

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Ref: NMD/GC/5

**Minutes of the Meeting of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
Governance Committee held on Wednesday 15 October 2014 at 6.00pm in the
Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick**

In attendance:

(Councillors)

Councillor S Burns
Councillor M Carr (Chairperson)
Councillor P Clarke
Councillor G Craig
Councillor L Devlin
Councillor G Donnelly
Councillor S Ennis
Councillor C Enright
Councillor V Harte
Councillor H Harvey
Councillor L Kimmins
Councillor K McAteer
Councillor H McKee
Councillor H Reilly
Councillor M Ruane
Councillor G Stokes
Councillor JJ Tinnelly

Also in attendance:

Councillor T Andrews
Councillor W Walker

(Officials)

Mr L Hannaway, Chief Executive Designate
Mr J McBride, Change Manager
Mrs C Miskelly, Head of Human Resources
Mrs D Starkey, Committee Administrator

Mr M Lipsett, Director of Recreation and Community
Services
Mrs M Ward, Group Chief Building Control Officer
Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director Corporate Services (Legal
& Administrative Services)

GC/44/2014: APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Bailie, Fitzpatrick and O'Muirí and Mr Eddie Curtis, Chief Executive (Newry and Mourne District Council) and Mr Canice O'Rourke, Director of Environmental Services (Down District Council).

GC/45/2014: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

GC/46/2014: ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9 SEPTEMBER 2014

Read: Action Sheet arising from Governance Committee Meeting held on 9 September 2014. **(Copy circulated)**

NOTED: The Chief Executive confirmed that all actions had been progressed and it was agreed to mark the action sheet 'noted'.

Councillor Enright entered the meeting during consideration of the following item – 6.30pm.

GC/47/2014: ORGANISATION FOUNDATION DESIGN

Read: Report from Chief Executive on Organisation Foundation Decision. **(Copy circulated).**

NOTED: A discussion took place regarding the recommendations contained within the report.

Councillor Stokes **PROPOSED** an amendment to the recommendations for a new Civic Centre and administration centre in Newry to be included within 2015/19 Council Corporate Plan with the view that the new civic centre be delivered by 2019, with full meeting facilities for Planning, Council, Committee and Party Meetings. Councillor Stokes added that once a Senior Management Team was in place that a project Board be established to deliver the project by 2019.

Councillor K McAteer **SECONDED** the proposed amendment.

At the request of Councillor Stokes the Chairman asked for a recorded vote, the results of which were as follows:

FOR: Councillors Carr, Devlin, Donnelly, K McAteer, Reilly and Stokes **(6)**

AGAINST: Councillors Burns, P Clarke, Craig, Ennis, Enright, Harte, Harvey, Kimmins, McKee, Ruane and Tinnelly **(11)**

The Chairman declared the proposal **LOST**.

NOTED: Councillor Burns **PROPOSED** the approval of the recommendations contained within the report with an amendment to the reference made to preparing a 'scoping study' being changed to a 'feasibility study'.

The proposal was **SECONDED** by Councillor Ruane.

The Chairman asked for a show of hands on proposal, the results of which were as follows:

FOR: 11
AGAINST: 4
ABSTENTION: 2

The Chairperson declared the proposal **CARRIED**.

NOTED: During discussion Councillors Reilly and P.Clarke raised concerns that UKIP, Alliance and Independents Councillors would be sharing one office space.

The Chief Executive advised he was happy to meet with Members and examine options for private/segmented office space for UKIP, Alliance and Independent Members.

AGREED: It was **AGREED** on the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Burns, **SECONDED** by Councillor Ruane to approve the following:

- **Full Council meetings from the 1 April 2015 be held in the Council Chamber, Downpatrick;**
- **Planning Committee meetings from the 1 April 2015 be held in the Boardroom, Monaghan Row, with the remaining Committees shared between the two sites of Downpatrick and Newry;**

- Suitable office space be secured for the Party Groupings (as represented on the Party Representatives' Forum) in the Downshire Civic Centre;
- The proposed refurbishment of the Boardroom, Monaghan Row be abandoned (other than the necessary audio / visual works for the Planning Committee);
- Authority be granted to Officials to prepare a feasibility study outlining the key issues for the development of a new civic and administrative centre in Newry;
- For the purposes of administration, Monaghan Row be designated as the administrative headquarters of the new Council with the Mayor / Chairman and Chief Executive based at that location. (The Mayor / Chairman have the flexibility to operate out of either Monaghan Row or the Downshire Civic Centre depending on the area of the District from where they are from); and
- Subject to the completion of organisational design, Directors and their Directorates be evenly spread between Newry and Downpatrick.

