



October 12th, 2026

Chairperson: Alderman P Porter

Vice-Chairperson: Councillor R McLernon

Aldermen: A Ewart MBE and O Gawith

Councillors: J Bamford, T Beckett, R Carlin, K Dickson, A Ewing, J Harpur, J Lavery BEM, U Mackin, G McCleave, M McKeever and The Hon N Trimble

Ex Officio: The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor B Higginson

Deputy Mayor, Alderman A McIntyre

Notice of Meeting

A meeting of the **Corporate Services Committee** will be held on **Wednesday, 9th September 2026** at **6:00 pm** for the transaction of the undernoted Agenda. Members are requested to attend.

A hot meal shall be available in **Lighters Restaurant** from 5.15 pm.

David Burns, Chief Executive, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Agenda

1.0 APOLOGIES

2.0 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

- (i) Conflict of Interest on any matter before the Meeting (Member to confirm the specific item).
- (ii) Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interest (Member to complete the Disclosure of Interest form).

3.0 REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION

3.1 Elections 2027 - Operational Requirements

For Decision

Attachment: FINAL CS_Sept_26_Elections_2027.pdf

Page 1

4.0 HEAD OF GOVERNANCE & COMMUNICATIONS

4.1 Citywide

For Decision

Attachment: FINAL CSC Report 09 09 26 - Citywide.pdf

Page 3

Attachment: Equality Screening Citywide.pdf

Page 5

4.2 Annual Somme Pilgrimage

For Decision

Attachment: CSC Report 110926 - Somme Pilgrimage 2026.pdf

Page 19

Attachment: Appendix 1 - Somme Pilgrimage 2026.pdf

Page 21

4.3 Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Support for the Armed Forces Community

For Noting

Attachment: FINAL CSC Report - Support for the Armed Forces Community.pdf

Page 31

Attachment: FINAL Briefing Paper - Lisburn Castlereagh City Council Support for the Armed Forces Community.pdf

Page 34

4.4 Armed Forces Day 2027 - Working Group

For Noting

Attachment: FINAL CSC Report - Armed Forces Day 2027 Update_20.08.26.pdf

Page 41

Attachment: Appendix 1 CSC Report - Working Groups March 25.pdf *Page 44*

Attachment: Appendix 2 D'Hondt Table Outside Bodies.pdf *Page 48*

5.0 REPORT OF HEAD OF FINANCE

5.1 Policy Consultation - Business Growth Accelerator and Non-Domestic Vacant Rates

For Decision

Attachment: CSC Report - Policy Consultation Business Growth Accelerator NDVR.pdf *Page 53*

Attachment: Appendix 1 Business Growth Accelerator NDVR Consultation Letter.pdf *Page 55*

Attachment: Appendix 2 DRAFT Rates Consultation Response - LCCC - August 2026.pdf *Page 57*

5.2 Estimates 2027/2028 - Schedule of Meetings

For Decision

Attachment: FINAL CSC September 2026 - Estimates Timetable.pdf *Page 71*

Attachment: Appendix - Proposed Programme for the Striking of a District Rate for Financial Year Commencing 1 April 2027.pdf *Page 72*

5.3 Request to Earmark Reserves

For Decision

Attachment: CSC September 2026 - Reserves.pdf *Page 73*

Attachment: FINAL Report on Community Facilities Fund 2026-27_20.8.26.pdf *Page 75*

5.4 2025/2026 Treasury Outturn Report

For Noting

Attachment: CSC Report - September 2026 - Treasury outturn 2025 26 outturn cover report.pdf *Page 79*

Attachment: Treasury Outturn report 202526.pdf *Page 81*

Attachment: Prudential Indicators outturn 202526.pdf *Page 91*

5.5 Treasury Outturn - Quarter 1, 2026/2027

For Noting

Attachment: CSC Report - September 2026 - Treasury outturn quarter 1 *Page 93*

6.0 REPORT OF HEAD OF HR & OD

6.1 Consultation LGSC

For Decision

Attachment: FINAL CSC Report - LGSC Consultation Response - Code of Conduct & Working Relationship Protocol.pdf

Page 106

Attachment: Appendix 1 - Letter from LGSC.pdf

Page 108

Attachment: Appendix 2 -Schedule of Amendments.pdf

Page 109

Attachment: Appendix 3 - Code of Conduct for LG Employees - Consultation Version.pdf

Page 114

Attachment: Appendix 4 - LG Employee & Councillor Working Relationship Protocol - Consultation Version.pdf

Page 140

Attachment: Appendix 5 - Consultation Questionnaire.pdf

Page 149

6.2 Workforce Reports

For Noting

Attachment: CSC Report - Workforce Report.pdf

Page 152

Attachment: FINAL Attendance Management Report Analysis for Period Ending on 30th June 2026.pdf

Page 154

Attachment: Recruitment Committee Report - Advert & Selection.pdf

Page 161

Attachment: Recruitment Committee Report 2 - Appointments.pdf

Page 162

Attachment: Workforce Profile.pdf

Page 163

7.0 CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

7.1 Digital Platform - Renewal

For Decision

Confidential due to the NI Local Government Act 2014 Schedule 6 Access to Information: Exempt Information Part 1 3. Information relating to any individual, & information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

Attachment: CSC Report - September Committee Report Placecube Renewal 2.pdf

Not included

7.2 Report on Tender Awards

For Noting

Confidential due to the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 -Schedule 6 – Access to Information : Exempt Information 3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

Attachment: CSC Report Tender Awards for Noting September 2026.pdf

Not included

Attachment: APPENDIX 1 Tender Award Summary for Noting September 2026.pdf

Not included

Attachment: APPENDIX 2 Tender Reports September 2026.pdf

Not included

7.3 Quarterly Update on the financial position of the Capital Programme 2025-2030

For Decision

Confidential due to the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 -Schedule 6 – Access to Information : Exempt Information 3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

Attachment: FINAL CSC September 26 Capital Report Financial Position FINAL DRAFT - Quarterly.pdf

Not included

Attachment: Appendix 1 - Capital Programme July 2026.pdf

Not included

Attachment: Appendix 2 - Capital Programme Profiles July 2026.pdf

Not included

7.4 Movements and Changes in the Capital Programme to July 2026

For Decision

Confidential due to the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – Schedule 6 - Access to Information: Exempt Information 3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

Attachment: FINAL CSC September 26 Capital Programme Movements and Changes FINAL DRAFT Rev 1.pdf

Not included

7.5 Management Accounts

For Decision

Confidential due to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

7.6 Repairs and Renewals - Quarter 1, 2026/2027

For Decision

Confidential due to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

Attachment: CSC Report - September 2026 - Quarterly finance reports (Q1).pdf

Not included

Attachment: RR Quarter 1 2627.pdf

Not included

7.7 Elections 2027 - Request for Additional Employment

For Decision

Confidential due to the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, Schedule 6,

Part 1: Exempt Information, 1 and

2: 1. Information relating to any individual.

2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

Attachment: FINAL - CS_Conf_Sept_26_Elections_2027_Request for Employment.pdf

Not included

Attachment: Protocol for Managing LG Code of Conduct.pdf

Not included

7.8 Procedures Relating to the role of Chief Executive

For Decision

Confidential due to information relating to any individual, & information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

Attachment: CS Report - Conf_Sept_26_Employment_Procedures.pdf

Not included

Attachment: Appendix 1 - Proposed Grievance Procedure.pdf

Not included

Attachment: Appendix 2 - Proposed Disciplinary Procedure(1).pdf

Not included

Attachment: Appendix 3 - Flowchart Grievance_updated1.pdf

Not included

Attachment: Appendix 4 - Flowchart Disciplinary(1).pdf

Not included

Attachment: Appendix 5 - LGSC Grievance Procedure with Tracked Changes(1).pdf

Not included

Attachment: Appendix 6 - LGSC Disciplinary Procedure with Tracked Changes(1).pdf

Not included

Attachment: Appendix 7 - Equality Screening of Grievance Procedure.pdf

Not included

Attachment: Appendix 8 Equality Screening of Disciplinary Procedure(1).pdf

Not included

8.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS



Committee:	Corporate Services Committee
Date:	9 September 2026
Report from:	Director of Organisation Development & Innovation

Items for:	Decision
Subject:	Elections 2027: Operational Requirements

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u> At the Corporate Services Committee meeting of 10 September 2025, the Chief Executive provided an outline on the Council's approach to the 2027 Local Government Elections which will take place on 6 May 2027, coinciding with the Northern Ireland Assembly Elections. Work is ongoing in that regard, and this paper seeks to provide approvals for a number of areas to assist in the preparations for, and operations of, elections and associated Council business during and immediately after this period, namely: 1. Date of Annual Meeting of Council 2027 2. Delegated Authority — Operational/Strategic Decisions up to Annual Meeting 1. Date of Annual Meeting 2027 In accordance with legislation and Council Standing Orders, the Annual Meeting of Council must be held within 21 days of the Election, that is, by 27 May 2027. It should generally be held at 12noon unless otherwise stated. It is therefore proposed that the Annual Meeting of Council takes place on Thursday, 27 May 2027 at 12noon. 2. Delegated Authority — Operational/Strategic Decisions up to Annual Meeting As there will be no Council or Committee meetings during May 2027, authority is sought to delegate powers to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Mayor, to take urgent operational or strategic decisions during this period up to the Annual Meeting. Delegated authority is specifically sought from 27 April to 26 May 2027.
4.0	<u>Recommendation</u> It is recommended that Members: 1. Approve the date of Annual Meeting of Council as Thursday, 27 May 2027 at 12noon. 2. In the absence of meetings of Council or Committees during May 2027, approve authority to delegate powers to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Mayor, to take urgent operational or strategic decisions between 27 April 2027 and 26 May 2027

5.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u>	
	None	
6.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
6.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
6.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out	Operational requests in accordance with current processes
6.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
6.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out.	Operational requests in accordance with current processes

Appendices:	None
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Committee:	Corporate Services Committee
Date:	9 th September 2026
Report from:	Head of Governance & Communications

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Citywide

1.0	As part of efficiency savings in 2024, a decision was taken to cease the printing and distribution to 60,000 homes of the Citywide Magazine twice per year. Instead, a limited number would be printed and distributed to Council facilities and an online version would be placed on the Council's website and advertised through our social media channels. Online viewing numbers have reduced from 2024 to present as follows: Winter 2024: 1,649 views Summer 2024: 1,113 views Spring/Summer 2025: 276 views Spring 2026: 119 views
1.1	The overriding aim of Citywide is to advise Lisburn & Castlereagh households of the extensive work of the Council and its partners while promoting forthcoming events and opportunities. In addition to far fewer online views, engagement and participation in associated competitions has reduced significantly. Due to the significant work that occurs across Directorates to develop Citywide, options have been considered for future promotion of our collective work.
1.2	Option 1 - Retain the status quo - With this option, we would continue to invest Officer hours to develop articles and creation, predominantly, of an online magazine. Feedback has indicated a low desire for reading the online version and engagement with competitions has been low.
1.3	Option 2 - cease publication of Citywide - this would allow officers to focus their time on operational requirements whilst engagement with our Communications Team would need to explore increased ways of advertising forthcoming events and sharing of recent Council successes.
1.4	Option 3 - Return to a printed and delivered copy of Citywide in time for the festive period 2026. Officers have commenced work on this and believe this can be achieved. Development, printing and delivery to 60,000 households is estimated at £30,000. In taking forward this option, Officers would explore and include methods for engagement and feedback on the quality/content of the magazine to inform future decisions by the Council.
1.5	It is anticipated that the costs of production of a one off version of the Citywide magazine can be met from existing Finance & Corporate Services budget lines. Should this not be achievable, a year end draw against the reserves could be used to ensure an overall Corporate balanced budget.
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u> it is recommended that the Committee agrees to production and distribution of a 2026 Citywide magazine to our c60,000 households.

3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u>	
	Will be met from existing Finance & Corporate Services budget lines or through a draw against reserves at year end to achieve an overall corporate balanced budget.	
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	Yes
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out	N/A
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out.	N/A

Appendices:	Equality Screening
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Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Section 75 Equality and Good Relations Screening template (Oct 2022)

Part 1. Information about the activity/policy/project being screened

Name of the activity/policy/project

CityWide Residents' Magazine

Is this activity/policy/project – an existing one, a revised one, a new one?

This is a revision of an existing procedure in relation to the distribution of the magazine.

Background

In recognition of the poor viewing of Citywide in E format during the last 2 years, this activity is based on November 2026 issue of the magazine being printed and delivered to ratepayer households.

What are the intended aims/outcomes the activity/policy/project is trying to achieve?

The intended aims/outcomes of the activity are:

- To increase reach by ensuring information is delivered to every household.
- To increase awareness of council services, consultations and events.
- To address digital exclusion among older residents, vulnerable groups and those with limited internet access.
- To demonstrate transparency and accountability by proactively sharing information with residents.
- To continue to meet the needs of residents in relation to information provision.

Who is the activity/policy/project targeted at and who will benefit? Are there any expected benefits for specific Section 75 categories/groups from this activity/policy/project? If so, please explain.

The magazine is targeted at all households and businesses in the council area. The main objectives of the proposed activity are not targeted at and specific Section 75 groups.

Who initiated or developed the activity/policy/project?

The Corporate Communications Team within the Finance and Corporate Services Department.

Who owns and who implements the activity/policy/project?

Owned by Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council. Will be implemented by the Corporate Communications Team.

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the activity/policy/project?

Yes

If yes, give brief details of any significant factors.

- Financial implications due to budget pressures – the cost of print production and distribution is rising
- There is a focus on sustainability and environmental impacts of printing.

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the activity/policy/project will impact upon? Delete if not applicable

Staff

- Chief Executive
- Senior Management Team
- Heads of Service
- Corporate Communications Team

Service users

- Rate payers
- Local businesses

Voluntary/ community/ trade unions

- Various community and voluntary groups

Other

- Elected Members

Other policies/strategies/plans with a bearing on this activity/policy/project [

Name of policy/strategy/plan	Who owns or implements?
Corporate Plan	HR&OD
Digital Innovation Strategy	Portfolio Office

Available evidence

What evidence/information (qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered or considered to inform this activity/policy? Specify details for each Section 75 category.

Most up to date NISRA population data from Census 2021 (published 22/09/22)
[Lisburn and Castlereagh Census Data](#)

Given that we do not hold information on the categories of people who red CityWide, the following section has been based on the makeup of Elected Members of the council, as well as census data for the Council area. The proposal has also been informed by the low level of engagement with the electronic version of CityWide over the last two years, which has prompted consideration of alternative methods of distribution.

Section 75 Category	Details of evidence/information
Religious Belief	NI Census 2021 data for the Lisburn and Castlereagh area: 58% Protestant (or other Christian) 27% Catholic 2% Other 13% None We do not have information on the religious background of businesses or individuals who may access this magazine The Council does not hold information on the religious belief of Elected Members.

Political Opinion	The Local Government Election in May 2023 demonstrated the following weighting in the Borough’s political opinion. Note: only 52% of those eligible submitted a vote. <table><tr><td>DUP (%)</td><td>Alliance (%)</td><td>UUP (%)</td><td>SF (%)</td><td>SDLP (%)</td><td>Ind (%)</td></tr><tr><td>35</td><td>32.5</td><td>15</td><td>10</td><td>5</td><td>2.5</td></tr></table> The Council has 40 Elected Members drawn from the following political parties: DUP - 14 APNI - 13 UUP - 6 SF - 4 SDLP – 2 INDEPENDENT – 1	DUP (%)	Alliance (%)	UUP (%)	SF (%)	SDLP (%)	Ind (%)	35	32.5	15	10	5	2.5
DUP (%)	Alliance (%)	UUP (%)	SF (%)	SDLP (%)	Ind (%)								
35	32.5	15	10	5	2.5								
Racial Group	Using the same Census/boundary data indicates that just over 4% of the population were from an ethnic minority group.												
Age	The population in 2021 totalled 149,106: 28,331 (0-14) 44,731 (15-39) 49,205 (40-64) 26,839 (65+ years)												
Marital Status	For the 16+ population in relation to marital and civil partnerships: 33% single 52% married or civil partnership 3% separated 6% divorced or formerly in a civil partnership. 6% widowed or surviving partner from a civil partnership												
Sexual Orientation	The Census 2021 data indicates that 91% identified as straight or heterosexual, 2% of the household population identified as gay, lesbian,												

	bisexual or other sexual orientation, while 7% prefer not to say or not stated.
Men & Women Generally	The LCCC population (2021) was 51% female and 49% male. This reflects the overall NI position. Northern Ireland has a small but growing number of people who identify as trans (based on referrals to gender identity services and support groups) and it is likely that LCCC will have a small number of trans residents. LCCC Elected Members: • Female – 22.5% • Male – 77.5%
Disability	Published data from the 2021 Census indicates that 32% of the population had one or more long term health conditions.
People with and without Dependants	People with dependants includes those who care for children, older people, and those with disabilities. Limited information on carers is available; however, 2021 Census data indicates 14% of the council population reported providing some level of unpaid care and 31% of households have at least one dependant.

Needs, experiences and priorities

Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular activity/policy/decision? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories

Section 75 Category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
Religious Belief	

Political Opinion	No different needs or experiences identified in relation to religious belief or political opinion.
Racial Group	Council meetings and information should be accessible for everyone including people who do not have English as their first language. There is a need to ensure key corporate information can be made available in other languages where needed and is well promoted to new residents to the area and to those who may not have English as a first language.
Age	It is anticipated that some people in this category, for example older people, may prefer a hard copy magazine and/ or are less likely to have easy access to online channels.
Marital Status	No different needs or experiences identified for these groups in relation to the proposed changes.
Sexual Orientation	
Men & Women Generally	
Disability	People with different disabilities have different access needs when it comes to information. A printed residents' magazine may improve access for some residents who are not able to use digital channels; however, it may create barriers for people with visual impairments. Online magazines will still be accessible for those with sight impairment through Browsealoud software on the Council's website, or copies can be made available in braille.
Dependants	No different needs or experiences identified for these groups in relation to the proposed changes.

Part 2. Screening questions

1 What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this activity/policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories?

Section 75 Category	Details of likely impact – will it be positive or negative? If none anticipated, say none	Level of impact - major or minor* - see guidance below
Religious Belief	No differential impact as the proposed changes apply equally to all.	None
Political Opinion		
Racial Group		
Age		
Marital Status		
Sexual Orientation		
Men & Women Generally		
Disability	Providing a hard copy may improve access to Council information for some disabled people who experience barriers accessing digital information. However, people with visual impairments may experience barriers in accessing the printed format, which will be mitigated through continued availability of accessible online information and Braille copies on request.	Minor
Dependants	No different impact identified for these groups	None

* See Appendix 1 for details.

2(a) Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?

Section 75 Category	IF Yes, provide details	If No, provide details
Religious Belief		No opportunity identified
Political Opinion		No opportunity identified
Racial Group	People whose first language is not English may experience barriers in accessing information provided only in English. Where appropriate, consideration should be given to making key information available in alternative languages. Council could possibly do more to make those from racial minorities and newcomers to the area aware of council business, including meetings.	
Age		No further opportunities identified at this time
Marital Status		
Sexual Orientation		
Men & Women Generally		
Disability		
People with and without Dependents		

Equality Action Plan 2021-2025

Does the activity/policy/project being screened relate to an action in the Equality Action Plan 2021-2025? Yes/No If yes, specify which action.

No

2(b) DDA Disability Duties (see Disability Action Plan 2021-2025)

Does this policy/activity present opportunities to contribute to the actions in our Disability Action Plan:

- to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?
- to encourage the participation of disabled people in public life?

No

3 To what extent is the activity/policy/project likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Good Relations Category	Details of likely impact. Will it be positive or negative? [if no specific impact identified, say none]	Level of impact – minor/major*
Religious Belief	No direct impact on good relations for any of these groups identified in relation to the proposed changes.	N/A
Political Opinion		
Racial Group		

*See Appendix 1 for details.

4 Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Good Relations Category	IF Yes, provide details	If No, provide details
Religious Belief		No specific good relations opportunities identified
Political Opinion		
Racial Group		

Multiple identity

Provide details of any data on the impact of the activity/policy/project on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

Consideration was given to the potential implications of the proposed changes for the different equality categories, for example, persons with disabilities.

Part 3. Screening decision/outcome

Equality and good relations screening is used to identify whether there is a need to carry out a **full equality impact assessment** on a proposed policy or project.

There are 3 possible outcomes:

- 1) **Screen out** - no need for a full equality impact assessment and no mitigations required because no relevance to equality, no negative impacts identified or only very minor positive impacts for all groups. This may be the case for a purely technical policy for example.
- 2) **Screen out with mitigation** - no need for a full equality impact assessment but some minor potential impacts or opportunities to better promote equality and/or good relations identified, so mitigations appropriate. Much of our activity will probably fall into this category.
- 3) **Screen in for full equality impact assessment** – potential for significant and/or potentially negative impact identified for one or more groups so proposal requires a more detailed impact assessment. [See Equality Commission guidance on justifying a screening decision.]

Choose only one of these and provide reasons for your decision and ensure evidence is noted/referenced for any decision reached.

Screening Decision/Outcome	Reasons/Evidence
Option 1 Screen out – no equality impact assessment and no mitigation required [go to Monitoring section]	
Option 2 Screen out with mitigation – some potential impacts identified but they can be addressed with appropriate mitigation or some opportunities to	It has been concluded that there is no need to carry out a full equality impact assessment on the proposal to publish hard copies of CityWide.

better promote equality and/or good relations identified [complete mitigation section below]	However potential for minor negative impact was identified for those whose first language isn't English or those with visual impairments - see Mitigation section below.
Option 3 Screen in for a full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) [If option 3, complete timetabling and prioritising section below]	

Mitigation (Only relevant to Option 2)

Can the activity/policy/project plan be amended or an alternative activity/policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations? If so, give the **reasons** to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative activity/policy and ensure the mitigations are included in a revised/updated policy or plan.

It is recognised that, whilst publishing hard copies of CityWide will benefit some groups, this may not be accessible to everyone, for example, people with visual impairments or people whose first language is not English.

Those with visual impairments can avail of the online version with Browsealoud software or request a copy in braille. Where English is not a first language a translated copy can be requested.

Timetabling and prioritising for full EQIA (only relevant to Option 3)

If the activity/policy has been '**screened in**' for full equality impact assessment, give details of any factors to be considered and the next steps for progressing the EQIA, including a proposed timetable.

N/A

Is the activity/policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities? Yes/No. If yes, please provide details.

No

Part 4. Monitoring

Public authorities should consider the guidance contained in the Commission's Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007).

Effective monitoring will help a public authority identify any future adverse impact arising from the activity/policy which may lead the public authority to conduct an equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and activity/policy development.

What will be monitored and how? What specific equality monitoring will be done? Who will undertake and sign-off the monitoring of this activity/policy and on what frequency? Please give details: The distribution arrangements will be reviewed following the publication of each edition of CityWide. The following will be monitored:

- Complaints and unsolicited feedback
- Regular feedback from Citywide surveys
- Hard copy stock levels in community locations
- Feedback from focus groups or consultations.

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

	Position/Job Title	Date
Screened by: Judith McNamee	Head of Governance & Communications	2.9.26
Reviewed by: Annie Wilson	Equality Officer	03.09.2026
Approved by: -		

Note: On completion of the screening exercise, a copy of the completed Screening Report should be:

- approved and 'signed off' by a senior manager responsible for the activity/policy

- included with Committee reports, as appropriate
- sent to the Equality Officer for the quarterly screening report to consultees, internal reporting and publishing on the LCCC website
- shared with relevant colleagues
- made available to the public on request.

Evidence and documents referenced in the screening report should also be available if requested.

Appendix 1 – Equality Commission guidance on equality impact

*Major impact:

- a) The policy/project is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
- b) Potential equality matters are unknown, because, for example, there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and it would be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them;
- c) Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;
- d) Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are concerns amongst affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;
- e) The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
- f) The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

Minor impact

- a) The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
- b) The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;
- c) Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;

- d) By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

No impact (none)

- a) The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations;
- b) The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

Updated Template @ Oct 2022

Committee:	Corporate Services Committee
Date:	9 th September 2026
Report from:	Head of Governance & Communication

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Annual Somme Pilgrimage

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>	
1.1	At the Corporate Services Committee Meeting held on 13 September 2023, it was agreed that representation at the Somme from this Council would be the Mayor of the Day, the Chairperson of Corporate Services, the Chief Executive or their nominee plus up to 2 Members who have not previously represented the Council at the Somme, thereby keeping to 1 vehicle.	
1.2	Attached at Appendix 1 is a highlight report following the trip in July 2026.	
1.3	With Local Government Elections planned for May 2027, there would be insufficient time through our governance processes, post-election, to agree alternative Somme attendance arrangements. As such, it is proposed that the arrangements outlined at 1.1 continue for 2027 and a report be brought to the new Corporate Services Committee early in the term of the new administration.	
1.4	Work will commence in the near future to allow flights and accommodation to be secured at best value to the Council.	
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u>	
2.1	It is recommended that Members: • Note the report from on the 2026 Somme Pilgrimage; and • Agrees attendance at the 2027 Somme Pilgrimage as outlined in the report.	
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u>	
	Funding exists within existing budget lines to support this initiative.	
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out The proposal is in accordance with agreed Council policy.	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No

4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out. The proposal will have no detrimental impact on rural needs	
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Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Report from the Chief Executive of the 2026 Somme Pilgrimage
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Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
The Battle of the Somme Commemoration Visit:
29th June – 2nd July 2026



Introduction

On the morning of Monday 29th June 2026, a delegation from Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council consisting of:

- The Mayor (Councillor Brian Higginson), the Vice Chair of Corporate Services Committee (Councillor Ross McLernon), Councillor Jessica Bamford, Councillor Nicola Parker and David Burns (Chief Executive)

travelled to France to attend the 110th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme.

Each delegate was given a detailed reading guide to the locations to be visited. The brief had been prepared by Dr Ciaran Toal, Research Officer at the Irish Linen Centre & Lisburn Museum and highlighted those soldiers who gave their lives, with specific links to the Lisburn and Castlereagh area. For this pilgrimage, accommodation was secured in Amiens.

Tuesday 30th June 2026

The day started with an early morning visit to the Ulster Tower and Thiepval Woods. It was known that a VVIP would be in attendance for the 110th anniversary services the following day and an early visit would provide Members with the opportunity to spend time at the Ulster Tower with minimal interruption.

A tour of Thiepval Woods was the first official element of our itinerary where we met Austin, a volunteer from the Somme Association. Members joined a pre-arranged tour of the Thiepval Woods, owned and preserved by the Somme Association. These woods were the starting point for the allied forces prior to attacking the German lines on 1st July 1916. The Somme Association had preserved and reinstated some of the trenches to provide a feel for the living conditions and risk that existed on the front line. Dugouts of both the French and allied forces were visible, as was a mortar launch area. In line with a previously agreed commitment by the Council, a donation was made to the Somme Association for this volunteer led tour.



From Thiepval Woods, the next stop of the day was the Canadian National Memorial at Vimy Ridge. The French Army suffered 150,000 casualties in several battles to try

and recapture the ridge from the Germans over several years. In 1917, the task was then given to the Canadian Corps of 4 divisions, the first time that the Canadian Expeditionary Force participated in a battle together. The ridge was heavily defended by 4 divisions of the German 6th Army. Tunnels were dug by Welsh and English miners to enable the Canadian Corps to advance to the front line underground and, accompanied by a well-planned artillery barrage, the Canadians captured the ridge in a day and all their objectives in 3 days, with the loss of 3,598 soldiers killed and 7,000 wounded. An unknown number of Germans were killed and over 4,000 taken prisoner. The fierce battle became a symbol of Canadian national achievement and sacrifice. Today a 100 hectare (250 acres) portion of the battlefield (including the ridge) serves as a memorial park, staffed by Canadian students on voluntary secondments.



