



20 January 2021

To: Each Member of the Council

Dear Member

MEETING OF ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

A remote meeting of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council will be held on **Monday 25 January 2021 at 6.30 pm.**

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

To ensure social distancing only the Mayor, Group Leaders, or their nominee, and the Independent Member may attend the Council Chamber. 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

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 14 December 2020, a copy of which is **enclosed**.
- 5 To approve the minutes of the proceedings of the Operations Committee Meeting of Monday 4 January 2021, a copy of which is **enclosed**.
- 6 To approve the minutes of the proceedings of the Policy and Governance Committee Meeting of Tuesday 5 January 2021, a copy of which is **enclosed**.
- 7 To approve the minutes of the proceedings of the Community Planning Committee Meeting held on Monday 11 January 2021, 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 18 January 2021, 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 18 January 2021, a copy of which is **enclosed**.
- 9 ITEMS FOR DECISION
 - 9.1 Items for Signing and Sealing
 - 9.2 Department of Health Launch of Public Consultation – Introduction of a Statutory Soft Opt-Out System for Organ Donation
 - 9.3 Disposal of Land at Grange Drive, Ballyclare
 - 9.4 Disposal of Land at Whiteabbey Maintenance Depot
 - 9.5 Department of Justice - Launch of Consultation on Proposals to Reform Rehabilitation Periods in Northern Ireland
 - 9.6 DAERA discussion paper on a Climate Change Bill for Northern Ireland
 - 9.7 DAERA discussion paper on Environmental Plans, Principals and Governance for Northern Ireland

- 9.8 Publication of DfI Transport Study
- 9.9 Northern Ireland Planning Conference 2021
- 9.10 Living with Water, An Integrated Plan for Drainage and Wastewater In Greater Belfast - Public Consultation
- 9.11 COVID-19 Sunday Opening Hours
- 9.12 Community Winter Resilience Kits
- 9.13 Cranfield Jetty and Slipway
- 9.14 Economic Development Revitalise Funding – Business Grants
- 9.15 Blue Green Infrastructure
- 9.16 Full Fibre NI Update
- 9.17 Union Connectivity Review Meeting With Sir Peter Hendy
- 9.18 Requests to Use Council Facilities for Vaccinations
- 9.19 Local Labour Market Partnership
- 9.20 ERDF Collaborative Digital Transformation Programme
- 9.21 Council Events 2021
- 10 ITEMS FOR NOTING
 - 10.1 Dissolvement of the Court of Ulster University
 - 10.2 Correspondence regarding Motion on Universal Basic Income
 - 10.3 Northern Ireland Housing Council
 - 10.4 Motion – Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
 - 10.5 Motion – Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
 - 10.6 Motion – Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
 - 10.7 Rate Striking 2021/22
 - 10.8 Appointment of Councillor Members to the Drainage Council of Northern Ireland
 - 10.9 Broadband Universal Service Obligation (USO)
- 11 ITEMS IN COMMITTEE

- 11.1 Residual Waste Treatment Project
- 11.2 Tender for Creation of Two Sensory Gardens and One Community Garden
- 11.3 Servicing, Repair and Maintenance of Mobile Plant and Machinery
- 11.4 Framework for the Provision of Landscaping Services
- 11.5 Supply and Delivery of Summer Bedding Plants
- 11.6 Disposal of Land at 131 Shore Road for Social Enterprise
- 11.7 Former Toilet Block at Castle Mall
- 11.8 Leasing of Car Parking Spaces at Harrier Way Car Park, Ballyclare
- 11.9 ISPS Handa World Invitational Golf Competition – Flagship Event Sponsorship Request
- 11.10 Belfast Region City Deal - Briefing
- 11.11 Staffing Matters
- 11.12 Correspondence from Michael Paul Consultancy

12 MOTION

*Proposed by Alderman Julian McGrath and Councillor Neil Kelly
Seconded by Alderman Cosgrove and Councillors Sam Flanagan, Michael Goodman and Ryan Wilson.*

“This Council condemns animal cruelty in all its forms and acknowledges the work of numerous animal welfare organisations and of local councils, including ours, in tackling cruelty towards animals.

This Council notes that there is currently no register of those convicted of offences against animals and there is no public register of licensed dog breeders, allowing unlicensed puppy farms to proliferate.

This Council therefore resolves to write to the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to ask for the introduction of:

(a) a Register of Banned Animal Welfare Offenders for those convicted of animal cruelty; and,

(b) a publicly accessible list of licensed dog breeders.

Finally, Council resolves to copy in each of the other ten councils to these

requests.”

13 MOTION

*Proposed by The Mayor Councillor Jim Montgomery
Seconded by Alderman John Smyth, Councillors Paul Dunlop, Neil Kelly, Roisin Lynch and Leah Smyth*

“This Council recognises the importance of the regeneration of Antrim town centre and requests a meeting with the Minister for Infrastructure to discuss access to High Street and Castle Street from the Dublin Road”

14 MOTION

*Proposed by Councillor Ryan Wilson
Seconded by Councillor Noreen McClelland*

“This Council believes that

Terminal illness diagnosis

Every employee, facing the trauma of a terminal illness diagnosis, should be treated with compassion and understanding in order to assist them at such a distressing time. In society we would expect nothing else, and this should be no different in the workplace.

Limited protections do exist for chronic long term degenerative illnesses at work through reasonable adjustments. However, a terminal diagnosis, where life expectancy is not foreseen by a medical professional for longer than 12 months, should be protected to ensure nobody has to undergo the additional stress and worry about their job.

We note that the TUC has launched a campaign calling for additional employment protections for workers with a terminal diagnosis and has launched a voluntary Charter that employers can sign up to. Currently a million workers throughout the UK are covered by that Charter from the private and the public sector.

In light of that this Council resolves to;

- 1) Support the TUC's Dying to Work campaign which sets out a Charter outlining the principles in which terminally ill employees should be treated if they wish to continue to work.*
- 2) Ensure as an employer to be the best for our people and sign up to the Charter making it clear that we will offer support and understanding in such circumstances.*
- 3) Ensure as an employer that our employees will be given the freedom to make an informed decision for themselves as to the best course of action for them and their families.*
- 4) Ensure that all financial details, including death in service benefits, are fully explained so that any decision taken is an informed decision.*

- 5) Write the principles of the Charter into our procedures and train our staff accordingly.
- 6) Encourage employers throughout our Borough to sign up to the Charter."

15 MOTION

Proposed by Councillor Ryan Wilson
Seconded by Councillor Roisin Lynch

"This Council believes that:

Student Support

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all citizens and that the impact on our young people has been severe. This Council recognises the difficulties faced by those young people in full-time third level education, both at universities and further education colleges, who, because of restrictions, are unable to attend classes in person or live in student accommodation which they have paid for. This Council recognises that many university students have found themselves suffering financial hardship which has caused significant distress and led to poor mental health.

This Council calls on university accommodation providers and private landlords who have not provided rent waivers to do immediately and calls on the Department for the Economy and Department of Finance to develop and fund a Student Support Grant for all full time third level students, many of whom cannot gain any employment at this time and are unable to claim benefits."

16 MOTION

Proposed by Councillor Noreen McClelland
Seconded by Alderman Thomas Burns

"This Council believes that:

Child Poverty

This Council notes with alarm the Department of Communities' Family Resources Survey 2018/2019 which show that 122,000 children in Northern Ireland live in relative poverty (24% of children) with 109,000 of those living in absolute poverty and expresses deep concern that these figures have increased significantly since the previous year and have not improved at all in the last five years. The rise of the Universal Credit claimant count and expected end of the furlough scheme could see a further increase in these numbers, with the two-child tax credit rule and benefit cap only adding to the pressure on families with children.

This Council calls on the Minister for Communities to immediately convene a child poverty task force, to set out how her department will reduce child poverty by next year and over the next decade."

17 MOTION

Proposed by Councillor Roisin Lynch
Seconded by Councillor Ryan Wilson

"This Council believes that:

Brexit

This Council expresses deep concern about the financial consequences of Brexit for Executive departments including the loss of £70 million in EU Structural Funds for the Department for the Economy; regrets that the level of funding promised to the devolved institutions by the British government will not be equivalent to EU Structural Funds; notes that any loss of funding will result in significant negative consequences for Northern Ireland's economy and society; expresses concern that plans to operate the UK Shared Prosperity Fund from Westminster represent moves to centralise regional development policy; and calls upon the Minister for the Economy and the Minister of Finance to urge the British Government to commit to using the Shared Prosperity Fund to replace in full the EU funding lost as a result of Brexit and operate in a way that respects devolution settlements."

18 MOTION

Proposed by Alderman Phillip Brett
Seconded by Alderman Mark Cosgrove

"This Council commends the Northern Ireland COVID-19 vaccination team, recognises that per head of population Northern Ireland is leading the world in rolling out the vaccine, appreciates that Her Majesty's Government has ensured Northern Ireland's access to the vaccine, urges the Government to make the vaccine available to as many as possible, supports 24/7 vaccination, encourages our residents to receive the vaccination and will make our facilities available for mass vaccination."

**REPORT ON BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED
AT THE COUNCIL MEETING ON MONDAY 25 JANUARY 2021**

9. ITEMS FOR DECISION

9.1 TO APPROVE THE SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

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

- Antrim Property Limited and Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council - Licence to Enter on to Land to Carry Out Works at Castle Mall, Antrim
- Contract with Totalis Solutions for Design, Supply and Installation of Interpretative Displays at the Gateway, Antrim Loughshore.

RECOMMENDATION: that the documents be signed and sealed.

Prepared by: Paul Casey, Borough Lawyer and Head of Legal Services

9.2 G/MSMO/008/VOL 2 DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH LAUNCH OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION – INTRODUCTION OF A STATUTORY SOFT OPT-OUT SYSTEM FOR ORGAN DONATION

Members are advised that correspondence has been received from the Department of Health regarding the launch of a public consultation on the introduction of a statutory soft opt-out system for organ donation for Northern Ireland.

The consultation launched on 11 December 2020 and will run until 19 February 2021. The Department will publish details of public engagement events to take place early in the New Year to ensure that all stakeholders have an opportunity to hear about the proposals and submit their responses.

The consultation document is **enclosed** for Members' information and further details can be found on the department's website at:
<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations/organ-donation>

Members may note the correspondence or respond on a corporate, individual/party political basis.

The Council's instructions are requested.

Prepared by: Member Services

Approved by: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive

9.3 CE/GEN/017 DISPOSAL OF LAND AT GRANGE DRIVE, BALLYCLARE

Members are advised that a D1 form, a copy of which is enclosed, has been received from Land and Property Services regarding land declared surplus by the Housing Executive at Grange Drive, Ballyclare. Officers have reviewed the information provided and have not identified a need for this asset.

It is understood that this land may be of interest to the developer(s) of the Ballyclare Relief Road and associated housing scheme.

RECOMMENDATION: that the Council does not express an interest in this land.

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

9.4 CE/GEN/017 DISPOSAL OF LAND AT WHITEABBEY MAINTENANCE DEPOT

Members are advised that a D1 form, a copy of which is enclosed, has been received from Land and Property Services regarding land declared surplus by the Education Authority Northern Ireland at Whiteabbey Maintenance Depot. Officers have reviewed the information provided and have not identified a need for this asset.

RECOMMENDATION: that the Council does not express an interest in this land.

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

9.5 G/MSMO/008 Vol 2 DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE - LAUNCH OF CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS TO REFORM REHABILITATION PERIODS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Members are advised that correspondence has been received from the Department of Justice regarding the launch of a consultation on proposals to reform rehabilitation periods in Northern Ireland to reflect changes in sentencing practices and developments in other jurisdictions.

Rehabilitation periods in Northern Ireland have remained essentially unchanged since they were first introduced in 1978 and since then changes in sentencing practice have meant that longer sentences are now being imposed than when rehabilitation periods were first established.

The consultation seeks views on proposals to reduce the length of time that it will take for some convictions to become spent; and to allow more sentences to be included in the rehabilitation of offenders scheme in Northern Ireland.

The consultation and survey can be accessed and completed online at:

<https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/doj/reform-of-rehabilitation-periods>

The closing date for responding to the consultation exercise is 5 March 2021.

Alternatively, a hard copy of the document can be requested from: DoJCLB@justice-ni.x.gsi.gov.uk or by writing to Criminal Law Branch, Criminal Justice Policy and Legislation Division, Department of Justice, Massey House, Stormont Estate, Belfast, BT4 3SX.

Members may note the correspondence or respond on a corporate, individual/party political basis.

The Council's instructions are requested.

Prepared by: Member Services

Approved by: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive

9.6 G/MSMO/008/VOL 2 DAERA DISCUSSION PAPER ON A CLIMATE CHANGE BILL FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

The Department of Agriculture, Environmental and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has issued a discussion paper seeking the views of individuals, organisations and businesses across society in order to understand public views as to what a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill should look like. A response to the discussion paper is due by 1 February 2021.

The crux of the consultation is to determine which of the following high-level options is appropriate for Northern Ireland;

1. Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill setting interim emission targets and a longer-term target of net zero emissions in Northern Ireland by 2050.
2. Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill setting interim emission reduction targets and a long-term target for Northern Ireland by 2050, the long-term target is an equitable contribution to achieving UK-wide Net Zero by 2050.

Sustainable NI has provided a draft response to the paper which is **enclosed** and it is understood that NILGA is also working on a response.

Members may wish to endorse the Sustainable NI response or respond on a Corporate, Individual or Party Political basis.

The Council's instructions are requested.

Prepared by: Liz Johnston, Head of Corporate Recovery

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

9.7 G/MSMO/008/VOL 2 DAERA DISCUSSION PAPER ON ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS, PRINCIPLES AND GOVERNANCE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND - PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has issued a discussion paper seeking views on how Environmental Plans, Principles and Governance should be dealt with following the EU Exit on 31 December 2020.

The discussion paper seeks the views on:

1. Environmental Improvement Plans, which would require DAERA to produce long-term strategic plans for the environment;
2. A policy statement on the application of environmental principles, currently contained in EU treaties, by all Departments when making policy; and
3. Arrangements for independent environmental oversight, a role currently undertaken by the European Commission. The Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) will be established under the Environment Bill and (subject to the Assembly's approval) extend to Northern Ireland.

NILGA has submitted a response (**enclosed**) which it is proposed should be endorsed by the Council along with the following additional points:

- The Council welcomes the Ministers proactive approach to Environmental Protection and the clear link to Climate Change Management and future sustainability.
- NI should be guided by the long term Environmental principles but these must be kept under review to be amended or added to as required. It is also important that these principles are owned and understood by the wider NI Society to achieve maximum buy in. To this end Local Government has a key role to play as the custodians of the Environment for their respective geographical area through their Community Plans and Local Development Plans.
- The mechanism for DAERA to publish a policy statement and carry out a public consultation needs to be meaningful in terms of engagement with Local Government and wider society to understand how this will impact all parties going forward.
- OEP functions should be kept under review so that changes/additions can be made as the situation in Northern Ireland evolves and a formalised system of review employed with clear reporting structures.
- The role of the OEP, its' strategic position within the Northern Ireland Governance structure and its' Terms of Reference need to be more comprehensively detailed along with the proposed costs for its' operation.
- Alignment of the Environment and Green Growth Strategies can be best achieved through shared targets/outcomes which will ensure that the policy approaches "talk to each other".
- Need to recognise the importance of Local Government in terms of the services which are potentially impacted by this initially ie Planning, Waste Management, Environmental Health etc

- Northern Ireland has its own unique set of circumstances and geography and therefore there should be an OEP for Northern Ireland to implement a system of Environmental Governance.
- Clarification is required in terms of Local Governments responsibilities and what role Councils will have in relation to the OEP.
- OEP should be funded through Central Government via the savings made from EU withdrawal ie direct from the Treasury.
- There needs to be a permanent “presence” in Northern Ireland to highlight the importance of the role and to ensure that NI specific conditions/issues are understood and that responses can be swift. Consideration to be given to how this should be staffed including secondments from relevant bodies with expertise.
- When setting up OEP there needs to be appropriate communication, promotion, along with training and awareness raising with and for Local Government and the Private Sector. Clear guidance has to be provided on how the OEP will operate and Local Governments involvement including capacity building.

