



September 5th, 2024

Chair : Councillor N Trimble

Vice-Chair: Councillor N Eaton

Aldermen: A Ewart MBE, M Gregg, A Grehan and H Legge

Councillors: T Beckett, P Burke, A Ewing, A Givan, J Harpur, B Higginson, C Kemp, J Lavery BEM, and G McCleave

Ex Officio: The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson

Deputy Mayor, Councillor R Carlin

Notice of Meeting

A meeting of the **Corporate Services Committee** will be held on **Wednesday, 11th September 2024 at 6:00 pm** for the transaction of the undernoted Agenda. Members are requested to attend.

A hot meal shall be available in the **Members' Suite** 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).

📄 *Disclosure of Interests form.pdf*

Not included

3.0 REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES

3.1 Government Budget Consultations

For Decision

📄 *FINAL CSC Report - Government Budget Consultations.pdf*

Page 1

📄 *Appendix 1 - DfC Budget 2024-25 Equality Impact Assessment Consultation.pdf*

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📄 *Appendix 2 - DoH Budget 2024.pdf*

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📄 *Appendix 3 - DfI Budget 2024-25 Equality Impact Assessment.pdf*

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📄 *Appendix 4 - The Executive Office (TEO) Budget Allocation 2024-25 Equality Impact Assessment Consultation.pdf*

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4.0 REPORT OF HEAD OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS & ADMINISTRATION

4.1 Somme Pilgrimage

For Noting

📄 *FINAL CSC Report - Somme Pilgrimage.pdf*

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📄 *Appendix 1 - Somme 2024 Highlight Report.pdf*

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4.2 2025 Anniversaries Programme

For Decision

📄 *FINAL CSC Report - 2025 Anniversaries.pdf*

Page 25

📄 *App 1 Correspondence from Bruno Peek.pdf*

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📄 *App 2 Draft Terms of Reference 2025 Anniversaries Working Group.pdf* Page 30

4.3 Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance 2024

For Decision

📄 *FINAL CSC Report - RBL Festival of Remembrance (updated).pdf* Page 32

📄 *App 1 - Correspondence from RBL.pdf* Page 34

4.4 Area Integrated Partnership Boards

For Decision

📄 *FINAL CSC Report - ICS NI Request for local Government representatives to be members of Area Integrated Partnership Boards.pdf* Page 36

5.0 REPORT OF HEAD OF FINANCE

5.1 Estimates 2025/2026 - Schedule of Meetings

For Decision

📄 *FINAL CSC September 2024 - Estimates Timetable.pdf* Page 39

📄 *FINAL Proposed Estimates Timetable 2025 26.pdf* Page 40

5.2 Car Parking Bad Debt Write-Off

For Decision

📄 *FINAL CSC Report - Car Parking debt write off request.pdf* Page 41

6.0 REPORT OF HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Workforce Reports

For Noting

📄 *FINAL CSC Report - Workforce Report - September 2024.pdf* Page 43

📄 *Qtr 1 - June 2024.pdf* Page 45

📄 *Recruitment Committee Report - Advert Selection.pdf* Page 56

📄 *Recruitment Committee Report - Appointments.pdf* Page 57

📄 *Appendix Workforce Profile.pdf* Page 59

7.0 CONFIDENTIAL REPORT FROM DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES

7.1 Report on Tender Awards

For Noting

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

7.2 Single Tender Action Quarterly Update - September 2024

For Noting

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

7.3 Capital Programme Movements

For Decision

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

7.4 Provision of Catering and Bar Services at Lagan Valley Island

For Decision

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

7.5 Management Accounts - Period 4 of 2024/2025

For Noting

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

7.6 Quarterly Finance Reports

For Noting

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

7.7 Treasury Outturn Report - 2023/2024

For Noting

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

7.8 Treasury Outturn Report - Q1 of 2024/2025

For Noting

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

7.9 Tender for Occupational Health Services

For Decision

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

7.10 Efficiency Review Steering Group

REPORT TO FOLLOW

8.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Committee:	Corporate Services Committee
Date:	11 th September 2024
Report from:	Director of Finance & Corporate Services

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Government Budget Consultations

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>
1.1	Public equality impact assessment consultations (EQIA) on funding proposals, as part of budget settlements for the 2024-25 year, have been launched by the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department for Communities • Department of Health • Department for Infrastructure • The Executive Office
1.2	Department for Communities
1.3	In line with Corporate Services approval attained at the June meeting, the Chair and Vice-Chair of Corporate Services Committee considered the response before submission.
1.4	Department of Health <p>The consultation was launched on the 6 June 2024, with the response submitted by the 29 August 2024 deadline.</p>
1.5	Department for Infrastructure <p>The consultation was launched on the 11 June 2024, with response to be submitted by the 6 September 2024.</p>
1.6	The Executive Office <p>The consultation was launched on the 15 August 2024, with response to be submitted by the 12 September 2024.</p>
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the response to the Department for Communities on budget settlements for 2024-25 financial year (Appendix 1). • Note the response to the Department of Health and agree retrospective approval for submission (Appendix 2). • Note the response to the Department for Infrastructure and agree retrospective approval for submission (Appendix 3).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the response to The Executive Office and agree retrospective approval from Corporate Services Committee, through Council, for submission (Appendix 4). 	
3.0	<p><u>Finance and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None.</p>	
4.0	<p><u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u></p>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
4.2	<p>Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions or rationale why the screening was not carried out</p> <p>The screening will be the responsibility of the relevant Department.</p>	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	<p>Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions or rationale why the screening was not carried out.</p> <p>The screening will be the responsibility of the relevant Department.</p>	

Appendices:	<p>Appendix 1 – Response to Department for Communities</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Response to Department of Health</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Department for Infrastructure</p> <p>Appendix 4 – The Executive Office</p>
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DfC Budget 2024-25 Equality Impact Assessment Consultation

Communities Minister, Gordon Lyons, has launched an Equality Impact Assessment consultation on his initial decisions on the Department for Communities 2024-25 Budget. The consultation will run from 11 June until 3 September 2024 and ask for views on the allocation of funds for the financial year 2024-25. After consideration by CMT, and consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, the following responses to the questions raised were agreed and the response was submitted on 9th July 2024.

1. Are there any data, needs or issues in relation to any of the Section 75 equality categories that have not been identified in Section 6 of the EQIA consultation document? If so, what are they and can you provide details.

No

2. Are there any adverse impacts in relation to any of the Section 75 equality groups that have not been identified in Section 7 of the EQIA consultation document? If so, what are they?

There is limited equality information / data available and this is referenced within the EQIA itself.

In assessing the impact of the budget against obligations under Section 75 of the 1998 Act, the Department concludes in the document that there is evidence of significant and adverse impact in respect of some Section 75 categories. While these Impacts have been considered against the backdrop of available data, it is extremely difficult to assess whether the differential impacts are adverse due to the lack of data presented from an equality perspective. Each has been set out in its own merit but it is impossible to assess one against another in terms of the range of cuts, increases or maintaining of budgets when such important policy areas are 'measured' against each other ie number of new homes to be built verses affordable warmth scheme or urban regeneration. This lack of data makes it almost impossible to assess if due regard has been given to all Section 75 groups and more importantly if the proposals target those most at risk.

3. Please state what action you think could be taken to reduce or eliminate any adverse impacts in allocation of the Department's budget.

LCCC believes that there are a range of actions that could be taken to reduce or eliminate adverse impacts in the allocation of the Department's budget. These are set out below:

Voluntary and Community Sector

LCCC welcomes the decision by the Minister to uplift the funding available to the Voluntary and Community Sector by £1.45m in the 24/25 financial year. This is a vital source of funding at a local government level translating in the effective delivery of the Community Support Programme. However, the impact of the uplift across the 11 councils will be minuscule and it is important to recognise that while the current level of funding is protected in a difficult fiscal environment, the pressures on the community and voluntary sector will not be addressed by this slight increase. This council has had to supplement the Community Support Programme by an additional £100k just to keep the groups at a 'standstill' in covering programming and running costs – this is evidenced in the document when it is cited 'that a large proportion of organisations in this sector operate with very lean budgets'. It is recommended that a much broader, cross-cutting approach is considered when finalising the budget right across the DfC portfolio.

Realising and funding Community Planning powers

A key area for development is further realising the Community Planning powers across each Council to accelerate further collaborative working. In the context of the DfC resource budget, it is requested that funding for each Council is received as one grant and gives the Council the autonomy to spend on a needs driven basis, emanating from the local Community Plan. This in itself may generate efficiencies through removal of duplication in administration of various funding streams provided to Councils.

This translates to the Community Festivals Fund, Community Support Programme and other in year grants coming as one collaborative grant. It is also requested that TEO work with DfC to merge the Good Relations budget with the Community Support budget so have one overall grant. Whilst DoJ fund PCSP and it is recognised that this is a legislative requirement to monitor policing performance, cognisance should be given to the programme costs of this fund forming part of the overall requested collaborative grant.

Again, we believe the Community Planning Framework should be applied to ALB's to ensure greater synergies and collaborative working. Museums and Arts could be collapsed to form one overarching entity and sports could be maximised against local Community Planning Partnerships.

Local libraries could embed in communities through councils' local centres and satellite centres, reducing the need for additional buildings and staff could be co-located to maximise community planning outcomes.

Labour Market Partnership Funding

At a meeting with the Regional DfC on 7th June 2024, it was suggested that though funding for 2024/25 has been secured, this could be resourced over two financial years. Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council welcomes the news that funding will continue to enable delivery of the Labour Market Partnership however any budget reductions will have a negative significant impact on the listed Section 75 groups, who are a priority for the programme. The Lisburn & Castlereagh LMP have developed a number of programmes that specifically targets certain Section 75 groups including Female Returners and those with a disability. We are keen to build upon our successes, however, uncertainty with regards to the budget allocation will have a disproportionate impact on those who are furthest from the labour market.

While the LMP is conscious that budget reductions are difficult and impact across a range of different organisations and services, we believe that a funding reduction for LMPs is short-sighted and will have long term impacts. DfC and Councils have invested time and effort into the development of a local mechanism (LMPs) which has had positive impacts on unemployment and economic inactivity at a local level. The initiative, which is in its third year of operation, has been a success.

The Council is concerned that if a similar approach to budgeting comes forward in following years, this will negatively impact future schemes which have been in planning, thus impacting confidence in the system, the LMP process and its ability to make a difference.

4. Are there any other comments you would like to make in regard to this pro forma or the consultation process generally?

Council welcomes Minister's intention and recent correspondence regarding the winding up of a specific arms length body (ie LGSC). There is unanimous agreement by central and local government that this ALB which is funded directly by Councils should have been closed down several years ago. There was a specific sub grouping Equality and Diversity Group established by LGSC. The Group undertakes valuable Equality work especially in relation to the Diversity Ambassadors and Statutory Duty Network Group but it is unclear who would undertake such work in the future.

There are ALBs within the DfC portfolio where there is significant synergies in terms of objects and target groups e.g. Arts Council and NI Museums –there are opportunities to combine such organisations and deliver better outcomes with savings on resources, structures and governance. Many of these ALB's are small yet require financial investment in buildings, systems and staffing. Equally DfC should look at criteria for any new ALB's so that there is scale and size.

Buildings could be repurposed, given to local government for community asset transfer or sold. The Council would welcome a discussion with DfC in explore opportunities on this matter and if deemed feasible offer to pilot some alternative models recognising that the Council area has substantial offices/accommodation that may allow for shared service provision. In addition, consideration could be given to the planning opportunities of "meanwhile uses" for existing buildings and underutilised properties.

More data is needed than what has been tabled within the consultation document. A current outcome based analysis is required in order to be able to make informed decisions. As an example the consultation refers to an allocation of £3.3m capital investment to fund urban regeneration projects and £1.7m capital investment across cultural, heritage and active community to promote health and wellbeing. However, there is no comparative financial data which would help provide a basis to assess potential equality and other implications.

DoH Budget 2024-25 Equality Impact Assessment Consultation

In mid-June, the Department of Health published an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and a Rural Needs Impact Assessment on the 2024/25 health budget.

The 12-week consultation commenced on 6 June, ended on 29 August and views were sought on the allocation of funds for this financial year. The dates fell outside the committee schedule over the summer and therefore consideration and approval of the response was provided by CMT in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Communities and Wellbeing committee. The following responses to the questions raised were agreed and the response was submitted by 29 August deadline as follows:

1. Are there any adverse impacts in relation to any of the Section 75 equality groups that have not been identified in section 5 of the EQIA Consultation document? If so, what are they? Please provide details.

Section 5 has adequately identified the adverse impacts in relation to all the Section 75 equality groups. The significance of the impacts on the Section 75 groups as a result of unavoidable cuts to services right across the health service could not be fully understood in advance of implementation. However, the 2.3% reduction in funding compared to 2023/34 expenditure will mean that the health and social care system will be adversely limited in capacity and delivery due to increased demand and pay inflation in 2024/25. With an estimated £1bn needed to address fundamental service and structural issues within the health service, the impacts as outlined in the document are likely to be further exacerbated and therefore have even deeper consequences on the most vulnerable sections of our community. This is recognised by the Department of Health in its assessment of the budget available to it and LCCC endorses this position. There is an urgent requirement for an essential additional budget allocation, in the least to break-even on last year's financial settlement.

2. Please state what action you think could be taken to reduce or eliminate any adverse impacts in allocation of the Department's draft budget?

The cost saving measures identified in the 'Health Budget Assessment' as published by the Department of Health are considered to be a comprehensive assessment of robust steps that would need to be taken to attempt to address the shortfall in the department's draft budget. A summary of these include:

- Improved productivity and efficiency eg reform, innovation and capacity building, reduction in agency spend;
- HSC Trust cost saving measures eg reduction in acute and homecare beds, 1200 reduction in staffing provincewide; and
- Departmental led savings eg restrictions on use of new drugs, reduction in support services provided by the community and voluntary sectors.

However, the catastrophic consequences of such measures will inevitably shrink our health service at a time when demand is greatest and they will place additional burden on staff who are already overstretched.

While LCCC understands that improvements in efficiency and effectiveness are necessary to reform the health service, the scale of the cuts appear unprecedented and counterintuitive to aid the delivery of a fit for purpose health service. Reform will not happen within the lifecycle of this budget and it will likely be a number of years before efficiencies are realised.

The Department of Health states in its published document on the overview of the impact of the 2024/25 budget on the health and social care system in Northern Ireland, that **'the emerging picture of a cumulative catastrophic impact on the Health and Social Care system..... that reductions in acute beds, home care hours and care home beds would have significant and sustained consequences for elective care, hospital discharges, patient flow, Emergency Department overcrowding and ambulance handover times. Pressures on services and staff, already at severe levels, will be significantly intensified.'** LCCC expresses its deep concern on this published position by the Department of Health on the widespread impact of the cuts required to ensure that it makes ends meet and the negative consequential impacts this will have not only on the Section 75 groups but those right across our society.

3. Are there any other comments you would like to make in regard to this EQIA or the consultation process generally?

In assessing the impact of the budget against obligations under Section 75 of the 1998 Act, the Department concludes in the assessment document that there is evidence of significant and adverse impact in respect of most Section 75 categories. While these impacts have been considered against the backdrop of available data, it is extremely difficult to assess the level of differential impacts due to the lack of data presented from an equality perspective. It is suffice to say that, at a service wide level, ALL aspects of the health service will be impacted by the cuts as the available budget is insufficient to continue 'business as usual' let alone enhance delivery at any level.

It is impossible to look at a prioritisation of health services and where available budgets should be directed due to the interdependencies that exist within health in addressing the needs of individuals and communities.

Furthermore, LCCC is gravely concerned that if planned cuts go ahead in the community and voluntary sectors, which provides a crucial role in the delivery of care at a grass roots level and are already struggling to meet the demand for its services, how devastating it will be to the people who rely on them at the point of need – such services will include and are not limited to mental health, addiction services, domestic violence.

In submitting this response, council fully acknowledges the challenging fiscal position facing the Northern Ireland Executive and all the central government departments in setting budgets for the 2024/25 financial year.

Dfl Budget 2024-25 Equality Impact Assessment

The Department for Infrastructure is seeking comments on the equality implications of its Resource and Capital Budget 2024-25 allocations, which when set against its requirements for both resource and capital fell short.

Proposed response to the consultation which closes 6 September 2024 at 17:00

1. Are there any adverse impacts in relation to any of the Section 75 equality groups that have not been identified in section 6 of the EQIA Consultation document? If so, what are they?

Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council believe by not having the requisite balanced investment in key infrastructure that a number of the groups will be adversely impacted. In particular these relate to those with transport needs and whose circumstances limit their access to public transport.

We would ask the Department to include in their assessment specific investments that are aimed to mitigate limitations on mobility, eg railway infrastructure including station upgrade, road surface repairs and the like. We would encourage the Department to consider timely investment in extending and delivering the BRT into Carryduff as well as linking the RUAS at the Maze with Sprucefield as well as Lisburn City Centre.

We would further suggest the Department needs to work with local Councils to understand and establish local need as there will be investment in capital projects through Councils, sometimes supported by national and regional funding programmes, which are designed to be as inclusive as possible yet when the public transport and the road networks are not maintained they effectively deny access to the provision of the services provided via the Council programmes.

For some categories of people they will, due to their circumstances, dependents, disability etc, be living within very constrained disposable income limits. By limiting budgets on blue/greenway initiatives and more widely key infrastructure projects, this will have an inevitable limitation on these categories of individuals enjoying the same quality of life as others. Associated with this we believe that any intervention impacting on people with disabilities in terms of car parking provision limitations or escalation of fees is adverse to this Section 75 grouping.

In relation to waste and water infrastructure, limitation of investment is already an issue for many proposed developments. These include both domestic and non domestic proposed developments. Some of these developments are aimed at improving services and housing stock to suit the communities in which we live. A limitation of investment in this type of infrastructure and its knock-on effect will have a negative impact on many in the community in which we live.

As well as the points that are already raised about the generalisation of development and its impact on access to key services, it is important in the view of this Council that the Department focuses and resources on its statutory consultee responsibilities for the planning function. It has been acknowledged that the Department has not been able to respond in a timely and efficient manner to planning applications. Some, but not all, of these applications are directly and indirectly about improving the quality of life of Section 75 groups.

This Council works closely with other government departments to create employment opportunities for all sections of community. By limiting infrastructure investment and not availing of development opportunities through direct investment, planning reform and working in partnership on strategic sites, local employment opportunities are limited. People with limited social mobility need local jobs in line with a place based economic model. The Department for the Economy are leading a new strategy that emphasises the above, however, if critical infrastructure investment is not matched the opportunities may well be lost to the detriment of Section 75 groupings.

In an ageing population infrastructure is critical in order to maintain parity of lifestyle and opportunity to essential services. Our Council, like others, has an ageing population that requires investment in public transport, nursing care and the like. We would encourage the Department to further consider the needs of the ageing population of Lisburn and Castlereagh when assessing the impact of the budget allocation.

Much of this Council's recent investment decisions eg Dundonald International Ice Bowl, pitch provision in Carryduff and Lisburn North, is for the purpose of providing sport and recreation. This category of provision is mainly used by the youth and again we would ask the Department to consider the impact of its budget allocation in limiting the availability of these facilities to the patrons across the Council area. Specifically public transport is designed and laid out on a radial basis and therefore requires to extend to the full extremities of the Council area even though it cuts across neighbouring Councils. The provision, for example, at the Ice Bowl is paid for by all ratepayers from Glenavy through to Dundrod but yet their accessibility through the lack of infrastructure and investment is not in par with others.

2. Please state what action you think could be taken to reduce or eliminate any adverse impacts in seeking to manage the Department's 2024-25 budget, for both resource and capital?

In assessing consultation we note the consideration of mitigations and alternative policies are not detailed outside of the specific policies to protect concessionary fares and the prioritisation of health and safety development proposals. The Department has conceded it is difficult to mitigate the adverse impacts anticipated. We do not believe by providing for individual screening on specific proposals will be comprehensive enough to mitigate the overall detrimental proposals on development and a programme approach is essential. This programme should incorporate as a minimum the development proposals already in the pipeline for each Council in order to avoid social mobility issues across our Council area population.

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In addition we would ask the Department to take into account of urbanisation trends to be part of its consideration where investment in infrastructure would mitigate against adverse equality impact. Through our mutual obligations in having regard for community planning the provision of services has been specifically designed for all our citizens, therefore mitigation through regard for local Council services needs to be assessed.

We would encourage the Department to mitigate the impact on any budget proposals by further collaboration with our Council including the investment of resources to service prosperity and growth for the benefit of all including Section 75 groups. In particular we would welcome the Department to consider a co-ordinated, regional/sub regional funding programme as provided for through national funding frameworks. This Council is prepared to be flexible within our resources in taking advantage of local Council governance arrangements but would caution that this should not be considered as a transfer of risk or responsibility.

No mitigation is cited for the addressing of already existing limitations in service provision involved in areas such as planning. In fact the Department continues to call in and limit the private sector in mitigating growth opportunity. This has happened at both Sprucefield as well as the proposals at Blaris without due regard or consultation with the Council. A different approach is required and should form part of the mitigation of these budget proposals.

3. Are there any other comments you would like to make in regard to the consultation process generally?

There are no additional comments to make in relation to process with the exception that the budget proposals do not appear to have a wider regard for growth and prosperity. Our Council continues to experience limitations despite private sector opportunity in the area of growth and prosperity.

Consideration should include Dfl's budgetary commitments in respect of initiatives aimed at environmental improvements as well as the net zero agenda. There is no evidence presented in the consultation to correlate the impact of the budget reductions in these with Section 75 groupings. We would encourage the Department, in assessing the impact, to understand the extent of any inter-relationship. The reality is that our citizens and specifically our Section 75 citizens requires inter-Council/sub regional/regional solutions across a range of strategic policies, therefore the process needs to consider the limitations it brings as a minimum at a sub regional level.

The Executive Office (TEO) Budget Allocation 2024-25 Equality Impact Assessment Consultation

TEO has launched an Equality Impact Assessment consultation on the initial decisions of its budget allocation for 2024-2025. The consultation will run from 15th August – 8th November 2024 and asks for views on the allocation of funds for the financial year 2024-25, prioritised within 4 weeks closing on 12 September.

The Equality Impact Assessment examines options for reductions and the equality impacts of these options. Consultation responses are also invited on the Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) and the Children's Right's Impact Assessment (CRIA).

The draft response to the consultation acknowledges the challenges faced within TEO regarding budgetary allocation however highlights the limited information regarding the overall detail of impact on equality as a result of the initial fiscal allocation.

1. Do you agree that TEO has gathered the necessary Section 75 data to inform its decisions around the allocation of its budget?

No.

If you disagree, what Section 75 data is missing?

The EQIA does not fully describe the equality impacts for each S75 category – there is information on Section 75 groups who are supported through the implementation and delivery of the District Councils Good Relations Programme (DCGRP).

The funding allocation, particularly for DCGRP, will likely have a greater impact on minority groups who may not benefit from other funding/support opportunities or participate in programmes resulting in such groups being at a significantly greater disadvantage as a result of this allocation of funding.

The EQIA has not considered the equality impact of the limited funding allocation on localised programmes at a grass roots level. Greater context should be provided regarding organisations and programmes sustainability in the light of the allocation.

The lack of data makes it difficult to assess whether adequate consideration has been given to all Section 75 groups and whether the allocation of funding has been provided to target those most in need.

2. Are there any adverse impacts in relation to Section 75 equality categories that have not been identified?

Yes.

If you answered Yes, what are the adverse impacts that have not been identified?

There is limited equality information and data available included in the EQIA. Given that the councils good relations programmes encourage participation from all communities, anticipated reduction from base line financial allocation will directly impact on these categories.

3. Please state what action you think could be taken to avoid new or exacerbated inequalities.

Whilst the uplift in comparison to the 2023/24 funding contribution towards the delivery of the DCGRP is welcomed by Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, it is still 38% short of the 2022/23 allocation. This will continue to have an adverse impact in terms of support and programming at a local level.

The DCGRP is one of the only TEO programmes which is based upon needs identified through regular audits. The design of this programme is undertaken with consultation from local communities, politically agreed, accountable and based on local need. The restrictions to fully implement the programmes, due to budget constraints will negatively impact on the potential beneficiaries and relationships which have been harnessed between council and local communities.

Further consideration is required regarding potential duplication of funding. It would be beneficial for TEO to collaborate on an inter-departmental basis to provide one collaborative fund available for councils to deliver against programme for government objectives.

4. Do you agree with TEO's assessment on budget allocations?

No

If you answered No, please provide some additional information as to why.

The EQIA proposes equally distributing an additional £750,000 between Central and District Council Good Relations. Relatively speaking, the report identifies the Central Good Relations Fund engaging with 20,000 participants in 2023-24. The EQIA indicates that the DCGRP engaged with circa 56,000 individuals which is significantly greater than alternative TEO funded schemes. The document outlines the intention to 'prioritise front-line activity' and therefore it is recommended to undertake significant review of allocation, value for money and programme beneficiaries in order to most effectively allocate funding.

5. What impact did the 2023-24 budget have on any TEO funded service delivery that your organisation is involved in?

Yes

If Yes, what TEO programme or policy was impacted and how?

The DCGRP for Lisburn & Castlereagh was significantly impacted. The number of programmes being delivered were reduced from 11 to 7 overall programmes. This reduction in delivery resulted in a significant reduction in participation and community engagement. Despite best efforts to ensure support was available to address localised needs, initiatives were limited reflecting the overall budgetary reductions. Particularly, the success and enhancement of the council's good relations programme cannot be sustained with the reductions to this budget. Going forward, reduction in delivery will have significant impacts on long term benefits in delivering the desired objectives. In addition, as Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council undertakes a co-design approach and collaborates extensively both internally and with external partners to deliver against the DGCRP priorities, the impact of reduced budgets will impinge on this approach.

6. Do you have any other comments you would like to add about the Equality Impact Assessment?

The EQIA identifies that any additional funding being offered through the DCGRP would require additional match funding by each council. Given the reduction in DCGRP funding having an overall impact on the delivery of the programme, this council has maintained its contribution which is significantly above the mandatory 25%. This should be taken into account for any potential funding which may become available later in the year.

The EQIA presents limited evidence to support the disproportionate budget allocated to the DCGRP. TEO should ensure that good relations work being delivered at a local level is continued to be valued and funded appropriately.

There is limited reference to the statutory obligations to promote good relations within a central and local government setting. It is vital to emphasise the need to think creatively about how budgets are allocated to deliver against good relations priorities. Through a co-design delivery process, consideration should be given to consolidating similar funding streams within TEO to reduce silo working and provide continuation and enhancement of successful localised programming.

7. Do you have any other comments you would like to add about the Rural Needs Impact Assessment?

No

8. Do you have any other comments you would like to add about the Child Rights Impact Assessment?

No

In submitting this response, Council fully acknowledges the challenging fiscal position facing the Northern Ireland Executive and all the central government departments in setting budgets for the 2024/25 financial year.

Committee:	Corporate Services Committee
Date:	11 th September 2024
Report from:	Head of Corporate Communications & Administration

Item for:	Noting
Subject:	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 2024.	
1.3	It was further agreed that attendance at the Somme for the remaining years of the new Council term be in line with the arrangements detailed at 1.1 of this report.	
1.4	Work will commence in the near future to identify attendees for the 2025 Somme attendance to allow flights and accommodation to be secured at best value to the Council.	
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u>	
	It is recommended that Members:	
	Note the report on the 2024 Somme Pilgrimage and intention to identify attendees for 2025, subject to the estimates setting process.	
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u>	
	Funding already 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 2024 Somme Pilgrimage
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The Battle of the Somme Commemoration Visit:

30th June – 3rd July 2024

Introduction

On the afternoon of Sunday 30th June 2024, a delegation from Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council consisting of:

- The Mayor (Councillor Kurtis Dickson), the Vice Chair of Corporate Services (Councillor Nancy Eaton), Councillor Alan Martin and David Burns (Chief Executive)

travelled to France to attend the 108th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme commemorations.

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. Due to a delay in the flight leaving Belfast, the delegation only arrived at their accommodation in Peronne at 10pm.

Monday 1st July 2024

In the lead up to attendance at the Somme, the Chief Executive had asked staff if they had any relatives who had fought at the Somme and may not have full details of their contribution to the war effort. Two members of staff indicated a desire for further information. The Chief Executive worked with our Museums team to find out more information from war and census records from that time. Both relatives had died at the Somme. One remained missing and his name was inscribed on the memorial to the missing at Thiepval whilst the other was buried approximately 30 minutes away from Peronne. As a result, at 6am on our first day, a visit was made to Serre Road Cemetery No.1, near Beaumont-Hamel, to find the grave of the relative of our employee. A number of photos were taken of the cemetery and of the soldier's grave to send back to our member of staff. Later in the day, photographs were taken of the Thiepval Memorial and sent to our other employee, who is also recognised on the Lisburn War Memorial on Castle Street.



Serre Road Cemetery No. 1

After a return to the hotel for breakfast, the next visit was to Martinsart 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

Thereafter, the delegation 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.

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.

From there, the delegation travelled 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, including the Junior Ministers from the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister. During each of the three services the delegation laid a wreath on behalf of the people of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council.

Following the services, 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.





Service at Thiepval Memorial to the Missing



Northern Ireland Service of Remembrance at the Ulster Tower



Irish Service of Remembrance at Guillemont



Tuesday 2nd July 2024

The first stop of the day was a return to the Ulster Tower to meet Austin, a volunteer from the Somme Association. Austin took the group on a pre-arranged tour of the Thiepval Woods, land 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. The word “chatting” originated in such trenches in the first World War when British soldiers referred to the process of picking lice off themselves and their clothes, coming from the Hindi word for parasite, “chat”. 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. It has one of the most impressive WW1 memorials, situated on the top of the ridge. During WW2, Hitler gave orders that it was not to be destroyed and a German battalion were tasked to guard it.



Tunnels to the Canadian Front Line at Vimy Ridge and view from the German Trenches to Canadian Front line, 30 metres away

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

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. The Menin Gate is undergoing refurbishment works which are due to complete in 2027. Unlike last year, where the service was moved to outside the memorial, on this occasion the service returned to its usual location.



Service of Remembrance at Menin Gate, Ypres

Committee:	Corporate Services Committee
Date:	11 th September 2024
Report from:	Director of Finance & Corporate Services

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	2025 Anniversaries Programme

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>
1.1	VE 80
1.2	The Council has received correspondence (Appendix 1) from Pageant Master, Bruno Peake, requesting the participation of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council in celebrating VE Day 80 on 8 May 2025.
1.3	An official guide has been developed www.veday80.org.uk for those organisations wishing to take part. This guide provides a range of suggestions for events and activities to mark this anniversary including involvement from local churches and communities.
1.4	It is suggested that councils participate in the following events on Thursday 8 May 2025: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 0800hrs - Reading of the VE Day 80 Proclamation - 0900hrs- Raising of a unique VE Day 80 flag - 2130hrs - Beacon Lighting
1.5	In the guide, there is a particular focus on street parties and outdoor celebrations. It also encourages participation from churches, villages, town halls, pubs, clubs and hotels.
1.6	Organisations are asked to officially register their involvement by 30th April 2025 .
1.7	VJ 80 & Remembrance 2025
1.8	There are a number of additional anniversaries that will take place during 2025 including VJ 80. Whilst official guides have not yet been released, we expect to receive guidance from the Pageant Master in due course. It also expected that there will be additional activities associated with Remembrance 2025 in line with these significant anniversaries.
1.9	Proposal
1.10	To progress an appropriate programme of events to commemorate significant anniversaries in 2025, a cross party working group (one representative of each political party, plus the Chairperson of Corporate Services Committee, the Chairperson of the Communities and Wellbeing Committee and the Mayor is proposed.
1.11	At its first meeting, the working group would: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nominate a Chairperson; • Agree a terms of reference (draft attached at appendix 2); • Develop an outline programme of events in line with national guidance for approval by Corporate Services Committee; and

1.12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine an estimated budget for the 2025 Anniversaries Programme. <p>Updates from the working group will be reported as appropriate through the Corporate Services Committee with approval requested for any associated programmes and budget required.</p>
2.0	<p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>It is recommended that Members agree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to support the 2025 Anniversaries Programme to officially register LCCC as part of the VE 80 programme and other similar events before April 2025; to establish a working group as outlined to deliver a suitable programme of events for VE Day 80 and other anniversaries associated with the second world war. to provide party nominations to join the working group to the Members Services Manager by 26 September 2024.
3.0	<p><u>Finance and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>A proposed budget will be developed and brought back to Corporate Services Committee for approval. It is proposed that the programme is funded from reserves.</p>
4.0	<p><u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u></p>
4.1	<p>Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Yes / No</p>
4.2	<p>Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out</p> <p>This event falls under the Policy on Invitations to Civic Functions which has been screened with mitigations in place.</p>
4.3	<p>Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Yes / No</p>
4.4	<p>Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out.</p> <p>Not required</p>

<p>Appendices:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Correspondence received from Bruno Peake VE 80 Draft Terms of Reference
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From: Bruno Peek <brunopeek@mac.com>

Sent: Wednesday, July 17, 2024 10:15 AM

To: Karen Ireland <k.ireland@nilga.org>; Bruno Peek <brunopeek@mac.com>

Subject: Fwd: LOCAL COUNCILS IN NORTHERN IRELAND - VE DAY 80 - 'A SHARED MOMENT OF CELEBRATION' - 8TH MAY 2025



Karen Ireland - Communications

Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA)

Bradford Court

Upper Galway

Castlereagh

BT8 6RB

Northern Ireland

17th July 2024

Dear Karen (if I may),

RE: LOCAL COUNCILS IN NORTHERN IRELAND - VE DAY 80 - 'A SHARED MOMENT OF CELEBRATION' - 8TH MAY 2025

Following on from the enormous success of D-Day 80 - 6th June 2024, in which we all commemorated the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings in Normandy, France, through the lighting of over one thousand Beacons and five hundred Lamp Lights of Peace, as well as all other various activities that took place throughout the United Kingdom, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and UK Overseas Territories, which are still able to be viewed on the D-Day 80 website - www.d-day80beacons.co.uk, we are now focusing our efforts on the celebration of the 80th Anniversary of of VE Day which marked the end of the war in Europe 80 years ago.

So with this in mind, we would very much like to encourage the involvement of all your Councils within Northern Ireland, in VE Day 80 - 8th May 2025, enabling them to use this occasion to pay 'tribute' to the **44,000 brave Irishmen** that fought for the freedom we all enjoy today, as well as those that sadly paid the ultimate sacrifice while doing so.

The attached Guide To Taking Part outlining the event is also available on the VE Day 80 website - www.VEday80.org.uk.

So with this in mind, we would be extremely grateful if you would kindly consider distributing the attached Guide to all your Councils within Northern Ireland, encouraging them to take part please, whether it be through the lighting of a Beacon or Lamp Light of Peace at 9.30pm on 8th May 2025.

We would also like to encourage the involvement of farmers within Northern Ireland too, so would be grateful for any contacts you have within the farming community of NI please.

My warmest regards,



Bruno Peek

Bruno Peek CVO OBE OPR
Pageantmaster
VE Day 80
8th May 2025
Telephone: + 44 (0) 7737 262 913
Email: brunopeek@mac.com
www.VEday80.org.uk



Draft Terms of Reference 2025 Anniversaries Working Group

1. Title

2025 Anniversaries Working Group

2. Aims and Objectives

- To develop and deliver a programme of events and projects to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day, and the 80th anniversary of VJ day, significant historic events that marked the end of the war in Europe, Japan and WWII as a whole on 8th May and 15th August 1945. This programme will include any additional anniversaries and activities for which national guidance is issued, including Remembrance events in November 2025.
- To work collectively to agree a schedule of activities including a dedicated Beacon Lighting event as requested by Pageantmaster, Bruno Peake.
- To meet monthly as a group to coordinate and review progress on each project within the overall programme; and
- To develop a coordinated approach for publicity and communications in relation to the 2025 anniversaries.

3. Composition of Working Group

- One representative of each political party plus the Chairperson of Corporate Services Committee, the Chairperson of the Communities and Wellbeing Committee and the Mayor.
- Head of Corporate Comms and Administration (or representative)
- Head of Communities (or representative)
- Head of Parks and Amenities (or representative)
- Civic Events Officer
- Administration Manager
- Museum Manager
- Events Officer (Communities and Wellbeing Team)
- Additional working group members may be identified as and when required in line with project planning.

4. Chair, Governance and Administration

- At the first meeting of the working group the Members will nominate a Chairperson.
- In the event that the meeting will not be attended by the Chair, Members will nominate an interim Chair.
- Meetings shall be monthly, however the frequency of meetings may be increased, if deemed necessary, by the Chair of the working group.
- The Civic Events Officer will act as the secretariat for the working group.
- Agenda items will be generated from the actions arising from the previous meeting with one standing item: Review of 2025 Anniversaries Programme schedule.
- Minutes of the previous meeting will be electronically distributed to members in advance of the meeting.
- Minutes of meetings and progress updates will be reported through Corporate Services Committee as appropriate.
- Agendas and relevant papers will be issued at least 3 days prior to the date of the scheduled meeting.
- Members of the working group will be expected to come prepared to all meetings in respect of feedback and items actioned.
- In case of an absence, working group members should endeavour to send a deputising person on their behalf. Should this not be possible, an update in respect of actions should be provided 3 days in advance of the meeting.
- Officers are responsible for regularly updating project progress within their remit in the 2025 Anniversaries document located in the Q Drive.
- Appointed working group members are expected to adhere to the rules and regulations of the terms of reference and fulfil their duties as set out in 3.5 Finance Regulations.
- There is a central budget of [To be Agreed] set aside for delivery of the 2025 Anniversaries Programme.
- Spend for each project is managed by the Directorate's appointed lead.
- It is the responsibility of the lead officer for each project to ensure all relevant approvals are in place in relation to spend.
- A full financial overview of the 2025 Anniversaries programme will be reported through Corporate Services Committee.

5. Term

- The Group will be in place until < tbc depending on national programmes released >.

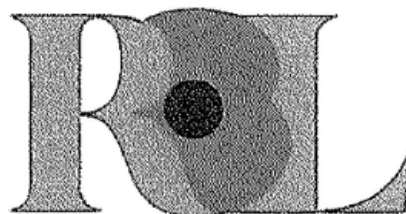
Committee:	Corporate Services Committee
Date:	11 September 2024
Report from:	Head of Corporate Communications & Administration

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance 2024

1.0	<p><u>Background and Key Issues</u></p> <p>Correspondence has been received from The Royal British Legion (attached at Appendix 1) asking the Council to consider sponsoring an advertisement in this year's Northern Ireland Festival of Remembrance official programme.</p>										
1.1	The Festival of Remembrance event will take place on Saturday 2 November at the Waterfront Hall, Belfast.										
1.2	The rates for full-colour advertising are:										
1.3	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Full page outside back cover advert in the A4 event programme (303mm x 216mm)</td> <td>£1,200</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Full page inside front cover or inside back cover advert in the A4 event programme (303mm x 216mm)</td> <td>£1,100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Full page advert in the A4 event programme (303mm x 216mm)</td> <td>£1,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Half page advert in the A4 event programme (185mm x 134mm)</td> <td>£500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Quarter page advert in the event programme (90mm x 134mm):</td> <td>£250</td> </tr> </table>	Full page outside back cover advert in the A4 event programme (303mm x 216mm)	£1,200	Full page inside front cover or inside back cover advert in the A4 event programme (303mm x 216mm)	£1,100	Full page advert in the A4 event programme (303mm x 216mm)	£1,000	Half page advert in the A4 event programme (185mm x 134mm)	£500	Quarter page advert in the event programme (90mm x 134mm):	£250
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Half page advert in the A4 event programme (185mm x 134mm)	£500										
Quarter page advert in the event programme (90mm x 134mm):	£250										
1.4	The sponsorship rates do not include tickets to the event, which can be purchased separately via the Waterfront Hall Box Office or website at a cost of £25 each (to be confirmed when issued on website).										
1.5	In previous years the Council has supported this event with a half page advert in the programme and the purchase four tickets for the Mayor plus a guest, and the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of Corporate Services Committee or their nominees.										
2.0	<p><u>Recommendation</u></p>										
2.1	<p>It is recommended that Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree the sponsorship of a half page advertisement in the Festival of Remembrance programme and the purchase of four tickets. • Agree that representation at the Festival of Remembrance is in line with previous representation as outlined in item 1.5 – (Mayor & Guest, Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Corporate Services Committee or their nominees). 										

3.0	<p><u>Finance and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>£600 Costs will be met through the Civic and Ceremonial Budget.</p>	
4.0	<p><u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u></p>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
4.2	<p>Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out</p> <p>Decision has been made in line with the Council's Policy on Invitations to Civic Functions, Visits & Council Events. This policy is currently under review following the outcome of a screening exercise in Autumn 2023. Potential impacts on religious, political and racial groups were identified which the Council will address by taking the following mitigating steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church services to be interdenominational to promote inclusivity. • Where possible a balance of cross community representation of schools and/or community groups will be included in civic events. • All events will be considered in the context of the Council's wider programme of events across the year. • The policy on Invitations to Civic Functions, Visits and Council Events to be reviewed to incorporate the above actions. 	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	<p>Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out.</p> <p>Decision has been made in line with the Council's Policy on Invitations to Civic Functions, Visits & Council Events.</p>	

Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Correspondence from the Royal British Legion
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ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

Patron: His Majesty
The King

19th July 2024

The Royal British Legion
51-53 Fountain Street
Belfast
BT1 5EB
E: info@rbl.org.uk
M: 07599611749

Northern Ireland Festival of Remembrance 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

The Northern Ireland Festival of Remembrance is recognised as one of the premier occasions in The Royal British Legion's calendar, and this year's event will take place at Belfast Waterfront Hall on Saturday 2nd November 2024.

This year marks numerous important anniversaries, and we would invite you to show your support for the RBL by kindly sponsoring an advertisement in this year's official Festival of Remembrance programme. We are anticipating another sell-out event like previous years with the potential of 1800 people attending.

This year marks the 80th anniversary of key turning points in the Second World War, which marked the beginning of the liberation of Western Europe. We will pay tribute to all those Royal Ulster Rifles that landed on D-Day on the 6th of June. We will recognise those who served and currently serve in Kosovo 25 years after the deployment of a NATO peacekeeping force. Closer to home, we will remember all those from Northern Ireland who paid the ultimate sacrifice in Afghanistan as this year marks 10 years since the end of Operation Herrick. Lastly, we will paying a special tribute to our National President, Vice Admiral Sir Clive Johnstone KBE CB who sadly passed away in May this year after our National Conference.

Through your support, we invite you to take the opportunity to say thank you to those who have served, are still serving, plus those who paid the supreme sacrifice to change the world we live in today.

Our suggested donations for full-colour advertising sponsorship are as follows:

- **Full page outside back cover** advert in the A4 event programme (303mm x 216mm): **£1200**
- **Full page inside front cover or inside back cover** advert in the A4 event programme (303mm x 216mm): **£1100**
- **Full page** advert in the A4 event programme (303mm x 216mm): **£1000**
- **Half page** advert in the A4 event programme (185mm x 134mm): **£500**
- **Quarter page** advert in the A4 event programme (90mm x 134mm): **£250**

These rates do not include tickets to the event, which can be purchased separately via the Waterfront Hall Box Office or website from 1st August 2024.

All profits raised by the Northern Ireland Festival of Remembrance and the programme will go directly to the Poppy Appeal, which was created by the Royal British Legion in 1921 to help all those returning from the First World War and it still one of the biggest charities helping to support veterans, serving personnel and their families with any crisis that they find themselves in. By working with us you can support us to reach a wide and varied new customer base and a make a real difference to the Armed Forces Community.

The Northern Ireland Festival of Remembrance programme booking deadline will be Friday 12th September 2024, with a copy deadline of 26th September 2024.

To place a booking or discuss these donation rates further, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Harry Alexander

Harry Alexander
Festival of Remembrance Committee





Committee:	Corporate Services
Date:	11 September 2024
Report from:	Head of Corporate Communications & Administration

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Area Integrated Partnership Boards

1.0	<u>Background</u>
1.1	Work is underway on the development and implementation of the Integrated Care System for Northern Ireland (ICS NI).
1.2	ICS NI is the new framework for planning health and social care services in Northern Ireland. It is a single planning system that will help to improve the health and wellbeing of our population. The objective is to improve health and wellbeing outcomes and reduce health inequalities through collaboration and partnership working.
1.3	The ICS NI model is outcomes-based and underpinned by a population health approach, that is; looking at the entire life course from prevention, through to early intervention, treatment, aftercare and eventually end of life care.
1.4	To support this, the DoH will establish five Area Integrated Partnership Boards (AIPBs), to work locally in partnership with others to identify local needs, agree priorities and identify what collective action should be taken to effect change with a focus on prevention, early intervention and community health and wellbeing.
1.5	A regional ICS Partnership forum will be established to lead on working regionally in partnership with others to support the work of AIPBs, identify areas for regional collaboration where this would bring the greatest benefit to the whole NI population, and support shared learning.
1.6	<p>Work is currently underway to stand up ICS NI in shadow form from Autumn 2024 to allow for a period of learning and refinement. This will involve a phased approach, with work progressing on the establishment of the Regional ICS Partnership Forum as well as Shadow Area Integrated partnership Boards in the following areas:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern (transitioning from Test status); • South-Eastern; and • Western <p>The Belfast and Northern shadow AIPBs will be stood up in due course.</p>
1.7	<p>Further information about ICS NI can be accessed here: https://online.hscni.net/our-work/integrated-care-system-ni/</p>

2.0	<u>Key issues</u>	
2.1	<p>The Department is seeking a single councillor nomination from each relevant Council in the AIPB area, as shown below with a nomination being sought for Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council in both the Belfast AIPB and South Eastern AIPB as it straddles the geographic area of two AIPBs.</p> <p>Belfast AIPB – Belfast City Council, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council</p> <p>Northern AIPB – Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Causeway Coast and Glens District Council, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, Mid Ulster District Council</p> <p>South Eastern AIPB – Ards and North Down Borough Council, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, Newry Moure and Down District Council.</p> <p>Southern AIPB – Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, Mid Ulster District Council, Newry Mourne and Down District Council.</p>	
2.3	<p>It is expected that a shadow AIPB member will undertake a term of up to four years pending regulations approval. AIPB Members will typically be required to commit one day per month for attendance at shadow AIPB meetings.</p>	
2.4	<p>As an external appointment, and due to its connections to community planning, it is appropriate to allocate these places using the D'Hondt system, with the positions being allocated to APNI (first choice) and UUP.</p>	
3.0	<p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>It is recommended that the Council's nomination to the Belfast AIPB and South Eastern AIPB be made on the basis of the D'Hondt system with the positions being allocated to the APNI (first choice) and UUP.</p> <p>Confirmation of the nominated members by the relevant Nominating Officers will be provided at the meeting.</p>	
4.0	<p><u>Finance and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None.</p>	
5.0	<p><u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u></p>	
5.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	N/A
5.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions or rationale why the screening was not carried out	N/A
5.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	N/A

5.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions or rationale why the screening was not carried out.	N/A
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Appendices:	None
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Committee:	Corporate Services
Date:	11 th September 2024
Report from:	Head of Finance

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Estimates 2025-2026 – Schedule of Meetings

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>	
1.1	A schedule of meetings for the preparation of the annual estimates for the financial year commencing 1st April 2025 is attached for Member's approval.	
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u>	
	It is recommended that the schedule of meetings for the preparation of the Estimates for 2025/2026 be approved.	
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u>	
	Not Applicable – for internal scheduling.	
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 – for internal scheduling.	
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.	
	Not Applicable	

Appendices:	Estimates Timetable 2025/26
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**PROPOSED PROGRAMME FOR THE STRIKING OF A DISTRICT RATE
FINANCIAL YEAR COMMENCING 1ST APRIL 2025**

9th October 2024 (6.00 pm) - Wednesday

Meeting of the Corporate Services Committee at which the first draft of the 25/26 estimates will be considered.

November/December 2024

Directorate updates presented to each home committee.

13th November 2024 (6.00 pm) - Wednesday

Update presented to Corporate Services Committee of the overall 25/26 draft estimates.

11th December 2024 (6.00 pm) - Wednesday

Update presented to Corporate Services Committee of the 25/26 draft estimates.

2nd January 2025 (6 pm) - Thursday

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

7th January 2025 (6.00 pm) - Tuesday

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

8th January 2025 (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.

9th January 2025 (6.00 pm) – Thursday (proposed new date still to be agreed by ESC)

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

23rd January 2025 (6.00 pm) - Thursday

Special Meeting of the Corporate Services Committee to consider the Striking of a Rate for the Year 25/26 and the making of a recommendation to the Council as to the Rate to be struck.

6th February 2025 (6.00 pm) – Thursday (subject to RGC start time of 6.45 pm)

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 25/26.

Committee:	Corporate Services
Date:	11 th September 2024
Report from:	Head of Finance

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Car Parking bad debt write off

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>																				
1.1	The provision of off street car parking transferred to Local Councils on 1 April 2015. While Councils retain responsibility for the overall financial management of the function, they delegated operational management to an independent contractor and the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) up to March 2024.																				
1.2	Councils were given all of the debt prior to 01/04/2015 relating to the car parks and a bad debt provision.																				
1.3	The Council must approve the write off of the car park debts to enable DfI to remove the actual write off in the PCN IT system.																				
1.4	Below are the bad debts that have been recommended for write off:																				
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>FY</th> <th>PCN's</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2015/16</td> <td>£ 360.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016/17</td> <td>£ 3,225.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2017/18</td> <td>£ 4,590.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2018/19</td> <td>£ 3,915.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019/20</td> <td>£ 2,430.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021/22</td> <td>£ 675.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022/23</td> <td>£ 765.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2023/24</td> <td>£ 765.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grand Total</td> <td>£ 16,725.00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	FY	PCN's	2015/16	£ 360.00	2016/17	£ 3,225.00	2017/18	£ 4,590.00	2018/19	£ 3,915.00	2019/20	£ 2,430.00	2021/22	£ 675.00	2022/23	£ 765.00	2023/24	£ 765.00	Grand Total	£ 16,725.00
FY	PCN's																				
2015/16	£ 360.00																				
2016/17	£ 3,225.00																				
2017/18	£ 4,590.00																				
2018/19	£ 3,915.00																				
2019/20	£ 2,430.00																				
2021/22	£ 675.00																				
2022/23	£ 765.00																				
2023/24	£ 765.00																				
Grand Total	£ 16,725.00																				
1.5	The individual amounts within the bad debts range from £65 to £135.00 and from a period of December 2015 to March 2024. Details have been provided by DfI of the actions carried out to try to recover the above debts to Finance.																				
1.6	There remains a number of outstanding debts in relation to the car parking charges. DfI are actively pursuing these debts and have recommended we do not write off these additional amounts at present.																				
1.7	The Council has made a provision within the balance sheet should any of these additional debts have to be written off. The current balance held for bad debts in relation to car parking is £79,683.60. This is reviewed at each year-end based on the information provided to the finance unit.																				

2.0	<u>Recommendation</u>	
	It is recommended that the debt recorded is approved to be written off the ledgers of the Department for Infrastructure.	
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u>	
	To be funded through provision held in balance sheet	
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 Implementing CFC 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. Not Applicable	

Appendices:	
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Committee:	Corporate Services Committee
Date:	11 th September 2024
Report from:	Head of Human Resources & Organisational Development

Item for:	Noting
Subject:	Workforce Reports

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>	
1.1	Workforce Reports are provided on a quarterly basis to this Committee for review and scrutiny as appropriate and include:	
1.2	Report on Attendance Management within the Council for the period up to 31 st June 2024 including actions taken by the Council to support attendance and minimise absence levels.	
1.3	Workforce This report details the number of staff employed and agency workers engaged with the Council as at August 2024.	
1.4	Recruitment This report provides detail of the current position of recruitment of posts as at 7 th August 2024, 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 <u>or</u> 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 <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out.	Report for noting only

Appendices:

- **Attendance Management Report: Analysis for Period Ending on 31st June 2024**
- **Recruitment Committee Report - Advert & Selection**
- **Recruitment Committee Report – Appointments**
- **Appendix Workforce Profile**



**ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT:
ANALYSIS FOR PERIOD
ENDING
30 JUNE 2024**

1.0 OVERVIEW

This report provides Council with detailed information in relation to sickness absence levels in the organisation. The report also provides a summary of how sickness absence is being monitored and managed.

2.0 ROLLING YEAR JULY 2023 – JUNE 2024

Full Council	01.05.23 to 30.04.24	01.06.24 to 31.05.24	01.07.23 to 30.06.24
Total Possible Days	158,528.60	158,443.68	158,517.85
Days Lost Through Short Term Sickness	2,488.88	2,439.41	2,478.33
Days Lost Through Long Term Sickness	10,858.74	10,875.24	10,807.24
Total Lost Time Rate	8.48%	8.40%	8.38%
Total Days Lost	13,347.62	13,314.65	13,285.57
Days lost per employee	16.26	16.02	15.75

Days lost per employee differs significantly by directorate, in the financial year ending 30 June 2024, as illustrated by the below table:

Directorate	Days lost per employee
Chief Executives Office (Incl Audit)	3.38
Environmental Services	25.30
Finance & Corporate Services	4.94
Leisure & Community Wellbeing	15.54
Organisation Development & Innovation	3.79
Regeneration & Growth	15.73

2.1 ACTUAL MONTHS

APRIL 2024 – JUNE 2024

Full Council	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024	Qtr 1
Total Possible Days	13,174.36	13,126.71	13,264.98	39,566.05
Days Lost Through Short Term Sickness	163.82	182.01	255.14	600.97
Days Lost Through Long Term Sickness	793.00	784.50	795.00	2372.50
Total Lost Time Rate	7.32%	7.36%	7.92%	4.86%
Total Days Lost	956.82	966.51	1050.14	2973.47
Days lost per employee	1.32	1.34	1.44	2.65

2.2 Absence Analysis by Reason Qtr 1 April 2024 – 30 June 2024

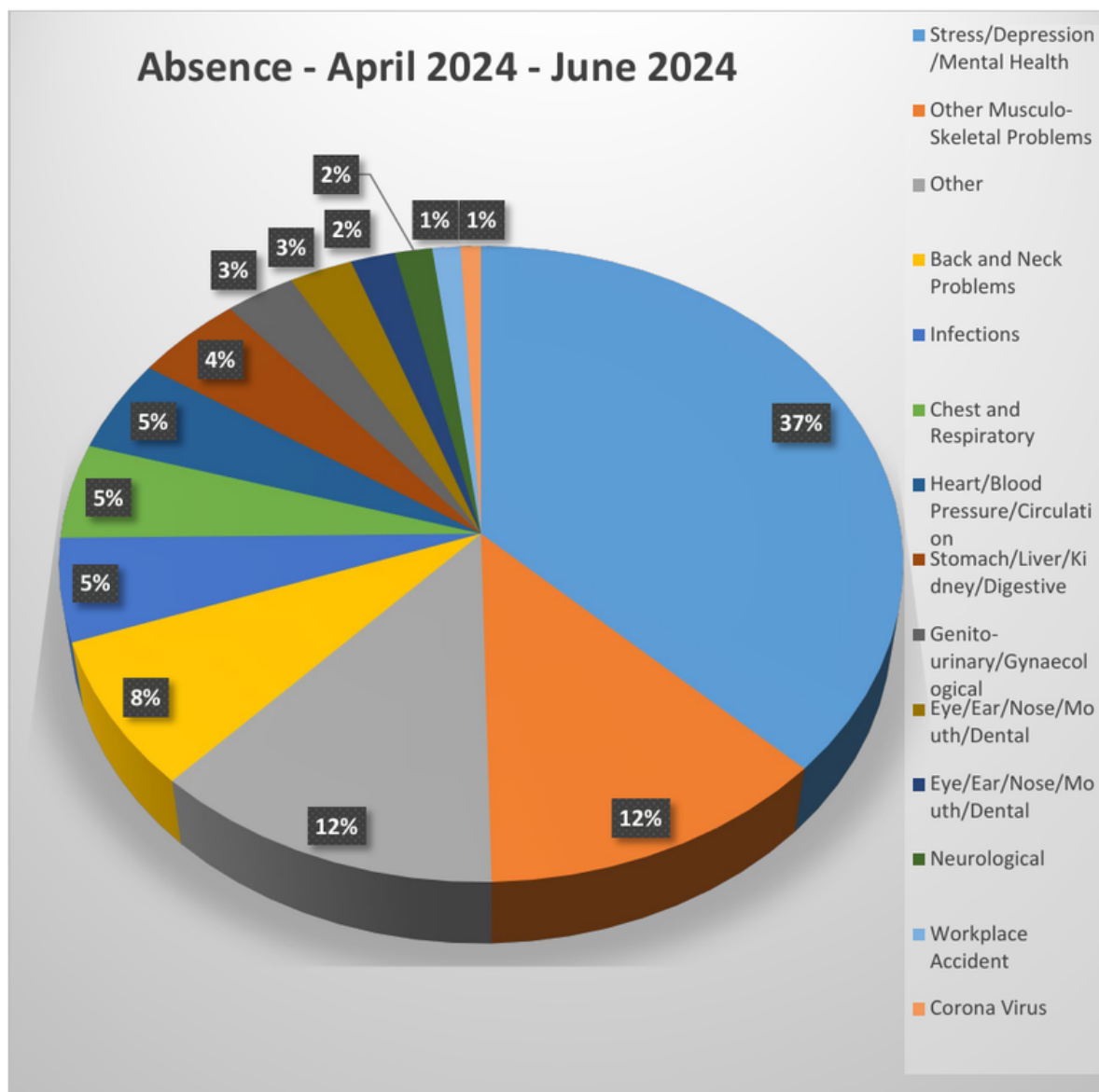
Days Lost Current vs Previous Qtr.

Reason	Days Lost Previous Qtr	Days Lost Current Qtr	Variance
Stress/Depression/Mental Health	1,233.64	1,134.15	-99.48
Other Musculo-Skeletal Problems	462	377	-85
Other	293	376	83
Back and Neck Problems	375	231	-144
Infections	196	159	-37
Chest and Respiratory	146	147	1
Heart/Blood Pressure/Circulation	195	144	-51
Stomach/Liver/Kidney/Digestive	307.00	138.55	-168.45
Genito-urinary/Gynaecological	84	90	6
Eye/Ear/Nose/Mouth/Dental	13	57	44
Neurological	101	48	-53
Workplace Accident	73.50	36.00	-37.50
Corona Virus	61	26	-35

Stress/Depression/Mental Health has consistently been the largest cause of sickness absence. This remains to be the main cause of sickness absence in the first quarter of 2024/2025. However, in comparison to the quarter 3 and 4 of 2023/2024 financial year, the days lost due to **Stress/Depression/Mental Health is continuing to decrease by 99.48 days**, which again is a marked improvement.

Back, Neck & Other/Musculo-Skeletal problems are again in the top four causes of sickness absence, however, it is pleasing to note that the days lost to both of these absence reasons has reduced by a total of **229 days**.

The pie chart below provides a visual illustration of the reasons for sickness absence for the first quarter of 2024/2025. The list of absence reasons is in descending order e.g. the most frequent cause for long term sickness is "Stress/ Depression/ Mental Health" absences (37%).



2.3 Number of Employees Absent Current vs Previous Qtr.

Org Structure	Emp Absence Count Previous Qtr (FTE)	Emp Absence Count Current Qtr (FTE)	Variance
Full Council	190.76	142.57	-48.19

The above table demonstrates that in comparison to the previous quarter, (January to March 2024), there has been a decrease of 48 employees absent in the first quarter of 2024/2025. In the previous quarter more than 1 in 4 employees were absent due to sickness, however in the current quarter this has decreased to around 1 in 5 employees who were absent due to sickness.

2.4 Days Lost - All Employees Previous Qtr vs Current Qtr

Org Structure	Days Lost Previous Qtr	Days Lost Current Qtr	Variance
Full Council	3,551	2973.47	-577.53

The above table shows that in comparison to the previous quarter, (January to March 2024), there has been a decrease of 577 days lost in the first quarter of 2024/2025. This equates to a reduction of 19.4% of days lost due to sickness absence.

2.5 Average Days Lost Previous Qtr vs Current Qtr

Org Structure	Ave Days Lost Duration Previous Qtr (FTE)	Ave Days Lost Duration Current Qtr (FTE)	Variance
Full Council	4.72	3.44	-1.28

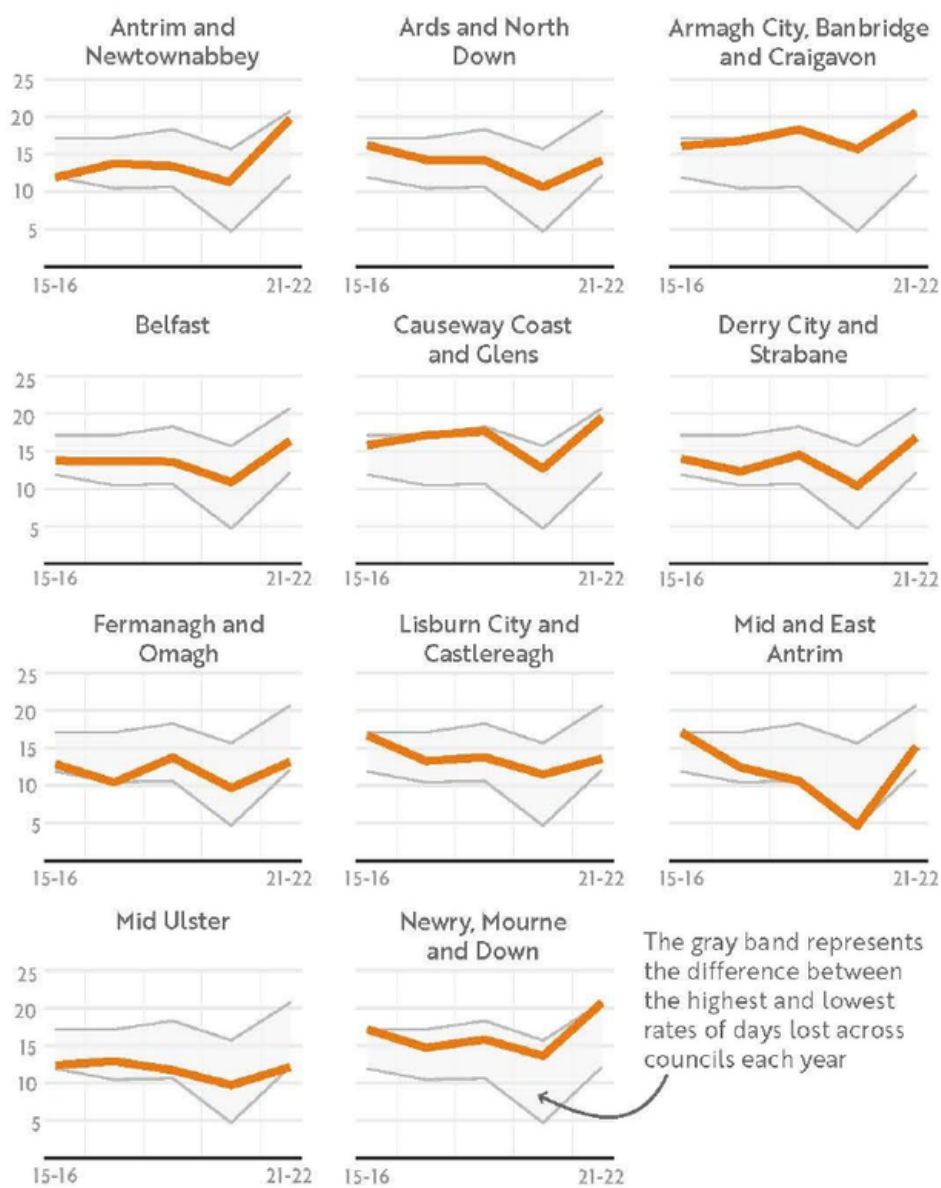
The above table shows the average duration of sickness absence based on FTE has decreased by 1.28 days. This equates to a reduction of 37.2% in days lost per person.

2.6 Northern Ireland Audit Office – Local Government Audit Report December 2021

Whilst there are no Absence figures yet published for 2022-2023 or 2023-2024 the NIAO advised in their Audit report of 21 December 2023 the following:

In all councils, absence levels reduced during the pandemic to their lowest over five years. However, this trend was reversed as we entered the post pandemic environment, and councils recorded their highest average sickness percentage against the previous five years.

Number of days lost to sickness absence per year:



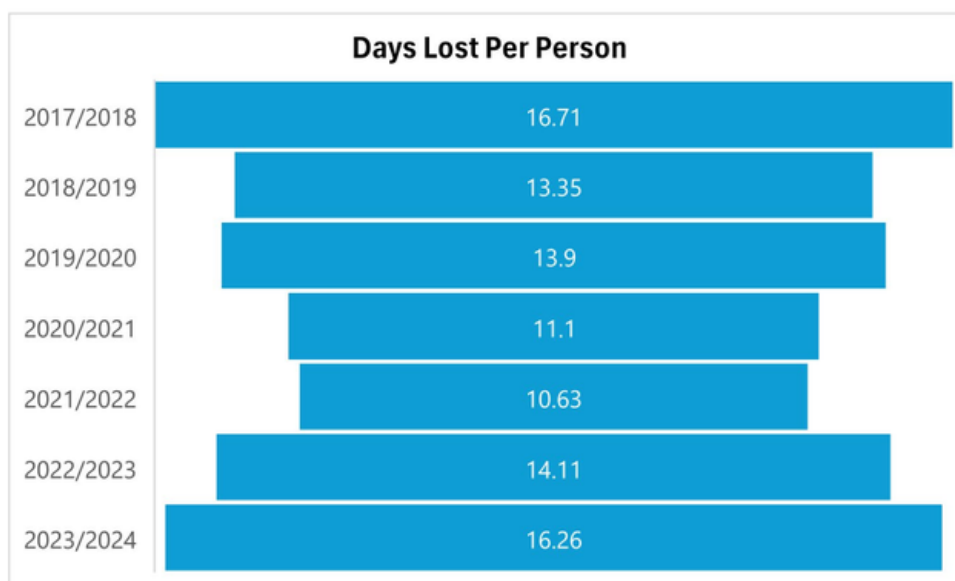
Source: Councils' Annual Audit Letters

In the NIAO report for the 2021/2022 period Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council had the third lowest number of sick days per person at 13.6 (10.63 days per person without Covid-19 absences).

No further absence information has been published from the Department for Communities or Northern Ireland Audit Office for the 2022/2023 period.

2.7 Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council’s Yearly Absence Trend

A year-on-year comparison of the Council’s own absence has been analysed and is detailed below.



There has been an increase of 2.15 days’ absence per employee, in the period 2022/2023 from **14.11 days** (15.81 days incl. Covid 19) to **16.26** days in the period 2023-2024.

The growth in absence in the last two years has been driven at least in part by NHS backlogs for treatment, longer recovery times due to treatment delays and inactivity. Long-term absence has been impacted by treatment delays which is evidenced by Occupational Health reports and Absence Interviews with employees.

2.8 Days Lost per Reason

Analysis over the last 3 Financial Years has been carried out on the Absence Categories.

Due to a system upgrade it has not been possible to get data before 2021

Full Council Sickness Categories - Days Lost														
	Back & Neck Problems	Chest & Respiratory	Corona Virus	Eye/Ear/ Nose /Mouth/ Dental	Genito-urinary/ Gynae	Heart/ Blood Pressure /Circulation	Infections	Neuro	Other	Other Musculo-Skeletal	Pregnant exc Mat Leave	Stomach/ Liver/Kidney/ Digestive	Stress/ Depression/ Mental Health	Workplace Accident
2021/2022	381.00	260.50	2,200.50	315.00	100.00	467.00	559.50	533.00	681.00	817.50	74.00	348.50	3,473.00	9.00
2022/2023	509.00	539.00	1,388.50	252.00	250.00	534.00	672.50	662.50	1,989.50	1,474.00	106.00	447.00	3,971.00	157.00
2023/2024	707.5	617.68	247.67	77	435	806.74	489.31	437	1,125	2,011.00	119.00	927.23	5,119.64	197.00
TOTAL	956.82	1417.18	3836.67	644.00	785.00	1807.74	1721.31	1632.50	3795.50	4302.50	299.00	1722.73	12563.64	363.00

3.0 ACTIONS TAKEN

Reducing sickness absence is a top priority for the Council.

It is imperative that all Line Managers follow the processes which are in place, utilise the available support, and spend the time required to make sure their staff are in work, healthy and productive.

This is important in relation to our duty of care to our workforce, as an employer, but also important in terms of finances and productivity as high absence levels can affect the performance of services provided.

As detailed in previous reports we have a HR Officer focusing on improving sickness absence across the Council through a temporary project. This Officer has been meeting with Directors, Heads of Service and their individual Units and Line Managers to analyse absence within their departments.

These sessions have been instrumental in preparing line managers with the skills they need to manage employee absences confidently, but also importantly to provide on-going support when new situations arise which they may be unsure about or to clarify key points of procedure.

3.1 OTHER ACTIONS

BENCHMARKING

Internal & External Benchmarking

Benchmarking exercises have been undertaken as part of the Absence project. Benchmarking was carried out initially internally, an Absence Focus Group has been created with representatives nominated from Heads of Service from their respective Units, a meeting was also held with the HoST Team and individual Management meetings have also been had.

A breakdown of Absence in each area has been provided at all Management meetings, establishing areas that need to be improved and recommendations for inclusion in the new Policy for Managing Attendance and content that require to be focused on with Line Managers and Employees.

According to the CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development) mental health sickness is the highest rate of sickness absence in a decade has been recorded in all employment sectors.

As stated above in 2.2 Mental health issues have been increasing, despite workplace health and wellbeing services being put in place.

Absence due to personal stress has increased, personal stress is identified as an event or condition that occurs in a person's life that may adversely impact on the individual's or their family's health or wellbeing. A stressor may occur directly, such as personally experiencing a serious illness, or indirectly, such as having a family member with a serious illness.

There will be a renewed focus on resilience workshops for employees in the coming months to help employees navigate challenges they may be having,

A review was undertaken over the past year to determine the causes of this type of absence amongst employees. The main reasons for these types of sickness absence in the financial year 2023/2024 were due to the following:

- Personal Stress due to caring responsibilities for an ill family member. This is known as the 'Sandwich Generation'. The name refers to a generation of people that are caring for two different age types simultaneously e.g. a child/children and elderly parent/s.

We find there are more 'Sandwich Carers' than ever before in the Council. Over the past 3 years there has been an increase in long term sick leave with employees caring for ill parents or spouses.

During Absence Interview meetings with employees, we have been advised that the backlog of NHS waiting lists / Social Care Packages for relatives and the Education Authority's SEN provision have all had an impact on the length of time that an employee is off causing them anxiety and stress.

- Bereavement
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Low Mood
- Work Related Stress

External Benchmarking

External benchmarking was carried out with local Councils, local authorities, Queens University Belfast, Education Authority, SERC, NI Water and Coca Cola HBC. Councils in Wales and Scotland were also contacted. A few of the organisations provided their sickness absence figures but some would not as they had not yet been published.

Through these benchmarking exercises, it was hoped to identify best practices, address challenges, and optimise our absence management strategies.

It was quickly established from the councils that were contacted that they are facing workforce capacity pressures, which included staff absence, an ageing workforce and challenges of recruitment and retention, especially since Covid.

When comparing systems, policies and best practice council are managing attendance the same way with Policies and standards in managing both short-term and long-term sickness absence however, some of the organisations had a separate department that solely managed Absence and a separate that manages Health & Wellbeing.

In all the organisations listed above it was confirmed that their main absence reason was at an all-time high with Mental Health / Stress, the major cause of long-term sickness. And in most of the organisations, Musculoskeletal/Back & Neck absence was higher in their front-line operational employees especially in Cleansing, Tradesperson and Recreational roles.

Benchmarking internally and externally has been instrumental in identifying that the Council and other organisations have "Accidental Line Managers". Accidental managers are employees in temporary acting up positions or those employees for which they can find themselves unprepared and untrained as a Line Manager but skilled in the field that they have worked in.

Line managers play such a key role in supporting employees' health and wellbeing including taking primary responsibility for managing both short-term and long-term absence.

In dealing with Sickness Absence, it was identified that this was an area where there was a lack of confidence and competence for some Council Line Managers dealing with sickness, having difficult conversations with employees and making decisions on the next step.

Ongoing training is imperative and regular meetings have been held with the Heads of Service and the Units, HR clinics for line managers continue to be held in the areas which have the highest sickness absence levels to provide them with the necessary support and guidance.

3.2 Health & Wellbeing

Implementing preventative health and wellbeing strategies also requires Line Managers to be skilled and have the confidence to support wellbeing in their employees.

A Health & Wellbeing Survey was developed and sent to all employees in June 2024. Once the results of the survey are reviewed and analysed the draft Health & Wellbeing Strategy will be finalised and training rolled out.

The results of the survey will also be taken into consideration when planning and organising Training and Health & Wellbeing events and initiatives throughout the year. Council plans to implement the finalised Health & Wellbeing strategy in September 2024, in conjunction with the new Managing Attendance Policy.

The Council has 25 Mental Health First Aiders who provide first aid support for employees experiencing mental health problems at work. These employees have also been trained to recognise signs and symptoms of mental ill health and respond appropriately.

There are a number of Health and Wellbeing initiatives which are being utilised to support employees in the workplace on a daily, weekly or monthly basis.

3.3 USEL

The Council continues to work in partnership with USEL a government-based organisation who can assist employers with absence relating to physical impairment or mental health issues. They offer services such as Physiotherapy and Counselling at no cost to the Council.

The Employment Services Officer keeps in regular contact with employees (normally bi-weekly).

Currently there are 12 employees on both the Workable (NI) Programme and Condition Management Programme. Employees must be at work or committed to coming back to the workplace to avail of the programme. All employees have been referred to various programmes and are receiving support and assistance.

3.4 MANAGING ATTENDANCE POLICY & TRAINING

As detailed in previous reports we have undertaken to review the Policy for Managing Attendance. After detailed consultations with local trade union representatives, Heads of Service, CMT and the Absence Working group which consisted of line manager representatives, a draft version of the new policy has been presented to the Corporate Committee. Following consultation with the trade unions, the Council plans to implement the new policy and procedure in September 2024, once the policy is signed off.

A training programme has been developed with materials to provide line managers with the support and advice to both understand their duties and responsibilities under the new policy, but also to ensure that they have the necessary skills to effectively manage sickness absence within their areas.

In the meantime, HR clinics for line managers continue to be held in the areas which have the highest sickness absence levels to provide them with the necessary support and guidance.

3.5 REPORTING

Heads of Service will continue to be provided with sickness absence statistics on a monthly basis to help them effectively monitor and manage sickness absence levels within their units.

Now that our new absence reporting process place is established, and sufficient data within the system, we are undertaking a review of the reporting process to ensure it continues to operate as originally intended.

In addition, we are undertaking a review of how non-compliance issues are captured and reported, to ensure that sickness absence is managed as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Recruitment Committee Report - Advert & Selection

Primary	Status	Post Title	Department	Unit	Total Number of Posts Required	Type of Post
1	JF3521	00_Pre-Advert	Apprentice Mechanic (Heavy Vehicle)	Environmental Services	Waste Management & Operations	1 Fixed Term - Full Time
2	JF3520	00_Pre-Advert	Apprentice Web Developer/Graphic Designer	Finance & Corporate Services	Corporate Communications & Administration	1 Fixed Term - Full Time
3	JF3526	00_Pre-Advert	Finance Higher Level Apprentice	Finance & Corporate Services	Finance	1 Fixed Term - Full Time
4	JF3522	00_Pre-Advert	Community Arts Events Apprentice	Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Communities	1 Fixed Term - Full Time
5	JF3527	00_Pre-Advert	Community Network Officer (PEACEPLUS)	Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Communities	1 Fixed Term - Full Time
6	JF3519	00_Pre-Advert	Apprentice GGGG	Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Parks & Amenities	1 Fixed Term - Full Time
7	JF3525	00_Pre-Advert	Operation Coordinator	Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Sports Services	1 Fixed Term - Full Time
8	JF3528	00_Pre-Advert	Health and Fitness Officer	Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Sports Services	4 Permanent - Full Time Permanent - Part Time
9	JF3523	00_Pre-Advert	Tourism Apprentice	Regeneration & Growth	Economic Development	1 Fixed Term - Full Time
10	JF3524	00_Pre-Advert	Administration Apprentice	Regeneration & Growth	Economic Development	1 Fixed Term - Full Time
11	JF3510	01_Advert Live	Receptionist	Environmental Services	Waste Management & Operations	1 Permanent - Full Time
12	JF3508	01_Advert Live	Receptionist (full time)	Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Communities	1 Fixed Term - Full Time
13	JF3518	01_Advert Live	Swimming Teachers	Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Sports Services	1 Permanent - Part Time
14	JF3516	01_Advert Live	Funding Officer	Organisation Development & Innovation	IT & Commercialisation	1 Fixed Term - Part Time
15	JF3493	01_Advert Live	Procurement and Contracts Support	Regeneration & Growth	Assets	1 Fixed Term - Part Time
16	JF3517	01_Advert Live	Principal Regeneration Officer	Regeneration & Growth	Economic Development	1 Fixed Term - Full Time
17	JF3514	02_Awaiting Shortlisting	Vehicle Maintenance Filter	Environmental Services	Waste Management & Operations	1 Permanent - Full Time
18	JF3515	02_Awaiting Shortlisting	Data Protection Training Support Assistant	Organisation Development & Innovation	IT & Commercialisation	1 Fixed Term - Full Time
19	JF3512	02_Awaiting Shortlisting	Principal Planning Officer	Regeneration & Growth	Planning & Capital Development	1 Permanent - Full Time
20	JF3498	04_Awaiting Interview	Health and Fitness Officer	Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Sports Services	1 Permanent - Full Time
21	JF3509	04_Awaiting Interview	HR & OD Advisor	Organisation Development & Innovation	HR & OD	1 Fixed Term - Full Time
22	JF3502	04_Awaiting Interview	Play Park Inspector Labourer	Regeneration & Growth	Assets	1 Fixed Term - Part Time
23	JF3496	04_Awaiting Interview	Capital Programme Manager	Regeneration & Growth	Planning & Capital Development	1 Permanent - Full Time
24	JF3440	10_On Hold	Cleansing Supervisor	Environmental Services	Waste Management & Operations	2 Fixed Term - Full Time

Recruitment Committee Report 2 - Appointments

	Primary	Status	Post Title
1	JF3513	05_Conditional Offer Letter Pending	Higher Level Apprentice - Business Data Management
2	JF3506	05_Conditional Offer Letter Pending	HR & OD Co-Ordinator
3	JF3476	06_Pre-Employment in Progress	Senior Rec Assistants DIIB (Casual)
4	JF3503	06_Pre-Employment in Progress	Plumber
5	JF3501	06_Pre-Employment in Progress	Handyperson (Plant Support)
6	JF3507	07_Firm Offer Pending	HR & OD Advisor
7	JF3459	08_Firm Offer Issued	Environmental Health Placement Student
8	JF3452	08_Firm Offer Issued	Leisure Assistant
9	JF3452	08_Firm Offer Issued	Leisure Assistant
10	JF3478	09_Terms & Conditions Returned	Environmental Health Officer

Department	Unit	Total Number of Posts Required	Type of Post
Organisation Development & Innovation	HR & OD	1	Fixed Term - Full Time
Organisation Development & Innovation	HR & OD	1	Fixed Term - Full Time
Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Sports Services	1	Casual
Regeneration & Growth	Assets	1	Permanent - Full Time
Regeneration & Growth	Assets	1	Permanent - Full Time
Organisation Development & Innovation	HR & OD	1	Permanent - Full Time
Environmental Services	Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning	1	Fixed Term - Full Time
Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Sports Services	1	Permanent - Part Time
Leisure & Community Wellbeing	Sports Services	1	Permanent - Part Time
Environmental Services	Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning	1	Permanent - Full Time

WORKFORCE PROFILE
September Committee Report

Department & Unit	Employees at 1st August 2024						Agency staff as of 5th August 2024					
	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	0.4	2.4	2.0	1.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Audit, Risk & Performance	5.0	0	5.0	5.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total CEO	7.0	0.4	7.4	7.0	1.0	8.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Finance and Corporate Services												
Corporate Communications & Administration	35.0	6.82	41.8	35.0	13.0	48.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.0
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	14.0	0.93	14.9	14.0	1.0	15.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.0
Total CS	51.0	8.16	59.2	51.0	15.0	66.0	2.0	0.0	2.0	2.0	0.0	2.0
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	38.0	4.8	42.8	38.0	8.0	46.0	2.0	0.5	2.5	2.0	1.0	3.0
Waste Management & Operations	156.0	3.45	159.5	156.0	7.0	163.0	39.0	1.2	40.2	39.0	2.0	41.0
Building Control	19.0	0	19.0	19.0	0.0	19.0	3.0	0.0	3.0	3.0	0.0	3.0
Total ES	216.0	8.25	224.3	216.0	15.0	231.0	44.0	1.7	45.7	44.0	3.0	47.0
Leisure and Community Wellbeing												
Communities	51.0	6.61	57.6	51.0	10.0	61.0	5.5	4.4	10.0	6.0	9.0	15.0
Director - Leisure and Community Wellbeing	1.0	0.6	1.6	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.0
Parks and Amenities	90.0	1.73	91.7	90.0	3.0	93.0	8.0	0.0	8.0	8.0	0.0	8.0
Sports Services	102.0	34.09	136.1	102.0	72.0	174.0	13.0	2.4	15.4	13.0	5.0	18.0
Total LCW	244.0	43.03	287.0	244.0	86.0	330.0	27.5	6.9	34.4	28.0	14.0	42.0
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	21.0	3.31	24.3	21.0	6.0	27.0	3.0	0.0	3.0	3.0	0.0	3.0
Planning & Capital Development	31.0	5.41	39.0	31.0	8.0	39.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.0
Assets	27.0	2.77	29.8	27.0	5.0	32.0	2.0	0.8	2.8	2.0	1.0	3.0
TOTAL STRG	81.0	11.49	95.1	81.0	19.0	100.0	6.0	0.8	6.8	6.0	1.0	7.0
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
Transformation Portfolio	15.0	0	15.0	15.0	0.0	15.0	3.0	0.0	3.0	3.0	0.0	3.0
Human Resources and Organisation Development	20.0	5.95	26.0	20.0	10.0	30.0	2.5	0.0	2.5	3.0	0.0	3.0
TOTAL ODI	37.0	5.95	43.0	37.0	10.0	47.0	5.5	0.0	5.5	6.0	0.0	6.0
Total Employees (FTE / Headcount)	636.0	77.3	715.9	636.0	146.0	782.0	85.1	9.4	94.4	86.0	18.0	104.0

* 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 2024	Full-time	Part-time	Total
Employees	636	146	782
Agency Workers	86	18	104

Total Headcount May 2024	Full-time	Part-time	Total
Employees	636	152	788
Agency Workers	75	17	92

Other Totals	
Detail	Number
Total fixed term workers	52
Total current secondments/transfers (internal/external)	10
Total students	4