

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of Inaugural Strategy Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on Thursday 16 April 2015 at 6.00pm in the Mourne Room Downshire Civic Centre Downpatrick.

Chairperson: Councillor R Burgess

Vice Chairperson: Councillor H Reilly

In Attendance:

- Councillor S Burns**
- Councillor M Carr**
- Councillor W Clarke**
- Councillor G Craig**
- Councillor D Curran**
- Councillor G Donnelly**
- Councillor C Enright**
- Councillor H Harvey**
- Councillor L Kimmins**
- Councillor B O Muiri**
- Councillor B Quinn**
- Councillor M Ruane**
- Councillor W Walker**

Officials in Attendance:

- Mr L Hannaway Chief Executive**
- Mr E Curtis Director of Strategic Planning & Performance**
- Ms R Mackin Assistant Director of Administration (Equality)**
- Ms H McKee Community Planning Manager**
- Ms C Miskelly Assistant Director Corporate Services (HR)**
- Ms E McParland Democratic Services Manager**
- Ms V Keegan Marketing and Communications Manager**
- Mr P Green Legal Officer**
- Mr J McBride Change Manager**
- Ms U Mhic An tSaoir Irish Language Officer**
- Ms L Dillon Democratic Services Officer**

SPR/01/2015:- APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

The Chairperson welcomed Members to the first meeting of the Strategy Policy & Resources Committee.

The following apologies were received from Councillor C McGrath and Mr R Dowey Head of Finance.

SPR/02/2015:- DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were received.

SPR/03/2015:- TERMS OF REFERENCE

Read: Terms of Reference for the Strategy Policy & Resources Committee.
(Copy circulated)

Noted: **On the proposal of Councillor O'Muiri seconded by Councillor Donnelly it was agreed to note the Terms of Reference for the Strategy Policy & Resources Committee which had been previously circulated to Members.**

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE

**SPR/04/2015:- REPORT
RE: CORPORATE PLANNING AND POLICY**

Read: Report from Ms R Mackin Assistant Director of Administration (Equality) dated 16 April 2015 regarding:
Corporate Planning
Corporate Policy
Equality Scheme
Disability Action Plan
Bilinguism (Copy circulated)

Officers presented the various sections of this Report and advised that:

Corporate Planning - The Corporate Plan for the new Council a Policy Development Framework has been provided in order to create a clear approach to the management of all Council policies. This is a fluid process and members will be kept updated on progress.

Agreed: Regular progress reports on Corporate Planning be presented at future meetings of the Strategy Policy and Resources Committee to include progress indicators to allow for measurement against Plan.

Corporate Policy – A brief outline on the headline actions planned for the next 3 months was presented.

Equality Scheme – Outlined planned actions were presented.

Disability Action Plan – A brief outline on the headline actions planned for the next number of months was presented.

Agreed: At the request of Councillor Quinn officials to examine the provision of additional disability parking spaces at the Council offices, Monaghan Row, Newry.

Bilingualism Policy – This Report was presented.

Noted: A paper will be forwarded to the Management Team in due course regarding resourcing in respect of the Irish Language Policy – majority of structures will not be completed until mid/late summer 2015.

Agreed: Mr C Moffett Equality Officer to respond to a query from Councillor Walker seeking clarification as to whether bilingual signage at the entrance of villages and towns will be erected throughout the District.

Record: Councillor Reilly asked that it be recorded that he was extremely concerned at some of the comments contained in the Equality Impact Assessment in respect of the Irish Language Policy and said there should be a full Equality Impact Assessment carried out by the Council as currently he believed Unionists were being alienated from the Council.

The following issues were raised by Members:-

- Provision of additional resources to bring forward the development of the Irish Language Policy
- Details on plans for resources in respect of the development of the Irish Language Policy.
- Equality Impact Assessment.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor O’Muir seconded by Councillor Kimmins it was agreed to approve the following reports:-
Report on Corporate Planning
Report on Corporate Policy
Report on Equality Scheme

**Report on Disability Action Plan
Report on Bilingualism**

Councillor Reilly objected to the above decision.

