



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD
AT MOSSLEY MILL ON MONDAY 29 JUNE 2020 AT 6.30 PM**

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

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

1 BIBLE READING, PRAYER AND WELCOME

The Mayor welcomed all present to the meeting, particularly Councillor Linda Irwin, and advised Members of the audio recording procedures.

The meeting opened with a Bible reading and prayer by the Reverend Gregory.

Councillors Finlay, Goodman, Kelly, Kinnear and McAuley joined the meeting at this point.

2 APOLOGIES

None

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 13.1(5) – Alderman Smyth
Item 12.5 – Councillor McClelland
Item 11.8 – Councillor Robinson
Item 11.11 – Alderman Kinahan
Item 11.1 – Councillor Logue

In response to a query from a Member, the Chief Executive provided clarification in relation to a question on conflicts of interest.

4 MINUTES OF ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING

Moved by Councillor Webb
Seconded by Alderman Girvan and

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Meeting held on Tuesday, 26 May 2020 be taken as read and signed as correct.

5 MINUTES OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

Moved by Alderman McGrath
Seconded by Councillor Cooper and

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Operations Committee Meeting of Tuesday 2 June 2020 be approved and adopted.

NO ACTION

6 MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

Moved by Councillor Dunlop
Seconded by Alderman Kinahan and

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Policy and Governance Committee Meeting of Wednesday 3 June 2020 be approved and adopted.

NO ACTION

7 MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

Moved by Councillor McWilliam
Seconded by Alderman Clarke and

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Community Planning Committee Meeting of Monday 8 June 2020 be approved and adopted.

NO ACTION

8 MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

Moved by Councillor Magill
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Special Council Meeting of Thursday 11 June 2020 be taken as read and signed as correct.

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

Moved by Alderman Brett
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee Meeting of Monday 15 June 2020 Part 1 be approved and adopted.

NO ACTION

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

Moved by Alderman Brett
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee Meeting of on Monday 15 June 2020 Part 2 be taken as read and signed as correct.

NO ACTION

10 MINUTES OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING

Moved by Councillor Goodman
Seconded by Councillor McAuley and

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Audit Committee Meeting of Tuesday 23 June 2020 be approved and adopted.

NO ACTION

11. ITEMS FOR DECISION

11.1 TO APPROVE THE SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

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

- Lease with Listening Ear Project for the lease of an office at the Dunanney Centre.
- Contract for the Refurbishment of Mini Pitches at the Valley Leisure Centre (Phase 2).
- Contract for the GROW Co-operation Scheme works at Antrim Loughshore.

Moved by Councillor Hamill

Seconded by Councillor Magill and

RESOLVED – that the documents be signed and sealed.

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

11.2 EH/EHS/10 LICENSING OF PAVEMENT CAFÉS ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2014

With the relaxation of the restrictions placed on businesses serving food and drinks on their premises by the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020, there was increasing pressure on some premises to comply with social distancing requirements whilst being able to accommodate a viable number of customers.

Members were reminded that the Licensing of Pavement Cafés Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 came into operation on 1 October 2016.

This statutory duty requires the Council to regulate the operation of Pavement Cafés by:

- Administration of any applications for a Pavement Café
- Consultation with the Department for Infrastructure Roads (DfI Roads) and, where the premises is licensed for the sale of alcohol, with the PSNI
- Enforcement of the licence through, for example, imposing a range of licence conditions

Anyone who operates a business in or from premises, which involves the supply of food or drink to the public, may apply for a Pavements Café licence. This includes cafés, restaurants and pubs, retail outlets providing refreshments, takeaways or supermarkets with a deli counter.

In August 2016, Council resolved to absorb the administration costs in relation to applications received under the Pavement Café Act and set a zero fee for

Pavement Cafés in the Borough. In addition, Council set the licence period for an initial application for three years moving to an open-ended licence period thereafter, subject to continued compliance with licence conditions.

