

NEWRY MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting
held on Monday 13 May 2024 at 6.00pm in the Boardroom, Monaghan Row.**

Chairperson: Councillor M Ruane

**Committee Members
in attendance:**

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor C Bowsie
Councillor W Clarke	Councillor K Feehan
Councillor C Galbraith	Councillor G Hanna
Councillor G Kearns	Councillor S Murphy
Councillor A Quinn	Councillor J Tinnelly
Councillor J Truesdale	

Officials in attendance: Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism
Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Regeneration
Ms M Boyle, Head of Tourism Development and Visitor Experience
Ms A McVeigh, Head of Regeneration and Business Development
Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)
Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer
Mrs N Stranney, Democratic Services Officer

Also in attendance: **Northern Ireland Co-Ownership:**
Mr M Graham, Chief Executive
Mr C O'Neill, Director of Product Development

ERT/046/2024: APOLOGIES / CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillor Campbell.

ERT/047/2024: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Andrews declared an interest in item ERT/025/2024 which appeared on the action sheet.

**ERT/048/2024: ACTION SHEET ECONOMY, REGENERATION & TOURISM
COMMITTEE MEETING MONDAY 15 APRIL 2024**

Read: Action Sheet arising out of the Minutes of the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday 15 April 2024. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Andrews requested an update on the status of Ballykinlar hut and was informed this was an ongoing process and a report would be brought to Committee at a future date.

Having declared an interest in ERT/025/2024, Councillor Andrews left the meeting at this stage – 6.04pm

Regarding concerns raised by Councillor Truesdale on the Tourism Strategy, the Chairperson stated that the Tourism Strategy had already been approved at the last meeting.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Kearns, seconded by Councillor S Murphy, it was agreed to note the Action Sheet arising from the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday 15 April 2024.**

Councillor Andrews returning to the meeting at this stage – 6.06pm

PRESENTATION

ERT/049/2024: PRESENTATION FROM MARK GRAHAM – CO-OWNERSHIP

The Chairperson welcomed Mr Mark Graham and Mr Charlie O'Neill to the meeting and invited them to make their presentation. (Copy attached to these minutes)

Mr Mark Graham, Chief Executive, Co-Ownership thanked the Chairperson for the invitation to attend the meeting and stated Co-Ownership was founded in 1978 and were funded by the Department of Communities and throughout their time had assisted over 33,000 people into home ownership. He stated Co-Ownership represented around 7% of the first-time buyer market in Northern Ireland. He advised the purpose of presenting to local Councils was to begin conversations around local development plans and where Co-Ownership may fit into this as well as ensuring that people were made aware that Co-Ownership exists to enable people to buy property.

Following the presentation the Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members:

- Would Co-Ownership review the current capped amount of £195,000 as this area, in particular, along coastal areas that figure would not be sufficient to purchase property?
- Could the over 55 scheme be developed to include assisting current homeowners with existing homes?
- Was the buyout amount calculated at the original purchase price or market value?
- When considering Co-Ownership who would be responsible for paying valuation and conveyancing fees?
- Was there any data to suggest why the uptake of Co-Ownership within Newry, Mourne and Down District was so low?
- If a landowner had availability of land, what would trigger the role that the Housing Executive would play in the scenario?
- In order to apply for Co-Ownership, would applicants need to be in employment?

The delegation responded to the queries as follows:

- The capped amount was reviewed periodically by the Department of Communities and in the future, Local Development Plans would include requirements that new build developments must incorporate a certain proportion of affordable homes in their plans.
- The over-55 scheme could be assessed to determine if it could be developed to cater to specific circumstances.
- Co-Ownership subsidises fees, however if the applicant was to sell the house, they would pay the conveyancing fees.
- With regard to low numbers of uptake in the area, it could be that higher housing transactions usually mean more business and potentially higher property prices in some areas contribute to this trend. An advertising campaign would be launched soon, covering digital platforms, TV, and billboards. Events were held with every opportunity taken to share information, however customer choice was always paramount, and Co-Ownership

was committed to assisting individuals throughout Northern Ireland, regardless of their location.

