

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of Strategy Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on Thursday 16 March 2017 at 5.00pm in the Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick.

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| In the Chair: | Councillor P Brown | |
| In Attendance: | Councillor T Andrews Councillor R Burgess Councillor S Doran Councillor M Murnin Councillor G Sharvin | Councillor P Byrne Councillor M Carr Councillor C Enright Councillor M Ruane Councillor W Walker |
| Also in Attendance | Councillor M Larkin Councillor A McMurray | Councillor D McAteer |
| Officials in Attendance: | Mrs D Carville, Director of Corporate Services Mr M Lipsett, Director of Active and Healthy Communities Mrs M Ward, Director of Enterprise, Tourism and Regeneration Mr J McBride, Assistant Director, Transformation, Innovation & Performance Mrs R Mackin, Assistant Director, Corporate Planning and Policy Mr A Hay, Principal Planning Officer Mr C Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy Mrs U Mhic an tSaoir, Irish Language Development Officer Mr E McManus, Capital Projects Mrs E McParland, Democratic Services Manager Mrs C Taylor, Democratic Services Officer | |

SPR/53/2017

APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Bailie, Clarke, Ó'Múiri, Trainor, Mr L Hannaway and Mr E Curtis.

In response to a query from Councillor Burgess regarding Saintfield Community Centre, the Chairperson advised that the email circulated previously to Members prior to the February 2017 Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee meeting had been sent from the Saintfield Development Trust.

The Chairperson advised that Agenda Item 17 – Newry Civic Centre Progress Report – would now be taken in open session and not in exempt items.

SPR/54/2017 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

SPR/55/2017 ACTION SHEET OF THE STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16 FEBRUARY 2017

Read: Action Sheet of the Strategy, Policy and Resources (SPR) Committee Meeting held on 16 February 2017 (circulated).

SPR/192/2016 – Former Kindle Primary School – Business Case

In response to Councillor Sharvin's queries regarding the former Kindle Primary School, Mr Lipsett advised that the meeting with the Education Authority (EA) had taken place on 15 March 2016, at which the EA had made clear that they would not accept Council's proposal for the site to be transferred under the Community Asset Transfer at nil premium and they had asked Council to indicate if they would pursue purchase of the site for £65,000. Mr Lipsett also advised if there was a change in the valuation of the Kindle Primary School, he would bring this matter back to Committee.

AGREED: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Murnin, that Council purchase the former Kindle Primary School Site at the LPS valuation of £65,000.**

In response to Councillor Ruane's query, Mr Lipsett confirmed that the purchase price was budgeted for within the Capital Programme and he undertook to bring details back to the Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee in April 2017.

SPR/30/2017 – Saintfield Community Centre

Councillor Burgess requested an update on the Saintfield Community Centre, after which a lengthy discussion ensued.

Mr Lipsett advised that dates had been circulated for the meeting with the signatories on the letter, but a final date had not yet been confirmed.

Councillor Brown asked that all of the Rowallane DEA Councillors be invited to the meeting with the Trust, and also that any other relevant individuals that officers needed to meet with, also be invited to the meeting.

Councillors expressed disappointment that the hockey pitch would not be started by May 2017 and therefore not ready for the new season in September. Mr Lipsett advised that the previous action was to meet with signatories on the letter first to ascertain exactly what was required. He said there was no issue with the hockey pitch being built first as the pitch and the drainage were already in place, but he was to meet with signatories first, and the pitch would not be completed for this season

as a business case was required to show that the hockey club could generate enough income to replenish the playing surface in 10 years' time.

Councillor Andrews said it was important the Rowallane Councillors were on board with this project every step of the way. He referred to the Community Trust, saying there were no nominations to this group as yet, but asked that representation be investigated on this group.

AGREED: It was agreed that Rowallane DEA Councillors and any other interested parties would also be invited to the meeting with the Trust.

AGREED: It was further agreed that representation on the Community Trust would be investigated.

AGREED: The Action Sheet of the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee held on 16 February 2017 was agreed.

