

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of Strategy Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on Thursday 13 May 2021 at 6.00pm via Microsoft Teams (Hybrid)

In the Chair: Councillor G Sharvin

In Attendance:

Councillor P Brown	Councillor P Byrne
Councillor O Hanlon	Councillor R Howell
Councillor A Lewis	Councillor H McKee
Councillor O Magennis	Councillor D Murphy
Councillor M Savage	Councillor W Walker

Also in attendance: Councillor T Andrews
Councillor G Hanna
Councillor J Trainor

Officials in Attendance: Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
Mrs D Carville, Director of Corporate Services
Mr M Lipsett, Director of Active & Healthy Communities
Mr C Mallon, Director of Enterprise, Regeneration & Tourism
Mrs C Miskelly, Assistant Director Corporates Services, HR & Safeguarding
Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director Corporate Services
Mr C Quinn, Assistant Director of Estates & Capital Projects
Mr F O'Connor, Legal Advisor
Mr A Patterson, Assistant Director Tourism Culture & Events
Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director Enterprise, Employment & Regeneration
Mrs R Mackin, Assistant Director Corporate Planning & Policy
Mrs L Fitzsimons, Human Resources Manager
Mr G McBride, Head of Administration & Customer Services
Mrs K McNiff, Safety Health & Emergency Planning Manager
Mrs C Hanvey, Personal Assistant
Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager
Ms L O'Hare, Democratic Services Officer

SPR/66/2021: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Doran, Gallagher & Ó Muirí.

The Chairperson advised members that this was his last meeting as Chairperson and wished the incoming Chairperson good luck for their term.

The Chairperson paid tribute to former SDLP Councillor Michael Carr former colleague and friend who sadly passed away and was buried on Tuesday, offering condolences to his wife Kay and the Carr family.

SPR/67/2021: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

SPR/68/2021: ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON THURSDAY 15 APRIL 2021

Read: Action Sheet of the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on Thursday 15 April 2021. **(Copy circulated)**

On a point of information Councillor Brown queried the lack of minutes from the Newry City Centre Regeneration Project meeting.

Mr Mallon advised that the May meeting had been changed to a design workshop and apologised that the April minutes had not been tabled. He stated the outcome of the workshop and the April minutes would be brought to the next Strategy Policy and Resources meeting in June.

In response to a number of points in relation to the Newry City Centre Regeneration Project raised by Councillor Brown and Councillor Savage, Mrs Ward confirmed that she would be happy to discuss the matter outside of the meeting as it was not an agenda item and Councillor Brown could attend the next Project Board meeting as a guest if he wished to do so.

Councillor Byrne confirmed for clarity that every party was represented at the Programme Board and, as co-Chair of the board, he was happy to discuss any concerns or questions other Councillors may have.

Agreed: It was agreed that the action sheet from the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meetings held on 15 April 2021, be approved.

FOR CONSIDERATION AND OR/DECISION

SPR/69/2021: IRISH STREET REGENERATION PROJECT – EXPRESSION OF INTEREST IN ADJACENT LAND

Read: Report dated 13 May 2021 from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director, Enterprise, Employment and Regeneration, regarding Irish Street Regeneration Project – Expression of Interest in adjacent land. **(Copy circulated)**

The Chairperson and Councillor Hanlon spoke in support of the officer's recommendation highlighting the fantastic work carried out by ALPS across the District. They asked to caveat this recommendation to ensure it was made clear to potentially interested groups that any expression would be on a temporary basis so as not to cause any issues with the wider development and regeneration of Irish Street.

Councillor Trainor highlighted there had been ongoing anti-social behaviour issues in Irish Street and any utilisation of the site could help deter that behaviour and in turn make the area more attractive to developers.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, to approve Officers to explore the temporary letting of the site via an expression of interest. A market valuation of the site for letting purposes will be undertaken.