- Not sure of what Newry, Mourne and Down Planning Policies are but would normally be triggered by a particular size.
- Applicants would need to be employed and affordability assessments and credit checks were carried out before being approved for Co-Ownership, however, each case would be assessed on its individual requirements.

NOTICES OF MOTION

ERT/050/2024: NOTICE OF MOTION C/082/2024 – CROSS BORDER TEACHING REGISTRATION

Read: Report dated 13 May 2024 from Ms A McVeigh, Head of Regeneration and Business Development regarding Cross Border Teaching Registration. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Feehan thanked the officers for the paper and proposed the recommendations with an addition for engagement with Louth and Monaghan County Councils. He stated he had received feedback from young teaching graduates about the difficulties achieving permanent teaching posts in the North and also with progressing through the registration process in the South. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Andrews.

Councillor Truesdale addressed the ongoing challenges faced by individuals in the South, particularly focusing on the disparities within the multid denominational education system and the requirement to have an Irish Language qualification. She queried whether the obstacles as she had outlined would go across the entire Republic rather than just Louth and Monaghan. Councillor Truesdale expressed scepticism about the potential impact of the Labour Partnership or the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor in relaxing these conditions. She asked what the proposer of the motion and officials would hope the review would contain without requesting more favourable terms being given over to teachers in the North of Ireland.

Councillor Quinn supported the motion and stated that it was a language qualification and not specifically the Irish Language that was required for some teaching posts in the Republic.

As there was dissent in the chamber, the Chairperson put the proposal to a vote, the results of which were as follows:

FOR:	10
AGAINST:	1
ABSTENTIONS:	2

In summing up, Councillor Feehan thanked Members for supporting his motion, while highlighting his disappointment at those who voted against.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Feehan, seconded by Councillor Andrews, it was agreed that Council will engage through the LMP to review and identify opportunities for synergies between key stakeholders, including the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor in respect of cross-border teaching registration and employment practices.**

It was also agreed that engagement be undertaken with Louth and Monaghan County Councils.

FOR DECISION

ERT/051/2024: DUBLIN-BELFAST ECONOMIC CORRIDOR (DBEC)

Read: Report dated 13 May 2024 from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism regarding Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor Partnership: Update. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Feehan, seconded by Councillor Kearns, the following was agreed:

- To note the update provided against the Dublin Belfast economic Corridor Partnership
- To approve that council, as the administrative lead for the DBEC Partnership process two procurement processes as detailed below.
- Feasibility Study for Cluster Development: Offshore wind supply chain (subject to funding approval)
- External consultancy support for development of bid to Peace Plus theme 6.1: Strategic Planning and Engagement

FOR INFORMATION

ERT/052/2024: FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE CALL 1 – GOOD RELATIONS

Read: Report dated 13 May 2024 from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism regarding Financial Assistance Call 1 – Good Relations. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Galbraith, seconded by Councillor Andrews, the following was agreed:

- To note the appendices attached to the officer's report for Good Relations and issue letters of offer.
- Pre-letter of offer conditions met prior to issue of full letter of offer issued and where this is not satisfied budget to be re-allocated.

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

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Bowsie, seconded by Councillor Andrews, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on the following matters which related to exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Quinn, seconded by Councillor Andrews, it was agreed to come out of Closed Session.

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

FOR DECISION

ERT/053/2024: AONB AND GEOPARK – SLA’s

Read: Report dated 13 May 2024 from Ms A McVeigh, Head of Regeneration and Business Development regarding AONB and Geopark – SLA’s.
(Copy circulated)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Quinn, seconded by Councillor Feehan, it was agreed to approve funding letters of offer through SLAs for the delivery of the series of projects as contained in the officer’s report.

FOR INFORMATION

ERT/054/2024: LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP (LMP) REVIEW OF 2023/2024 ACTION PLAN

Read: Report dated 13 May 2024 from Mr C Mallon, Director of economy, Employment and regarding Labour Market Partnership (LMP) Review of 2023/24 Action Plan **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Kearns, it was agreed to note the outputs for NMD LMP for 2023/2024.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 6.39pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 3 June 2024.

**Signed: Councillor M Ruane
Chairperson
Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee**

**Signed: Mr C Mallon
Director Economy, Regeneration & Tourism**
