



25 November 2020

**To: Each Member of the Council**

Dear Member

**MEETING OF ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBAY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

A remote meeting of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council will be held on **Monday 30 November at 6.30 pm.**

All Members are asked to attend the meeting via "Zoom".

To ensure social distancing it is only possible to facilitate 11 Members in the Council Chamber. The calculation for this is done by d'Hondt plus the Independent Member (4 DUP, 2 UUP, 2 Alliance, 1 SDLP, 1 Sinn Fein, 1 Independent). The Members present in the Chamber will also access the meeting via Zoom. This does not affect the voting rights of all Members.

You are requested to attend.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jacqui Dixon".

Jacqui Dixon, BSc MBA  
**Chief Executive, Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council**

**For any queries please contact Member Services:**

Tel: 028 9034 0048/028 9448 1301

[memberservices@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk](mailto:memberservices@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk)

## AGENDA

- 1 Bible Reading and Prayer (In accordance with Standing Orders, Members are not required to attend for this part of the meeting and, following this part of the meeting, Members outside the Chamber will be called to the meeting).
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Declarations of Interest
- 4 To take as read and confirm the minutes of the proceedings of the Council Meeting of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council held remotely on Monday, 26 October 2020, a copy of which is **enclosed**.
- 5 To approve the minutes of the proceedings of the Operations Committee Meeting of Monday, 2 November 2020, a copy of which is **enclosed**.
- 6 To approve the minutes of the proceedings of the Policy and Governance Committee Meeting of Tuesday, 3 November 2020, a copy of which is **enclosed**.
- 7 To approve the minutes of the proceedings of the Community Planning Committee Meeting held on Monday, 9 November 2020, a copy of which is **enclosed**.
- 8(a) To take as read and confirm the Part 1 of the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee Meeting held on Monday, 16 November 2020, a copy of which is **enclosed**.
- 8(b) To approve Part 2 of the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee Meeting held on Monday, 16 November 2020, a copy of which is **enclosed**.
9. PRESENTATION BY DFI ROADS SERVICE
10. ITEMS FOR DECISION
  - 10.1 SONI Consultation - Transmission Development Plan for Northern Ireland 2020-2029
  - 10.2 Access to Food - Christmas and New Year Support
  - 10.3 Sports Hardship Fund
  - 10.4 ERDF Collaborative Funding Bid for Digital Transformation
  - 10.5 Social Economy – Community Wealth Building Scoping Exercise
  - 10.6 Scheme of Delegated Functions – Environmental Health

- 10.7 Economic Development and Tourism Strategies
- 10.8 Economic Development Revitalise Funding and Economic Recovery Support
- 10.9 COVID-19 Sunday Opening

11. ITEMS FOR NOTING

- 11.1 Correspondence from United Nations
- 11.2 Northern Ireland Housing Council
- 11.3 Motions – Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
- 11.4 Freeports – Innovation Enterprise Zones
- 11.5 Shared Prosperity Fund
- 11.6 MIPIM – Renewed Ambition Programme

12. ITEMS IN COMMITTEE

- 12.1 Corporate Planning Workshop 2020
- 12.2 Residual Waste Treatment Project
- 12.3 Local Development Plan – Submission of Draft Plan Strategy Documents to DfI for Independent Examination
- 12.4 Full Fibre NI Scheme Procurement and Contract Award
- 12.5 Tender for Supply and Installation of Awnings
- 12.6 Provision of Insurances
- 12.7 Christmas Eve 2020
- 12.8 Staffing Matters -Severance

13. MOTION

*Proposed by Councillor Webb  
Seconded by Councillor Foster*

*“This Council is concerned about the impact the economic crisis, caused by the coronavirus pandemic, is having on our residents and recognises the need for a reformed fairer welfare system that gives protection to everyone in*

*our community. The Council recognises the necessity to provide economic security for all, and the need for investment in people to protect livelihoods, and also to help kickstart the economy.*

*Therefore the Council calls on the Department for Communities, the Department of Finance and the UK Treasury to design and deliver a recovery Universal Basic Income (UBI) for Northern Ireland.*

*Additionally, this Council supports in principle the investigation by the Treasury and the NI Executive of a full permanent UBI for Northern Ireland, recognising the need for a radical overhaul of the welfare system and the positive impact this would have on poverty alleviation, inequality and mental health."*

#### 14. MOTION

*Proposed by Councillor Finlay*

*Seconded by Councillors Bennington, Logue, McClelland, Ramsay and Stewart*

*"We call upon the Council to recognise the impact of all gender discrimination and those affected by it. We recognise that misogyny plays a role in attitudes towards a variety of crimes including harassment, assault, sexual assault and hate crimes and should be recognised as a factor when determining these crimes. We also recognise that societal misogyny plays a part in the career choices and personal lives of women and girls in this country.*

*We ask that the Chief Executive writes to Judge Desmond Marrinan, Head of DoJ's Hate Crime Review asking the panel to recognise gender as a category of hate crime and to recognise crimes targeted at women as hate crimes based on misogyny."*

*We ask that Council supports the Raise Your Voice Project, which tackles sexual harassment and sexual violence across Northern Ireland by placing posters in Council buildings so that those affected can avail of those services.*

**REPORT ON BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED  
AT THE COUNCIL MEETING ON MONDAY 30 NOVEMBER 2020**

**9. G/MSMO/007 VOL 5 PRESENTATION BY DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE,  
ROADS SERVICE**

Members are advised that the Department for Infrastructure, Roads Service will be in attendance to provide an overview of the work being undertaken and future plans. A copy of the Department for Infrastructure Annual Report is **enclosed**.

