

At the Council Meeting held on Monday 9 January 2023 the Minutes of the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting were discussed and it was agreed to amend the minute to include the following:

SPR/196/2022 - Minutes of Newry City Centre Regeneration Partnership Board Meeting, 1 December 2022

Councillor McMurray asked that his comments at the meeting in relation to the Alliance Party's opposition be included within the minute. The Democratic Services Manager agreed the amendments to the minute would be added accordingly.

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of Strategy Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on Thursday 15 December 2022 at 6.00pm via Microsoft Teams & Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre

In the Chair: Councillor O Hanlon (Chamber)

In Attendance in Chamber Councillor A McMurray

In Attendance via Teams: Councillor P Byrne
Councillor H Gallagher
Councillor O Magennis
Councillor B Ó Muirí
Councillor M Rice
Councillor G Sharvin
Councillor D Taylor

Officials in Attendance: Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services
Mr C Mallon, Director Enterprise, Regeneration & Tourism
Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director Administration
Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director Enterprise, Employment & Regeneration
Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director Finance & Performance
Mr F O'Connor, Head of Legal Administration
Mr P Rooney, Legal Advisor
Mr C Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy
Ms V Keegan, Head of Communications & Marketing
Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)
Mrs L Cummins, Democratic Services Officer

SPR/180/2022: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Howell, Lewis, Murphy and Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive.

The Chairperson wished Mr F O'Connor best wishes as he was leaving council to take up a new post and welcomed Mr P Rooney as his interim replacement.

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Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor McMurray, that Elected Members confirm the motion broadly reflects Council's corporate Section 75 and Disability Duties responsibilities, and commitments and positive actions set out within Council's Equality Scheme, Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan.**

It was also agreed that a full accessibility audit of all council facilities be carried out detailing any required action and also the timeline for completion of such. This should include the likes of play parks- for example accessible play equipment.

A co-design stakeholder forum be established to support and assist council in ensuring they are delivering fully accessible facilities. That a co-design stakeholder list be developed who are engaged on accessibility within council's facilities.

SPR/184/2022: **STATUTORY DUTY COMPLIANCE: A) DRAFT EQUALITY ACTION PLAN 2023-2027, B) DRAFT DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2023-2027**

Read: Report dated 12 December 2022 from Mr C Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy regarding Statutory Duty Compliance: A) Draft Equality Action Plan 2023-2027, B) Draft Disability Action Plan 2023-2027 **(Copy circulated)**

In response to a query raised by Councillor Ó Muirí, Mr Moffett confirmed that each consultation would be a singular stand-alone process with documents to be completed with responses, it was solely for advertising they were being grouped together.

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

- **Draft Equality Action Plan 2023 - 2027**

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- **Draft Disability Action Plan 2023 – 2027**

SPR/185/2022:

DRAFT IRISH LANGUAGE STRATEGY 2023 - 2027

Read:

Report dated 12 December 2022 from Mr C Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy regarding Draft Irish Language Strategy 2023 - 2027 **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Ó Muirí, Hanlon & Sharvin welcomed the report highlighting that user groups who benefitted from the financial assistance scheme or the bursary schemes were getting better every year being assisted by council in capacity building and the scheme had enabled Irish language groups and local clubs across the DEA's to offer Irish language courses and as a result reaching a wider audience. The next 4 years looked positive. The 6-month monitoring reports were very helpful and needed to continue to be tracked to ensure the strategy was meeting its targets and if not, what was needed to be reviewed to change it.

Councillor Taylor advised that he had previously raised concerns regarding the implementation of the strategy and did not agree with the comments in the report as any strategy seeking to expand or be enhanced would require additional significant resources and support, he felt this was in disproportion compared to other events i.e. Ulster Scots or PUL activity. Councillor Taylor stated he did not agree with the assessment and felt it would have an impact on community relations as people would draw comparisons about the level of support required and offered to different cultural activities.

Councillor Ó Muirí stated that it didn't always cost money to do something better, it was about everyone trying a bit harder to do things better through capacity building without extra money and resources. It was not about culture, history or tradition it was purely about language. An argument could be made that there are millions of pounds spent on the English language in comparison to the Irish language as this is the only real like for like comparison.

The Chairperson put the matter to a vote, the results of which are as follows:

FOR:	8
AGAINST:	1
ABSTENTIONS:	0

The proposal was carried.

Agreed:

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Magennis, that Elected Members agree the draft Irish Language Strategy 2023 – 2027 for 12 week public consultation.

