MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD AT MOSSLEY MILL ON MONDAY 27 JULY 2026 AT 6.30 PM

In the Chair	:	Mayor (Councillor H Cushinan)
Members Present	:	Aldermen – L Boyle, P Bradley, L Clarke, M Magill, and P Michael
	:	Councillors – J Archibald-Brown, A Bennington, M Brady, J Burbank, M Cooper, P Dunlop, J Gilmour, N Kelly, R Kinnear, L Kirkpatrick, AM Logue, R Lynch, H Magill, B Mallon, A McAuley, E McLaughlin, V McWilliam, S Ward, B Webb and S Wilson
Members Present (Remotely)	:	Aldermen – T Campbell, S Ross and J Smyth
	:	Councillors - S Cosgrove, S Flanagan, R Foster, M Goodman, T McGrann, M Ní Chonghaile, L O'Hagan, A O'Lone, M Stewart,
In Attendance (In person)	:	James Flanagan, Partner - A&L Goodbody Ciaran Murdock, Associate - A&L Goodbody
Officers Present	:	Chief Executive - R Baker Director of Economic Development and Planning – M McAlister Director of Community and Culture – U Fay Director of Environment Services and Sustainability– M Laverty Director of Finance – J Balmer Director of Organisation Development (Interim) – L Johnston Borough Lawyer (Legal, Land, Governance & Policy) – P Casey Head of Leisure – D O'Hagan Head of Capital Development – R Hillen ICT Project Officer – C Bell ICT Helpdesk Officer – J Wilson Member Services Manager – A Duffy

1 BIBLE READING, PRAYER AND WELCOME

The Mayor welcomed all present to the meeting and advised Members of the audio recording procedures.

The meeting opened with a Bible reading and prayer by Pastor Niall Lockhart.

Alderman L Boyle, Councillors J Burbank, M Goodman, N Kelly, A McAuley, T McGrann, L O'Hagan and A O'Lone joined the meeting at this point.

MAYOR'S REMARKS

The Mayor noted that a number of traditional summer events had taken place across the Borough during July, including family fun days and parades, all of which had passed off peacefully. He expressed concern regarding the display of controversial items on bonfires, including references to himself, and highlighted the distress such actions can cause to family and friends. He thanked Members and staff who had assisted in addressing the issue and stated that efforts should continue to end such practices.

The Mayor reaffirmed his commitment, alongside the Deputy Mayor, to serving all residents of Antrim and Newtownabbey throughout their term of office.

2 APOLOGIES

Aldermen – M Cosgrove and J McGrath

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 6.2 – Councillor T McGrann
Item 7.4 – Councillor B Webb

4 MINUTES OF THE ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING

Moved by Councillor Brady
Seconded by Councillor Webb and

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Meeting of Monday 29 June 2026 be taken as read and signed as correct.

5(a) MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING, PART 1

Moved by Alderman Boyle
Seconded by Councillor Flanagan and

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee Meeting of Monday 20 July 2026 Part 1 be taken as read and signed as correct.

5(b) MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING, PART 2

Moved by Alderman Boyle
Seconded by Councillor Flanagan and

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee Meeting of Monday 20 July 2026 Part 2 be approved and adopted.

6 ITEMS FOR DECISION

6.1 ED/DI/005 ASK CAPITAL GRANT PROGRAMME GRANT AWARDS

1. <u>Purpose</u>

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the award of three grants under the ASK Capital Grant Programme.

2. Background

The ASK (Advice, Skills and Knowledge) Mentoring Programme was launched in September 2025 and supported local businesses through tailored one-to-one mentoring and business development support.

Through the programme, businesses could access up to 10 hours of mentoring support across a range of areas such as Advanced Digital Technologies, Digital Infrastructure & Strategy, Innovation & Product Development, Business Strategy and Planning and Sales & Marketing.

To support the implementation of mentor-led recommendations, the Council introduced the ASK Capital Grant Programme, which provided eligible businesses with grant assistance towards capital investment projects.

Following completion of mentoring, eligible businesses could be invited to apply for an 80% funded capital grant of up to £1,500 to support investment in software, systems, equipment and other innovation-enabling technologies aligned with Economic Development objectives.

3. Previous Council Decision

In May 2026, Members approved the extension of the Ask Capital Grant Programme, with a budget allocation of £75,000 for the 2026/27 financial year.

4. Capital Grant Applications Received

Members were advised that during the period 9 June 2026 to 1 July 2026, a total of three applications were received, with a maximum of £4,500 being recommended for approval, subject to the receipt and verification of all relevant supporting documentation. Grant awards were set out in the table circulated.

5. Financial Position

The overall ASK Capital Grant Programme budget for 2026/27 was £75,000. To date, £25,000 had been awarded. Should Members approve the three grant recommendations within this report the remaining programme budget would be £45,500.

6. Summary

This report made three grant recommendations under the ASK Capital Grant Programme for the period 9 June 2026 to 1 July 2026, with a total value of £4,500.

Moved by Councillor Webb
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and

RESOLVED: - that Members approve the three grant awards totalling a maximum of £4,500 to the successful applicants under the ASK Capital Grant Programme, subject to the receipt and verification of all relevant supporting documentation.

ACTION BY: Natasha Donald, Economic Development Manager

Having declared an Interest in Item 6.2, Councillor McGrann left the meeting remotely.

6.2 CCS/EDP/025 DUAL LANGUAGE STREET SIGN APPLICATIONS

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to provide an update on the current status of Dual Language Street Sign applications.

2. Introduction/Background

The Dual Language Street Sign Policy was adopted by Council in May 2022. This report provided an update on current applications and sought approval where required in accordance with the Policy.

3. Applications Update

- Petition received

No new applications had been received.

- Stage 1 – Petition Verification (For Approval)

Three applications were at this stage.

The occupiers signing the petition had been verified against the Electoral Register and the following three applications met the required one-third threshold. Approval was requested to progress to the Stage 2 canvass exercise:

Brecart Road, BT41 3TH and BT41 3PJ

Pakenham Court, BT29 4EP
Mayfield Park, BT36 7WJ

- Stage 2 – Residents Canvass (For noting)

Three applications had progressed to this stage. Canvass letters had been issued to occupants, and results would be reported at August Full Council.

Cargin Road, BT41 3NU and BT41 3PB
Hollybrook Gardens, BT36 4ZS
Loup Road, BT41 3TW

- Stage 3 – Street Sign Installation (For Noting)

Two applications were at Stage 3 of design, fabrication and installation of street signs.

Longlands Walk, BT36 7NQ
Longlands Park, BT36 7NG

4. Map and Costs

Relevant maps and associated costs were circulated for Members' information.

At the request of Members, the Chief Executive agreed to provide an annual rolling report detailing the costs associated with Irish language street sign applications and sign installation, with consideration given to including the comparable cost for English-only signage.

Moved by Councillor McLaughlin
Seconded by Councillor Logue and

RESOLVED: - that the Dual Language Street Sign applications at:

Stage 1
- **Brecart Road, BT41 3TH and BT41 3PJ, be approved.**
- **Pakenham Court, BT29 4EP, be approved.**
- **Mayfield Park, BT36 7WJ, be approved.**

Stage 2
- **Cargin Road, BT41 3NU and BT41 3PB, be noted.**
- **Hollybrook Gardens, BT36 4ZS, be noted.**
- **Loup Road, BT41 3TW, be noted.**

Stage 3
- **Longlands Walk, BT36 7NQ, be noted.**
- **Longlands Park, BT36 7NG, be noted.**

ACTION BY: Claire Webb, Accessibility and Inclusion Officer and Richard Baker, Chief Executive

Councillor McGrann returned to the meeting remotely.

6.3 CP/CF/007 GREYSTONE COMMUNITY CENTRE – FREE USE REQUEST: GREYSTONE RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to recommend to Members that Greystone Residents and Community Enhancement in Antrim was given permission to use Greystone Community Centre free of charge for a Community Fun Day and Launch Event on Saturday 22 August 2026.

2. Introduction/Background

A request had been received from a newly formed community group Greystone Residents and Community Enhancement (G.R.A.C.E.) to use Greystone Community Centre free of charge to hold a Community Fun Day and Launch Event on Saturday 22 August 2026 starting at 10am and finishing at 3pm.

The group aimed to relieve poverty, advance education and provide or assist in providing facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation or other leisure time occupants to improve the lives of residents.

3. Previous Decision of Council

Members were reminded that approval was given at the June 2025 Committee for a revision to the Community Development Pricing Policy, which now required all free use requests to be brought to the Committee for decision.

4. Request for Free Use

G.R.A.C.E. had requested free use of Greystone Community Centre for their Community Fun Day and Launch event. There was no admission charge to the event.

The community benefits of this event would include:

- Promotion of positive community activities for local residents
- Positive use of Council facilities
- Promotion of learning and wellbeing through varied activities and programming
- Promotion of community and voluntary infrastructure and services from within the borough
- Promotion of prosperity by providing those living in the area to engage with the group

The fun day and launch event aligned with the Council's Community Plan by promoting inclusion, strengthening community connections, and encouraging greater participation in community activities.

G.R.A.C.E. had requested free use of Greystone Community Centre rather than paying the community rate on the basis that they are a new group and awaiting their banking arrangements being finalised. The public liability insurance for this event had been provided by T.I.D.E.S who had supported G.R.A.C.E in their development.

5. Financial Position/Implication

The waiver of community hire charges for the fun day represented potential lost income of £92.50 which included both the Large Meeting Room and Small Meeting Room.

6. Summary

G.R.A.C.E. had requested free use of Greystone Community Centre for their fun day and launch event on Saturday 22 August 2026.

Moved by Councillor Dunlop
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and

RESOLVED: - that Greystone Residents and Community Enhancement is given permission to use Greystone Community Centre free of charge on Saturday 22 August 2026.

ACTION BY: Paul Townsend, Community Facilities Coordinator

6.4 L/LEI/002/VOL4 LEISURE GRANT AID PROGRAMME

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek approval for the recommendations set within the 1st call of the 2026-27 Leisure Grant Aid Programme.

2. Introduction

For the period April - May, a total of 80 applications were received, 9 applications were deemed ineligible and 71 met the criteria for funding. Details of the grant programme criteria were circulated.

A table setting out details and recommendations for the 71 applications was circulated for Member's reference. Upon approval of the listed grants, the remaining balances in each funding category were outlined below:

Category	Budget	Approved spend to date 2026-27	No. of apps.	Grants proposed (£)	Funding Balance remaining (subject to approval of applications)
Capital Grants	£40,000	£0	4	£40,000	£0

Grants to Clubs	£50,000	£0	5	£8,576	£41,424
Grants to Athlete Bursaries	£30,000	£0	46	£30,000	£0
Grants to Coaches and Officials Bursaries	£5,000	£0	3	£675	£4,325
Sports Event Grant	£40,000	£0	5	£9,446	£30,554
Defibrillator Grant	£5,000	£0	3	£1,500	£3.500
Allocation total	**£170,000**	**£0**	**80**	**£90,197**	**£79,803**
Fitness suite Gold Card	20 Applications	0 Application	14	12 Applications	8 Applications

3. Financial Position/Implication

The overall budget for the 2026-27 programme was £170,000. The eligible amount requested from the 71 applications who met the criteria was £98,544.

Officers applied a proportionate reduction to awards under the Capital Grant Scheme and Grants to Athletes Bursary Scheme to remain within budget, while ensuring all eligible applications received an_allocation. This brought the total recommended award to £90,197, leaving a remaining balance of £79,803 for the 2026–27 financial year.

Details of the proportionately reduced recommended awards were shown in the circulated information.

As the Capital Grant Scheme and Grants to Athletes Bursary Scheme budgets had now been fully allocated, no further funding calls would be opened during the 2026–27 financial year.

4. Summary

The overall budget for the 2026-27 programme was £170,000. Should approval be given for the grants listed; the total spend to date would total £90,197 with a remaining balance of £79,803.

Moved by Councillor Lynch
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin and

RESOLVED: - that approval be granted for the Leisure Grant Aid Programme, covering the period from April – May 2026.

ACTION BY: Anna Boyle, Funding Unit Manager and Conor McCallion, Leisure Development Manager

6.5 CP/CP/224 DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES: WARM HEALTHY HOMES FUND CONSULTATION

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval in relation to the draft corporate response for the Department for Communities public consultation on the Warm Healthy Homes Fund.

2. Introduction/Background

The Department for Communities (DfC) was undertaking a consultation and seeking views on the proposed Warm Healthy Homes Fund, a new energy efficiency scheme aimed at supporting low-income households experiencing, or at risk of, fuel poverty across Northern Ireland

The Warm Healthy Homes Fund was intended to become the Department's primary long-term intervention for tackling fuel poverty and improving energy efficiency in private sector homes, including owner-occupied and private rented properties. The proposed scheme would replace the existing Affordable Warmth Scheme from April 2027.

The proposed Warm Healthy Homes Fund formed part of the Department's wider commitment to addressing fuel poverty, improving domestic energy efficiency, supporting better health outcomes and contributing towards Northern Ireland's climate change and carbon reduction ambitions.

The consultation period opened on 27 May 2026 and closed on 19 August 2026. Responses received outside of this timeframe would not be considered by the Department.

3. Previous Decision of Council

Members were reminded at the June Community Development Committee it was agreed that a corporate response be prepared with a draft brought to the Council meeting in July.

4. Key Issues

Members were advised that a draft corporate response had been prepared and was circulated for Members' consideration. The draft response aimed to reflect the Council's experience of supporting residents experiencing fuel poverty, financial hardship and housing inequalities.

The corporate response supported many of the Department's proposals, whilst recommending that sufficient flexibility was incorporated to ensure assistance reaches those households facing the greatest levels of vulnerability.

The principal themes contained within the Council response included:

- Support for the proposed eligibility criteria using Universal Credit, Pension Credit and an income threshold as a transparent means of targeting assistance.
- Recognition that disability-related benefits and Winter Fuel Payments should be excluded from income assessments, acknowledging the increased energy requirements experienced by many disabled people and those living with long-term health conditions.
- A recommendation that flexibility is retained to support households experiencing exceptional hardship or fluctuating incomes, including those in seasonal or self-employment.
- Support for prioritising properties with poor Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings while recommending that wider vulnerability factors, including age, disability, long-term health conditions, families with young children and rural off-gas households, are also considered within prioritisation decisions.
- Support for extending assistance within the private rented sector and for adopting a whole-house, fabric-first approach to improving energy efficiency.
- Support for the proposed grant limits, contractor accreditation requirements and quality assurance measures to ensure value for money and high standards of installation.
- Recognition of the importance of appropriate aftercare arrangements to maximise the long-term benefits of energy efficiency improvements.
- Recommendations that equality and accessibility remain central to scheme delivery, including the provision of alternative application routes for residents who may face digital, language or accessibility barriers.

The response also highlighted the importance of ongoing monitoring and review to ensure the scheme continued to respond effectively to changing economic conditions and reached those households most at risk of fuel poverty.

5. <u>Summary</u>

The DfC had launched a public consultation on the proposed Warm Healthy Homes Fund. The consultation closed on 19 August 2026.

A corporate response had been prepared for Members' approval.

Moved by Alderman Ross
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and

RESOLVED: - that the draft corporate response for the Department for Communities public consultation on the Warm Healthy Homes Fund be approved, and a submission made before the consultation closed on 19 August 2026.

ACTION BY: Conor Cunning, DEA Engagement Manager

6.6 AC/GEN/078 THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH LEGACY BURSARY SCHEME

1. <u>Purpose</u>

The purpose of this report was to seek Members' approval for the 2026 Duke of Edinburgh Legacy Bursary Scheme awards.

2. Background

The Duke of Edinburgh Legacy Bursary Scheme was an initiative for residents aged 11–18 who faced financial or social barriers to achieving their career aspirations or hobbies. It offered successful applicants up to £1,000 in funding for equipment and training.

The scheme featured a 12-week personal development programme, for 20 participants, held weekly from September to December, covering sessions such as:

- Volunteering
- Mental health and physical wellbeing
- Money management
- Digital technology and photography

The 2026 Programme would be the fifth cohort of the Legacy Bursary Scheme.

3. Previous Council decision

Members were reminded that it was agreed by the Council in April 2021 that a permanent memorial to Duke of Edinburgh Prince Philip be placed in Antrim Castle Gardens and the creation of an annual bursary scheme, to benefit young people be explored.

An outline of the bursary scheme was reported to the Community Planning Committee in November 2021 with the final Bursary Scheme agreed by the Working group at its February 2022 meeting and approved at the March 2022 Community Planning Committee.

4. Duke of Edinburgh Legacy Bursary Scheme 2026

The 2026 Duke of Edinburgh Legacy Bursary Scheme_opened for online applications on 9 April 2026 and closed on 8 June 2026.

Applicants were required to meet the following criteria:

- Be aged 11-18 years on 1 September 2026
- Live at a permanent address within the Borough
- Not have previously received a bursary from Council
- Be willing to fully participate in the 12-week programme
- Be able to attend a team building event in mid-late August.

Members were advised that 36 applications were received with 25 of these meeting the required criteria and threshold for funding, totalling £25,000.
An Assessment Panel made up of Members from the Working Group met on 23 June and recommended that all 25 successful applications be approved for the 2026 Scheme.

5. <u>Financial Implication</u>

Provision of £25,000 had been made in the Community Development Directorate 2026/27 revenue budgets for the delivery of the Duke of Edinburgh Legacy Bursary Scheme. This included up to £20,000 for 20 x Bursary Awards and £5,000 for the delivery of the Programme.

It was proposed that all 25 successful applications be approved for the 2026 Scheme, at an additional cost of £5,000, provision for which had been identified in the 2026/27 Community Development budget.

6. <u>Governance</u>

A Duke of Edinburgh Working Group was established in August 2021. The Working Group met annually to assess Bursary Scheme applications.

7. <u>Summary</u>

A total of 36 applications for the Duke of Edinburgh Legacy Bursary Scheme had been assessed by a panel and 25 applicants were recommended for funding of up to £1,000 per applicant.

An additional £5,000 had been identified within the 2026/27 Community Development budget for the delivery of the Scheme.

Moved by Councillor Gilmour
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and

REVOLVED: - that all 25 successful applications for the 2026 Duke of Edinburgh Legacy Bursary Scheme be funded at a total cost of £25,000.

ACTION BY: Stacey Myles, Neighbourhood Renewal Officer

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN COMMITTEE'

Moved by Councillor Dunlop
Seconded by Alderman Boyle and

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

Members were advised that the live stream and audio recording would cease at this point.

7 ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE

7.1 IN CONFIDENCE CD/PM/092 GLENGORMLEY PUBLIC REALM SCHEME – GLENWELL ROAD/CHURCH WAY JUNCTION IMPROVEMENTS CONTRACTOR FINAL ACCOUNT

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to request approval for the agreed final account of [redacted] for Northstone Materials Limited.

2. Introduction & Background

The Glenwell Road/Church Way junction Improvement works entailed the construction of a right-hand turn lane on the Antrim Road in Glengormley including repositioning of utilities and new traffic light signalisation. The works essentially involved converting an area of existing grass into a new lane on the carriageway. This required the various underground utilities to be lowered to enable the carriageway to be constructed to the necessary specification.

These works were required to enable a potential one-way system between Glenwell Road and Farmley Road to be implemented to reduce traffic congestion at certain peak times on the Glenwell Road. Council managed and delivered the project on behalf of the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) who normally undertook projects of this nature.

In December 2022 Members approved Northstone Materials Limited to undertake the works at the Tendered Total of the Prices of £[redacted] and Tender Assessment Total Price of £[redacted]. The total predicted works cost was £[redacted] giving an anticipated Council works contribution of £[redacted] due to a funding contribution of £[redacted] from DfI. As noted in the tender report, the lack of information on the existing underground utilities, meant the original completion date was high risk.

3. Supplier Performance

The table below showed the project performance compared to the anticipated programme and the rationale for the programme delay.

Main supplier
Northstone Materials Limited
Procurement route for the main supplier
Council's Framework for General Car Park Improvements, Refurbishment and New Works
Additional suppliers
Various utility companies and Yunex (traffic light signalisation)
Construction Delivery Time:

Contract start date:	January 2023
Contract completion date:	May 2023
Actual completion date:	October 2023
Time over/under runs:	Start on site delayed until February 2023 due to a delay in completion of DfI's resurfacing works on the M2 motorway, as Glengormley was part of the diversion route. During the design phase a workshop was held with the various utility companies to discuss the works required, as envisaged at that stage with the limited information available, and to sequence their programme of works. Early in the works programme the condition of the utilities was found to be more complicated than envisaged with the discovery of asbestos ducting. This postponed all other utility works being undertaken until this was resolved and due to the specialist nature of the works required this delayed Northstone Materials Limited's main works contract considerably. Completion on site was achieved in October 2023.

4. Assessment of Costs

The table below showed the uplift in project cost of £[redacted]

Project component:	Anticipated cost:	Actual cost:	% Variation	Reason for variation:
Main Works Contract	[redacted]	[redacted]	4.7	See Section 3 re programme delay. Includes other unforeseen and re-measurement of original works
Traffic Signalisation	[redacted]	[redacted]	0	
Utilities	[redacted]	[redacted]	-6.9	£[redacted] included within anticipated costs as based on estimates from utility companies
Totals:	[redacted]	[redacted]	**1.3**	
Council Works Contribution	[redacted]	[redacted]	**3.3**	

DfI Contribution	[redacted]	[redacted]	0	[redacted]

5. <u>Project Objectives</u>

As referred to earlier in this report, these works were required to enable a potential one-way system between Glenwell Road and Farmley Road to be implemented to reduce traffic congestion at certain peak times on the Glenwell Road. The works completed in Farmley carpark/Glenwell created a through road would facilitate such a one way system in the future if it was desirable/necessary to proceed with such an arrangement.

DfI would undertake an evaluation of the outcomes of the project at a later date, but initial feedback had been, that congestion on all roads around the junction and the number of road traffic collisions, had reduced. This evaluation would also determine if a one-way system was still necessary.

Moved by Councillor Goodman
Seconded by Alderman Bradley and

RESOLVED: - that the agreed final account of £[redacted] for Northstone Materials Limited be approved giving a final Council works contribution and gross CAPEX cost of £[redacted]

ACTION BY: Andrew McKeown, Capital Development Manager

7.2 IN CONFIDENCE FI/PRO/TEN/459 CONSULTANT FEES FOR GLENGORMLEY OFFICE REGENERATION

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Moved by Alderman Bradley
Seconded by Councillor Webb

RESOLVED: - that the estimated revised fee sum to Collins Rolston Architects Ltd for the following key elements up to completion of the pre-construction stage is approved giving a total estimated fee of £[redacted]:

a) Pre-termination direct fees for design and project management £[redacted]
b) Direct fees (post termination) £[redacted]
c) Fees for statutory elements, surveys and reports £[redacted]

ACTION BY: Claire Minnis, Projects Development Manager

Councillor Mallon left the Chamber at Item 7.3. Mr Murdock and Mr Flanagan also left the meeting at this point.

7.3 IN CONFIDENCE FI/PRO/TEN/459 TENDER FOR PROVISION OF CONTRACTOR FOR GLENGORMLEY OFFICE REGENERATION

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[redacted]

ACTION BY: Claire Minnis, Capital Development Manager and Reggie Hillen, Head of Capital Development

Having declared an Interest in Item 7.4, Councillor Webb left the Chamber.

7.4 IN CONFIDENCE FI/PRO/TEN/622 DEVELOPMENT OF AN ECONOMIC STRATEGY

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report was to obtain approval for the appointment of a suitably qualified and experienced organisation to develop an economic strategy on behalf of the Council.

2. Introduction/Background

The Council is ambitious for its people and strives to support them by creating jobs and training opportunities, increasing prosperity, ensuring sustainable and inclusive development through collaborative partnership working and defining metrics for success. Our efforts to grow the local economy aim to support local businesses to realise their goals whilst also attracting new investment from beyond the Borough.

The Economic Strategy to 2040 and beyond, supported by an initial 5-year Action Plan would form a structured and coherent roadmap to guide the economic growth of the Borough and support the achievement of our ambitions.

The consultant would be required to develop a strategy that considers the location, the policy landscape, key collaborations and the role of regeneration in supporting economic growth as well as promoting the principles of Community Wealth Building. The development work would include establishing a clear vision and building an evidence base, undertaking stakeholder engagement and identifying key economic focus areas, and producing a framework for measuring and monitoring progress.

The commission would be overseen by the Economic Development team and at the Council Meeting in January 2024, Members approved a budget for this commission of £[redacted].

3. Procurement Process

This tender was procured in accordance with good practice laid out in the Procurement Act 2023. The opportunity was made available on eSourcingNI on 4 June 2026.

Six tender responses were opened via the eSourcingNI Portal on 3 July 2026 and referred to the evaluation panel for assessment.

The tenders were evaluated on a three-stage basis as follows:

STAGE 1 – COMPLETION AND COMPLIANCE

The tenders were checked for completion and compliance and to ensure that no mandatory or discretionary exclusion grounds were applicable. The tenders met the requirements of this stage and proceeded to Stage 2.

STAGE 2 – CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

The tenders were evaluated on a pass/fail basis for:
- financial capacity
- management systems and practices
- previous relevant experience
- declarations and form of tender

Two tenders failed to meet the requirements of this stage and did not proceed further in the process. The remaining four tenders met the requirements of Stage 2 of the evaluation process and proceeded to Stage 3.

STAGE 3 – AWARD STAGE
Quality & Commercial Assessment

The tender was evaluated on the basis of:
- proposed methodology/approach (35%)
- project management and delivery (35%)
- cost (30%)

One tender did not meet the threshold for quality and did not proceed further in the evaluation. The remaining three tenders achieved scores which exceeded the agreed quality threshold and officers were content that the tenderers could deliver a high-quality contract in accordance with all aspects of the specification. Full details of the evaluation methodology were available in Appendix A (circulated).

The recommendation was as follows:

Supplier	Quality Assessment (out of 70%)	Cost Assessment (out of 30%)	Total Score (out of 100%)	Total Cost (£) (excl. VAT)
OCO Global	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]

The full list of bidders and evaluation outturn is available in Appendix B (circulated).

4. Social Value

Social Value in procurement was implemented by the Executive in June 2022 and incorporates all aspects of sustainable procurement including ethical and sustainable supply chains, community benefits and wealth building, job and skills creation and efforts to decarbonise. It was a mandatory requirement for the above threshold contracts. This procurement exercise did not meet the requirements for social value criteria to be applied.

Moved by Councillor Cooper
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and

RESOLVED: – that having achieved a score of [redacted] OCO Global be appointed to develop the economic strategy at the tendered rates.

ACTION BY: Melissa Kenning, Procurement Manager

Councillors Mallon and Webb returned to the Chamber at Item 7.5.

Councillor McLaughlin left the meeting at Item 7.5.

Staff Members left the Chamber at Item 7.5.

7.5 IN CONFIDENCE HR/HR/027 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES

The Chief Executive tabled the report on the revised Organisational Structures for Planning and Building Control and the associated Voluntary Severance application, subject to consultation with staff and Trade Unions

Moved by Alderman Magill
Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and

RESOLVED – that the revised structure and associated voluntary severance application be approved, subject to consultation with staff and Trade Unions.

ACTION BY: Liz Johnston, Director of Organisation Development (Interim)

MOTION TO PROCEED 'OUT OF COMMITTEE'

Moved by Councillor Logue
Seconded by Alderman Boyle and

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

Members were advised that the audio recording would restart at this point.

Staff Members returned to the Chamber.

The Mayor congratulated Antrim boxer Nicole Clyde on reaching the quarter finals of the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games and wished her every success in her bid for a medal. He also extended best wishes to any other competitors from the Borough who were continuing to participate in the Games.

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and the meeting concluded at 7.22pm.

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MAYOR

Council Minutes have been redacted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation, and legal advice.