

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Minutes of Strategy Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on
Thursday 14 April 2022 at 6.00pm via Microsoft Teams**

In the Chair: Councillor O Hanlon (Chamber)

In Attendance in Chamber Councillor R Howell

In Attendance via Teams: Councillor P Brown
Councillor P Byrne
Councillor O Magennis
Councillor B Ó Muirí
Councillor M Savage
Councillor G Sharvin
Councillor D Taylor
Councillor J Tinnelly

Also in attendance: Councillor A McMurray

**Officials in Attendance
In chamber:** Mrs D Carville, Deputy Chief Executive
Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director Corporate Services
(Administration)
Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director Estates & Project Management
Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)
Mrs L Cummins, Democratic Services Officer

**Officials in Attendance
Via Teams:** Mr M Lipsett, Director Active and Healthy Communities
Mrs C Miskelly, Assistant Director Corporate Services
(HR & Safeguarding)
Mr A Patterson, Assistant Director Tourism Culture Events
Mr C Jackson, Assistant Director Building Control & Regulation
Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director Enterprise, Employment &
Regeneration
Mr G Scott, Safeguarding Coordinator

**Also in Attendance:
Via Teams:** Mr C Campbell, Legal Advisor, Belfast City Council

SPR/056/2022: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillor Gallagher, Murphy and Rice, Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive and Mr C Mallon, Director of Enterprise Regeneration and Tourism.

SPR/057/2022: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mrs Carville declared an interest on behalf of all officers in item 16 – Business Administration Voluntary Redundancy and item 17 - Planning for the Future Update and all relevant officers would be asked to leave the meeting at that point.

SPR/058/2022: ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16 MARCH 2022

Read: Action Sheet of the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 16 March 2022. **(Copy circulated)**

SPR/048/2022 - Downpatrick and County Down Railway

In response to a query raised by Councillor Sharvin, Mrs Carville confirmed that following ratification of the Strategy Policy and Resources Committee minutes officers had written to the Downpatrick and County Down Railway seeking dates for meeting to progress the matter.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Ó Muirí that the action sheet from the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 16 March 2022, be approved.**

FOR CONSIDERATION AND OR DECISION

SPR/059/2022: SAFEGUARDING POLICY – UPDATE

Read: Report dated 14 April 2022 from Mr G Scott, Safeguarding Coordinator, regarding, Safeguarding Policy - Update. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Magennis that the updated policy (Version 3 as appended to the report), be approved for adoption and that members agree to Appendices being updated as required without the need to revert to the committee for approval to do so.**

SPR/060/2022: CASTLEWELLAN FOREST PARK NLHF PROJECT GOVERNANCE

Read: Report dated 14 April 2022 from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director Enterprise, Employment & Regeneration, regarding Castlewellan Forest Park NLHF Project Governance. **(Copy circulated)**

In proposing the paper, Councillor Howell paid thanks to the members of the Task and Finish Board for enabling the project to progress to this juncture stating it was natural progression now that the Council had taken over the forest park and it was important these structures were put in place.

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Magennis, it was agreed that Elected Members approved:**

- **The Terms of Reference, structure and membership of Project Board.**
The Terms of Reference, structure and membership of Castlewellan Forest Park – Regeneration Stakeholder Forum.

SPR/061/2022: UKRAINE ASSISTANCE CENTRE

Read: Report dated 14 April 2022 from Mr M Lipsett, Director of Active & Healthy Communities, regarding Ukraine Assistance Centre **(Copy circulated)**

Councillors Savage and Tinnelly paid tribute to staff for all their hard work establishing the assistance centre at short notice and were heartened at the generosity of local families opening up their homes to the Ukraine people.

In response to queries raised by Councillor Savage, Mr Lipsett confirmed that approximately 25 people made up of 9 families had been supported through the centre on the first day by 10 different agencies who had attended. On-going support was being provided through the Ethnic Minorities Centre which was open all week. The Executive office had allocated 1 day a week which they deemed sufficient at this point for the assistance centre to be open. The Home Office hoped to attend from next week in order that visas could be expedited on the day, 8 out of the 9 families had arrived with no visas.

Some of the challenges faced was co-ordinating all the agencies, their staff and IT needs, space was an issue and a large part of the leisure centre would need to be closed 1 day a week to accommodate this going forward.

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Tinnelly, it was agreed to note the contents of the report and agree to:**

- **The continued use of the Newry Leisure Centre as a Ukrainian Assistance Centre.**
- **That the Ballymote Centre be offered as a suitable venue for a Ukraine Assistance Centre in the Downpatrick area and remains closed until a final decision is made.**

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

SPR/062/2022: ALLOCATION OF SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES

READ: Report dated 14 April 2022 from Mrs D Carville, Deputy Chief Executive, regarding Allocation of Special Responsibility Allowances **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Ó Muirí stated that his party's position had been fairly consistent on the matter and the most fair and equitable way of dealing with the issue was to split it equally amongst everyone that already received an SRA to avoid creating a hierarchy of Committees and therefore proposed to proceed with option 1.

Councillor Byrne outlined their approach was that the Chair of Planning and the Planning Committee should be recognised for the extent of work that goes on within that Committee it was not about setting a hierarchy. The only reason this changed was due to current situation found ourselves in with 2 SRA's and under guidance one member cannot hold 2 SRA's. Needs more clarity at the next AGM for the next term to avoid conflicts of interest and should be included in guidance for future reference.

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed that Elected Members approve to proceed with Option 1 - To retain the current position of allocating any outstanding SRAs among those positions that receive SRA payments. The position can be**

monitored by Parties during preparations for the AGM to try to ensure that there are no overlaps in SRA allocation.

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 Sharvin 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/063/2022: EXTENSION OF LEASE WITH NORTHERN IRELAND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES (“NIFRS”) – DOWNSHIRE CIVIC CENTRE, DOWNPATRICK

Read: Report dated 14 April 2022 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director of Administration, regarding Extension of Lease with Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (“NIFRS”) – Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick (**Copy circulated**)

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin seconded by Councillor Howell it was agreed that Elected Members approve the new rental valuation for the duration of the 2-3 year extension of this Lease, with no further rent review to take place during the 2-3 year extended term.

SPR/064/2022: PROPOSED LEASE OF THE GENERATOR HOUSE, NEWCASTLE HARBOUR, NEWCASTLE

Read: Report dated 14 April 2022 from Mr F O’Connor, Head of Legal Administration (Acting), regarding proposed Lease of The Generator House, Newcastle Harbour, Newcastle. (**Copy circulated**)

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Magennis, it was agreed that Elected Members approve to extend the term of years previously agreed from 5 years to 25 years in respect of the proposed lease of the Generator House, Newcastle Harbour subject to revised Departmental Consent from the Department of Communities.

SPR/065/2022: BANN ROAD, CASTLEWELLAN – STORM ATTENUATION PROJECT

Read: Report dated 14 April 2022 from Mr C Jackson, Assistant Director, Building Control & Regulation, regarding Bann Road, Castlewellan – Storm Attenuation Project **(Copy Circulated)**

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Magennis, it was agreed that Elected Members approve the following recommendations:

- Members to note the content of the report and approve to add an additional £36,009 to the Capital Programme budget for this project.

SPR/066/2022: DIRECTOR RECRUITMENT

Read: Report dated 14 April 2022 from Mrs D Carville, Deputy Chief Executive, regarding Director Recruitment. **(Copy circulated)**

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Ó Muirí, it was agreed that Elected Members agree to note the contents of the report and:

- a. Approve the recruitment for a Director: Corporate Services.
- b. Confirm their agreement to the proposal at 2.3 of the report.

SPR/067/2022: SURPLUS ASSET UPDATE

Read: Report dated 14 April 2022 from Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director Estates & Capital Projects, regarding Surplus Asset Update. **(Copy circulated)**

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Magennis, it was agreed that Elected Members approve the following recommendations:

- Abbey Heights Amenity Area.
To Proceed with Outline Planning Application (as per Appendix B).

- **Daisyhill – Grills House Section.**
To Proceed to Open Market (as per Appendix D).

SPR/068/2022: 2022/23 INSURANCE PREMIUM

Read: Report dated 14 April 2022 from Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director Estates & Capital Projects, regarding 2022/23 Insurance Premium. **(Copy circulated)**

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Savage it was agreed that Elected Members agree to review and approve the payment of the insurance premiums for 2022/23 at the costs outlined in the officer's report.

SPR/069/2022: BRC D PROJECT GOVERNANCE – MOURNES GATEWAY

Read: Report dated 14 April 2022 from Mr A Patterson, Assistant Director of Tourism, Culture & Events, regarding BRC D Project Governance – Mourne Gateway **(Copy circulated)**

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Savage, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed that Elected Members approve the project governance arrangements for the Mourne Gateway project as detailed in the report.

SPR/070/2022: RETIREMENT ON GROUNDS OF ILL HEALTH

Read: Report dated 14 April 2022 from Mrs D Carville, Deputy Chief Executive, regarding Retirement on Grounds of Ill Health. **(Copy circulated)**

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Savage, it was agreed that Elected Members note the contents of the report and agree that:

- a. All employees who, since 1 April 2020, have terminated their employment under the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Managing Attendance Procedure, due to ill-health retirement, be paid a leaving payment which mirrors the statutory notice provisions as set out in the Employment Rights

(Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (see 4.1).

and

- b. **Going forward, employees who, due to ill-health retirement, terminate their employment under the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Managing Attendance Procedure, be eligible to receive a leaving payment which mirrors the statutory notice provisions as set out in the Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996**

All relevant officers left the meeting at this point – 18.54pm

Councillor Brown left the meeting at this point - 18.56pm

SPR/071/2022: BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCY

Read: Report dated 14 April 2022 from, Mrs D Carville, Deputy Chief Executive, regarding Business Administration Voluntary Redundancy. **(Copy circulated)**

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

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Ó Muirí, it was agreed that Elected Members note the contents of the report and to agree in principle that SMT can progress with the 49 voluntary redundancy 'Expression of Interest' applications. As detailed in this report any VR recommendations will be subject to formal consultation and all applicants will be required to make a formal voluntary redundancy application, which will be subject to further SPRC approval. And this will also be subject to formal consultation with TUs.**

Councillor Tinnelly left the meeting at this point - 19.17pm

SPR/072/2022: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE UPDATE

Read: Report dated 14 April 2022 from, Mrs D Carville, Deputy Chief Executive, regarding Planning for the future Update. **(Copy circulated)**

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

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Savage, it was agreed that Elected Members approve the following recommendations:**

1. To pause the voluntary redundancy of the Tier 3 posts, to be revisited by August SPR Committee.
2. Approve the recruitment of Assistant Director Finance & Performance and Assistant Director Capital & Procurement via a publicly advertised recruitment process.

Councillor Ó Muirí left the meeting at this point - 19.55pm

FOR NOTING –

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014

SPR/073/2022: ANNUAL DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING ACTIVITY REPORT (1 APRIL 2021 - 31 MARCH 2022)

Read: Report dated 14 April 2022 from, Mrs R Mackin, Assistant Director Corporate Planning & Policy, regarding Annual Digital Communications and Marketing Activity Report (1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022). **(Copy circulated)**

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

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Magennis, it was agreed to note the Annual Digital Communications and Marketing Activity Report from April 2021 – 31 March 2022.**

There being no further business, the Meeting concluded at 20.05pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 03 May 2022.

Signed: **Councillor Oonagh Hanlon**
Chairperson

Signed: **Dorinnia Carville**
Deputy Chief Executive