

NEWRY MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Enterprise, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting
held on Monday 12 June 2023 at 6.00pm in the Boardroom, Monaghan Row,
and remotely via Microsoft Teams**

Chairperson: Councillor M Ruane (Chamber)

Deputy Chairperson: Councillor G Kearns (Chamber)

In attendance: **(Committee Members)**
Councillor T Andrews (Chamber)
Councillor C Bowsie (Chamber)
Councillor P Campbell (Chamber)
Councillor W Clarke (Teams)
Councillor C King (Chamber)
Councillor D Lee-Surginor (Chamber)
Councillor S Murphy (Chamber)
Councillor A Quinn (Chamber)
Councillor J Tinnelly (Teams)
Councillor J Truesdale (Chamber)

Non Members: Councillor O Hanlon (Teams)
Councillor C Enright (Teams)
Councillor A McMurray (Teams)
Councillor H Reilly (Teams)

Officials in Attendance: Mr C Mallon Director Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism
Mr A Patterson, Assistant Director Tourism, Culture & Events
Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director Enterprise, Employment Regeneration
Mr C Jackson Assistant Director Building Control & Licensing
Ms L Dillon Democratic Services Officer
Ms L Cummins Democratic Services Officer

ERT/062/2023: APOLOGIES / CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Councillor M Savage
Councillor C Galbraith

ERT/063/2023: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest.

**ERT/064/2023: ACTION SHEET
MINUTES OF ENTERPRISE, REGENERATION &
TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING
MONDAY 13 MARCH 2023**

Read: Action Sheet arising out of the Minutes of the Enterprise, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday 13 March 2023. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor it was agreed to note the Action Sheet arising from the Enterprise, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday 13 March 2023.

ERT/065/2023: ERT COMMITTEE – TERMS OF REFERENCE

Read: Report dated 12 June 2023 from Mr C Mallon Director ERT, regarding the Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism Committee Terms of Reference. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor it was agreed to adopt the proposed changes as detailed in Appendix 1 – Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism Terms of Reference.

**ERT/066/2022: START TIMES
ERT COMMITTEE MEETINGS
JUNE 2023 – MAY 2024**

Read: Paper recommending proposed dates and start times for Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meetings from June 2023 to May 2024. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor it was agreed the start time for ERT Committee Meetings from June 2023 - May 2024 will be 6.00 pm.

ERT/067/2022: ERT DIRECTORATE BUSINESS PLANS

Read: Report dated 12 June 2023 from Mr C Mallon Director ERT, regarding ERT Directorate Business Plans. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Campbell seconded by Councillor Kearns it was agreed to approve the ERT Directorate Business Plans.

NOTICE OF MOTION

**ERT/068/2023: NOTICE OF MOTION
RE: INVEST NI**

The following Notice of Motion came forward for consideration in the name of Councillor O Hanlon and Councillor D Murphy :-

"That this Council notes the recent publication of the Department of Economy's review into Invest NI; Welcomes that the need for profound change within the organisation has been recognised; Notes with concern that Invest NI has not proactively promoted the benefits and opportunities of the Protocol for businesses, which given our councils geographic position represents missed opportunities; And calls on Council to work collaboratively with Invest NI to put a focus on: 1. Promoting a balanced regional economy; 2. Boosting productivity; 3. Targeting support to local small and medium businesses; 4. Bringing new and good quality jobs to our district; 5. Future proofing our local economy and investing in green jobs; 6. Unlocking the potential of our towns."

Councillor Hanlon presented the Notice of Motion and made the following points:

- Invest NI have an annual budget of almost £140m and over 600 staff, therefore adequately resourced to develop the economy in towns and villages across the District.
- A vast majority of small businesses, particularly in Downpatrick, have been neglected, whereas large companies and consultants have been supported .
- Support should be given to a broad range of business with a partnership approach to sub regional economic development.
- Support for businesses to boost the local economy in Downpatrick and across the District remains a priority for Sinn Féin.

- Invest NI need to review how it conducts business focusing on attracting investment and creating new/good quality jobs in the area helping to unlock the potential of Downpatrick; kick start the night time economy; securing the status of our county town as a tourism and heritage hub and making it an even better place to live for our local community.
- Local businesses have huge opportunity with the north now having real competitive economic advantage as the recent deal between the EU and British Government has unlocked unique and unparalleled access for our businesses to both the EU and British markets.
- Political stability and a functioning Executive is needed to avail of this opportunity to create good jobs, grow businesses and strengthen the economy.

Read: Report dated 12 June 2023 from Mr J McGilly Assistant Director Enterprise Employment & Regeneration regarding a Notice of Motion on Invest NI. **(Circulated)**

AGREED: It was unanimously agreed to adopt the Notice of Motion.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Campbell seconded by Councillor Quinn it was agreed to note the report and ensure as the Invest NI review is implemented, robust structures and processes of engagement are put in place to ensure progress is made against the key priorities outlined in the Notice of Motion.

**ERT/069/2023: NOTICE OF MOTION
RE: DOWNPATRICK TOWN**

The following Notice of Motion came forward for consideration in the name of Councillor C Enirght and D Lee-Surginor:-

“ This Council recognises the disparity of Council investment between our County Town of Downpatrick when compared to large public-sector led investment proposals for Newry City or the Gateway Project in Newcastle. The recent flawed private sector-led project in our County Town failed to attract any private sector interest in redeveloping Downpatrick’s Town Centre. This project aimed to sell off the land-bank built up by Down Council over 30 years including the old Police Station, the main town car-park and derelict properties in Irish Street under the 2011 Downpatrick Masterplan. Council notes NM&D’s fresh opportunity to deliver a meaningful, large-scale public investment-led regeneration of Downpatrick’s old retail centre in line with the 2011 Council-led

Downpatrick Masterplan. This Council directs Management to reinstate the original public-sector led project for the town centre aspect of the Downpatrick Masterplan. Including the in-town 2-lane one-way system, additional on-street parking, enhanced pedestrian areas from ASDA to Irish Street and improved access to the old retail centre of the town to make it competitive with out-of-town shopping, LIDL or ASDA. Council notes that original estimates suggest that this could be achieved with 10% of the estimated cost of the proposed major Newry development or less than half the budget for the so-called Mournes Gateway project in Newcastle."

Councillor Enright presented the Notice of Motion making the following points:

- The Motion aims to copper fasten the public spending guarantees for the lands around the Irish Street Car park and old Police Station as envisaged by the former Down Council.
- Calls on NMDDC to renew the commitment to restoring the County town of Downpatrick by carrying through the aims of the 2011 Downpatrick Masterplan.
- Recent attempts by Council and DfC to sell several sites, including derelict properties in Irish Street, to the private sector, and abandon the original plan for a public sector led investment plan for the town, failed to attract any private sector investment.
- Calls for a new effort by Council to invest funding to ensure Downpatrick can develop as previously promised.
- Emerging consensus from all parties indicates the development of Downpatrick needs to be a public sector led project – these lands were assembled over 30 years with a view to a plan for the development of the town centre, improving access and revitalising the old retail centre of the town and make it competitive with out of town shopping.

Councillor Lee-Surginor concurred with Councillor Enright and indicated support for the Notice of Motion.

Read: Report dated 12 June 2023 from Mr J McGilly Assistant Director Enterprise Employment & Regeneration regarding a Notice of Motion on Downpatrick town. **(Circulated)**

Mr McGilly referred to initiatives undertaken by Council and DfC in partnership with local stakeholders from across the private sector, business community, community sector and the arts and culture sector.

He also added that the Development Plan was being revisited with the view to obtaining feedback from relevant stakeholders.

He also referred to engagement with wider stakeholders by way of workshops etc led through the Living High Streets initiative funded by DfC, with the Living High Streets Toolkit being launched this autumn.

Councillor Andrews supported the Notice of Motion.

Councillor Campbell said Sinn Fein supported the recommendations contained in the officer report highlighting the positive initiatives completed and ongoing in Downpatrick, Irish Street Public Realm Scheme, and Church Street Revitalisation Scheme which have benefited Downpatrick moving forward, including development of the new skate park and formation of the Regeneration Working Group. He added following engagement with residents and stakeholders including statutory, private and voluntary bodies, that everyone continue to work to improve our County town and move forward together.

