, 3 in Environmental Services and 4 in Performance. The

estimated gross cost per month for these staff is approximately £120,594 of which Council will be able to claim back 80% £96,475.

5.2 Financial Impact of COVID 19 on Corporate Services Directorate, Planning Services, and Performance as at 8th May 2020

Overview – Currently there are 125 members of staff within Corporate Services, Planning and Finance. On a daily basis between 85-95 of these staff are working from home, with the remainder working from a Council office. There have been no positive COVID 19 cases.

The Income and Expenditure for the Corporate Services Directorate has been analysed and reviewed (Appendix 2, previously circulated), and can be summarised as follows:

Estimated Budget	£4,553,252
Projection	£4,665,315
Increase of	£102,063

The overall increase can be attributed to the following:

Projected Income Loss	£25,393
Additional Expenditure (ICT Equipment, Licensing, Insurance)	£155,901

Total Increase	£181,294
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Less

Expenditure Savings	£79,231
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Net Increase	£102,063
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Planning Service

Planning Service staff have been working from home, via VPN (Virtual Private Network), with staff accessing Council offices as required. The Income and Expenditure for Planning Services has been analysed and reviewed and can be summarised as follows:

Budget	Budget 2020/21	COVID	Difference
Expenditure	£2,368,047	£2,341,305	£26,741
Income	£1,467,773	£733,887	£733,887
Net	£900,274	£1,607,419	£707,145

This is based on 50% income from applications, resulting in a potential loss of over £733k, with potential reductions in expenditure of £26K.

Performance

All figures based on a monthly basis.

Budget area	Income loss per month against budget	Financial cost reduction per month against budget
Income from Town Halls	£6543	
Utility savings in Town Halls		£4829
Utility savings in Civic buildings		£825
Maintenance cost reductions in Town Halls and Civic buildings		£2430
Agency Staff already furloughed		£4800
Overtime cost reduction from Town Halls and Civic buildings		£800
Total monthly financial position	£6543	£13,684
Net position		£7141

The monthly financial position for Performance is a reduction in cost of £7141.

Furlough of Additional Staff (Non-Agency)

The Performance section has four staff who meet the income generating criteria set down by Government in relation to potential for Furlough Elected Members are asked to consider the Furlough of these four posts.

Further cost reductions

It is envisaged there will be additional cost reductions in relation to expenditure such as staff mileage.

5.3 Land and Property Section 83: protection from forfeiture of Business Tenancies for non-payment of rent

Deferral of Rent Payments

- * **Councillor Nicholl left the meeting at 7.45pm approximately during consideration of this Item.**

A number of tenants have written to Council with concerns regarding payment of rent during this time when their business are closed as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic.

Invoices which were due to be issued at the beginning of April to some of Council's tenants have been held pending Council's consideration of the matter.

Advice and support to tenants has been provided, insofar as possible at this stage, where requests have been made and Council's Economic Development Team are also offering support to businesses in the Borough to assist businesses to claim government assistance where appropriate.

It is recommended that Council grants a temporary payment holiday to tenants, if required, with guidance on the letter provided by Legal services.

Council's solicitor outlined the provisions of Section 83 of the Coronavirus Act to Members and responded to Members' questions in relation to Council's obligations in relation to the collection of rent from Council's tenants while they were closed and suffering a loss of income because of the Covid19 pandemic. Members expressed concern at the hardship being experienced by businesses in the Borough and in particular those businesses currently leasing property from the Council.

Following further clarification on the different payment terms for tenants in accordance with their leases and further legal advice it was:

Proposed by Councillor Callan
Seconded by Alderman S McKillop

- that Council grants a temporary payment holiday to tenants, if required, with guidance on the letter provided by Legal services.

- * **The Chair declared a recess at 8.23pm.**
- * **The meeting reconvened at 8.30pm.**

The Mayor put the motion to a recorded vote.

For: Alderman Boyle, Duddy, Fielding, Finlay, Hillis, McCorkell,
(35) S McKillop and Robinson

Councillors Anderson, Baird, Bateson, Beattie, Callan, Chivers, Holmes, Hunter, Knight-McQuillan, McAuley, McCandless, McCaw, McGurk, McKeown, MA McKillop, McLaughlin , McLean, McQuillan, C McShane, P McShane, Mulholland, Peacock, Quigley, Schenning, Wallace, Watton and Wilson

Against: (0)

Abstain: (0)

The Mayor declared the Motion **CARRIED**.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT

6.1 Update on Environmental Services

The confidential information report, previously circulated, was presented by the Director of Environmental Services

The report updated Members on service provision and impact of COVID-19 on staffing, finance and operational matters in Environmental Services.

Due to the coronavirus emergency and the subsequent lockdown the Environmental Services Contingency Plan was activated which identified the essential services of waste collection, burial services, public health, dog control and emergency planning to be maintained. Other services have been maintained to a reduced level.

All essential services have been maintained with all 3 waste stream bin collections being collected and all burials conducted as required. I am extremely proud of how all my staff have conducted themselves and delivered these frontline services.

Additional resource including staff, vehicles and PPE have been allocated to these service areas in order to maintain social distancing and protect our staff.

Financial Update

ES budget for 2020/21 is £22,783,695. This was allocated on the basis of £2.26m of savings to be achieved from the starting ZBB position of £25,046,695. COVID-19 will have a significant impact on the budget for 20/21 and beyond. These impacts are a combination of loss of income, additional expenditure off-set by savings. The impact on the ES budget will

depend on the duration of the restrictions and economic recovery. A breakdown of the ES Budget is noted below.

	Budget Expenditure	Budgeted Income	Budget Net Expenditure
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES	28,431,410	5,647,715	22,783,695
Estates	3,822,839	276,640	3,546,199
Health and Built Environment	3,464,141	1,393,738	2,070,403
Infrastructure	1,422,001	2,489,308	(1,067,307)
Operations	19,019,192	1,488,029	17,531,163
ES Business Support	576,200		576,200
ES Centrally Managed	127,037		127,037

Operational Update

Flytipping – Flytipping incidents have increased but not significantly since the beginning of the calendar year. A table showing the number of incidents is noted below. All incidents reported have been collected with 72 hours.

Week ending	2018	2019	2020
03-Jan	7	7	3
10-Jan	6	8	7
17-Jan	3	6	1
24-Jan	7	2	8
31-Jan	7	0	6
07-Feb	3	8	4
14-Feb	12	3	5
21-Feb	12	8	7
28-Feb	3	7	7
06-Mar	10	6	8
13-Mar	7	1	5
20-Mar	3	3	2
27-Mar	7	4	2
03-Apr	5	9	13
10-Apr	4	8	8
17-Apr	7	7	11
24-Apr	3	5	8
01-May	9	5	11
Total	115	97	116

Cemeteries – Burial numbers during April 2020 have increased by 15 from the same period last year.

It is recommended that Members note the report.

Councillor McQuillan requested that further information be brought to Council in relation to Entertainment Licences and payment for these when businesses were closed and experiencing financial difficulty. The Director advised that he would look into the issue and bring information for Council's consideration.

Members **noted** the content of the report.

6.2 Reopening of Household Recycling Centres

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

The report is to advise Members on the reopening of Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) and to consider allowing householders to deposit garden waste and cardboard in addition to excess waste normally deposited in the black bin.

The household recycling centre network was closed in late March due to the coronavirus emergency and the subsequent lockdown.

Following guidance issued by Minister Poots on Monday 27th April 2020 Members agreed that the household recycling network should be reopened on Monday 4th May.

A telephone booking system was implemented on Thursday 30th April. This system is to help ensure staff safety, control vehicle numbers and maintain social distancing at HRCs. No waste from a non-household source is permissible.

The HRCs currently accept excess waste that would normally be deposited in the household black bin. Only cars have access to a household recycling centre, unless special circumstances determine otherwise.

Across the HRC network, there is 3,780 booking slots available Monday to Friday.

Between the 4th and 7th May, there were 563 slots booked via telephone booking system. During this booking period, 19% capacity availed of for one waste stream.

The measures put in place to accept waste at HRCs are working. This is in large part down to staff on the ground, those manning the telephone booking system and co-operation from householders.

It is proposed to accept in addition to excess black bin waste another two waste streams, namely garden waste and cardboard.

It is recommended that householders now be allowed to deposit garden waste and cardboard, in addition to excess waste normally deposited in the black bin, at household recycling centres.

In relation to queries from Members in relation to the waste streams which would be permitted at recycling centres the Director confirmed that, subject to the return of contractors Council relied on for the disposal of certain waste streams i.e. oil and small electrical appliances, all waste streams would be accommodated on a phased approach to re-opening.

Members extended their thanks to staff for the continued provision of services.

Proposed by Councillor Beattie
Seconded by Councillor Mulholland

- that householders now be allowed to deposit garden waste and cardboard, in addition to excess waste normally deposited in the black bin, at household recycling centres.

The Mayor put the Motion to a recorded vote.

For: Alderman Boyle, Duddy, Fielding, Finlay, Hillis, McCorkell, S McKillop and Robinson
(36)
Councillors Anderson, Baird, Bateson, Beattie, Callan, Chivers, Holmes, Hunter, Knight-McQuillan, McAuley, McCandless, McCaw, McGurk, McKeown, MA McKillop, McLaughlin, McLean, McQuillan, C McShane, P McShane, Mulholland, Peacock, Quigley, Schenning, Scott, Wallace, Watton and Wilson

Against: (0)

Abstain: (0)

The Mayor declared the motion **CARRIED**.

7. LEISURE AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORTS

7.1 Tourism and Recreation Event Grant Programme

The report previously circulated, was presented by the Director of Leisure and Development.

The Director of Leisure and Development advised Members that the report previously circulated had been superseded by the cancellation of events referred to within the report and that this rendered the report published no longer relevant.

Alderman McCorkell stated that he would be keen to explore the allocation of funding to events for expenses incurred to date in relation to the preparation and planning for events which had had to be cancelled because of the Covid 19 pandemic.

The Director of Leisure and Development advised that the event organisers may still incur fixed costs which were not eligible for funding under the Council's current grants' criteria. He suggested that it would be an option to bring a report to Council outlining revised options for eligible funding.

Councillor C McShane stated that she was disappointed that Council were being provided with a verbal report on the matter and that she would have expected a supplementary report to have been brought before Council providing Members with detail. The Director responded advising that he was required to update Members if the report and circumstances had changed since publication.

It was **AGREED** to defer a decision on the Tourism and Event Grant Programme and for the Funding Unit and Director of Leisure and Development to prepare a report for presentation to Council Meeting at its next meeting in June providing detail on potential revised criteria, eligible funding and costs.

7.2 Community Development Grants – Allocation of Funding

The report previously circulated was presented by the Director of Leisure and Development.

The report provided Members with the outcome of the assessment of applications received to the Community Development Grant Programmes for 2020-21 and to provide recommendations in relation to grant awards to be made through the three programmes:

1. Community Development Support Grant (CDSG).

2. **Social Inclusion Grant (SIG).**
3. **Community Festivals Fund (CFF).**

Approximately 50% of the Community Development Grants are provided by Department for Communities (DfC) through both the Community Support Programme and Community Festivals Fund Programme.

At the time of writing the report, the amount of funding from DfC for 2020-21 is not yet known, however since some of the projects applied for are due to take place in April Council is asked to make decisions in principle, subject to confirmation of necessary match funding from DfC.

At its meeting in November 2019 Council agreed to reduce grant programmes by 5% for 2020-21. Proposed funding awards are on the basis of this reduction and on the assumption that DfC allocations to Council will be at the same rate as 2019-20 amounts.

As part of the business planning process, a report was brought forward to Council in November 2019 to approve all grant funding programmes for the 20-21 period, inclusive of the three aforementioned grant programmes.

Information roadshows were held in early December in five locations across the Borough in order to provide potential applicants with detailed information and guidance about the individual grant programmes. A workshop on how to write a successful application was also held.

The grant programmes were opened for applications on 4th December 2019 for approximately 6 weeks.

An assessment panel scored applications against the criteria as stated in the Guidance Notes for each programme. Applicants were required to attain a score of at least 65% in order to be recommended for funding, in line with Council's Grant Funding Policy.

An extract from the Guidance Notes for the three grant programmes, detailing eligibility and assessment criteria, is attached at **Annex A**, previously circulated.

Community Development Support Grant

Purpose of Grant Programme: To contribute to the running costs/overhead costs incurred by core community development organisations.

Levels of Grant available: Community Development groups with premises could apply for grants of up to 75% of costs up to a maximum grant of

£2,000. Community Development groups without premises could apply for grants of up to 75% of costs up to a maximum grant of £1,000.

Applications Received:

No. of applications received	65
No. of ineligible applicants	4
No. of unsuccessful applications (scoring less than 65%)	10
No. of successful applications (scoring 65% and above)	51
Total value of CDSG funding recommended	£92,836.86

A list of the applications received, the assessment scores and maximum eligible funding amount recommended are listed in **Annex B**, previously circulated.

Four of the applicant organisations were deemed to be ineligible as the applicant organisation did not meet the eligibility criteria for the grant programmes. Ten applications did not score sufficiently high enough to be awarded a grant.

Social Inclusion Grant

Purpose of Programme: To provide small grants to local community and voluntary organisations that are involved in activities that encourage people within their community, particularly those that are socially isolated, to participate in social and recreational activities.

Levels of Grant: 85% of costs up to a maximum grant of £500.

Applications Received:

No. of applications received	38
No. of ineligible applications	7
No. of unsuccessful applications (scoring less than 65%)	8
No. of successful applications scoring 65% or more	23
Total value of SIG funding recommended	£11,215

A list of the applications received, the assessment scores and maximum eligible funding amount recommended are listed in **Annex C**, previously circulated.

Of the seven ineligible applications six were ineligible as they had annual income in excess of £50,000, which deems them ineligible as outlined in Section 1.8 of the Guidance Notes. The other ineligible applicant had already applied for and is eligible to receive a Community Development Support Grant and as stated in the Guidance Notes, '*organisations that intend to apply for a Community Development Support Grant from Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council are not eligible to apply for a*

Social Inclusion Grant. Eight applications did not score sufficiently high enough to be awarded a grant.

Community Festivals Fund

Purpose of the Programme: To support, promote and develop the capacity of communities to host community festival events across the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area. A community festival is a festival which has developed from within a community and should celebrate and positively promote what the community represents. DfC's CFF Policy & Guidance Framework sets the programme criteria for this particular fund.

Levels of Grant available:

<u>One day community fun day type events.</u> Events must be programmed to be of at least 4 hours consecutive duration and include a range of at least 3 types of activities to suit all sections of the community.	75% of costs up to a maximum of £750
<u>Festival events lasting 2 consecutive days or more.</u> Each of the days of the festival must include a range of activities to suit all sections of the community and be programmed to be at least 4 hours duration. The Festival must have different activities on each day that it takes place.	75% of costs up to a maximum of £1,500
<u>Festivals lasting 3 consecutive days or more and anticipated to attract at least 500 participants.</u> Each of the days of the festival must include a range of activities to suit all sections of the community and be programmed to be at least 4 hours duration.	75% of costs up to a maximum of £3,000

Applications Received:

No. of applications received	49
No. of ineligible applications	4
No. of unsuccessful applications (scoring less than 65%)	7
No. of eligible applications (scoring 65% and above)	38
Total value of CFF funding recommended	£52,270

A list of the applications received, the assessment scores and maximum eligible funding amount is listed in **Annex D**, previously circulated.

Some applications were reduced in the scale of the grant they were considered for as they did not meet the eligibility criteria for higher awards. Four applications were deemed ineligible as they did not meet the eligibility criteria in terms of the range of activities and length of their events as defined in the Guidance Notes. Seven applications did not meet the threshold of 65% to be successful for funding.

In the event that the letter of offer from DfC is delayed beyond 31st March, Council may wish to consider awarding grants to successful organisations with events scheduled to take place in April, May and June in order to ensure that they can plan ahead. A letter of offer could then be issued for the remainder of the applicants when Council receives confirmation of funding from DfC, and subject to the amount received.

Community Development Officers will provide feedback and capacity building support to the unsuccessful applicant groups in all three programmes in order to increase their capacity and to source and apply for other funding.