David Porter, Divisional Roads Manager and Stephen Gardiner, Section Engineer, will be joining the meeting via Zoom.

## 10. ITEMS FOR DECISION

### 10.1 G/MSMO/008/VOL2 SONI CONSULTATION - TRANSMISSION DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR NORTHERN IRELAND 2020-2029

Members are advised that correspondence has been received from SONI, a copy of which is enclosed, who operates and plans the electricity grid in Northern Ireland. SONI is currently in the process of consulting on the Transmission Development Plan for Northern Ireland (TDPNI) 2020-2029 a copy of which can be downloaded/viewed via the following link:-

<http://www.soni.ltd.uk/media/documents/TDPNI2020-draft-for-SONI-consultation.pdf>

The proposals detailed within the TDPNI will ultimately support Northern Ireland's future renewable energy targets; with Minister Dodds MLA, recently outlining an ambition for no less than 70% of electricity generated from renewable sources by 2030 – a stronger and more flexible grid will be needed.

Within the TDPNI 2020-29 SONI is proposing a number of essential upgrades to the Northern Ireland grid including:

- Modernising parts of the grid in the Belfast Metropolitan Area, so that it can fuel long-term economic growth in the city centre
- They are also looking to mid-to-north County Antrim, here the grid is at capacity and needs to be strengthened to increase the flow of electricity from renewable sources
- The North West is another key region for works. SONI wants to strengthen the grid here to support economic development and to facilitate decarbonisation of Northern Ireland's electricity supply.

The consultation period runs from 10 November to 11 December 2020. Following this they will update their plans before submitting them to the Utility Regulator for consideration.

Submissions can be made by email to [info@soni.ltd.uk](mailto:info@soni.ltd.uk). Please include "Response to TDPNI Consultation" in the title of any email response. If sending by post, please address to: TDPNI 2020-2029, SONI Ltd, 12 Manse Road, Belfast, BT6 9RT.

**RECOMMENDATION: Members decide whether they wish to respond on a Corporate, Individual or Party basis.**

Prepared and Approved by: Majella McAlister, Director of Economic Development and Planning

## 10.2 CP/CD/351 ACCESS TO FOOD - CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR SUPPORT

Members are advised that the **enclosed** letter has been received from the Department for Communities (DfC) advising of a fund of £3.5m from the NI Executive for Christmas/New Year food support. While DfC intends to distribute some of this centrally it is clear that they will rely on the 11 councils to help coordinate support at a local level.

While there is no formal confirmation of the individual Council allocations or detailed guidelines for how the funding can be used it is likely that the time scales would be too short to run an application process before Christmas. Early indications suggest the ANBC could be in receipt of around £120k from this fund.

DfC has suggested that Councils should target the following groups across the region, but with a focus on areas of disadvantage through Neighbourhood Renewal, key strategic VCS organisations in areas outside NR and Rural groups:

- a. Children and Young People;
- b. Carers;
- c. Older People;
- d. People Living with Disability;
- e. Anyone who has lost income as a direct result of the pandemic;
- f. Clinically extremely vulnerable (link to DoH and Trusts). This element is a contingency in case shielding is reintroduced.

DfC also proposes a focus on a more strategic and sustainable approach to food poverty/food insecurity issues and some specific support elements reflecting the ongoing challenges many of our citizens face.

Proposed uses for the funding in Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council include:

- Up to £2k each for all 8 x Fair Share members (list **enclosed**) in the Borough to help with the purchase of stock
- Up to £10k each for the Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships in Rathcoole and Grange
- Up to £1.5k each to the current 18 recipients of Areas at Risk funding (list **enclosed**)
- £16k for the older citizens Christmas events that has already been launched. A flexible approach to the timing of events is proposed to accommodate COVID restrictions
- Up to £1k to each of the 35 x CV groups on the **enclosed** list who supported food distribution during the emergency COVID-19 relief. Members are requested to advise if there are other groups that should be added to this list.

Subject to DfC confirmation of what will be considered eligible under the programme; funding to the NR areas, AAR recipients, charities and CV groups could be used for a range of support including:

- Family/individual support packages, including food and seasonal items
- Cooked meal provision, perhaps in partnership with local restaurants/community food providers, reflecting private sector collaboration
- Providing 'meals on wheels' Christmas lunches and companionship to older people living alone.
- Support to safe spaces, offering somewhere safe to spend Christmas, and Christmas meals and activities.

DfC is organising zoom calls with Councils in the coming days to hear views and help refine the details of the investment fund.

Equality Screening and Rural Proofing have been undertaken and an Equality Impact Assessment is not required. The screening forms are **enclosed** for Members' information.

**RECOMMENDATION: that, subject to confirmation of the programme details from DfC,**

- (i) Members approve the range of investments proposed and agree that officers have a degree of flexibility to vary the amounts and recipients to reflect the actual grant awarded by DfC;**
- (ii) Members approve the enclosed Equality Impact Assessment Form and Rural Needs Impact Assessment Form.**

Prepared by: Ronan McKenna, Community Planning Manager

Approved by: Nick Harkness, Director of Community Planning

### 10.3 L/LEI/2 SPORTS CLUB HARDSHIP FUND

Members are reminded that at the November meeting of the Operations Committee the establishment of a Sports Hardship Fund was considered to help smaller local sports club within the Borough to meet the additional costs of compliance with COVID-19 requirements.

