

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on Thursday 12 June 2025 at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Downshire Civic Centre

In the Chair: Councillor O Hanlon

**In Attendance in
Chamber:**

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| Councillor R Howell | Councillor T Howie |
| Councillor C King | Councillor A Lewis |
| Councillor A Mathers | Councillor D McAteer |
| Councillor M Rice | Councillor G Sharvin |
| Councillor H Reilly | |

**Committee Members in
Attendance via Teams:**

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|---------------------|---------------------|
| Councillor S O'Hare | Councillor D Taylor |
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Non-Committee Members

In Attendance via Teams: Councillor G Hanna Councillor A Quinn

**Officials in Attendance
in Chamber:**

Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism
Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability & Environment
Mr A Patterson, Director of Active & Healthy Communities
Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director of Capital, Estates & Procurement
Ms V Keegan, Assistant Director of Digital & Communications
Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of People & Legal
Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Regeneration
Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director of Community Development
Mr C Sage, Assistant Director of Sustainability
Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism
Mrs A McAlarney, Development Manager: Planning
Mrs L Jackson, Development Plan Manager
Mr P Rooney, Head of Legal Administration
Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager
Mrs F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer
Mr C Smyth, Democratic Services Officer

**Officials in Attendance
Via Teams:**

Ms C Hughes, Head of Performance & Improvement (Acting)

SPR/081/2025:

APOLOGIES & CHAIRPERSONS REMARKS

An apology was received from Councillor Enright and Mrs Kelly, Director of Corporate Services.

SPR/082/2025:

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

SPR/083/2025: ACTION SHEET OF STRATEGY, POLICY & RESOURCES
MEETING HELD ON 15 MAY 2025

Action Sheet of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee meeting held 15 May 2025. **(Copy circulated)**

On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Howie, it was agreed to approve the action sheet of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee meeting of 15 May 2025.

SPR/084/2025: TO AGREE START TIMES FOR STRATEGY, POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2025-26

Proposed Start Times of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee Meetings 2025/26. **(Copy circulated)**

On the proposal of Councillor King, seconded by Councillor Howell, the start times of the Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee Meetings 2025/26 were agreed.

FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION

SPR/085/2025: PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2025-26

Report from Ms C Hughes, Head of Performance & Improvement (Acting), regarding Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26. **(Copy Circulated)**

Mr Mallon outlined the content of the Performance Improvement Plan, noting that it would be published prior to ratification at full Council on 7 July.

In proposing the report, Councillor Reilly stated that unless the practical aspect of bin collections vastly improved this would be a meaningless plan, further advising that he had requested missed bin collections be actioned and they were still awaiting action, despite being advised otherwise.

Mr Mallon advised that the relevant Director would follow up with Councillor Reilly outside of the meeting.

Councillor Howie queried why all of the DEA Fora had not been given the opportunity to consult on the plan. Mrs Hughes advised that the consultation had been scheduled between 14 March and 9 May 2025, and three of the forums did not have meetings scheduled within those time periods. She confirmed that the relevant co-ordinators had been sent the presentation, reports and survey link to be forwarded to their members.

On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Howie, the following was agreed:

- The Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 (including the five performance improvement**

objectives), Consultation and Engagement Report 2025-26 and Objective Delivery Plans 2025-26.

- That in order to meet the statutory deadline, authority is given by the SPR Committee to publish the Performance Improvement Plan 2025 – 26 before 30 June 2025, ahead of full Council ratification.

SPR/086/2025:

DIRECTORATE BUSINESS PLANS

Read:

Report from Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive, and Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Directorate Business Plans. **(Copy Circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Rice, the following was agreed:

- The assessment of the Chief Executive's and Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2024-25
- The Chief Executive and Corporate Services Business Plan 2025-26

SPR/087/2025:

**SECTION 75 STATUTORY DUTIES COMPLIANCE:
REVISED EQUALITY SCHEME – FIVE YEAR REVIEW OF
COUNCIL'S EQUALITY SCHEME.**

Read:

Report from Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of Legal & People, regarding Section 75 Statutory Duties Compliance – Revised Equality Scheme – Five Year Review of Council's Equality Scheme. **(Copy Circulated)**

Mrs McClean outlined the report, confirming that this review was in line with legislation as set out within the Northern Ireland Act 1998. She advised that the changes were minor modifications and confirmed that the scheme had been approved by the Equality Commission in March 2025.

