



October 22nd, 2020

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the Council meeting to be held on **Monday, 26th October 2020** at **6:00 pm** in **Microsoft Teams**.

Agenda

1.0 Introduction and Apologies

2.0 Declarations of Interest

3.0 Report from Council's Planning Department in relation to planning application P/2015/0218/F - Lands Approx 600m SW Mullaghgarriff Road, Newry in the townlands of Gruggandoo, Grugganskea & Mullaghgarve BT34 5LT Construction of Windfarm

📄 *Gruggandoo Wind Farm.pdf*

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📄 *Letter to Dfl.pdf*

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📄 *Special_Council_Minutes_28-09-2015.pdf*

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📄 *Special Council (ABO Windfarm) - 26-06-2017.pdf*

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📄 *Special Council (ABO Windfarm) - 26-09-2017.pdf*

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4.0 Presentation from ABO Wind - 10 Minutes

5.0 Presentation from Mourne AONB Wind - 10 Minutes

6.0 Question & Answer session

7.0 Planning Officer's to clarify points raised

8.0 To discuss Council's corporate response to planning application P/2015/0218/F

Invitees

Cllr Terry Andrews

Mr Alan Beggs

Ms Kate Bingham

Cllr Patrick Brown

Cllr Robert Burgess

Cllr Pete Byrne

Mrs Dorinnia Carville

Cllr charlie casey

Cllr William Clarke

Cllr Dermot Curran

Cllr Laura Devlin

Mr Eoin Devlin

Ms Louise Dillon

Cllr Sean Doran

Cllr Cadogan Enright

Cllr Aoife Finnegan

Cllr Hugh Gallagher

Cllr Mark Gibbons

Cllr Oonagh Hanlon

Cllr Glyn Hanna

Cllr Valerie Harte

Cllr Roisin Howell

Mrs Sheila Kieran

Cllr Mickey Larkin

Cllr Alan Lewis

Mr Michael Lipsett

Mrs Regina Mackin

Cllr Oonagh Magennis

Mr Conor Mallon

Cllr Gavin Malone

Cllr Cathy Mason

Mr Johnny Mc Bride

Colette McAteer

Cllr Declan McAteer

Cllr Leeanne McEvoy

Cllr Harold McKee

Patricia McKeever

Cllr Karen McKevitt

Cllr Andrew McMurray

Mr Roland Moore

Cllr Roisin Mulgrew

Cllr Declan Murphy

Cllr Barra Ó Muirí
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Linda O'Hare
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Cllr Gerry O'Hare
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Cllr Kathryn Owen
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Cllr Henry Reilly
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Cllr Michael Ruane
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Cllr Michael Savage
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Cllr Gareth Sharvin
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Donna Starkey
.....
Cllr Gary Stokes
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Sarah Taggart
.....
Cllr David Taylor
.....
Cllr Jarlath Tinnelly
.....
Cllr John Trainor
.....
Cllr William Walker
.....
Mrs Marie Ward
.....

Report to:	Special Council Meeting
Date of Meeting:	26 October 2020
Subject:	Gruggandoo Wind Farm Planning Application
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Conor Mallon
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Anthony McKay (Chief Planning Officer)

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

For decision	<input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/>	For noting only	<input type="checkbox"/>
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1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	<p>A recommendation is required on a revised proposal for a windfarm at Gruggandoo, in response to a statutory consultation received from the Department for Infrastructure.</p> <p>Some Members will recall that this planning application was first considered by a Special Meeting of Newry Mourne and Down District Council on 28 September 2015.</p> <p>The proposal at that time was for the construction of a wind farm comprising 12 turbines of a height not exceeding 125 metres in the townlands of Gruggandoo, Grugganskeagh and Mullaghgarve.</p> <p>This application is being processed by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) as a regionally significant proposal. The Council is engaged in the process as a statutory consultee.</p> <p>At the Special Council meeting in September 2015, the Council adopted the recommendation in the report to oppose the granting of planning permission.</p> <p>In November 2016, DfI issued a Notice of Opinion to refuse planning permission. In December 2016 the applicant requested a hearing before the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC). A hearing has not yet been convened.</p> <p>Rather, DfI accepted the submission of further environmental information and a revised proposal from the applicant. As a consequence of this, DfI consulted with the Council (Statutory Consultee) to seek its views on the revised proposal. The revised planning application was for a wind farm comprising 10 turbines of a height not exceeding 125 metres.</p>

	<p>A report was tabled at a Special Council Meeting on 26 June 2017. Members deferred the matter to enable a visit to the application site to be conducted. In addition it was agreed that a visit would be undertaken to an existing wind farm site containing turbines of a size similar to the current proposal.</p> <p>A visit was undertaken to the Dunmore and Dunbeg wind farms located between Limavady and Coleraine on 25th August 2017. A visit to the application site at Gruggandoo outside Hilltown was undertaken on 1 September 2017.</p> <p>At a Special Council Meeting on 26 September 2017 Council considered the proposal and supported the recommendation of the Planning Department that the planning application be opposed.</p> <p>In early 2020 DfI received further amendments to the proposal. The proposal now comprises 8 wind turbines, height not to exceed 142.5 metres and associated infrastructure including electrical substation and control building, access tracks, passing bays and junction improvements.</p> <p>DfI is seeking the Council response to this latest revision.</p>
2.0	Key issues
2.1	<p><u>Banbridge Newry & Mourne Area Plan 2015</u></p> <p>The application site is located within the Mournes Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and within the Mournes Special Countryside Area (SCA). This is a sensitive upland landscape of exceptionally high scenic value. Policy COU1 recognises that there are exceptional landscapes such as the High Mournes where the quality of the landscape and the unique amenity value is such that development should only be allowed in exceptional circumstances. The policy advises that within SCAs, planning permission will only be granted to development proposals which are of such national or regional importance as to outweigh any potential detrimental impact on the unique qualities of the upland environment.</p> <p>The proposal is not considered to be of such regional or national importance; and is considered to have failed this policy test.</p> <p><u>The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) – Planning for Sustainable Development</u></p> <p>The SPPS recognises the contribution of renewable energy towards sustainable development and economic growth. It seeks to facilitate the siting of renewable energy facilities without compromising other environmental assets of acknowledged importance. It indicates that the wider environmental, economic and social benefits of such proposals are material considerations to be given appropriate weight in determining planning applications.</p> <p>The potential benefits are acknowledged; not least the investment in the local and NI wide economies, the funding of local community groups and organisations, the</p>

	<p>contributions to achieving renewable energy generating targets and the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>However, it is considered that such benefits should not be given determining weight when set against the unacceptable adverse impacts arising from a proposal to develop a windfarm of this scale in such a sensitive landscape.</p> <p><u>Planning Policy Statement 2 (PPS2) Natural Heritage</u> The proposal is considered to be contrary to Policy NH6 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) whereby the siting, size and scale are not sympathetic to the special character of AONB.</p> <p><u>Planning Policy Statement 16 (PPS16) Tourism</u> It is considered that the proposal is contrary to Policy TSM8 Safeguarding of Tourism Assets. The Mourne represent a significant tourism asset to the District. A proposal of this scale has the potential to impact on the distinctive characteristics of the Mourne, thereby undermining the ability of the District to attract tourism.</p> <p><u>Planning Policy Statement 18 (PPS18) Renewable Energy</u> Policy RE1 is supportive of wind energy proposals that would not result in unacceptable adverse impacts.</p> <p>It is considered that this proposal, by reason of the number, scale, size and siting of turbines would have an unacceptable adverse impact on visual amenity and landscape character across a number of landscape character areas, as defined by the NIEA Landscape Character Assessment.</p> <p><u>Planning Policy Statement 21 (PPS21) Sustainable Development in the Countryside</u> In light of the comments made in relation to PPS18, it follows that this proposal is also considered to be contrary to Policy CTY1 – Development in the Countryside.</p> <p><u>Conclusion</u> Having had regard to the development plan, the relevant planning policy context and all other material considerations, the proposal for 8 turbines at Gruggandoo is considered to be unacceptable in planning terms.</p>
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	A response is returned to DfI indicating Council's opposition to this Planning Application.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	None

5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<p><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.3	<p><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)
6.1	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></p>

7.0	Appendices
8.0	Background Documents

Liam Hannaway
Chief Executive



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

26th February 2018

Jane Curley
DfI Planning
Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
Belfast
BT2 8GB

Dear Ms Curley,

P/2015/0218/F - Construction of a wind farm comprising 10 no. wind turbines (tip height not exceeding 125 metres), and electrical substation and control building, construction of internal access tracks, spoil deposition areas, temporary construction compound, formation of passing bays on Mullaghgariff Road, delivery route improvements at Rostrevor Road, junction improvements at Rostrevor/Mullaghgariff Road and all associated ancillary works at Lands approximately 650m south west of 40 Mullaghgariff Road Newry in the townlands of Gruggandoo Grugganskeagh and Mullaghgarve BT34 5LT

I apologise for the delay in responding to your consultation.

The Newry, Mourne and Down District Council considered this proposal at a Special Council meeting held on the 26th September 2017. At this meeting, the Council's internal Planning Department had considered all the material information supplied available to it and had recommended to the members that the application should not be supported for the following reasons:

The proposal is contrary to The Banbridge and Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015 Policy COU1, in that the proposal is sited within the SCA and this proposal is not of such national or regional importance to outweigh and potential detrimental impact on the unique qualities of the upland environment.

The proposal is contrary to the SPPS and Policy RE 1 of PPS 18 as the proposed 10 wind turbines would have an unacceptable adverse impact on the visual amenity and landscape character across a number of areas as defined by the NIEA Landscape Character Assessment by reason of the scale, size and siting of the turbines.

The proposal would be contrary to PPS 2 NH 6 and the SPPS as this proposal would have an adverse impact on the AONB due to the siting, size and scale of the proposed turbines not being sympathetic to the character of the AONB.

Oifig an Iúir
Newry Office
O'Hagan House
Monaghan Row
Newry BT35 8DJ

Oifig Dhún Pádraig
Downpatrick Office
Downshire Civic Centre
Downshire Estate, Ardglass Road
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Ag freastal ar an Dún
agus Ard Mhacha Theas
Serving Down
and South Armagh



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The proposal is contrary to Policy TSM 8 of PPS 16 in that the scale of this proposal will have an adverse impact on the distractive characteristics of the Mourne, thereby undermining the ability of the District to attract tourism.

This recommendation was voted on by the Full Council and subsequently at the Planning Committee meeting held on 11 October 2017 it was decided that the Council would support the recommendation of the Planning Department and respond to DfI indicating the Councils opposition to this Planning Application on the grounds detailed above.

If you have any further queries on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

Liam Hannaway
Chief Executive

JMcP/AM

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on Monday 28 September 2015 at
6.00pm in the Mourne Room Downshire Civic Centre Downpatrick****Chairperson:** Councillor N Bailie

In Attendance:

Councillor T Andrews
 Councillor P Brown
 Councillor S Burns
 Councillor M Carr
 Councillor C Casey
 Councillor W Clarke
 Councillor G Craig
 Councillor D Curran
 Councillor G Donnelly
 Councillor S Ennis
 Councillor C Enright
 Councillor G Fitzpatrick
 Councillor G Hanna
 Councillor V Harte
 Councillor H Harvey
 Councillor T Hearty
 Councillor D Hyland
 Councillor L Kimmins
 Councillor M Larkin
 Councillor K Loughran
 Councillor D McAteer
 Councillor K McAteer
 Councillor C McGrath
 Councillor H McKee
 Councillor R Mulgrew
 Councillor M Murnin
 Councillor P O Gribin
 Councillor B O Muiri
 Councillor B Quinn
 Councillor G Stokes
 Councillor H Reilly
 Councillor M Ruane
 Councillor J Tinnelly

Officials in Attendance:	Mr L Hannaway	Chief Executive
	Mr A McKay	Head of Planning
	Ms J McParland	Senior Planning Officer
	Ms H McKee	Community Planning Manager
	Mr P Green	Legal Officer
	Ms E McParland	Democratic Services Manager
	Ms C McAteer	Democratic Services Officer
	Ms L Dillon	Democratic Services Officer

Also in Attendance:

NIHE

Mr T McCartney	Director of Corporate Services
Mr O McDonnell	Area Manager (Acting) South Down
Ms L Wilson	Area Manager
Ms P Aitken	Regional Planning
Ms P Warnock	Regional Planning
Mr S Semple	Strategic Planning

ABO Wind

Ms T Frazer	ABO Wind
Mr I Cummings	26 Extreme

Mourne AONB Against Wind

Mr C McGreevy

Hilltown Community Association

Mrs M Byrne

APOLOGIES

The following apologies were received:

Councillor L Devlin
Councillor B Walker
Councillor D Taylor

**PRESENTATION – HOUSING EXECUTIVE
RE: HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN**

Mr McCartney delivered a presentation on the (HIP) Housing Investment Plan for Newry, Mourne & Down District area.

Ms L Wilson presented the Housing Executive Investment section contained within the Housing Investment Plan.

Discussion

Discussion followed on the HIP during which the following issues were raised:

How many Housing Associations are based in the Newry Mourne & Down District?

Quite a few Housing Associations are active in the Newry Mourne & Down District. However whilst most of the Housing Associations are represented in the area, they do not have an administrative base within the District.

Housing Associations do not appear to be keeping up with housing demand.

The Housing Executive does not have responsibility for building housing. However NIHE Regional Services facilitate Housing Association developments through land assembly involving land acquisition, planning and feasibility studies and transfer of Housing Executive land.

Issues regarding kitchen replacements in Kilkeel.

Councillor Reilly to email Housing Executive regarding a question about kitchen replacements in Kilkeel.

If refugees were to be brought into the District would they be given priority for housing over people who were already in housing need?

A multi-agency approach was on-going which would look at housing refugees if a situation arose whereby refugees would be brought into the area.

Clarification on the level of finance used by Housing Associations for building dwellings and the level of finance used for their administrative costs.

Housing Executive would not be aware of this financial breakdown. The Department for Social Development would hold this information as part of their governance regulations.

Is Housing Executive still the umbrella agency for Housing Associations?

The Housing Executive are not the umbrella agency for Housing Associations. This is the role of NIFHA (Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations). The Housing Executive, through its Regional side determines housing need to assist Housing Associations in their new build programme. Regulation for Housing Associations lies solely with the DSD.

Where one section of the community is identified as being in housing need, do the Housing Executive attempt to house people within their respective communities?

Housing allocations are made on the basis of a housing selection scheme which ensures fairness in allocations.

When can Councillors expect to see a draft version of the Housing Investment Plan?

The Draft Housing Investment Plan has already been issued and Councillors should have received a copy. If any Councillor has not received a copy they should contact the Housing Executive and a copy will be provided.

Many people are finding the process of applying for grants for heating/insulation/windows very difficult and frustrating, especially elderly people – can this process be made easier? Have Housing Executive any targets to meet in terms of carrying out these works or is it a case of available funds?

Where the tenant belongs to the Housing Executive such works are carried out via the Planned Maintenance Scheme.

In the case of a relationship breakup where one parent may find themselves without accommodation, are these cases assessed to ensure accommodation is provided to enable the parent to have access to their children?

In the case of a marriage breakdown where there are children involved, priority cannot usually be awarded to both parents. Priority is awarded to the parent who gets custody of the children. In the case of the other parent, account can be taken of access to the children and an additional room will be allowed for that overnight access.

What arrangements are made where people wish to downsize their accommodation?

Housing Associations are encouraged to ensure that 20% of their new build consists of one bedroom dwelling in their annual programme.

Concerns regarding security issues in communal housing where the vulnerable people are having their homes attacked. (Particular reference was made to recent arson attacks in Newcastle)

Housing Executive have a Supporting People Programme which receives funding in the sum of £74million per year – as part of this programme a large piece of work is being done to address a range of issues including antisocial problems.

The Housing Executive has worked closely with the Council and other statutory agencies regarding antisocial problems. Residents are being asked to be vigilant although further works is needed by way of a joined up approach in terms of improving security in estates.

Housing Executive need to ensure people with disabilities are housed in appropriate types of accommodation.

Housing Executive are working with Housing Associations to identify how many adaptations are needed in order to plan for the future housing needs of people.

Concerns regarding problems with double glazing which has created an air tight home, leading to problems associated with lack of ventilation.

Housing Executive will seek further detail from Councillor D McAteer and have this issue followed up.

Conclusion:

Mr Semple explained the Housing Executive were keen to work with the Council in identifying needs for social and affordable housing and he asked the Council to consider this as part of the preparation of the Area Plan.

Councillor Bailie thanked the representatives from Housing Executive for attending the meeting.

Councillor Carr left the meeting at this point – 6.45 pm.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bailie advised that Councillor Carr had submitted a “perceived declaration of interest” in relation to planning application P/2015/0218/F for the proposed wind-farm at Hilltown and had therefore left the meeting.

**PRESENTATION – ABO WIND
RE: PLANNING APPLICATION – P/2015/0218/F
PROPOSED WIND FARM HILLTOWN**

Tamasin Fraser, Head of Development NI, Abo Wind, gave a presentation on the proposed Gruggandoo Wind Farm (**Presentation circulated**). She said that Ian Cumming, 26 Extreme, intended to give a short speech supporting the wind-farm and she had also been accompanied by a local landowner who proposed to speak in support of the application.

It was noted that due to allocated time slots being exceeded, Mr Cumming and the local landowner did not address the meeting.

**PRESENTATION – MOURNE AONB AGAINST WIND FARMS
RE: PLANNING APPLICATION – P/2015/0218/F
PROPOSED WIND FARM HILLTOWN**

Mr Connaire McGreevy gave a presentation on behalf of Mourne AONB Against Wind Farms and spoke on a number of key points of concern about the proposed wind farm. (**Presentation and key note speech circulated**).

**PRESENTATION – HILLTOWN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
RE: PLANNING APPLICATION – P/2015/0218/F
PROPOSED WIND FARM HILLTOWN**

Mrs Martina Byrne gave a presentation on behalf of Hilltown Community Association and spoke on a number of key points of concern about the proposed wind farm. (**Presentation and key note speech circulated**).

Question and Answer Session

A question and answer session followed during which Members raised the following issues:-

- The Council's Planning Department were saying that this planning application was contrary to a number of planning policies including PPS 2 and PPS 18. Could Abo Wind comment?
- There was a recommendation in the Mourne National Park Report that this area of the Mournes was suitable for renewable energy wind-farms and yet none of the speakers mentioned this.
- Abo Wind to clarify how the community will benefit from the proposed Community Fund; how it will be set up and how it will be delivered.
- Reference to a Council meeting with the Chief Executive of Donegal County Council – clarification on his comments that the rates income from wind-farms made a very substantial contribution to the Council's rates income.
- Reference to opposition to wind-farms on the basis that they are a subsidised form of renewable energy – there is an over reliance on wind farms and there was no saving for the environment in real terms.
- The National Park Report was totally rejected by the Mournes Community.
- If Abo Wind have already been approached by groups regarding the community fund, Councillors should be made aware of who the groups are – this has the potential to set groups in the community against each other.
- Donegal County Council made it clear that they would not allow wind-farms in areas if it would have a detrimental effect on tourism.
- Green energy taxes would be imposed on businesses to pay for wind-farm energy.
- Concern about the impact of any proposed wind-farm on the property value of nearby houses – will they be compensated if house prices fall?
- Are there any other areas in Northern Ireland where large wind-farms have been built in an AONB or designated area?
- Is there any evidence to show how wind-farm developments affect tourism?
- The Abo presentation mentioned supporting 17 local families – is this separate to the Community Investment Fund?
- Has Abo considered providing an upgrade to the rural broadband in the area whilst they would be upgrading cabling etc?
- Are there any examples of wind-farms being dismantled after their 25 year life had expired and would a bio diversity project be carried out to enhance the area after the Company left the site?
- Disappointment that the local community association had indicated their lack of satisfaction at any community engagement.
- Are the "below ground" structures removed after the Company leaves the site and if not, what long term effects might there be on the environment and wildlife?
- Confirmation sought that any electricity generated would enter the NIE grid at the sub-station at Monkshill, Newry and also how the electricity would be supplied to the sub-station i.e. via standard electricity poles and lines or underground cabling?

- How was the criteria for the £500 energy discount worked out and could this criteria be extended to take in more of the community?
- Could the Company gave examples of similar installations in Europe where there were positive outcomes; negative experiences and/or both?
- Why does the planning application show the red line boundary running to the Newry side of Warrenpoint?