FOR NOTING

SPR/70/2021: LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION – DISSOLUTION FUNDING & CONTINUING OPERATIONS 2021/2022

Read: Correspondence dated 15 April 2021 from The Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland, regarding Local Government Staff Commission – Dissolution Funding & Continuing Operations 2021/22 **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **It was agreed to note the contents of the correspondence.**

SPR/71/2021 STATUTORY REPORTING – RURAL NEEDS ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT FOR PERIOD 1 APRIL 2020 – 31 MARCH 2021

Read: Report dated 13 May 2021 from Mrs R Mackin, Assistant Director Corporate Planning and Policy, regarding Statutory Reporting – Rural Needs Annual Monitoring report for period 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021 **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **It was agreed to note the contents of the report.**

SPR/72/2021: FOI/EIR/DP AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT MONITORING STATISTICS

Read: Report dated 13 May 2021 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director Corporate Services (Administration), regarding FOI/EIR/DP & Records Management Monitoring Statistics **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **It was agreed to note the contents of the report.**

SPR/73/2021: ANNUAL FAIR EMPLOYMENT MONITORING RETURN; 2 JANUARY 2020 – 1 JANUARY 2021

Read: Report dated 13 May 2021 from Mrs C Miskelly, Assistant Director Corporate Services (HR & Safeguarding), regarding Annual Fair Employment Monitoring Return; 2 January 2020 – 1 January 2021 **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **It was agreed to note the contents of the report.**

SPR/74/2021: SICKNESS ABSENCE

Read: Report dated 13 May 2021 from Mrs L Fitzsimons, Human Resources Manager, regarding Sickness Absence **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Byrne highlighted that positive changes in the sickness absence showed that the hybrid model going forward could benefit the Council in terms of sickness absence.

Agreed: **It was agreed to note the contents of the report.**

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Savage, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on the next matter which related to exempt information by virtue of para. 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) 2014 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

SPR/75/2021: 2021/22 INSURANCE PREMIUMS

Read: Report dated 13 May 2021 from Mrs K McNiff Safety, Health & Emergency Planning (SHEP) Manager, regarding 2021/22 Insurance Premiums. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Savage, that Elected Members review and approve the payment of the insurance premiums for 2021/22.

SPR/76/2021: TENDER FOR POSTAL SERVICES

Read: Report dated 13 May 2021 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director Corporate Services (Administration) regarding, Tender for Postal Services **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Savage, that Elected Members approve the Full Business Case for the Tender of Postal Services as attached at Appendix 1 and tender for Council's main collection and sorting mail service using a Postal Services Framework Agreement available to public sector bodies. It is further recommended that the contract award be for a period of 3 years.

SPR/77/2021: DOWN RAILWAY

Read: Report dated 13 May 2021 from Mr F O'Connor, Acting Head of Legal Administration, regarding Down Railway **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Walker, that Elected Members agree to approve the recommendations set below:

1. To progress a review of the sub lease and Partnership agreement and seek to set out a new legal agreement which confirms DCDR are responsible for all operational matters, including ongoing maintenance associated with the railway and buildings.
2. A one-off payment is made to DCDR to assist with maintenance costs associated with the Engine Shed Roof and Bridge 163.
3. The Council remains committed to the land acquisition which will be subject to Planning approval and confirmation of funding from DCDR. The Council will continue engagement with Belfast legal service to establish a timetable for land acquisition via vesting.

SPR/78/2021: SURPLUS ASSET UPDATE

Read: Report dated 13 May 2021 from Mr C Quinn, Assistant Director Estate & Project Management regarding Surplus Asset update (**Copy circulated**)

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Hanlon that Elected Members note the content of the report and attached Appendix A and approve the following recommendations:

- Former Play Area at Crown Villas, Crieve, Newry. Accept the final bid as detailed in the officers report and move to 'sale agreed.'
- Newry Canal - Lock Keepers Cottage. Council's legal department to open communication with the previous owner's legal representative to explore if they wish to exercise their rights to reserve their right to purchase this property, before proceeding with the current 'sale agreed.'
- Play Area at Rear of Bleary Bungalows. Council officers to continue to liaise with the property owners who have declared an interest in purchasing this asset.
- Lands at 15 The Square Ballynahinch. As no firm commitment has been received from NIHE/Habinteg Housing Association, to accept the final bid as detailed in the officer's report and move to 'sale agreed.'

