



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD
AT MOSSLEY MILL ON TUESDAY 26 MAY 2020 AT 6.30 PM**

- In the Chair** : Deputy Mayor (Councillor A M Logue)
- Members Present** : Aldermen – F Agnew, P Brett, T Burns, T Campbell, L Clarke
M Cosgrove, M Girvan, D Kinahan, J McGrath and J Smyth
- Councillors – J Archibald, A Bennington, M Cooper,
H Cushinan, P Dunlop, G Finlay, S Flanagan, R Foster,
J Gilmour, M Goodman, P Hamill, L Irwin, N Kelly,
R Kinnear, R Lynch, V McAuley, N McClelland,
T McGrann, V McWilliam, M Magill, P Michael,
J Montgomery, V Robinson, S Ross, L Smyth,
M Stewart, R Swann, B Webb and R Wilson
- Officers Present** : Chief Executive - J Dixon
Director of Economic Development and Planning – M McAlister
Director of Operations – G Girvan
Director of Finance and Governance – S Cole
Director of Community Planning – N Harkness
Director of Organisation Development – A McCooke
Borough Lawyer and Head of Legal Services – P Casey
Head of ICT – G Smyth
ICT Change Officer – A Cole
ICT Helpdesk Officer – J Wilson
Systems Support Officer – C Bell
Member Services Manager – V Lisk

The Deputy Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised Members of the audio recording procedures.

In order to protect public health during the current COVID-19 emergency it was not possible to allow the public or the press to attend the Council meeting. The Council minutes and audio recording would be published on the Council's website.

1 APOLOGIES

None

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 5.2 – Alderman Agnew
Item 5.4 – Alderman Smyth

3 MINUTES OF ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING

Moved by Alderman Girvan
Seconded by Alderman Cosgrove and

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Meeting held on Monday, 27 April 2020 be taken as read and signed as correct. It was noted that Councillor Finlay did not agree with Item 6.1.

4 MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Moved by Councillor Hamill
Seconded by Alderman Cosgrove and

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Special Meeting of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council held on Thursday 14 May 2020 be taken as read and signed as correct.

5. ITEMS FOR DECISION

5.1 TO APPROVE THE SEALING OF A DOCUMENT

Members were advised of the undernoted item for signing and sealing by Council, approval having been previously granted and all necessary legislative requirements being met:-

- Contract for Sixmilewater Park Entrance Scheme.

Moved by Councillor Magill
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and

RESOLVED - that the document be signed and sealed.

ACTION BY: Paul Casey, Head of Legal Services and Borough Lawyer

5.2 AC/EV/020 REQUEST TO HOLD DRIVE IN CHURCH SERVICES IN CAR PARKS

Members were aware that on Tuesday 12 May 2020 the Northern Ireland Executive published its Approach to Decision Making, which is a staged approach to relaxing current COVID-19 restrictions. Within the Pathway to Recovery section of the document step 1 regarding Community and Family includes the potential for Drive Through Church Services. Whilst there were no dates for introduction of each of the 5 steps within the Pathway to Recovery indications are that step 1 may come into effect in the coming weeks should advice to The Executive support this.

Correspondence had been received from Trinity Reformed Presbyterian Church, Doagh Road, Newtownabbey. They were requesting use of either the Theatre car park at Mossley Mill or the theatre side car park at Ballyearl Leisure Centre to host a drive through church service as soon as restrictions have moved from the current position to step 1. Given the extensive public use of the Newtownabbey Way and the proximity of local residents, officers recommend that the Ballyearl Leisure Centre car park would be a more suitable venue if Members were inclined to accede to the request.

The service would meet on the first available Sunday with the car park required from 11.15 am until 12.45 pm. They have anticipated that they may hold a service each Sunday from 31 May 2020 to 28 June 2020. They have given assurances that they will take on responsibility for provision of marshals who will park cars and ensure social distancing is maintained throughout the service. The Church will also supply a risk assessment and £5 million in public liability insurance. They have indicated that those attending would not leave their cars.

There is a requirement for the Minister to use a PA sound system so that the congregation can hear him. An assurance has been received about volume levels being maintained at such a level so as not to intrude on neighbouring residential areas and be kept at a level as necessary for the Minister to be heard by the congregation within cars with open windows.

In addition, a similar request has been received by Abbots Cross Congregational Church, Doagh Road, Newtownabbey who have requested use of the Valley Leisure Centre car park for morning and evening services at 11.30 am and 6.30 pm from Sunday 31 May. This Church would be required to give the same assurances as Trinity Reformed Presbyterian Church in terms of marshalling, social distancing, risk assessment and insurance prior to services taking place.

Any similar requests received would be considered on a first come, first served basis and would take into account any access arrangements and potential impact on surrounding properties.

Moved by Alderman Cosgrove
Seconded by Alderman Brett and

RESOLVED - that

- (i) requests from Trinity Reformed Presbyterian Church and Abbots Cross Congregational Church to hold 'drive through' church services in the car parks at Ballyearl Leisure Centre and Valley Leisure Centre respectively be approved;**
- (ii) a policy on the use of car parks, to include the booking procedure, pricing and the types of events that may be facilitated be provided to the next Council meeting.**

ACTION BY: Nick Harkness, Director of Community Planning

Alderman Burns joined the meeting during the next item.

5.3 ED/EUP/154 RURAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GRANT SCHEME – TACKLING RURAL POVERTY AND SOCIAL ISOLATION

Members recalled that during the 2019-20 financial year, the Council administered a pilot Rural Business Development Grant scheme on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) through the Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Programme (TRPSI). The pilot programme was open to micro businesses based in the rural areas of the Borough, and 15 applicants were successful in securing grants of up to £4,999 to make capital investments in their businesses, such as purchasing new equipment. The total value of grants awarded in the Borough was £47,100.

Due to the success of the pilot scheme, DAERA has approached Councils to administer another programme, of similar scale and value to the last one, subject to the outcome of a Business Case, which is currently underway. The grant scheme will be a capital grant scheme of up to £4,999 per award to support rurally based micro businesses to invest in new equipment or capital items to enable them to remain sustainable. A micro business is a business with up to 10 full-time equivalent employees and the rural area is defined as any village or area with less than 5,000 residents. Grant funding will be offered at a maximum 50% grant rate, so at least 50% of project costs will be provided by the participating businesses.

It is anticipated that approximately £50,000 of funding will be made available to the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area in the 2020-21 financial year to deliver this programme to micro businesses in the rural area, and that approximately 15 rural businesses will benefit from grant aid. There is no direct financial contribution required from the Council. As with the previous programme, up to 15% (£7,500) of the allocated £50,000 funds can be used for administration purposes to promote and deliver the programme, which will be managed by the Economic Development Team.

Moved by Councillor Lynch
Seconded by Councillor McClelland and

RESOLVED - that the Council agrees to participate in the second Rural Business Development Grant Scheme in 2020-21, subject to the award of funding from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs through the Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Programme.

ACTION BY: Emma Stubbs, Economic & Rural Development Manager

Alderman Smyth left the meeting having declared an interest in the next item.

5.4 L/LEI/BE/002 & L/LEI/AP/008 GOLF COURSES – RECOVERY PLAN

The Northern Ireland Executive announced on 18 May 2020 that some sports, including golf, could restart. Officers have been in liaising with the Ulster Branch of the Golfing Union of Ireland (GUI), which is the governing body of the sport in Northern Ireland, and have incorporated the recently published protocols for re-opening golf into an Operational Recovery Plan for Allen Park and Ballyearl.

In 2019/2020 the net cost for golf and driving ranges at Allen Park was £250,000 and at Ballyearl was £150,000 – a total net cost to Council of £400,000.

Golf

The following guidance has been received from the GUI:

- i. Tee times are booked in advance online only
- ii. Maximum of 3 players with 14 minutes between tee times
- iii. Junior players permitted only if accompanied by members of own household

It was proposed that only courses and driving ranges would be open for the remainder of the financial year, buildings would be closed. Having considered toilet provision, in line with a number of other golf courses, it is not proposed to provide toilets. An Equality Impact Assessment would be completed in respect of this and clear communication messages would be provided to customers. At Allen Park at this stage, only members would be permitted to play, as it is affiliated to the GUI. Memberships would be charged pro rata for the remaining months of the year. Bookings would be made online and in the event that customers cannot do this, bookings can be made at both Mossley Mill and Antrim Civic Centre.

Both courses had had routine maintenance and repairs carried out over recent weeks in anticipation of a relaxation of the regulations.

Normal and proposed opening times for golf at both centres are set out below:

Summer				
Facility	Current opening - Weekdays	Proposed Opening	Current opening - Weekends	Proposed Opening
Allen Park	8am – 10pm	8am – 6pm (last tee time 6pm)	8am – 8pm	8am – 6pm (last tee time 6pm)
Ballyearl	9am – 9.45pm	8am – 6pm (last tee time 6pm)	9am – 8pm	8am – 6pm (last tee time 6pm)

Winter hours for golf reflect daylight hours.

Driving Ranges

Contactless ball dispensers are in place at both driving ranges. For operational reasons, it is proposed that charges for the driving ranges would be at the discounted rates during this period.

Driving ranges are normally open from 9am – 9pm daily year round and it was proposed that these opening hours are retained.

In the initial days after opening, it was proposed that bookings would be required for slots on the driving ranges to manage demand and traffic. This would be kept under daily review and usage may revert to normal.

Staff

Apart from greens staff, it was proposed that each course would have one member of staff in the starter hut with cover for breaks and access to welfare facilities provided.

It was estimated that the net subsidy for this proposal would be £100,000 for the remainder of the year.

Quarterly reports on income and expenditure would be provided to the Council.

Moved by Alderman Brett
Seconded by Councillor Foster and

RESOLVED - that approval be given for the Golf Recovery Plan using the normal pricing structure. Memberships at Allen Park to be charged pro-rata for the remaining months of the year.

ACTION BY: Matt McDowell, Head of Leisure

Alderman Smyth returned to the meeting.

5.5 PK/GEN/003 PARKS RECOVERY PLAN

Since the COVID -19 pandemic, only essential Council services have been delivered and for the Parks team, the priority throughout the lockdown period has been burials and where possible, grass cutting in cemeteries.

The budget for Parks the current year is £4.2m and operations at this time of year would normally include grass cutting, planting of flower beds, installation of hanging baskets, watering, weeding and maintenance of roundabouts.

The Parks team is supplemented each year through recruitment of seasonal staff. This year due to financial uncertainties these staff were not recruited. In addition, some staff have been absent due to sickness, self-isolating or due to underlying health conditions and there has been a need to have greater staff numbers involved in burials. This has meant that normal grass cutting, has been severely limited.

The table below sets out the current staffing situation in Parks:

Staff	Normal staffing levels	Current staffing levels
Total number of operational staff - Operatives / Supervisors	95	45

In addition to the grass cutting in cemeteries, the grass cutting schedule for the Borough includes parks, play parks, small areas in towns and villages, leisure centres, riverside paths, car parks, bowling greens, 27 grass pitches, roundabouts, as well as Council facilities including; community centres, pavilions, Mossley Mill and Antrim Civic Centre. Normally, these are completed on a 10-14 day cycle.

Grass cutting is an issue which residents are extremely sensitive about and which is very visible as well as being an important part of the presentation of the Borough as well as for sight lines. Complaints have already been received in relation to the lack of grass cutting, despite awareness of the restrictions due to the virus. The next few weeks are critical to achieving a minimum standard of service, otherwise grass cutting will not return to an acceptable standard.

In the short term it was proposed that to achieve an urgent full first cut across the Borough that through a combination of overtime and the use of contractors is utilised at an estimated total cost of £45,000. This provides time to prepare a way forward for the remainder of the season and to explore the use of furloughed staff.

Plants and hanging baskets, ordered and paid for will be delivered this month. As there will not be the staff to plant, water and weed flower beds across the Borough, it is proposed that plants are given to community groups for planting in towns, villages, etc. Watering and weeding will also be required by the groups.

Hanging baskets are industrial size and have limitations as to where they can be installed. It may be possible to offer to some businesses.

Where flower beds are not planted it would be prudent to weed these, cover in fabric and cover in bark to ensure that they do not become overgrown. The estimated cost for this would be £5,000.

Moved by Alderman McGrath
Seconded by Alderman Cosgrove and

RESOLVED - that the short term Parks Recovery Plan be approved.

ACTION BY: Ivor McMullan, Head of Parks

5.6 EH/EHS/LR/11 SCHEME OF DELEGATED FUNCTIONS – ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Members were aware 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.

Enforced by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), these Regulations required the closure of certain businesses and prohibited anyone from leaving their home without a reasonable excuse. They also introduced a ban on gatherings of more than two people.

It is an offence not to comply with the Regulations and anyone committing an offence is liable to fixed penalty notice of £60, which is reduced to £30 if paid within 14 days of the date of the offence.

In the case of a second fixed penalty notice, the amount will be £120 doubling with each subsequent offence up to a maximum of £960.

On 14 May 2020, the Minister of Health, following a proposal from the Department of Justice, moved to also designate District Councils as an enforcing authority under these regulations. In making the request, the Minister recognised that District Councils were: -

'taking cognisance of their officers' knowledge of local businesses and their expertise and enforcement capabilities, and have been prepared to step forward and respond constructively to this request to support the public health response to the COVID-19 outbreak.'

The Northern Ireland Executive approved this request. This designation allows Councils to take such action as is necessary to enforce any requirement or restriction imposed by: –

- Regulation 3
Requirement to close premises and businesses during the emergency
- Regulation 4
Further restrictions and closures during the emergency

This legislation does not cover the requirement for social distancing which is dealt with under existing Health and Safety at Work Legislation.

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 were circulated.

Moved by Councillor Goodman
Seconded by Alderman Girvan and

RESOLVED - that the Scheme of Delegated Functions for the Director of Operations, Geraldine Girvan, and Head of Environmental Health, Clifford Todd, be adopted. The Director of Operations to write to DAERA to seek clarity on the funding for the additional responsibilities.

ACTION BY: Clifford Todd, Head of Environmental Health/Geraldine Girvan, Director of Operations

5.7 COVID-19-6 G/MSMO/002 RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL

Members were aware that the normal operation of Council decision making had been impacted by COVID-19.

At the Special Council Meeting held on 14 May it was agreed that a report be brought back to Council regarding the re-establishment of Committees of the Council

The Council has 5 standing Committees:

Committee Name	Number of Members
Operations	15
Policy & Governance	15
Community Planning	15
Planning	12
Audit	6

It was proposed that:

1. the standing 5 Committee structure be re-established from 1 June 2020;

2. all meetings are held remotely as per the agreed Interim Protocol for Remote Council Meetings during COVID-19, until further notice;
3. existing membership of Committees continues until the Annual Meeting takes place at a date and time yet to be agreed;
4. Chairs of Committee and Council meetings be assisted in the use of Zoom from the Council Chamber in Mossley Mill. The Chamber in Antrim Civic Centre will not be available for meetings as it will be required to facilitate social distancing for staff returning to the workplace;
5. meetings will commence at 6.30 pm with the exception of Planning Committee which will start at 6 pm, with consideration of Planning Applications commencing at 6.30 pm;
6. Committee Members will be given priority seating/access to the Council Chamber. Non-committee Members will be expected to access remotely, however, as numbers will be limited in the Chamber to facilitate social distancing;
7. additional Planning Committee meetings may be held subject to consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Planning Committee;
8. the following schedule of dates for Council and Committee meetings is agreed for the period 1 June – 31 December 2020;

Council / Committee Meetings	Date of Meeting
Operations Committee	Tuesday 2 June 2020
Policy & Governance Committee	Wednesday 3 June 2020
Community Planning Committee	Monday 8 June 2020
ADDITIONAL SPECIAL MEETING	Thursday 11 June 2020
Planning Committee	Monday 15 June 2020
Audit Committee	Tuesday 23 June 2020
Council Meeting	Monday 29 June 2020
ADDITIONAL SPECIAL MEETING	Thursday 9 July 2020
Planning Committee	Monday 20 July 2020
Council Meeting	Monday 27 July 2020
ADDITIONAL SPECIAL MEETING	Thursday 13 August 2020

Planning Committee	Monday 17 August 2020
Council Meeting	Monday 24 August 2020*
ANNUAL MEETING TO BE HELD BEFORE 30 SEPTEMBER 2020	
Operations Committee	Monday 7 September 2020
Policy & Governance Committee	Tuesday 8 September 2020
ADDITIONAL SPECIAL MEETING	Thursday 10 September 2020
Community Planning Committee	Monday 14 September 2020
Planning Committee	Monday 21 September 2020
Audit Committee	Tuesday 22 September 2020
Council Meeting	Monday 28 September 2020
Operations Committee	Monday 5 October 2020
Policy & Governance Committee	Tuesday 6 October 2020
ADDITIONAL SPECIAL MEETING	Thursday 8 October 2020
Community Planning Committee	Monday 12 October 2020
Planning Committee	Monday 19 October 2020
Council Meeting	Monday 26 October 2020
Operations Committee	Monday 2 November 2020
Policy & Governance Committee	Tuesday 3 November 2020
Community Planning Committee	Monday 9 November 2020
ADDITIONAL SPECIAL MEETING	Thursday 12 November 2020
Planning Committee	Monday 16 November 2020
Council Meeting	Monday 30 November 2020
Operations Committee	Tuesday 1 December 2020*
Policy & Governance	Wednesday 2 December 2020*
Community Planning Committee	Monday 7 December 2020*

Planning Committee	Tuesday 8 December 2020*
Audit Committee	Wednesday 9 December 2020*
Council Meetings	Monday 14 December 2020*

*denotes change due to public holiday

There will be no refreshments at meetings until further notice.

Members were advised that a report in relation to the provision of webcam(s) was currently being prepared for consideration.

Moved by Alderman McGrath
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and

RESOLVED - that Council agrees the proposed re-establishment of Council Committees as outlined in points 1–8.

ACTION BY: Liz Johnston, Head of Governance/Member Services

5.8 COVID-19-6 COUNCIL GOVERNANCE

Remote Planning Committee Meetings

Members were aware that the normal operation of Council decision making has been impacted by COVID-19.

Under the Protocol for Planning Decision-Making during COVID 19 agreed by Council on 27 April 2020 it had been agreed that Planning Committee meetings would be suspended and no planning refusals would be issued until further notice. Until normal Council business resumes the Protocol indicates that any recommended approvals for major applications, applications which meet the required threshold of objections, a Council or Member's planning application, or those with a Council interest, which would normally have been determined by the Planning Committee will for the time being be directed to the Chief Executive for consideration in consultation with Members of the Planning Committee.

The Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 provides guidance and direction to Councils in relation to remote Council meetings.

Having regard to the above Regulations the Interim Protocol for Remote Planning Committee Meetings during COVID-19 has been developed and was circulated. This Protocol is similar to the Protocol for remote Council meetings, adopted by the Council at the Special Council meeting on 14 May, however, it has been adapted to specifically apply to Planning Committee meetings. Officers recommend that this Protocol be added to the Protocol for the Operation of the Planning Committee. Therefore the Protocol agreed on the 27 April would no longer apply.

The Protocol for the Operation of the Planning Committee forms part of Standing Orders. Standing Order 31.2 (Amendment) states that any motion to, add to, vary or revoke these Standing Orders will, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned, without discussion to the next ordinary Meeting of the Council.

In order for the Protocol to apply to this meeting, if approved by the Council, the Council will need to suspend Standing Order 31.2 for the purposes of facilitating decision making during this pandemic for this item only as per Standing Order 31.1 (Suspension). Standing Order 31.1 states that a Member may move a motion for the suspension of one or more of these Council Standing Orders excluding Standing Orders 24.3, 25, 26 and 27 which cannot be suspended. Suspension can only be for the duration of the meeting. The Minutes of the Meeting must record the reason for the suspension. Mandatory standing orders may not be suspended by the Council.

Moved by Councillor Robinson
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and

RESOLVED - that the Interim Protocol for Remote Planning Committee Meetings during COVID-19 be approved and added to Standing Orders. Standing Order 31.2 be suspended for this item only.

ACTION BY: Paul Casey, Borough Lawyer and Head of Legal Services

5.9 PK/GEN/003 CHANGES TO TEMPORARY ARRANGEMENTS FOR CAR PARKING, TENNIS COURTS AND ANGLING

Car parks at Parks

Council's parks have remained open throughout the current lockdown with car parking associated with parks closed from 23 March 2020 due to people not complying with social distancing.

In line with Step 1 of the Northern Ireland Executive's Approach to Decision Making document, it was proposed to re-open these car parks from Wednesday 27 May 2020.

In considering the opening of these car parks, it was proposed to install signage to advise the public that toilets, play-parks and outdoor gyms would remain closed - the situation will be kept under review.

Tennis Courts

Tennis courts are also highlighted in Step 1 of the Approach to Decision Making document. The Council has tennis courts at Mossley, Lilian Bland, Sixmile Park and Wallace Park. It was proposed that these courts be re-opened from 27 May 2020.

Angling

On Friday 15 May 2020, the Northern Ireland Executive announced that angling would gradually re-open from Monday 18 May 2020. Again it was proposed that angling resumes from 27 May 2020.

Moved by Alderman Girvan
Seconded by Councillor Hamill and

RESOLVED - that approval be given for the following Council facilities to re-open from 27 May 2020:

- all Council car parks
- tennis courts
- angling facilities

Other associated amenities to be kept under review.

