



8 June 2020

**To: Each Member of the Council**

Dear Member

**SPECIAL MEETING OF ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

A remote Special Meeting of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council will be held at **The Chamber, Mossley Mill** on **Thursday 11 June 2020 at 6.30 pm**.

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

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

You are requested to attend.

Yours sincerely

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

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

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

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## **A G E N D A**

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### 3. ITEMS FOR DECISION

#### 3.1 LOUGH NEAGH SAND EXTRACTION – REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT PLANNING APPLICATION REFERENCE: LA03/2017/0310/F

Members of the Planning Committee were provided with an update in May 2019 regarding the Enforcement Notice served by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) in May 2015 in relation to ongoing sand dredging operations at Lough Neagh as well as the regionally significant planning application submitted in March 2017 (details below) that is currently being processed by DfI.

<b>Application Ref:</b>	LA03/2017/0310/F
<b>Proposal:</b>	Application for the extraction, transportation and working of sand and gravel from Lough Neagh. Sand and gravel to be extracted from within two distinct areas totalling some 3.1km <sup>2</sup> , in the north-west of Lough Neagh situated approximately east of Traad Point, north of Stanierds Point, west of Doss Point and south of Ballyronan and the ancillary deposition of silt and fine material.
<b>Location:</b>	Lough Neagh within the Mid Ulster District Council Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council and Lisburn and Castlereagh Council Areas
<b>Applicant:</b>	Lough Neagh Sand Traders Ltd

**Full details of the application, including the application forms, relevant drawings, consultation responses and any representations received are available to view at the Planning Portal [www.planningni.gov.uk](http://www.planningni.gov.uk)**

At that time Members were made aware that the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) had issued its advisory report to DfI following an inquiry in relation to the current planning application which is seeking planning permission to continue dredging operations for a 15 year period in the 3.1km<sup>2</sup> dredging areas, identified by the Sand Traders and all of which are located in the Mid Ulster Council area (see Map).

The PAC Report recommended that planning permission should be granted by DfI, however as Members will be aware the final decision on this application rests with the Minister for Infrastructure taking account of the PAC Report.

As part of the ongoing processing of this regionally significant application the Department has now issued a consultation to the Council (copy **enclosed**), as well as to Mid Ulster District Council, Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, under Section 76(3) of the 2011 Planning Act regarding matters considered necessary for inclusion within a Section 76 Planning Agreement should the Minister determine to grant planning permission in this case.

A planning agreement under Section 76 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 can be used to overcome obstacles to the grant of planning permission where these cannot be addressed through the normal use of planning conditions. As indicated in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement, such an Agreement may facilitate or restrict the development or use of land in any specified way and, amongst other matters, may be considered appropriate:

- to enable the development in question to proceed;
- is designed to secure an acceptable balance of uses;
- is otherwise so directly related to the proposed development and to the use of the land after its completion, that the development ought not be permitted without it; or
- is intended to offset the loss of, or impact on, any amenity or resource present on the site prior to development.

In this case the Department has indicated the following are the matters it considers should be incorporated into any Section 76 Planning Agreement should the Minister determine to grant planning permission:

- (1) Submission of a report detailing best practice measures to minimise sand accumulating on the shore.
- (2) A Decommissioning Plan to be submitted for the removal of all above ground structures at each landing site and the restoration of the land following cessation of activities.
- (3) A scheme for a Protection Zone with other friendly fencing around each otter (Lutra lutra) holt entrance
- (4) A scaled map of each landing site showing the details of the extent of shoreline delineation.
- (5) Submission of an Emergency Response Plan (ERP) for all onshore activities
- (6) Restriction on the hours of operation for land-based activities at each site to protect residential amenity.
- (7) Provision of Noise Mitigation measures at Sites 4, 5 & 6.
- (8) Provision of a noise report demonstrating compliance specified with noise levels.
- (9) Submission of a Dust Management Plan for each of the 8 landing sites.
- (10) Provision of a video record of all local haulage routes from each of the landing sites to the nearest A Class road to establish the condition of the local road network
- (11) Submission of a landscape and visual mitigation scheme for the 8 landing sites.

The Department has stressed that this consultation is on a 'without prejudice' basis and that no decision has been reached on the proposal. A Section 76

Agreement does not, in itself, confer planning permission nor does it determine the outcome of a related planning application.

Officers would confirm that the Council is not the decision maker in respect of this regionally significant application nor is it responsible for the contents of the Section 76 Planning Agreement; rather the Council is one of a number of Councils which has been consulted by DfI on this matter. Any comments made by the Council on the Section 76 Agreement will be considered by DfI as part of the processing of the application together with all other consultation replies and other representations received. In addition, while the Council has been consulted on the proposed contents of the Section 76 Agreement, there is no obligation on the Council to provide a corporate view.