The proposal was put to a vote by way of a show of hands and voting was as follows:-

FOR: 8
AGAINST: 3
ABSTENTIONS: 2

(Note - Councillor Harvey was not a member of the SPR Committee).

The proposal was declared carried.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor O’Muiri seconded by Councillor Kimmins to adopt the following reports:-

**Report on Corporate Planning
Report on Corporate Policy
Report on Equality Scheme
Report on Disability Action Plan
Report on Bilingualism**

**SPR/05/2015:- REPORT
RE MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Read: Report from Ms V Keegan Marketing Manager dated 16 April 2015 regarding an update on Marketing and Communications.(Copy circulated)

Ms Keegan presented the above report.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor O Muiri seconded by Councillor Kimmins it was agreed to approve the above Report and the recommendations contained therein.

Agreed: It was agreed Mr E Curtis arrange for a check to be carried out to ensure that a postal drop of postcards had been delivered to homes throughout all of the Council area giving communication details for the new Council.

SPR/06/29015:- REPORT ON EQUALITY SCREENING REPORT
RE: BILINGUISM POLICY

Read: Report from Mr C Moffett Equality Officer dated 16 April 2015 regarding an Equality Screening Report on the Bilingualism Policy. (Copy circulated)

Noted: It was noted the above report had already been tabled at the Shadow Council Governance Committee Meeting held on 10 March 2015 and formally ratified at the Meeting of Shadow Council Tuesday 31 March 2015.

Mr C Moffett presented the above report and explained the Bilingual Policy was about facilitating and encouraging promotion and use of the Irish and English Language.

Concerns were raised by several members regarding the issue of erecting bilingual signage.

Noted: **It was agreed to note the Report on Equality Screening regarding the Bi Linguism Policy.**

(Councillor Enright joined the meeting at this point – 6.35pm.)

(The meeting adjourned at 6.35pm for a 20 minute period due to IT problems and resumed at 6.55pm.)

SPR/07/2015:- REPORT FROM MS H MCKEE COMMUNITY PLANNING
MANAGER
RE COMMUNITY PLANNING

Read: Report from Ms H McKee Community Planning Manager regarding Community Planning:- (Copy circulated)

- Age Friendly Strategy
- Children & Young Peoples Youth Strategy
- Consultation & Engagement Framework

Community Planning

Ms McKee presented the report on Community Planning and outlined the 5 main areas as follows:-

- Economic development, regeneration, tourism
- Education
- Environment
- Health and wellbeing

- Planning
- Safety

The following issues were raised:

- The Strategy Policy & Resources Committee need to work closely with the Active Healthy Communities Committee in order that more contact and interaction is made with local communities in respect of community planning
- Need to increase the involvement of statutory communities in terms of community planning and engagement with the community
- Need to highlight that community planning is not a money saving exercise but about better delivery of services in communities.
- Seek a commitment from statutory bodies that they will become involved in community planning
- Need to identify priorities that are needed in certain areas
- Seek the views of people living in communities such as housing estates and from older people in the community and youth, ethnic minorities

Agreed: Ms H McKee to arrange an information session for Councillors on Community Planning.

Age Friendly Strategy **Children and Young Peoples Youth Strategy**

Ms Mackin presented the reports on Age Friendly Strategy and Children and Young Peoples Youth Strategy.

Ms Mackin pointed out officials would be working closely with the Active & Healthy Communities Committee on these strategies.

