



**LEISURE & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY 18 APRIL 2023**

Table of Recommendations

No	Item	Summary of key Recommendations
1.	Apologies	<i>Councillors McMullan and Schenning</i>
2.	Declarations of Interest	<i>None</i>
3.	Minutes of Leisure and Development Committee meeting held Tuesday 21 March 2023	<i>Confirmed as a correct record</i>
4.	Labour Market Action Plan	<i>To recommend to Council: Option 2 – Sign-off on the Causeway LMP Strategy & Action Plan and enter into agreement with DfC to roll-out the £585k plan across the borough; Option 4: Allocate two members to the LMP through D'Hondt from the Leisure and Development Committee</i>
5.	Town Centre Experience Fund	<i>To recommend to Council that the TCEF moves from an open/close programme to a rolling programme for applications in 2023/24</i>
6.	Correspondence	<i>None</i>
7.	Matters Reporting to the Partnership Panel	<i>None</i>

8.	Consultations	None
	FOR CONFIDENTIAL CONSIDERATION (Items 9-14 inclusive)	
9.	Asylum Seekers Briefing	Information
10.	Leisure and Development Financial Position P11	Information
11.	SSRP Tender Report	To recommend to Council a) Mosside Community Centre – JPM Contracts Ltd for a contract sum of £352,703 (excl.VAT); b) Armoy, Church Road Playpark – Garden Escapes Ltd for a contract sum of £100,664.25 (excl.VAT)
12.	Town and Village Management Review	To recommend to Council the appointment of consultant Mr. Chris Wade from the People and Places Partnership to conduct an independent review of strategic operations of the Town and Village Management unit
13.	Air Show Specialist Requirements	To recommend to Council that following on from the Council decision to approve the expenditure of £50,000 in the 2023/2024 financial year for preparatory works for the 2024 Air Show, members approval is sought to augment the Council's Event Team with the necessary specialists in order to deliver the 2024

		<i>Northern Ireland International Air show</i>
14.	Portrush Recreation Grounds	<i>To recommend to Council Option 2 (discretionary) – Apply PAN with DfC funding: cost overrun of 12% and net cost of £319k</i>
15.	Any other relevant business notified in accordance with Standing Order 12. (o)	<i>Nil</i>

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEISURE AND DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AND VIA VIDEO
CONFERENCE ON TUESDAY 18 APRIL 2023 AT 7.00 PM**

In the Chair: Councillor McCaw (C)

Members Present: Alderman Baird (C), Hillis (C), Knight McQuillan (R)
Councillors Callan (R), Holmes (R), McGurk (R), McAuley
(R), MA McKillop (R), Peacock (R), Watton (C)

Officers Present: R Baker, Director of Leisure and Development (C)
N McGurk, Head of Prosperity and Place (R)
W McCullough, Head of Sport and Wellbeing (R)
P Harkin, Good Relations Manager (R)
J Beggs, SIB Projects Officer (R)
M McGerty, Causeway Labour Market Partnership
Manager (R)
I Owens, Committee & Member Services Officer (C)

In Attendance: C Thompson, ICT Operations Officer (C)
A Lennox, Mobile Operation Officer (C)

Public 1 no. (R)

Press 2 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 Leisure and Development undertook a roll call of committee members present.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors McMullan and Schenning.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. MINUTES OF LEISURE AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD
TUESDAY 21 MARCH 2023**

Summary previously circulated.

Proposed by Councillor Watton
Seconded by Alderman Hillis and

AGREED – to recommend that the Minutes of the Leisure and Development Committee meeting held Tuesday 21 March 2023 were signed as a correct record.

4. LABOUR MARKET ACTION PLAN

Report, previously circulated, presented by the Head of Prosperity and Place.

Purpose of Report/ Background

The purpose of this report is to:

- Request approval for the attached Causeway Coast and Glens Labour Market Partnership Strategy & Action Plan (2023/24).
- Request that Members consider their preferred membership option in terms of representation on the Causeway Coast and Glens LMP in 2023/24.

Background

Action 27 of the Causeway Community Plan aims to:

'Support the development of the Labour Market Partnership - supporting educational and skills initiatives within the Causeway Coast and Glens area to match current and future business needs.'

Since 2022 the Department for Communities (DfC) have supported the development and delivery of 11 Labour Market Partnerships (LMPs) across Northern Ireland. In 2022-23 Council undertook the task of local convenor of a partnership approach to employability interventions in Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area. The LMP Members are local stakeholders and have been involved in the planning and delivery of the initial Action Plan. Current organisations represented on the LMP include: Careers Service

- Causeway Chamber of Commerce
- Causeway Enterprise Agency
- DfC JBO (NW & NE regions)
- Invest NI
- Northern Trust
- NRC
- NWRC
- Roe Valley Enterprises

In early 2023 a strategic assessment was carried out of employability outcomes and local labour market conditions in the Causeway Coast and Glens Council area. This exercise was undertaken to ensure that the priorities identified in the LMP Strategic Assessment and Action Plan reflect priority employability and labour market issues in the area, informed by analysis of information provided by statutory partners, colleagues across council as well as the results of ongoing

Borough wide engagement and consultation with local businesses and the community across the Council area.

The Action Plan has been developed to follow the achievements of the 2022/23 LMP Action Plan, and to address the employability needs across the borough. The following three strategic priorities (SP) have been identified with the 2023/24 Causeway LMP Action Plan:

1. *SP1: To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local LMP for the area.*
2. *SP2: To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally.*
3. *SP3: To promote and support delivery of existing employability or skills provision available either regionally or locally.*

The purpose of the Action Plan is to identify the priority areas for action by the LMP. The plan sets out to:

- Review and confirm priority employment and labour market issues locally, evidenced and informed by a comprehensive strategic assessment.
- Describe what the LMP aims to achieve.
- Communicate the content of the Causeway Coast and Glens LMP Action Plan and how the LMP will work to deliver its Plan.
- Explain how the LMP will work in partnership to make the best use of resources.
- Explain how Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) will be used to measure and manage performance of the LMP.
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DfC priorities for the 2023-24 Action Plans include the following employability areas: Economic Inactivity

- Long Term Unemployed
- Young People
- Disability
- Skills Labour Supply
- Economic Shock

Proposal

See Annex A, previously circulated, for a copy of the draft Causeway Coast and Glens LMP Strategic Assessment and Plan for 2023-2024. As lead authority for Causeway Coast and Glens economic growth, it is important that we play a convening role which brings partners together and drives a LMP with purpose. In light of this fast changing labour market support context, the purpose of this LMP Action Plan will be to support NI initiatives, ensure that local knowledge and insights are 'surfaced' and develop solutions based on local context.

In considering the role of the LMP, the team consulted with a wide range of key stakeholders including businesses, training and education authorities. The following three strategic priorities and programmes have been identified within

the draft LMP Action Plan and are consistent with the labour market activation proposals in the Borough's Economic Development Strategy.

Strategic Priority 1	To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local Labour Market Partnership for the area	
Projects	SP1.1	LMP Delivery and Development
	SP1.2	2024-27 Strategic Assessment and 2024/25 Action Plan
Strategic Priority 2	To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally	
Projects	SP2.1	Work Ready: Develop and provide a support programme for the LTU and EI.
	SP2.2	Business Start-up Support and Seed Fund: To support and empower individuals enabling their progress into employment and self-employment.
	SP2.3	Pathways Programme: Develop a programme to target the most disadvantaged in the Borough, including those living with disabilities.
	SP2.4	Aspire Youth Programme: Develop a programme to target the most disadvantaged in the Borough, including between the age of 16-24 not in education, employment or training.
	SP2.5	Retrain Plus: Support the newly unemployed with the opportunity to retrain and learn new skills
	SP2.6	Priority Sectors Personal Learning Account: Enabling upskilling within priority sectors.

Strategic Priority 3	To promote and support delivery of existing employability or skills provision available either regionally or locally.	
Projects	SP3.1	Employability NI: To ensure communication and engagement across the Borough of the Employability NI initiatives and local provisions.
	SP3.2	Job Fairs: to deliver job fairs across the borough helping local people find employment opportunities
	SP3.3	Causeway Area Learning Partnership Careers and Industry Engagement: to engage and support CALP and Careers Service with their local action plans
	SP3.4	Sustaining Lifelong Learning: Promotion of and engagement in lifelong learning within local communities

	SP3.5	Apprenticeship Alert: Increase awareness of apprenticeships within the Borough.
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The budget breakdown and further detail within each respective theme can be found in the full Action Plan at Annex A, previously circulated. Subject to approval from Department of Finance, it is envisaged that DfC will provide 100% funding of £585k in 2023/24 to deliver upon the Causeway Coast and Glens LMP.

In 2022-23 no elected members from Causeway Coast and Glens Council were represented on the Labour Market Partnership as there is no requirement from DfC to have elected members on the LMP. Across the other regional 11 LMPs elected members involvement varies. However, we would like Council members to consider if they would also like to be represented on the Causeway Coast and Glens LMP in 2023/24.

Options

Council are asked to review the Action Plan in Annex A, previously circulated, and to consider the two sub options below:

- Option 1 – Do nothing. Do not enter into agreement with DfC for the roll-out of a £585k LMP for the Causeway Coast and Glens area.
- Option 2 – Sign-off on the Causeway LMP Strategy & Action Plan and enter into agreement with DfC to roll-out the £585k plan across the borough.

Council are also asked to confirm whether to have elected members represented on the Causeway Coast and Glens LMP in 2023/24 i.e.:

- Option 3: As per 2022/23 LMP governance structures, continue to have no elected members represented on the LMP in 2023-24 and update members of progress through Leisure and Development Committee meetings.
- Option 4: Allocate two members to the LMP through D'Hondt from the Leisure and Development Committee.

Recommendations

Option 2 – Sign-off on the Causeway LMP Strategy & Action Plan and enter into agreement with DfC to roll-out the £585k plan across the borough.

Members to consider their preferred option (i.e. either Option 3 or Option 4) in terms of representation on the Causeway Coast and Glens LMP in 2023/24.

The Head of Prosperity and Place advised that the Causeway Labour Market Partnership Manager was also in attendance to answer Elected Members questions.

At the request of Councillor McGurk the Head of Prosperity and Place advised that the benefits of Elected Member representation was that there would be a political voice to push and drive agendas and that Officers would appreciate the additional strength and support from Elected Members. The Head of Prosperity and Place said that attendance by Elected Members would allow for the sharing of information via Leisure and Development Committee meetings.

The Head of Prosperity and Place provided details of the time commitment for Elected Members which would involve attending bi-monthly meetings on the morning of the first Wednesday of the month.

Proposed by Councillor McGurk
Seconded by Councillor Callan and

AGREED – to recommend to Council:

Option 2 – Sign-off on the Causeway LMP Strategy & Action Plan and enter into agreement with DfC to roll-out the £585k plan across the borough; and Option 4: Allocate two members to the LMP through D'Hondt from the Leisure and Development Committee.

5. TOWN CENTRE EXPERIENCE FUND

Report, previously circulated, presented by the Head of Prosperity and Place.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to move the Town Centre Experience Fund from an open/close programme to a rolling programme for applications. This will allow for efficiencies in the fund allocation process for both applicants and council officers.

Background

The Town Centre Experience Fund (TCEF) is open for grants up to a maximum of £2,000 per applicant (total programme fund is £24,000). In February 2023 Council approval the continuation of the annual TCEF grant. The current programme opened on 12th April 2023 with a closing date 26th May 2023.

Groups of traders/town centre stakeholders are encouraged to work together to introduce new experiences, activities, marketing or event development for their respective town centre. See Annex A, previously circulated, for guidance notes.

In summary, the eligibility criteria is as follows:

- All applicants must be based within the settlements of Ballymoney, Ballycastle, Ballykelly, Bushmills, Coleraine, Cushendall, Dungiven, Garvagh, Kilrea, Limavady, Portrush and Portstewart.
- They must also be actively trading commercially or a constituted organisation.
- The lead applicant must have a business bank (or other financial institution) account for the sole purpose of their business/organisation – i.e. separate from personal finances.
- Businesses/organisations may only make one or be involved in one application per year.

Proposal

Lessons learnt from previous programmes indicate that it is important that applications are assessed in a timely manner as proposals from interested groups tend to be timebound. Oversight by the Funding Department on the assessment process will ensure that the council policies and procedures are adhered to and funding awards made accordingly. In light of the decision making process a rolling programme has been proposed and an information report will be brought to Leisure & Development Committee on completion of allocation of the TCEF.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Leisure & Development Committee recommends to Council that the TCEF moves from an open/close programme to a rolling programme for applications in 2023/24.

Councillor McGurk said that she welcomed the flexibility of the proposal for groups and organisations involved during the year.

Proposed by Councillor McGurk
Seconded by Councillor MA McKillop and

AGREED – to recommend to Council that the TCEF moves from an open/close programme to a rolling programme for applications in 2023/24.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

7. MATTERS REPORTING TO THE PARTNERSHIP PANEL

There were no matters to report to the Partnership Panel.

8. CONSULTATIONS

There were no consultations.

*** Alderman Baird joined the meeting at 7.20 pm**

MOTION TO PROCEED ‘IN COMMITTEE’

Proposed by Councillor Watton
Seconded by Councillor McGurk and

AGREED – to recommend that Council move ‘*In Committee*’.

*** Public and Press were disconnected from the meeting at 7:24pm.**

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

9. ASYLUM SEEKERS BRIEFING

Confidential, for information report, previously circulated, was presented by the Good Relations Manager.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to provide an update to Members on:

- The increase of dispersal of asylum seekers in the CCGBC area.
- The Home Office sponsored dispersal funding programme for councils across Northern Ireland for the establishment of networks and initiatives which assist with integration into local communities.

Background

From the report provided to Council in December 2022, Members will be aware that the Home Office is the lead UK government department for nationality, immigration and asylum, and these matters were not transferred as part of devolution and remain Excepted Matters.

The Northern Ireland Executive do not have statutory powers in respect of immigration and asylum, however Executive Departments do have a role to play in supporting refugees and asylum seekers here for example in terms of access to health and education services.

Asylum accommodation and financial support is funded and provided by the Home Office *only for those asylum seekers who are deemed destitute whilst their claim is assessed*. It is provided under the Asylum Accommodation and Support Contract (AASC) and does not form part of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) remit for the provision of social housing.

The Home Office seek to select Asylum accommodation where there are sufficient support services in place. They may on occasion have to place asylum seekers in temporary accommodation such as hotels to meet their statutory accommodation duty but would then seek to transfer asylum seekers to dispersed accommodation as soon as practicable.

Since June 2019 the company contracted by the Home Office to provide asylum seekers accommodation and to maintain such accommodation in Northern Ireland is MEARS.

Housing; Emergency Contingency and Dispersal Accommodation

In the December briefing, information was provided to council that The Home Office, through Mears Housing, had secured and began utilising the Rambler Inn Hotel accommodation, in Portstewart as contingency emergency accommodation (classified as Initial Accommodation IA). The hotel is currently at capacity housing 45 male residents.

The Home Office is now expanding dispersal accommodation (DA) into the Causeway Coast and Glens Council area and are seeking to secure 235 bed

spaces over the next 12-month period. This is moving at pace with the Home Office has advising that dispersal will have commenced by 3rd April.

Dispersal Accommodation (DA) is considered as temporary accommodation whilst awaiting an asylum application outcome and tends to be private rented accommodation procured by Mears Housing who manage and maintain the properties on behalf of The Home Office.

Once an Asylum outcome is concluded, those who have been in Dispersal Accommodation will receive 28 days' notice to vacate the property and seek alternative more permanent accommodation. If the Asylum application outcome is positive (granted), this will mean that the individuals / families will then seek to find their own accommodation. They will be eligible to apply for social housing via NIHE or they can seek to secure private rented accommodation. An application for social housing in the first instance is most likely.

The Home Office has also advised that within the coming months they are planning to stand up a further (IA) hotel with a maximum capacity of 165 beds in the Council area. This contingency emergency accommodation will be used to accommodate families seeking Asylum. It is unlikely that this hotel will be used to capacity due to restriction on room sharing.

The Home Office have advised that this information remains in confidence until official notification from The Executive Office. The Home Office have indicated that the stand-up date is likely to be the end of May however, when a date has been confirmed, a letter will be issued to The Chief Executive by The Executive office to officially inform Council of the use of the accommodation.

NI Executive Office /Council Engagement & Funding

In late November after the first residents were placed in the Rambler's Inn, Council was asked by the Executive office to submit a bid for funding to support the establishment of networks for assistance and integration of those seeking Asylum with local communities. Information on the funding bid was provided in the December briefing.

Council has received the MoU for the Dispersal Funding from The Executive Office who are managing the funding sponsored by The Home office. CCGBC has been allocated a total sum of £162,095 for the costs of research and development, staff resource allocation and programme costs for the development and provision of resources to support activities and services to aid integration. The funding aims to provide support and signpost users to access key information and relevant services applicable to their asylum seeker status. The proposal submitted also included support to establish and/or build upon the necessary networks and infrastructure for integrating asylum seekers following full dispersal.

The funding allocated to Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is for activity until the end of March 2024. There is no indication that further funding will be provided at this time.

Actions included in the proposal and progress to date

Actions were prioritised according to urgency, aiming to promote collaborative efforts at a local level. To date a range of activities for provision of support and integration have commenced including the development of a co-ordinated approach for the provision of support and services. Activities as set out below are funded through the Executive Office scheme.

Establishing the as is position and development of a localised Asylum Support Plan

A scoping and needs analysis have been carried out engaging both providers and service users. This has resulted in identifying roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders, the needs of those requiring support and those who have been providing or can provide support, the current resources available and ascertaining the gaps.

A co-design process to develop a framework and delivery plan is underway. Work is ongoing to establish the governance structures for provision of support and services. Council role is in facilitating a collaborative wrap around service through the co-ordination of an interagency steering group and to lead on the development and delivery of the local plan once it has been finalised.

Statutory and community response in providing and offering wide ranging support has been immense.

Providing interim activities to support wellbeing and build community connections

Examples of activities undertaken to date include the compilation and publication of key information for service users, the delivery of an information and networking event, English Classes, cultural competency training for service providers, cultural awareness raising workshops for service users, connecting local groups offering support to the service users, physical wellbeing activities and provision of support for volunteering by service users.

Home Office and The Executive Office requests of council

Council Engagement Group – Officers continue to participate in the cross-council engagement group and are provided with updates from The Home Office and The Executive Office. A data sharing agreement has been proposed for the sharing of information including data on numbers of people and countries of origin being placed in each council area.

To reduce the back log of Asylum applications, Council officers have been advised that the Home Office are implementing the streamlining of asylum applications for cases of people from 5 nationalities, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Libya, Syria and Yemen who applied for Asylum before last July. The Home Office will advise each council area if any of these cases are within their Council area once the data sharing agreement is in place.

Councillor Watton spoke of the dire situation of homelessness in the Coleraine area for local residents and said that action was required to address the shortage in social housing as people were being offering housing a long

distance from our Council area. Alderman Hillis and Baird concurred with Councillor Watton's remarks.

At the request of Councillor Watton the Good Relations Manager explained that as part of the asylum process the travel element of funding was to cover visits to specialist Belfast based Solicitors and Home Office visits, attend medical appointments and access community facilities or support provision, given that the weekly entitlement is £9 per week which would not cover transport costs.

At the request of Alderman Hillis, the Good Relations Manager explained that the £162,095 grant was effective for a period from January 2023 to March 2024 and gave a detailed summary of what the funding was financing.

At the request of Alderman Baird, the Good Relations Manager confirmed that Mears Housing were procured to manage accommodation and appointed a Welfare Support Officer who provides oversight.

The Good Relations Manager further advised Elected Members that the Red Cross had undertaken orientation activities and provided travel and shopping vouchers and that a number of local churches and charities were also assisting with provision of basic essentials.

Alderman Knight-McQuillan referred to the impact on tourism given that the area was a tourism destination and potentially a whole hotel being lost to the Borough.

The Director of Leisure and Development confirmed there was an under provision of accommodation in the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council and agreed that this would exasperate the problem even further.

Committee NOTED the report.

10. LEISURE AND DEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL POSITION P11

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

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report to provide Members with a financial summary of the 2022/23 in-year position at Period 11.

Background

Council has approved the annual budget for Leisure and Development and delegated authority to officers to utilise this budget in the provision of services to the rate payers. The L&D budget for 2022/23 is £11,887,822. The net budget is a calculation of the forecast:

- Gross Expenditure of £20.436m.
- Gross Income of £8.549m.

Table 1 illustrates a P11 Net Position of £9,907,129.38, which is adverse by £15, 917. This is an improvement from Period 10 and represents a significant improvement since the Q2 and Q3 during which the adverse position peaked at £415K.

L&D is at 103% of forecast expenditure based upon a budget of £17, 798,277 compared to actual expenditure of £18,406, 383.

L&D is at 107% of forecast income based upon a budget of £7,907,064, compared to actual income of £8,499,254.

The service area financial positions are also shown in Table 1, previously circulated.

The Director of Leisure and Development provided commentary on the report.

Committee NOTED the report.

11. **SSRP TENDER REPORT**

Confidential report, previously circulated, was presented by the Head of Prosperity and Place.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the outcome of the procurement process to appoint contractors to undertake works in Mosside Community Centre and Armoy, Church Road Playpark, as part of the Covid Recovery Small Settlement Regeneration Programme (CRSSRP).

Background

The CRSSRP is funded through the Department for Communities [DfC], the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs [DAERA], and the Department for Infrastructure [DfI] and agreed contribution from Council.

Project A, within the overall Programme, is a follow on to Village Renewal Scheme within the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 and aims to deliver much needed facilities to 10 rural settlements.

All projects included in the Small Settlement Programme including the Mosside Community Centre and Armoy Playpark works were approved by Council following acceptance of Letter of Offer in March 2022.

Further tender reports will be presented to the Committee as they are obtained for the remaining settlements within the Programme.

Procurement Process

Tender reports for each settlement are included in **Annex A** and set out the process adopted by Council Capital Projects Team during advertising and tender scoring.

- a) Mosside Community Centre - three tenders were received and two progressed to assessment.
- b) Armoy, Church Road Playpark – five tenders were received and three progressed to assessment.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the contracts are awarded as follows:

- a) Mosside Community Centre – JPM Contracts Ltd for a contract sum of £352,703 (excl.VAT).
- b) Armoy, Church Road Playpark – Garden Escapes Ltd for a contract sum of £100,664.25 (excl.VAT).