Where the Council receives an application it must, by such means as it thinks appropriate:

- (a) make the application available to be viewed by the public until the end of the period allowed for representations (28 days), and
- (b) publicise the fact that representations relating to the application may be made in writing to the Council until the end of that period.

In order to comply with this requirement, applicants would be required to affix a public notice to the premises on the day an application is made. The notice must be positioned so as to be visible to the public for the 28-day period. In addition, Council would make the application details available to be viewed for 28 days by the public on its website.

The Pavement Café Act places a duty on Council, when considering a new application, to consult with DfI Roads before arriving at a decision. This ensures that any possible implications for vehicular traffic, pedestrians, public safety issues, and environmental impacts are properly taken into account, as DfI Roads are best placed to advise councils on these matters.

Local Government representatives raised concerns with the Committee for Social Development in October 2013, prior to the introduction of the legislation, about the need to ensure disabled access issues were carefully addressed. This was also a key concern for MLAs arising from discussions at the Committee.

Draft Guidance provided by the Department for Social Development in 2014, in respect of minimum footway widths had been the subject of significant concern for disabled groups.

Councils had been working with Department for Infrastructure to seek the completion of Technical Guidelines. These would assist with consistency of interpretation regarding the factors to consider in the layout and design of a Pavement Café and, in particular, take account of other pavement users. Officials from the Department for Infrastructure and District Council Licensing Officers, were invited to appear before the All Party Group on Visual Impairment at the Northern Ireland Assembly in 2017, as they were concerned the available guidance did not give due regard to many of the issues raised by disability organisations.

To date, final Guidance, which had undergone an Equality Impact Assessment, had not been produced. Councils had therefore been concerned about processing applications in the absence of definitive guidance from Department for Infrastructure and, in light of the concerns of the disability groups, were very aware of compliance with Disability Discrimination Act requirements.

Applicants were encouraged to discuss proposals at an early stage with Environmental Health staff so that any potential problems can be quickly identified and resolved, and agreement reached with the other consultees. This would minimise any potential risks arising from creation of the Pavement Café and involve close cooperation with DfI Roads staff and PSNI where appropriate.

The Minister for Infrastructure had recently written to the Chief Executives of all eleven councils asking that a flexible approach be taken regarding the considerations around planning matters for Pavement Cafés during the COVID-19 pandemic, circulated.

In order to support local businesses at this time in maximising their customer base under the provisions of the Licensing of Pavement Cafés Act, the following approach was proposed:

- Pavement Café Licences are issued for an initial period of 1 year (not 3 years as originally approved by Council) as an interim measure during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Only where representation is made in writing to Council before the end of the 28-day period would an application be brought to Council for decision. In all other circumstances (revocation, suspension, or compulsory variation) matters would be dealt with under the Scheme of Delegation for Environmental Health Functions. This would provide maximum flexibility for businesses should any changes be required
- In the absence of Guidance from the Department for Infrastructure that has undergone Equality Screening, any applications made to Council under the Licensing of Pavement Cafés Act will be reviewed using the Council's Equality Impact Assessment processes.
- The Council will take a flexible and pragmatic approach to enforcement action.

Moved by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Alderman Kinahan and

RESOLVED – that during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- i. licences issued under the Licensing of Pavement Cafés Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 are valid for 1 year;**
- ii. only where representation is made in writing to Council before the end of the 28-day period would an application be brought to Council for decision. In all other circumstances (revocation, suspension, or compulsory variation) matters would be dealt with under the Scheme of Delegation for Environmental Health Functions;**
- iii. in the absence of Guidance from the Department for Infrastructure that has undergone Equality Screening, any applications made to Council under the Pavement Café Act will be reviewed using the Council's Equality Impact Assessment processes;**
- iv. applications are invited from relevant businesses; and**

- v. **the Council will take a flexible and pragmatic approach to enforcement action.**

ACTION BY: Clifford Todd, Head of Environmental Health

11.3 PK/GEN/170 RECOVERY PLAN – CARAVAN PARKS AND SLIPWAYS

Caravan Parks

The Northern Ireland Executive had announced that caravan parks, camp sites and self-catering tourist accommodation would be permitted to open from 26 June 2020. Both of Council's caravan parks had been closed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic since mid-March, before the peak caravan season commenced.