Consultation and Engagement Framework

Ms Mackin presented the report on Consultation and Engagement Framework.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Clarke seconded by Councillor Donnelly it was agreed to agree the Community Planning Report which incorporated:-

- **Age Friendly Strategy**
- **Children and Young Peoples Youth Strategy**
- **Consultation and Engagement Framework**

CORPORATE SERVICES SECTION

SPR/08/2015:- TENDER REPORT - RE: INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICES

Read: Report dated 16 April 2015 from Mr R Dowey Head of Finance regarding the award of tender for Internal Audit services to be provided by external suppliers and recommending awarding of the tender to Company A for a period of 12 months expiring 31 March 2016. In the event that the first 12 months is satisfactory then the contract to be extended for a further 2 years. (Copy circulated)

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Craig seconded by Councillor Ruane it was agreed to approve the recommendation contained in report dated 16 April 2015 from Mr R Dowey Head of Finance regarding the award of tender for Internal Audit services to be provided by external suppliers, and that this tender be granted to Company A for a period of 12 months expiring 31 March 2016. In the event the first 12 months of this contract is satisfactory, the contract to then be extended for a further 2 year period.**

Agreed: **It was also agreed Mr R Dowey Head of Finance provide Councillor H Reilly with details of the re-evaluation of rate income for the legacy Down District Council.**

SPR/09/2015:- REPORT RE SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE & POLICY

Read: Report from Ms C Miskelly Assistant Director Corporate Services (Human Resources). (Copy circulated)

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Kimmins seconded by Councillor Donnelly it was agreed to approve the Newry, Mourne & Down District Council Shared Parental Leave Policy.**

SPR/10/2015:- LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION - FINANCIAL SCHEME 2015/16

Read: Report from Ms C Miskelly Assistant Director Corporate Services (Human Resources) dated 16 April 2015 regarding the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC) Financial Scheme 2015/16. (Copy circulated)

Agreed: It was unanimously agreed to note payment will be issued to the Local Government Staff Commission regarding the Financial Scheme 2015/16.

SPR/11/2015:- APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES:-
- LOUTH NEWRY MOURNE & DOWN JOINT COMMITTEE
- NILGA
- NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNCILLORS

It was noted outstanding appointments had to be made to the following bodies:-

- Louth, Newry, Mourne & Down Joint Committee (LNMD)
- NILGA
- National Association of Councillors

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Craig seconded by Councillor Reilly it was agreed to appoint the following Members to the Louth, Newry, Mourne & Down Joint Committee:-
- Councillor B Walker
- Councillor D McAteer
- Councillor C Enright

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Craig seconded by Councillor Reilly it was agreed to appoint the following Members to NILGA:-
- Councillor B Walker
- Councillor H Reilly

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Craig seconded by Councillor Reilly it was agreed to appoint the following Members to the National Association of Councillors:-
- Councillor R Burgess
- Councillor P Clarke

SPR/12/2015:- APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTORS
- EAST BORDER REGION

Read: Letter dated 19 February 2015 from P Arthurs East Border Region seeking appointment 3 No. Members of the East Border Region Forum to the position of Director of the East Border Region Board.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Clarke seconded by Councillor Kimmins it was agreed to appoint Councillor M Ruane as a Director of the East Border Region Board.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Carr seconded by Councillor Quinn it was agreed to appoint Councillor T Andrews as a Director of the East Border Region Board.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Carr seconded by Councillor Ruane it was agreed to appoint Councillor D Hyland as a Director of the East Border Region Board.

SPR/13/2015:- COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

Read: Report from Ms E McParland Democratic Services Manager regarding the Draft Constitution for the Council to be finalised and presented to the Monthly Meeting on Tuesday 5 May 2015. (Copy circulated)

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Donnelly seconded by Councillor Ruane it was agreed to approve the Draft Council Constitution and that same be presented to the Monthly Meeting of Council to be held on Tuesday 5 May 2015.

Following formal adoption of the Council Constitution, this document is to be put onto the Council's website.

CONFERENCES AND CORRESPONDENCE SECTION

**SPR/14/2015:- DSD
- DISABILITY ACTION PLAN – PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

It was noted the Department for Social Development is carrying out a public consultation on the Disability Action Plan 2014-2017 for a 12 week period commencing 9 March 2015 until 31 May 2015. The public consultation document is available on the Department for Social Development's website.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Ruane seconded by Councillor Kimmins it was agreed the DSD consultation on the Disability Action Plan be referred to the individual Party Groupings on the Council for response.

SPR/15/2015:- REVALUATION – BUSINESS RATES

Read: Correspondence dated 26 March 2015 from Department of Finance & Personnel in response to the Council's letter of 4 March 2015 seeking a meeting with Simon Hamilton MLA Minister for Department of Finance and Personnel, to discuss the impact of the revaluation of business rates

on small businesses in the Council area. The Minister is unable to meet with Newry, Mourne & Down Council. (Copy circulated)

Agreed: Council officials arrange to carry out analysis of properties across the entire Newry, Mourne & Down District and do a rates comparison exercise for all of the towns contained in the District.

Agreed: It was agreed the Council arrange Information Seminars in both parts of the District to assist businesses undergoing the appeal process available for revaluation decisions.

Agreed: The views expressed by Members regarding the revaluation of business rates be forwarded to the ERT Committee.

Agreed: It was agreed to continue to lobby the Minister for Department of Finance and Personnel regarding Business Rates Relief and to ask that the scheme be extended for a further year after March 2016.

SPR/16/2015:- 2015 NILGA CONFERENCE
- THURSDAY 18 JUNE 2015

Read: Correspondence dated 2 April 2015 from NILGA regarding the 2015 NILGA Conference to be held in the La Mon Hotel, Thursday 18 June 2015. (Copy circulated)

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Craig seconded by Councillor Donnelly it was agreed Council representatives on NILGA attend the 2015 NILGA Conference in the La Mon Hotel on Thursday 18 June 2015:-

Councillor T Andrews
Councillor C Casey
Councillor D Curran
Councillor S Doran
Councillor P O’Gribin
Councillor B Quinn
Councillor B Walker
Councillor H Reilly

**SPR/17/2015: REQUEST FROM NI WATER
RE: MAINTENANCE WORKS - NEWRY STREET CAR PARK,
WARRENPOINT**

Read: Report from Ms Marie Ward Group Chief Building Control Officer dated 16 April 2015 regarding a request from NI Water seeking approval to close the car park at Newry Street, Warrenpoint for a 1 day period on the 22 April 2015 to facilitate essential maintenance works in connection with a pumping station located at Newry Street, Warrenpoint. (Copy circulated)

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Carr seconded by Councillor Ruane it was agreed to grant NI Water permission to close the car park at Newry Street, Warrenpoint for a 1 day period on the 22 April 2015 to facilitate essential maintenance works relating to the pumping station.**

It was also agreed to request NI Water to provide the Council with an update regarding works at the pumping station located at Newry Street, Warrenpoint and to request that in future they give adequate notice of essential works which may result in the closure of this car park.

**SPR/18/2015:- PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY
RINGHADDY ROAD AND QUARTERLAND ROAD, KILLINCHY**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Ruane seconded by Councillor Donnelly it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting to allow consideration of this matter as it contains information considered exempt under Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 – information relating to an individual.**

Read: Report from Mr P Greene Legal Advisor, dated 16 April 2015 regarding a judicial review pre action protocol letter in respect of Down District Council's assertion of a public right of way between Ringhaddy Road and Quarterland Road, Killinchy.

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Kimmins seconded by Councillor Clarke it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.**

Agreed: **When the Council came out of closed session Mr Curtis reported that on the proposal of Councillor Walker seconded by Councillor Clarke it was agreed to note the legal proceedings which will commence in respect of a judicial review on pre action protocol in respect of Down**

District Council's assertion of a public right of way between Ringhaddy Road and Quarterland Road, Killinchy.

SPR/19/2015: FUTURE MEETINGS OF SPR COMMITTEE

Read: Listing of future Strategy Policy and Resources Committee Meetings to be held up until April 2016. (Copy circulated)

Agreed: It was agreed officials look at the possibility of providing a video conferencing facility for Members who are unable to attend committee meetings due to work commitments, subject to such an arrangement complying with the Council's Standing Orders.

The Meeting concluded at 8.15pm.

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

**Signed: Councillor Robert Burgess
Chairperson**

**Signed: Eddy Curtis
Director of Strategic Planning and Performance**