Vimy Ridge Canadian War Memorial

The delegation then made its way towards Ypres, Belgium, a historic city devastated during the Great War (1914-1918).

On route to Ypres, the delegation visited the Irish Peace Tower at Messines and visited the memorial to the battle, which saw the 36th (Ulster Division) and the 16th (Irish) Division fighting side by side.

The plaque at Messines reads:

“From the crest of this ridge which was the scene of the horrific carnage in the First World War on which we have built a peace park and round tower to commemorate the thousands of young men from all parts of Ireland who fought a common enemy, defended democracy and the right of all nations, whose graves are in shockingly uncountable numbers and those who have no graves, we condemn war and the futility

of war. We repudiate and denounce violence, aggression, intimidation, threats and unfriendly behaviour.

As Protestants and Catholics, we apologise for the terrible deeds we have done to each other and ask forgiveness. From this sacred shrine of remembrance, where soldiers of all nationalities, creeds and political allegiances were united in death, we appeal to all people in Ireland to help build a peaceful and tolerant society. Let us remember the solidarity and trust that developed between Protestant and Catholic soldiers when they served together in these trenches.

As we jointly mark the armistice of 11 November 1918, when the guns fell silent along this western front, we affirm that a fitting tribute to the principles for which men and women from the island of Ireland died in both World Wars would be permanent peace."



Irish Peace Tower, Messines

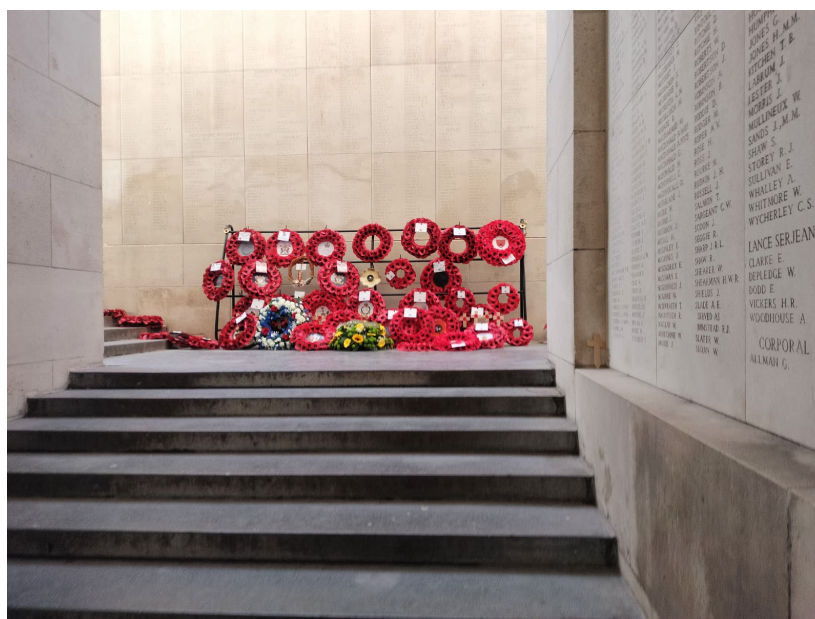
Following the Irish Peace Tower visit, a stop was made nearby at the Messines Ridge British Cemetery. Here, the Mayor took some personal time to visit the grave of his Great Uncle, Rifleman 2534, Albert Hawthorne of the Royal Irish Rifles who lost his life in this area on 2nd September 1918, not long before the end of WW1.



The grave of Rifleman 2534, Albert Hawthorne, Royal Irish Rifles and Mayor's deceased Great Uncle

The day finished in Ypres where a visit was made to St George's Church, a church and school built in Ypres for British soldiers and their families after the first World War, located there to assist in the rebuild of the city. Later in the evening the delegation participated in a wreath laying ceremony at the Menin Memorial Gate. On every day of the year, The Last Post is sounded here at 8.00 pm in honour of United Kingdom and Commonwealth personnel who fought and died in the Ypres Salient prior to August 1917. The Memorial lists 54,000 names of those who died in the Ypres Salient and who have no known graves. In recent years, The Menin Gate was shrouded in scaffold. This year, refurbishment works had concluded and this allowed the service to return to its usual location underneath the stone structure.

Following the service, the delegation made its 2 hour journey back to Amiens.



Service of Remembrance at Menin Gate, Ypres

Wednesday 1st July 2026

1st July 2026 was 110 years since the Battle of the Somme. In recognition of this milestone, it was known that HRH Princess Anne would be in attendance at the Thiepval and Ulster Tower services. As such, additional arrangements and security measures were in place to reach both venues.

An early start was planned to support a stop at Martinsart cemetery where, on the evening of June 28, 1916, a few days before the commencement of the Battle of the Somme, men of the 13th Battalion of the Royal Irish Rifles were moving out of the French Village of Martinsart. Their instruction was to take up forward positions on the Somme when they were hit by a German artillery shell. Fourteen men died immediately and a further nine died in the days that followed as a result of their wounds. Of the twenty three who died, ten were from Hillsborough, eleven from Dromore and two were from Banbridge.



Martinsart Cemetery

Afterwards, the delegation made its way to the Lochnagar mine crater, the largest man-made mine crater created in the First World War on the Western Front. It was laid by the British Army's 179th Tunnelling Company Royal Engineers underneath a German strongpoint called "Schwaben Höhe". The mine was exploded two minutes before 07.30 am Zero Hour at the launch of the British offensive against the German lines on the morning of 1st July 1916.



Thereafter, the delegation was directed to Henry Potez Airport on the outskirts of Albert to meet with other remembrance service attendees. Transport was provided from the airport to Thiepval, Ulster Tower and Guillemont.

The delegation, and other Councils, first attended the Commonwealth Service of Remembrance at Thiepval. The Thiepval Tower is inscribed with the names of more than 72,000 soldiers who fell in the Somme region in the first World War where their bodies remain missing or unidentified. Occasionally, bodies are recovered from the French countryside and are given a full military burial. Where their identity is known, their name is removed from the Thiepval memorial.



Service at Thiepval Memorial to the Missing

Following this service, the delegation attended the Ulster Tower and had lunch, provided by the Somme Association. A remembrance service was held shortly thereafter to commemorate the Ulstermen who fought and died in the region.



Service of Remembrance at the Ulster Tower

From there, onward travel was provided to Guillemont for a service of remembrance for those from across Ireland. Part of this service was delivered in Irish and wreaths were laid by a number of dignitaries. During each of the three services the delegation laid a wreath on behalf of the people of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council.



Service of Remembrance at Guillemont

Thursday 2nd July 2024

Following breakfast, the delegation made its way to Paris Charles de Gaulle airport for the journey home.

Committee:	Corporate Services Committee
Date:	9 th September 2026
Report from:	Head of Governance & Communications

Item for:	Noting
Subject:	Council Support for the Armed Forces Community

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>																
1.1	This paper focuses on the Council support for the Armed Forces Community, and specifically: 1. Outlines the Council's ongoing commitments under the Armed Forces Covenant; 2. Provides an update of the support offered, at a recent meeting (13/08/26) with the Veterans' Commissioner; and 3. Addresses a Notice of Motion, dated 14/04/26, raised in respect of the Armed Forces Covenant.																
1.2	At the Corporate Services Committee on 13th May 2026, in relation to the Armed Forces Covenant, it was proposed by Alderman Porter and seconded by Alderman Gregg that a report be provided to the Committee detailing: • What support the council offers and has this been itemised? • What difference does this support make? • How can this support make a difference going forward?																
1.3	The paper in the attached appendix addresses these points. The Council's support is summarised in the table below: <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Type of Support</th><th>Examples</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Strategic Support</td><td>Armed Forces Covenant, Veterans' Champion, policy development</td></tr> <tr> <td>Financial Support</td><td>Covenant Fund programme, VE Day grants, Thiepval contribution, sponsorship support</td></tr> <tr> <td>Civic Recognition</td><td>Armed Forces Day, VE Day, VJ Day, homecomings, commemorations</td></tr> <tr> <td>Advocacy and Representation</td><td>Attendance at national and regional Armed Forces events</td></tr> <tr> <td>Information and Signposting</td><td>Veteran webpages, Veterans Handbook, support referrals</td></tr> <tr> <td>Facilities and Assets</td><td>Use of parks, venues and public spaces</td></tr> <tr> <td>Partnership Working</td><td>Engagement with Royal British Legion, Veterans Commissioner, MOD, Armed Forces charities and community organisations</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Type of Support	Examples	Strategic Support	Armed Forces Covenant, Veterans' Champion, policy development	Financial Support	Covenant Fund programme, VE Day grants, Thiepval contribution, sponsorship support	Civic Recognition	Armed Forces Day, VE Day, VJ Day, homecomings, commemorations	Advocacy and Representation	Attendance at national and regional Armed Forces events	Information and Signposting	Veteran webpages, Veterans Handbook, support referrals	Facilities and Assets	Use of parks, venues and public spaces	Partnership Working	Engagement with Royal British Legion, Veterans Commissioner, MOD, Armed Forces charities and community organisations
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Partnership Working	Engagement with Royal British Legion, Veterans Commissioner, MOD, Armed Forces charities and community organisations																
1.4	The Council's support delivers a range of social, community and civic benefits, including: supporting veterans' wellbeing, strengthening community cohesions, preserving local heritage, raising awareness of available support, enhancing civic pride and leveraging external resources.																
1.5	The support makes a significant difference by: supporting covenant accreditation and best practice, improving veteran engagement, strengthening community connections, economic and tourism benefits and supporting future generations.																

1.6	Since signing the Armed Forces Covenant in 2017, LCCC has demonstrated a sustainable and visible commitment to supporting serving personnel, veterans and their families. Through financial investment, civic leadership, commemorative activities, partnership working and practical support the Council has strengthened community connections, improved veteran wellbeing and promoted recognition of military service.	
1.7	LCCC's hosting of the Armed Forces Day in 05/2027, together with the ongoing engagement with the veterans' organisations and community partners will ensure continued support for the Armed Forces community across the council area.	
1.8	A meeting was held on 13/08/26 with the Veterans' Commissioner, LCC Veterans' Champion and the Mayor. This was a positive meeting and a number of actions as detailed below were agreed, which will help ensure the continued positive working relationship is maintained and demonstrates the Council's ongoing commitment to our veterans: • To explore options to support concessionary arrangements for Vitality through a Veterans Card and to engage with the Veterans Commissioner in continuing to provide support through the council's Community Planning and Community Wellbeing programmes; • To explore opportunities for the Council to host entrepreneurial workshops for Veterans and organise breakfast meetings targeted for veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan; • To explore the availability of the Island Hall to host other events; • To send the link from the council's website to the Veterans Commissioner in order to promote advocacy support; and • To consider veterans within the context of career fairs.	
1.9	A Notice of Motion, dated 14/04/26, from Councillor Hynds, asked Council to: • Write to the Minister of Finance to request a review of how the current rates system applied to serving personnel, with a view to ensuring fairness and appropriate recognition of their service; and • Explore what additional support, guidance or signposting can be provided at a local level to assist serving personnel in accessing any existing reliefs or support schemes for which they may be eligible	
1.10	This report aims to address the points raised in the Notice of Motion and correspondence is ongoing with the Minister of Finance.	
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u> It is recommended the Committee notes the briefing paper on LCCC support for the Armed Forces Community	
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u> N/A	
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out	N/A

4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out.	N/A

Appendix:	Briefing Paper: Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Support for the Armed Forces Community
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Briefing Paper: Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Support for the Armed Forces Community

Purpose

This briefing paper outlines:

- Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council's (LCCC) commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant;
- Summarises support provided to the Armed Forces community;
- Considers the impact of this support; and
- Highlights opportunities to strengthen outcomes in the future.

Background

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council signed the Armed Forces Covenant in 2017, reflecting longstanding cross-party support for serving personnel, veterans, reservists and their families across the council area.

The Covenant is a public pledge that recognises the contribution of the Armed Forces community and seeks to ensure that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly and are not disadvantaged because of their service.

The Covenant encourages cooperation between local authorities, statutory agencies, businesses, charities and community organisations to provide practical support and improve access to services. It is intended to be a two-way arrangement, encouraging members of the Armed Forces community to contribute positively to civic and community life.

LCCC continues to work closely with the Northern Ireland Veterans' Commissioner and the Northern Ireland Veterans' Support Office to support local veterans and their families.

Council Support for the Armed Forces Community

Strategic and Advocacy Support

- **Armed Forces Covenant Commitment**
 - Signed the Armed Forces Covenant in 2017
 - Ongoing commitment to promoting Covenant principles across council services and activities

- Civic Events Policy review undertaken in 2025 to identify and strengthen activities contributing to Covenant commitments
- **Veterans' Champion**
 - Alderman Tinsley serves as the Council's Veterans Champion
 - Provides support and advocacy for local veterans
 - Maintains regular engagement with the Northern Ireland Veterans' Commissioner's Office
- **Information and Signposting**
 - Dedicated veterans' webpage providing information on support services
 - Access to the Northern Ireland Veterans' Support Committee Veterans Handbook
 - Signposting veterans and families to relevant statutory, charitable and support organisations

Financial Support

● **Veterans Engagement Programme**

In April 2021, LCCC successfully secured £20,000 through the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust's Force for Change Programme.

The programme focused on:

- Reducing social isolation
- Building relationships between veterans and community groups
- Improving health and wellbeing
- Enhancing social, digital and research skills

The project involved 30 participants and culminated in the publication of *Veteran Life: Untold Stories of the People Behind the Uniform*.

- **VE Day 80 Community Grant Fund (2025)**
 - Grant fund launched in March 2025
 - 86 community groups awarded grants
 - Total funding distributed: £59,525
 - Supported local commemorative activities and community engagement initiatives

- **Festival of Remembrance**

- Key sponsor of the Royal British Legion Northern Ireland Festival of Remembrance at Belfast Waterfront Hall in November 2024.

- **Thiepval Memorial Event**

- Contributed £5,000 toward the Thiepval Fireworks Display in November 2024, supporting the post-covid return of a significant commemorative event.

Civic and Commemorative Activities

- **Armed Forces Day**

- Hosted UK Armed Forces Day in 2019
- Attendance exceeded 15,000 visitors
- Preparations underway to host Armed Forces Day again in 2027 following a successful bid in 2025

- **Homecoming and Military Recognition Events**

- Hosted a homecoming parade and reception for 2nd Battalion, The Rifles (2 Rifles) following deployment to Iraq (March 2018)
- Hosted a Beating Retreat event marking the 50th anniversary of the Royal Irish Rangers (June 2018)
- In November 2018 a weekend of activities were held to mark the 100th anniversary of the formation of the RAF and a Beacon lighting ceremony was held at Castle Gardens to mark the centenary of the end of WW1
- In August 2020 events were held at sunrise and sunset to mark the 75th anniversary of VJ Day, the end of WW2
- Supported the Presentation of the Shamrock ceremony for the 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Regiment in Hillsborough (March 2026)

- **Veteran Recognition**

- Reception for veteran Mark Clougherty in recognition of his charity cycle challenge supporting Help for Heroes (2020)
- Freedom of the City bestowed to veteran Tommy Doherty (Apr 2026)

- **UDR and Greenfinches Commemorations**

- Hosted a thanksgiving service marking the 50th anniversary of the UDR Greenfinches (2023)
- Supported the 50th anniversary of the UDR in Wallace Park (2021)

- **VE Day 80 Commemorations (2025)**

Council-led events included:

- Period-themed tea dance in Market Square
- Historical exhibitions and talks at the Irish Linen Centre
- Civic proclamation and flag raising ceremony
- Royal British Legion wreath laying ceremony
- Beating Retreat and beacon lighting
- Castle Gardens commemorative event featuring the Band of the Royal Irish Regiment
- Service of Thanksgiving at Seymour Street Methodist Church
- Community grant programme supporting local initiatives

- **VJ Day 80 Commemorations (2025)**

- NMBVA Pantridge Parade and wreath laying ceremony
- Civic dinner with proceeds donated to the Gurkha Welfare Trust
- Royal British Legion wreath laying event

- **Annual Events**

- Armed Forces Day flag raising ceremony
- Somme Commemorations and Pilgrimage
- Lisburn Half Marathon Bombing memorial service and wreath laying
- £1.5k pa and logistics support in kind plus member attendance at RBL remembrance service each November
- Royal British Legion Poppy appeal launched and supported by the Mayor
- Civic illuminations recognising:
 - The Battle of the Somme
 - Remembrance Day
 - Significant military anniversaries.

Representation and Partnership Working

LCCC representatives have attended:

- Northern Ireland Veterans Awards (2022-2025)
- Armed Forces Covenant Convention, Glasgow (2025)
- VE Day 80 National Commemorations, London (2025)
- MOD VJ Day Commemorations (2025)
- Army Benevolent Fund Belfast Blitz Concert (2026)

These engagements demonstrate active participation in regional and national initiatives supporting veterans and serving personnel.

In-Kind and Facility Support

LCCC has provided access to council facilities and land for Armed Forces-related activities including:

- RAF Cadet drone training at Billy Neill Country Park (2025)
- Remembrance Service at Moat Park (2025)
- 50th anniversary UDR commemoration in Wallace Park (2021)

This support helps reduce event costs whilst enabling community-based military and veterans' activities.

The Council's support can be categorised as follows:

Type of Support	Examples
Strategic Support	Armed Forces Covenant, Veterans Champion, policy development
Financial Support	Covenant Fund programme, VE Day grants, Thiepval contribution, sponsorship support
Civic Recognition	Armed Forces Day, VE Day, VJ Day, homecomings, commemorations
Advocacy and Representation	Attendance at national and regional Armed Forces events
Information and Signposting	Veteran webpages, Veterans Handbook, support referrals
Facilities and Assets	Use of parks, venues and public spaces
Partnership Working	Engagement with Royal British Legion, Veterans' Commissioner, MOD, Armed Forces charities and community organisations

What Difference Does This Support Make?

The Council's support delivers a range of social, community and civic benefits.

Supporting Veterans Wellbeing - Projects funded through the Armed Forces Covenant Fund have helped tackle social isolation, improve wellbeing and develop skills among veterans.

Strengthening Community Cohesion - Events such as Armed Forces Day, VE Day and VJ Day bring together veterans, serving personnel, families and the wider community, fostering better understanding and mutual respect.

Preserving Local Heritage - Commemorative events help preserve important historical narratives and ensure future generations understand the sacrifices made by service personnel.

Raising Awareness of Available Support - The Council's webpages, signposting activity and Veterans Champion role help veterans navigate available services and support networks.

Enhancing Civic Pride - Hosting nationally significant events reinforces Lisburn and Castlereagh's reputation as a city that values and recognises military service.

Leveraging External Resources - Council involvement has helped secure external funding and attract visitors, participants and community organisations to local events and initiatives.

How Can This Support Make a Difference Going Forward?

Supporting Covenant Accreditation and Best Practice - Continued investment and recording of Covenant related activity can strengthen the Council's reputation as a leading Covenant authority and support future recognition opportunities.

Improving Veteran Engagement - Building upon the success of previous programmes could deliver:

- Additional wellbeing initiatives
- Skills and employability programmes
- Increased peer-support networks
- Greater engagement with younger veterans

Strengthening Community Connections - Future events can continue to bring together civilian and military communities, reducing isolation and promoting inclusion.

Economic and Tourism Benefits - Hosting Armed Forces Day 2027 presents a significant opportunity to:

- Increase visitor numbers
- Generate local economic activity
- Showcase the city region
- Enhance civic pride and national profile

Supporting Future Generations - Partnerships with cadets, schools and youth organisations can help educate younger people about military history, service and citizenship

Conclusion

Since signing the Armed Forces Covenant in 2017, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council has demonstrated a sustained and visible commitment to supporting serving personnel, veterans and their families. Through financial investment, civic leadership, commemorative activities, partnership working and practical support, the Council has helped strengthen community connections, improve veteran wellbeing and promote recognition of military service.

With the planned hosting of Armed Forces Day 2027 and continued engagement with veterans' organisations and community partners, LCCC is well placed to build upon this work and further enhance support for the Armed Forces community across the Council area.

Committee:	Corporate Services
Date:	9 th September 2026
Report from:	Head of Corporate Communications & Administration

Item for:	Noting
Subject:	Armed Forces Day 2027 – Working Group

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>
1.1	Lisburn hosted a very successful Armed Forces Day in 2019 with excellent community and partner feedback. Over 15,000 people attended the event in Lisburn City and Wallace Park, which provided the backdrop for a diverse range of family friendly attractions.
1.2	This Committee, at its June 2024 meeting, agreed that Council would submit an application to the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association, (RFCA) to host Armed Forces for 2027 and that £135k would be secured from reserves to support the event.
1.3	RFCA has subsequently confirmed that this Council have been successful in their bid to host the event in 2027. Officers have commenced work in line with this, firstly by undertaking a site visit to Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council who hosted Armed Forces Day this year.
1.4	To progress the event, a Member and Officer Working Group will commence to develop a draft programme for submission to this Committee for approval, together with the required screening documentation and anticipated budget considerations.
	<u>Armed Forces Day Elected Member and Officer Working Group Composition</u>
1.5	In April 2025 this Committee agreed that the following composition would be employed for ad-hoc working groups. ➤ Six places allocated through running a D'Hondt process in the same way as allocations are made to external groups; ➤ The Mayor; ➤ The Chairperson of the reporting Committee and, ➤ That the appointment of the Chairperson of the working group be allocated via a further D'Hondt process in line with that for appointing positions of responsibility.
1.6	The Committee further agreed that in relation to the term of membership for ad hoc working groups operating beyond a single Council term: ➤ the representation of the Mayor and the Chair of the Committee change in accordance with the outcome of the Annual Meeting; and ➤ the Chair and Membership of the working group remain consistent as far as is possible so as to maintain stability and continuity for the duration of the project.

1.7	Officers in attendance will be from the following units:	
	1. Parks and Amenities 2. Corporate Communications and Administration 3. Health and Safety 4. Communities 5. Economic Development and; 6. Other officers as required	
1.8	For the Armed Forces Day 2027 working group this results in the following party positions, based on the agreement in April 2025:	
	1. Mayor of the day 2. Chair Corporate Services Committee 3. 2 x DUP 4. 1 x Alliance 5. 1 x UUP 6. 1 x SF 7. 1 x SDLP	
1.9	Nominations from political parties will now be progressed.	
1.10	Attached for Members' information, are the April 2025 report to Corporate Services Committee on Membership of Ad Hoc Working Groups within Council and the d'Hondt table for appointing to all outside body positions 2023-2027.	
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u> It is recommended that Members note: 1. the composition of the Armed Forces Day Working Group.	
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u> Estimated cost: £135k funded from reserves in 2027.	
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
	Programme to be screened separate to events calendar.	
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out.	
	Programme to be screened separate to events calendar.	

Appendices:	Appendix 1 - April 2025 CSC report on Membership of Ad Hoc Working Groups Appendix 2 - d'Hondt table for appointing to all outside body positions 2023-2027
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Committee:	Corporate Services Committee
Date:	9 April 2025
Report from:	Head of Corporate Communications and Administration

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Membership of Ad Hoc Working Groups within Council

1.0

Background and Context

At the Corporate Services Committee Meeting on 13 November 2024, Members discussed appointments to ad hoc working groups and the process for appointing a Chairperson. It was agreed that Officers would explore options to improve this process, ensuring fairness, consistency, transparency and democratic representation.

1.1

Ad Hoc Working Groups

Ad hoc working groups are established to support events or initiatives (e.g. NI Centenary, Royal Hillsborough, VE 80). Each group operates under clearly defined terms of reference outlining its purpose, scope and membership as agreed by the reporting committee.

The membership of ad hoc working groups has traditionally included:

- One representative from each party
- The Mayor
- The Chairperson of the relevant Committee(s).

The Chairperson is typically selected by agreement among group members at their first meeting.

1.2

Review of Other Councils

To inform this review, other councils were surveyed regarding their approach to managing working groups:

Council	Membership	Process for appointment of Chairperson
Belfast City Council	One representative from each political party as registered with the Electoral Commission.	Agreed by Members at the first meeting and serves until the next Annual Meeting.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Six Elected Members are appointed using the D'Hondt method.	Agreed by Members at the first meeting.
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council	Number of Members appointed and method of appointment agreed by committee. D'Hondt is normally used.	Agreed by Members at the first meeting.
Derry City and Strabane District Council	One representative from each political party plus one Independent Member.	Agreed by Members at the first meeting.
Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon City Council	Two representatives from larger Parties (DUP and Sinn Fein) and one Member from the smaller Parties (UUP, Alliance, TUV and SDLP) plus one Independent Member and the Chair of the reporting committee.	Chairperson of the reporting committee assumes the role of chair of the working group. If there is no natural reporting committee the Chair is agreed by the Members at the first meeting.
Ards and North Down Borough Council	One representative from each major political party, plus one nomination between all smaller parties and independents.	Agreed by Members at the first meeting.
Mid Ulster District Council	Ten members allocated through D'Hondt.	Appointed using the D'Hondt method.

1.3 **Positions of Responsibility Using D'Hondt**

In March 2023, LCCC adopted the D'Hondt method to allocate positions of responsibility at the beginning of the new term of Council.

1.4 **Appointments to Outside Bodies using D'Hondt**

In September 2023, it was further agreed to use the D'Hondt method for appointing Members to outside bodies, with a separate table created for these appointments.

1.5 **Proposed Membership of LCCC Ad Hoc Working Groups**

Following feedback at the Corporate Services Committee meeting, two options are proposed for consideration to determine the membership of ad hoc working groups.

Option 1

	• One representative from each political party registered with the Electoral Commission • The Mayor • The Chairperson of the reporting committee Option 2 • Allocate 6 places through running a D'Hondt process in the same way as allocations are made to external groups • The Mayor • The Chairperson of the reporting Committee		
1.6	Appointment of Chairperson The appointment of the Chairperson will be allocated via a further D'Hondt process in line with the process for appointing positions of responsibility. Member Services will keep detailed records of all allocations to manage nominations as required.		
1.7	Term of Membership For ad hoc working groups operating beyond a single Council term, it is proposed that: • The representation of the Mayor and Chair of the Committee changes in accordance with the outcome of the Annual Meeting. • The Chairperson and membership of the working group remain consistent as far as possible to maintain stability and continuity for the duration of the project.		
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u> It is recommended that Members: • Consider the two options outlined in the report for membership of ad hoc working groups and confirm the preferred approach. • Approve the recommendation in relation to the appointment of the Chairperson. • Approve the recommendation in relation to the term of membership.		
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u> None		
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>		
4.1	<table> <tr> <td>Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?</td><td>Yes</td></tr> </table>	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	Yes
Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	Yes		

4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out The proposed changes enhance democratic fairness and transparency without adversely affecting any Section 75 group. No significant impacts requiring mitigation were identified.	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out. The proposed changes are procedural and aim to improve governance. No negative impact on any rural dwellers is anticipated.	