AGREED: It was unanimously agreed to adopt the Notice of Motion.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Lee-Surginor seconded by Councillor Truesdale it was agreed:

- a) To agree the content of the Report, in particular the projects already implemented and those in planning and development phase and the role of the Downpatrick Regeneration Working Group as agreed by full Council.**
- b) To note the completion of the MAG / DfC Living High Street Toolkit in June and the formal launch in Autumn 2023.**
- c) Council Officials will present the outcomes of the MAG / DfC "co-designed" Living High Street Toolkit, as the framework / masterplan for regeneration of Downpatrick Town Centre, at the ERT Committee Meeting in August 2023.**

ERT/070/2023: NOTICE OF MOTION
RE: VAT FOR HOSPITALITY AND TOURSIM SECTOR

The following Notice of Motion came forward for consideration in the name of Councillors L Devlin and G Sharvin:-

" This Council unequivocally supports our hospitality and tourism sector and its vital contribution to the District's economy.

This Council puts on record our frustration that the recently announced Spring Budget failed to provide a lifeline to the Hospitality Sector by reducing the VAT rate.

This Council writes to the Chancellor calling for the issue to be reconsidered given the ever increasing rate of inflation and the fact that the Republic of Ireland's VAT rate for Hospitality and Tourism is 9% compared to our rate of 20%.

This Council writes to all 18 MP's calling on each to lobby for this much needed reduction in VAT ."

Councillor Andrews presented the Notice of Motion and made the following points:

- VAT is one of the biggest issues facing businesses, in particular the hospitality sector with soaring costs in some cases tripled from a number of years previous.
- NMD district has one of the best food drink offerings, yet increasing costs are pushing businesses to a point of no return.
- Northern Ireland is one of only 3 European countries who do not offer a reduced VAT rate for tourism, and with inflation at a record high, and food seeing the biggest cost increase, this acutely affects the hospitality industry.
- As part of the Council's Corporate Plan, we are endeavouring to make the NMD district one of the premier tourist destination in Ireland which will be impossible without local home grown businesses.
- During the pandemic VAT on hospitality was reduced to 5%, then increased to 12.5% in October 2021 but is now sitting at 20% since last year while in the Republic of Ireland VAT is sitting at 9% therefore making competitiveness impossible.
- The island of Ireland is marketed as a single destination beyond these shores with many visitors going north and south making an unfair competitive advantage.
- Immediate Government support is required for the hospitality sector. In any other financial climate these businesses would be viable and profitable and would in turn support the economy and communities. A VAT reduction would ensure sustainability for these businesses which is vital to the economic fabric or the District.

Several Councillors indicated support for the Notice of Motion.

Read: Report dated 12 June 2023 from Mr A Patterson Assistant Director Tourism Culture & Events regarding a Notice of Motion on reduction of VAT in the Tourism and Hospitality sector. **(Circulated)**

AGREED: It was unanimously agreed to adopt the Notice of Motion.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews seconded by Councillor Bowsie it was agreed:

a) Council write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer stating:

- This Council unequivocally supports our hospitality and tourism sector and its vital contribution to the District's economy.
- This Council puts on record our frustration that the recently announced Spring Budget failed to provide a lifeline to the Hospitality Sector by reducing the VAT rate.
- This Council calls for the issue to be reconsidered given the ever increasing rate of inflation and the fact that the Republic of Ireland's VAT rate for Hospitality and Tourism is 9% compared to our rate of 20%.

b) Council write to all 18 MPs calling on each to lobby for this much needed reduction in VAT.

ENTERPRISE EMPLOYMENT & REGENERATION

ERT/071/2023: ARTISAN MARKETS

Read: Report dated 12 June 2023 from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director Enterprise Employment and Regeneration regarding an update on Artisan Markets in Downpatrick, Newcastle, Newry, Warrenpoint and Slieve Gullion pilot. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Campbell seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor it was agreed:

- To note the annual attendance figures at the Artisan Markets and review market activity in Autumn.
- To note the delivery of a market in Slieve Gullion
- To recommend the sale of local craft alcohol products (unopened) at Artisan Markets, as per Licensing (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 – Local Producer's licence; sales not on licensed premises Article 52D of the Licensing (NI) Order 1996.

ERT/072/2023: NI ENTERPRISE SUPPORT SERVICE PROGRAMME

Read: Report dated 12 June 2023 from Mr J McGilly Assistant Director Enterprise Employment & Regeneration, regarding NI Enterprise Support Service Programme. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor it was agreed:

- **To note the update provided on the development of a NI Enterprise Support Service Programme.**
- **To approve that Council enters into a formal partnership agreement with the lead Council, subject to a successful funding bid to enable delivery of the programme.**

TOURISM CULTURE & EVENTS

ERT/073/2023: BALLYKINLAR HUT RELOCATION

Read: Report dated 12 June 2023 from Mr A Patterson Assistant Director Tourism Culture & Events, regarding Ballykinlar Hut Relocation. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Truesdale seconded by Councillor Andrews it was agreed to approve the recommendations regarding the Ballykinlar Hut project as set out in above Report.

Noted: It was noted removal of the hut will take place in the autumn to allow visitors to view the hut throughout the summer period.

**ERT/074/2023: BATHING WATER OPERATOR
-SANDY BOTTOM WARRENPOINT**

Read: Report dated 12 June 2023 from Mr A Patterson Assistant Director Tourism Culture & Events, regarding Bathing Water Operator for Sandy Bottom Warrenpoint. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Tinnelly seconded by Councillor Ruane it was agreed Council act as Bathing Water Operator for Sandy Bottom Warrenpoint.

ERT/075/2023: IRELAND GOLF TOUR OPERATOR ASSOCIATION

Read: Report dated 12 June 2023 from Mr A Patterson Assistant Director Tourism Culture & Events, regarding sponsorship for Ireland Golf Tour Operator Association. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Lee-Surginor seconded by Councillor Andrews it was agreed to approve Council sponsorship in the sum of £5,500 to the Ireland Golf Tour Operators Association National Golf Tourism and Gala Irish Golf Awards in October 2023.

ERT/076/2023: VISITOR SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Read: Report dated 12 June 2023 from Mr A Patterson Assistant Director Tourism Culture & Events, regarding Visitor Safety Advisory Group membership. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Truesdale seconded by Councillor Andrews it was agreed to approve Council membership of the Visitor Safety Advisory Group at an annual cost of £1,150.

EXEMPT INFORMATION

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews seconded by Councillor King 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 Andrews seconded by Councillor Bowsie it was agreed to come out of Closed Session.

ERT/077/2023: UPDATE RE: SMALL SETTLEMENTS SCHEME

Read: Report dated 12 June 2023 from Mr J McGilly Assistant Director Enterprise Employment & Regeneration regarding an update of the Small Settlements Scheme. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews seconded by Councillor King it was agreed:

- **Available revitalisation funding is allocated to the below action plans to enable the delivery of identified reserve projects:**
 - (a) -Meigh**
 - (b) -Newtownhamilton**
 - (c) -Strangford / Killough**
- **Council enter into an agreement with DFI that establishes agreement for placement of planters at various locations throughout Dundrum village on DFI lands.**
- **Council establish a formal agreement with Dundrum Village Association, to acknowledge the purchase of planters by Council, that ownership of the planters will pass to Dundrum Village Association and outline that Dundrum Village Association will after completion of the revitalisation scheme, assume full responsibility for the planter boxes. The Agreement will pass on Council's responsibilities under the terms of the agreement with DFI to Dundrum Village Association.**
- **Council to 'note' the update on the 4 EI Schemes, with a further report brought back following conclusion of the Tender Stage.**

ERT/078/2023: AONB & GEOPARK ENVIRONMENTAL FUND BUSINESS CASE

Read: Report dated 12 June 2023 from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director Enterprise Employment & Regeneration regarding AONB & Geopark Environmental Fund Business Case. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Quinn seconded by Councillor Truesdale it was agreed:

- a) To note Council have submitted a funding application to NIEA Environment Fund 2023 -28 for provision of Management for the Ring of Gullion and Strangford & Lecale AONBs; and the Strangford Lough, Murlough and Carlingford Lough MPAs.
- b) Subject to a successful funding application Council approve the Business Case for 5-year implementation of the core programmes and proceed to carry out the required procurement exercises in line with budgets available

ERT/079/2023: CARLINGFORD LOUGH GREENWAY
- **BUSINESS CASE FOR STAGE 1 WORKS**

Read: Report dated 12 June 2023 from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director Enterprise Employment & Regeneration regarding the Business Case for Carlingford Lough Greenway – Stage 1 works.
(Copy circulated)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Tinnelly seconded by Councillor Ruane it was agreed:

- a) **Members approve the Business Case for the Carlingford Lough Greenway `Site Investigation Study`.**
- b) **Members note the Letter Of Offer from DFI Blue Green Fund.**
- c) **Members approve the overall Business Case and proceed with procurement exercises as required for the delivery of Carlingford Lough Greenway project.**
- d) **Council `note` the update on progress and programme for the scheme.**

ERT/080/2023: THIRD PARTY TICKET SALES

Read: Report dated 12 June 2023 from Mr A Patterson Assistant Director Tourism Culture & Events regarding third party ticket sales. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Campbell seconded by Councillor Tinnelly it was agreed to approve the commission rates outlined in this report to third-party ticket sales for groups using Council's arts venues for performances & arts productions via the Council's Box Office.

ERT/081/2023: TOURISM EVENTS SUPPLIERS

Read: Report dated 12 June 2023 from Mr A Patterson Assistant Director Tourism Culture & Events regarding tourism events suppliers.
(Copy circulated)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor it was agreed to approve business cases to appoint successful suppliers via a procurement process to deliver on key aspects of Council's annual Tourism Events programme as set out in this report.

ERT/082/2023: ULSTER RALLY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Read: Report dated 12 June 2023 from Mr A Patterson Assistant Director Tourism Culture & Events, regarding Ulster Rally sponsorship.
(Copy circulated)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Bowsie seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor it was agreed Council enter into a sponsorship agreement with the event promoters as detailed in above Report.

FOR NOTING

**ERT/083/2023: BUILDING CONTROL
6 MONTHLY REPORT**

Read: Building Control 6 monthly report. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Campbell seconded by Councillor Bowsie it was agreed to note the Building Control 6 monthly Report.

ERT/084/2023: ERT HISTORIC ACTION TRACKER

Read: Action Tracker Report for Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism Committee. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Campbell seconded by Councillor Bowsie it was agreed to note the Historic Action Tracker Report for Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism Committee.

ERT/085/2023: FOREST PARK ENHANCEMENTS – DOG ENCLOSURES

Read: Report dated 12 June 2023 from Mr A Patterson Assistant Director Tourism Culture & Events regarding Forest Park Enhancements – dog enclosures. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Campbell seconded by Councillor Bowsie it was agreed to note the above Report.

**ERT/086/2023: LIECNSING
6 MONTHLY REPORT**

Read: Licensing 6 monthly Report. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Campbell seconded by Councillor Bowsie it was agreed to note the Licensing 6 monthly Report.

ERT/087/2023: PROPERTY CERTIFICATE FEES

Read: Report dated 12 June 2023 from Mr C Jackson Assistant Director Building Control & Licensing, regarding Property Certificate fees. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Campbell seconded by Councillor Bowsie it was agreed to note the content of the Property Certificate Fees report.

**ERT/088/2023: REPORT RE: SCHEME OF DELEGATION
OCTOBER 2022 – MARCH 2023**

Read: Report regarding Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism Department
Scheme of Delegation 01 October 2022 – 31 March 2023.
(Copy circulated)

**AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Campbell seconded by
Councillor Bowsie it was agreed to note the ERT Scheme of
Delegation Report October 2022 – March 2023.**

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 7.10pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 03 July 2023.

**Signed: Councillor M Ruane
Chairperson
Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism Committee**

**Signed: Mr C Mallon
Director Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism**
