

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Minutes of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on
Thursday 11 June 2026 at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Downshire Civic Centre**

In the Chair: Councillor C Bowsie

**In Attendance in
Chamber:**

Councillor P Byrne	Councillor O Hanlon
Councillor M Hearty	Councillor A King
Councillor C King	Councillor A Mathers
Councillor D McAteer	Councillor M Rice

**Committee Members in
Attendance via Teams:**

Councillor S O'Hare	Councillor H Reilly
Councillor D Taylor	Councillor J Truesdale

**Officials in Attendance
in Chamber:**

Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism
Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability & Environment
Mr A Patterson, Director of Active & Healthy Communities
Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Performance
Mr C Haughey, Assistant Director of Healthy Living
Ms V Keegan, Assistant Director of Digital & Communications
Ms E Kirk, Assistant Director Legal & People
Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director of Community Engagement
Mr G Scott, Safeguarding Co-Ordinator
Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager
Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer

**Officials in attendance
via Teams:**

Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Regeneration
Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism

SPR/089/2026: APOLOGIES & CHAIRPERSONS REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Howell and Howie.

SPR/090/2026: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

**SPR/091/2026: ACTION SHEET OF STRATEGY, POLICY & RESOURCES
MEETING HELD ON 14 MAY 2026**

Read: Action Sheet of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee meeting held 14 May 2026. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor A King, it was agreed to note the action sheet of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee meeting of 14 May 2026.

SPR/092/2026: **TO AGREE START TIMES FOR STRATEGY, POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2026/27**

Read: Start Times of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee Meetings for 2026/27 **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to approve the start times for the Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee Meetings for 2026/27.

FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION

SPR/093/2026: **DIRECTORATE BUSINESS PLANS**

Read: Report from Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive, regarding Directorate Business Plans. **(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Ward advised that the Directorate Business Plan review of 2025/26 was tabled for consideration, alongside the forward-looking Business Plan for 2026–27, reminding Members that the Business Plans were derived from, and considered as part of, the Council's Corporate Plan.

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

- **The assessment of the Chief Executive – Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2025/26.**
- **The Chief Executive – Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2026/27.**

SPR/094/2026: **UNREASONABLE BEHAVIOUR POLICY REPORT**

Read: Report from Mr C Haughey, Assistant Director Healthy Living, regarding Unreasonable Behaviour Policy Report. **(Copy circulated)**

Mr Haughey advised that the report sought approval for the adoption of the Council's Unreasonable Behaviour Policy, noting that Council was committed to the principle that unreasonable behaviour by any person should not be accepted. He advised that, as part of the Council's safeguarding processes, the need for the policy and associated procedures had been identified to support the protection of all staff and users of Council facilities.

In proposing the report, Councillor Hanlon noted the importance of having the policy in place to protect both staff and service users.

Following a query from Councillor A King regarding whether the policy had originated from issues within leisure facilities, Mr Haughey confirmed that all Council staff could be subjected to unreasonable behaviour from service users. However, he noted that given the high volume of users accessing leisure facilities, incidents were more likely to arise in that setting.

Councillor McAteer welcomed the report and stated that when action was taken against dog fouling the policy would help protect the enforcement officers.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor A King, it was agreed to approve the Unreasonable Behaviour Policy and Procedures for adoption and introduction through Council.**

SPR/095/2026: **ANNUAL COMPLAINT HANDLING REPORT**

Read: Report from Ms E Kirk, Assistant Director People & Legal, regarding Annual Complaint Handling Report. **(Copy circulated)**

Ms Kirk advised that the report presented the Annual Complaints Handling Report for 2025–26, noting that Members were asked to note the contents of the report and to approve the alignment of future reporting with the financial year, with the reporting period running from April to March.

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

- **Approve the transition from calendar year to financial year reporting for the Council's Annual Complaints Report.**
- **Note the 2025/26 Annual Complaints Handling Report.**

SPR/096/2026: **GREENWAY FEASIBILITY AND DESIGN: WARRENPOINT TO NEWCASTLE**

Read: Report from Mr C Mallon, Director: Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, regarding Greenway Feasibility and Design: Warrenpoint to Newcastle. **(Copy circulated)**

Mr Mallon advised that the report outlined a Letter of Offer received from the Department for Infrastructure and the Department for Transport in relation to the proposed Greenway from Warrenpoint to Newcastle, which would be delivered in two phases. He explained that the report sought Members' approval to note the Letter of Offer and to approve the appointment of a design team through an existing framework to progress the feasibility study for the proposed Greenway between Warrenpoint and Newcastle.

In proposing the report, Councillor McAteer stated that it was encouraging to see the project progressing. He welcomed the strategic and long-term approach being taken by the Council to develop and enhance the network of greenways and associated active travel infrastructure, noting that this would further strengthen the area's tourism offering. He acknowledged that the project was a long-term initiative but emphasised that such decisions were important in planning for the future. He also highlighted the significance of the proposed route from

Warrenpoint onwards, and the importance of integrating it with other key infrastructure projects, including the Carlingford Lough Greenway and the Carlingford Lough Ferry. He noted that, with the anticipated opening of the Narrow Water Bridge, improved connectivity between these projects would be of considerable benefit and formed an important part of the Council's wider strategic vision.

In seconding the report, Councillor Reilly noted his delight that areas such as Kilkeel and Annalong were being included and queried how phase 2 would be implemented.

Mr Mallon explained that the proposed approach would see both phases of the project progress concurrently, advising that phase 1 would involve the development of the Warrenpoint to Rostrevor section to concept design stage, while phase 2 would progress at a more strategic level, adopting a corridor-wide approach to assess the opportunities and constraints associated with the proposed Greenway route from Warrenpoint to Greencastle and onwards to Newcastle.

Councillor Rice queried the proposed route and whether it would be coastal, to which Mr Mallon confirmed that the feasibility aspect would look at route selection, but the hope would be the path would be coastal where possible.

- AGREED:**
- On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Reilly, the following was agreed:**
- **To note the Letter of Offer from Department for Infrastructure and Department of Transport.**
 - **To approve the appointment of a design team through an existing framework to progress the feasibility study on the proposed Greenway from Warrenpoint to Newcastle.**

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

- AGREED:**
- On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, 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 Hearty, seconded by Councillor C King, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.**

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

SPR/097/2026: MEIGH COMMUNITY CENTRE

Read: Report from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director: Community Development, regarding Meigh Community Centre. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to approve the capital budget and appointment of the preferred contractor to deliver the works as detailed within the report.**

SPR/098/2026: SUSTAINABILITY & ENVIRONMENT RESOURCES

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

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Mathers, it was agreed to approve the additional staff resources as detailed at section 2.2 of the officer's report.**

SPR/099/2026: STRANGFORD & LECALÉ LANDSCAPE CONNECTIONS

Read: Report from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, regarding Strangford & Lecale Landscape Connections. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor A King, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, the following was agreed, subject to a positive funding decision by the NLHF Board of Trustees on 24 June 2026:**

- **To accept and execute the Letter of Offer and all associated documentation required to commence the Development Phase.**
- **To approve the Council's 2026/27 revenue contribution.**
- **To commence recruitment for the approved externally funded posts.**

SPR/100/2026: FINANCE STRUCTURE

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

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor C King, it was agreed to approve the proposed structure for the Finance & Performance Department as detailed in section 2 and Appendix 1 of the officer's report.**

SPR/101/2026:

COMMUNICATIONS RESOURCES

Read:

Report from Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive, regarding Communications Resources. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

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

- **To approve, under the Corporate Services Directorate, Digital & Communications Department, the associated business case and recommended Option 3.**
- **To approve the extension of the two temporary Communications and Marketing Officer positions to maintain operational capacity while the recruitment process is undertaken.**

SPR/102/2026:

YEAR END MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS 2025/26

Read:

Report from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director People & Performance, regarding Year End Management Accounts. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor A King, it was agreed to note the year end management accounts position for 25/26 and to approve the recommendations as set out in section 2.5 of the officer's report regarding the future allocation of reserves.

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

SPR/103/2026:

LAND & PROPERTY SERVICES NI VALUATIONS 2026

Read:

Report from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director: Finance & Performance, regarding Land & Property Services NI Valuations 2026. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Mathers, it was agreed to note the payment to LPS NI for the 2026 valuations. Expenditure is included within revenue budgets.

SPR/104/2026:

NEWRY TOWN HALL CLOSURE

Read:

Report from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, regarding Newry Town Hall Closure. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Mathers, it was agreed to note the update on management of assets to date, and to agree to the proposals for the remaining identified assets within Newry Town Hall.

SPR/105/2026: **NIAO AUDIT FEE**

Read: Report from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director: Finance & Performance, regarding NIAO Audit Fee. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Mathers, it was agreed to note the update in relation to the increased Audit Fees.

SPR/107/2026: **KILKEEL LEISURE CENTRE UPDATE**

Read: Report from Mr A Patterson, Director of Active & Healthy Communities, regarding Kilkeel Leisure Centre Update. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Mathers, it was agreed to note the contents of the report.

FOR NOTING

SPR/107/2026: **MINUTES OF NCCR PROGRAMME BOARD MEETING 23/03/2026**

Read: Minutes of NCCR Programme Board Meeting 23/03/2026. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Byrne raised concerns regarding the timing of the NCCR Working Group minutes and the reporting of actions arising, noting that the March minutes were being considered after a subsequent meeting had already taken place and suggested that Members should receive more timely updates, particularly in relation to the public perception survey and stakeholder feedback. He emphasised that this was not intended as a criticism but to ensure that the Committee remained informed of ongoing developments.

Mr Mallon confirmed that he would take the feedback into consideration.

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

There being no further business, the Meeting concluded at 6.53pm

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 6 July 2026.

Signed:

Councillor Callum Bowsie
Chairperson

Signed:

Marie Ward
Chief Executive