The following responses were given by Tamasin Fraser, Abo Wind; Connaire McGreevy Mourne AONB Against Wind Farms and Martina Byrne, Hilltown Community Association:-

- Tamasin Fraser – the Banbridge/Newry and Mourne Area Plan refers to a Special Countryside Policy Area designation which would allow a wind-farm site in this area as there is a premise of development if it is of regional significance. This planning application was being determined as an Article 31 application which means that it has to be considered by the DoE as it is regionally significant.
- Tamasin Fraser – PPS18 is the Renewable Energy Policy and there is a presumption in favour of development if there is a social, economic and environmental benefit to the area.
- Martina Byrne– given the short time frame for the delivery of presentations, the Community Group wanted to give a good flavour of all the current issues – they were fully aware of the comment made in the National Park Report.
- Tamasin Fraser – Abo also aware of the National Park Report but it is not a current designation.
- Tamasin Fraser – there are various ways the Community Fund can be delivered – nothing is set in place and this will be something which will be worked through. For example a Committee could be set up in the local area which could receive, assess and disseminate funds. If the Community Group had any particular issues of interest Abo Wind would be more than happy to hear from them.
- Martina Byrne– Hilltown Community Association would like to know more details about the Community Investment Fund – how is it going to be operated; what is the definition of “community” and will it extend beyond the Hilltown area?
- Connaire McGreevy – the issue of a potential fall in the property values of homes in the vicinity of a wind-farm had been mentioned in his keynote speech – case of Julian and Jane Davis, England and email details of this can be sent to Councillors.
- Tamasin Fraser – an article by RACS – they reviewed a number of articles and did not find any conclusive impact on property values – the case referred to by Mr McGreevy involved other specific issues.
- Tamasin Fraser - The ROCs (Renewable Obligations Certificate) was due to end in 2016 in England and soon after in Northern Ireland – wind-farms would not therefore be a subsidised form of renewable energy.
- Tamasin Fraser – There was another wind-farm in County Derry and also in County Tyrone. Wind farms have a finite life time and are only operational for 25 years. After that period all operations stop and all above

ground structures are removed, although normally landowners like to retain the laneways which have been created.

- Connaire McGreevy – A plan for 8 turbines in Tyrone was refused planning permission last year due to the adverse impact on the visual amenity of the area. In Scotland research had shown that wind-farms were putting off tourists and there was research to support this, which he could forward to Members.
- Tamasin Fraser – Abo was very conscious of the impact on tourism and had engaged fully with the Mourne Heritage Trust and also the Council's Tourist Officers. The information pack which she had distributed at the beginning of the meeting gave a flavour of the key views of the site and a full suite of images were available with the planning application.

Councillor Hyland and Councillor K McAteer left the meeting at this point – 7.40 pm.

- Tamasin Fraser – the Community Fund was entirely separate from the support proposed for the 17 local families. The level of the Community Fund was dictated by Ministers in Northern Ireland with a recommended level of £1k-£5k per megawatt. Abo Wind had given a commitment to the upper end of the scale and they were very keen to hear from local organisations on their views as to how this fund could be disseminated (£190k per annum for the 25 year lifetime of the project). They were also keen to engage with the Council to make sure that local people and local projects benefitted.
- Tamasin Fraser – Abo Wind were keen to explore any possibilities for the potential to upgrade broadband in the area. They would also carry out a full assessment by experts on a biodiversity; wildlife and habitat management programme.
- Tamasin Fraser – Abo Wind had agreed to meet with the Community Association on two separate occasions but each of these meetings had been cancelled. A further meeting was scheduled for 22 October 2015. Tonight was the first time she had heard of the Mourne AONB Against Wind Farms Group, but she would be happy to engage with them.
- Tamasin Fraser – the decommissioning aspect of the operation was covered by the environmental statement – generally the Company found that landowners wanted to retain any laneways etc. The process for decommissioning required a full habitat management scheme to be put in place when the life of the wind farm has completed. Underground structures are not removed but are soiled and seeded over.
- Tamasin Fraser - If planning permission is achieved for the wind-farm, electricity generated would be fed into the Sub Station at Monkshill Road, Newry, as directed by NIE. NIE will dictate how the electricity is carried, either by standard poles or underground cabling and NIE will have their own process of negotiations with landowners if this is necessary.
- Martina Byrne– the Community Association had not been successful in engaging with Abo Wind until they were approached by Margaret Ritchie MLA on 1 July 2015. Through her office two meetings were set up but subsequently had to be cancelled. A meeting would now be held on 22 October 2015.

- Martina Byrne– expressed concerns that Abo Wind were a subsidiary group of a Parent Organisation. What would happen to the structures at the end of their lifetime if the Group had insufficient funding to remove them?
- Tamasin Fraser – Abo Wind is a subsidiary of a Company who had a full financial commitment to the project for the lifetime of the project.
- Tamasin Fraser – the 1.5k criteria for homes which would be entitled to an energy discount had been agreed following a public consultation event (to be applied to homes 1.5k from the outer diameter of each site). Abo Wind had written to every household in the area which fell within this category and 95 homeowners had expressed an interest in the scheme.
- Martina Byrne– this scheme had not been made public to the residents of Hilltown. The letters from Abo Wind had been addressed to key residents of the area, some residents who would be living beside the proposed wind turbines had not been included.
- Tamasin Fraser – referred to a wind farm in Derry which had been built in a designated area – it is now listed as a tourist attraction on the Council's website.
- Connaire McGreevy – having visited a wind farm in Scotland it was his view it was quite divisive in the Community – he would try and get more information on this to forward to Councillors.
- Tamasin Fraser – Abo Wind has various wind-farm projects in Germany and specifically in the Bavarian region which is an area of special scenic beauty. She said she would put together some examples and forward these to Councillors.
- Tamasin Fraser – the boundary site marked in red on the application took into account the "haul route" – how to get to the site and any road improvements required and how the Company would get the components to the site.

REPORT FROM PLANNING DEPARTMENT

RE: DRAFT RESPONSE TO PLANNING APPLICATION – P/2015/0218/F

Read: Draft Response from Planning Officers on planning reference P/2015/0218/F - **Proposal:** Construction of a wind farm comprising 12 no. wind turbines (tip height not exceeding 125 metres), and electrical substation and control building, construction of internal access tracks, spoil deposition areas, temporary construction compound, formation of passing bays on Mullaghgarraiff Road, delivery route improvements at Rostrevor Road, junction improvements at Rostrevor/Mullaghgarraiff Road and all associated ancillary works. **Site Location:** Lands approximately 650m south west of 40 Mullaghgarraiff Road, Newry in the townlands of Gruggandoo Grugganskeagh and Mullaghgarve BT34 5LT.

The report recommended that given the information currently on the Planning Portal in relation to this application, the Council Planning

Department would recommend to the Council that this proposal would be contrary to RE 1 of PPS 18, CTY 1 of PPS 21, NH6 of PPS 2, TSM 8 of PPS 16, Policy COU 1 of the Banbridge/ Newry and Mourne Area Plan and possibly depending on whether further information is provided in relation to the latest response from Natural Environmental Divisions comments policies NH 2 and NH 5 of PPS 2. **(Report circulated).**

Ms J McParland advised the reason DoE Headquarters was dealing with this planning application was that it met the major threshold under The Planning (Development Management) Regulations 2015.

Councillor Hanna left the meeting at 8.00 pm.

Councillors O'Gribin, W Clarke and S Burns left the meeting at 8.10 pm.

Mr Green, Legal Advisor, confirmed that this was a Major Development prescribed for the purpose of Section 26 (1) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and therefore would be determined by the DoE. The Council were Statutory Consultees on this application. He said Members of the Planning Committee could discuss the application and comment on it as long as they retained an open mind and their position did not pre-determine any future renewable energy applications.

A detailed discussion followed on the report during with the Planning Officers advised that the consultation response from the Council had to be submitted by Friday 2 October 2015.

Planning Officers responded to a number of queries raised by Members in terms of information on LCA 72 Slieve Roosley Document, referred to in the Planning Officer's report and the importance of the Planning Officers giving weight not just to the visual impact on the landscape but also the 5 priorities contained in the Sustainable Development Strategy to promote sustainable energy development.

Mr McKay advised that in dealing with this planning application, Planning Officers had taken account of all relevant policies. He said Northern Ireland was divided into a number of Landscaped Character Areas but the area proposed in this application was sensitive to wind-farm development – if there was a wind-farm it would have quite a damaging visual impact, as the area did not have the capacity to absorb wind farm development. He said in terms of the size of development, this proposal was at the upper end of the scale and would be visible over a wide area.

Councillor Reilly proposed and Councillor O'Muiri seconded that the Council accept the recommendations outlined in the report presented by Planning Officers and recommend this report and recommendations to the Planning Committee as the Council's corporate response to planning application P/2015/0218/F – proposed wind farm at Hilltown.

The proposal was put to a recorded vote and voting was as follows:-
(Recorded Vote attached)

For:	11
Against:	1

Abstentions: 9
Absent: 20

AGREED: The proposal was declared carried and it was agreed that the Council accept the recommendations outlined in the report presented by Planning Officers and recommend this report and recommendations to the Planning Committee as the Council's corporate response to planning application P/2015/0218/F – proposed wind farm at Hilltown.

During the vote Members indicated the following:-

- Councillor Bailie – voted for the proposal on the basis of the information provided in the Planning Officer's Report.
- Councillor Craig – abstained as he was concerned that as a Member of the Planning Committee it could be perceived that he was taking a position on wind farms generally.
- Councillor Enright – voted against the proposal on the ground of what he believed were errors contained in the Planning Officer's advice.
- Councillor Fitzpatrick – abstained on the basis of the short time in which she had received the information and her lack of understanding of the information.
- Councillor Harte - voted for the proposal on the basis of the information provided in the Planning Officer's Report.
- Councillor Larkin - voted for the proposal on the basis of the information provided in the Planning Officer's Report.
- Councillor Ruane - voted for the proposal on the basis of the information provided in the Planning Officer's Report. He also received clarification that the decision did not exclude Members of the Planning Committee from making decisions on future wind farm planning applications.
- Councillor Stokes – voted for the proposal on the basis of the information provided in the Planning Officer's Report. He was not against wind turbines per se.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 8.45 pm.

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

Signed: _____ **Chairperson**

Signed: _____ **Chief Executive**

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL
RECORDED VOTE

19

DATE: 28.9.2015 VENUE: Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre

MEETING: Special Council Meeting

SUBJECT OF VOTE: Councillor Reilly proposed and Councillor O'Muiri seconded that the Council accept the recommendations outlined in the Report presented by Planning Officers and recommend this Report and recommendations to Planning Committee as the Council's Corporate response to Planning Application P/2015/0218/F – proposed wind farm at Hilltown

COUNCILLOR	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
T Andrews				√
N Bailie	√			
P Brown			√	
R Burgess				√
S Burns				√
M Carr				√
C Casey	√			
P Clarke				√
W Clarke				√
G Craig			√	
D Curran				√
L Devlin				√
G Donnelly				√
S Doran				√
S Ennis	√			
C Enright		√		
G Fitzpatrick			√	
G Hanna				√
V Harte	√			
H Harvey				√
T Hearty				√
D Hyland				√
L Kimmins	√			
M Larkin	√			
K Loughran			√	
D McAteer			√	
K McAteer				√
C McGrath				√
H McKee			√	
R Mulgrew	√			
M Murnin			√	
P O Gribin				√
B O Muiri	√			
B Quinn			√	
H Reilly	√			
M Ruane	√			
G Sharvin				√
G Stokes	√			
D Taylor				√
JJ Tinnelly			√	
B Walker				√
TOTALS	11	1	9	20

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

NMD/SC

**Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on Monday 26 June 2017 at 6pm in
the Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick**

In the Chair: Councillor R Mulgrew

In attendance: **(Councillors)**

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor P Brown
Councillor R Burgess	Councillor S Burns
Councillor P Byrne	Councillor M Carr
Councillor C Casey	Councillor G Craig
Councillor D Curran	Councillor L Devlin
Councillor S Doran	Councillor C Enright
Councillor G Fitzpatrick	Councillor V Harte
Councillor H Harvey	Councillor T Hearty
Councillor D Hyland	Councillor L Kimmins
Councillor M Larkin	Councillor K Loughran
Councillor J Macauley	Councillor D McAteer
Councillor O McMahon	Councillor A McMurray
Councillor M Murnin	Councillor P O'Gribin
Councillor B Ó Muirí	Councillor B Quinn
Councillor H Reilly	Councillor M Ruane
Councillor G Stokes	Councillor J Tinnelly
Councillor J Trainor	Councillor W Walker

(Officials)

Mr L Hannaway, Chief Executive
 Mr A McKay, Chief Planning Officer
 Ms E McParland, Democratic Services Manager
 Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Officer
 Ms C McAteer, Democratic Services Officer

Also in attendance: Representing ABO Wind

Tamasin Frazer, ABO Wind
 Thomas Bell, Clyde Shanks

Representing Clonduff GAC

Mr J Cousins, Chairperson
 Mr D O'Hagan, JMP Architects

Representing Mourne AONB Against Wind Farms

Mr John McCallister
 Mr Owen McMullan

SC/14/2017**APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Bailie, Clarke, Hanna, Sharvin and Taylor.

The Chairperson advised that the Council's role in this planning application process was as a statutory consultee. She said the meeting was being held to give the various parties an opportunity to present their case to Members. A paper would then be presented to the Council's Planning Committee to agree the Council's corporate response which would be submitted to the Department of Infrastructure who would be making the final decision on the application.

The Chairperson said each Group would be given ten minutes to make their presentation and this would be followed by a question and answer session to allow Members to seek information from the three presenting parties.

SC/15/2017**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

SC/16/2017**REPORT BY MR A McKAY, CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER****Read:**

Report dated 26 June 2017 from Mr A McKay, Chief Planning Officer, giving the background to the planning application for the construction of a wind farm in the townlands of Gruggandoo, Grugganskeagh and Mullaghgarve. The report recommended that having had regard to the Development Plan; the relevant planning policy context and all other material considerations, the proposal for a 10 turbine wind farm at Gruggandoo was considered to be unacceptable in planning terms and a response therefore be returned to the Department for Infrastructure indicating the Council's opposition to the planning application. **(Circulated)**.

SC/17/2017:**PRESENTATIONS**

Mr Bell and Ms Frazer gave a presentation on behalf of ABO Wind. **(Attached)**.

Mr D O'Hagan gave a presentation on behalf of Clonduff GAC. **(Attached)**.

Mr McCallister and Mr McMullan gave a verbal presentation on behalf of Mourne AONB Against Wind Farms.

A question and answer session followed with the three presenting parties and the following issues were raised:-

- In the event that this application was approved by the relevant Government Department, could Councillors be given an assurance that ABO Wind would enter into a pre-agreement contract with relevant community groups for the distribution of the Community Fund. Also if all community groups could not

be accommodated within the footprint of Clonduff GAC would they have an opportunity to benefit from the Fund?

- The Council should draw on the experiences of counties such as Donegal and Kerry who had very large wind farms in outstanding scenic areas and yet there was no negative impact on tourism in these areas.
- Tourism was one of the key priorities of the Newry, Mourne and Down Area – ABO had stated that the people who championed tourism had not made any objections against the proposed wind farm.
- How did ABO propose to overcome the poor grid capacity in the area?
- What was the response from Mourne Heritage Trust?
- Each of the proposed wind turbines was 125m in height, giving a total of 4100ft of infrastructure in a small area.
- What did the accompanying infrastructure, to connect the wind turbines to the nearest sub-station, entail?
- Request for an explanation of the comment that everyone was “out of pocket” due to the use of renewable energy.
- Could the Architect of the proposed new build by Clonduff GAC confirm that the application had the full support of the Club?
- Why were the Statutory Bodies responsible for tourism not objecting if the wind farm would have such a negative effect?
- Request for elaboration on comments that the playschool and primary school might benefit from funding.
- Request for elaboration on the 600 extra letters of support which had been submitted.
- Would like to see photos from the main arterial routes in the vicinity of the planning application site.
- Why was there no photographic evidence to back up the Planner's arguments?
- Under the Regional Strategy Policy the wider socio economic benefits should be material to an application.
- Community representatives seemed to have bought into the proposal – no evidence was being produced to oppose this.
- Concern expressed about the affect this proposal would have on the Clonduff/Hilltown community. Some Members had received emails and phone calls from people who were concerned about the Club supporting this proposal.
- Need to clarify the level of support in the community.
- Given the seriousness of the issue there should be an opportunity for all Members to have a site visit to see exactly where each potential turbine would be sited and their impact on the surrounding area. Information on the design and type of the turbines should be made available to Members in advance of a site meeting and also clarification from the Council's Environmental Health Department as to how they could comment on potential noise levels without knowing the type of the turbines to be erected.

Mr McKay and representatives from the Groups responded to the queries as follows:

ABO Wind

- ABO Wind were committed to the Community Fund and had a legal agreement in place with the Club. There was £3.25m in the Community Fund pot and there would be a fund beyond this for Groups who could not tap into the funding to Clonduff GAC.
- ABO Wind had consulted with relevant Tourism bodies, including Mourne Heritage Trust and the Council's Tourism Officer. Their comments were that the proposed site was not a tourism centred location in terms of the higher Mournes.
- Other Council areas with wind farms had brown tourism signs and they are seen as a tourist attraction.
- ABO Wind did have a grid connection with NIE on the back of a feasibility study which was carried out. There was capacity in the area but an offer would not be made until planning permission was secured. The grid connection would either be overhead or underground cables – there would be an agreement with NIE that will dictate how the electricity was sent to the substation.
- Each turbine was 125m to tip height but the footprint of infrastructure was quite small – 3 hectares of infrastructure on site.
- There were no longer any subsidies for renewable energy – this project would be funded by direct investment.
- The playgroup and the primary school were outside the funding agreement with Clonduff GAC. There had also been a number of calls and letters to their office in support of the proposal and these letters would be uploaded to the planning file.

Clonduff GAC

- Clonduff GAC confirmed that an offer had been made by ABO in October 2016 which had been accepted by the Executive Committee of the Club. The offer was £1.6m grant towards the development of facilities at Clonduff Park. The representatives of the Club were here tonight to explain their development proposals and that they were a potential beneficiary should planning permission be granted. The Club had never said if they supported or objected to the application.

Mourne AONB Against Wind Farms

- Wind farms were dividing communities – there seemed to be a greater emphasis placed on those who supported the wind farm and were 12 km away from it, than those who were against, living within 3km. The sacrifice was too much for too many for too little for too long. This could be seen in West Tyrone.
- People were coming from all over the world to visit this area and there was a responsibility on everyone to pass on the area in a better condition to future generations.

Chief Planning Officer

- The Council was a consultee in this exercise – the Department for Infrastructure would make the decision.
- Photo montages would not give a proper insight – Members would only get this by visiting the site.
- The policy within the Banbridge Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015 was unequivocal. This application was inside a special countryside area.
- The material benefits could be quantified in terms of the rate income to the Council and the benefit to the Community. However it was not possible to quantify what the cost would be to the area if the application was approved.

The Chairperson then adjourned the meeting for 10 minutes to give Members an opportunity to talk amongst their Parties to consider how the Council could move forward on their consultation response.

SC/18/2017: WAY FORWARD

Councillor McAteer proposed and Councillor Ruane seconded that, having listened to the advice from the Council’s Chief Planning Officer and before making any further decision on this application, a site meeting be held, to which all interested Councillors be invited to attend, to view the location of the proposed turbines and their impact on main arterial routes/landscapes. If practical, a visit also be arranged to a similar scale of wind farm.

The proposal was put to a vote and voting was as follows:-

FOR: 35
AGAINST: Nil
ABSTENSIONS: Nil

The proposal was declared carried.

AGREED: It was unanimously agreed that having listened to the advice from the Council’s Chief Planning Officer and before making any further decision on this application, a site meeting be held, to which all interested Councillors be invited to attend, to view the location of the proposed turbines and their impact on main arterial routes/landscapes. If practical, a visit also be arranged to a similar scale of wind farm.

It was further agreed that if a Councillor wanted clarification on any issues prior to the site visit that they email details to Officers.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 7.40 pm.

Signed:

Chairperson

Chief Executive

Gruggandoo – Revised 33MW Wind Farm Proposal

June 2017



Attendees



- Thomas Bell – Clyde Shanks (agent)
- Tamasin Fraser – ABO Wind (applicant)

Structure



- Council Sept 2015 Concerns Recap
- Since Then?
- Revised Project Headlines
- Rebuttal
- Closing Comments

Council Concerns – Sept 15



- Vote in Sept 15 was informed by several presentations
- 11 members considered that the scale of 12 turbines would potentially impact:
 - Landscape – AoNB, SCA & thereafter, Tourism
 - Ecology – Red Kite
 - Community Benefit – lack of focus

Since Then?



- ABO – Resolution and Concession
- Refocussed Community Consultation
- DfI Notice of Opinion (Premature...)

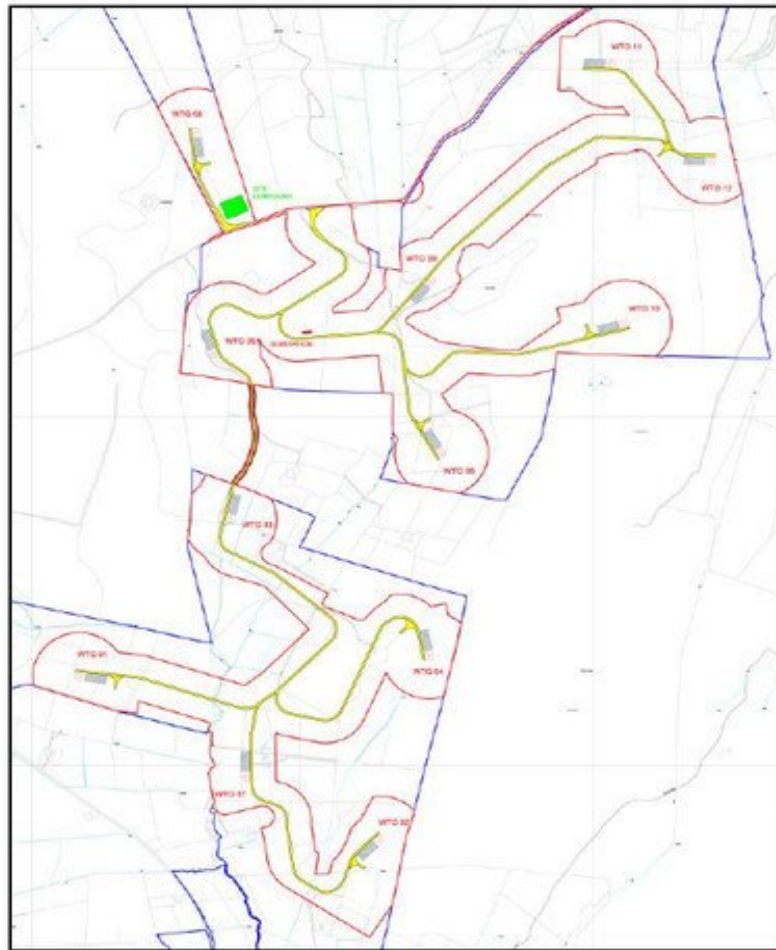
Revised Project Headlines



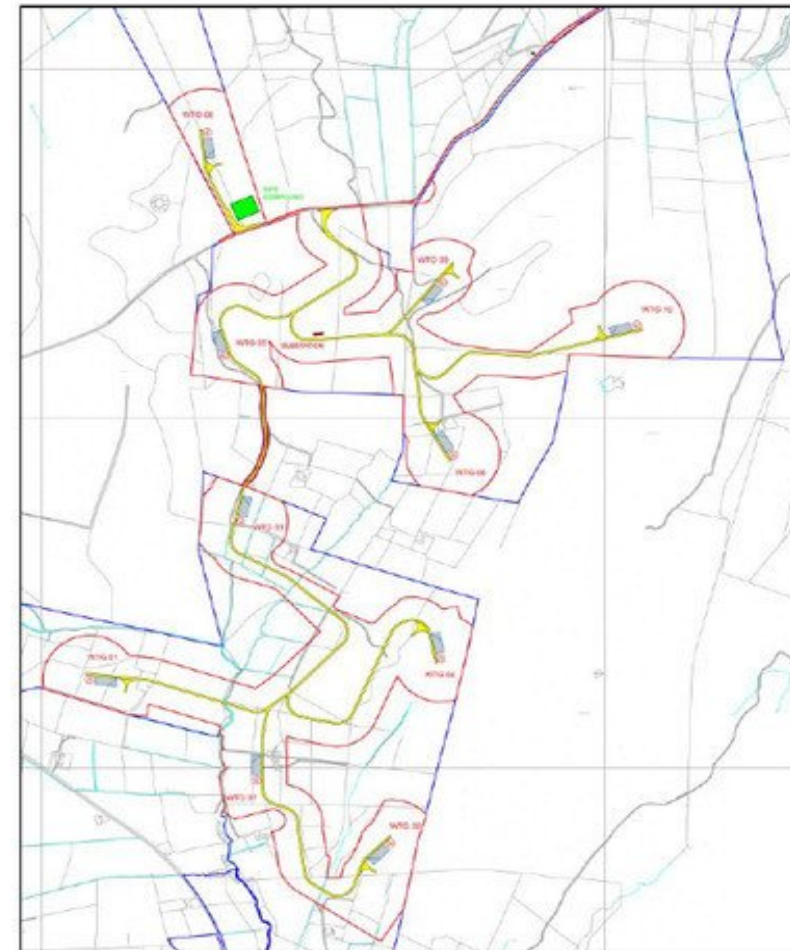
- Concession – less turbines proposed

Revised Project Headlines

2015



2017



Revised Project Headlines



- Further engagement with all key consultees late 2016 Inc.
 - DfI & NIEA (Countryside) – landscape
 - NIEA (Env Division) – ecology
 - NMDDC (Env Health) – noise (shadow flicker for 12 turbine scheme – no objection)
- Re-focussed re-engagement with community groups Inc. Clonduff GAC

Landscape

- Three points:
 1. Objectivity
 2. Revised scheme / comprehensively assessed – <30% impact
 3. Peripheral from High Mournes – foothills

Landscape

1. Regional Significance – AoNB and SCA – exception
2. DfI deemed the proposal to be RS i.e. Art 31 / S26
3. The test is not yes or no but within SCAs, permission will only be granted where proposals:

‘...of such national or regional importance as to outweigh any potential detrimental impact on the unique qualities of the upland environment...’

4. Tourism – New Assessment, Mourne Heritage/NITB & Council Tourism Officer

- Rostrevor Rd (Trainor's Bridge)

2015



- Rostrevor Rd (Trainor's Bridge)

2017



- Clonduff GAC (Across Pitches)

2015



- Clonduff GAC (Across Pitches)

2017



- Leitrim Rd (Looking West)

2015



- Leitrim Rd (Looking West)

2017



- Mourne Way (Looking West – Rocky Mountain)

2015



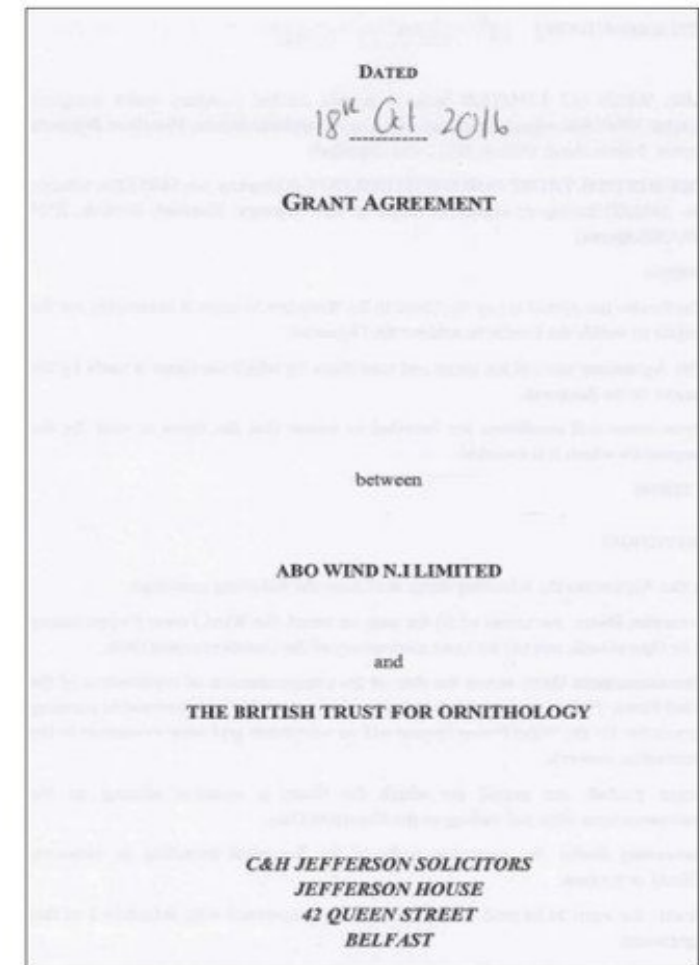
- Mourne Way (Looking West – Rocky Mountain)

2017



Natural Heritage

- Two points
 1. Priority Habitat (Compensatory Area)
 2. Trust for Ornithology – Red Kite Officer Role



Noise (& shadow flicker)

- Env Health – Response dated 26 May 2017

Environmental Health have no objections in principle provided that the following conditions are attached to any approval granted:

1. *The level of noise emissions from the wind farm (including the application of any tonal penalty when calculated in accordance with the procedures described in Pages 104 - 109 of ETSU-R-97) shall not exceed the values set out in the attached Table 1 below. Noise limits for dwellings which lawfully exist or have planning permission for construction at the date of this consent but are not listed in the tables attached shall be those of the physically closest location listed in the tables, unless otherwise agreed by the Department.*

Reason: To control the noise levels from the development at noise sensitive locations.

www.newrymournedown.org

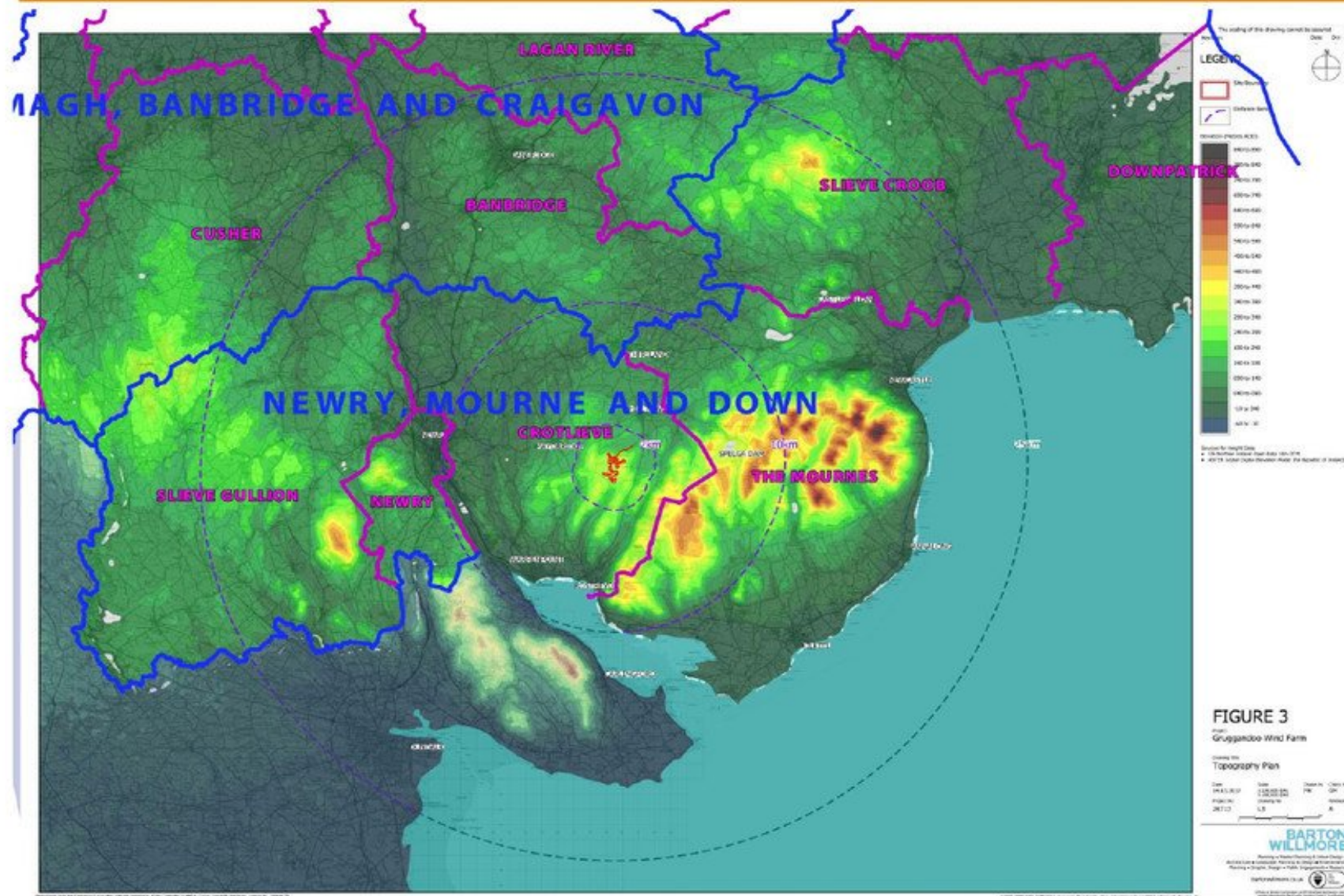


Community Benefit



1. Hilltown Mart – financial contribution
2. Clonduff GAC – financial contribution
3. Conduff Playgroup – financial contribution
4. Business Rates £13.46M lifespan
5. Electricity Discount Scheme for those living within 1.5km of the site
6. Power 37% of all homes in NMD with renewable energy