AGREED: It was **AGREED** options for visits to predecessor Council assets be presented at the Party Representatives' Forum Meeting to be held on 28 October 2014.

GC/48/2014: **DESIGN OF FUTURE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

Read: Report on the design of future governance arrangements presented by Mr J McBride. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: It was **AGREED** on the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Craig, **SECONDED** by Councillor Harvey to approve the following:

- To proceed with the submission of an application for Borough Status to secure the position of Mayor;
- Await the final decision on corporate identity and branding before deciding to submit an application for a Coat of Arms; and
- Options for a new Council Seal and Chain of Office to be presented at the Governance Committee Meeting to be held on 11 November 2014.

GC/49/2014:

**LAY MEMBERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS ON COUNCIL
DECISION MAKING STRUCTURES**

Read:

Report from Chief Executive on Lay Membership on Council Decision-Making Structures. **(Copy circulated)**

NOTED:

The Chief Executive advised the purpose of the report was to consider arrangements for Lay Membership in the new Council, with the exception of the Audit Committee, which was to be considered by the Finance and Resources Committee on 21 October 2014.

Mr McBride asked Members to note that the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 would bring to a close all the Committees, Sub Committees and Working Groups of the two predecessor Councils on the 31 March 2015.

NOTED:

In response to a query regarding the Public Sector Taskforce (DDC) the Chief Executive explained the differences between a Sub-Committee of a Council Committee and a Taskforce / Working Group. The main difference being that Sub-Committees can make recommendations to a Committee of Council whereas a Taskforce / Working Group is established around specific area of interest.

AGREED:

It was AGREED on the PROPOSAL of Councillor Burns, SECONDED by Councillor Craig to approve the following:

- **Lay Membership be restricted to specified Sub-Committees of the Council's Standing Committees;**
- **Membership of any Sub-Committee (where Lay Membership is utilised) be comprised of two-thirds (2/3) Elected Members of the Council and one third (1/3) Lay Membership;**
- **Lay Members be appointed following a public advertisement and appointments process;**
- **Lay Members be appointed for only the term of the Council, and can only serve for a maximum of two consecutive terms;**
- **Only Elected Members of the Council be able to hold the position of Chair (an exception being a proposed Audit Committee which would be considered at the next Finance & Resources Committee meeting); and**
- **Authority be granted to Officials to identify suitable Sub-Committees of Council where Lay Membership could be considered.**

GC/50/2014: FRONT OF HOUSE/RECEPTIONIST SERVICES FOR NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Read: Report dated 9 October 2014 on Reception/Front of House Services – Newry, Mourne and Down District Council presented by Mrs A Robb. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: It was **AGREED** on the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Stokes, **SECONDED** by Councillor P.Clarke to approve the following:

- Introduction of a single telephone number for Newry, Mourne and Down District Council effective from 1 April 2015;
- Introduction of an automated call interception system which gives the option of talking to an operator;
- Introduction of a pilot scheme for recording of calls on a phased basis;
- Introduction of a protocol to ensure the maximum benefit is achieved through the use of direct line numbers taking into account those services which receive a high number of sales calls e.g. IT;
- Retain the current use of Visitor passes and extend this where possible in line with health and safety requirements/best practice;
- Retain the current provision of additional services at reception areas but keep under review in line with changes to buildings/layout and service location;
- Development of staff protocols for front of house services to ensure consistency in service provision from 1 April 2015. This will include training in the new Council area, structure, location of services, key contacts and how to deal with Visitors;
- In conjunction with HR investigate the options around the different reception opening hours currently in operation; and
- Relevant Officers to keep Front of House/Reception Services under review and revisit in the longer term following the transitional period.

AGREED: At the request of the Chairman, the Chief Executive undertook to examine and present a report on the use of audio / video conferencing facilities for meetings between both centres in Newry and Downpatrick.

GC/51/2014: CRITICAL POLICIES – GAP ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Read: Report from Mr J McBride on Critical Policies – Gap Analysis and Recommendations. **(Copy circulated)**

NOTED: Mr McBride advised the report set out the critical suite of policies which the new Council must adopt by 1 April 2015.

A register of all policies for the new Council, once approved, would be made available on the new Council website.

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

GC/51/2014: APPROVAL TO TENDER FOR MEDIA MONITORING SERVICES

Read: Report from Mrs R Mackin regarding a request to seek quotations for Media Monitoring Services for Newry, Mourne and Down Council. **(Copy circulated)**

NOTED: In presenting the report Mr McBride responded to queries raised and advised the service to be provided was cost effective and beneficial in enabling both officers and Members to check media coverage of Council activity.

AGREED: **The Chief Executive undertook to include within the terms of reference for the Media Monitoring Service that the facility be shared with Members.**

AGREED: **It was AGREED on the PROPOSAL of Councillor Craig, SECONDED by Councillor P.Clark to grant permission to seek quotations for the provision of Media Monitoring Services for the new Council.**

GC/52/2014: CORPORATE IDENTITY AND BRANDING EXERCISE

NOTED: Mr McBride provided a verbal update in relation to the Corporate Identity and Branding Exercise being undertaken by Consultants, McCadden Design including:

- The desktop exercise had been completed.
- A number of visits to sites across the District had been undertaken as well as face to face interviews, on line questionnaires placed on Council websites and a community event held in the Burrendale, Newcastle with feedback provided from a range of consultees.
- It was essential Council agreed the Corporate Identity and Branding by December 2014.

NOTED: Mr McBride advised a meeting of the Corporate Branding Sub Committee would be convened in November 2014 to consider the emerging results from the various consultation and engagement exercises being undertaken.

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

GC/53/2014: **LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM PROGRAMME – UPDATE REPORT**

Read: Report from Mr J McBride on Local Government Reform Programme – Update Report. **(Copy circulated)**

NOTED: Mr McBride reported all work was progressing as planned, with no areas of concern aside from the increased uncertainty regarding functions transferring from the Department of Social Development.

AGREED: It was **AGREED** to circulate copies of the forward work plan to all Councillors on a monthly basis.

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

Councillor Reilly left the meeting at this point – 7.15pm.

GC/54/2014: **PROPOSED MEETING ARRANGEMENTS**

Read: Report from the Chief Executive on proposed meeting arrangements. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: It was **AGREED** on the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Craig, **SECONDED** by Councillor McKee to approve the following timetable for meetings on new organisation structures as follows:

- **Tuesday, 4 November 2014, 1.00pm – Special Party Representatives' Forum meeting to consider the proposals (with Party Grouping briefings offered after this date and before 11 November 2014);**
- **Wednesday, 5 November 2014, 9.00am – meeting with the Directors of both predecessor Councils;**
- **Wednesday, 5 November 2014, 2.00pm – Meeting with the Assistant Directors of both predecessor Councils;**
- **Tuesday, 11 November 2014, 6.00pm – Option 3: Presentation of the proposals to the scheduled meeting on the Governance Committee (with all Members of Council invited to attend for this specific item). This**

meeting to be followed by a Special Meeting of full Council following the close of the Governance Committee; and

- Tuesday, 2 December 2014, 6.00pm – Full Council meeting to agree final arrangements.

It was further **AGREED** to re-schedule Council meetings in December as follows:

- Transition Management Team (TMT) meeting, 10.00am, Tuesday 16 December 2014 (Boardroom, Monaghan Row);
- Party Representatives' Forum meeting, 3.00pm, Tuesday 16 December 2014 (Boardroom, Monaghan Row);
- Finance & Resources Committee meeting, 6.00pm, Tuesday 16 December 2014 (Boardroom, Monaghan Row); and
- Development Committee meeting, 6.00pm, Thursday 18 December 2014 (Training Room, Monaghan Row)

GC/55/2014: **NILGA REPOSE TO DHSSPSNI CONSULTATION ON USE OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE INFORMATION**

Read: Response from NILGA on DHSSPS consultation on a proposal to introduce primary legislation for the use of Health and Social Care service user identifiable information for secondary purposes in controlled circumstances. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: It was **AGREED** to mark the correspondence 'noted'.

There being no further business the Meeting ended at **7.25pm**.

For consideration at the Shadow Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday 4 November 2014.

Signed: **Councillor M Carr**
(Chairperson)

Signed: **Mr L Hannaway**
(Chief Executive Designate)