

NEWRY MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting
held on Monday 11 May 2026 at 6.00pm in Boardroom, Warrenpoint Town Hall**

Chairperson: Councillor D Lee-Surginor

Committee Members Councillor T Andrews Councillor G Hanna
Councillor V Harte Councillor G Kearns
Councillor A Lewis Councillor M Ruane
Councillor H Young

**Committee Members
in attendance via Teams:** Councillor W Clarke Councillor K Feehan
Councillor C Galbraith Councillor O Hanlon
Councillor A Quinn

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

**Officials in attendance
via Teams:** Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager

ERT/050/2026 APOLOGIES / CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillor S Murphy and Tinnelly.

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.

Councillor Lee-Surginor noted this was his final meeting as Chair, and thanked Members for their contributions over the past year.

ERT/051/2026 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

**ERT/052/2026 ACTION SHEET ECONOMY, REGENERATION & TOURISM
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 20 APRIL 2026**

Read: Action Sheet arising out of the Minutes of the Economy,
Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on 20 April
2026. **(Copy circulated)**

ERT/041/2026: Financial Assistance Call 1 Tranche 2 2026/27:

Councillor Andrews queried whether there was an update on the progress of the Letters of Offer to successful applicants.

Mr Mallon advised that April's Economy, Regeneration & Tourism (ERT) Committee minutes had been ratified at Council meeting held 5 May 2026, therefore following the closure of the call-in period, officers would take forward any actions accordingly.

ERT/035/2026: Officer Report on Notice of Motion – Night Time Economy in Downpatrick:

Councillor Galbraith queried what actions had taken place since the previous ERT Committee meeting on the above item, to which Mr Mallon reiterated that as the minutes had been ratified at Council held 5 May 2026, actions would be taken forward following the closure of the call-in period.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Ruane, it was agreed to note the Action Sheet arising from the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on 20 April 2026.**

FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION

ERT/053/2026

ARTS OUTREACH PROGRAMME 2026/27

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism regarding Arts Outreach Programme for 2026/27.
(Copy circulated)

Mrs Smyth stated that the paper set out proposals for the delivery of an arts outreach programme for 2026–27, which had been delivered over the past few years. She explained that the recommendations in Section 3 of the report sought approval to deliver an artist bursary programme, which would issue letters of offer for six bursaries. She further advised that the proposals included delivering two art bursaries through a service level agreement for the John Hewart International Summer School, delivering a theatre-in-residence programme via a service level agreement, and delivering an artist-in-residence programme, also through a service level agreement.

AGREED: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hanna, seconded by Councillor Ruane, to approve the following:**

- **To deliver an Artist Bursary Programme, awarding Letters of Offer for 6 bursaries.**
- **To deliver 2 Artist Bursaries through a Service Level Agreement for the John Hewitt International Summer School**
- **To deliver a Theatre Company in Residence programme, establishing an SLA for delivery against KPI's.**
- **To deliver an Artist in Residence programme, establishing an SLA for delivery against KPI's.**

ERT/054/2026

GRAPHIC DESIGN, ARTWORK & PRINT MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism regarding Graphic Design, Artwork & Print Management Services. **(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Smyth stated that approval was being sought, through procurement and approval of the attached business case, to appoint graphic design, artwork and print management services. She explained that this was essential to support communications and marketing across the tourism, culture, arts and events programmes.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Ruane, it was agreed to approve the business case and necessary procurement exercises to appoint a graphic design, artwork and print management services contract for tourism, culture, arts and events.**

ERT/055/2026

LOCAL ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP – PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism regarding Local Economic Partnership – Professional Services. **(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Smyth stated that Members would be familiar with the Local Economic Partnership as previous reports had been presented, including the action plan approved by the Department for the Economy. She explained that the paper sought approval for the procurement of the professional services required to support the delivery of two capital grant programmes outlined within the action plan and fully supported by the Department for the Economy.

She advised that the programmes were the Commercial Property Grant and the Property Façade Renewal Scheme, and that the associated costs would be fully funded through the Local Economic Partnership.

In proposing the report, Councillor Andrews queried whether there were any additional plans to include villages and towns across the District alongside any funding opportunities for the same.

Mr Mallon noted that there was an initiative being developed through Central Government Departments and that opportunities could arise when that Shaping Sustainable Places initiative was rolled out.

Councillor Hanlon welcomed the paper, mentioning the hard work that had been carried out in the background with owners and traders in Downpatrick.

Councillor Hanna queried how Council proposed to make business owners aware of the scheme when it became available.

Mrs Smyth confirmed that Council hoped to launch the Commercial Property Grant Scheme in the coming weeks, noting that a press release would be issued when officially launched. She confirmed that Members would be made aware and encouraged them to engage with the local community to share the information.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Hanna, it was agreed to approve**

procurement of professional services required to support the delivery of two capital grant programmes on behalf of the Local Economic Partnership: Revive and Reimagine – Commercial Property Grant and Property Façade Renewal Scheme.

ERT/056/2026

UNESCO TOGETHER PROJECT

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

Mrs Smyth stated that the paper outlined funding received for the UNESCO Together project, supported through the PEACEPLUS funding programme, with all details of the project outlined at section 2 of the officer's report. She advised that this would enable the project to proceed, including the completion of all necessary legal requirements to facilitate project delivery, and would also approve the attached business case to allow the required procurements to be undertaken.

AGREED:

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

- **To approve the acceptance of the Letter of Offer for UNESCO Together (PEACEPLUS) and the completion of all necessary legal and administrative requirements to enable project delivery.**
- **To approve the business case and subsequent procurements to enable delivery of the UNESCO Together (PEACEPLUS) Project.**

ERT/057/2026

NEWRY BID

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

Mrs Smyth stated that Newry BID had recently completed a successful re-vote securing a further five-year term and had now entered a new BID period. She explained that, as part of this arrangement, there was an operating agreement between the Council and Newry BID setting out the Council's role in administering the BID levy, including issuing invoices and managing any debt. She advised that the report presented information on this operating agreement, which was included as an appendix, and sought approval from members to sign the new BID operating agreement. She highlighted that Section 2 of the report set out details of the revised and updated agreement, which reflected recommendations arising from a recent audit report.

Councillor Hanna queried whether all parties involved with the proposed operating agreement were content with the agreement as he understood there were issues previously regarding the levy collection.

Mrs Smyth advised that Council had met with Newry BID and they were content to take the proposed operating agreement to their board for agreement, confirming that any future debt and levy agreements would be tabled at the Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee meetings for agreement.

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Harte, seconded by Councillor Young, the following was agreed:

- **To note the update provided against Newry BID successful re-vote for a 3rd BID Term.**
- **That Council sign the renewed "BID Levy Operating Agreement" and work with Newry BID in ensuring adherence to the conditions contained within.**

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 Harte, 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/058/2026

FOOD CURATOR – TOURISM EVENTS

Read:

Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding Food Curator – Tourism Events. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Hanna, to establish a Service Level Agreement with Food NI for delivery of the Food Curator Element of both Wake the Giant and Eats and Beats 2026 festivals.

ERT/059/2026

HOTEL ACCOMMODATION SCHEME

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

AGREED: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Hanna, to issue Letters of Offer to the applicants recommended for the award of funding under the Hotel Accommodation Scheme and that Pre-Letter of Offer conditions are to be met prior to issue of full Letter of Offer and where conditions are not satisfied, no letter of offer will be issued.**

FOR NOTING

ERT/060/2026

KILCURRY SUBCATCHMENT WATER ASSESSMENT PROJECT

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding Kilcurry Subcatchment Water Assessment Project. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Ruane, it was agreed to note acceptance of the Letter of Offer for Kilcurry Subcatchment Water Assessment project (DAERA Environment Fund) and the completion of all necessary legal and administrative requirements to enable project delivery.**

ERT/061/2026

NMD MUSEUMS QUARTERLY UPDATE

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding Quarterly Update Report for Museums (Q4 25/26 Jan-March). **(Copy circulated)**

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

Councillor Andrews offered his thanks to Councillor Lee-Surginor as Chairperson and Councillor Feehan as Deputy Chairperson for their work over the year.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 6.31pm

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 1 June 2026

**Signed: Councillor D Lee-Surginor
Chairperson**

Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee

Signed:

Conor Mallon

Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism
