

## **NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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### **Minutes of Strategy Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on Thursday 17 August 2023 at 6.00pm via Microsoft Teams & Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre**

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**In the Chair:** Councillor L McEvoy (Chamber)

**In Attendance in Chamber:**

Councillor P Byrne	Councillor C Enright
Councillor O Hanlon	Councillor R Howell
Councillor T Kelly	Councillor A Lewis
Councillor A Mathers	Councillor D McAteer
Councillor S O'Hare	Councillor H Reilly
Councillor G Sharvin	

**In Attendance via Teams:** Councillor A Quinn Councillor D Taylor

**Non-Members:** Councillor T Andrews (Chamber)  
Councillor C Bowsie (via Teams)  
Councillor J Truesdale (via Teams)

**Officials in Attendance:** Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services  
Mr A Cassells, Director of Sustainability & Environment  
Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director: Capital Projects and Procurement  
Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director: Finance & Performance  
Mrs C Miskelly, Assistant Director: Corporate Services (HR & Safeguarding)  
Mr C Moffett, Assistant Director: Corporate Planning and Policy (Acting)  
Ms E Cosgrove, Head of Compliance  
Mr P Rooney, Legal Advisor  
Mr G McBride, Head of Administration & Customer Services  
Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)  
Mrs S Kieran, Democratic Services Officer

**Officials in Attendance via Teams:** Mr P Tamati, Assistant Director: Leisure & Sports

#### **SPR/095/2023: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

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

#### **SPR/096/2023: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**SPR/097/2023: ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON THURSDAY 15 JUNE 2023**

**Read:** Action Sheet of the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on Thursday 15 June 2023. **(Copy circulated)**

**Agreed:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, to approve the action sheet from the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 15 June 2023.**

**FOR DISCUSSION/DECISION**

**SPR/098/2023 OFFICER REPORT ON NOTICE OF MOTION – MEMORIAL TO CROSSGAR’S TITANIC VICTIM, JAMES MCGRADY**

**Read:** Report dated 11 August 2023 from Mr C Moffett, Assistant Director: Corporate Planning & Policy (Acting), regarding Memorial to Crossgar’s Titanic Victim, James McGrady **(Copy circulated)**

Mr Moffett presented the report stating there were cost implications such as the cost of purchasing and designing a ‘Titanic-style’ bench and information panel, installation and ongoing maintenance. He stated there were three Council policies involved i.e. Naming Council Facilities; Policy regarding Artwork and Sculptures; and Policy on Request to Plant Trees on Council Property. Council policy indicates that applications were not accepted to memorialise individuals or families.

Councillor Bowsie presented the motion stating Mr McGrady was the last victim of the titanic that was found and he had resided at Rockschapel Road in Crossgar. He stated the intention behind a bench was to fill a need in the square in Crossgar as there was no public bench sited there presently and he felt tying in the Titanic links to Crossgar would be beneficial.

Members discussed the issue at length with the following comments being made:

- Had any further investigation taken place with regard to other victims of the titanic that had come from the local area?
- If Council were to approve this request, would we be veering outside of Council policy and setting a precedent which may insult those people who had been turned down in the past.
- Rowallane was an appropriate location for this type of recognition as the designer of the Titanic actually lived in the Rowallane area.
- There was a precedent set with Council having recognised maritime disasters at Newry canal.

Mr Moffett responded to the queries as follows:

- Council policy does not accept applications to memorialise individuals or families. Discussions at the working group were around an information panel referencing the titanic and explaining the link to the local area.
- Following discussions with the Titanic society he was unable to provide any further names but would continue to follow this up.

Councillor Byrne advised there was another victim of the Titanic from the District namely, Mr James Heslin who came from Jonesborough. He stated Mr Heslin had died on the Titanic and his body was not recovered, his wife lived in the local area until her death at aged 104. Councillor Byrne suggested rather than a bench to one person, perhaps the museums could document the people referenced and their links to the Titanic.

Councillor Reilly proposed to accept the officer's recommendation to progress the motion as per Council's Policy on Naming Council Facilities. This was seconded by Councillor Lewis.

Following further discussion, Councillor Byrne proposed to bring the report back to the Equality and Good Relations Reference Group for further investigative work given the revelations that there was at least one other person from the District involved in the tragedy. This was seconded by Councillor Howell.

Councillor Reilly was asked if he was willing to withdraw his proposal which he assented to. He stated in order to assist the process the word 'memorial' could be removed from the original notice of motion.

**Agreed:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Howell, to bring the report back to the Equality and Good Relations Reference Group for further investigative work. It was also agreed that the word 'memorial' be removed from the original notice of motion.**

**SPR/099/2023**

**REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR COUNCILLORS' EQUALITY AND GOOD RELATIONS REFERENCE GROUP**

**Read:** Report dated 17 August 2023 from Mr C Moffett, Assistant Director: Corporate Planning & Policy (Acting), regarding Revised Terms of Reference for Councillors' Equality and Good Relations Reference Group **(Copy circulated)**

**Agreed:** **On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Howell, the revised Terms of Reference of the Councillors' Equality and Good Relations Reference Group were agreed.**

**SPR/100/2023:**

**NEW COUNCIL COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE – IMPLEMENTATION OF NORTHERN IRELAND PUBLIC SECTOR OMBUDSMAN (NIPSO) MODEL COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURES PARTS 1-3**

**Read:** Report dated 17 August 2023 from Mr G McBride, Head of Administration and Customer Services, regarding New Council Complaints Handling Procedure – Implementation of Northern Ireland Public Sector Ombudsman (NIPSO) Model Complaints Handling Procedure Parts 1-3 **(Copy circulated)**

In proposing the report, Councillor Enright welcomed the implementation of a clear procedure as he had found in the past it was difficult to bring complaints regarding Council for investigation to Ombudsman level.

On a point of information, Councillor Sharvin advised this was not a new procedure, there had always been a complaints system in place with reporting to the Ombudsman if appropriate.

Mr McBride clarified under the existing arrangements, it was a 3-stage complaints procedure, and this new method would be a 2-stage procedure thereby reducing the time a complainant may have to wait on a resolution.

Councillor Byrne welcomed the public-facing document and thanked officers for its clarity. He raised a query regarding where the statistics regarding complaints would be published.

Mr McBride advised guidance would be forthcoming from NIPSO, however internally there would be quarterly reports and externally there would be an annual report available to the Ombudsman and members of the public to scrutinise the type and number of complaints received.

**Agreed:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Enright, seconded by Councillor Kelly, to adopt the model MCHP as published by NIPSO and replace its current policy documents with the customised version attached to the officer's report within the period of 6 months from the publication date as required.**

**SPR/101/2023:** **REVISED RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

**Read:** Report dated 17 August 2023 from Ms E Cosgrove, Head of Compliance, regarding Revised Records Management Policy and Procedure **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Byrne raised an issue around the e-learning module training and the fact that the e-mail inviting Members to take part in training looks like a fraudulent e-mail therefore Members are afraid to click on same. He stated the training numbers would increase if this was addressed.

Ms Cosgrove thanked the Member for his comment and advised this was being looked at currently. She advised she was in liaison with the Democratic Services Manager regarding training on Access to Information and Records Management.

**Agreed:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Lewis, to approve the revised Records Management Policy and Procedure.**

**SPR/102/2023:** **COUNCIL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS**

**Read:** Report dated 17 August 2023 from Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting), regarding Council Decision-Making Process **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Sharvin asked that the wording on NM3 be changed from 'available' to 'suitable' to ensure officers have adequate time to prepare reports for committees. He also asked that the word 'moved' be replaced by 'present'.

Councillor McAteer suggested NM9 could be moved to earlier in the process.

Members asked if they could have time to scrutinise the report and bring any amendments back. Ms Taggart advised the wording etc could be amended however the premise of the document couldn't be amended as it is based on Council's Standing Orders.

**Agreed:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Byrne, to note the process maps and narratives for dealing with Notices of Motion at both Council and Committee Meetings. It was also agreed to bring back updated maps to reflect the discussions at the meeting and any further changes to wording or the order of the flowchart that Members have they should email through to the Democratic Services Manager.**

**SPR/103/2023: BUSINESS CONTINUITY POLICY**

**Read:** Report dated 17 August 2023 from Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director: Capital Projects & Procurement, regarding Business Continuity Policy (**Copy circulated**)

Councillor Byrne highlighted the name of the Director on the report should be amended from Dorinnia Carville to Josephine Kelly.

**Agreed:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, to approve the Business Continuity Policy as attached to the officer's report.**

**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 Hanlon, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on items 10-19 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 Howell, seconded by Councillor Mathers, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.**

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

**SPR/104/2023: SALE OF NO 13 AND NO 15, THE SQUARE, BALLYNAHINCH**

**Read:** Report dated 17 August 2023 from Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director: Estates and Capital Projects, regarding Sale of No 13 and No 15, The Square, Ballynahinch (**Copy circulated**).

**Agreed:** **On the proposal of Councillor Kelly, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to accept the highest offer and proceed with the sale of the site.**

**SPR/105/2023: PROPOSED RENEWAL OF A LICENCE OF LANDS AT CASTLE PARK, NEWCASTLE TO NATIONAL WESTMINSTER BANK FOR A MOBILE BANK UNIT**

**Read:** Report dated 17 August 2023 from Mr P Rooney, Head of Legal Administration, regarding Proposed Renewal of a Licence of Lands at Castle Park, Newcastle to National Westminster Bank for a Mobile Bank Unit (**Copy circulated**).

**Agreed:** **On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed to grant a Licence to National Westminster Bank permitting them to operate a mobile banking unit at Castle Park each Thursday from 10am until 12pm for a further 2 year period subject to a yearly Licence Fee as set out in the officer's report.**

**SPR/106/2023: PROPOSED LEASE OF AREA FOR MOBILE PHONE INSTALLATION AT DOWNPATRICK HRC SITE**

**Read:** Report dated 17 August 2023 from Mr P Rooney, Head of Legal Administration, regarding Proposed Lease of Area for Mobile Phone Installation at Downpatrick HRC Site (**Copy circulated**).

**Agreed:** **On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to defer decision to establish whether a planning application has been submitted on the site.**

**SPR/107/2023: KILKEEL BOWLING PAVILION**

**Read:** Report dated 17 August 2023 from Mr P Tamati, Assistant Director: Leisure and Sport, regarding Kilkeel Bowling Pavilion (**Copy circulated**).

**Agreed:** **On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Lewis, the final cost estimate was agreed for the refurbishment and upgrade of Kilkeel Bowling Pavilion as per section 4.1 of the officer's report.**

**SPR/108/2023:**

**DIRECTOR RECRUITMENT**

**Read:**

Report dated 17 August 2023 from Ms C Miskelly, Assistant Director: Corporate Services (HR & Safeguarding), regarding Director Recruitment (**Copy circulated**).

**Agreed:**

**On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, the following was agreed:**

- a. Approve the recruitment for Director: Sustainability & Environment;**
- b. Confirm decision in relation to 2.4 of the officer's report;**
- c. Confirm to [human.resources@nmandd.org](mailto:human.resources@nmandd.org) nominations to the selection panel for Director: Sustainability & Environment and Director: Active & Healthy Communities, by Monday 4 September 2023, together with availability for training.**
- d. Agreed also to seek permission for 3 Elected Members to be appointed to both recruitment panels.**
- e. In the case of more than 3 nominations, it was noted that a Party Leaders meeting be called.**

**SPR/109/2023:**

**CONSENT TO ASSIGN LEASE OF LANDS AT BALLYKINLAR**

**Read:**

Report dated 17 August 2023 from Mr P Rooney, Head of Legal Administration, regarding Consent to Assign Lease of Lands at Ballykinlar. (**Copy circulated**)

**Agreed:**

**On the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to consent to the assignment of the lease from the Playgroup to the Group identified in the officer's report, subject to the consent of the Head Landlord. It was also agreed to amend or waive the clauses in the Sublease to permit the new tenant to use the lands as an office to carry out its functions.**

**FOR NOTING – The following items are deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the October 2022 Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014**

**SPR/110/2023:**

**QUARTER 1 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS – 2023/24**

**Read:**

Report dated 17 August 2023 from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director: Finance & Performance, regarding Quarter 1 Management Accounts – 2023/24 (**Copy circulated**)

**Agreed:** On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to note the Quarter 1 2023-24 Management Accounts.

**SPR/111/2023: BELFAST REGION CITY DEAL – ANNUAL REPORT**

**Read:** Report dated 17 August 2023 from Ms J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Belfast Region City Deal – Annual Report **(Copy circulated)**

**Agreed:** On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to note the BRCD Annual Report for 2022/23.

**SPR/112/2023: STAFF MATTER – SUSTAINABILITY & ENVIRONMENT**

**Read:** Report dated 17 August 2023 from Mr A Cassells, Director, Sustainability & Environment, regarding Staff Matter: Sustainability & Environment. **(Copy circulated)**

**Agreed:** On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to note the contents of the officer's report, including the closure of the canteens since March 2020.

**SPR/113/2023: NEWRY LEISURE CENTRE (NLC) – SWIMMING POOL**

**Read:** Report dated 17 August 2023 from Mr P Tamati, Assistant Director: Leisure and Sport, regarding Newry Leisure Centre (NLC) – Swimming Pool **(Copy circulated)**

**Agreed:** On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to note the contents of the officer's report with a further report to be tabled at Council to agree a programme of works and closure arrangements of Newry Leisure Centre swimming pool.

**FOR NOTING**

**SPR/114/2023: STATUTORY REPORTING - SECTION 75 POLICY SCREENING REPORT – QUARTERLY REPORT FOR PERIOD APRIL – JUNE 2023 AND NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL PUBLIC AUTHORITY STATUTORY EQUALITY AND GOOD RELATIONS DUTIES ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2022-23**

**Read:** Report dated 17 August 2023 from Mr C Moffett, Assistant Director: Corporate Planning and Policy (Acting) regarding



Statutory Reporting – Section 75 Policy Screening Report – Quarterly Report for Period April – June 2023 and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report 2022-23 **(Copy circulated)**

**Agreed:** **On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Byrne, to note the Section 75 Policy Screening Report – Quarterly Report for period April – June 2023. It was further agreed to note Newry, Mourne and Down District Council’s Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report for the period 2022-2023 for submission to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland by 31 August 2023.**

**SPR/115/2023: SICKNESS ABSENCE**

**Read:** Report dated 17 August 2023 from Mr P Preen, HR Operations Manager, regarding Sickness Absence. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Sharvin queried whether any work had been undertaken to discover the cause of the increase in sickness levels. He also asked whether sickness absence as a risk to the Council was tracked by the Audit Committee?

Ms Miskelly advised analysis was carried out regularly however as the information is personal and sensitive it would not be able to be shared. She stated the health and wellbeing group seek feedback on a regular basis with regard to staff morale etc. She advised she would revert to Members with figures as to the numbers of staff engaged in the process.

Mr Byrne advised sickness absence was tracked as a corporate risk on the register which was tabled quarterly at the Audit Committee.

Councillor McAteer stated some staff had advised him they weren’t able to work flexibly the same as others and suggested this maybe a way of reducing sickness absence.

**Agreed:** **On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Byrne, to note the contents of the report and to note the following measures in relation to sickness absence:**

- **Absence data is analysed and reported on a quarterly basis to both the Senior and Corporate Management Teams to identify opportunities for targeted interventions.**
- **Sickness Absence forms part of the Corporate Risk Register and performance monitored on the Corporate Dashboard.**
- **A tender for a new Occupational Health Service is due to close on 17 August 2023.**

**SPR/116/2023: DRAFT NILGA CORPORATE PLAN 2023-2027**

**Read:** Report dated 17 August 2023 from Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting), regarding Draft NILGA Corporate Plan 2023-2027 **(Copy circulated)**

**Agreed:** **On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Byrne, to note the officer's report and members to respond with any feedback to NILGA regarding Corporate Plan 2023-2027 by Thursday 31 August 2023.**

**SPR/117/2023:** **CLOSED/OPEN REPORTING**

**Read:** Report dated 17 August 2023 from Ms J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Closed/Open Reporting. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Byrne thanked officers for bringing the report however proposed that the recommendation be amended to read "Officers should do all in the power to..." rather than "consideration should also be given.." This was seconded by Councillor Hanlon.

Ms Taggart advised there was a trial at the Active and Healthy Community Committee Meeting with regards separating reports and appendices and this may be something that could be incorporated by other Committees if successful.

**Agreed:** **On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, to note that staff have been reminded of the need to review the contents of each report in line with the relevant sections of the legislation. It was agreed that officers should do all in their power to bring matters that can be brought into open session, but with legal, commercial information being considered in closed session.**

There being no further business, the Meeting concluded at 8.15pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 4 September 2023.

**Signed:** **Councillor Leeanne McEvoy**  
**Chairperson**

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