

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Minutes of Strategy Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on
Thursday 12 August 2021 at 6.00pm via Microsoft Teams (Hybrid)**

In the Chair: Councillor O Hanlon (Chamber)

In Attendance in Chamber: Councillor P Byrne
Councillor R Howell
Councillor D Murphy
Councillor B Ó Muirí
Councillor D Taylor
Councillor J Tinnelly

In Attendance via Teams: Councillor P Brown
Councillor H Gallagher
Councillor H Reilly
Councillor M Savage
Councillor G Sharvin
Councillor W Walker

Also in attendance: Councillor T Andrews
Councillor H McKee
Councillor G Stokes
Councillor W Clarke

Officials in Attendance

In Chamber: Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
Mrs D Carville, Director of Corporate Services
Mr J McBride, Director of Neighbourhood Services (Acting)
Mrs C Miskelly, Assistant Director Corporates Services, HR & Safeguarding
Mr P Preen, HR Policy and Projects Manager
Ms L O'Hare, Democratic Services Officer

Officials in Attendance

Via Teams: Mr M Lipsett, Director of Active Healthy Communities
Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Corporate Services
Mr P Tamati, Assistant Director, Leisure and Sport
Mr C Quinn, Assistant Director, Estates & Capital Projects
Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director, Enterprise, Employment & Regeneration
Mrs R Mackin, Assistant Director, Corporate Planning & Policy
Mr F O'Connor, Legal Advisor
Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)

SPR/111/2021: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Doran and Magennis.

In response to a point of clarity raised by Councillor Tinnelly, the Chief Executive confirmed that all committee members were encouraged to attend in the Chamber, however due to the legislation still awaiting royal assent, Members were still able to dial into the meetings remotely

if they so wished. She stated the hybrid method of working would need to be reviewed if the legislation was not forthcoming.

SPR/112/2021: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Savage declared an Interest in Item 10 – Options for the Distribution of the 2022 Annual Report/NMD Connect Citizens Magazine.

SPR/113/2021: ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON THURSDAY 17 JUNE 2021

Read: Action Sheet of the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on Thursday 17 June 2021. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Brown queried why the minutes from the NCCR Project Board meeting held on 24 June 2021 had not been tabled and when officers expected to share the results of the public consultation which closed at the end of May. He asked whether the delay was due to the ongoing investigation.

Mrs Carville confirmed there had been extenuating factors such as officer's annual leave etc which had delayed the minutes of the NCCR Project Board meeting held on 24 June 2021 being issued to the Project Board. She advised the Project Board members had been furnished with the minutes and as there was an amendment contained within same to the previous set of minutes, both sets would be tabled at the next Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee.

With regard to the public consultation, Mrs Carville advised there had been a significant response and the independent consultants were still reviewing these, therefore there had been no results forthcoming to the Council. She stated once received they would be tabled before the Programme Board initially before coming to the Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee. She advised she did not foresee any significant delay to this due to the ongoing investigation.

Councillor Brown stated, for the record, that the minutes for this particular Programme Board always seemed to have some sort of reason for delay each time.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Howell that the action sheet from the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 17 June 2021, be approved.**

NOTICES OF MOTION

SPR/114/2021: NOTICE OF MOTION REGARDING DIGITAL POVERTY

Read: Report dated 12 August 2021 from Mrs D Carville, Director Corporate Services regarding Notice of Motion regarding Digital Poverty. **(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Carville confirmed that letters had been sent to the Education Minister and the Ni Executive Office as requested, however, no response had been received to date. Mrs Carville highlighted section 2 of the report regarding the existing, ongoing activity throughout the district, recognising the need for collaborative working to address the issue of digital poverty and outlining some of the ways this could be achieved by working collaboratively with other stakeholders throughout the district.

Councillors Savage, Ó Muiri and Tinnelly welcomed the paper thanking the officers for the significant work completed thus far and the establishment of a working group to bring stakeholders together to identify those who were disadvantaged through the lack of connectivity. Councillor Tinnelly asked for a time limited approach and the ability to signpost people to get the support and help required.

