

September 21st, 2023

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Wednesday, 27th September 2023** at **7:00 pm** in **City Hall, Bangor.**

Agenda

Agenda

(Attached)

📎 *C 27.09.2023 Agenda.pdf*

Page 1

1. **Prayer**
2. **Apologies**
3. **Declarations of Interest**
4. **Mayor's Business**
5. **Mayor and Deputy Mayor Engagements for the Month of September 2023**
6. **Minutes of Council Meeting held dated 20 August 2023**

(Copy attached)

📎 *C 30.08.2023 Minutes.pdf*

Not included

7 **Minutes of Committees**

7.1 **Planning Committee dated 5 September 2023**

(Copy attached)

📎 *Minutes PC.05.09.23.pdf*

Not included

📎 *Minutes PC.05.09.23 PM.pdf*

Not included

7.2 **Environment Committee dated 6 September 2023**

(Copy attached)

📎 *230906 EC Minutes.pdf*

Not included

📎 *230906 EC MinutesPM.pdf*

Not included

*****IN CONFIDENCE*****

7.2.1 Matter Arising - Governance Arrangement for Management of Council Harbours Appointment of 'Duty Holder'

7.3 Place and Prosperity Committee dated 7 September 2023

(Copy attached)

📎 *PP 07.09.2023 Minutes.pdf* *Not included*

📎 *PP 07.09.2023 Minutes PM.pdf* *Not included*

7.4 Corporate Services Committee dated 12 September 2023

(Copy attached)

📎 *CS 12.09.2023 Minutes.pdf* *Not included*

📎 *CS 12.09.2023 Minutes PM.pdf* *Not included*

7.4.1 Matter Arising - Report on the Consultation Response to Northern Ireland's 2030 and 2040 Emissions Reduction Targets and First Three Carbon Budgets and Seeking views on Climate Change Committee (CCC) Advice Report: The Path to Net Zero Northern Ireland

(Report attached)

📎 *Item 7.4.1-Matter Arising-Report on the Consultation response to Northern Irelands 2030 - 2040 Emissions Reduction Targets and First Three Carbon Budgets a.pdf* *Not included*

📎 *Item 7.4.1 - Matter Arising - Appendix 1 - Carbon Budget Consultation Document.pdf* *Not included*

📎 *Item 7.4.1 - Matter Arising - Appendix 2 - Draft consultation response revised Full council.pdf* *Page 5*

7.5 Community and Wellbeing Committee dated 13 September 2023

(To follow)

7.5.1 Matter Arising - Report on the Funding Offer from Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) for Capacity and Capability Building Programme in Northern Ireland: Non-Good Products 2023/24

(Report attached)

📄 **7.5.1 Matter Arising Funding Offer from BEIS Capacity & Capability Building Programme.pdf**

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7.6 Audit Committee dated 18 September 2023

(To follow)

8. Requests for Deputation

8.1 Re-Gen

(Copy attached)

📄 **8.1 Request for Presentation - Re-Gen.pdf**

Not included

📄 **8.1 Appendix 1 - Letter from Re-Gen.pdf**

Not included

9. Nomination to East Border Region Members Forum

(Report attached)

📄 **9. Nomination to East Border Region Forum.pdf**

Not included

10. NILGA Accredited Provision for Elected Member Development 2023/2024

(Report attached)

📄 **10. NILGA Accredited Provision for Elected Member Development 23 24.pdf**

Not included

📄 **10. Appendix 1 - NILGA Accredited Provision Nominations LetterANDAug2023.pdf**

Not included

📄 **10. Appendix 2 - NILGA Local Development Planning Leadership Programme 2023-24 Promotion.pdf**

Not included

📄 **10. Appendix 3 - NILGA Leadership Development Programme 2023 -24 Promotion August 2023.pdf**

Not included

📄 **10. Appendix 4 - NILGA Accredited Learning Provision Indicative Costs (2023-24).pdf**

Not included

11. Implementation of New HRC Access Booking System Update

(To follow)

12. Nomination to Outside Bodies

(Report attached)

📎 *12. Nominations to Outside Bodies.pdf*

Not included

13. Sealing Documents

14. Transfer of Rights of Burial

15. Notice of Motion Status Report

(Report attached)

📎 *15. NOM Status Report.pdf*

Not included

📎 *15. NOM TRACKER LIVE.pdf*

Not included

16. Notices of Motion

16.1 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Moore and Councillor Creighton

This Council believes:

education should be accessible to all who seek it and embedding a culture of lifelong learning in our society is essential to enabling people to realise their potential.

part-time flexible learning is crucial to meeting the skills needed to build a modern, inclusive and green economy.

part-time students are a unique demographic, they are more likely to have disabilities, come from disadvantaged backgrounds, having caring responsibilities, such as children or elderly relatives, and in general, be part of a 'hard to reach' group who missed out on full-time study.

lifelong learning, including non-formal education, addresses social issues, strengthens communities and builds civic engagement. It is the most effective tool for meeting social policy objectives and creating positive social change.

recognises that lifelong learning must become a meaningful and developed policy area with tangible actions and outcomes, underpinned by the wealth of best practice and innovation from across the UK and Ireland.