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Mathers, it was agreed to approve Council's Equality Scheme, and that further to approval, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland be informed of the outcome of the review.

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

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Mathers, 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 Howell, seconded by Councillor Rice, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

The Chairperson advised the following had been agreed whilst in closed session:

SPR/088/2025: LEASE OF LANDS AT DRUMANESS PLAYING FIELDS

Read: Report from Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of Legal and People, regarding Lease of Lands at Drumaness Playing Fields. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Howie, it was agreed to enter into a lease with the group noted in this report in respect of that portion of Drumaness Playing Fields as outlined in blue on the map attached to the Officer's report for a term of 25 years at a peppercorn rent, subject to Departmental Consent.

SPR/089/2025: LEASE OF CLOGHREAGH PLAYING FIELDS

Read: Report from Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of Legal and People, regarding Lease of Cloughreagh Playing Fields. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Taylor, it was agreed to enter into a lease with the group noted in this report in respect of Cloughreagh Playing Fields for a term of 25 years at a peppercorn rent, subject to Departmental Consent.

SPR/090/2025: LEASE OF LANDS AT LISMORE PARK, CROSSMAGLEN

Read: Report from Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of Legal and People, regarding Lease of Lands at Lismore Park, Crossmaglen. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor King, it was agreed to grant the lease of lands at Lismore Park, Crossmaglen as outlined and hatched red on the map attached hereto for a term of 25 years at a peppercorn

rent, subject to Departmental Consent, to the company as noted in the Officer's Report.

SPR/091/2025:

LEASE OF LANDS AT STATION ROAD, CASTLEWELLAN

Read:

Report from Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of Legal and People, regarding Lease of Lands at Station Road, Castlewellan. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Reilly, it was agreed to enter into a lease with the group noted in this report in respect of lands at Station Road, Castlewellan as outlined in red on the map attached hereto for a term of 25 years at a peppercorn rent, subject to Departmental Consent.

SPR/092/2025:

PUBLIC PATH EXTENSION, KILLEAVY

Read:

Report from Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of Legal and People, and Mr P Rooney, Head of Legal Administration, regarding Public Path Extension, Killeavy. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor King, seconded by Councillor McAteer, it was agreed to enter into an Agreement with the noted party noted for a period of up to 14 years to extend the path to include the land shown shaded in purple on the map attached for the amount stated in the Officer's Report.

SPR/093/2025:

RENEWAL OF LICENCE FOR ADVERTISING HOARDINGS, NEWRY

Read:

Report from Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of Legal and People, regarding Renewal of Licence for Advertising Hoardings, Newry. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor McAteer, it was agreed to grant licences to the parties noted within the report, permitting them to operate the advertising hoardings on the car park known as Canal Bank 1, Newry for a term of 5 years subject to yearly licence fees to be determined by Council's Valuer.

SPR/094/2025:

CONACRE ARRANGEMENTS FOR ROSTREVOR AND KILBRONEY

Read: Report from Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of Legal and People, regarding Conacre Arrangements for Rostrevor and Kilbroney. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor McAteer, the following was agreed:

- That a full Expression of Interest is issued in respect of the cutting of grass from the Hay Meadow, Kilbroney Park and that Council enter into a Conacre Licence Agreement for the 2025 Season (September only)
- That an Expression of Interest is issued to the 2 parties who have expressed an interest in the grazing of the lands at Rostrevor Cemetery, Rostrevor and that Council enter into a Conacre Licence Agreement with the highest bidder from mid-July until 31 October 2025.

SPR/095/2025: **EASEMENT AT MAIN AVENUE, DERRYBEG, NEWRY**

Read: Report from Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of Legal and People, regarding Easement at Main Avenue, Derrybeg, Newry. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor McAteer, it was agreed to grant an Easement for a foul and storm pipe under that portion of Council lands as are shown by a red dashed line at Main Avenue, Derrybeg, Newry to the party named in this report subject to the payment of the market value easement fee (less any apportionment due to the owner of the freehold) and subject also to the payment of Council's legal and valuation costs.

SPR/096/2025: **CAMLOUGH LAKE RECREATIONAL HUB**

Read: Report from Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director of Capital, Estates & Procurement, regarding Camlough Lake Recreational Hub. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor King, seconded by Councillor Mathers, the following was agreed:

- To appoint Contractor (Supplier 3) to provide full delivery of the Camlough Lake Recreational Hub Facility, subject to obtaining all statutory approvals and finalisation of land acquisition.

- **To allocate funding to the project within the capital plan as per section 4.0 of the Officer's Report.**

SPR/097/2025:

NEWRY CANAL RESTORATION WORKS – LOCK 6

Read:

Report from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, regarding Newry Canal Restoration Works – Lock 6. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Mathers, the following was agreed:

- **To approve the procurement and appointment of a contractor required to deliver the project as outlined in section 2.1 of the Officer's Report.**
- **To approve the business case and allocate budget within the capital plan as outlined in section 4 of the Officer's Report.**

Cllr Sharvin joined the meeting during discussion on the above item – 6.32pm

SPR/098/2025:

CASTLEWELLAN TREE TOP WALK - OBC

Read:

Report from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, regarding Castlewellan treetop Walk - OBC. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Lewis, seconded by Councillor Howell, the following was agreed:

- **To approve the Outline Business Case as set out in Appendix 1 of the Officer's Report.**
- **To approve the allocation of budget in the Capital Programme as per the preferred option 3 as laid out within the Officer's Report.**
- **To approve the procurement and appointment of an Integrated Consultancy Team to progress design development of the infrastructure enabling works.**

SPR/099/2025:

KILKEEL LOWER SQUARE AND RIVER WALK EI SCHEME

Read:

Report from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, regarding Kilkeel Lower Square and River Walk EI Scheme. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Rice, seconded by Councillor Reilly, the following was agreed:

- To approve business case and the allocation of budget in the capital plan for the design and development of Kilkeel Lower Square & River Walk Environmental Improvement Scheme.
- To approve the procurement and appointment of the ICT to deliver RIBA Design Stage 2 – 3.

SPR/100/2025:

DIGITAL INNOVATION AND REGENERATION UNIT

Read:

Report from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, regarding Digital Innovation and Regeneration Unit.
(Copy circulated)

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Mathers, it was agreed to approve the Digital Innovation and Regeneration Unit structure and budget allocation as outlined within section 4 of the Officer's Report.

SPR/101/2025:

PROCUREMENT OF AN ICT TO PROGRESS DELAMONT COUNTRY PARK DEVELOPMENT

Read:

Report from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, regarding Procurement of an ICT to Progress Delamont Country Park Development. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Howie, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, the following was agreed:

- To approve the procurement and appointment of an ICT to develop the Delamont Master Plan: Viewpoint and Orientation Centre projects to RIBA Stage 3.
- To approve the procurement and appointment of a specialised site-specific Interpretation Plan that sets out the Interpretative Experience for Delamont Country Park.
- To approve the business case and the allocation of budget in the Capital Programme to progress the projects at Delamont Country Park as set out in Section 4 of the Officer's Report.

SPR/102/2025:

AUTOMATED CHARGED PARKING INSTALLATION

Read:

Report from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, regarding Automated Charged Parking Installation.
(Copy circulated)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Howell, the following was agreed:

- To approve the procurement and appointment of a supplier under the EPSO framework, to enable the installation of an automated parking system, as set out in section 2 of the Officer's Report.
- To allocate a budget within the Capital Plan for the design, implementation and operation of an automated parking system, as set out in Section 4 of the Officer's Report.