RECOMMENDATION: that Council endorses the response made by NILGA along with the additional points outlined.

Prepared by: Liz Johnston, Head of Corporate Recovery

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

9.8 P/FP/LDP 118 PUBLICATION OF DFI TRANSPORT STUDY

Members are advised that a new suite of Transport Plans are being prepared by Department for Infrastructure (DfI), which are intended to set out the framework for transport policy and investment decisions until the year 2035. Members will be aware that the Forward Plan Team represent the Council on the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan Project Board.

The publication of the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan is being undertaken in parallel with the Local Development Plan (LDP) process and is being used to inform the new LDP for the Borough. The latest stage in this process was the recent publication of the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Study by DfI, in November 2020 a copy of which is enclosed. The purpose of the Transport Study is to set out an objective evidence-based assessment of transport issues based on the Council's growth ambitions.

The study includes a Modelling Report on the Greater Belfast area enclosed in Annex D as well as a number a local transport studies for a number of Councils including Antrim and Newtownabbey copies of which are enclosed in Annex E. All documentation is available to view at <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/belfast-metropolitan-transport-study>

The next phase of the Transport Plan will be the publication of the Belfast Metropolitan Local Transport Plan which is to align with the next stage of the Local Development Plan process. In light of this recent publication, it is suggested that representatives from DfI are invited to Council to give an overview of the Transport Study and the next stage of the Transport Plan process.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted and DfI representatives are invited to provide a presentation to Elected Members.

Prepared by: Sharon Mossman, Principal Planning Officer

Agreed by: John Linden, Head of Planning

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

9.9 G/MSMO/015 NORTHERN IRELAND PLANNING CONFERENCE 2021

Agenda NI's Northern Ireland Planning Conference is being held online on Thursday 11 February 2021. A copy of the programme is enclosed for information. The delegation fee is £145 + VAT = £174 per delegate.

RECOMMENDATION: that the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Planning Committee or their nominees attend the online conference as an approved duty together with the relevant Officers.

Prepared by: Majella McAlister, Director of Economic Development & Planning

9.10 P/FP/LDP99 & PK/GEN/182 LIVING WITH WATER, AN INTEGRATED PLAN FOR DRAINAGE AND WASTEWATER IN GREATER BELFAST - PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Members are advised that the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) has now published 'Living with Water', an Integrated Plan for Drainage and Wastewater Management in Greater Belfast, for public consultation a copy of which is **enclosed**. Members are reminded that a representative from DfI attended the Council's Operations Committee on 4 January 2021 to present the Plan.

An outworking of the Northern Ireland Executive's decision in 2014 to develop a multi-agency Strategic Drainage Infrastructure Plan for Greater Belfast, DfI considers the document is a new approach to the provision of drainage and wastewater infrastructure, more commonly known as 'Blue/Green Infrastructure', to protect places from flooding, provide a cleaner and greener environment, and to ensure that the Greater Belfast area is open for business and investment.

In summary, the Plan covers the catchment area feeding the six Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) that discharge into Belfast Lough. Recognising a collaborative approach to develop integrated and sustainable drainage solutions, the consultation helps to explain the challenges involved, and the opportunities for potential solutions and the scale of investment needed to deliver them.

Implementation of this Plan is central to the delivery of the Floods Directive, the Water Framework Directive, the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) and the Long Term Water Strategy (LTWS). In February 2020 the Northern Ireland Assembly declared a climate emergency. This Plan will help the Greater Belfast area to adapt to changing rainfall patterns and mitigate against increased greenhouse gas emissions. The Northern Ireland Executive's 2020 'New Decade New Approach' document recognises the importance of investing in drainage and wastewater.

The policy, regulations and funding of drainage and waste water management in Northern Ireland is currently provided by a number of different organisations. This Plan coordinates and optimises the strategic planning of future drainage and waste water related works in the greater Belfast area.

The Borough is located within DfI's North Foreshore Study Area. This covers four areas, one of which is the Whitehouse/Mallusk catchment. The Plan identifies a number of strategic issues and pressures, catchment objectives, opportunity based solutions and indicative timescales.

Strategic Issues and Pressures

1. Flood risk in the Carnmoney Industrial Estate to the Shore Road area as well as the Mallusk and Ballyhenry areas.
2. Flood risk in the Monkstown and Whiteabbey areas.
3. Flood risk in the Hightown areas of Glengormley and Collinward area of Carnmoney.

4. Development issues throughout the area due to sewerage network capacity constraints.
5. Water quality issues associated with network capacity problems and overflows within the catchment upstream of Whitehouse WwTW and in Belfast Lough.

Catchment Objectives

1. To Reduce the number of people/properties and infrastructure at risk of flooding in the Carnmoney Industrial Estate, Shore Road, Mallusk, Ballyhenry, Monkstown, Whiteabbey, Hightown and Collinward areas.
2. To contribute to achieving Good Ecological Status in Three Mile Water and Ballymartin Water and downstream in Inner Belfast Lough.
3. To facilitate sustainable development in the sub catchment area.

Opportunity Based Solutions

Solutions outlined in the Plan include a combination of potential blue/green infrastructure such as river restoration works, and conventional hard engineered measures such as sewerage network improvements. For example:

1. Carnmoney Hill / Collinward / Mossley: To work with the Council, the Belfast Hills Partnership and the National Trust to manage the uppermost parts of the river catchments to reduce surface water run-off and to increase water attenuation and retention.
2. Sewerage Network Improvements: Improvements in the Whitehouse / Mallusk area include increasing capacity, CSO screening and the provision of additional storage.
3. Glengormley Area: Potential build on any upper catchment management works in the surrounding hills by working in partnership with the Council to use existing green space like NI Water's land at the Valley Leisure Centre/Park, to help attenuate storm water. These works could be tied in with the Council's Local Development Plan.
4. Newtownabbey area: To work with the Council and the Woodland Trust to carry out river and floodplain restoration works in areas like Three Mile Water Conservation Park, Monkstown Wood and Glen Park. There is also the potential to include stormwater attenuation within the site of the old UUJ campus as part of any future re-development plans. DfI also considers that opportunities should be taken to make full use of existing features such as the former Mill Pond at Mossley Mill.

In terms of DfI's projected six-year timeframe, one short-term urgent project to be completed between 2021/22 – 2024/25 includes investment within the Whitehouse area to address unsatisfactory spills from sewer overflows impacting on the Shellfish Water at Belfast Lough.

The public consultation commenced on 11 November 2020 and runs for 11-weeks to 29 January 2021. A draft response to this consultation is **enclosed** for Members' consideration.

RECOMMENDATION: that the response to DfI be approved.

Prepared by: Sharon Mossman, Principal Planning Officer

Agreed by: John Linden, Head of Planning

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

9.11 ED/ED/183 COVID-19 SUNDAY OPENING HOURS

A decision was taken by Council in April 2020 to relax enforcement action in relation to Sunday Opening Hours of large supermarkets. It was reviewed and extended in November 2020 in the run up to Christmas to facilitate 'safe' shopping environments and social distancing for staff and customers. This approval expired on Sunday 10 January 2021. The relaxation helped retailers manage customer volumes and better facilitated key workers, healthcare workers and customers with disabilities. The period between 10am and 1pm was set aside for these categories. Normal liquor licencing provisions were not affected by this relaxation. Retailers were in all cases 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 m²) through to the end of March 2021, should they choose to open or deliver on a Sunday from 10am 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 has been put in place to cover the period Sunday 17 January 2021 to Sunday 28 March 2021 inclusive. There is no change to smaller retail shops (under 280 m²), 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.

The new arrangements have been communicated to relevant retailers across the Borough.

RECOMMENDATION: that the Sunday Trading arrangements be approved retrospectively.

Prepared by: Colin McCabrey, Head of Economic Development

Approved by: Majella McAlister, Director of Economic Development & Planning

9.12 WM/WM/002 COMMUNITY WINTER RESILIENCE KITS

In order to assist residents during times of heavy snowfall, winter resilience kits are available to community groups in the Borough. These kits consist of snow shovels, basic sets of ice grippers for shoes, waterproof gloves and hi-vis waistcoats in one box. With 5 of each item per box, the kits cost around £117 each, and form part of the Snow Clearance Plan as set out in the Winter Operations Plan, (enclosed). A supply is retained in Stores, however, in recent years, there have been only minor snow episodes and a very small number of packs have been issued. Any community group can complete a form and be provided with a kit.

Recently, there has been a protracted period of compacted ice, resulting in dangerous conditions in many parts of the Borough and many calls to Elected Members requesting assistance. Grit boxes across Northern Ireland are provided by the Department for Infrastructure, Roads (DfI, Roads) in response to requests from the public and requests are considered against a set of criteria. There are just under 350 DfI provided grit boxes across the Borough. This grit is provided for roads, not footpaths. The Department has no statutory responsibility to grit footpaths.

Officers have explored the potential to provide small grit spreaders as part of the Community Winter Resilience Kits. These could be loaned to community groups who express an interest in helping to grit footpaths in their area, similar to the equipment provided through the Support in Kind scheme. Returned equipment can be cleaned, maintained and stored as part of the Community Winter Resilience Kits. A reasonable quality grit spreading model which would hold 50kg of salt (around 2 bags) would cost an estimated £180.

RECOMMENDATION: that grit spreaders are purchased and added to the Community Winter Resilience Kits, provided to community groups on a loan basis, and that grit for this purpose is provided by the Council.

Prepared by: Michael Laverty, Head of Waste Management

Approved by: Geraldine Girvan, Director of Operations

9.13 ED/TOU/064 CRANFIELD JETTY AND SLIPWAY

Members are reminded that the Council owns and maintains a small park, jetty and slipway as well as the Holy Well in Cranfield on the shore of Lough Neagh at Churchtown Point near Randalstown. There is also the ruins of a 13th century Church (St Olcans) including a graveyard at this location. Some images are enclosed for reference.

Following reports of deterioration and concerns regarding health and safety a structural condition report of the jetty and slipway was undertaken in June 2019. The purpose of this was to inspect and report on the condition of the existing jetty and slipway structures at Cranfield and to ascertain any issues. The report identified that deck boards on the jetty have deteriorated and are cracking. Corrosion has been identified throughout the jetty structure.

The slipway neighbouring the jetty is cracked in multiple locations across its width. This has created hazardous voids. Paving in the vicinity of the slipway is generally in good condition but some repair is needed, especially where the paving meets the slipway.

For health and safety reasons, as a temporary measure, the jetty has been closed off to the public with harris fencing with 'Danger Keep Out' signage in place. The fencing is continually being removed by persistent users of the jetty who fail to acknowledge that the existing structure should not be accessed. The slipway is separate from the jetty and is still in operation but there is a health and safety risk associated with its continued use. The hazards on the slipway are mostly slips and trips. Some additional best practice health and safety provisions could also be implemented at the Cranfield site, including steps attached to the jetty for easy entry and exit to the water.

Officers have engaged with local stakeholder groups to determine current levels of need for the jetty. Until such times as the fencing was erected, approximately six boats used Cranfield Jetty permanently. Over the past five years the boat owners experienced some vandalism to their vessels and decided to no-longer berth at Cranfield. The nearest alternative mooring points are at Toome Canal and Antrim Lough Shore Park with each providing small jetties where boats can moor for the day.

Lough Neagh Partnership's Lough Neagh Management Strategy identifies five strategically important local recreational nodes on the Lough. They are Churchtown Point/Cranfield, Gawleys Gate, Randalstown Forest, Sandy Bay and Washingbay. This stems from a study completed by the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) (Inland Waterways) completed in October 2014 which identified these sites as primarily providing recreational opportunities for local communities. In addition to these the same report identified six regional recreational nodes with the capacity to attract day visitors from further afield. These are Ballyronan, The Battery, Lough Shore Park, Maghery, Oxford Island (including Kinnego Marina), and Toome Canal. The DCAL study noted a disparity across all sites regarding the quality of provision and access and made recommendations for the improvement and enhancement of infrastructure. Work on the NI Tourism Strategy to the period

2030 has been suspended due to COVID-19 but it is expected that Lough Neagh will feature as a key opportunity for product development appealing to regional and national visitors in the shorter-term.

Local boat owners are interested in returning and making Cranfield their permanent base. No active fishermen are able to use the jetty due to its current condition but around 12 boats still use the slipway to gain entry in and out of the Lough. A private pleasure craft owner has expressed interest in using Cranfield Jetty and slipway as they have recently invested in a new business titled 'Lough Neagh Tours by Land and Water' which they were hoping would in-part operate from Cranfield. They have a relatively small craft which will provide ticketed tours over the Spring and Summer months.

Lough Neagh Rescue uses Cranfield jetty on a regular basis for all types of training and in case of emergency the jetty is used as a primary and secondary landing emergency facility. It is also included as part of a HM Coastguard emergency procedure for aircraft landings on the Lough. There has also been an increase in usage by swimmers. A local group from Ballyronan use Cranfield for weekly open water swimming sessions. Their numbers have been steadily increasing along with swimmers going out on their own. There has also been an increase in water sport activities and visitors to the shoreline for local exercise.

Officers have considered the following options for the jetty:

- Option 1 Complete removal of the jetty is estimated at £27,000. The absence of the jetty would significantly detract from the site as a local recreational node and restrict opportunity to develop Lough Neagh as a tourism product and economic stimulus;
- Option 2 The capital replacement of the jetty and slipway which includes enhancements to provide best practice water safety provisions at £165,000;
- Option 3 More permanent fencing to restrict access to the jetty at an estimated cost of £5,000. This option is not a longer term solution and would need investigated further for practical engineering solutions. Also, given the persistent removal of the current temporary fencing it is likely that any permanent fencing will also be damaged to facilitate access.

Given the strategic tourism significance and local importance of access to the water a full replacement of the jetty and repair of the slipway is to be considered the most satisfactory option for the longer-term.

The estimated cost of full replacement and repair is £165,000.

The Council's instructions are requested.

Prepared by: Karen Steele, Tourism, Town Centre and Regeneration Manager

Agreed by: Colin McCabrey, Head of Economic Development

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

9.14 ED/GEN/015 & ED/ED/184 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REVITALISE FUNDING – BUSINESS GRANTS

The Action Plan for 'Revitalise Funding' administered by the Department for Communities (DfC) for business COVID-19 recovery was approved by the Council in July 2020. The Council's funding allocation towards business grants and awnings within the approved action plan, a copy of which is enclosed is £360,000.

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the status of the various business grant funding initiatives being implemented to meet the funding deadline of March 2021. It should be noted that many of the businesses had not yet submitted their claims and it is anticipated that there will be a surge towards the end date. During this period of extended restrictions, the majority of businesses are closed and communication continues to prove challenging.

Town Centre Business Grant Administration:

This grant offered up to £1,000 to retail and eligible service sector businesses located in DfC defined town centres. Letters of Offer were awarded to 98 businesses at the end of October. The total value of grants committed to these businesses is £80,000. To date 16 claims at a total value of £13,199.81 have been processed.

Outside of Town Centre Business Grant Administration:

This grant offered up to £1,000 to retail and eligible service sector businesses located outside the traditional town centres of Antrim, Ballyclare, Crumlin, Glengormley & Randalstown. This grant application closed on Friday 4 December 2020. Letters of Offer with a total value of £42,709.16 have been awarded to 46 businesses. To date 5 claims have been processed at a value of £4,793.83.

Micro Business Scheme

A further scheme to assist businesses not eligible for the initial two funding calls was launched on 4 January 2021. This was targeted at micro businesses employing 10 employees or less with a turnover less than £632,000. It closes for applications on 4 February with 30 applications received to date. Grant funding will be allocated on a first come first served basis. Further details regarding this grant funding can be found at the following link - <https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/micro-business-revitalise-funding/>.

Delegated Authority for the Chief Executive for the award of grant funding to businesses was approved by the Council to expedite the speed at which Letters of Offer could be issued. A further list of awards which were issued under delegated authority, since the previous tranche were approved by Council on 26 October 2020, are **enclosed** for Members' information. The grant awards totalled £65,577.34.

Awnings Scheme:

There were 114 expressions of interest for the scheme across the Borough resulting in 73 successful submissions due to a number of factors including; addresses outside the defined town centres, businesses not trading from

commercial premises and businesses trading from a non-traditional retail setting.

To date 57 businesses have agreed to proceed with their installation. A list of these businesses is enclosed. The breakdown of awnings by town and current status is noted in the table below:

Town (& colour selection)	Number of expressions of interest received by town	Currently confirmed on the scheme (paperwork received)
Antrim – Charcoal Grey	21	18
Ballyclare – Charcoal Grey	20	15
Crumlin – Forest Green	9	5
Glengormley – Admiral Blue	13	12
Randalstown – Admiral Blue	10	7
Total	73	57

The budget for the project was £168,850.

Officers have been made aware of interest in the scheme by businesses that did not initially express an interest therefore it is proposed to re-open the scheme on a first come first served basis and to review the eligibility of the 41 unsuccessful applicants when costs had been finalised with Sign Reload for the installation of the current cohort of awnings to ensure a full budget draw-down.

Given the impact of the current restrictions on businesses, Officers will continue to liaise with DfC regarding any opportunity to extend the Letter of Offer beyond the 31 March 2021 spend deadline.

A further report will be presented to the Council in February.

RECOMMENDATION: that

- i. the grants awarded under delegated authority since the previous tranche approved by Council on 26 October 2020 be noted;**
- ii. the businesses benefitting from the Awnings Scheme be noted;**
- iii. authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to review the criteria and extend the offer of the awnings programme to other businesses to maximise the draw-down of funding within the budget of £168,850 by 31 March 2021;**
- iv. a further report on the revitalise funding action plan be presented to the February meeting of the Council;**
- v. authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to implement any new requests which meet the broad criteria of the funding provided should an underspend be identified as the Council reaches the deadline for expenditure.**

Prepared by: Craig Mullan, Strategic Business Investment and Engagement Officer

Agreed by: Colin McCabrey, Head of Economic Development

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

9.15 ED/ED/184 BLUE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

DfC is co-ordinating Revitalise Grant Funding to Councils to support the recovery of town and village centres. As part of this overall fund DfI made a budget of £363,000 available to Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council to support blue and green infrastructure projects to be delivered by March 2021, however an extension until June is anticipated.

The indicated targets for the DfI supported projects are:

- To achieve a shift from the private car to active travel modes such as walking and cycling;
- To protect and enhance our 'green' and 'blue' infrastructure (parks, green spaces and street trees, ponds, streams and lakes to define a sense of place;
 - Promoting health and wellbeing outcomes;
 - Strengthening the resilience of our natural environment;
 - To develop integrated drainage solutions;
 - New improved physical infrastructure and environment;
 - Bring communities together;
- Enhance our attractiveness as a home, place for business and tourist destination;
- Develop strategic sites across NI to provide new and improved physical infrastructure and environment.

In September 2020 a report to Council detailed the following summary projects as the 'types of schemes being given consideration' subject to consultation with our Central Government Partners, budget and funding.

1. **New recreation, cycle ways and walkways: £150,000**
This was intended to be allocated to Phase 1 of a new cycle and walking route linking Mallusk - Glengormley - O'Neill Road - Gideon's Green.
2. **Enhanced recreation, cycle ways and walkways: £180,000**
This was intended to be allocated to an enhancement of existing cycle routes and walkways by visually connecting the pathways through planting and directional assets such as planters and signage.
3. **Waterways and SUDs Schemes: £33,000**
This was intended to be allocated to a flood alleviation scheme in Knockenagh Park and improvements to hydrology in the leisure grounds of Rathfern Community Centre.

Following this Officers engaged further with DfC officials and tested the feasibility of delivering these schemes within the available budget and timeframe. This had led to a number of schemes being postponed and new schemes introduced as outlined below.

The schemes and estimated budgets for consideration are:

- 1) **Antrim Boardwalk:**

Phase 1 - Existing Boardwalk: Treatment of existing timbers, galvanised plate on existing timbers, resin bonded gravel, replacement handrail, H&S works, and contingency. Prelims (@15%) and fees (@6.5%): £113,000 (lighting £12,500 extra) plus £5,000 to enclose the water feature under the underpass which is not in use. **Estimated cost £ 130,500**

2) Cycle Trail:

Improving and linking the cycle route within Glasna braden Glen. These works would be focused primarily on widening the entry point and 2 m tarmac path to 4 metres, to meet DfI Cycle unit standards for a shared path. This will involve cutting into path banks and infilling locations to take the additional path width.

The project will also involve a number of other necessary landscaping requirements to achieve the necessary width involving removal and replacement of some trees, installation of safety rails and culverts where required. This project would complete a very valuable section on a key Shared Cycle plan for the location. **Estimated cost of £120,000**

3) Bike Stands & Bikes for Hire (Pilot Scheme):

Location analysis still being undertaken. Indicative costs are £12,000 for 40 stands and £18,000 for 60 stands. **Estimated cost £18,000**

A second element of this scheme is the introduction of bikes for hire pilot scheme at key locations (to be determined) to encourage sustainable methods of transport. **Estimated cost for a pilot project £61,500.**

4) Waterways and SuDs Schemes:

Flood alleviation scheme in Knockenagh Park and improvements to hydrology in the leisure grounds of Rathfern Community Centre to increase the use of the area for outdoor leisure and recreation and as a key entry point to Carnmoney Hill and the wider Belfast Hills. **Estimated cost £33,000.**

The projects outlined if approved will be worked up in further detail and submitted to DfC/DfI for consideration.

RECOMMENDATION: that the proposals outlined be approved and a bid submitted to DfC/DfI for the £363,000 funding available.

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

9.16 ED/ED/130 FULL FIBRE NI UPDATE

Further to the Council report in November 2020, which advised that the Fibrus bid had been successful, Officers have been working with the team in Newry, Mourne & Down District Council (NMD) who are the lead for FFNI to progress delivery of the Scheme.

As the lead Council, NMD has been faced with a series of extremely complex and technical issues associated with the procurement process and risks in relation to the FFNI infrastructure. The impact of this has been that additional consultancy and legal support has been required in excess of that originally anticipated and in addition the programme end date has been extended from September 2021 to December 2021. Whilst this was to be welcomed in terms of a longer delivery period, no staff/consultancy revenue was provided for this period.

NMD Council has therefore written to all of the 10 participating Councils to ask that a further contribution of up to £20,000 be made towards the operational/management costs, in addition to the £50,000 (per Council) previously agreed.

The business case for Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council has determined the following:

- The Council's FFNI project will provide gigabit capable fibre to 35 corporate sites, and enable fibre broadband for an estimated 24,905 homes and businesses (this will be supplemented by an additional 25 Business Service Organisation sites, including local GP surgeries, ambulance/fire stations and Whiteabbey Hospital);
- It will support the economic growth of our region and help to ensure our citizens are included in society;
- It will deliver an estimated £4,029,474 of GVA increase over 15 years;
- It will migrate the great majority of the Council's network connections on to fibre connection; and,
- It will deliver network savings of approximately £53,028 over 5 years.

The value of works programmed by Fibrus in Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area for the achievement of the outputs above is £503,684. Legacy broadband infrastructure within the Borough means that Antrim and Newtownabbey already enjoys a much higher than average level of broadband connectivity when compared with other Council areas. The successful procurement will deliver all of the sites identified by Council, thereby delivering positive economic development benefits and cost savings.

Due to the strategic importance of broadband connectivity which has been highlighted as a result of the pandemic in terms of homeworking and home schooling it is increasingly important that residents and businesses have the opportunity to access broadband and/or improve their connectivity at a competitive rate. As a result, it is considered that the additional support requested should be provided.

Members are advised that Fibrus will be commencing the inspection of sites within the Borough to be connected to full fibre from the beginning of February.

RECOMMENDATION: that the Council contributes up to a further £20,000 towards the management/operational costs to assist the delivery of the FFNI programme.

Prepared by: Colin McCabrey, Head of Economic Development

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

9.17 ED/REG/058 UNION CONNECTIVITY REVIEW MEETING WITH SIR PETER HENDY

Background to The Union Connectivity Review (UCR)

On 30 June 2020 the Prime Minister announced a detailed independent review would be undertaken by Sir Peter Hendy to review of how the quality and availability of transport infrastructure across the UK can support economic growth and quality of life across the whole of the UK.

The Union Connectivity Review (UCR) will make recommendations as to whether and how best to improve transport connectivity across the UK in the long term, including how to bolster existing connections. This work will cover transport connectivity between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland via road, rail and air, and across the Irish Sea.

Any recommendations made by Sir Peter should be consistent with the UK's wider fiscal strategy and underpinned by detailed, published economic analysis. Sir Peter should ensure that any recommendations he makes have significant benefits to either economic growth or quality of life in the UK.

The review was launched at the beginning of October. It will publish an interim report in early 2021, and a final report in Summer 2021.

Northern Ireland Roundtable

Local Councils were invited to attend a virtual roundtable discussion with Sir Peter Hendy, as part of the Union Connectivity Review and Antrim and Newtownabbey took part in a discussion on 16 December 2020 along with a number of other Councils.

The purpose of this roundtable was to provide an opportunity for the Councils to discuss connectivity directly with Sir Peter. This was the sixth in a series of sectoral roundtables taking place to coincide with the Call for Evidence which was published on the 16 November 2020 and which closes on 30 December.

Sir Peter has encouraged all attendees to consider this and respond as appropriate. Sir Peter is particularly interested in Councils' views on union connectivity and where he should focus; what specific journeys and routes between nations could be improved, and why; what are the main obstacles which could be overcome by investment in union connectivity; and views on the potential value of a national strategic transport network.

The key points raised at the discussion relevant to the Council area were as follows:

1. Strategic importance of Belfast International Airport to Antrim and Newtownabbey and the region as a whole. In this regard there is an urgent need for road improvements with the potential to link the 2 motorways as a strategic goal. The opportunity also exist to reopen the Knockmore Link with a connection to the airport – this could bring great

gains for Airport customers but also open up an alternative transport mode to the growing population along this route.

2. Freeports and the opportunity to local one in Northern Ireland – again highlighting the potential role of the airport in such a venture.
3. Expansion of Glider into Antrim and Newtownabbey and in addition that these buses could be low carbon vehicles fuelled by hydrogen.
4. Ancillary infrastructure – to make public transport work more effectively in the borough there is a need for more park and ride and park and share facilities, rail-halts and dualling of railway lines.
5. The example of the Heathrow Hub was highlighted which had identified the key role which Northern Ireland companies could play in the delivery of significant capital schemes on the mainland e.g. Heathrow Expansion, HS2 etc and the spin off opportunities that could emanate from a hub/hubs of this nature.
6. Importance of the Transport and Logistics sector to the borough and the key role that such businesses play in delivering into supply chains both in Northern Ireland and on the mainland. This highlighted the need for quality road provision, service areas for drivers etc
7. The cost of crossing the North Channel and the poor quality of the road infrastructure at key entry points in Scotland was also raised.
8. The Low Carbon agenda and what this will mean in terms of future transport and mobility was a key consideration in future investment proposals.

Based on these main points relevant to the Borough, Officers have drafted the **enclosed** report. Whilst the Call for Evidence which was published on the 16 November was due to close on the 30 December, Sir Peter agreed that submissions in the early New Year would be accepted.

RECOMMENDATION: that the response to the call for evidence be approved.

Prepared & Authorised by: Majella McAlister, Director of Economic Development & Planning

9.18 L/LEI/AF/010 & AC/MU/001 REQUESTS TO USE COUNCIL FACILITIES FOR VACCINATIONS

Two requests have been received from GP practices to use Council facilities for administering COVID-19 vaccinations. A GP has requested use of the Museum at the Mill for vaccinations on 14 and 19 January 2021.

Similarly, a group of five GP Practices based in the Antrim area have requested use of Antrim Forum as a mass vaccination centre. The booking is anticipated to commence from 25 January 2020, Monday to Saturday 9am – 5pm for several weeks, or possibly months. The use of the smaller sports hall with its own access and egress, will ensure the vaccination centre can continue to operate when current restrictions are relaxed and the leisure centre reopens to the public.

It is proposed that the charges are waived and claimed from the Department as COVID-19 expenditure.

RECOMMENDATION: that Council approves use of the facilities for vaccinations at no charge.

Prepared and approved by: Geraldine Girvan, Director of Operations and Nick Harkness, Director of Community Planning

9.19 ED/REG/059 LOCAL LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP

The Department for Communities has for some time now been developing a model to address employment issues at a local level. The intention is that such a model would deal with the specific issues which those seeking employment face as well as employers seeking to fill positions within their organisations.

To this end it is proposed that a Local Labour Market Partnership (LMP) would be established within each Council area alongside a regional partnership. The LMP's form part of a suite of programmes being advanced under the Employability NI banner.

It is intended that the LMP would operate as a 'service' with a funding agreement between the Department and the Council for the development and delivery of an agreed Action Plan. A budget will be provided for the service and it is proposed that 20% of this sum may be used for administrative costs.

In order to make progress and enable the Councils to begin work on the development of their Action Plans, the Department has invited proposals for 'interim' arrangements, up to 31 March 2022 including the composition and operation of the LMP and the preparatory work which it will undertake.

In line with the Outcomes-Based Accountability (OBA) approach agreed by the Executive in 2016, LMP's are required to:-

- Review and confirm priority employability and labour market issues locally based on a strategic assessment.
- Describe what the LMP aims to achieve.
- Communicate and content of their Action Plan and how the LMP will work to deliver the Action Plan.
- Explain how the LMP will work in partnership to make the best use of resources.
- Explain how OBA will be used to measure and manage performance of LMP's.

In the absence of a budget it is unclear what level of administrative support will be available to the Council, however this activity is in line with the Community Plan and the Council's Economic Development Strategy and critical to the Borough's labour market as part of recovery efforts following the pandemic.

RECOMMENDATION: that

- i. the Council proceeds to establish an interim Labour Market Partnership (LMP) subject to the Council agreeing the membership of the Partnership**

at a future meeting;

ii. the Council develops an Action Plan for the 2021-2022 period.

Prepared by: Colin McCabrey, Head of Economic Development

Approved by: Majella McAlister, Director of Economic Development & Planning

9.20 ED/ED/186 ERDF COLLABORATIVE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

Members will be aware that the 11 Councils have been collaborating on a Digital Transformation Programme, which will be submitted to Invest NI to secure an existing underspend in ERDF funding.

Based on the intelligence which has been collated and engagement with both academics and those in the private sector, it has been agreed that this should be a high intensity programme creating a real step change for the participant businesses and therefore will be low volume in terms of participants. The programme will have 3 broad aims as follows:-

- 1 To drive 'digital inclination' amongst the target market aligned to an innovation roadmap (for each SME/micro-business).
- 2 To 'demystify' various advanced digital technologies /tools through high quality ideation support, exposure to and sharing of good practice, and active experimentation.
- 3 To put in place a digital acceleration plan for each, to route participating businesses onto more intensive supports in the 'digital innovation ecosystem' (e.g. via Digital Catapult, impending digital offers in various City/Growth Deals, Invest NI supports etc).

Over the anticipated delivery period from May/June 2021 to December 2022 it is estimated that 200 businesses will take part. Each business will receive 6 days of expert mentoring support or part of a wider support package which will include workshops and masterclasses.

The overall budget for the programme is £1,136,018 with £908,814 to be secured from Invest NI and £227,204 match funding to be provided by the participating Councils. There are also some costs including programme management and evaluation which are not eligible for ERDF funding which will have to be met by the Councils.

The following summary indicates the financial breakdown of the programme:-

Digital Programme Costs:-	£1,136,018
Funded by	
Invest NI	<u>£908,814</u>
Local Councils:	£227,204

With respect to the non-ERDF elements including programme management and evaluation the breakdown is as follows:-

ERDF Ineligible (evaluation)	£15,000
Programme Management	<u>£100,000</u>
	£115,000

Based on the 11 Council split this equates to £31,109 approximately from each Council.

Members are advised that 1 of the 11 Councils will be required to act as 'lead' and undertake the project management. It is proposed that Antrim and Newtownabbey should perform this role and that the Chief Executive will sign the application to Invest NI for the funding.

RECOMMENDATION: that the Council participates in the Digital Transformation Digital Programme providing match funding of approximately £31,000 and agrees to undertake the programme management role.

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

9.21 ED/ED/080/VOL3 COUNCIL EVENTS 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant and potentially long term impact on the Northern Ireland economy and in particular the Tourism and Hospitality sectors where restrictions will remain in place for the foreseeable future. It is anticipated that domestic tourism generated by Northern Ireland residents through staycations and visitors from the Republic of Ireland and the rest of the UK will be the main driver of the tourism economy over the next 12-18 months until the European and International markets recover.

The Council along with Central Government has already focussed resources on supporting the sector to prepare for reopening and is conscious of the positive role that events, both those delivered directly by the Council and those delivered by the community and private sector can play as part of recovery efforts. This however must be balanced with the likelihood of further restrictions and a cautious approach to large scale gatherings of people, at least within the period until the end of June 2021.

The implementation of the normal calendar of events in 2021 is therefore uncertain and a number of options are outlined below for members' consideration.

The key factors which have informed the options include:

- **Consumer confidence:** Irrespective of what the Health and Safety Guidance will be in future, the general public may not yet feel confident to attend traditional Spring and Summer events where larger crowds are gathered;
- **Content:** Content for traditional Spring and Summer Events will need more detailed Health and Safety considerations. For example, activities such as amusements and bouncy castles increase the likelihood of cross-contamination and animation such as face painting is close contact;
- **Supply:** Small-scale animation delivered previously within town centres proved difficult to procure as suppliers were hesitant of performing in public spaces and required special provisions such as a controlled space to change in etc;
- **Additional Costs:** If an element of restrictions remain, the costs associated with events will increase. In particular additional stewarding and infrastructure to ensure safe social distancing may be required;
- **Financial Loss:** There is the potential for significant financial resource to be spent on the delivery of events which will continue to carry a risk of cancellation or postponement. Both Antrim Live and Garden Show Ireland rely on income generation to reduce the cost to the Council. There will be less tickets available for events in order to manage safe social distancing and hence income will be reduced.

Whilst virtual content is proposed as the preferred option for the delivery of some events, this is due to the uncertainty regarding any future restrictions. However, it may be possible to pre-plan animation (e.g. small-scale entertainment such as busking and street theatre) for some events in tandem with the virtual offer, which can be activated quickly if circumstances permit.

To facilitate this tenders, select lists and quotations for the following services/products are being established;

- o Entertainment
- o Stewarding
- o Infrastructure
- o First Aid
- o Traffic Management
- o Personal Protective Equipment
- o Agent for market vendors (food and craft)
- o Catering

Consideration has also been given to the branding and promotion of specific events and how efficiencies can be achieved in 2021 through dual branding, by recognising The Centenary and the normal event promotion as part of a combined effort, as highlighted in the table below.

Members will also wish to note that it had been planned that the Council Events policy would be reviewed in 2020 however this has not been possible due to the pandemic, therefore regular updates will be provided to the Council on each upcoming event as necessary.

Council Run Events up to 31st October 2021

Month/ Date Normal	Event	Budget	Proposed Delivery Option / Considerations & Branding
May			
Mon 3 rd	NI Centenary (lighting of 2 beacons)	Included in Centenary Budget	Proposed Option: Virtual Content.
Sat 8 th	Darkness into Light	£2,000	Proposed Option: Virtual Content but may also be delivered depending on local restrictions.
25-29 th May	May Fair	£25,000	Proposed Option: Virtual Content with small scale animation if restrictions permit. Combined branding to include The Centenary
Sat 29 th & Sun 30 th	Antrim Live	£15,000	Potential rescheduled date to 29 th and 30 th May. It would typically be held over Sat 10 th and Sun 11 th April. Combined branding to include The Centenary.
May to August	Summer Sunday Music	£9,000	Delivered at ACG and Jordanstown Loughshore Park. Dates to be confirmed subject to restrictions, unlikely to start before June. Combined branding to include The Centenary
June			
Sat 19 th – Sun 20 th	Garden Show Ireland	£35,000	A proposal has been received to run a smaller scale event which is under consideration with a report to Council in February. Combined branding to include The Centenary

Fri 25 th	Schools Out for summer	£5,000	V36 at The Valley. Event delivered in its traditional format or rescheduled if restrictions in place.
July			
No council events			
August			
7 th	Party in the Park	£20,000	Antrim Castle Gardens Event delivered in its traditional format or rescheduled if restrictions in place. Combined branding to include The Centenary
28-29 August	Shoreline Festival	£31,000	Jordanstown Loughshore Park - Consider opportunity to combine with One Big Weekend by changing date - Engage with Whiteabbey traders to consider how the greatest impact can be achieved for them. Combined branding to include The Centenary
September			
3 Sept 4 Sept	One Giant Evening One Giant Picnic	£25,000 each event	Main Centenary events Combined branding to include The Centenary
4 Sept	Spinning Yarns	£10,000	Location is Mossley Mill - Could be combined with One Giant Weekend or rescheduled to later in the month Combined branding to include The Centenary
October			
30 Oct	2 x Halloween events	£20,000 £18,000	V36 at The Valley The Junction, Antrim – To be confirmed

May/June - Animation events will be also be delivered for the town centres of Glengormley, Crumlin and Randalstown with an indicative budget of £45,000 to be included.

External Events in 2021 delivered by the Community & Private sectors

In addition to Council led events, there are a number of external events which would typically be financially supported by the Council on an annual basis. Whilst clarity has been sought from event promoters the picture remains uncertain at this time. The following is a summary of the current position:

- Balmoral Show 2021: The Balmoral Show has announced that the event will take place on 22-25 September 2021. In 2019 the Council hosted a trade stand to showcase local food businesses as part of the Food NI marquee. The Royal Ulster Agricultural Society (RUAS) has not yet opened for trade stand registrations but the cost for the Council to participate with Food NI in 2019 was £5,500. Further provision of £1,500 has been made in the 2021/22 budget for the stand to cover associated costs such as branding, electrics, set-up etc should the Council participate in 2021.

- World Rally Championship (2021 UK round): An application to secure the necessary Central Government funding to support a bid for Northern Ireland to host the 2021 UK round of the World Rally Championship has been unsuccessful. The main issue is the ongoing risk posed by COVID-19. Whilst the Rally represented a positive opportunity to profile the region globally it is felt that COVID-19 could diminish the substantial economic benefits which the Rally generates for its host regions. Therefore, it was determined that the event did not represent best value for public money at this time. The possibility of a 2022 round in Northern Ireland is currently being explored by the event promoters.
- ISPS Handa World Golf Invitational 2021: Event promoters are making plans for the event to be delivered from 29 July to 1 August 2021 and a separate report has been prepared to cover the detail of the promoters request for assistance.
- Easter Stages Rally 2021 has been cancelled as of 20 January. It is intended that the event will be rescheduled to 15 and 16 April 2022.
- Officers are liaising with the event promoters for The Irish Game Fair, Shane's Castle May Day Steam Rally and Statscup Supercup NI to determine their plans for 2021.

RECOMMENDATION: that

- i. the proposed events plan be implemented and be kept under review;**
- ii. a report on the proposal for Garden Show Ireland will be brought to the Council in February 2021;**
- iii. regular updates on the events programme be presented to the Council;**
- iv. a review of Council events schedule be brought to a future meeting of the Council in due course.**

Prepared by: Karen Steele, Tourism, Town Centre and Regeneration

Agreed by: Colin McCabrey, Head of Economic Development

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

10. ITEMS FOR NOTING

10.1 DISSOLVEMENT OF THE COURT OF ULSTER UNIVERSITY

Correspondence has been received from the Ulster University regarding the dissolution of The Court of Ulster University on which Alderman Brett was the Council's representative.

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

10.2 G/MSMO/60 CORRESPONDENCE REGARDING MOTION ON UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME

Members will recall that at the Council meeting of 30 November 2020 a Motion was carried regarding the design and delivery of a Universal Basic Income for Northern Ireland and, as requested, the Chief Executive had written to the Finance and Community Ministers, and HM Treasury (copy enclosed).

Responses have now been received from HM Treasury (enclosed) and on behalf of the Finance and Community Ministers (enclosed).

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Member Services

Approved by: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive

10.3 CE/OA/013 NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING COUNCIL

As agreed at the August 2019 meeting of the Council, the Northern Ireland Housing Council's December 2020 and January 2021 monthly bulletins are enclosed for Members' information. A copy of the minutes of the Housing Council meetings on 12 November 2020 and 10 December 2021 are also enclosed.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Member Services

Approved by: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive

**10.4 G/MSMO/14 MOTION – NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL –
CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC IMPACT ON FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION
STUDENTS**

Members are advised that correspondence has been received from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council regarding a Motion adopted by that Council.

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

**10.5 G/MSMO/14 MOTION – FERMANAGH AND OMAGH DISTRICT COUNCIL –
CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC IMPACT ON GCSE AND A LEVEL STUDENTS**

Members are advised that correspondence has been received from Fermanagh and Omagh District Council regarding a Motion adopted by that Council.

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

RECOMMENDATION: that the correspondence from Fermanagh and Omagh District Council be noted.

Prepared by: Member Services

Approved by: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive

10.6 G/MSMO/14 MOTION – NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL – CONTRIBUTION TO HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE WORKERS

Members are advised that correspondence has been received from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council regarding a Motion adopted by that Council.

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

10.7 FI/FIN/045 RATE STRIKING 2021/22

At the January 2021 Policy and Governance Committee Elected Members were provided with correspondence from DfC in relation to the Rate Setting process for 2021/22.

Under the Local Government Finance Act Northern Ireland 2011, District Councils are obliged to set the estimates of rates before 15 February each year. District Councils are also obliged under the Rates Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 to set district rates no later than this date.

Due to the current COVID-19 emergency situation **the rate setting date will be changed to 1 March** for the 2021/22 financial year. Formal confirmation of this will follow once the necessary regulation amendments are made.

As confirmation of the revised date has not been received, it is proposed that the Council uses the provisions of Standing Order 4 (i) to facilitate the setting of the rate once clarity on the revised date has been received from DfC. Under this provision the Mayor of the Council may call a meeting of the Council at any time.

This will ensure that the decision in relation to the District rate is made using the most current data available and that the provisions of the Finance Act 2011 and Rates Regulations (NI) 2007 are adhered to.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance and Governance

Approved by: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive

10.8 G/MSMO/011 APPOINTMENT OF COUNCILLOR MEMBERS TO THE DRAINAGE COUNCIL OF NORTHERN IRELAND

Members will recall that at the Council meeting in February 2020 nominations for consideration for appointment to the Drainage Council were agreed.

The Infrastructure Minister, Nichola Mallon, has announced the appointment of the 10 Councillors effective from 1 January 2021 and Councillor Webb has been appointed to serve a second term as a Non-Executive Member.

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

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Member Services

Approved by: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive

10.9 ED/GEN/006 BROADBAND UNIVERSAL SERVICE OBLIGATION (USO)

As Members will be aware in light of the current pandemic, the issue of broadband connectivity and access has never been more critical in support of local businesses, home working, home schooling and contributing to improved access to public services and social inclusion.

Since 20 March 2020, the Universal Service Obligation (USO) is a legal right afforded to every home and business in the UK to request a 'decent, affordable broadband connection'. This is defined in law as a service with a minimum download speed of 10Mbps and a minimum upload speed of 1Mbps, to enable a good quality experience for consumers when accessing common internet applications, including TV, film and gaming streaming, online shopping and access to digital public services. BT is the USO provider for the UK (except Hull). The industry regulator Ofcom, has stipulated that USO-compliant services must cost no more than £46.10/month.

BT is currently writing to local premises to inform them of their right to request, and to encourage individuals to check their eligibility at www.bt.com/uso or by contacting their team at 0800 783 0223. For USO-eligible premises, BT is required to upgrade their connectivity – on request – at no cost to the customer if the necessary works cost no more than £3,400. If costs exceed this limit (primarily based on factors of remoteness or rurality), the customer has the option of paying the full excess above this value, in order to initiate the necessary works.

BT can offer a range of technological solutions to improve connectivity, either a 'fixed line' broadband service into premises, or via a 4G mobile network through a service like the BT 4G Hub, which can be used in more rural locations.

According to Ofcom, up to 98.3% of homes and businesses in Antrim and Newtownabbey already have access to decent broadband, but it is estimated that up to 1,027 homes or businesses (according to BT sources) may be eligible to get a faster broadband connection under the USO, most often by means of a full fibre connection, capable of delivering speeds of up to 1Gbps.

Members should note that the USO is a separate mechanism to other ongoing initiatives that the Council is involved in, namely the Full Fibre NI (FFNI) and the Department for the Economy's Project Stratum, which will be rolled out to enhance the Borough's connectivity further.

Fibrus has been commissioned to deliver both initiatives across the region, and it is anticipated that the FFNI stream will commence in summer 2021, whilst the Stratum project is scheduled to reach Antrim and Newtownabbey in summer/autumn 2023. Collectively, all of these various initiatives will have a hugely significant impact locally and work towards a common goal of improving local connectivity across the Borough to the point that within the next 18-24 months, the area will be placed as one of the top 15 best

connected Boroughs in the UK, bringing to residents and businesses increased opportunities across economic, societal and environmental areas.

RECOMMENDATION: that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Alastair Law, Innovation and Funding Officer

Agreed by: Colin McCabrey, Head of Economic Development

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