



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD  
AT MOSSLEY MILL ON MONDAY 30 JANUARY 2023 AT 6.30 PM**

- In the Chair** : Mayor (Alderman S Ross)
- Members Present (In Person)** : Aldermen – F Agnew, T Burns, T Campbell, L Clarke, M Cosgrove, M Girvan, P Michael and J Smyth
- Councillors – J Archibald-Brown, A Bennington, P Bradley, M Brady, J Burbank, M Cooper, H Cushinan, P Dunlop, J Gilmour, N Kelly, R Lynch, A McAuley, N McClelland, V McWilliam, M Magill, B Mallon, J Montgomery, N Ramsay, V Robinson, L Smyth, B Webb and R Wilson
- Members Present (Remote)** : Councillors – M Goodman, S Flanagan, R Foster, R Kinnear, T McGrann, M Stewart and R Swann
- Officers Present** : Chief Executive - J Dixon  
Director of Economic Development and Planning - M McAlister  
Director of Operations – G Girvan  
Director of Finance and Governance – S Cole  
Director of Community Planning - U Fay  
Director of Organisation Development – D Rogers  
Director of Waste Operations – M Lavery  
Head of Regeneration and Infrastructure (Interim) – S Norris  
Head of Corporate Affairs – J McIntyre  
Borough Lawyer and Head of Legal Services – P Casey  
Council Lawyer – A McDowell  
ICT Systems Support Officer – C Bell  
ICT Helpdesk Officer – J Wilson  
Member Services Manager – A Duffy  
Member Services Officer – L Irwin

Although the COVID restrictions had been relaxed, to manage numbers and minimise risk, members of the public and press could continue to access those parts of the Council meetings which they are entitled to attend through the livestream on the Council's website.

**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 Reverend Robert Ginn who expressed condolences to the families of those who had been bereaved during the month of January 2023. Joan Christie CVO OBE, former Lord Lieutenant of County Antrim. Sam Magee MBE, former Chief Executive of Antrim Borough Council. Mr Walter Rader OBE, Northern Ireland's former representative of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Services and to Councillor Gilmore on the passing of her Mother In-Law.

On the recent achievement of MBE of the Kings New Year Honours list Reverend Ginn also expressed congratulations to the Chief Executive, Jacqui Dixon on being awarded an MBE which was echoed by Members.

Councillors Cushman, Goodman, Kelly, McAuley and McGrann joined the meeting.

### **MAYOR'S REMARKS**

The Mayor also expressed his condolences to those mentioned by Reverend Ginn and invited Party Leaders on behalf of their Groups and Members to pay tributes to Joan Christie CVO OBE. Samuel Magee MBE. Mr Walter Rader OBE. Councillor Gilmore on the passing of her Mother In-Law.

A Member also expressed her condolences to the family of John McTeague, who was the son the former Councillor Tommy McTeague, who also passed away in January 2023.

## **2 APOLOGIES**

Alderman J McGrath

## **3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Item 12.8 – Councillor Bradley - non-pecuniary interest

## **4 MINUTES OF THE ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING**

Moved by Alderman Smyth  
Seconded by Councillor Montgomery and

**RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Meeting of Monday 19 December 2022 be taken as read and signed as correct.**

## **5 MINUTES OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING**

Moved by Councillor Ramsay  
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and

**RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Operations Committee Meeting of Monday 9 January 2023 be taken as read and signed as correct.**

**6 MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**

Moved by Councillor Magill  
Seconded by Alderman Girvan and

**RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Policy and Governance Committee Meeting of Tuesday 10 January 2023 be approved and adopted.**

**7 MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING**

Moved by Councillor Cooper  
Seconded by Councillor Dunlop and

**RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Community Planning Committee Meeting of Monday 16 January 2023 be approved and adopted.**

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

Moved by Alderman Agnew  
Seconded by Councillor Bennington and

**RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee Meeting of Monday 23 January 2023 Part 1 be taken as read and signed as correct.**

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

Moved by Alderman Agnew  
Seconded by Councillor Bennington and

**RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee Meeting of Monday 23 January 2023 Part 2 be approved and adopted.**

*Alderman Burns and Campbell left the Meeting during the presentation.  
Councillors Kelly and Montgomery left and returned to the Chamber during the presentation.  
Councillor Kinnear joined the meeting during the presentation.*

**9 PRESENTATION**

**9.1 SISTER CITIES PRESENTATION – GILBERT AND ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY**

Members received a presentation from the Director of Economic Development and Planning on the Council's Sister Cities Partnership with Gilbert. She highlighted benefits from recent trip to Gilbert and key opportunities for the future.

The Director of Economic Development and Planning responded to Members' questions following which the Mayor and Members thanked her for her presentation.

Moved by Councillor Lynch  
Seconded by Councillor McWilliam and

**RESOLVED - that the presentation be noted.**

NO ACTION

## 10 ITEMS FOR DECISION

### 10.1 CE/CS/019 CORPORATE STRATEGY 2023-2030

Members would be aware of the need to update the Corporate Strategy for the period 2023-2030 in preparation for the newly elected Council.

An ongoing programme of engagement and consultation with Elected Members, customers, rate payers and staff would be integral to the process.

An indicative timetable for completion had been prepared for Members' approval.

Council Approval Draft Plan	26 June 2023
Public and Staff Consultation (12 Weeks)	Open: 3 July 2023 Closes: 25 September 2023
Consultation Report to P&G	3 October 2023
Council Approval	30 October 2023

Moved by Councillor Lynch  
Seconded by Councillor Montgomery and

**RESOLVED - that the indicative timetable for the completion of the draft Corporate Strategy 2023-2030 be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Helen Hall, Director of Corporate Strategy*

### 10.2 CP/CF/001 COUNCIL FACILITIES - FACILITY CLOSURES 2023-2024

Members were reminded that annually, in the last quarter of the year, proposed schedules of closure arrangements on Bank and Public Holidays for Council facilities were brought to the relevant committees for approval.

A draft schedule of bank and public holiday closures for 2023/24, was circulated for all Council facilities, given that the Coronation of King Charles III is being held in May 2023. Members were advised that Monday 8 May was included in the circulated schedules as an additional holiday for the Coronation. It was also proposed that Council facilities close on Saturday 6 May 2023, which is the day of the Kings Coronation. The only exception to this

would be any necessary opening of facilities to accommodate the delivery of Council's Coronation events.

Members were also advised that proposals for Crematorium opening in 2023/24 were circulated given the anticipated opening of this new facility in June 2023.

Moved by Councillor Webb  
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and

**RESOLVED - that the proposed arrangements for bank and public holiday opening of Council facilities for 2023/24 be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Ursula Fay, Director of Community Planning*

*Alderman Cosgrove left and returned to the Chamber during Item 10.2.*

### **10.3 CCS/EDP/025 DUAL LANGUAGE STREET SIGN APPLICATION**

Further to the report to Council on 31 October 2022, please find below a status update on Dual Language Street Sign Applications.

#### **Stage 1**

No new applications.

#### **Stage 2**

Applications received to date: One

With valid signed petition requesting signage to be erected in a second language being Irish for the following area:

#### **1. CASHELTON MANOR, NEWTOWNABBEY, BT36 7FN**

Following approval from Council, officers canvassed the residents of Cashelton Manor as listed on the Electoral Roll. 34 responses were received, from the 67 residents on the Electoral Roll. 25 responses indicated a preference for yes, 37.3% of residents.

As per the Dual Language Street Sign Policy where two-thirds or more of all those canvassed had indicated that they are in favour of the erection of a second language street sign, the matter would be brought before the Council for decision.

The canvas for Cashelton Manor had failed to achieve the required two-thirds of residents canvassed, and further applications would not be considered until February 2026.

#### **Stage 3**

No applications at this stage

Moved by Councillor Wilson

Seconded by Councillor Lynch that the application be progressed to the next stage of approval on the basis that the policy needed reformed as those who were indifferent were preventing the vast majority of residents who supported the dual signage.

On the proposal being put to the meeting, and a recorded vote having taken place, Members voted as follows:

<b>In favour of the Motion Members viz 7</b>	<b>Against the Motion Members viz 27</b>	<b>Abstentions Members viz 0</b>
Councillors – Goodman, Lynch, Cushinan, Kinnear, McClelland, McGrann and Wilson	Aldermen – Agnew, Cosgrove, Clarke, Girvan, Michael, Smyth and Ross  Councillors – Archibald- Brown, Bennington, Brady, Burbank, Dunlop, Flanagan, Foster, Gilmour, Kelly, McAuley, McWilliam, Magill, Mallon, Montgomery, Ramsay, Robinson, Stewart, Swann, Smyth and Webb	

The Motion was declared not carried.

Members sought clarification from the Chief Executive who confirmed that should Members go against the policy this would leave the Council open to challenge.

Moved by Alderman Cosgrove  
Seconded by Councillor Montgomery and

**RESOLVED - that Members note the status update as outlined above and that Officers proceed to advise the petitioners of the outcome.**

*ACTION BY: Ellen Boyd, Accessibility and Inclusion Officer and James Porter, Customer Services Manager*

*Councillor Bradley and Cooper returned to the Chamber.*

#### **10.4 PT/C1/049 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2023-24 – DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION**

Members were reminded that Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 puts in place a framework to support the continuous improvement of Council services, in the context of strategic objectives and issues.

