

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Ref: NMD/FR

Minutes of the Meeting of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Finance and Resources Committee held on Tuesday 16 December 2014 at 6.00pm in the Boardroom, District Council Offices, Monaghan Row, Newry

In the Chair: Cllr. Hearty

In attendance: (Councillors)

Cllr. T Andrews	Cllr. S Burns
Cllr. M Carr	Cllr. C Casey
Cllr. G Craig	Cllr. S Doran
Cllr. C Enright	Cllr. V Harte
Cllr. H Harvey	Cllr. R Mulgrew
Cllr. H Reilly	Cllr. G Stokes
Cllr. D Taylor	Cllr. B Walker

(Non Committee Members)

Cllr. G Hanna	Cllr. B Quinn
Cllr. K Loughran	Cllr. D McAteer

(Officials)

Mr L Hannaway, Chief Executive Designate
Mr R Dowey Head of Finance
Mrs C Miskelly, Head of Human Resources
Mrs E McParland, Democratic Services Manager
Mrs C McAteer, Committee Administrator

(Officials Newry and Mourne District Council)

Mrs R Mackin, Assistant Director of Administration (Equality)

(Officials Down District Council)

Mrs V Keegan, Marketing Manager
Mr G McBride, Assistant Director (Customer Relations)

FR/99/2014: APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor D Curran; Councillor G Fitzpatrick; Councillor P Clarke; Councillor K McAteer; Councillor G Donnelly; Mr J McBride; Mrs M Ward and Mr M Lipsett.

FR/100/2014: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted there were no declarations of interest.

FR/101/2014: TENDER FOR THE PROVISION OF THE COUNCIL'S STATUTORY ADVERTISING ACCOUNT

Read: Report dated 16 December 2014 from Veronica Keegan, Marketing Manager, recommending that a tender for the provision of the Council's Statutory Advertising Account be approved for a four year period, with the option to extend for a further year.

AGREED: **It was AGREED on the PROPOSAL of Councillor Andrews, SECONDED by Councillor Walker, to approve the above recommendation.**

FR/102/2014: QUOTATIONS FOR A CUSTOMER COMPLAINT SYSTEM

Read: Report dated 16 December 2014 from Mrs R Mackin/Mr G McBride seeking authority to proceed to quotations for a Customer Complaints System. (Copy circulated).

AGREED: **It was AGREED on the PROPOSAL of Councillor Enright, SECONDED by Councillor Walker, to grant authority to officers to proceed to quotations for a Customer Complaints System.**

"IN COMMITTEE" ITEMS

- FR/103/2014: A) CAPITAL SPEND 2015/2016**
B) 1st DRAFT OF DISTRICT RATE
C) PARTNERSHIP PROJECT WITH NIEA – FLY-TIPPING
D) CONSULTATION ON THE 2015/2016 DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS
E) DECREASE IN RATE SUPPORT AND DE-RATING GRANT

AGREED: **It was AGREED on the PROPOSAL of Councillor Andrews, SECONDED by Councillor Burns, to discuss these items "In Committee" due to the commercially sensitive information to be discussed. (Local Government Act NI, part 8, para (5), Schdule 6, part 1, para.3).**

Read: Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Capital Program ref Dates as Under Draft 4. (Copy circulated).

Read: Letter dated 5 December 2014 from the NI Environment Agency regarding the Partnership Project to address fly-tipping. (Copy circulated).

Read: Report dated 16 December 2014 from Mr R Dowey enclosing the DoE Consultation on the 2015/2016 Draft Budget Proposals and asking that Members particularly read pages 7 and 8 of this document – reference points 8-11. (Copy circulated).

Read: Report dated 16 December 2014 from Mr R Dowey giving an update on the apparent reduction of 15.1% being imposed on the DoE in respect of the de-rating grant and resources grant which is payable to some District Councils. Members were asked to note that this will have an impact on the 2015/2016 Rates if the reduction is confirmed. (Copy circulated).

AGREED: It was **AGREED** on the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Andrews, **SECONDED** by Councillor Burns, to come “Out of Committee”.

NOTED: Councillors Casey, Doran, Harte, Mulgrew and Craig left the meeting at 6.45 pm.

AGREED: The Chairman reported that the following had been agreed whilst “In Committee”:-

- 1) It was **AGREED** on the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Carr, **SECONDED** by Councillor Taylor, to write to Simon Hamilton, MLA, Minister of Finance and Personnel and also to Mark H Durkan, MLA, Minister of the Environment, expressing the Council’s grave concerns about the adverse impact of the recent non-domestic rates revaluation on businesses in the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area.
- 2) It was **AGREED** on the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Walker, **SECONDED** by Reilly, to seek an urgent Meeting with the two Ministers to discuss the Council’s concerns.
- 3) It was **AGREED** on the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Burns, **SECONDED** by Councillor Hearty, that Councillor Burns as the Newry, Mourne and Down Partnership Panel Member, raise the Council’s concerns relating to this matter at the next meeting of the Partnership.
- 4) It was **AGREED** that within their respective Party Groupings, Members give consideration to their strategic priorities prior to attending the workshop to go through the Rates process.
- 5) It was **AGREED** to respond to the DoE Consultation on 2015-2016 Draft Budget Proposals, expressing the Council’s concerns regarding the impact of the proposed decrease in DoE budget by 2015/2016.
- 6) It was **AGREED** to write to the DoE expressing the Council’s concerns on an apparent reduction of 15.1% being imposed by the DoE in respect of the de-rating grant and resources grant which is payable to some of the District Councils.

NOTED: Councillor D McAteer left the meeting at 6.55 pm.

MINUTES

FR/104/2014: ACTION SHEET FROM F&R COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2014

READ: Action Sheet arising from the Finance and Resources Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 18 November 2014. **(Copy circulated).**

NOTED: Mr Hannaway confirmed that all actions had been progressed and it was agreed to mark the action sheet `noted`.

FINANCE BUSINESS

FR/105/2014: SIGNATORIES FOR DANSKE BANK ACCOUNT

Read: Report dated 17 December 2014 from Mr R Dowey seeking approval for the following:-

- 1) To approve the signatory of the Chief Executive Designate and the Head of Finance to operate all accounts being set up by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council by Danske Bank Ltd.
- 2) If the Bank so allows these two officers also be given approval that when additional posts at Senior level are filled they have the authority to instruct the Bank to add new signatories to the Bank approval list as and when required.

In the event item at (2) is not permissible, that the Council agree to the names of the two most Senior Accountants in the Finance Section be added to the approved signatories (i.e. Mr Ken Montgomery and Ms Brenda Phillips).

AGREED: It was **AGREED** on the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Carr, **SECONDED** by Councillor Burns, to approve the above report and recommendations.

FR/106/2014: RPA COSTS

READ: Report giving details of the RPA costs from 26 May to 30 November 2014. **(Copy circulated).**

AGREED: It was **AGREED** to mark the above report `noted`.

FR/107/2014: PROGRESS ON I.C.T. ITEMS

READ: Progress report dated 16 December 2014 on I.C.T. issues. **(Copy circulated).**

AGREED: It was **AGREED** to mark the above report `noted`.

NOTED: Mr Hannaway advised that he had met with representatives from Deloitte and a report on Due Diligence would be tabled at the January Governance Committee Meeting for consideration.

NOTED: Mr Dowey confirmed he would investigate problems which Councillor Quinn and other Councillors were experiencing accessing Minute Pad and also ensure that Councillor D Taylor was provided with a laptop.

FR/108/2014: e PROCUREMENT AND FINANCE SYSTEM CONVERGENCE

READ: Report dated 16 December 2014 from Mr R Dowey giving an update on progress in relation to Sun Systems; Budgeting Software (Rocket); Cintra iQ Payroll System; eProcurement System; RAMS (Real Asset Management) and Stock System. **(Copy circulated).**

AGREED: It was **AGREED** to mark the above report `noted`.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

FR/109/2014: FINANCIAL AND ACCOUNTING POLICIES

NOTED: The following Financial and Accounting Policies were listed for approval for the month of December 2014:-

- Accounts Payable.
- Writing Off Bad Debts.
- Booking Travel.
- Cash Handling and Cash Handling Risk Assessment.
- Payment of Electricity Accounts.
- Handling of Euro.
- Hospitality Procedures.
- Payment and Recovery of Advances to Councillors and Council Employees.
- Strategy for Labelling of Assets.

AGREED: It was **AGREED** on the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Burns, **SECONDED** by Councillor Walker, to approve the above Policies and Procedures and also to grant authority to relevant officers to update these Policies and Procedures as and when required.

ASSET MANAGEMENT

FR/110/2014: ASSET DISPOSAL AND ACQUISITION POLICY

Read: Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Acquisition and Disposal of Land Assets Policy. (Copy circulated).

AGREED: It was **AGREED** on the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Andrews, **SECONDED** by Councillor Stokes, to approve the above Policy.

NOTED: Councillor Loughran left the meeting at 7.30 pm.

NOTED: Councillor Reilly advised that a Group in Newry Street, Kilkeel had secured funding through the Space and Places Award and he asked that officials investigate if the Council could consider transferring Kilkeel Town Hall to them for the project.

HUMAN RESOURCE BUSINESS

FR/111/2014: UPDATE ON CAPACITY BUILDING FOR ELECTED MEMBERS

Read: Report dated 16 December 2014 from Mrs C Miskelly updating Members of the learning and development activities which have taken place and are planned for Members including Equality Training; Planning Training; Study Visit to Fife Council; details of Elected Member Induction Training and an update on Community Planning Training. (Copy circulated).

NOTED: Mrs Miskelly advised a report on the Fife Study Visit would be presented to the next Shadow Planning Committee Meeting and she also drew the Members' attention to a letter from NILGA giving details of additional dates for Regional Planning Capacity Building Training, if any Member had been unable to attend previous sessions.

Mrs Miskelly also referred to the Elected Member Induction Programme and encouraged Members to contact Eileen McParland before 22 December 2014 to confirm the modules they would like to attend.

NOTED: Councillor Walker advised that NILGA were also organising a number of training days on the Code of Conduct and he would encourage Members to attend this beneficial training.

AGREED: It was **AGREED** on the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Andrews, **SECONDED** by Councillor Walker, to approve the above report.

FR/112/2014: EQUALITY TRAINING FOR ELECTED MEMBERS – EVALUATION REPORT

Read: Report dated 16 December 2014 from Mrs C Miskelly updating Members on a recent "Being Fair: Being Inclusive" training event

and also giving details of Members who attended Equality Training. (Copy circulated).

AGREED: It was **AGREED** to mark the above report `noted`.

FR/113/2014: **PROTOCOL FOR FILLING POSTS IN THE NEW COUNCIL**

Read: Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Protocol in respect of matters relating to Circular LGRJF/08 – July 2014 “Procedure for the filling of Posts in the new Council Structures and Related Guidance”. (Copy circulated).

NOTED: Mrs Miskelly advised the Trade Unions had considered this Protocol at a meeting held on 15 December 2014 and had accepted it, subject to some small amendments being made. The Protocol would now be implemented in the new Council.

AGREED: It was **AGREED** to mark the above Protocol `noted`.

“IN COMMITTEE” ITEMS

FR/114/2014: **A) UPDATE ON ORGANISATIONAL DESIGN CONSULTATION**
B) UPDATE ON ORGANISATIONAL DESIGN CONSULTATION

AGREED: It was **AGREED** on the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Burns, **SECONDED** by Councillor Taylor, to discuss these items “In Committee” due to the staffing issues to be discussed. (Local Government Act NI, part 8, para (5), Schedule 6, part 1, para.3).

Read: Report dated 16 December 2014 from Mr L Hannaway on Organisation Design Structure Consultations. (Copy circulated).

Read: Report dated 16 December 2014 from Mr L Hannaway/Mrs C Miskelly on proposals concerning locations and structures for Departments within the Corporate Services Directorate and Democratic Services Unit. (Copy circulated).

AGREED: It was **AGREED** on the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Andrews, **SECONDED** by Councillor Harvey, to come “Out of Committee”.

AGREED: The Chairman reported the following had been agreed whilst “In Committee”:-

- 1) It was **AGREED** on the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Andrews, **SECONDED** by Councillor Walker to approve the amendments to the Organisation Structure as detailed in the report dated 16 December 2014 from Mr L Hannaway.
- 2) It was **AGREED** on the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Andrews, **SECONDED** by Councillor Walker to agree in principle to the location of departments and services within the Corporate Services Directorate and Democratic Services Unit and to approve the HR and Finance Structures as detailed in the report dated 16 December 2014 from Mr L Hannaway/Mrs C Miskelly.

**FR/115/2014: ANNUAL ICLRD/DDBS CONFERENCE –
SHARED SERVICES/SHARED OPPORTUNITIES**

Read: Invitation to attend the above Conference to be held from 29-30 January 2015 in the Killyhevlin Hotel, Enniskillen – fee £55 (Conference only); £75 (Conference fee and dinner on Thursday 29 January) or £125 (Conference fee, all meals and B & B accommodation in the Killyhevlin Hotel).

AGREED: It was **AGREED** to mark the above correspondence `noted`.

There being no further business the Meeting ended at 8.10 pm.

For consideration at the Shadow Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday 6 January 2015.

Signed: Councillor T Hearty
Chairperson

Mr L Hannaway
Chief Executive Designate