This Council therefore resolves to:

work with the Lifelong Learning Alliance to develop a Lifelong Learning campaign, to inform and raise public awareness of how lifelong learning transforms lives and communities.

Engage with MLAs and MPs to prioritise funding for formal and informal part-time education when the

Executive is formed.

Encourage MLAs to form an All- Party Group on Lifelong Learning to support an evidence and best-practice informed approach to policy making, in collaboration with adult education bodies to form a voice for Lifelong Learning in the Assembly when an Executive is formed.

16.2 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Woods and Councillor McKee

That this Council, recognising its commitment as a responsible employer, and that staff are paid the current Living Wage, tasks officers to explore becoming 'Living Wage' accredited with the UK Living Wage Foundation, as well as ensuring any regularly contracted employees and workers, including those who are employed externally to deliver Council services, are paid the living wage hourly rate. It also explores also becoming Living Hours and Living Pensions accredited too.





16.3 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Adair and Councillor Douglas

That Council notes the increasing complaints regarding the poor condition and appearance of our cemeteries across the Borough and tasks officers to bring back a report on options to improve the maintenance of our cemeteries which are places of special significance to those who have lost loved ones.

***** IN CONFIDENCE *****




17. Disposal of Kinnegar Logistics Base Update

(Report attached)

 17. Disposal of Kinnegar Logistics Base -update.pdf	<i>Not included</i>
 17. Appendix 1 - Letter from Cleaver Fulton Rankin.pdf	<i>Not included</i>
 17. Appendix 1 - Legal Opinion.pdf	<i>Not included</i>
 17. Appendix 2 - Letter from Joe ONeil Belfast Harbour to Stephen Reid.pdf	<i>Not included</i>

18. NIE Request for Use of Land Castle Place Car Park, Newtownards

(Report attached)

 18. Request for a lease to NIE - Kennel Lane Carpark Newtownards.pdf	<i>Not included</i>
 18. Appendix 1 - location map - request from NIE.pdf	<i>Not included</i>
 18. Appendix 2 - substation drawing - request from NIE.png	<i>Not included</i>

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

20 September 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby invited to attend a hybrid Meeting (in person and via Zoom) of Ards and North Down Borough Council which will be held at the City Hall, The Castle, Bangor on **Wednesday, 27 September 2023 at 7.00pm.**

Yours faithfully

Stephen Reid
Chief Executive
Ards and North Down Borough Council

A G E N D A

1. Prayer
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Mayor's Business
5. Mayor and Deputy Mayor Engagements for the month of September 2023
6. Minutes of Council meeting dated 30 August 2023 (Copy attached)
7. Minutes of Committees
 - 7.1. Minutes of Planning Committee dated 5 September 2023 (Copy attached)
 - 7.2. Minutes of Environment Committee dated 6 September 2023 (Copy attached)

*****IN CONFIDENCE*****

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 - 7.3. Minutes of Place and Prosperity Committee dated 7 September 2023 (Copy attached)

- 7.4 Minutes of Corporate Services Committee dated 12 September 2023 (Copy attached)
 - 7.4.1 Matter Arising – Report on the Consultation response to Northern Ireland’s 2030 and 2040 Emissions Reduction Targets and First Three Carbon Budgets and Seeking views on Climate Change Committee (CCC) Advice Report: The path to Net Zero Northern Ireland (Report attached)
- 7.5 Minutes of Community and Wellbeing Committee dated 13 September 2023 (Copy to follow)
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16. Notices of Motion
 - 16.1 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Moore and Councillor Creighton

This Council believes:

- education should be accessible to all who seek it and embedding a culture of lifelong learning in our society is essential to enabling people to realise their potential.
- part-time flexible learning is crucial to meeting the skills needed to build a modern, inclusive and green economy.
- part-time students are a unique demographic, they are more likely to have disabilities, come from disadvantaged backgrounds, have caring

responsibilities, such as children or elderly relatives, and in general, be part of a 'hard to reach' group who missed out on full-time study.¹

- lifelong learning, including non-formal education, addresses social issues, strengthens communities and builds civic engagement. It is the most effective tool for meeting social policy objectives and creating positive social change.
- recognises that lifelong learning must become a meaningful and developed policy area with tangible actions and outcomes, underpinned by the wealth of best practice and innovation from across the UK and Ireland.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- To work with the Lifelong Learning Alliance to develop a Lifelong Learning campaign, to inform and raise public awareness of how lifelong learning transforms lives and communities.
- Engage with MLAs and MPs to prioritise funding for formal and informal part-time education when the Executive is formed.
- Encourage MLAs to form an All-Party Group on Lifelong Learning to support an evidence and best-practice informed approach to policy making, in collaboration with adult education bodies to form a voice for Lifelong Learning in the Assembly when an Executive is formed.

