

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of Strategy Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on Thursday 15 August 2024 at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Downshire Civic Centre

In the Chair: Councillor T Howie

In Attendance in Chamber: Councillor P Byrne Councillor W Clarke
Councillor C Enright Councillor O Hanlon
Councillor A Lewis Councillor A Mathers
Councillor A Quinn Councillor M Rice
Councillor G Sharvin

Non-Committee Members

In Attendance: Councillor T Andrews

**Officials in Attendance
in Chamber:**

Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services
Ms S Murphy, Director of Sustainability & Environment
Mr A Patterson, Director of Active & Healthy Communities
Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director: Capital & Procurement
Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance and Performance
Mr C Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy
Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)
Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer

SPR/108/2024: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors King, McAteer, O'Hare, Reilly and Taylor and from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism.

SPR/109/2024: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Lewis declared an interest in Item 17 – Fellowship Programme Request.

**SPR/110/2024 ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM STRATEGY, POLICY &
RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 13 JUNE 2024**

Read: Action sheet of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee meeting held Thursday 13 June 2024. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Enright, it was agreed to approve the action sheet of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held 13 June 2024.**

Read: Report from Mr C Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy, regarding Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Corporate Plan.
(Copy circulated)

Mr Moffett outlined the Report to be agreed today and the amount of consultation that was involved in collating it, with a resident survey of the District, Council employees, senior management, elected representatives and a 12-week public consultation.

On proposing the Report, Councillor Enright noted his delight at the inclusion of a reference to climate change and sustainability. He then requested an additional insertion as follows, **"amend the current area plan to reflect climate change"** where the Corporate Plan mentioned the Local Development Plan, advising that this would be reflective of the climate change emergency. He stated these had been agreed previously through Notices of Motion on climate change emergency.

Mrs Ward responded to advise that the current Area Plan was being reviewed as part of the Local Development Plan (LDP) and therefore it wasn't appropriate to discuss any amendments to it at this time. She advised that she would also like to review the detail surrounding the Notice of Motion and any amendments and outcomes, further reminded Members that there was a Corporate Plan, under which fell the Directorate Plans which referenced sustainability and climate change plans, and that the Local Development Plan (LDP) was addressed under the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Directorate Plan.

Councillor Enright noted that the Motion for amending the Area Plan in 2019 had been tabled following a number of renewable energy applications being rejected due to a lack of consideration for climate emergency in the Area Plan. He noted that the 2019 motion was reflective of England Planning Area Plans being amended to include a statement that referenced climate change, and he advised that Planners would then be permitted to consider the climate change emergency when considering planning applications.

Mrs Ward reminded Members that England was legislatively different from NI in relation to Planning, acknowledged the issues around climate change in relation to the Area Plan, and reminded Members that the Area Plan was being considered under the LDP stating the issue was more appropriately dealt with under the relevant Directorate Plan. She further reminded Members that had the Notice of Motion to amend the area plan been successful then it would have been amended by this juncture.

Councillor Sharvin noted that the Corporate Plan was reviewed and updated each year but noted that as the Area Plan was not completed it was irrelevant to the agenda item as raised, but did acknowledge the merits of Councillor Enright's point.

Councillor Lewis also noted his understanding of the merits of adding in a point on climate change emergency and queried the time frame of completing the Area Plan review.

Mrs Ward advised that she did not have the date of the meeting to hand, however there was a process that had to be followed that involved the Planning Appeals Commission. She advised Members that the referenced 2019 Notice of Motion had been tabled at a Planning Committee meeting, which Councillor Enright did not attend, and it was then referred to the LDP working group, and reminded Members that it was not appropriate to discuss amending the Area Plan as that was more appropriate under the relevant Directorate Business Plan.

Councillor Enright then clarified that he was not proposing to amend the Area Plan, rather to include a simple planning statement regarding considering climate change emergency when making recommendations on planning applications.

Councillor Hanlon asked whether the Planners took climate change into consideration through statutory consultees, without adding in a statement to the Area Plan and queried when the LDP working group was to meet to discuss the Motion.

Mrs Ward advised that the meeting had taken place some time previous and suggested that this matter be referred back into the Planning Committee, and advised again that had the Motion been successful, any amendments would have been tabled and agreed.

Councillor Enright then referenced a meeting to discuss the Hilltown Wind Farm application and advised that a Council Officer had advised him that Planners were not allowed to take climate change into account when considering planning applications, and the Officer advised that the Area Plan be amended to consider this.

Councillor Sharvin queried whether a conflict of interest had now arisen as a live planning application was being discussed, along with Planning Policies, and whether Planning Committee Members should excuse themselves from the discussion.

Mrs Ward reminded Members again that this Motion had been discussed by the Planners and the ERT Committee, she couldn't comment on the statement from Councillor Enright, and advised Members that that Motion had been referred to the LDP Working Group, and no amendments had arisen from that debate. She advised that the detail of the conversation with the Council Officer would have to be checked before being able to comment on that. She reiterated Councillor Hanlon's point that while climate change emergency was not referenced currently in the Area Plan, the Planning Department would always refer applications to statutory consultees who advised on any climate change implications.

Councillor Sharvin noted that Councillor Enright had made a proposal and queried whether there was a seconder, to which Councillor Howie advised that she was happy to second the proposal and advised that the item should move to a vote.

Councillor Hanlon requested clarity on what was being voted on, and what relevance it had to the SPR Committee, or Council policies and procedures. She referenced the Hilltown Windfarm as mentioned by Councillor Enright and advised that the application had not been approved and queried whether Members had discussed climate change in relation to that application.

Mrs Ward advised that it was not appropriate for Council to discuss an ongoing live planning application that was with the department, reminded Members that it was not relevant to this discussion and that the question now was whether the area plan was to be amended, and the item tabled was the Corporate Plan that had already been amended by Council as requested when previously tabled.

Councillor Byrne requested clarity regarding the proposal relating to the 2019 Notice of Motion that had been referred to the LDP working group, confirmed that this was how motions were tabled and handled, and as Councillor Enright was not present at those meetings, queried whether he had knowledge of the discussions and agreed outcomes, or was he proposing a further amendment to the Area Plan without the required knowledge of

meetings where it was already discussed, and further queried whether the proposer and seconder had knowledge of the discussions to date with the LDP team.

Councillor Howie advised that she had not read the minutes of the relevant meetings but advised that she understood that adding a climate emergency contingency to planning policies was a good step towards tackling the climate emergency and understood the merit behind Councillor Enright's proposal.

Councillor Byrne clarified that Officers had been tasked with a piece of work regarding amending the Area Plan, and that the Alliance Party were now proposing further amendments without reading or understanding the work the Officer's had carried to date.

Mrs Ward interjected to advise that the matter of the climate emergency being included in the area plan was relevant to the Planning Committee and ERT, not this Committee.

Councillor Howie requested that the item be referred back to the relevant Committee regarding amending the LDP to include the climate change emergency.

Following further discussion on the item regarding the Council Officer's statement to Councillor Enright, Ms Taggart read the following extract from the minutes relating to the meeting to which Councillor Enright referred to:

"Mr Hay advised there was no need to fundamentally revise and amend the POP. He advised the POP had identified climate change as a key issue for the district, one that would be increasingly taken into consideration in the preparation of each of the development plan documents of the LDP, which was an ongoing process. To revise and amend the POP was not necessary and would only set the clock back in the preparation of the LDP for the district, which would be counterproductive".

Councillor Enright noted he was content to withdraw his proposal if the item was referred back to the relevant Committee.

In concluding the discussion on the draft Corporate Plan, Councillor Howie also noted her Party's opposition to the statement regarding the progression of the Mourne Mountain Gateway Project in its current form.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed to approve the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Corporate Plan 2024-2027.**

On the proposal of Councillor Enright, seconded by Councillor Howie, it was agreed that the LDP amendment be brought back to the relevant Committee.

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

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Lewis, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, 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 Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

The Chairperson advised the following had been agreed whilst in closed session:

SPR/112/2024 **PROPOSED LICENCE OF LANDS AT CASTLE PARK, NEWCASTLE FOR MOBILE BANK UNIT**

Read: Report from Ms E Cosgrove, Assistant Director Administration (Acting), regarding the proposed licence of lands at Castle Park Newcastle for a Mobile banking unit. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to approve the recommendations as outlined in the Officer’s Report.**

On the proposal of Councillor Lewis, seconded by Councillor Howie, it was agreed that Council would contact banking institutions to encourage additional mobile banking hubs across the District.

SPR/113/2024 **RENEWAL OF LEASE IN RESPECT OF OFFICE SPACE AT BESSBROOK COMMUNITY CENTRE**

Read: Report from Ms E Cosgrove, Assistant Director Administration (Acting), regarding the Renewal of Lease in Respect of Office Space at Bessbrook Community Centre. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to approve the recommendations as outlined in the Officer’s Report.**

SPR/114/2024 **SURRENDER AND REGRANT OF LEASE FOR PITCH AT DONARD PARK, NEWCASTLE**

Read: Report from Ms E Cosgrove, Assistant Director Administration (Acting), regarding the Surrender and Regrant of Lease of pitch at Donard Park. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Clarke, it was agreed to approve the recommendations as outlined in the Officer’s Report.**

SPR/115/2024

WINTER GRAZING OF THE DUNES AT TYRELLA BEACH

Read:

Report from Ms E Cosgrove, Assistant Director Administration (Acting), regarding Winter Grazing at the Dunes, Tyrella Beach. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed to approve the recommendations as outlined in the Officer's Report.

SPR/116/2024

REQUEST FOR EASEMENT

Read:

Report from Ms E Cosgrove, Assistant Director Administration (Acting), regarding a Request for Easement. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Quinn, it was agreed to approve the recommendations as outlined in the Officer's Report.

SPR/117/2024

MONAGHAN ROW

Read:

Report from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Monaghan Row. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Mathers, it was agreed to exercise the option to extend the Lease by 6 months. It was also agreed that Officers liaise with the Health Trust regarding access to the building.

SPR/118/2024

TYRELLA BEACH AMENITY BUILDING

Read:

Report from Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director of Capital Projects & Procurement, regarding Tyrella Beach Amenity Building. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Lewis, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to appoint a contractor to deliver the Tyrella Beach Amenity Building project as outlined in the Officer's Report.

SPR/119/2024

CIVIL ENGINEERING FRAMEWORK APPOINTMENT

Read: Report from Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director of Capital Projects & Procurement, regarding Civil Engineering Framework Appointment. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to appoint the preferred contractor as NMDDC Civil Engineering Framework Contractor as outlined within the Officer's Report.**

SPR/120/2024 **BALLYNAHINCH COMMUNITY CENTRE CONTRACTOR APPOINTMENT**

Read: Report from Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director of Capital Projects & Procurement, regarding Ballynahinch Community Centre Contractor Appointment. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to appoint the preferred Contractor to deliver the Ballynahinch Community Centre Refurbishment project as detailed in the Officer's Report.**

SPR/121/2024 **THEATRE CONFERENCE APPOINTMENT OF IST & CIVIC AND REGIONAL HUB APPOINTMENT OF IST**

Read: Report from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, regarding Theatre Conference Appointment of IST and Civic & Regional Hub Appointment of IST. **(Copy circulated)**

As there was dissent within the Chamber, the Officer's Recommendations were put to a show of hands vote with the results as follows:

For	8
Against	2
Abstentions	0

The proposal was declared carried.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Byrne, the following was agreed:**

- **To issue intention to award letters to the successful tenderers for the Theatre Conference, Civic & Regional Hub and Public Realms as per the tender reports in Appendix 1 and 2 of the Officer's Report.**
- **The appointment of the Integrated Supply Team for the NCCR – Theatre Conference and Civic & Regional Projects subject to the completion of the necessary standstill periods and planning approvals.**

- To approve Council's contribution as per the Officer's Report.

SPR/122/2024

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY 2024

Read: Report from Ms S Murphy, Director of Sustainability & Environment, regarding Health and Safety Policy 2024. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed to adopt the updated policy, and that all Members be familiar with and abide by Section 6.2 – Chairperson and Elected Council Members.**

SPR/123/2024

RATES SUPPORT GRANT (RSG)

Read: Report from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Rates Support Grant. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to write to the Minister expressing the importance of the RSG and the risk of reducing the RSG budget.**

Having previously declared an interest, Councillor Lewis left the room for discussion on the following item – 7.21pm

SPR/124/2024

FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME REQUEST

Read: Report from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding a Fellowship Programme Request. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Hanlon it was agreed to approve the payment of 2/3rd of the cost by the Council for the Fellowship Programme with the caveat that should the Member not complete the Programme or leave Council with the term, this funding would be reimbursed in full to the Council.**

Councillor Lewis rejoined the meeting at this stage – 7.27pm

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

SPR/125/2024

AMGEN IRISH OPEN

Read: Report from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director of Sustainability, regarding Amgen Irish Open. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to note the required budget allocation to support the delivery of the event as set out in the Officer's Report.**

Councillor Enright left the meeting at this stage – 7.45pm.

SPR/126/2024 **BRCD ANNUAL REPORT**

Read: Report from Mrs 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 2023/2024.**

SPR/127/2024 **MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**

Read: Report from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Performance, regarding 2024/25 Quarter 1 Management Accounts. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to note the Quarter 1 2024/25 Management Accounts.**

SPR/128/2024 **NEWRY CITY CENTRE REGENERATION PROGRAMME BOARD EXEMPT MEETING MINUTES OF 12 APRIL 2024**

Read: Exempt minutes of Newry City Centre Regeneration Programme Board Meeting of 12 April 2024. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to note the minutes.**

SPR/129/2024 **NEWRY CITY CENTRE REGENERATION PROGRAMME BOARD PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES OF 12 APRIL 2024**

Read: Public minutes of Newry City Centre Regeneration Programme Board Meeting of 12 April 2024. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Rice, it was agreed to note the minutes.

SPR/130/2024 **STATUTORY REPORTING**

Read: Report from Mr C Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy, regarding Statutory Reporting. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Rice, it was agreed to note the following:

- Section 75 Policy Screening Report – Quarterly Report for period April – June 2024
- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council’s Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report for the period 2023 – 2024 for submission to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland by 31 August 2024

SPR/131/2024 **COMPLIANCE TEAM 2023-24 YEAR END REPORT**

Read: Report from Ms E Cosgrove, Assistant Director Administration (Acting), regarding Compliance Team 2023/24 Year End Report **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Rice, it was agreed to note the monitoring statistics.

SPR/132/2024 **MCHP COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 4 2023/2024**

Read: Report from Ms E Cosgrove, Assistant Director Administration (Acting), regarding MCHP Complaints Performance Report Quarter 4 2023/2024. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Rice, it was agreed to note the monitoring statistics.

There being no further business, the Meeting concluded at 7.57pm

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 2nd September 2024.

Signed: **Councillor Tierna Howie**
Chairperson

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