Subject to approval at November meeting of Council, it is proposed that the £50,000 fund would be open to clubs for applications for up to a maximum of £1,000. The fund has been designed to try to ensure that applications are straightforward yet still meet good governance requirements to make it as assessable and inclusive as possible. The criteria for the scheme which are enclosed for consideration have been developed to offer 100% funding and in addition, it is proposed to accept applications which include spend since 1 April 2020. This is to assist applicants to help to offset spend on COVID-19 measures to date which may have depleted funds.

In order to ensure that funding gets to clubs as quickly as possible Officers are requesting delegated authority to administer and vouch successful applications.

#### **RECOMMENDATION: that**

- (i) the criteria for the Sports Hardship Fund are approved, and,**
- (ii) delegated authority be granted to officers to approve assessed applications and vouch and make payment to successful applicants**

Prepared by: Matt McDowell, Head of Leisure

Approved by: Geraldine Girvan, Director of Operations

## 10.4 ED/ED/186 ERDF COLLABORATIVE FUNDING BID FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Members are advised that Invest NI has invited local Councils to submit a collaborative bid for remaining funds under the ERDF Local Economic Development Measure. The overall resources available are in the region of £1.1 million (based on £660,000 ERDF; £220,000 Invest NI and £220,000 match funding from Councils). Funding allocations are likely to be committed over two financial years.

Following discussion in relation to shared priorities, it has been agreed that the proposal should be focussed on Digital Transformation. This programme will be additional to any current digital support programmes which Councils are delivering and will seek to complement the proposals under the Belfast Region City Deal and the other Growth Deals

Based on preliminary findings, it is proposed that this programme will be focused on a relatively small number of businesses. These businesses will have the potential to embrace a digital transformation of their business. Another potential work strand will focus on increasing the number of companies that can engage with the range of Challenge Funds that are likely to emerge as part of some of the City Deals/Growth Deals work. Currently, the number of NI companies engaging in these initiatives is relatively limited and the uptake of funds from organisations such as Innovate UK is low compared to other UK regions.

In order to move forward, assistance is required to draft the technical application to Invest NI and it is proposed to appoint a consultant the indicative cost of which is £9,000 which will be shared across the Councils. This contribution will form part of the Councils collective match funding required as part of the overall £1.1 million programme.

A further report will be presented to Members in due course providing the detail of the programme.

Members will also be aware of the Complementary Fund of £100 million linked to the City Deal/Growth Deals announced earlier this year. It is proposed that this fund could facilitate a relatively small-scale proposal (£3-4 million) to establish a flexible support fund providing capital grants for SMEs seeking to invest in digital transformation, for example new equipment, software etc. This opportunity whilst distinct from the collaborative ERDF application, has the potential to add value by providing a mechanism to address financial barriers to digital transformation. It could also substantially enhance the leverage that could be brought to the ERDF application and is likely to increase the chance of securing approval from Invest NI.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the Council supports the development of the Digital Transformation Programme and provides a contribution of approximately £1,000 towards the costs of preparing the bid to Invest NI.**

Prepared and Approved by: Majella McAlister, Director of Economic Development and Planning

## 10.5 CP/CP/122 SOCIAL ECONOMY – COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING SCOPING EXERCISE

Members will be aware that responsibility for Social Enterprise transferred to Local Government under the Review of Public Administration in 2015. The Council has supported the sector through delivery of a Pilot Social Enterprise programme. This was scheduled to conclude in March 2020 and supported 6 existing and 9 start-up social enterprises.

The programme was delivered by Mallusk Enterprise Park (MEP) at a total cost of £36,950. An end of project report indicates that the outcomes were good and there was good response to start-up spaces on the programme. Full evaluation will be received from MEP in due course. Participants included Extern NI, Transport Training Services (TTS NI), Alternative Angles (Triangle Housing), Lightwork NI, Crumlin United (Pakenham Community Hub), JC Todd, Laurelview Equestrian Centre, HICUP, The Mango Girl, The Yew Tree Doorstep Meals, Unique Ireland Tours, Riverside School and Quirky Emporium (Bridge Training Association). As a result of this programme 5 new businesses registered with Companies House and 10 paid positions were created.

The Council also supports a range of social enterprises across the Borough through various contracts, e.g. Bryson Recycling and Habitat for Humanity; Service Level Agreements for the operation of the Community Centres at Rathfern and Monkstown; a voluntary advice service contract with Community Advice Antrim and Newtownabbey and has acted as 'sponsor' for a number of groups through the Public Asset Disposal process.

In the current financial year to the end of September 2020, 16% of all council expenditure was with 383 local suppliers at a value of £2.4m. Only 14% of expenditure was outside of Northern Ireland (£2m) benefitting a further 380 local businesses. The remaining expenditure by Council in the NI supply chain for Council services is just under £10.5m. The Council will continue to support a buy-local ethos to stimulate economic recovery from COVID-19. To support this the Council delivers a Bid 2 Win programme to help businesses compete for public procurements.

The Council working with its City Deal partners is also exploring opportunities to include social clauses to promote apprenticeships, training/employment and other benefits through relevant City Deal contracts.

