

September 8th, 2026

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Monday, 14th September 2026** at **6:00 pm** in **Boardroom, Warrenpoint Town Hall, Warrenpoint.**

Committee Membership 2026-27

Councillor K Feehan **Chairperson**

Councillor S Murphy **Deputy Chairperson**

Councillor T Andrews

Councillor W Clarke

Councillor C Galbraith

Councillor O Hanlon

Councillor G Hanna

Councillor G Kearns

Councillor D Lee-Surginor

Councillor N Lawlor

Councillor A Lewis

Councillor A Quinn

Councillor M Ruane

Councillor J Tinnelly

Councillor H Young

Agenda

1.0 Apologies and Chairperson's Remarks

2.0 Declarations of Interest

3.0 Action Sheet arising from Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Meeting held 10 August 2026

Attachment: ERT Action Sheet - Aug 2026 inc. historic actions .pdf

Page 1

For Discussion/Decision

4.0 Mourne Gullion Landscape Connections Project – Baseline Survey

For Decision

Attachment: ERT Report - Mourne Gullion Landscape Connections Project.pdf

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Exempt Appendices

4.1 Appendix - Mourne Gullion Landscape Connections Project – Baseline Survey

For Information

This item is deemed to be exempt under 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) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

Attachment: Appx 1 - Mourne Gullion Landscape Connections Business Case (restricted).pdf

Not included

For Discussion/Decision

5.0 Night Time Economy

For Decision

Attachment: ERT Report - Night Time Economy.pdf

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6.0 Ring of Gullion Landscape Partnership Scheme

For Decision

Attachment: ERT Report - ROG Legacy phase Heritage Festival.pdf

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Exempt Appendices

6.1 Appendix - Ring of Gullion Landscape Partnership Scheme

For Information

This item is deemed to be exempt under 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) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

Attachment: Appx 1 - ROG Legacy phase Heritage Festival (restricted).pdf

Not included

Items deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014

7.0 Financial Assistance: Call 1 2027/28

For Decision

This item is deemed to be exempt under 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) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

Attachment: ERT Report - Financial Assistance Call 1 2027-28.pdf

Not included

For Noting

8.0 Bathing Waters Consultation

For Information

Attachment: ERT Report - Consultation on the Bathing Water Review for Northern Ireland.pdf

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Attachment: Appendix 1 - Bathing Waters Consultation Response.pdf

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9.0 Harbours Bill

For Information

Attachment: ERT Report - Consultation on the Harbours Bill.pdf

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Attachment: Appendix 1 - Harbours Bill Consultation.pdf

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10.0 NMD Museums Quarterly Update

For Information

Attachment: ERT Report - NMD Museums Quarterly Update.pdf

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ACTION SHEET - ECONOMY, REGENERATION & TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING –**MONDAY 10 AUGUST 2026**

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
ERT/075/2026	Action Sheet of ERT Meeting held 8 June 2026	It was agreed to note the action sheet	C Mallon	Noted	Y
ERT/076/2026	PEACEPLUS	the following was agreed: • To note the minutes of PEACEPLUS Partnership on 30 July 2026. • To note that an application for additional funding for delivery of summer programmes had been submitted. • Approve the following business cases and commencement of procurement based on same: • 3.2 Children's Language Scheme (one district wide project). • 3.2 Learn the Language of your Neighbour (one district wide project).	A Smyth	In progress	Y
ERT/077/2026	RING OF GULLION LPS LEGACY PROJECTS	it was agreed to approve the issue of Service Level Agreements (SLA) for the delivery of three Ring of Gullion Landscape Partnership Legacy phase projects as set out in section 2 of the officers' report.	A Smyth	In progress	Y
ERT/078/2026	BRCD ANNUAL REPORT	it was agreed to approve the BRCD Annual Report 2025/26	A Smyth	In progress	Y