16.2 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Woods and Councillor McKee

That this Council, recognising its commitment as a responsible employer, and that staff are paid the current Living Wage, tasks officers to explore becoming 'Living Wage' accredited with the UK Living Wage Foundation, as well as ensuring any regularly contracted employees and workers, including those who are employed externally to deliver Council services, are paid the living wage hourly rate. It also explores also becoming Living Hours and Living Pensions accredited too.

16.3 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Adair and Councillor Douglas, Alderman McIlveen

That Council notes the increasing complaints regarding the poor condition and appearance of our cemeteries across the Borough and tasks officers to bring back a report on options to improve the maintenance of our cemeteries which are places of special significance to those who have lost loved ones.

*****IN CONFIDENCE*****

17 Disposal of Kinnegar Logistics Base Update (Report attached)

18 NIE request for Use of Land Castle Place car park, Newtownards (Report attached)

MEMBERSHIP OF ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Alderman Adair	Councillor Hollywood
Alderman Armstrong-Cotter	Councillor S Irvine
Alderman Brooks	Councillor W Irvine
Alderman Cummings	Councillor Irwin (Deputy Mayor)
	Councillor Kennedy
Alderman Graham	Councillor Kerr
Alderman McAlpine	Councillor MacArthur
Alderman McDowell	Councillor Martin
Alderman McIlveen	Councillor McCollum
Alderman Smith	Councillor McCracken
Councillor Ashe	Councillor McKee
Councillor Blaney	Councillor McKimm
Councillor Boyle	Councillor McLaren
Councillor Cathcart	Councillor McRandal
Councillor Chambers	Councillor Moore
Councillor Creighton	Councillor Morgan
Councillor Cochrane	Councillor Rossiter
Councillor Douglas	Councillor Smart
Councillor Edmund	Councillor Woods
Councillor Gilmour (Mayor)	Councillor Wray

Appendix 2
Carbon Budget Consultation Document – Draft Response

Question 1.

The 2030 Target: Do you agree that DAERA should follow the current advice provided by the CCC and keep the current 2030 emissions reduction target in the Act of an at least 48% reduction in emissions compared to the baseline?

X Yes

No - please provide your reasons and any suggested alternative (Noting, that if the target is to be changed, that the Act only allows it to be changed to a higher percentage

Comments:

No comments

Question 2.

The 2040 Target: Do you agree that DAERA should follow the current advice provided by the CCC and set a 2040 emissions reduction target of an at least 77% reduction in emissions compared to the baseline?

X Yes

No - please provide your reasons and any suggested alternative.

Comments:

Although the Council supports this target, with the 'speculative option' it is important to highlight that these would have other implications. This must be achieved in a sustainable manner, taking consideration of Northern Ireland's strong agri-food industry and its contribution to the local economy.

In the case of DACCS this would be costly in the region of £190-200/tCO₂. DACCS 'would be more expensive to do in NI than elsewhere in the UK because any captured CO₂ would need to be shipped to a storage facility away from Northern Ireland rather than being stored locally. The cost, social and achievability implications of these options must be considered.

Question 3.

First Carbon Budget (2023-2027): Do you agree that DAERA should follow the current advice provided by the CCC and set the first carbon budget at a level that has a 33% average annual reduction in emissions compared to the baseline?

X Yes

No - please provide your reasons and any suggested alternative.

Comments:

In June 2023, the Data for Northern Ireland's emissions in 2021 were published. The longer-term trend showed a decrease of 23.2% compared with emissions in 1990. Between 2020 and 2021 all sectors, except waste management and public, showed an increase in emissions. The most significant increases in terms of tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent were in the Transport (0.4 MtCo₂e), Agriculture (0.3 MtCo₂e) and Energy Supply (0.2

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MtCO₂e) sectors. The Council is aware that EPUKI is phasing out the use of coal at the Kilroot Power Plant, planned for September. Still, it is evident the need for a major commitment of the NI Executive and the UK Government to support this transition. In 2021, Northern Ireland contributed 5.3% of all UK greenhouse gas emissions, which stood at 426.5 MtCO₂e. In the UK there has been a 47.7% reduction in emissions between 1990 and 2021. During the same period, the reduction in emissions in Northern Ireland was 23.2%, compared to 50.2% in England, 49.3% in Scotland and 35.0% in Wales.

Council believe it is imperative that emissions begin to be reduced across all sectors with adequate support provided to enable rapid decarbonisation if net zero is to be achieved.

Question 4.

Second Carbon Budget (2028-2032): Do you agree that DAERA should follow the current advice provided by the CCC and set the second carbon budget at a level that has a 48% average annual reduction in emissions compared to the baseline?

X Yes

No - please provide your reasons and any suggested alternative.

Comments:

No comments

Question 5.

Third Carbon Budget (2033-2037): Do you agree that DAERA should follow the current advice provided by the CCC and set the third carbon budget at a level that has a 62% average annual reduction in emissions compared to the baseline?

x Yes

No - please provide your reasons and any suggested alternative.

Comments:

No comments

Question 6.

CCC advice: Do you agree that DAERA should follow any updated advice and recommendations from the CCC (as a result of the publication of the Northern Ireland 2021 Greenhouse Gas Inventory) when setting the first three carbon budgets?

x Yes

No - please provide your reasons

No comments

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Question 7.

Impact assessments: Can you provide any information (relating to the potential financial, economic, social, rural and equality impacts) which will help inform the completion of the relevant impact assessments on the proposed carbon budgets?

Comments:

At the UK level, data analysis suggests that if, by 2035, cars only account for a third of all journeys, and all houses currently graded below EPC band C have been upgraded, then about 26% of the total cuts needed to be in line with a net zero trajectory can be achieved. The Council would like it noted that local authorities in NI have a very limited level of control over some sectors, such as housing and transport, that could greatly contribute to staying within the carbon budgets and achieving those targets recommended by the CCC.

Appropriate interventions are necessary, and substantial investment in skills is pivotal to help absorb the economic shock. This includes targeted job support from the government; and in the short to medium term, reskilling and upskilling workers, with a focus on workers whose skills are not immediately transferable, to provide them with the necessary tools to find employment or maintain employment in a greener economy. This will guarantee a just transition. Local authorities and public bodies can help drive this transition as they have greater potential for doing so, knowing and managing the needs of their areas of control.

Alongside national government intervention, it is recognised that the Council as the local planning authority can bring forward an up-to-date Local Development Plan and set out appropriate policy for local area, and an approach to planning which seeks to minimise reliance on the private car, for example. But the lack of powers and resources impedes this intervention. The national government should support Councils by developing plans and delivering the necessary tools and funding to public transport providers to meet that objective.

Funding should also be made available to ensure that all government and public sector projects and initiatives are climate smart – leading by example and supporting wider decarbonisation across society through capital development, green procurement, funding policies, green jobs and investment.

1. More powers must be devolved at the local level, and better spatial planning will support achieving greater benefits by integrating transport and housing plans in local decision-making. This links to the following point.
2. Changes to governance structures should be taken into consideration to meet the Net Zero target and the 2030 and 2040 targets. This government fragmentation and the current state of devolution of powers mean that local authorities and public bodies often have too few levers to pull. They often lack statutory powers to act.
3. Moving away from car dependency and incentivising the take-up of low-carbon solutions is an important step when considering the impacts of actions to reach net zero. Councils welcome funding for EV charging infrastructure, but more must be allocated to help people become less dependent on cars. Costs should be calculated considering actions like
 - (a) adopting schemes like Clean Air Zones;

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- (b) investing in active travel alternatives;
- (c) encouraging people to use more public transport by intensifying services;
- (d) investing in public transport infrastructure to expand the network, and the recent All-Ireland railway strategy is an example and only the beginning of this huge potential.

It should be noted that these NI-wide strategic plans must be led by Central Government, DfI.

It is also recognised that climate action at both global and local scales should be underpinned by key principles and values, this has been further reinforced by the UK Committee on Climate Change Sixth Carbon Budget. Principles to be applied to climate action and emission reduction criteria:

- Just Transition and reduction of inequality
- Green & sustainable jobs, opportunities and skills development
- Distribution of costs and support for small business, communities and individuals
- Financial support, incentives and mechanisms
- Fair distribution of costs and benefits
- Communication and engagement
- Environmental and biodiversity protection and restoration
- Health and wellbeing benefits

Alignment of the emission reduction targets and climate action with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals will ensure a fair and sustainable pathway to achieve agreed targets in Northern Ireland.

Pathway to Net Zero

Stretch Ambition The options proposed under the 'Stretch Ambition' would mean increases in the amount of carbon sequestered in land and engineered greenhouse gas removals. The Stretch Ambition scenario would achieve a 93% reduction against the baseline by 2050

Question 8.

Stretch Ambition Scenario to reach 93% reduction by 2050: Do you think that the Northern Ireland Executive should follow the advice provided by the CCC and choose the Stretch Ambition Scenario?

Yes

No - please provide your reasons and any suggested alternative.

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Comments

We partially agree with the Stretch Ambition Scenario since carbon capture and storage (CCS) processes are not the silver bullet to reduce emissions. The Council strongly believes that it is pivotal to consider the collaborative and collective approach to meet these ambitious targets among national and local governments, along with businesses and communities. Within the transport sector, the second larger emitter in NI, major investment is required to expand the electric vehicle charging infrastructure advised by the CCC, there is a need to invest in more and better infrastructure for ways of transport alternative to cars and to drastically reduce car dependency in Northern Ireland. Shifts in behaviour is a must if we are to move away from private car use to other modes of travel such as walking, cycling and public transport. At the moment there is a lack of understanding and support for this and more emphasis needs to be put on this to bring the public along with these changes.

Very important will also be strengthening the electricity networks and implementing renewable sources of energy like wind, solar and geothermal to increase the percentage of emission fall currently advised at 33% from 2020 to 2030 for buildings and 51% for Energy. The requirement of the NI Climate Change Act for energy emission reduction is that 80% of electricity must come from renewables by 2030. The commitment to meet this target can reduce electricity emissions by 75% from where they are today; therefore, there is an opportunity to meet these targets without being rushed into expensive technologies for carbon capture that still have not been proven successful and that could cause uncontrolled consequences.

Speculative Options Even with the radical actions under the stretch ambition pathway, there is still an emissions gap to Net Zero. The CCC considered some speculative options including the deployment of direct air capture of CO₂ and a further decrease of livestock numbers. Whilst it is up to the Northern Ireland Executive to decide which speculative options to pursue, the CCC's advice on the 2030 and 2040 emissions reduction targets and the first three carbon budgets is based on the Speculative DACCS.

Question 9 (a).

The Speculative DACCS Option to reach Net Zero by 2050: Do you think that the Northern Ireland Executive should choose the Speculative Direct Air Capture with CCS (DACCS) option to reach Net Zero?

Yes

No - please provide your reasons and any suggested alternative.

Comments:

This technology is still very controversial and the costs of moving the carbon captured to be stored outside NI should be diverted towards more feasible investments such as infrastructure, transport and renewables. Council would not be in a position to comment on this further.

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Question 9 (b).

The Speculative Agriculture Option Do you think that the Northern Ireland Executive should choose the Speculative Agriculture option?

Yes

No - please provide your reasons and any suggested alternative

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates that achieving a 45% reduction in global methane emissions by 2045 could reduce global warming by 0.3°C. This would help us stay within the target of 1.5°C of warming by 2050.

The Just Transition principles of 'no community left behind' and ensuring the most vulnerable sections of our population do not bear a disproportional and negative burden must be applied.

Land-based mitigation measures must be considered, for example improved management of existing broadleaf forests and expansion of hedgerows.

Question 9 (c).

Other Speculative Options: Do you think that the Northern Ireland Executive should consider other speculative options such as (1) enhanced rock weathering and (2) addition of biochar to agricultural land?

Yes

No - please provide your reasons and any suggested alternative.

The Council is currently unsure of the details of these options, therefore cannot provide comment at this point.

Question 10.

Agriculture Sector Contribution to Net Zero: Do you think that the Northern Ireland Executive should diverge from the CCC sector advice to deliver the required outcomes for the first carbon budget period and that these can be achieved through the actions outlined in the Agriculture sector summary?

Yes

No - please provide your reasons.

Comments:

Local government does not have a direct functional remit for agriculture, and is therefore not providing a response to this question, beyond agreeing that as the largest GHG emitter in NI, agriculture has an essential role to play in achieving Net Zero targets.

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Question 11.

LULUCF Sector Contribution to Net Zero: Do you think that the Northern Ireland Executive should follow the LULUCF sector advice provided by the CCC?

Yes

No – please provide your reasons and any suggested alternative.

