

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Minutes of Strategy Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on Thursday 15
November 2018 at 5.00pm in the Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick**

In the Chair: Councillor M Savage

In Attendance:

Councillor R Burgess	Councillor P Byrne
Councillor M Carr	Councillor S Doran
Councillor D Hyland	Councillor O McMahon
Councillor B Ó Muíri	Councillor J Rice
Councillor M Ruane	Councillor G Sharvin
Councillor J Trainor	Councillor W Walker

Also in Attendance: Councillor T Andrews

Officials in Attendance: Mr L Hannaway, Chief Executive
Mrs D Carville, Director of Corporate Services
Mr J McBride, Assistant Director Community Planning & Performance
Mrs R Mackin, Assistant Director Corporate Planning & Policy
Mr C Mallon, Assistant Director of Estates and Project Management
Mr K Montgomery, Assistant Director of Corporate Services, Finance
Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director Corporate Services, Administration
Mr F O'Connor, Head of Legal Administration
Ms E Cosgrove, Head of Compliance
Mrs E McParland, Democratic Services Manager
Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Officer

Also in Attendance: Ms N Creagh, Department for Communities
Mr P Dalgarno, Department for Communities

SPR/146/2018: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillor McMurray.

SPR/147/2018: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

SPR/148/2018: ACTION SHEET OF THE STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 OCTOBER 2018

Read: Action Sheet of the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 11 October 2018. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Hyland, seconded by Councillor Burgess, it was agreed that the Action Sheet of 11 October 2018 be noted and actions removed as marked.**

PRESENTATIONS

SPR/149/2018: PRESENTATION FROM DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES

The Chairperson welcomed Ms Nichola Creagh and Mr Piers Dalgarno from Local Government & Housing Regulation Division and invited them to make their presentation.

Ms Creagh thanked the Chairperson for the invitation to attend the Committee stating she was going to speak specifically about land disposals. She provided some background to the fact that, currently, Ministerial approval was required for those land disposals in cases where they were being sold at less than best value, e.g. to community groups, and she said this had been stalled due to the current impasse at Stormont. She advised there had been guidance issued at the beginning of November stating that the absence of NI Ministers did not prevent senior officers in NI Departments exercising the function of the department during the period for forming an Executive, if the officer was satisfied that it was within the public interest to exercise such a function during that period.

Ms Creagh advised this was not a blanket approval and depended upon the circumstances of particular disposals, however the opportunity existed to have disposals approved within an approximate period of 8 weeks. She stated in the longer term, it could be argued that the continuation of the situation whereby Ministerial approval was required for disposals equating to small amounts of money, could be reconsidered going forward.

The Chairperson thanked the delegation for their presentation and invited questions from Members:

Members asked the following questions:

- If a disposal was submitted for consideration from today's date, would it take 8 weeks to be approved?
- Council had a number of items that had been awaiting approval, would these matters be resolved within the 8 week timeframe or would they require to be submitted again.
- Given that Newry, Mourne and Down District Council was one of the only Councils in Northern Ireland that sought Departmental approval for the leasing of land in these circumstances, was there an opportunity to fast-track leasing to groups through other mechanisms.
- The opportunity to provide community groups with leases through the process was beneficial to both the Council and the local community.
- If a renewal was required, would this need to go before the Permanent Secretary.
- What advice was in place when disposing through the usage of peppercorn rentals.
- If the lands in question were considered contentious how would the Permanent Secretary determine whether it was within the public interest to grant disposal or not.

Ms Creagh and Mr O'Connor responded to the queries as follows:

- If a submission was received from the Council in the correct format and it was a normal, straightforward disposal it should not take any longer than 8 weeks. This would not however apply in cases which were not straight forward disposals.
- In relation to matters which involved outstanding items previously submitted, , subject to the caveat above, these should be resolved within 8 week timeframe. However Members should perhaps speak with Council Officers regarding individual cases.
- There was a small number of applications currently with the Department and these would need to be re-submitted, however they should be progressed within 8-10 weeks.

- Other Councils did seek approval for disposals, however NMD had the majority of cases, and the Department would be happy to resolve any outstanding within the 8 weeks, provided they were relatively normal.
- Renewals would be something Council officials would be better placed to comment on.
- Peppercorn rents did need approval in the main and would have to be submitted, but as land law was quite complicated, it was hard to say what would apply in each circumstance and each would have to be looked at on its own merits.
- Each case would need to be looked at individually and, if not controversial, should be relatively simple to progress. However it was impossible to define without knowing the circumstances of particular cases.

