

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of Strategy Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on Thursday 13 October 2022 at 6.00pm via Microsoft Teams & Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre

In the Chair:	Councillor O Hanlon (Chamber)
In Attendance in Chamber	Councillor O Magennis Councillor A McMurray Councillor D Murphy Councillor B O'Muire Councillor G Sharvin Councillor J Trainor
In Attendance via Teams:	Councillor P Byrne Councillor M Gibbons Councillor R Howell Councillor A Lewis Councillor M Rice Councillor D Taylor
Non Committee Members:	Councillor T Andrews Councillor L Devlin Councillor C Enright Councillor H McKee
Officials in Attendance:	Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services Mr C Mallon, Director Enterprise, Regeneration & Tourism Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director Capital and Procurement Mr F O'Connor, Head of Legal Administration Mr C Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting) Mrs L Cummins, Democratic Services Officer

SPR/145/2022: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Gallagher and Hanna.

SPR/146/2022: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chief Executive declared an interest on behalf of all officers in Item 12 - Planning for the Future Tier 3 Voluntary Redundancy Call, and all relevant officers would be asked to leave the meeting at that point

**SPR/147/2022: ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM STRATEGY, POLICY AND
RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON THURSDAY
15 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Read: Action Sheet of the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on Thursday 15 September 2022. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Byrne asked for an update on SPR/142/2022- Lease of storage unit at Greenbank Industrial Estate, Newry.

Mrs Ward advised at this point Council was refraining from entering into a lease but that arrangements were in place for the next few months and would continue to be kept under review.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Ó Muirí to approve the action sheet from the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 15 September 2022.**

NOTICE OF MOTION

SPR/148/2022: CROSS BORDER TOURISM & ACTIVE TRAVEL

Read: Report dated 13 October 2022 from Mr C Mallon, Director Enterprise Regeneration and Tourism regarding Cross Border Tourism & Active Travel **(Copy circulated)**

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Enright:

'This council recognises the opportunity presented by cross-border tourism and the importance of active travel for healthier, more sustainable lifestyles. It also recognises the key role that projects such as the Narrow Water Bridge and Albert Basin Park can play in supporting this. Council will appoint an officer responsible for identifying funding for cross border tourism and active travel in the area within a month of this motion being passed. and Council will formally write to the Southern Government's Shared Island Unit expressing their interest in submitting a formal application for a number of projects which will support cross border tourism and active travel in the area. This will specifically include applications for 1. the remainder of funding for the Albert Basin Park project, 2. an Omeath Road cycle expressway, and 3. connective cycle lanes and greenways between Newry city centre and Rostrevor to link to the Mourne Way as part of restoring the Ulster Way.'

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Gibbons.

In presenting the motion, Councillor Enright highlighted that progress had been made with Ards and North Down Borough Council having succeeded in obtaining funding supported by Newry Mourne and Down and other Councils to explore the Columban Way. He stated this should resolve many of difficulties with the St Patrick's trail and Ulster Way in the area with regard establishing an off-road route constructed.

Councillor Enright proposed that the officer's report be amended to include the specific items he had referred to in his motion for clarity on the capital funding projects that might be supported.

This was seconded by Councillor McMurray.

Councillor Sharvin extended thanks to Mr Mallon and his team on the great detail of work already underway across the District and in particular within the Downpatrick DEA.

In summing up Councillor Enright advised, if Council was successful in having the greenway projects and off-road project like the Columban Way completed, then there was the potential to be as good as Kerry and Wicklow in terms of walking routes and active travel.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor McMurray, that Elected Members approve the following recommendations:**

- **The appointment of an officer is not approved, the current resource exists within Council to identify and submit successful applications for funding for cross border and active travel projects.**
- **Council officers formally write to the Shared Island Unit expressing an interest in submitting applications for capital funding for projects which will support cross border tourism and active travel in the area. This will specifically include applications for 1. the remainder of funding for the Albert Basin Park project, 2. an Omear Road cycle expressway, and 3. connective cycle lanes and greenways between Newry city centre and Rostrevor to link to the Mourne Way as part of restoring the Ulster Way.'**

CORPORATE PLANNING AND POLICY

SPR/149/2022: **REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR COUNCILLOR'S EQUALITY AND GOOD RELATIONS REFERENCE GROUP**

Read: Report dated 13 October 2022 from Mr C Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy, regarding Revised Terms of Reference for Councillor's Equality and good relations Reference Group (**Copy circulated**)

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor McMurray that Elected Members approve the revised Terms of Reference of the Councillor's Equality and Good Relations Reference Group.**

FOR DISCUSSION/DECISION

SPR/150/2022: **REQUEST BY COUNCILLOR MURPHY**

Following a request from Councillor Murphy that consideration was given to potential plans to use Council's facilities and resources to ease the burden on those that are most impacted by the cost of living crisis.

Councillor Murphy suggested it would be a good idea to touch base with those groups already working with those most affected through community associations and charities to see how best to make use some of Council facilities that are not being utilised at present.

All parties spoke in support and thanked Councillor Murphy for bringing the matter forward, speaking at length at the impact of the cost of living crisis and the importance of assisting and supporting those most affected, the following points were raised:

- Council should do all they can within their remit to support those affected.
- Engage with as many groups as possible already offering assistance in order to investigate how Council can best help.
- Council should build upon previous motion on Child Poverty and response from Department for Communities and try incorporating cost of living and the practicalities of poverty within the District.
- It would be useful to have a directory of services to signpost people for help and advice.
- A similar plan should be put in place as was implemented during Covid to help those affected and perhaps use the assistance centres that were previously used for Ukrainian families as a place people could go to.
- People who never needed help before were finding themselves in a situation they never thought they would be in.
- Councillor Trainor advised members there were two great tools Councillors could promote and signpost people to – 'Advice NI' and 'Make the Call' to see what resources and support are available to them.

The Chief Executive advised that Council, through the Emergency Planning Structures for Northern Ireland investigate emergencies and crisis situations, including the issues faced this winter. Council also have representation through the Emergency Leadership Group, bringing together various different bodies to look at the numerous challenges faced in the coming months.

On a local level Council were investigating 'Warm Banks' using own facilities to encourage people to visit them for heat etc. and a report would follow imminently around that specific issue.

The Chief Executive highlighted that Community Planning structures and the Strategic Stakeholder Forum Group had been strengthened as a result of Council's response during Covid and a survey had been undertaken to see what support and help could be provided, the results of which were imminent and would be brought back through the relevant committees demonstrating the various ways they can help.

The Council faces many challenges financially and consideration was also given through the Strategic Finance Working Group at what Council could do to help within the boundaries of what they are responsible for and what finances are available.

Councillor Murphy thanked Members for their support and hoped by working together that much needed help could be provided for those most in need.

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Trainor, seconded by Councillor Magennis, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on items 9-17 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 any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

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

The Chairperson advised the following had been agreed while in closed session.

SPR/151/2022: DBEC RESOURCES

Read: Report dated 13 October 2022 from Mr C Mallon, Director of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism, regarding DBEC Resources. **(Copy circulated).**

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Byrne it was agreed Elected Members approve the funding to deliver the DBEC objectives for 2023 and 2024 as set out in the officer's report.

SPR/152/2022: PROPOSED LEASE OF LANDS AT MCCLELLAND PARK, NEWRY FOR A PROPOSED NEW ELECTRICTY SUBSTATION

Read: Report dated 13 October 2022 from Mr F O'Connor, Head of Legal Administration regarding, Proposed lease of lands at McClelland Park, Newry for a proposed new electricity substation **(Copy circulated).**

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Murphy, seconded by Councillor Magennis, it was agreed that Elected Members approve to enter into a 99-year Lease of the lands outlined in red on the map attached to the officer's report being lands at McClelland Park with Northern Ireland Electricity Networks subject to them discharging Councils legal and valuation costs.