Section 85 of the Act requires a Council, for each financial year, to set itself improvement objectives to enhance its functions. Each improvement objective should bring about improvement in at least one of the specified aspects as defined in Section 86: Strategic Effectiveness; Service Quality; Service Availability; Fairness; Sustainability; Efficiency; Innovation.

The Council was committed to continuous improvement, recognising that improvement means more than just quantifiable gains in efficiency or internal effectiveness. Rather, it means a course of action that enhances the sustainable quality of life and environment for ratepayers and communities.

The draft Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2023-24 which was circulated provides an overview of some achievements to date, details our statutory targets and identifies six improvement objectives for the year. These improvement objectives focus on how we will:

- support our residents through the challenging cost of living crisis;
- drive forward our commitment to making our Borough cleaner and greener through sustainable climate change;
- continue to encourage entrepreneurship, by streamlining processes and systems to ensure that suppliers receive payments more promptly;
- make sure we have fresh initiatives in place to ensure that we maintain high levels of customer satisfaction;
- manage staff attendance by investing in employee wellbeing;
- continue to grow leisure, resulting in healthy, happy people.

The Plan also details performance targets for all service areas and these would be reported quarterly to Committee/Council, however do not form part of the Councils legislative duty.

Departmental guidance, indicates that Councils should *'develop an on-going dialogue with our communities and areas that it serves, so that the setting of improvement objectives is a jointly owned process centred on a balanced assessment of the needs of the community as a whole, rather than any particular organisation or interest group within it.'*

To this end, it was proposed to conduct a twelve-week consultation to encourage feedback from our stakeholders, commencing on 6<sup>th</sup> February and running to 28<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

Following the consultation, a summary report of the responses would be presented to the Policy and Governance Committee, and a revised draft of the Plan would be brought to Members' attention in June 2023. Thereafter, quarterly reports on performance would be brought to the relevant Committee.

The Plan had been screened for equality and there were no implications to the equality of opportunity or good relations of the Section 75 equality categories. A copy of the Screening Form, was circulated for Members' consideration.

A Rural Needs Impact Assessment of the Plan had been carried out to ensure Rural Proofing was circulated for Members' consideration.

Moved by Councillor Lynch  
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and

**RESOLVED - that the Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2023-24 (Draft for consultation), Equality Screening Form and Rural Needs Impact Assessment are approved, subject to consultation.**

*ACTION BY: Lesley Millar, Performance and Transformation Manager*

*Councillor Gilmour left and returned to the Chamber during Item 10.5.*

#### **10.5 G/MSMO/138 CHANGE TO SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS OF ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY BOROUGH COUNCIL IN MAY AND JUNE 2023**

Members recalled approving the schedule of meetings of the Council for the period 1 January – 31 December 2023 back in July 2022.

Following the announcement of the change in date of the Local Council Elections to the 18 May 2023 by the Electoral Office, adjustments were required to the schedule of meetings in May and June 2023 previously agreed.

A revised Schedule of Meetings from 1 May 2023 to 31 December 2023 was circulated reflecting the above changes.

A proposed Induction and Training Programme would be brought to the next meeting of the Elected Members Development Working Group.

Moved by Councillor McClelland  
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and

**RESOLVED - that the attached Schedule of Meetings for Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Liz Johnston, Deputy Director of Performance and Governance (Interim)*

#### **10.6 ED/REG/048 INTEGRATED MASTERPLAN FINAL ADOPTION**

Members were reminded that since 2020 Council Officers had been progressing the development of an Integrated Masterplan that sets out the regeneration proposals for:

- 5 Town Centres
  - Antrim
  - Ballyclare
  - Crumlin
  - Glengormley



- Randalstown
- 9 Economic Nodes
- Abbey Centre
- Belfast International Airport
- Beverly Shopping Area
- Carnmoney
- The Junction
- Mallusk
- Nutts Corner
- Whiteabbey Village
- Whiteabbey
- Four Arterial Routes
- A57
- A52/A26
- A8
- A6/M22/M2

These proposals had been drawn up through extensive consultation with Elected Members, statutory agencies, the business community and residents.

In September 2022 the final consultation exercise was launched which was a full public consultation. This was supported by five consultation events, one per town. In total over 120 written responses were received and officers engaged with over 300 businesses and residents at the events.

The results of all rounds of consultation had now been analysed. The results of this analysis was included in the detailed consultation report (circulated) that accompanies this report.

The proposals within the Integrated Masterplan which include action plans for each town were met with broad support, especially the Council's commitment to improve the appearance and appeal of the Borough through public realm schemes, shop front improvements and investment in connectivity through blue/green infrastructure. The consultation responses had also suggested several new actions to be explored and had assisted in the prioritisation of the actions contained in the final plan.

Officers had prepared the final actions plans for adoption, considering all the feedback received during the process. Copies of these were circulated for Members information.

Across the Action Plans initial progress had already been made on a range of projects with funding secured in the 22/23 financial year and Officers would pursue other funding opportunities as they arise to enable further progress to be made on the other medium terms actions identified. Elected Members would be updated on a regular basis at a DEA level through the DEA Engagement Groups.

Moved by Councillor Lynch  
Seconded by Councillor McWilliam and

**RESOLVED - that the final Antrim and Newtownabbey Integrated Masterplan and associated Action Plans contained therein, be adopted.**

*ACTION BY: Steven Norris, Head of Regeneration and Infrastructure*

## **11 ITEMS FOR NOTING**

### **11.1 G/MSMO/14 MOTION – NEWRY AND MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL – WORKERS LEGAL RIGHTS TO TIPS**

Members were advised that correspondence had been received from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council regarding a Motion adopted by that Council and requesting support.

A copy of the letter was circulated for Members' information.

Moved by Councillor Montgomery  
Seconded by Councillor Dunlop and

**RESOLVED - that the correspondence from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council be noted.**

*NO ACTION*

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

Members were advised that correspondence had been received from Northern Ireland Housing Council for Members' information. A copy of the Northern Ireland Housing Council's January Bulletin and Minutes from their December Meeting were circulated.

Moved by Councillor Montgomery  
Seconded by Councillor Dunlop and

**RESOLVED - that the correspondence be noted.**

*NO ACTION*

### **11.3 ED/ED/218 INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF INVEST NORTHERN IRELAND – OVERVIEW**

Members were reminded that the review of Invest Northern Ireland (Invest NI) led by Sir Michael Lyons was published on 11 January 2023. The remit of the report aimed to explore the recent performance of Invest NI and whether it was fit for purpose to deliver the Department for Economy's (DfE) 10X Vision and provide an assessment of Invest NI's efficiency and effectiveness.

The report consulted widely with over 300 participants, organisations and firms from across the business eco-system of Northern Ireland participating, including Local Government. Invest NI was last reviewed in 2012 by The Northern Ireland Audit Office and before that in 2009 by Independent Review of Economic Policy (IREP).

Invest NI was the region's economic development agency, with a budget of more than £160 million in each of the last five years. Consideration was given to the strategic direction, including the economic challenges in Northern Ireland, which Invest NI seek to address.

The Review offers a comprehensive analysis of Invest NI's performance and recognises the need for an economic development agency in Northern Ireland, and outlines that there are fundamental existing strengths and capabilities within Invest NI. However, the review outlines the need for profound change, urging both reform and repurposing of the agency.

The Review cites Antrim and Newtownabbey's economic development strategy 2018-2023 'Invest and Connect' as an example of a local authority seeking effective partnership and inter-agency working, and lists Invest NI as a partner in this regard. The Review urges Invest NI to do more of this type of partnership working.

The report offers a summary of its findings split into 17 'Areas' that range from various internal factors, issues around service delivery to forward planning. The Invest NI Summary of Findings and Recommendations was circulated for Members information.

Regarding the 10X vision, the report found that it had been widely welcomed as an ambitious vision for a pathway that might move the Northern Ireland economy from its current underperformance and prevailing low productivity on to a new trajectory. However, findings demonstrate frustration at slow progress in developing an associated action plan with clear, measurable milestones and responsibilities. The report calls for stronger endorsement of the 10X principles across the NI Executive, collaboration between relevant Departments and fuller, more open engagement with the businesses and key stakeholders in Northern Ireland.

A full copy of the report can be found using the link below;

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/independent-review-of-investni-report.pdf>

Moved by Councillor Montgomery  
Seconded by Councillor Dunlop and

**RESOLVED - that the report be noted.**

*NO ACTION*

#### **11.4 FI/GEN/015 PUBLIC ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS**

Local Government Remote Meetings Legislation is contained within Section 78 (local authority meetings) of the Coronavirus Act 2020 and it was anticipated it would be extended beyond the current expiry date of 24 March 2023.

The legislation provides Council with the flexibility to hold meetings remotely or by hybrid means. In September 2022, Members approved a protocol for remote Council meetings to facilitate hybrid meetings.

Even though COVID restrictions had been relaxed, members of the public and press have continued to access those parts of the Council meetings which they are entitled to attend through the livestream on the Council's website.

Going forward, a hybrid means of attendance at Council and Committee meetings would now be possible for members of the public and press. Attendance at meetings would return to pre-covid arrangements with the addition of remote access and numbers in the Chamber will be managed to ensure compliance with relevant fire safety requirements.

It is anticipated that a maximum of 10 members of the public/press would be able to attend Council meetings and Committees in both Chambers.

Moved by Councillor Montgomery  
Seconded by Councillor Dunlop and

**RESOLVED - that the report be noted.**

*No ACTION*

#### **11.5 ED/ED/228 BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT SUPPORT UPDATE**

Members would be aware that in August 2022 approval was granted for a business engagement approach involving the appointment of a consultant to liaise with the businesses in the town centres and villages to establish an appropriate model going forward. In addition, the Council also wished to determine the immediate needs of businesses and provide interim support to existing business structures such as Chambers of Commerce to reinvigorate their activities post pandemic.

In practice, this work involves three key strands:

- Conduct a survey with local businesses focusing initially in town centres and to gather detailed information on the challenges impacting upon them.
- To appoint a consultant to provide interim support to existing business structures such as Chambers of Commerce to reinvigorate their activities post pandemic.
- To update Council business directories and develop a more streamlined approach to communication with businesses.

Significant progress had been made as summarised below:

#### **Business Survey**

A survey tool had been used to gather the information from businesses across the Borough to help inform future economic development programmes and policies.

To date, over 100 businesses had completed the survey with this stage now complete in Glengormley, Randalstown and Crumlin with 60, 55 and 10 surveys completed respectively.

Surveying in Ballyclare commenced on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> January and Antrim would be completed in early February.

Once all the town centres and Whiteabbey Village have been completed Officers would move to other economic areas outside the town centres, industrial areas and villages.

In tandem with this activity, the survey would be promoted through social media platforms etc. to encourage uptake.

### **Chambers of Commerce 2022/2023**

Lara Goodall Consulting was appointed in November 2022 to undertake this element of work in relation to the re-establishment of Chamber of Commerce, or similar vehicles, within the town centres and villages.

Lara would support the groups for a period of one year and oversee the following activity

- Review of existing structures
- Recruitment and marketing of new chamber members
- Development of operating rules for the chamber members
- Scheduling of meetings, development of agendas
- Secretary for each chamber taking minutes and co-ordinating the business members
- Supporting the private sector Chair and members
- Holding a minimum of three meetings of each chamber before November 2023 and following up on actions.

Lara had now held meetings with key business representatives in each of the towns and representatives from the previous organisations. A summary of the next steps are included below:

- **February 2023** – media campaign for business engagement events to launch. This will be supported by 1-2-1 engagement with specific business owners, leaflets drops and emails to business databases.
- **March 2023** – initial meeting and information evening to promote the newly formed Chambers of Commerce/Business Associations to tell people more about them and sign up new members.
- **April/May 2023** – first official meetings of the new groups to commence facilitated by Lara Goodall Consulting.

It was hoped that the groups would then meet once a quarter for the remainder of the year and develop an Action Plan outlining activity that the business community wish to see progressed.

### **Business Directories and Future Communication**

As part of the survey exercise the team on the ground are also collecting the most up to date contact details for each of the businesses to update Council databases. Over 200 new business contacts had been added to Council business databases and Officers have expanded coverage to industrial areas which would improve our overall communication with the business community in the Borough.

A dedicated closed email group had been established for each town. This was the preferred option for communication as indicated by the businesses surveyed. Officers in the Economic Development Team would 'push out' key information to the group through this channel and reply to incoming messages.

In addition, when on the ground in the town centres Officers are also recording.

1. Vacant units
2. Vacant units on higher floors
3. Areas of disrepair or unsightliness
4. Issues with footpaths or walkways
5. Issues with street furniture or signage.

This information would help to inform the overall picture of each town and the regeneration initiatives to be developed by the Council.

Moved by Councillor Montgomery  
Seconded by Councillor Dunlop and

**RESOLVED - that the report be noted.**

*NO ACTION*

*Alderman Smyth left the meeting.*

**MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN COMMITTEE'**

Moved by Councillor Magill  
Seconded by Councillor Dunlop 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.

## 12 ITEMS IN COMMITTEE

### 12.1 **IN CONFIDENCE** P/PLAN/083 DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE'S UPLIFT IN PLANNING FEES



Moved by Councillor Archibald-Brown  
Seconded by Councillor Magill and

**RESOLVED - that the report be noted.**

NO ACTION

### 12.2 **IN CONFIDENCE** ED/ED/173 OUR PROSPERITY OUTCOME DELIVERY GROUP MINUTES

The Our Prosperity Outcome Delivery Group met on the 27 January 2023 to review progress on strategic economic development and tourism matters and to consider priorities as a result of the pandemic and its economic impact. A copy of the minutes from the meeting held on 27 January 2023 were circulated for Members consideration.

Moved by Councillor Lynch  
Seconded by Councillor Magill and

**RESOLVED - that the minutes of the Our Prosperity Outcome Delivery Group of 27 January 2023 be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Majella McAlister, Director of Economic Development and Planning*

### 12.3 **IN CONFIDENCE** ED/ED/195 VOL.2 LEVELLING UP FUND GOVERNANCE BOARD MINUTES

The Levelling Up Fund award required that a governance structure be put in place to oversee the management and implementation of the approved schemes:

- LUF0037 Glengormley Integrated Economic and Physical Regeneration Scheme
- LUF0080 Antrim Integrated Economic and Physical Regeneration Scheme

This included an internal project board made up of relevant Officers involved in delivery: Capital Development; Economic Development; Public Relations & Marketing; Legal Services; Building Control.

The Levelling up Fund Project Board met on the 15 and 21 December 2022 to monitor progress and to provide direction for the schemes.

Copies of the minutes from the meetings were circulated for Members consideration.

Moved by Councillor Lynch  
Seconded by Alderman Girvan and

**RESOLVED - that the minutes of the Levelling Up Fund Project Board meetings held on 15 and 21 December 2022 be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Majella McAlister, Director of Economic Development and Planning*

#### **12.4 IN CONFIDENCE ED/ED/232 GILBERT STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAMME**

Members were reminded that the 2023 Sister Cities Student Exchange Programme was approved by Council in October 2022. The Sister Cities Student Exchange Programme is a cross-community programme that typically provides four students, two from Antrim and Newtownabbey and two from Gilbert, Arizona with an opportunity to develop an understanding of a different country, its culture, and its people through a family living experience. The programme lasts approximately six weeks during the summer with half the time spent in Gilbert and half in Antrim and Newtownabbey.

Members were advised that the exchange between Gilbert and Leshan would not be taking place in 2023 and therefore the Gilbert Sister Cities Partnership had proposed to increase participant numbers to four from Antrim and Newtownabbey and four from Gilbert, rather than two from each area.

Following an application process of a written application form, nomination from school teacher or youth leader, and an interview with students and their parents/guardians, this increase could be accommodated, provision for which exists within the Economic Development budget. Members instructions were requested.

Thirteen applications were received in total, with eight eligible applicants proceeding to interview. The interview panel consisted of the Mayor, Alderman Stephen Ross, Chair of the Our Prosperity Outcome Delivery Group, Alderman Mark Cosgrove and his nominated representative Councillor Jim Montgomery and Economic Development Officer, Sara Thompson.

The four top scoring candidates selected to represent Antrim and Newtownabbey during the 2023 Student Exchange Programme are;

██████████ attending Antrim Grammar School



[REDACTED] attending Antrim Grammar School  
[REDACTED] attending Belfast Met  
[REDACTED] attending St. Louis Grammar

The reserve candidates are [REDACTED] attending Edmund Rice College and [REDACTED] attending St. Malachy's College.

Members, the Mayor and past participants would be invited to meet the American students and their host families at a reception during the summer. The programme remains subject to Covid travel restrictions.

Moved by Alderman Girvan  
Seconded by Councillor Montgomery and

**RESOLVED - that Members approve [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED], to take part in the 2023 Student Exchange Programme.**

*ACTION BY: Carly Long, Economic Development Project Officer*

## **12.5 IN CONFIDENCE FI/FIN/043 RATES ESTIMATES 2023/24 UPDATE**

### **COST OF LIVING**

Members were reminded that at the Council meeting on the 19th December 2022, Council agreed the JTU's counter offer after consideration of the Council's financial position. Trade Unions had advised of a positive outcome to the workplace ballot and agreement on the offer.

The payment of the first increment for the 2022/23 financial year had been implemented in the January 2023 payroll including all the back pay arising.

### **ESTIMATES 2023/24**

Council Officers were continuing to look for efficiencies, refining costs and income levels within the 2023/24 Estimates process as more information becomes available. The challenge particularly around inflation and energy costs would continue into 2023/24.

Estimates presentations had been provided at all Committees in January 2023 to allow members the opportunity to scrutinise the income & expenditure budgets for each service and obtain answers to their queries from the relevant officers.

Detailed estimates information had also been circulated to members for all Council services.

Currently the District Rate increase for 2023/24 sits at circa 6.0% with the one off 2023 election an estimated £400K and the agreed 2<sup>nd</sup> payroll increment for 2023/24 estimated at £472K being covered from the Borough Recovery

Reserve. It was predicted that the reserves position of Council would remain healthy into the medium term.

As we move closer to rate striking in February 2023, a decision would be required in relation to the amount of reserves to apply to 2023/24 Budgets to arrive at an affordable rate increase for rate payers.

The financial health of Council would be maintained into the medium term by continuing to streamline and improve business models and seek efficiencies in our delivery of services. This includes the re-introduction of the Councils Voluntary Severance Scheme following consultation with Trade Unions.

In line with the Estimates Timetable a further update on the Estimates position of Council would be provided at the Policy & Governance Committee in February. This would provide members with the opportunity to raise any further issues in relation to the 2023/24 budgets prior to Rate Striking on 13<sup>th</sup> February.