Appendices:	Appendix 1: Equality Screening
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POSITION	PARTY	Outside Body/Working Group
1	DUP (1)	Belfast Region City Deal Engagement Forum
2	ALL (1)	Age Friendly Champion
3	DUP (2)	Sport Lisburn Castlereagh
4	ALL (2)	Community Advice Lisburn & Castlereagh
5	UUP (1)	Belfast Region City Deal Engagement Forum
6	DUP (3)	Community Advice Lisburn & Castlereagh
7	ALL (3)	Sport Lisburn & Castlereagh
8	SF (1)	Belfast Dublin Eastern Economic Corridor
9	DUP (4)	Belfast Dublin Eastern Economic Corridor
10	ALL (4)	Belfast Dublin Eastern Economic Corridor
11	UUP (2)	Lagan Valley Regional Park
12	DUP (5)	Belfast Region City Deal Engagement Forum
13	ALL (5)	Strategic Community Planning Partnership
14	DUP (6)	Belfast Regional Tourism Partnership
15	ALL (6)	Belfast Region City Deal Engagement Forum
16	SDLP (1)	Belfast Regional Tourism Partnership
17	SF (2)	Diversity Champion

POSITION	PARTY	Outside Body/Working Group
18	DUP (7)	Eastside Partnership Board
19	UUP (3)	Strategic Community Planning Partnership
20	ALL (7)	Strategic Community Planning Partnership
21	DUP (8)	Strategic Community Planning Partnership
22	ALL (8)	Lagan Valley Hospital Multi Agency Group
23	DUP (9)	Laurelhill Sports Zone
24	UUP (4)	Knockagh Monument Joint Committee
25	ALL (9)	Sustainable NI's All Party Group on Sustainable Development
26	DUP (10)	Lagan Valley Regional Park
27	SF (3)	Mental Health Champion
28	ALL (10)	LDP Spatial Working Group (a) Metropolitan Spatial Working Group (b) Neighbouring Council Spatial Working Group
29	DUP (11)	Knockagh Monument Joint Committee
30	UUP (5)	LDP Spatial Working Group (a) Metropolitan Spatial Working Group (b) Neighbouring Council Spatial Working Group
31	ALL (11)	Parenting Champion
32	DUP (12)	Somme Advisory Council
33	ALL (12)	NI Assembly All Party Group on Climate Action
34	DUP (13)	Parenting Champion

POSITION	PARTY	Outside Body/Working Group
35	SDLP (2)	Sustainable NI's All Party Group on Sustainable Development
36	SF (4)	NI Assembly All Party Group on Climate Action
37	DUP (4)	Lagan Navigation Trust
38	UUP (6)	NILGA's Regional Elected Member Development Working Group
39	ALL (13)	Somme Advisory Council
40	IND (1)	NILGA Strategic Policy Network
41	DUP (15)	Ulster Grand Prix & Bike Week Steering Group
42	ALL (14)	Parenting Champion
43	DUP (16)	Lagan Valley Hospital Multi Agency Group
44	ALL (15)	Declined the position
45	UUP (7)	Ulster Grand Prix & Bike Week Steering Group
46	DUP (17)	NILGA's NI Strategic Migration Partnership
47	ALL (16)	Declined the position
48	SF (5)	Lagan Navigation Trust
49	DUP (18)	NI Local Government Partnership on Traveller Issues
50	ALL (17)	Area Integrated Partnership Board (allocated August 2024)
51	UUP (8)	Area Integrated Partnership Board (allocated August 2024)

POSITION	PARTY	Outside Body/Working Group
52	DUP (19)	Lagan Valley Regional Park (allocated September 2024) Resigned from position 22 06 2026
53	ALL (18)	Local Economic Partnership (nominated June 2025)
54	DUP (20)	Local Economic Partnership (nominated June 2025)
55	ALL (19)	Local Economic Partnership (nominated June 2025)
56	SDLP (3)	Walking Champion (tbc)
57	SF (6)	Armed Forces Day Working Group (tbc)
58	DUP (21)	Armed Forces Day Working Group (tbc)
59	UUP (9)	Armed Forces Day Working Group (tbc)
60	ALL (20)	Armed Forces Day Working Group (tbc)
61	DUP (22)	Armed Forces Day Working Group (tbc)
62	ALL (21)	Armed Forces Day Working Group (tbc)
63	DUP (23)	
64	UUP (10)	
65	ALL (22)	
66	DUP (24)	
67	SF (7)	
68	ALL (23)	

POSITION	PARTY	Outside Body/Working Group
69	DUP (25)	
70	UUP (11)	
71	ALL (24)	
72	DUP (26)	
73	ALL (25)	
74	DUP (27)	
75	SDLP (4)	
76	SF (8)	
77	DUP (28)	
78	UUP (12)	
79	ALL (26)	
80	IND (2)	
81	DUP (29)	
82	ALL (27)	
83	DUP (30)	



Committee:	Corporate Services Committee
Date:	9 September 2025
Report from:	Head of Finance

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Policy Consultation – Business Growth Accelerator and Non-Domestic Vacant Rates

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>		
1.1	Council received correspondence on 1 July 2026 from Department of Finance, Land & Property Services advising they have commenced a consultation on two measures relating to the non-domestic rating system: • A Business Growth Accelerator, providing temporary, targeted relief for businesses taking practical steps to expand; and • Non-Domestic Vacant Rating, including how any increases in liability levels should be introduced.		
1.2	The Department is seeking views on the options outlined which will help inform future policy proposals brought to the Executive.		
1.3	The Consultation closes on 23 September 2026.		
1.4	Members are asked to review this consultation (<i>see link below</i>) and approve the response, on behalf of the Council, for submission before 23 September, subject to any further comments requested for inclusion. Business Growth Accelerator and Non-Domestic Vacant Rating (NDVR) Consultation Department of Finance		
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u> Members approve the response, on behalf of the Council, to Department of Finance, Land & Property Services for submission before 23 September, subject to any further comments requested for inclusion.		
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u> None		
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>		
4.1	<table> <tr> <td>Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?</td> <td>No</td> </tr> </table>	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No		
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out As this is a consultation, an equality or good relations screening is not required.		

4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out. As this is a consultation, a Rural Needs Impact Assessment is not required.	

Appendices:	Appendix 1 - Consultation letter from Land & Property Services Appendix 2 – Draft LCCC Consultation Response
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Land &
Property
Services
Seirbhísí
Talún agus
Maoine

Andrew McAvoy

Director of Rating Policy

Land & Property Services
Lanyon Plaza
7 Lanyon Place
Town Parks
BELFAST
BT1 3LP

Telephone number:
Email:

david.burns@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk

Date: 1 July 2026

Dear Chief Executive,

POLICY CONSULTATION: BUSINESS GROWTH ACCELERATOR AND NON-DOMESTIC VACANT RATING

On 29 June, the Minister of Finance announced a public consultation on two measures relating to the non-domestic rating system:

- a Business Growth Accelerator, providing temporary, targeted relief for businesses taking practical steps to expand; and
- Non-Domestic Vacant Rating, including how any increases in liability levels should be introduced.

The Minister's full statement is available at:

[Minister of Finance Oral Ministerial Statement – Consultation on the Business Growth Accelerator and Vacant Rating Reform | Department of Finance](#)

The Department has today published a consultation paper setting out background information on both areas and is seeking your views on the options outlined which will help inform future policy proposals brought to the Executive. The consultation will run

for a period of twelve weeks and will close on **23 September 2026**. Further details can be found on Department's website at the link below:-

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/consultations/business-growth-accelerator-and-non-domestic-vacant-rating-ndvr-consultation>

I look forward to hearing the views your Council may have on the above matters.

Yours sincerely



ANDREW MCAVOY

Director of Rating Policy, Department of Finance

¹For how we process personal information, see [LPS Privacy Notice](#) on our website <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/lps-privacy-notice>

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Draft Response

**Business Growth Accelerator and Non-Domestic Vacant Rating (NDVR)
Consultation**

Consultation Closes
Wednesday 23rd September at 5:00pm



CONSULTATION QUESTIONS - BUSINESS GROWTH ACCELERATOR

General principles:

1. Do you support a Business Growth Accelerator?

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council supports the introduction of a Business Growth Accelerator.

The Council recognises that there is not necessarily a direct relationship between rates relief and economic development, and that taxation policy in isolation will not drive sustainable economic growth. Investment decisions are influenced by a much wider range of factors, including market demand, infrastructure, access to finance, skills, energy costs and the wider business environment.

However, the proposed Business Growth Accelerator differs from a general reduction in rates liability. It would provide a temporary deferral of the additional liability arising specifically from qualifying business investment, allowing businesses time to realise a return before the higher rates liability takes effect. On this basis, the Council would deem that the proposal has merit as a targeted measure to remove a potential barrier to investment, rather than as a general rates relief intended to stimulate economic growth in itself.

2. Does the current system discourage investment?

Potentially yes.

The Council view is that the current rating system can act as a disincentive where investment in property results in an immediate or relatively rapid increase in rateable value.

Business investment decisions are influenced by a range of factors including demand, access to finance, labour, energy, infrastructure, planning, construction costs and expected return on investment. Rates will therefore rarely be the sole determinant of an investment decision.

Nevertheless, the cumulative cost of doing business is important, particularly for SMEs. An increase in rates immediately following capital investment reduces the short-term return from that investment and may alter the viability, scale or timing of a project.

This is particularly relevant where businesses are considering extensions, new production space, improved retail or hospitality premises, additional warehousing, investment in low-carbon technologies or significant refurbishment.

A well-designed Accelerator could therefore remove one of a number of barriers affecting marginal investment decisions.

3. Would this policy incentivise new activity, or mainly defer valuation increases that would already be occurring?

The Council view is that it is likely to do both.

There will inevitably be an element of deadweight, some businesses benefiting from the relief would have undertaken their investment regardless of the policy.

However, this should not be regarded as a reason not to proceed. The relevant policy question is whether the measure will also generate sufficient additional investment, accelerate investment decisions or increase the scale of projects to justify the temporary revenue foregone.

For some firms, particularly SMEs operating with limited cash reserves, reducing the immediate recurring cost associated with investment may improve project viability or enable a business to undertake a larger investment than would otherwise have been possible.

The scheme should therefore be monitored against measurable outcomes, including:

- number and value of qualifying investments;
- additional floorspace brought into productive use;
- private-sector capital investment leveraged;
- employment created or safeguarded;
- properties improved or expanded;
- business survival and growth; and
- additional rateable value generated when the relief period expires.

Evaluation should specifically attempt to assess additionality rather than measuring scheme take-up alone.

4. What is the appropriate grace period that could be adopted?

The Council believes that 12 months should represent the minimum standard period, broadly reflecting the established Scottish approach.

[Business Growth Accelerator Relief - mygov.scot](https://mygov.scot/business-growth-accelerator-relief)

We would consider exploring the possibility of permitting an enhanced period of up to 24 months in defined circumstances, particularly where an investment delivers demonstrable additional economic or regeneration benefits.

A 12-month period provides simplicity and gives businesses an initial period in which to generate a return from their investment. For larger projects, however, it may be insufficient given construction costs, commissioning periods, recruitment requirements and the time required for new productive capacity to reach normal operating levels.

Enhanced support could therefore potentially apply to investments involving significant employment creation, regeneration of strategic sites, reuse of substantial vacant property, significant productive investment or investment aligned with recognised economic priorities.

Any enhanced period should be governed by clear criteria to ensure transparency and control cost.

5. Should enhanced support apply where vacant property units are brought back into use? (e.g. as part of any extension or improvement work)

Yes.

The Council would support enhanced treatment where investment both expands economic activity and brings vacant commercial property back into productive use.

Such projects can create multiple economic benefits simultaneously by supporting business growth, increasing employment, reducing vacancy, improving the physical environment and eventually expanding the rating base.

This is particularly relevant to town and city centres where persistent vacancy can reduce footfall, weaken neighbouring businesses and undermine investor confidence.

The Business Growth Accelerator should therefore complement rather than duplicate the existing 'Back in Business' scheme.

There may be merit in an enhanced package where a previously vacant property requires substantial investment, extension or refurbishment before becoming commercially viable.

The objective should be to make occupation and reuse financially more attractive than continued vacancy.

Scope and eligibility:

6. How should “qualifying improvements” be defined?

Qualifying improvements should be defined by their impact on the productive capacity, functionality, sustainability or commercial usability of a property, rather than through an overly prescriptive list of individual works.

Potential qualifying improvements should include:

- extensions providing additional productive or commercial floorspace;
- major refurbishment or redevelopment;
- additional manufacturing, production or warehousing capacity;
- substantial improvements to retail, hospitality, tourism or office premises;
- installation of equipment or property-related infrastructure which increases rateable value;
- energy efficiency and low-carbon investments where these form part of the rateable property;
- accessibility improvements;
- redevelopment of vacant or derelict commercial premises; and
- subdivision or reconfiguration where this facilitates economically productive occupation.

Routine repair and maintenance which simply preserves the existing condition of the property should not normally qualify. The view should be whether the works represent genuine additional investment and result in an increase in the productive utility and rateable value of the property.

The scheme should be clear about how it applies where the property owner and the business paying the rates are not the same. In rented premises, either the landlord or the business may pay for the improvements, while the business may ultimately face the higher rates bill. As far as possible, the relief should benefit the person or business making the investment and taking the financial risk.

The rules should also be flexible enough to cover different types of businesses and property arrangements, while being clear about what qualifies for relief.

7. Should minimum or maximum thresholds apply within the policy?

The Council would caution against introducing a high minimum investment threshold, as relatively modest property improvements can represent a significant investment for smaller businesses. If a minimum is required, it should therefore be proportionate and should not unintentionally favour larger businesses.

There may be merit in a maximum level of relief per undertaking to ensure that support remains proportionate and represents value for money. However, further detail is required on how the Accelerator would interact with existing rates reliefs, including Industrial Derating, to ensure that businesses are not unintentionally over-supported or that different reliefs do not work against wider rating and economic policy objectives.

It would be appropriate to consider the cumulative impact of rates supports as part of the final scheme design, alongside relevant subsidy control requirements and the wider financial implications for central and local government.

8. Are any property types best excluded? (e.g. publicly owned property, utilities, etc)

The Council view would be that exclusions should be kept to a minimum and should be evidence-based. The principal consideration should be whether the Business Growth Accelerator has the potential to influence investment decisions and support additional economic activity, rather than excluding broad categories of property by default.

Care should be taken in considering infrastructure-related property. Infrastructure constraints, including wastewater capacity, can represent a significant barrier to business investment, development and employment growth. Where investment in infrastructure or associated property improvements can help unlock economic development, such investment should not be excluded solely because of the property type. Exclusion may, however, be appropriate where investment is already required through statutory or regulatory obligations and there is little evidence that rates relief would influence the timing or scale of that investment.

Delivery and administration:

9. How can administrative burden be minimised?

(This question refers to the impact on the applicant, however views can also be submitted on how the proposal can best align with the current rating and valuation system).

The scheme should operate, as far as possible, through the existing rating and valuation system, with a straightforward application and assessment process. Requirements should be proportionate to the value and duration of the relief and should not create unnecessary barriers for businesses, particularly SMEs.

The Council recommends:

- a single, straightforward application or notification process;
- clear eligibility criteria, guidance and worked examples;
- maximum use of information already held by Land & Property Services and other public bodies, avoiding duplication of information requests;
- digital application and communication, with appropriate alternative arrangements where required;
- clear responsibility for determining eligibility and administering the relief;
- proportionate evidence requirements; and
- a clear review or appeal mechanism.

Businesses should not be required to undertake complex economic appraisals or demonstrate economic outputs in order to access standard relief, as such requirements could disproportionately affect smaller businesses and undermine the objective of encouraging investment.

Monitoring information should instead be collected proportionately to enable the Department to evaluate the overall economic effectiveness and additionality of the scheme.

The effectiveness of the scheme will also depend on businesses being aware of the support and understanding how and when it can be accessed. Therefore, there is a need to develop a clear communications and awareness programme, working with councils, business representative organisations and other business support partners to promote the scheme, particularly among SMEs. Any additional administrative responsibilities placed on councils should be clearly defined and appropriately resourced.

10. Should advance notification be required from an applicant before any extension or improvement works commence?

The Council does not consider advance notification should be an absolute condition of eligibility.

Businesses may not always be aware of the scheme at the point when investment decisions are taken, while smaller firms in particular should not lose entitlement solely because of an administrative omission before works commenced.

Advance notification should nevertheless be encouraged and could enable Land & Property Services to identify qualifying projects early.

A reasonable notification window should also be available following commencement or completion of works.

The guiding principle should be to prevent abuse without creating a barrier which undermines take-up by legitimate businesses.

11. How should the policy align with the completion notice process that applies within the rating and valuation system?

There should be a clear and automatic relationship between the completion notice, valuation and commencement of the Accelerator period.

Businesses should receive clear notification setting out:

- the previous rateable value;
- the revised rateable value;
- the amount of additional liability being relieved;
- the commencement date; and
- the date on which full liability will begin.

12. What economic benefit (if any) would result from this policy proposal?

The economic benefit will depend on the extent to which the proposal changes business investment behaviour. Where it results in investment being brought forward, increased in scale or proceeding where it may otherwise have been delayed, potential benefits include increased private sector investment, productive capacity, construction activity, employment and improvements to the commercial property stock.

There may also be wider regeneration benefits where investment improves existing business premises or supports the reuse and redevelopment of underutilised property. Over the longer term, successful investment may increase rateable values and strengthen the non-domestic rating base, generating additional revenue for both central and local government once the relief period ends.

These potential benefits must, however, be considered against the rates revenue foregone during the relief period. Further clarity would be welcomed on how the cost of the Accelerator will be apportioned between the regional and district rate and what this may mean for council income. Where a policy determined at regional level results in a reduction in district rate income, further thought should be given to how that loss of revenue will be addressed so that the cost of the intervention does not place additional pressure on council services or other ratepayers.

Success should be measured by the additional economic activity attributable to the policy rather than simply the number of businesses receiving relief or the total value of relief awarded.

13. Are there more effective alternatives to achieve the same policy goals?

No single intervention is likely to achieve the same objective in all circumstances. The Business Growth Accelerator has merit as a targeted measure which can reduce the immediate rates impact associated with investment in rateable property. However, rates are only one of a range of factors influencing business investment and expansion.

The effectiveness of the Accelerator will therefore depend on the wider business environment, and it should complement, rather than substitute for, other economic development interventions. In particular, where investment is constrained by issues such as inadequate infrastructure, access to finance, skills shortages or site availability, rates relief alone will be insufficient to enable development to proceed.

The Accelerator should form part of a wider package of interventions including:

- Go Succeed business support;
- Invest NI growth and productivity support;
- innovation and digital adoption programmes;
- access to finance;
- regeneration programmes;
- investment in strategic employment sites;
- investment in enabling infrastructure, particularly wastewater, energy and transport; and
- skills interventions aligned with business growth.

These existing business support networks should also be used to raise awareness of the Accelerator and identify businesses considering investment or expansion that may be eligible for support.

Addressing enabling infrastructure constraints is particularly important, as the absence of necessary capacity can prevent otherwise viable business investment and development from proceeding irrespective of the availability of rates relief.

The policy should also be regularly evaluated to determine whether it is influencing the timing, scale or viability of investment and whether the economic benefits generated justify the associated fiscal cost.



CONSULTATION QUESTIONS -

NON-DOMESTIC VACANT RATING LIABILITY

1. Do you support increasing non-domestic vacant rating (NDVR) liability to 75% and 100%?

The Council supports the principle of using the rating system to encourage the productive reuse of long-term vacant commercial property. However, increasing liability should be proportionate and recognise that vacancy is not always within the control of the property owner.

A phased approach is therefore preferred, particularly before moving to 100% liability. The effectiveness of the measure should be assessed by whether it changes behaviour and increases occupancy, rather than by the additional rates revenue generated alone.

2. Should current NDVR exclusions remain?

The Council considers that current NDVR exclusions should remain. Retaining the exclusions would help ensure the increased liability is applied proportionately and does not place undue pressure on owners where vacancy is outside their control, where occupation is temporarily impractical or where wider market conditions prevent reuse.

3. What is the appropriate timing for introducing any increased NDVR liability locally?

Any increase should be phased, with sufficient notice to allow property owners time to market, improve or bring vacant premises back into use. It may be worth considering an

initial increase to 75%, with the impact on vacancy and the commercial property market assessed before progressing to 100%.

4. Are alternative approaches preferable aside from increasing rating liability?

Increasing liability should form part of a wider approach rather than being relied upon as the principal solution to commercial vacancy. Rates can influence behaviour where viable occupier demand exists, but they cannot address underlying market failure, poor property condition, infrastructure constraints or changing demand for particular types of commercial space.

A combination of incentives, regeneration interventions, business support and proportionate rating measures is therefore likely to be more effective.

5. How should this change align with the rating and valuation system?

Any change should align closely with the existing rating and valuation system and be capable of being administered consistently.

The Council would support a phased implementation approach, with clear rules on when increased liability applies, how exclusions are treated and how any move from 75% to 100% liability would be triggered. This would help ensure that owners receive sufficient notice and that the system remains transparent, predictable and fair.

6. What complementary measures are needed to promote occupancy?

Complementary measures are essential. These could include continuation or enhancement of the 'Back in Business' scheme, business start-up and growth support, regeneration and property improvement programmes, temporary use of empty properties, support to divide larger or outdated premises into smaller, more usable units, and investment to improve and regenerate town and city centres.

We would support exploring infrastructure constraints and the suitability of existing commercial stock. In some locations, vacancy will not be resolved through increased rates liability unless the underlying barriers to investment and occupation are also addressed.

Local councils should have an important role in identifying local barriers and aligning interventions with regeneration and economic development priorities.

7. What do you see as the behavioural impacts associated with the policy proposal?

The proposal could encourage owners of long-term vacant property to market premises more actively, review rents, invest in refurbishment, consider alternative uses or bring forward redevelopment.

However, the extent of this behavioural response will depend on whether there is realistic demand for the property. Where there is little or no demand for a property, higher rates may simply increase costs without helping to bring it back into use.

8. Are additional anti-avoidance measures required prior to implementation?

Yes, appropriate anti-avoidance measures should be in place before any increase in liability is introduced.

These should be designed to prevent artificial or short-term arrangements intended only to avoid increased liability, while ensuring that owners are not penalised where vacancy is genuine and reasonable steps are being taken to market, refurbish or bring the property back into use.

Anti-avoidance provisions should be clear and proportionate. They should form part of a phased implementation approach, with guidance issued in advance so that property owners understand what evidence may be required and how legitimate temporary use, refurbishment, marketing or redevelopment activity will be treated.

9. Should treatment vary by sector or property type?

There may be a case for differentiation, although this should be based primarily on property and market characteristics rather than broad sectoral exemptions.

Some properties, such as large or specialist industrial buildings, older properties needing significant work, heritage buildings, or premises in areas where demand is low, may naturally take longer to find a new occupier. Any different treatment for these properties should be based on clear evidence, apply only for as long as necessary, and be kept as simple as possible.

10. How can collection be maximised upon introduction of the policy?

Collection will be maximised where the policy is introduced clearly, consistently and with sufficient notice to affected ratepayers. A phased approach would support compliance by allowing owners time to understand the change, review their position and take practical steps to bring vacant property back into use where possible.

Communication with ratepayers will be key. This should include early communication with property owners, clear guidance on liability, exclusions and any anti-avoidance provisions, and accurate identification of vacant properties before the increased liability takes effect. Land & Property Services should make maximum use of existing data and ensure billing arrangements are clear and timely.

Collection should also be supported by proportionate payment and enforcement arrangements which distinguish between unwillingness to pay and genuine difficulty arising from market failure, property condition or infrastructure constraints. The objective should be to encourage productive reuse and secure fair collection, rather than to create unmanageable debt where there is limited prospect of occupation.

11. Should mitigation measures apply in cases of market failure?

Yes. Higher rates may encourage owners to bring vacant properties back into use where there is demand, but they cannot create demand where none exists. Owners should not be unduly penalised where a property has been actively marketed but remains vacant because of weak demand, infrastructure constraints or its specialist nature.

12. Should increases depend on duration of vacancy?

Yes. Properties that are empty for a short period, for example while a new tenant is being found, should not be treated in the same way as properties that have been left vacant for a long time. A phased increase in rates based on how long the property has been vacant would therefore be a fairer approach.

13. What wider impacts do you foresee as a result of this proposal?

**(Impacts may include social, economic, rural, environmental, s75 etc.)
wider impacts**

The impact of the proposal may vary across different areas and property types. In rural areas or locations where demand for commercial property is weaker, premises may remain vacant despite the owner actively trying to find a tenant. Infrastructure constraints may also make some properties more difficult to bring back into use.

Care should therefore be taken to ensure that increased rates do not unintentionally discourage investment in older or difficult-to-let properties, where refurbishment or redevelopment may provide a better long-term economic outcome.

These differing impacts should be considered as part of the Department's Section 75 equality assessment and Rural Needs assessment, particularly where the proposals could have unintended impacts on particular communities, locations or businesses.



Committee:	Corporate Services
Date:	9 th September 2026
Report from:	Head of Finance

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Estimates 2027/2028 – Schedule of Meetings

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>	
	A schedule of meetings for the preparation of the annual estimates for the financial year commencing 1st April 2027 is attached for Member’s agreement.	
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u>	
	It is recommended that the schedule of meetings for the preparation of the Estimates for 2027/2028 be agreed.	
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u>	
	Not Applicable	
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out	Not Applicable
	Not Applicable	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out.	
	Not Applicable	

Appendices:	Proposed Schedule of Estimates meetings
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PROPOSED PROGRAMME FOR THE STRIKING OF A DISTRICT RATE FINANCIAL YEAR COMMENCING 1ST APRIL 2027

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14th October 2026 (6.00 pm) - Wednesday

Meeting of the Corporate Services Committee at which the first draft of the 27/28 estimates will be considered.

November/December 2026

Directorate updates presented to each home committee.

11th November 2026 (6.00 pm) - Wednesday

Update presented to Corporate Services Committee of the overall 27/28 draft estimates.

9th December 2026 (6.00 pm) - Wednesday

Update presented to Corporate Services Committee of the 27/28 draft estimates.

5th January 2027 (6.00 pm) - Tuesday

Meeting of the Communities and Wellbeing Committee at which the estimates of Leisure and Wellbeing will be considered.

6th January 2027 (6.00 pm) – Wednesday

Meeting of the Environmental and Sustainability Committee at which the estimates of Environmental Services will be considered.

7th January 2027 (6.00 pm) – Thursday

Meeting of the Regeneration and Growth Committee at which the estimates of Regeneration and Growth will be considered.

13th January 2027 (6.00 pm) - Wednesday

Meeting of the Corporate Services Committee at which the estimates of Finance & Corporate Services, Organisation Development & Innovation and Governance & Audit will be considered.

21st January 2027 (6.00 pm) - Thursday

Special Meeting of the Corporate Services Committee to consider the Striking of a Rate for the Year 27/28 and the making of a recommendation to the Council as to the Rate to be struck.

4th February 2027 (6.00 pm) – Thursday

Special Meeting of the Council to receive a recommendation from the Special Meeting of the Corporate Services Committee as to the Rate to be adopted for the Year 27/28.

Committee:	Corporate Services
Date:	9 th September 2026
Report from:	Head of Finance

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Request to earmark reserves

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>	
1.1	A report was presented to the Communities & Wellbeing Committee meeting on Tuesday 1 st September regarding the Community Facilities Fund 2026-27.	
1.2	Following assessment, 69 of a total of 80 applications met the required threshold and were deemed successful.	
1.3	The assessment outcomes of applications for this funding demonstrate significant and unprecedented demand for the scheme with an increase of 128% when compared to the previous year's applications.	
1.4	As a result, the scheme has been substantially oversubscribed with the value exceeding the budget allocation by £234,578.	
1.5	A number of options were presented to Committee, and it was agreed to approve financial awards for all 69 successful groups based on their weighted scores, subject to the approval of using reserves to cover any deficit remaining after in-year reallocation of appropriate 26/27 revenue and DEA programme budgets.	
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u>	
	It is recommended to approve the earmarking of reserves up to a maximum of £234,578.	
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u>	
	Not Applicable	
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out	
	Grant programme screened as part of DEA Programme	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out.	
	Grant programme screened as part of DEA Programme	

Appendices:	Communities & Wellbeing report – Community Facilities Fund 2026-27 – Outcomes of Assessment
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Committee:	Communities & Wellbeing
Date:	01 September 2026
Report from:	Head of Communities

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Community Facilities Fund 2026-27 – Outcomes of Assessment

1.0

Background and Key Issues

1.1

The 2026/27 DEA Local Investment Programme, agreed by Council in April 2026, included a further round of the Community Facilities Fund with an approved budget allocation of £450,000.