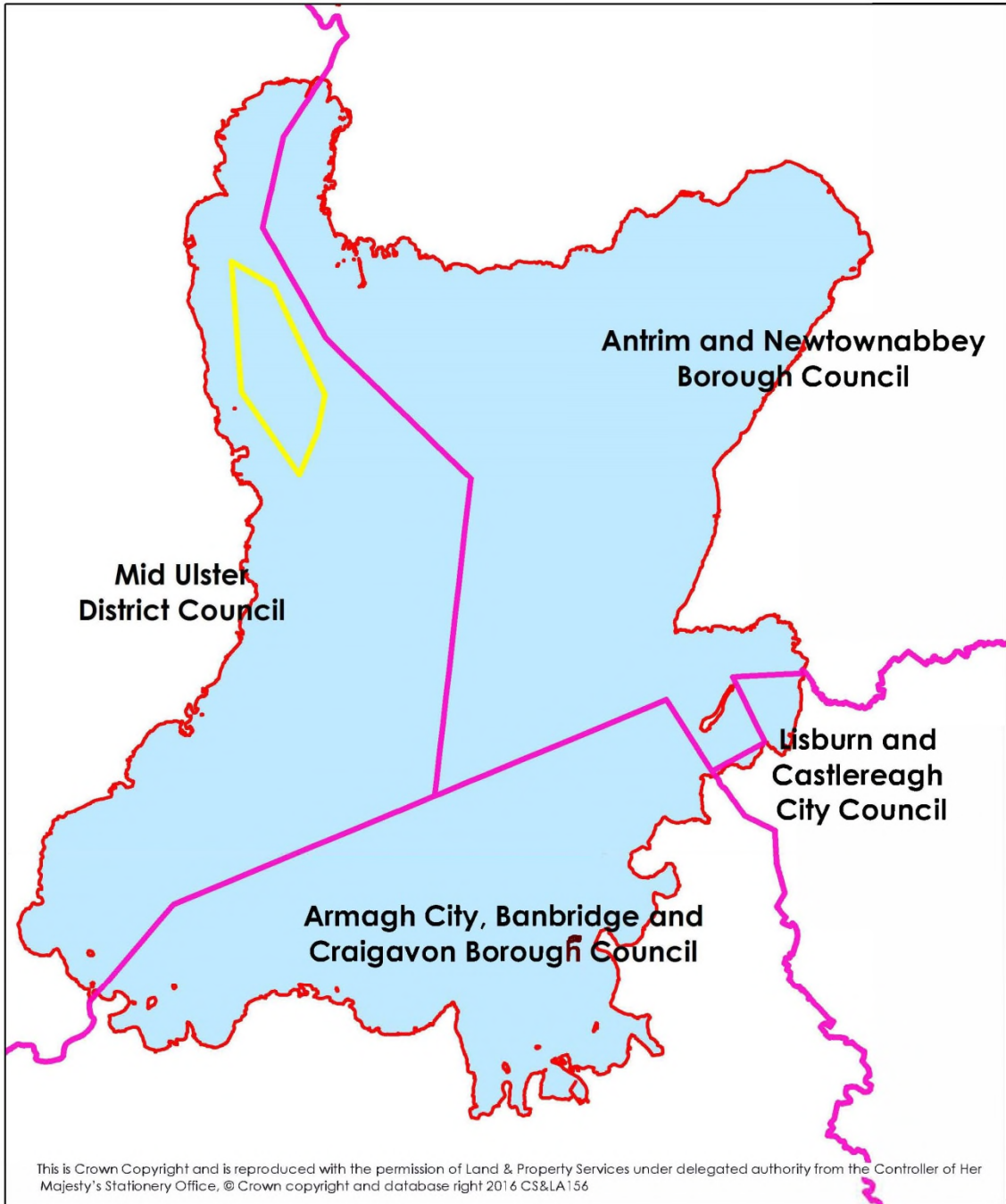
There are a number of options available to the Council in responding to the consultation by DfI:

1. Provide a corporate view in support of the proposed contents of the Section 76 Agreement.
2. Provide a corporate view opposing the proposed contents of the Section 76 Agreement.
3. Provide no corporate view on the proposed contents of the Section 76 Agreement. In this case individual Members or parties may express their own views directly to DfI.

**The Council's instructions are requested.**

Prepared by: John Linden, Head of Planning

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





**Location Map**

**Application Reference: LA03/2017/0310/F**

Extraction, transportation and working of sand and gravel  
Lough Neagh



-  Planning Application Boundary
-  Proposed Extraction Area
-  Council Areas

For Information Only



### **3.2 L/GEN/075 LEISURE RECOVERY PLAN**

Members are reminded that over 10,000 More Leisure Memberships were in place prior to the COVID-19 emergency. These memberships were suspended in March due to the emerging restrictions and leisure facilities have been closed since 19 March.

As we move towards recovery of leisure services, in line with the Northern Ireland Executive's Approach to Decision Making document, progress is being made through the 5 Steps. Golf courses, tennis courts, and angling facilities have already re-opened.

There are a number of additional elements of the leisure service which can now re-open, albeit on a limited basis.

#### **Bowling Greens**

The Council's three bowling greens, at Allen Park, Lilian Bland, and Mossley Pavilion are home to local clubs; Antrim Lawn Bowling Club, Glengormley Bowling Club, and Mossley Bowling Club. It is proposed, as per guidance, that greens will be re-opened but that no pavilions/clubhouses will open at this stage. The clubs will have responsibility for applying specific guidelines as outlined by the Irish Bowling Association. No additional staffing is required with this proposal. Antrim Lawn Bowling Club has a lease in place whilst the other clubs operate through normal extended lets as set out in the Pricing Schedule approved annually.

If approved, it is proposed that bowling greens would re-open week commencing 15 June 2020.

#### **Antrim Stadium**

Officers have been liaising with Athletics Northern Ireland (NI) which has recently published its 'Covid Exit Plan' setting out guidelines relating to use of athletics tracks. Such outdoor facilities are able to be used for training purposes only and the Athletics NI guidelines recommend a maximum of 30 people using the track at any one time but in groups of up to 10.

A new operating model will be required for the Stadium as it is normally managed by staff from Antrim Forum which is currently closed. Access to the track is normally during the opening hours of Antrim Forum. The Stadium can be re-opened through bookings which would require staff to be on site. Bookings can be managed online for the local club and Pay as You Go using a similar booking process to that used for golf. For those without internet access bookings can be taken at Antrim Civic Centre.

A total of 1.4 FTE staff would be required to return from furlough to facilitate this. This would cost just over £28,000 to the year end. Income is estimated to be approximately £10,000, provided a net cost estimated at £18,000. It is worth noting that there will be no school use nor any competitions until late spring 2021 – into the new financial year.

	Normal Opening (Pre Closure)	Proposed Opening
Weekdays	6.15am – 10pm	12pm – 8pm
Weekends	9.30am – 6pm	10am – 4pm

Total proposed opening hours 52.

As with the bowling clubs, Ballymena and Antrim Athletics Club would be responsible for complying with the guidelines set by Athletics NI.

If approved, it is proposed to re-opening Antrim Stadium on 1 July 2020.

### **Outdoor Pitches (including 3G)**

With the easing of restrictions in relation to outdoor spaces and public sports amenities, it is now possible for grass and 3G pitches to reopen. At the current Step of the Approach to Decision Making document, team sports training on a non-contact basis in small groups is permitted.

In normal circumstances the grass playing pitches would be resting at this time of the year with the competitive football season completed. The Northern Ireland Football League which is responsible for all amateur football has cancelled the 2019/20 season with no current date for a resumption of the 2020/21 season. The NI Executive Approach to Decision Making document references the resumption of competitive sport and full use of sporting facilities in Step 5, although at this stage it is not clear when this will be. As Council's grass pitches are used for competitive matches it is recommended that the pitches remain closed until these matches can proceed.

The re-opening of synthetic and 3G pitches is proposed as follows with opening hours. Smaller pitches cannot be used due to social distancing.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Proposed opening hours</b>
Valley	3G pitch 3 synthetic hockey pitches	12pm – 8pm weekdays and 10am – 4pm at weekends
Allen Park	3G pitches	
Crumlin	3G pitches	
Foundry Lane	Synthetic hockey pitch	
Antrim Forum	Marks Arena	
	MUGA	

Across the sites, a total of 5 FTEs will be required (staff for Antrim Stadium as set out above will also cover the Marks Arena), at an estimated cost of £112,000. With estimated income of £85,00 for the remainder of the year, the net cost is estimated at £27,000.



If approved, it is proposed to re-open pitches as set out above from 1 July 2020.

### **Fitness Classes/Gyms**

As a means to start to create awareness in preparation for the phased re-opening of leisure facilities it is proposed to introduce live streaming of exercise programmes through digital platforms. Branded as 'MORE Live', the virtual classes would commence on 1 July as follows:

- initially offer fitness classes for customers to follow at home whilst leisure centres are closed
- thereafter provide a service for customers who are more comfortable exercising at home while lockdown restrictions are easing
- offer a valuable suite of recorded classes which will provide a virtual catalogue for More members to avail of 'on demand' as an addition to their membership package when these resume
- offer an additional product for pay as you go customers going forward.

'MORE Live' would broadcast across an existing live streaming platform through which customers can gain easy access by downloading an App.

The majority of classes within the proposed programme do not require customers to have equipment at home. There would be a balanced mix of class types within the programme to ensure the majority of ages and exercise levels are properly catered for.

Initially there will be 24 classes provided at peak times between  
6.30am – 11.30am and,  
6pm – 8pm weekdays  
10am – 1pm weekends

The proposal is to offer virtual classes free of charge for the first week of an individual customer's use before introducing a £10 per month charge.

It is proposed that 'MORE Live' would become part of the More membership in due course and also remain available at the £10 per month option for non-members. It is estimated that an initial 500 subscriptions would be generated. The restricted opening of leisure centres for fitness classes and gyms is likely to take place in August and a further report will be brought for consideration in due course.

**RECOMMENDATION: that approval is given for the initial Leisure Recovery Plan as set out above including the addition of a £10 per month charge for virtual fitness classes with the Leisure Pricing Schedule to be updated accordingly.**

Prepared by: Matt McDowell, Head of Leisure

Approved by: Geraldine Girvan, Director of Operations

### 3.3 ED/ED/151 COVID-19 BUSINESS RECOVERY STRUCTURES

Council's Economic Development Section continues to provide support and advice to businesses during COVID-19. To help inform the immediate business reaction to the pandemic a Council-specific Business Resilience and Revival Package of mentor support was put in place. Businesses can also easily access advice by texting 'Business' to 80039 for a personal call-back service or access the full range of support available on our/coronavirus-business-info webpage. Dedicated free Chartered Accountancy support was also made available to businesses, primarily targeting sole traders/self-employed and partnerships. Webinars were created and promoted providing guidance across a range of topics including critical financial analysis, e-commerce, innovation, remote working and re-opening. Since the outbreak of COVID-19 Council's Economic Development Team have had 517 direct business engagements arising from Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn social media platforms which reached 546,508 persons.

There is still a demand for Council's support services and the section continues to assist the Department for Economy with business verification for the award of grant payments. To aid business cash flow management grant funding via GROW and Department for Community supported projects has also been expedited.

The introduction of restrictions has created opportunity for innovation and collaboration, particularly in the sectors of retail and accommodation. The type and nature of enquiries being received by the Council has changed from 'reactionary' to 'recovery', with retail and tourism businesses seeking guidance and support from Council to assist with the safe re-opening and scaling up of their businesses.

Summary issues pertaining to the retail industry are:

- Installation of physical barriers to protect employees and customers
- In some instances the need for structural changes to buildings
- Management of customers queueing on pavements
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) availability
- Private sector waste collection
- Assistance with sourcing and implementation of contactless payment technology
- Implementation of social distancing arrangements
- New technology for display of menus
- Opportunities to innovate via collaborative click and collect type services

Summary issues pertaining to the tourism industry are:

- Challenges with the application of 2m social distancing and the introduction of new operating procedures
- Customer confidence to visit attractions and stay in accommodation
- Clarity of local offer and itineraries for visitors
- A need for greater opportunities to collaborate with regional tourism clusters

- Limited ability to create an 'experience' in hotels without bar, restaurant and spa elements being operational in some form
- Guidance regarding best practice for opening accommodation safely;
- Grant eligibility issues regarding employment status, company status and rates calculations
- Coach operators significantly impacted. Current social distancing means 50 seater coach capacity is reduced to 11

These issues have been identified by direct engagement with businesses and 32 tourism respondents to an online survey.

The Council will continue to support other sectors with their economic recovery including rural businesses through the administration of the DAERA TRPSI grant funding for capital equipment. However, the easing of regulations has created an immediate need for coordinating support to the retail and tourism sectors. Across both sectors there is an opportunity to rationalise resources, communicate more effectively and promote a collaborative action plan to aid and accelerate recovery. It is proposed that the best model to inform recovery action plans for each sector are separate engagement forums, representing Borough-wide interests.

Draft terms of reference for a Retail and Town Centre Re-opening Mobilisation Team and a Tourism COVID-19 Recovery Team are **enclosed** as Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 for Members' consideration. Each Forum includes supporting officers across a range of Council services such as Environmental Health, Health and Safety and Parks and Operations.

Council Officers are working with Tourism NI's Recovery Working Group which is planning domestic campaigns under their message of 'a small step to a giant adventure'. The Department for Communities (DfC) has also approached the Council regarding funding opportunities for capital initiatives in town centres to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19. A copy of the correspondence is **enclosed**. A fund of up to £11 million is available cross the 10 Councils with individual bids based on need to be submitted.

**RECOMMENDATION that:**

- i. A Retail and Town Centre Re-opening Mobilisation Team and a Tourism COVID-19 Recovery Team be established.**
- ii. Draft terms of reference for each group be approved with a view to initiating the first meetings as soon as possible.**
- iii. A bid be submitted to DfC for Town Centre recovery actions.**

Prepared by: Colin McCabrey, Head of Economic Development

Approved by Majella McAlister, Director of Economic Development and Planning