Comments:

We agree with most of the guidance provided by the CCC. In particular, the Council strongly supports the landscape regeneration of woodlands and peatlands in Northern Ireland in the following years to guarantee adequate carbon sequestration to reach the target of 22% emission reduction by 2030. However, the Council recommends investing carefully in afforestation plans due to the importance of appropriate analysis of soil and tree species to avoid soil depletion and biodiversity loss. Reforestation should be considered before afforestation. Planting trees in areas that have never been forested, known as afforestation, can release carbon, resulting in a net loss of carbon from the ecosystem. Furthermore, soil is the largest carbon sink and, therefore, the correct management of land and its use to restore and prevent soil degradation should be a priority. Some studies have shown that in the Scottish moorlands, experimental areas planted with native trees actually stored less carbon after several decades than untouched plots covered in heather. There is more carbon below ground than above ground, which means more carbon is stored in soil than in plant biomass. For instance, diverse pastures properly managed with varied plant species would be more effective at storing carbon than new tree plantations. The risk of afforestation is also linked to the disturbance of well-established soil where carbon has been stored for long; planting trees can cause the release of this carbon from the soil, counteracting the net carbon target. Proper land use management should be developed to help capture atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂) through a natural process called carbon sequestration.

The Council also notes that consideration and additional support will be required to aid farmers transition land towards afforestation.

Question 12 (a).

Buildings Sector Contribution to Net Zero: Do you think that the Northern Ireland Executive should consider the CCC advice on residential buildings, and develop a plan to improve energy efficiency and reduce reliance on fossil fuels, taking account of the capacity and capability of the low-carbon heating sector in Northern Ireland?

Yes

No - please provide your reasons and any suggested alternatives.

Comments:

The Council agrees with the advice regarding residential buildings, in particular the need to consider the skills and capacity gap in providing homes with net zero technology. There is agreement with the need to upskill our workforce in the area of green technology.

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The NI Building Regulations under the remit of the Department of Finance are currently in a transitional phase and various consultations in respect of the speed and obligation required by new regulations. In those consultations it is recognised that improvements to standards of new build dwellings is required, but is dependent on the ability of the grid to accept 'renewables' connections from multiple sources and is dependent on efficiency of technologies and availability. Affordability must be considered. Will these improved regulations drive up house prices and reduce affordability of housing? Central government needs to drive improvements in technologies and availability which will reduce pricing/ costs. Greater emphasis is needed on the necessary support required to deliver a just transition with adequate provision made for socio-economic circumstances and areas of high social deprivation.

In relation to existing housing stock, it is essential that schemes/ process are supported by central government to drive thermal efficiency and improvement in housing stock. The Affordable Warmth Scheme is a worthy scheme but is not on a scale required on its own to meet net zero targets.

Future drives, encouragement and subsidy should be used (at an appropriate level) to support the transition away from fossil fuel use. CCC recommends that building emissions need to fall 33% between 2020 and 2023. Targets are set at 2030 for homes off grid and 2033 for homes on grid with new heating appliances to be zero-carbon. This should be in the context of just transition and not only for those that can afford it. Again industry needs support to scale up to meet any demand as there is concern about both availability of technology and more importantly a trained workforce/ expertise.

Energy conservation and efficiency measures, and a "fabric first" approach must ensue to reduce energy demand and consumption in the first place. Improvements in Building Control standards must be implemented as soon as practicable to avoid a continuing need for retrofit.

NI public sector, local authorities and public bodies in particular, must be adequately supported to embrace this journey; therefore, funding currently available for English and Welsh councils and public bodies, for example, should be available across all UK bodies to facilitate this process and guarantee a just transition to Net Zero. There is a note to one of the recommendations: "The public sector should lead by example. The advice for the UK as a whole is that by 2025, the installation of high-carbon fossil boilers and by 2030 gas boilers to be phased out in public buildings". This is an ambitious target and investment will be required to ensure it can be realised. The NI Executive should work in partnership with public bodies to manage and provide these opportunities for a greener and more inclusive economy in our region.

Question 12 (b).

Buildings Sector Contribution to Net Zero: Do you think that the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) should lead by example in the government estate and phase out the use of fossil fuel boilers as per the CCC advice?

Yes

No - if not, please provide your reasons and any suggested alternatives.

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Comments:

All public bodies are seen as leaders. It is essential that the NICS should lead by example.

Question 13.

Energy Sector Contribution to Net Zero: Do you think that additional measures (over and above those in the Energy Strategy) should be taken to ensure alignment with the CCC's advice?

No

Yes - please provide examples of additional measures.

Comments:

The Council acknowledges and broadly supports the measures outlined in the Energy Strategy - however rather than additional measures, greater support and incentives are required to ensure a just transition of all communities in particular those experiencing fuel and energy poverty. Council also reiterates the need for greater financial support to enable councils to support the decarbonisation of energy as well as required major investment in national and local infrastructure to facilitate increased renewables.

Question 14.

Transport Sector Contribution to Net Zero: Do you think that the Northern Ireland Executive should follow the transport sector advice provided by the CCC?

Yes

No - please provide your reasons and any suggested alternative.

Comments:

The Council acknowledges the need to transition through increased use of electric vehicles - however significant support is required to support a just transition in transport, including support and incentives for electric vehicle purchase and increased skills in vehicle maintenance.

In order for the ambitious CCC deployment rates for electric vehicles (EVs) there will be a requirement for considerable upgrading of NIE infrastructure. There is a high dependency on cars in the Council area due to its mix of urban and rural areas and lack of available public transport in some parts. Financial incentives for the purchase of EVs and the installation of charge points will be required to increase EV ownership rates. Means to improve rates of active travel such as increased cycling lane provision must also be provided.

NI Executive must commit to investing in more and better infrastructure and services that can reduce car dependency. The Council would prefer to see fewer cars on the road than more e-charging points, and the "substantial investment" mentioned in the CCC's report should be redirected to more functional infrastructure that could also improve the health and

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wellbeing of NI people, from better and more secure cycle lanes to more bus and train services. This must be a whole and equal approach to shifting to more sustainable travel and transport. As per Q8 - Shifts in behaviour is a must if we are to move away from private car use to other modes of travel such as walking, cycling and public transport. At the moment there is a lack of understanding and support for this and more emphasis needs to be put on this to bring the public along with these changes.

The transport sector requires huge investment, quickly which makes this target ambitious but necessary. This is a priority sector and changes must be led by Central Government.

It will be important to introduce measures to protect the use of vehicles required for necessary journeys, where electric technology may not be the best option. For example, heavy vehicles (refuse lorries) require a considerable amount of power to operate. If other more practical and efficient means are developed such as Hydrogen and other developing technologies, then these should be considered.

Question 15.

Business and Industrial Processes Sector Contribution to Net Zero: Do you think that the Northern Ireland Executive should follow the Business and Industrial Processes sector advice provided by the CCC?

Yes

No – please provide your reasons and any suggested alternative.

Comments:

The industry sector will need to reduce fossil fuel use by 45% by 2030. To achieve this, businesses must accelerate efforts to use energy and resources more efficiently and switch to low-carbon energy, with a focus on the electrification of heat. Monitoring energy use; reducing energy usage; reducing water usage; rewarding the green commute; reviewing logistics; switching to green energy; reducing and recycling are among some of the key mitigation steps that should be accelerated in the next few years to stay within the first carbon budget.

Of note to us is the requirement that Public Buildings need to phase out fossil fuel boilers by 2030 – to meet this deadline those design changes need to be implemented now. Public sector need that advice and support immediately in order to try and meet this target. This sector will require support in order to achieve this.

The Council strongly supports the need to enhance and implement further circular economy actions throughout business and industry, acknowledging that greater government support and incentives are required to support the sector. It is also noted that enhancement of circular economy principles is likely to lead to extended business and economic development opportunities in Northern Ireland through more localised recycling and reprocessing.

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Question 16.

Waste Sector Contribution to Net Zero: Do you think that the Northern Ireland Executive should follow the Waste sector advice provided by the CCC?

X Yes

No - please provide your reasons and any suggested alternative.

Comments:

The council acknowledges the contribution of the waste sector towards net zero and the role of local authorities in managing waste. The energy from waste to landfill could be seen as a good opportunity for the transition to low-carbon energy production, but it will still produce carbon emissions, and should therefore only adopted in this 'transitioning' context.

We are committed to the principles of circular economy and would recommend greater emphasis on achieving zero waste to landfill. Whilst the recycling rate should increase, we strongly support investing in an effective campaign for waste reduction to divert waste from landfill. We need to reinforce, with strong communications, waste reduction & reuse. COVID has seen a fall back to old habits of disposable products and increasing public confidence in reuse needs to be supported. These campaigns need to be developed and delivered regionally, reinforcing messages of reducing single use plastics. Behavioural change is as necessary as investment in infrastructure to reduce our reliance on exporting recyclables.

Emissions from landfill are directly proportional to the amount of waste produced and reaching it. We agree with the recent U.N. methane assessment, also recommended by the CCC and well received by DAERA, that calls for ending the practice of sending organic waste, such as food scraps, to landfills. Such waste should instead go to compost facilities or specially designed digesters that reduce or capture methane emissions better. The Council supports the need to for reuse from landfill e.g. methane, however greater regulation and support is needed to ensure mitigation of pollution and release of gases. It will be necessary to ensure that capture of landfill gas reduces over time, once disposal of biodegradable material via landfill ceases. In addition, carbon capture and storage technologies require further research to develop a better understanding of potential risks.

The difficulties associated with behaviour change in diverting waste from landfill must be properly considered, as not all householders and businesses will be brought into compliance with a ban aimed at the biodegradable part of waste mixed with other material. Importantly, councils should not be left with additional regulatory or enforcement roles to support actions without recognition of, and financial support to cover, any additional resource and capital costs associated with such new duties.

