

## NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

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### **Minutes of Strategy Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on Thursday 15 October at 3.00pm in the Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick.**

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Chairperson:	Councillor R Burgess	
In Attendance:	Councillor P Brown Councillor M Carr Councillor G Craig Councillor G Donnelly Councillor C McGrath Councillor B Quinn Councillor B Walker	Councillor S Burns Councillor W Clarke Councillor Curran Councillor L Kimmins Councillor B Ó'Muirí Councillor M Ruane
Non-Committee Members:	Councillor T Andrews Councillor T Hearty Councillor M Murnin	Councillor H Harvey Councillor H McKee
Officials in Attendance:	Mr L Hannaway, Chief Executive Mr E Curtis, Director of Strategic Planning & Performance Mr C O'Rourke, Director of Regulatory & Technical Services Mr R Dowey, Head of Finance Mrs H McKee, Community Planning Manager Mr C Moffett, Equality Officer Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Economic Regeneration and Tourism Ms V Keegan, Marketing Manager Ms C Miskelly, Assistant Director, Human Resources Ms R Mackin, Assistant Director, Corporate Planning and Policy Mr P Green, Legal Advisor Mr E McManus, Capital Projects Mr J McBride, Change Manager Mr A Hay, Development Plan Manager Mr M McQuiston, Senior Planning Officer Ms M Fitzpatrick, Planning Officer Mrs E McParland, Democratic Services Manager Mrs C Taylor, Democratic Services Officer	

#### **SPR/167/2015:- APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Stokes and Taylor.

**SPR/168/2015:- DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**SPR/169/2015:- ACTION SHEET OF THE STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2015**

Read: Action Sheet of the Strategy, Policy and Resources (SPR) Committee Meeting held on 17 September 2015.

SPR/151/2015 – Proposal to Purchase Portion of Land at Former Down District Council Site on Strangford Road, Downpatrick for Development of New Down High School.

Mr Curtis advised that negotiations were on-going and a report would be brought back to the November Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting.

**Noted: The Action Sheet was NOTED.**

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**SPR/170/2015:- LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN – POPULATION AND GROWTH – DATA UPDATE**

Read: Reports from Mr A Hay, Development Plan Manager, dated 15 October on the preparatory papers: Population and Growth – Data Update, Population and Growth – Settlement, Hierarchy and Employment and Economic Development

Mr Hay made a presentation on the Local Development Plan (copy presentation attached).

Mr Hay advised that the reports on Population and Growth – Data Update, Population and Growth - Settlement Hierarchy, and on Employment and Economic Development would be presented as part of the on-going programme of work on the Local Development Plan. He advised that the aim of the presentation was to provide Members with an update of the programme’s preparatory work in developing the evidence base, an update of the Population and Growth paper following the publication of further 2011 Census data and revised population projections, to outline the Settlement Hierarchy and to provide an overview and key findings of the Employment and Economic Development paper.

Questions from Members were answered as follows:

- Bessbrook had been included within the development limit for Newry in previous Area Plan (Newry Area Plan 1984-1999) and had then been separated out in the current adopted Area Plan (Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015). Clarification was also given that the 2001 Census referred to Newry/Bessbrook as one settlement but that the 2011 Census referred to them as two separate settlements.
- Warrenpoint and Burren were designated together as one settlement entity with a singular settlement development limit in the adopted Area Plan rather than two separate individual settlements.
- The preparation of the Newry, Mourne and Down Local Development Plan was an opportunity to start with a clean slate, although the strategic direction of the Plan would need to take account of the Regional Development Strategy (RDS), in particular the main hubs being the focus of development
- It would be important to look at the existing settlement hierarchy and consider the services, functions and the roles that they played in the wider area.
- The status of some settlements within the settlement hierarchy may change e.g. from village to town and vice versa, as informed by the settlement appraisal work and proposed workshops with Members
- The designation of dispersed rural communities (DRCs) as outlined in PPS21 would be considered. Additional work would be carried out on this topic and Members afforded the opportunity to put forward their views. DRCs had not been included in the existing Area Plans following a review of all the settlements Members would have the opportunity to discuss the settlement appraisals and the settlement hierarchy at the proposed workshops prior to the settlement hierarchy for the District being finalised. . The settlement hierarchy would be used to inform the settlement strategy for accommodating future growth across the District as part of the LDP.
- Officers would look at settlement clustering and whether settlements would be better served by having separate identities or being clustered together within a single development limit. The findings would be discussed with Members as part of the settlement appraisal workshops.
- Under the NISRA classification of settlements a settlement with a population of 5,000 was deemed as urban ie. Newcastle, which was classed as a small town. Anything below this size was classed as rural. In the case of

