

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of Strategy Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on Thursday 12 November 2015 at 6.00pm in the Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick.

In the Chair : Councillor H Reilly

In Attendance: Councillor P Brown Councillor S Burns
Councillor M Carr Councillor W Clarke
Councillor G Craig Councillor G Donnelly
Councillor B Ó'Muirí Councillor B Quinn
Councillor M Ruane Councillor B Walker

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
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 J McBride, Change Manager
Mr A Hay, Development Plan Manager
Ms A Magorrian, Human Resources Officer (Training)
Mr C Moffett, Equality Officer
Ms T Mooney, Tourism Officer
Ms U Mhic An Tsaoir, Irish Language Liaison Officer
Mr M Walsh, Irish Language Officer
Mrs E McParland, Democratic Services Manager
Mrs C Taylor, Democratic Services Officer

SPR/196/2015:- APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillor R Burgess (Chairperson), Councillor L Kimmins, Councillor C McGrath, Ms M Ward, Director of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism and Ms H McKee, Community Planning Manager.

SPR/197/2015:- DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr E Curtis, Director of Strategic Planning and Performance declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 7i, being a member of the Murphy Trust.

SPR/198/2015:- ACTION SHEET OF THE STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15 OCTOBER 2015

Read: Action Sheet of the Strategy, Policy and Resources (SPR) Committee Meeting held on 15 October 2015.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Burns, seconded by Councillor Donnelly, the Action Sheet of the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee held on 15 October 2015, be approved.**

SPR/199/2015 RATES SUPPORT GRANT 2015/16

Read: Report from Mr R Dowey, Head of Finance, regarding the Rates Support Grant multi-Council Delegation with the DOE Minister held on 11 November 2015

NOTED: Mr Dowey, Head of Finance briefed Members on the meeting held with the Minister for the DOE, Minister Durkan, MLA regarding the cuts to the General Grant. He said Councillors Casey, Craig and Curran had formed part of the delegation along with representatives from the other 7 Councils in Northern Ireland who were in receipt of the Rates Support Grant.

Mr Dowey outlined the points highlighted by Minister Durkan; which were the budget problems his Department had faced and that the majority of costs were staffing costs, although the Voluntary Exit Scheme had saved monies on those staffing costs and some of those savings would now be released to Councils in the increased Regional Support Grant. Minister Durkan said he was hopeful of further savings later in the year. The Minister was asked if this budget could be ring-fenced for future years, to which he had emphasised that the political parties in Local Government should lobby their MLA's to illustrate how important the Rates Support Grant was to the 7 Councils. He had also advised work was underway with an Equality Impact Assessment.

Mr Dowey further advised that Minister Durkan would be providing a written response to the issues raised by the Members within a two week period.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Craig, seconded by Councillor Donnelly, that Council write to Minister Durkan, MLA, requesting the Rate Support Grant to be ring-fenced for the future.

PRESENTATIONS

SPR/200/2015:- PRESENTATION BY LAURA LEONARD, BELFAST CITY COUNCIL – EUROCITIES

Read: Presentation to Newry, Mourne and Down District Council regarding the Eurocities Network, by Ms L Leonard, European and International Relations Manager, Belfast City Council.

Ms L Leonard made a comprehensive and informative presentation on the benefits of joining the Eurocities Network (copy previously circulated).

NOTED: Mr Curtis, Director of Strategic Planning and Performance, said Council had begun the development of the Memorandum of Understanding between Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and Louth Council at a meeting this week, at which, the Eurocities Network had been high on the agenda. Council had a number of international events in conjunction with Russia, America and France, which were very successful. The difficulties encountered had been accessing funding, but being a member of the Eurocities Network would provide Council with access to funding information, which it currently did not have.

NOTED: Ms Leonard advised that the cost of joining the Eurocities Network was €4,220 per annum.

NOTED: Mr Hannaway, Chief Executive, said Belfast and Dublin were keen to work with the District as an economic driver on the European corridor.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Brown, seconded by Councillor W Clarke, that Newry, Mourne and Down District Council join the Eurocities Network at a cost of €4,220 per annum.

Noted: The Presentation on Eurocities was noted.