At the request of Alderman Baird, the Director of Leisure and Development confirmed that subject to the ratification of the decision, Officers would initiate mobilization of the proposal immediately.

Proposed by Alderman Baird
Seconded by Alderman McGurk and

AGREED to recommend to Council that the contracts are awarded as follows:

- a) Mosside Community Centre – JPM Contracts Ltd for a contract sum of £352,703 (excl.VAT); b) Armoy, Church Road Playpark – Garden Escapes Ltd for a contract sum of £100,664.25 (excl.VAT).

12. TOWN AND VILLAGE MANAGEMENT REVIEW

Confidential report, previously circulated, was presented by the Head of Prosperity and Place.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is for Members to confirm the appointment of an external contractor to undertake an independent review of strategic operations (i.e workstreams, project activities, objectives, targets and key performance indicators) of the Town and Village Management team within the Prosperity & Place service area.

This review has been specifically identified as a recommendation by internal audit i.e. item 9 – *‘Town and Village Management should develop a medium-term plan (3 years) which would support annual planning of activities’*.

The purpose of the independent review is to assist Town and Village Management to re-focus its objectives and operations and as a result, to enhance the contribution it makes to Council's new Economic Development strategy 2020 - 2035.

Background

The Prosperity and Place service area recognises that the nature and functionality of our town centres has changed significantly, as a result of the evolution of online shopping and the economic shock of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Town and Village Management unit is a busy team of four staff: one Manager and three Project Officers. The workstreams of Town and Villages Management are organised under the following strategic themes:

It has been noted that much of the work of Town and Village Management (TVM) has been too much activity-focused and reactionary in nature. There is a desire for TVM operations to be more strategic in nature, and re-focused to achieve measurable medium and longer-term outcomes. To achieve this, changes in how the annual workplan and budget is configured is needed. This will include new indicators to monitor progress, results and outcomes more effectively.

The review will be framed by the following three questions:

- i. How effectively are the current activities of TVM contributing to the Council's Economic Development strategy 2020 - 2035?
- ii. Taking into consideration the best practices in town management by local authorities in the UK and Ireland, and incorporating the objectives of the Council's Economic Development strategy 2020 – 2035 (which includes the top twenty-five priorities¹ for reinventing, repositioning, rebranding and restructuring town centres) what could / should TVM be doing from 2023 onwards, and how would workstreams be measured using an outcomes-based accountability approach?
- iii. What Operational Framework could be put in place to enable Town and Village Management to re-focus its activities and reorganise its workstreams and business planning objectives and thereby maximise its contribution to Council's Economic Development strategy?

The key deliverable for this contract is a comprehensive report with practical recommendations for a new strategic operational framework for the Town and Village Management team. Implementing the recommendations will enable Town and Village Management to re-focus its work streams and its methodology for reporting on activities, budget expenditure and results. This in turn will assist in measuring its contribution to the Council's Economic Development Strategy 2020 – 2035 and will ensure that all activities are aligned with the relevant policy frameworks and investment priorities from the Department for Communities and other relevant Government Departments.

Procurement Process

On 20th January 2023, Town and Village Management issued a tender for applications from consultants to conduct an independent review of strategic operations for Town and Village Management. Please see Annex A, previously circulated.

On 21st February 2023 a scoring panel of Council Officers assessed two applications received. The scores were previously circulated.

The winning tender was from Mr. Chris Wade, Director of the People and Places Partnership (<https://people-places.net/>)

The budget submitted by Mr. Wade was £10,313.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Leisure and Development Committee recommends to Council the appointment of consultant Mr. Chris Wade from the People and Places Partnership to conduct an independent review of strategic operations of the Town and Village Management unit.

Proposed by Councillor McGurk
Seconded by Alderman Baird and

AGREED - to recommend to Council the appointment of consultant Mr. Chris Wade from the People and Places Partnership to conduct an independent review of strategic operations of the Town and Village Management unit.

13. AIR SHOW SPECIALIST REQUIREMENTS

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

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek members approval to augment the Council's Event Team with the necessary specialists in order to deliver the 2024 Air Show.

Specifically:

- The procurement of the Air Display Director (and associated air display services) through a DAC.
- The employment of a Sponsorship / STEM / Industry / MOD Coordinator.

Background

In the January 2023 meeting, Council approved a previous 'notice of motion' from January 2021:

'That this Council would develop a new International Air Show for 2022 to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and explore holding the event every 2 years from 2022. We should make this a key regional event not just for the Borough but for Northern Ireland and therefore explore working in partnership with key partners like the Northern Ireland Office, Ministry of Defence, Department for the Economy, Invest NI and Tourism NI. A project Board involving elected members

of no more of 6 by d'hondt should be set up to shape and develop this event along with experts and other key stakeholders.'

Furthermore, Council approved the additional expenditure of £50,000, in the 2023/2024 financial year for preparatory works for the 2024 Air Show.

The report made reference to the following:

This includes the procurement of the Air Display Director (and associated services) and the employment of a Sponsorship / STEM / Industry Liaison Consultant. Both positions are for a fixed period and are not permanent appointments. Without these event specific specialists, the Air Show is not viable.

Air Show Air Display Coordinator / Director Team

Roger Steel a partner in R5 Air Displays Ltd, has been involved in the Portrush Air Show since 2008, when he was a member of the Flying Control Committee (FCC).

In 2013, Roger became the Flying Display Coordinator (FDC) – responsible for arranging all display assets, programming the flying display and being the flying subject matter expert at planning meetings.

In 2014, Roger then was moved into the role of Flying Display Director (FDD) until 2019, assuming full responsibility for all aspects of the air display.