It was proposed to re-open the caravan parks to self-contained caravans and motorhomes from 1 July. These vehicles make up about 90% of bookings. Communal facilities, such as the toilet/shower block, laundry room, social area (Antrim only) would remain closed and kept under review, however sluice rooms would need to be kept open to service these self-contained vehicles.

It was proposed that, subject to Council approval for the recovery plan, the online booking system would re-open on 30 June 2020.

Having assessed each site, Officers were satisfied that there is sufficient space around individual pitches to comply with social distancing. Both sites would have appropriate ground markings and signage in place.

Details for each caravan park are set out below:

Jordanstown

The caravan park at Jordanstown operates year round and comprises 12 caravan and 3 motorhome pitches plus 3 for tents. The normal operating costs per annum are approximately £80,000, with income of approximately £60,000.

Sixmilewater, Antrim

The Sixmile Caravan Park in Antrim operates March to October plus - weekends only in February and November and recently has opened for Enchanted Winter Garden in December.

It comprises 37 caravan/motorhome pitches plus 12 for tents. The normal operating costs are £140,000 per annum, with income of approximately £110,000.

Additional cleaning was normally done by the contractor twice a day during high season and twice a day at weekends during the low season. As only the sluice room would re-open, council staff would clean as required and there would be no need for contract cleaning, saving £10,000 to the end of March.

Pricing

Officers had reviewed the pricing in line with other operators in Northern Ireland, both council and privately owned. A table was circulated for information.

Both Council sites are of a high standard with good amenities and locations. Both currently have a 5* rating from Tourism Northern Ireland. Currently, the costs are £23 in low season and £25 in high season.

Based on current pricing, the estimated income and expenditure to the year end in March 2021 (9 months) would be as follows:

<u>July 2020 – March 2021</u>	Est. Income	Est. Expenditure	Est. Net Cost
Sixmile Caravan Park	£82,500	£97,500	£15,000
Jordanstown Caravan Park	<u>£45,000</u>	<u>£60,000</u>	£15,000
Totals	£127,500	£157,500	£30,000

If costs were increased to £27 for weekdays and £30 for weekends (minimum 2 night stay) and public holidays, the projections would be as follows:

	Est. Income	Est. Expenditure	Est. Net cost/surplus
Sixmile Caravan Park	£100,000	£97,500	(£2,500)
Jordanstown Caravan Park	<u>£54,000</u>	<u>£60,000</u>	£6,000
Totals	£154,000	£157,500	(£3,500)

Slipways

There are two slipways at Antrim Lough Shore Park. The larger slipway is located near the Gateway Centre and facilitates access for Lough Neagh Rescue boats and other pleasure boats whilst jet skis have traditionally used the smaller slipway located at the entrance to Rea's Wood. This is so as to ensure that jet skis and boats from Council's side of the river as well as from Antrim Boat Club are separate.

Large slipway

This slipway is accessed by barrier/key system with the keys normally issued by Caravan Park staff. The system was put in place a number of years ago in order to manage access to the slipway and ensure the safety of users. The keys are issued on payment of a returnable £20 deposit and are renewed and reprogrammed annually. Deposits are returned when customers no longer require them.

Jet ski slipway

This slipway is also accessed by a barrier/key system issued by caravan park staff on request daily. To access this slipway a refundable deposit is payable. The barrier at this slipway was put in place a number of years ago as there was no lighting in this area of the car park and the slipway leads to open

water. The barrier remains locked and has not been accessible since lockdown due to the caravan park being closed.

Proposed Operating Model

It was proposed that arrangements for access to the large slipway continue to operate online, with transactions also being available at Antrim Civic Centre whilst communal facilities are closed.

Having reviewed existing arrangements for the jet ski slipway, Officers were of the opinion that it does not need to be locked during the day. Having contacted other councils and groups around Lough Neagh, the majority do not lock up slipways at all, leaving them open during spring and summer and with one being closed at night in winter for safety reasons.

