

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

NMD/SC/

Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on Monday 29 August 2017 at 6pm in the Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick

In the Chair: Councillor W Clarke

In attendance: (Councillors)

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor P Brown
Councillor R Burgess	Councillor P Byrne
Councillor C Casey	Councillor G Craig
Councillor C Enright	Councillor H Harvey
Councillor M Larkin	Councillor K Loughran
Councillor J Macauley	Councillor D McAteer
Councillor O McMahon	Councillor M Murnin
Councillor B Quinn	Councillor M Ruane
Councillor M Savage	Councillor J Trainor
Councillor B Walker	

(Officials)

Mr L Hannaway, Chief Executive

Ms C Taylor, Democratic Services Officer

Also in attendance: Ms K Sharkey (Service Delivery Manager – Newcastle/Downpatrick)
Mr C McHugh (Service Delivery Manager – Newcastle/Downpatrick)

SC/19/2017 APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Carr, Curran, Devlin, Fitzpatrick, Hanna, Harte, Sharvin, Stokes, Taylor and Tinnelly.

The Chair offered condolences to the families of local men, Féargal Magennis and Geoff Cartwright from the District who had been tragically killed in road accidents.

AGREED: It was agreed a letter of condolence be sent to the families of Féargal Magennis and Geoff Cartwright.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Michael Savage to the Council and thanked Kevin McAteer for his contribution to Council.

AGREED: It was agreed that a letter of thanks be sent to Kevin McAteer for his contribution to Council.

SC/20/2017 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

SC/21/2017

PRESENTATION BY TRANSLINK

The Chairperson welcomed Ms Kay Sharkey and Mr Ciaran McHugh from Translink to the meeting and invited them to make their presentation.

Mr McLaughlin thanked the Chairperson for the opportunity to present to Council and he highlighted the following points from Newcastle and Downpatrick:

- Phoenix Gas had been working in the Spa area and the Annacloy Road into Downpatrick which had affected school services prior to June with road closures and Translink services had experienced difficulties in getting through. There would now be a one week lane closure between Spa and Walter Watson's on the Dunmore Road for one week. Social media, the journey planner and schools had been updated to reflect this lane closure.
- From 1 September, it was hoped Phoenix Gas would have completed as far as the Aughlisnafin Road and it was hoped the Service 18 could be amended to divert along this road instead of via Drumcaw.
- Phoenix Gas would be moving onto section between the Clonvarghan Road to Walter Watson's engineering works, during this time Shimna School bus can still operate and buses from St Malachy's in the afternoon can still operate and been asked to keep updated as to when they will reach the Clonvarghan Road as diversions will then be required.
- Works would start in Kilmore in mid-September, which Phoenix Gas hoped to complete over 2 consecutive Sundays and a lane closure would be in place.
- Works would start in October/November on the Ardnabannon Road and a lane closure would be operated by traffic lights.
- Works to the Carnacaville Road towards Maghera village would start in late January/February time, and this would cause major disruption to St. Joseph's Primary School. Phoenix Gas were liaising with the school in regard to this planned disruption.
- The Translink summer timetable had been operating since the last day in June and the winter timetable would begin on 1 September 2017.
- Maria McCann was moving on to a development programme within Translink and a new Chief Clerk was in place in the Newcastle Depot, in Elise McEvoy who would deal with bookings for private hire.
- A new temporary staff inspector, Colin Corrigan was also in place.
- Ciaran McHugh would take over in mid-September, the role of Service Delivery Manager in Newcastle and Downpatrick and Kay Sharkey would move on to look after the Translink Travel Centre.
- There had been calls from Mourne's Councillors and the Kilkeel Chamber of Commerce for an upgrade of the Translink depot in Kilkeel. The depot was very small with a small area to park buses and there had been calls from the public to provide toilet facilities, which could not be provided as the building was too small. There was a depot upgrade programme within Translink, but no funding and Tranlink representatives called on the Councillors to lobby the Assembly once it was up and running.

- An update was provided on the events that had taken place during the summer across the District and how well the transport had been running.
- The offer of a return ticket for the price of a single would finish on 31 August, and had been well used. During the winter period one third off off-peak returns after 09:30 could be availed of on buses and trains and there was a rambler fare on a Sunday.
- 15-24 year olds got a third off fares if they purchased a card for £8.
- Translink had invested heavily in Newcastle and Downpatrick last year and had provided extra 215 services – Downpatrick to Belfast - in September 2016, and passenger numbers were continuing to grow.
- 237 Express – Newcastle to Belfast was also seeing growth and people using it in the afternoons.
- Town services, especially the Kilkeel town service needed more passenger numbers as did Ballynahinch town service.

Mr McHugh provided his email address for Councillors wishing to contact him:
Ciaran.mchugh@translink.co.uk

Representatives from Translink responded to the queries as follows:

Slieve Croob DEA

In response to Councillor Murnin's concerns regarding the speed of buses through Carlisle Park, Ballynahinch, the Translink representatives explained when buses operated through housing estates, a cushioned speed bump was requested to limit noise, although Carlisle Park, Ballynahinch did not have these and to alleviate the problem, a notice would be put up in the area asking the drivers to watch their speed.

Downpatrick DEA

In response to Councillor Enright's queries, the Translink representatives explained that Translink actively promoted a "Go Healthy" scheme for their bus drivers to become actively engaged in sport.

Slieve Gullion DEA

Councillor Hearty raised concerns regarding the transport between Crossmaglen and Newry, particularly in the evenings. With the new leisure centre and access to the cinema and city centre facilities, people of the Crossmaglen area disadvantaged as they were not able to get a bus home after 6.10pm. He called on Translink to look at a well advertised pilot scheme for the area for 4-5 months.

Ms Sharkey undertook to pass on Councillor Hearty's concerns to Mr McLaughlin in the Newry depot, saying it could be something Translink would look into.

Newry DEA

Councillor Casey said the 11B to Drumgullion and Fairfield Heights were missed, but was glad that Translink were not cutting services without prior consultation.

The Mournes DEA

Councillor Quinn raised concerns in the Kilkeel area, saying the Post Office had moved to across the road from the Translink depot and elderly residents would be using the buses to access the Post Office, but the depot was not meeting their needs and required an upgrade.

Councillor Quinn said some areas ie. Attical, Cranfield, Greencastle, Longstone, did not require a bus service every day, one or two days a week serving these areas of would suffice and if people knew which days the buses ran on, it could meet most of their needs and this could help increase the usage of the services.

Councillor Quinn asked for a pilot scheme for buses running in the evenings from Newry to Kilkeel.

Councillor Quinn asked if Translink undertook a consultation, the Mournes Councillors wished to be involved.

Councillor Clarke asked Translink to look at the service in Newcastle to Sunningdale Drive, Tullybrannigan area, saying people would like to avail of this service, but a steep hill was preventing pensioners from accessing it.

Councillor Clarke concurred with Councillor Quinn's comments regarding the upgrade of the Kilkeel depot, saying partnership and working in collaboration was needed and he proposed writing to the Permanent Secretary at the Department for Infrastructure seeking resources for the upgrade of the Kilkeel depot. Councillor Quinn seconded this proposal.

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Quinn, that correspondence be sent to the Permanent Secretary at the Department for Infrastructure seeking resources for the upgrade of the Kilkeel depot.

Councillor Quinn suggested Translink and Council worked together on a travel package involving membership, which would help passengers wishing to travel from the smaller towns and villages to Newry and Downpatrick to avail of the facilities.

Councillor Clarke also suggested linking the car parks with the town services which would cut down on town centre congestion.

Crotlieve DEA

As Councillor Tinnelly was an apology for the meeting, Mr Hannaway advised the Translink representatives of his query regarding a bus shelter at the park n ride at the Sheepbridge.

Councillor McAteer queried whether Translink engaged with Council over bus stops and what the budget was for bus stops.

Mr McHugh advised initially Translink would establish the need for a bus stop and take into account how busy the stop was or would be. They did work in partnership with Council and worked with a company who Translink worked with on the infrastructure of bus stops. It was hoped communities and/or Council approached Translink with the needs and Translink would then assess the need and work in conjunction with the Department for Infrastructure and the PSNI over safety.

Mr McHugh confirmed Translink Head Office would keep the budget for the bus stops and undertook to provide details to Councillor McAteer.

Ms Sharkey undertook to provide the information regarding the bus stop at the Sheepbridge Park n Ride to Councillor Tinnelly.

Rowallane DEA

In response to Councillor Walker's query regarding a park n ride in the Downpatrick area, Ms Sharkey confirmed Translink were keen to develop park n rides and were generally a success. She said a park n ride for Saintfield/Crossgar was being looked into and a review was currently being undertaken currently and park n ride was included within this review.

Councillor Walker raised concerns over the lack of bus service on a Sunday from Killyleagh to Downpatrick and asked Translink to look into a Pilot scheme for a few months. In response, Ms Sharkey undertook to speak with the scheduler regarding the bus service from Killyleagh to Downpatrick on a Sunday.

In response to Councillor Harvey's concerns regarding disruption to Crossgar by Phoenix Gas, Ms Sharkey confirmed there would be a lane closure, although she hoped buses could still travel through the town and she was worked with Phoenix Gas on this issue.

In response to Councillor Brown's queries regarding the large run down space on the Belfast Road, Saintfield, Ms Sharkey undertook to chase up who was responsible for tidying up the site.

Councillor Brown said there was a need for a park n ride in Saintfield, to which Ms Sharkey confirmed there had been plans a few years ago for, and she would revert to Councillor Brown on this query.

In response to concerns from Councillor Andrews, Ms Sharkey confirmed work had been undertaken with the schools and with the Education Board regarding children being dropped off in Crossgar to take the No 12 bus to Ballygowan, and would ask Peter Murphy to revert to Councillor Andrews on this issue.

Ms Sharkey confirmed Translink would look into a bus service from Killyleagh to Crossgar to Ballynahinch on market day, but said it had been provided some years ago and taken off as it was not well used. She suggested another option was Lisburn on market day there and she would pass this information to the scheduler.

Ms Sharkey confirmed there were capacity issues on the school services, but there were no extra buses that could be used.

Ms Sharkey referred to the Westlands Express stop in Crossgar, saying the express buses were a success for Translink as they were limited in stops. She said the 237 service from Newcastle to Belfast had stops taken off in Dundrum after consultation with passengers, and to this end, she was not keen to add another stop in Crossgar as it would make the express service less attractive.

Councillor Burgess referred to the bus service from Downpatrick to Ballynahinch, saying the last direct bus was at 5.45pm and enquired if a later bus could be scheduled.

The Chairperson thanked Ms Sharkey and Mr McHugh for their attendance at the meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 6.56pm

For adoption at Meeting of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council to be held on Monday 2 October 2017.

Signed:

Chairperson

Chief Executive