



Subject:	Motion – Rates Freeze
Date:	18th November, 2022
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
	To bring to Members' attention a motion in relation to a Rates Freeze, part of which the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 25th October, referred to this Committee.
2.0	Recommendation
	The Committee is asked to consider the motion.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<u>Key Issues</u> The Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 25th October, considered the following motion which had been received for submission to the Council on 1st November:

Rates Freeze

“This Council recognises the impact the rising cost of living crisis will have on Council expenditure, and the pressure this will put on our existing budgets to deliver the same high-quality services.

The Council also recognises the crisis we face will demand a heightened and increases response from local government.

At a time when many people are struggling to heat their homes, or put food on the table, the Council and its partner organisations must be adequately equipped to help navigate this crisis and provide the increased support that is needed for those struggling.

During the Covid pandemic, local Councils were allocated a financial package to help them manage the additional pressures the pandemic presented.

The cost-of-living crisis is a crisis on a similar magnitude and will require additional support to be provided to local Councils, to ensure they are adequately equipped to help mitigate the impact of this crisis on communities.

The Council views any effort to increase rates as a response to these financial pressures as counter intuitive. Any move to increase rates during a cost-of-living crisis will only exacerbate problems for working class communities. It would lead to a further hike in already mounting household bills and could force more people into poverty.

The Council acknowledges the need to avoid another rates increase during the cost-of-living crisis.

As a first step toward avoiding this, the Council will write to Stormont Ministers, the Secretary of State, and the Treasury, urging them to support a financial package of additional funding to be allocated to local Councils to help them manage the cost-of-living crisis.

The Council also commits to writing to all other councils across the north, asking them to adopt a similar position of calling for an increase of government support.

This will help to ensure that all Councils are adequately equipped to provide support to communities, to pay fair wages to its employees, and deliver high quality services during the cost-of-living crisis.”

Proposer: Councillor Michael Collins

Secunder: Councillor Matt Collins

3.2	The Interim City Solicitor advised the Standards and Business Committee that those parts of the motion relating to a Council rates freeze were not competent, as setting the rate is a legal obligation and must go through a process.
3.3	<p>Accordingly, the Committee agreed that those paragraphs of the motion, deemed competent, in relation to writing to Stormont Ministers, the Secretary of State and the Treasury, urging them to support a financial package of additional funding to local Councils and writing to all other councils asking them to adopt a similar position, be referred, in the first instance, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>This motion, if agreed, may have potential equality, good relations and rural needs implications and should be subject to our normal screening process as appropriate.</p>
	Documents Attached
	None