

January 19th, 2026

**Notice Of Meeting**

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Monday, 19th January 2026** at **6:00 pm** in **Boardroom, Warrenpoint Town Hall.**

**Committee Membership 2025-26**

Councillor D Lee-Surginor **Chairperson**

Councillor K Feehan **Deputy Chairperson**

Councillor T Andrews

Councillor W Clarke

Councillor C Galbraith

Councillor O Hanlon

Councillor G Hanna

Councillor V Harte

Councillor G Kearns

Councillor A Lewis

Councillor S Murphy

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 of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting of 8 December 2025

📎 *ERT Action Sheet - 2025-12-08 inc. historic actions updated.pdf*

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### *For Discussion/Decision*

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## 4.0 Officer Report on Notice of Motion - Festival for Newry City (C/173/2025)

*For Decision*

📎 *ERT Report - NoM Festival for Newry City.pdf*

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## 5.0 Downpatrick Growing Together (GROVE)

*For Decision*

📎 *ERT Report - Downpatrick Growing Together (GROVE).pdf*

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### *Exempt Appendices*

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### 5.1 Exempt Appendix for Downpatrick Growing Together (GROVE)

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business

📎 *Appendix 1 - Downpatrick Growing Together (GROVE).pdf*

*Not included*

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### *For Discussion/Decision*

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## 6.0 Make It Local

*For Decision*

📎 *ERT Report - Make it Local.pdf*

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### *Exempt Appendices*

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### 6.1 Exempt Appendix for Make It Local

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local

Government Act (NI) 2014 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business

 **Appendix 1 - Make it Local Business Case.pdf**

**Not included**

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

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## **7.0 ERT Facilities Hire Charges**

*For Decision*

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business

 **ERT Report - ERT Facility Hire Charges.pdf**

**Not included**


 **Appendix 1 - ERT Facility Hire Charges.pdf**

**Not included**

## **8.0 Newry City Music Festival**

*For Decision*

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business

 **ERT Report - Newry City Music Festival.pdf**

**Not included**

 **Appendix 1 - Newry Music Festival Business Proposal.pdf**

**Not included**

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## **9.0 Warrenpoint Pontoon and Breakwater**

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business

 **ERT Report - Warrenpoint Pontoon and Breakwater.pdf**

**Not included**

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***FOR NOTING Items deemed to be exempt under Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014***

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## **10.0 Newry BID Revote 2026**

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business

 *ERT Report - Newry BID Revote 2026.pdf*

*Not included*

 *Appendix 1 BID Revote Proposals.pdf*

*Not included*

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***For Noting***

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## **11.0 Planning File Management And Retention**

*For Information*

 *ERT Report - Planning File Management & Retention.pdf*

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## **12.0 Rural Business Development Grant Scheme**