ERT/079/2026	FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE CALL 1.1 & 2	the following was agreed: - To issue Letters of Offer to projects as per Council Policy to the groups recommended for the award of funding within the budget allocation for each theme. - To agree that Pre-Letters of Offer conditions are to be met prior to issue of full Letter of Offer and where conditions are not satisfied, the budget will be reallocated to score and rank list if applicable. - To issue a Letter of Offer under Community Events and Festivals theme following consideration of appeals. - To proceed at risk to award funding under the Community Events and Festivals theme, to enable groups to deliver upon the objectives outlined in their applications.	A Smyth	In progress	Y
ERT/080/2026	NEWRY CHAMBER MUSIC	the following was agreed: - To issue a Letter of Offer to Newry Chamber Music for the delivery of an Ensemble in Residence programme. - To issue a Letter of Offer to Newry Chamber Music for the co-ordination of two Professional Music Performances: Irish Doctors Choir and the Fews Ensemble and Christmas Miscellany.	A Smyth	In progress	Y
ERT/081/2026	ST PATRICKS DAY 2026/27	the following was agreed: - To approve SLAs to the organisations named in the report to deliver schools engagement and enhanced float and parade content for Downpatrick and Newry St Patricks Day 2027 events. - To approve a pilot financial assistance call for community groups and businesses for the provision of St Patricks Day fringe activities.	A Smyth	In progress	Y
ERT/082/2026	STRANGFORD & LECALE LANDSCAPE CONNECTIONS	the following was agreed: - To note that an application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for the Strangford and Lecale Landscape Connections project has been successful for the initial development phase. - To approve an additional match funding commitment for the Development Phase of the Strangford and Lecale Landscape Connections project , to be used only if external funding is not secured.	A Smyth	In progress	Y

ERT/083/2026	GO SUCCEED UPDATE	it was agreed to note the update on Go Succeed funding and future planning.	A Smyth	In progress	Y
ERT/084/2026	NEWRY BID	it was agreed to note the quarter one update from Newry BID on delivery performance against BID Strategic Priorities 2026-2031.	A Smyth	Completed	Y
ERT/085/2026	LOCAL GROWTH FUND CONSULTATION RESPONSES	it was agreed to note Council's consultation response to Local Growth Fund.	A Smyth	Completed	Y

Report to:	Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday 14 th September 2026
Subject:	Baseline surveys for Mourne Gullion Landscape Connections project
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Amanda Smyth, Assistant Director – Economy, Growth & Tourism
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Aveen McVeigh, Head of Regeneration and Business Development

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

For decision	x	For noting only	
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1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	<u>Purpose</u> To approve the recommendations in 3.1 of this report. <u>Background</u> The Mourne Gullion Landscape Connections project is being delivered through a partnership comprising the National Trust, as lead partner, Mourne Heritage Trust, NI Water and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council. The project has received grant notification and permission to start from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, together with funding from DAERA, enabling the Development Phase to proceed.
2.0	Key issues
2.1	The Mourne Gullion Landscape Connections project covers approximately 181,115 acres across the Mourne and Ring of Gullion Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). Working with landowners, communities and other stakeholders, the project will deliver practical and strategic interventions to support nature recovery, reconnect people with the area's natural and cultural heritage, promote sustainable landscape management and strengthen climate resilience. As part of the project, baseline ecological surveys are required to establish the current extent and condition of habitats across the project area. The surveys will provide a robust evidence base to ensure future interventions are appropriately targeted, support improved ecological outcomes and enable the impact of the project to be effectively measured and demonstrated. The surveys will also fulfil a key project commitment, support future monitoring and reporting requirements, and strengthen the evidence base for an application to The National Lottery Heritage Fund for Delivery Phase funding.

	Council is responsible for managing the procurement process on behalf of the partnership, in accordance with funder requirements and Council procurement procedures. Business case approval is therefore required to progress the procurement of the baseline surveys, which represent a key first stage in project delivery.
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	It is recommended to approve the business case outlined in Appendix 1, for Baseline surveys for Mourne Gullion Landscape Connections project
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	The baseline surveys are 100% funded through The National Lottery Heritage Fund and DAERA Environment Fund.
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i> It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations ☒
5.2	<i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i> Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following: The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened ☐ The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation ☐
5.3	<i>Proposal initiating consultation</i> 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 ☐

	Consultation period will be 12 weeks ☐ Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) ☐ Rationale:
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)
6.1	Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following: Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed ☐
7.0	Appendices
	This item is deemed to be exempt under 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) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business: Appendix 1 – Business case
8.0	Background Documents
	N/A

Report to:	Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday 14 th September 2026
Subject:	Nighttime economy / Evening Living
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Amanda Smyth, Assistant Director – Economy, Growth & Tourism
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Aveen McVeigh, Head of Regeneration and Business Development

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

For decision	x	For noting only	
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1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	<u>Purpose</u> To approve the recommendations in 3.1 of this report. <u>Background</u> At the ERT Committee meeting on 20 April 2026, Members considered a Notice of Motion relating to the night-time economy and agreed the following actions: • To engage with Downpatrick Regeneration Working Group (DRWG) to host an engagement event with local businesses and relevant agencies to scope an action plan for the development of Downpatrick's night-time economy, looking at all aspects of economic growth in Downpatrick to enhance foot flow and visitor experience and promote Downpatrick as a positive place to visit, shop, dine, and stay. • Officers to engage with Belfast City Council to develop proposals for a Purple Flag accreditation application for Downpatrick, Newry and Newcastle. • It was also agreed that the Council hosts an engagement event with local businesses and relevant agencies in Newry and Newcastle to scope an action plan for the development of their nighttime economy.
2.0	Key issues
2.1	Officers met with DRWG and committed to undertaking an initial scoping study of Downpatrick's evening economy. Officers subsequently extended the scope to include Newcastle and Newry and undertook a baseline assessment of the evening economy identifying existing businesses, services and activities and establishing an initial evidence base to inform further work.

	Officers have undertaken engagement and benchmarking with a range of organisations with direct experience of developing, managing and delivering evening and night-time economy initiatives and Purple Flag accreditation, including: • Belfast City Council: to understand Belfast’s strategic approach to the evening and night-time economy and its experience of Purple Flag, including the role of Belfast BIDs in managing the accreditation. • City Centre Initiative Derry/Londonderry (CCI): which leads the city’s Purple Flag accreditation, providing practical insight into the governance, partnership structures, resource requirements and operational arrangements needed to secure and maintain accreditation. • Ashby de la Zouch Town Council: to understand how the Purple Flag model can be successfully applied in a smaller town context. Ashby de la Zouch, with a population of approximately 17,620, is currently the smallest settlement to hold Purple Flag accreditation. • Association of Town & City Management (ATCM): the organisation responsible for managing the Purple Flag accreditation programme, to gain direct insight into the accreditation requirements, assessment process and expectations for partnership working and ongoing delivery.
2.2	<u>Next Steps</u> A vibrant evening economy can make an important contribution to the economic vitality of town centres by extending footfall and activity beyond traditional daytime hours, supporting existing businesses, creating opportunities for new enterprise and employment, and enhancing the overall attractiveness and vitality of places. This direct engagement, wider benchmarking and local scoping work provides a strong baseline and evidence base from which to progress the development of an Evening Living Economy Action Plan. It is proposed to build on the research and scoping already undertaken by officers and engage with DRWG, NRWG, Newry BID and chambers of commerce within the district to develop recommendations for actions through the new Enterprise and Regeneration Strategy that will be developed over the coming months (subject to procurement).
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	To engage with Downpatrick Regeneration Working Group, Newry Regeneration Working Group, Newry BID and Chambers of Commerce within the district to develop recommendations for a nighttime economy action plan through the new Enterprise and Regeneration Strategy.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	N/A

5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i> It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations ☒
5.2	<i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i> Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following: The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened ☐ The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation ☐
5.3	<i>Proposal initiating consultation</i> 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 ☐ Consultation period will be 12 weeks ☐ Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) ☐ <i>Rationale:</i>
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)
6.1	Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following:

	Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed	☐
7.0	Appendices	
	n/a	
8.0	Background Documents	
	n/a	

Report to:	Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday 14 th September 2026
Subject:	Ring of Gullion Landscape Partnership Scheme - Legacy phase project – Heritage Festival
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Amanda Smyth, Assistant Director – Economy, Growth & Tourism
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Aveen McVeigh, Head of Regeneration and Business Development Darren Rice, AONB and Geopark Manager