Mrs Carville recognised the need for other statutory partners to be involved and stated a review period of one year could be included within the terms of reference to formally review the operation of the working group, in order to see if sufficient progress was being made.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Savage, seconded by Councillor Gallagher, to establish a working group, coordinated by the Community Planning Team. It was also agreed to include a review period of one year within the Terms of Reference of the Working Group.**

SPR/115/2021: FUTURE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES & RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Read: Report dated 12 August 2021 from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Enterprise, Employment and Regeneration, regarding future funding opportunities & resource requirements. **(Copy circulated)**

In response to queries raised by members, Mr McGilly confirmed that members would be regularly updated, and it would be the role of the appointed officer to explore all funding opportunities.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Murphy, that Council approve an additional resource to be recruited on a fixed term basis for 18 months, to support development work required around the emerging programmes as detailed in the report**

SPR/116/2021 PHA COVID-19 TESTING FACILITY AT ALBERT BASIN NEWRY

Read: Report dated 12 August 2021 from Mr C Quinn, Assistant Director, Estates and Project Management, regarding PHA Covid-19 Testing Facility at Albert Basin Newry **(Copy circulated)**

The Chairperson and members took the opportunity to thank Mr Quinn for the valuable work and detailed reports he had carried out in his time in Council and wished him well in returning to his post in CPD.

Mr Quinn highlighted there had been some complaints in relation to mobility issues and members of the public being unable to gain access to the site. The PHA had responded stating it was a walk-in site and advised that test kits had been offered to take home while encouraging people to access a drive-in site and get tested in these circumstances. Mr Quinn advised this had been further challenged by himself to the PHA stating that drive-in sites were quite a distance away and it would not be convenient for those people to travel that distance. He advised an update would be provided to members once received.

Councillor Tinnelly asked whether the shopping centres had been consulted to advise that carparks would not be available in the run up to Christmas as used in previous years due to the PHA still being on site.

Mr Quinn advised they had not yet been advised as it was pending the outcome of the meeting but would now be advised that there would be the potential and most likely that the PHA would still be on site.

- Agreed:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Howell, that members consider approve the following:**
- **not to trigger the termination clause within the lease agreement with PHA/DHSC for the Covid 'walk-in' test facility at Albert Basin on 30th September 2021.**
 - **A further report to SP&R Committee prior to the end of the lease period, to gauge if the testing facility is likely to remain in place thereafter and how this would impact on future Council events at Albert Basin.**

SPR/117/2021: RESPONSE TO NIPSO CONSULTATION ON COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURES

Read: Report dated 12 August 2021 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Corporate Services (Administration), regarding Response to NIPSO Consultation on Complaints Handling Procedures **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Sharvin asked whether an electronic form on the website could be provided in order that members of the public could submit complaints online. He also queried whether the complaints received through the advertised email address went directly to the relevant complaints team.

Mrs Robb confirmed she would investigate the possibility of the provision of online forms and whether there was an interim solution. She stated a review of the Council's complaints procedure highlighted there were too many access points for complaints and the recommendation was to look at narrowing the access points to better control the flow of complaints into the organisation.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Walker, to consider and adopt, the draft response appended to this document. In doing so Council should welcome the standardisation of complaints handling across the public sector. The on-line questionnaire to be completed on behalf of Council.**

It was also agreed that the possibility of providing an online form for members of the public to submit complaints be investigated.

SPR/118/2021: PARENTAL BEREAVEMENT LEAVE AND PAY BILL - SURVEY

Read: Report dated 12 August 2021 from Mr P Preen, HR Policy Projects Manager, regarding Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay Bill – Survey **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, to approve their agreement to the proposed survey responses as set out at 2.2 to 2.12 of the officer's report, and to allow these**

responses to be submitted on behalf of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

CONFERENCE/EVENTS

SPR/119/2021: APSE ANNUAL SEMINAR (7-9 SEPTEMBER 2021 THE ICC, BIRMINGHAM)

Read: Correspondence received in relation to APSE Annual Seminar (7 - 9 September 2021 The ICC, Birmingham) **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Howell, to approve the travel costs for Councillor Andrews to attend at the APSE Annual Seminar (7 - 9 September 2021 The ICC, Birmingham) as deputy Chair of APSE NI, as presented.