*For Information*

 *ERT Report - Rural Business Development Grant Scheme.pdf*

*Page 16*

# Invitees

Cllr Terry Andrews

Cllr Callum Bowsie

Ms Michelle Boyle

Fionnuala Branagh

Cllr Jim Brennan

Ms Sonya Burns

Lorraine/Emma Burns/McParland

Mr Gerard Byrne

Cllr Pete Byrne

Cllr Philip Campbell

Cllr William Clarke

Cllr Laura Devlin

Ms Louise Dillon

Cllr Cadogan Enright

Cllr Killian Feehan

Cllr Doire Finn

Cllr Conor Galbraith

Cllr Mark Gibbons

Cllr Oonagh Hanlon

Cllr Glyn Hanna

Cllr Valerie Harte

Mr Conor Haughey

Cllr Martin Hearty

Cllr Roisin Howell

Cllr Tierna Howie

Ms Catherine Hughes

Cllr Jonathan Jackson

Joanne/Noelle Johnston

Cllr Geraldine Kearns

Miss Veronica Keegan

Mrs Sheila Kieran

Cllr Cathal King

Cllr Aurla King

Ms Elaine Kirk

Cllr Mickey Larkin

Cllr Niall Lawlor

Cllr David Lee-Surginor

Cllr Alan Lewis

Cllr Oonagh Magennis

Mr Conor Mallon

Cllr Aidan Mathers

Cllr Declan McAteer

Jonathan McGilly  
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Mr Martin McKibbin  
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Ms Tracie McLoughlin  
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Ms Aveen McVeigh  
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Cllr Selina Murphy  
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Cllr Kate Murphy  
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Cllr Declan Murphy  
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Sinead Murphy  
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Cllr Siobhan O'Hare  
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Mr Andy Patterson  
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Cllr Áine Quinn  
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Cllr Henry Reilly  
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Cllr Michael Rice  
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Ms Alison Robb  
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Cllr Michael Ruane  
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Mr Conor Sage  
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Mrs Amanda Smyth  
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Conor Smyth  
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Donna Starkey  
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Sarah Taggart  
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Cllr David Taylor  
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Cllr Jarlath Tinnelly  
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Ms Sinead Trainor  
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Cllr Jill Truesdale  
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Mrs Marie Ward  
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Cllr Helena Young  
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ACTION SHEETECONOMY, REGENERATION & TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING – MONDAY 8 DECEMBER 2025

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
ERT/122/2025	Action sheet of ERT meeting 10/11/2025	It was agreed to note the action sheet	C Mallon	Noted	Y
ERT/123/2025	Officer Report on NOM – Revitalisation Project	It was agreed to approve that the revitalisation of derelict and dilapidated buildings can be addressed through delivery of the Local Economic Partnership Action Plan	C Mallon	In progress	Y
ERT/124/2025	Belfast City & Region Place Partnership	It was agreed to approve membership with Belfast City & Region Place Partnership.	C Mallon	Ongoing	Y
ERT/125/2025	PeacePlus	It was agreed to approve the procurement and delivery plan of the below activities under Strand 3 of the co-designed Local Action Plan: - Strand 2.6 – Social and Emotional Support Programmes - 3.2 Minority Support Programme: Discovering the sites of Northern Ireland and Council District. - 3.7 Shared History and Culture Programme Steps through time	A Smyth	In progress	Y
ERT/126/2025	St Patricks Day 2026 SLAs	It was agreed to approve the issue of Service Level Agreements to Beat Carnival and Down Community Arts to undertake schools and community engagement to create float and parade content for Downpatrick and Newry St Patrick's Day 2026 events.	A Smyth	In progress	Y

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
ERT/127/2025	Delamont Caravan Park & Touring in the Trees Kilbroney Park	the following was agreed: -To approve the renewed lease agreement with the Camping & Caravan Club for lands at Delamont Country Caravan Park, for a further term of one year under the current lease arrangements and valuation. -Approve that the Touring in the Trees site at Kilbroney Park continues to be operated as a site for registered youth groups.	A Smyth	In progress	Y
ERT/128/2025	Ulster Fleadh	It was agreed that Council support the Warrenpoint Comhaltas for the hosting of the Ulster Fleadh in Warrenpoint in July 2026, subject to funding being agreed in the rates setting process.	A Smyth	In progress	Y
ERT/129/2025	Digital Transformation Flexible Fund	It was agreed to note the update provided on the performance and delivery of the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund programme	A Smyth	Noted	Y
ERT/130/2025	Go Succeed NI Update	It was agreed to note the update provided on the implementation of go Succeed NI Update.	A Smyth	Noted	Y



<b>Report to:</b>	Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	Monday 19 January 2026
<b>Subject:</b>	Notion of Motion: Festival for Newry City
<b>Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):</b>	Amanda Smyth Assistant Director: Economy, Growth and Tourism
<b>Contact Officer (Including Job Title):</b>	Catriona Regan Head of Culture, Arts, Heritage and Events

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

	For decision	X	For noting only	
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose and Background</b>			
1.1	<p><u>Purpose</u> Approve recommendation as set out in section 3.1 of this report</p> <p><u>Background</u> Notion of Motion brought forward by Cllr Finn states:</p> <p><i>"Newry, Mourne and Down District Council commends the work and success of Eats and Beats, Footsteps in the Forest and Wake the Giant and agree to commencing work towards a festival for Newry City."</i></p>			
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Key issues</b>			
2.1	<p><u>Events Programme</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council supports a comprehensive events programme, which includes 3 Giant Adventures (Wake the Giant, Eats and Beats and Footsteps in the Forest), a series of family focuses events at Forest Parks, two St Patrick's Day parades, Christmas and Halloween events.</li> <li>Included in the events programme is Newry Arts Festival, an annual festival celebration of arts. The most recent Art Festival was held in March 2025, Fire Side Stories, which featured storytelling, dance, acrobatics, theatre. Additional funding from UK Shared Prosperity Fund enabled this event to be also held in Newcastle and Downpatrick.</li> </ul> <p><u>Development of a Festival for Newry City</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council has recently established an Arts Working Group, which was established with the purpose of supporting the continued growth of an arts and culture offering across the district.</li> <li>Consideration of the further development of a festival for Newry City can be</li> </ul>			

	<p>tabled at the next meeting of the Arts Working group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note separate report tabled at ERT Committee, January 2026, regarding the pilot of a new 2 day Newry City Music Festival</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
3.1	<p>It is recommended:</p> <p>To agree that the request for the establishment of a festival for Newry City is tabled for consideration by the Arts Working Group.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Resource implications</b>
4.1	To be determined following discussion at the Arts Working Group and tabled for consideration by Council.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)</b>
5.1	<p><b><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></b></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p><b><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></b></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.3	<p><b><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></b></p> <p>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 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p>

	<i>Rationale:</i>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</b>
6.1	Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service
	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
	n/a
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Background Documents</b>
	N/A

<b>Report to:</b>	Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> January 2026
<b>Subject:</b>	Downpatrick Growing Together (GROVE- Growing, relationships over Vibrant Environments)
<b>Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):</b>	Amanda Smyth, Assistant Director Economy, Growth & Tourism
<b>Contact Officer (Including Job Title):</b>	Aveen McVeigh, Head of Regeneration and Business Development

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

<b>For decision</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>For noting only</b>	
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<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose and Background</b>
1.1	<p><u>Purpose</u> To approve recommendations set out in section 3.1</p> <p><u>Background</u> Council, working with the Downpatrick Regeneration Working Group, is progressing the delivery of the Living High Streets Framework. The Grove has been identified as a priority site in Downpatrick and benefited from UKSPF funding in 2024/25. Building on this investment, a community clean-up acted as the catalyst for an application to PEACEPLUS for a wider community-led project.</p>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Key issues</b>
2.1	<p>The overarching objectives of the GROVE project is to build stronger, more connected communities through the development of shared, inclusive spaces and activities that encourage mutual understanding and cross-community collaboration.</p> <p>The GROVE project will engage with a wide range of community groups, schools/college. The project will be delivered over 2 years and will have the following elements: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community workshops, clean up events and planting</li> <li>• Urban forest school programme</li> <li>• Creative sessions</li> <li>• Biodiversity and BioBlitz days (recording flora and fauna)</li> <li>• Study trip</li> </ul> <p>It is anticipated that this project will: -</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen cross-community relationships and reduce social divisions</li> <li>• Develop and enhance the Grove as a shared civic space fostering pride</li> <li>• Empower local changemakers</li> <li>• Foster lasting peacebuilding and nurture a culture of respect</li> <li>• Create pride among Downpatrick's diverse population</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
3.1	<p>It is recommended:</p> <p>To approve acceptance of a Letter of Offer for Downpatrick Growing Together funded via PEACEPLUS 1.2 Empowering Communities</p>
3.2	<p>To approve the implementation of the project including any necessary procurements</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Resource implications</b>
4.1	Refer to appendix 1
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)</b>
5.1	<p><b><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></b></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p><b><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></b></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>

5.3	<p><b><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></b></p> <p>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 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>
6.0	<p><b>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</b></p>
6.1	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></p>
7.0	<p><b>Appendices</b></p>
	<p>This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - <b>Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information)</b> and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.</p> <p><b>Appendix 1: Resource Implications</b></p>
8.0	<p><b>Background Documents</b></p>
	<p>N/A</p>

<b>Report to:</b>	Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> January 2026
<b>Subject:</b>	Make it Local
<b>Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):</b>	Amanda Smyth, Assistant Director Economy, Growth & Tourism
<b>Contact Officer (Including Job Title):</b>	Aveen McVeigh, Head of Regeneration and Business Development

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

<b>For decision</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>For noting only</b>	
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<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose and Background</b>
1.1	<p><u>Purpose</u> To consider and approve recommendation at section 3.1.</p> <p><u>Background</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local businesses have faced sustained pressures in recent years, from rising operating costs to shifts in customer purchasing behaviour.</li> <li>The objective of Make it Local (MiL) is to elevate the visibility of local businesses by showcasing their products and services, and to encourage residents and visitors to shop locally, contributing to a more resilient and sustainable local economy.</li> <li>Make it Local campaign gives businesses a free platform to showcase and promote their products and services.</li> <li>Strengthening the MiL brand and continuing to build on previous campaign successes will be critical to maintaining momentum and enhancing the initiative's reach and impact.</li> <li>The programme has become a significant platform for positioning NMDDC as a destination offering high-quality, distinctive local products and services.</li> </ul>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Key issues</b>
2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make it Local delivery</li> </ul> <p>Council actively seeks external funding to widen the range of support that MiL offers. Since 2021, the Make it Local (MiL) initiative has profiled 104 businesses across the district, representing a broad mix of retail and hospitality businesses.</p>

	<p>In 2025, 25 businesses were promoted through funding from the Small Settlements Regeneration Programme (DfC, DAERA and DfI) and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). This investment enabled the delivery of a major district-wide campaign with the assistance of the digital and communications agency.</p> <p>Following the successful campaigns, Council funded targeted digital advertising campaigns to align with key tourism and cultural events such as Wake the Giant, the Ulster Fleadh, and Eats and Beats/Newcastle Restaurant Week, amplifying the shop local message at moments of high footfall and heightened visitor engagement.</p> <p>A targeted Christmas 2025 campaign showcased five local businesses, highlighting the economic importance of supporting local traders during a key trading period. The campaign achieved more than 300,000 impressions. Collectively, these campaigns have strengthened public awareness of MiL and clearly demonstrated the impact of sustained, high-quality brand promotion. Council funded campaigns were delivered exclusively through social media channels.</p>
2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make it Local – 2026 / 2027</li> </ul> <p>To strengthen and further grow the MiL brand, Council proposes to implement a programme of marketing campaigns throughout 2026/27. These campaigns will showcase the breadth of products, services, and experiences available across the district, both online and in-store. They will also be strategically aligned to support major district-wide events and key seasonal trading periods, including Christmas.</p> <p>Council will conduct an Expression of Interest inviting businesses from across the district to participate in MiL. Applications will be assessed against defined criteria to select businesses to feature in MiL 2026/27. Successful businesses will take part in photography and video production, with content used across the campaign activity. A coordinated mix of outdoor advertising, print, radio, social media, and digital channels will be used to maximise reach and engagement.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
3.1	<p>It is recommended:</p> <p>To approve the procurement and appointment of a creative communications consultancy to engage and support Council with delivery of a Make it Local campaign throughout 2026/27.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Resource implications</b>
4.1	<p>Subject to rates estimates for 26/27. A request for budget has been submitted for Make it Local and detailed in attached business case.</p>



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

	Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
	<p>This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph <b>3</b> of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - <b>Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information)</b> and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appendix 1 – Business Case</li> </ul>
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Background Documents</b>
	n/a

Report to:	Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday 19 January 2026
Subject:	Planning File Management and Retention Extension to contract
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Jonathan McGilly, Assistant Director – Regeneration
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Margaret Rodgers, Business Support Manager

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	<b>Purpose and Background</b>
1.1	<p><u>Purpose</u> To note the renewal of the current contract under the EPSO framework, 390_22 for Document Storage and Retrieval Services with Iron Mountain UK Limited which is due to expire on 15 January 2026.</p> <p><u>Background</u> Since 2012, Iron Mountain UK has been the preferred supplier for the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) and has continued this role with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (NMDDC) since 2015.</p> <p>In 2024, the market for document storage and retrieval services was tested via the EPSO framework. This annual renewal process confirmed that Iron Mountain UK remains competitive against other providers. Additionally, the significant costs and logistical challenges associated with removing records if the contract were not renewed, coupled with the need for consistency and minimal disruption, make switching providers financially impractical.</p>
2.0	<b>Key issues</b>
2.1	<p>As part of the new planning portal project, a substantial number of applications are now submitted online. Efforts are ongoing to reduce the volume of hard copy applications over the coming years.</p> <p>In the interim, hard copy files will continue to exist, and planning must retain all files for 6 years from the last date of use under legislation. The ongoing initiatives to</p>

	<p>reduce hard copy applications and implement a controlled weeding programme are expected to help manage storage needs more efficiently in the future.</p> <p>Given Iron Mountain UK's long-standing relationship with our Council, maintaining consistency is crucial to avoid any disruption in service.</p> <p>Consultations with other councils have revealed that most use their own facilities for file storage, with some continuing to use Iron Mountain for off-site storage as their preferred provider.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
3.1	<p>It is recommended:</p> <p>To note the extension of the current contract, under the EPSO framework, with Iron Mountain UK Ltd for a further 12 months, from 16 January 2026 to 15 January 2027.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Resource implications</b>
4.1	£15K per annum as per agreed budget.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)</b>
5.1	<p><b><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></b></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p><b><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></b></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>

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

<b>Report to:</b>	Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> January 2026
<b>Subject:</b>	Rural Business Development Grant Scheme
<b>Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):</b>	Amanda Smyth Assistant Director Economy, Growth and Tourism
<b>Contact Officer (Including Job Title):</b>	Sonya Burns – Head of Programmes Paul Jordan – Project Coordinator

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

<b>For decision</b>	<b>For noting only</b>	<b>x</b>
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<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose and Background</b>
1.1	<p><u>Purpose</u> To provide an update regarding the 2025/26 Rural Business Development Grant Scheme.</p> <p><u>Background</u> The Rural Business Development Grant Scheme, which is delivered in partnership with DAERA, is aimed at providing support towards the sustainability and growth of rural micro-businesses (less than 10 full-time equivalent employees). The scheme provides small capital grants of up to 50% of costs for capital items up to a maximum of £7,500.</p>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Key issues</b>
2.1	<p>The 2025/26 Scheme opened on the 25<sup>th</sup> September 2025. Following a series of workshops a total of 193 applications were received by the 30<sup>th</sup> October deadline. This is an increase from the 140 applications received in 2024/2025.</p> <p>Following the completion of basic eligibility checks and full assessments, a total of 128 Letters of Offer were issued to the value of up to £575k.</p> <p>This represents an increase from 80 Letters of Offer issued to the value of £275k in the previous year.</p> <p>Council staff will be working with successful applicants over the coming quarter to process their final claims ahead of the March submission deadline.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
	It is recommended:

3.1	To note the update regarding the 2025/26 Rural Business Development Grant Scheme.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Resource implications</b>
4.1	The scheme is fully funded by DAERA.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)</b>
5.1	<p><b><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></b></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p><b><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></b></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.3	<p><b><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></b></p> <p>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 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</b>
6.1	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></p>

<b>7.0</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
	n/a
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Background Documents</b>
	n/a