

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

**Minutes of Neighbourhood Services Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 18 August 2021 at 6.00pm in the Mourne Room. Downshire Civic Estate, Downpatrick and via MS Teams.**

**Chair:** Councillor A Finnegan

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

**Non-Committee Members:** Councillor P Byrne (Teams)  
Councillor G O'Hare (Teams)

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

### **NS/116/2021: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Walker, Stokes and McKevitt and Mr L Dinsmore, Head of Waste Processing and Enforcement.

### **NS/117/2021: DECLARATIONS OF "CONFLICTS OF INTEREST"**

No declarations of conflicts of interest were made.

### **NS/118/2021: ACTION SHEET OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 23 JUNE 2021**

**Read:** Action Sheet of the Neighbourhood Services Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 23 June 2021. ***(Circulated)***.

**AGREED:**                   **On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Magennis, it was agreed the Action Sheet of the Neighbourhood Services Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 23 June 2021 be noted and actions removed as marked.**

**FOR CONSIDERATION/DECISION**

**NS/119/2021:    NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES OPERATIONAL UPDATE**

Read:                        Report dated 18 August 2021 from Mr J McBride re:  
Neighbourhood Services Operational Update. ***(Circulated)***.

Mr McBride outlined a summary of the actions taken in response to several operational challenges encountered during July and August 2021, and which impacted upon the level of service provided to the public.

Issues raised

- Commend NS Team and especially the front-line staff for all their hard work during such challenging times but Members expressed their deep concerns regarding the level of service provided for refuse collection and street cleansing and said it was not acceptable.
- The challenges from COVID were acknowledged but Members said there had been ongoing problems with the refuse collection service for years and it was time action was taken to deal with them and have a root and branch review in terms of staffing capacity and vehicular capacity. If additional resources were needed, then this should be identified.
- The need for good cleansing schedules to be put in place especially during the tourism season, with a deep cleanse of coastal areas, including street furniture, at the beginning of the tourist season.
- Cleansing schedules for many of the Estates and housing developments throughout the District needed to be put in place. Officers needed to be more pro-active about this and look at developing an app which would provide clear information to the public.
- Street bins needed to be emptied more regularly and if bins were sited at the end of roads etc. these needed to be emptied on a regular basis.

Mr McBride acknowledged that whilst COVID had presented challenges, the level of service that had been provided was not what was expected. He said he would continue to engage with Members on these issues and confirmed that a contractor would shortly be appointed to carry out a deep cleanse on specific areas in the major towns and villages of the District. He advised the schedule of deep cleansing would be presented to Members at the next Committee Meeting.

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

**AGREED:** It was also agreed a schedule of deep cleansing in the major towns and villages throughout the District be presented to Members at the next Committee Meeting for their information.

## **FACILITIES MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE**

### **NS/120/2021: PUBLIC TOILET STRATEGY WORK PACKAGES**

Read: Report dated 18 August 2021 from Mr K Scullion re: Public Toilet Strategy Work Packages. *(Circulated)*.

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor McKee, it was agreed to

- Note contents of this report
- To agree the recommendations as set out in section 2.2

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Murphy, it was agreed that the governance arrangements for the delivery of the Public Toilet Strategy would be via a Project Board and that a report be brought back to the September Committee Meeting on the establishment of such a Board; Membership and draft terms of reference.

### **NS/121/2021: BUS SHELTER REQUESTS**

Read: Report dated 18 August 2021 from Mr K Scullion re: bus shelter requests. *(Circulated)*.

#### Issued raised

In response to a query from Councillor O'Hare, Mr Scullion advised that a tender for the provision and installation of a bus shelter on Main Street Hilltown, would close next week and it was hoped to have the shelter erected end of September/early October 2021.

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

- **Note the content of the report.**
- **Approve erection of new Bus Shelter at Bridge Rd, Burren**
- **Approve the removal of old bus shelter at Corlat Rd, Whitecross**
- **Approve the replacement of existing bus shelter at Ardfreelin, Newry**

**NS/122/2021: CHRISTMAS ILLUMINATIONS AND CELEBRATIONS GROUP MEETING – 5 AUGUST 2021**

Read: Report dated 18 August 2021 from Mr K Scullion re: Christmas Illuminations and Celebrations Group Meeting held on 5 August 2021. *(Circulated)*.