Roger Steel / R5 Air Displays Ltd 12-year familiarity with the Portrush and Portstewart geography in the context of the air display is unique having been instrumental in the moving of the event from West Bay to East Strand and the development of a bespoke event in Portstewart.

Since 2008, Roger has been responsible for submitting Air Display Permission Requests to the Civilian Aviation Authority (Article 86), without rejection.

Beyond Portrush, R5 Air Displays Ltd is the FDD for 16 other air displays (pre-Covid Pandemic).

In the period 2021/22, R5 Air Displays Ltd was the technical lead for the creation and development of the 2022 Northern Ireland International Air Show flight plan, display line and all other air-display elements. This is the exact plan for the 2024 event.

Professional Body Membership / Qualifications / Accreditations

Roger is a partner in R5 Air Displays Ltd is a CAA Tier 3 accredited FDD (Mandatory Qualification) and Mentor and a member of the CAA Flying Display Focus Group – a group of experienced and trusted members of the flying display industry (FDDs, Event Organisers, Display Pilots and Display Pilot Examiners).

Roger is a founder member of the British Air Display Association whose main aim is 'To encourage, promote and advance Safety and Standards in British Air Displays'.

Roger is also member of the European Air show Council and attends the twice-yearly UK Flying Display Symposium which is an ideal opportunity to contact well-established flying display pilots.

Relevant Connections

R5 Air Displays Ltd has worked extensively with Air Traffic Management at City of Derry Airport, Belfast International Airport and local facilities at Ballerina and Aghadowey.

R5 Air Displays Ltd has an intimate understanding of the RAF asset booking process responsible for allocating RAF flying display assets (Red Arrows etc) to displays in the UK and overseas.

DAC Justification

Air Displays are inherently dangerous activities as demonstrated in recent years at Shoreham and Cheshire in England, during which multiple fatalities occurred.

Beyond the mandatory qualifications / accreditations, no other individual has the experience, familiarity, and expertise relevant to this Council's air display (generally and specifically).

No other individual has the relevant connections with the local air display community.

Relevant to Council's air display, no other individual has the necessary connections with the national non-military air display community.

Relevant to Council's air display, no other individual has the necessary connections with the military air display stakeholders.

As an event with a military dimension, trusted relationships are crucial (security is a consideration for the MOD in Northern Ireland).

As the SRO for Council's International Air show, based upon the experience, familiarity, expertise and connections, the continuation of Roger Steel / R5 Air Displays Ltd.'s involvement in the event is not only essential from a safety perspective but essential for the future viability of the air show.

Beyond the mandatory qualifications / accreditations, no other individual has the experience, familiarity, and expertise relevant to this Council's air display (specifically).

In short, without R5 Air Displays Ltd's involvement in the 2024 event, the Council's International Air Show is unlikely to be viable.

Note that by making a request and signing this form, the relevant officers, have confirmed that they have no conflict of interest associated with the award of business that may result from this process.

Cost

The total value of the contract for Services for R5 Air Displays Ltd is up to £15k including expenses (ex VAT).

The employment of a Sponsorship / STEM / Industry Liaison Coordinator.

Due to the unique nature of the air show and the necessity to secure income, liaise and work directly with industry, education and the MOD, the following role is required. This role does not exist within the current structure.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

- STEM Component Development - To include and develop a STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) component within the event, to address the current skills shortfall in the economy and to generally promote education, employment and enterprise for industry generally, but specifically the Northern Ireland Aerospace Sector.
- Income Generation - To offset event costs, income generation through partnerships, sponsorship, grant funding, corporate hospitality sales and other sources of funding.
- Industry Engagement - Through engagement with Aviation Defence Systems (ADS) NI, the Development of Airwaves as a showcase event and regional economic development platform for industry generally, but specifically the Northern Ireland Aerospace Sector.
- MOD / Government Engagement - Liaison with key stakeholders including the Ministry of Defence and Government Agencies to maximise the impact of the event and the involvement of all three Services.
- Hospitality / Civic Ceremonial Elements - The lead role for the organisation / hosting of event hospitality to include STEM, Sponsors, Partners, Industry, MOD and linked civic elements i.e. the Royal British Legion's ceremony hosted by the Lord Lieutenant.

Cost

This role is a fixed contractual period ending in October 2024 and has been evaluated at P08 SCP 46. In accordance with policy, this fixed term employment will be facilitated through Council's employment agency.

Recommendations

Following on from the Council decision to approve the expenditure of £50,000 in the 2023/2024 financial year for preparatory works for the 2024 Air Show, members approval is sought to augment the Council's Event Team with the necessary specialists in order to deliver the 2024 Northern Ireland International Air show.

Specifically:

- The procurement of the Air Display Director (and associated services) through a DAC.
- The employment of a Sponsorship / STEM / Industry Liaison Coordinator.

At the request of Councillor McGurk, the Director of Leisure and Development confirmed the timeline for appointment of Sponsorship/STEM/Industry Liaison Coordinator including salary scale and grade of pay.

Councillor McGurk pointed out an omission in the template relating to the cost of the proposal which should have been £50k and the Director of Leisure and Development acknowledged the error.

Proposed by Councillor Watton

Seconded by Councillor Callan and

AGREED - to recommend to Council that following on from the Council decision to approve the expenditure of £50,000 in the 2023/2024 financial year for preparatory works for the 2024 Air Show, members' approval is sought to augment the Council's Event Team with the necessary specialists in order to deliver the 2024 Northern Ireland International Air show.

Specifically:

- The procurement of the Air Display Director (and associated services) through a DAC.
- The employment of a Sponsorship / STEM / Industry Liaison Coordinator.

