

**NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Regulatory and Technical Services Committee Meeting held on  
Wednesday 19 April 2017 in the Boardroom, District Council  
Offices, Monaghan Row, Newry**

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**Chairperson:** Councillor R Mulgrew

**Vice Chairperson:** Councillor T Andrews

**Members:** Councillor C Casey                      Councillor D Curran  
Councillor G Fitzpatrick                  Councillor V Harte  
Councillor D Hyland                        Councillor G Stokes  
Councillor D Taylor                        Councillor J Tinnelly

**Officials in Attendance** Mr C O'Rourke, Director of Regulatory and Technical Services  
Mr A McKay, Head of Planning  
Mr J Parkes, Assistant Director of Waste Management  
Mr K Scullion, Assistant Director Facilities Management and Maintenance  
Mr E Newell, Building Control Officer  
Mrs C McAteer, Democratic Services Officer

**RTS/44/2017:            APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

It was noted apologies were received from Councillor Trainor and Councillor Craig.

**RTS/45/2017:            DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**Noted:** There were no declarations of interest.

**RTS/46/2017:            ACTION SHEET OF THE REGULATORY AND TECHNICAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING – WEDNESDAY 22 MARCH 2017**

**Read:** Action Sheet of the Regulatory and Technical Services Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 22 2017. **(Circulated).**

**Agreed:** The Action Sheet was noted.

## RTS/35/2017 – Interruptions in bin service collections

- In response to a request for an update from Councillor Andrews on a request that DEA Councillors be sent a text message if there was an interruption in the collection of a bin route, Mr Parkes confirmed it would be difficult to do this. However Officials were looking at sending an email to DEA Councillors advising if there were any interruptions to service, the routes affected and the estimated alternative pick up arrangements.
- In response to concerns expressed by Councillor Casey regarding delays in the bulky refuse collection service, Mr Parkes said there were staffing issues with the service and officials were working on dealing with the backlog of requests and putting a more robust system in place in the former Newry and Mourne Council area. He said the aim was to have all items collected within the next two weeks.
- At the request of Councillor Fitzpatrick it was agreed Mr Parkes investigate issues with the non-collection of black bins in the Mayobridge area.
- At the request of Councillor Hyland it was agreed Mr Parkes investigate issues with the non-collection of brown bins from the Warrenpoint Road area on 19 April 2017.

## **RTS/47/2017: REGULATORY & TECHNICAL SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN - UPDATE Q4**

**Read:** Regulatory and Technical Services Business Plan – Update Q4. **(Circulated).**

**Noted:** Mr O'Rourke responded to queries from Members regarding A5 – effectively implementing sickness absence management procedures and A19 rationalise 4 day vs 5 day week for refuse collection regimes.

**Agreed:** **The Regulatory and Technical Services Business Plan – Update Q4 was noted.**

## **PLANNING**

### **RTS/48/2017: PLANNING COMMITTEE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

**Read:** Planning Performance Indicators for March 2017. **(Circulated)**

**Agreed:** **The above Report was noted.**

Mr McKay gave a breakdown on information contained in the report:-

1. Live applications

There were 1600 live applications in January 2016 and this figure had now been reduced to 1074. After Belfast City Council, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Planning Department is the busiest amongst the 11 Councils. During this period processing times had been improved to approximately 9 weeks for local applications.

2. Live applications by length of time in system

In April 2016 there were 222 applications in the system between 12 and 18 months. Planning staff had worked hard on legacy applications, most of which were pre December 2014 and in March 2017 that figure had reduced to 87.

3. Live applications by Case Officer

The number of live applications by Case Officer had been reducing but due to staff turnover and maternity leave, these were now rising again. The process was underway to replace staff but this would take time to complete. Mr McKay also confirmed that the number of planning applications being received as up 8-10% month on month.

4. Decisions issued per month

There has been a slight slump in the figures – April 2016 (168) March 2017 (155) but this was slowly starting to recover.

5. Decisions issued ytd

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council were on par with Belfast City Council. The average number of decisions issued by other Councils was between 500 and 700. Newry, Mourne and Down was one of the most productive Planning Departments with an approval rate of 88%. The refusal rate was largely a result of the legacy applications in the system.

6. Enforcement live cases

There was currently 721 enforcement cases which reflected the level of unauthorised activity in the District but the Planning Team were actively working on this area.

7. Planning Committee

Mr McKay said the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Planning Committee was one of the most hard working Committees throughout the

Councils in terms of the number of planning applications they dealt with on a monthly basis.

8. Appeals

From April 2016 to March 2017 46 decisions had been referred to the PAC. Of these 37 were dismissed and 9 upheld which was an 80% success rate for the Council.

