

NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 22 November 2023 at 6.00pm in the Boardroom, District Council Offices, Monaghan Row, Newry and via MS Teams.

Chair: Councillor T Andrews (Chamber)

In Attendance in Chamber: Councillor W Clarke Councillor C Enright
Councillor K Feehan Councillor D Finn
Councillor M Larkin Councillor G Kearns
Councillor O Magennis Councillor L McEvoy
Councillor H Reilly Councillor D Taylor

In Attendance via Teams: Councillor M Rice Councillor J Truesdale

Officials in Attendance: Mr A Cassells, Director Sustainability and Environment
Ms S Murphy, Assistant Director Waste Management
Ms G Kane, Acting Assistant Director: Facilities and Maintenance
Mr A Mallon, Acting Assistant Director: Facilities and Maintenance
Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)

Officials via Teams: Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer

SE/122/2023: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Jackson and K Murphy.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Feehan to the Committee. He also thanked Council staff, agencies and other individuals who went the extra mile to assist with the recent flooding in the District.

The Chairperson condemned the despicable vandalism of the Christmas Tree in Kilkeel.

SE/123/2023: DECLARATIONS OF "CONFLICTS OF INTEREST"

Councillor Andrews declared an interest in item 13 – FASTER EV Project Update and Legal Agreement with EasyGo.

SE/124/2023: ACTION SHEET: SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 OCTOBER 2023

Read: Action Sheet of the Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 17 October 2023. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Finn, seconded by Councillor McEvoy, it was agreed that the Action Sheet of the Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 17 October 2023 be noted.**

NOTICE OF MOTION

SE/125/2023: REPORT ON NOTICE OF MOTION IN RELATION TO LIVESTOCK WORRYING

Read: Report dated 22 November 2023 from Andrew Cassells, Director of Sustainability & Environment regarding a Notice of Motion in relation to Livestock Worrying. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Clarke presented his motion was about Council working with relevant partners to raise awareness of the impact of dogs off leads, worrying livestock and perhaps being able to produce a publicity campaign about the issue in conjunction with National Trust who own part of the high Mourne, Northern Ireland Water and Mourne Heritage Trust. He stated there had been a number of attacks in the high Mourne where a number of sheep had been attacked and subsequently died.

Councillor Clarke outlined that people believe it was ok to walk through the forest in the Mourne Mountains and then release their pets however the message needed to be clear that if any livestock was nearby that dogs should be kept on leads and under control. He proposed that a meeting be organised with all the relevant agencies to discuss a way forward, sharing resources and expertise in order to make the message clear.

Councillor Truesdale queried the figure regarding 26 reported incidents as, according to DAERA tables there were only four between April 2022 and June 2023. She also stated there was an issue with the lack of resource as Newry, Mourne and Down only have four dog wardens to cover the District.

To clarify Councillor Truesdale's comment about the number of reported incidents, Mr Cassells advised the reporting period was from 14th November 2022 until 14th November 2023.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Magennis it was agreed that a meeting be organised with relevant partners to discuss a way forward to produce a publicity campaign highlighting the importance of ensuring dogs are kept under control in the Mourne Mountains.

SE/126/2023: CONSULTATION RESPONSE ON CREATING A SMOKEFREE GENERATION AND TACKLING YOUNG VAPING

Read: Report dated 22 November 2023 from Sinead Murphy, Assistant Director Environment relating to a consultation response on creating a smoke free generation. **(Copy circulated)**

In presenting the report, Mrs Murphy advised that smoking was the single most entirely preventable cause of ill health, disability and death in the UK. She stated it was responsible for around 2200 deaths per year in Northern Ireland and in October this year, the Department of Health and Social Care published a command paper "Stopping the Start", their plan to create a smokefree generation. She advised the consultation response was contained within the officer's report and asked for approval of the Council's response.

Councillor Rice welcomed the officer's report and the consultation stating vapes were presented as an alternative to smoking, however they were made attractive to young people by the bright

colours and flavours, advertisement and ease of access to them which seemed to be counterproductive to stopping smoking.

Councillor Truesdale concurred with Councillor Rice's comments and stated there had been an article from YMCA Youth Council giving young people's views on vaping with comments such as:

- No matter how much control there is, people will always find a way to access vapes;
- There needed to be more resources to people who are addicted to these sort of things;
- The difference in marketing between cigarettes with their health warnings and vapes was stark.
- Vapes are appealing if you think of the colours and flavours, whereas on cigarette packets it says 'smoking kills'.

Councillor Truesdale stated that young people know they are being targeted so this was a crucial motion and consultation and thanked officers for bringing it forward.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Rice, seconded by Councillor Truesdale, it was agreed to approve the consultation response to the UK Government and devolved administrations consultation on creating a smokefree generation and tackling youth vaping in Appendix 1.**

SE/127/2023: FLEET REPLACEMENT

Read: Report dated 22 November 2023 from Sinead Murphy, Assistant Director Environment relating Fleet Replacement Update (**copy circulated**)

In response to a query from Councillor Enright, Mr Cassells advised that there were issues with regard to capacity at the depots for electric vehicles and a business case, looking at 'whole life costs' would be brought forward in the new year for electric mechanical sweeper vehicles.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Enright, seconded by Councillor Rice, it was agreed to note the contents of the officer's report.**

EXEMPT INFORMATION ITEMS

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

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Finn, 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 McEvoy, seconded by Councillor Clarke, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.**

The Chairperson advised the following had been agreed whilst in closed session:

SE/128/2023: UPGRADE TO TOWN CENTRE CCTV AND COUNCIL FACILITIES CCTV

Read: Report dated 22 November 2023 from Ms Gail Kane, Acting Assistant Director of Facilities Management & Maintenance regarding updating both Council Facilities and Town Centre CCTV Systems. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Truesdale, it was agreed that members note the content of the report and business case to be developed and brought to the Committee with a number of options for a way forward for the proposed development of a new suite of digital CCTV systems for the Council's facilities.

SE/129/2023: SUMMER PITCH MAINTENANCE 2024-2026

Read: Report dated 22 November 2023 from Aidan Mallon, Assistant Director Facilities Management & Maintenance, regarding Tender for Annual Sports Pitch End of Season Maintenance for pitches District Wide 2024-2026. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Truesdale, the Committee agreed to endorse the key pitch work principles and the commencement of the tender process for maintenance works as outlined in Section 2 of this report.

SE/130/2023: REPORT UPDATE ON CASTLEWELLAN MAY FAIR UPGRADE

Read: Report dated 22 November 2023 from Gail Kane, Acting Assistant Director: Facilities Management & Maintenance regarding the upgrade to Castlewellan May Fair. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor McEvoy wished to place on record Councillor Howell's thanks to Council officers for the work on the May Fair.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor McEvoy, seconded by Councillor Clarke, it was agreed to note the contents of the officer's report and approve the recommendations contained within it. It was also agreed to provide a revenue budget for the May 2024 Castlewellan Fair.

SE/131/2023: BUSINESS CASE FOR CCTV TOWN CENTRE MAINTENANCE AND PEST CONTROL

Read: Report dated 22 November 2023 from Gail Kane, Acting Assistant Director: Facilities Management & Maintenance regarding the renewal of 2 No. Service contracts – Town Centre CCTV Maintenance and Pest Control Services. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Magennis, it was agreed to note the contents of the report and to approve the following:

- **Business case for the maintenance of the town centre CCTV systems for a 2-year period from 1st April 2024**
- **Business case for the continuation of the Council's pest control service for a 5-year period from 1st July 2024**

SE/132/2023: BUSINESS CASE FOR BEDDING PLANTS

Read: Report dated 22 November 2023 from Aidan Mallon, Assistant Director, Facilities Management & Maintenance regarding the Tender Supply of Summer & Winter Bedding plants for Public Spaces 2024 to 2026 **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Kearns, it was agreed to endorse the themes and the commencement of procurement for supply of bedding plants as outlined in Section 2 of the officer's report.

SE/133/2023: BUSINESS CASE FOR APPOINTMENT OF CONTRACTOR TO UNDERTAKE ASBESTOS CONTROL MEASURES ON BEHALF OF THE COUNCIL

Read: Report dated 22 November 2023 from Aidan Mallon, Assistant Director, Facilities Management & Maintenance regarding the appointment of a contractor to undertake Asbestos Control Measures on behalf of the Council. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Truesdale, seconded by Councillor Finn, it was agreed to note the officer's report and associated business case and accept the conclusion of the Business Case that Option 1 is chosen as the preferred option. Option 1 will see the appointment, through a tender process, of a competent contractor to undertake a number of duties under the Council's Asbestos Management Plan for a 3-year period.