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Finnegan, seconded by Councillor Murphy, it was agreed to note the content of this report and the Action Sheet of the Christmas Illuminations Group Meeting held on 5 August 2021 and to approve the following recommendations set out in Section 2.3 and 2.5:-**

- **Subject to consultation with affected local community groups involved with this project, to replace the existing trees at Belleeks, Drumaroad, Newcastle & Ballykinelar with either Carpinus betulus 'Fastigiata' or Pinus nigra trees.**
- **Agree to the replacement of the cut tree previously provided in Gargory for a sustainable Christmas tree in Leitrim.**

**AGREED:** **It was also agreed, following a request from Councillor Curran and Councillor Brown, that officials look again at the possibility of providing some type of Christmas illuminations on English Street, Downpatrick for this year and that discussions be held with local businesses to see if any compromise agreement can be reached. Officers bring back an options paper for consideration at the September Committee Meeting.**

**NS/123/2021: UPDATE ON TREE STRATEGY WORKS**

Read: Report dated 18 August 2021 from Mr K Scullion re: arboriculture works progress update. *(Circulated)*.

Issues raised

- A request from Councillor Casey that several trees vandalised and uprooted on the Newry Canal towpath be replaced (Mr Ellis confirmed this would be done)

- Officers to arrange to cut back an overgrown section of the towpath from O'Reilly's Lock and if necessary liaise with Rivers Agency in relation to this matter.
- Need for additional bins where the two path splits past Carnbane.
- Officers to look at a request to consider Donard Forest/Domain as part of a future work programme and advise Councillor Clarke of the up to date position.
- In response to Councillor McKee, Mr Ellis gave an explanation on tree felling at Kilbroney Park and the Narnia trail and future action to be taken.
- In response to Councillor Ruane, Mr Ellis to ensure broken and overhanging tree branches in Ring McIlroy Park, Warrenpoint, be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

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

**AGREED:**                    **It was agreed Officers action the issues raised by Members and advise individual Members of the outcome.**

**NS/124/2021:**            **ALL IRELAND POLLINATOR PLAN**

Read:                            Report dated 18 August 2021 from Mr K Scullion re: All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. ***(Circulated)***.

Issues raised

- Concerns that some areas that had been re-wilded had not worked and instead of masses of colour from native wildflowers there were overgrown areas of long grass and weeds.
- Would those areas be cut back and new seeds sown if necessary.

Mr Ellis gave an update on why some areas had been more successful than others and advised on issues such as weather; ground and soil conditions and the procurement of specialist machinery which would help maintain the re-wilded areas. He encouraged Members to continue with the project and said this was only year one and lessons had been learned. He advised Members would be kept updated as the project was moved forward.

**AGREED:**                    **On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Magennis, it was agreed to note the content of this report and that Newry, Mourne and Down District Council register as a supporter of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.**

**WASTE MANAGMENT**

**NS/125/2021: DISTRIBUTION OF COMPOSTABLE FOOD BAGS AND FOOD WASTE CADDY BINS**

Read: Report dated 18 August 2021 from Ms S Murphy re: distribution of compostable food bags and food waste caddy bins. *(Circulated)*.

**AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Murphy, it was agreed to recommend approval of Option 1 for the distribution of compostable food waste bags and option 3 for the distribution of caddy bins as follows:-**

**Distribution of Compostable Food Waste Bags: Recommended Option: Option 1**

- **The continuation of current arrangements for the distribution of Compostable Food Waste Bags.**
- **Bags to continue to be available at HRC sites (10 sites)**
- **Bags to be available for collection at other 29 locations e.g. Council Offices and Community Centres, following relaxation of Covid restrictions.**
- **Bags to be made available at appropriate Community outlets where requested**
- **Bags to be made available to Councillors where requested for onwards delivery to known requestors, from September 2021.**

**Distribution of Caddy-bins: Recommended Option: Option 3**

**It is proposed that a number of caddy-bins are made available for householders who request a replacement caddy-bin.**

- **It is considered that a publicity initiative be re-run to encourage householders not to place food waste in their black bin**
- **To support the initiative a number of food waste caddies to be made available and distributed as follows to reduce delivery costs:-**
  1. **Food waste caddies to be made available to Councillors on an equal basis and maximum limit of 100 caddies, as required, with Councillors to issue to householders at recorded addresses. Householder to receive additional instruction 'Lets Recycle Right' and a roll of compostable liners**
  2. **1000 food waste caddies to be made available for issue by Customer Services, on request, to replace broken caddies with collection to be arranged from local HRC site by householder and/or at Greenbank /Downshire following reopening of such facilities. Any surplus not taken up by Councillors to be redistributed in this manner.**
  3. **10 Food Waste Caddies to be issued to primary schools, on request (max 1000 caddies) to further promote food waste recycling in the home, as per previous Council decision.**

**AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Murphy, it was also agreed to that Officers**

**explore the feasibility of deploying brown bins to residents of high-rise buildings, who were not previously provided with these, and a report be brought back to the next Committee Meeting.**

(Councillor Taylor left the meeting)

**NS/126/2021: FLEET REPLACEMENT UPDATE**

Read: Report dated 18 August 2021 from Ms S Murphy re: Fleet Replacement (Capital) – status update. *(Circulated)*.

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

**AGREED: At the request of Councillor Andrews it was agreed officers investigate the revenue potential of having advertisements on Council vehicles, similar to a scheme introduced by APSE and report back to Committee.**

**NS/127/2021: ENFORCEMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Read: Report dated 18 August 2021 from Ms S Murphy re: implementation of the Enforcement Improvement Plan for dog fouling and illicit dumping. *(Circulated)*.

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

**AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Andrews, it was also agreed that officers prepare a report for the next Committee Meeting on options for future staffing levels to improve the enforcement service, including the possibility of supplementing the service with a contractor on a short-term basis.**

**AGREED: At the request of Councillor Casey it was also agreed officers replace the existing signage with updated Newry, Mourne and Down signage, in relation to keeping dogs on a lead on Newry Towpath.**

**NS/128/2021: CIRCULAR ECONOMY STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK – CALL FOR EVIDENCE**

Read: Report dated 18 August 2021 from Ms S Murphy re: Circular Economy Framework – Call for Evidence. *(Circulated)*.

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Finnegan, it was agreed to note the contents of the response provided in Appendix 1.

**NS/129/2021:** **DISTRIBUTION OF COMPOST FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS**

Read: Report dated 18 August 2021 from Ms S Murphy re: distribution of compost for community groups. *(Circulated)*.

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Casey, it was agreed to note the content of this report and that an update report would be provided at the September Committee Meeting.

#### **FOR NOTING**

**NS/130/2021:** **Arc21 JC MINUTES – 27 MAY 2021**

Read: Arc21 JC Meeting Minutes held on 27 May 2021 *(Circulated)*.

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

**NS/131/2021:** **HISTORIC ACTIONS TRACKING SHEET**

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

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

#### **EXEMPT INFORMATION ITEMS**

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

Items 18 and 19 were 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 Andrews, seconded by Councillor Magennis, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on these items.**

**NS/132/2021: ARC 21 IN COMMITTEE JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – THURSDAY 27 MAY 2021**

Read: Arc 21 In Committee Joint Committee Meeting Minutes held on Thursday 27 May 2021. *(Circulated)*.

**NS/133/2021: BUSINESS CASE FOR REPLACEMENT OF SAFETY TILES WITH WET-POUR SURFACING IN VARIOUS COUNCIL PLAY AREAS**

Read: Report dated 18 August 2021 from Mr K Scullion re: business case for replacement of safety tiles with wet-pour surfacing in various Council play areas. *(Circulated)*.

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

(Councillor Brown left the meeting)

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

NS/132/2021 - Arc21 Joint Committee Minutes 27 May 2021

**AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Murphy, it was agreed to note the Arc21 Joint Committee Meeting Minutes held on Thursday 27 May 2021.**

NS/133/2021 – Business Case for the replacement of safety tiles with wet-pour surfacing in various Council Play Areas

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

- **Note the content of the report.**
- **Approve the findings of the Business Case presented. Accept Option 3 – Replacement of defective safety tiles with a Wet Pour surface to safety standards required for each of the 24 Play Parks under consideration over the financial years 2021/22 to 2022/23. Project to proceed subject to budget availability.**

**AGREED: It was also agreed officers look at the surfacing on Whitecross play park and Leitrim play park to see if they would be eligible for resurfacing with wet-pour surfacing.**

Mr J McBride read out the following statement on behalf of the Chief Executive:

“Due to the current legislative uncertainty around remote meetings and the restrictions on indoor gatherings, the Chief Executive also agrees to exercise her delegated authority under Standing Orders to implement the resolution of the Committee once ratified by Council subject to any conflict of interest or legal advice that the decision is unlawful.”

There being no further business the meeting ended at 8.25 pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 6 September 2021.

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

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