Summary

Total amount recommended for funding through CDSG	£92,836.86
Total amount recommended for funding through SIG	£11,215
Total amount recommended for funding through CFF	£52,270
Total amount recommended for funding	£156,322
DfC contribution*	£80,060
Anticipated net cost to Council	£78,927

* Based on assumption that DfC allocations to Council will be at the same rate as 2019-20 amounts.

It is recommended that Council:

- i. Approve awards for funding through Community Development Support Grant, Social Inclusion Grant and Community Festivals Fund as detailed in Annex B, C & D, subject to the necessary funding being available from DfC.
- ii. If confirmation of funding is not received from DfC by 1st April 2020 issue letters of offer to events taking part in April, May and June, with the remainder of the letters of offer to be issued when confirmation of funding is received from DfC.

Alderman S McKillop noted that the application submitted by Riding for the Disabled had been deemed ineligible for funding and as Council's Disability Champion requested that the Director of Leisure and Development review the application. The Director of Leisure and Development agreed to do so.

Members agreed to take a recorded vote for each of the 3 grant programmes.

Community Development Support Grant (CDSG)

Recorded vote on Motion for Council to approve awards for funding through Community Development Support Grant, as detailed in the report annexe, subject to the necessary funding being available from DfC.

If confirmation of funding is not received from DfC by 1st April 2020 issue letters of offer to events taking part in April, May and June, with the remainder of the letters of offer to be issued when confirmation of funding is received from DfC.

The Mayor put the Motion to a recorded vote.

For: (25) Alderman Boyle, Finlay, Hillis, McCorkell, McKeown
S McKillop and Robinson
Councillors Baird, Bateson, Callan, Holmes, Hunter,
Knight-McQuillan, McAuley, McCandless, McCaw,
McGurk, McLaughlin , McLean, C McShane, P McShane,
Scott, Wallace, Watton and Wilson

Against: (0)

Abstain: (0)

The Mayor declared the Motion **CARRIED**.

Social Inclusion Grant (SIG)

Recorded vote on motion for Council to approve awards for funding through Social Inclusion Grant, as detailed in the report annexe, subject to the necessary funding being available from DfC.

If confirmation of funding is not received from DfC by 1st April 2020 issue letters of offer to events taking part in April, May and June, with the remainder of the letters of offer to be issued when confirmation of funding is received from DfC.

The Mayor put the Motion to a recorded vote.

For: (28) Alderman Boyle, Finlay, Hillis, McCorkell, McKeown
McKillop S and Robinson
Councillors Anderson, Baird, Bateson, Callan, Chivers,
Holmes, Hunter, Knight-McQuillan, McAuley, McCandless,
McCaw, McGurk, McKillop MA, McLaughlin, McLean,
C McShane , P McShane P, Scott, Wallace, Watton and
Wilson

Against: (0)

Abstain: (0)

The Mayor declared the Motion **CARRIED**.

Community Festival Fund

Recorded vote on motion for Council to approve awards for funding through Community Development Support Grant, as detailed in the report annexe, subject to the necessary funding being available from DfC.

If confirmation of funding is not received from DfC by 1st April 2020 issue letters of offer to events taking part in April, May and June, with the remainder of the letters of offer to be issued when confirmation of funding is received from DfC.

The Mayor put the Motion to a recorded vote.

For: (25) Alderman Boyle, Finlay, Hillis, McCorkell, McKeown
McKillop S and Robinson
Councillors Anderson, Bateson, Beattie, Callan, Chivers,
Holmes, Hunter, Knight-McQuillan, McCandless, McCaw,
McGurk, McLaughlin, McLean, C McShane, Scott, Watton and
Wilson

Against: (0)

Abstain: (1) Councillor P McShane

The Mayor declared the motion **CARRIED**.

7.3 Delivery Options for Tourism and Recreation Council Managed Events (July to September 2020)

Report previously circulated, presented by the Director of Leisure and Development.

The report provided Members with the delivery options for Tourism and Recreation Council Managed Events (July to September 2020).

Government Guidance

The following Cabinet Office Guidance on Mass Gatherings was last updated on 1st May 2020.

3. Stopping public gatherings.

To make sure people are staying at home and apart from each other, the government has prohibited by law all public gatherings of more than two people, except for very limited purposes:

- Where the gathering is of a group of people who live together in the same household – this means that a parent can, for example, take their children to the shops if there is no option to leave them at home.
- Where the gathering is essential for work purposes - but workers should try to minimise all meetings and other gatherings in the workplace.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council has within its Tourism and Recreation remit a policy to deliver quality events across the area, inspiring visitors to stay and spend within the local economy.

It is recognised that many of the Council-led events bring significant return on investment, with examples including a direct economic impact of £2.3 million being experienced for Lammis Fair.

Council currently supports events through three strands:

- Council Managed Events** - Events which are managed and delivered by Council.
- TEFP Events (Tourism Events Funding Programme)** - Events which are financially supported by Council. This fund supports a range of large and small event providers and is administrated jointly by the Tourism Events Team and the Funding Unit.
- External Assisted Events** - Events which benefit the Borough and are assisted by Council in many ways, such as the use of land, infrastructure, human resources.

In November 2019, Council approved a portfolio of Council Events to be managed directly by the Events Team for 2020 / 2021 (Table 1).

Council Managed Events

During week commencing 23rd March 2020, the Events Team cancelled all Council Managed Events scheduled to take place between April and June 2020. This was a direct result of Public Health Agency (PHA) guidance in

relation to Covid - 19, and in particular as a result of a government ban on events and 'mass gatherings'. The events affected were Ballymoney Spring Fair, Easter Seasonal Programme, Rhythm of the Bann, NW200 Race Week Festival, Rathlin Sound Maritime Festival and Salmon and Whiskey Festival.

Table 1:

Events 2020	Date
Ballymoney Spring Fair	Friday 10th – Saturday 11th April
Easter Seasonal Programme	Saturday 11th – Monday 13th April
Rhythm of the Bann	Friday 8th – Saturday 9th May
NW200 Race Week Festival	Sunday 10th – Saturday 16th May
Rathlin Sound Maritime Festival	Friday 22nd May – Sunday 31st May
Salmon and Whiskey Festival	Saturday 13th – Sunday 14th June
Seasonal Summer Programme (Summer Theatre Programme)	Monday 6 th July - Friday 21 st August
Summer Fireworks Evening (Finale of Red Sails) Portstewart	Saturday 25 th July
Summer Entertainment and Fireworks Evening Portrush	Saturday 15 th August
Ould Lammas Fair	Saturday 22 nd - Tuesday 25 th August
Seasonal Halloween Events x 4	Wednesday 28 th - Saturday 31 st October
Atlantic Sessions	Thursday 12 th - Sunday 15 th November
Seasonal Christmas Light Switch On's (to include Festive Fund)	Thursday 19 th November – Saturday 5 th December

Council Funded Events

In relation to TEFPP Events (Tourism Events Funding Programme 2020/2021), at the time of the outbreak of Covid-19, Council Officers were still in assessment mode and no decisions on funding awards to applicants had been made.

Officers are aware that applicants to the fund are currently making fluid decisions on event cancellations / postponements and are currently engaging with applicants to ascertain the status quo of their event plans for 2020 /2021. A separate report on findings will be produced in due course.

External Assisted Events

Council Officers are also currently in direct communication with External Assisted Events to confirm their plans for 2020 delivery. Again, the findings of this engagement will be included in a future report.

It is important to note that both funded and supported events are not only currently impacted by the government ban on events and 'mass gatherings', but also by the unavailability of Council land on which many of these events are held and the inability to access council infrastructure and resources at this time.

Proposals

Council is asked to give consideration to two proposed options for delivery of Council Managed Events taking place between June and September (namely Seasonal Summer Street Theatre Programme, Summer Fireworks Evening (Finale of Red Sails) Portstewart Summer Entertainment and Fireworks Evening Portrush and Ould Lammas Fair).

Events planned beyond September 2020 (Halloween and Christmas) will be subject to ongoing review and a further report will be brought to Members for decision in the coming months.

Options

Option 1: Proceed to plan and deliver Council Managed Events (July to September 2020):

Advantages:

- a) Events - can assist to **generate visitor and participant numbers, bed nights and spend** and act as a driver to support local economy recovery from Covid-19.
- b) **The PR and marketing of events** assists in showcasing the Borough.
- c) **Maintains continuity and sense of expectancy** of public e.g. Lammas Fair.

- d) Opportunity for Council to **work in collaborative partnership with public / private and voluntary sectors** to ensure continuity of event delivery.
- e) Ensures that the **Borough continues to be recognised as a host for events** which benefit both the citizens of the area and visitors, ensuring that impact and legacy continue to be delivered.

Disadvantages:

- a) **Events and ‘mass gatherings’ are currently in breach of government legislation** and there is a high probability that this will continue to be the case beyond June 2020.
- b) **Council would be proceeding ‘at financial risk’** - currently no guarantee that government will allow events and ‘mass gatherings’ to take place between July and September 2020.
- c) **Contractual position with event suppliers** - internal legal and external barrister advice has indicated that Council can no longer rely on Covid -19 as a 'Force Majeure' in relation to tenders/contracts moving forward - therefore Council proceeds 'at risk' with any new contracts - this also has potential financial implications.
- d) **PR / Reputational risk** to Council of proceeding - this is multi-faceted:
 - Pre-event marketing of and encouraging ‘mass gatherings’ - not appropriate at current time
 - ‘Host’ communities of these events may have reservations about attracting large crowds into their areas - potential negative publicity for Council.
 - Public expectation that events are not a priority at this time.
 - Attracting visitors and participants from beyond the Borough - again, not appropriate at this time.
 - Visitor Experience impacted - if key elements of programming cannot be delivered - resulting in an event which is below visitor and participant expectations.
 - Potential late cancellations to suppliers - damaging to relations between Events Team and suppliers.
- e) **Timing of any further Public Health Agency Guidance** - does not account for the long lead-in time to deliver events e.g. issue of statutory road closures and licenses (8 - 12 week processes,

dependant on other Government bodies).

- f) By continuing to progress with event planning, **Council would be out of sync** with the policy decisions of other Councils and external event organisers in NI who have already made the decision not to run events during July to September 2020.
- g) Risk that **multi-agencies e.g. PSNI, NIAS do not have adequate resources or capacity** to support events into the summer due to the impact of the on-going pandemic. Events cannot be delivered by Council in isolation.
- h) Possibility that **travel restrictions** will still be in place throughout the summer impacting on the capacity of both visitors and participants to attend events.
- i) **Impact of Covid-19 on event suppliers-** these organisations will need time to readjust when restrictions are lifted e.g. Impact of Furlough etc.
- j) **Possibility of second 'wave'** of pandemic and having to pull back from all event planning.
- k) **Concern that the general public will avoid mass gatherings**, even if government restrictions are lifted - it may take some time for public confidence to rise. Future market testing and public consultation will be needed to ascertain public appetite for events.
- l) Government restrictions in relation to Covid-19 may be lifted in a phased approach, with events and 'mass gatherings' - due to their deemed higher risk in adhering to '**social distancing**' - being one of the last restrictions to be lifted.
- m) **Lack of internal capacity / resources to deliver events** e.g. Environmental Services, Estates and Operations Teams are all at this time currently engaged in Emergency Planning and other statutory services required by Council.
- n) **Inability to hold the necessary pre-event planning meetings** - both internal and external shortcomings which will impact on both the quality and safety of the events delivered.

Option 2: Decide not to proceed with Council Managed Events 2020 (July to September):

Advantages:

- a) Council will both **mitigate against and eliminate** the numerous disadvantages of proceeding as detailed in 7.1 above.
- b) **Council will be in agreement with other Councils** – Derry City and Strabane Council have cancelled the Maritime Festival programmed for July and have no other major events planned for delivery prior to Halloween. Belfast City Council has already announced the cancellation of their events up to October.
- c) **This will support External Events decisions**, as it is noted that the Army Road Races in July and the Heart of the Glens festival in August have both been cancelled by their respective organisers.

Disadvantages:

- a) The **advantages** detailed in 7.1 above **will not be realised**.
- b) By deciding not to proceed with Council Managed Events (July to September), **Council will lose** all of the Economic, Tourism and PR benefits associated with these events.

It is recommended that considering the unprecedented circumstance and the challenges of forward planning at this stage, a Council decision is sought regarding the planning for, and delivery of Council events from July to September 2020.

Councillor Baird expressed her deep disappointment at the cancellation of the Lammas Fair but in the circumstances stated that it was unavoidable. She asked that Council officers liaise with PSNI and the local Chamber of Commerce in relation to the cancellation of the Lammas Fair.

Proposed by Councillor Callan
Seconded by Councillor Baird

- that Council considering the unprecedented circumstances and the challenges of forward planning at this stage does not proceed with Council Managed Events 2020 July to September as outlined in Option 2 in the report to Council.

The Mayor put the Motion to a recorded vote.

For: Aldermen Boyle, Fielding, Finlay, Hillis, McKeown, McKillop S,
(31) Robinson

Councillors Anderson, Baird, Bateson, Beattie, Boyle, Callan, Chivers, Holmes, Hunter, Knight-McQuillan, McAuley, McCandless, McCaw, McGurk, McLaughlin, McQuillan, C McShane , P McShane, Mulholland, Quigley, Robinson, Schenning, Scott, Wallace

Against (0)

Abstain: (0)

The Mayor declared the Motion **CARRIED**.

7.4 Leisure and Development Summary Position (Staff and Finance) as a Consequence of Covid 19 Pandemic

Confidential report previously circulated, presented by the Director of Leisure and Development.

The report provided Members with information on the current financial and staffing position of the Leisure and Development Directorate as a direct consequence of the Covid 19 Pandemic.

The report concludes with a recommendation to Furlough eligible staff.

Whilst Council has approved the annual budget for Leisure and Development, the Covid 19 Pandemic is having a direct impact upon the services and programmes delivered and the availability of facilities, which has consequently had a major impact upon the net budget of the Directorate.

Current Financial Position

Period 11 19/20 Financial Period Position

The Leisure and Development position at month 11 has a £566k favourable variance.

Service Area	Month 11 net Expenditure	Month 11 Budget Net	Variance
Community & Culture	1,341,022.00	1,556,410.00	215,388.00
Prosperity & Place	1,116,540.00	1,488,599.00	372,059.00
Tourism & recreation	1,057,094.00	1,550,265.00	493,171.00
Sport & Wellbeing	4,735,449.00	4,179,745.00	555,704.00
Leisure Dev Management	447,364.00	451,872.00	4,508.00
Funding Unit	160,404.00	186,411.00	26,007.00
SIB	87,083.00	97,973.00	10,890.00

Golf	259,038.00		259,038.00
	9,203,994.00	9,511,275.00	307,281.00
Remove Golf	259,038.00		259,038.00
Leisure & Development	8,944,956.00		565,888.90

Note that in February 2018, Council approved funding for the 2019 Open Golf, drawn directly from General Reserves. This sum, drawn upon by services throughout Council, is not part of the 2019/2020 Leisure and Development budget, consequently it is discounted when reviewing the in-year position.

Despite the restrictions caused by the Covid 19 Pandemic, occurring late March 2020, based upon the trend of an improving positive variance position, the 'end of year' Period 12 position is not likely to change significantly.

FINANCIAL PERIOD 20/21

General Estimated Income Losses. As a direct consequence of the UK Government Guidance in order to inhibit the transfer of Covid 19, all of the Leisure and Development income generating services and programmes have been curtailed since the later weeks of March 2020.

At this stage, there is no clear indication as to when restrictions will be lifted and services will resume. Consequently a 12 month 'worse-case scenario' is illustrated.

The estimated loss of income (excluding grant funding) in the 20/21 period is circa £6m p/a.

Therefore a general estimate is that Leisure and Development is losing £500k income each month.

The specific income streams are (annual estimates):

Service	12 Month Income
Holiday and Leisure Parks	£2,761,760
Leisure Centres	£2,393,846
Outdoor Leisure Facilities (Pitches, Courts & Greens)	£164,713
Golf Courses	£100,000
Community Centres	£77,733
Tourism Events (Trading)	£83,350

Visitor Information Centres	£38,768
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An Evolving Understanding of Cost Savings. As a direct result of the Covid 19 and the closure of facilities, cessation of programmes, services and events, L&D is estimated to save £3.539m (annual estimate).