Community Benefit



Community Benefit



1. ABO acknowledge concerns – listened to feedback
2. Framed against benefits, the concession and local support
3. Stats as of 21 June 2017:

91% advocacy (659 supporting vs 72 objecting)*

**this accounts for individual private representations i.e. does not include the organisations benefiting from the project*

Rebuttal

Key Issues

Banbridge Newry & Mourne Area Plan 2015

The application site is located within the Mourne Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and within the Mourne Special Countryside Area (SCA). This is a sensitive upland landscape of exceptionally high scenic value. Policy COU1 recognises that there are exceptional landscapes such as the High Mourne where the quality of the landscape and the unique amenity value is such that development should only be allowed in exceptional circumstances. The policy advises that within SCAs, planning permission will only be granted to development proposals which are of such national or regional importance as to outweigh any potential detrimental impact on the unique qualities of the upland environment.

The proposal is not considered to be of such regional or national importance; and is considered to have failed this policy test.

Rebuttal

The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) – Planning for Sustainable Development

The SPPS recognises the contribution of renewable energy towards sustainable development and economic growth. It seeks to facilitate the siting of renewable energy facilities without compromising other environmental assets of acknowledged importance. It indicates that the wider environmental, economic and social benefits of such proposals are material considerations to be given appropriate weight in determining planning applications.

The potential benefits are acknowledged; not least the investment in the local and NI wide economies, the funding of local community groups and organisations, the contributions to achieving renewable energy generating targets and the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

However, it is considered that such benefits should not be given determining weight when set against the unacceptable adverse impacts arising from a proposal to develop a windfarm of this scale in such a sensitive landscape.

Rebuttal

Planning Policy Statement 2 (PPS2) Natural Heritage

The proposal is considered to be contrary to Policy NH6 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) whereby the siting, size and scale are not sympathetic to the special character of AONB.

Planning Policy Statement 16 (PPS16) Tourism

It is considered that the proposal is contrary to Policy TSM8 Safeguarding of Tourism Assets. The Mourne represent a significant tourism asset to the District. A proposal of this scale has the potential to impact on the distinctive characteristics of the Mourne, thereby undermining the ability of the District to attract tourism.

It is considered that this proposal, by reason of the number, scale, size and siting of turbines would have an unacceptable adverse impact on visual amenity and landscape character across a number of landscape character areas, as defined by the NIEA Landscape Character Assessment.

Closing Comments

- Concession
- Refreshed Environmental Info – no harm to 1, ecology, 2, residents (noise / shadow flicker)
- Landscape – impact but not significant – other significant material considerations...

BALANCED AGAINST

1. Overwhelming local support for the scheme
2. Community Benefits – focussed at the local population
3. Significant benefits for Council, no other operational wind farm: opportunity

PRESENTATION TO NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

26 JUNE 2017



Proposed New Facilities
Clonduff Park, Hilltown



CLUB BACKGROUND

- ESTABLISHED IN 1887
- LARGEST RURAL CLUB IN DOWN
- LOCAL POPULATION c.2,800
- 999 MEMBERS
- 125 PLAYING MEMBERS
- 35 TEAMS - ALL AGES / ALL CODES



Proposed New Facilities
Clonduff Park, Hilltown

CLUB BACKGROUND LOCATION

54



Proposed New Facilities
Clonduff Park, Hilltown



DEVELOPMENT HISTORY 1968 – OPENING ON MAIN PITCH

55



Proposed New Facilities
Clonduff Park, Hilltown

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

1998 – NEW REPLACEMENT CLUBHOUSE

56



Proposed New Facilities
Clonduff Park, Hilltown

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

2008 – ACQUISITION OF ADDITIONAL LAND

2009 – 2010 NEW TRAINING PITCH

57



Proposed New Facilities
Clonduff Park, Hilltown

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

2014 – ACQUISITION OF ADDITIONAL LANDS

58



Proposed New Facilities
Clonduff Park, Hilltown

INVESTMENT

**BETWEEN 2008 AND 2015 CLONDUFF GAA HAVE
COMPLETED AN INVESTMENT PROGRAM WORTH OVER
£1,000,000
THROUGH LAND ACQUISITION AND CAPITAL WORKS**



**Proposed New Facilities
Clonduff Park, Hilltown**

VISION

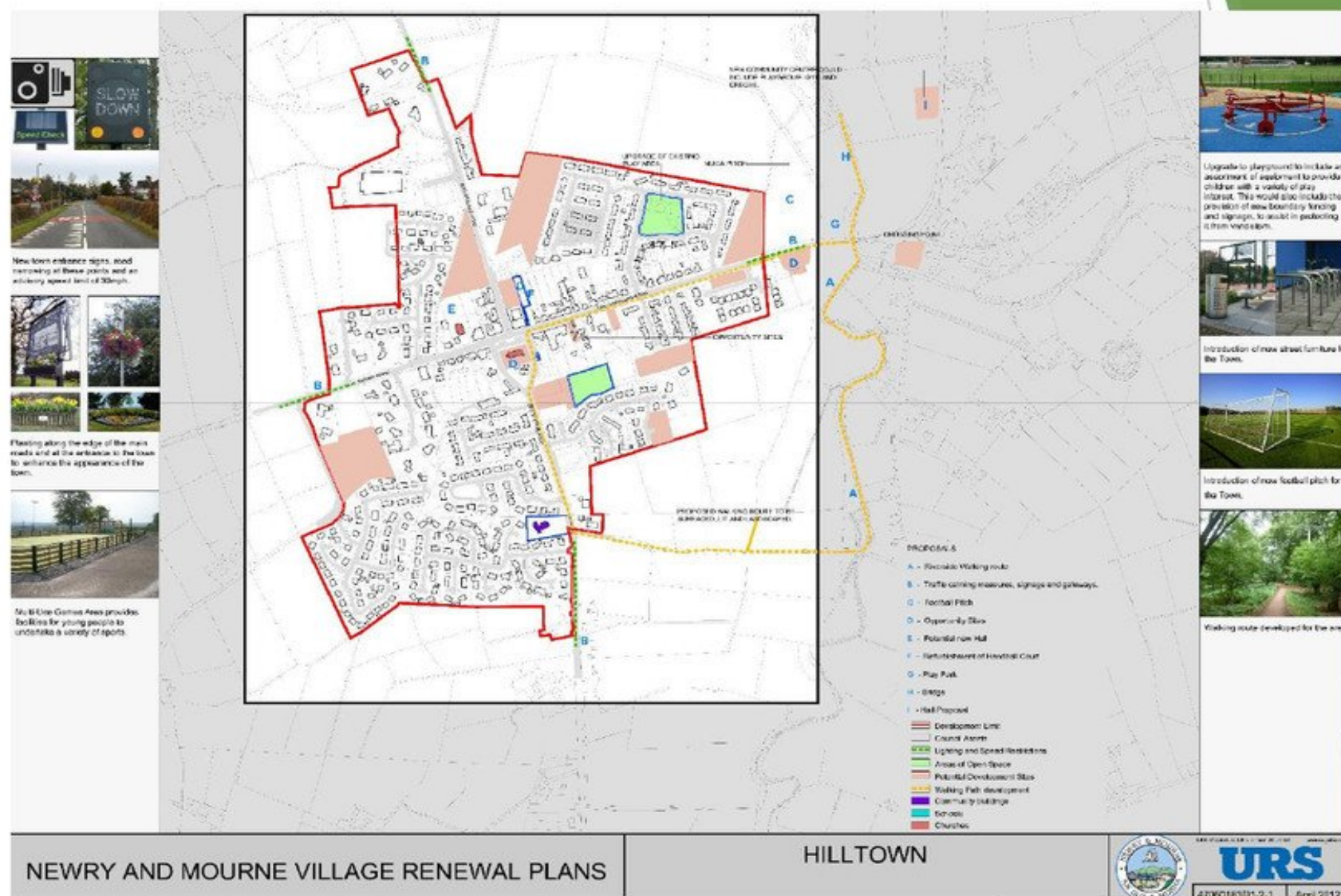
- **5 YEAR PLAN 2012 - 2017**
- **“TO BECOME THE BEST AT WHAT WE DO”**
- **“TO BE A ROLE MODEL AND EXAMPLE OF EXCELLENCE”**
- **CREATION OF STATE OF THE ART FACILITIES TO ENHANCE AND DEVELOP OUR PLAYING MEMBERS SKILLS AND DEVELOP CLUBS ACTIVITIES**
- **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT :TO IDENTIFY FACILITIES THAT WILL BE OF BENEFIT TO THE WIDER COMMUNITY AND ESTABLISH A “COMMUNITY HUB”**