Councillor Rice left the meeting at this stage – 7.01pm

The Chairperson, having declared an interest, left the chamber at this stage and the Deputy Chairperson, Councillor Clarke assumed the Chair – 7.03pm

Having previously declared an interest, Councillors Larkin and Truesdale left the meeting at this stage – 7.03pm

SE/134/2023: FASTER EV PROJECT UPDATE AND LEGAL AGREEMENT WITH EASYGO

Read: Report dated 22 November 2023 from Andrew Cassells, Director, Sustainability & Environment regarding the Faster EV project update and Legal Agreement with EasyGo **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Enright, seconded by Councillor Magennis, it was agreed to note the update on the FASTER EV project and approve the draft legal agreement which was provided as Appendix 1 to the officer's report. It was also agreed to note that a final version of the legal agreement will be provided back to Committee for noting in the event that there are further minor changes to the draft.

The Chairperson re-entered the meeting at this stage and resumed the Chair – 7.08pm

Councillors Larkin and Truesdale rejoined the meeting at this stage – 7.08pm

SE/135/2023: NFLA MEMBERSHIP

Read: Report dated 22 November 2023 from Andrew Cassells, Director Sustainability & Environment regarding NFLA Membership (**Copy circulated**).

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Enright, seconded by Councillor Clarke, it was agreed to retain membership of the NFLA and to pay the current 2023/24 membership fees as outlined within the officer's report. It was also agreed to seek representation on the NFLA Steering Committee via Party Leaders and that as part of Council's membership we look at the possibility of hosting an event.

Councillors Feehan, Kearns and Magennis left the meeting at this stage – 7.16pm

SE/136/2023: REVISED RESPONSE TO DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMY/UTILITY REGULATOR CALL FOR EVIDENCE ON CONNECTION CHARGES

Read: Report dated 22 November 2023 from Andrew Cassells, Director of Sustainability & Environment regarding a Call for Evidence Response – Electricity Connection Policy and Framework Review (**Copy circulated**)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Enright, seconded by Councillor Truesdale, it was agreed to submit the revised Call for Evidence Response as contained within Appendix 1 of the officer's report.

SE/137/2023: BUSINESS CASE FOR THE PURCHASE OF FORKLIFT TRUCK

Read: Report dated 22 November 2023 from Sinead Murphy, Assistant Director: Environment regarding a business case for the purchase of a forklift truck. (**Copy circulated**)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Enright, seconded by Councillor Truesdale, it was agreed to approve the business case for the purchase of a replacement forklift truck.

SE/138/2023: JOINT COMMITTEE MEMBERS BULLETIN & MINUTES

Read: Arc21 – Joint Committee Members Bulletin & Minutes 26 October 2023
(Copy circulated)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor McEvoy, seconded by Councillor Finn, it was agreed to note the bulletin and minutes.

SE/139/2023: JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING IN COMMITTEE MINUTES – THURSDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2023

Read: Arc21 – Joint Committee Members Minutes 25 September 2023
(Copy circulated)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor McEvoy, seconded by Councillor Finn, it was agreed to note the minutes.

FOR NOTING

SE/140/2023: SUSTAINABLE FOOD PLACES BRONZE AWARD

Read: Report dated 22 November 2023 from Andrew Cassells, Director, Sustainability & Environment regarding Sustainable Food Places Bronze Award. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor McEvoy, seconded by Councillor Finn, it was agreed to note the Council's success in being awarded a SFP Bronze Award.

SE/141/2023: SUSTAINABLE FOOD PLACES BRIDGING THE GAP FUNDING APPLICATION

Read: Report dated 22 November 2023 from Andrew Cassells, Director of Sustainability & Environment regarding Bridging the Gap funding Application (Sustainable Food Places). **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor McEvoy, seconded by Councillor Finn, it was agreed to note the recent support for the above "Bridging the Gap" funding application. Committee would be advised on the outcome of the application at the earliest opportunity.

SE/142/2023: BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY

Read: Report dated 22 November 2023 from Andrew Cassells, Director of Sustainability & Environment regarding Draft Biodiversity Strategy and associated Action Plan. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor McEvoy, seconded by Councillor Finn, it was agreed to note the draft Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, along with the attached consultation questions, and the proposed public consultation. Members to provide any further feedback through NMD Speak Service or via besustainable@nmandd.org

SE/143/2023: **ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF THURSDAY 25 SEPTEMBER.**

Read: ARC21 joint committee meeting minutes of Thursday 25 September 2023.
(Copy circulated)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor McEvoy, seconded by Councillor Finn, it was agreed to note the minutes of ARC21 joint Committee Meeting held 25 September

There being no further business the meeting ended at 7.30pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 04 December 2023.

Signed: **Councillor Terry Andrews**
Chairperson

Signed: **Mr Andrew Cassells**
Director of Sustainability & Environment