NEWRY MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday 12 October 2026 at 6.00pm in Boardroom, Warrenpoint Town Hall

Chairperson: Councillor K Feehan

Committee Members: Councillor G Hanna, Councillor G Kearns, Councillor D Lee-Surginor, Councillor J Tinnelly, Councillor H Young

Committee Members in attendance via Teams: Councillor W Clarke, Councillor C Galbraith, Councillor O Hanlon, Councillor N Lawlor, Councillor A Lewis

Officials in attendance: Mr C Mallon, Director, Economy, Regeneration and Tourism
Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director, Regeneration
Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director, Economy, Growth and Tourism
Mr C Smyth, Democratic Services Officer

Officials in attendance via Teams: Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer

ERT/096/2026: APOLOGIES / CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Andrews, S Murphy and Ruane.

The Chairperson advised that in an effort to be more transparent, many of the reports were tabled in open session while the appendices were in closed session. He asked that should Members have any questions regarding an appendix that they wait until the meeting was in closed session to raise any queries.

ERT/097/2026: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

ERT/098/2026: ACTION SHEET ECONOMY, REGENERATION & TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 14 SEPTEMBER 2026

Read: Action Sheet arising out of the Minutes of the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on 14 September 2026. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Kearns, seconded by Councillor Young, it was agreed to note the Action Sheet arising from the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on 14 September 2026.**

FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION

ERT/099/2026: **BRCD CONTRACTS FOR INNOVATION CHALLENGE FUND**

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism regarding BRCD Contracts for Innovation Challenge Fund. (Copy circulated)

Mrs Smyth advised that the Contracts for Innovation Grant Programme, delivered under the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD), invited Councils to identify operational challenges and provided an opportunity for private sector organisations to develop and present innovative solutions. She reported that the Council had successfully been appointed to lead the first challenge to be brought to market and that officers had worked closely with the BRCD team to develop the proposal.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Kearns, seconded by Councillor Young, it was agreed to approve, subject to securing the necessary approvals from the Belfast Region City Deal, the implementation of the Contracts for Innovation Challenge, including:**

- **The progression of all required legal agreements and procurement activities, including the use of the Competitive Flexible Procurement Procedure, to deliver the Innovation Challenge Fund; and**
- **The award of contracts to eligible and successful SMEs within the approved funding budget.**

ERT/100/2026: **LOCAL GROWTH FUNDING**

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism regarding Local Growth Funding – Department for Communities. **(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Smyth presented the report and advised that the Department for Communities (DfC) had secured funding opportunities for which the Council had submitted four applications, as outlined in Section 2 of the report. She reported that the applications comprised a Commercial Property

Grant Scheme; a Revive and Reimagine Property Façade Grant Scheme for Downpatrick; enhanced public realm and landscaping works in Downpatrick (Grove area); and enhancement works along the Newry Greenway and towpath. Mrs Smyth noted that the relevant business cases were attached at Appendix 1.

In response to a query from Councillor Hanlon regarding whether works, such as landscaping within The Grove area of Downpatrick, would be undertaken by external contractors or managed by the Council's in-house landscaping teams, and whether the funding would be ringfenced and not used for general maintenance, Mr Mallon confirmed that the works would be managed in-house and that general maintenance was funded through a separate budget.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Kearns, it was agreed to note the submission of applications to DfC and approve, subject to Letter of Offer, implementation of the projects outlined in section 2 of the officers' report.**

ERT/101/2026: **MOURNE GULLION LANDSCAPE CONNECTIONS PROJECT**

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism regarding Mourne Gullion Landscape Connections Project. **(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Smyth outlined the report, which sought approval of the business case detailed at Appendix 1. She advised that the Mourne Gullion Landscape Connections Project was a partnership between the National Trust, the Council, Mourne Heritage Trust and NI Water. She reported that a recent funding application had been approved and had secured £1.1 million in development funding. Mrs Smyth noted that, as a project partner, the Council was responsible for delivering elements of the approved programme, including the investments outlined in Section 2.1 of the officers' report.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Kearns, seconded by Councillor Young, it was agreed to approve the business case for the Mourne Gullion Landscape Connections Project.**

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

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Hanna, seconded by Councillor Kearns, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on the following matters 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).

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Young, seconded by Councillor Hanna, it was agreed to come out of Closed Session.**

The Chairperson advised that the following had been agreed while in closed session.

ERT/102/2026: **LEP REVIVE & REIMAGINE COMMERCIAL PROPERTY GRANT**

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism regarding Local Economic Partnership: Revive and Reimagine Commercial Property Grant. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Feehan, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor, it was agreed to approve issuing of notification of assessment outcome to applicants, including progressing relevant applicants to Letter of Offer award as per the assessment process outlined in section 2 of the officers' report and to accept and return a Letter of Offer from DfC in respect of Revive and Reimagine Commercial Property Grant, pending final approval from DfC.**

FOR NOTING

ERT/103/2026: **BUILDING CONTROL 6 X MONTHLY REPORT**

Read: Report from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Regeneration regarding Building Control 6 x Monthly Update Report. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Young, seconded by Councillor Feehan, it was agreed to note the report.**

ERT/104/2026: **LICENSING 6 X MONTHLY REPORT**

Read: Report from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Regeneration regarding Licensing 6 Monthly Report. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Young, seconded by**

Councillor Feehan, it was agreed to note the report.

ERT/105/2026 **NEWRY BID UPDATE**

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding Newry BID. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Young acknowledged and congratulated Newry BID on a successful quarter of activities and events, commended the level of collaboration involved and welcomed the positive outcomes delivered.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Young, seconded by Councillor Feehan, it was agreed to note the quarter two update from Newry BID on delivery performance against BID Strategic Priorities 2026-2031.**

ERT/106/2026 **PEACEPLUS LOCAL ACTION PLAN**

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Young, seconded by Councillor Feehan, it was agreed to note the minutes of the PEACEPLUS Partnership on 24 September 2026 and that officers will now proceed with the procurement and delivery of activities under Strand 3 of the Co-designed Local Action Plan as detailed in section 2 of the officers' report.**

ERT/107/2026 **REGIONAL BALANCE BILL PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding Regional Balance Bill Public Consultation. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Galbraith welcomed the report and expressed support for the principles of the Regional Balance Bill. He highlighted the importance of equitable access to investment, public services and opportunities across all communities, and stated that binding targets and accountability measures would help promote fair regional development. Councillor Galbraith encouraged support for the Bill as it progressed through the Assembly.

Councillor Feehan associated himself with Councillor Galbraith's comments, welcomed the Council's support for the response, and encouraged parties to submit

responses to the consultation.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Young, seconded by Councillor Feehan, it was agreed to note the response to the Regional Balance Bill.**

ERT/108/2026 **ULSTER UNIVERSITY ECONOMIC POLICY CENTRE (UUEPC) OUTLOOK NMDDC**

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding UUEPC – Economic Outlook NMDDC. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Young, seconded by Councillor Feehan, it was agreed to note the update on Council's Economic Outlook compiled by Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC).**

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 6.25pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 2 November 2026

Signed: _____

Councillor K Feehan
Chairperson
Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee

Signed: _____

Conor Mallon
Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism