

NEWRY MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting
held on Monday 9 September 2024 at 6.00pm in the Boardroom, Monaghan Row**

Chairperson: Councillor A Lewis

**Committee Members
in attendance:**

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor W Clarke
Councillor K Feehan	Councillor C Galbraith
Councillor G Hanna	Councillor V Harte
Councillor G Kearns	Councillor D Lee-Surginor
Councillor S Murphy	Councillor A Quinn
Councillor M Ruane	Councillor J Truesdale

**Non-Committee Members
in attendance (via Teams):** Councillor C Bowsie

Officials in attendance: Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism
Ms A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth and Tourism
Mrs N Stranney, Democratic Services Officer

**Officials in attendance:
(via Teams)** Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (acting)
Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer

ERT/077/2024: APOLOGIES / CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

An apology was received from Councillor Hanlon.

ERT/078/2024: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Andrews and Galbraith declared an interest in item 5 on the agenda – PeacePlus Update Report.

**ERT/079/2024: ACTION SHEET ECONOMY, REGENERATION & TOURISM
COMMITTEE MEETING MONDAY 12 AUGUST 2024**

Read: Action Sheet arising out of the Minutes of the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday 12 August 2024. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Andrews requested an update on ERT/032/2024 and Mr Mallon replied stating an update would be provided within the next few weeks.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Hanna, it was agreed to note the Action Sheet arising from the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday 12 August 2024.**

FOR DECISION

ERT/080/2024: DOWN COUNTY MUSEUM CAFÉ

Read: Report dated 9 September 2024 from Amanda Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth and Tourism regarding provision of catering services at Down County Museum. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Galbraith, in proposing the officer's recommendation, highlighted that Down County Museum was a popular attraction that brought many visitors and prior to Covid, the café was a popular dining spot.

Councillor Clarke seconded the proposal stating it would increase the footfall and economic regeneration within the old quarter of Downpatrick.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Galbraith, seconded by Councillor Clarke, it was agreed that Council undertake a tender process to appoint a suitably experienced operator to deliver catering services at Down County Museum.

As they had previously declared an interest, Councillors Andrews and Galbraith left the chamber at this point – 6.10pm

ERT/081/2024: PEACEPLUS UPDATE REPORT

Read: Report dated 9 September 2024 from Amanda Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth and Tourism regarding the Peaceplus programme. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Kearns, it was agreed to note the minutes of the PEACEPLUS Partnership 4th March 2024 and 29th August 2024 (draft) which included the following recommendations:

- **Subject to Letter of Offer proceed with the recruitment of additional funded posts outlined in the Peace Plus submission.**
- **Subject to Letter of Offer and relevant business case approval procurement of the communication plan for the PEACEPLUS programme.**
- **Subject to Letter of Offer and relevant business case approval, procurement & implementation of the programmes outlined above understands 1-3, in section 2.1 of the officer's report.**

Councillors Andrews and Galbraith re-entered the chamber at this stage – 6.12pm

ERT/082/2024: NATIONAL HISTORIC FLEET VESSEL, MARY JOSEPH

Read: Report dated 9 September 2024 from Amanda Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth and Tourism regarding the National Historic Fleet vessel, Mary Joseph. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Hanna proposed the officer's recommendation, stating it was unfortunate that the vessel had deteriorated beyond repair and given the historical importance of the vessel to the local area, asked that any artefacts that could be salvaged should be displayed in Kilkeel Museum.

Councillor Lee-Surginor seconded the proposal.

Councillor Clarke noted the vessel's importance to Kilkeel's prawn fishery as it was the first prawn vessel in Kilkeel and stated due to the severe decay and extensive costs of deconstruction, the officer's recommendation was the correct course of action. He agreed with Councillor Hanna with regards preserving any artefacts and also with the suggestion to scan the vessel for future reconstruction purposes.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Hanna, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor, it was agreed to accept the National Museums NI (NMNI) decision to undertake ethical deconstruction of the National Historic Fleet vessel, Mary Joseph unless they identify any viable alternative solution by their consultation deadline of midday on Monday 9 December 2024.

ERT/083/2024: TOWN AND CITY CENTRE TASKFORCE

Read: Report dated 9 September 2024 from Conor Mallon, Director of Economy Regeneration and Tourism regarding the establishment of a Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, Town and City Centre Taskforce. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Andrews proposed to accept the officers report and requested that other areas, such as his own DEA of Rowallane could be included. He proposed that DEA Councillors be involved through existing mechanisms.

Councillor Hanna seconded the report enquiring whether elected representatives would be involved and what kind of input would be sought from the community.

Councillor Clarke supported the strategic approach, highlighting the importance of collaboration to get results. He acknowledged that while dereliction was low in Newcastle it remained a concern elsewhere across the District and welcomed efforts to revitalise high streets.

Councillor Lee-Surginor enquired what timescales were involved and how the taskforce would be communicated to the community and voluntary sector i.e. through DEA fora or community representatives from each town.

Mr Mallon stated that the next stage of the process would be agree membership with terms of reference being developed to set out the key objectives. He advised this would be a strategic group to set the strategic direction across Council to try to resolve issues that were being faced in multiple areas. He stated that proposals would be brought back to a future Committee meeting on how the taskforce would be established.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Hanna, it was agreed that Council progress the establishment of the NMDDC Town and City Centre Taskforce and work with the groups to establish Terms of Reference and key properties.

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

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor, 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 Andrews, seconded by Councillor Hanna, it was agreed to come out of Closed Session.

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

FOR DECISION

ERT/084/2024: SUB REGIONAL ECONOMIC PLANS

Read: Report dated 9 September 2024 from Amanda Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth and Tourism regarding Sub Regional Economic Plans. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Hanna, seconded by Councillor Andrews, it was agreed that the Council engage Newry and Mourne Enterprise Agency and Down Business Centre through a Service Level Agreement to scope and shape a concept paper and proposals on relevant investment areas aligned to a sub-regional economic action plan.

ERT/085/2024: CHRISTMAS EVENTS 2024

Read: Report dated 9 September 2024 from Amanda Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth and Tourism regarding the delivery of Christmas Events 2024. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Quinn, seconded by Councillor Clarke, the following was agreed:

- to approve the award of the SLAs for delivery of Christmas Events in 2024 as outlined in section 2.1 of the officer's report.
- to approve the dates for the Council run Christmas Events in Newry on 21 November 2024 and Downpatrick on 23 November 2024.

ERT/086/2024: FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE – MINOR CAPITAL GRANTS

Read: Report dated 9 September 2024 from Amanda Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth and Tourism regarding Community Minor Capitals Items Call 2 Financial Assistance 2024-2025. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Hanna, it was agreed to allocate letters of offer to projects as per Council Policy to the groups recommended for the award of funding within the budget allocation for each theme.

ERT/087/2024: SMALL SETTLEMENT SCHEMES

Read: Report dated 9 September 2024 from Amanda Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth and Tourism regarding Small Settlements Regeneration Programme. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Hanna, seconded by Councillor Ruane, the following was agreed:

- Council Officials engage with the Scheme Funding Departments to identify options to utilise the unallocated budget within scheme eligibility criteria.
- To agree utilisation of unallocated budget reported back to Economy Regeneration and Tourism Committee.

FOR INFORMATION

ERT/088/2024: ENVIRONMENTAL FUND – REPROFILING REPORT

Read: Report dated 9 September 2024 from Amanda Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth and Tourism regarding Financial Commitment to AONB and Geopark Letter of Offer Environment Fund 2023 - 2028. **(Copy circulated)**

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

- to note the reduction in the in-kind funding provided via volunteer contributions.
- to note the reprofile of the budget.
- to note that Council will issue a letter of comfort to NIEA regarding Councils ambition to deliver on the outcomes and targets as detailed in the Letter of Offer.

ERT/089/2024: CROSS BORDER TEACHING REGISTRATION

Read: Report dated 9 September 2024 from Amanda Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth and Tourism regarding Challenges faced by teacher seeking employment between Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Clarke, it was agreed for the Council to await the findings from the All-Island Labour Market Mobility and engage with cross border stakeholders to support the progression of recommended actions to harmonise the registration process for teachers.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 6.50pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 7th October 2024.

Signed: Councillor A Lewis
Chairperson
Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee

Signed: Conor Mallon
Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism
