



June 14th, 2024

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are requested to attend a meeting of the

Mid and East Antrim Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee

to be held on **Monday, 17th June 2024 at 6:30 pm** in **Council Chamber, The Braid, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena.**

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Valerie Watts'.

Valerie Watts
Interim Chief Executive, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

Agenda

1 NOTICE OF MEETING

2 APOLOGIES

3 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

4 ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION / DECISION

4.1 Terms of Reference - Circulated (14.06.24)

 *CRPG - Terms of Reference V0.4.pdf*

Page 1

4.2 Policy Briefing - Circulated

 *Policy Briefing.pdf*

Page 5

 *Appendix 1 Consultation Register Summary Report.pdf*

Page 8

 *Appendix 2a - LGSC Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Action Plan 2024-2026.pdf*

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 *Appendix 2b - MEABC Response CON-036-2425.pdf*

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4.3 Update on National Pay Award - Circulated

 *Update on National Pay Award.pdf*

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 *Appendix 1 NJC Pay Claim 2024-25.pdf*

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 *Appendix 2 - Emps to NJC TUs pay offer 16May24.pdf*

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 *Appendix 3 - Emps to CO TUs pay offer 16May24.pdf*

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 *Appendix 4 - Emps to ALACE pay offer 16May24.pdf*

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4.4 Performance Improvement Plan 2023/24 Year-End Update - Circulated

 *Performance Improvement Plan 2023-24 Year-End Update.pdf*

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 *Appendix 1 Performance Improvement Plan 2023-24 Year-End Update.pdf*

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4.5	Absence Management - Circulated	
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4.6	Annual Performance Report on the Corporate Key Health and Safety Priorities including Key Achievements - Circulated	
	<i>Annual Performance Report on the Key Health and Safety Priorities.pdf</i>	<i>Page 86</i>
4.7	NIE Sub-station – Herbert Street, Carnlough - Circulated	
	<i>NIE Sub-station Herbert Street Carnlough.pdf</i>	<i>Page 92</i>
	<i>Appendix 1 - NIE sub-station cable easement plan.pdf</i>	<i>Page 94</i>
4.8	NIE Sub-station – Lancasterian Street Carpark, Carrickfergus - Circulated	
	<i>NIE Sub Station Lancasterian St.pdf</i>	<i>Page 95</i>
	<i>Appendix 1 - Lease map - new Substation cable easement RoW - Lancasterian St.pdf</i>	<i>Page 97</i>
4.9	NIE Sub-station Cable Easement Extension – Broughshane Street Carpark - Circulated	
	<i>NIE Substation Cable easement Extension Broughshane Street Carpark.pdf</i>	<i>Page 98</i>
	<i>Appendix 1 - Original lease map with smaller cable easement.pdf</i>	<i>Page 100</i>
	<i>Appendix 2 - Updated lease map with larger cable easement.pdf</i>	<i>Page 101</i>
4.10	Services to Mark 108th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme in France - Circulated (14.06.24)	
	<i>Services to Mark 108th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme.pdf</i>	<i>Page 102</i>
	<i>Appendix 1 - The Somme Association Invitation.pdf</i>	<i>Page 104</i>
4.11	Forward Plan for Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance Committee - Circulated (14.06.24)	
	<i>CRPG - Forward plans cover report.pdf</i>	<i>Page 105</i>
	<i>Appendix 1 - CRPG Forward Plan.pdf</i>	<i>Page 108</i>

5 ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

None.

6 TABLED QUESTIONS

Closed Committee - In accordance with Council policy, representatives of the Press will not be in attendance for this section of the Meeting.

7 ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION / DECISION – CLOSED COMMITTEE

7.1 Procurement Update - Circulated

 *Procurement Update.pdf*

Not included

8 ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL – CLOSED COMMITTEE

None

Council/Committee:	Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance
Date:	17 June 2024
Report Title:	Terms of Reference for Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee
Publication Status:	Open
Author:	Sarah Williams, Assistant Director of Business Support
Approver:	Laureen Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate Services

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This report outlines the areas of business that fall within the remit of this Committee. It is important to highlight that Members have a clear responsibility to integrate strategy and service delivery within this Committee's remit. Additionally, Members contribute to achieving the priority outcomes set forth in the Corporate Plan. It is therefore proposed that the service planning, allocation of resources, performance, and service opportunities will be all reported to the Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee.
- 1.2. This is in line with the decisions taken at Council on 13 May 2024 with regards to good governance changes and the Scheme of Delegation. The focus of this is to ensure that Council and Committees, through all Members, can drive the strategic direction and resource allocation against priorities but enabling officers to deliver services on a day-to-day basis in a streamlined and seamless way.

2. Background

- 2.1. The following are the service functions that fall within the remit of the Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee:

Key Functions (with Consultation & Engagement, Complaints and Annual Events Programme added for clarity):

- Finance and Budget Management;
- Overview of Capital Plan and Budget;
- Governance including Council Constitution, Scheme or Delegation and Standing Orders;

- Communication, PR and Marketing; and
- Corporate Policy Framework

2.2. Consultation & Engagement

- Complaints
- Procurement
- Insurance
- ICT and Digital Strategy
- Legal
- Assets and Facility Management (excluding Harbours and Marinas Service)
- Approval of the Annual Events Programme

2.3. Key Service Areas (Events has been added for clarity):

- Finance including Capital Plan
- Procurement
- Legal and Democratic Services
- Assets and Facility Management
- Strategy and Policy
- Information Governance
- Insurance
- ICT and Digital
- Community Grants
- Events

2.4. Current Delegated Powers

- Powers for Officers to make allocation from the Councils Grants Scheme up to the value of £2,500 and reported to the Committee for noting.
- Grants awards over the value of £2,500 to be approved by delegated Committee.

3. Key issues for Consideration

3.1. The role of the Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee is the following:

- The monitoring of the financial budgets of the Council following Councils approval for Medium Term Financial Planning (MTFP)
- Oversight of procurement and contract management
- Oversight and assurance of Value for Money (VFM)



- Overview and monitoring of Corporate Policies and Procedures to ensure delivery in line with Corporate Priorities
- To review Corporate Performance, making recommendations for course correction when performance is not meeting targets
- To consider opportunities for innovation and best practice to ensure continuous improvement and quality service delivery
- To direct available resources within existing budgets and within the remit of the Committees key functions if services fail to achieve effective improvement outcomes
- Approving and overseeing the delivery of any relevant service strategies for the following Council functions (with Consultation & Engagement and Procurement added for clarity):
 - Communications
 - Customer Service
 - Consultation & Engagement
 - Human Resources and Workforce Development
 - Governance
 - ICT and Digital Strategy
 - Performance
 - Procurement

4. General Considerations/implications

- 4.1. Committees of Council can carry out decision making on behalf of Council to ensure the business of Council is transacted in a timely and efficient manner.
- 4.2. At present there is one delegation to the Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee to take decisions. This is in relation to community grants in excess of £2500.
- 4.3. Aside from the community grant delegation this Committee will make recommendations to Council, which are then approved, adopted, and ratified by Council and become a decision of Council.
- 4.4. Additional powers can be delegated to this Committee to make decisions rather than recommendations only. Aside from community grants any further delegations will need to be proposed and agreed by Council.



- 4.5. To note: This Committee cannot make decisions in relation to the outright disposal or acquisition of property/land however if time permits, officers may take a report to the Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee with a recommendation to Full Council for final decision.

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1. Elected Members note the remit of the Committee and over the next 12 months the Committee may require further delegations, subject to Council approval.

6. Recommendation or Decision

- 6.1. Elected Members are asked approve the key functions and service areas the Committee will consider and this will operate as the Terms of Reference for the Committee and a further report will be provided if further delegations are required.



Council/ Committee:	Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance Committee
Date:	17 June 2024
Report Title:	Policy Briefing
Publication Status:	Open
Author:	Siobhan Fisher, Assistant Director – Citizen Focus
Approver:	Laureen Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate and Support Services

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to update Elected Members in respect of matters that fall within the remit of the Policy Team.

2. Background

- 2.1. Within the Corporate and Support Services directorate, the Policy team is responsible for managing Council's responsibilities in relation to information governance (Freedom of Information, Environmental Information Regulations and Data Protection/UK GDPR), complaints, public consultations, equality & diversity and rural needs.
- 2.2. Policies and guidance for Elected Members are available in the 'Policies' section of MinutePad.

3. Key Issues for Consideration

Public Consultations

- 3.1 Public consultations published by the NI Executive are centrally registered by the Policy team and considered by the relevant service areas, with responses drafted to those that are relevant to Council and/or the Borough. Draft consultation responses are submitted to the most relevant Committee for Elected Members to review and approve the response prior to submission.
- 3.2 A summary of these consultations is produced to the Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance Committee each month. This month's consultation summary is set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.3 A proposed response to the Local Government Staff Commission's (LGSC) public consultation on their Draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy

2024 - 2026 is attached at Appendix 2, together with the consultation document to provide context.

Information Governance

- 3.4 A programme of work has been designed to ensure Council's compliance in all areas of information governance. The redesign of the Corporate and Support Services Directorate will support the team in taking forward this significant programme of change. Council will soon be publishing copies of its data protection impact assessments and privacy notices on its website to ensure best practice with transparency and accountability.
- 3.5 The Policy team sends a report on information governance to CRPG twice per year. The most recent report was presented in February 2024 and the next report is due in August/September 2024.

Complaints

- 3.6 Council implemented NIPSO's Model Complaints Handling Procedure from 1st January 2024. The Policy team sends a quarterly complaints report to CRPG. The most recent report was in May 2024. The next report is due in August/September 2024. A summary of Council's complaints data will be reported to CRPG and published annually at each year end. Members queried a number of issues in the data presented at the last meeting which are being investigated and will be reported in the next quarterly complaints report.

Equality & Diversity and Rural Needs

- 3.7 Council's internal EDI Network of officers continues to meet quarterly and report on the progress of Council's Disability Action Plan and Equality Scheme to the Inclusion & Equality Sub-Committee. Council's Diversity Ambassadors are participating in the initial stages of the ambassador program being rolled out by the Local Government Staff Commission.
- 3.8 Council will soon be publishing copies of its equality screenings and rural needs impact assessments on its website to ensure best practice with transparency and accountability.
- 3.9 Council's draft annual submissions to the Equality Commission of Northern Ireland and DAERA will be presented to CRPG for review and approval in July/August 2024.
- 3.10 The Policy team sends a report on equality and diversity to CRPG twice per year. The most recent report was presented in February 2024 and the next report is due in July/August 2024.

4. General Considerations / Implications

- 4.1 Responding to relevant public consultations is necessary for Council to publicly demonstrate its policy position and work towards achieving optimum outcomes on behalf of the residents of the Borough.

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1. N/A

6. Recommendation or Decision

It is recommended that Elected Members:

- Note the Public Consultation summary report; and
- Review and approve the proposed consultation response to the public consultation on the LGSC's Draft EDI Strategy 2024 – 2026.

7. Appendices / Links

Appendix 1	Consultation Summary Report
Appendix 2a	LGSC's Draft EDI Strategy 2024 - 2026
Appendix 2b	Council's proposed consultation response



Consultation Register Summary Report
Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance Committee

17th June 2024

A. Consultations where Council is the stakeholder

Consultations for Response by MEABC		
Title and Closing Date	Consulting Department/Organisation	Proposed Dept and Committee
Consultation on the Draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2024-2026	Local Government Staff Commission	Policy Team Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance Committee - 17 June 2024

B. Consultations being conducted by Council

Title	Consulting Department	Comments/Link to Consultation Documents
Nil		

DRAFT



Equality & Diversity
in Local Councils



THE EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION STRATEGY

2024 - 2026



A large, artistic graphic of a human head profile, facing right. The head is composed of numerous thin, layered pieces of wood, creating a sense of depth and texture. The wood grain is visible, and the colors range from light tan to dark brown. The head is set against a dark blue background with a torn paper effect at the top.

Diversity is integral to the work of Councils and a progressive programme of work has been undertaken, demonstrating significant improvements in service delivery, communication methods and working practices. Council commitment goes beyond complying with the statutory duties. It is about the Council and partners actively removing barriers and supporting individuals and families to reach their fullest potential.

Equality & Diversity Group 2023



FOREWORD

THIS STRATEGY SETS OUT OUR VISION FOR TACKLING INEQUALITIES, FOSTERING GOOD RELATIONS ACROSS OUR COMMUNITIES AND RECOGNISING THE CONTRIBUTIONS THAT PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS MAKE TO LIFE ACROSS NORTHERN IRELAND.

Our action plan sets out how we will deliver these ambitions. It demonstrates the efforts we will undertake to build an inclusive culture within our workforce and has a positive impact on the communities we serve. It shows how we will shape our services which actively address inequality and exclusion, and proactively promotes building good relations.

We recognise that we can only deliver this Strategy by working together with all our stakeholders. That is why we have developed this Strategy in consultation with our partners, including the Diversity Ambassadors. We are committed to working with our partners to enhance equality and fairness.

This updated Strategy and Action Plan is the next step on our journey to creating an inclusive local government sector, which works for all. We will achieve our vision through strong leadership and ownership of this Strategy and accountability for it at all levels.

Chair, Local Government Equality and Diversity Group

To be effective in attracting a diverse audience and talent, Councils need to go beyond Article 55 reviews and practice, which requires both leadership and a culture change to move beyond simple compliance.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Local Councils Baseline Study and Impact Study 2023



BACKGROUND

The Equality, Diversity Group was established to prioritise and influence equality, good relations and diversity initiatives across local government. Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy sets out the direction and focus for Councils in Northern Ireland. It was first launched in 2011 and has been refreshed every three to four years.

This revised Strategy builds on what we have learnt. It also takes account of internal and external changes and constraints, including those caused by the global pandemic in 2020, and outlines our EDI priorities leading to 2026.

The refresh has been informed by consultation with partners. Findings have been considered and addressed. The outcome includes a continued focus on supporting and assisting Councils to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion as a Civic Leader, an Employer, and Service Provider.



OUR APPROACH

Set out below is the business, moral and legal case for EDI, our objectives and the tools for their delivery, and responsibilities for implementation. Together they reflect a strategic, joined up and flexible approach to EDI for local government.

The United Nations World Social Report (2020) identified that 'socio-economic disadvantage and inequality plays a significant role in systemic discrimination and in holding people back and is often given limited attention.' In this Strategy we commit to addressing this and developing a plan to do so rather than just acknowledging it. This will support greater inclusion across our workforce and wider opportunities for access and engagement across our service delivery where it is possible to do so.

BUSINESS CASE

Mainstreaming EDI principles and practices is important for service delivery, how we work and for our organisational culture. It supports us to:

- *Deliver effective good relations.*
- *Maintain a strong local government brand.*
- *Maximise and retain valued skills, knowledge and expertise.*
- *Have committed and motivated staff who feel fairly treated, respected and included. This results in greater job satisfaction, better employment relations, fewer grievances and enables individuals to fully focus on utilising their skills and talents in the workplace.*
- *Continue to nurture creativity, innovation and flexibility and spot new opportunities to work with others, as well as new inclusive approaches and sources of support which facilitate meaningful participation and other benefits.*
- *Remain relevant and dynamic and achieve impact and sustainability. This will come from engaging with the Diversity Ambassadors addressing perspectives, needs, abilities, and opportunities.*
- *Effectively manage risk by considering the potential impact of policies, practices, programmes, activities, events, and service delivery on different groups. This allows us to promote good relations and to mitigate against potential discrimination.*



MORAL CASE

We believe that it is important to value everyone and to be empathetic, fair and respectful and inclusive. This holds for Elected Members, staff, contractors, or contributors to our work, irrespective of background, characteristics or attributes.

Investing in and being committed to EDI is the right thing to do from many perspectives, including the strong alignment with human rights and social justice but particularly because of local government's vision as a civic leader.

LEGAL CASE

Local government has a number of legal obligations relating to equality, diversity and inclusion¹. Whilst it is our statutory responsibility to meet these duties, we believe it is important to go beyond them and challenge ourselves to constantly improve.

We are committed to supporting Councils to meet their legal obligations including Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and other relevant legislation, codes of practice and guidance which are important reference points and steer our approach. We will encourage local government to go further in order to fulfil our vision of a diverse and inclusive local government sector.

¹ Local Councils in Northern Ireland, in their roles as **employers** and as **service providers** are obliged to comply with a number of laws that seek to promote equality of opportunity by banning unlawful discrimination and harassment. The laws are:

- Equal Pay Act (NI) 1970
- Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976
- Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Race Relations (NI) Order 1997
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2003
- Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2006
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (NI) 2006



OUR OBJECTIVES

Three key objectives underpin our EDI Strategy. They are set out below, the Action Plan (attached as Appendix 1) details the specific tools and actions that will determine the next phase of our work up to 2025.

1. AN INCLUSIVE ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Our goal is to ensure that Councils are supported to have inclusive organisational cultures which commit to treating everyone with dignity; make decisions drawing on different perspectives and experiences, involve, listen to and seek to learn from a wide range of people and strive to nurture a sense of belonging and ensure everyone can meaningfully participate.

2. DEVELOPING CAPABILITY AND LEADERS

Leaders exist in different roles and particularly, but not exclusively, in senior positions. They are crucial in driving progress, achieving fairness, promoting inclusion, ensuring anti-racism, and enhancing working culture, reputation and impact.

Our objective has an emphasis on nurturing and developing engagement, role models, and leadership capability in EDI. The result will be a local government sector with more confident, competent and committed leaders, particularly at senior levels, including Elected Members.

3. MEASURING PERFORMANCE, IMPACT AND LEGAL COMPLIANCE

Tracking the progress of our Strategy is crucial. Increasingly we want to take an evidence informed approach so that resources and priorities are focused where they are most needed, risk is managed and good practice is widely shared.



RESOURCING AND COSTS

The EDI Strategy will be fully owned by the local government, SOLACE led, Equality and Diversity Group and managed by the Local Government Staff Commission (the Commission). The Equality and Diversity Group will review the Strategy Objectives and the Commission will allocate the financial and staff resources required to implement them.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The membership of the Equality and Diversity Group will continue to provide direction and support to local government on progress towards mainstreaming EDI.

The Group will continue to share responsibility and require accountability, particularly from those with influence and authority, including NILGA, SOLACE, PPMA, trade unions and stakeholders. Their support for this Strategy and commitment to it through their behaviours, attitudes and effective use of resources will make a critical difference.

The Diversity Ambassadors also have a crucial role to ensure that all good relations work and activities mainstreams EDI consistently to help bring about the inclusive culture local government aspires to.

Next review January 2025.

To demonstrate a culture that supports inclusion needs leadership and role modelling from Elected Members and Council Officers to be visible to both existing staff and potential job applicants.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Local Councils Baseline Study and Impact Study 2023



APPENDIX 1



APPENDIX 1

ACTION PLAN 2024 - 2025

AIM	FOCUS	TOOLS AND SUPPORT
Objective: An inclusive organisational culture		
Addressing under representation and improve inclusion of ethnic staff and disabled people in our workforce, particularly, but not only at leadership levels.	<p>Improve data capture and recording to establish the baseline and monitor performance.</p> <p>Improve attraction and recruitment processes, especially from under represented groups.</p> <p>Support Councils to invest in their current workforce and provide specific opportunities for development and progression.</p>	<p>Continue to implement the recommendations of the 2023 Equality Baseline and Impact Study.</p> <p>Initiate a pilot Action Plan for Recruitment and Selection for Councils.</p> <p>Continue to implement the regional Talent Management Strategy, including phase II Mentoring Programme</p>
Supporting Councils to nurture an organisational culture where Members and staff feel respected and comfortable being themselves, free from unjustified discrimination. This includes but is not limited to racism in its different forms, exclusion, offensive behaviour, harassment or bullying.	<p>Develop model policies and guidance for Councils.</p> <p>Support Councils to align EDI internally and how EDI is reflected and addressed in the delivery of services.</p> <p>Ensure health and wellbeing initiatives are promoted and facilitated across local government.</p>	<p>There will be expanded opportunities to participate and contribute to the Statutory Duty Network, and Talent Management Group</p> <p>Learning and development interventions, including mentoring and awareness sessions. Specific EDI training for Diversity Ambassadors</p> <p>New approaches to inform and achieve informal conflict resolution and support a constructive giving and receiving feedback culture, at all levels.</p>





Equality & Diversity
in Local Councils

AIM	FOCUS	TOOLS AND SUPPORT
Objective: Developing capability and leaders		
<p>Providing support to Councils increase accountability so that leaders at all levels are both supported in and measured against their contribution to EDI.</p>	<p>Work in partnership with NILGA to include an EDI category in the Local Government Awards.</p> <p>Initiate a programme to better define good relations that is relevant to local government.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the Money and Pensions Service to introduce the Themes within the UK Strategy for Financial Wellbeing.</p>	<p>Continue to work in liaison with NILGA to contribute to the Elected Member Development Charter and the regional Member Development Programme.</p> <p>Liaise with relevant stakeholders to define good relations.</p> <p>Diversity Ambassadors designated, supported and resourced for all local government organisations.</p>
<p>Promoting and sharing internal and external facing international EDI work and learning with Councils</p>	<p>Deliver a programme of best practice events and information sessions for Diversity Ambassadors to learn from each other and subject matter experts.</p>	<p>EDI learning and development activities for leaders, to raise awareness and promote behaviour change, including unconscious bias, anti racism, effective people management.</p>
<p>Greater attention to EDI deliverables and personal development objectives, so they are SMART, stretching and ensure accountability for change, to strengthen and ultimately achieve inclusion and a sense of belonging.</p>	<p>Use data to identify areas of disparity and implement action to address any disparity.</p>	<p>Provide guidance to assist Councils to support and strengthen EDI performance deliverables and development objectives to measure progress.</p> <p>Develop interventions that support accountability to help track this area and achieve EDI strategic objectives.</p> <p>Relaunch the Section 75 Leadership in Local Councils Guidance.</p>



AIM	FOCUS	TOOLS AND SUPPORT
Objective: Measuring performance, impact and legal compliance		
<p>Ensuring the local government Equality and Diversity Group measure their performance towards their vision, progress against objectives and the extent and quality of the contribution and distinct impact we aim to make through EDI.</p>	<p>Be transparent in our policies and processes by communicating what we are doing.</p>	<p>Develop a comprehensive EDI data dashboard that is tracked and disseminated, including through a performance review process to review performance, interrogate data and insights and ensure that the Group is meeting and/or exceeding EDI objectives.</p>
<p>Ensuring we support Councils to comply with legal obligations and where possible and appropriate go beyond the legal minimum.</p>	<p>EDI related risks will be anticipated and well managed.</p> <p>Introduce measures to enable Councils to go beyond statutory requirements to measure, monitor and share equality and diversity data to drive diversity plans and demonstrate the impact of their work on EDI.</p> <p>Support Councils to address and reduce the gender pay gap.</p>	<p>Support the implementation of the Equality and Diversity Framework which details each Council's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Statement of intent</i> • <i>Compliance with equality and good relations and diversity obligations.</i> <p>Develop a programme in partnership with the Equality Commission to support Councils to implement the 'Every Customer Counts' initiative.</p> <p>Develop a reporting mechanism to effectively measure the Gender Pay Gap.</p>









Ref: CON/036/2425

FAO: Paula Hamilton
 Senior HR Officer
 Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland
 3rd Floor
 St Anne's House
 15 Church Street
 Belfast
 BT1 1ER

By email only: Paula.Hamilton@lgsc.org.uk

17th June 2024

Dear Paula,

Re: Consultation on the Local Government Staff Commission - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024- 2026

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council (MEABC) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the consultation on the Local Government Staff Commission's Equality, Diversity (EDI) and Inclusion Strategy for 2024-2026.

MEABC commends the overall tone and positive intention of the Strategy to support Councils to have an inclusive organisational culture, which is evident throughout. MEABC's view is that the Strategy is transparent, well rounded and covers an encouragingly broad range of matters, including providing direction and support to ensure that the EDI objectives are met and exceeded at all levels within Councils.

Council applauds the Strategy's vision for tackling inequalities, fostering good relations, and recognising the contributions of people from different backgrounds in Northern Ireland. MEABC is pleased to note the aim to include an EDI category in the Local Government Awards as there is a lot of meaningful work going on within Councils that positively contributes to EDI and this recognition could lead to a stronger stance on the overall agenda.

MEABC would like to offer the following comments and suggestions regarding the Action Plan in Appendix 1:

Print friendly

Head Office

The Braid
 1-29 Bridge Street
 Ballymena BT43 5EJ



Ballymena Office

Ardeevin
 80 Galgorm Road
 Ballymena BT42 1AB

Carrickfergus Office

Museum & Civic Centre
 11 Antrim Street
 Carrickfergus BT38 7DG

Larne Office

Smiley Buildings
 Victoria Road
 Larne BT40 1RU

Planning Office

Silverwood Business Pk
 190 Raceview Road
 Ballymena BT42 4HZ

Integum Chair
 Executive
 (Valerie Warren)



Recruitment & Selection Processes:

We recognise that there is a need for greater flexibility in Council recruitment and selection processes. To address these issues on a wider basis, the Local Government Recruitment & Selection Code of Practice would need to be modified to include more inclusive recruitment practices.

MEABC have been working to address the issues through our Inclusion & Equality Sub-Committee and our internal EDI Network. The Council has hosted several work placements this year with students from our local SEN school who have been working in our Parks Department. These placements have been very successful and have benefitted Council staff and the students alike. Council recognises there are potential barriers owing to our recruitment and selection processes and would like to see a collective approach to addressing the issues. Ideas for moving forward have been discussed that could include the introduction of job tasters/trials, a guaranteed interview scheme, alternative approaches to interviewing and selection and ring-fencing positions to ensure diverse candidate pools.

Council also works with a range of stakeholders through the Labour Market Partnership and the Mid and East Antrim Manufacturing Taskforce Employers to offer placement opportunities in local businesses. There is significant potential for opportunities within all these initiatives and Council wishes to see a strategic approach to resolving any barriers.

MEABC supports the Strategy's commitment to initiate a pilot action plan for recruitment and selection for councils which would help provide guidance for us to implement these vital changes.

EDI Diversity Ambassadors:

Increasing the number of trained EDI Diversity Ambassadors within each Council is essential. These ambassadors play a crucial role in promoting and implementing EDI initiatives and providing support across the organisation which is essential to raising awareness and promoting inclusivity.

EDI Training and Awareness:

Creating the organisational culture around EDI that is expressed in the Strategy will require robust training and awareness raising. Expanding centrally offered EDI training and awareness programs is vital to achieving a consistent approach across all councils. This should encompass comprehensive training modules to ensure all staff understand and embrace EDI principles.

Please reply to:

Head Office
The Braid
1-29 Bridge Street
Ballymena BT43 5EJ

□ **Ballymena Office**
Ardeevin
80 Galgorm Road
Ballymena BT42 1AB

□ **Carrickfergus Office**
Museum & Civic Centre
11 Antrim Street
Carrickfergus BT38 7DG

Larne Office
Smiley Buildings
Victoria Road
Larne BT40 1RU

Planning Office
Silverwood Business Pk
190 Raceview Road
Ballymena BT42 4HZ

Interim Chief Executive
(Valerie Warren)

Tel: 0300 1245 000

www.midandeantrim.gov.uk



Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for EDI:

MEABC is currently designing an organisational structure within which there is a senior lead officer with a dedicated team who will work with internal and external stakeholders to ensure EDI is embedded within Council. An officer within the HR team will work to address issues around training, culture and workforce. MEABC would support the assignment of a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for each local authority to champion EDI at both the Senior Management Team (SMT) and Elected Member levels. This role will ensure that EDI remains a strategic priority and is integrated into all aspects of council activity and operations.

EDI Training for Line Managers:

All line managers should undergo EDI training to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to manage diverse teams effectively. This training should cover areas such as unconscious bias, inclusive leadership, and equitable decision-making.

Learning & Development Support:

Formal Learning & Development (L&D) support should be provided for managers in areas such as conflict resolution, coaching, handling difficult conversations, and unconscious bias. This support is crucial for creating an inclusive workplace where all employees feel valued and respected.

Formal EDI Targets and Activities:

MEABC supports the Strategy's proposal to set formal EDI targets and activities for local authorities to achieve annually. We agree that this will provide clear goals and accountability and that these targets should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) to drive meaningful progress. The MEABC Inclusion & Equality sub-committee has made recommendations to Council to include percentage targets within a future Council policy. A regional approach would further enhance our goals in this regard.

Data-driven Approach

We note the Strategy's repeated commitment to the creation, maintenance and reliance upon data to support an evidence-based approach. MEABC are in complete agreement with this commitment, however we believe that this will require strong guidance and support for councils to achieve. The proposal for the development of a comprehensive EDI data dashboard that is tracked and disseminated would represent a vital resource to achieve this goal within councils.

Phase ready to:

Head Office
The Braid
1-29 Bridge Street
Ballymena BT43 5EJ

Ballymena Office
Ardeevin
80 Galgorm Road
Ballymena BT42 1AB

Carrickfergus Office
Museum & Civic Centre
11 Antrim Street
Carrickfergus BT38 7DG

Larne Office
Smiley Buildings
Victoria Road
Larne BT40 1RU

Planning Office
Silverwood Business Pk
190 Raceview Road
Ballymena BT42 4HZ

**Intergroup Chair
Executive**
(Valerie Warren)



MEABC look forward to working with the LGSC on this vital initiative and contributing to a more equitable future for all.

If you require any elaboration on the points noted herein, please do not hesitate to contact us at policy@midandeastantrim.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Siobhan Fisher
 Assistant Director – Citizen Focus
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Council/Committee:	Corporate Resources Policy & Governance Committee
Date:	17 June 2024
Report Title:	Update on National Pay Award
Publication Status:	Open
Author:	Denise Stevenson, Human Resources Manager
Approver:	Laureen Donnan, Director of Corporate Services

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to update Members on the 2023-24 Pay Award negotiations in respect of:
 - (a) Staff covered under the National Joint Council (NJC) remit
 - (b) Chief Officers and;
 - (c) Chief Executives.

2. Background

- 2.1. On 29 February 2024, the Trade Union side of the National Joint Council for Local Government Services submitted the NJC Pay Claim 2024-25 as follows:
 - An increase of at least £3,000 or 10% (whichever is greater) on all spinal column points
 - In addition to the pay claim, they also submitted the following:
 - Reviews of the gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps in local government
 - A 2-hour reduction in the working week with no detriment
 - An additional day of annual leave for personal or well-being purposes (with term time only staff also receiving a full day rather than a pro rata amount, that they can use at any time, including term time)
 - A phased approach to reaching a minimum pay rate of £15 an hour in a maximum of two years, sooner if possible
- 2.2. The National Employers made pay offers to each negotiating body on 16 May 2024.
- 2.3. The offer for (a) staff covered under the National Joint Council was as follows:
 - With effect from 1 April 2024, an increase of £1,290 (pro rata for part-time employees) to be paid as a consolidated, permanent addition on all NJC pay points 2 to 43 inclusive.

- With effect from 1 April 2024, an increase of 2.50 per cent on all pay points above the maximum of the pay spine (i.e.SCP 44 and above) but graded below deputy chief officer.
 - With effect from 1 April 2024 an increase of 2.50 per cent on all allowances
- 2.4. The offer for JNC Chief Officers (For Mid and East Antrim Borough Council this is for all Directors) was as follows:
- With effect from 1 April 2024, an increase of 2.50% on basic salary,
- 2.5. The offer for Chief Executives was as follows:
- With effect from 1 April 2024, an increase of 2.50% on basic salary,

3. Key Issues for Consideration

- 3.1. To date, there has been no formal response from the JNC. However, news reports from individual trade unions would indicate that they are recommending that the offer is rejected pending consultative ballots with members.
- 3.2. A further update from the National Employers is expected shortly.

4. General Considerations / Implications

- 4.1. Financial – A flat 4% pay award had been included in this year's budget. Preliminary calculations indicate that the proposed pay award will require an additional estimated amount of £100k beyond the budgeted figure based on current staff and agency roles included within the budget.
- 4.2. HR will continue to update members with any further information regarding the NJC Pay Award 2024-25.

5. Recommendation or Decision

- 5.1. It is recommended that Members note the content of this report.

6. Appendices / Links

- Appendix 1 - Joint Trade Union Side NJC Pay Claim 2024-25.
- Appendix 2 - National Employers Circular for NJC Pay Offer 2024-25
- Appendix 3 - National Employers Circular for Chief Officer Pay Offer 2024-25
- Appendix 4 - National Employers Circular for Chief Executive Pay Offer 2024-25



**Trade Union Side of the National Joint Council for Local Government Services:
England, Wales and Northern Ireland**

NJC PAY CLAIM 2024-25

This NJC pay claim for 2024-25 is made by the Joint Trade Union Side (UNISON, GMB and UNITE) to the Local Government Association.

Our claim is for:

- An increase of at least £3,000 or 10% (whichever is greater) on all spinal column points

In addition:

- Reviews of the gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps in local government
- A 2-hour reduction in the working week with no detriment
- An additional day of annual leave for personal or well-being purposes (with term time only staff also receiving a full day rather than a pro rata amount, that they can use at any time, including term time)
- A phased approach to reaching a minimum pay rate of £15 an hour in a maximum of two years, sooner if possible

29 FEB 2024

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- 1. KEY POINTS IN OUR CLAIM**
- 2. CONTEXT OF OUR CLAIM**
- 3. COST OF LIVING CRISIS**
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- 6. ACHIEVING A £15 PER HOUR MINIMUM RATE**
- 7. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION CRISIS**
- 8. PAY-RELATED CONDITIONS OF WORK**
- 9. EQUALITY IMPACT**
- 10. CONCLUSION**

KEY POINTS IN OUR CLAIM

COST OF LIVING CRISIS

- The cost of living crisis is pushing our members into more debt
- Their basic spending is overtaking their income each month
- The TUC has warned of a “debt time bomb” for households in 2024
- 1 in 5 households have less than £100 spare each month
- Over 2023, household costs rose faster than NJC pay increases

ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

- NJC staff have lost (on average) 25% from the value of their pay since 2010
- The cost of living has risen by 59.4% since 2010 while NJC pay has risen by 27%
- For 10 of the last 14 years, NJC pay awards have fallen below average pay awards
- The cost of meeting this pay claim is £2,169m
- The net cost would be £1,227m - after deductions for taxes and benefit spend
- In total, just over half (51%) the cost of this pay claim would be recouped by government

COMPARING NJC PAY

- Local government will be unable to attract and retain staff if pay continues to fall
- Pay in local government is still among the lowest in the public sector
- NJC SCP 2, 3 and 4 all now fall below the £12 UK Foundation Living Wage rate
- Our claim would lift NJC SCP 2 to £13.15 per hour – passing the Foundation rate
- From April, the legal minimum wage will climb to £11.44 per hour (15p behind NJC SCP 2)
- NJC pay has fallen back into bargain basement territory

ACHIEVING A £15 PER HOUR MINIMUM RATE

- Many organisations are calling for a minimum wage of £15 per hour
- For members on low incomes, this would provide a desperately needed boost to incomes
- There are currently 16 NJC spinal column points that fall below £15 an hour
- The TU Side is recommending local government adopts a phased approach to £15p/h
- NJC pay could reach £15 an hour by April 2026, via three annual increases of 10%
- More than other measure, this would undo the damage done by the cost of living crisis

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION CRISIS

- More than 9 in 10 councils are experiencing staff recruitment and retention problems
- Nearly half of all councils now have vacant HGV driver posts
- Nationally the unemployment rate is at the lowest level for almost 50 years
- Low local government pay and low unemployment mean that local authorities will continue to struggle to recruit

PAY-RELATED CONDITIONS OF WORK

- Reviews of the gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps in local government are needed
- A 2 hour reduction to the working week and an additional day of annual leave will support staff in their work-life balance and wellbeing

EQUALITY IMPACT

- Low pay in local government disproportionately affects those with protected characteristics
- A gender pay gap exists in local government
- This may extend to other equalities areas (including ethnicity and disability)

2. CONTEXT OF OUR CLAIM

Since 2010, NJC staff have lost (on average) 25% from the value of their pay. Over the same period, the cost of living has risen by nearly 60%. This situation is being made even worse by the ongoing cost of living crisis - which is pushing our local government members into more and more debt. Our members are now seeing their basic spending overtake their income, with 1 in 5 households having less than £100 to spare each month.

For a workforce that delivers key, frontline services to communities (often supporting some of the poorest and most vulnerable in society), the idea that those staff are being pushed into poverty themselves is unacceptable.

Our headline claim is for an increase of at least £3,000 or 10% (whichever is greater) on all spinal column points (with the £3,000 figure adjusted for London as usual).

Low pay doesn't just harm staff - it is also a key factor in more than 9 in 10 councils experiencing staff recruitment and retention problems. Low pay and low unemployment mean that local authorities will continue to struggle to recruit as they will be unable to compete in the wider labour market.

Pay in local government remains among the lowest in the public sector – with NJC SCPs 2, 3 and 4 all now falling below the £12 UK Foundation Living Wage rate. From April, the legal minimum wage will climb to £11.44 per hour – just 15p behind NJC SCP 2. NJC pay cannot continue playing cat and mouse with the legal minimum wage. It's time for local government employers to finally create some much-needed headroom between NJC pay and bargain basement, minimum wage pay.

One way to achieve that headroom would be to introduce a minimum rate of £15 per hour – something being called for by the Trades Union Congress - along with charities and organisations concerned with low pay. There are currently 16 NJC spinal column points that fall below £15 an hour. The Trade Union (TU) Side is recommending local government adopts a phased approach to reach £15 an hour in a maximum of two years, sooner if possible.

In addition to our headline claim the TU Side is also calling on the employer to review the gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps in local government - and to work with us to resolve any issues this reveals. We are also asking for a reduction to the working week along with an additional day of annual leave for personal or well-being purposes (with term time only staff also receiving a full day rather than a pro rata amount, that they can use at any time, including term time). The Trade Union side reiterates its call for joint work on a new contract model for term time only workers, bringing in 52 week contracts and pay for those that want them.

The TU Side knows that this pay claim is affordable. In total, over half the cost of this pay claim would be recouped by government. We call on the employers to join us in successfully making the case to government for more central government funding to support better services and to fully fund any pay award.

The TU Side believes our headline claim for an increase of at least £3,000 or 10% (whichever is greater) on all spinal column points is fair and appropriate – and we expect the LGA to enter into meaningful negotiations with us on our claim. We are concerned that it is some years since proper pay talks have taken place. Meaningful negotiations would enable both sides to exchange views and

seek to reach an agreement if at all possible. This would also be in line with Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No.15), which promotes collective bargaining for public employees, as well as other methods allowing public employees’ representatives to participate in the determination of their conditions of employment.

3. COST OF LIVING CRISIS

3.1 Household debt

As the cost of living crisis continues, many of our members are seeing their basic spending overtake their income each month. Many are building up debt just to get by, with no way of repaying what they already owe. The Trades Union Congress (TUC) has warned of a “debt time bomb” as households are set to face a £1,400 rise in credit card and loan debt in 2024. This is an increase of 11% on 2023.¹

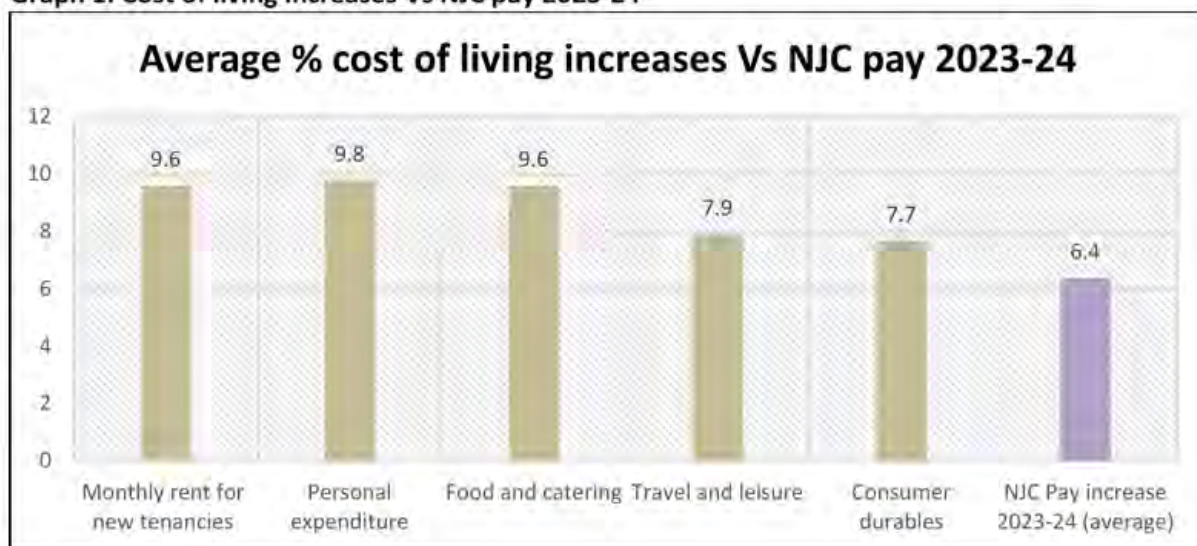
The TUC analysis found that over the course of the next parliament, unsecured debt is set to rocket by £6,000 on average per family. That includes debt from credit cards, loans and purchase hire agreements, while excluding mortgages and student loans.

More than one in five households (22%) have less than £100 spare each month, according to research by the building society Nationwide². The average amount left after paying bills has also dropped from £328 in 2021 to £295 in 2022 and £237 at the end of 2023. This is clearly an unsustainable problem and one that employers must address urgently, via inflation-busting pay increases.

3.2 Cost of living rises Vs NJC pay in 2023

Over 2023, household costs continued to outstrip NJC pay increases, with rents, personal expenditure, food, travel, leisure and consumer durables all rising faster than NJC pay, which increased by an average of 6.4% over the same period - as demonstrated in the graph below:

Graph 1: Cost of living increases Vs NJC pay 2023-24



¹ TUC analysis, Jan 2024

² Nationwide Building Society research, Jan 2024

4. ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

4.1 Value of NJC pay

When measured against the overall rise in inflation since 2009/10, NJC staff are losing out. On average, staff have lost 25% from the value of their pay since 2010 (see appendix 1).

When analysed by job role, even those on lower incomes (who have seen the benefit of bottom loading in some pay awards), are worse off than they were in 2009/10.

Table 1: Real (RPI) changes to selected spine points 2009/10 to 2022/23

Occupation	Old Spine Point	2009/10	2022/23	New Spine Point	Real change (%)
Cleaner	6	£12,489	£20,258	1	-7.4
Customer Services Officer	11	£14,733	£20,812	3	-14.3
Refuse And Recycling Collector	13	£15,444	£21,189	4	-19.5
Library Assistant	16	£16,440	£21,968	6	-23.7
Teaching Assistant (Level 2)	17	£16,830	£21,968	6	-23.7
Crematorium Officer	18	£17,161	£22,396	7	-25.5
Qualified Residential Care Worker	21	£19,126	£24,054	11	-28.2
HLTA	28	£23,708	£29,439	22	-29.1
Librarian	31	£26,276	£32,020	25	-30.4
Environmental Health Officer	34	£28,636	£34,723	28	-30.8
Access to Housing Officer	38	£31,754	£38,296	32	-31.1
Social Worker	36	£30,011	£36,298	30	-30.9
Accountant	41	£34,549	£41,496	35	-31.4
Children's Residential Manager	46	£38,961	£46,549	40	-31.8

As the table above demonstrates, a number of roles hit by the effects of long-term low pay are those likely to be worst hit by the cost-of-living crisis. For the full version of this table, showing all SCPs, see appendix 1.

4.2 Falling value in NJC Pay

While a wage keeping pace with the cost of living each year would have risen by 59.4% since 2010, NJC pay has risen by just 27% which means that thousands of pounds have been cut out of the value of staff wages.

The table below demonstrates the major fall in living standards suffered by staff over recent years.

Table 2: NJC Pay Awards Vs Rise in cost of living (RPI)

Year	NJC pay increases	Rise in cost of living ³ (as measured by Retail Prices Index)
2010	0%	4.6%
2011	0%	5.2%
2012	0%	3.2%
2013	1%	3.0%
2014	2.2%*	2.4%

³ Office for National Statistics, Consumer Price Inflation Reference Tables, January 2022

2015		1.0%
2016	1%*	1.8%
2017	1%*	3.6%
2018	2%*	3.3%
2019	2%*	2.6%
2020	2.75%	1.5%
2021	1.75%	4.1%
2022	7% (average)	11.6%
2023	6.4% (average)	

* Average across all SCPs

The increasing cost of commodities over the last year (to Oct 2023) shows that the latest NJC pay award (which averaged 6.4%) is falling behind consumer costs in nearly all areas – as show in the table below:

Table 3: Price changes to RPI commodities over the year to Oct 2023

Item	Average % increase to October 2023
Alcohol and tobacco	10.4
Personal expenditure	9.8
Food and catering	9.6
Travel and leisure	7.9
Consumer durables	7.7
Housing and household expenditure	2.7
All goods	6.4
All services	4.1
All items	6.1

Source: Office for National Statistics, Consumer Price Inflation Reference Tables, October 2023

Among household costs, some are rising significantly faster, with mortgage interest payments leading the way in jumping by 53.4% over the past year. The Resolution Foundation estimates that annual repayments for those re-mortgaging in 2024 are set to rise by £2,900 on average⁴.

The price of housing remains one of the biggest issues facing employees and their families and though the rate of increase in house prices has slowed, private rental prices have seen average monthly rent for new tenancies in the UK push up by 9.6% to £1,283⁵ in October 2023.

The cost of childcare was revealed by the annual Coram Family and Childcare Survey published in March 2023, which found that the average cost of a part time (25 hours a week) childcare place for a child under two in a nursery in Britain has risen 5.6% to £7,134 per year, while for a two-year-old that cost has jumped 6.1% to £6,912 per year.

Table 4: Highest cost of living rises, 2009-23

Expenditure Item	House prices	Bus & coach fares	Electricity	Gas
Price rise 2009 - 23	65%	93%	180%	144%

⁴ <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/press-releases/mortgage-crunch-deepens-with-15-7-billion-repayments-rise-now-on-track-to-bite-by-2026/>

⁵ HomeLet Rental Index, August 2023

4.4 Motoring Costs

Motoring costs continue to rise, in terms of both fuel and vehicle maintenance expenses, as shown in the table below:

Table 5: Rise in motoring costs, Office for National Statistics

Costs	Increase since 2011
Total motoring costs	47%
Petrol and oil costs	17%
Vehicle maintenance costs	53%
Combined weighted petrol & oil / vehicle maintenance costs	29%

Most local government employers use HMRC rates for mileage allowances that have remained unchanged since 2011. A recent study by the RAC found that a worker driving 5,000 miles per annum for work would be losing close to £1,000 a year because of the inadequacy of HMRC rates covering their actual costs.

4.5 Average pay settlements

Table 7 shows how a decade of below average NJC pay awards have caused local government staff to fall behind their equivalents in the private sector and wider economy. For 10 of the last 14 years, NJC pay awards have fallen below average pay awards in both the private sector and across the whole economy.

Table 6: NJC pay awards Vs those in the wider economy since 2010

Year	Across economy	Private services*	NJC Pay Award
2010	2%	2%	0%
2011	2.5%	2.7%	0%
2012	2.5%	2.8%	0%
2013	2.5%	2.5%	1%
2014	2.5%	2.5%	2.2%**
2015	2.2%	2.4%	1%**
2016	2%	2%	1%**
2017	2%	2.2%	2%**
2018	2.5%	2.5%	2%**
2019	2.5%	2.5%	2.75%
2020	2.3%	2.2%	1.75%
2021	2.0%	2.1%	7%***
2022	4.0%	4.0%	6.4%***
2023	5.6%	6.0%	

*Does not include manufacturing and primary, as these are less accurate comparators

** For NJC SCPs over a certain level

***average percentage rise across all pay points

While average pay settlements across the whole economy have seen salaries grow by 36.5% since 2010, NJC increases have only amounted to 27.10% across more than a decade.

NJC pay is set to fall even further behind, given that average earnings growth across the economy is now running at almost 8.5%⁶ (apart from the pandemic period, this represents one of the fastest growth rate rates in over two decades)

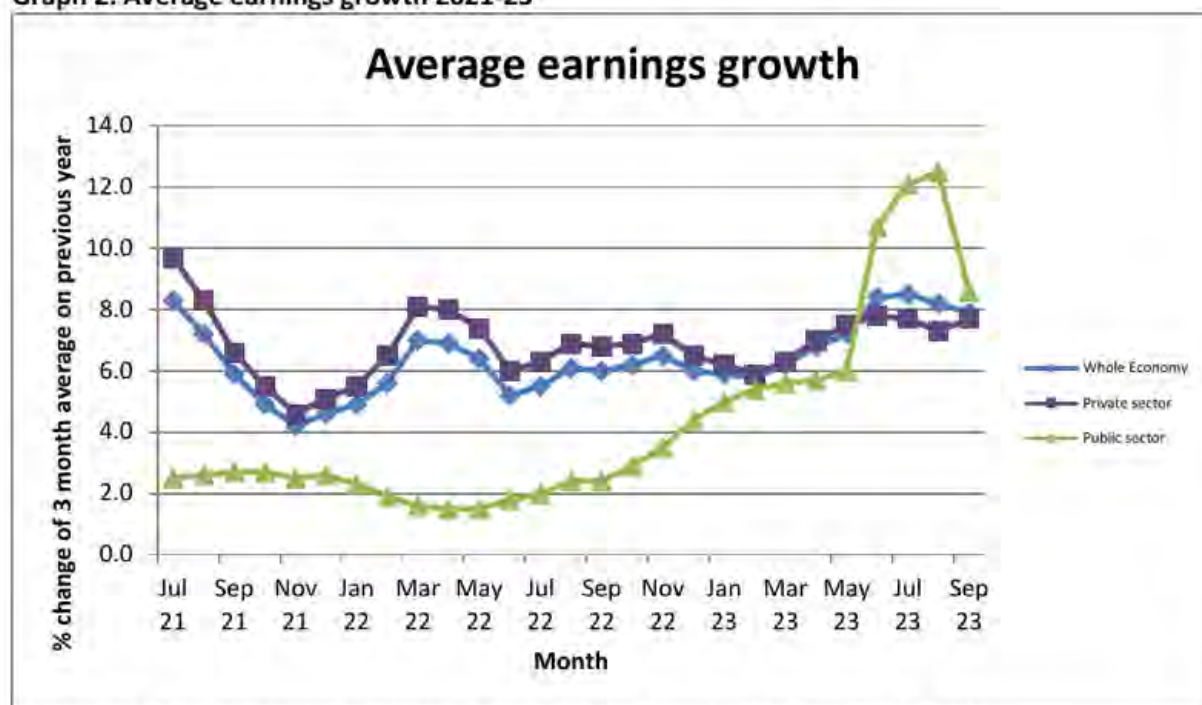
4.6 Average earnings growth

The graph below shows trends in average earnings growth over the last two years.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, average earnings growth has remained at relatively high rates and average earnings growth across the economy hit 7.9% in September 2023⁷. If the distorted figures of the pandemic period are set aside, this is the quickest growth in average earnings for over 20 years.

As in the case of pay settlements, a gap between public and private rates has been a persistent feature of the economy over the last decade. 2020 saw the first sustained period since 2010 when the public sector has been running ahead of the private sector. However, faster growth in the private sector reasserted itself strongly between 2021 and 2023, before a record surge in public sector earnings growth over the last few months took the public rate to 8.6% in September 2023 against private sector earnings growth of 7.7%. The Office for National Statistics asserts that the public sector surge has been heavily influenced by one-off non-consolidated payments in the NHS and civil service over the last year.

Graph 2: Average earnings growth 2021-23



Source: Office for National Statistics, Labour Market Overview UK, November 2023

The Treasury’s Summary of Independent Forecasts puts average earnings growth at 3.6% by the close of 2024⁸.

⁶ Office for National Statistics, Labour Market Overview UK, September 2023

⁷ ONS, Labour Market Overview, November 2023

⁸ HM Treasury Forecasts for the UK Economy, November 2023

4.7 Economic benefits of increasing local government pay

Research conducted by Landman Economics finds that the gross cost to local government of meeting the Trade Union Side's 2024/25 pay claim for NJC local government workers is £2,169m in total. This includes £1,906m in salary costs, plus an additional cost of £263m in higher employer NICs.

Central government receives the £263m in higher employer NICs. Central government also benefits from additional receipts of employee NICs (£169m) and income tax (£437m) as well as reduced benefit, tax credit and Universal Credit expenditure (£73m). In total, central government saves £943m.

The net cost to the public sector as a whole (both local and central government) would be £1,227m. If indirect taxation is then factored in, central government recoups a further £163m, reducing the net cost to £1,063m. In total, just over half (51%) of the cost to local government of meeting the pay claim accrues to central government.

Table 7: Cost of meeting the 2024/25 NJC pay

	Cost/Saving
Gross cost to local government	£1,906m
+ Employer's National Insurance	£263m
= Total cost to local government	£2,169m
Employer's National Insurance (as above)	£263m
+ Employee's National Insurance	£169m
+ Income Tax	£437m
+ Reduced benefit/tax credit/Universal Credit expenditure	£73m
= Total central government savings	£943m
Net public sector cost:	
= £2,169m - £943m	£1,227m
+ Indirect taxes	£163m
Net public sector cost after indirect taxes:	
= £1,227m - £163m	£1,063m

With just over half the cost of this pay claim recouped by the government, the logic in properly funding local government pay is clear. This reinforces our ongoing calls for proper local authority funding for pay from central government – something the TU side hopes the employers will join us in lobbying government for.

5. COMPARING NJC PAY

5.1 NJC pay vs the wider labour market

As described earlier in chapter 4.5, average pay settlements across the whole economy have seen salaries grow by 36.5% since 2010 while NJC increases have only grown by approximately 27.10% over the same period.

The ability of local government to attract and retain staff in the long term will be damaged if the pay of its staff falls behind the going rate in the labour market – a market where staff can find better pay for less stressful and demanding roles (especially compared to roles in social care and customer services).

5.2 Pay at the bottom

The Foundation Living Wage is an estimate of the minimum hourly rate of pay needed for a worker to cover the costs that most people would regard as necessary for a 'basic standard' of living.

Every year the Living Wage Foundation announces two new Living Wage rates - one for London and one for the rest of the UK. The UK rate is currently set at £12 an hour and the London rate is set at £13.15 an hour⁹. Unlike the legally enforceable National Minimum Wage, whether to pay the Living Wage is a voluntary decision for an employer.

These latest Foundation Living Wage rates mean that Local Government is now competing in a labour market where many comparable employers are paying more to entry level or low paid staff – with SCP 2 - 4 now falling below the £12 UK Foundation Living Wage rate (SCP 1 was deleted from 1 April 2023):

Table 8: NJC SCPs Vs the Foundation Living Wage

SCP*	2023 Annual	2023 Hourly
2	£22,366.47	£11.59
3	£22,736.84	£11.79
4	£23,114.33	£11.98
5	£23,499.96	£12.18

*SCP 1 deleted from 1 April 2023

There are now almost 7,000 employers accredited as Living Wage employers by the Living Wage Foundation, including some NJC local authorities (who choose to uplift the bottom NJC pay rates when calculating their local pay bands, to meet the Foundation rate).

If our claim was met in full, it would lift NJC SCP 2 to £13.15 per hour – not only meeting the Foundation rate but providing some much needed head room for future increases (the Living Wage Foundation increase their rate annually – with the next rise due to be announced in Autumn 2024).

5.3 National minimum wage

The legally enforceable National Minimum Wage rate (which the government refer to as the "national living wage") is calculated differently to the real Living Wage since it does not increase in line with cost of living.

Table 9: National Minimum Wage rates

April 2023	23 and over	21 to 22	18 to 20	Under 18	Apprentice
	£10.42	£10.18	£7.49	£5.28	£5.28
April 2024	21 and over*		18 to 20	Under 18	Apprentice
	£11.44		£8.60	£6.40	£6.40

*From 1 April 2024, workers aged 21 and over will be entitled to the National Living Wage.

⁹ The Living Wage Foundation, Annual Living Wages Rates, Oct 2023

From April 2024, the legally enforceable minimum rate will climb to £11.44 per hour (for those 21 and over) which is only 15p behind NJC SCP 2 – meaning that NJC pay has fallen back into bargain basement territory – paying a rate nearly equal to the UK’s lowest paying employers¹⁰.

5.5 Across the pay spine

Pay in local government is still among the lowest in the public sector. According to the LGA’s own figures (as published in the latest LGA earnings and demography survey), the median FTE gross salary of local government employees was £23,951 in 2019/20 – compared to median gross full-time annual earnings across the public sector as a whole of £32,743 in April 2020 (making average local government wages 27 per cent lower than those in the wider public sector). A sample benchmarking exercise (shown below) based on more recent salary data indicated that occupational pay differentials remain significant between local government employers and those in the wider economy.

Table 10: Median self-reported hourly pay by broad occupational group, 2022

SOC2020 broad group	Non-Local Government	Local Government	Difference (%)
Managers, directors and senior officials*	22.34	21.96	-1.7
Professional occupations	21.14	19.77	-6.5
Associate professional occupations	16.75	14.16	-15.4
Administrative and secretarial occupations	12.95	12.34	-4.8
Caring, leisure and other service occupations*	10.18	9.20	-9.6
Process, plant and machine operatives*	12.03	11.24	-6.5
Elementary occupations	9.62	9.53	-0.9
* = Local Government estimates affected by small sample sizes (50 or lower in the unweighted sample)			

6. ACHIEVING A £15 PER HOUR MINIMUM RATE

Many organisations, unions, and the TUC are now calling for a minimum wage of £15 per hour. For working families on low incomes, this would provide a desperately needed boost to their incomes, with the poorest 70% of households seeing a 6.9% increase in their forecast incomes¹¹. It would restructure the labour market away from low paid and insecure work and protect living standards during the cost-of-living crisis. It would also reduce the welfare and benefits bill, increasing tax and national insurance income without creating unemployment.

A £15 per hour minimum rate is no longer the over-ambitious target it appeared to be in recent years. The Foundation Living Wage has already reached £12 an hour and is due to increase again in the autumn. The Labour Party is committed to scrapping the current national minimum wage and introducing a “genuine living wage” based on the actual cost of living. By 2025, even the legal minimum rate could be closer to £15 an hour than £10 an hour. The Trade Union Side believes that

¹⁰ Minimum wage rates for 2023-24, UK Government

¹¹ Progressive Economy Forum, June 2022

£15 an hour is a target that must be recognised and addressed by the local government employers. However, recognising the issue is not enough without a clear plan for how to reach that target.

There are currently 16 NJC spinal column points that fall below £15 an hour:

Table 11: Percentage increases need to reach £15 per hour on the NJC pay spine

SCP	2023 Annual	2023 Hourly	Increase needed to reach £15p/h
2	£22,366.47	£11.59	29.4%
3	£22,736.84	£11.79	27.3%
4	£23,114.33	£11.98	25.2%
5	£23,499.96	£12.18	23.1%
6	£23,892.72	£12.38	21.1%
7	£24,293.61	£12.59	19.1%
8	£24,701.63	£12.80	17.2%
9	£25,118.80	£13.02	15.2%
10	£25,545.14	£13.24	13.3%
11	£25,978.59	£13.47	11.4%
12	£26,421.20	£13.69	9.5%
13	£26,872.97	£13.93	7.7%
14	£27,333.90	£14.17	5.9%
15	£27,802.97	£14.41	4.1%
16	£28,282.21	£14.66	2.3%
17	£28,769.59	£14.91	0.6%

As shown above in table 11, the increases needed for NJC pay to reach £15 an hour are significant - especially at the bottom end of the pay spine. Even meeting this year’s claim in full would not achieve a £15 an hour rate for SCP 2-10. The Trade Union Side is therefore recommending that local government adopts a phased approach, with a target to reach a minimum rate of £15 an hour in a maximum of two years, sooner if possible. One method to achieve this is via three annual increases of 10% as shown in the table below:

Table 12: Roadmap to achieving £15 per hour minimum rate for the NJC pay spine

Current NJC Pay Spine			Hourly rate at 10% increase per year		
SCP	2023 Annual	2023 Hourly	2024 Hourly	2025 Hourly	2026 Hourly
2	£22,366.47	£11.59	£12.75	£14.03	£15.43
3	£22,736.84	£11.79	£12.96	£14.26	£15.69
4	£23,114.33	£11.98	£13.18	£14.50	£15.95
5	£23,499.96	£12.18	£13.40	£14.74	£16.21
6	£23,892.72	£12.38	£13.62	£14.98	£16.48
7	£24,293.61	£12.59	£13.85	£15.24	£16.76
8	£24,701.63	£12.80	£14.08	£15.49	£17.04
9	£25,118.80	£13.02	£14.32	£15.75	£17.33
10	£25,545.14	£13.24	£14.56	£16.02	£17.62

Whatever method is used to reach £15 an hour, the benefit to low paid members would be significant. More than other measure, this would help to undo the damage done to NJC pay by the cost of living crisis.

7. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION CRISIS

Recruitment and retention pressures in local authorities are significant and getting worse. The LGA itself issued a statement last year confirming that "More than 9 in 10 councils are experiencing staff recruitment and retention difficulties across a diverse range of skills, professions and occupations."

This is a particular concern for certain roles within local government – for example HGV drivers, where nearly half of all councils (49 per cent) now have vacant HGV driver posts, and just over a third (34 per cent) struggling to get agency staff just to fill vacant HGV posts.¹²

While recruitment pressures build at local authorities, nationally the unemployment rate has been in decline from a peak of 8.5% in 2011 to 4.2% in the three months to September 2023 (recent rates have been at the lowest level for almost 50 years).

Forecasts now put the average unemployment rate at 4.6% in 2024, though outside of recent years this level would still be a rate only last consistently experienced in the mid-1970s. Meanwhile, the Office for National Statistics indicates that the vacancy rate across the economy was running at 3% in the three months to October 2023 (a higher level than at any point in the two decades before August 2021).

The number of unemployed people per vacancy was running at 1.4% by July 2023 - a trough that has seen the lowest levels recorded in more than two decades and represents a dramatic decline from 5.8% in 2011.

8. PAY-RELATED CONDITIONS OF WORK

8.1 Work-life balance and wellbeing

Long hours, absences and stress continue to be a serious concern for workers in local authorities.

Analysis by the TUC consistently shows that public sector workers are working disproportionate amounts of unpaid overtime¹³. According to the latest TUC report 1 in 6 public sector workers (16.7%) did unpaid overtime in 2023, compared to 1 in 9 (11.9%) in the private sector. Public sector staff gave £11 billion worth of unpaid overtime to meet the needs of service users.

This enormous goodwill contribution must be recognised. The Trade Union Side strongly believes that workers should be paid for all the hours they work and that employers must get a grip on unpaid overtime.

Evidence shows that long hours can lead to serious and long term mental and physical ill health, stress, fatigue and increases in workplace accidents, decreasing productivity within organisations, lowering morale and leading to increased staff turnover¹⁴.

¹² LGA, Local Government Workforce Survey 2022, May 2022

¹³ TUC analysis, Feb 2024

¹⁴ Breaking the Long Hours Culture, Institute for Employment Studies, 1998

We are currently facing an epidemic of stress and anxiety across the UK economy. Analysis by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) of Labour Force Survey statistics shows that stress, depression or anxiety accounts for over 50% of all work-related ill health cases. The predominant cause of work-related stress, depression or anxiety from the Labour Force Survey was workload, in particular tight deadlines, too much work or too much pressure or responsibility - the biggest single cause of sick leave by some distance. That same analysis showed that this is an acute issue within local authority services with human health and social work, public administration and education all accounting for some of the highest levels of average rates of stress, depression or anxiety.

An increasing number of organisations are recognising the impact of long hours and are now considering alternative models of working.

There is a growing consensus that reducing working time would have a significant positive impact across the economy and society. Evidence shows that it could lower unemployment, increase productivity, reduce carbon emissions, increase leisure time and leisure activities¹⁵. It would also help improve mental and physical health reducing the need for acute health services, it would support gender equality providing a more equal share of paid and unpaid work and strengthened communities.

According to the 4 Day Week campaign group around 1000 organisations have so far signed up to a four-day week without loss of pay for their staff, including some high-profile employers and at least one local authority. Despite pressure from central government South Cambridgeshire District Council has claimed that its experiment has saved hundreds of thousands of taxpayers' money through reduced spend on agency staff whilst improving performance¹⁶.

This experience has been replicated by most other employers and the experience from this campaign is that employers and workers have seen immediate benefits. These have included higher performance as productivity goes up and costs reduce, reduced sickness, improved recruitment and retention and happier staff.

The Trade Union Side believes that now is the time for the working week and leave entitlement of staff to be improved nationally and is therefore calling for:

- **A 2 hour reduction in the working week with no detriment**
- **An additional day of annual leave for personal or well-being purposes - regardless of current entitlement (with term time only staff also receiving a full day rather than a pro rata amount, that they can use at any time, including term time)**

9. EQUALITY IMPACT

Low pay in local government disproportionately affects women workers, and other workers who share protected characteristics under the Equality Act. Trade Union Side analysis of ONS data confirms that local government workers are more likely to be older, disabled, to have childcare responsibilities, and to be religious, and married. Local government workers continue to be less

¹⁵ Henley Business School, University of Reading, 2022

¹⁶ <https://www.localgov.co.uk/Why-the-four-day-week-could-solve-the-workforce-crisis-/57916>

likely self-report that they are from an ethnic minority background or to be non-UK nationals, which reflects the need to encourage more workforce diversity in the sector.

It should be noted that, of the protected characteristics that are relevant to the Public Sector Equality Duty, gender reassignment, pregnancy, and sexual orientation cannot be measured by the ONS Labour Force Survey. The meaning of race and belief, as defined under the Equality Act, are also wider than the measures captured in the table below.

Table 13: Labour Force Survey – workforce self-reported equalities characteristics (percentages unless otherwise stated)¹⁷

Characteristic	Non-Local Government	Local Government
Age (Average)	41.8	44.6
Dependent children (under 19)	0.7	0.8
Female	46.6	66.8
Non-white ethnicity	16.2	9.4
Nationality other than UK	15.2	6.2
Disability (EA10)	17.7	18.7
Religious	49.2	51.3
Married or in a civil partnership	49.0	54.9

Gender pay gap reporting and comparisons with other sectors reveal that the gender pay gap in all organisations was 14.2%, compared to 6.1% in local authorities¹⁸. Women comprised 39.7% per cent of the top pay quartile across the whole economy, compared with 44.7% local authorities. This means that while local government performs slightly better than the wider economy, a pay gap still exists. And without transparent recording of pay gaps in other equalities areas (including ethnicity and disability), we cannot know the scale of the issues across the whole local government workforce. The TU side is therefore asking for reviews of the gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps in local government, along with joint work depending on the outcome of the reviews.

10. CONCLUSION

With no end in sight for the cost of living crisis, our NJC members' pay is worth less and less with each passing month. Food, fuel, energy, mortgages and rents have become unaffordable for many - with households having to routinely run up debt on credit cards and overdrafts just to get by each month.

The UK economy is in recession again – with a government unwilling and unable to address the issue of low pay. During this period of economic downturn, the best employers will always prioritise supporting their staff in keeping up with the cost of living.

Sadly, NJC pay has failed to keep up - falling behind pay in the wider economy, behind the foundation living wage and now skirting the legal minimum at the bottom end of the pay spine.

Our claim for an increase of at least £3,000 or 10% (whichever is greater) on all spinal column points would begin a long overdue process of restoring NJC pay, after more than a decade of decline. 25%

¹⁷ Trade Union Side analysis of ONS Quarterly Labour Force Survey (Q4 2023)

¹⁸ LGA analysis, 2019

has been lost from the value of NJC pay since 2010 and to undo this decline, bold action is need by the local government employers.

This bold action must include not only meeting our claim in full - but a commitment to achieving a £15 per hour minimum rate by at least 2026 - an act that would finally create some much-needed headroom at the bottom of the pay spine.

APPENDIX 1: NJC SPINAL COLUMN POINTS - REAL TERMS CONVERSION*

Old SCP	2009/10	2023/24	New SCP	Old SCP if inflated by RPI to April 2024	Real-terms change (£)	Real-terms change (%)
4	£12,145			£22,499	-£133	-0.6
5	£12,312			£22,809	-£443	-1.9
6	£12,489		1	£23,136	-£770	-3.3
7	£12,787			£23,688	-£1,322	-5.6
8	£13,189	£22,366	2	£24,433	-£2,067	-8.5
9	£13,589	£22,366		£25,174	-£2,808	-11.2
10	£13,874	£22,737	3	£25,702	-£2,965	-11.5
11	£14,733	£22,737		£27,294	-£4,557	-16.7
12	£15,039	£23,114	4	£27,860	-£4,746	-17.0
13	£15,444	£23,114		£28,611	-£5,497	-19.2
14	£15,725	£23,500	5	£29,131	-£5,631	-19.3
15	£16,054	£23,500		£29,741	-£6,241	-21.0
16	£16,440	£23,893	6	£30,456	-£6,563	-21.5
17	£16,830	£23,893		£31,178	-£7,285	-23.4
18	£17,161	£24,321	7	£31,791	-£7,470	-23.5
19	£17,802	£24,702	8	£32,979	-£8,277	-25.1
20	£18,453	£25,119	9	£34,185	-£9,066	-26.5
		£25,545	10			
21	£19,126	£25,979	11	£35,432	-£9,453	-26.7
22	£19,621	£26,421	12	£36,349	-£9,928	-27.3
		£26,873	13			
23	£20,198	£27,334	14	£37,418	-£10,084	-26.9
24	£20,858	£27,803	15	£38,640	-£10,837	-28.0
		£28,282	16			
25	£21,519	£28,770	17	£39,865	-£11,095	-27.8
		£29,269	18			
26	£22,221	£29,777	19	£41,165	-£11,388	-27.7
27	£22,958	£30,296	20	£42,531	-£12,235	-28.8
		£30,825	21			
28	£23,708	£31,364	22	£43,920	-£12,556	-28.6
29	£24,646	£32,076	23	£45,658	-£13,582	-29.7
30	£25,472	£33,024	24	£47,188	-£14,164	-30.0
31	£26,276	£33,945	25	£48,677	-£14,732	-30.3
32	£27,052	£34,834	26	£50,115	-£15,281	-30.5
33	£27,849	£35,745	27	£51,591	-£15,846	-30.7
34	£28,636	£36,648	28	£53,049	-£16,401	-30.9
35	£29,236	£37,336	29	£54,161	-£16,825	-31.1
36	£30,011	£38,223	30	£55,597	-£17,374	-31.2
37	£30,851	£39,186	31	£57,153	-£17,967	-31.4

38	£31,754	£40,221	32	£58,826	-£18,605	-31.6
39	£32,800	£41,418	33	£60,763	-£19,345	-31.8
40	£33,661	£42,403	34	£62,358	-£19,955	-32.0
41	£34,549	£43,421	35	£64,004	-£20,583	-32.2
42	£35,430	£44,428	36	£65,636	-£21,208	-32.3
43	£36,313	£45,441	37	£67,271	-£21,830	-32.5
44	£37,206	£46,464	38	£68,926	-£22,462	-32.6
45	£38,042	£47,420	39	£70,474	-£23,054	-32.7
46	£38,961	£48,474	40	£72,177	-£23,703	-32.8
47	£39,855	£49,498	41	£73,833	-£24,335	-33.0
48	£40,741	£50,512	42	£75,474	-£24,962	-33.1
49	£41,616	£51,515	43	£77,095	-£25,580	-33.2

*Calculations are based on the change in the RPI rate between April 2009 and April 2023, which was then inflated by 5.1 per cent (the OBR November 2023 forecast for RPI growth in 2024). Inflation values are taken from ONS Consumer Price Inflation timeseries data publication (20 December 2023). Figures are rounded.

APPENDIX 2: £3,000 and 10% increases applied to NJC Pay Spine (higher amounts in red)

SCP	2023 Annual	2023 Hourly	£3,000 increase	10% increase	2024 Hourly*
2	£22,366	£11.59	£25,366	£24,603	£13.15
3	£22,737	£11.79	£25,737	£25,011	£13.34
4	£23,114	£11.98	£26,114	£25,426	£13.54
5	£23,500	£12.18	£26,500	£25,850	£13.74
6	£23,893	£12.38	£26,893	£26,282	£13.94
7	£24,294	£12.59	£27,294	£26,723	£14.15
8	£24,702	£12.80	£27,702	£27,172	£14.36
9	£25,119	£13.02	£28,119	£27,631	£14.57
10	£25,545	£13.24	£28,545	£28,100	£14.80
11	£25,979	£13.47	£28,979	£28,576	£15.02
12	£26,421	£13.69	£29,421	£29,063	£15.25
13	£26,873	£13.93	£29,873	£29,560	£15.48
14	£27,334	£14.17	£30,334	£30,067	£15.72
15	£27,803	£14.41	£30,803	£30,583	£15.97
16	£28,282	£14.66	£31,282	£31,110	£16.21
17	£28,770	£14.91	£31,770	£31,647	£16.47
18	£29,269	£15.17	£32,269	£32,196	£16.73
19	£29,777	£15.43	£32,777	£32,755	£16.99
20	£30,296	£15.70	£33,296	£33,325	£17.27
21	£30,825	£15.98	£33,825	£33,907	£17.58
22	£31,364	£16.26	£34,364	£34,501	£17.88
23	£32,076	£16.63	£35,076	£35,284	£18.29
24	£33,024	£17.12	£36,024	£36,326	£18.83
25	£33,945	£17.59	£36,945	£37,339	£19.35

26	£34,834	£18.06	£37,834	£38,317	£19.86
27	£35,745	£18.53	£38,745	£39,319	£20.38
28	£36,648	£19.00	£39,648	£40,313	£20.90
29	£37,336	£19.35	£40,336	£41,070	£21.29
30	£38,223	£19.81	£41,223	£42,046	£21.79
31	£39,186	£20.31	£42,186	£43,104	£22.34
32	£40,221	£20.85	£43,221	£44,243	£22.93
33	£41,418	£21.47	£44,418	£45,560	£23.61
34	£42,403	£21.98	£45,403	£46,643	£24.18
35	£43,421	£22.51	£46,421	£47,763	£24.76
36	£44,428	£23.03	£47,428	£48,871	£25.33
37	£45,441	£23.55	£48,441	£49,985	£25.91
38	£46,464	£24.08	£49,464	£51,110	£26.49
39	£47,420	£24.58	£50,420	£52,162	£27.04
40	£48,474	£25.13	£51,474	£53,322	£27.64
41	£49,498	£25.66	£52,498	£54,448	£28.22
42	£50,512	£26.18	£53,512	£55,563	£28.80
43	£51,515	£26.70	£54,515	£56,666	£29.37

*Hourly rate based on whichever increase is higher - £3,000 or 10%

National Employers for local government services

Mike Short, Sharon Wilde, Clare Keogh
Trade Union Side Secretaries
NJC for Local Government Services
c/o UNISON Centre
130 Euston Road
London NW1 2AY

16 May 2024

Dear Mike, Sharon and Clare

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY 2024

Thank you for your pay claim, which was received on 29 February. Following its receipt, the National Employers consulted councils and then met initially on 16 April to discuss the key themes to come out of those sessions. They then adjourned for private political discussions before reconvening today.

The employers considered very carefully your request for 'meaningful negotiations'. Conscious of the usual implementation date of 1 April and concerns raised by employers and employees alike when previous Agreements have been delayed, the National Employers agreed that making a full and final offer would provide certainty from the outset to yourselves, your members, the wider workforce and local employers that their offer, set out below, is the maximum they are able to make.

The National Employers wish to make the following full and final, one-year (1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025) offer:

- **With effect from 1 April 2024, an increase of £1,290 (pro rata for part-time employees) to be paid as a consolidated, permanent addition on all NJC pay points 2 to 43 inclusive.** *The equivalent percentage increases to each pay point are shown at Annex A*
- **With effect from 1 April 2024, an increase of 2.50 per cent on all pay points above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer** *(in accordance with Green Book Part 2 Para 5.4¹)*
- **With effect from 1 April 2024 an increase of 2.50 per cent on all allowances** *(as listed in the 2023 NJC pay agreement circular dated 1 November 2023)*

The most important factor in formulating this response has been affordability. We have a duty to balance your claim against the interests of local residents, in terms of the level and quality of services provided by local authorities. The proposed increase will be difficult to fund in a number of local authorities and anything beyond that would take many more authorities well beyond their level of affordability.

We recognise that our offer falls short of your aspirations, but the effects of an unaffordable increase are inescapable: councils would have to make cuts in services, with a subsequent impact on jobs and council tax payers.

¹ The Green Book Part 2 Para 5.4 provides that posts paid above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer are within scope of the NJC. The pay levels for such posts are determined locally, but once fixed are increased in line with agreements reached by the NJC.

In response to other elements of your claim:

Your claim seeks, **Reviews of the gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps in local government.** You may be aware that the LGA monitors councils statutory reporting of the Gender Pay Gap, providing annual updates through the [LG Inform platform](#). This year, the LGA will be undertaking a programme of work which will include examining how councils report any pay gaps across their workforce, particularly in relation to employees with certain protected characteristics.

The National Employers propose the NJC Joint Secretaries discuss options for working together to capture pay gap information that will be of most benefit to the sector.

In response to the remaining elements of your claim:

- **A two-hour reduction in the working week, with no detriment**
The Employers reject this element of the claim in relation to a proposed 35-hour week (34 in London). Such a reduction would be out of line with norms in local government and would result in an increase in costs that would adversely affect local authority services.
- **An additional day of annual leave for personal or well-being purposes (with term-time only staff also receiving a full day rather than a pro rata amount, that they can use at any time, including term time)**
The Employers reject this element of the claim. All NJC employees currently receive a minimum of 23 days' leave (with a further three days after five years' service), plus two extra statutory days, plus public holidays. Many councils have a more generous basic leave entitlement.
- **A phased approach to reaching a minimum pay rate of £15 an hour in a maximum of two years, sooner if possible**
In order to achieve this objective would require increasing just the bottom pay point by 29.42 per cent over the period 2024-26. That would be prohibitively expensive for councils at any time, not least during the current difficult financial circumstances.

The National Employers of course respect that each of your unions will have its own processes and procedures to follow, but we urge you all to please try and synchronise the timing and duration of your membership consultations in order that a final agreement is reached so that employees, who continue to provide such critical support to their communities, can receive this award as soon as is practicable.

A prompt settlement this year would give us the necessary opportunity to begin negotiating a redesigned national pay spine, as was agreed by us all in the 2023 NJC agreement. The National Employers today recommitted to this objective, which will require intense and meaningful negotiations with the NJC unions.

Yours sincerely,

Naomi Cooke

Naomi Cooke
Employers' Secretary

ANNEX A

SCP	Employer offer	Equivalent percentage
1	<i>Deleted wef 1 April 2023</i>	
2	£1,290	5.77%
3	£1,290	5.67%
4	£1,290	5.58%
5	£1,290	5.49%
6	£1,290	5.40%
7	£1,290	5.31%
8	£1,290	5.22%
9	£1,290	5.14%
10	£1,290	5.05%
11	£1,290	4.97%
12	£1,290	4.88%
13	£1,290	4.80%
14	£1,290	4.72%
15	£1,290	4.64%
16	£1,290	4.56%
17	£1,290	4.48%
18	£1,290	4.41%
19	£1,290	4.33%
20	£1,290	4.26%
21	£1,290	4.18%
22	£1,290	4.11%
23	£1,290	4.02%
24	£1,290	3.91%
25	£1,290	3.80%
26	£1,290	3.70%
27	£1,290	3.61%
28	£1,290	3.52%
29	£1,290	3.46%
30	£1,290	3.37%
31	£1,290	3.29%
32	£1,290	3.21%
33	£1,290	3.11%
34	£1,290	3.04%
35	£1,290	2.97%
36	£1,290	2.90%
37	£1,290	2.84%
38	£1,290	2.78%
39	£1,290	2.72%
40	£1,290	2.66%
41	£1,290	2.61%
42	£1,290	2.55%
43	£1,290	2.50%

National Employers for local government services

52

George Georgiou
Officers' Side Secretary
JNC for Chief Officers of local authorities
GMB Mary Turner House, 22 Stephenson Way
London NW1 2HD

16 May 2024

Dear George

CHIEF OFFICER PAY 2024

Thank you for your pay claim, which was received on 6 March. Following its receipt, the National Employers consulted councils and then met initially on 16 April to discuss the key themes to come out of those sessions. They then adjourned for private political discussions before reconvening today.

Conscious of the usual implementation date of 1 April and concerns raised by employers and employees alike when previous Agreements have been delayed, the National Employers agreed that making a full and final offer would provide certainty from the outset to yourselves, your members, the wider workforce and local employers that their offer, set out below, is the maximum they are able to make.

The National Employers wish to make the following full and final, one-year (1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025) offer:

- **With effect from 1 April 2024, an increase of 2.50 per cent on basic salary¹**

Your claim seeks, "**Action to close the gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps.**"

You may be aware that the LGA monitors councils statutory reporting of the Gender Pay Gap, providing annual updates through the [LG Inform platform](#). This year, the LGA will be undertaking a programme of work which will include examining how councils report any pay gaps across their workforce, particularly in relation to employees with certain protected characteristics.

The National Employers propose the JNC Joint Secretaries discuss options for working together (perhaps also with the NJC unions, whose claim included a similar request) to capture pay gap information that will be of most benefit to the sector.

Your claim also seeks, "**Joint work on model national overtime working and mental health policies.**" The National Employers propose that the Joint Secretaries have discussions on the issue of senior officers' wellbeing and access to advice and support as they steer councils through these challenging times.

The National Employers hope this full and final offer can promptly form the basis of an agreement between the two Sides so that Chief Officers, who continue to provide such critical support to their communities, can receive this award as soon as is practicable.

Yours sincerely,

Naomi Cooke, Employers' Secretary
cc Ruth Levin, UNISON

¹ Basic salary should exclude other separately identified payments such as Returning Officer fees etc

National Employers for local government services

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Ian Miller
Honorary Secretary ALACE
Officers' Side Secretary
JNC for Chief Executives of Local Authorities

16 May 2024

Dear Ian,

CHIEF EXECUTIVE PAY 2024

Thank you for your pay claim, which was received on 19 February. Following its receipt, the National Employers consulted councils and then met initially on 16 April to discuss the key themes to come out of those sessions. They then adjourned for private political discussions before reconvening today.

The National Employers thank you and Tracey for taking the time today to set out the Officer Side's case in such helpful detail.

The employers considered very carefully your request for negotiations. Conscious of the usual implementation date of 1 April and concerns raised by employers and employees alike when previous Agreements have been delayed, the National Employers agreed that making a full and final offer would provide certainty from the outset to yourselves, your members, the wider workforce and local employers that their offer, set out below, is the maximum they are able to make.

The National Employers wish to make the following full and final, one-year (1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025) offer:

- **With effect from 1 April 2024, an increase of 2.50 per cent on basic salary¹**

The National Employers propose that the Joint Secretaries re-engage on our previous discussions on the issue of senior officers' wellbeing and access to advice and support, as they steer councils through these challenging times.

Despite rejecting the same request last year, the employers again considered the request for, *"a direct and immutable link for increases for April 2024 onwards, to ensure that chief executives would receive the same percentage increase as the top point on the NJC scale."*

However, for the same reason given last year, namely the employers' wish to retain the existing flexibility that allows them to consider pay claims for each distinct group, the National Employers again reject this element of the claim.

¹ Basic salary should exclude other separately identified payments such as Returning Officer fees etc

National Employers for local government services

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The National Employers hope this final offer can promptly form the basis of an agreement between the two Sides so that Chief Executives, who continue to provide such critical support to their communities, can receive this award as soon as is practicable.

Yours sincerely,

Naomi Cooke

Naomi Cooke
Employers' Secretary

Council/Committee:	Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee
Date:	17 June 2024
Report Title:	Performance Improvement Plan 2023/24 Year-End Update
Publication Status:	Open
Author:	Siobhan Fisher, Assistant Director of Citizen Focus
Approver:	Laureen Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate Services

1. Purpose

- 1.1. To provide Elected Members with the Performance Improvement Plan 2023/24 Year-End Update report for scrutiny, and to seek approval to publish the report on the Council's website.

2. Background

- 2.1. The Local Government Act (NI) 2014 places a general duty on councils to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions". This includes a statutory requirement to publish a Performance Improvement Plan each year. These arrangements are subject to an annual audit and assessment by the Northern Ireland Audit Office.
- 2.2. The Performance Improvement Plan 2024/25 was approved by Council on 13 May 2024, and has been published on the corporate website.

3. Key Issues for Consideration

- 3.1. The Performance Improvement Plan for 2023/24, provided at [Hyperlink 1](#), set out six Improvement Objectives.
- 3.2. It is the role of this committee to scrutinise the Year-End Update report, provided at [Appendix 1](#).
- 3.3. The report indicates steady progress in the final quarter of the year, with slight variations in the classification of measures.
- 3.4. Ongoing measures from the 2023/24 Improvement Objectives continue within the Performance Improvement Plan for 2024/25, unless reported otherwise.

4. General Considerations / Implications

- 4.1. Publication of the Performance Improvement Plan ensures compliance with the statutory requirements of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 and provides a mechanism to demonstrate continuous improvement.
- 4.2. The development and management of Improvement Objectives forms a key part of the Council's Performance Self-Assessment Report, which we are required to publish by 30 September each year.
- 4.3. It is critical that SMT and Elected Members are provided with regular update reports to ensure objectives are progressing as planned and issues are resolved in a timely manner.
- 4.4. Failure to do this may lead to poor service delivery, poor audit results and reputational damage.

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1. The report will be published on the corporate website following the ratification of the minutes of this meeting.

6. Recommendation or Decision

- 6.1. Elected Members are asked to scrutinise the Performance Improvement Plan 2023/24 Year-End Update report and approve its publication on the corporate website.

7. Appendices / Links

Hyperlink 1 – [Performance Improvement Plan 2023/24](#)

Appendix 1 – Performance Improvement Plan 2023/24 Year-End Update



Performance Improvement Plan 2023-2024

Year-End Update Report

April 2023 - March 2024

www.midandeantrim.gov.uk



Mid & East Antrim
Borough Council

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Other formats:
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Duty to Improve

The Local Government Act (NI) 2014 put in place a framework to support continuous improvement in the delivery of council services.

Under the Act councils have a statutory duty to publish a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) by 30 June each year, which sets out one or more improvement objectives, and to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to achieve them. This is known as the Duty to Improve.

For us, improvement is not limited to gains in service output or efficiencies. It is about focusing on the issues that are important to our stakeholders, helping us achieve our vision of improving the quality of life for all.

Arrangements to secure continuous improvement

Our arrangements to secure continuous improvement are outlined within our Performance Management Framework. This framework drives performance at all levels within the organisation, and illustrates how our corporate strategies, aims and objectives, flow through the organisation to link to each employee's individual work plan.

We use a series of measures to monitor our performance and to identify any improvements that we make. Our arrangements are supported by a dedicated performance management system and are subject to an annual audit and assessment by the Northern Ireland Audit Office.

Feedback

We welcome the opinions of our citizens, businesses, community groups, employees, Elected Members, and service users at any time throughout the year.

If you have an idea for improvement, please email us at: performance@midandeantrim.gov.uk

Performance Improvement Plan for 2023 to 2024

Maintaining our performance has never been more important, nor more challenging.

As we entered the 2023/24 year, we faced high levels of inflation, a cost-of-living crisis, tightened financial conditions and slower economic growth. We felt the ongoing effects of the pandemic, and the challenge of transitioning to a carbon-neutral society.

Despite these conditions, our commitment to supporting our ratepayers and communities was unwavering, as demonstrated in our Performance Improvement Plan for 2023 to 2024.

Developed with extensive stakeholder engagement and public consultation, the plan outlined some of the areas we sought to improve during the year, how we planned to do it, and how our citizens would be better off as a result.

You can view the full plan at:

www.midandeantrim.gov.uk/performance



Our Improvement Objectives for 2023 to 2024

1

Growing the economy and creating jobs

Identify ways to increase local jobs and employment opportunities within Mid and East Antrim.

2

Revitalising our towns

Through a variety of regeneration activities, support our businesses, welcome inward investment, and attract visitors to our towns.

3

Supporting our citizens' health and wellbeing

Encourage and promote regular, safe, and responsible use of our parks and open spaces by providing quality, sustainable and inclusive opportunities.

4

Working in partnership to support our citizens, particularly those who are vulnerable

Through citizen-focused projects, including Autism-Friendly and Age-Friendly initiatives.

5

Improving infrastructure to support the transition to low-carbon transport systems

To reduce emissions and protect the environment for future generations.

6

Enhancing customer engagement and service delivery

Develop the Council's use of information technology to improve customer engagement and service delivery.

Annual performance summary

The following pages outline in detail what our citizens will see from the delivery of our Improvement Objectives. We refer to these as outcomes.

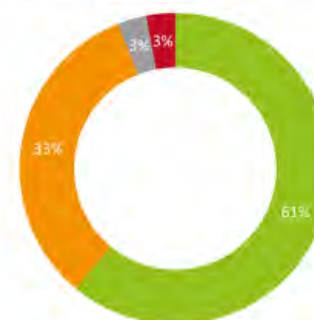
We use a series of key performance indicators to track the delivery of our outcomes. We refer to these as measures.

We have summarised our performance against our 33 measures during 2023/24, and compared this with our performance in the first nine months. In summary, 58% of measures were achieved or on track (down 3 points from December 2023), with a resultant increase in the number of measures classed as delayed but progressing (up 3 percentage points).

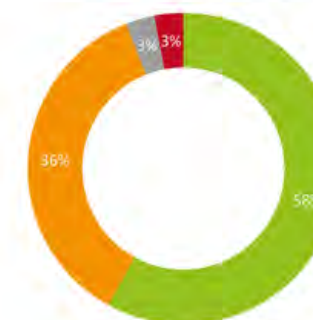
Progress Key

- Achieved or on track
- Delayed but progressing
- Not achieved or stopped
- Data not available

At the end of Dec 23



Year-end update



Ongoing measures from the Improvement Objectives for 2023 to 2024 continue within the Performance Improvement Plan for 2024 to 2025, unless otherwise stated.

Greater detail on the objectives is provided throughout the remainder of this report.

Growing the economy and creating jobs

Through identifying ways to increase local jobs and employment opportunities within Mid and East Antrim.

Why are we doing this?

- 4,680 redundancies were confirmed in Mid and East Antrim since 2013.
(Source: NISRA Labour Market Report, Redundancy Tables October 2022)
- Developing skills and job prospects ranked the 3rd top priority for making the borough a better place to live in.
(Source: MEA Citizens Survey 2022)
- Only 28% of citizens agreed that Mid and East Antrim is a good area for job opportunities.
(Source: MEA Citizens Survey 2022)

Who is responsible?

The Director of Development.



What you'll see

Outcome 1	Programmes to encourage skills development and employability
Measure 1	The delivery of 8 employment and skills programmes by 31 March 2024.
Status	8 additional programmes commenced in the final quarter of the year, bringing the total number to 20, as follows: Forklift, Classroom Assistant, Transport, Restaurant, Manufacturing, Childminding, Enterprise Pathways, Paediatric First Aid, Work Connections, Health Support Services, Female Manufacturing, Do it Herself (Ballymena area cohort), Administration Academy, Graduate Disability Programme, Do It Herself (Larne area cohort), Plant Operations, Security Industry Association, Education and Training (level 3), Engineering Academy, and Tourism.
Outcome 2	The promotion of new jobs in the borough through Business Start Interventions
Measure 1	The promotion of 85 jobs by 31 March 2024.
Status	Enquiries increased with the introduction of the new Northern Ireland Entrepreneurial Support Service (Go Succeed) in November 2023. In 2023/24, 103 jobs were promoted through Go For It up to the end of September, with several clients still in progress through Go Succeed. This includes 9 full-time equivalent jobs from the Labour Market Partnership's Enterprise Pathways programme, which provides bespoke development support to residents who are unemployed and wish to start a business, or to sustain self-employment.
Measure 2	The implementation of the Northern Ireland Entrepreneurship Support Service (NIESS) by 31 March 2024, in partnership with all Northern Ireland councils.
Status	Go Succeed is progressing well, with strong local interest. Almost 300 Mid and East Antrim based individuals have signed up for support across the Start-Up and Growth elements of the service.
Outcome 3	An effective and efficient Planning Service to maximise economic development
Measure 1	Adopt the Local Development Plan Strategy by 31 December 2023.
Status	The Local Development Plan Strategy was adopted by the Council on 16 October 2023. The aim is to create a borough that supports sustainable economic growth and innovation, infrastructure, the right mix of housing, and to improve the wellbeing of our communities.
Measure 2	A processing time for major planning applications within an average of 30 weeks by 31 March 2024.
Status	Our average processing time for major planning applications from April to December 2023 was 67.4 weeks. The average processing time across all NI councils during this time was 44.2 weeks. Three of the 11 councils were within the 30-week target. Verified data up to March 2024 is not yet available.
Measure 3	A processing time for local planning applications within an average of 15 weeks by 31 March 2024.
Status	Our average processing time for local planning applications from April to December 2023 was 10 weeks. The average processing time across all NI councils during this time was 20.4 weeks. Three of the 11 councils were within the 15-week target. Verified data up to March 2024 is not yet available.
Measure 4	70% of enforcement cases concluded within 39 weeks of receipt of complaint by 31 March 2024.
Status	The number of enforcement cases concluded, and corresponding processing times are not yet published by the Department for Infrastructure.