Development Trusts NI (DTNI) wrote to the Council earlier this year regarding a piece of work in relation to Community Wealth Building. DTNI has established a framework entitled 'Time to Build an Inclusive Local Economy, a copy of which is enclosed. This includes a range of measures to support the social and economic rebuilding of the economy post COVID-19. Similar approaches have been adopted by Preston City Council, North Ayrshire Council and the Welsh Assembly.

DTNI drawing on project funding from Friends Provident Foundation, will be working with Centre for Local Economic Strategies and The Community Foundation to consider the immediate, short term strategic actions and

medium and long term policy priorities needed to launch Community Wealth Building in Northern Ireland. The type of interventions which are proposed include harnessing the spending power of public bodies such as Councils and hospitals and Universities through local sourcing of products and services from social enterprises, facilitating the growth of products, employment and services that can be provided by social enterprises and promoting the uptake of land/buildings that are vacant/underused.

In advance of engaging directly with DTNI it is proposed that a Scoping Study be commissioned to explore the current status of the Social Economy sector in the Borough. Members will know that compared to other Council areas, the estimated number and range of social enterprises in Antrim and Newtownabbey is quite limited, potentially influenced by the fact that to date the unemployment level has been very low and employment opportunities have been plentiful due to the presence of large employers. It is also the case that whilst there is a large community and voluntary sector within the Borough, the majority of these groups have remained as constituted community groups and have not made the transition into social enterprise bodies such as community companies etc.

It will be important therefore in the first instance to understand the capability and ambition of organisations to grow and transition into this type of operating model and to explore the type of support which would be required to assist them on this journey.

This work will also ensure that the Council area is in a position to benefit from the Peace+ programme. The Programme will have two interlinked core objectives, firstly to take advantage of the opportunities and address the needs arising from the peace process, in order to boost economic growth and stimulate social and economic regeneration and secondly to take action to promote social inclusion, particularly for those at the margins of economic and social life. Funding of approximately £1 million will be available to support social enterprise development.

It is anticipated that the cost of the initial scoping study will be between £5,000 to £10,000.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the Scoping Study be progressed at a cost of £ 5,000 to £10,000.**

Prepared and Approved by: Majella McAlister, Director of Economic Development and Planning

## 10.6 EH/EHS/LR/011 SCHEME OF DELEGATED FUNCTIONS – ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Members are reminded that the Department of Health made regulations in response to the serious threat to public health arising from the incidence and spread of the COVID-19 Coronavirus in Northern Ireland.

The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2020 came into force on 28 March 2020.

The latest revision of these regulations includes allowing Councils to designate staff as Enforcement Officers for the purposes of issuing an improvement notice where there is a breach of specific regulations.

The premises improvement notice must:

- specify any premises to which it relates;
- specify the measures the enforcement officer requires a person to take in order to ensure that the person complies with any requirement or requirements of the specified regulations; and
- specify a time limit within which the measures must be taken (which must not be less than 48 hours beginning with the time the notice is issued).

A copy of the improvement notice must also be displayed in a prominent position near every entrance to the premises, and a copy posted on the Council's website.

Following this new designation, it is necessary to update the Scheme of Delegated Functions for the Director of Operations and the Head of Environmental Health. Copies of the revised Schedules are **enclosed**.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the Scheme of Delegated Functions for the Director of Operations, Geraldine Girvan and Head of Environmental Health, Clifford Todd are adopted.**

Prepared and Agreed by: Clifford Todd, Head of Environmental Health

Approved by: Geraldine Girvan, Director of Operations

## 10.7 ED/TOU/070 VOL 2 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM STRATEGIES

Members will recall the detailed engagement undertaken to inform the Economic Development Strategy and associated Socio Economic Profile which were approved 'in principle' in November 2018. A further action plan was developed to articulate the immediate priorities emerging from these documents and this was approved by the Council in August 2019. All of this documentation has been used to inform the economic aspects of the Local Development Plan (LDP).

Similarly, the draft Tourism strategy was agreed 'in principle' in September 2017 and a detailed action plan followed in July 2018. A subsequent prioritisation exercise was then undertaken by Tim Husbands on behalf of the Council, as summarised in the **enclosed** presentation which was presented to the Strategic Economic Working Group in February 2020. The Group asked that a detailed report on the presentation be provided to the full Council. Due to COVID restrictions it was not possible to facilitate this as a presentation by Mr Husbands however a copy of the presentation was reported to the July Council meeting and approval granted to proceed with a number of key elements at a cost of £82,000, including: Marketing & Communications and Attraction & Product Development approved in February 2020. It was indicated that a number of other priorities and initiatives within the presentation would be revisited at a later stage.

These documents have been used to inform the tourism aspects of the LDP.

On a practical level these documents are used as the Council's agreed approach to Economic Development and Tourism however prior to moving into the Independent Examination stage of the LDP, these documents must be confirmed as final versions and made available publicly.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the Economic Development & Tourism Strategies and their associated action plans/documents be confirmed as final and made available publicly.**

Prepared and Approved by: Majella, McAlister, Director of Economic Development and Planning

## **10.8 ED/GEN/015, ED/ED/184 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REVITALISE FUNDING AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY SUPPORT**

The Action Plan relating to funding from the Department for Communities (DfC) for recovery has been approved previously by the Council and is informed by discussions at the Retail and Town Centre COVID-19 Recovery Mobilisation Team. It details a range of projects across the themes of Communications, Minor Capital Works, Infrastructure and Animation. The total approved budget allocation is £899,000. This consists of £430k DFC Capital Funds, £26k DFC Revenue Funds, £80k DAERA Rural Development Funds and £363k DFI Capital Funds for blue and green infrastructure. DFC has also expressed the potential for future slippage funds as the Department approaches the end of the financial year.

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the status of the various initiatives being advanced to meet the funding timescale of March 2021 although the funders have indicated some flexibility to move this to June 2021. The report also frames some initiatives being advanced to support economic recovery for which provision is made in the Council's Economic Development budgets.

### **Town Centre Grant Administration:**

Letters of Offer were awarded to 98 businesses within town centres at the end of October. The total value of grants to these businesses is £80,000. 15 businesses, mostly from the finance and professional services or healthcare sector were kept on a reserve list subject to funding being available to support their applications. It is recommended that the 15 businesses be issued Letters of Offer at a maximum value of £15,000 (£1,000 max. each).

Members will be aware that there are a range of social enterprises which operate across the Council area, in some cases providing vital workspace and office accommodation within our Town Centres. Two of these facilities, namely Foundry House and the Co-Working space are located in Ballyclare. They are keen to open their doors as soon as possible to provide vital 'safe' workspace and wish to avail of the £1,000 Revitalise grant for essential equipment and supplies. As they were not open in Feb/March they do not meet the current eligibility criteria however due to their importance as part of the Recovery programme, it is proposed that assistance of £1,000 for each premise be provided.

Should further requests from social enterprises providing workspace/office accommodation in town centres be received these will be reported to the Retail and Town Centre Re-opening Mobilisation Team for consideration.

The original budget set for this activity within the action plan was £100,000 to date including the request presented in the report, £97,000 has been allocated.

### **Outside of Town Centre Grant Administration:**

The town centre application criteria were applied to this grant and promoted on Friday 13 November with a deadline for applications of Friday 4 December

2020. The indicative budget for this scheme is £120,000. This grant is being administered on a first come first served basis. As with the Town Centre Grant process, businesses from the finance and professional services or healthcare sector will be kept on a reserve list subject to budget availability. At the August Council meeting £50,000 Council revenue funding was approved for the recovery of other commercial areas agreed by Council. This budget will be used in conjunction with the DfC and DAERA funds to support these businesses.

The approach being adopted by Officers in the administration of all schemes is pro-business so therefore we aim to administer support as quickly and efficiently as possible. Significant resource is allocated to support businesses through the process. In light of the new restrictions there is an increased urgency to expedite the programme delivery. Therefore, approval is sought to delegate the award of Letters of Offer to businesses to the Chief Executive with a report to be provided retrospectively to the January Council meeting.

On 23 November The Minister of Finance provided details on financial support to mitigate the impact of the current COVID-19 restrictions. The total value of this support is £338.1M. £4.1M of this amount has been allocated to support Bed and Breakfasts. This is aimed at certified accommodation businesses that were excluded from previous support because they pay domestic rates rather than business rates. Further details of the scheme and the criteria are awaited. Officers were considering support for tourism accommodation providers who were not able to apply for the Localised Restriction Support Scheme. A particular need was to direct support to self-catering accommodation providers who did not qualify for the £10k grant support at the beginning of lock-down because they have less than 5 bed-spaces. While Officers keep a watching brief on how the NI Executive is targeting support to this sector it is proposed that a provisional budget of £10,000 be made available to support providers not deemed eligible for the support being developed by the NI Executive with the potential to award grants of up to £1,000 per eligible business.

#### **Awnings Scheme:**

At the October meeting the Council granted delegated authority to the Chief Executive to award the awnings contract post-tender. This tender has been awarded to Sign Reload Limited. The tender is for the design, manufacture and installation of 95 awnings across 85 businesses in Antrim (24 awnings), Ballyclare (28 awnings), Crumlin (7 awnings), Glengormley (13 awnings) and Randalstown (23 awnings). A separate delegated authority tender report is included in the agenda for Members information. The project is advancing with final installations scheduled by the end of March 2021.

#### **Regeneration Schemes:**

The following schemes are proposed under the DFC and DAERA funding at an estimated total value of £13,800:

<b>Location</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Value and Funding Source</b>
Randalstown	Refurbishment of lighting on two trees upon arrival on the right hand side close to McManus Hardware.	£7,000 DFC
Toome	Canal Walk improvements. Outdoor seating to support local businesses. 2 benches, 2 picnic tables and 2 parasols.	£2,800 DAERA
Killead	2 picnic tables (1 at security fence at airport and 1 near housing estate) and a bench on linear park.	£1,000 DAERA
Dunadry	Benches opposite Dunadry Hotel	£1,000 DAERA
Moneyglass	Moneyglass: Picnic tables at the walking track St Ergants GAA Club. Screens and sanitiser dispensers at GAA Club.	£1,000 DAERA
Carnmoney	Outdoor seating and environmental improvements for businesses.	£1,000 DAERA

In action plans reported previously to the Council the following schemes have already been granted approval: Templepatrick (£8k), Glengormley (£13k), Antrim (signage at Castle Mall at £15k) and Ballyclare (signage at McConnell's Yard at £4k).

### **Economic Development Initiatives:**

#### **Tourism Signage:**

Brown signage for attractions and facilities helps visitors orientate themselves and can play a significant role in the quality of the visitor experience in the Borough. Local Councils are responsible for promoting tourism in the local area and coordinating applications for tourism signage in each respective area. In assessing an application the Council liaises with TNI on the eligibility of tourist destinations and with TransportNI in relation to the design, location and extent of signing. The final decision about brown signage is taken by TransportNI, taking into consideration road safety and traffic management issues.

Following recent engagement, 33 businesses have identified brown signage as a key issue and are seeking consideration of new or replacement signage. Key Council owned destinations such as Antrim Castle Gardens & Antrim Lough Shore Park are also to be mapped by TNI and Council to better understand the visitor journey and identify brown signage improvements.

An indicative budget to support private sector liaison with the implementation of signage improvements is £20,000. A meeting with Tourism NI and DFI will be held in due course to discuss those deemed eligible and who will be invited to submit an application.

Separately, in 2017 the Council previously allocated £6,150 towards the Lough Neagh Landscape Partnership Scheme Signage Project. This was part of a

joint contribution from Mid Ulster and Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon Council's that allowed Lough Neagh Partnership to lever in additional funds from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for interpretation panels and brown signage. The Partnership is continuing to work to secure additional brown directional signage for the Lough Neagh region. Proposed sites for new or improved brown signage through this project are Antrim Lough Shore Park, Randalstown Forest & Farr's Bay, Cranfield and Toome Lockhouse & Canal.

**Prince's Trust Development Awards:**

Members will recall that the Council has supported The Prince's Trust Development Awards over the past number of years to the value of £10,000. In the current year a financial contribution was not awarded due to the implications of COVID-19. The Prince's Trust Development Awards target support at young people aged 16 -30 who live within the Council area. The aim is for 90% of young people who receive a Development Award to achieve a positive outcome, progressing into self-employment/employment, education, or training. The Prince's Trust is experiencing demand from the local area and has requested a contribution from the Council of £2,000 for the remainder of the financial year to the end of March 21 to support their awards scheme. £1,500 of the amount will be allocated to help participants remove barriers to support and the remaining £500 will support the Prince's Trust in their delivery of the scheme.

Should the financial commitments detailed within this report exceed the funding amount provided by DFC and DAERA the necessary budget will be met from the Economic Development Revenue Budget of £50,000 originally assigned to Town Team activities.

**RECOMMENDATION: that**

- i. Revitalise grants of up to £1,000 each be awarded to the 15 businesses, which were previously held on a reserve list;**
- ii. Revitalise grants of up to £1,000 each be awarded to the Social Enterprise premises at Foundry House and the Co-Working Space in Ballyclare;**
- iii. delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive to expedite grant funding being issued to businesses outside of local centres. The maximum total value of awards being £120,000 for outside of Town Centre Businesses and £10,000 for self-catering accommodation providers should they not qualify for the support announced for B&B's by the NI Executive. A report to be brought back to Council in January;**
- iv. the regeneration schemes, totalling £13,800 be approved including, Randalstown, Toome, Killead, Dunadry, Moneyglass and Carnmoney;**
- v. budget of £20,000 be approved to support the private sector with the implementation of brown signage;**
- vi. a budget of £2,000 be approved for the Prince's Trust Development Awards, up until 31 March 2021.**

Prepared and Agreed by: Colin McCabrey, Head of Economic Development

Approved by: Majella McAllister, Director of Economic Development and Planning

## 10.9 ED/ED/183 COVID-19 SUNDAY OPENING

Members will be aware that the Council agreed in April 2020 to relax enforcement action in relation to the Sunday Opening hours of large supermarkets. This action was taken as a response to the unprecedented impact of COVID-19 and sought to facilitate key workers, healthcare workers and customers with disabilities. The period between 10.00 am and 1.00 pm was set aside for these categories. Normal liquor licencing provisions were not affected by this relaxation.

Over recent weeks, representations have been made by local retailers requesting that the Council does not enforce Sunday Trading hours in the run up to Christmas. This is to facilitate 'safe' shopping environments and social distancing for staff and customers and to allow the effective management of customer volumes. Retailers will in all cases be expected to comply with all current COVID-19 related legislation and regulations.

To this end, it is recommended that the Council does not undertake enforcement action against large retail shops (in excess of 280 m<sup>2</sup>), should they choose to open or deliver on a Sunday from 10.00 am onwards. Normal liquor licencing provisions would not be affected by this relaxation. This will apply to all retail units across the Borough. This arrangement is temporary and will be in place from Sunday 29 November 2020 and those Sundays when shops are allowed to open until Sunday 10 January 2021. There is no change to smaller retail shops (under 280 m<sup>2</sup>), which can continue to trade up to 24 hours.

The legal advice is that during the current COVID-19 pandemic it is reasonable and proportionate for the Council to relax its enforcement powers in relation to Sunday trading hours under The Shops (Sunday Trading &c.) (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 for the period as outlined above.

Should this approach be approved, Officers will communicate the new arrangements accordingly.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the Sunday Trading arrangements as proposed be approved.**

Prepared and Approved by: Majella McAlister, Director of Economic Development and Planning

## 11. ITEMS FOR NOTING

### 11.1 G/MSMO/107 CORRESPONDENCE FROM UNITED NATIONS

Members are advised that correspondence has been received from the United Nations to express appreciation for participation in the UNRIC-supported initiative Turn Europe UN Blue across Europe, in the context of the United Nations' 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (UN75) and for UN Day on 24 October 2020.