SPR/201/2015 PRESENTATION REPORT BY COUNCILLORS BURNS AND CARR – SISTER CITIES

NOTED: Councillors Burns and Carr made an informative presentation on their recent visit to Southern Pines which had included the signing of the Sister Cities International Partnership Agreement between Newry, Mourne and Down and Pinehurst, Southern Pines and Aberdeen Area, NC USA (copy previously circulated).

NOTED: Councillor Carr explained how Sister Cities International had been created and the history and background of Newry & Mourne in Sister Cities. He advised the trip had been very successful with the signing of the Sister Cities International Partnership Agreement. He placed on record his thanks to the Chairperson, Ms N Bailie for completing the signing of the agreement and to Mr L Hannaway, Chief Executive and Ms T Mooney, Tourism Officer, for their help during the visit.

NOTED: Councillor Burns advised Members of the itinerary undertaken during the visit and that there had been many successful outcomes. He said Newry, Mourne and Down District Council had been asked to become members of the International Association of Golf Tour Operators (IAGTO) and form a partnership with Pinehurst Golf Resort with the opportunity to work with a destination golf marketing company who wished to come to the District to see what it has to offer and to make it a 'Play and Stay' area. He further advised there was a firm commitment from an Economic Development Group to send 20 golfers to the District in 2016, which would boost the economy.

NOTED: **The Presentation on Sister Cities was noted.**

CORPORATE PLANNING AND POLICY

SPR/202/2015 IRISH LANGUAGE STRATEGY

Read: Report from Ms U Mhic An tSaoir, dated 12 November 2015 on the Irish Language Strategy 2015-2016.

NOTED: Ms U Mhic An Tsaoir, Irish Language Liaison Officer, explained that the Irish Language Strategy had been developed in the Irish Language Unit and prepared within Council's bi-linguism policy. She advised how the Strategy covered the period up to 31 March 2016 and outlined the aims and objectives of the Strategy. She said that the Irish Language Unit would oversee the implementation of the bi-linguism Policy, produce guidelines on the use of the Irish language, undertake an Audit of the Irish language community in the District, draw up a Strategy for the Irish language for 2016-2019 and ensure that Council provided adequate resource for the bi-linguism Policy in future budgets.

NOTED: Mr Curtis, Director of Strategic Planning and Performance advised that Section 7 of the Strategy was not for agreement at this point in time as the issues contained within it, relating to staffing, were still out for consultation.

- NOTED: Questions from Members were answered as follows:
- The Strategy was currently out for consultation.
 - The workload of the Irish Language Unit had doubled since the Councils had merged. Discussions had been taking place regarding someone who could offer translation services and work with the community groups.
 - The Strategy end date was 31 March 2016, which would give officers the opportunity to identify resources going forward. Undertaking an audit was a key strategy and it would address key issues.
- NOTED: Councillor Craig said one of the aims of promoting the Irish language was to promote a strong and shared community, but he saw in the Strategy, the recognition that there would be different reactions and requested that the implementation of the Strategy be discussed at the Good Relations Forum.
- NOTED: Mr Hannaway, Chief Executive advised the Good Relations Forum had no decision making powers.
- NOTED: Councillor W Clarke referred to the opportunities for co-operation between Councils, translation costs and resources and enquired whether this was being looked into.
- Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor O’Muirí, seconded by Councillor Burns,**
- **That the Irish Language Strategy 2015-2016, be agreed with exception of Section 7 of the Strategy relating to staff issues.**
 - **That translation costs and resources be investigated through the opportunities for co-operation between Councils.**
- Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Craig, seconded by Councillor Brown, that the implementation of the Irish Language Strategy be discussed at the Good Relations Forum.**
- SPR/203/2015 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN PAPER 4 – TOWN CENTRES AND OPPORTUNITY SITES**
- Read:** Report from Mr A Hay, Development Plan Manager, dated 12 November 2015 on the Local Development Plan Preparatory Studies Paper 4 – Town Centres and Opportunity Sites.

Mr Hay, Development Plan Manager, made a presentation on the Local Development Plan Preparatory Studies Paper 4 – Town Centres and Opportunity Sites (copy attached).

Questions from Members were answered as follows:

- In the past, DSD had provided grants for the renovation of city centre sites, but these were no longer available. It was possible that DSD would transfer functions to Council, but this was looking increasingly unlikely. Council could request DSD to re-implement these grants. The 'Living over the Shops' scheme was also no longer available.
- Protected housing areas in the town centres contributed to the vitality and viability of town centres. Housing in town centres also helped support the evening economy. The town centre health checks would look at how the town centres were performing as a whole.
- There would be involvement in stakeholder engagements similar to the Community Planning process. The Local Development Plan is linked to the Community Plan with the Local Development Plan being informed by the Community Planning process. Previous town centre studies would be reviewed. It was recognised that, as part of the Local Development Plan process, there was a need to engage with local communities, the public and stakeholders on the role of the town centres.
- The paper suggested further research was undertaken on town centre health checks and retail capacity studies which would inform the direction of the Plan's retail strategy.
- There were 2 relatively up to date legacy development plans which covered the District, the Ards and Down Area Plan 2015, and the Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015, these were respectively adopted in 2009 and 2013. In both plans many of the designated town centre development opportunity sites were undeveloped and remained available. The paper represented the start of the process to review the vitality and viability of the town centres.

Noted:

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Craig, seconded by Councillor O'Muirí, that the report on the Local Development Plan Paper 4 - Town Centres and Opportunity Sites, be noted.

ESTATE

SPR/204/2015 **CAPITAL PROJECTS – PROGRESS REPORT**

Read: Report from Mr E Curtis, Director of Strategic Planning and Performance, dated 12 November 2015, on the progress of Capital Projects.

NOTED: Mr Curtis, Director of Strategic Planning & Performance referred to the £100,000 of over-spend on capital projects, previously reported to Committee by Mr E McManus, Capital Projects Officer. He advised that a report would be brought back to the Council meeting on 7 December 2015 regarding the results of the tenders for the Down Leisure Centre and the Newry Leisure Centre, Phase 2. Implementation dates for both schemes would be 18 January 2016.

In response to a query from Councillor Reilly, Mr Curtis, Director of Strategic Planning & Performance, confirmed that there was sufficient funds within Capital Funds to cover the over-spend.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Craig, that the contents of the report be noted and further details awaited regarding compensation events/additional costs for Victoria Lock Refurbishment Scheme.**

SPR/205/2015 **KINDLE INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL – LETTER FROM EDUCATION AUTHORITY**

Read: Correspondence from the Education Authority, South Eastern Region, dated 16 October 2015 regarding the proposed Community Project, at the site of the former Kindle Primary School, Ballykinler.

NOTED: Mr Curtis, Director of Strategic Planning & Performance, said this matter had been raised at the Council meeting held on 2 November 2015, where Council had requested officers to work with the Department, the results of which would be reported back to Council.

NOTED: **Correspondence from the Education Authority dated 16 October 2015 regarding the proposed Community Project, Kindle, was noted.**

SPR/206/2015 **PLAY AREA AND MOBILE AT ORIEL DRIVE, DOWNPATRICK**

Read: Report from Ms A Robb, Assistant Director of Corporate Services (Administration) dated 20 October 2015, regarding the play area and mobile building at Oriel Drive, Downpatrick.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor W Clarke, seconded by Councillor Donnelly, that authority be given to acquire the freehold transfer of land for the play area and mobile building at Oriel Drive, Flying Horse, Downpatrick in order to regularise the title in the sum of £6,500.

SPR/207/2015 **ORIOR PARK CHANGING ROOMS, BESSBROOK**

Read: Report from Mr E Curtis, Director of Strategic Planning and Performance, dated 12 November 2015, regarding the 21 year Lease of the Changing Rooms at Orior Park, Bessbrook to Bessbrook United FC.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Donnelly, seconded by Councillor Ruane, to grant a 21 year lease of the Council owned changing rooms at Orior Park/Allotment Gardens, Bessbrook, to Bessbrook United Football Club, subject to NIHE approval, DOE approval to peppercorn rent and legal agreement being drawn up.

SPR/208/2015 **REQUEST TO PURCHASE LAND AT STATION ROAD, CASTLEWELLAN**

Read: Report from Ms A Robb, Assistant Director of Corporate Services (Administration), dated 12 November 2015, regarding the request to purchase land at Station Road, Castlewellan.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor W Clarke, seconded by Councillor Craig, to note the expression of interest in the site from an adjacent landowner, make a planning application for residential development for the site at Station Road, Castlewellan and, thereafter, seek to dispose of the site on the open market in order to maximise the return for Council.

SPR/209/2015 **REQUEST TO ACQUIRE LISBURN STREET CAR PARK, BALLYNAHINCH**

Read: Report from Mr P Green, Legal Advisor, dated 12 November 2015, regarding the Expression of Interest in Lisburn Street off-street car park (south), Ballynahinch.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Craig, seconded by Councillor W Clarke, that Option 2 be agreed: Sale of the portion the developer requires to build the rear of the store on

(hatched and outlined in blue at Appendix 2 in report presented by Mr Green, and already approved by Council) and lease of remainder of car park area for 25 years (would require expression of interest exercise to be carried out).

SPR/210/2015 **VALUATION OF LAND AT GREENBANK INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, NEWRY**

Read: Report by Mr K Scullion, Assistant Director of Facilities Management & Maintenance, dated 9 November 2015, regarding the proposed additional car parking at Greenbank Industrial Estate, Newry, for Council Staff.

Read: Correspondence dated 26 October 2015, from Land & Property Services regarding the valuation of land at Greenbank Industrial Estate, Newry

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Donnelly, that approval be given to enter into negotiation with Southern Group Enterprises with the aim of setting up a rental agreement to avail of 38 car parking spaces at their premises located within the Greenbank Industrial Estate, Newry.

The cost of the annual rental is expected to be c £410 per month plus maintenance costs. Rental of site is available initially up to end of June 2016 with possibility of extension.

SPR/211/2015 **STORM WATER DRAINAGE AT CORRAGS ROAD, BURREN VILLAGE GREEN**

Read: Report from Mr P Brannigan, Estates Officer, dated 12 November 2015, regarding the request by Killowen Contracts for a wayleave to lay a storm sewer to serve a new private housing development through Council land at Burren Village Green.

NOTED: Councillor Quinn said it was important the contractors left the Green back in a suitable condition when work was completed.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Quinn, that the request by Killowen Contracts for a wayleave to lay a storm sewer to serve a new private housing development through Council land at Burren Village Green, be approved subject to consultation.

SPR/212/2015 **MURPHY TRUST**

Read: Report from Ms B Magill, Administration Manager, dated 12 November 2015, regarding the transfer of Murphy Trust property.

NOTED: Further to Councillor Reilly's question regarding rental incomes, the Chief Executive, undertook to provide further information.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Ruane seconded by Councillor Donnelly, that agreement be given for Newry, Mourne and Down District Council to manage, control and maximise the property portfolio of the Murphy Trust.**

SPR/213/2015 **COUNCIL LAND AT THE GREEN, STRANGFORD – REQUEST FOR USE**

Read: Report from Ms A Robb, Assistant Director of Corporate Services (Administration), dated 12 November 2015, regarding the request from the contractors for DRD Transport NI to use Council land at The Green, Strangford to construct a temporary slipway.

NOTED: After discussion, it was suggested that DRD Transport NI would be requested to put together a rationale as to why the use of the land at The Green, Strangford by the contractors to construct a temporary slipway, was necessary, and advise local residents.

Councillor Reilly requested the recommendation be changed to read "small section of The Green". Councillor Clarke requested DRD Transport NI be held to the 10 month time frame.

NOTED: Councillor Carr requested that matters like these which referred to specific issues within the DEA's, in future be discussed at DEA meetings where the local Councillors who were aware of the issues would be present.

Mr Hannaway said the DEA Fora were currently at inception stage, but issues such as this could be considered within their remit.

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

- **That the request for DRD Transport NI to use a small section of Council Land at The Green, Strangford, to construct a temporary slipway from January 2016 for a period of up to 10 months, be acceded to.**

- That DRD Transport NI be advised that the works should take no longer than the 10 month time frame indicated by them.
- That DRD Transport NI be requested to carry out consultation with local residents outlining the need for these works to be undertaken.

CORPORATE SERVICES

SPR/214/2015 APPROVAL FOR CALL FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE 2016/17

Read: Report by Ms S Burns, Programme Manager, dated 12 November 2015, regarding Financial Assistance.

NOTED: Councillor Carr said it was important to give groups an early indication of whether they had achieved funding or not so that they could plan events.

Mr Curtis, Director of Strategic Planning and Performance, advised that a new dedicated team had been set up which would ensure a more streamlined and faster system.