At the February Policy & Governance Committee members would also be provided with a number of reports which are requirements of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the Prudential Code. Members would be required to approve a range of indicators and strategies prior to the prescribed date for striking rates.

Moved by Councillor Webb  
Seconded by Alderman Cosgrove and

**RESOLVED - that Council notes the update on the 2023/24 Estimates position of Council.**

*NO ACTION*

**12.6 IN CONFIDENCE WM/ARC21/008 RESIDUAL WASTE TREATMENT PROJECT**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Moved by Alderman Cosgrove  
Seconded by Councillor Montgomery and

**RESOLVED -** [REDACTED]

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

**12.7 IN CONFIDENCE ED/ED/195 CAPITAL PROJECT UPDATES**

**Levelling Up Fund**

Members are advised that since securing £5.1 million from the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) in October 2021 significant progress had been made in relation to the two major regeneration schemes in Antrim and Glengormley town centres which include the development of enterprise hubs at both locations. The majority of the funding secured from LUF was allocated towards the development of the hubs.

The purpose of this report was to provide an update on the Antrim project and associated budget taking account of the external funding requirements and current spend deadline of 31 March 2024.

Members were advised that the LUF award was a maximum allocation and that no uplift in the funding would be provided to counter the inflationary increases currently being experienced.

**Antrim Integrated Physical Economic and Regeneration Project**

(A) **Riverfront Regeneration** – this project was nearing completion with the new double height rear entrance to the Karl building now in place. The contractors would now complete the new ramp by the end of April which would provide much improved access from the boardwalk into the building and beyond to the High Street. Once complete, this access which had been designed to promote connectivity between the Antrim

Castle Gardens, the wider town and the High Street via the boardwalk would be officially launched and promoted through the Council's media platforms. A series of photos illustrating the works completed were circulated for members' information.

- (B) **Office/Workspace** - the original cost estimate for this project of £ [REDACTED] included within the LUF bid was based on design and consultancy work undertaken by the building owner at that time. Since being awarded the funding through the LUF programme the Council had commissioned a range of surveys and undertaken detailed design work to more fully inform the scheme going forward.

This had identified that particular aspects of the scheme such as M&E services were significantly under-represented and would not have delivered the scope and quality of office/workspace that the Council wishes to deliver. The scheme had also been revised to ensure that the offices/workspace meets the demands/requirements of the target market namely business start-ups and entrepreneurs who have an expectation of the accommodation they expect in line with other similar facilities across the region.

Over the intervening period since the submission of the bid, there has also been a significant increase in inflation which had impacted both the supply and cost of labour and materials. Overall this had resulted in an increase in the cost of the scheme which was now estimated to be £ [REDACTED] requiring a contribution of £1,769,254.00 from the Council.

Whilst this represents a considerable uplift in the Council's contribution to the capital scheme, it must be considered in the context of the increase in the valuation as a result of the capital investment in the project and the income that would be generated.

### **Valuation & Projected Income**

To inform the bid to LUF an independent valuation for the first floor was obtained from OKT. This assessment valued the first floor in its current condition at £ [REDACTED] or £ [REDACTED] per sq. foot based on an area of 16,040 sq. foot. Following refurbishment and on the assumption that the space was fitted out as high quality offices the valuation increases to £ [REDACTED] or £ [REDACTED] per sq. foot based on a nett lettable area of 13,634sq foot. This assumes 15% allowance for common areas which would not be lettable.

If the new offices/workspace which would be of a very high quality were let on the open market, based on the valuation they could return an income of £ [REDACTED] (£ [REDACTED] x 40 years plus 3% annual uplift x expected occupancy). This was in line with the business case which supported the LUF submission which applied an occupancy rate of 35-75% in years 1 to 4 and 80% at year 5 and thereafter.

The rates however applied in the business case to hiring the space were lower than those that could be achieved on the open market and would generate an income of £ [REDACTED] over the same period.

As noted this figure is lower than the open market return however this project was providing a market intervention to support start-up businesses and entrepreneurs and was not intended to compete with the private therefore it was not intended that it would be charged at the optimum market rate. Officers will review the rates prior to facility opening to determine if there is scope to increase in line with the wider market.

The tables below summarise the original budget estimate included in the LUF bid and shows the MRP which would be paid annually by the Council, the lease repayment due to the building owner and projected income.