A copy of the correspondence is **enclosed** for Members' information.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.**

Prepared by: Member Services

Approved by: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive

## 11.2 CE/OA/013 NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING COUNCIL

As agreed at the August 2019 meeting of the Council, the Northern Ireland Housing Council's November 2020 monthly bulletin is **enclosed** for Members' information. A copy of the minutes of the Housing Council meeting on 8 October 2020 is also **enclosed**.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.**

Prepared by: Member Services

Approved by: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive

### 11.3 G/MSMO/14 MOTIONS – NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Members are advised that correspondence has been received from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council regarding Motions adopted by that Council requesting Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council's support.

A copy of the letter is enclosed for Members' information.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the correspondence from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council be noted.**

Prepared by: Member Services

Approved by: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive

## 11.4 ED/ED/185 FREEPORTS – INNOVATION ENTERPRISE ZONES

The UK Government recently published proposals regarding an ambitious Freeport policy. A Bidders Prospectus is due to be published in Autumn 2020.

The Government's ambitious proposals for the Freeport policy, containing measures which will increase trade and investment, kick start regeneration through job creation and boost innovation across the four nations of the UK.

The Government is keen for a new Global Britain to be a hub for international trade and investment. Revitalising port regions through an ambitious Freeport policy is seen as a key component of realising this vision and unlocking the deep potential of all nations and regions of the UK.

The UK Government is focused on economic recovery and long-term, sustainable growth for the whole of the UK. Freeports are designed to be innovative hubs that boost the economy by helping businesses to invest in their machinery, infrastructure and staff. They will help to level up the country by bringing jobs, investment and prosperity to some of our most deprived communities around the UK, and will boost global trade, by showcasing the best of British industry, technology and innovation to the rest of the world. Freeports will also be a key element of the Government's 2025 Border Strategy.

The Government wants Freeports around the world to operate as secure customs zones, usually located at ports, where business can be carried out inside a country's land border, but where different customs rules apply.

Secure Freeport customs sites will enable UK businesses to access a range of benefits to boost their international competitiveness in a high productivity cluster. Countries around the world have adapted this basic model by adding different elements to create their own bespoke Freeports, combining a mixture of customs flexibilities, to provide relief from duties, import taxes and administrative burdens; tax measures to incentivise private investment; regulatory flexibilities; and investment in infrastructure, all concentrated in the geographical area around the Freeport.

The Government is committed to the design of a bespoke, world-leading UK Freeport model aiming to achieve three objectives:

- Establish Freeports as national hubs for global trade and investment across the UK;
- Promote regeneration and job-creation; and,
- Create hotbeds for innovation.

The Government has proposed combining five sets of measures – customs, tax reliefs, planning, regeneration funding, and innovation – to achieve these objectives by encouraging the maximum number of businesses to open, expand and invest in our Freeports.

The UK Government is working with the devolved administrations on establishing at least one Freeport in each of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The location of the English Freeports will be established by a bidding process based on the Freeports objectives and this is anticipated to commence early in the New Year. The location of the Freeports in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland will be determined collectively by both the UK Government and the devolved administration and should align objectives, processes and timescale where possible.

The UK Freeport model will maximise geographic flexibility to reflect best the different assets and needs of ports and regions across the UK. The UK Government has designed this model to apply effectively to areas with seaports, airports and rail ports, and to regions featuring multiple ports – no mode of port or area is excluded.

As stated previously further details will be outlined in the 'Freeport Bidding Prospectus', which was expected to be published in the autumn. The full response to the consultation is **enclosed** as Appendix 1 for Members' information and can be accessed via the link below:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/924644/FINAL - 200923 - OFF SEN - Freeports Con Res - FINAL.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/924644/FINAL_-_200923_-_OFF_SEN_-_Freeports_Con_Res_-_FINAL.pdf)

At a Northern Ireland wide level Invest NI has been facilitating some initial discussions with stakeholders including local government and central government departments to establish what the opportunities from a Freeport model might be and how best such an approach could strategically fit with initiatives such as the City & Growth Deals currently being progressed. Officers will update Members as further information becomes available.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.**

Prepared and Approved by: Majella McAlister, Director of Economic Development and Planning

## 11.5 ED/ED/167 SHARED PROSPERITY FUND

Earlier this year SOLACE NI commissioned Ekosgen to undertake a Northern Ireland specific study on the potential impacts on Local Government of the UK Government's proposed Shared Prosperity Fund, the successor funding to the EU Structural funds.

The Ekosgen paper has been developed in consultation with each of the 11 Councils, relevant Government departments and EU funded delivery projects. A copy of the final report is **enclosed** which will be used by Local Government to influence the future design and delivery of the Shared Prosperity Fund across the 11 Council areas.

An Executive Summary, a copy of which is also **enclosed** highlights the following key principles for a new approach.