This is a prediction based upon the assumption that Sport and Wellbeing and Community & Culture facilities are closed for the entire year. This figure does not include any cost benefit of furloughing permanent staff.

Savings are derived from:

- Furloughed Agency Staff undertaken by Grafton Recruitment
- Utilities Costs reduced as a consequence of closing facilities (albeit essential maintenance continues).
- Minimal additional staff costs resulting from mileage, expenses and overtime.
- Programmes and activities.
- Supplies and services.
- Events (March to June).

On the basis that Period 1 Management Accounts are not currently available, an understanding of the current financial position is constantly evolving.

Summary Position as at 8th May 2020. The following summary is an estimate as at 8th May 2020.

Budget net Expenditure	£19,953,296
Budgeted Income	£9,621,007
Budget Net Expenditure	£10,332,289
Covid Expenditure	£16,413,830
Covid Income	£3,605,640
Covid Net Expenditure	£12,808,189
Mitigated Expenditure	£3,539,466
Income Shortfall	(£6,015,366)
Impact on Net Expenditure	(£2,475,900)

At this stage, the consequence of the Covid 19 Pandemic is a £2.475,900 negative variance upon the Leisure and Development Net Budget.

Current Staffing Position

The following is a summary of the impact upon staff.

Note that whilst services have ceased and facilities closed, the establishment of the Council Coordination Hub and the necessity to set up 'food distribution centres' has necessitated the redeployment of staff (predominately on a volunteer basis).

Agency Staff

- 212 - Total Agency staff 'assigned' to Leisure and Development by Grafton Recruitment.
- 182 - Stood Down and now being 'Furloughed' by Grafton Recruitment.
- 30 - Still required in essential roles.

Permanent Staff

- 210 - Total Permanent Staff (Full-time and Part-time).
- 55 – Unable to work from home and therefore available and eligible for Furlough (subject to minimal change based upon ongoing redeployment).

Furlough

On the 4th May 2020, Communities Minister Deidre Hargey MLA confirmed that that NI Councils are eligible to apply to furlough staff through the Covid 19 Job Retention Scheme (CJRS).

The UK Government websites states that Public Authorities can apply for CJRS, when the organisation cannot maintain its current workforce because operations have been severely affected by coronavirus (COVID-19). The organisation can furlough employees and apply for a grant that covers 80% of their usual monthly wage costs, up to £2,500 a month, plus the associated Employer National Insurance contributions and pension contributions.

CJRS is a temporary scheme in place for 4 months starting from 1 March 2020, but it may be extended if necessary.

It is clear that the loss of income detailed in Section 3 of this report means that all cost saving measures must be considered and the CJRS provides

the only current substantial means to offset these losses, considering that Council's single biggest cost is salaries.

The 55 permanent staff highlighted in Section 4 of this report are all employed in facilities which have been closed since March 2020. This includes all of Council's leisure centres, community centres and arts facilities. The roles predominately include fitness instructors, pool attendants, caretakers and cleaners.

Based upon current UK Government guidance, it is unlikely that Council's leisure centres, community centres and arts facilities will open in the immediate future.

It is recommended that subject to the agreement from the individual member of staff, Council proceeds to furlough eligible employees, who are normally employed in a facility or service area that has ceased to operate, is unable to work from home and is not redeployed to another function within Council.

Councillor Callan sought clarification on the number of eligible employees for furlough referring to the figures contained in the Environmental Services report presented to Council and the figures relating to Performance staff in the Corporate Policy and Resources report presented to Council.

The Chief Executive advised that the total number of staff currently identified as eligible for furlough was 61.

Proposed by Councillor Callan
Seconded by Alderman Hillis

- that, subject to the agreement, from the individual member of staff, Council proceeds to furlough eligible employees, who are normally employed in a facility or service area that has ceased to operate, is unable to work from home and is not redeployed to another function within Council, at 80% of their salary.

Amendment

Proposed by Councillor C McShane
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin

- that, subject to the agreement, from the individual member of staff, Council proceeds to furlough eligible employees, who are normally employed in a facility or service area that has ceased to operate, is unable to work from home and is not redeployed to another function within Council at 100% of their salary.

The Mayor put the Amended Motion to a recorded vote.

- For:** Alderman Boyle
(14) Councillors Bateson, Beattie, Chivers, McCaw, McGurk, MA McKillop, McLaughlin , C McShane, P McShane, Mulholland, Peacock, Quigley and Schenning
- Against** Alderman Duddy, Finlay, Fielding, Hillis, McCorkell, McKeown,
(21) S McKillop and Robinson
Councillors Anderson, Callan, Holmes, Hunter, Knight-McQuillan, McAuley, McCandless, McLean, McQuillan, Scott, Wallace, Watton and Wilson
- Abstain:** (0)

The Mayor declared the Amendment **LOST**.

- * **Alderman Duddy left the meeting.**

The Mayor put the original Motion to a recorded vote.

- For:** Alderman Boyle, Finlay, Fielding, Hillis, McCorkell,
(33) McKeown, S McKillop, Robinson
Councillors Anderson, Baird, Bateson, Beattie, Callan, Chivers, Holmes, Hunter, Knight-McQuillan, McAuley, McCaw, McCandless, McGurk, MA McKillop, McLaughlin , McLean, McQuillan, C McShane, Mulholland, Peacock, Quigley, Scott, Wallace, Watton and Wilson
- Against** P McShane
(1)
- Abstain:** (0)

The Mayor declared the substantive Motion **CARRIED**.

8. NI PLANNING IT SYSTEM – DISTRIBUTION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT COSTS

The report previously circulated, presented by the Head of Planning.

Extensive work has been undertaken over the last 2 years in relation to procuring a replacement NI Planning IT system. The Outline Business Case and Memorandum of Understanding were presented to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee at their meeting held on 19 March 2019

where it was resolved to agree to the estimated funding and signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) subject to all eleven Councils buying in. This decision was ratified by full Council at their meeting held on 26 March 2019. This included a commitment to share the costs of the project at least until Full Business Case stage following a public procurement exercise.

Dfl has written to all 11 Councils (Appendix 1 of the report, previously circulated) to advise that the procurement process for the replacement system has been completed and indicated that a preferred supplier has been identified for the new system. The correspondence advises that a Full Business Case (FBC) (Appendix 2 of the report, previously circulated) has been prepared which outlines the project costs (including contract costs) and the timeframe for delivery.

The FBC outlines that the preferred option for a new Planning IT system as being:

- A single regional IT system shared between the 11 Councils and the Department for Infrastructure; and
- An off the shelf IT system tailored to meet the business needs outlined in the contract specification agreed by all Councils and the Department .

The estimated cost of the preferred option is █████ over the 20 years of the project i.e. from 2019/20 to 2039/40. The cost is made up of █████ capital and █████ resource. The project timescale anticipates the new IT system being fully operational across all Councils by February 2022.

Whilst this represents an increase in the costs previously identified as part of the Outline Business Case (OBC), this is primarily because the project is now covering a much longer timeframe of 20 years (comprised of an initial 10 years with two 5 year contract extensions allowed for) compared to the original 11 years outlined in the OBC. When compared against the original timeframe the estimated project costs in the FBC actually represent a reduction of just over █████ compared to those estimated in the OBC.

In line with the previously agreed principle of shared costs the Department has advised that it will contribute █████ over the lifespan of the project.

- █████ (resource) i.e. █████ per year for 18 years (2022 to 2040) in line with historic day to day costs
- █████ over the period towards the capital cost of the new system
- █████ over the period to cover the cost of the Department's project team

Accordingly, the cost to local government will be [REDACTED], which if apportioned on the fee revenue as per the preferred option in the FBC (which is the most beneficial to this Council in monetary terms when compared to evenly split or based on number of users) will equate to a total of [REDACTED] for this Council over 20 years (or [REDACTED] per annum on average) (Appendix 3). This compares with an estimated cost of [REDACTED] per annum in the OBC. As with the OBC the majority of this expenditure (some 55%) can be capitalised. Council, in accordance with the MOU, has already made a payment of £52k for the year 2019/20. If one Council does not agree to sign up to this FBC the cost for this council will increase to approximately [REDACTED] over the 20 year timespan of the regional system (depending on which Council does not agree to sign up).

The Department in its letter is seeking the agreement of all Councils on

- The preferred option outlined in the FBC; and
- the Council's contribution of [REDACTED] if all 11 Councils sign up or [REDACTED] if 1 Councils sign up.

In the report provided to Members on the OBC, advice was provided that Belfast City Council had at that time explored the option of a standalone system but subsequently decided to commit to the regional solution. The main considerations in this regard were as follows:

- The regional approach would be a new fit for purpose NI wide IT solution.
- A standalone system alongside a regional solution would be detrimental to customer service as there would be two different public website interfaces which would be frustrating and confusing.
- The standalone and regional costs are likely to be broadly similar if the cost to local government is split evenly. However if a council goes alone its upfront capital costs are likely to be significantly greater than the regional approach.
- The Department will not provide any funding to a council, which decides to go alone.
- The risks and costs associated with data migration are considered too great for any council that decides to procure their own system.
- Staff resources are likely to be significantly higher than those required for a regional system.
- Procurement of a standalone system will be shorter (possibly by 12 months) however it is not considered that the time advantage outweighs other factors.

- The risk of reputational damage in not supporting a regional solution and the increased cost that would as a result be attributed to other councils.

It should also be noted that in a scenario where one Council decides not to progress with the regional solution as outlined then the cost per Council could rise from ██████ to an estimated ██████ or from an average of ██████ per annum to ██████ per annum although this would still be under the estimated cost outlined in the OBC of ██████ previously presented to Members.

At this time the Department is seeking the unanimous agreement of all Councils for its proposition. However, in the event that more than one Council does not agree for whatever reason, it is unlikely to be possible to proceed with a single regional IT System as outlined and urgent consideration of alternative proposals would then be required.

It is recommended that Council agrees to sign up to the Full Business Case and support the preferred option set out in the FBC and contribute up to ██████ over 20 years towards the new Regional IT System.

Proposed by Alderman S McKillop
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin

- that Council agrees to sign up to the Full Business Case and support the preferred option set out in the FBC and contribute up to ██████ over 20 years towards the new Regional IT System.

The Mayor put the Motion to a recorded vote.

For: Alderman Boyle, Finlay, Fielding, Hillis, McCorkell,
(30) McKeown, S McKillop and Robinson
Councillors Baird, Bateson, Beattie, Callan, Chivers, Holmes,
Hunter, Knight-McQuillan, McAuley, McCandless, McCaw,
McGurk, MA McKillop, McLaughlin, McLean, McQuillan,
Mulholland, Quigley, Schenning, Scott, Wallace and Watton

Against: (0)

Abstain: (0)

The Mayor declared the motion **CARRIED**.

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN PUBLIC'

Proposed by Councillor McGurk
Seconded by Councillor Beattie and

AGREED: that Council move 'In Public'.

This being all the business, the Mayor thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting closed at **11.00pm**.

Mayor