1.2

The Community Facilities Fund (CFF) is a grant scheme designed to support minor capital works, repairs and/or the implementation of digital solutions. The fund enables groups and organisations to improve income generation opportunities, adapt or enhance facility use, and make facilities more accessible and inclusive for the benefit of the local community. The maximum award per application is £15,000.

1.3

The Community Facilities Fund has been opened three previous rounds, as outlined in Table 1 below.

1.4

Table 1

Year of Funding	Scheme Budget	Applications Received	Amount Expended	Budgetary end position
Year: 2021/22	£280,000	33	£250,938	£29,062 Underspend
Year 2: 2024/25	£420,000	46	£379,895	£40,105 Underspend
Year 3: 2025/26	£540,000	35 for CFF	£607,010.51	£67,010.51 Overspend
Strand 1 – Capital Strand 2 – Event Infrastructure Strand 3 - Pitches		Capital – 31 Event Inf. – 16 Pitches - 17	Capital – £330,331.13 (Event Inf. - £84,752.38 – Pitches - £191,927)	

1.5

The budget approved through the DEA Investment Programme 2026/27 was informed by previous uptake, demand and outcomes from the Community Facilities Fund over the preceding three funding rounds.

1.6	The fund opened for applications on 9 June 2026 and closed on 30 June 2026. To support potential applicants, three information workshops were delivered at Enler Community Centre, Ballymacash Community Centre and online. A further funding support session was also held at Lough Moss Leisure Centre. In total, approximately 40 people attended these sessions.
2.0	<u>Outcomes of Assessment</u>
2.1	A total of 80 applications were received and assessed by a panel of Council Officers. Applications were assessed against five criteria: eligibility, feasibility, deliverability, affordability and sustainability as detailed in the guidance notes. A minimum threshold score of 50% was required for an application to be deemed successful.
2.2	Following assessment, 69 applications met the required threshold and were deemed successful. Successful applications were received from across all seven DEA areas. Appendix 1 provides the full assessment outcome, including applications received, funding requested and scores achieved.
2.3	The assessment outcomes demonstrate significant and unprecedented demand for the scheme, with applications increasing by 128% when compared with the previous year's capital strand applications; 35 applications received in 2025/26 compared with 80 applications in 2026/27. While the specific reasons for this increase are not definitively known, it is considered that the scheme's impact since its inception has demonstrated tangible benefits for community organisations, particularly in supporting improvements to community facilities. This may have encouraged further organisations to seek support to enhance, adapt or improve their facilities for wider community benefit.
2.4	As a result, the scheme has been substantially oversubscribed, with the value of successful applications exceeding the approved budget allocation by £234,578. This level of demand was not anticipated when the 2026/27 budget was set, which had been based on previous programme intelligence and historic uptake.
2.5	Successful applicants are subject to a robust due diligence process, and their letter of offer is conditional upon the organisation fulfilling this process, this is applied to all relevant grant funding streams. The unsuccessful applicants will receive tailored support from staff as required.
2.6	A wider review of Council grant aid is currently underway. This review will evaluate existing grant programmes and consider alternative models and ways of working, with a view to maximising the effectiveness of Council's financial support packages for the community and voluntary sector.
3.0	<u>Options</u>
3.1	The total value of funding deemed eligible, based on the weighted scores of successful applications, is £684,578. This exceeds the agreed budget allocation of £450,000 by £234,578.
3.2	Officers have explored the following options: a) Option 1 – approve awards to applicants deemed successful in line with the programme criteria, applying a 34% reduction to the funding amount calculated

through the weighted score. This option would require an additional allocation of £1,182.

- b) **Option 2** – approve awards to successful applicants in order of their weighted scores, on a rolling basis, until the available budget is fully allocated (42 applications would benefit, with the remaining 29 receiving zero financial assistance). This would include the £23,666 underspend from the DEA Investment Programme noted in item 3.1 under the DIY & Technical Fund.
- c) **Option 3** – approve financial awards for all 69 successful groups based on their weighted scores. This would be funded through the in-year reallocation of appropriate 2026/27 revenue and DEA programme budgets, with any remaining deficit earmarked from reserves. This option and its financial implications have been discussed with Finance colleagues, and it has been agreed that the matter will be reported to the Corporate Services Committee for any approvals regarding the reserves budget.

4.0 **Preferred Option – Option 3**

- 4.1 **Option 3** is the preferred option, whilst not anticipated to reallocate budgets in year, the number of successful applicants delivering impactful projects across our Council area is significant. Whilst the budget was built on the intelligence of previous financial allocations, this year has seen an unprecedented number of applicants rising from 35 last year to 80 this year, with 69 being successful.
- 4.2 Our Community Plan and Corporate Plan has a strong focus on supporting our communities and it is important we continue to work in partnership with local groups. The last 2 years has seen a growing appetite and greater connection with groups through these funds; therefore, it is recommended that this option is agreed.
- 4.3 **Option 1** renders a number of projects unfeasible as a 34% cut means the amount remaining for award would not cover the costs of the project. Given the time and effort groups have put into the application process, along with programming plans based on the facility enhancement could bring a degree of risk to their overall project.
- 4.4 **Option 2**, whilst remaining in budget, results in 29 groups across all DEA's losing out on receiving any funding. The type of projects losing out include kitchen upgrade, community garden, making facilities safe and sustainability initiatives. The impact of this is not only felt by the group, but the wider community.
- 4.5 If Members agree to option 3, governance of this workstream will be reported through the Corporate Services Committee, along with any approvals required regarding reserves.
- 4.6 As noted previously officers are currently reviewing all grant aid schemes and associated spend over the last 3 years to prepare accurate workstreams for 2028/29, as the last 2 years has seen some unprecedented demands. Options around administration and thresholds will be considered, along with budget allocations.

5.0	<u>Recommendation</u> It is recommended that Members agree to: 1. Proceed with Option 3 and allocate the full award, of the weighted score, to all 69 successful groups, subject to approval of reserves at Corporate Services Committee in September.	
6.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u> 1. Option 1: £451,898 from DEA Investment Programme, 2. Option 2: £473,666 from DEA Investment Programme including in-year DEA reallocation of funds 3. Option 3: £234,578 from the in-year reallocation of appropriate 2026/27 revenue and DEA programme budgets, with any remaining deficit earmarked from reserves.	
7.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
7.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out? <i>This is an outcome report.</i>	N/A
7.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out This grant programme has been screened as part of the DEA Investment Programme 2026/27	
7.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed? <i>This is an outcome report.</i>	N/A
7.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out. This grant programme has been screened as part of the DEA Investment Programme 2026/27	

Appendices:	Appendix 1 – CFF 2026/27 Table of Outcomes
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Committee:	Corporate Services
Date:	9 th September 2026
Report from:	Head of Finance

Item for:	Noting
Subject:	2025/26 Treasury Outturn Report

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>		
1.1	In February 2025, to comply with the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011, Council approved the annual Treasury Management Strategy and associated Prudential Indicators for the financial year 2025/26.		
1.2	The attached report on the Prudential and Treasury Indicators details the Council's performance against the indicators approved for 2025/26.		
1.3	The key points to note for the 2025/26 financial year are: • Total spend on Capital Projects in the year amounted to £26.86m. • Both the Operational Boundary and the Authorised Borrowing Limit were deemed adequate for the year. • No new loans or finance lease agreements have been entered into during the 2025/26 financial year. • The balance of external loans at 31st March 2026 was £17.79m • As at 31st March 2026, the Council's short term investments (held in various institutions) were £33.28m.		
1.4	The Council continues to receive Treasury Management advice from its professional advisor, Arlingclose.		
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u> It is recommended that Members note the information contained in the report.		
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u>		
	• As highlighted above		
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>		
	<table> <tr> <td>Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?</td> <td>No</td> </tr> </table>	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No		
	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out		

	This is a financial report for noting only.	
	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out. This is a financial report for noting only.	

Appendices:	Treasury 2025/26 Outturn Report Prudential indicators 2025/26 Outturn Report
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Treasury Management Outturn Report 2025/26

Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council

Introduction

In February 2025 the Council adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice* (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Council to approve, as a minimum, treasury management semi-annual and annual outturn reports.

This report includes the requirement in the 2021 Code of reporting of the treasury management prudential indicators. The non-treasury prudential indicators are incorporated in the Council's treasury management strategy.

The Council's treasury management strategy for 2025/26 was approved at a meeting in February 2025. The Council has invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk remains central to the Council's treasury management strategy.

External Context

Economic background: The financial year was largely dominated by two periods of significant uncertainty and volatility. The first being the US trade tariff 'Liberation Day' in April 2025 and the second was the US/Israel war with Iran at the end of February 2026.

After the initial fallout from US trade tariffs, the following months saw some improvements as equity markets made gains and bond yields eased modestly. However, in the UK this trend in bond yields reversed somewhat as an uncertain economic outlook together with concerns around the government's fiscal position and autumn Budget saw 'term premia' rise as investors demanded a higher return for holding gilts.

The Budget itself was more muted than had been expected. Despite a weak economic outlook, this helped UK markets perform better with gilt yields trending downwards, inflation easing, and expectations for cuts in Bank of England (BoE) Bank Rate increasing.

The end of February 2026 saw the start of the war between US/Israel and Iran. The conflict caused oil and other commodity prices to rise sharply as the shipping lanes in the region became effectively closed, restricting global oil supply. At the end of the period, the economic outlook remained highly uncertain in terms of its impact on inflation as well as countries' fiscal and monetary policy conditions around the globe.

Prior to the start of the war, headline UK consumer price inflation (CPI) inflation had generally been trending downwards, albeit the 3% in February 2026 was unchanged from January. Core CPI also stayed put at 3.1%. Inflation was expected to fall further over the coming months to the BoE's 2% target, but the war changed this. Inflation is now expected to rise again, but how quickly and by how much depends on the duration of the war and how long commodity prices are elevated.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported the UK economy expanded by 0.1% in Q4 2025. This followed previous modest gains of 0.2% in Q2 and by 0.1% in Q3. Of the subsequent monthly figures, the ONS estimated that GDP showed no growth in January 2026. As this is from before the war started the impact on growth will not be seen formally in the data for a couple more months.

While the most recent labour market figures were slightly better than expected, the general trend has been one of persistent weakness. In the three months to January 2026, the unemployment rate rose to 5.2% (from 5.1%), while the employment rate held at 75.1%. Despite inflation being expected to rise in the coming months, labour market conditions remain loose and so any upward pressure on wages from general inflation is likely to be tempered by the weaker labour market environment.

After cutting Bank Rate to 3.75% in December 2025, the BoE's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted 5-4 to hold rates in February 2026 and then unanimously to do so again in March. Until the war started, financial markets were expecting Bank Rate to be cut to 3.5% at the March meeting. However, the conflict in the Middle East quickly changed this. The MPC noted the risks to both inflation and growth and indicated they could move rates either up or down depending on the conditions. Financial markets quickly responded to this by pricing in rate hikes.

Following the March MPC meeting, Arlingclose, the Council's treasury adviser, revised its central interest rate view and now predicts Bank Rate will be held at 3.75%. However, the conflict makes the outlook for rates highly uncertain. In the short-term the risks are to the upside with the chance of higher Bank Rate should the MPC decide it wishes to quickly quash potential second-round effects from higher inflation. Further out, if Bank Rate is hiked quickly, the pace and magnitude of subsequent cuts could take it far lower than was previously anticipated as policymakers add significant stimulus to a much weaker economic growth outlook.

The US Federal Reserve had been cutting rates over the period, reducing Fed Funds Rate target range by 0.25% at its December meeting to 3.50%-3.75%. At the three subsequent meetings, the rate was held at the same range. Policymakers noted that while inflation was elevated, economic activity had been expanding but the war with Iran made the path of monetary policy highly uncertain. Despite this, the Fed still suggested that further rate cuts were likely in 2026 and 2027.

The European Central Bank (ECB) has kept its key interest rates on hold since June 2025, maintaining the deposit rate at 2.0% and main refinancing rate at 2.15%. At its March 2026 meeting, the ECB noted the war in the Middle East had significantly increased uncertainty, creating upside risks for inflation and downside risks for growth, leading it to revise up its forecasts accordingly.

Financial markets: After declining sharply early in the financial year following the announcement of US tariffs, sentiment in financial markets had improved but equity and bond markets remained volatile throughout. However, the latter part of the period was dominated by the US/Israel war with Iran, which saw equity markets fall sharply, and bond yields rise as concerns over the inflationary impact from sharply higher oil and other commodity prices outweighed the flight-to-quality into government bonds often seen in conflicts.

Equity markets had been registering gains after the declines during the April sell-off, but the war reversed this and markets saw another sharp drawdown. Both the FTSE 100 and 250 fell by around 10% over the month from the start of the conflict to the end of the financial year.

The period saw significant volatility in gilt yields. The 10-year UK benchmark gilt yield started the year at 4.65% and ended at 4.86%. However, over this time the 10-year yield hit a low of 4.23% and a high of 4.95% in the space of a month. It was a similar picture for the 20-year gilt which started at 5.18% and ended at 5.45% with a low and high of 4.92% and 5.55% respectively. The Sterling Overnight Rate (SONIA) averaged 4.01% over the 12 months to 31st March.

Credit review: Arlingclose maintained its recommended maximum unsecured duration limit on most of the banks on its counterparty list at 6 months. The other banks remain on 100 days.

Earlier in the period, Fitch upgraded NatWest Group and related entities to AA- from A+ and placed Clydesdale Bank's long-term A- rating on Rating Watch Positive. Fitch later upgraded Clydesdale Bank and HSBC, but downgraded Lancashire CC and Close Brothers.

Moody's affirmed OP Corporate's rating at Aa3 In May 2025. Later in the period, Moody's upgraded Transport for London, Allied Irish Banks, Bank of Ireland, Toronto-Dominion Bank, DZ Bank, Nordea and HSBC and downgraded Close Brothers. In the last quarter of 2025 S&P upgraded Clydesdale Bank, Allied Irish Banks and Bank of Ireland, and assigned Warrington Council a BBB+ rating.

After spiking in April 2025 following the US trade tariff announcements, UK credit default swap (CDS) prices had trended down before picking up modestly in October and November. After declining again in December and into the new calendar year, they rose sharply once again when the war in the Middle East started. They were still elevated at the end of the period, but prices for all banks on Arlingclose's counterparty list remained within limits deemed satisfactory for maintaining credit advice at current durations.

Overall, European banks' CDS prices have generally been flatter and lower compared to the UK, as have Singaporean and Australian lenders while some Canadian bank CDS prices have remained elevated since the beginning of the period in part due to ongoing trade tensions with the US.

Financial market volatility is expected to remain, and CDS levels will be monitored for signs of ongoing credit stress. As ever, the institutions and durations on the Council's counterparty list recommended by Arlingclose remain under constant review.

Local Context

On 31st March 2026, the Council had net investments of £33.97m arising from its revenue and capital income and expenditure. The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while balance sheet resources are the underlying resources available for investment. These factors are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Balance Sheet Summary

	31.3.25 Actual £m	31.3.26 Actual £m
General Fund CFR	42.28	66.20
Less: Other debt liabilities*	0.01	0.18
External borrowing**	18.88	17.79
Internal borrowing	23.39	48.24
Less: Balance sheet resources	66.77	82.21
(Investments) / New Borrowing	(43.38)	(33.97)

- * leases, PFI liabilities and transferred debt that form part of the Council's total debt
 ** shows only loans to which the Council is committed and excludes optional refinancing

The treasury management position at 31st March and the change during the year is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Treasury Management Summary

	31.3.25 Balance £m	Movement £m	31.3.26 Balance £m	31.3.26 Rate %
Long-term borrowing	17.789	-1.446	16.343	-8.13
Short-term borrowing	1.091	0.366	1.457	33.56
Total borrowing	18.880	-1.080	17.800	25.43
Long-term investments	0.003	0.000	0.003	0.00
Short-term investments	43.394	-10.112	33.282	-23.30
Cash and cash equivalents	8.240	-5.939	2.302	-72.07
Total investments	51.637	-16.051	35.587	-95.37
Net investments	32.758	-14.970	17.786	-120.80

Borrowing Strategy and Activity

As outlined in the treasury strategy, the Council's chief objective when borrowing has been to strike an appropriate risk balance between securing lower interest costs and achieving cost certainty over the period for which funds are required, with flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Council's long-term plans change being a secondary objective. The Council's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio.

Gilt yields slightly decreased over most of the period; reflecting expectations of lower interest rates, a tepid economy and to some extent an improvement in the UK governments fiscal position following tax rises in the autumn budget. Subsequent to the war in the Middle East however, gilt yields saw a rapid rise to above the yield at the beginning of the financial year.

The PWLB certainty rate for 10-year maturity loans was 5.38% at the beginning of the period and 5.72% at the end. The lowest available 10-year maturity certainty rate was 5.13% and the highest was 5.88%. Rates for 20-year maturity loans ranged from 5.71% to 6.37% during the period, and 50-year maturity loans from 5.46% to 6.24%. The cost of short-term borrowing from other local authorities has been similar to or a little above Base Rate for most of the period, with interest rates between 4.0% and 4.5%. However, as is commonly seen, rates rose higher towards the end of the financial year, with rates of 5.0% - 7.0% being seen.

CIPFA's 2021 Prudential Code is clear that local authorities must not borrow to invest primarily for financial return and that it is not prudent for local authorities to make any investment or spending decision that will increase the capital financing requirement and so may lead to new borrowing, unless directly and primarily related to the functions of the Council. PWLB loans are no longer available to local authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield unless these loans are for refinancing purposes. The Council has no new plans to borrow to invest primarily for financial return.

Loans Portfolio: At 31st March 2026 the Council held £17.8m of loans, (a decrease of £1.1m 31st March 2025, as part of its strategy for funding previous years' capital programmes. Outstanding loans on 31st March 2026 are summarised in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Borrowing Position

	31.3.25 Balance £m	Net Movement £m	31.3.26 Balance £m	31.3.26 Weighted Average Rate %	31.4.26 Weighted Average Maturity (years)
Northern Ireland Consolidated Fund	18.88	-1.09	17.79	6.95	5.49

The Council's borrowing decisions are not predicated on any one outcome for interest rates and a balanced portfolio of short- and long-term borrowing was maintained.

There remains a strong argument for diversifying funding sources, particularly if rates can be achieved on alternatives which are below gilt yields + 0.80%. The Council will evaluate and pursue these lower cost solutions and opportunities with its advisor Arlingclose.

Treasury Management Investment Activity

The CIPFA Treasury Management Code now defines treasury management investments as those investments which arise from the Council's cash flows or treasury risk management activity that ultimately represents balances that need to be invested until the cash is required for use in the course of business.

The Council holds significant invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. During the year, the Council's single investment balances ranged between £2 and £10 million due to timing differences between income and expenditure. The investment position is shown in table 4 below.

Table 4: Treasury Investment Position

	31.3.25 Balance £m	Net Movement £m	31.3.26 Balance £m	31.3.26 Income Return %	31.3.26 Weighted Average Maturity days
Banks & building societies (secured deposits)	4.39	-1.06	3.34	3.05	64.79
Local authorities and other govt entities	29.00	-8.00	21.00	4.22	135.24
Money Market Funds	10.00	0.00	10.00	3.65	1.00
Total investments	43.39	-9.06	34.34	10.92	201.03

Both the CIPFA Code and government guidance require the Council to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its treasury investments before seeking the optimum rate of return, or yield. The Council's objective when investing money is to strike an

appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income.

As demonstrated by the liability benchmark in this report, the Council expects to be a long-term investor and treasury investments therefore include both short-term low risk instruments to manage day-to-day cash flows and longer-term instruments where limited additional risk is accepted in return for higher investment income to support local public services.

Bank Rate reduced from 4.50% to 4.25% in May 2025, followed by a further reduction to 4.00% in August 2025 and to 3.75% in December 2025. Short term interest rates have largely followed these levels. The money market rates ranged between [3.6% and 4.5%].

The progression of risk and return metrics are shown in the extracts from Arlingclose's quarterly investment benchmarking in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Investment Benchmarking - Treasury investments managed in-house

	Credit Score	Credit Rating	Bail-in Exposure	Weighted Average Maturity (days)	Rate of Return %
31.03.2026	4.78	A+	53%	27.05	4.22
Similar LAs	4.77	A+	70%	41	3.87
All LAs	4.59	A+	30%	13	3.94

The Council has budgeted £370,000 income from these investments in 2025/26. Income received up to 31st March 2026 was £1,910,000, whilst a further £204,000 has been declared and is due to be paid by May.

The change in the Council's funds' capital values and income return over the year is shown in Table 4.

Because these funds have no defined maturity date, but are available for withdrawal after a notice period, their performance and continued suitability in meeting the Council's medium- to long-term investment objectives are regularly reviewed. Strategic fund investments are made in the knowledge that capital values will move both up and down on months, quarters and even years; but with the confidence that over a three- to five-year period total returns will exceed cash interest rates.

Treasury Performance

The Council measures the financial performance of its treasury management activities both in terms of its impact on the revenue budget and its relationship to benchmark interest rates, as shown in table 6 below.

Table 6: Performance 2025/26

	Borrowing	Leases	Investments	Net Investments
Actual average principal £m	17.80	0.18	33.29	15.31
Budgeted principal £m	17.79	0.18	20.00	2.03
Variance £m	0.01	0.00	13.29	13.28

Actual cost / (income) £m	1.11	0.00	1.91	0.80
Budgeted cost / (income) £m	1.11	0.00	0.37	-0.74
Variance £m	0.00	0.00	1.54	1.54

Compliance

The Chief Finance Officer reports that all treasury management activities undertaken during the year complied fully with the principles in the Treasury Management Code and the Council's approved Treasury Management Strategy. Compliance with specific investment limits is demonstrated in table 7 below.

Table 7: Investment Limits

	2026/27 Counterparty limit	31.3.26 Actual	2025/26 Sector Limit	Complied? Yes/No
Any single organisation, except the UK Government	£5m	£2m BoS £1m Barclays	Unlimited	Yes
Any group of organisations under the same ownership	£5m	£0	Unlimited	Yes
Secured investments with banks and building societies	£5m	£3m	Unlimited	Yes
Money Market Funds	£5m	£10m	Unlimited	Yes
Strategic pooled funds	£5m	£0	£10m	Yes
Non-specified investments	£3m	£0	£5m	Yes

Compliance with the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary for external debt is demonstrated in table 8 below.

Table 8: Debt and the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary

	2025/26 Maximum	31.3.26 Actual	2025/26 Operational Boundary	2025/26 Authorised Limit	Complied? Yes/No
Total debt	£18.8	£17.80m	£85m	£105m	Yes

Since the operational boundary is a management tool for in-year monitoring it is not significant if the operational boundary is breached on occasions due to variations in cash flow, and this is not counted as a compliance failure.

Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

As required by the 2021 CIPFA Treasury Management Code, the Council monitors and measures the following treasury management prudential indicators.

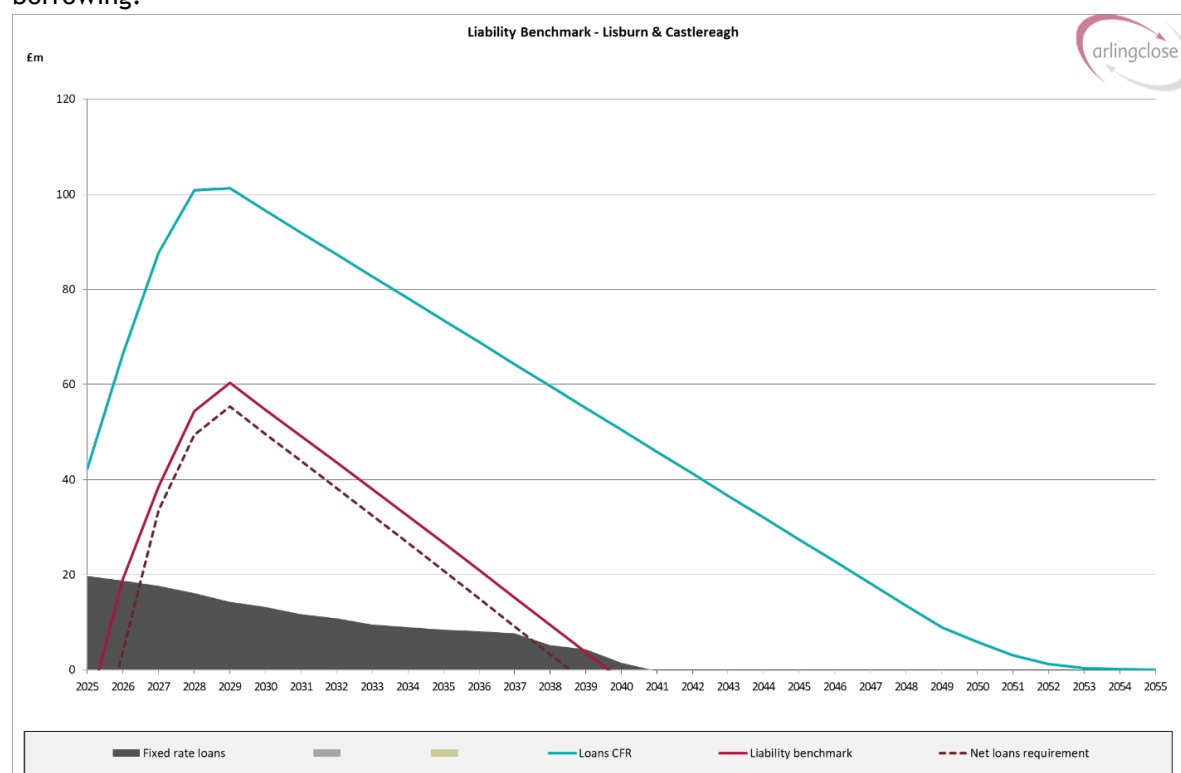
1. Liability Benchmark:

This new indicator compares the Council's actual existing borrowing against a liability benchmark that has been calculated to show the lowest risk level of borrowing. The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future, and so shape its strategic focus and decision making. It represents an

estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing the Council must hold to fund its current capital and revenue plans while keeping treasury investments at the minimum level of £5m required to manage day-to-day cash flow.

	31.3.25 Actual	31.3.26 Actual	31.3.27 Forecast	31.3.28 Forecast
Loans CFR	42.28	66.20	87.35	100.25
Less: Balance sheet resources	66.77	82.21	65.15	62.37
Net loans requirement	(24.49)	(16.00)	22.21	37.89
Plus: Liquidity allowance	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Liability benchmark	(19.49)	(11.00)	27.21	42.89
Existing borrowing	18.88	17.79	16.34	14.52

Following on from the medium-term forecast above, the long-term liability benchmark assumes capital expenditure funded by borrowing, minimum revenue provision on new capital expenditure based on an asset life and income, expenditure and reserves all increasing by inflation of 2.5% p.a. This is shown in the chart below together with the maturity profile of the Council's existing borrowing.



Whilst borrowing may be above the liability benchmark, strategies involving borrowing which is significantly above the liability benchmark carry higher risk.

2. Maturity Structure of Borrowing: This indicator is set to control the Council's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of all borrowing were:

	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	31.3.26 Actual	Complied?
Under 12 months	15%	0%	8.18%	Yes
12 months and within 24 months	20%	0%	10.24%	Yes
24 months and within 5 years	25%	0%	18.65%	Yes
5 years and within 10 years	30%	0%	18.31%	Yes
10 years and above	100%	0%	44.62%	Yes

Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment.

3. Long-term Treasury Management Investments: The purpose of this indicator is to control the Council's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The prudential limits on the long-term treasury management limits are:

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	No fixed date
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£6m	£5m	£4m	£3m
Actual principal invested beyond year end	£0m	£0m	£0m	£0m
Complied?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Long-term investments with no fixed maturity date include strategic pooled funds, real estate investment trusts and directly held equity but exclude money market funds and bank accounts with no fixed maturity date as these are considered short-term.

