

## **NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Neighbourhood Services Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 16 November 2021 at 6.00pm in the Mourne Room. Downshire Civic Estate, Downpatrick and via MS Teams.**

**Chair:** Councillor A Finnegan (Chamber)

**Members:** Councillor T Andrews (Chamber)  
Councillor P Brown (Teams)  
Councillor C Casey (Chamber)  
Councillor W Clarke (Teams)  
Councillor D Curran (Chamber)  
Councillor G Malone (Teams)  
Councillor D Murphy (Chamber)  
Councillor O Magennis (Teams)  
Councillor K McKeivitt (Teams)  
Councillor M Ruane (Teams)  
Councillor H McKee (Chamber)  
Councillor G Stokes (Teams)  
Councillor D Taylor (Teams)

**Non-Committee Members:** Cllr. Tinnelly  
Cllr. Gibbons  
Cllr. Reilly

**Officials in Attendance:** Mr J McBride Director Neighbourhood Services (Acting)  
Mr K Scullion, Assistant Director Facilities Management and Maintenance  
Ms S Murphy, Acting Assistant Director Waste Management  
Ms S Taggart – Democratic Services Manager (Acting)  
Ms L Dillon, Democratic Services Officer  
Ms C McAteer, Democratic Services Officer

**Also in attendance:** Mr A Cassells Strategic Investment Board Advisor

### **NS/163/2021: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillor Owen

### **NS/164/2021: DECLARATIONS OF "CONFLICTS OF INTEREST"**

Councillor Taylor declared an interest in item 12 – Business Case for the maintenance of Town Clocks – as a member of the Select Vestry of St. Patrick's Parish Church.

**NS/165/2021: ACTION SHEET OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19 OCTOBER 2021**

Read: Action Sheet of the Neighbourhood Services Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 19 October 2021. *(Circulated)*.

**AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor McKee, it was agreed the Action Sheet of the Neighbourhood Services Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 19 October 2021 be noted and actions removed as marked.**

Matters arising from Action Sheet

NS/148/2021: Christmas Illuminations and Celebrations Group Meeting

Councillor Andrews proposed and Councillor Brown seconded that in light of representations made by Gargory constituents that they would still like to have their tree, that officers meet on site with Gargory Community Group as soon as possible to try to come to some resolution that Gargory be provided with a Christmas tree for this year.

Mr Scullion said the NS Committee and full Council had agreed that this year a cut Christmas tree would not be placed in Gargory and it would be replaced with a planted tree now planted in Leitrim. He said there was now a progressive view in trying to reduce the number of cut trees and he would respectfully say to remain with the current position and not provide a tree in Gargory.

Councillor Ruane wanted it clarified that he had no problem with any community looking for a tree for their area for Christmas but it was setting a precedent if this was agreed. He said Council officers should speak with the group in relation to what could be done next year for Christmas but to do it this year would open the floodgates from any group from any part of the District who also wanted a tree. He said the allocation of Christmas trees had already been agreed through the Neighbourhood Services Committee and through full Council and there was also a Committee that put work into where the trees were located.

Councillor Curran spoke in support of the provision of a cut Christmas tree in Gargory for this year.

The proposal from Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Brown was put to a vote and voting was as follows:-

FOR:	7
AGAINST:	5
ABSTENTIONS:	0

The proposal was declared carried.

**AGREED:**               **On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Brown it was agreed that in light of representations made by Gargory constituents that they would like to have a cut Christmas tree provided this year, that officers meet on site with Gargory Community Group as soon as possible to try to come to some resolution that Gargory be provided with a Christmas tree.**

Christmas tree in Annalong

**AGREED:**               **It was agreed Mr Scullion provide an update to Councillor Reilly regarding the Christmas tree in Annalong.**

Newry Crib

Councillor Casey referred to his previous request that officials contact Newry Cathedral administrators requesting they open the garden to the public to allow them access to the Crib and said he did not accept the reply received that as far as they were concerned nothing had changed and it was not Parish's intention to open the area up to the general public, citing anti-social and liability issues. Councillor Casey said the piece of ground could be locked at night if necessary but at the very least during Christmas week it could be opened to allow people to visit the Crib and if necessary the crib pushed back in at night.

Mr Scullion advised he had contacted the Parish office and said the Crib was there on church property and it was their decision as to whether to provide access or not. He said the person he had spoken to did refer to the potential for anti-social behaviour and also potential liability issues should an accident happen in the grounds. He said it was the Parish preference that the arrangement continue as in previous years behind the gate, as if it were to be opened during the day there would be a requirement to have someone lock it at night and open it in the morning.

NS/147/2021 – Newry Canal

**AGREED:**               **In response to a query from Councillor Casey, Mr Scullion said he would check with the Council squad to see if they would be carrying out further maintenance works on the Canal which was in Council ownership (the piece to WIN Industrial Estate) and advise Councillor Casey. He would also liaise with colleagues in Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council regarding works. He confirmed he would also be taking a report back to the December Committee meeting regarding an update from Rivers Agency.**

## **FOR CONSIDERATION AND/OR DECISION**

**NS/166/2021: NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES DIRECTORATE – SIX MONTHLY REVIEW OF THE DIRECTORATE BUSINESS PLAN (APRIL 2021-SEPTEMBER 2021)**

Read: Report dated 16 November 2021 from Mr J McBride re: Neighbourhood Services Directorate – Six Month Review of the Directorate Business Plan (April 2021-September 2021). *(Circulated)*.

**AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Curran, seconded by Councillor Casey, it was agreed to approve the Six Month Review of the Neighbourhood Services Directorate Business Plan (April 2021-September 2021).**

In response to comments from Councillor Andrews:-

- Mr McBride said in terms of the fleet replacement programme additional resources had been secured and progress was being made in terms of specifications and the plan was to go out to tender very shortly. He advised an update would be brought to Committee next month.
- Ms Murphy said plan was to progress the Garage review within Q2 but due to a number of impacts this would be completed by the end of Q4.
- Ms Murphy said in relation to education in recycling a campaign would be commenced within the next week or two which was a NI wide campaign and members would be able to see what the Council would be participating in in relation to this campaign.

## **FACILITIES MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE**

**NS/167/2021: REMOVAL OF BAMBOO AT KILBRONEY FOREST**

Read: Report dated 17 November 2021 from Mr J McBride re: works relating to the removal of bamboo planting in Kilbroney Park, Rostrevor. *(Circulated)*.

**AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Finnegan, seconded by Councillor Murphy it was agreed to:-**

- **Approve the report into works relating to the removal of Bamboo Planting in Kilbroney Park, Rostrevor: and**
- **Agree to the development and implementation of new procedural arrangements whereby the Neighbourhood Services Committee be notified in advance of any**

**planned works, specifically in relation to the management of non-native invasive species, rewilding and the Council's tree strategy. Local DEAs to be consulted on any specific local issues.**

Councillor Tinnelly said he offered a qualified welcome to the findings of the report and thanked the Director and officials for their speedy response to concerns raised around this matter.

He said whilst he welcomed confirmation that the badger setts were empty this was a retrospective survey and he did not see any reference to the dates of when the setts possibly were vacated. However, he said 18 months of chemical spraying did not help matters and possibly deemed these setts uninhabitable and even though they were unused they were still subject to the Wildlife NI Order 1995.

Councillor Tinnelly then raised a number of issues in relation to the timeline included in the report presented to Committee. He said the context of the timeline for these events was very important and it was important the public were assured that no Councillors were aware that the bamboo planting was to be removed before it actually happened.

Councillor Tinnelly said the report as it currently sat did not make this clear and went on to address 4 specific issues regarding emails referenced in the report.

Mr McBride said the report as presented dealt with the facts and no information relating to any emails had been released as part of the report. He said it referred to the timeline of events pre and post the works and the information contained within the report dealt with the questions the Member was referring to.

Councillor Brown proposed and Councillor Malone seconded the report be amended to remove reference to those e mails to Councillors given the fact that the actual bamboo planting that was destroyed was not specifically referenced in these emails. The fact that this was not referenced meant that Councillors could not have known that this was the likely outcome and therefore the inclusion of that email in the report could be potentially misleading to the public.

Mr McBride said the report dealt with the facts pre and post the removal of the bamboo and referred to the conclusion of the report which stated that there was no evidence to suggest there had been any negative ecological impact arising from these actions. The report said this was supported by the removal of non-native invasive species which was consistent with the Council's Biodiversity Action Plan and the ecology report which had assessed the badger sett was dis-used/not currently in use.

Councillor McKee said before he could agree or disagree to anything he did not believe there was enough detail on it and there was too much for him to grasp and it was something that should be put in writing and considered at the next meeting.

Councillor Ruane said Council had to be open and transparent with everything they did. He said reference was made to a sentence in emails but for Council, Members should be made aware of all the emails and what was actually contained in them. He also said that there may be a number of phone calls with officers that were not referenced either in the report. He suggested what was needed was a full disclosure of all emails in relation to any contact in relation to the works that were carried out and he would propose this.

Councillor Finnegan seconded this proposal.

Councillor Brown said he would be happy to withdraw his proposal on this basis.

**AGREED:**                    **On the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Finnegan, it was agreed a report detailing all communications between officials and Councillors on the issue of the removal of bamboo in Kilbroney Forest tabled at the December Neighbourhood Services Committee Meeting for consideration.**

**NS/168/2021:            PUBLIC CONVENIENCE STRATEGY – GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

Read:                            Report dated 17 November 2021 from Mr K Scullion, Assistant Director Facilities Management and Maintenance regarding Public Convenience Strategy – governance arrangements. ***(Circulated)***

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

- **Note the contents of this report.**
- **Approve that governance arrangements for the delivery of the Public Toilet Strategy will be through the Neighbourhood Services Working Group.**
- **Officers to review the Terms of Reference of the Neighbourhood Services Working Group and report back for Committee consideration.**

Noted:                            Cllr. Andrews advised that as Councillor Stokes was the SDLP Group representative and the SDLP had a vacancy, Cllr. Curran would fill the SDLP vacancy on the Working Group.

## **WASTE MANAGEMENT**

### **NS/169/2021: HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING REVIEW**

Read: Report dated 16 November 2021 from Ms S Murphy Acting Assistant Director Waste Management regarding Household Recycling Centres update. *(Circulated)*.

**AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor McKee, it was agreed to note and approve the contents of this report and note an update report on HRC review would be provided at a future meeting of the NS Committee.**

In response to Councillor McKee, Ms Murphy advised the access control option for Kilkeel was the erection of automated barriers and for Hilltown, flow plates.

### **NS/170/2021: ENFORCEMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Read: Report dated 16 November 2021 from Ms S Murphy Acting Assistant Director Waste Management regarding implementation of the Enforcement Improvement Plan for dog fouling and illicit dumping. *(Circulated)*

**AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Casey, seconded by Councillor Murphy, it was agreed to note the content of this update report.**

### **NS/171/2021: DEEP CLEANSING OF PAVED SURFACES**

Read: Report dated 16 November 2021 from Ms S Murphy Acting Assistant Director Waste Management regarding schedule of deep cleansing of paved surfaces to other areas within the District. *(Circulated)*.

**AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Curran, seconded by Councillor McKee, it was agreed to approve the deep cleansing schedule as set out in section 2.2 of the report.**

Ms Murphy responded to queries from Members:-

- Larger coastal villages like Ardglass would be included within the tier 3 settlements and officers were looking at options in terms of deep cleansing and would report these back to Committee.
- Noted the request that Newtownhamilton be included on the tier 3 settlement schedule.

- Noted comments that if there was resources for tier 3 areas there should be a way to prioritise this to try and tackle those areas that have that higher footfall, particularly those along the coast.
- Noted comments that Council should have their own in-house resource that would allow Council to do the work themselves on a year on year basis and this was something that could be discussed at the cleansing workshop next week.
- Expect work as detailed in the report would be carried out in the coming months, dependent on the contractor's availability.

Councillor Finnegan said she would like to pass on her thanks from herself and Crossmaglen Community Association to the Director, Officers and the Cleansing and Maintenance Team for the excellent work they did in over Halloween. She asked that her thanks be passed on to the Team on the ground.

**NS/172/2021: CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR ARRANGEMENTS**

Read: Report dated 16 November 2021 from Ms S Murphy Acting Assistant Director Waste Management regarding arrangements for refuse collection services and opening of Household Recycling Centres for the 2021 Christmas and New Year holiday period.  
***(Circulated)***

**AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Stokes, seconded by Councillor Magennis, it was agreed to note the arrangements in 3.2 for Refuse Collection Services and 3.3 for Household Recycling Centres for the 2021 Christmas and New Year holiday period to be publicised as follows:**

- **Publicised on Council website**
- **Posted on social media outlets**
- **Details to be recorded on 'out of hours' messaging**
- **Holiday arrangements to be displayed prominently at HRC sites from 13 December 2021**

**EXEMPT INFORMATION ITEMS**

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

Items 11, 12, 13 and 14 are deemed to be exempt under 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) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.



**On the proposal of Councillor McKee, seconded by Councillor Magennis, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on these items.**

**NS/173/2021: MINUTES OF ARC 21 'IN COMMITTEE' JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING – THURSDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2021**

Read: Minutes of Arc 21 'In Committee' Joint Committee Meeting held on Thursday 30 September 2021. *(Circulated)*.