Ms Burns, Programmes Manager also addressed the concerns regarding timeframes. She advised Members there were 600 applications this year and 28 capacity programmes would be rolled out throughout the District to assist groups to fill out the application forms and look at alternative sources of funding.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Quinn, that approval be given to:

- **3 Financial Assistance Calls for the period 2016-2017.**
- **Allocation within the rates budget for grant allocations, advertising and capacity building programme and for resourcing the management and delivery of the programme.**
- **Inclusion of logistical support, (barriers, tables, chairs etc.), request form in the application and in letters of offer of financial assistance to major/minor events (to include provision of portaloos where deemed essential).**
- **Capacity building for the Community /Voluntary Sector and resourcing of same.**
- **Advances to groups for up to 50% of the grant aid if the need can be demonstrated and an Advance Agreement signed off.**

- **Thresholds for each theme to be set by Officers in line with rates.**

SPR/215/2015 UPDATE ON CHRISTMAS EVENTS FUNDING

Read: **Report by Mr E Curtis, Director of Strategic Planning and Performance, dated 12 November 2015, regarding the update on Christmas Events Funding**

Noted: Councillor W Clarke noted the disparity between the groups and said moving forward there should be a set criteria based on the number of residents and how many people attended the events. He referred to the tourism potential at the Christmas Light Switch-ons and said a criteria was needed to benchmark rates of success against spend. He suggested planting pine trees that could be used in 20 years as the Christmas trees, which would save money in the long term.

Mr Curtis, Director of Strategic Planning and Performance advised a review would be taking place as part of the Rates Estimates process.

Councillor Quinn said it was important to ascertain the community benefits of the Christmas events.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Carr, that the Christmas Event Funding throughout the District be agreed.**

SPR/216/2015 ELECTED MEMBER APPLICATION TO UNDERTAKE ACCREDITED TRAINING

Read: **Report by Ms C Miskelly, Assistant Director of Corporate Services (Human Resources), dated 12 November 2015, regarding Elected Member Application to undertake Accredited Training.**

NOTED: Councillor Reilly registered his concerns on this item.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor W Clarke, that the application for financial assistance for a Councillor to undertake a part-time Honours Degree in Irish Language and Literature at the University of Ulster which commenced in September 2015, be approved.**

SPR/217/2015 PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT

Read: Correspondence dated 30 October 2015 from the Northern Ireland Audit Office regarding the Audit and Assessment of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Performance Improvement Responsibilities for 2015-16

Noted: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor W Clarke, seconded by Councillor Donnelly, that the correspondence dated 30 October 2015 from the Northern Ireland Audit Office regarding the Audit and Assessment of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Performance Improvement Responsibilities for 2015-16, be noted.

SPR/218/2015 **CONTRIBUTIONS EXPENDITURE – UPDATE**

Read: Spreadsheet – Contributions/events for Marketing for Meeting 12 Feb 2015.

Noted: The Contributions/events for Marketing for Meeting 12 February 2015 was noted.

SPR/219/2015 **APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE BOARD OF THE CARLINGFORD LOUGH COMMISSIONERS**

Read: Report dated 12 November 2015 from Ms E McParland, Democratic Services Manager, regarding the Appointment of Members to the Board of Carlingford Lough Commissioners

Noted: Mr Hannaway, Chief Executive, advised Members that the Chief Executive of Warrenpoint Harbour Authority had advised that only 2 positions were available on the Board of the Carlingford Lough Commissioners and the Council had now been advised these positions could be rotated. He said nominations would be sought from the Parties involved: Sinn Fein, SDLP and UUP, at the Council meeting on 7 December 2015.

SPR/220/2015 **SISTER CITY/TWINNING ISSUES**

Read: Report from Mr E Curtis, Director of Strategic Planning and Performance dated 12 November 2015 on Sister City/Twinning Issues – Grozny, Russia

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Craig:

- That agreement be given to continue discussions with local Recycling Companies in Newry, Mourne and Down District Council re the provision of recycling facilities in the city of Grozny, Southern Russia.
- That a small deputation from Grozny in December 2015 be hosted.

GRANT AIDED PROGRAMMES

SPR/221/2015 SIF – UPDATE

Read: Report from Ms S Burns, Programmes Manager, dated 12 November 2015, regarding the Social Investment Fund.

Noted: In response Councillors' questions Ms Burns, Programmes Manager, explained that there had been no letters back from OFMDFM and the projects were on a case by case basis for each zone. The Council was on the South Eastern Board which provided updates on the zones. Ms Burns confirmed there was no cost to Council regarding the Castlewellan community centre renovation. Ms Burns undertook to provide Members with updates on the projects.

Agreed: It was agreed that the Programmes Manager would provide project updates to Members when they became available.

SPR/222/2015 PEACE IV

Read: Report from Ms S Burns, Programmes Manager, dated 12 November 2015, regarding the Peace IV Programme.

Noted: Ms Burns, Programmes Manager, explained that a Letter of Offer would probably not be received until 2017.

Noted: Ms Burns, Programmes Manager, in response to queries, advised she was not aware of any money being available in advance for Council to develop the programme. SEUPB had said they would host a number of workshops, but it was unclear whether these would be capacity building workshops.

Noted: The contents of the report were noted.

COMMUNITY PLANNING

SPR/223/2015 STATUTORY GUIDANCE FOR THE OPERATION OF COMMUNITY PLANNING

Read: Report dated 12 November 2015 from Ms H McKee, Assistant Director, Community Planning, regarding the Statutory Guidance for the Operation of Community Planning.

Noted: Mr Curtis, Director of Strategic Planning & Performance, advised that this guidance would be strictly followed and reported back to Council on a regular basis.

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

SPR/224/2015 APPOINTMENT OF AN ARBITRATOR - DATAHUB

Read: Report dated 12 November 2015, from Mr E Curtis, Director of Strategy, Policy and Performance, regarding the Appointment of an Arbitrator.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor W Clarke, that Quigg Golden, be appointed Arbitrators in this case.**

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

SPR/225/2015 VALUATION FOR THE SALE OF LAND AT FORMER DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES AT STRANGFORD ROAD, DOWNPATRICK

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Donnelly, seconded by Councillor Ruane, 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).**

Read: Report from Mr E Curtis, Director of Strategic Planning and Performance dated 12 November 2015, regarding the sale of land at former Down District Council offices at Strangford Road, Downpatrick.

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

Agreed: When the Committee came out of closed session, the Chairman reported it had been agreed on the proposal of Councillor W Clarke, seconded by Councillor Craig, that the valuation from LPS be accepted.

SPR/226/2015 **UPDATE ON VOLUNTARY SEVERENCE SCHEME**

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Donnelly, seconded by Councillor Ruane, 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).

Read: Report from Ms C Miskelly, Assistant Director of Corporate Service (Human Resources) dated 12 November 2015, regarding the Recommendations for Approval under RPA Staff Severance Scheme for Local Government.

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

Agreed: When the Committee came out of closed session, the Chairman reported it had been agreed on the proposal of Councillor W Clarke, seconded by Councillor Craig, that the recommendations regarding the second phase of consideration of applications for voluntary severance at 2.2 and 3.6 of the report, be agreed.

The meeting concluded at 8.27pm

For consideration at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 7 December 2015.

Signed: **Councillor Robert Burgess**
Chairperson

Signed:

Eddy Curtis

Director of Strategic Planning and Performance

12.11.2015

Local Development Plan: Preparatory Studies Paper 4: Town Centres and Opportunity Sites

Andrew Hay
Development Plan Manager



Ae freastal ar an Dúin agus Ard Mhacha Theas
Serving Down and South Armagh

Comhairle Ceantair an Iúir, Mhúrn agus an Dúin
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

www.newrymournedown.org



Aim of Paper

- Provide an overview and key findings of the Town Centre and Opportunity Sites Paper.
- Provide an overview of the current retail offer within Newry, Mourne and Down towns, examine the take up of town centre development opportunity sites and consider vacancy levels within the District's town centres.



Paper 4: Town Centres and Opportunity Sites

The paper builds on the existing evidence base and sets out:

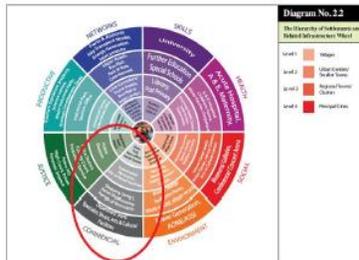
- Regional and local policy context for formulating local development plan policies for retail development
- Overview of retail trends in Northern Ireland.
- Review of:
 - Existing Development Plans and the town centre designations e.g. town centre boundaries, primary retail cores and development opportunity sites.
 - Town Centre Masterplans and Village Plans
 - Town Centre Studies (inc. town centre health checks) .
- Key findings, conclusions and recommendations.



Policy Context: RDS

Retail/Commercial Provision by Settlement Level:

- **Villages (L1)** – shops to meet daily needs and other commercial services e.g. pub, post office, petrol station etc.
- **Smaller Towns (L2)** – supermarkets, restaurants and mix of retail facilities.
- **Regional Towns (L3)** – shopping centres, retail warehouses, range of restaurants/bars.
- **Principal Cities (L4)** – In addition to services provided at level 3, contain department stores, specialist shops, arts and cultural activities.





Policy Context – The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)

Regional Strategic Policy for town centres and retailing requires LDPs to:

- Adopt a town centre first approach for retailing and main town centre uses.
- Undertake an assessment of need/capacity for retail and other main town centre uses across the District.
- Prepare town centre health checks and regularly review them (at least once every five years).
- Include a strategy for town centres and retailing, and contain appropriate policies and proposals that promote town centre first for retail and other main town centre uses.



Local Development Plan role and functions in respect of town centres and retail

- define a network and hierarchy of centres – town, district and local centres;
- define the spatial context of town centres and the primary retail core;
- set out appropriate policies that make clear which uses will be permitted in the hierarchy of centres and other locations, and the factors that will be taken account for decision making;
- provide for a diverse offer and mix of uses, which reflect local circumstances, and
- allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and form of retail, and other town centre uses.



Existing Development Plans

Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015 (BNMAP)

- Newry, Warrenpoint, Killeel, Crossmaglen, Newtownhamilton

Ards & Down Area Plan 2015 (ADAP)

- Downpatrick, Newcastle, Ballynahinch
- Provide the policy framework against which to assess development proposals.
- The Plans designate town centre boundaries and primary retail cores.
- Development opportunity sites are identified and set out the types of development that would be suitable within these town centre locations.
- Other designations afford protection to certain uses and include areas of town centre housing, areas of townscape character and local landscape policy areas.



Town Centre Masterplans and Village Plans

- Town Centre Masterplans and Village Plans are non statutory plans focusing on regeneration initiatives and public realm improvements.
- The plans set out visions for each town centre, identify key proposals and a range of initiatives. Masterplans set out a vision for a particular town centre and identify key proposals



Town Centre Studies

Regional Planning Policy requires Councils in preparing a Local Development Plan to undertake both an assessment of the health of town centres and a retail capacity study.

- A town centre health check is a qualitative assessment which looks at the attractiveness, accessibility, and amenity of the town centre. Using a series of measures it provides a view of the performance and provides a framework for assessing vitality and viability.
- A retail capacity study is a quantitative assessment of the need for additional retail floorspace over the plan period. It identifies the catchment area, calculates total expenditure and turnover of convenience and comparison goods and gives a projection of future retail needs.

Existing health check and retail capacity research undertaken by consultants as part of the SPPS and town centre Masterplans will need to be updated to support policies and proposals within the new LDP.



Key Findings and Conclusions

- In line with SPPS requirements, the LDP will need to ensure that retail growth remains focused on the main centres.
- Whilst the SPPS requires a town centre first approach consideration will be given to identifying district centres, local/neighbourhood centres and village centres within the LDP.
- Key difference in the past between masterplans and the statutory development plans has been that the masterplans have adopted a more proactive holistic approach while development plans are more regulatory in nature.
- In preparing new LDP opportunity to re-strike the balance and include non-land use actions taken by the council to improve the attractiveness and amenity of town centres.



Recommendations

- Newry and Downpatrick reaffirmed as the main city/town centres
- Existing town centre boundaries, retail designations and opportunity sites to be reviewed.
- That a retail capacity studies and health checks be undertaken for the 8 city/town centres, options for achieving this will be further considered.
- As part of the settlement appraisal work and any potential reclassification of villages to towns the issue of town centre designation should also be considered.
- The identification of district, local and neighbourhood centres within NMD city/towns be considered.
- That a policy review paper on retail be prepared for inclusion in the Preferred Options Paper.