ACTION BY: Ivor McMullan, Head of Parks

5.10 WM/RC/001 HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING CENTRES (HRCs) – RECOVERY PLAN UPDATE

As Members were aware a recovery plan for the re-opening of the recycling centres has been implemented and was circulated. Phases 1 and 2 of the plan have been successfully implemented with all five Recycling Centres open from Monday to Saturday 9am to 8pm. As a result of the ongoing constraints due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to protect staff and members of the public, a number of restrictions remain in place:

- 6 waste streams permitted (general waste, garden waste, cardboard, timber/wood, dry recyclables, and glass);
- Entry to Borough residents only;
- No vans or trailers permitted;
- Appointments required for Crumlin and O'Neill Road Recycling Centres;
- Staff unable to assist with the handling of waste;

Residents' feedback on the use of the temporary collection points, holding areas and appointment systems has been largely positive. All necessary social distancing measures have been maintained with individual waste disposal areas for users in place and staff wearing appropriate PPE. As of Monday 18 May 2020 all HRCs across Northern Ireland are now operating, mostly under restrictions similar to those implemented by Council at Phase 2 of the Recovery Plan. As there is a continuing requirement to maintain social distancing, it is proposed to retain the majority of the current arrangements (Phase 2) with the exception of the following:

- Access for vans and trailers permitted
- Collection of electrical items (subject to space at individual Centres)

As the initial surge in demand has now passed, it was proposed to allow vans and trailers access to the Recycling Centres from Wednesday 27 May 2020. As set out above, proof of residency in the Borough will be required,

appointments will be for access to Crumlin and O'Neill Road Recycling Centres would need to be made and waste permitted is as per the 6 streams set out above and any addition approved by Council. Time on site for Crumlin and O'Neill Road for this group of residents will be for the same duration – 5 minute slots in order to prevent congestion on the two sites. There are no time restrictions at Bruslee, Newpark, or Craigmore Recycling Centres.

It was proposed that in addition to the 6 waste streams which are currently accepted, where physical spacing allows and waste contractors are available to collect the material, that Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) is accepted from Monday 1 June.

In order to allow residents additional access to the Recycling Centres during the early stages of recovery, the normal Saturday opening hours were extended from 6pm to 8pm. It was useful for the initial recovery period but usage in this period on a Saturday has now reduced completely and therefore it was proposed to return to the normal summer closing time of 6pm on Saturday commencing from 30 May 2020.

A Recovery Plan for (i) acceptance of all waste streams at HRCs, social distancing and contractor availability permitting and (ii) bulky collections will be developed for consideration at the Operations Committee.

Moved by Councillor Magill
Seconded by Councillor Bennington and

RESOLVED - that the amendments to the Household Recycling Centre Recovery Plan be approved including the relevant implementation dates and revision to Saturday opening hours.

ACTION BY: Michael Lavery, Head of Waste Management

5.11 LA03/2020/0161/PAD REQUEST FROM DEVELOPER OF PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF 23 DWELLINGS AT LANDS ADJACENT TO GLENAVNA MANOR

Members were advised that correspondence has been received from Clyde Shanks, planning agents for a developer, in relation to a Pre-Application Discussion application for 23 dwellings at lands adjacent to Glenavna Manor, Newtownabbey.

Included within the development proposal is a fully equipped children's play park in order to offset the loss of open space. A map showing the location of the development was circulated for ease of reference. Council had been requested to comment in terms of need for such play provision.

Council currently has three play parks in that general area, Abbey Glen, Jordanstown Lough Shore Park and Hazelbank, the closest being Abbey Glen. In view of the proximity of existing play parks, there is no need for a further play park in the area, however, there is potential for the developer to be asked to make an equivalent contribution to improve the facilities at Abbey Glen play park.

Moved by Councillor McGrann
Seconded by Councillor Goodman and

RESOLVED – that, as there is no need for an additional play park in the area, the developer be asked to make an equivalent contribution to improve the facilities at Abbey Glen play park.

ACTION BY: Geraldine Girvan, Director of Operations

6. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

6.1 G/MSMO/2 CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP BY THE DEMOCRATIC UNIONIST PARTY

The Electoral Office have confirmed that Linda Irwin has been returned to the Macedon vacancy for the Democratic Unionist Party, effective from 4 May 2020. Following this confirmation, the Nominating Officer has advised that Councillor Irwin would be a member of the Community Planning Committee.

Moved by Alderman Brett
Seconded by Councillor Magill and

RESOLVED - that the change in Membership by the Democratic Unionist Party be noted.

ACTION BY: Member Services

6.2 PT/GEN/035, G/MSMO/2 SDLP GROUP LEADER CHANGE

Correspondence has been received and circulated from the SDLP Nominating Officer to advise that Councillor Roisin Lynch had been appointed as the SDLP Group Leader for Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council as of 18 May 2020.

Moved by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor Goodman and

RESOLVED - that the change of Group Leader for the SDLP be noted.

NO ACTION

6.3 P/PLAN/1 RECORD OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS ON 18 MAY 2020

Members were aware that the normal operation of Council's Planning Committee has been impacted by COVID-19.

Under the Protocol for Planning Decision-Making during COVID 19 agreed by Council on 27 April 2020 it was agreed that Planning Committee meetings would be suspended and no planning refusals would issue until further notice.

Until normal Council business resumes the interim Protocol indicated that any recommended approvals for major applications, applications which meet the required threshold of objections, a Council or Member's planning application, or those with a Council interest, which would normally have been determined by the Planning Committee would for the time being be directed to the Chief Executive for consideration in consultation with Members of the Planning Committee.

The Chief Executive considered a number of planning applications on 18 May 2020 in lieu of the Planning Committee meeting originally scheduled for this date. The applications considered were those listed on the Agenda that had been previously circulated to Members and made available on the Council's website.

The record of the decisions taken by the Chief Executive on these applications was circulated and had been published on the Council's website in accordance with the agreed interim Protocol.

Moved by Councillor Robinson
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and

RESOLVED - that the report be noted.

NO ACTION

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN COMMITTEE'

Moved by Councillor Robinson
Seconded by Councillor Dunlop and

RESOLVED - that the Council proceeds to conduct the following business 'In Committee'.

Alderman Brett left the Chamber.

7. ITEMS IN COMMITTEE

7.1 IN CONFIDENCE ED/ED/130 FULL FIBRE NI CONTRACT AWARD PROCESS

[REDACTED]

Moved by Alderman Kinahan
Seconded by Councillor Bennington and

RESOLVED - that following completion of the procurement exercise and receipt of the preferred bidder details from the FFNI Consortium (led by Newry, Mourne & Down District Council)

- (i) the Council agrees to award the contract/s on the basis that it is cost neutral to the Council;**
- (ii) the contracts are sealed as required;**
- (iii) in line with the contracts the relevant orders are placed;**
- (iv) a full tender report be presented to the July Council meeting for noting.**



Officers to provide an update to Members in relation to coverage.

ACTION BY: Alastair Law, Innovation and Funding Officer

Alderman Brett returned to the Chamber.

7.2 IN CONFIDENCE FI/FIN/043 EMERGENCY FINANCIAL PLAN

Members were reminded that at the Special Council Meeting held on Thursday 14 May, it was agreed to keep the current financial position under review.

Since then, Minister Hargey had confirmed, and a copy of the letter was circulated, that £20.3M of emergency COVID-19 funding will be made available to address cost pressures for Councils between now and the end of June 2020 and Minister Murphy has announced rates exemptions for all businesses for another month and for some businesses for the rest of the year.

These announcements were extremely welcome and would assist the Council's cashflow position in the short term and had been factored into the update below.

All non-essential services continue to be suspended.

Detailed assumptions about what the Council has committed to within the context of providing Essential Services only in the current Financial Year were circulated.

Members were aware that to continue to provide Essential Services only will fall short of the expectations of our ratepayers and that this position is not sustainable.

The Council would be asked to approve the operational recovery of each Council service in line with the Northern Ireland Executive's Recovery Plan, a copy of which was circulated.

Income

Members were aware that Income sources for the Council come from three main elements: Rates Income (80%), Earned Income (18%) & Grant income (2%).

Council rates income was budgeted at £52m in the 2020/21 estimates process. This is made up of a number of elements: Rates, De-rated grant and Transferred Function Grant. Within our assumptions as a reasonable worst case scenario, it is anticipated that:

- Domestic rates income will reduce by at least 2% i.e. £500,000
- Non Domestic rates will reduce by 25% i.e. £5m in line with forecasted reduction in GVA in line with the projected economic downturn – this assumes that LPS will continue to pay the Council for rates not collected as a result of the rates exemption scheme

- The Council's earned income will reduce by £8.2m in this financial year
- COVID-19 additional spend will be approximately £400,000 for 8 weeks

The total financial impact in the current financial year is therefore estimated to be £14.1m.

This impact will be partially mitigated by applications for 'Furlough' through the HMRC Job Retention Scheme of approximately £980k and the Northern Ireland Assembly emergency funding package at an amount expected of approximately £1.25m.

The total financial impact was therefore expected to be £11.9m.

Use of Reserves

Council Total Reserves are made up of a number of Balances and Reserves. Some of these have been set up for specific purposes e.g. Rates Appeal Reserve. The Council's General Fund (usable reserve) at 31 March 2019 was £7.3m. However, this Reserve will be impacted when the Financial Statements for 2019/20 are finalised. Also, the estimates process for 2019/20 provided for £700,000 to be released from this Reserve. This means that the estimated General Fund at 31 March 2020 is £6.3m. This is subject to any changes after the NIAO process is complete. The Council reserves policy is set at 9% of Gross Revenue spend of £66m (£5.9m).

The use of Reserves beyond this would require a change to the Reserves Policy of Council. Members will be aware that it is prudent to hold a minimum of one month's expenditure in reserves (£5.5m).

It is important to differentiate the Council's cash position from its reserves position.

The General Fund Reserve (£6.3m) is an accumulation of surpluses over time. It does not sit as cash in the bank but has been invested by the Council in the assets and facilities throughout the Borough as part of prudent treasury management. In normal circumstances, the Council operates to have neither surplus cash nor a significant overdraft at the end of each month. Use of reserves will not therefore assist in the current situation.

The Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 (Part 1 para 7) stipulates that If in any financial year it appears to the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of a Council that reserves are likely to be inadequate, the CFO shall report to Council on:

- o The reasons for that situation; and
- o The action which the CFO considers appropriate to prevent that reserve continuing to be inadequate in the next financial year

This reserve can only be spent once, while service demands continue month on month and year on year.

In normal circumstances the Council's reserves were adequate to cushion uneven cash flows and prevent unnecessary temporary borrowing as well as

a contingency for unexpected events. They are, however, insufficient to cover an event of the scale of the current situation.

The ongoing funding gap is simply too large to be funded by reserves alone.

Members were aware that Land and Property Services produced a new Non Domestic Valuation list which came into effect on 1 April 2020. The purpose of this was to rebalance business rates. The new list is available online, however, the rates bills based on these new valuations have not been delivered to businesses due to the pandemic. Traditionally there is always a challenge to values on the list which may result in NAV reductions. Council Officers are aware of one challenge by network utilities. It is anticipated that any reductions in NAV as a result of appeals will be covered by the provision above.

Cash Position

The current reduction in income was having an immediate impact on the Council's cash flow. The estimated cash deficit for the Council at the end of April 2020 was anticipated to be £1.1m.

In addition, the Council had other significant cash outlays over the next six months including repayment of rates appeals monies to Belfast International Airport (BIA):

	£'000
Loan Repayments	█
Rates	█
Insurance	█
BIA Appeal Repayment	█

In order to help with the stress on cash resources the Council's overdraft limit on its current account had been increased from £█ to £█

However, this temporary arrangement had been put in place to ensure that staff and suppliers continued to be paid, this would not be sustainable beyond the end of July 2020 without immediate intervention or remedial action. This overdraft would be insufficient to cover the above expenditure.

At that point, the Council would need to consider sourcing finance using other mechanisms potentially in the form of additional loans.

The Council was required to be mindful of its legal responsibility to avoid insolvency and maintain an adequate level of reserves: Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 states that 'A council shall make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs'.

Unless measures were put in place soon to mitigate the deficit situation as outlined above and to make up for the potential loss in rate income in

2020/21, it was anticipated that there would be a substantial rate increase next year (2021/22).

It was noted that, to cover for every £1m deficit there would be an additional 2% rate increase.

In a reasonable worst case scenario of an £8.2m income deficit for the year and a reduction of the rate base of £5.5m, the projected rates increase required for 2021/22 would be in the region of 27%.

Moved by Alderman Cosgrove
Seconded by Alderman Brett and

RESOLVED - that the report be approved and that the Council's financial position be kept under review.

ACTION BY: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive

MOTION TO PROCEED 'OUT OF COMMITTEE'

Moved by Councillor Hamill
Seconded by Councillor Foster and

RESOLVED - that the Council proceeds to conduct any remaining business 'In Public'.

The Deputy Mayor thanked Members for attending and adhering to the social distancing restrictions and the meeting concluded at 8.02 pm.

DEPUTY MAYOR