Additional indicators

Security: The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted average credit rating of its investment portfolio. This is calculated by applying a score to each investment (AAA=1, AA+=2, etc.) and taking the arithmetic average, weighted by the size of each investment. Unrated investments are assigned a score based on their perceived risk.

	2025/26 Target	31.3.26 Actual	Complied?
Portfolio average credit rating	A	A	Yes

Liquidity: The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to liquidity risk by monitoring the amount of cash available to meet unexpected payments within a rolling three-month period, without additional borrowing.

	31.3.26 Actual	2025/26 Target	Complied?
Total cash available within 3 months	£32.9m	£12m	Yes
Total sum borrowed in past 3 months without prior notice	£0m	£0	Yes

Interest Rate Exposures: This indicator is set to control the Council’s exposure to interest rate risk.

Interest rate risk indicator	2025/26 Target	31.3.26 Actual	Complied?
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>rise</u> in interest rates	£800,000	£99,768	Yes
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>fall</u> in interest rates	£800,000	-£99,649	Yes

For context, the changes in interest rates during the year were:

	<u>1/4/25</u>	<u>31/3/26</u>
Bank Rate	4.50%	3.75%
1-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	4.82%	5.04%
5-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	4.94%	5.28%
10-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	5.38%	5.72%
20-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	5.88%	6.23%
50-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	5.63%	6.08%

The impact of a change in interest rates is calculated on the assumption that maturing loans and investment will be replaced at new market rates.

Prudential Indicators Outturn 2025/26

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

The Council measures and manages its capital expenditure, borrowing with references to the following indicators.

It is a requirement of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential Code that these are reported on a quarterly basis.

Capital Expenditure: The Council has undertaken and is planning capital expenditure as summarised below.

	2024/25 actual	2025/26 actual	2026/27 budget	2027/28 budget
Capital Expenditure	£9.52m	£26.86m	£34.63m	£27.17m

The main capital projects to date include Dundonald International Ice Bowl redevelopment (£57M), Fleet replacement (£14M) and BRCD Royal Hillsborough (£4M).

Capital Financing Requirement: The Council's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP and capital receipts used to replace debt.

	31.3.2025 actual	31.3.2026 actual	31.3.2027 forecast	31.3.2028 forecast
TOTAL CFR	42.28	66.20	93.95	97.48

Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement: Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, except in the short term. The Council has complied and expects to continue to comply with this requirement in the medium term as is shown below.

	31.3.2025 actual	31.3.2026 actual	31.3.2027 forecast	31.3.2028 forecast
Debt (incl. PFI & leases)	18.90	17.97	16.50	14.63
Capital Financing Requirement	42.28	66.20	87.35	100.25

Debt and the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary: The Council is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the Authorised Limit for external debt) each year. In line with statutory guidance, a lower "operational boundary" is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

	Maximum debt 2025/26	Debt at 31.3.26	2025/26 Authorised Limit	2025/26 Operational Boundary	Complied? Yes/No
Total debt	£18.08m	£17.80m	£85m	£105m	yes

Since the operational boundary is a management tool for in-year monitoring it is not significant if the boundary is breached on occasions due to variations in cash flow, and this is not counted as a compliance failure.

Proportion of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream: Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and MRP are charged to revenue.

The net annual charge is known as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e. the amount funded from Council Tax, business rates and general government grants.

	2024/25 actual	2025/26 actual	2026/27 budget	2027/28 budget
Financing costs (£m)	7.32	8.27	9.27	10.26
Proportion of net revenue stream	13.06%	14.16%	15.51%	16.51%

Treasury Management Indicators: These indicators (Liability Benchmark, Maturity Structure of Borrowing, Long-Term Treasury Management Investments) are within the Treasury Management Outturn Report 2025/26.

Committee:	Corporate Services
Date:	9 th September 2026
Report from:	Head of Finance

Item for:	Noting
Subject:	Treasury Outturn Quarter 1 2026/27

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>	
1.1	In February 2026, to comply with the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011, Council approved the annual Treasury Management Strategy and associated Prudential Indicators for the financial year 2026/27.	
1.2	The attached reports on the Prudential and Treasury Indicators details the Council's performance against the indicators approved for 2026/27 for up to 30 th June 2026.	
1.3	The key points to note for quarter 1 2026/27 are: - Both the Operational Boundary and the Authorised Borrowing Limit were deemed adequate for the period. - No new loans or finance lease agreements have been entered into during the first quarter of the financial year. - The balance of external loans at 30th June 2026 was £17.79m - As at 30th June 2026, the Council's short term investments (held in various institutions) were £25.07m.	
1.4	The Council continues to receive Treasury Management advice from its professional advisor, Arlingclose.	
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u> It is recommended that Members note the information contained in the report.	
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u> As highlighted above	
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out	

	This is a financial report for noting only.	
	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out. This is a financial report for noting only.	

Appendices:	Q1 2026/27 Treasury Report Q1 2026/27 Prudential Indicators Report
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Prudential Indicators Q1 2026/27

Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council

The Council measures and manages its capital expenditure, borrowing with references to the following indicators.

It is now a requirement of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential Code that these are reported on a quarterly basis.

Capital Expenditure: The Council has undertaken and is planning capital expenditure as summarised below.

	2025/26 actual	2026/27 forecast	2027/28 budget	2028/29 budget
Capital Expenditure	£26.86m	£34.77m	£26.71m	£9.11m

The main General Fund capital projects to date have included Dundonald International Ice Bowl redevelopment (£57M), Fleet replacement (£14M) and BRCD Royal Hillsborough (£4M).

Capital Financing Requirement: The Council's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP and capital receipts used to replace debt.

	31.3.2026 actual	31.3.2027 forecast	31.3.2028 budget	31.3.2029 budget
TOTAL CFR	66.20	87.35	100.25	101.79

Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement: Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, except in the short term. The Council has complied and expects to continue to comply with this requirement in the medium term as is shown below.

	31.3.2026 actual	31.3.2027 forecast	31.3.2028 budget	31.3.2029 budget
Debt (incl. PFI & leases)	17.92	16.50	14.63	13.58
Capital Financing Requirement	66.20	87.35	100.25	101.79

Debt and the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary: The Council is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the Authorised Limit for external debt) each year. In line with statutory guidance, a lower "operational boundary" is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

	Maximum debt Q1 2026/27	Debt at 30.6.26	2026/27 Authorised Limit	2026/27 Operational Boundary	Complied? Yes/No
Total debt	£17.80m	£17.80m	£120m	£95m	Yes

Since the operational boundary is a management tool for in-year monitoring it is not significant if the boundary is breached on occasions due to variations in cash flow, and this is not counted as a compliance failure.

Proportion of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream: Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and MRP are charged to revenue.

The net annual charge is known as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e. the amount funded from Council Tax, business rates and general government grants.

	2025/26 actual	2026/27 forecast	2027/28 budget	2028/29 budget
Financing costs (£m)	8.27	9.27	10.26	11.26
Proportion of net revenue stream	14.16%	15.51%	16.51%	17.42%

Treasury Management Indicators: These indicators (Liability Benchmark, Maturity Structure of Borrowing, Long-Term Treasury Management Investments) are within the Treasury Management Outturn Report Q1 2026/27.

Treasury Management Report Q1 2026/27

Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council

Introduction

In February 2026 the Council adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice* (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Council to approve, as a minimum, treasury management semi-annual and annual outturn reports.

This quarterly report provides an additional update and includes the requirement in the 2021 Code of quarterly reporting of the treasury management prudential indicators. The non-treasury prudential indicators are incorporated in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.

The Council's treasury management strategy for 2026/27 was approved at a meeting in February 2026. The Council has invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk remains central to the Council's treasury management strategy.

External Context

Economic background: The main story for the quarter was the continuation of the Middle East conflict, started on 28th February with strikes by Israel and the US on Iran. The conflict led to the closure of the Hormuz Strait, a waterway through which around 20% of the world's oil and liquified natural gas flows, resulting in sharp rises in energy and other commodity prices. Towards the end of the quarter, the US and Iran came to an agreement to negotiate a peace settlement, which prompted a reduction in energy commodity prices, albeit remaining higher than pre-war.

Coming close on the heels of the last energy price shock in 2022 following Russia's invasion of UK, central bank policymakers and financial markets reacted quickly to reflect the new reality for monetary policy. In the UK, the headline consumer price inflation (CPI) rate was widely expected to fall back to 2% in April, with changes to government energy policy announced in the budget reducing energy bills and therefore headline inflation rates. Instead, the sharp rise in petrol prices occurring from the war maintained the CPI rate well above target at 2.8%.

Having been expected to cut Bank Rate from 3.75%, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) instead held Bank Rate steady throughout the quarter. Despite sending hawkish signals with each monetary policy decision, and the voting split changing from a 9-0 hold in March to a 7-2 hold in June, the majority of committee members appear to believe the UK economy and labour market were soft enough to absorb the price shock without producing the persistent inflationary conditions seen in 2022, which led to Bank Rate rising to 5.25%. This appears to be backed up by business surveys towards the end of the quarter suggesting that business pricing pressures, while elevated, are abating.

Against expectations, UK headline CPI decreased over the quarter, from an annual rate of 3.3% in March to 2.8% in May, but still well above the Bank of England's 2% target. The core measure of CPI inflation also decreased, from 3.1% to 2.6% over the same period. Upside pressure in inflation generally reflected fuel prices, but many other categories experienced disinflation, providing some evidence that higher energy prices were not immediately feeding into a wider subset of products.

Inflation will rise from July, however, as the retail energy price cap is increased by 13%. Expectations range from inflation rising to 3.5% to 4.0% and the MPC's resolve to maintain Bank Rate at 3.75% will likely be tested at this point.

Data released during the period showed the UK economy expanded by 0.6% in the first quarter of the calendar year, following three previous quarters of weaker growth. However, monthly GDP data showed a contraction of 0.1% in April as weaker confidence affected spending and investment decisions. Purchasing managers' index (PMI) data indicated that softer growth was also likely in May and June, with the services PMI denoting a small contraction in activity from both months.

Labour market data showed a continued softening in employment conditions, as weaker private sector earnings growth was reported for the period February to April 2026. The unemployment rate for April was 4.9%, PAYE employment was down over the year, and the number of vacancies continued to fall. The looser labour market is supporting the MPC's decision not to tighten monetary policy, with the likelihood of wage growth rising in line with inflation appearing remote.

Arlingclose, the Council's treasury adviser, maintained its central view that Bank Rate remain at 3.75%, and that the Bank of England would focus on the spare capacity in the economy, notably the labour market, rather than the upside risk of persistent inflation. The balance of risks over the near term, however, is deemed to be to the upside as signs of second round inflationary effects will prompt policymakers to raise interest rates. Over the medium term, the balance of risk for Bank Rate shifts to the downside, with tighter monetary policy, higher prices and weaker growth presenting downside risks for inflation.

The US Federal Reserve also held interest rates steady the period, maintaining the Fed Funds Rate at 3.50%-3.75%. The decision in June was the sixth consecutive month where no changes were made to the main interest rate. US CPI jumped to 4.2% in May on the back of higher gasoline prices, raising the possibility that policy under new Fed Chair Kevin Warsh may lead to higher rather than lower rates.

The European Central Bank (ECB) hiked rates in June, the first rise since September 2023. The ECB noted heightened uncertainty in the near-term from the effects of the war, including higher inflation and potentially weaker growth. The June hike to 2.40% represented an insurance move to maintain inflation around the 2% target.

Financial markets: After the sharp deterioration early in the quarter, sentiment in financial markets showed signs of improvement during the period as hopes for an end to the US/Israel war with Iran increased. However, bond and equity markets remained volatile. Early in the period bond yields rose sharply due to tighter monetary policy expectations, but yields steadily declined as it became apparent central banks, including the Bank of England, were not going to immediately hike policy rates. Equity markets sold off sharply in March but gained back some of the previous declines, particularly in US markets, where AI-related sentiment remained strong.

Political uncertainty in the UK due to poor local election results for the Labour party placed upward pressure on medium and longer-term gilt yields. The eventual resignation of Keir Starmer and likely accension of Andy Burnham reduced some uncertainty and prompted a decline in yields.

Over the quarter, the 10-year UK benchmark gilt yield started at 4.86% and ended at 4.77% having hit 5.20% in late April. The 20-year gilt yield was slightly more stable, starting at 5.45% and finished at 5.42%, after peaking at 5.79% in May. The Sterling Overnight Rate (SONIA) averaged 3.73% over the quarter to 30th June.

Credit review: Arlingclose maintained its advised recommended maximum unsecured duration limit on the majority of the banks on its counterparty list at 6 months. Other banks remain on 100 days.

During the quarter, Fitch upgraded numerous banks due to a rating methodology change, which placed greater emphasis on resolution regimes, loss-absorbing debt buffers and depositor protection. It also changed the reference obligations used for Issuer Default Ratings and introduced more differentiated notching between deposits, senior preferred, senior unsecured and senior non-preferred debt ratings.

Moody's also made changes to the ratings of European banks following the passing of EU legislation introducing full depositor preference across the bloc which places deposits ahead of senior unsecured debt in the creditor hierarchy. This resulted in upgrades to the ratings to several counterparties on Arlingclose's recommended list.

Credit default swap (CDS) prices on UK banks spiked through late March/early April following escalation in the Iran war but eased back over the rest of the quarter to end at broadly pre-conflict levels.

European banks' CDS prices followed a similar pattern, albeit some German banks were modestly higher compared to the previous quarter. Trade tensions between Canada and the US caused Canadian bank CDS prices to rise over the quarter and remain elevated compared to earlier Q1 2026 while Australian and Singaporean lenders were broadly unchanged.

Overall, at the end of the period CDS prices for all banks on Arlingclose's counterparty list remained within limits deemed satisfactory for maintaining credit advice at current durations.

Financial market volatility is expected to remain a feature, at least in the near term, and credit default swap levels will be monitored for signs of ongoing credit stress. As ever, the institutions and durations on the Council's counterparty list recommended by Arlingclose remain under constant review.

Local Context

On 31st March 2026, the Council had net investments of £33.97m arising from its revenue and capital income and expenditure. The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while balance sheet resources are the underlying resources available for investment. These factors are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Balance Sheet Summary

	31.3.26 Actual £m	31.3.27 Forecast £m
General Fund CFR	66.20	87.35
Less: *Other debt liabilities	0.18	0.16
External borrowing**	17.79	16.34
Less: Balance sheet resources	82.21	65.37
(Investment) / New Borrowing	(33.97)	5.48

* lease and PFI liabilities and transferred debt that form part of the Council's total debt

** shows only loans to which the Council is committed and excludes optional refinancing

The treasury management position at 30th June and the change over the quarter is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Treasury Management Summary

	31.3.26 Balance £m	Movement £m	30.6.26 Balance £m	30.6.26 Rate %
Long-term borrowing	16.343	0.000	16.343	0.00
Short-term borrowing	1.457	0.000	1.457	0.00
Total borrowing	17.800	0.000	17.800	0.00
Long-term investments	0.003	0.000	0.003	0.00
Short-term investments	33.282	(8.211)	25.071	(24.67)
Cash and cash equivalents	2.302	2.322	4.624	100.86
Total investments	35.587	(5.889)	29.698	76.19
Net investments	17.787	(5.889)	11.898	76.19

Borrowing Strategy and Activity

As outlined in the treasury strategy, the Council's chief objective when borrowing has been to strike an appropriate risk balance between securing lower interest costs and achieving cost certainty over the period for which funds are required, with flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Council's long-term plans change being a secondary objective. The Council's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio.

Gilt yields have moved about during the period but overall have decreased slightly. Oil prices have reduced and inflationary figures in the UK have not risen by as much as markets initially expected. Concerns about the tepid UK economy have also lessened expectations of future rate rises which has lowered gilt yields.

The PWLB certainty rate for 5-year maturity loans was 5.16% at the beginning of the period and 5.07% at the end. The lowest available 5-year maturity certainty rate was 5.04% and the highest was 5.49%. In contrast rates for 20-year maturity loans ranged from 6.02% to 6.50% during the period, and 50-year maturity loans from 5.89% to 6.35%. After coming down from a characteristic spike seen around financial year end, the cost of short term borrowing from other local authorities has remained a little above Base Rate, at between 4.0% and 4.5%, throughout the period.

CIPFA's 2021 Prudential Code is clear that local authorities must not borrow to invest primarily for financial return and that it is not prudent for local authorities to make any investment or spending decision that will increase the capital financing requirement and so may lead to new borrowing, unless directly and primarily related to the functions of the Council. PWLB loans are no longer available to local authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield unless these loans are for refinancing purposes. The Council has no new plans to borrow to invest primarily for financial return.

Loans Portfolio: At 30th June the Council held £17.79m of loans, a similar position to 31st March 2026, as part of its strategy for funding previous years' capital programmes. Outstanding loans on 30th June 2026 are summarised in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Borrowing Position

	31.3.26 Balance £m	Net Movement £m	30.6.26 Balance £m	30.6.26 Weighted Average Rate %	30.6.26 Weighted Average Maturity (years)
Northern Ireland Consolidated Fund	17.80	-	17.80	6.95%	4.49

The Council's short-term borrowing cost has reduced slightly over the period in line with Base Rate and short-dated market rates. The average rate on the Council's short-term loans at 30th June 2026 on £17.79m was 6.95%, this compares with 6.82% on £18.88m loans 12 months ago.

Treasury Investment Activity

The CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes (revised in 2021) defines treasury management investments as investments that arise from the organisation's cash flows or treasury risk management activity that ultimately represents balances that need to be invested until the cash is required for use in the course of business.

The Council holds significant invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. During the year, the Council's investment balances ranged between £10 and £2 million due to timing differences between income and expenditure. The investment position is shown in table 4 below.

Table 4: Treasury Investment Position

	31.3.26 Balance £m	Net Movement £m	31.6.26 Balance £m	31.6.26 Income Return %	31.6.26 Weighted Average Maturity days
Banks & building societies (secured deposits)	3.34	16.35	19.68	3.53%	24.15
Local authorities and other govt entities	21.00	(21.00)	0.00	0.00%	0.00
Money Market Funds	10.00	0.00	10.00	3.83%	1.00
Total investments	34.34	(4.65)	29.68	7.36%	25.15

Both the CIPFA Code and government guidance require the Council to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its treasury investments before seeking the optimum rate of return, or yield. The Council's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income.

As demonstrated by the liability benchmark in this report, the Council expects to be a long-term investor and treasury investments therefore include both short-term low risk instruments to manage day-to-day cash flows and longer-term instruments where limited additional risk is accepted in

return for higher investment income to support local public services.

The Council has budgeted £270,000 income from these investments in 2026/27. Income received up to 30th June was £117,000, whilst a further £20,000 has been declared and is due to be paid by August.

The change in the Council's funds' capital values and income return over the 3-month period is shown in Table 4.

Because these funds have no defined maturity date, but are available for withdrawal after a notice period, their performance and continued suitability in meeting the Council's medium- to long-term investment objectives are regularly reviewed. Strategic fund investments are made in the knowledge that capital values will move both up and down on months, quarters and even years; but with the confidence that over a three- to five-year period total returns will exceed cash interest rates.

Treasury Performance

The Council measures the financial performance of its treasury management activities both in terms of its impact on the revenue budget and its relationship to benchmark interest rates, as shown in table 5 below.

Table 5: Performance 2026/27

	Borrowing	Leases	Investments	Net Investments
Actual average principal £m	17.80	0.01	25.07	7.26
Budgeted principal £m	17.79	0.18	20.00	2.03
Variance £m	0.01	(0.17)	5.07	5.22
Actual cost / (income) £m	1.04	0.00	0.24	0.80
Budgeted cost / (income) £m	1.11	0.00	0.27	0.84
Variance £m	(0.07)	0.00	(0.03)	(0.04)

Compliance

The Chief Finance Officer reports that all treasury management activities undertaken during the quarter complied fully with the principles in the Treasury Management Code and the Council's approved Treasury Management Strategy. Compliance with specific investment limits is demonstrated in table 6 below.

Table 6: Investment Limits

	2026/27 Max Counterparty Limit	30.6.26 Actual	Sector Limit	Complied? Yes/No
The UK Government	Unlimited	£0	n/a	Yes
Local authorities & other government entities	£5m	£0	Unlimited	Yes
Secured investments	£5m	£19.6m	Unlimited	Yes

Registered providers and registered social landlords (unsecured)	£3m	£0	£5m	Yes
Banks (unsecured)	£3m	£0	Unlimited	Yes
Building societies (unsecured)	£3m	£0	£10m	Yes
Money Market Funds	£5m	£10	Unlimited	Yes
Strategic pooled funds	£5m	£0	£10m	Yes
Other Investments	£3m	£0	£5m	Yes

Compliance with the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary for external debt is demonstrated in table 7 below.

Table 7: Debt and the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary

	Q1 2026/27 Maximum	30.6.26 Actual	2026/27 Operational Boundary	2026/27 Authorised Limit	Complied? Yes/No
Total debt	£17.8m	£17.8m	£95m	£120m	Yes

Since the operational boundary is a management tool for in-year monitoring it is not significant if the operational boundary is breached on occasions due to variations in cash flow, and this is not counted as a compliance failure.

Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

As required by the 2021 CIPFA Treasury Management Code, the Council monitors and measures the following treasury management prudential indicators.

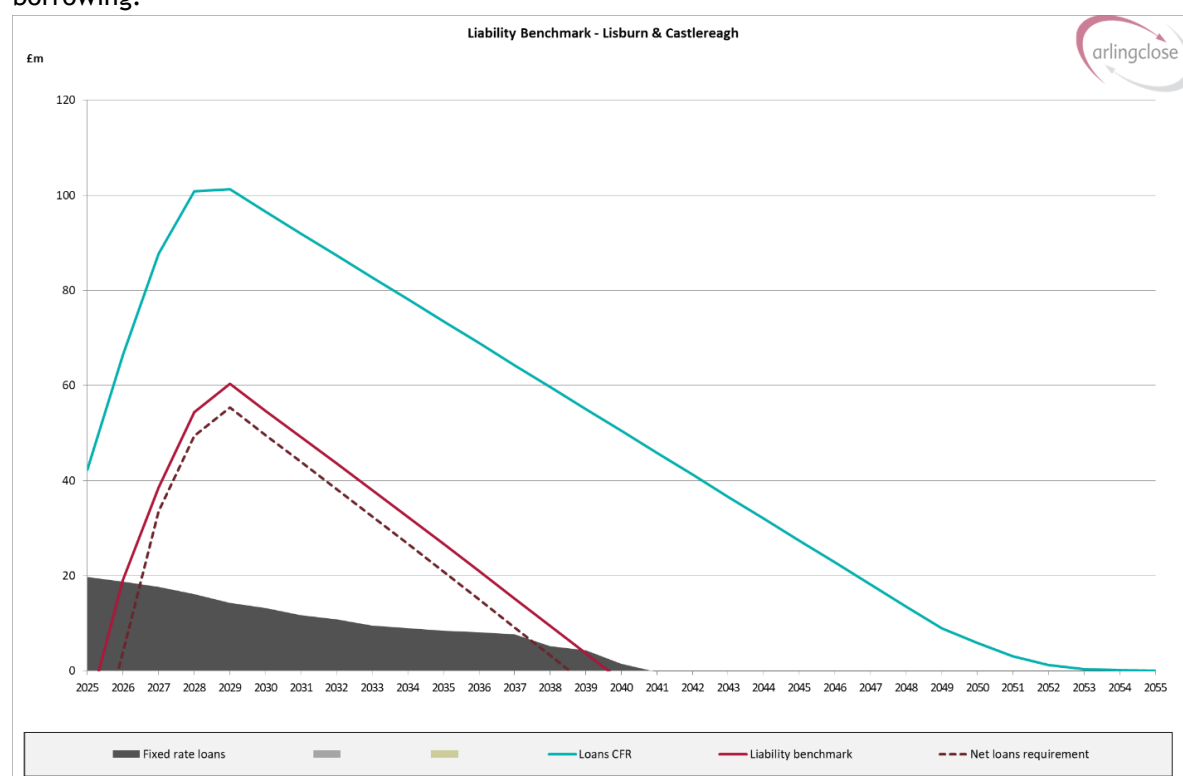
1. Liability Benchmark:

This indicator compares the Council's actual existing borrowing against a liability benchmark that has been calculated to show the lowest risk level of borrowing. The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future, and so shape its strategic focus and decision making. It represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing the Council must hold to fund its current capital and revenue plans while keeping treasury investments at the minimum level of £5m required to manage day-to-day cash flow.

	31.3.26 Actual	31.3.27 Forecast	31.3.28 Forecast	31.3.29 Forecast
Loans CFR	66.20	87.35	100.25	101.79
Less: Balance sheet resources	82.21	65.37	62.37	56.84
Net loans requirement	(16.00)	21.99	37.89	44.95
Plus: Liquidity allowance	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Liability benchmark	(11.00)	26.99	42.89	13.48

Following on from the medium-term forecast above, the long-term liability benchmark assumes capital expenditure funded by borrowing, minimum revenue provision on new capital expenditure based on asset life and income, expenditure and reserves all increasing by inflation of 2.5% p.a.

This is shown in the chart below together with the maturity profile of the Council's existing borrowing.



Whilst borrowing may be above the liability benchmark, strategies involving borrowing which is significantly above the liability benchmark carry higher risk.

2. **Maturity Structure of Borrowing:** This indicator is set to control the Council's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of all borrowing were:

	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	30.6.26 Actual	Complied?
Under 12 months	15%	0%	8.18%	Yes
12 months and within 24 months	20%	0%	10.24%	Yes
24 months and within 5 years	25%	0%	18.65%	Yes
5 years and within 10 years	30%	0%	18.31%	Yes
10 years and above	100%	0%	44.62%	Yes

Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment.

3. **Long-term Treasury Management Investments:** The purpose of this indicator is to control the Council's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The prudential limits on the long-term treasury management limits are:

	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	No fixed date
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£5m	£4m	£3m	£3m
Actual principal invested beyond year end	£0m	£0m	£0m	£0m
Complied?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Long-term investments with no fixed maturity date include strategic pooled funds, real estate investment trusts and directly held equity but exclude money market funds and bank accounts with no fixed maturity date as these are considered short-term.

Additional indicators

Security: The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted average credit rating of its investment portfolio. This is calculated by applying a score to each investment (AAA=1, AA+=2, etc.) and taking the arithmetic average, weighted by the size of each investment. Unrated investments are assigned a score based on their perceived risk.

	2026/27 Target	30.6.26 Actual	Complied?
Portfolio average credit rating	A	A	Yes

Liquidity: The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to liquidity risk by monitoring the amount of cash available to meet unexpected payments within a rolling three-month period, without additional borrowing.

	30.6.26 Actual	2026/27 Target	Complied?
Total cash available within 3 months	£24.7m	£12m	Yes
Total sum borrowed in past 3 months without prior notice	£0	£0	Yes

Interest Rate Exposures: This indicator is set to control the Council's exposure to interest rate risk.

Interest rate risk indicator	2026/27 Target	30.6.26 Actual	Complied?
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>rise</u> in interest rates	£800,000	£38,797	Yes
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>fall</u> in interest rates	£800,000	£38,784	Yes

For context, the changes in interest rates during the quarter were:

	<u>01/04/26</u>	<u>30/06/26</u>
Bank Rate	3.75%	3.75%
1-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	4.93%	4.77%
5-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	5.16%	5.07%
10-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	5.62%	5.55%
20-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	6.14%	6.09%
50-year PWLB certainty rate, maturity loans	6.00%	5.98%

The impact of a change in interest rates is calculated on the assumption that maturing loans and investment will be replaced at new market rates.

Committee:	Corporate Services Committee
Date:	9 th September 2026
Report from:	Head of HR & OD

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Consultation LGSC – Code of Conduct & Working Relationship Protocol

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>	
1.1	The Council was contacted by the Local Government Staff Commission on 22 nd June to request feedback on their live consultation.	
1.2	In November 2025, based on a recommendation from the Minister for Communities, the NI Executive formally agreed that the Local Government Staff Commission (the Commission) would be wound up in March 2027.	
1.3	As a consequence of this decision the existing Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees (the Code) and Local Government Employee and Councillor Working Relationship Protocol (the Protocol) will no longer be applicable.	
1.4	The Commission are of the view that it would be useful to put in place a Code and a Protocol which could be recommended as guidance to councils prior to the Commission's dissolution, and which could be owned and managed by councils with effect from 01 April 2027.	
1.5	These documents will apply to the Council, so it is recommended that a response is provided to this consultation as an organisation.	
1.6	The LGSC have provided a questionnaire to use when providing responses. The Council's proposed response has been drafted using this, please see Appendix 5 .	
2.0	<u>Recommendations</u>	
	It is recommended that the consultation response at Appendix 5 be approved.	
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u>	
	Minimal as no immediate changes anticipated to be required our own policies and procedures.	
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions or rationale why the screening was not carried out	Not applicable at this time
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No

4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out.	Not applicable at this time
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Appendices:	Appendix 1 - Letter from LGSC Appendix 2 -Schedule of Amendments Appendix 3 - Code of Conduct for LG Employees - Consultation Version Appendix 4 - LG Employee & Councillor Working Relationship Protocol - Consultation Version Appendix 5 – Consultation Questionnaire
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CHAIRPERSON
Mr Bumper Graham

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22 June 2026

Dear Colleague

Consultation on the Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees and the Local Government Employee and Councillor Working Relationship Protocol

In November 2025, based on a recommendation from the Minister for Communities, the NI Executive formally agreed that the Local Government Staff Commission (the Commission) would be wound up in March 2027.

As a consequence of this decision the existing Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees (the Code) and Local Government Employee and Councillor Working Relationship Protocol (the Protocol) will no longer be applicable. The Commission are therefore of the view that it would be useful to put in place a Code and a Protocol which could be recommended as guidance to councils prior to the Commission's dissolution, and which could be owned and managed by councils with effect from 01 April 2027.

On this basis the Commission now wishes to consult with councils, the NIHE and other key stakeholders on the structure and provisions of a revised Code and Protocol. Therefore, I attach for your consideration the following:

- Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees – Consultation Version
- The Local Government Employee and Councillor Working Relationship Protocol Consultation Version
- A Schedule of Amendments
- A Consultation Response Questionnaire

I would be grateful if you could consider this revised Protocol and provide a response to the Commission by **Thursday 22 October 2026**.

Should you require any further information, do not hesitate to contact me, or in my absence, Paula Hamilton, Senior HR Officer by email on paula.hamilton@lgsc.org.uk

Yours sincerely

Diana Stewart
Director of the Local Government Staff Commission

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

Formation Works, Lanyon
22 East Bridge Street
Belfast BT1 3NR

The Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland



Review of the Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees and Local Government Employees and Councillor Working Relationship Protocol

Schedule of Amendments Against old version to new version

Click the below link

[Microsoft Word - 1. Revised Code of Conduct Jan 21](#)

June 2026

Code of Conduct

SECTION 1 – Introduction

Status of the Code

This paragraph has been amended to include an adoption date. Refer to paragraph 1.1.

Scope

This is a new paragraph added. Refer to paragraph 1.2.

SECTION 2 – Framework for the Code

Framework for the Code

This paragraph has been amended. Refer to paragraph 2.0.

National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service (the National Agreement)

This paragraph is unchanged. Refer to paragraph 2.1.

Principles of Conduct

This paragraph has been amended to reflect the November 2021 review of the accompanying descriptors, the retitling of the Principles as *Nolan Principles: The Seven Principles of Public Life*, and the inclusion of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Refer to paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3.

Health and Safety

This is a new paragraph added. Refer to paragraph 2.4.

SECTION 3 – Consultation and Implementation

This section has been deleted.

SECTION 4 – Model Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees

(Renumbered as Section 3 in the revised Code)

Standards of Behaviour and Impartiality

This paragraph has been amended and retitled Standards of Behaviour and Impartiality. Refer to paragraph 3.1.

Disclosure of Information and Data Protection

This paragraph has been amended and retitled Disclosure of Information and Data Protection. Refer to paragraph 3.2.

Political Neutrality

This paragraph is unchanged. Refer to paragraph 3.3.

Conflict of Interest, Relationships and Personal Interests

This paragraph has been amended and retitled Conflict of Interest, Relationships and Personal Interests. Refer to paragraph 3.4.

Relationship with Councillors

This paragraph is unchanged and incorporated into paragraph 3.4.

Contact with the Community and Service Users

This paragraph is unchanged and incorporated into paragraph 3.4.

Relationship with Contractors, Planning Applicants and those applying for Council Grants

This paragraph is unchanged and incorporated into paragraph 3.4.

Fraud and Bribery Detection (formerly Bribery and Corruption / Fraud and Corruption)

This paragraph has been amended and consolidated from the previous Bribery and Corruption and Fraud and Corruption provisions. Refer to paragraph 3.6.

Appointments and Other Employment Matters

This paragraph is unchanged and incorporated into paragraph 3.4.

Outside Commitments, Voluntary Work and Working Hours

This paragraph has been amended and retitled Outside Commitments, Voluntary Work and Working Hours. Refer to paragraph 3.5.

Personal Interest

This paragraph is unchanged and incorporated into paragraph 3.4.

Equality Issues

This paragraph has been amended and incorporated into paragraph 2.3.

Separation of Roles

This paragraph is unchanged but retitled Procurement and Contract Management. Refer to paragraph 3.7.

Use of Financial and Other Council Resources

This paragraph has been amended. Refer to paragraph 3.8.

Hospitality and Gifts

This paragraph is unchanged. Refer to paragraph 3.9.

Sponsorship – Giving and Receiving

This paragraph is unchanged. Refer to paragraph 3.10.

Social Media and Media Contact

This is a new paragraph added. Refer to paragraph 3.11.

Raising Concerns

This paragraph has been amended. Refer to paragraph 3.12.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct

This paragraph is unchanged. Refer to paragraph 3.13.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Nolan Principles – The Seven Principles of Public Life.

Appendix 2

Legal and Other Provisions Relating to the Code of Conduct.

Appendix 3

Model Declaration of Interest Form.

Local Government Employee and Councillor Working Relationship Protocol

SECTION 1 – Introduction

This section has been amended. Refer to paragraphs 1.1 to 1.5.

SECTION 2 – Purpose

This section has been amended. Refer to paragraphs 2.1 to 2.5.

SECTION 3 – Conduct of Local Government Employees towards Councillors

This section has been amended and retitled Principles, including the Nolan Principles.

Refer to paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3.

SECTION 4 – Conduct of Local Government Employees towards Councillors *(Formerly Section 3 in the previous Protocol)*

This section has been amended and renumbered. Refer to paragraphs 4.1 to 4.4.

SECTION 5 – Conduct of Councillors towards Employees

This section has been amended and retitled Conduct of Councillors against Local Government Employees. Refer to paragraphs 5.1 to 5.6.

SECTION 6 – Dealing with Disputes/Complaints Between Councillors and Local Government Employees

This is a new section added to the Protocol. Refer to paragraphs 6.0 to 6.27.

SECTION 7 – Breaches of the Protocol

This is a new section added to the Protocol. Refer to paragraphs 7.0 to 7.2.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES **CONSULTATION VERSION** **June 2026**

This document is available on request in a range of formats to suit the need of different users. If you would like a copy in an alternative format, please contact your HR department.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

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CONSULTATION VERSION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Status of the Code

The wording in this paragraph will replicate the wording of the Local Government Staff Commission (Dissolution Order (NI) 2027 which will detail the responsibilities of the Department for Communities in this respect.

The Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees (the Code) is effective from 01 April 2027.

It is desirable for the protection of the public and the protection of employees that guidance be given to local government employees as to the conduct expected of them. This Code provides guidance to assist Councils and their employees in their day-to-day work and sets out the minimum standards of behaviour expected.

The aim of the Code is to set guidelines for Council employees which will help maintain and improve standards and protect employees from criticism or misunderstanding.

1.2 Scope

The provisions of this Code apply to all staff employed by Councils in Northern Ireland in the performance of their duties on a day-to-day basis including any additional offices to which they may be appointed in their capacity as a local government employee.

The terms employee/s or member/s of staff should be taken to mean any individual/s employed by a Council including those working both full time and part time on a permanent, temporary, fixed term or inward secondment basis. This Code also applies to seasonal and casual staff, agency workers and volunteers while they are engaged in carrying out duties for the Council.

2.0 FRAMEWORK FOR THE CODE

The public is entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all employees who work for local government and this Code has been developed in line with best practice, existing legislation and the following guidance. In addition, to this guidance employees are required to demonstrate the Council's organisational values in their behaviours at work.

2.1 National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service (the National Agreement)

The basic principle is stated in Part 2 paragraph 2, Key National Provisions of the National Joint Council for Local Government Services, National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service (the National Agreement):

2. Official Conduct

- 2.1 *Employees will maintain conduct of the highest standard such that public confidence in their integrity is sustained.*
- 2.2 *Local codes of practice will be developed to cover the official conduct and the obligations of employees and employers.*

Similar provisions are incorporated in the National Conditions of Service of Local Authority Chief Executives and Chief Officers.

2.2 Nolan Principles – The Seven Principles of Public Life

This Code builds on, and is in keeping with, the seven principles of public life articulated by the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life established in 1994, please refer to Appendix 1 for the revised Nolan Principles. The Seven Principles of Public Life apply to anyone who works as a public office holder. This includes all those who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally or locally and all people appointed to work in the public sector. The descriptors have been amended to reflect Local Government employees. These Principles also apply to all those in the private sector delivering public services.

- **Selflessness** – Officers should act solely in terms of the public interest.
- **Integrity** – Officers must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
- **Objectivity** – Officers must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

- **Accountability** – Officers are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
- **Openness** – Officers should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
- **Honestly** – Officers should be truthful.
- **Leadership** – Officers should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

2.3 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Four further principles of conduct have been adopted from the Northern Ireland Assembly Code of Conduct that employees are expected to comply with as well as Council policies concerning equality, diversity and inclusion:

- **Equality** – Officers should promote equality of opportunity and not discriminate against any person, treating people with respect regardless of race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, political opinion, marital status and whether or not a person has dependants.
- **Promoting Good Relations** - Officers should act in a way that is conducive to promoting good relations by tackling prejudice, promoting understanding and respect and encouraging participation between people on the grounds of different religion, political opinion, race, gender, age, sexual orientation and disability.
- **Respect** – Officers should show respect and consideration for others at all times.
- **Good Working Relationships** - Officers should work responsibly with other officers and Elected Members for the benefit of the whole community. Officers' working relationships should at all times be professional, courteous and based on mutual respect.

2.4 Health and Safety

The Council takes its duty of care to its employees seriously. Employees must comply with any corporate health and safety policies and procedures that apply to their work or role.

3.0 MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

3.1 Standards of Behaviour and Impartiality

Employees are expected to provide the highest possible standard of service to the public and provide appropriate advice and support to councillors, colleagues or service users with impartiality. Employees have a duty to conduct themselves with integrity and honesty and ensure, where appropriate, that other employees do so also.

Employees will be expected, without fear of recrimination or victimisation, to bring to the attention of the appropriate level of management any deficiency in the provision of service or illegal or unethical conduct. In particular, employees should be prepared to highlight concerns with regards to fraud, safeguarding issues, health and safety, data protection and any other issue of legal compliance where actions may be unlawful or amount to maladministration, or where there could be serious impact on the safety or wellbeing of colleagues, service users, or the reputation of the Council.

Employees must report to the appropriate manager any impropriety or breach of the terms of this Code.

3.2 Disclosure of Information and Data Protection

Employees should not use any information obtained in the course of their employment for personal or commercial gain or benefit, nor should they pass it on knowingly to others who might use it in such a way.

Employees who have access to any commercially sensitive, confidential or personal information should only disclose it in the course of their work, as required. In addition, employees should only access and view data essential to their day-to-day tasks and not seek out individual or personal information.

The general position is that Council business should be undertaken in an open and transparent manner. This is supported through legislation (access to information rules, data protection and freedom of information).

The law requires that certain types of information must be available to Councillors, auditors, government departments, service users and the public. The Council itself may also decide to be open about other types of information. The Council should therefore make clear to employees:

- the types of information which must be made available, and to whom;
- the types of information which the Council has voluntarily made open, and to whom;
- the types of information which the Council does not wish to be disclosed without specific permission.

Any particular information received by an employee from an individual, (including a councillor) which is personal to the individual should be kept confidential, except where such disclosure is required or sanctioned by law, for example, where an individual shares information which may be a safeguarding issue, this must be shared with the Council's Safeguarding Officer and passed on to the relevant agency, or where the individual provides their permission to disclose the information.

Employees should attend any training sessions provided by the Council in relation to disclosure of information and data protection and seek advice, if unsure from their line manager.

3.3 Political Neutrality

Employees serve the Council as a whole. They must serve all councillors equally, and not just those of a particular group, for example the majority/main party, and must ensure that the individual rights of all councillors are respected.

Employees may be required to advise political groups. In the provision of such advice, employees should not compromise their political neutrality. Any advice given should be available to all political groups, if requested.

Employees must follow Council policies and must not let their own personal or political opinions interfere improperly with their work.

While the Council recognises and respects the rights of all employees to hold personal or political opinions; employees should ensure that the expression of those opinions does not constitute a conflict of interest for their role within the Council. This does not compromise an employee's rights in relation to collective trade union representation and engagement, and lawful trade union activity.

An employee of a Council cannot stand, be elected or co-opted as a councillor for the Council in which they are employed. An employee may stand and be elected as a councillor in a Council different to that which they are employed by (provided they do not hold one of the prescribed offices or employments outlined in the Local Government (Disqualification) (Prescribed Offices and Employments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014.

3.4 Conflict of Interest, Relationships and Personal Interests

Employees are expected to conduct themselves with integrity, impartiality and honesty and their private interests should not have the potential for allegations of impropriety or partiality to be upheld in doing so bringing the Council into disrepute.

Responsibility is placed on every employee to declare any personal or financial interests, which could reasonable be considered or perceived to conflict with the Council's interests.

Conflicts of interest could include anything that might reasonably prevent, or perceived as preventing, employees from acting with impartially or professionalism. If in doubt whether to disclose something, employees should take the more cautious approach and make the disclosure.

Employees must adhere to Council policy regarding declaration of interests and must declare any new interests to the appropriate manager as soon as they become aware of them. This includes advising their new line manager if they change their role/position in the Council. Appendix 3 on page 25 sets out a model Declaration of Interest Form, extracted from the NI Audit Office Guidance. Councils can use this model form or their own form for staff to declare their interests.

Employees must not gain financial benefit as a result of their Council employment, outside of their salary or other payment related to their employment. This would constitute a conflict of interest and potentially corruption.

In particular, attention is drawn to the following examples of situations and relationships where potential conflicts of interest can occur:

Relationships with Councillors

Employees are responsible to the Council and have a general duty to act in the interests of the local community. Some employees give advice to councillors and senior managers in the course of their work for the Council and should do so in a balanced and professional manner. Mutual respect between employees and councillors is essential to good local government.

Employees should deal with councillors in a polite, professional and efficient manner. They should not approach or attempt to influence councillors in relation to personal or contractual matters, for example, a potential regrading of their post, but should use the existing employment procedures within the Council, for example, the Grievance Procedure.

Employees should not report any issues or concerns regarding the operation of the Council, which have come to their attention in the course of carrying out their duties, to a councillor. These should be raised with their line manager through the Council procedures, if appropriate.

This does not compromise an employee's rights as a ratepayer to access and/or question the provision of Council services to them through open and transparent Council procedures, for example, in relation to a planning or refuse collection issue.

Employees should report to an appropriate manager if a councillor attempts to pressurise them to deal with a matter which is not in accordance with Council procedure or policy.

For further advice and guidance, refer to the Local Government Employee and Councillor Working Relationship Protocol.

Contact with the Community and Service Users

Employees have a responsibility to the community they serve and should, ensure courteous, effective and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals within the community. Employees should always try to be positive, constructive and inclusive.

This may require reasonable adjustments for effective communication with people with disabilities in accordance with the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. In addition, the language needs of someone whose first language is not English need to be considered.

Employees also have a right not to be verbally or physically abused by the community and service users. Any incidents should be reported immediately to the employee's line manager.

The Council strives to provide consistent and accessible customer service excellence in the delivery of all services. However, it is recognised that on occasions the best possible standard of service is not provided. To ensure the Council is aware of such situations, takes remedial action and continually improves, there is a Local Government Complaints Handling Procedure which all employees are required to comply with.

Relationships with Contractors, Planning Applicants and those applying for Council Grant

All relationships with external contractors or potential contractors or applicants for planning consent or grant must be made known to the appropriate manager. Similarly, any beneficial interest or licence in respect of land which is affected by a planning application must be made known to the appropriate manager.

Employees who are employed within the Planning Department, and who are members of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), must also adhere to their Code of Professional Conduct (RTPI Code of Professional Conduct)

Orders, contracts, grants and planning decisions must be decided on merit and no special favour should be shown in the procurement process to any businesses or potential suppliers particularly those run by, for example, friends, persons to whom the employee owes (or is owed) an obligation, partners or persons where a family relationship is deemed to exist. Appendix 2, page 22 provides a definition of family relationship.

Employees who deal with, engage or supervise contractors or process or determine applications under delegated powers with whom they have previously had, or currently have, a relationship in a private or domestic capacity, should declare that relationship to the appropriate manager as soon as they are aware and a decision on their suitability to be part of the process should be made and recorded.

Employees must not accept money or any other reward from any organisation, body or individual who may benefit from work or funding provided by the Council.

Appointments and Other Employment Matters

Where an employee is involved in appointments responsibility is placed on every panel member to disclose to an appropriate manager or officer of the Council where potential conflict of interest may be present, for example partners or persons where a family relationship is deemed to exist, or if an individual has agreed to act as a referee for an applicant.

Where a potential conflict of interest exists, the issue is not about satisfying the conscience of the individual. Public perceptions and also those of other candidates must be considered and, in such cases, it may be appropriate for the individual to withdraw from the recruitment exercise.

Similarly, employees should not be involved in decisions in relation to discipline, promotion or pay adjustments for any other employee with whom they have a close personal relationship, a person to whom the employee owes (or is owed) an obligation, partner or person where a family relationship is deemed to exist. For further examples of Potential Categories of Interests see Appendix 2, page 21.

Employees should declare an interest and, if appropriate, remove themselves from discussions or meetings where they personally could potentially be a beneficiary and/or be impacted by decisions made.

Personal Interests

Employees should review regularly their personal circumstances and take steps to deal with any potential conflict of interest. As soon as they become aware of a potential conflict, employees must declare to an appropriate manager any financial or non-financial interests that they consider could bring about conflict with the Council's interests, for instance:

- membership of an organisation receiving grant aid from the Council.
- membership of an organisation or pressure group which may seek to influence the Council's policies.

- membership of an organisation which may seek to influence the performance of an employee in carrying out their duties.
- having a beneficial interest in land which is within the Council's district and is subject to any planning application.
- having a beneficial interest in a company which is seeking to or doing business with the Council.

Employees who have an interest, financial or non-financial, should not involve themselves in any decision or allocation of Council services or resources from which they, their friends, persons to whom they owe (or are owed) an obligation or family might benefit and should ensure that the matter is referred immediately to their line manager.

In a work capacity, or when using their Council job title or email address, employees must not criticise the Council either through the media, at a public meeting, or in any written communication with members of the public, including social media.

The Council recognises and respects the right of all employees to become members of organisations. However, employees must declare personal interests where there is, or could be perceived to be, a conflict of interest between their duties as an employee and their membership of the organisation.

3.5 Outside Commitments, Voluntary Work and Working Hours

All employees must be clear about their contractual obligations and must not take on outside employment which conflicts with the Council's interests and if any of the following apply to the business, employment or appointment, and engagement in it would, in the Council's view:

- not be in the Council's interests.
- put the employee in a position where duty to the Council and external interests would conflict, or are likely to conflict.
- weaken public confidence in the impartiality of the Council or in the effective conduct of the Council's work.

Employees must not have any external business, external employment or external appointment without advising their line manager.

Employees should adhere to the requirements regarding declaration of interests (seeking clarification from their line manager if required).

Engagement in any external business, employment or appointment will be deemed to act detrimentally to the Council's interests where it may give rise to or contribute to an employee's sickness absence, or deterioration in performance.

Employers and employees of Councils should be aware of their responsibilities under The Working Time Regulations (NI) 2016.

3.6 Fraud and Bribery Detection

Fraud

The Council considers fraud as the use of deception with the intention of obtaining personal gain or obtaining a gain for others, avoiding an obligation or causing a loss to another party in accordance with the Fraud Act 2006. The Council will use, and disclose as necessary, information it holds including payroll information, for the prevention and detection of fraud and for the recovery of debt. Additionally, to fulfil its duty to protect the public funds it administers, the Council is required to participate in the National Fraud Initiative.

Fraud on the part of an employee is considered an act of gross misconduct, therefore an employee who is guilty of obtaining, or attempting to obtain, personal financial benefit or financial benefit for a third party, through fraudulent means will have that matter dealt with under the Council's disciplinary procedures.

Bribery

Receiving or making bribes is a criminal offence under the Bribery Act 2010 (that carries prison terms of up to 10 years and unlimited fines). Bribes may not always be monetary and may include hospitality and gifts. Employees must not:

- Offer, promise or give someone a reward to induce them to perform their functions or activities improperly.
- Accept, agree to accept or request a reward in return for performing a relevant function or activity improperly.

- Bribe a foreign public official in order to win business, keep business or gain business advantage for the organisation.

Payroll

The Council considers false claims for payroll purposes to be acts of fraud and will treat them as such. Employees must ensure that any claim for payment is accurate, for example claims for travelling expenses must be accurate and relate only to journeys necessarily undertaken for business purposes. Managers must also ensure that timesheets, travel claims, etc are accurate before authorising them.

3.7 Procurement and Contract Management

Employees involved in funding applications, the procurement process and dealing with contractors should be clear on the separation of client and contractor roles within the Council. All employees who have both a client and contractor responsibility must be aware of the need for accountability and openness.

Employees in contractor or client units must exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with all customers, suppliers, other contractors and sub-contractors. Employees who are privy to confidential information relating to the tendering process should not disclose that information to any unauthorised party or organisation.

Employees contemplating a management buyout should, as soon as they have formed a definite intent, inform the appropriate manager and withdraw from the contract awarding process.

Employees should ensure that, in awarding contracts, no special favour is shown to current or former employees or someone with whom they have a close personal relationship, partners or persons where a family relationship is deemed to exist (see Appendix 2, page 22 for a definition of family relationship) or to businesses run by them or employing them in a senior or relevant managerial capacity. If any such relationship exists, a decision on the suitability of an employee to be part of the process should be made and recorded.

3.8 Use of Financial and other Council Resources

Employees must not use Council equipment, materials and resources without authorisation or for a purpose not connected with their employment.

Finance

Employees must ensure that they use public funds entrusted to them in a responsible manner. They should strive to ensure value for money for rate payers and to avoid legal challenge to the Council.

An employee who, in their role in the Council, is responsible for a budget and becomes insolvent or bankrupt, must inform their line manager promptly.

Council Vehicles

All employees must comply with Council policy which prohibits personal use of Council vehicles, including situations where (for operational reasons) an employee is required to take a Council vehicle home.

ICT

All employees must comply with Council policy governing the personal use of communications systems, use of the internet, email and telephones. The Council must make employees aware of monitoring systems in place, basic housekeeping guidelines and the requirement to encrypt equipment and files.

Records Management

Employees must ensure that all files and documents in their possession are kept in a safe and secure manner and that data protection requirements are adhered to.

Confidential information must be used only for the purpose it was obtained and must not be used or disclosed in a manner incompatible with that purpose. It must be kept securely and disposed of in a secure manner in line with data protection principles.

3.9 Hospitality and Gifts

Employees should only accept offers of hospitality or invitations to attend social or sporting functions where the Council should be seen to be represented. They must be properly authorised and recorded in accordance with the Council's policy.

If an employee is in any doubt about the propriety of accepting any hospitality, he/she should take advice from their line manager.

When hospitality has to be declined, those making the offer should be courteously advised of the procedures and standards operating within the Council. Offers of hospitality which are declined should also be recorded in the Gifts and Hospitality register.

Employees should not accept personal gifts from contractors, members of the public, outside suppliers and organisations or groups in receipt of funding from the Council, although the Council may wish to allow employees to keep items of token value such as pens, diaries etc in line with Council policy on Gifts and Hospitality.

When considering whether or not to accept authorised hospitality, employees should be particularly sensitive as to its timing in relation to decisions which the Council may be taking affecting those providing the hospitality, for instance during a tendering period of a contract for which the provider may be bidding.

Acceptance by employees of hospitality through attendance at relevant conferences and courses is acceptable where:

- it is clear that the hospitality is corporate rather than personal;
- any offers of hospitality are reported and agreed by the employee's line manager in advance, or
- where the Council is satisfied that any procurement decisions are not compromised.

Where a visit is necessary, to inspect equipment for example, the Council should consider meeting the cost of the visit to avoid jeopardising the integrity of the Council in subsequent procurement decisions.

3.10 Sponsorship - Giving and Receiving

Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor or is seeking to sponsor a Council activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the basic conventions concerning acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply. Particular care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors.

Where the Council wishes to sponsor an event or service neither an employee nor any friends, partners or persons where a family relationship is deemed to exist (see Appendix 2, page 22 for a definition of family relationship) must benefit from such sponsorship in a direct way without there being full disclosure to an appropriate manager of any such interest.

Similarly, where the Council through sponsorship, grant aid, financial or other means, gives support in the community, employees should ensure that impartial advice is given and that there is no conflict of interest involved.

3.11 Social Media and Media Contact

The Council respects the legal rights of employees. However, incautious social media use brings with it the risk that employees may breach Council policy, which may in turn constitute misconduct resulting in disciplinary action, even if the breach is in the employee's own time.

In an employee's work with the Council, contact with the media must only take place where this has been authorised by a designated senior officer.

3.12 Raising Concerns

If an employee becomes aware of activities which he/she believes to be illegal, improper, unethical, dangerous that is in the public interest (i.e. that offers others, or otherwise inconsistent with this Code, the employee should report the matter, acting in accordance with the employee's rights under The Public Interest Disclosure (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (amended in October 2017), in line with the Council's Raising Concerns Policy and Health and Safety Policies.

The Order offers protection to employees who disclose serious concerns made in the public interest. In accordance with this legislation employees must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a concern.

The Council will ensure that any employee making a report does not experience detriment in the course of their employment. The Council will also take all complaints seriously; treat all parties involved fairly; exercise confidentiality wherever possible and treat victimisation as a disciplinary offence.

3.13 Breaches of the Code of Conduct

Any breach by an employee of any part of the Council's Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees or its supporting policies and guidance may be a disciplinary matter, which could lead to loss of employment. Some breaches of the Code could result in referral of the matter to the PSNI, which could lead to criminal prosecution.