- The former Kearns & Murtagh Yard, Cecil St, Newry. As no firm commitment has been received from NIHE/Clanmill Housing Association to accept the final bid as detailed in the officer's report and move to 'sale agreed.'
- 5 Ballynoe Road, Downpatrick (former site of Killough Road Community Centre). As no firm commitment has been received from NIHE in acquiring this asset for social housing any sale is deferred until the interest from a local community group in acquiring the asset is explored further.
- Lands at Mourne Esplanade, Kilkeel. As no interested has been generated via the D1 disposal process, officers to appoint selling agent to place this surplus asset on the open market for sale.

Councillor Savage left the meeting at 19.07pm

SPR/79/2021: PROPOSED LATERAL FLOW TESTING FACILITY AT BALLYMOTE

Read: Report dated 13 May 2021 from Mr C Quinn, Assistant Director Estate & Project Management, regarding Proposed Lateral Flow testing facility at Ballymote **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, the following recommendations were approved:

- Members approve to proceed with the setting up of a lateral flow test facility at Ballymote Sports Centre and to complete negotiations with the Dept of Health regarding the registration process, the formal agreement including the associated recovery of costs.
- That the lateral flow test facility would be offered in the first instance to council staff and subject to associated satisfactory amendments to the formal agreement, that the testing facility would be offered to the small business sector and the wider community at later stages.
- Approval for Council to absorb the costs of the infrastructure noted in the officer's report on the understanding that Council will benefit from this infrastructure after the test facility is stood down.
- Subject to satisfactory completion of the formal agreement with the Dept of Health, that officers proceed with setting up and operating the test facility prior to the full Council approval.
- That officers continue discussions with the Dept of Health on the possibility of offering our facilities for collection points for test kits.

SPR/80/2021: PHA COVID-19 TESTING FACILITY AT ALBERT BASIN NEWRY

Read: Report dated 13 May 2021 from 2021 from Mr C Quinn, Assistant Director Estate & Project Management, , regarding PHA Covid-19 Testing Facility at Albert Basin Newry **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Magennis, the following was approved:**

- **Elected Members approve to enter into a new 6-month lease agreement with the PHA/DHSC for the Covid 'walk-in' test facility at Albert Basin from 1st July 2021**
- **The terms of the lease would be similar to the current lease i.e. include a break clause which would allow NMDDC to terminate the lease after 3 months, with 20 days' notice to be given to the tenant. Therefore, the earliest termination date would be 30th September 2021.**
- **A further report to SP&R Committee prior to the end of the initial 3-months of lease period, to gauge if the testing facility is likely to remain in place thereafter and how this would impact on future Council events at Albert Basin.**

FOR NOTING

SPR/81/2021: PAVEMENT CAFÉ LICENSES

Read: Report dated 13 May 2021 from Mr C Mallon, Director of Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism, regarding Pavement Café Licenses **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.**

Agreed: **It was agreed to note the contents of the report.**

SPR/82/2021: STRATEGIC FINANCE WORKING GROUP ACTION SHEET – 10 MAY 2021

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.**

Agreed: **It was agreed to note the Action Sheet of The Strategic Finance Working Group – 10 May 2021**

SPR/83/2021: NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT PAYROLL POLICY

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to note the contents of the report and approve the Newry Mourne and Down District Payroll policy.

Ms Ward Chief Executive, explained she would be attending all Committee meetings this month from a legislative perspective and made the following statement:

“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 concluded at 19.59pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 07 June 2021.

Signed: **Councillor Gareth Sharvin**
Chairperson

Signed: **Dorinnia Carville**
Director of Corporate Services