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 Murphy, 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/120/2021: OPTIONS OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE 2022 ANNUAL REPORT/NMD CONNECT CITIZEN MAGAZINE

Read: Report dated 12 August 2021 from Mrs R Mackin, Assistant Director Corporate Planning and Policy, regarding Options for the distribution of the 2022 Annual Report/NMD Connect Citizen Magazine. **(Copy circulated)**

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Taylor, it was agreed to approve Option 2 – 2021 Distribution Model Promoted on the Council website, supported by a limited print run and marketing campaign in local press making available hard copies in the two main Council Office buildings and providing each Councillor with 100 copies and to make available to their constituents. (Councillors have the option to request to opt out of receiving 100 copies if they wish to do so)
It was also agreed that officials would promote the NMD Connect via social media platforms in Council.

SPR/121/2021: SUB-LEASE OF STORE AT DOWNSHIRE CIVIC CENTRE

Read: Report dated 12 August 2021 from Mr F O'Connor, Head of Legal Administration (Acting) regarding, Sub-Lease of store at Downshire Civic Centre **(Copy circulated)**

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Howell to accept the request made by NIHE for lease of the store room within Downshire Civic Centre shown on the attached map circulated with the officer's report, on similar terms as the current lease dated 12th January 2018 and subject to a valuation being carried out to determine the additional rent payable.

SPR/122/2021: BRIDGE STREET CAR-PARK, KILKEEL

Read: Report dated 12 August 2021 from Mr F O'Connor, Head of Legal Administration (Acting) regarding, Bridge Street Car-Park, Kilkeel **(Copy circulated)**

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Taylor, it was agreed that Elected Members accept the proposal made by DFI that the areas marked red and green on the map attached to the officer's report be included in the legal transfer to Council of Bridge Street car-park, Kilkeel.

SPR/123/2021: SURRENDER OF LEASE – UNITS 1 AND 8 MCGRATH HOUSE, MARAGRET STREET, NEWRY

Read: Report dated 12 August 2021 from Mr F O'Connor, Head of Legal Administration (Acting) regarding, Surrender of Lease – Units 1 and 8 McGrath House, Margaret Street, Newry **(Copy circulated)**

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Savage, seconded by Councillor Ó Muirí it was agreed that the Lease was intended to be terminated in June 2020 and that Council enter into a Deed of Surrender on that basis with no further payment due by the tenant.

SPR/124/2021: SURPLUS ASSET – THE CLOCK RECREATION AREA SHRIGLEY D1 PROCESS UPDATE

Read: Report dated 12 August 2021 from Mr C Quinn, Assistant Director of Estates and Project Management regarding, Surplus Asset – The clock recreation area Shrigley D1 process update **(Copy circulated)**

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Brown, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed to note the content of the report and Appendix 1 – Expression of Interest Questionnaire and that members agree with the recommendation of the SFWG – accept the EOI submitted by SHSC and are content to move to the next stage of the D1 process i.e. submission of developed business case within a 6-month timeframe.

SPR/125/2021: APPOINTMENT OF A CONSULTANT FOR THE BUSINESS CASE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE UPGRADE OF COUNCIL'S PUBLIC SPACE & FACILITIES CCTV SYSTEMS

Read: Report dated 12 August 2021 from Mr J McBride, Director of Neighbourhood Services (Acting), regarding Appointment of a Consultant for the purposes of business case development for the upgrade of the Council's Public Space & Facilities CCTV System. **(Copy circulated)**

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Savage, seconded by Councillor Gallagher, it was agreed to the appoint a Consultant for the preparation of a Business Case for upgrading the Public Space & Facilities CCTV systems. The budget for services to be provided by the appointed Consultant was also agreed as outlined in the officer's report.

SPR/126/2021: REGULARISATION AND UPGRADE OF ESRI SOFTWARE AND PROCUREMENT OF ENTERPRISE LICENCE AGREEMENT

Read: Report dated 12 August 2021 from Mrs D Carville, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Regularisation and Upgrade of ESRI Software and Procurement of Enterprise Licence Agreement. **(Copy circulated)**

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Savage, it was agreed to approve the business case as attached to the officer's report to purchase an ESRI Enterprise Licence Agreement through the DFC Finance's NI Public Sector GI Support & Maintenance Contract.