Mrs Carville stated officers would draw up a policy statement on submission of proposals to the Department and bring this back to a future Committee Meeting for consideration.

Agreed: **Agreed that officers would draw up a policy statement on submission of proposals to the Department and this to be brought back to a future Committee Meeting for Members' consideration.**

CORPORATE PLANNING AND POLICY

SPR/150/2018: 2019 ANNUAL REPORT/NMD CONNECT

Read: Report dated 15 November 2018 from Ms V Keegan, Head of Communications and Marketing regarding 2019 Annual Report/NMD Connect **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Ó Muíri, it was agreed to note the contents of the report and agree arrangements, as outlined in paragraph 3.1, for the presentation of the 2019 Annual Report/NMD Connect to be published in February 2019.**

SPR/151/2018: CORPORATE PLAN 2019-2023

Read: Report dated 15 November 2018 from Ms R Mackin, Assistant Director of Corporate Planning and Policy, regarding Corporate Plan 2019-2023 **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor McMahan, the timetable for the development of the Corporate Plan 2019-2023 as outlined in Section 2.1 of the officer's report was agreed. It was also agreed to appoint an independent facilitator to develop the Corporate Plan.**

PERFORMANCE

SPR/152/2018: MID-YEAR ASSESSMENT PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Read: Report dated 15 November 2018 from Ms K Bingham, Head of Performance and Improvement, regarding Mid-Year Assessment of the Performance Improvement Plan 2018-19 **(Copy circulated)**

Following presentation of the report, Mr McBride responded to the queries raised as follows:

- Keep NI Beautiful commissioned surveys in August 2017 and April 2018 and the figures showed that the District had now fallen below the regional average, which was a result of increased levels of dog fouling and littering. He advised the dog fouling strategy would be presented to the RTS Committee once finalised.
- Regarding a query concerning the actions identified in the report, he advised the Performance Improvement Plan process was not all-encompassing of Council activity, therefore the subsequent assessment was only made against those actions which had been identified in the Plan and perhaps this issue needed to be considered as part of strengthening the process going forward.
- There were issues raised around the role of other public sector organisations in relation to cleansing across the District. He advised the Neighbourhood Services project had identified the need for greater collaboration amongst public sector partners in supporting this.
- In response to a query about the status of the environmental improvement schemes, he advised the change in status from amber to green reflected a milestone being achieved concerning their commencement. He further advised more commentary could have been added in the explanation column and he would request this be amended by the relevant Department.

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Hyland, seconded by Councillor Doran, the Mid-Year Assessment of the Performance Improvement Plan 2018-19 was agreed.**

SPR/153/2018: **MID-YEAR ASSESSMENTS OF DIRECTORATE BUSINESS PLANS 2018-19**

Read: Report dated 15 November 2018 from Mr Johnny McBride Assistant Director, Community Planning and Performance detailing the Mid-Year Assessments of CEO and Corporate Services Business Plan 2018-19 **(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Carville and Mr Hannaway responded to queries raised as follows:

- The Member's survey was to be implemented at the beginning of next year.
- The audit of record systems were an audit of existing information systems to ensure the Department was aware of all data being held. This was separate to any areas of the organisation where members felt there was a lack of systems in place. This would however be picked up as part of the IT strategy, with Neighbourhood Services also reviewing what data and IT systems were required during the Neighbourhood Service's review on-going. Page 6 did have a typing error, it should have read 245 met timeframe out of 310.

Councillor Hyland stated members of the public had spoken to him of their delight at Newry Leisure Centre, the Greenway Project and Municipal Park so the feedback was very positive.

Noted: **The Mid-Year Assessments of Chief Executive Office and Corporate Services Business Plans 2018-19 were noted.**

FOR NOTING

SPR/154/2018: LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN STEERING GROUP – MINUTES OF MEETING 8 MAY 2018

Read: Minutes of Local Development Plan Steering Group Meeting held on 8 May 2018 **(Copy circulated)**

Noted: **The minutes were noted.**

SPR/155/2018: COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP BOARD MINUTES

Read: Minutes of Community Planning Partnership Board Meeting held on 23 October 2018 **(Copy circulated)**

Noted: **The minutes were noted.**

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

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Burgess, seconded by Councillor Trainor, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on the next matters which related to exempt information by virtue of para. 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) 2014 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.**

SPR/156/2018: REQUEST FOR TRANSFER OF LANEWAY

Read: Report dated 15 November 2018, from Ms A Robb, Assistant Director Corporate Services (Administration), regarding Request for Transfer of Laneway at 130 Drumaness Road, Drumaness **(Copy circulated)**

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

Agreed: **Agreed on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Walker, to note the contents of the officer's report and accede to the applicant's request for the transfer of laneway at 130 Drumaness Road, Drumaness as shown on the map presented to Committee, at a nominal consideration for the reasons outlined in the officer's report at paragraph 3.1.**

SPR/157/2018: SURPLUS LAND AT GREENFIELD STEPS, ARDGLASS

Read: Report dated 15 November 2018, from Ms A Robb, Assistant Director Corporate Services (Administration), regarding Surplus Land at Greenfield Steps, Ardglass **(Copy circulated)**

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

Agreed: Agreed on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Ruane, to express an interest in the acquisition of land at Greenfield Steps, Ardglass, declared surplus by Transport NI.

SPR/158/2018: SALE OF LAND AT ALTNAVEIGH

Read: Report dated 15 November 2018, from Mrs D Carville, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Council Land at Altnaveigh, Doran's Hill, Newry (**Copy circulated**)

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

Agreed: Agreed on the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Hyland, by a vote with the following results:
FOR: 8
AGAINST: 0
ABSTENTIONS: 4
to proceed with the sale of land at Altnaveigh Newry to Thomas Davis GFC for the sum quoted in the officer's report, subject to the conditions specified at para.3.1.

SPR/159/2018: TRANSFER OF BUDGET WITHIN CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Read: Report dated 15 November 2018, from Mr K Montgomery, Assistant Director of Finance, regarding Variations to Approved Capital Expenditure (**Copy circulated**)

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

Agreed: Agreed on the proposal of Councillor Doran, seconded by Councillor Ruane, to note the contents of the officer's report and approve the adjustments to the Council's capital programme.

SPR/160/2018: MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

Read: Report dated 15 November 2018, from Mr K Montgomery, Assistant Director of Finance, regarding Management Accounts to 30 September 2018 (**Copy circulated**)

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

Agreed: Agreed to note the contents of the officer's report showing budget expenditure for the first six months of the 2018/2019 financial year compared to actual expenditure and revenue for the same period.

SPR/161/2018: BUSINESS CASE FOR PPE

Read: Report dated 15 November 2018, from Mr K Montgomery, Assistant Director of Finance, regarding Business Case for Personal Protective Clothing (PPE) **(Copy circulated)**

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

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Trainor, to note the contents of the officer's report and approve the Business Case presented to Committee relating to procurement of PPE to enable a procurement process to commence.**

SPR/162/2018: UPDATE ON NEWRY DEA ASSETS

Read: Report dated 15 November 2018, from Mr C Mallon, Assistant Director of Estates and Project Management, regarding Disposal of Surplus Assets in Newry DEA **(Copy circulated)**

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

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hyland, seconded by Councillor Byrne, to note the contents of the officer's report and approve the recommended preferred route for the disposal of the assets listed, being:**

- 1. Open market sale of 2 sites:
NM195 Market McAleavey store open market
NM156 Moorhill former refuse site**
- 2. Proceed with the D1 process in relation to two assets:
NM184 metal portal frame store
NM182 Hospital Road grass area**
- 3. Apply for planning permission for development of:
NM139 Abbey Heights amenity area**
- 4. Await further response from LPS on:
NM162 Daisy Hill Nurseries
NM144 Ashtree former play area, Rathfriland Road
NM416 Crown Villas play area, Crieve Road
NM148 Bleary Bungalows play area
NM161 Coreagh Office**

SPR/163/2018: ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM ALBERT BASIN TASK & FINISH WORKING GROUP MEETING HELD ON 1ST NOVEMBER 2018

Read: Action Sheet arising from Albert Basin Task & Finish Working Group Meeting held on 1st November 2018 **(Copy circulated)**

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

Agreed: Agreed to note the action sheet arising from Albert Basin Task & Finish Working Group Meeting held on 1st November 2018.

SPR/164/2018: CHANGE IN PERSONNEL

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

Noted: Members were updated on a change of personnel at Assistant Director level.

There being no further business, the Meeting concluded at 6.43pm

For consideration at the Council Meeting to be held on 3 December 2018.

Signed: **Councillor Michael Savage**
Chairperson

Signed: **Dorinnia Carville**
Director of Corporate Services