

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on Thursday 12 March 2026 at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Downshire Civic Centre

In the Chair: Councillor O Hanlon

**In Attendance in
Chamber:**

Councillor P Byrne	Councillor M Hearty
Councillor T Howie	Councillor A King
Councillor A Lewis	Councillor A Mathers
Councillor S O'Hare	Councillor H Reilly
Councillor M Rice	

**Committee Members in
Attendance via Teams:**

Councillor R Howell	Councillor C King
Councillor D Taylor	

Non-Committee Members

In Attendance via Teams: Councillor C Bowsie

**Officials in Attendance
in Chamber:**

Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism
Ms S Murphy, Director of Sustainability & Environment
Mr A Patterson, Director of Active & Healthy Communities
Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director of Capital Projects & Procurement
Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance and Performance
Ms E Kirk, Assistant Director of People & Legal
Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director: Regeneration
Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer
Mr C Smyth, Democratic Services Officer

SPR/031/2026: APOLOGIES & CHAIRPERSONS REMARKS

An apology was received from Councillor McAteer

SPR/032/2026: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

**SPR/033/2026: ACTION SHEET OF STRATEGY, POLICY & RESOURCES
MEETING HELD ON 12 FEBRUARY 2026**

Read: Action Sheet of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee meeting held 12 February 2026. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to note the action sheet of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee meeting of 12 February 2026.

FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION

Councillor Byrne stated that he had repeatedly raised concerns about the number of items being taken into closed session, emphasising the importance of transparency for the public regarding matters discussed by the committee, requesting that officers review the papers to determine whether the main body of papers could be in open session and any financial information be placed in appendices. He acknowledged that some of the tabled papers contained significant financial information and therefore understood why certain items were considered in closed session and further requested that any agreed recommendations read out at the end of closed sessions were as detailed as possible so the public could understand what had been discussed.

Mrs Ward advised that she could not provide the exact recommendations as they first needed to be considered and agreed by the committee, and highlighted that, in some cases, the nature of the papers meant they had to remain confidential and welcomed this recognition by Councillor Byrne. She confirmed that the proposed agreed recommendations had been reviewed and would continue to be reviewed following the committee's decisions, with the intention of providing the public with as much clarity as possible about what had been discussed. She added, however, that Council also had a responsibility to protect financial interests and those of other bodies when determining what information could be disclosed.

Councillor Byrne referred to Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act, noting that while items could be taken into closed session due to their financial or personal nature relating to individuals or the Council, the legislation also stated that matters could remain in open session where the public interest outweighed the reasons for confidentiality and asked that this principle be kept in mind in future, emphasising the need to avoid a perception that decisions were being made behind closed doors.

Councillor Hanlon noted that the Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee had been effective in handling items between public and closed sessions and acknowledged that the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee dealt with many financially sensitive matters, which made it more difficult to strike the right balance. However, she stated that she recognised and accepted the points raised by Councillor Byrne.

Councillor Bowsie stated that he had previously raised the matter during the last Audit Committee meeting where he recalled that the Chief Executive had stated that legal advice would be provided to councillors at a future Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee meeting regarding the relevant clause in the Local Government Act relating to confidential business, highlighting this as his reason for attending the Committee meeting, and requested an update on the matter.

Councillor Hanlon advised that she did not recall that agreement following the Audit Committee but advised that officers would take it on board for a subsequent meeting.

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

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Lewis, seconded by Councillor O'Hare, 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 O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

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

SPR/034/2026: GO SUCCEED NI UPDATE

Read: Report from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, regarding Go Succeed NI Update. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Hearty, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to approve an increased Council contribution to match DFE funding for delivery of the Go Succeed subject to agreement of all Councils as detailed at section 4 of the officer's report. It was further proposed to write to the UK Government reminding them of their promises that EU funding would be matched and request that the council be reimbursed for the funds it is putting towards the Go Succeed programme.

SPR/035/2026: NCCR THEATRE AND CONFERENCE FACILITY UPDATE

Read: Report from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, regarding NCCR Theatre and Conference Facility Update. **(Copy circulated)**

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

- To note the BRCD and DfC approval of the revised timetable for delivery of the NCCR programme of works with the Theatre/Conference associated public realm and the flood alleviation work to be completed in early 2028.
- To approve the additional Integrated Consultancy Team fees as part of the

capital budget incurred on the project since the Full Business Case approval

- To approve the introduction of the contractual X1 inflation clause on the ICT fees as part of the capital budget schedule from January 2026.
- To approve the additional contractual X1 inflation costs incurred on the construction project since the FBC approval.
- To note the proposed change of NEC4 Project Manager for RIBA stages 5 – 7 of the project.

SPR/036/2026: NCCR THEATRE AND CONFERENCE FACILITY – OPERATING MODEL

Read: Report from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, regarding NCCR Theatre and Conference Facility Operating Model. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Reilly, it was agreed to defer the paper to enable further details to be provided regarding the proposed model and engagement with the local Trade Unions**

SPR/037/2026: DELAMONT COUNTRY PARK CARAVAN SITE

Read: Report from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, regarding Delamont Country Park Caravan Site. **(Copy circulated)**

Cllr Rice left the meeting at this stage – 7.21pm

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Lewis, seconded by Councillor O'Hare, it was agreed to approve Council operation of the Delamont Country Park caravan site from June to September 2026 and for the site to be marketed and booked through the camp manager system, the same as Castlewellan and Kilbroney caravan site. A report to be tabled in October regarding the operation outcomes and to consider most appropriate management from 2027.**

SPR/038/2026: MONAGHAN ROW LEASE

Read: Report from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, regarding Monaghan Row Lease. **(Copy circulated)**

- AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Mathers, the following was agreed:
- To note the extended lease with the SHSCT until 30 June 2026
 - Subject to meeting the IT and security requirements for the temporary site, Council progress the works to facilitate the lease of the building at a cost detailed at section 4.1 of the officer's report.
 - That Council enter into a lease for the temporary building at the estimated annual rental cost as detailed at section 4.2 and 4.3 of the officer's report.

SPR/039/2026: CAPITAL PROGRAMME – CLIENT-SIDE PROJECT MANAGERS

Read: Report from Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director: Capital Projects & Procurement, regarding Capital Programme – Client-Side Project Managers. **(Copy circulated)**

- AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Byrne, the following was agreed:
- To approve the appointment of Client-Side Project Managers to support the delivery of Newry City Park and Warrenpoint Health and Wellbeing Hub and allocate the capital budget as detailed at section 4.1 of the officer's report.
 - To approve the business cases as attached at Appendix 1.

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

SPR/040/2026: WASTE CONTRACT PROCUREMENT UPDATE

Read: Report from Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability & Environment, regarding Waste Contract Procurement Update. **(Copy circulated)**

- AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Hearty, it was agreed to note the contents of the report.

SPR/041/2026: 2025/2026 QUARTER 3 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS UPDATE

Read: Report from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Performance, regarding 2025/26 Quarter 3 Management Accounts. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Hearty, it was agreed to note the quarter three 2025/2026 Management Accounts.

SPR/042/2026: TREASURY MANAGEMENT

Read: Report from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Performance, regarding Treasury Management. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Hearty, it was agreed to note that Council will lead the group procurement process on behalf of all 11 Councils for the Treasury Management and Technical Accounting and Support Service contracts.

SPR/043/2026: MINUTES OF NEWRY CITY CENTRE REGENERATION PROGRAMME BOARD MEETING HELD 8 DEEMBER 2025

Read: Minutes of Newry City Centre Regeneration Programme Board Meeting held 8 December 2025. **(Copy circulated)**

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

Cllr Reilly left the meeting at this stage – 7.44pm

FOR NOTING

SPR/044/2026: ACTION SHEET OF WOMEN’S WORKING GROUP MEETING HELD 11 FEBRUARY 2026

Read: Action Sheet of Women’s Working Group Meeting held 11 February 2026. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Lewis, seconded by Councillor Howie, it was agreed to note the action sheet.

There being no further business, the Meeting concluded at 7.47pm

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 13 April 2026.

Signed: _____
Councillor Oonagh Hanlon
Chairperson

Signed: _____

Marie Ward
Chief Executive