

NEWRY MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday 8 September 2025 at 6.00pm in Boardroom, Warrenpoint Town Hall

Chairperson: Councillor D Lee-Surginor

**Committee Members
in attendance:**

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor W Clarke
Councillor O Hanlon	Councillor G Hanna
Councillor G Kearns	Councillor A Lewis
Councillor S Murphy	Councillor M Ruane
Councillor J Tinnelly	

Committee Members

in attendance via Teams: Councillor K Feehan Councillor C Galbraith
Councillor A Quinn

Non-Committee Members

in attendance via Teams: Councillor D Finn

Officials in attendance:

Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism
Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Regeneration
Ms A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth and Tourism
Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer
Mr C Smyth, Democratic Services Officer

ERT/083/2025

APOLOGIES / CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillor H Young.

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.

The Chairperson noted Councillor Gareth Sharvin's resignation after 14 years of service, commending his hard work and strong advocacy for the Downpatrick DEA, and took the opportunity to wish him well for the future. Councillors Hanlon and Andrews echoed the Chairperson's sentiments.

ERT/084/2025

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

ERT/085/2025

**ACTION SHEET ECONOMY, REGENERATION & TOURISM
COMMITTEE MEETING MONDAY 11 AUGUST 2025**

Read: Action Sheet arising out of the Minutes of the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday 11 August 2025 **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to note the Action Sheet arising from the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday 11 August 2025.**

FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION

ERT/086/2025 ESTABLISHMENT OF ARTS WORKING GROUP – NOTICE OF MOTION

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism regarding Establishment of Arts Working Group. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Finn expressed her longstanding support for the arts across the District and welcomed the establishment of a working group to support individuals working within the sector, including those involved in amateur dramatics and professional careers. She highlighted ongoing underfunding and a lack of recognition for the arts' contribution to health, wellbeing, and mental health, particularly among young people. She emphasised the District's wealth of talent and the importance of nurturing and valuing those involved in the arts. She welcomed the redevelopment of Newry Town Hall into a theatre space, but noted concerns raised by local arts groups regarding communication and uncertainty about future performance venues. Councillor Finn stressed the importance of clear communication and ongoing support for the arts sector and requested that the working group's Terms of Reference included representation from groups across the district to ensure inclusive engagement and meaningful feedback.

Mr Mallon advised that the Terms of Reference for the working group, including its membership, would be determined by the group itself once established and advised that Councillor Finn's comments would be considered as part of the group's remit, subject to Council approval.

Councillors Feehan, Andrews and Clarke all welcomed the motion.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Clarke, it was agreed to approve the recommendation for the establishment of an Arts Working Group.**

ERT/087/2025 PEACEPLUS

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, regarding PEACEPLUS Theme 1.1. **(Copy circulated)**

Ms Smyth presented the report and accompanying business case relating to Strand 2.5 of the PEACEPLUS Action Plan: Cross Community Festival Programme.

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Clarke, it was agreed to approve the business case and procure the related elements of the Action Plan for: Strand 2.5 Cross-community Festival Programme – “Celebrating Languages Together”.

ERT/088/2025

**STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI)
PLANNING FUNCTIONS**

Read:

Report from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Regeneration, regarding Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) – Revision 2. **(Copy circulated)**

Mr McGilly advised that the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) required revision due to the relocation of the Planning Service from Monaghan Row to Greenbank. He noted that a 12-week consultation period was underway, and the Draft Plan Strategy would remain available at Monaghan Row until 22 September, for the next stage the location would move to Warrenpoint Town Hall. The Strategy would remain available online as per the original SCI. He further advised that this revised SCI would be submitted to the Department for approval as part of the Local Development Plan legislative process.

In response to a query from Councillor Andrews regarding wider availability, Mr McGilly confirmed that the document was accessible in Council offices and online.

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Ruane, the following was agreed:

- **The amendments to the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) as set out within the Report and within the attached SCI (Appendix 1).**
- **The submission of the revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) to the Department for Infrastructure for their agreement and carrying out any legislative requirements in terms of publication of the revised SCI.**

ERT/089/2025

**TOURISM EVENTS, FACILITIES AND VISITOR SERVICING
PROCUREMENTS**

Read:

Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism regarding Tourism Events, Facilities and Visitor Servicing – Supplier procurements. **(Copy circulated)**

Ms Smyth outlined the procurement proposals which aimed to support the delivery of tourism events.

In response to a query from Councillor Hanlon regarding whether the procurement related to overall event management or individual business cases, Mr Mallon confirmed that it pertained to separate business cases.

Councillor Hanlon further queried whether event delivery could be managed in-house, to which Ms Smyth advised that this was not feasible. She advised that existing event contracts were due to expire which necessitated the outlined procurement arrangements to ensure appropriate support for future events.

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Andrews, it was agreed to proceed to procurement to deliver on Council Tourism Events Programme, Tourism Facilities Operations and Visitor Servicing to include:

- **PA & Lighting**
- **Marquees**
- **Event Staging**
- **Professional Stewarding, Event Safety & Safeguarding**
- **Digital Services for Tourism, Culture & Events**
- **Security Services for Tourism Facilities**

ERT/090/2025

LOCAL ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP ACTION PLAN

Read:

Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth and Tourism, regarding Local Economic Partnership. **(Copy circulated)**

Ms Smyth advised that the Local Economic Partnership (LEP), established in January 2025, had continued to meet with the aim of developing a draft Action Plan that aligned to the Department for the Economy's (DfE) £45 million sub-regional plan. She noted that, under the LEP governance structure, the Action Plan would be brought to committee for consideration prior to submission to DfE.

Councillor Hanlon welcomed the paper and commended the work of Council officers and members of the working groups. Councillor Andrews echoed these sentiments.

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Andrews, it was agreed to note the NMD Local Economic Partnership approval of an action plan and approve submission of the action plan to Department of Economy for consideration.

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

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Kearns, seconded by Councillor S Murphy, 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 Kearns, seconded by Councillor Ruane, it was agreed to come out of Closed Session.

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

ERT/091/2025

NEWRY CHAMBER MUSIC ARTS & OUTREACH PROGRAMME

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding Newry Chamber Music – Arts & Community Outreach Programme. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Clarke, it was agreed to provide support via a letter of offer to Newry Chamber Music for the delivery of an arts & community outreach programme in the 2025/26 season.

FOR NOTING

ERT/092/2025

HERITAGE PROJECTS UPDATE

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding NMD Heritage Projects Update. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Andrews, it was agreed to note the report.

ERT/093/2025

NMD MUSEUMS UPDATE

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding NMD Museums Update (Q1 25/26 Apr-June). **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Andrews, it was agreed to note the report.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 6.28pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 6 October 2025

Signed: Councillor D Lee-Surginor

**Chairperson
Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee**

**Signed: Conor Mallon
Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism**