Employment and Skills programme case studies

Do it Herself

This bespoke academy aimed to encourage greater participation of females in the labour market through training in non-traditional skills, such as tiling, joinery, decorating, and confidence building. Of 10 participants, 6 gained a level 2 qualification, and lots of positive feedback was received:

"All aspects of the course were ideal. I could not fault anything. From beginning to end, the depth of knowledge to the atmosphere, to the tools and materials provided were exceptional and professional."

"I like my own independence to complete jobs within the home and this has empowered me to, not only by learning new skills but to have the confidence and know-how."

Graduate Disability Academy

8 participants enrolled on the programme, which provides training and employment opportunities and outcomes, for graduates with disabilities who are unemployed, underemployed, or economically inactive. 8 placements were completed, 3 qualifications were secured, and 2 participants gained employment.

Transport Academy

20 participants were recruited onto this academy, an intensive training intervention which develops practical industry knowledge and skills for people who are unemployed, underemployed, at risk of redundancy, or who wanted to skill up. 8 participants acquired licenses, and 5 secured employment.

Revitalising our towns

Through a variety of regeneration activities, support our businesses, welcome inward investment, and attract visitors to our towns.

Why are we doing this?

- Delivering clean and attractive streets and towns was identified as being one of the top 5 priorities for making Mid and East Antrim a better place to live in.
(Source: MEA Citizens Survey 2022)
- Of 20 potential actions, clean and attractive towns and streets ranked the joint 2nd most popular action the Council could take to make their area a better place to live in. The regeneration of towns and streets ranked 7th.
(Source: MEA Citizens Survey 2022)

Who is responsible?

The Director of Development and the Director of Operations.



What you'll see

Outcome 1	Clean and attractive towns and streets
Measure 1	A Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful (KNIB) Street Cleansing Index score of 66% or above by 31 March 2024.
Status	Surveys were undertaken in July to September 2023, and January to March 2024, with a score of 70% achieved within each period.
Outcome 2	Enhancement of Ballymena and Larne town centres through public realm improvement works
Measure 1	The completion of public realm improvement works at Point Street Larne by 31 August 2023.
Status	The public realm works completed on 5 May 2023, and included additional infrastructure upgrades by Northern Ireland Electricity. The cleaning and sealing of the footway took place shortly after, alongside the decommissioning of the works compound.
Measure 2	The completion of public realm improvement works at Castle Street Ballymena by 31 December 2023.
Status	The public realm works, comprising the public footway on Bridge Street and Castle Street, and road resurfacing, completed in January 2024.
Outcome 3	Revitalisation Scheme delivered within our 3 main towns
Measure 1	To agree the Revitalisation Scheme by 30 September 2023.
Status	The first application for funding was successful, with a Letter of Offer received from the Department for Communities for over £400,000. A second application, for street art across the borough's three main towns, was also successful, with a Letter of Offer received for £54,000. An additional funding application will be submitted within the 2024/25 financial year. This action is included in the Performance Improvement Plan for 2024 to 2025.
Measure 2	To deliver the Revitalisation Scheme by 31 March 2025.
Status	The programme is progressing well, and continues within the Performance Improvement Plan for 2024 to 2025. The Shopfront Improvement Scheme was very successful, with a reallocation of budget agreed to meet demand. 89 businesses availed of the funding, which totalled approximately £305,000. Ballymena and Carrickfergus sound systems have been ordered and are due for installation by 30 June 2024. Pavement café furniture was purchased and distributed, with 13 businesses benefiting throughout the borough. Planting took place within Ballymena, Carrickfergus, and Larne. A series of animation activities also took place throughout the year, including Larne Fashion Show, a mini-food festival in Ballymena, and an interactive programme called 'A living map' over four days in Carrickfergus. The smart benches are being funded through an alternative funding source.

Outcome 4	Up to 10 buildings of historical and architectural interest restored in Carrickfergus through the Townscape Heritage Initiative, with Council and Heritage Lottery grant assistance
Measure 1	The restoration of 10 buildings of historical and architectural interest by 30 September 2023.
Status	The tenth and final property, 1-3 Cheston Street, is expected to complete by 31 July 2024. This property experienced delays due to complex design challenges and adverse weather conditions, which affected timescales for lime rendering. This action continues within the Performance Improvement Plan for 2024 to 2025.
Outcome 5	The local community will have a better understanding of built heritage
Measure 1	To deliver a Built Heritage Education programme by 30 September 2023.
Status	A post project evaluation, closing event and publication on the scheme will be completed by 31 July 2024. This action continues within the Performance Improvement Plan for 2024 to 2025.
Outcome 6	Increased inward investment and local employment opportunities related directly and indirectly to heritage and tourism growth
Measure 1	Increased floor space for retail, commercial or residential use by 30 September 2023.
Status	The Council's Regeneration Team will complete an end of scheme evaluation, which will help to determine this information. This action continues within the Performance Improvement Plan for 2024 to 2025.



Supporting our citizens' health and wellbeing

To encourage and promote regular, safe, and responsible use of our parks and open spaces by providing quality, sustainable and inclusive opportunities.

Why are we doing this?

- Citizens ranked support and activities for children and young people as the most important thing that needed to be improved to make the area a better place to live in.

(Source: MEA Citizens Survey 2022)

- Almost half would like to see more support services for children and families and/or those with disabilities, and more than a third would like to see more access to green spaces such as parks and forests.

(Source: MEA Citizens Survey 2022)

- Both the Play Strategy and Play Investment Framework for Mid and East Antrim emphasise the need for play. Our landscape provides excellent opportunities to enhance health and wellbeing, as outlined in our Outdoor Recreation Strategy.

Who is responsible?

The Director of Community and the Director of Operations.



What you'll see

Outcome 1	5 replacement play parks completed by 30 June 2023
Measure 1	To replace play parks at: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ballymena Road, Ahoghill 2. Martinstown 3. Ferris Park, Larne 4. Woodburn, Carrickfergus 5. Wilson Crescent, Ballymena
Status	All 5 play parks are complete and open to the public.
Outcome 2	2 replacement play parks completed by 31 March 2024
Measure 1	To replace play parks at: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clough 2. Marine Gardens, Carrickfergus
Status	Clough playpark completed in April 2024. Marine Gardens will complete this summer, and continues within the Performance Improvement Plan for 2024 to 2025.

Outcome 3	3 new or upgraded multi-use games or kick-about areas completed by 30 June 2024
Measure 1	New or upgraded multi-use games or kick-about areas in: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Portglenone 2. Carnlough 3. Glynn
Status	The Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) in Portglenone, located beside the Marina and Community Centre, includes the upgrade of the existing children's playpark, including some inclusive play equipment. The MUGA is practically complete, with additional work required to the playpark railings and gates. Both the flood-lit kick-about area in Glynn and the refurbishment of the MUGA in Carnlough with a new 3G surface, are expected to complete in May 2024. The official opening dates for all three sites are yet to be confirmed. These projects continue within the Performance Improvement Plan for 2024 to 2025.
Outcome 4	1 new skatepark completed by 31 March 2024
Measure 1	A new skate park in Larne by 31 March 2024.
Status	Works are expected to start in May 2024. This action forms part of the Performance Improvement Plan 2024 to 2025 for delivery by 31 October 2024.
Outcome 5	5 outdoor safety training courses delivered
Measure 1	Deliver 4 courses by 31 March 2023 and another by 31 December 2023.
Status	All 5 courses are complete, with a total of 152 attendees.
Outcome 6	Outdoor events delivered by 31 March 2024
Measure 1	Deliver 20 events, with 50 participants.
Status	79 events have been held since April 2023, totalling 2712 participants. Of these, 17 were held in the final months of the year, and included activities such as Wild about Food events, the Big Garden Bird Watch, Willow and Hazel coppicing, creating hurdles and garden obelisks, Natural Play Sessions, Easter at Carnfunnock, and more.
Outcome 7	Number of trees planted by 31 March 2024
Measure 1	Plant 5,000 trees by 31 March 2024.
Status	The total number of trees planted in 2023/24 was 60,512. Approximately 58,500 were planted on non-Council land, and 2,000 on Council's land.



Working in partnership to support our citizens, particularly those who are vulnerable

Through citizen-focused projects, including Autism-Friendly and Age-Friendly initiatives.

Why are we doing this?

- Almost half of citizens said they would like to see more support services for children and families and/or those with disabilities. Less than half agreed the borough is a good area for supporting equality and inclusion.

(Source: MEA Citizens Survey 2022)

- Figures extracted from the 2022/23 Northern Ireland School Census show that 15,212 school aged children had been diagnosed with autism. This represents an estimated autism prevalence rate of 5% within the school aged population.

(Source: "Prevalence of Autism (including Asperger Syndrome) in School Age Children in Northern Ireland", Department of Health and NISRA 2023)

- Of 20 actions we could take to make your area a better place to live in, citizens ranked affordable quality housing joint second. 57% agreed the borough is a good area for a sense of belonging among people.

(Source: MEA Citizens Survey 2022)

Who is responsible?

The Director of Community.



What you'll see

Outcome 1	The promotion and delivery of the Autism Friendly Initiative
Measure 1	Deliver 10 Autism Friendly workshops to service providers by 31 March 2024.
Status	157 people participated in 14 Autism Awareness workshops this year. 10 sessions were held with the Police Service of Northern Ireland, one with the Braid Museum and Arts Centre, two with Libraries NI and one with the Girls Brigade in Carrickfergus.
Measure 2	Deliver 3 Autism Friendly Roadshows within Ballymena, Carrickfergus, and Larne by 31 March 2024.
Status	The final two roadshows have taken place. Life after ASD diagnosis Healthy Living and Healthy Minds was held in Larne in February 2024, with 35 participants. Speakers included the National Autistic Society NI, the Northern Health and Social Care Trust's Take 5 and Autism teams, the Northern Regional College on healthy eating, Autism NI, and Council departments. The event included a Makaton demonstration. Employability, Benefits, and Independent Living took place in Ballymena in March 2024, with 10 participants. Speakers included the NOW Group, Access Employment Limited, Ulster Supported Employment Limited, Triangle, the Department for Communities, the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, the Public Health Authority's Autism team, and Make the Call.
Measure 3	Develop a Communications Plan to raise awareness of the initiative by 31 March 2024.
Status	A communications plan was developed, but progress slowed due to staffing limitations. Despite this, a series of activities were undertaken throughout the year, including an article on our intranet to mark World Autism Awareness Week, and the promotion of the Autism-Friendly roadshows. 310 staff members also completed JAM (Just A Minute) Card Training, and we continue to promote further uptake. We are also working with the Equality Commission NI and the Department of Health's Autism Strategy Team to review the 'Every Customer Counts Business Checklist' to ensure it accommodates the needs of autistic people, and will promote the resource when it launches. This action continues within the Performance Improvement Plan for 2024 to 2025.
Measure 4	Deliver 4 Autism Friendly Action Plans in Council venues by 30 September 2023.
Status	Despite initial development work, due to staffing limitations, the delivery of the action plans at the Braid Museum and Arts Centre, Larne Arts Centre, Carrickfergus Museum, and Andrew Jackson Cottage, has been delayed. This action continues within the Performance Improvement Plan 2024 to 2025 for implementation by 30 September 2024.
Measure 5	4 additional Autism Champions within Council by 30 September 2023.
Status	Of the 5 people identified for completing Autism NI's Autism Champion qualification, 1 person completed it by 31 March 2024, with the remaining 4 to do so before 30 September 2024. This action continues within the Performance Improvement Plan for 2024 to 2025.

Measure 6	An Autism Awareness Train the Trainer programme developed and shared with partner organisations by 31 March 2024.
Status	A pilot programme was rolled out with Libraries NI in June 2023. The development of a bespoke Train the Trainer programme continues with the Police Service of Northern Ireland's Tactical Support Group unit and the Police Training College. Work continues with Community Planning partners to further refine the generic training materials for in-house use.
Outcome 2	The establishment of an Age Friendly Alliance
Measure 1	To develop a Mid and East Antrim Age Friendly Alliance by 31 December 2023.
Status	The first meeting of the Age Friendly Alliance took place in November 2023, and a second on 23 January 2024.
Measure 2	To develop a Mid and East Antrim Age Friendly Action Plan by 31 March 2024.
Status	The draft Age-Friendly Strategy and Action Plan has been subject to a public consultation, and is anticipated to launch by 30 June 2024. This action continues within the Performance Improvement Plan for 2024 to 2025.
Outcome 3	The development of a borough-wide Landlord Forum.
Measure 1	To develop a borough-wide Landlord Forum by 31 March 2024.
Status	Arrangements for the MEA Landlord Forum to act as a subgroup of the Landlord Association (Northern Ireland) are now in place. However, it has not been possible for the MEA Forum to hold its first meeting as planned this quarter, and as the newsletter intends to promote the meeting, it has also been subject to delay. New dates are being arranged. The Council will step back from its leadership role but will continue to provide appropriate support to the Forum, and will review this within 12 months. We will also continue to engage with community-led initiatives with the aim of achieving sustainable environmental improvements.



Improving infrastructure to support the transition to low-carbon transport systems

To reduce emissions and protect the environment for future generations.

Why are we doing this?

- The phase out date for the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans is 2035.
- In a FASTER Project survey (2021), which established attitudes and behaviour towards transport use, almost 30% of NI respondents (totalling 464) were from Mid and East Antrim (totalling 134 people). Of these, 34% of those who plan to change their vehicle in the next 3 years said they would be likely to purchase a battery electric vehicle.
- When asked what the Council should prioritise to be more environmentally friendly, awareness and assistance in tackling climate change was the 2nd most popular response.

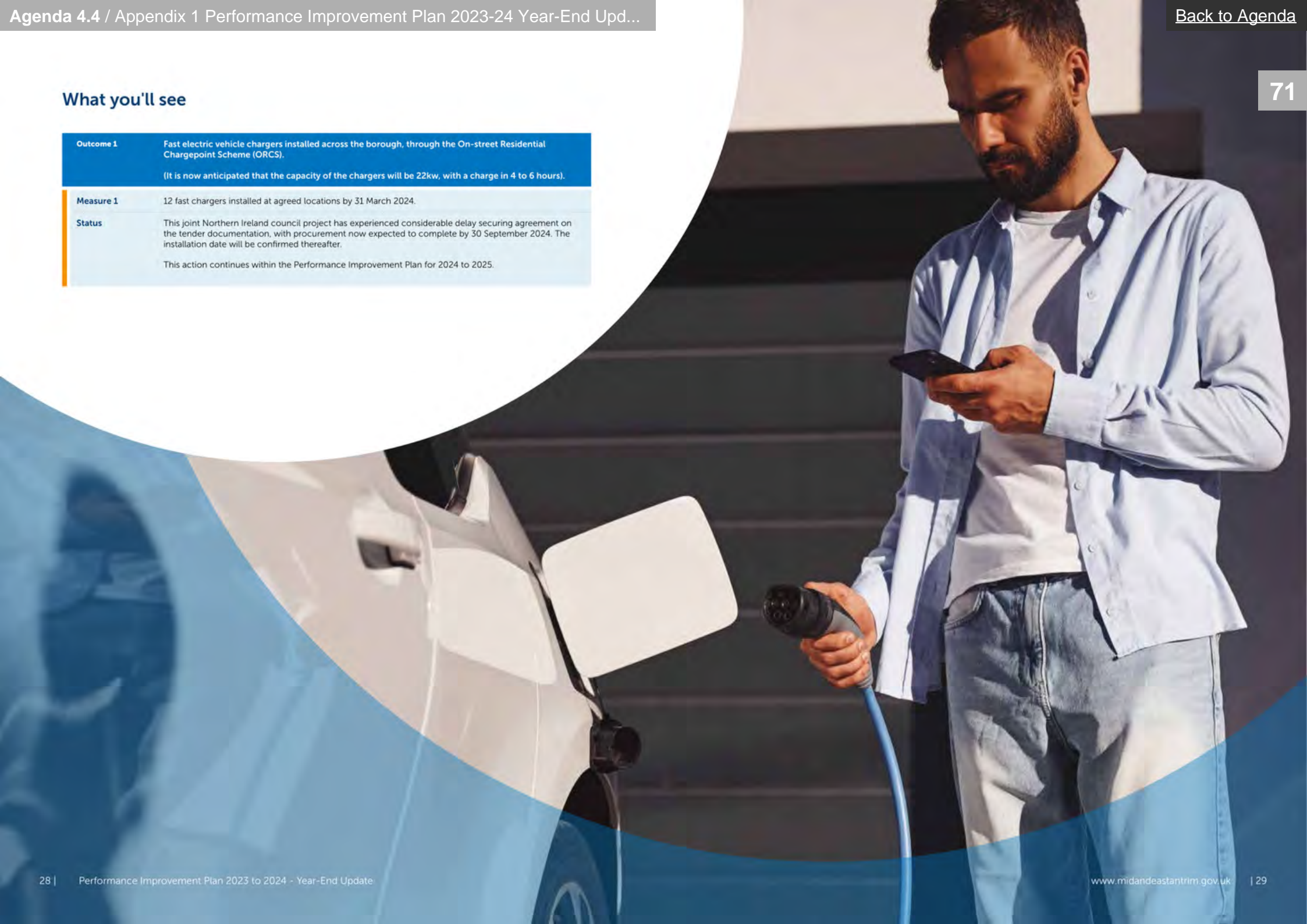
(Source: MEA Citizens Survey 2022)

Who is responsible?

The Director of Operations.

What you'll see

Outcome 1	Fast electric vehicle chargers installed across the borough, through the On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS). (It is now anticipated that the capacity of the chargers will be 22kw, with a charge in 4 to 6 hours).
Measure 1	12 fast chargers installed at agreed locations by 31 March 2024.
Status	This joint Northern Ireland council project has experienced considerable delay securing agreement on the tender documentation, with procurement now expected to complete by 30 September 2024. The installation date will be confirmed thereafter. This action continues within the Performance Improvement Plan for 2024 to 2025.



Enhancing customer engagement and service delivery

To develop the Council's use of information technology to improve customer engagement and service delivery.

Why are we doing this?

- To be a High Performing and Sustainable Council is a strategic priority within our Corporate Plan.
- Digital transformation initiatives can improve our management reporting and help to inform our decision-making. It can provide us with greater flexibility in how we deliver our services, leading to gains in efficiencies and better value for money for our ratepayers.

Who is responsible?

The Interim Director of Corporate Services.



What you'll see

Outcome 1	The digital transformation of at least one customer-facing service
Measure 1	16 Council-managed community centres connected to full fibre broadband by 30 September 2023.
Status	<p>Following a review of our Community Development service, the number of Council-managed community centres reduced to 10. Each of these facilities has been upgraded with cabling to enable full-fibre broadband.</p> <p>Due to wider digital transformation activities within the organisation and staffing limitations, only 4 of our centres are currently fully connected. The remaining 6 will be connected in the 2024/25 financial year, alongside 2 additional centres, which are now back within Council's direct management.</p> <p>This action continues within the Performance Improvement Plan for 2024 to 2025, for delivery by 31 March 2025.</p>

Previous years' Improvement Objectives

While most of our previous objectives are complete, some were not achieved in the year in which they related. An update is provided below.

Objective 1 Encourage people to value our natural environment through the promotion of the Green Dog Walkers scheme.	
Outcome 1	A cleaner borough.
Measure 1	A reduction in the number of residents perceiving dog foul to be an issue in our local areas.
Status	Our Citizens' Survey (2022) indicated an increase in people perceiving dog foul to be an issue within their local environment (11% in 2018 versus 42% in 2022). The 2022 survey was conducted in a post-pandemic environment, which may have affected results. During this time, there was a substantial increase in local outdoor activity as people stayed close to home and worked from home. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that pet ownership increased during this time, with a significant proportion of individuals obtaining a dog having never owned one before. Access to dog training services and peer support was also reduced throughout the pandemic. We continue to encourage responsible pet ownership, and seek to influence behavioural change through the Green Dog Walkers Scheme, which is integrated into everyday practices and is at the core of our communications. While updates will no longer be reported through the Performance Improvement Plan, dog foul complaints will be monitored and reported to the relevant Committee every six months.
Objective 2 Improving customer engagement and service delivery by enhancing the Council's use of information technology	
Outcome 1	The continued implementation of the Council's Agile Framework, through the delivery of a number of citizen-focused projects.
Measure 1	The redesign of the Council's website developed from user experience feedback (phase 3).
Measure 2	The expansion of the automated customer call system into an additional service area.
Status	The Council is in the process of designing and implementing significant change to operate more effectively and efficiently. One element of this transformational work includes a technology review across the organisation. The website redesign and expansion of the automated customer call system are not being progressed at present and will form part of the wider review, as resources are prioritised accordingly.
Objective 3 The development of Sullatober Household Recycling centre	
Outcome 1	A larger site with improved infrastructure and accessibility to maximise re-use and recycling.
Measure 1	A 6,500m2 site by 31 March 2022.
Status	The new and improved household recycling centre opened in May 2022. The more user-friendly site enables more efficient waste disposal, quicker traffic throughput and less congestion. The area has since benefited from additional investment, including the upgrading of surrounding roads and the development of new business units.

Measure 2	Increase the recycling rate by 23.2% by 31 March 2023.
Status	The recycling rate for April to December 2023 was 65.8%, an increase of 2.5% (1.6 percentage points) from the 2018 baseline year (64.2%). While we continue to encourage recycling through the provision of modern facilities and environmental education programmes, recycling remains at the public's discretion. As a result, it is not anticipated the original 23.2% target can be achieved. This measure will no longer be reported through the Performance Improvement Plan. The level of domestic and commercial waste, recycling, street cleanliness and fly tipping etc., will be reported to the Council's Environment and Economy Committee each quarter and the statutory waste indicators will continue to be reported within the Performance Improvement Plan for 2024 to 2025.
Measure 3	1,046 additional tonnes of recycled materials by 31 March 2023.
Status	There were 235.6 additional tonnes of recycled materials from April to December 2023 (+8.4%) compared with the same period in 2018 (baseline year). Although improvements continue to be made to our recycling operations, after due consideration, it is not anticipated that the original target can be achieved. This measure will no longer be reported through the Performance Improvement Plan.
Measure 4	12 additional tonnes of re-used materials by 31 March 2023.
Status	There were 30.53 additional tonnes of re-used materials from April to December 2023 compared with the same period in 2018 (baseline year). Examples of types of reused materials include additional Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment, furniture and bric-a-brac, and textiles and footwear. Improvements continue to be made to the segregation and management of materials for re-use.
Outcome 2 Financial savings by compacting waste and reduction in fuel consumption.	
Measure 1	50% reduction in containers hauled per newly compacted material by 31 March 2023.
Measure 2	Reduce tCO2e by 800 by 31 March 2023.
Status	A significant number of shifting variables makes it impossible to provide a reliable comparison between the 2018/19 baseline year, and the 2023/24 financial year, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste collection, management and methods of disposal differ due to legislative changes, and contrasting practices at the disposal sites used by the Council. The Council has made substantial investments in more fuel-efficient and carbon-efficient equipment and vehicles. Changes in working practices throughout 2022/23 have resulted in operational efficiencies i.e. greater optimisation of vehicles, with waste operators now servicing multiple sites. The number of households in the borough increased from 57,158 in 2018/19 to 58,776 in 2022/23 (+2.83%). The amount of waste arisings in the borough has also increased, with almost 1,000 additional tonnes of waste from April to December 2023, compared with the same period in 2018. As other councils have introduced waste control measures to limit the amount of waste being disposed of from outside their respective council areas, 'Waste Tourism' has significantly increased in Mid and East Antrim, particularly within the Carrickfergus area. <p>As result, these two measures are deemed stopped and will not be reported in the Performance Improvement Plan for 2024 to 2025. Improvements will continue to be made to the effectiveness and efficiency of our waste operations, in line with changing legislation and environmental targets.</p>
Outcome 3 A more effective and efficient service with increased customer satisfaction and value for money for ratepayers.	
Measure 1	Increased rate of customer satisfaction.
Status	Surveys conducted in 2021 and 2022 indicate an increase in customer satisfaction for accessibility, movement around the site, and sufficient site size.

Statutory key performance indicators

The Department for Communities set statutory targets for councils in the areas of Planning, Economic Development and Waste.

These are outlined in our annual business plans, and as far as possible, within our Improvement Objectives. We also set our own internal targets to ensure continuous improvement within these areas.







Performance updates are published on our website every 3 months at:

midandeastantrim.gov.uk/improvement

Our results for the period April 2023 to December 2023, are summarised to the right. Data up to March 2024 is not yet available.

* (Includes 9 full time equivalent posts from the Labour Market Partnership's Enterprise Pathways programme).

** The Department for Communities (DIC) requires that each council sets and monitors its own individual target for this indicator annually.

	Indicator 	Target 	Result 
	The average processing time of major planning applications	MAX 30 Weeks	67.4 Weeks
	The average processing time of local planning applications	MAX 15 Weeks	10 Weeks
	The percentage of enforcement cases concluded within 39 weeks	MIN 70%	The data has not yet been published.
	The number of jobs promoted through business start interventions	MIN 85 Jobs	103 Jobs*
	The percentage of household waste collected by district Councils that is sent for recycling	MIN 50%	52.48%
	The amount of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled	MAX 16,387 Tonnes	10,302 Tonnes
	The amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings	MAX 75,797 Tonnes**	57,613 Tonnes



For us, improvement is not limited to gains in service output or efficiencies. It is about focusing on the issues that are important to our citizens and businesses, helping us achieve our vision of improving the quality of life for all.



For further information contact us at:

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Visit our website: www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk

Feedback

We welcome your suggestions and comments on areas where we can enhance our services at any point throughout the year. Please feel free to reach out to us by emailing: performance@midandeastantrim.gov.uk

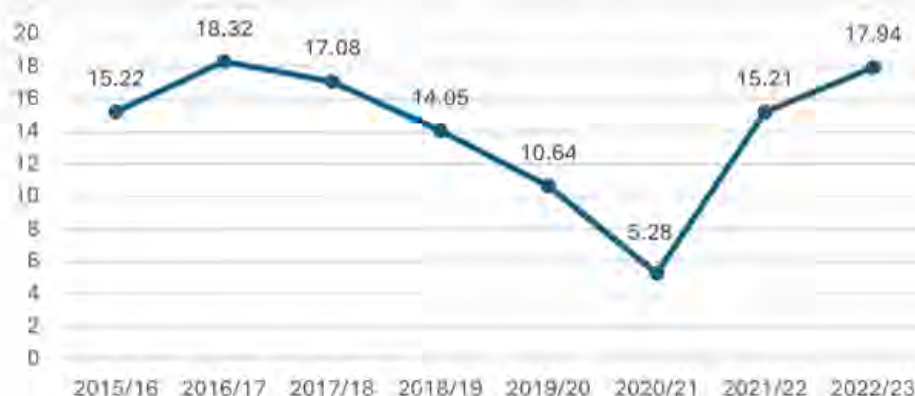
Council/Committee:	Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance Committee
Date:	17 June 2024
Report Title:	Absence Management
Publication Status:	Open
Author:	Sarah Williams, Assistant Director of Business Support
Approver:	Lauren Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate Services

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to update Elected Members on absence management from the period 01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 and to highlight actions Officers continue to implement in order to support a positive attendance culture.

2. Background

- 2.1. Absence levels in Mid and East Antrim Borough Council have previously been amongst the highest across all Councils. Following a period of focused management and interventions including a new Attendance Policy introduced in April 2019, the absence management levels began to fall but have increased during the last two financial years.
- 2.2. The chart below shows the Council absence rates from 2015/16 onwards.



- 2.3. The Council recognises that absence during the 2020/21 financial year was heavily influenced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting a record

low level of absence. In 2021/22 there was an increase in absence levels and this was in line with other Councils in Northern Ireland and also the general working population.

- 2.4. As previously reported in January 2024, according to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's Health and Wellbeing at Work survey published in September 2023, absence levels across the UK reached their highest in a decade. When examining the potential reasons for increased absence levels in Council, sadly it is the case that a record number of employees have been diagnosed with various types of cancer during this financial year. This absence is recorded across a number of categories as set out in section 3.5 of this report. In addition, some staff have experienced other very serious health events such as strokes or been involved in road traffic accidents that have resulted in significant injuries. A number of these types of absence are usually long term in nature.

3. Key Issues for Consideration

- 3.1 The table below shows the days lost to sickness absence per FTE for the period 01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 against target:

Month / Days Lost	12 months 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024
Actual	17.04
Target	14.00

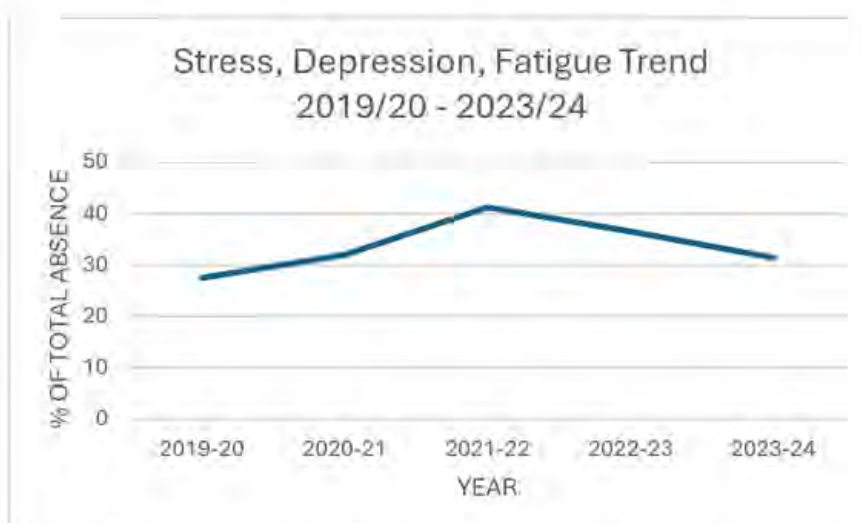
- 3.2 If **COVID-19 related absence** were to be discounted for the purposes of absence reporting in line with practice in some other Councils across Northern Ireland, the total days lost per FTE would reduce to 16.54.
- 3.3 **No absence.** In line with the trends in recent years, a relatively high percentage of staff, 64.37% had no absence during 2023/24. This metric compares favourably with other Councils and demonstrates that a comparatively small number of staff have taken sickness absence leave during the year and of those who have, in many cases the duration of absence has been lengthy.
- 3.4. **Long term absence.** 82% of staff absence is long term. This is defined as absence that is for 20 continuous working days or more. There have been 123 long term absences during the reporting period with a total of 29 staff absent for 100 days or more due to serious health issues, including cancer, debilitating musculoskeletal issues and other traumatic health issues. At the time of writing, of these 29 long term absentees, 7 have left Council employment due to resignation, ill health retirement or dismissal on capability grounds, a further 4 staff have been approved to leave via ill health retirement and will do so in the coming weeks, 15 staff have successfully returned to work, leaving three employees on continued absence. There were also a further five employees who were granted ill

health retirement earlier in the year, meaning that they were not classed as long term absentees during 2023-24.

- 3.5 In relation to long term absence, regrettably staff continue to experience significant delays in line with the general population in accessing initial NHS Consultant appointments, diagnostic procedures and other surgical interventions and treatments. This means that in some cases the employee's condition is deteriorating to the extent that they are unable to work until surgery has been completed. This has continued to contribute towards higher levels of absence during 2023-24. Staff are able to avail of a free Health Cash Plan that provides some monetary support if they wish to avail of private healthcare to access an appointment with a Consultant or to access diagnostic imaging such as CT and MRI scans or X-rays.
- 3.6. **Absence reasons.** The table below provides a percentage breakdown of absence, by reason, for the period 01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 (as defined by the local government auditor standards):

Absence Reason	Number Of Days	%	No of Absentees
Stress, depression, fatigue	3,218.5	31.43%	65
Musculo-skeletal ex back+neck	1,780	17.38%	40
Stomach, liver, kidney	987	9.64%	60
Other	792	7.73%	12
Heart, blood pressure	784	7.66%	15
Chest and respiratory	705.5	6.89%	52
Back and Neck problems	651	6.36%	24
Infections	402	3.93%	62
Genito-urinary/Gynae	400.5	3.91%	8
Eye, ear, nose and mouth	282.5	2.76%	25
Neurological	188.5	1.84%	14
Pregnancy (exc Mat Leave)	48	0.47%	3
Grand Total	10,239.5	100.00%	380

- 3.7 **Mental Health related absence.** Mental Health related absence continues to be the main reason for absence, with 31.43% of all absence attributed to the Stress, Depression and Fatigue category. However, it should be noted that this absence category has decreased since its recent peak during 2021-22 as demonstrated in the following chart:



3.8 Upon further examination of this absence reason category, 77% was due to personal related reasons such as bereavement, family illness. The chart below provides a further breakdown. Council has continued to implement a positive mental health and well-being action plan to support staff. Further details on the activities and initiatives that have been launched as part of this plan are detailed later in this report.



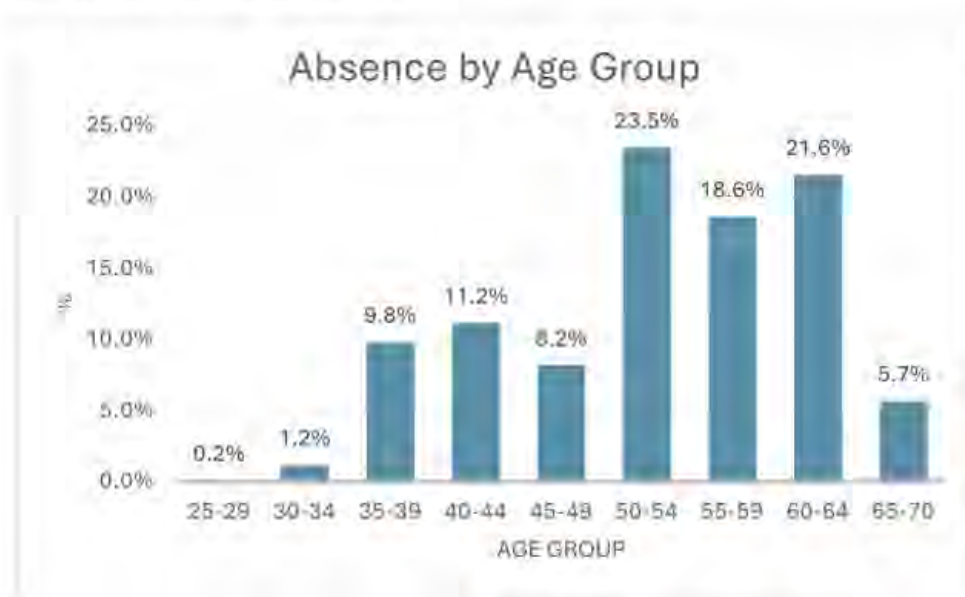
3.9. In line with the Local Government Mental Health Strategy, Council has continued to implement its positive mental health and well-being action plan to act positively to reduce staff absence with a focus on mental health related absence. As part of this roll out, a suite of health and wellbeing measures are available to staff so that they can access the help they need to improve their health and wellbeing. Such initiatives include:

- Provision of an Employee Assistance Programme which incorporates a confidential counselling service

- A Health Cash Plan Staff that provides some financial assistance towards physiotherapy, podiatry and optometry services, as well as diagnostic tests and scanning and a confidential telephone counselling service;
- A network of 15 Mental Health Champions who have all been trained in Mental Health First Aid.
- Circulation of information from external stakeholders, detailing free webinars and other initiatives that focus on health and wellbeing topics including mental health, financial health, achieving work life balance, healthy eating and more specific advice relating to both men's and women's health.
- Access to information on two different wellbeing hubs (Inspire and Stay Well), where all staff can find information, advice and signposting that may assist them with challenging circumstances. Line managers also have access to wellbeing information in a dedicated area.
- Two specific initiatives were rolled out by Council in October. The first was promotion of the Shoctober Campaign which focused on the Chain of Survival, CPR, defibrillation and heart health. The second was Optimistic October that encouraged staff to 'be kind to your mind' and included Time to walk and talk, Self-care, Desk Yoga and a Macmillan Coffee morning.

3.10 Highest absence incidents. Of further note is the Stomach, liver and kidney category of absence which accounts for the highest number of absence incidents (68), ranging from staff who have cancer to those who have taken a short period of absence due to an upset stomach.

3.11 Demographic Breakdown of Absence. The following chart shows that as would generally be expected, absence was highest amongst the oldest employees in the workforce.



- 3.12 In terms of gender, absence was highest amongst male employees and when compared with the gender breakdown of the overall workforce, the level of absence amongst male employees was higher than expected. This will be scrutinised further and reported back to Elected Members during the 2024/25 year but it is anticipated that this will be mainly due to a higher number of men working in front line operational roles that are more physically demanding, particularly taking account of an aging workforce.
- 3.13 The chart overleaf sets out the gender breakdown of the full staff population and compares this with the gender breakdown of absentees throughout the year.
- 3.14 At the Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee in January, Elected Members requested that absence was broken down by department. The chart below provides a breakdown by Directorate.



- 3.15 To provide a further breakdown, the table below includes absence by service level and clearly shows that staff working in front operational roles in Neighbourhood Services have a higher level of absence.

Department	Total Days Lost
Chief Executive's Department	
Finance	114.00
HR & Organisational Development	130.50
Community	
Community Planning & Development	537.00

Parks & Open Spaces	137.00
Public Protection, Health & Wellbeing	1,524.00
Corporate Services	
Communications	26.00
Corporate Performance & Improvement	91.00
Corporate Services	187.00
Development	
Digital Innovation & Procurement	89.00
Economic Development	482.00
Planning & Building Control	748.00
Tourism, Arts & Culture	161.50
Operations	
Capital Works	10.00
Facility Management & Maintenance	774.00
Neighbourhood Services	4,923.50
Other* (small departments have been combined in this category to ensure staff cannot be identified.)	305.00
TOTAL	10,239.50

4. General Considerations / Implications

4.1. Financial

The Council follows the guidance within the NJC Terms and Conditions of employment for Local Government, known as 'Green Book'. The Green Book scheme for sickness absence provides that employees are entitled to occupational sick pay which is determined by length of service. The maximum amount of contractual sick pay after five years local government service is six months at full pay, six months half pay.

There are also the financial costs incurred in relation to the need for temporary cover of short and long-term sickness cases to maintain service delivery.

4.2. Human Resources

The Council aims to support staff that experience ill health and to assist them to maintain a good attendance at work. Sickness absence has an impact on the delivery of services to customers and means that duties need to be covered or reallocated to ensure continuity of service delivery. Long periods of absence as well as unplanned short-term periods of absence can cause disruptions and put additional pressure on remaining team members.

4.3. Legal

The Council has an obligation to make reasonable adjustments to allow a disabled employee to continue working or to join the organisation. Sickness records are a protected category under the Data Protection Act provisions in relation to employee records.

4.4. Equality

Council does employ a number of staff who have medical conditions which are considered to meet the definition of disability. The Council works with its

occupational health provider and external agencies to ensure appropriate reasonable adjustments are in place.

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1. Council will continue to benchmark and explore best practice in supporting staff to maintain good attendance levels and equip line managers to fulfil their obligations in managing attendance.
- 5.2. Heads of Service will continue to be briefed on a monthly basis about absence in their service, allowing for key case discussions to be held and actions agreed.
- 5.3. In line with the strategic direction of senior management, Human Resources will continue to encourage and work with line managers to maintain a flexible approach when facilitating adjustments that allow a member of staff to either remain in work or return to work following sickness absence.
- 5.4. Members will be aware that Audit & Scrutiny Committee requested a deep-dive scrutiny review into the issue of sickness absence. Due to resource and business pressures in HR the start of this review has been delayed. It is planned to start this during the summer months.

6. Recommendation or Decision

- 6.1. Elected Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

7. Appendices / Links



Council/Committee: Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee
Date: 17 June 2024

Report Title: Annual Performance Report on the Corporate Key Health and Safety Priorities including Key Achievements

Publication Status: Open

Author: Diane Irwin, Health and Safety Manager

Approver: Sarah Williams, Assistant Director Support Services

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on performance activity in line with the key Health and Safety priorities during 2023/2024.

2. Background

- 2.1. This report covers the 2023/24 year and gives an update on the implementation of the Council's Health and Safety framework built on the Plan/Do/Check/Act model. This report highlights the work undertaken and achieved during this period and looks at the year ahead.

3. Key Issues for Consideration

- 3.1 The key focus for the 2023/24 year was to improve the risk assessment process and in particular to support the operational teams with embedding their safety arrangements. An overview on key health and safety performance targets are reflected in the following points.

3.2 Accidents Statistics 2023/24

An accident management system is in place to allow for the reporting of all accidents and incidents with these reviewed by Line Management and the Corporate Health and Safety team.

The table below shows the set Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) against the Actual Number reported covering both accidents and RIDDOR.

	Annual KPI Set: Reduce the number from 2022/23 baseline	Actual Number from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024
Accidents	11	10
RIDDOR	2	6

It can be noted the number of accidents reported for the year 2023/24 did not exceed the baseline of 11 from the previous year. However, the number of RIDDOR (*Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations*) reports exceeded the previous year's baseline target with six of the accidents requiring a RIDDOR report.

All accidents including those which are reportable under RIDDOR are reviewed and investigated to consider the improvements needed to prevent future reoccurrences as well as to learn lessons.

The improvements from these are captured within Corrective Actions Plans and these are followed through until closed off and this results with a safer working environment for all.

The corrective action plans are also a new KPI for the health and safety team this reporting year and it is noted that 85% of these were completed for this period which exceeded the 75% target set.

3.1. Corporate Health and Safety Committee

During the 2023/24 year the Corporate Health and Safety Committee have met on three occasions, 8 June 2023, 5 October 2023 and 23 January 2024 respectively to oversee the implementation of the Council's Health and Safety Framework.

The Committee has a set Agenda which covers:

- Policy development
- Risk Assessment update
- Inspections and audits
- Training
- Legislation updates
- An overview on new claims/insurance update.

3.2. Policy Progress

The key Policies to note are:

- (a) The **Fire Safety Policy** was approved towards the end of the previous year (March 2023) with implementation taking place during this reporting period from 2023/24.

The implementation of the Policy included staff training both in classroom and via eLearning and ensuring at least one fire drill had taken place. Evacuation procedures continue to be updated in line with

any workplace changes. More fire drills will be carried out during this new financial year.

(b) **The Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Policy**

The PPE Policy was reviewed and updated by the end of March 2024 and approved in April 2024. This Policy has now been circulated to all staff and key operational managers. Operational Managers were provided with additional information for their teams including a toolbox talk and workplace checks such as display of mandatory signage.

3.3. Risk Assessments

The Health and Safety team had devised a simpler proforma for the completing of operational risk assessments. Line managers and supervisors were provided with training on the process of risk assessment including how to record and evaluate using the new documentation.

Operational Departments are reviewing and updating their risk assessments with these discussed at health and safety working groups. Comprehensive reviews and updates of risk assessments are progressing with the operational areas.

The introduction of health and safety working groups with key operational areas is a new function this year aiming to build on the safety culture and also to support teams with key areas and in particular with updating and embedding risk assessments. It is hoped these working groups will meet twice per year at least.

In addition, Health and Safety continues to support managers across the Council with their everyday risk assessments covering chemicals, set up of workstations, individual assessments to cover pregnant woman, young people and staff absences.

3.4. Training

To ensure staff remain competent in their job role training is provided as a means of updating knowledge and skills.

Over the last 12 months training has resumed for a number of key areas and these are highlighted as follows:

- External classroom training undertaken showing numbers:
 - **First Aid at work** for various staff (61 trained)
 - **Work equipment** (dumpers, bin lifts) for operational staff (62 trained)
 - **Personal Protection** training for staff in front facing roles (36 trained)
- Construction Skills Register (CSR)** cards for Officers who may need to access construction sites (31)



- The **eLearning training** using the iHASCO system continues to be utilised for a number of safety modules such as
 - Accident Reporting (293 completed)
 - Manual Handling (305 completed)
 - Slips, trips, and falls (339 completed)
 - COSHH – chemicals (270 completed)
- **Bespoke inhouse** Health and Safety training has been developed and provided for:
 - Working at Height with Ladders/Step Ladders
 - General health and safety awareness training delivered to some Community Centre staff.
 - Risk Assessment training for operational line managers and supervisors.
- **Induction** training
All new starts receive Health and Safety Induction training which raises awareness on how to work safely, responding to an emergency, how to report accidents, and raise concerns to their line manager.
- **Manual handling** training
Council had seven staff trained in November 2023 as Manual Handling Train the Trainers. This brings the total numbers of trained staff to 16 across all of the Council in various workplaces.

A corporate package of training materials has been developed to ensure a consistent approach is taken by trained staff and this includes for example the Safe Operating Procedure to follow for delivery, presentation, training plan and evaluation.

This supports Council to ensure teams get training designed for their work area and in the long term this should reduce injuries for example associated with back, shoulder and neck and improve attendance to work.

3.5. Inspections and audits

A schedule of inspections and audits had been in place throughout the year to check compliance with legislation and best practice ensuring control measures were working to reduce accidents and injuries.

All recommendations are shared and discussed with the relevant Manager before leaving the site and this is followed up either by email or report.

It can be noted the KPI target for the year had been to complete 60 inspections, and at the year-end there were 64 inspections completed.



The inspections and audits cover a range of workplaces across Council as well as checking documentation in place.

3.6. Support, advice and promoting safe working practices:

The Health and Safety team continues to provide support and advice across Council on a daily basis via email, meetings and during site visits ensuring compliance with legislative requirements.

3.7. Other areas of interest to note:

- Health and Safety Executive NI Visits

- July 2023 the HSENI Inspector visited three HRC sites Ballymena, Larne and Sullatober and confirmed he was content with the sites and no actions to be taken forward.

- Occupational Health Surveillance

The programme of mandatory health checks had been arranged and completed with 86 staff undertaking from the following work areas of Parks, Facilities, Waste Management, and Garages. No issues of concern were identified. This programme will continue this year also.

- Mental Health and Well Being

The KPI target was set for two activities relating to “*Encourage our staff to use the resources and tools available to improve and maintain their physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing*”.

This target had been met with two activities scheduled and delivered during the Mental Health Awareness week in May 2023 and October 2023 to tie in with mental health awareness days.

The Health and Safety Manager during the year has worked in partnership with the Local Government Staff Commission (NI) for Health and Wellbeing and introduced any new initiatives arising from this group, as well as Business in the Community (NI) sharing any webinars available and ensured all relevant information from both organisations including the Staff Well Hub which has been circulated via the Achieve email address.

3.8. **Looking forward** to the key activities for the year ahead

- Delivering on the **Business Plan and KPIs** set for 2024/25.
- Renewal of the **Health and Safety System**:
The health and safety system for recording accidents will be renewed again later this year. The system will be utilised for the recording of

accidents and will have additional modules of risk assessment and corrective actions.

- To progress a draft **Drugs and Alcohol Policy** including testing by an external consultant.
- Revitalising the **Corporate Health and Safety Committee** meetings and refreshing the **Terms of Reference** with the newly appointed Assistant Director Business Support as Chair.
- **Refresher line management training** on reporting accidents and investigations to improve the data set in line with the renewal of the new Health and Safety System.
- Focusing on **safety behaviours** this year in light of the accidents for the 2023/24 period.
- Review of Corporate Health and Safety **Policy** documentation for those over three years.

4. General Considerations / Implications

- 4.1. There are no required financial considerations required for this report as this is an update on previous work which has already took place with budgets agreed.
- 4.2. There are no Human Resources considerations at this time as this is an update report on previous work which has already happened. The aim of the key health and safety priorities are to improve working conditions and to reduce absence allowing for service delivery.

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1. To continue with the implementation of the Corporate Health and Safety framework and focus on the key health and safety priorities and business plan to ensure compliance with statutory and legislative requirements.

6. Recommendation or Decision

- 6.1. It is recommended that Council/Elected Members note the report.

7. Appendices / Links

Council/Committee:	Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance
Date:	17 June 2023
Report Title:	NIE Sub-station – Herbert Street, Carnlough
Publication Status:	Open
Author:	Sarah Williams, Assistant Director Business Support
Approver:	Laureen Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate Services

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to a Lease, right of way and cable easement for a new Northern Ireland Electricity Networks Limited (NIE) Sub-station at Herbert Street, Carnlough.

2. Background

- 2.1. NIE have approached Council regarding the siting of a new Sub-station at Herbert Street, Carnlough measuring 24.75sqm in accordance with the map attached at Appendix 1. Relevant officers have no objection to the proposal and NIE have offered £2000 based on a value by Land and Property Services (LPS).

3. Key Issues for Consideration

- 3.1. Council has a number of lease agreements with NIE across the Borough. Council typically enters a 99 year lease with standard provisions for sub-stations and NIE pays a premium usually determined by LPS valuers. All new agreements relating to land require Council approval.

4. General Considerations / Implications

- 4.1. Financial implications - the lands have been valued independently by LPS on behalf of NIE and meets with Council Officers' approval.
- 4.2. Good Relations - As per other leases for similar sub-stations in the Council area, this lease will maintain good relations with an important statutory stakeholder and the community.
- 4.3. Corporate Plan - The sub-station is key to the distribution of electricity to support local households and businesses.

5. Proposed Way Forward

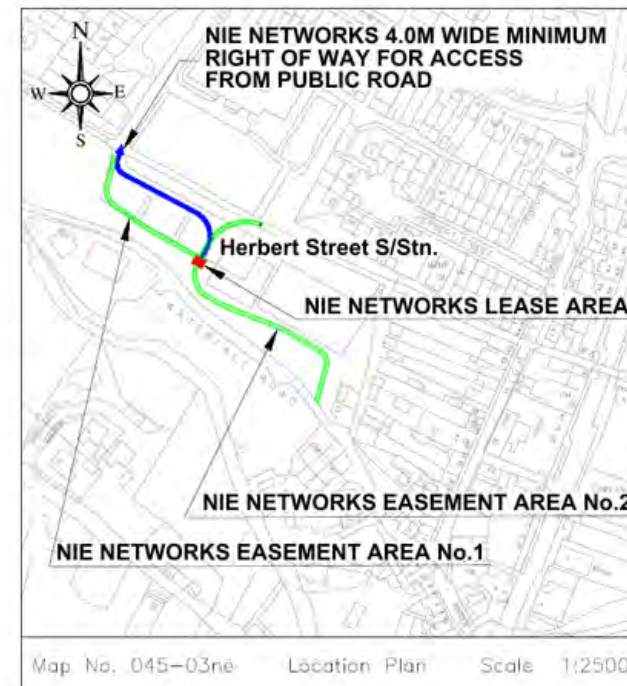
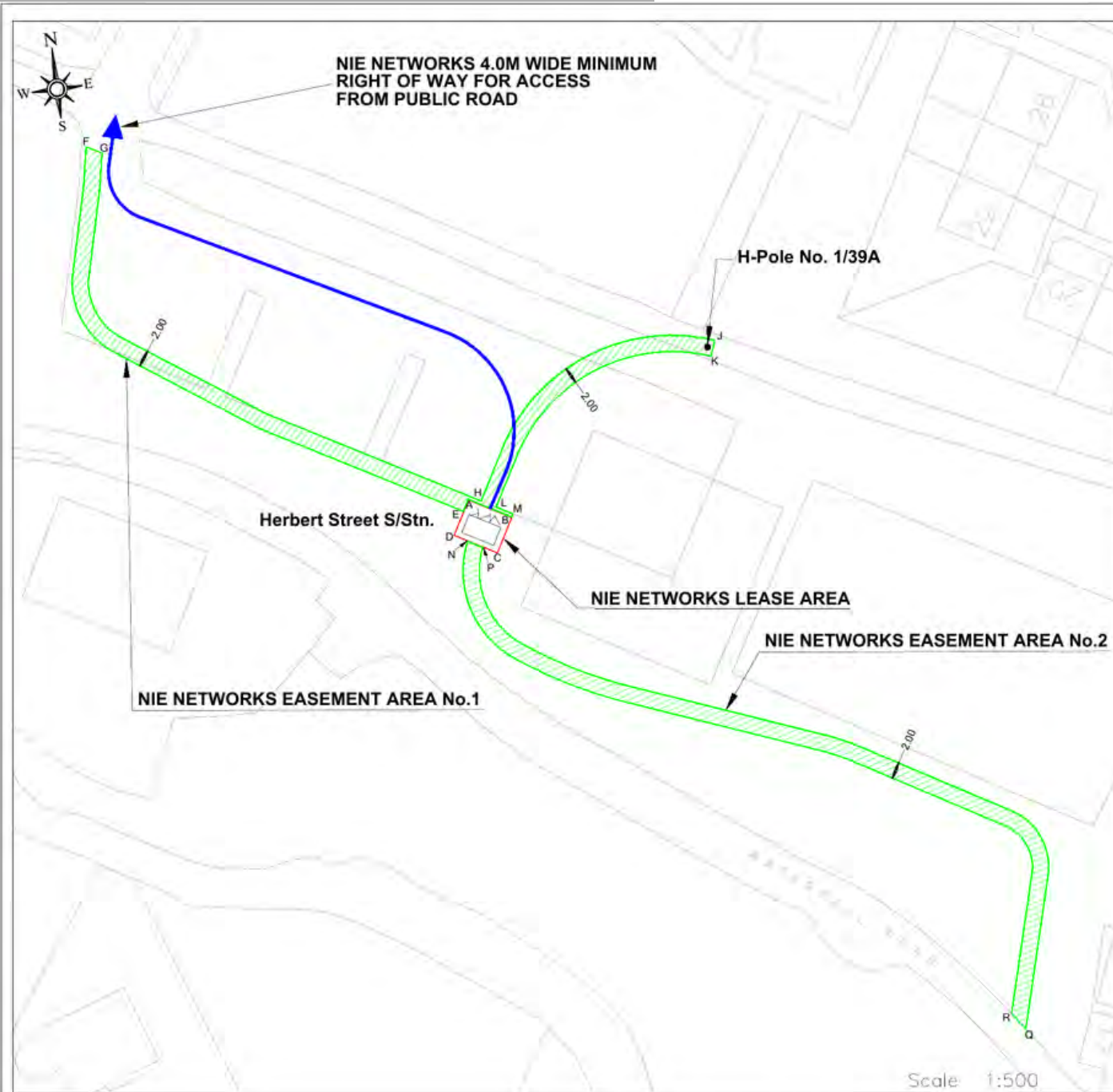
- 5.1. If approved the Mayor and Chief Executive will need to be authorised to execute the necessary legal documentation.

6. Recommendation or Decision

- 6.1. Council/Elected Members are asked to:
 - agree to enter into a new Lease, right of way and cable easement with NIE for a new sub-station at Herbert Street, Carnlough as outlined in Appendix 1; and
 - authorise the Chief Executive and the Mayor to execute and seal the new Lease, right of way and cable easement.

7. Appendices / Links

Appendix 1 – Proposed lease, right of way and cable easement



Map No. 045-03ne Location Plan Scale 1:2500

SUB-STATION LEASE AREA A-B-C-D-A

SITE MEASUREMENTS
 A = B = 5.50m
 A = D = 4.50m
 Lease Area = 24.75'

- SUB-STATION NOTES**
- 1A. FOR DETAILS OF RAFT FOUNDATION SEE DRG. No. CN-2018-2003C2
 - 1B. FOR PLAN & ELEVATION OF KIOSK S/S SEE DRG. No. E.S.1 6006/124/2.
 - 1C. NIE NETWORKS TO HAVE AN UNDEFINED RIGHT OF WAY FOR ACCESS FROM PUBLIC ROAD.
 - 1D. NIE NETWORKS TO HAVE A RIGHT OF WAY AS PER THE 1:2500 LOCATION PLAN.
- EASEMENT NOTES**
- 2A. NIE NETWORKS TO HAVE A 3.00m WIDE CABLE EASEMENT FROM E-F-G-H-J-K-L-M-O-A-E & N-P-Q-R-N.
 - 2B. AREA DEFINED BY CABLE EASEMENT PLANTING IS RESTRICTED TO GRASS OR SHALLOW ROOTED GROUND COVER.
 - 2C. NIE NETWORKS EASEMENT AREA No.1 E-F-G-H-J-K-L-M-O-A-E = 212.850m²
 NIE NETWORKS EASEMENT AREA No.1 N-P-Q-R-N = 201.970m²

- LEGEND**
- NIE NETWORKS LEASE AREA
 - NIE NETWORKS CABLE EASEMENT
 - NIE NETWORKS 4.0m WIDE MINIMUM RIGHT OF WAY FOR ACCESS FROM PUBLIC ROAD

	NIE NETWORKS JOB No.		
	Title: NIE NETWORKS S/STN. LEASE SITE PLAN		
	HERBERT STREET S/STN. OPPOSITE 60 CROFT ROAD CARNLOUGH BT44 0EX		
	Drawing Office DARGAN	Map No. I.G. 045-03ne	Date 26/07/2023
Survived by -	Drawn by E.McMenemy	Scale AS SHOWN	
Checked by E.McMenemy	Map No. I.G. 045-03ne	Date 26/07/2023	
Agreed by N.Freeman	Sheet Size A3	Drawing No. EIL 3232	

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REV	LEASE AND EASEMENT REPOSITIONED	E.McM	E.McM	15/05/2024			
	LEASE AND EASEMENT REPOSITIONED	E.McM	E.McM	10/05/2024			
	AMENDMENT	CHECKED BY	INT	DATE	Agreed by	N.Freeman	

Council/Committee:	Corporate Resources Policy & Governance
Date:	17 June 2024
Report Title:	NIE Sub-station – Lancasterian Street Car Park, Carrickfergus
Publication Status:	Open
Author:	Sarah Williams, Assistant Director Business Support
Approver:	Laureen Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate Services

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to a Lease, right of way and cable easement for a new Northern Ireland Electricity Networks Limited (NIE) Sub-station at Lancasterian Street Carpark in Carrickfergus.

2. Background

- 2.1. NIE have approached Council regarding the siting of a new Sub-station at Lancasterian Street Carpark measuring 40sqm in accordance with the map attached at Appendix 1. Relevant officers have no objection to the proposal and the lands have been valued by Land and Property Services (LPS) at £3,500.

3. Issues for Consideration

- 3.1. Council has a number of lease agreements with NIE across the Borough. Council typically enters a 99 year lease with standard provisions for sub-stations and NIE pays a premium usually determined by LPS valuers. All new agreements relating to land require Council approval.

4. General Considerations / Implications

- 4.1. Financial implications: the lands have been valued independently by LPS on behalf of NIE and meets with Council Officers' approval.
- 4.2. Good Relations: As per other leases for similar sub-stations in the Council area, this lease will maintain good relations with an important statutory stakeholder and the community.
- 4.3. Corporate Plan: The sub-station is key to the distribution of electricity to support local households and businesses.

5. Proposed Way Forward

If approved the Mayor and Chief Executive will need to be authorised to execute the necessary legal documentation.

6. Recommendation or Decision

6.1. That Council:

- (a) agrees to enter into a new Lease, right of way and cable easement with NIE for a new sub-station at Lancasterian Street, Carrickfergus as outlined in Appendix 1; and
- (b) authorises the Chief Executive and the Mayor to execute and seal the new Lease, right of way and cable easement.

7. Appendices / Links

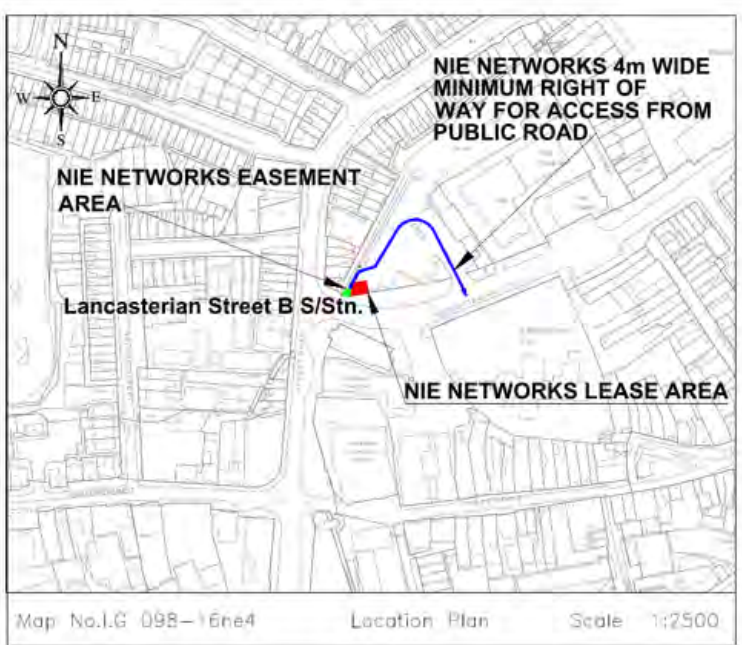
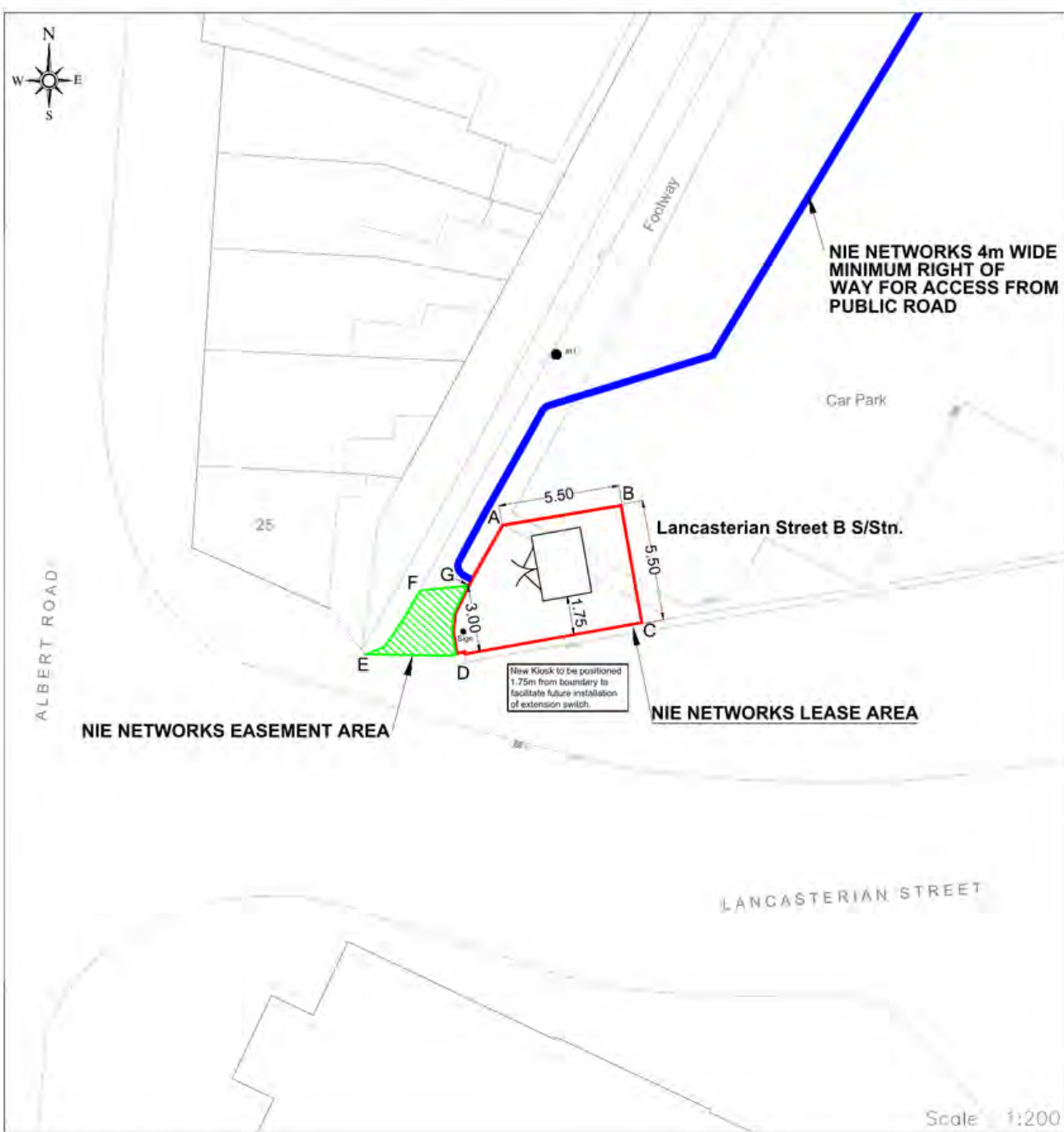
Appendix 1 – Proposed lease, right of way and cable easement

Abbreviations

NIE - Northern Ireland Electricity Networks Limited

LPS - Land And Property Services

Location Nelson Street - Carrickfergus Drawn by L Beattie Date 14/09/2023



Map No. I.G. 098-16ne4 Location Plan Scale 1:2500

- 14. SUB-STATION LEASE AREA A-B-C-D-A**
- SITE MEASUREMENTS**
- A - B = 5.50m
 - B - C = 5.50m
 - C - D = 5.50m
 - D - A = 3.00m
 - D - A = 3.17m
- Lease Area = 40.35m²

- SUB-STATION NOTES**
18. FOR DETAILS OF PAVEMENT FOUNDATION SEE DRG. NO. DN/0016-001-02
 19. FOR PLAN & ELEVATION OF KIOSK S/S SEE DRG. NO. E.S.1 6000/124/1
 19. THE AREA TO BE COVERED WITH 50mm LAYER OF CONCRETE AFTER CABLEING IS COMPLETE. (A-B-C-D-A)
 20. NIE TO HAVE 4m RIGHT OF WAY AS PER 1:2500 LOCATION PLAN
 21. NIE NETWORKS TO REMOVE ANY TREES WITHIN THE PROPOSED LEASE AREA

- EASEMENT NOTES**
22. NIE NETWORKS TO HAVE 4m CABLE EASEMENT FROM D-E-F-G-D
 23. AREA DEFINED BY CABLE EASEMENT PLANTING IS RESTRICTED TO GRASS ON SHALLOW ROOTED DROUING COVER
 24. EASEMENT AREA = D-E-F-G-D = 5.00m²

- LEGEND**
- NIE NETWORKS LEASE AREA
 - NIE NETWORKS CABLE EASEMENT AREA
 - NIE NETWORKS 4.0m MINIMUM WIDE RIGHT OF WAY FOR ACCESS FROM PUBLIC ROAD

	NIE NETWORKS JOB NO.			
	NIE NETWORKS LEASE, EASEMENT & RIGHT OF WAY SITE PLAN			
LANCASTERIAN STREET B S/STN				
CARRICKFERGUS				
BT38 7AG				
DRAWING OFFICE DARGAN	Drawn by: L Beattie	Map No. I.G. 098-16ne4	Date: 14/09/2023	Scale: AS SHOWN
Checked by: J.S.C	Approved by:	Sheet Size: A3	Drawing No. EIL 3322	Rev.

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REV	AMENDMENT	INT.	DATE

Council/Committee:	Corporate Resources Policy & Governance
Date:	17 June 2024
Report Title:	NIE Sub-station Cable Easement Extension – Broughshane Street Carpark
Publication Status:	Open
Author:	Sarah Williams, Assistant Director Business Support
Approver:	Laureen Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate Services

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to an extension of a cable easement for an existing Northern Ireland Electricity Networks Limited (NIE) Sub-station at Broughshane Street Carpark.

2. Background

- 2.1. In October 2021 Council approved a lease, incorporating a right of way and cable easement for an NIE Sub-station at Broughshane Street Carpark in accordance with the map attached at Appendix 1.

3. Key Issues for Consideration

- 3.1. NIE now indicate that they require an extension to the cable easement measuring a further 183 sqm in line with the map at Appendix 2. A valuation of £6,000 has been agreed. NIE indicate they wish to address the matter by way of surrendering the current Lease and executing a new Lease, rather than by way of rectification, and accordingly Council approval will be required.

4. General Considerations / Implications

- 4.1. Financial implications – the extra easement has been valued independently by LPS on behalf of NIE and meets with Council Officers' approval.
- 4.2. The Sub-station Lease has already been approved by Council.
- 4.3. Good Relations: As per other leases for similar sub-stations in the Council area, this lease will maintain good relations with an important statutory stakeholder and the community.
- 4.4. Corporate Plan. The sub-station is key to the distribution of electricity to support local households and businesses.



5. Proposed Way Forward

The existing Lease is to be surrendered and a new Lease executed to effect the extension of the cable easement. Council needs to authorise the Mayor and Chief Executive to execute such legal documentation due to this approach.

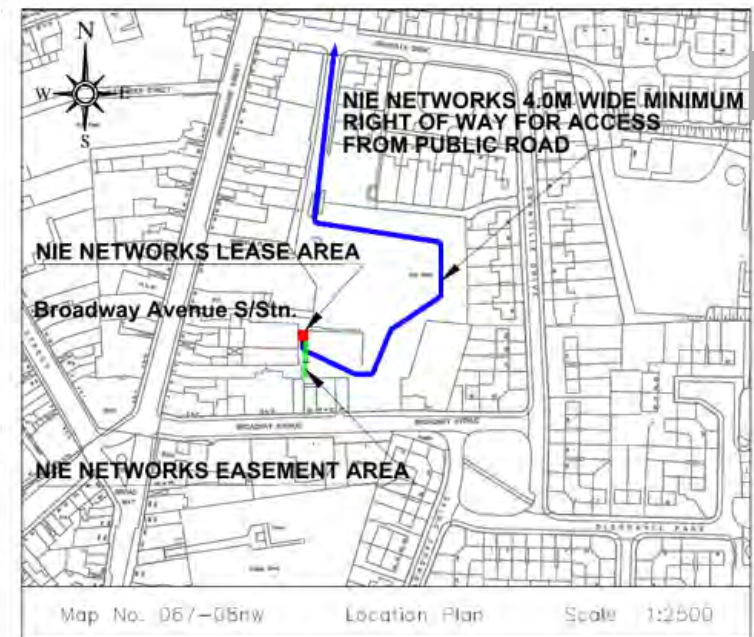
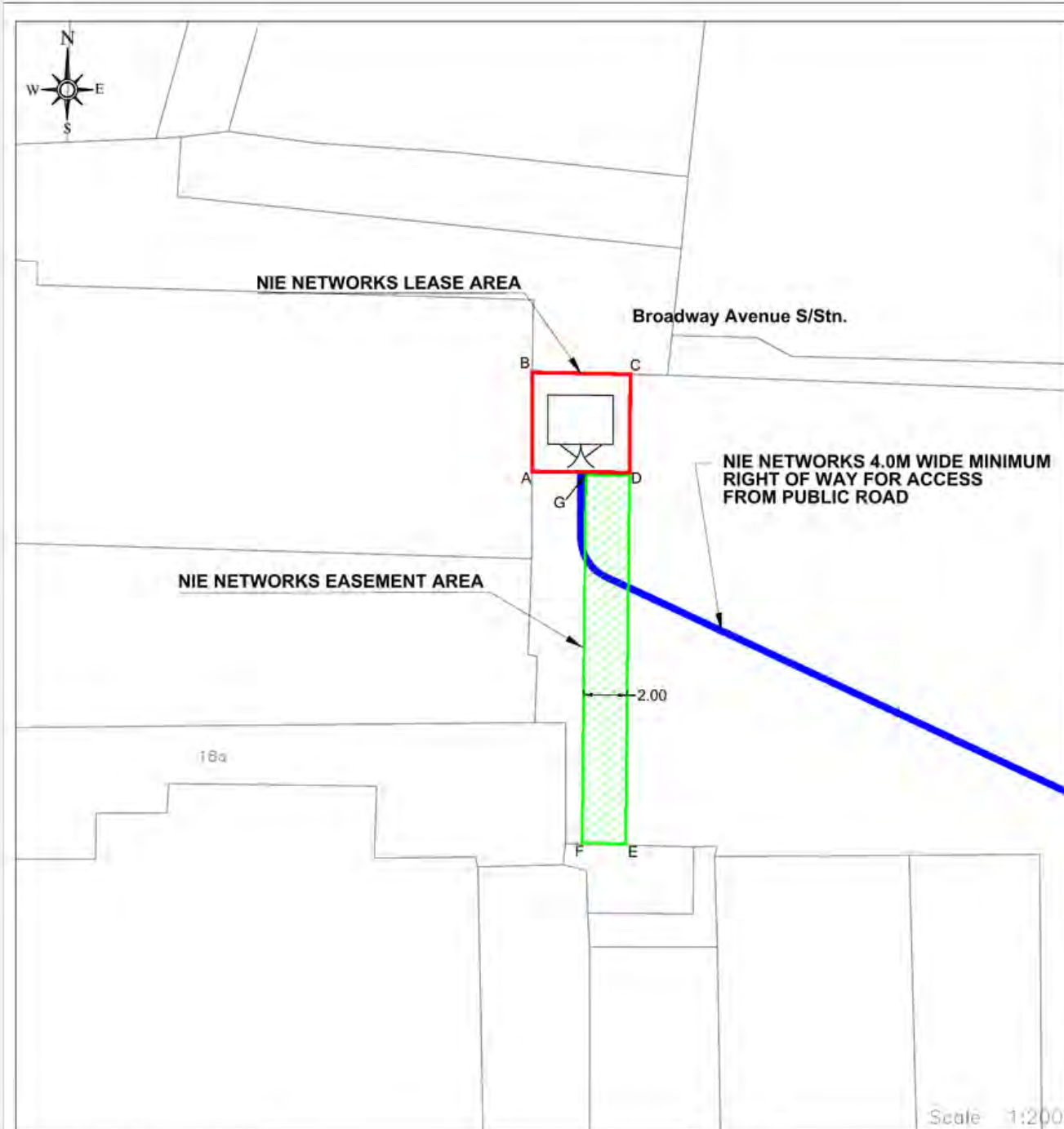
6. Recommendation or Decision

6.1. That Council:

- (a) approves the extension of the cable easement in respect of the existing NIE sub-station at Broughshane Street Carpark by surrendering the existing Lease and entering into a new Lease including cable easement; and
- (b) authorises the Chief Executive and the Mayor to execute and seal the Surrender and new Lease including cable easement.

7. Appendices / Links


- Appendix 1 – Previous lease and cable easement
- Appendix 2 – Proposed lease and cable easement



- SUB-STATION LEASE AREA A-B-C-D-G-H**
- SITE MEASUREMENTS**
 A - B = 4.50m
 A - D = 4.50m
 Lease Area = 20.25m²
- SUB-STATION NOTES**
- (A) FOR DETAILS OF RMT FORMULATION SEE DRG NO. DR-00149(2)11
 - (B) FOR PLAN & ELEVATION OF WORK 1/2 SEE DRG NO. DR-1000(2)1/1
 - (C) SITE AREA TO BE COVERED WITH 50mm LAYER OF CONCRETE AFTER CABLEING IS COMPLETE (A-B-C-D-G-H)
 - (D) NIE NETWORKS TO HAVE A RIGHT OF WAY AS PER THE 19500 LOCATION PLAN
 - (E) HAVE A HARDY FENCE ALONG THE SIDES A-B & C-D TO PREVENT VEHICLES FROM DESTROYING THE SUBSTN
- EASEMENT NOTES**
- (A) NIE NETWORKS TO HAVE A CABLE EASEMENT FROM D-E-F-G-H
 - (B) AREA DEFINED BY CABLE EASEMENT PLANNING IS RESTRICTED TO GRASS OR SHALLOW HOLED DRAINAGE COVER
 - (C) NIE NETWORKS EASEMENT AREA D-E-F-G-H IS 5.00M²

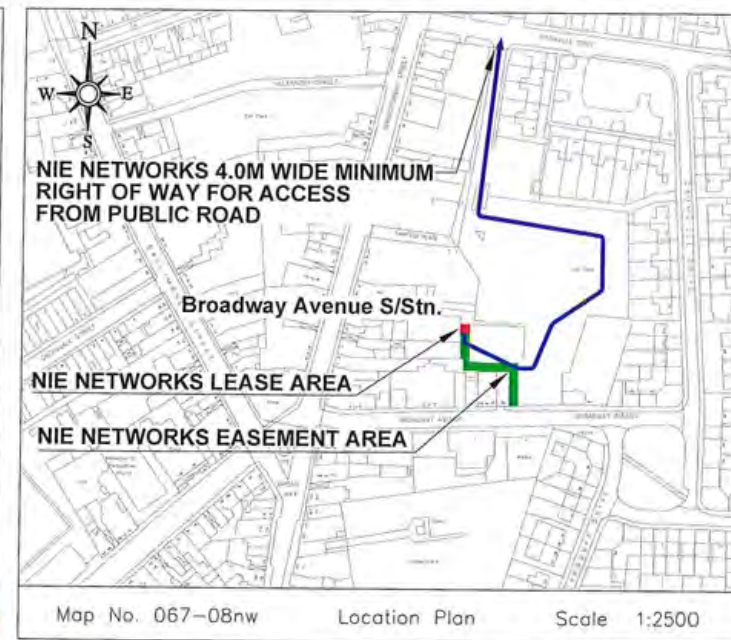
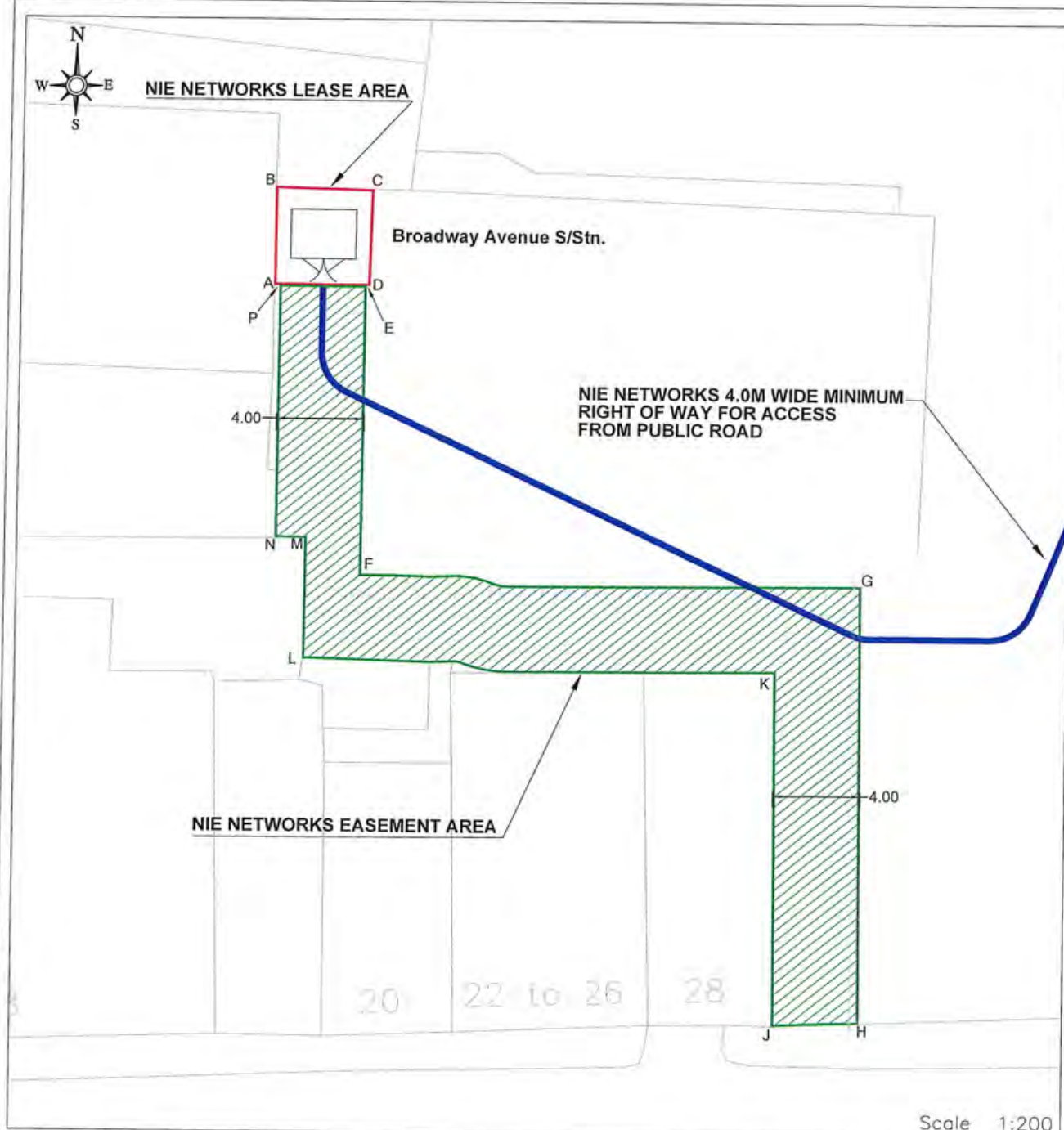
LEGEND

- NIE NETWORKS LEASE AREA
- NIE NETWORKS CABLE EASEMENT
- NIE NETWORKS 4.0m WIDE MINIMUM RIGHT OF WAY FOR ACCESS FROM PUBLIC ROAD

	NIE NETWORKS JOB No. 4793805	
	NIE NETWORKS S/STN. LEASE & CABLE EASEMENT BROADWAY AVENUE S/STN. GARFIELD PLACE CAR PARK BALLYPENA BT43 7AA	
DRAWING OFFICER: DARGAN	Saved by: A. Gilmore	Drawn by: A. Gilmore
Checked by: A. Gilmore	Drawn by: A. Gilmore	Checked by: A. Gilmore
Approved by: A. Gilmore	Map No.: 067-05nw	Date: 23/07/2015
Sheet Size: A3	Drawing No. EIL 1800	Title: AS SHOWN

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REV	DESCRIPTION	W.M.	J.C.	DATE	CHECKED	DATE	APPROVED	DATE
1	CABLE EASEMENT ADDED TO DRAWING			06/10/2015				
2	AMENDMENT							



SUB-STATION LEASE AREA A-B-C-D-A

SITE MEASUREMENTS

A - B = 4.50m
A - D = 4.50m

Lease Area = 20.25m²

SUB-STATION NOTES

- 1A. FOR DETAILS OF RAFT FOUNDATION SEE DRG. No. CN-2016-201C1.
- 1B. FOR PLAN & ELEVATION OF KIOSK S/S SEE DRG. No. E.S.I. 8000/124/1.
- 1C. SITE AREA TO BE COVERED WITH 50mm LAYER OF CONCRETE AFTER CABLING IS COMPLETE. (A-B-C-D-A)
- 1D. NIE NETWORKS TO HAVE A RIGHT OF WAY AS PER THE 1:2500 LOCATION PLAN.
- 1E. HAVE A RAISED KERB ALONG THE SIDES A-D & C-D TO PREVENT VEHICLES FROM OBSTRUCTING THE S/STN

EASEMENT NOTES

- 2A. NIE NETWORKS TO HAVE A CABLE EASEMENT FROM E-F-G-H-J-K-L-M-N-P-E.
- 2B. AREA DEFINED BY CABLE EASEMENT PLANTING IS RESTRICTED TO GRASS OR SHALLOW ROOTED GROUND COVER.
- 2C. NIE NETWORKS EASEMENT AREA E-F-G-H-J-K-L-M-N-P-E = 217.940m²

LEGEND

- NIE NETWORKS LEASE AREA
- NIE NETWORKS CABLE EASEMENT
- NIE NETWORKS 4.0m WIDE MINIMUM RIGHT OF WAY FOR ACCESS FROM PUBLIC ROAD

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REV	DESCRIPTION	BY	CHECKED	DATE
B	CABLE EASEMENT AMENDED	E.McM	J.S.C	14/09/2022
A	CABLE EASEMENT ADDED TO DRAWING	W.M.	J.C.	06/10/2021
	AMENDMENT	INT	CHECKED	DATE

	NIE NETWORKS JOB No. 4793805		
	Title NIE NETWORKS S/STN. LEASE & CABLE EASEMENT BROADWAY AVENUE S/STN. GARFIELD PLACE CAR PARK BALLYMENA BT43 7AA		
DRAWING OFFICE DARGAN		Drawn by	W.Mohan
Surveyed by		A.Gilmour	Checked by
P.Gilmour		Approved by	A.Gilmour
Map No.	I.G. 067-08nw	Date	23/07/2015
Scale	AS SHOWN	Sheet Size	A3
Drawing No.	EIL 1800	REV	B

Council/ Committee:	Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance Committee
Date:	17 June 2024
Report Title:	Services to Mark 108 th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme in France
Publication Status:	Open
Author:	Sarah Williams, Assistant Director of Business Support
Approver:	Laureen Donnan, Interim Director of Corporate and Support Services

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is for Elected Members to consider representation from Council to attend the services to mark the 108th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme event on 1 July 2024.

2. Background

- 2.1. An invitation was received from 'The Somme Association' for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council to send representatives to the services to mark the 108th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme. The letter is set out at **Appendix 1**.
- 2.2. Member Services have researched costs for Member's consideration.

3. Key Issues for Consideration

- 3.1. To attend from 29 June 2024 to 2 July 2024, the costs are as follows:
 - Flights plus bag will be approximately £246.00
 - Hotel £409.80
 - Return train fare £50.00
 - Somme Association Lunch £10
 - Total approximately £715.00 plus subsistence and internal train fares.**
- 3.2. To attend from 30 June 2024 to 2 July 2024, the costs are as follows:
 - Flights plus bag will be approximately £260.00.
 - Hotel £235.73.
 - Return train fare £50.00.

- Somme Association Lunch £10
Total approximately £555.00 plus subsistence and internal train fares.

4. General Considerations / Implications

4.1 Members are asked to consider the invitation to attend.

5. Recommendation or Decision

It is recommended that Members consider the invitation and provide direction on whether Council is represented at the services.

6. Appendices / Links

Appendix 1 – The Somme Association Invitation

THE SOMME ASSOCIATION

Vice-President
The Viscount Brookeborough, DL

Chairman
Mr Alan McFarland

Director
Mrs Carol Walker MBE

Honorary President:
H.R.H The Duke of Gloucester, KG, GCVO

233 Bangor Road
Newtownards
BT23 7PH

Telephone 028 91823202
Facsimile 028 91823214

Website: www.sommeassociation.com
Email: sommeassociation@btconnect.com
Face Book: The Somme Association

104

7th May 2024

Valerie Watts
Interim Chief Executive
Mid and East Antrim Borough
Council
1-29 Bridge Street
Ballymena
BT43 5EJ

Dear Ms Watts

May I on behalf of the Officers of the Somme Association, invite representatives from your Council to attend the services to commemorate the 108th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme in France.

A Commemoration Service shall be held at the Ulster Memorial Tower, Thiepval, France, at 14.30hrs on 1st July 2024 and at 16.30hrs at the 16th (Irish) Division Memorial in the village of Guillemont.

For further assistance or if you have any questions, please email me at sommeassociation@btconnect.com

Your Councils attendance would be greatly appreciated and I hope that representatives shall be able to attend.

Yours sincerely

Carol Walker MBE
Director

Council/Committee:	Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance
Date:	17 June 2024
Report Title:	Forward Plan
Publication Status:	Open
Author:	Laureen Donnan, Interim Director Corporate Services
Approver:	Valerie Watts, Interim Clerk & Chief Executive

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is set out the forward planning process for Committees in order that work is planned, and Members can assure that the relevant reports are being scheduled at the appropriate time. Whilst this covering report has the forward plan for 17 June 2024 meeting attached as an appendix, in future, the appendix will be updated and considered as a final agenda item at each future meeting.

2. Background

- 2.1. Forward planning is a good governance tool that supports the work of Council. It enables Members to plan annually for the core business of Council and Committees and ensure that reports are appropriately provided and aligned with priority issues that can at times be seasonally specific.
- 2.2. There are also requirements for compliance through regular reporting to ensure oversight and governance of the performance and financial health of the Council, for which the Council is assessed by external auditors.
- 2.3. At present forward planning is limited. Agendas are largely developed on a meeting-by-meeting basis, through a meeting with the chair just prior to the agenda publication date and are usually determined by a range of officers, at times creating agendas with a plethora of reports as well as some which are significantly lighter. Forward planning supports the development of more balanced agendas across the municipal year.
- 2.4. The approach also supports better officer work planning and senior team oversight about the work plan for the year. A similar forward plan is being developed for SMT to drive and respond to agenda items, leading to a more balanced and planned approach.

3. Key Issues for Consideration

- 3.1. The most effective approach to forward planning for Council and Committees is one that sets out the annual programme of meetings which is populated with the annual reports required in specific months, the quarterly reports required and thereafter spreading out the reports that would be expected on an annual cycle at some point through the year. Within each forward plan the next meeting would be set out to include the other reports that have been notified as necessary up to the preceding week of the committee meeting. The remainder of the plan at that stage would be the list of what is known for the remaining meetings for the year.
- 3.2. The forward plan should also indicate the purpose of each report and whether they are presented for decision or for information. As a final agenda item for the meeting Members will be asked to indicate if they are content with the next agenda as set out, including any further items identified at that meeting itself. This therefore becomes the agreed agenda, negating the need for a further agenda setting meeting with the chair, except where an item needs to be added at urgent notice. In this instance, officers will need to seek the agreement of the chair.

4. Proposed Way Forward.

- 4.1. Appendix 1 sets out the first forward plan for Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee in the municipal year 2024-25. It outlines the agenda for the next Committee meeting with the date as well the start of agendas for future meetings. It lists items that have not yet been programmed in and will be dependent on other factors such as officer capacity and the priorities of Members. As indicated above, each meeting the committee date and list of items will move up and become the next agenda, including items that have been added up to the preceding week.

5. General Considerations/Implications

- 5.1. Financial implications – there are limited financial considerations except for the inclusion of a further report being needed on the agenda.

6. Recommendation or Decision

- 6.1. It is recommended that Elected Members:
 - Consider and approve the proposed approach to forward planning
 - Agree the next agenda for Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee on 29 July (with any additional items being included following agreement with the Chair).



7. Appendices / Links

Appendix 1 – Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance – Forward Plan 2024-25

Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee Forward Plan

1. Planned Agenda Items Next meeting (29 July 2024)

Items	Purpose
Policy Briefing	For noting.
Council Publication Scheme	For noting.
VAT Update	For approval.
Procurement Update	For noting.
Members' Annual Training Programme (including mandatory)	For approval.
Annual Equality Commission Submission	For noting.
Quarterly Complaints Report	For noting.
Members Code of Conduct	For noting.
Constitution – Annual Update	For noting.
Asset Management Plan 2024-25	For noting.
Community Grants	For approval.
Assets	For approval.
Business Cases	For approval.
Health & Safety Annual Report	For noting.

2. Future Meetings

Meeting Date	Item	Purpose
9 Sept 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Briefing • Quarterly Communications Update • Sickness Absence Update (Q3 and 4) • Reserves Policy • Quarterly Budget Monitoring – Q1 • Performance Improvement Plan – Q1 update report • Procurement Update 	For noting. For noting? For noting. For noting. For noting. For noting. For approval.
21 Oct 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Briefing • Annual Workforce Report • Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan – Annual Review • Technology One programme update • Quarterly Complaints Report • Procurement Update 	For noting. For noting. For noting. For noting. For noting. For noting.
2 Dec 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Briefing • Quarterly Communications Update • Quarterly Budget Monitoring – Q2 • Procurement Update • Capital Plan 2025-2029 	For noting. For noting. For noting. For noting. For noting. Approval of 4 year Capital Plan as part of the Rate Setting process
13 Jan 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Briefing • Procurement Update 	For noting. For noting.

Appendix 1

Meeting Date	Item	Purpose
24 Feb 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Briefing • Quarterly Complaints Report • Sickness Absence Update (Q1 and 2) • Performance Improvement Plan Q3 Update • Quarterly Budget Monitoring – Q3 • Fees & Charges • Treasury Management Annual Outturn Report • Information Governance Update Report • NIAO Annual Audit & Assessment Report • Procurement Update • Workplace Charter Domestic Violence – Annual Update 	For noting. For noting. For noting. For noting. For noting. For approval. For noting. For noting. For noting. For noting. For noting.
7 April 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Briefing • Quarterly Communications update • Licences /agreement enacted under Scheme of Delegation • Procurement Update 	For noting. For noting. For noting. For noting.
19 May 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Briefing • Quarterly Complaints Report • Procurement Update 	For noting. For noting. For noting.

3. Items to be Programmed

Item	Purpose
Customer & Digital Strategy	
Consultation & Engagement Strategy	
Communications & Marketing Strategy	
Social Value Report	
Annual Investment Strategy	
Modern Slavery Policy	
Annual review: Statutory Equality and Good Relation duties	
Dual Language Street Naming Policy	
Variety of policy updates/reviews	
Annual Events Programme	
Complaints Policy Report	
Access to Information Report	
PIP – Q1 2024/25 Performance Report Q2, Q3	
PIP – 2024/25 Year End Report	
Notices of Motion - Update	
Annual Training Update	
Rate Setting Workshops	
Medium Term Financial Plan Review	
HR Policies / Strategic projects / industrial action as required	
Health and Safety Policies as required	
Staff survey actions (full council?)	
Learning and Development Policies as required	