

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Minutes of Strategy Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on
Thursday 17 February 2022 at 6.00pm via Microsoft Teams**

In the Chair: Councillor O Hanlon (Chamber)

In Attendance in Chamber Councillor R Howell
Councillor B Ó Muirí
Councillor G Sharvin
Councillor W Walker

In Attendance via Teams: Councillor P Brown
Councillor P Byrne
Councillor D Murphy
Councillor M Rice
Councillor M Savage
Councillor D Taylor
Councillor J Tinnelly

Also in attendance: Councillor D Curran
Councillor C Enright (Chamber)
Councillor A Lewis
Councillor H McKee
Councillor J Trainor

**Officials in Attendance
In chamber:** Mrs D Carville, Deputy Chief Executive
Mr C Mallon, Director of Enterprise, Regeneration & Tourism
Mrs C Miskelly, Assistant Director Corporate Services
(HR & Safeguarding)
Mrs L Fitzsimons, HR Manager
Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)
Mrs L Cummins, Democratic Services Officer

**Officials in Attendance
Via Teams:** Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director, Estates & Capital Projects
Mr E Devlin, Assistant Director Active & Healthy Communities
Mr F O'Connor, Head of Legal Administration (Acting)

**Also in Attendance:
Via Teams:** Mrs N Largey, Legal Advisor, Belfast City Council

SPR/019/2022: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

An apology was received from Councillor Magennis.

SPR/020/2022: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Byrne and Ó Muirí declared an interest in item 14 – Chief Executive Appraisal.

SPR/021/2022: ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON THURSDAY 20 JANUARY 2022

Read: Action Sheet of the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on Thursday 20 January 2022. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Savage, seconded by Councillor Howell that the action sheet from the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 20 January 2022, be approved.**

FOR CONSIDERATION AND/OR DECISION

SPR/022/2022: NOTICE OF MOTION REGARDING ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE

Read: Report dated 17 February 2022 from Mr E Devlin, Assistant Director of Health and Wellbeing, regarding Notice of Motion – Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Enright spoke at length on his notice of motion highlighting the scale of the problem was enormous but that the opportunities were also enormous. A new Ombudsman, Off Charge had been set up by the UK government to enforce targets, however, approximately one third of premises in the district were unsuitable for charging at home, which equated to 31,000 vehicles in the area in the next 10 years that would not have the facility to charge EV vehicles at home.

He referred to Dundee Council presentation and the 18.5 million funding they were able to access through the UK Westminster Government and the Scottish Government which put them in a situation where they had assets entirely funded by the public sector. The total number of parking bays under Council control was approximately 8,500, the District had 13 EV charging points, 7 of which were not working or unusable due to poor markings. Councillor Enright suggested a reasonable target was to have 1 charging EV point in each Council car park within a year and Council should be applying to Central Government for funding.

Members raised the following points:

- Enough was not being done to prepare the district and future proof for a green economy, or looking for funding to offset the costs of introducing more EV charging points across the district.
- Further research was required based around solid targets to fully assess the costs associated.
- More work was required regarding the potential income that could be generated and offset against costs to Council.
- Setting of targets was critical throughout the process to get to where was needed by 2030.
- More PR work was needed in promoting the locations of the EV charging points and keeping the public informed of the options available to them.
- Members acknowledged the work that had already been completed.
- More collaboration required with Planning to provide provision in applications to include EV chargers which would then increase the scope of how many are available throughout the District.
- None of the public charging points in Northern Ireland were chargeable at present.

- Where would the EV market be in the future, if there were longer charging ranges there would be less need for charging.
- Essence of the motion was great, but the target and cost should not just be with Council, more collaboration needed and working in partnership with NIE, ESB and the Government.
- Current existing schemes should be investigated and maximised upon.
- Keep members apprised of funding applications submitted and the outcomes.

In summing up, Councillor Enright highlighted the numbers he was talking about were not extreme, 1% equated to 80 charging points throughout the district, and if Council were to increase the total target to 2.2% i.e. 180 charging points by placing a EV in every carpark it would mean that no matter where you were in Newry Mourne and Down there would be somewhere you could use a EV charging point and every single village would have at least one charging point.

Mr Devlin highlighted that people in rural areas were maybe more likely to have their own space to charge their car, therefore leading to less demand needing charging points in carparks, electric cars were much more expensive compared to petrol or diesel cars therefore may not be affordable to a lot of people.