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

For decision	x	For noting only	
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1.0	Purpose and Background
	<u>Purpose</u> To approve the recommendation set out in Section 3.1 <u>Background</u> The Ring of Gullion Landscape Partnership was delivered between 2014 and 2018 with support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund and a range of other funders. To secure the long-term legacy of the partnership a 10-year Legacy Plan, together with an associated budget, was approved by The National Lottery Heritage Fund for the period 2019–2029. The Landscape Partnership Scheme and the 10-year Legacy Phase is coordinated by the Ring of Gullion Landscape Partnership. The Partnership operates under its own governance arrangements detailed in the Ring of Gullion Landscape Partnership Terms of Reference.
2.0	Key issues
2.1	<u>Ring of Gullion Heritage Festival</u> The Ring of Gullion Heritage Festival, formerly the Ring of Gullion Lúnasa Festival, is a legacy project of the Ring of Gullion Landscape Partnership Scheme. The festival was established during the Scheme's Delivery Phase to celebrate and promote the area's cultural, natural, geological and built heritage through a programme of community-led events and experiences. The Ring of Gullion Landscape Partnership Legacy Plan includes provision to support the continued delivery of the festival until March 2029, or until the available legacy funding is fully utilised. The festival programme is developed through the Ring of Gullion Festival Working Group, which includes representatives from heritage and cultural organisations,

2.2	tourism providers, traditional music, farming and rural interests, tour guides and heritage ambassadors, community organisations and festival/event specialists. <u>Outcomes of the Festival</u> The festival aims to: • celebrate and promote the cultural, natural, geological and built heritage of the Ring of Gullion; • support community-led festival development; • involve local organisations, businesses and heritage practitioners in delivery; • ensure appropriate governance and accountability for public funding; • build local capacity; and • support the long-term sustainability of the festival in accordance with the Legacy Plan.
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	To approve issuing Service Level Agreement (SLA) for the delivery Ring of Gullion Heritage Festival Landscape Partnership Legacy phase project as set out in section 2 of this report.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	The required budgets are available within existing Ring of Gullion Landscape Partnership Scheme Legacy budgets at 100% funding.
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i> It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations ☒
5.2	<i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i> Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following: The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened ☐

	The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation	☐
5.3	<i>Proposal initiating consultation</i> 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 Consultation period will be 12 weeks Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <i>Rationale:</i>	☐ ☐ ☐
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)	
6.1	Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following: Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed	☐
7.0	Appendices	
	This item is deemed to be exempt under 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) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business: Appendix 1: SLA – Ring of Gillion - Legacy phase Ring of Gullion Heritage Festival	
8.0	Background Documents	
	n/a	

Report to:	Economy Regeneration & Tourism Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday 14 th September 2026
Subject:	Consultation Response on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Amanda Smyth, Assistant Director Economy Growth & Tourism
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Michelle Boyle, Head of Tourism Development and Visitor Experience

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

For decision	For noting only	x
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1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	Purpose To note recommendation in Section 3 Background DAERA sought views on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland
2.0	Key issues
2.1	The Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland consultation document sought views on eight policy proposals: • How information is communicated to bathing water users • Length of the bathing season • Bathing water monitoring • Criteria for identification of bathing waters • Monitoring of candidate sites • Removal of automatic de-identification • Ensuring monitored locations match usage
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	To note the consultation response submitted by the deadline of 21 August 2026
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	N/A

5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i> It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations ☒
6.0	Appendices
	Consultation response
7.0	Background Documents
	None

Appendix 1

Summary Response to consultation (7 questions)

1) How information is communicated to bathing water users

Current position

Bathing water operators are required to display public information during the bathing season in an easily accessible location near identified bathing waters. This is typically provided through a bathing water poster displayed on a site information board.

DAERA is also required to disseminate bathing water information actively and promptly using appropriate media and technologies. In July 2025, DAERA launched an interactive Bathing Water Quality Dashboard, bringing together information for all 33 identified bathing waters in Northern Ireland on a single online platform.

Information is currently communicated via an online dashboard and a Traffic Light system works well

DAERA and bathing water operators are exploring options to improve how information is made available. It has been proposed that new signage could include a Quick Response (QR) code linking users directly to online water quality information, consistent with approaches used elsewhere in the UK.

Have you used the DAERA Bathing Water Quality Dashboard to make informed decisions about where and when to swim at identified bathing waters?

If yes, did you find the dashboard easy to use and understand? Please include any suggestions for how this could be further improved

The Council agrees the Dashboard is beneficial, the map can easily be enlarged to select a location you are interested in

The QR code on posters works well in providing a quick link and the posters continue to be the preferred method of communication

2) Length of the bathing season

The current bathing season runs from 1 June to 15 September which aligns with that currently operating in Ireland and Scotland. England and Wales have a longer bathing season running from 15 May to 30 September. DAERA is exploring the potential for a more flexible approach to bathing season length, whereby different sites could have different season durations.

[It is recommended this is extended from 01 April – 31 October to support the increased interest in open water swimming.](#)

[It is further recommended testing in waters that are used over the winter period maybe useful. For waters that experience poor quality/algae - year round testing may provide data that can inform actions to improve water quality.](#)

3) Bathing Water Monitoring

The Department is seeking your views on the potential to move towards a risk-based approach to bathing water monitoring.

Current approach

At present, DAERA monitors all identified bathing waters on twenty occasions during each bathing season. This approach ensures a robust dataset for classification purposes and public health protection.

Proposed approach

Evidence indicates that the current level of sampling may not be necessary to adequately assess water quality at all sites, particularly those that have demonstrated long-term stability and consistently high-quality classification results.

The Department is therefore seeking your views on whether monitoring could move towards a risk-based sampling model, whereby stable, consistently 'Excellent' bathing waters are monitored less frequently, but no less than the minimum legal requirement of one sample per month.

[The Council recommends in sites which are consistently excellent reducing the amount of sampling would seem reasonable if the resource can be used to extend the season & incorporate testing for new bathing waters.](#)

4) Criteria for identification of bathing waters

Sites nominated for consideration as bathing waters are assessed through a staged evaluation process. Progression through this process depends on a number of factors, including whether there is a Bathing Water Operator willing to manage the site, whether the location is safe and accessible for monitoring, and whether there is sufficient evidence the site is used by a large number of bathers. The guide value used in Northern Ireland to define a “large” number of bathers at a site is 45 bathers on at least one occasion or 100 site users on at least two occasions.

The Council propose the assessment process should engage the operator on patterns of use and best time to survey to improve transparency & ability to adequately capture levels of recreational use.

The Council further propose the bathing water programme should be extended to include other recreational activities that involve whole-body contact such as diving, surfing, sailboarding, kiteboarding, whitewater canoeing (i.e. Camlough Lake, Castlewellan Lake)

5) Monitoring of candidate sites

DAERA is interested in views on whether the introduction of a more structured ‘pre-application’ or ‘candidate site’ stage would be a useful approach for managing bathing waters in the future. Under such an approach, selected sites could be monitored for a defined period before any decision is taken on formal identification.

The Council would welcome this approach as it provides the opportunity to determine if sufficient bathing water usage can be achieved prior to designating a site as a designated bathing water.

6) Removal of automatic de-identification

The Department is seeking views on whether poor-performing identified bathing water sites should be reviewed on an individual basis rather than being automatically de-identified after five years.

The Council propose that the automatic de identification of bathing waters after five consecutive years of ‘poor’ classification should be changed and it should be reviewed on a case by case basis.

7) Ensuring monitored locations match usage

DAERA are reviewing whether the current monitoring locations reflects where most people now enter the water and swim.

Current Position: The Department currently monitors 33 identified bathing water sites across Northern Ireland. Details of these sites and their monitoring locations are available at: see Annex A of the Consultation Document for Map of Identified Bathing Waters.

Proposal: We are therefore inviting respondents to review their local identified bathing water site and consider whether the current monitoring location reflects where most people now enter the water and swim

The Council suggest these locations at the designated bathing waters are most reflective of primary use.

Need to consider assessment and application of criteria. If criteria is 45 bathers on one day, engagement needs to take place with the operator around period of assessment, and opportunity for more than one assessment visit

- Need to consider measures to improve water quality for waters that receive below sufficient results.

Report to:	Economy Regeneration & Tourism Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday 14 th September 2026
Subject:	Consultation Response on the Harbours Bill
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Amanda Smyth, Assistant Director Economy Growth & Tourism
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Aveen McVeigh, Head of Regeneration and Business Development

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

For decision	For noting only	x
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1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	<u>Purpose</u> To note recommendation in Section 3 <u>Background</u> The Northern Ireland Assembly's Committee for Infrastructure has launched a Call for Evidence on the Harbours Bill and is inviting stakeholders and members of the public to share their views. The primary aim of the Harbours Bill is to modernise the legislative and governance framework for Northern Ireland's Trust Ports. The proposed changes are intended to support these autonomous statutory bodies to operate more efficiently, enhance their contribution to the regional economy, and address governance considerations arising from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) classification of Trust Ports, particularly in relation to borrowing and its interaction with departmental capital budgets.
2.0	Key issues
2.1	The Northern Ireland Assembly's Committee for Infrastructure is responsible for examining the provisions of the Bill and gathering evidence to inform its report to the Assembly. The Committee sought views on: • The objectives of the Bill • The detailed provisions within the Bill • The potential impacts and consequences of the proposals

	Any suggested amendments
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	To note the consultation response attached at appendix 1.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	N/A
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i> It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations ☒
6.0	Appendices
	Consultation response
7.0	Background Documents
	None

The Clerk to the Committee for Infrastructure
 Room 410 Parliament Buildings
 Stormont
 Belfast BT4 3XX
 By email: committee.infrastructure@niassembly.gov.uk
 FAO Clerk to the Committee

Harbours Bill (NIA Bill 37/22-27) — Call for Evidence: Submission on behalf of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Committee for Infrastructure’s call for evidence on the Harbours Bill. Warrenpoint Harbour is a significant economic asset and stakeholder within the Newry, Mourne and Down District.

Its future performance may contribute to:

- regional trade and connectivity;
- business competitiveness;
- employment;
- inward investment;
- supply-chain development;
- infrastructure investment; and
- the overall economic profile of the district.

Council understands that the Bill is intended to modernise the legislative and governance framework for Northern Ireland’s Trust Ports and to enable them to operate with greater independence.

The Bill does not appear to transfer any harbour functions, operational responsibilities or financial liabilities to Council.

Council therefore considers that the direct impact on Council is limited. The principal local interest arises from Warrenpoint Harbour’s significance to the district’s economy and its role as a major stakeholder within the area.

Clause 1: Limitation of power to initiate transfer of harbour authorities

Clause 1 would prevent the Department from using its existing power to initiate a privatisation scheme in relation to the four named Trust Ports, including Warrenpoint Harbour Authority.

Council notes that this provision would maintain Warrenpoint Harbour’s status as a Trust Port unless any future change was pursued through separate legislation.

Clause 2: Limitation of power to issue directions to harbour authorities

Clause 2 would remove the Department for Infrastructure's power to give directions to the named Trust Ports in relation to the exercise of their functions.

Council notes that this is intended to reduce the level of government control over the Trust Ports and support reconsideration of their classification by the Office for National Statistics.

Clause 3: Power of harbour authorities to acquire businesses etc.

Clause 3 would replace references to "harbour operations" with the broader expression "activities relating to harbours". It would also remove the requirement for Ministerial consent before a harbour authority acquires a harbour business or shares in such a business.

Council notes that the provision may give Trust Ports greater flexibility to pursue commercial opportunities.

Clause 4: Power of harbour authorities to give harbour directions

Clause 4 would allow the appropriate Department, by order, to authorise a harbour authority to issue directions concerning ships within, entering or leaving its harbour.

Council notes that these powers relate primarily to the safe and efficient operation of the harbour and that consultation and publication requirements are included.

Clause 5: Purposes for which harbour orders may be made

Clause 5 would allow harbour orders to authorise the delegation of certain harbour-authority functions, subject to specified exceptions. It would also allow a harbour order to pursue an additional object where the Department considers that its achievement would be conducive to the efficient functioning of a harbour.

Council considers it appropriate that the Committee satisfies itself that the proposed changes provide a proportionate balance between operational independence, effective governance, financial sustainability and public accountability.

Report to:	Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday 14 th September 2026
Subject:	NMD Museums Quarterly Update Report (Q1 26/27 Apr-Jun)
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Amanda Smyth Assistant Director: Economy, Growth and Tourism
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Alan Freeburn Museum and Heritage Services Manager

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

For decision	☐	For noting only	☒
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1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	<u>Purpose</u> To note the update on the activities, programming and achievements of NMD Museums. <u>Background</u> NMD Museums consists of Down County Museum, Downpatrick and Newry and Mourne Museum, Newry. Together they provide a museum service for the whole of NMDDC
2.0	Key issues
2.1	<u>Newry and Mourne Museum (NMM)</u> <u>Exhibitions</u> • Installation of display of historic embroidered linen in Gallery 2. • Installation of <i>Saint Brigid and her Cloak - the Brat Bhríde</i> - in Gallery 1. This was created by Interwoven, a sub-group of the Dolmen's Climate Change Network, a community-led initiative in South-East County Down that brings people together through practical action, creativity, and shared learning to respond to climate change and care for the natural environment. <u>Notable Donations/Acquisitions</u> • Duncan donation, comprising a portrait of AC Duncan and an illuminated address presented to Samuel Duncan, along with education certificates, advertising prints, newspaper clippings, and letters, including a letter signed by Winston Churchill. Samuel Duncan owned part of Duncan, Alderdice Distillery in Newry. • Purchase of a 19th century oak alms box from the Convent of Mercy at auction.

2.2

Visitor Nos

Schools	73
Outreach	95
Other Groups/Events	392
General Visitors	2142
Total	2702

Events

- Easter activities
- Fixing Our Broken Planet launch and workshops
- PeacePlus funded workshops
 - Flowering in the Mournes
 - Newry Canal and Our Heritage
 - Castles and Towers

Down County Museum (DCM)

Exhibitions

- A new art gallery was opened with *INDUSTRIA: Art & Industry in Down* exhibition
- DCM held an exhibition, *The Art of Place*, at Down Arts Centre in June
- The showpiece temporary exhibition, *Partying Down in the 1980s* opened and this runs until Feb 2027.

Notable Donations/Acquisitions

- Donation of Ardnabannon House contents from Waterford County Museum
- Donation of Mabel Annesley woodcut by member of the public

Visitor Nos

Schools	166
Other Groups/Events	315
General Visitors	2524
Total	2600

Events

- Easter Activities
- Lecale and Down Historical Society Meetings
- PeacePlus funded Castles and Towers workshop

NMD Museums Misc.

- Both museums contribute regular historical articles to local press and publish blogs on the museum website
- The launch of DCMs *Partying Down in the 1980s* exhibition featured on BBC Radio Ulster, BBC News (online) and BBC Newsline (television)

	- Both museums have hosted a number of work experience students from local schools. - NMD Museums are part the Northern Ireland Museums and Heritage Consortium (NIMHC), led by National Museums NI, that was successful in applying to the Arts and Humanities Research Council's Collaborative Doctoral Landscape Award to develop, select and support doctoral projects that are co-created, jointly supervised, and aligned with the Consortium's four thematic strands of Peacebuilding, People & Place, Planet and Progression. The Consortium bring together museums, archives and galleries across Northern Ireland to strengthen doctoral research capacity, support high-quality collaborative PhD projects, and build a sustainable research culture across the region's cultural and heritage sector.
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	To note the update on the activities, programming and achievements of NMD Museums.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	N/A
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i> It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations ☐
5.2	<i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i> Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following: The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened ☐ The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation ☐

5.3	Proposal initiating consultation 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 ☐ Consultation period will be 12 weeks ☐ Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) ☐ <i>Rationale:</i>
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)
6.1	Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following: Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed ☐
7.0	Appendices
	n/a
8.0	Background Documents
	n/a