SPR/127/2021: NEWCASTLE CENTRE CAPITAL BUILD PROJECT

Read: Report dated 12 August 2021 from Mr M Lipsett, Director of Active and Healthy Communities regarding, Newcastle Centre Capital Build Project (**Copy circulated**)

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed:

- To appoint an economist to complete a full business case for the Newcastle Centre to identify a preferred option and appoint a consultant team to provide design and cost information to support the completion of the business case.
- To consider the consultant's report in relation to the Newcastle Centre auditorium extension as per appendix 1, 2, & 3 and agree the demolition of the auditorium extension area of the Newcastle Centre.
- To allocate an additional £450,000 to Councils Capital programme to progress points 1 and 2 above and facilitate displacement of key bookings.
- Agree revised operational hours of the Newcastle Centre pending the major Capital build project for the centre, as per appendix 4.

SPR/128/2021: TERMS AND CONDITIONS UPDATE

Read: Report dated 12 August 2021 from Mr M Lipsett, Director of Active and Healthy Communities, regarding Terms and Conditions update (**Copy circulated**)

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Gallagher, 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 that Elected Members note the progress on the workplan as set out in appendix 1.

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Council or a government department and employees of, or office holders under, the Council and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business

SPR/129/2021: STAFF SEVERANCE SCHEME

Read: Report dated 12 August 2021 from Mrs M Ward Chief Executive, regarding Staff Severance Scheme (**Copy circulated**)

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Murphy it was agreed to approve a multiplier of 3.0. It was agreed that the decision reached in relation to this severance scheme will be current at the time and council reserves the right to revisit these in light of this financial circumstances.

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/130/2021: MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS – Q1 2021/22

Read: Report dated 12 August 2021 from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance (Acting), regarding Management Accounts Q1 2021/22 **(Copy circulated)**

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Savage it was agreed to note the Management Accounts for Quarter 1 2021/22.

SPR/131/2021: STRATEGIC FINANCE WORKING GROUP ACTION SHEET – 2 JULY 2021

Read: Strategic Finance Working Group Action Sheet held on 2 July 2021. **(Copy circulated)**

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Savage, it was agreed to note the Strategic Finance Working Group Action Sheet of 2 July 2021.

FOR NOTING

SPR/132/2021: NMDDC RESPONSE TO THE NILGA CONSULTATION PAPER: VISION AND DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT (PHASE ONE) 2021 - 23

Read: Report dated 12 August 2021 from Mr D Carville, Director of Corporate Services, regarding NMDCC response to the NILGA Consultation paper: Vision and Development of Local Government (Phase One) 2021 - 23 **(Copy circulated)**

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

SPR/133/2021: **ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 2020 – 31 MARCH 2021 ON REQUESTS RELATED TO NAMING COUNCIL FACILITIES, PLANTING TREES AND TO LOCATE ARTWORKS/SCULPTURES ON COUNCIL PROPERTY**

Read: Report dated 12 August 2021 from Mrs R Mackin, Assistant Director of Corporate Planning and Policy, regarding Annual report for the period 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021 on requests relayed to naming council facilities, planting trees and to locate artworks/sculptures on council property. **(Copy circulated)**

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

SPR/134/2021: **SECTION 75 POLICY SCREENING REPORT – QUARTERLY REPORT FOR PERIOD APRIL – JUNE 2021 AND NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL PUBLIC AUTHORITY STATUTORY EQUALITY AND GOOD RELATIONS DUTIES ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2020-2021**

Read: Report dated 12 August 2021 from Mrs R Mackin, Assistant Director of Corporate Planning and Policy, regarding Section 75 Policy Screening report – Quarterly report for period April – June 2021 and Newry Mourne and Down District Council Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations duties annual progress report 2020 – 2021 **(Copy circulated)**

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

Mrs Carville, on behalf of the Chief Executive read the following statement:

“Due to the current legislative uncertainty around remote meetings and the restrictions on indoor gatherings, the Chief Executive also agrees to exercise her delegated authority under Standing Orders to implement the resolution of the Committee once ratified by Council subject to any conflict of interest or legal advice that the decision is unlawful.”

There being no further business, the Meeting concluded at 20.29pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 06 September 2021.

Signed: **Councillor Oonagh Hanlon**
Chairperson

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