**NS/174/2021: BUSINESS CASE FOR MAINTENANCE OF TOWN CLOCKS**

Read: Report dated 16 November 2021 from Mr K Scullion, Assistant Director Facilities Management and Maintenance regarding business case for maintenance of town clocks. *(Circulated)*.

**NS/175/2021: MIXED DRY RECYCLABLES CONTRACT**

Read: Report dated 16 November 2021 from Ms S Murphy Acting Assistant Director Waste Management regarding the extension of a contract for the management of the Council's Mixed Dry Recyclable (MDR) waste. *(Circulated)*.

**NS/176/2021: NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES DIRECTORATE PROCUREMENT ACTION PLAN**

Read: Report dated 16 November 2021 from Mr J McBride, Director: Neighbourhood Services (Acting) regarding Neighbourhood Services Directorate Procurement Action Plan. *(Circulated)*.

Councillor McKee, and Councillor Magennis, seconded to come out of closed session.

When the Committee was out of closed session the Chairperson reported the following had been agreed:-

NS/173/2021 - Minutes of ARC21 'In Committee' Joint Committee Meeting – Thursday 30 September 2021

**AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor McKee, it agreed to note the Arc21 'In Committee' Joint Committee Meeting Minutes held on Thursday 30 September 2021.**

NS/174/2021 - Business Case for the maintenance of town clocks

**AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Stokes, it agreed to:-**

- **Note the content of the report.**
- **Approve the findings of the business case that reviews options for maintenance of five town clocks. The preferred option (Option 3) would see a suitably qualified maintenance contractor appointed through tender to undertake routine maintenance of the six town clocks and provide breakdown cover for up to a maximum three-year period. The contract would include the option to remove existing clocks or add additional clocks from the service provision.**
- **Council consider undertaking a project which would lead to the restoration of the clock at Dan Rice Hall and if agreed to proceed then to approve the recommendations within section 2.3 of this report.**

NS/175/2021 - Mixed Dry Recyclables Contract

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Murphy, seconded by Councillor McKevitt, it agreed to approve the contract for the Receipt and Processing of Mixed Dry Recyclables with the Council's current contractor be extended from 1 April 2022 for two years.

NS/176/2021 – Neighbourhood Services Procurement Action Plan Update

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Finnegan, seconded by Councillor McKee, it was agreed to approve an extension to the Neighbourhood Services Procurement Action Plan to the 30 June 2022.

**Noted:** Councillor McKevitt asked that it be recorded that she had expressed serious concerns at the amount of contracts that were currently out and the additional cost to the Council to procure these contracts, which had not been budgeted for in the rates process.

**FOR NOTING**

**NS/177/2021: ARC21 JC MINUTES  
THURSDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2021**

Read: Arc21 JC Meeting Minutes held on 30 September 2021  
*(Circulated).*

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Casey , seconded by Councillor Andrews, it was agreed to mark this correspondence noted.

**NS/178/2021: ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE MEMBERS' MONTHLY BULLETIN THURSDAY 28 OCTOBER 2021**

Read: Arc21 Joint Committee Members' Monthly Bulletin held on Thursday 28 October 2021 *(Circulated)*.

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Casey, seconded by Councillor Andrews it was agreed to mark this correspondence noted.

**NS/179/2021: NISRA – NI LOCAL AUTHORITY COLLECTED MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STATISTICS**

Read: Correspondence from NISRA re: NI Waste Management Statistics – April to June 2021. *(Circulated)*.

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Casey, seconded by Councillor Andrews, it was agreed to note this information.

**NS/180/2021: ISSUE OF FIXED PENALTY NOTICES**

Read: Report dated 16 November 2021 from Ms S Murphy re: Update to Council on issue of fixed penalty notices. *(Circulated)*

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

Noted: Ms Murphy to liaise with Councillor Casey outside the meeting regarding his queries in relation to statistics for enforcement action taken against dog fouling.

**NS/181/2021: HISTORIC ACTIONS TRACKING SHEET**

Read: Historic Actions Tracking Sheet *(Circulated)*.

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Casey, seconded by Councillor Andrews, it was agreed the Historic Actions Tracking Sheet of the Neighbourhood Services Committee Meetings be noted and actions removed as marked.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 7.25 pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 06 December 2021.

**Signed: Councillor A Finnegan**  
**Deputy Chairperson of Neighbourhood Services Committee**

**Signed: Mr J McBride**  
**Director of Neighbourhood Services (Acting)**