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Question 17.

Fisheries Sector Contribution to Net Zero: Do you think that the Northern Ireland Executive should follow the Fisheries sector advice provided by the CCC?

Yes

No - please provide your reasons and any suggested alternative.

Comments:

It is noted that this question affects functions, industry and business outside of the remit of local government. NILGA trusts that the Department will ensure that there will be appropriate consideration by those with expertise in this area and therefore we have no further comment to make in respect of this question.

Unclassified

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ITEM 7.5.1

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	27 September 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Environmental Health, Protection and Development
Date of Report	19 September 2023
File Reference	CW99
Legislation	Enterprise Act 2002
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: N/A
Subject	Matter Arising - Funding Offer from Department of Business Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) for Capacity & Capability Building Programme in Northern Ireland: Non-Food Products 2023/24
Attachments	

Background

At its September meeting, the Community and Wellbeing Committee considered a report on the Funding Offer from Department of Business Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) for Capacity & Capability Building Programme in Northern Ireland: Non-Food Products 2023/24.

At the meeting, the proposal fell and the Committee did not agree to accept the Grant offer.

By way of background, the funding is used to undertake a wide range of activities on non-food products including to;

- build on previous product safety capacity and capability building work;
- ensure access to enforcement equipment and facilities;

Not Applicable

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- provide advice and support to local businesses to meet their obligations under product safety legislation for importing and appropriate labelling/marketing of goods;
- define work processes;
- develop officers' understanding of local supply chains and their associated risks;
- ensure adequate prioritisation of effort and resource against OPSS policy and national regulatory interests; and
- ad hoc requests for case studies or other additional information.

Members will recall from previous reports in 2023, and supported by two sets of legal advice, that the activities funded through this Grant are a statutory duty on Council and must be carried out whether this funding is accepted or not. The funding has been accepted by the Council in both 2021/22 and 2022/23. The legislation clearly states the obligation to carry out these functions; there is no suggestion of discretion within these duties. Discretionary work carried out by Officers could be interpreted as the way in which the legislation is enforced. Officers currently follow the Council's Enforcement Policy principles which present a graduated approach to enforcement using a range of formal and informal enforcement actions.

Funding

These funding offers are historically made during the financial year meaning that the Council operates at risk by incurring cost in anticipation of the funding. The Council employs staff directly to discharge these responsibilities and work has already been completed from the 2023/24 work plan.

The Council approved the 2023/24 budget in February. This budget included within the income assumptions that £55k of grant funding would be received to discharge these statutory responsibilities. By not accepting the grant, the Council must consider options for how this could otherwise be funded in the current year, as well as consider long term options as part of the estimates process for next year.

Options

Outlined below is an assessment of the usual options which would be examined by Council in order to manage a cost pressure:

- (i) **Service Underspends** - At this stage in the financial year, expenditure within the EHPD Service is expected to land in line with budget (excluding this pressure).
- (ii) **Service Reductions** – It is detailed within budgetary guidance to managers that Heads of Service are charged with managing budget pressures within their Service budget. Therefore options to manage this cost pressure must be examined by the Head of Service for EHPD. As over 90% of the service delivers statutory functions, savings would therefore need to come from non-statutory functions, such as health and wellbeing and pest control. The Head of Service has indicated that expenditure on these areas would be cut back in the current financial year, both in the extent of service provision and through not filling existing vacancies in order to come in on budget.

Not Applicable

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- (iii) **Organisation Underspends** - The Council will produce a forecast year end outturn at the November Corporate Services Committee. Whilst time-based savings have been created through managing vacancies in the first part of the year (therefore showing a year to date underspend) the Council is still monitoring some significant uncertainties, particularly around staff pay award, as well as managing pressures relating to a reduction in income from planning applications and cost increases in estate maintenance. The Council's proposed budget strategy for 24/25 includes a commitment to improve financial resilience through increasing reserves, which would be supported by any identified organisational underspends at year end. Managing this additional pressure at an organisational level increases the risk of organisational budget overspend.
- (iv) **Reserves** – The Council agreed a Reserves policy in June 2023. The policy states the *'the general fund may be used for non-essential expenditure up to a maximum of 0.5% of the opening balance for the financial year. Approval for this must be by the Corporate Services Committee in order to maintain appropriate oversight of unbudgeted expenditure'*. Using reserves in this instance would therefore be in breach of the Council's Reserves policy.

RECOMMENDATION

Further to the decision made at the Community and Wellbeing Committee on 13 September 2023, it is recommended that Council considers the options outlined in this report.