Over a 40 year period, with a 3% annual increase applied to the rate, the net income generated to the Council would be approximately £ [REDACTED]

	MRP cost over 40 years	Lease over 40 years (annual increase in line with RPI)	TOTAL 40 Year Cost
Estimated budget as per LUF submission (June 2021) £ [REDACTED]		Per annum £ [REDACTED] plus RPI increase (upward only) First year free (split across 2 years) – 3% applied £ [REDACTED]	
LUF £ [REDACTED]	N/A	N/A	N/A one off capital investment
Council £70,166 (5.6% of total)	£ [REDACTED]	£ [REDACTED]	£ [REDACTED]
Annual cost	£ [REDACTED]	£ [REDACTED]	£ [REDACTED]

**Original Cost estimate as per LUF Bid June 2021**

**Current Cost Estimate – January 2023**

	MRP cost over 40 years	Lease over 40 years (annual increase in line with RPI)	TOTAL
Current budget estimate – Jan 2023	Per annum	Per annum £ [REDACTED] plus RPI increase (upward only)	Per annum

£ [REDACTED]	£ [REDACTED]	First year free (split across 2 years) £ [REDACTED]	£ [REDACTED]
LUF £ [REDACTED]	N/A	N/A	N/A one off capital investment
Council £1,769,254.00 [REDACTED] of total )	£ [REDACTED]	£ [REDACTED]	£ [REDACTED]
Annual Cost	£ [REDACTED]	£ [REDACTED]	£ [REDACTED]

Income	40 year projection plus 3% annual uplift	£ [REDACTED]
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### Boardwalk Extension

The Boardwalk extension project was progressing well with the Consultant team, Rolston appointed. Work on ecological and ground condition surveys was underway, the outcome of which would determine the design options, programme and costs. Planning permission is in place for the Boardwalk extension based on the initial design with a material start required before October 2023 to keep the approval live. Officers would provide a further report in due course to update members on progress.

### (C) CRUMLIN ALLOTMENTS

Members were reminded that at the Council meeting in April 2022 CivCo Ltd were appointed to undertake the works for the Crumlin Allotments.

The project was due to be completed in Spring 2023.

Taking account of inflation and site conditions the maximum outturn cost was estimated to be £ [REDACTED].

It was hoped the final outturn cost could be delivered below this sum as several costs were currently being assessed and negotiated with the contractor.

Moved by Councillor Montgomery  
Seconded by Councillor Goodman and

### RESOLVED - that

- (a) A revised budget of £ [REDACTED] be approved for the new Office/Workspace hub in Antrim.

**(b) A further report be provided to a future meeting in relation to the extension of the boardwalk.**

**(c) The maximum predicted project outturn cost of £[REDACTED] for the Crumlin Allotments Project be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Majella McAlister, Director of Economic Development and Planning*

*Having declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 12.8 Councillor Bradley left the Chamber*

## **12.8 IN CONFIDENCE HR/HR/10 COST OF LIVING UPDATE**

Members were reminded that at the Council meeting on 19 December 2022 it was agreed to approve the Joint Trade Union's counter offer and that they proceed to ballot their members regarding the content of the offer. A copy of the counter offer was circulated at Appendix 1.

This ballot was conducted from 16 – 20 January 2023 and a formal ballot outcome had now been received to advise that the offer had been accepted by Trade Union members. A copy of the ballot outcome was circulated at Appendix 2.

Members were reminded that the details of the offer balloted were as follows:

- NJC pay grades would be lifted by one Spinal Column Point for all grades up to and including PO7, to take effect from 1 April 2022. This would be implemented in a timely manner and backdated to 1 April 2022.
- NJC Pay grades would be further lifted by one Spinal Column Point for all grades up to and including PO7, to take effect as from 1 April 2023. This would be implemented from 1 October 2023 (or earlier) and backdated to 1 April 2023.
- Removal of Scale 1C with the lowest pay band becoming Scale 2.
- Overtime to remain available up to and including Scale 6.
- This agreement commits to the participation in and completion of a full Pay & Grading review within a two-year period.
- This agreement commits to reviewing the Essential Car User policy with a view to extending where appropriate the number of posts that can access this allowance.

On receipt of the Ballot outcome, appropriate steps were taken to implement this payment with immediate effect and employees would receive this payment in their January salary.

This agreement constitutes a full and final settlement of all collective pay issues in relation to 2021/22. As a commitment to recognising the financial

position of the Council in relation to 2022/23, the Joint Trade Unions had agreed not to seek any further pay awards over and above this agreement. A copy of the Collective Agreement on Pay Dispute Issues in relation to the Year 2021/22 was circulated at Appendix 3 for Members' information.

Members were advised that there was currently no national pay agreement for 2023/24, however the Council would participate in the Northern Ireland Pay Briefing on 7 February 2023.

Moved by Councillor Webb  
Seconded by Councillor Magill and

**RESOLVED - that the report be noted.**

*NO ACTION*

*Councillor Bradley returned to the Chamber.*

**MOTION TO PROCEED 'OUT OF COMMITTEE'**

Moved by Councillor Montgomery  
Seconded by Alderman Girvan and

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

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and the meeting concluded at 8:08 pm.

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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.***