14. PORTRUSH RECREATION GROUNDS

Confidential report, previously circulated, was presented by the Director of Leisure and Development and the Head of Sport and Wellbeing.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of the paper is to update Members on the completion of 'Stage 3 – Construction' of Portrush Recreation Grounds following recent contract negotiations to close the final account on the project in accordance with the NEC contract obligations; and to request approval on the preferred course of action with regard to a discretionary inflation claim of £75k considered under the NI Executive, Procurement Advisory Note 01/21.

Background and Approvals To Date

In 2017, Council agreed to prioritise a list of capital projects, Portrush Recreation Grounds was ranked 9th on that list. The Council and Department for Communities (DfC) completed the £11.3m Portrush Regeneration Programme. Funding remaining within this budget was subsequently allocated to the redevelopment of Portrush Recreation Grounds.

In January 2018, Council instructed officers to proceed with the Outline Business Case (OBC) for upgrade works at Portrush Recreation Grounds which involved extensive consultation with various stakeholders.

In November 2019, as a result of affordability pressures, Council approved a reduced scale concept design at a cost of £2.86m with indicative partnership funding from DfC of £1.3m. The revised concept design comprised: public realm; bowling green, synthetic bowling training area; pavilion building, 'Changing Places' facility; large open recreational/event space; low level urban sports area; adventure style play park; designated disabled parking plus reinforced hard standing areas.

An ICT (design team) was subsequently appointed to progress the project through Stage 2 - detailed design and a planning application was approved in June 21. In parallel, the procurement process for an IST (contractor) was progressed with the Tender Report produced in May 21.

In September 2021, Council gave Stage 2 approval to appoint the construction contractor and develop the scheme at a total cost of £3.34m (included construction contract, professional fees, applications/surveys and CPD fees). This was based on a secured grant from DfC for c.£1.3m and a LUF application which was under consideration at the time. In October 2021, LUF funding was secured for £1.66m and DfC increased their contribution to £1.43m, leaving a net cost to Council of £0.25m.

The Capital Delivery Team agreed a standard NEC Contract: Option B – Priced Contract with Bill of Quantities for the sum of £2.934m with the contractor and construction commenced on-site in November 2021.

Project & Budget Update

Officers have been reporting progress on a monthly basis to the Leisure Facilities Project Board. This includes the presentation of the Project Dashboard which is discussed in detail on a monthly basis by the Steering Group, comprising officers of Council, DfC and CPD. Reporting to LUF is done electronically through quarterly Monitoring returns.

At the last Project Board in February 23, the following key issues were raised:

- Officers presented the Project Dashboard and confirmed that the £3.3m project was progressing on-site, however noted some slippage on agreed time and cost targets.
- The revised target date for completion was 17 March 2023 with the majority of works complete and wet pour at the Play Park causing the delay.
- LUF branding being commissioned ahead of an official launch 23rd March 2023.
- The key issue is managing the Compensation Events and additional inflationary claims logged by the Contractor and to ensure robust challenge process in place.
- Budget cover through a relatively small Optimism Bias of 3% almost fully utilised. A report will be brought to Committee in March for additional budget cover of c.10%. Discussions are ongoing with DfC regarding possible match funding.

As the project is now completed and the financial year end has passed, DfC has sought an urgent update with regard to the likely final account on this contract and Council's consideration of the additional inflationary claims made by the contractor. Further explanation and background to the three components of additional cost is provided below:

(i) Compensation Events (CEs) which are Contractually Payable

Under the NEC contract, the Contract Manager has been robustly challenging all CEs submitted by the contractor. Given the rapid increase in CEs submitted by the contractor mid-way through construction, the SRO put in place a CE Working Group to review and agree all CEs above £5k for SRO approval. The CE register contains 61 CE claims made by the contractor totalling £284k of

which a total of £143k (excluding £35k for CE 28 - red diesel below) has been agreed for payment under the contract.

In addition to the CE register a claim for an undermeasure of earthworks within the original Bill of Quantities was submitted by the contractor for £79k. This was assessed by the ICT and a total of £39k has been agreed for payment under the contract.

Given the overall delay and agreed completion date of 17th February 2023, the contractor lodged CEs for a 17 week programme extension amounting to £170k. These claims were only recently considered under the NEC Contract 'Disputes Resolution Procedure' and a negotiated settlement of £132k has been agreed for payment under the contract.

Officers will conduct a post implementation review of the project to include further examination of all CEs under the terms of the ICT contract and potential for claims for damages.

(ii) Legislative Changes which are Contractually Payable

The NEC contract included the X2 Clause for legislative changes and the contractor submitted a claim for change in law restricting the use of red diesel at £39k. This was assessed by the ICT and submitted to CPD for external review. The sum of £35k has been agreed for payment under the contract.

(iii) Inflationary Claims which are Discretionary

The NEC contract does not include X1 Clause for inflationary payments. However, the contractor raised early warnings over rising material price inflation and submitted CEs in respect of steel and granite at the start of the contract. At this time, the Steering Group agreed to maintain the contractual position and reject any such claims.

In September 22, the contractor submitted correspondence to CPD (and DfC by extension) requesting that an inflation claim be considered under the NI Executive Procurement Advisory Note (PAN 01/21) which was introduced on 2 August 2021.

The NI Executive approved the publication of a Procurement Advisory Note (PAN 01/21) in response to significant delays in delivery and volatility in the price of construction materials affecting the delivery of government construction projects and states:

"Notwithstanding the presence or absence of an existing contractual clause to deal with price adjustment for inflation, where the contractor provides compelling evidence, on an open book basis, that clearly demonstrates that the impact of inflation is higher on specific element(s) of the contract than that which a diligent contractor could reasonably have anticipated, then the Department should consider applying a Net Price Adjustment for inflation to impacted element(s) of the Price."

It is noted that this is Procurement 'Advisory' Note was only effective for projects tendered during the 2021 calendar year. It is not a Procurement 'Policy' Note and is therefore discretionary, however it is understood that £1.91m was paid out

to contractors during 2021 alone, including other Council projects funded in partnership with central government.

DfC requested that Council as the Contracting Authority consider this request with the potential for a pro rata funding contribution from DfC if processed in line with the PAN 01/21 guidance notes and validated by CPD.

As a consequence, the SRO then sought legal advice from Carson McDowell to consider both procurement risk and contractual risk to potentially enter into a Deed of Variation for specific inflationary costs to be added to the contract.

This legal advice was discussed with the Steering Group in December and a decision was taken to enter into discussions with the contractor 'without prejudice and subject to contract'. These discussions continued throughout December to March, and the contractor submitted a revised claim for material price inflation, including price inflation on red diesel for £193k. This was assessed by the ICT and CPD and the sum of £75k has been deemed eligible for payment under PAN 01/21 and is currently with DfC for approval.

As a worst case scenario, these additional costs amount to £424k (12% increase on the approved budget including Optimism Bias). Whilst these additional costs have been subject to due diligence and consideration, in relative terms this cost overrun is modest compared to other capital projects which have typically experienced 20%+ inflation over the same period.

Options & Implications

To decide upon the best course of action, 2 options have been considered:

Option 1 – Status Quo (contractual obligation)

This option maintains the existing contract position and includes legitimate CEs but excludes the contractor claims for inflation. As such, DfC funding would not be made available, and the final account will be payable by Council. This option would not require any contractual changes, however there is risk of legal challenge by the contractor and possible reputational damage in ignoring the PAN under the unprecedented market conditions.

Option 2 – Apply PAN 01/21 (change contract) with DfC funding

This option would require a deed of variation to the existing contract to be executed to include the inflationary claims. As such, DfC funding would be made available at 43% towards both inflationary costs and X2 red diesel claim at a total of £47k. This potential funding support has been accrued by DfC and is subject to approval.

Financial Scenarios

The most up to date final account estimates have been applied to each of the above options to generate financial scenarios which take account of CEs, inflationary claims and legislative claims. These scenarios also include additional professional fees linked to the increased contract cost and are compared to the original Council approved budget inclusive of Optimism Bias to identify a likely cost overrun and funding deficit. The scenarios also include proposed funding from Council and DfC subject to approval.

The financial scenarios are detailed in Annex A, previously circulated, and summarised in terms of the net cost to Council as follows:

- Option 1 (contractual obligation) – Status Quo: cost overrun of 9% and net cost of £271k.
- Option 2 (discretionary) – Apply PAN with DfC funding: cost overrun of 12% and net cost of £319k.

Depending upon which option is progressed, budget cover of between £271k and £319k is required. This will require a total project provision within the Capital Programme of c.£550k which is currently affordable. In overall terms this would equate to a Council contribution of 15% to the redevelopment of Portrush Recreation Grounds.

Recommendation

Members are requested to note the update on the completion of 'Stage 3 – Construction' of Portrush Recreation Grounds following recent contract negotiations to close the final account on the project in accordance with the NEC contract obligations; and to request approval on the preferred course of action with regard to a discretionary inflation claim of £75k considered under the NI Executive, Procurement Advisory Note 01/21 and instruct Officers to proceed with either Option 1 or 2.

The Director of Leisure and Development emphasised that any payment made based upon the NI Executive, Procurement Advisory Note 01/21, was entirely discretionary.

The Director of Leisure and Development provided an update on the advice of the Council's external Solicitor.

The Director of Leisure and Development referred to one other project which could become eligible for this discretionary payment but confirmed that the Capital Projects Manager believed the likelihood of such a payment being sought was low risk i.e. the project had already concluded.

The Director of Leisure and Development invited the Head of Sport and Well Being to present the report, in full, to the Committee. The Head of Sport and Well Being advised that the SIB Project Officer was also in attendance to answer Elected Members questions.

Alderman Hillis congratulated all involved in the project.

At the request of Alderman Hillis the Director of Leisure and Development confirmed that snagging issues and associated retention of funds would be unaffected by this proposal. The SIB Projects Officer advised that the retention in relation to snagging, 3% retention represented £88,000.

Councillor McGurk said Elected Members should be mindful of the inflationary figures impacting purchasing of materials and increased energy costs, saying it would be unfair not to cover the unforeseen expenses incurred by the contractor, however felt that due diligence was required as could be seen to be setting a precedence.

The SIB Projects Officer confirmed that the contractor had made their accounts fully available for inspection as part of an extensive review of the spending incurred on the contract.

At the request of Councillor McGurk, the SIB Projects Officer said that while the payment was discretionary, Department for Communities officials wished the matter to be considered given the unprecedented inflationary costs incurred.

Councillor McAuley asked for an update on the replacement of the wrongly fitted surface at the Plaza section and the Director of Leisure and Development confirmed the liability for the fault lay with the design team. The Director of Leisure and Development advised that costings were awaited. The Head of Sport and Wellbeing advised this would be progressed as part of snagging, advising it was important to ensure urban sports could be undertaken safely.

Proposed by Councillor McGurk
Seconded by Councillor Watton

- To recommend to Council Option 2 (discretionary) – Apply PAN with DfC funding: cost overrun of 12% and net cost of £319k.

The Chair put the Proposal to the Committee to vote.
9 Members voted For; 0 Members voted Against; 1 Member Abstained.
The Chair declared the Motion Carried.

MOTION TO PROCEED ‘IN PUBLIC’

Proposed by Councillor Watton
Seconded by Alderman Baird and

AGREED - to recommend that Council move ‘*In Public*’.

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

There were no items of Any Other Relevant Business.

There being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 9.10 pm.

Chair