Newtownhamilton although the population was only 800 it was classified as a town in the adopted Area Plan due to the level of services it contained in serving both its resident population and its large rural hinterland, this would be supported by its initial assessment using the criteria of the RDS Infrastructure Wheel

- Population projections indicated there would be an ageing population in the District over the plan period, and the Development Plan team would work with the Community Planning team to ascertain the land use implications for delivery of required services
- The next set of Housing Growth Indicators had not yet been received, but they would give an indication of how many new houses would be required over the next 15 years.
- The needs of border settlements and the rural hinterlands they serve would be considered and consultation with the authorities in the south of Ireland undertaken
- The zoning of land for economic development was set out in the two existing adopted Area Plans covering the District, but this would be reviewed as part of the LDP process. The distribution of lands for economic development uses across the District would be considered as part of the settlement strategy. The District had a large rural population, with many people self-employed and many microbusinesses and this would be taken into account. Consideration would also be given to the role that some villages and small settlements could play in meeting economic development needs.
- A paper on tourism and the role of the Local Development Plan would be brought to a future Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee.
- The Employment and Economic Development paper acknowledged the need for policies that would support rural economic development. Farm diversification and opportunities for business enterprise in rural areas would be further considered as part of the plan process
- Rural proofing the Local Development Plan would be part of the process along with the Sustainability Appraisal, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment and would take place as part of the planning process.
- There were 175 hectares of economic development land available in the District, this represented the remaining capacity in the zoned industrial lands as designated in the existing adopted Area Plans. An audit of this remaining capacity of zoned land would be undertaken to assess its

suitability and where sites have not come forward alternatives would be considered

- The allocation and distribution of economic development land in the legacy Area Plans would be reviewed

The Chief Executive outlined the importance of the RDS Infrastructure Wheel in terms of investment at regional level and suggested to Members to consider the importance of the size of settlements in the District regarding bringing in investment.

It was suggested by Councillor Burns that the detail of the Local Development Plan should be discussed at the local DEA Meetings. Mr Hay confirmed that officers were working collaboratively but that there was insufficient data to enable this to be currently considered at the DEA meetings.

**Noted:**        **The following reports were noted:**

- **Population and Growth – Data Update**
- **Population and Growth – Settlement Hierarchy**
- **Employment and Economic Development**

## **ESTATE**

### **SPR/171/2015        LAND OFFERED TO COUNCIL AT FORMER ABBEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL, COURTNEY HILL, NEWRY**

**Read:**                Report from Mr E Curtis, Director of Strategic Planning and Performance, dated 7 October 2015 regarding the Land offered to Council at the former Abbey Grammar School, Courtney Hill, Newry

**Noted:**                Mr Curtis advised that fencing required to secure the site would cost an estimated £20,000. However, a meeting would be held with the adjoining land owner to discuss sharing the cost.

**Agreed:**                **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Quinn, seconded by Councillor Ruane, to proceed with the acquisition of land comprising 5.44 acres offered to the Council by the Christian Brothers at the former Abbey Grammar School, Courtney Hill, Newry, as there is an identified need for amenity land in Newry City.**

### **SPR/172/2015        **BESSBROOK COMMUNITY CENTRE – HYDRO & HEAT PUMP****

**Read:**                Report from Mr E Curtis, Director of Strategic Planning and Performance, dated 15 October 2015 on the potential Hydro Turbine and Water Source Heat Pump at Bessbrook Community Centre.

NOTED: That provision of power to nearby houses would be looked at as part of the feasibility study.

**Agreed:** It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Brown, seconded by Councillor Ruane, that the matter be referred to Council's Senior Management Team for consideration of which Option (Option A or Option B) would be most viable.

**SPR/173/2015**      **REQUEST FROM THE QUAYS SHOPPING CENTRE TO USE ST. CHRISTOPHER'S PARK AT NEWRY ALBERT BASIN FOR STAFF CAR PARKING FOR 6 WEEKS AT CHRISTMAS 2015**

NOTED: Mr Curtis advised that a request had been received from the Quays Shopping Centre to use St. Christopher's Park, Albert Basin, Newry, for staff car parking for 6 weeks at Christmas 2015 to assist with provision of car parking space whilst the Quays Shopping Centre went through phase 5 of its development scheme.

NOTED: Mr Curtis said the land would be leased subject to valuation. He added that any additional items such as legal costs and lighting would be at nil cost to Council, with the lessee meeting the costs.

**Agreed:** It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Donnelly, seconded by Councillor Kimmins, that the request from the Quays Shopping Centre to use St. Christopher's Park at the Albert Basin for staff car parking for 6 weeks at Christmas 2015, be acceded to subject to valuation, and to other associated costs involved in the arrangement being met by the lessee.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

**SPR/174/2015**      **MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2015/2016**

**Read:** Report from Miss V Keegan, Marketing Manager, dated 15 October 2015, on the Marketing and Communications Strategy 2015/16

NOTED: Miss Keegan explained that during this period of change, it was important to strengthen communications regarding service delivery. The Strategy set out a framework for how the service would be delivered. The Strategy also had an action plan for the interim period which would be reviewed on an annual basis and performance assessed against targets in the Strategy.

**Agreed:** It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Craig, seconded by Councillor Donnelly, that the Marketing and Communications Strategy 2015/16, be approved.

**SPR/175/2015      MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS UNIT – QUARTERLY REPORT – JULY - SEPTEMBER 2015**

**Read:** Report from Miss V Keegan, Marketing Manager, dated 15 October 2015, on the Marketing and Communications Unit – Quarterly Report – July to September 2015.

**Noted:** The contents of the report were noted.

**CORPORATE SERVICES**

**SPR/176/2015      TREASURY MANAGEMENT**

**Read:** Report from Mr R Dowey, Head of Finance, dated 7 October 2015, regarding the Treasury Management Contract

**Agreed:** It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Craig, seconded by Councillor Ruane, to give retrospective approval for Newry, Mourne and Down District Council to join a Tender for Treasury Management to be led by Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council.

**SPR/177/2015      CAPITAL SPEND REPORT FOR 5 MONTHS TO 31 AUGUST AND 7 MONTHS TO 31 MARCH**

**Read:** Report from Mr R Dowey, Head of Finance, Capital Spend Report from 1 April 2015 to 31 August 2015 and 7 months Projected to 31 March 2016.

**NOTED:** Mr Dowey advised Members they would be updated on Capital Spend on a quarterly basis.

**Noted:** The contents of the report were noted.

**SPR/178/2015      INSURANCE REPORT FOR 6 MONTHS TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2015**

**Read:** Report from Mr R Dowey, Head of Finance, Insurance Report for 6 months to 30 September 2015.

NOTED: Mr Dowey advised Members they would be updated on Insurance Reports on a quarterly basis.

**Noted: The contents of the report were noted.**

**SPR/179/2015 NET REVENUE EXPENDITURE REPORT YEAR TO 30 JUNE 2015 (3 MONTHS)**

**Read:** Report from Mr R Dowey, Head of Finance, Net Revenue Expenditure Report Year to 30 June 2015 (3 months).

**Noted: The contents of the report were noted.**

**SPR/180/2015 PAYROLL SPEND REPORT TO 30 JUNE 2015 (3 MONTHS)**

**Read:** Report from Mr R Dowey, Head of Finance, Payroll Spend Report to 30 June 2015 (3 months)

NOTED: Mr Dowey advised that the redundancy payments had been capitalised and would be repaid over a 3 year period.

**Noted: The contents of the report were noted.**

**SPR/181/2015 IT EQUIPMENT STORAGE DEVICES**

**Read:** Report from Mr R Dowey, Head of Finance dated 7 October 2015 regarding IT Equipment Storage Devices.

NOTED: Members expressed concerns that retrospective approval was being sought for the IT equipment storage devices.

Mr Dowey advised that the servers had run out of space and there was an urgent need for additional storage.

**Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Craig, seconded by Councillor Quinn, to give retrospective approval to spend £18,888 to appoint Capita to supply, install and configure additional computer storage.**

**SPR/182/2015 STAFF RECOGNITION EVENT – DECEMBER 2015**

**Read:** Report from Mr R Dowey, Head of Finance regarding Staff Recognition Event – December 2015



**NOTED:** Mr Dowey advised that this request was brought under Section 37 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2011, regarding spend that the Council could not routinely undertake.

**NOTED:** Mr Dowey advised that the reasons for the Staff Recognition Event were:

- To help build morale within the workforce.
- An opportunity for staff to get to know one another.
- An opportunity for disseminating information in an informal setting and progress to date in recognition and celebration of a year of achievement for reorganisation, Irish Open, Famine Commemoration, etc.

**Agreed:** It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor W Clarke to give £5,000 under Section 37 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2011 for Council to host a staff recognition event in December 2015 .

**SPR/183/2015** **CORRESPONDENCE FROM DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE DATED 14 SEPTEMBER 2015 AND REPORT ON RESPONSES TO PROPOSALS FOR DRAFT LEGISLATION ON THE COLLECTION AND ENFORCEMENT OF FINANCIAL PENALTIES: EQUALITY AND REGULATORY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS, SEPTEMBER 2015**

**Read:** Report from Mr C Moffett, Equality Officer regarding the Department of Justice (DOJ), Criminal Law Branch: Report on Responses, Proposals for Draft legislation on the collection and enforcement of financial penalties: Equality and Regulatory impact assessments, September 2015.

**Noted:** The contents of the report were noted.

**SPR/184/2015** **CAR LOANS**

**Read:** Report from Ms C Miskelly, Assistant Director, Corporate Services (Human Resources), presented by the Head of Finance regarding Loans to Officers for Purchase of Motor Vehicles

**Agreed:** It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor O'Muirí:-

1. That Newry, Mourne and Down District Council adopts the provision in Section 41B of the Local Government Act to allow it to make loans to officers in accordance with the specified conditions.
2. That condition 1 on the previously circulated 'Schedule' for which a loan may be made to an officer for the purchase of a motor vehicle is determined by management where it is satisfied that it is essential for officers to use their private vehicles in carrying out official duties.

**SPR/185/2015      CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF NILGA**

**Read:                      Report from Mr J McBride, Change Manager, regarding Consultation Response to an Independent Review of NILGA**

**NOTED:**                      Councillor Burns referred to the importance of the NI Partnership Panel, in sending a corporate voice to the Executive, which was not currently happening and should be included in the response.

The Mr Hannaway said it was generally recognised that the Partnership Panel had been set up too early, but that engagement would begin to happen soon as the new arrangement for Local Government became established.

Mr McBride undertook to submit a strategic response in relation to Members' comments.

**Agreed:**                      **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Donnelly, seconded by Councillor Burns that the issues raised within the report be submitted as the Council's formal response to an independent review of NILGA.**

**SPR/186/2015      VIDEO CONFERENCING FACILITY BETWEEN COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**Read:**                      **Report from Mr K Scullion, Facilities Manager, regarding Video Conferencing between Council Chambers**

**NOTED:**                      Mr O'Rourke said this video conferencing facility would reduce travel costs and enable Council and Committee meetings, and general business continuity during inclement weather.

In response to concerns from Members, the Chief Executive said the initiative had been discussed at Party Representatives Forum and that a Council meeting would only take place by video conference in exceptional circumstances and he referred to the Standing Orders from the Highland Councils which specified in what circumstances this could happen.

**Agreed:** It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor W Clarke, seconded by Councillor Donnelly, that officers draw up specification for the implementation of a facility which would allow Council meetings to be held using a video conference facility with Members and Officers located at Council Chamber, Downpatrick and Council Chamber, Newry and that external consultancy support be engaged to develop the specification on the basis of approximately 6 days support at £350 per day.

## **EQUALITY**

### **SPR/187/2015      SECTION 75 POLICY SCREENING REPORT – QUARTERLY REPORT JULY – SEPTEMBER 2015**

**Read:** Report from Mr C Moffett, Equality Officer dated 15 October 2015, regarding Section 75 Policy Screening Report – Quarterly Report for period July – September 2015.

**Noted:** The contents of the report were noted.

### **SPR/188/2015      EQUALITY COMMISSION ADVICE ON GOOD RELATIONS FOR LOCAL COUNCILS SEPTEMBER 2015**

**Read:** Report from Mr C Moffett, Equality Officer dated 15 October 2015, regarding the Equality Commission advice on Good Relations for Local Councils

**Noted:** The contents of the report were noted.

### **SPR/189/2015      2016 DECADE OF CENTENARIES GRANT PROGRAMME**

**Read:** Report from Mr C Moffett, Equality Officer dated 15 October 2015, regarding the Decade of Centenaries Grant Programme - 2015

**NOTED:** Mr Moffett advised that £20,000 had been set aside in the 2015/16 rates for this programme. An additional £20,000 was now being sought in the 2016/17 budget to establish a total of £40,000 for the

programme. The maximum any organisation or group could apply for would be £3,000. The scheme would open on 16 November and close on the 4 December 2015.

**NOTED:** Mr Moffett advised that officers had met to discuss the programme of events. Nothing had been set aside yet regarding directly run Council activities.

Mr Hannaway advised that this programme had been developed through the Good Relations political forum. He suggested the Parties may wish to run a Council event.

Members requested that consideration be given to ensure the programme was shared across the entire District as some smaller towns who did not have established groups had missed out on funding in the past. Mr Moffett explained that work was being undertaken regarding capacity building for groups and organisations, which would help them in the application process.

**Agreed:** It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Burns, seconded by Councillor Walker :-

- That an additional £20,000 be allocated within the 2016/17 budget to establish a total budget of £40,000 for a Decade of Centenaries Grant Programme – 2016.
- That the call for applications to the Decade of Centenaries Grant Programme 2016 proceed.

## **COMMUNITY PLANNING**

**SPR/190/2015**      **COMMUNITY PLANNING AND THE ARTS – AN ARTS COUNCIL OF NORTHERN IRELAND SYMPOSIUM**

**Read:** Report from Mr L Hannaway, Chief Executive, regarding Community Planning and the Arts – How the Arts can help Councils deliver successful Community Plans

**Noted:** Mr Hannaway advised that 6 spaces had been provisionally reserved for 4 Councillors and 2 Officers.

**Agreed:** It was agreed that an email would be sent to Party Representatives requesting their nominations to the Symposium on 21 October 2015.

## VERIFICATION

SPR/191/2015

### SISTER CITY/TWINNING REPORT

**Read:** Report from Mr E Curtis, Director of Strategic Planning and Performance, dated 15 October 2015, regarding Sister City/Twinning

**NOTED:** Mr Curtis advised Members of the request from Gronzy, Russia, to twin with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

**NOTED:** In response to requests from Members, the following Sister City/Twinning projects would undergo further investigation:

- New Ross, Ireland
- South Dakota
- Western Isles, Scotland

Councillor Burns suggested a partnership policy could be developed.

**Agreed:** It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Burns, seconded by Councillor Ruane that:

1. The following 4 Sister Cities/Twinning projects are adopted for the 2015-2019 period:
  - a) Bezons (France) formal structure agreed
  - b) Listowel (Ireland) have formal structure agreed
  - c) Kirovsk (Russia) have formal structure agreed
  - d) Southern Pines (USA) have formal structure agreed
2. The projects above will be evaluated annually and will be tabled at Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee in the future.
3. The projects of New Ross, South Dakota and the Western Isles of Scotland undergo further investigation regarding twinning.
4. The request from Gronzy, Russia, to twin with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, is further investigated.

SPR/192/2015

### SCHEME OF DELEGATION FOR OFFICERS

Read: Report from Mr E Curtis, Director of Strategic Planning and Performance, dated 15 October 2015, regarding Scheme of Delegation.

Noted: Report dated 15 October 2015 from Mr E Curtis, Director of Strategic Planning and Performance, on decisions taken under delegated authority.

**SPR/193/2015**      **REPORT ON EUROCITIES**

Noted: Mr Curtis advised that a presentation would be made by Laura Leonard, EU and International Relations Manager, Belfast City Council on Eurocities at the November Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting.

**SPR/194/2015**      **TENDER FOR THE ADVERTISING OF PLANNING APPLICATION NOTICES**

Read: Report from Mr J McBride, Change Manager dated 15 October 2015, regarding the tender for the advertising of Planning Application Notices

Noted: Mr McBride advised that a protocol would be brought back to the November Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting for consideration.

**ITEM RESTRICTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 6 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (NI) 2014**

**SPR/195/2015**      **RELEASE OF CHARGE- MAYOBRIDGE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**

Read: Report from Mr E Curtis, Director of Strategic Planning and Performance and Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Corporate Services (Administration), dated 1 October 2015 regarding Release of Charge – Mayobridge Community Association

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Donnelly, seconded by Councillor Burns, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on this matter which related to exempt information by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - Information relating to the financial of business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

**Agreed:** On the proposal of Councillor Donnelly, seconded by Councillor Burns, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

**Agreed:** When the Committee came out of closed session, the Chairman reported that it had been agreed on the proposal of Councillor Donnelly, seconded by Councillor Burns:

**That Council agrees to Release the Charge registered on 2 May 2000 by the Council as a burden on the land comprised in Folio DN 46560L County Down owned by Mayobridge Community Association.**

The meeting concluded at 5.31pm

For consideration at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 2 November 2015.

**Signed:** Councillor Robert Burgess  
Chairperson

**Signed:** Eddy Curtis  
Director of Strategic Planning and Performance