The Chairperson confirmed that a more detailed report would be tabled at the Sustainability Climate Change Forum and then steered onto the Strategic Finance Working Group outlining costs and implications to Council. Councillor Enright agreed.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Brown, seconded by Councillor Ó Muirí to bring back a more detailed report with further information including costings, to be tabled at the next Sustainability and Climate Change Forum and to the Strategic Finance Working Group for consideration.**

SPR/023/2022: NOTICE OF MOTION REGARDING LIVE STREAMING

Read: Report dated 17 February 2022 from Mrs D Carville, Deputy Chief Executive, regarding Notice of Motion Regarding Live Streaming **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Brown stated that Newry Mourne and Down were only 1 of 2 Councils that did not supply live streaming of Council and Committee meetings stating members should follow the lead of other Councils and a price should not be put on transparency, he went onto update Members on the range of options available for live streaming of meetings and advised his preference was to proceed with option 2 and option 3 of the officer's recommendations. He stated there had been time for officials to outline costings on the report given the delay in bringing the motion to Committee.

The Chairperson clarified that Councillor Brown had previously asked for the motion to be deferred from the December 2021 Strategy Policy and Resources Committee meeting and this was the next available committee meeting the motion could be tabled, she also confirmed Councillor Brown's preferred options were to include officer's contacting all Councils and what their processes were and bring back as part of the report.

Members raised the following points:

- No costings were contained within the report, further work was required to bring back costs involved and value for money.

- 13 views over 2 years was not a lot, however this may have been due to Covid and it would be a positive thing to try and change the culture of how people perceived Council and their Councillors by making meetings more accessible to the public.
- This Council was in no way less transparent than any other Council across the North and was on a par with other Councils and meeting legal obligations providing hybrid meetings.
- Council already provide the facility for members of the public to watch the meetings live if requested through Democratic Services, if it was a hindrance to the public to request the link, Council should look at publishing the link on its website.
- There were 7 Councils who had no facility to watch the meetings afterwards but do upload the audio, which Newry Mourne and Down District Council were already doing.
- There was a consultation ongoing at present by the Minister for Communities Mrs Hargey, once the results of this came back there may be an opportunity to draw down some level of funding to help with recordings.
- Great tool on some of the other Council websites showing live attendance stats of Councillors at meetings.
- From an IT perspective, how would Council be able to support this request, was there the staff in place to provide the support and from a Freedom of Information perspective was there enough people within that department to respond to an increase in demand.

In summing up Councillor Brown thanked all Members for their comments stating there was an appetite to explore the issue further.

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Brown, seconded by Councillor Ó Muirí, it was agreed that Elected Members approved to continue with option 1, officers to research further option 2 and option 3 and return to Committee with a report outlining risks and cost implications. It was also agreed that officers investigate the current operations of other Councils with regard to live streaming.**

SPR/024/2022: ASSERTION OF MCMINNS LANE, DUNDRUM, CD/RW/8063

Read: Report dated 17 February 2021 from Mr F O'Connor, Head of Legal Administration (Acting), regarding Assertion of McMinns Lane, Dundrum, CD/RW/8063 **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to approve the assertion statement of the Land Management Officer dated 1st February 2022 and asserts the path known as McMinns Lane running between Castlehill and Castleview, Dundrum as a public right of way for use as a public footpath.**

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

SPR/025/2022: ALLOCATION OF SRA ALLOWANCES

READ: Report dated 17 February 2022 from Mrs D Carville, Deputy Chief Executive, regarding allocation of SRA Allowances. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Byrne proposed that Members stick to what was agreed between all the Council groups and recognise the Chair of Planning, with 50% to be split between the Chair Planning and 50% between the other SRA's, this was seconded by Councillor Savage.

Mrs Carville confirmed that her recollection was this applied only in the first and second year of the last term of Council, 50% went to the Chair of Planning as it was recognised because the Planning powers were newly devolved that it was a much bigger role, and from the third year it was split evenly. In the last two years the agreement had been to split evenly but she would confirm this.

Councillor Byrne confirmed his proposal still stood but was happy for officers to bring back with the further information to group leaders for further discussion.

Councillor Savage stated that there was huge responsibility as Chair of Planning and concurred with Councillor Byrne and was happy to bring back for further discussion.

Councillor Walker confirmed he was happy for the matter to be brought back for further discussion but would prefer the remaining 50% was split amongst the Deputy Chairs of Committees as they deserve recognition for the position they hold.

Mrs Carville advised that there was a ringfenced amount of money that comes with the Special Responsibility Allowance which could only be given to 21 Councillors, this did not allow additional to be given to Deputy Chairs of Committees as Planning Committee Members and Group Leaders etc were already included in the figure of 21. Members would need to investigate the make-up of the 21 in the next term of Council if Members wished.