SPR/153/2022: PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY AT BELL'S LANE, NEWRY

Read: Report dated 13 October 2022 from Mr F O'Connor, Head of Legal Administration, regarding Public Right of Way at Bell's Lane, Newry. **(Copy circulated).**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Murphy, it was agreed Elected Members approve the following recommendations:**

- i) **To agree the amended map which will replace the 1992 map agreed at the time of assertion.**
- ii) **To engage with the representatives of the deceased land-owner with a view to regularising land ownership issues in respect of Bell's Lane on the best terms possible.**

SPR/154/2022: SURPLUS ASSET UPDATE

Read: Report dated 13 October 2022 from Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director Estates and Capital Projects regarding Surplus Asset Update **(Copy circulated).**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Trainor, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed Elected Members approve the following recommendations:**

- **Patrick Street Play Area (McCreesh Park).**
Recommendation to accept the proposals in the questionnaire and inform them to move to the next stage of the process, completion of the Business Case.
- **Land for No.13 and No.15 (Steel Structure) The Square Ballynahinch.**
Recommendation to proceed with removal of the Steel Structure and re-advertise on the Open Market.
- **Meadowlands Recreation Area – (Section of as per Planning Application).**
Recommendation to withdraw the planning application and remove from the Disposal List and retain. To be moved to AHC Open Space Strategy.
- **Play Area at Latt Villas, Latt Road, Mullaghglass.**
Recommendation to write to the neighbouring properties to gauge the interest in buying plots of the land.
- **Site at 4 Daisy Hill - Grills House Section.**
Recommendation to accept the highest bid as per the officer's report.
- **Bleary Bungalows play area.**

Recommendation to proceed with buying the freehold as valued by LPS to progress with the sale as per the officer's report.

SPR/155/2022:

TIMINGS OF MEETINGS AND WORKING GROUPS

Read:

Report dated 13 October 2022 from Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive, regarding Timings of Meetings and Working Groups (**copy circulated**)

Agreed:

On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Murphy, it was agreed to keep the Statutory Committees as they were and for Senior Management Team to continue to review the model and timing of Working Groups and to implement appendix 2 of the officer's report.

All relevant officers left the meeting at this point – 19.07pm

SPR/156/2022:

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE TIER 3 VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCY CALL

Read:

Report dated 13 October 2022 from Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive, regarding Planning for the Future Tier 3 Voluntary Redundancy Call (**copy circulated**)

Agreed:

On the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Magennis, it was agreed Elected Members approve to progress with Planning for the Future as per the officer's report.

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/157/2022:

RELEASE OF DEED OF COVENANT AND CHARGE – 168 NEWCASTLE ROAD, CASTLEWELLAN

Read:

Report dated 13 October 2022 from Mr F O'Connor, Head of Legal Administration regarding, Release of Deed of Covenant and Charge – 168 Newcastle Road, Castlewellan (**copy circulated**)

Agreed:

On the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Ó Muirí, it was agreed Elected Members note the contents of the officer's report.

FOR NOTING

SPR/158/2022:

EATS AND BEATS EVENT

Read: Report dated 13 October 2022 from Mr C Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy, regarding Eats and Beats Event (**Copy circulated**)

Councillor Devlin welcomed the report and expressed her disappointment at the negative impact that had surrounded the Eats and Beats event which overall had been very successful and a superb family event that Council should be proud of.

Councillor Lewis responded by thanking the Chief Executive and her officers stating his party were happy that the issue had been raised at Council. He stated the only reason official complaints had not been received was due to the information officials had provided that there was no guarantee that individuals wishing to would remain anonymous.

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Trainor, it was agreed Elected Members note that Council take no further action and do not commission independent investigation in relation to alleged remarks made on stage at the Eats and Beats event.**

SPR/159/2022: **STATUTORY REPORTING – SECTION 75 POLICY**
SCREENING REPORT – QUARTERLY REPORT FOR PERIOD
JULY – SEPTEMBER 2022

Read: Report dated 13 October 2022 from Mr C Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy, regarding Statutory Reporting – Section 75 Policy screening report – Quarterly Report for Period July – September 2022 (**Copy circulated**)

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Trainor, it was agreed Elected Members note the Section 75 Screening Report – Quarterly Report for July – September 2022.**

There being no further business, the Meeting concluded at 19.27pm.

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

Signed: **Councillor Oonagh Hanlon**
Chairperson

Signed: **Marie Ward**
Chief Executive