SPR/103/2025: FLEET MANAGEMENT

Read: Report from Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability & Environment, regarding Fleet Management. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Rice, seconded by Councillor McAteer, it was agreed to approve the 2025-26 Fleet Procurement Programme.

Cllr Reilly left the meeting at this stage – 7.08pm

SPR/104/2025: LEISURE FACILITY LEASE AGREEMENT

Read: Report from Mr A Patterson, Director of Active & Healthy Communities, regarding Leisure Facility Lease Agreement. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to proceed with the preferred supplier as per the terms outlined within the Officer's Report.

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

SPR/105/2025: EXEMPT MINUTES OF MOURNE MOUNTAIN GATEWAY PROJECT – PROGRAMME BOARD MEETING 1ST APRIL 2025

Read: Exempt Minutes of Mourne Mountain Gateway Project – Programme Board Meeting 1st April 2025. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to note the minutes.

SPR/106/2025: MINUTES OF SFWG WORKING GROUP HELD 20 MAY 2025

Read: Minutes of SFWG Working Group held 20 May 2025. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Mathers, it was agreed to note the minutes**

SPR/107/2025: DRAFT MANAGEMENT YEAR END ACCOUNTS 2024-25

Read: Report from Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive, regarding Draft Year End Management Accounts 2024/25. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed to note the 2024/25 draft year end Management Accounts.**

SPR/108/2025: DEBT WRITE OFF AS AT MARCH 2025

Read: Report from Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive, regarding Debt Write Off As At March 2025. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Mathers, it was agreed to note the debt write off as at March 2025.**

Mrs Ward declared an interest in the following item and left the Chamber at this stage – 7.22pm

SPR/109/2025: CHIEF EXECUTIVE APPRAISAL

Read: Report from Mrs M Hughes, HR & OD Manager, regarding Chief Executive Appraisal. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to note the 2024/25 Performance Appraisal of the Chief Executive has been completed and that members of the group agreed in their assessment of performance.**

Mrs Ward rejoined the meeting at this stage – 7.24pm

FOR NOTING

SPR/110/2025: COMPLIANCE END OF YEAR REPORT

Read: Report from Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of Legal & People, regarding Compliance End of Year Report. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed to note monitoring statistics.**

SPR/111/2025: PLANNING DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Read: Report from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Regeneration, regarding Planning Update. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor McAteer commended the work that had been carried out within the Planning Department but stressed that further consideration should be given to the current backlog of applications. He queried whether the Operating Protocol could be reviewed in an attempt to allow the constant objections being raised at the last minute which caused continuous delays to planning applications and had an impact on the reporting statistics.

Mr McGilly advised that the Protocol was under review and would be presented to the Planning Committee at a future date but advised that legislation allowed objections to be submitted at any stage of a planning process.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed to note the content of the report.**

SPR/112/2025: MINUTES OF MOURNE MOUNTAIN GATEWAY PROJECT – PROGRAMME BOARD MEETING 1ST APRIL AND 2 MAY 2025

Read: Minutes of Mourne Mountain Gateway Project – Programme Board Meeting of 1 April and 2 May 2025. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed to note the minutes.**

SPR/113/2025: ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING ACTIONS AND MEASURES – DIRECTORATE BUSINESS PLANS 2024-25

Read: Report from Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of Legal & People, regarding Assessment of Community Wealth Building Actions and Measures – Directorate Business Plans 2024-25. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed to note the Assessment of Community Wealth Building Measures 2024-25 as set out in Appendix 1 of the Officer's Report.**

There being no further business, the Meeting concluded at 7.37pm

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 7 July 2025.

Signed: **Councillor Oonagh Hanlon**
 Chairperson

Signed: **Josephine Kelly**
 Director of Corporate Services