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SPR/186/2022: PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT 2022-23

Read: Report dated 12 December 2022 from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director: Finance and Performance regarding Performance Improvement Audit and Assessment 2022-23 **(Copy circulated)**

In response to a query from Councillor Sharvin, Mr Byrne confirmed that there had been no change since 2015, there had always been an unqualified opinion. The Audit Office would normally report in relation to improvement planning and the publication of improvement information however since Covid they were unable to assess all councils statistics as figures had been slightly skewed due to the impact of the pandemic on services.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Gallagher, seconded by Councillor Ó Muirí, that Elected Members agree the Performance Improvement Audit and Assessment 2022-23.**

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

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

Councillor Gallagher left the meeting at this point - 18.33pm

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

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SPR/187/2022:

BUSINESS CASE – INTERNAL AUDIT PROVISION

Read:

Report dated 12 December 2022 from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Performance, Internal Audit Provision. **(Copy circulated).**

Agreed:

On the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed Elected Members approve to proceed with option 2 – Outsource Internal Audit Function for the details outlined within the full Business Case.

SPR/188/2022:

CASTLEWELLAN FOREST PARK

Read:

Report dated 12 December 2022 from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director Enterprise Employment and Regeneration regarding, Castlewellan Forest Park **(Copy circulated).**

Agreed:

On the proposal of Councillor McMurray, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed that Elected Members approve the budget increase for NLHF project posts for three years and associated payroll budget.

SPR/189/2022:

CASTLEWELLAN FOREST PARK – RE-ROOTING OUR PAST IN OUR FUTURE PROJECT

Read:

Report dated 12 December 2022 from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director Enterprise Employment and Regeneration regarding, Castlewellan Forest Park – Re-Rooting our Past in our Future Project **(Copy circulated).**

Agreed:

On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor McMurray, it was agreed that Elected Members note the Project Board meetings held on 16 September 2022, 14 October 2022 and 12 December 2022. It was also agreed to approve progressing PQQ and ITT process to appoint an IST.

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SPR/190/2022: LEASE OF LANDS AT BALLYNOE ROAD DOWNPATRICK

Read: Report dated 12 December 2022 from Mr F O'Connor, Head of Legal Administration, regarding Lease of lands at Ballynoe Road, Downpatrick. **(Copy circulated).**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed Elected Members approve to enter into a Lease with the Group noted in the report in respect of the lands at Ballynoe Road, Downpatrick as outlined in red on the attached map for a term of 25 years at market rent, subject to the group receiving an offer of funding within a period of 5 years.**

SPR/191/2022: PROPOSED ASSIGNMENT OF LEASE DATED 4TH NOVEMBER 2013 BY TRUSTEES OF CROSSMAGLEN RANGERS

Read: Report dated 12 December 2022 from Mr F O'Connor, Head of Legal Administration, regarding proposed assignment of lease dated 4th November 2013 by Trustees of Crossmaglen Rangers **(Copy circulated).**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed Elected Members approve to the assignment of the lease dated 4th November 2013 to a new corporate tenant which will be controlled by representatives of Crossmaglen GFC.**

Councillor Taylor left the meeting at this point – 18.47pm

SPR/192/2022: ARDGLASS ROWING CLUB

Read: Report dated 12 December 2022 from Mr F O'Connor, Head of Legal Administration, regarding Ardglass Rowing Club **(copy circulated)**

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Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor McMurray, it was agreed to defer this item to the January SP&R Committee Meeting.**

SPR/193/2022: **NEWRY CITY CENTRE REGENERATION – FUNDING AGREEMENT**

Read: Report dated 12 December 2022 from Mr C Mallon, Director Enterprise Regeneration and Tourism, regarding Newry City Centre Regeneration – Funding Agreement (**copy circulated**)

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Magennis, it was agreed Elected Members consider the contents of the report, the funding agreement attached and approve the signing of the Funding Agreement between Belfast City Council and NMDDC in respect of the Newry City Centre Regeneration Projects.**

FOR NOTING – This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the October 2022 Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014

SPR/194/2022: **'ROVING REPORTER' PILOT – EVALUATION REPORT**

Read: Report dated 12 December 2022 from Ms V Keegan, Head of Communications and Marketing, regarding Roving Reporter Pilot – Evaluation Report. (**copy circulated**)

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

SPR/195/2022: **STRATEGIC FINANCE WORKING GROUP ACTION SHEET – 16 NOVEMBER 2022 & 7 DECEMBER 2022**

Read: Strategic Finance Working Group Action Sheet – 16 November 2022 & 7 December 2022. (**copy circulated**)

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Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Ó Muirí, it was agreed to note the Strategic Finance Working Group Action Sheet – 16 November 2022 & 7 December 2022.**

FOR NOTING

SPR/196/2022: **MINUTES OF NEWRY CITY CENTRE REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING – 01 DECEMBER 2022**

Read: Minutes of Newry City Centre Regeneration Partnership Board Meeting – 01 December 2022 **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed Elected Members note the Minutes of Newry City Centre Regeneration Partnership Board Meeting – 01 December 2022.**

There being no further business, the Meeting concluded at 18.59pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 09 January 2023.

Signed: **Councillor Oonagh Hanlon**
Chairperson

Signed: **Josephine Kelly**
Director of Corporate Services