<b>Principles and Recommendations for a New Approach in Northern Ireland</b>	
<b>Principle</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
National Framework	UKSPF should set a national framework defining <i>high level</i> strategic direction, objectives and priorities and alignment with UK strategies.
Regional and sub-regional priority setting	There must be a commitment and processes at regional level to set strategic priorities. These should be developed in partnership and based on an evidence-based assessment of need. At a sub-regional level, there must be scope to identify and invest in activities that will address local priorities and reflect the local context. This must be an underpinning principle that all stakeholders sign up to. Ownership of sub-regional funded activities should rest with local partners.
Outcomes based	Progress and achievements should be measured as outcomes and impacts, rather than activities and outputs. KPIs should be set that capture progress as well as final outcomes e.g. progress towards employment.
Flexible, single pot	There must be an assumption of trust so that monies can be disbursed with as few restrictions as possible, balanced with the right degree of scrutiny. Monies should be provided in Northern Ireland with no restrictions on capital and revenue allocations or prescriptive allocations by theme. Spend should be based on identified need and a holistic approach covering, for example, investment in skills, business support, infrastructure, innovation and so forth. There should be a strategic approach to spend, combing all available funding sources to maximise value for money. Business support (including social enterprises) should be business-led and include support to invest in the

	workforce, in equipment, in processes, as well as advice, and specialist business development support.
Maximum devolution of management and delivery	Northern Ireland should work towards devolving management and delivery to sub-regions where there is sufficient capacity and capabilities. For some activities, there will be a rationale for clusters of areas and partnerships who could act as intermediate bodies, and a regional approach with flexibility for distinctive local need. Where appropriate, the approaches used successfully through the city and growth deals could be replicated.
Attitude to risk	Being overly risk averse can inhibit impacts and limits the opportunity to test and learn from new and innovative approaches. SPF at UK and regional levels should set an attitude to risk that allows for innovation and moves away from simply funding 'more of the same'.
Fit for purpose systems and processes that are actively used	Management, appraisal, monitoring and verification processes should be fit for purpose, not overly complex and proportionate to the level of funding and scale of activities. They should be used to review and drive performance. Additional layers and processes should not be added over time unless there is a clear rationale and demonstration of added value. Management and monitoring systems and processes should be, as far as possible, harmonised with those of other funds and their activities. This will make for a more efficient use of project management and administration time and generate consistent data.

**Maximum devolution of management and delivery**

Northern Ireland should work towards devolving management and delivery to sub-regions where there is sufficient capacity and capabilities.  
For some activities, there will be a rationale for clusters of areas and partnerships who could act as intermediate bodies, and a regional approach with flexibility for distinctive local need.  
Where appropriate, the approaches used successfully through the city and growth deals could be replicated.

**Attitude to risk**

Being overly risk averse can inhibit impacts and limits the opportunity to test and learn from new and innovative approaches.  
SPF at UK and regional levels should set an attitude to risk that allows for innovation and moves away from simply funding 'more of the same'.

**Fit for purpose systems and processes that are actively used**

Management, appraisal, monitoring and verification processes should be fit for purpose, not overly complex and proportionate to the level of funding and scale of activities. They should be used to review and drive performance.  
Additional layers and processes should not be added over time unless there is a clear rationale and demonstration of added value.  
Management and monitoring systems and processes should be, as far as possible, harmonised with those of other funds and their activities. This will make for a more efficient use of project management and administration time and generate consistent data.

The means by which the Shared Prosperity Fund will be managed and delivered is as important as the finance available. There is an opportunity to move away from the Structural Fund programme approach and its limitations, to more effective arrangements, which take account of how partnerships and policy have evolved over the last EU programme period in Northern Ireland.

It is important to note that a recent session of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee heard from Mr Bill Pauley, Director of Strategic Policy and Reform in the Department of Finance on behalf of the Northern Ireland Civic Service. He highlighted the following in relation to the Executive position on the role of Local Government in the future Shared Prosperity Fund:-

“One area worth highlighting from this paper is in relation to the Executive’s position on the Role of Local Government in the future SPF: -

*‘There has been some indication that MHCLG is considering a local government based approach as a model to simplify the disbursement of funds, but this approach would be problematic for NI.*

*The local government landscape in NI is substantially different to GB with local authorities possessing a considerably narrower remit. Many functions exercised by local authorities in GB (such as education and skills) are reserved for Stormont where the Northern Ireland Act 1998 enshrines protections for the different communities into the political system.*

*For these reasons we do not believe delivery directly via local Government is a viable option in Northern Ireland and that engagement of local government in replacement programmes should be a matter for the NI Executive under similar terms as current programmes’.*

This submission highlights the potential challenges associated with Local Government involvement moving forward.

Members will be aware that DAERA has initiated some discussion in relation to the future of the Rural Development Programme and has indicated that it intends to roll out a number of pilot initiatives. At this point however it is anticipated that there will be a significant gap period between the end of the current programme due to complete in early 2021 and any successor programme which may be progressed. It is also unclear whether or not any successor programme would include individual allocations to Councils and local structures which is currently the case.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.**

Prepared and Approved by: Majella McAlister, Director of Economic Development and Planning

## 11.6 ED/ED/141 MIPIM – RENEWED AMBITION PROGRAMME

Members are reminded that the Council had previously agreed to participate in MIPIM 2020, however the event was subsequently cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to maintain the momentum of the City Deal Councils' collaborative efforts to attract investment, the Renewed Ambition Programme has been developed.

The programme will seek to deliver the Belfast City region's real estate ambitions by showcasing and promoting key sites across the 6 partner Council areas. There will be a greater focus going forward on recovery, investment and sustainability as well as the green agenda and a recommitment to delivering results through public private partnership.

A taskforce is in place which will extend its focus beyond MIPIM to concentrate on collective marketing and positioning of the city region for investment. Joe O'Neill, Chief Executive of Belfast Harbour is chairing the Taskforce, which has produced an outline programme, as summarised in the **enclosed** presentation.

A series of online events will kickstart the programme. Further details will be shared with Members as they are made available.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.**

Prepared and Approved by: Majella McAlister, Director of Economic Development and Planning