**Proposed New Facilities
Clonduff Park, Hilltown**

VISION IMPLEMENTATION

• 2012 - NEWRY & MOURNE COUNCILS VILLAGE STRATEGY

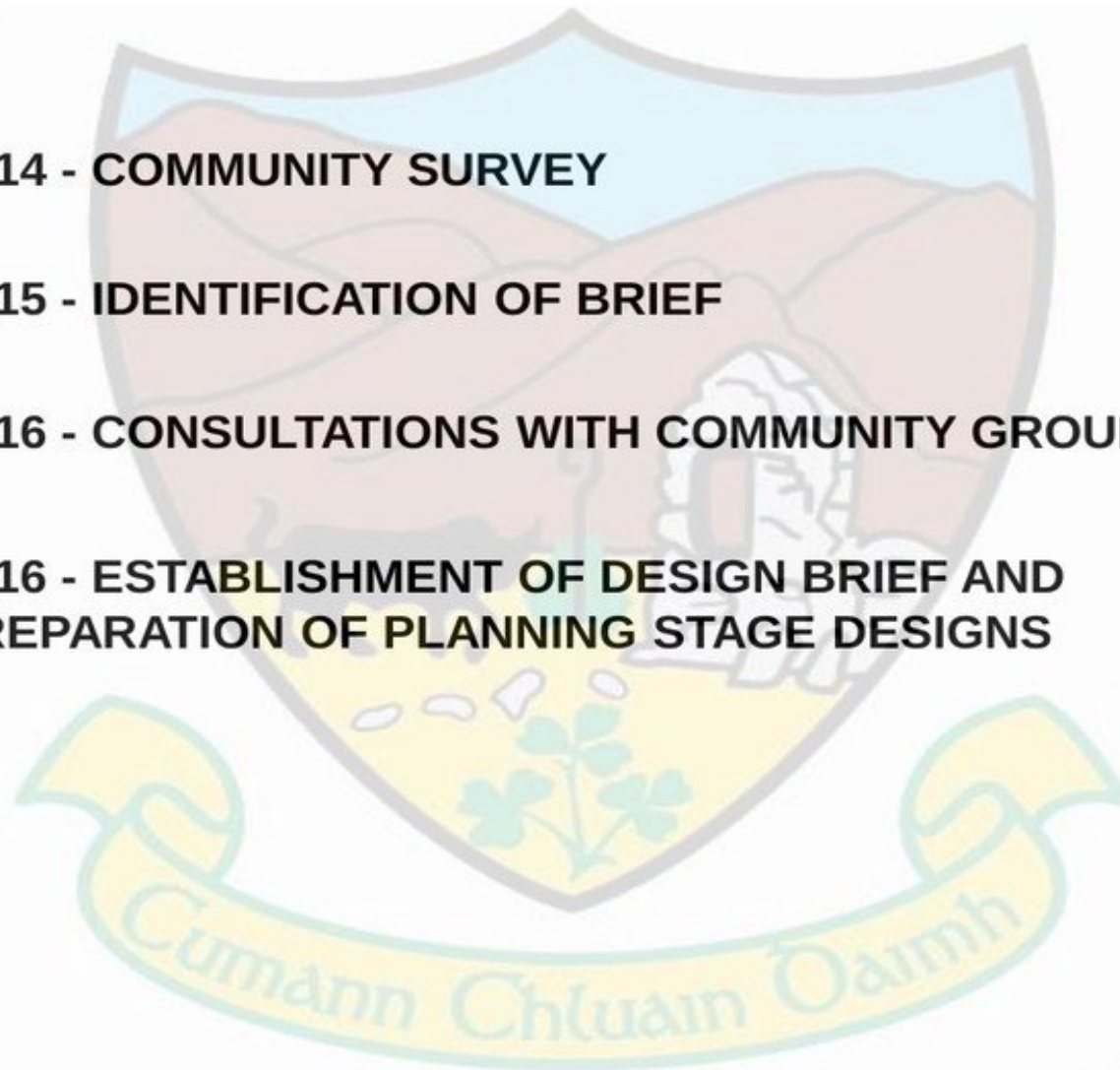


Proposed New Facilities
Clonduff Park, Hilltown



VISION IMPLEMENTATION

- **2014 - COMMUNITY SURVEY**
- **2015 - IDENTIFICATION OF BRIEF**
- **2016 - CONSULTATIONS WITH COMMUNITY GROUPS**
- **2016 - ESTABLISHMENT OF DESIGN BRIEF AND PREPARATION OF PLANNING STAGE DESIGNS**



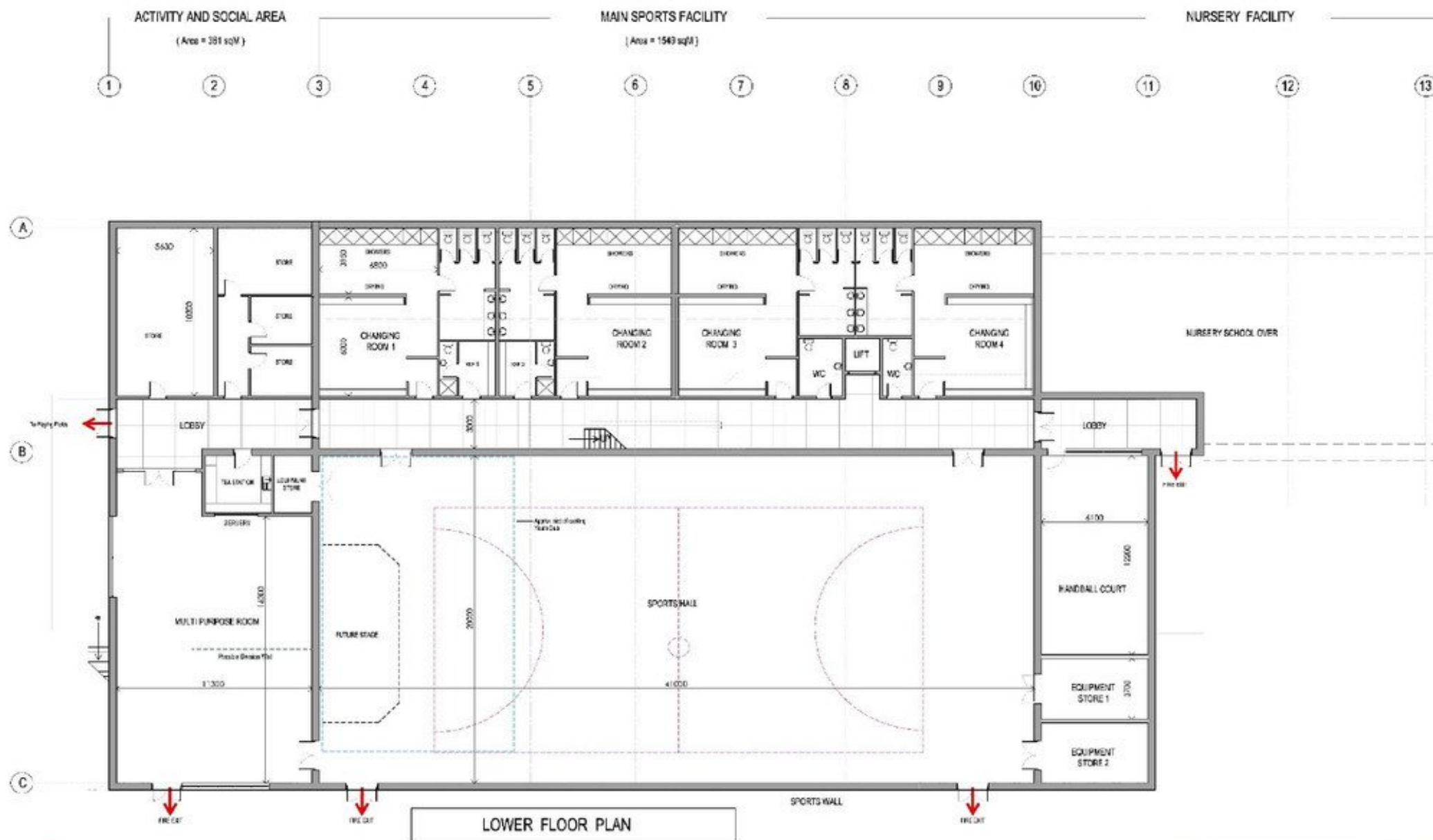
**Proposed New Facilities
Clonduff Park, Hilltown**



DESIGN PROPOSALS

64

1:1000 (INDICATIVE SCALE) - NOT TO BE USED FOR CONSTRUCTION



Proposed New Facilities
Clonduff Park, Hilltown



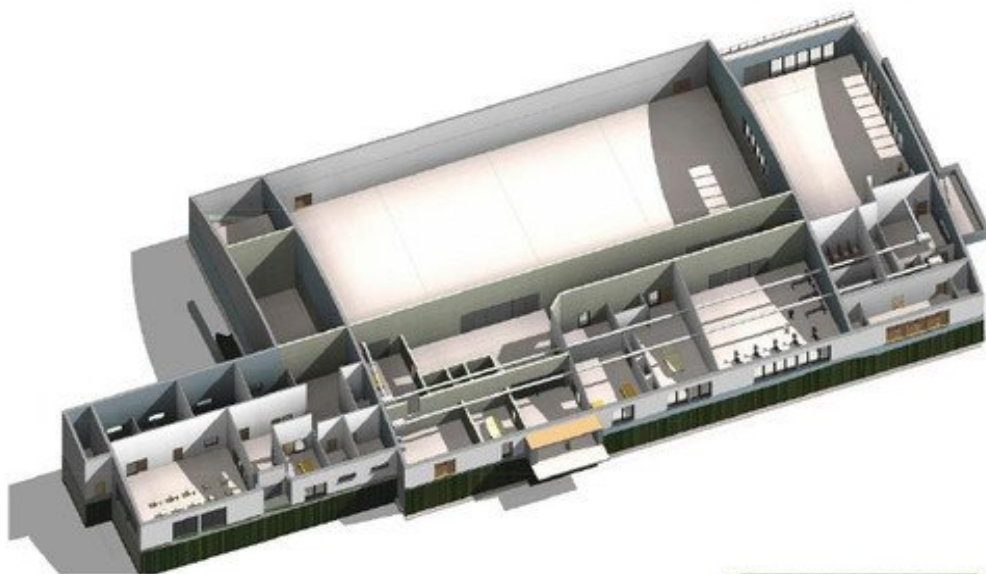
DESIGN PROPOSALS



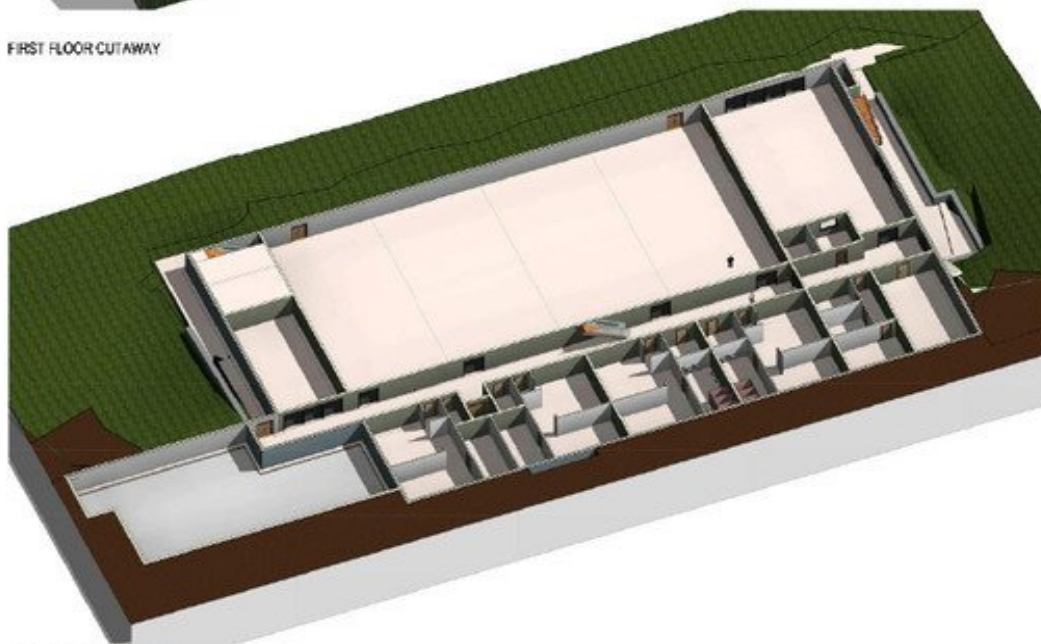
**Proposed New Facilities
Clonduff Park, Hilltown**



DESIGN PROPOSALS



FIRST FLOOR CUTAWAY



GROUND FLOOR CUTAWAY



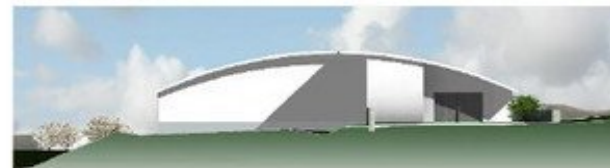
NORTH WEST FACING PERSPECTIVE



WEST FACING ELEVATION



EAST FACING ELEVATION



SOUTH FACING ELEVATION



NORTH FACING ELEVATION



Proposed New Facilities
Clonduff Park, Hilltown

DESIGN PROPOSALS PHASING

67



Proposed New Facilities
Clonduff Park, Hilltown



NORTH WEST PERSPECTIVE



**Proposed New Facilities
Clonduff Park, Hilltown**





SOUTH EAST PERSPECTIVE



**Proposed New Facilities
Clonduff Park, Hilltown**



NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

NMD/SC

**Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on Tuesday 26 September 2017 at
6.00 pm in the Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick**

In the Chair: Councillor R Mulgrew

In attendance: (Councillors)

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor P Brown
Councillor R Burgess	Councillor P Byrne
Councillor M Carr	Councillor G Craig
Councillor L Devlin	Councillor S Doran
Councillor C Enright	Councillor G Fitzpatrick
Councillor V Harte	Councillor H Harvey
Councillor D Hyland	Councillor L Kimmins
Councillor M Larkin	Councillor K Loughran
Councillor J Macauley	Councillor D McAteer
Councillor O McMahon	Councillor A McMurray
Councillor B Quinn	Councillor H Reilly
Councillor M Ruane	Councillor G Stokes
Councillor D Taylor	Councillor J Tinnelly
Councillor J Trainor	Councillor W Walker

(Officials)

Mr L Hannaway, Chief Executive
Mr A McKay, Chief Planning Officer
Mr K Montgomery, Assistant Director Finance & Systems
Ms E McParland, Democratic Services Manager
Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Officer
Ms C McAteer, Democratic Services Officer

SC/25/2017 APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Bailie, Casey, Curran, Hanna, Murnin, Savage and Sharvin.

SC/26/2017 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

**SC/27/2017 NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN COUNCIL'S STATEMENT
OF ACCOUNTS 2016/2017**

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Trainor, it was unanimously agreed to sign Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Statement of

Accounts 2016/2017 which were recommended for approval at the Audit Committee Meeting held on 26 September 2017.

SC/28/2017

**REPORT BY MR A MCKAY, CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER –
P/2015/0218/F – PROPOSED WINDFARM AT GRUGGANDOO**

Read:

Report dated 26 September 2017 from Mr A McKay, Chief Planning Officer, advising that a recommendation was required on a revised proposal for a windfarm at Gruggandoo, in response to a Statutory Consultation received from the Department of Infrastructure. The report outlined the key issues to be considered including the Banbridge/Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015; SPPS – Planning for Sustainable Development; PPS2 Natural Heritage; PPS16 Tourism; PPS18 Renewable Energy and PPS21 Sustainable Development in the Countryside. and recommended that having had regard to the Development Plan, the relevant planning policy context and all other material considerations, the proposal for a 10 turbine wind farm at Gruggandoo was considered to be unacceptable in planning terms and recommending that a response be returned to DFI indicating the Council's opposition to this planning application. (***Circulated***).

In presenting his report Mr McKay raised the following issues:-

- The NI Executive had set a target of 40% renewable energy being generated by 2020. Currently 30% levels were being achieved and there was confidence that, taking into account the number of approvals for existing and proposed wind farms, this target would be met and possibly exceeded.
- There was nothing to say that there might be other sites within the Mournes AONB suitable for a wind farm development, but this particular site was in a sensitive upland landscape of exceptionally high scenic value.

Members then spoke on the application and made the following points:-

- Challenged the figures presented by the Chief Planning Officer in relation to the set target for renewable energy. 80% of Northern Ireland's electricity had to be generated from renewable sources by 2050 and there was a high demand for the 3 main forms of energy i.e. electricity, transport and heating. The announcements by the British and Republic of Ireland Governments that they would be phasing out diesel and petrol cars would create a higher demand for electricity supplies.
- The UK Commission for Climate Change had undertaken to write to the Council by 1 October 2017 confirming effective targets for this area which would be well over 50%.
- The positive impact of revenue to the Council in terms of rates from renewable energy sources had to be given consideration.
- In consultations on a proposed Mournes National Park it had been highlighted that the Western Mournes was a suitable site for a wind farm and this had been written into the Report.

- Recent announcements from Electricity suppliers that the cost of electricity was again raising. New technology did not seem to be benefitting consumers and there was nothing to say that if these turbines were erected, that the consumer would benefit.
- The area where the proposed turbines were to be erected was one of the most scenic in the Mournes and the turbines would be clearly visible from some of the best scenic viewpoints. The Council could not be responsible for detracting from the Mournes AONB.
- Support for the wind farm being built at this location and the Council should inform the Department how important it was to the region. The Council seemed only to pay lip service to renewable energy.
- On visiting the proposed site there were 9 existing turbines which could be viewed from the location – there were scores of single turbines already established within the Mournes AONB. Very aware of protecting the asset that was the Mournes, but this application was on the fringe of the AONB and was separated from the High Mournes by a valley, river and acres of ground.
- The application would bring great benefits to the local Hilltown community; the project would be run by a professional Company who would maintain the wind turbines properly and it would contribute towards meeting renewable energy targets.
- Welcomed the site visit to Limavady which helped put the proposal into perspective. This scheme had been reduced from 12 to 10 wind turbines; it was less obtrusive than those in the north west of the Province and would contribute to meeting renewable energy targets.
- There was no evidence to support claims of negative effects on tourism – reference was made to wind farms in Kerry and the North West. The overall benefits to the community and rates income outweighed any detrimental impact on the landscape.
- Concerns at the sensationalising of some information from objectors to the wind farm. There were no concrete facts presented of negative effects on tourism; the Mournes Heritage Trust had taken no stance on this application; the site visit had demonstrated that there was little or no noise from the wind turbines unless standing directly beneath them and given the huge impact on rates the proposal could be considered to be of regional importance.
- Concerns about the amount of money offered to the local community – the life span of a wind turbine was 25 years which would equate to a very small community fund per annum.
- These turbines were industrial machines – the AONB was worth more than pounds and pence and it was unbelievable that there was a proposal to put such machines in this landscape.
- The proposed location of the turbines had achieved a reasonable compromise especially with the reduction in the number of turbines and there was considerable community benefit and the rates income was a significant benefit to the District.
- This was a difficult decision to have to make – the hills in the Mournes were used for many recreational activities but the Mournes had been undergoing influence by man for hundreds of years and this proposal would not detract from the area.

- Any source of renewable energy was to be welcomed – everyone should think about how they use energy and how we use our finite resources.
- Scaremongering from those objecting to the wind turbines on health grounds as there was no evidence to support this. Considerable economic benefits to the area and rates revenue.

Mr McKay responded to issues which had been raised by Members.

Following discussion Councillor Brown proposed and Councillor Hyland seconded that the Council reject the recommendation contained in a report dated 26 September 2017 from Mr A McKay in respect of planning application P/2015/0218/F and respond to the Department for Infrastructure that the Council support this application.

The proposal was put to a recorded vote and voting was as follows:- **(recorded vote attached)**

FOR:	15
AGAINST:	15
ABSTENTIONS:	0

The Chairperson used her casting vote against the proposal and supporting the recommendation of the Planning Officers to respond to DFI indicating the Council's opposition to this planning application on the grounds that it was unacceptable in planning terms and would have a detrimental impact on the area.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 7.00 pm.

For confirmation at Council Meeting to be held on Monday 6 November 2017.

Signed: Councillor R Mulgrew
 Chairperson of Council

Signed: Mr L Hannaway
 Chief Executive of Council

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL
RECORDED VOTE

DATE: 26-09-2017 **VENUE:** Mourne Room Downshire **MEETING:** Special Council Meeting

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SUBJECT OF VOTE: Councillor Brown proposed and Councillor Hyland seconded that the Council reject the recommendation contained in a report dated 26 September 2017 from Mr A McKay in respect of planning application P/2015/0218/F and respond to the Department for Infrastructure that the Council supports this application

COUNCILLOR	FOR THE PROPOSAL	AGAINST THE PROPOSAL	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
T Andrews	✓			
N Bailie				✓
P Brown	✓			
R Burgess	✓			
S Burns				✓
P Byrne	✓			
M Carr	✓			
C Casey				✓
W Clarke		✓		
G Craig	✓			
D Curran				✓
L Devlin		✓		
S Doran		✓		
C Enright	✓			
G Fitzpatrick	✓			
G Hanna				✓
V Harte		✓		
H Harvey		✓		
T Hearty				✓
D Hyland	✓			
L Kimmins		✓		
M Larkin		✓		
K Loughran		✓		
J Macauley	✓			
D McAteer	✓			
O McMahon		✓		
A McMurray	✓			
R Mulgrew		✓		
M Murnin				✓
P O Gribin				✓
B O Muir				✓
B Quinn		✓		
H Reilly		✓		
M Ruane		✓		
M Savage				✓
G Sharvin				✓
G Stokes		✓		
D Taylor	✓			
JJ Tinnelly		✓		
J Trainor	✓			
B Walker	✓			
TOTALS	15	15	0	11

The Chairperson used her casting vote against the proposal and supporting the recommendation of the Planning Officers to respond to DFI indicating the Council's opposition to this planning application on the grounds that it was unacceptable in Planning terms and would have a detrimental impact on the area.