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Savage, it was agreed to bring a report back to Party Leaders for further discussion and a further report to be brought to Strategy Policy and Resources Committee meeting.**

SPR/026/2022: SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS – MAY 2022-JUNE 2023

READ: Report dated 17 February 2022 from Mrs D Carville, Deputy Chief Executive, regarding Schedule of meetings – May 2022-June 2023. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed that Elected Members approve the schedule of meetings including the amendments on the following dates:**

- **Mock Annual Meeting – Thursday 26th May 2022 at 2pm**
- **Annual Meeting – Monday 1st June 2022 at 6pm**
- **ERT – Wednesday 12th April 2023 at 6pm**
- **Planning Committee Meeting from 4th May to be rescheduled to accommodate Assembly Elections**

Councillor Walker and Councillor Taylor left the meeting at this point - 19.30pm

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/027/2022: LEASE OF UNITS SAINTFIELD COMMUNITY CENTRE

Read: Report dated 17 February 2022 from Mr F O'Connor, Head of Legal Administration (Acting), regarding lease of units Saintfield Community Centre **(Copy circulated)**

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

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Brown, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to approve the following recommendations:**

- i) A lease of the Industrial Unit known as Unit B at Saintfield Community Centre, Belfast Rd., Saintfield, for a term of 15 years, is offered to the party named at para 1.6 of this report at the rent stated therein;**
- ii) A lease of the Industrial Unit known as Unit C at Saintfield Community Centre, Belfast Rd., Saintfield, for a term of 15 years, is offered to the party named at para 1.9 of this report at the rent stated therein.**
- iii) A review clause to be included in the lease for every 5 years.**

SPR/028/2022: LEASES OF COUNCIL LAND – LISMORE CROSSMAGLEN

Read: Report dated 17 February 2022 from Mr F O'Connor, Head of Legal Administration (Acting), regarding leases of Council Land – Lismore Crossmaglen **(Copy circulated)**

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

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to approve the grant of a 25-year lease to the successful applicant within this process indicated in para 2.1, subject to a market valuation and legal formalities, and the recovery from the club of the recoverable costs under the Sports and Community Leasing Policy (2016).**

SPR/029/2022: SURPLUS ASSET UPDATE

Read: Report dated 17 February 2022 from Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director Estates & Project Management, regarding Surplus Asset Update **(Copy Circulated)**

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed to note the content of the report and attached Appendix A – Surplus Asset Overview and approve to move Grove Gardens Recreation Area, Killyleagh to the Open Market.

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/030/2022: UPDATE IN ACQUISITION OF LANDS AT CAMLOUGH LAKE

Read: Report dated 17 February 2022 from Mr F O'Connor, Head of Legal Administration (Acting) regarding update on acquisition of lands at Camlough Lake **(Copy circulated)**

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Murphy seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed to note the contents of the report.

SPR/031/2022: STRATEGIC FINANCE WORKING GROUP ACTION SHEET – 18 JANUARY 2022 & 03 FEBRUARY 2022

Read: Report dated 17 February 2022 from Mrs D Carville, Deputy Chief Executive, regarding Strategic Finance Working Group Action Sheet – 18 January 2022 & 03 February 2022. **(Copy circulated)**

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Murphy seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed to note the Strategic Finance Working Group Action Sheet – 18 January 2022 & 03 February 2022.

SPR/032/2022: CHIEF EXECUTIVE APPRAISAL

Read: Report dated 17 February 2022 from Mrs C Miskelly, Assistant Director Corporate Services (HR & Safeguarding), regarding Chief Executive Appraisal **(Copy circulated)**

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Murphy seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed to note that the 2020-2021 and 2021–2022 Performance Appraisals of the Chief Executive had been completed and members of the Chief Executive Appraisal Group were unanimous in their assessment of performance.

SPR/033/2022: PRESENTATION ON MUSEUM STRUCTURES

Mr Mallon presented a verbal update and powerpoint presentation to the Committee regarding Museum structures.

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Brown seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to note the Presentation on Museum Structures. It was further agreed that Council would carry out a full and detailed Strategic Review of Museum services and the investment in them across the District, this review would include meaningful consultation with key community stakeholders including Friends of the Down Museum and other groups deemed relevant.

FOR NOTING

SPR/034/2022: NMDDC RESONSE TO: THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND STANDARDS) (AMENDMENT) ORDER (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2022

Read: NMDDC Response to: The Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022 **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to note NMDDC Response to: The Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022

SPR/035/2022: SICKNESS ABSENCE

Read: Report dated 17 February 2022 from Mrs L Fitzsimons, HR Manager, regarding Sickness Absence. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to note the contents of the report.

There being no further business, the Meeting concluded at 20.26pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 07 March 2022.

Signed: **Councillor Oonagh Hanlon**
Chairperson

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