9. Statutory Targets Performance Data

Previously the average processing time of an application was 32 weeks and this had now been reduced to 23 weeks.

**RTS/49/2017: RECORD OF MEETINGS BETWEEN PLANNING OFFICERS AND PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES – JANUARY 2017**

**Read:** Record of Meetings between Planning Officers and Public Representatives for February 2017. **(Circulated).**

**Agreed:** **The above Report was noted.**

**Noted:** Councillor Fitzpatrick said she had held a number of meetings with Planning staff which were not recorded and it was agreed Mr McKay would speak to his staff to ensure all meetings with public representatives were recorded.

**RTS/50/2017: REGISTER OF CONTACTS – Q4 JANUARY – MARCH 2017**

**Read:** Register of Contacts – Q4 1 January to 31 March 2017. **(Circulated).**

**Agreed:** **The above Report was noted.**

**FACILITIES MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE**

**RTS/51/2017: REPORT RE: MAINTENANCE AND UPKEEP OF MAGHERADROOL PARISH GRAVEYARD, CRABTREE ROAD, BALLYNAHINCH**

**Read:** Report dated 19 April 2017 from Mr Kevin Scullion, Assistant Director, regarding maintenance and upkeep of Magheradrool Parish Graveyard, Crabtree Road, Ballynahinch. **(Circulated).**

**Agreed:** On the proposal of Councillor Andrews seconded by Councillor Hyland, it was agreed-

- Council continues to maintain the site as part of its Grounds Maintenance Programme which should be extended to periodically cut back the ivy and other vegetation which grows on the church ruins, in consultation with the Historic Environment Division.
- Whilst the Council will not seek to discourage any work at the old graveyard the local group wishes to pursue this will be subject to the group receiving both Council approval and that of the Historic Environment Division before such work is undertaken.

**RTS/52/2017:** REPORT RE: REQUEST TO INVESTIGATE POSSIBLE CLEAN-UP WORKS AT WELL LANE GRAVEYARD, NEWRY

**Read:** Report dated 19 April 2017 Mr Kevin Scullion, Assistant Director, regarding request to investigate possible clean-up works at Well Lane Graveyard, Newry. **(Circulated)**.

**Agreed:** On the proposal of Councillor Casey seconded by Councillor Stokes it was agreed:-

- Mr Scullion and Mr Parkes consider a proposal for the Council to undertake a one-off clean-up of Well Lane Graveyard, Newry and submit a report for consideration by the Newry DEA Fora.
- Officer time be allocated to investigate other potential sources of funding and to pass this information to the Riverside Reform Presbyterian Church. Information obtained from any research undertaken to identify other possible funding sources should be shared with other Church maintained cemeteries.

#### **FOR NOTING**

**RTS/53/2017:** ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE MEMBERS' MONTHLY BULLETIN 30 MARCH 2017

**Read:** Arc21 Joint Committee Members' Monthly Bulletin 30 March 2017. **(Circulated)**.

**Agreed:** It was agreed to note the above Bulletin.

**RTS/54/2017:       ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**-   MINUTES OF THURSDAY 26 JANUARY 2017**

**Read:**               Arc21 Joint Committee Meeting Minutes dated 26 January 2017.  
**(Circulated).**

**Agreed:**           **It was agreed to note the above Minutes.**

**RTS/55/2017:       CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED WATER ENVIRONMENTAL**  
**IMPACT ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS**

**Read:**               Consultation on proposed Water Environmental Impact  
Assessment Regulations. **(Circulated)**

**Agreed:**           **It was agreed to note the above correspondence.**

**RTS/56/2017:       BUILDING REGULATIONS REPORT**  
**-   1 SEPTEMBER 2016 TO 28 FEBRUARY**

**Read:**               Building Regulations Report from Mr Colm Jackson, Assistant  
Director of Regulatory & Technical Services regarding applications  
received from 1 September 2016 to 28 February 2017.  
**(Circulated).**

**Agreed:**           **It was agreed to note the above Report.**

**RTS/57/2017:       HISTORIC ACTIONS TRACKING UPDATE**

**Read:**               Report re: Regulatory & Technical Services Committee Action  
Tracking Update. **(Circulated).**

**Agreed:**           **It was agreed to note the above Report.**

There being no further business the meeting ended at 6.00 pm.

For consideration at the Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday 2 May 2017.

**Signed:           Councillor Roisin Mulgrew**  
**Chairperson of Regulatory & Technical Services Committee**

**Signed:           Mr C O Rourke**  
**Director Regulatory & Technical Services**