SPR/56/2017 **REPORT OF NARROW WATER STAKEHOLDER GROUP MEETING HELD ON 20 FEBRUARY 2017**

Read: Minutes of the Narrow Water Stakeholder Group Meeting held on 20 February 2017 (circulated).

In response to concerns from Councillor Byrne regarding pedestrian and cycle routes being unnecessary for the bridge, Mrs Ward advised that the cycling and pedestrian option had been raised at a previous Narrow Water Stakeholder Group meeting where strong opinions had been voiced regarding pedestrian routes. She confirmed there was a commitment to deliver on the bridge, that various options on how the bridge could operate in the future were being explored and that it was being looked at in the context of the Southern Relief Road, and not particularly with Brexit in mind.

Councillor Walker concurred with Councillor Byrne that vehicular access was required and that the project needed to progress irrespective of cost.

AGREED: The Minutes of the Narrow Water Stakeholder Group Meeting held on 20 February 2017 were agreed on the proposal of Councillor Carr, seconded by Councillor Walker.

SPR/57/2017 **MINUTES OF THE STRATEGIC PROJECTS WORKING GROUP HELD ON 20 DECEMBER 2016**

Read: Minutes of the Strategic Projects Working Group held on 28 February 2017 (circulated).

Councillor Byrne said it was important that Council carefully managed the narrative regarding the assets strategy alongside information in relation to the Newry Civic Centre as a short, medium and long term assets portfolio was compiled.

AGREED: The Minutes of the Strategic Projects Working Group held on 28 February 2017 were agreed on the proposal of Councillor Murnin, seconded by Councillor Enright.

PERFORMANCE

SPR/58/2017 PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2017-18

Read: Report from Mr J McBride, dated 16 March 2017, regarding Performance Improvement Objectives 2017-18 (copy circulated)

Councillor Enright expressed concerns that the strategic objectives relating to the performance improvement proposal were not measurable nor had identifiable outcomes. He also expressed concerns that the Management Accounts had not been presented to the Committee in March.

In response, Mr McBride confirmed there were specified actions and targets provided within the Draft Performance Improvement Plan.

Mrs Carville confirmed the Management Accounts were not brought to committee on a monthly basis, but would be brought to the April committee meeting.

In response to queries from Councillor Sharvin, Mr McBride advised the quality of the refuse collection could be looked into with the Regulatory & Technical Services Department. He also confirmed that the number of jobs created was a target established by DETI through the Business Start Up Programme and related to this year, and the 34% increase in participation levels was a target contained within the Indoor Leisure Business Plan previously agreed by Council.

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Doran, that agreement be given to:

- The draft performance improvement objectives 2017-18, and supporting actions and measures, including authorisation to proceed with an 8 week public consultation from 24 March – 19 May 2017.
- The proposed approach and timetable for publishing the Performance Improvement Plan 2017-18, by 30 June 2017.

AGREED: It was further agreed that a performance measure for refuse collection would be explored with the Regulatory and Technical Services Department.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

SPR/59/2017 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN: PREPARATORY STUDIES – PAPER 10: OPEN SPACE, RECREATION AND LEISURE

Read: Report from Mr A Hay, Principal Planning Officer dated 16 March 2017 regarding Local Development Plan: Preparatory Studies – Paper 10: Open Space, Recreation and Leisure (copy circulated).

In response to concerns raised by Councillor Byrne regarding the deficit in areas of active recreation, Mr Hay advised that the paper reported the open space provision as calculated in the two legacy area plans, he accepted that there were discrepancies between the two plans in terms of the methodologies used. He said that this issue will be addressed in the new plan, advising that the provision of areas of active open space plan would be informed by the Council's Sports Strategy and the application of the latest accepted methodologies used in the assessment of open space provision, which would applied across the District as a whole. Mr Hay further advised that the referenced 2.4 hectares/1000 population in the paper was a national recognised standard for open space provision.

Mr Hay also confirmed that when all education pitches were included in the open space calculations there was no deficit in terms of existing and future needs provision, although there was an issue regarding the access and use of school pitches and facilities which were lying vacant a lot of the time. In reference to community use of school facilities, he advised that this issue could be addressed by the Council through the Community Planning Thematic Working Groups.

Councillor Byrne expressed concerns that the figures illustrated that the Newry end of the District was closer to having all of the pitches and facilities it needed and the Down end of the District only had 50% of the facilities required, which was not the case. He said many of the facilities in the legacy Newry district, were subject to restrictions on usage and therefore not available as public facilities and this should be reflected in the figures. Mr Hay acknowledged that there was a difference between the two legacy plans in terms of the accounting of active open space, with the plan for the Down end only including Council owned land and facilities, whilst the plan for the Newry end also included those under the ownership of others. He advised that this issue could be addressed, and that further work would be undertaken within the paper to help clarify this accounting discrepancy so that the information provided for each legacy area was more directly comparable.

In response to Councillor D McAteer's concerns regarding the number of cycle ways, Mr Hay confirmed that the cycle network map detailed the existing provision and that any new cycle ways would be accommodated as they came on board.

Mr Hay advised that the findings in the paper was an audit of the existing provision which would inform the first formal paper in the Local Development Plan process, which would then go out to public consultation, where options would start to be considered in addressing issues. He advised that regard would be given to how best to present, deliver, and communicate information throughout the plan process.

AGREED: It was agreed to note the contents of the report.

SPR/60/2017

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN – PREPARATORY STUDIES –
PAPER 12 (PART 1): COUNTRYSIDE – LANDSCAPE
CHARACTER ASSESSMENT**

Read: Report from Mr A Hay, Principal Planning Officer dated 16 March 2017 regarding Local Development Plan: Preparatory Studies – Paper 12 (Part 1): Countryside – Landscape Character Assessment (copy circulated).

In response to concerns from Councillor Carr regarding Warrenpoint and Burren being coupled together, Mr Hay advised that this was a legacy issue and the towns had been referred to together in previous plans, but that he would take the concerns on board.

In response to Councillor D McAteer's concerns regarding 9.11 – where significant concern had been expressed by many about the development trends and enhanced pressures being exerted on the countryside – Mr Hay confirmed that Part 2 of the Countryside paper which would cover rural pressure analysis, would be brought to Committee in April and it would contain more information on how some areas in the countryside had been impacted on by development/houses.

AGREED: It was agreed to note the contents of the report.

CORPORATE SERVICES

SPR/61/2017

COUNCILLORS ALLOWANCES

Read: Correspondence received from the Department for Communities dated 15 February 2017, regarding Consolidated Allowances Circular – Updated February 2017 (copy circulated).

Councillor Andrews expressed concerns that Councillors did not receive enough remuneration for their work.

AGREED: It was agreed to note the Correspondence received from the Department for Communities dated 15 February 2017 regarding Consolidated Allowances Circular – Updated February 2017.

COMMUNICATION

SPR/62/2017

REPORT ON DRAFT IRISH LANGUAGE STRATEGY 2017-2019

Read: Report from Mrs R Mackin, Assistant Director Corporate Planning and Policy, dated 16 March 2017 regarding Draft Irish Language Strategy 2017-2019 (copy circulated).

Councillor Enright raised concerns regarding the recommendation at the Irish Language Strategy Cross Party Working Group held on 23 February 2017, which

stated : *“To consider establishing and including a financial assistance funding stream for the Irish Language sector within the Strategy. Given Council has not allocated this funding within the 2017-18 financial year, should Council be minded to establish said funding stream for 2018 – 2019 this will require a robust business case”.*

Councillor Enright said it had been raised by Councillor Bailie on a number of occasions and previously agreed at Council that there should be an Irish Language group specific budget of £50,000.

Councillor Enright referred to the legacy Councils’ relationship with the Tourist Board NI in relation to signage, asking where was Council’s relationship with third party organisations in relation to losing funding due to the bi lingual policy.

In response to Councillor Enright, Mr Moffett advised he was not aware of a recommendation coming from Council to ring-fence £50,000 for Irish Language Groups, but that there were 9 financial assistance schemes which groups could apply to which was to be further discussed at the next Irish Language Strategy Cross Party Working Group.

Mrs Carville advised there was no additional £50,000 funding stream within the 2017-18 budget for this.

Councillor Sharvin said Councillor Bailie’s proposal had related to an Irish School which had received a lower amount of funding than they had previously been awarded.

Councillor Sharvin said that there was nothing to prevent Irish Language groups applying for funding. He said it could be considered an equality issue if Irish Language groups had their own stream of funding created.

Councillor Walker said all groups had a right to apply for financial assistance, not just Irish Language Groups and to set aside £50,000 for Irish Language groups would be discriminatory, and he did not agree with the proposal.

In response to a query from Councillor Sharvin, Mrs Mackin advised there had been 3 members of staff in the Irish Language Unit in the Newry & Mourne legacy Council and there were 3 members of staff in the new council, covering a wider area.

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Doran, that the Draft Irish Language Strategy 2017-2019, be approved.

SPR/63/2017 **UPDATED TERMS OF REFERENCE – IRISH LANGUAGE STRATEGY CROSS PARTY WORKING GROUP**

Read: Report from Mrs R Mackin, Assistant Director Corporate Planning and Policy, dated 16 March 2017 regarding Updated Terms of Reference – Irish Language Strategy Cross Party Working Group (copy circulated).

Councillor Brown said that as the 2 places available on the working group had not been taken up by unionist members, he would like to propose a representative from the Alliance Party.

Councillors Andrews and Walker said the representation from the Alliance Party was included within Independents and Smaller Parties.

Councillor Brown proposed a member of the Alliance Party should sit on the Irish Language Strategy Cross Party Working Group as well as representation from the Independents and Smaller Parties. This was seconded by Councillor Ruane, who added that the matter be put back to the working group for discussion.

Councillor Walker voiced his opposition.

Councillor Brown's proposal was put to a vote, the results of which were as follows:

FOR: 9
AGAINST: 1
ABSTENTIONS: 0

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Brown, seconded by Councillor Ruane, that the issue of a member of the Alliance Party sitting on the Irish Language Cross Party Working Group separately from the representation from Independents and Smaller Parties would be further discussed at the next working group meeting.

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Andrews seconded by Councillor Doran, that the updated Terms of Reference for the Irish Language Strategy Cross Party Working Group be accepted.

SPR/64/2017 **REPORT ON REQUESTS REGARDING PLANTING OF A TREE AND TO LOCATE A PARK BENCH**

Read: Report from Mrs D Carville, Director Corporate Services, dated 16 March 2017 regarding requests regarding Planting of a Tree and to locate a Park Bench (copy circulated).

Councillor Byrne said that whilst he understood the sensitivities around the requests, such issues should not be judged by Members, and instead should be dealt with by officers as per the Council policy. Councillor Ruane seconded this proposal.

AGREED: That requests relating to memorialising a deceased person would be dealt with in future as per Council's policy.

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Ruane, that the requests relating to the memorialising deceased persons contained in Officer's Report dated 16 March 2017, be refused.

SPR/65/2017 **REPORT ON UPDATED POLICY ON NAMING FACILITIES AND GUIDELINES AND ASSOCIATED PROCEDURE FOR (RE) NAMING OF FACILITIES**

Read: Report from Mrs R Mackin, Assistant Director Corporate Planning and Policy, dated 16 March 2017 regarding Updated Policy on Naming Facilities and Guidelines and associated procedure in relation to (re)naming of facilities (copy circulated)

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Doran, seconded by Councillor Byrne, to approve:

- The Updated Policy on Naming Council facilities
- The Updated Guidelines and associated procedure in relation to (re) naming of facilities.
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FOR CONSIDERATION AND/OR DECISION

SPR/66/2017 **BREXIT UPDATE**

Read: Report from Mr L Hannaway, Chief Executive, dated 16 March 2017 regarding Brexit update (copy circulated)

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, to note Council's engagement on the impact of Brexit and agree to:

- Newry, Mourne and Down DC (NMDDC) along with the East Border Region Committee (EBR) continue to lead on this work.
- NMDDC work in partnership with all the Local Authorities along the Border Corridor North and South to develop a clearer understanding on Brexit and its implications for key sectors and an agreed action plan on how to address these issues. This will not preclude any Council from progressing specific initiatives for their area if they are not common to the entire region (ie fishing – key sector in our area but not for all the Councils on the Border Corridor).
- The Group of Councils along the Border Corridor (covering each of the 3 Border networks ie EBR, ICBAN & NW), will organise a seminar for Elected Members & Chambers of Commerce, etc to learn more of the detail from the research and discuss possible actions. This will involve Governments on both sides of the Border.

SPR/67/2017 **CULLOVILLE DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION – SUPPLEMENTAL CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENT**

Read: Report from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director Corporate Services (Administration), dated 16 March 2017, regarding Culloville Development Association – Supplemental Contribution Agreement (copy circulated).

Councillor Sharvin voiced concern that Council were not treating all such cases consistently and urged caution regarding setting a precedent for Council to pay legal fees in similar cases, advising that Council would need to ensure charges had been registered.

Mrs Carville undertook to investigate Councillor Sharvin's comments further upon receipt of further information.

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Carr, seconded by Councillor Byrne, to approve the necessary legal formalities to secure a Charge relating to the Supplemental Contribution Agreement, subject to Culloville Development Association obtaining GAA approval.

SPR/68/2017 CREDIT CARD POLICY

Read: Report from Mrs D Carville, Director Corporate Services, dated 16 March 2017 regarding NMDDC Credit Card Policy (copy circulated)

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Carr, seconded by Councillor Walker, to approve the new policy in relation to Credit Card usage within the Council.

SPR/69/2017 NEWRY CIVIC CENTRE PROGRESS REPORT

Read: Report from Mrs M Ward, Director of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism, dated 16 March 2017 regarding Newry Civic Centre Progress Report (copy circulated).

Members asked questions regarding the progress of the Newry Civic Centre, which were answered by Mrs Ward as follows:

- The Strategic Projects Working Group which had previously been set up by Council, would be overseeing the project.
- There were a number of preferred sites for the civic centre. A wider call for sites would be progressed to see what further opportunity was on the market.
- It was important that the civic centre would be city centre located as it was a regeneration project to enable growth and development in Newry.
- The reason the Albert Basin site was ruled out was due to access issues, it was not located on a flood plain.
- It was envisaged that works would begin on the civic centre in 2019.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, to approve the following recommendations:

- 1. The Council approve the procurement route as set out for the delivery of the Civic Centre.**
- 2. The Council approve the criteria for location of the Civic Centre.**
- 3. The Council approve in principle the appointment of Deloitte through the Consultancy One Framework to ensure continuity of service and to benefit from Deloitte's experience of delivering similar projects in other major cities. This will be subject to a value for money determination working with Strategic Investment Board.**

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

SPR/70/2017

EXTERNAL WORKS AT NEWRY LEISURE CENTRE

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on this matter which related to exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information).

Read: Report from Mr E McManus, Estates/Capital Projects, dated 16 March 2017 regarding External Works at Newry Leisure Centre (copy circulated).

In response to a query from Councillor Carr, Mr McManus undertook to clarify the number of disabled parking places allocated at the Newry Leisure Centre.

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

Agreed: When the Committee came out of closed session, the Chairperson advised that it had been agreed on the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Andrews to note the content of the Officer's Report and to approve the following recommendations as detailed in Section 3.1 of the Report:

1. To carry out works at the entrance to the Newry Leisure Centre Complex from Clanrye Avenue as per the proposals, at an estimated cost as detailed in the Report.
2. To carry out paving works at the front of the vehicular entrance on the east side of the Phase 2 building at the cost detailed in the Report.
3. To alter the position of the 6 car parking spaces at the rear of the Phase 2 building at the cost detailed in the Report.
4. To seek agreement with Transport NI on financial arrangements whereby Transport NI would carry out a road improvement scheme in Cecil Street, Newry before Phase 2 of the Leisure Centre opens to the public – subject to the Council making a financial contribution to the scheme based on 50% of the cost; the estimated cost being as detailed in the Report.

Noted budget provision has been made in the 2017/2018 Capital Rates programme for such works.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 7.20pm.

For consideration at the Council Meeting to be held on 3 April 2017

Signed: **Councillor Patrick Brown**
Chairperson

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