CONSULTATION VERSION

Appendix 1

NOLAN PRINCIPLES – THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

Some of the accompanying descriptors were revised following a review, published in January 2013 and November 2021 and emphasise the values those in public life should practice:

- **Selflessness** – Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
- **Integrity** – Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
- **Objectivity** – Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
- **Accountability** – Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this..
- **Openness** – Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
- **Honestly** – Holders of public office should be truthful.
- **Leadership** – Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Appendix 2

LEGAL AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATING TO THE CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (paragraph 2.3, page 6)

Legislation

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2003.
 The Employment Equality Age Regulations (NI) 2006.
 Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976.
 Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998.
 Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
 Race Relations (NI) Order 1997.
 Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978 and Exceptions Order 1979.
 Equal Pay Act (Northern Ireland) 1970.
 Part-Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000.
 Fixed-Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2002.
 Parental Rights and Flexible Working under the Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996.
 Northern Ireland Act 1998.
 Human Rights Act 1998.
 General Data Protection Regulation 2016.
 Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

2. Disclosure of Information and Data Protection (paragraph 3.2, page 7)

Data Protection Act 2018.
 Freedom of Information Act 2000.
 Part 8, sections 42-52 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 deals with Access to meetings and Documents.
 Obligations of Discovery in connection with litigation.
 Human Rights Act 1998.
 General Data Protection Regulation 2016.

3. Potential Conflict of Interest Situations (paragraph 3.4, page 9)

Persons who owe you an obligation, or to whom you owe an obligation – this might include a debtor, creditor, fellow member of an organisation.

Very close personal relationships may also create a conflict, e.g. a good friend.

Family Relationship

For the purposes of the Code of Conduct, a relevant family relationship shall be deemed to exist between an officer and another person if they are:

- Married.
- Civil Partners.
- Cohabiting as if they were married.
- Cohabiting as if they were civil partners (partners).

or the other person is a biological, adopted, foster or step relative to an officer or of that officer's married partner, civil partner, or partner under one of the following categories:

- Child.
- Parent.
- Sibling.
- Son in law or Daughter in law.
- Mother in law or Father in law.
- Sister in law or Brother in law.
- Uncle or Aunt.
- Nephew or Niece.
- Grandson or Granddaughter.
- Grandparent.

For the avoidance of doubt, a personal relationship for the purposes of the Code of Conduct includes:

- a family relationship other than that specified above.
- a business/commercial/financial relationship.
- a sexual/romantic relationship.
- a friendship.

(A "friendship" refers to a personal relationship marked by mutual trust and familiarity beyond casual or professional interaction. This may include close personal friends, long-standing acquaintances, or individuals with whom there is a strong personal bond that could reasonably be perceived to affect an employee's objectivity or conduct in the workplace).

Potential Categories of Interest relating to Additional Employment

The following guidelines have been adapted from the NI Civil Service conflict of interest guidelines relating to additional employment

The following extract¹ deals with mitigating the conflict of 'being an employee, director, partner of another business or organisation, or pursuing a business opportunity':

"If an employee wishes to undertake any work (paid or unpaid) with another employer they must first advise their line manager/the Council.

No remunerative private work of the following description may be undertaken:

- a. work which would occupy your time or attention or render you unavailable for duty during normal official hours;*
- b. work identified in any way with the activities of a political party, group or organisation;*
- c. work of an educational, literary or scientific nature involving the use of information acquired by you in your official capacity or from official sources, except where it has previously been published, unless you have received the permission of your employing department to undertake such work;*
- d. work of a nature conflicting with your duty to the Council;*
- e. work which may ultimately have to be reviewed by you or any member of the Council acting in an official capacity;*
- f. work, related to your function, which an employee of the Council might otherwise justifiably undertake, but which is of such a scale as to involve unfair competition with persons wholly dependent on such work for a livelihood;*
- g. work which would involve the use of the property, tools, equipment or materials of the Council; and*
- h. work which is, or might be, inconsistent with your position as a public servant and may expose you or the Council to public criticism."*

¹ NICS Staff Handbook, Section 6.01, paragraph 6.1 and 6.2

4. Appointments and Other Employment Matters (paragraph 3.4, page 12)

Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection

The Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection issued as guidance effective from 01 April 2027.

Section 41 of Local Government Act (NI) 1972 deals with appointments to Councils.

5. Fraud and Bribery Detection (paragraph 3.6, page 14)

Section 46 of Local Government Act (NI) 1972 deals with the declaration of interest where an employee has a pecuniary interest and with recording of such interests. Not to do so will be an offence.

Section 47 of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972 forbids employees to accept payment apart from their salary/wage.

Appendix 3

Model Declaration of Interest Form

(extracted from the NIAO [conflicts of interest good practice guide.pdf](#))

** Councils can use this model form or their own form for staff to declare their interests.*

Register of Interests:

Declaration by Member of Staff

Period: 1 January 20xx to 1 January 20xx

Surname	
Forename	
Title	
Department	
Job Title	
Date of Appointment to Current Position	
Date of Appointment to Council (if different)	

Please include dates and role

1. Company interests – any relationship with a company or commercial organisation; Directorships, paid employment, consultancy, close family connection.

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2. Self employment

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3. Land or Property Holdings – see page 6 of the NIAO Guidelines on Conflicts of Interest and Representation on Outside Bodies

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4. Charities – trusteeships, governorships or employment with any charities or voluntary organisations.

5. Public Appointments – remunerated or unremunerated.

6. Memberships – including membership of professional or external bodies, trade or other associations

7. Close Family Links – specific close family interest in any of the above

8. Other interests – any other interests held by you or your close family

I confirm that the above declaration is complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. The interests I have declared include both direct and indirect interests (ie. those of a partner, spouse or close relative) and any specific financial interests are shown.

Signature: **Date:**

Print:

Local Government Employee and Councillor Working Relationship Protocol

Consultation Version June 2026

This document is available on request in a range of formats to suit the need of different users. If you would like a copy in an alternative format, please contact your HR department.

Local Government Employee and Councillor Working Relationship Protocol

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Local Government Employee and Councillor Working Relationship Protocol (the Protocol) is intended to guide Councillors and officers of the Council in their working relations with each other.
- 1.2 The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (the 2014 Act) includes an ethical framework for local government, a key element of which is the mandatory requirement for Councillors to observe the Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors (the Councillor Code), which establishes mechanisms for the investigation and adjudication of complaints and for appeals. The Councillor Code came into force on 28 May 2014 with Part 9 which deals with planning coming into effect from 1 April 2015.
- 1.3 *The wording in this paragraph will replicate the wording of the Local Government Staff Commission (Dissolution Order (NI) 2027 which will detail the responsibilities of the Department for Communities (DfC) in this respect. The Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees (the Code) is effective from 01 April 2027.*
- 1.4 Councils have established policies and procedures to resolve issues that employees¹ may encounter in the workplace. This Protocol does not override any existing employee policies or legal obligations but seeks to clarify the expected working relationship between Councillors and Employees.
- 1.5 All issues raised under the remit of this Protocol must be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

2.0 Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this Protocol is to:

- a) Promote trust, openness, fairness and honesty by setting out the working relationship between Councillors and Employees.
- b) Define roles so as to:
 - Clarify responsibilities.
 - Avoid conflict.
 - Ensure prompt resolution of any difficulties that may arise.
 - Prevent duplication or omission.

¹ For the purpose of this Protocol the term 'employees' or members of staff should be taken to mean any individual/s employed by a Council including those working both full time and part time on a permanent, temporary, fixed term or inward secondment basis. The Protocol also applies to seasonal and casual staff, agency workers and volunteers while they are engaged in carrying out duties for the Council.

- c) Secure compliance with the law, codes of conduct and the Council's own practices; and
- d) Set out procedures for dealing with concerns raised by Councillors or Employees.

2.2 Councillors and Employees must at all times observe this Protocol.

2.3 The Protocol seeks to maintain and enhance the integrity (real and perceived) of local government which demands the highest standards of personal conduct. Councillors and Employees must always respect the roles and duties of each other. They must show respect in all their dealings by observing reasonable standards of courtesy and by not seeking to take unfair advantage by virtue of their position.

2.4 Breaches of this Protocol by a Councillor may result in a complaint to the Local Government Commissioner for Standards. Breaches of this Protocol by an Employee may lead to disciplinary action.

2.5 This Protocol should also assist in furthering and developing a harmonious working environment with positive, constructive and professional relationships between Employees and Councillors.

3.0 Principles

3.1 This Protocol seeks to maintain and enhance the integrity (real and perceived) of local government which always demands the highest standards of personal conduct at all times.

This Protocol upholds the seven Nolan Principles and the additional principles of public life.

- **Selflessness** – Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
- **Integrity** – Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
- **Objectivity** – Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
- **Accountability** – Holders of public office are accountable to the public

for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

- **Openness** – Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
- **Honestly** – Holders of public office should be truthful.
- **Leadership** – Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Four further principles of conduct have been adopted from the Northern Ireland Assembly Code of Conduct that employees are expected to comply as well as Council policies concerning equality, diversity and inclusion:

- **Equality** – Officers should promote equality of opportunity and not discriminate against any person, treating people with respect regardless of race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, political opinion, marital status and whether or not a person has dependants.
- **Promoting Good Relations** - Officers should act in a way that is conducive to promoting good relations by tackling prejudice, promoting understanding and respect and encouraging participation between people on the grounds of different religion, political opinion, race, gender, age, sexual orientation and disability.
- **Respect** – Officers should show respect and consideration for others at all time.
- **Good Working Relationships** - Officers should work responsibly with other officers and Elected Members for the benefit of the whole community. Officers' working relationships should at all times be professional, courteous and based on mutual respect.

3.2 The Council has adopted mandatory codes of conduct for both Councillors and Employees which are based on the principles governing Councillors' and Employees' conduct enshrined in law. These principles underpin this Protocol.

- 3.3** Councillors are accountable to the electorate and serve only as long as their term of office lasts. Employees are accountable to the Council as a whole. Their job is to give advice to Councillors (individually and collectively) and to carry out the Council's work under the direction of the Chief Executive.

4.0 Conduct of Local Government Employees towards Councillors

- 4.1** Employees must treat all political groups and individual Councillors equally, fairly and remain politically neutral at all times. Employees will provide professional, impartial and effective support, to enable Councillors to fulfil their role, in and on behalf of the Council. Employees will not seek to influence or lobby a Councillor with regards to personal issues.
- 4.2** It is important that there should be good working relationships between senior Council Employees and Chairs of Committees and Mayors/Chairs. However, such relationships should not be allowed to become so close as to cast doubt either on an officer's ability to deal impartially with other Councillors, or the Chair/Mayor's ability to deal impartially with other employees.
- 4.3** Employees must at all times keep Councillors fully informed about significant issues which affect their wards or bodies on which they represent the Council. For example, if the Council conducts a consultation exercise, relevant Councillors, including ward Councillors should be notified at the beginning of the exercise.
- 4.4** An employee shall not discuss with a Councillor any work-related matters concerning him/herself or another individual Employee. These such matters should be dealt in accordance with Council policy.

5.0 Conduct of Councillors towards Local Government Employees

- 5.1** Councillors' engagement with Employees must be equitable, reasonable, courteous and respectful and ensure that the impartiality of Employees is not compromised. Councillors must abide by their Code of Conduct and their Council's standing orders.
- 5.2** It should be remembered that Employees are accountable to their Chief Executive, as Head of the Paid Service and that whilst Employees should always seek to assist a Councillor, they must not; in so doing go beyond the bounds of whatever authority they have been given by their Chief Executive.
- 5.3** Whilst Councillors are entitled to question Employees at meetings or in any public or private forum, they should not raise matters relating to the conduct or capability of an Employee or of Employees collectively, in a manner that is incompatible with this Protocol at meetings held in public or in any public forum. An Employee has no means of responding to criticisms in public.
- 5.4** Councillor's must not do anything which compromises or is likely to compromise employees' impartiality.

5.5 In seeking to deal with constituents' queries or concerns, Councillors should not seek to jump the queue but should respect the Council's procedures.

5.6 Councillors may request Designated Officers to provide them with such information, explanation and advice as they may reasonably need to assist them to discharge their roles as Councillors. This may range from general information about some aspects of the Council's services to specific information on behalf of a constituent. Where information is requested on behalf of a third party, it will only be provided if:

- It is in the public domain, and
- It is not barred by the Data Protection Act from being given.

6.0 Dealing with Disputes/Complaints Between Councillors and Local Government Employees

6.1 Councillors and Employees normally work well together. However, it is still necessary to have a clear procedure to deal with matters when disputes arise.

6.2 All complaints or disputes must be dealt with confidentially, courteously and respectfully.

6.3 The key principle for dealing with complaints is that both Councillors and Employees are committed to informal, non-adversarial solutions. Where a dispute or complaint arises, the first step should be for both parties to seek to resolve any differences informally, where necessary, with the assistance of a third party.

6.4 Alternative resolution of complaints or concerns may be recommended or achieved as agreed between the Councillor and Employee, including but not limited to a personal explanation, training, mediation and or an apology. No party can be forced to engage in such alternative resolution of complaints.

6.5 Further consideration may not be given in relation to a complaint if one or more of the following apply:

- Persistent or multiple complaints have been received which appear to be, for example, vexatious, malicious, politically motivated, relatively minor, insufficiently serious or tit-for-tat.
- Similar or the same complaints have already been raised and addressed and there is nothing more to be gained by further action being taken.
- The complaint concerns or is really about dissatisfaction with a Council decision or advice.
- There is not enough information to justify further investigation.
- The complaint is anonymous.
- The matter complained of took place more than 3 months before the complaint is received.

Complaint raised by a Councillor Towards a Local Government Employee

- 6.6** In the event that a Councillor wishes to raise either an informal or formal complaint regarding the conduct or behaviour of an Employee, the following process should be followed:

Informal Approach

- 6.7** A Councillor should seek to raise the matter in the first instance with the Director of the relevant service who should seek to resolve the matter with the Employee concerned. The Councillor must not engage directly with the Employee, nor make any attempt to reprimand or discipline the Employee.

Formal Approach

- 6.8** Where an informal resolution is not possible, or if the Councillor is unhappy with the outcome of the informal approach or considers the initial complaint to be of a serious nature, they should raise the matter formally with the relevant individual referred to below, who will determine how best to deal with the matter:

- A complaint by a Councillor against an Employee should be made to the Director of the service in question.
 - A complaint by a Councillor against a Director should be made to the Chief Executive.
 - A complaint by a Councillor against the Chief Executive should be made to the Mayor/Chair of the Council, copied to the senior officer responsible for HR (eg Head of Human Resources).
 - A complaint by a Councillor against an Employee (at any level) and the Chief Executive should be made to the Mayor/Chair of the Council, copied to the senior officer responsible for HR (eg Head of Human Resources).
 - A complaint by a Councillor against an Employee (at any level) and another Councillor should be made to the Chief Executive.
- 6.9** The Councillor may also wish to make their Party Group Leader, if relevant, aware of the complaint.
- 6.10** The recipient of the complaint may consult with others, as considered appropriate, for example human resources section where procedural advice is necessary.
- 6.11** The Councillor who has lodged a complaint has a right to know if action has been taken to correct a complaint or dispute, but they must not:
- Insist, or suggest to insist, that an Employee is disciplined; or
 - Influence the level of any disciplinary action which might be taken against an Employee.

- 6.12** The matter will be investigated, and the Councillor will be informed of progress and outcome but has no entitlement to detailed information about any disciplinary hearing or its conduct.
- 6.13** A Councillor's evidence will be considered as part of a formal process but the Councillor must:
- Respect the confidentiality of the investigation and disciplinary process.
 - Not seek to improperly influence the action taken against the Employee.
 - Accept the final decision.
- 6.14** The outcome of the formal investigation may result in:-
- no further action being required,
 - a verbal or written apology to the Councillor with an acknowledgement by the Employee that their conduct failed to meet the agreed standard and an undertaking that there will be no recurrence; or
 - referral for consideration under the Council's disciplinary procedures.
- 6.15** The Employee will be informed in accordance with the Council's disciplinary procedures.
- 6.16** If the complaint is in relation to the Chief Executive the procedures specified in the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) for Chief Executives of Local Authorities or the appropriate mechanism at that time will be followed.

Complaints by a Local Government Employee towards a Councillor

- 6.17** This protocol does not preclude an Employee, at anytime, if they think it necessary, to write to the Commissioner for Standards setting out how, in their opinion, a Councillor has breached the Code.
- 6.18** In the event that an Employee wishes to raise either an informal or formal complaint regarding the conduct or behaviour of a Councillor, the appropriate support must be provided by their respective line manager, and the following procedure should be followed:

Informal Approach

- 6.19** An Employee should seek to raise the matter in the first instance, confidentially with their relevant Director, providing details of the incident that has occurred. The Employee must not engage directly with the Councillor. If necessary, the Director may involve the Group Party Leader, if relevant.
- 6.20** The Director will undertake to resolve the matter through discussions with the Councillor concerned and report on the outcome to the Employee and the Chief Executive.

Formal Approach

- 6.21** If the Employee is unhappy with the outcome of the informal approach or considers their complaint to be of a serious nature, they may wish to consult with their recognised Trade Union representative, if applicable prior to raising the matter formally (verbally or in writing) with the relevant Director.
- 6.22** The relevant Director, with support from a senior HR Employee, if applicable, will ensure the matter is investigated according to the appropriate Council investigatory process.
- 6.23** The Councillor and Party Group Leader, if relevant, will be advised of the complaint and should agree to co-operate with the investigation to establish the facts.
- 6.24** The outcome of the investigation may result in: -
- no further action being required, or
 - a verbal or written apology to the Employee with an acknowledgement by the Councillor that their conduct failed to meet the agreed standards and an undertaking that there will be no recurrence.
- 6.25** If the Director considers that the circumstances of the complaint is sufficiently serious or a pattern of behaviour emerges, they may recommend to the Chief Executive that the matter is raised at a formal meeting with the Party Group Leader, if relevant.
- 6.26** The Director will write to the Employee and, where appropriate, their recognised Trade Union representative advising of the outcome. If the Employee is unhappy with the outcome, they may request that their complaint be reviewed by the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive will review the complaint and advise the Employee and their Trade Union representative of their decision.
- 6.27** The Councillor and the Group Party Leader, if relevant, will be informed in writing of the outcome of the investigation and consideration of further action.

7.0 Breaches of the Protocol

- 7.1** Breaches of this Protocol by a Councillor may constitute a breach of the Councillor Code.
- 7.2** Breaches of this Protocol by an Employee may be referred for disciplinary action.

This protocol is the interface between current Councillor and Employee Codes of Conduct, which require the highest standards of personal conduct, including activities on social media, to be maintained at all times.

Consultation Questionnaire on the Review of the Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees and the Local Government Employee and Councillor Working Relationship Protocol

The Commission would welcome your comments on the revised Code of Conduct and Protocol. Please provide any comments you have on the sections below and return to Diana Stewart at diana.stewart@lgsc.org.uk by Thursday 22 October 2026.

Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees

Section 1: Introduction Do you have any comments on this section? Content with this section as detailed.
Section 2: Framework of the Code Do you have any comments on this section? Content with this section as detailed.
Section 3: Model Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees Do you have any comments on this section? Content with this section as detailed.
Appendices Do you have any comments on the appendices? Content with this section as detailed.
Do you have any further comments on the Code of Conduct? No further comments on the basis that this document is guidance.

Protocol for Working Relationships between Local Government Employees and Councillors

Section 1: Introduction Do you have any comments on this section? Content with this section as detailed.
Section 2: Purpose Do you have any comments on this section? Content with this section as detailed.
Section 3: Principles Do you have any comments on this section? Content with this section as detailed.
Section 4: Conduct of Local Government Employees towards Councillors Do you have any comments on this section? Content with this section as detailed.
Section 5: Conduct of Councillors towards Local Government Employees Do you have any comments on this section? Content with this section as detailed.
Section 6: Dealing with Disputes and Complaints between Councillors and Local Government Employees Do you have any comments on this section? This new section appears to be more procedural than policy, and risks conflict with existing local arrangements. Its inclusion is not necessary and should be removed to avoid duplication, additional administration, and confusion.
Section 7: Breaches of the Protocol Do you have any comments on this section? Content with this section as detailed.

Do you have any further comments on the Protocol?

No further comments.

Organisation on whose behalf this response is submitted: Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council



Committee:	Corporate Services Committee
Date:	9 September 2026
Report from:	Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development

Item for:	Noting
Subject:	Workforce Reports

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>	
	1. Workforce Reports are provided on a quarterly basis to this Committee for review and scrutiny as appropriate and include: a. Report on Attendance Management within the Council for the period up to 31st June 2026 including actions taken by the Council to support attendance and minimise absence levels. b. Workforce This report details the number of staff employed and agency workers engaged with the Council as of 1st August 2026. c. Recruitment This report provides detail of the current position of recruitment of posts as of 8th August 2026, both internally and externally advertised posts.	
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u>	
	It is recommended that Members note the attached reports.	
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u>	
	Captured within current budgets.	
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions or rationale why the screening was not carried out	Report for noting only
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions or rationale why the screening was not carried out.	Report for noting only

Appendices:	• Attendance Management Report Analysis for Period Ending on 30th June 2026 • Recruitment Committee Report - Advert & Selection • Recruitment Committee Report – Appointments • Workforce Profile
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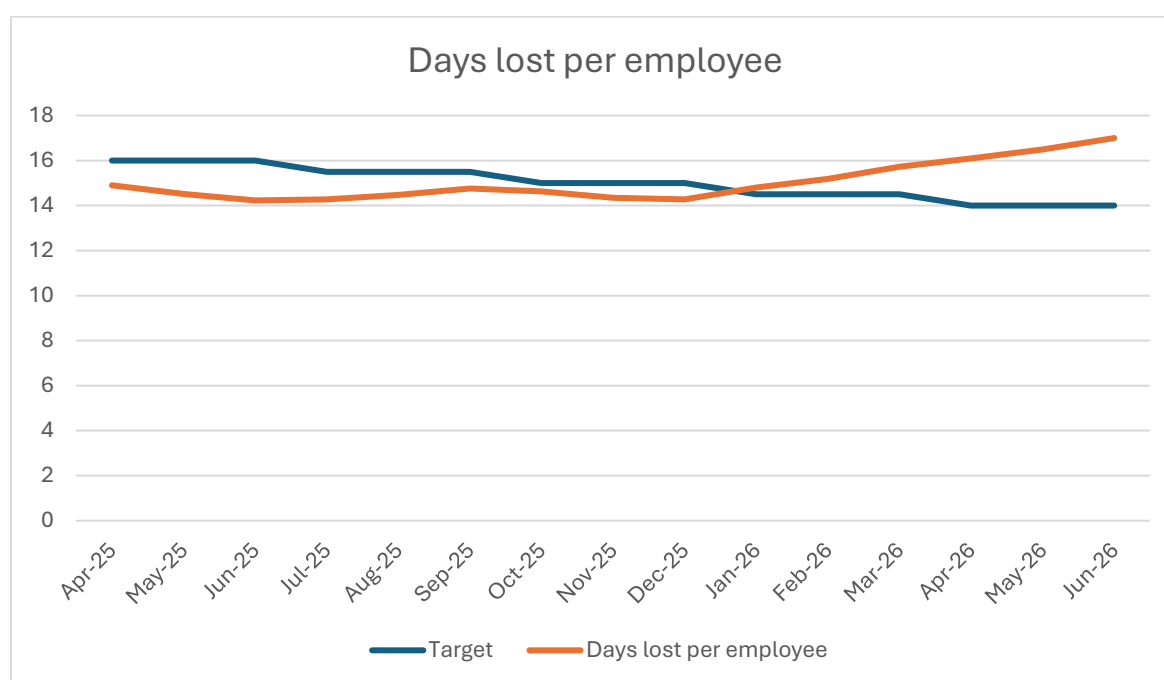
**ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT:
ANALYSIS FOR PERIOD
ENDING
30 JUNE 2026**

1.0 OVERVIEW

This report provides the Council with an overview of sickness absence levels across the organisation and outlines the arrangements in place for the monitoring and management of attendance.

2.0 ROLLING YEAR JULY 2025 – JUNE 2026

Full Council	01.05.25 to 30.04.26	01.06.25 to 31.05.26	01.07.25 to 30.06.26
Total Possible Days	158207.47	158235.00	158141.56
Days Lost Through Short Term Sickness	2310.34	2370.63	2440.63
Days Lost Through Long Term Sickness	9355.31	9584.31	9886.50
Total Lost Time Rate	7.37%	7.56%	7.79%
Total Days Lost	11,665.65	11,954.94	12,327.13
Days lost per employee	16.10	16.49	17.00



The rolling year position shows a continued upward trend in sickness absence across the Council. Days lost per employee increased from 16.10 for the period ending 30 April 2026 to 17.00 for the period ending 30 June 2026. The increase is evident in both short-term and long-term sickness absence, although long-term sickness remains the primary contributor to overall absence levels.

Ongoing monitoring, early intervention and targeted management support will therefore remain important in addressing sustained absence and supporting employees back to work where appropriate.

Days lost per employee differ significantly by directorate, in the financial year ending 30 June 2026, as illustrated by the table below:

Directorate	Rolling Year Days Lost Per Employee 01.05.25 to 30.04.26	Rolling Year Days Lost Per Employee 01.06.25 to 31.05.26	Rolling Year Days Lost Per Employee 01.07.25 to 30.06.26
Full Council	16.10	16.49	17.00
Chief Executives Office (Incl Audit)	0	0	0
Environmental Services	18.10	19.07	20.12
Finance & Corporate Services	8.47	8.98	8.93
Leisure & Community Wellbeing	18.53	18.56	18.72
Organisation Development & Innovation	8.63	8.09	9.60
Regeneration & Growth	12.64	13.02	14.14

2.1 ACTUAL MONTHS

APRIL 2026 – JUNE 2026

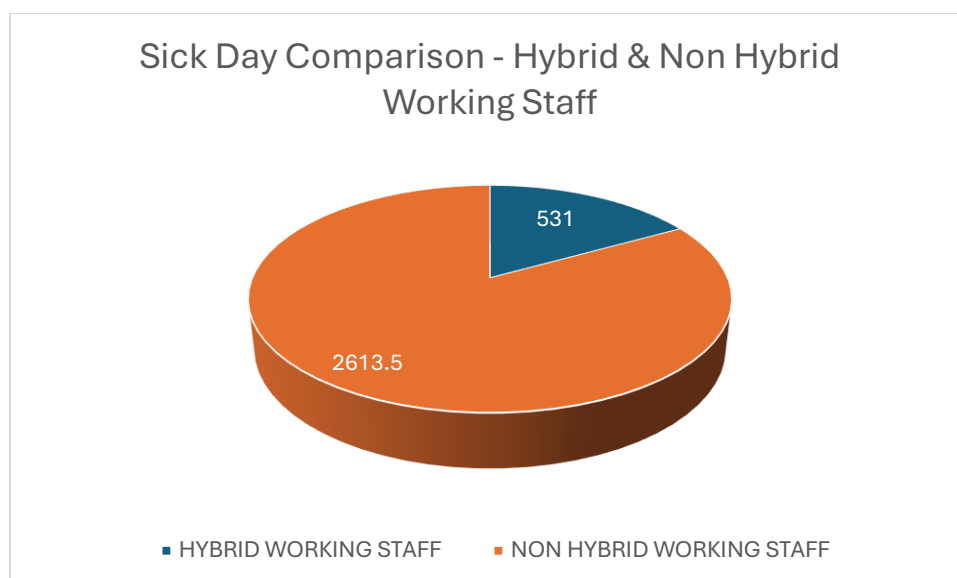
Full Council	APRIL 2026	MAY 2026	JUNE 2026	QTR 1
Total Possible Days	13,214.63	13,186.29	13,159.39	39,560.31
Days Lost Through Short Term Sickness	144.50	216.50	287.50	648.50
Days Lost Through Long Term Sickness	816.00	770.00	910.00	2,496.00
Total Lost Time Rate	7.27%	7.48%	9.10%	7.59%
Total Days Lost	960.50	986.50	1197.50	3,144.50
Days Lost Per Employee	1.33	1.36	1.66	4.35

During the first quarter of the current financial year sickness absences unfortunately increased throughout this three-month period. The increase throughout the quarter is reflected in both short-term and long-term sickness absence. However, long-term sickness remained the main contributor to overall absence, accounting for 2,496.00 days lost across the quarter, compared with 648.50 days lost through short-term sickness.

2.2 ANALYSIS OF SICKNESS ABSENCE AND HYBRID WORKING

In Q1 there were a total of 3,144.50 actual days lost due to sickness absence. This section provides an analysis of sickness absence across employees who are able to avail of hybrid working arrangements and those whose roles do not allow for hybrid working. The purpose of this comparison is to help identify whether there are any notable differences in absence levels between the two groups, while recognising that access to hybrid working is largely determined by the nature and requirements of individual roles.

Hybrid working arrangements are not available to all staff, as eligibility is dependent on the nature and requirements of individual roles. Where staff are able to avail of hybrid working, the operating model requires employees to work a minimum of 60% of their working time in the office. For full-time staff, this normally equates to three days working in the office and two days working from home, with arrangements applied on a pro rata basis for part-time staff. In Sports Services, due to operational requirements and the limited number of roles suitable for hybrid working, eligible staff are required to work four days in the office and one day from home.



The pie chart indicates that the majority of sickness absence during quarter 1 related to employees whose roles do not allow them to avail of hybrid working arrangements. This reflects the operational nature of many Council roles, where employees are required to attend the workplace to deliver services.

2.3 ABSENCE REASON ANALYSIS

Days Lost Previous v Current Quarter

Reason	Days Lost Previous Quarter	Days Lost Current Quarter	Variance From Previous Quarter
Stress/Depression/Mental Health	633.50	678.00	44.50
Other Musculo-Skeletal Problems	856.00	562.00	-294.0
Other	524.00	449.00	-75.00
Infections	352.33	204.00	-183.33
Stomach/Liver/Kidney/Digestive	210.00	252.50	42.5
Neurological	110.45	130.00	19.55
Chest and Respiratory	98.00	39.00	-59.00
Eye/Ear/Nose/Mouth/Dental	72.50	28.00	-44.50
Back and Neck Problems	185.00	152.00	-33.00
Corona Virus	9	0	-9.00
Genito-urinary/Gynaecological	96.00	35.00	-61.00
Heart/Blood Pressure/Circulation	66.67	190.00	123.33
Workplace Accident	165.00	425.00	260.00

Whilst absence due to Other Musculo-Skeletal Problems represented the largest cause of sickness absence across the Council in the previous quarter, absence due to Stress/Depression/Mental Health is once again the largest cause of sickness absence, with an increase of 44.50 days in comparison to the previous quarter.

For reporting purposes, the Stress/ Depression/ Mental Health category also includes employees who are experiencing serious mental health conditions. Absence attributed to personal stress continues to be a significant factor within this category. Personal stress is defined as any event or circumstance in an individual's life that adversely affects their own or

their family's health and wellbeing. This may arise directly, for example through serious illness, or indirectly through caring or support responsibilities for a family member.

Information obtained through absence interview meetings also indicate that external issues have affected the duration of absence and contributed to increased anxiety and stress for some employees.

Key factors influencing absence include:

- Bereavement
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Low Mood
- Work-Related Stress

Absence due to 'Other Musculo-Skeletal Problems', is the second highest cause of absence in the current quarter. It has decreased by 294 days in comparison to the previous quarter.

Absence categorised as 'Other' remains the third highest cause of absence in quarter 1 of the current financial year. Absence related to bereavement and cancer is included in this category.

2.4 ABSENCE COMPARISONS BY QUARTER

Absence Instances Previous vs Current Quarter

Reason	Absence Instances in Previous Q	Absence Instances in Current Q	Variance
Total	196	290	94

Number of Employee Absence Previous vs Current Quarter

Reason	Employee Absences in Previous Q	Employee Absences in Current Q	Variance
Total	181	252.78	71.78

Days Lost Previous vs Current Quarter

Reason	Days Lost Previous Q	Days Lost Current Q	Variance
Total	3,338.45	3,144.50	-193.50

The quarter 1 comparison shows that, while the number of absence instances increased from 196 in the previous quarter to 290 in the current quarter, and the number of employee absences increased from 181 to 252.78, the overall number of days lost reduced from 3,338.45 to 3,144.50. This represents an increase of 94 absence instances and 71.78 employee absences, but a reduction of 193.50 days lost overall. This indicates that sickness absence was more frequent during the current quarter and involved a higher number of employees, but the average duration of absence was shorter than in the previous quarter.

3.0 ACTIONS TAKEN

Regular meetings continue to be held with Directors, Heads of Service, individual units and line managers to review absence trends within their respective teams. Meetings were prioritised with Heads of Service and Directors in service areas identified as having the highest levels of sickness absence. As part of this process, detailed absence reports for each service area are considered at management meetings in order to identify areas requiring improvement.

HR & OD has continued to provide Directors and Heads of Service with monthly sickness absence reports. These reports support management in monitoring and analysing attendance trends, enabling informed decision-making and early intervention. They also assist in identifying patterns of absence, supporting employee wellbeing, and ensuring the consistent application of attendance management policies.

HR clinics continue to be delivered in areas with the highest sickness absence rates, providing managers with targeted support and practical guidance to assist them in addressing attendance issues effectively.

As referenced in previous reports, a comprehensive training programme was developed and delivered to support the implementation of the new Managing Attendance Policy and Procedure. This training has continued in order to ensure that new line managers understand their responsibilities under the revised policy and are equipped with the skills and resources required to manage sickness absence effectively within their teams.

3.1 HEALTH & WELLBEING

Health and wellbeing initiatives continued throughout quarter 1, reflecting the Council's ongoing commitment to supporting the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of employees. During the quarter, a range of initiatives were delivered to promote inclusion, encourage positive lifestyle choices and provide practical support to staff.

These included a staff workshop to mark World Autism Month, a Caring for the Carer workshop to support employees with caring responsibilities, and a Step Challenge to encourage participation in National Walking Month. In addition, football pitches were booked for operational staff within Waste Management and Operations, providing an opportunity to support physical activity, team engagement and positive wellbeing among employees in operational roles.

Promotion of Benenden, a private healthcare scheme available to employees, also continued during quarter 1. Employees who join the scheme can access a range of services including scans, diagnosis, surgery and treatment. Given the continued impact of lengthy NHS waiting lists on sickness absences, Benenden remains an important employee benefit and continues to be actively promoted across the Council.

The Council also continues to benefit from its network of 21 trained Mental Health First Aiders. These employees provide initial support to colleagues who may be experiencing mental health difficulties in the workplace and are trained to recognise early indicators of poor mental health. This network makes an important contribution to maintaining a supportive working environment and helps ensure that employees can access timely guidance and signposting to appropriate support services.

3.2 USEL

The Council maintains its partnership with USEL, a government-based organisation that supports employers in managing absences related to physical impairments and mental health challenges. Their services, including Physiotherapy and Counselling, are provided at no cost to the Council.

The Employment Services Officer maintains regular contact with employees, typically on a bi-weekly basis.

In Q1 7 employees participated in the Workable (NI) Programme and the Condition Management Programme. To access these programmes, employees must be either actively at work or committed to returning. All referred employees are receiving ongoing support and assistance.

3.3 CONCLUSION

The quarter 1 data indicates that sickness absence continues to require focused management attention across the Council. While overall days lost reduced compared with the previous quarter, absence instances and the number of employees absent both increased, demonstrating the need for continued monitoring, early intervention and consistent application of the Council's Managing Attendance Policy and Procedure.

The comprehensive training programme developed to support implementation of the new policy remains central to this approach. Further management training sessions will continue throughout the year to ensure that new line managers understand their responsibilities and are equipped with the skills and resources required to manage sickness absence effectively within their teams.

Targeted HR clinics will also continue in service areas with the highest sickness absence rates, providing managers with practical guidance and support to address attendance issues consistently and effectively. Alongside the Council's wider health and wellbeing initiatives, these measures will support employees, assist managers and contribute to reducing sickness absence over time.

Recruitment Committee Report - Advert & Selection

Primary	Status	Post Title	Department	Unit	Total Number of Posts Required	Type of Post
1 JF3910	00_Pre-Advert	Lead Environmental Health Officer	Environmental Services	Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning	1	Permanent - Full Time Fixed Term - Full Time
2 JF3905	00_Pre-Advert	Animal Welfare Officer	Environmental Services	Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning	1	Fixed Term - Full Time
3 JF3912	00_Pre-Advert	Cleansing Supervisor	Environmental Services	Waste Management & Operations	2	Permanent - Full Time
4 JF3908	00_Pre-Advert	PCSP Project Support Officer	Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Communities	2	Permanent - Full Time
5 JF3911	00_Pre-Advert	PCSP Project Support Assistant	Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Communities	1	Permanent - Full Time
6 JF3914	00_Pre-Advert	Community Centre Assistant P/T	Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Communities	1	Permanent - Part Time
7 JF3915	00_Pre-Advert	Swimming Teacher	Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Sports Services	1	Permanent - Part Time
8 JF3901	00_Pre-Advert	Senior Planning Officer	Regeneration & Growth	Planning & Capital Development	1	Fixed Term - Full Time
9 JF3904	01_Advert Live	Senior Leisure Assistant	Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Sports Services	1	Permanent - Full Time
10 JF3907	01_Advert Live	Assistant Plant Engineer	Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Sports Services	2	Fixed Term - Full Time Agency
11 JF3902	01_Advert Live	Head of Service - Assets	Regeneration & Growth	Assets	1	Permanent - Full Time
12 JF3898	02_Awaiting Shortlisting	Administrative Assistant	Environmental Services	Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning	1	Fixed Term - Full Time
13 JF3892	02_Awaiting Shortlisting	Civic Events Officer	Finance & Corporate Services	Governance and Communications	1	Permanent - Full Time
14 JF3894	02_Awaiting Shortlisting	Information Governance & Legal Support Officer	Finance & Corporate Services	Governance and Communications	1	Permanent - Full Time
15 JF3893	02_Awaiting Shortlisting	Information Governance & Legal Officer	Finance & Corporate Services	Governance and Communications	1	Permanent - Full Time
16 JF3896	02_Awaiting Shortlisting	Regeneration Officer	Regeneration & Growth	Economic Development	3	Permanent - Full Time Fixed Term - Full Time
17 JF3868	04_Awaiting Interview	EHO	Environmental Services	Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning	1	Fixed Term - Full Time
18 JF3891	04_Awaiting Interview	Fleet & Admin Manager	Environmental Services	Waste Management & Operations	0.4	Permanent - Part Time
19 JF3899	04_Awaiting Interview	Senior Deputy Registrar	Finance & Corporate Services	Governance and Communications	1	Permanent - Full Time
20 JF3864	04_Awaiting Interview	Leisure Assistant	Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Sports Services	11	Permanent - Full Time Permanent - Part Time
21 JF3882	04_Awaiting Interview	Digital Services Apprentice	Organisation Development & Innovation	Innovation	1	Fixed Term - Full Time
22 JF3881	04_Awaiting Interview	IT Services Apprentice	Organisation Development & Innovation	Innovation	1	Fixed Term - Full Time
23 JF3897	04_Awaiting Interview	Procurement Officer	Regeneration & Growth	Assets	3	Permanent - Full Time
24 JF3890	10_On Hold	Member Services Support Officer	Finance & Corporate Services	Governance and Communications	3	Permanent - Full Time

Primary	Status	Post Title	Department	Unit	Total Number of Posts	Type of Post
JF3906	05_Conditional Offer Letter Pending	Vehicle Mechanic Apprentice	Environmental Services	Waste Management & Operations	1	Fixed Term - Full Time
JF3915	05_Conditional Offer Letter Pending	Swimming Teacher	Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Sports Services	1	Permanent - Part Time
JF3878	06_Pre-Employment in Progress	4 Gs	Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Parks & Amenities	1	Fixed Term - Full Time
JF3878	06_Pre-Employment in Progress	4 Gs	Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Parks & Amenities	1	Fixed Term - Full Time
JF3883	06_Pre-Employment in Progress	Horticultural Apprentice / Sports Turf Management Apprentice	Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Parks & Amenities	1	Fixed Term - Full Time
JF3877	06_Pre-Employment in Progress	Senior recreation assistant	Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Sports Services	1	Permanent - Full Time
JF3889	06_Pre-Employment in Progress	Programme Co-ordinator	Organisation Development & Innovation	Innovation	1	Permanent - Full Time
JF3872	07_Firm Offer Pending	Technical Officer X 2	Environmental Services	Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planni	1	Permanent - Full Time
JF3872	07_Firm Offer Pending	Technical Officer X 2	Environmental Services	Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planni	1	Permanent - Full Time
JF3825	07_Firm Offer Pending	Civic Officer	Finance & Corporate Services	Governance and Communications	1	Permanent - Full Time
JF3883	07_Firm Offer Pending	Horticultural Apprentice / Sports Turf Management Apprentice	Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Parks & Amenities	1	Fixed Term - Full Time
JF3878	07_Firm Offer Pending	4 Gs	Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Parks & Amenities	1	Fixed Term - Full Time
JF3842	07_Firm Offer Pending	Sports Events Coordinator	Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Sports Services	1	Permanent - Full Time
JF3876	08_Firm Offer Issued	Digital Officer	Finance & Corporate Services	Governance and Communications	1	Permanent - Full Time
JF3884	08_Firm Offer Issued	HR & OD Apprentice	Organisation Development & Innovation	HR & OD	1	Fixed Term - Full Time
JF3885	08_Firm Offer Issued	Cleansing Services Officer	Environmental Services	Waste Management & Operations	1	Permanent - Full Time
JF3913	08_Firm Offer Issued	G G G G - unit 24	Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Parks & Amenities	1	Permanent - Full Time
JF3900	08_Firm Offer Issued	Digital Technician Support	Organisation Development & Innovation	Innovation	1	Fixed Term - Full Time
JF3865	09_Terms & Conditions Returned	Resilience Officer	Environmental Services	Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planni	1	Permanent - Full Time
JF3850	09_Terms & Conditions Returned	Events assistant - placement student	Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Parks & Amenities	1	Fixed Term - Full Time
JF3871	09_Terms & Conditions Returned	Parks Supervisor	Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Parks & Amenities	1	Fixed Term - Full Time
JF3755	09_Terms & Conditions Returned	Senior Planning Officer	Regeneration & Growth	Planning & Capital Development	1	Permanent - Full Time
JF3870	10_Pending Start Date	Procurement Officer	Regeneration & Growth	Assets	1	Permanent - Full Time

WORKFORCE PROFILE
September Committee Report

Department & Unit	Employees at 1st August 2026						Agency staff as of 1st August 2026					
	FTE			Headcount			Agency FTE			Agency Headcount		
	FT	PT	TOTAL	FT	PT	TOTAL	F/T	P/T	TOTAL	F/T	P/T	TOTAL
Chief Executive's Office												
Chief Executive's Office	2.0	0	2.0	2.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Audit, Risk & Performance	2.0	0	2.0	2.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total CEO	4.0	0	4.0	4.0	0.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Finance and Corporate Services												
Governance and Communications	30.0	5.16	35.2	30.0	10.0	40.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Director - Finance and Corporate Services	2.0	0.41	2.4	2.0	1.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Finance	13.0	1	14.0	13.0	2.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total CS	45.0	6.57	51.57	45.0	13.0	58.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Environmental Services												
Director - Environmental Services	3.0	0	3.0	3.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Environmental Health	39.0	6.9	45.9	39.0	12.0	51.0	3.0	0.0	3.0	3.0	0.0	3.0
Waste Management & Operations	159.0	5	164.0	159.0	10.0	169.0	45.0	0.0	45.0	46.0	1.0	47.0
Building Control	17.0	0	17.0	17.0	0.0	17.0	5.0	0.6	5.6	5.0	1.0	6.0
Total ES	218.0	11.9	229.9	218.0	22.0	240.0	53.0	0.6	53.6	54.0	2.0	56.0
Leisure and Community Wellbeing												
Communities	47.0	7.82	54.8	47.0	13.0	60.0	16.0	4.1	20.1	16.0	8.0	24.0
Director - Leisure and Community Wellbeing	7.0	0.6	7.6	7.0	1.0	8.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Parks and Amenities	81.0	1.19	82.2	81.0	2.0	83.0	12.0	0.0	12.0	12.0	0.0	12.0
Sports Services	110.0	33.65	143.7	111.0	69.0	180.0	6.0	2.0	8.0	6.0	5.0	11.0
Total LCW	245.0	43.26	288.3	246.0	85.0	331.0	34.0	6.1	40.1	34.0	13.0	47.0
Regeneration Growth												
Director - Service Transformation and Regeneration Growth	2.0	0	2.0	2.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Economic Development	26.0	3.8	29.8	26.0	7.0	33.0	2.0	0.0	2.0	2.0	0.0	2.0
Planning & Capital Development	38.0	4	42.0	38.0	6.0	44.0	2.0	0.0	2.0	2.0	0.0	2.0
Assets	26.0	2.39	28.4	26.0	5.0	31.0	0.0	0.8	0.8	1.0	0.0	1.0
TOTAL R&G	92.0	10.19	102.2	92.0	18.0	110.0	4.0	0.8	4.8	5.0	0.0	5.0
Organisation Development and Innovation												
Director - Organisation Development and Innovation	2.0	0	2.0	2.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Innovation	15.0	0.5	15.5	15.0	1.0	16.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Human Resources and Organisation Development	21.0	6.5	27.5	21.0	11.0	32.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.0
TOTAL ODI	38.0	7	45.0	38.0	12.0	50.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.0
Total Employees (FTE / Headcount)	642.0	78.9	720.9	643.0	150.0	793.0	92.0	7.6	99.6	94.0	15.0	109.0

* These figures include all agency workers who may be placed for the following reasons: to cover vacancies, maternity, long term sick, project or seasonal work

Total Headcount August 2026	Full-time	Part-time	Total
Employees	643	150	793
Agency Workers	94	15	109

Total Headcount May 2026	Full-time	Part-time	Total
Employees	636	153	789
Agency Workers	95	16	111

Other Totals	
Detail	Number
Total fixed term workers	56
Total current secondments/transfers (internal)	24
Total current secondments/transfers (external)	2
Total Apprentices	10
Total students	4

Committee:	Corporate Services
Date:	11 th June 2026
Report from:	Head of Finance

CONFIDENTIAL REPORT

Reason why the report is confidential:	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).
When will the report become available:	
When will a redacted report become available:	After Full Council
The report will never become available:	

Item for:	Noting
Subject:	Draft Management Accounts - Period 12 2025/2026

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u> Period 12 - Management Accounts
1.1	Attached is the set of Management Accounts for the period ended 31 st March 2026 (Period 12). As the year-end process is ongoing at the time of writing, these accounts remain subject to change.
1.2	This shows a summary of the current position for each Directorate.
1.3	It is to be noted that the net profiled expenditure is (£2.625m) underspent to approved estimates (3.41% underspent) for the financial year 2025/2026. This is the position including costs funded from earmarked reserves, which are listed separately in the appendix.
1.4	The year end position is summarised below: • Payroll Under spent (£1,104k) • Non-payroll Under spent (£534k) • Income Overachievement (£987k)
1.5	The utilisation of underspend will be in line with the approach approved by Corporate Services Committee in March 2026. (Building Resilience committee paper attached).
1.6	The table below details the indicative figures included on the building resilience paper and the draft outturn.

1.7		Building resilience paper (£)	Draft 25/26 outturn (£)
	Balance after reserves	2,858,058	2,625,287
	Risks	(1,421,063)	(631,666)
	Balance for allocation	1,436,995	1,993,621
	DEA	225,000	225,000
	Election	50,000	50,000
	Arts grants	20,189	20,189
	Pitches Strategy	800,000	800,000
	Capital reserve allocation	341,806	898,432

Analysis of current position

- 1.8 High level analysis is provided within Appendix 1 for Member's information split by payroll, non-payroll and income for each Directorate. Below are the main variances in more detail.

Payroll

- 1.9 The underspend within payroll is due to a number of variables. Some vacant posts were being held throughout the year to enable the implementation of previously agreed structures, whilst considering potential redeployment needs. Some senior roles were vacant during the financial year resulting in savings. The pay award built into the 2025/2026 estimates was higher than the final award, resulting in further savings.

- 1.10 Work has taken place to ensure the salary budgets for 2026/27 are in line with agreed structures.

Non Payroll

Finance & Corporate Services:

- 1.11 Corporate legal costs were £72k over profiled budget for the year (£257k actual vs £185k budget). Total spend includes the costs in relation to enforcement matters, legal fees relating to planning, in addition to other ongoing procurement, Land & property & HR matters.

Environmental Services:

- 1.12 Contract Hire of vehicles and plant was overspent by £276k. Four new RCVs came into service in December 2025, three were received at the end of March with one further RCV received in April. The two hired RCVs were returned Mid-April and there are currently no RCVs on hire.

- 1.13 Reduction in tonnage & cost per tonne has resulted in reduced costs within Waste Management, however there was an overspend associated with a waste contract regarding removal of wood.

Regeneration and Growth:

- 1.14 Planning legal costs are £39k over the annual profiled budget (£104k actual vs £65k budget).

1.15	Judicial costs correlate with the number of JR's / status of JR's at any point in time. Spend on Judicial reviews in the 2025/26 financial year was £367k. All Judicial Review costs are funded directly from reserves.
1.16	Income from recoupment of legal fees has been received (£227k) which has offset the costs detailed above.
	<u>Income</u>
1.17	In terms of income, there are areas which have over-achieved and are offset by areas that have under achieved. Some of the key income streams and performance are detailed below:
	Finance & Corporate Services:
1.18	Investment income continued to exceed budget with income of £1.736m compared to a budget of £370k. We continue to maximise all cash investments in line with our Treasury Strategy. A large portion (£1.183m) of this has been reallocated to the capital fund.
	Leisure & Community Wellbeing:
1.19	Vitality membership tracked income at 5.29% ahead of budget (actual £2,948k v budget £2,800k).
1.20	Golf Course income tracked 17.6% ahead of budget (£935k actual v £795k budget).
1.21	DIIB Ice Rink was £35k below budgeted income, this is due to the ongoing development of the new Centre. This underachievement reduced significantly from period 11.
1.22	Leisureplex was £54k below budgeted income, due to plant issue within the swimming pool (July & August), which resulted in reduced footfall during July and August. This underachievement has reduced from period 11.
	Environmental Services:
1.23	Trade Waste collection income was 9.03% below budget (£401k actual v budget £444k).
1.24	Recycling income from HRC sites was £62k behind the annual budget.
1.25	Income from off-street car parking, including parking charges and charge notices was behind the annual by 2.32%.
1.26	Income for building control outturn was 7.85% ahead of budget (£1,154k actual v £1,070k budget).
	Regeneration & Growth
1.27	Planning income was 25.1% behind budget with actual income of £843k v budget of £1,125k.

1.28	Property certificates within planning exceeded the profiled budget by 46.6% (£236k actual vs £161k budget).	
1.29	Penny Product - The Penny Product is the revenue raised for a District Council by one penny of District rates and is made up of 3 components - District Rates, De Rating Grant and Transferred functions Grant. - LPS provide a forecasted outturn to Finance in relation to the Penny Product. The forecast outturn for Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council is a negative sum of £600k. This is mainly due to a reduction in the valuation list of non-domestic properties for the current year, which has been fed into the estimates process for 2026/27. - De Rating Grant - The forecasted outturn based on quarter 4 figures is a negative outturn of £31.6k. Further information regarding the de-rating position has been fed into the estimates process for 2026/27. - Transferred Function Grant - this is set during the estimates process and does not change throughout the year. [REDACTED]	
1.30	[REDACTED]	
1.31	[REDACTED]	
	Closing out 2025/2026	
1.32	Work is underway in relation to the finalisation of the draft 2025/26 financial statements for the statutory audit.	
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u> It is recommended that Members note the information contained in this report.	
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u> As Above	
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions or rationale why the screening was not carried out.	
	This is a financial report for noting only.	

4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out. This is a financial report for noting only.	

Appendices:	Draft Management Accounts – Period 12 2025/2026 Building Resilience Corporate Services Paper March 2026
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LISBURN AND CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL
2025/2026 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

Draft 2025/26

SUMMARY BY DIRECTOR

	YTD P12 Act & Comm £	YTD P12 Budget £	Variance £	
Organisation Development & Innovation	4,436,651	4,975,929	(539,278)	-10.84%
Finance & Corporate Services	5,204,803	5,749,479	(544,676)	-9.47%
Governance & Audit	442,000	519,127	(77,127)	-14.86%
Community Health & Wellbeing	15,070,216	14,275,878	794,338	5.56%
Environmental Services	23,115,018	24,796,571	(1,681,553)	-6.78%
Regeneration & Growth	7,518,394	8,095,385	(576,991)	-7.13%
Total	55,787,082	58,412,369	(2,625,287)	-4.49%

Penny Product actual finalisation (negative outturn)	600,023		600,023	
De-rating grant finalisation (negative outturn)	31,643		31,643	
Available surplus	56,418,748	58,412,369	(1,993,621)	-3.41%

Decisions approved by committee to earmark in reserves - not included in use of surplus

Feasibility Fund	800,000

Use of surplus as approved by Corporate Services

DEA	225,000
Election Fund	50,000
Arts grants	20,189
Pitches Capital strategy	800,000
Balance to capital fund	898,432

Costs excluded from above covered by reserves:

VE Day	84,534
VJ Day	11,381
Community Investment Fund (CIF)	570,540
Investment interest to Capital Fund	(1,183,496)

Payroll/non Payroll/ Income Summary per Directorate to Period 12

Organisation Development & Innovation	YTD P12 Act & Comm	YTD P12 Budget	Variance	
	£	£		
Payroll	2,757,233	2,737,776	19,457	
Non-Payroll	2,034,955	2,576,653	(541,698)	
Income	- 355,537	(338,500)	(17,037)	
Total Net - Organisation Development & innovation	4,436,651	4,975,929	(539,278)	-10.84%

Finance & Corporate Services	YTD P12 Act & Comm	YTD P12 Budget	Variance	
	£	£		
Payroll	3,995,104	4,013,747	(18,643)	
Non-Payroll	2,829,722	2,887,029	(57,307)	
Income	(1,620,023)	(1,151,297)	(468,726)	
Total Net - Service Support	5,204,803	5,749,479	(544,676)	-9.47%

Governance & Audit	YTD P12 Act & Comm	YTD P12 Budget	Variance	
	£	£		
Payroll	376,029	441,934	(65,905)	
Non-Payroll	66,971	77,193	(10,222)	
Income	(1,000)	-	(1,000)	
			-	
Total Net - Governance and Audit	442,000	519,127	(77,127)	-14.86%

Community Health & Wellbeing	YTD P12	YTD P12	Variance	
	Act & Comm	Budget		
	£	£		
Payroll	15,811,340	15,393,647	417,693	
Non-Payroll	11,907,984	11,072,074	835,910	
Income	(12,649,108)	(12,189,843)	(459,265)	
			-	
Total Net - Community Health & Wellbeing	15,070,216	14,275,878	794,338	5.56%

Environmental Services	YTD P12	YTD P12	Variance	
	Act & Comm	Budget		
	£	£		
Payroll	13,156,187	13,919,068	(762,881)	
Non-Payroll	15,539,442	16,525,995	(986,553)	
Income	(5,580,611)	(5,648,492)	67,881	
			-	
Total Net - Environmental Services	23,115,018	24,796,571	(1,681,553)	-6.78%

Regeneration & Growth	YTD P12	YTD P12	Variance	
	Act & Comm	Budget		
	£	£		
Payroll	5,723,615	6,416,881	(693,266)	
Non-Payroll	4,753,687	4,528,274	225,413	
Income	(2,958,908)	(2,849,770)	(109,138)	
			-	
Total Net - Regeneration & Growth	7,518,394	8,095,385	(576,991)	-7.13%