It was therefore proposed that the current barrier be modified to be accessible by default to self-close or that self-closing gates be fitted. Either option would cost in the region of £350. The gates would therefore be able to remain accessible during the day, but self-close to provide safety and could be locked by the existing security contractor at night and in the winter months. It was proposed that the slipway does not re-open until the new barrier or gates are in place.

Moved by Alderman Cosgrove
Seconded by Alderman Brett and

RESOLVED – that

- i) both Caravan Parks be re-opened from 1 July 2020 for motor homes and self-contained caravans with bookings accepted on the basis of access to power, water and sluice services only with new pricing year round of £27 per night Monday to Thursday and £30 per night at weekends (minimum 2 night stay) and public holidays;**
- ii) should the lockdown ease and the communal facilities be able to re-open, approval is given for Officers to implement the changes; and**
- iii) the slipways are managed as set out in the operating model above.**

ACTION BY: Ivor McMullan, Head of Parks

11.4 PK/BIO/032 BEST KEPT GARDEN

The Best Kept Garden Competition 2020 was approved in February including elected members to participate in the judging, Aldermen Smyth and Clarke and Councillors Montgomery and McWilliam. With the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, essential services only were being delivered and a Parks Recovery Plan was subsequently approved with the focus being on grass cutting.

In the meantime, some interest had been expressed in the Best Kept Garden competition being run this summer as many people had taken the opportunity of the period of good weather during lockdown to work on their gardens and homes.

If the competition was to be approved in the current year, the judging would be done through photographs with visits to shortlisted gardens always mindful of compliance with social distancing requirements.

It was proposed that if approved:

- The opening date for entries would be 30 June 2020 and closing date - 14 August 2020
- The categories to be the same as last year with the exception of schools – as they have been closed since March. It may also be challenging to have nominees to the Best Commercial Premises category but Officers propose to retain this category as there may be some interest and also because it encourages any business which can plant or display flowers to do so in what is a difficult trading environment for commercial organisations.

The categories would therefore be:

- Best Kept Garden
- Best Kept front/container garden
- Best Kept Commercial Premises
- Best Kept Community Planting

Prizes - winners and runners up awarded in each category (£100 and £50 garden centre voucher) - total cost of prizes: £750

The awards event in the same format would not be possible in the context of social distancing, therefore, for this year it was proposed that the website, social media and press be used to publicise nominees and award winners

Moved by Councillor McClelland
Seconded by Councillor Logue and

RESOLVED – that the Best Kept Gardens Competition 2020 progresses as set out above and that schools be included.

ACTION BY: Ivor McMullan, Head of Parks

11.5 PK/CP/004 COUNCIL CAR PARKS

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic the decision was taken in March 2020 to suspend charging in those Council car parks which require payment. Following announcements by the Northern Ireland Executive non-essential retailers started to re-open on 15 June and restaurants, cafés and coffee shops can re-open from 3 July.

It was proposed therefore to lift the suspension of charging in the 3 car parks in which payment is required from Wednesday 1 July. For one week from 1 July, customers would be issued with advisory notices only with Penalty Charge Notices issued from Wednesday 8 July.

Moved by Councillor Goodman
Seconded by Alderman Brett and

RESOLVED – that charging in car parks return to normal with effect from Wednesday 1 July 2020 and that alternative car parking arrangements at Antrim Castle Gardens be highlighted to the public.

ACTION BY: Ivor McMullan, Head of Parks/Ursula Fay, Head of Arts and Culture

11.6 CP/CC/011 COMMUNITY CENTRES – CHILDCARE RE-OPENING

The Northern Ireland Executive announced on 11 June 2020 that community centres could re-open for childcare. Some of the Council run community centres facilitate childcare services and educational playschools.

Globe Afterschools Club has been a tenant at Stiles Community Centre for over 18 years. The Club had asked for permission to re-open to facilitate childcare for keyworkers from 1 July 2020. Globe were in the process of working through a risk assessment for re-opening and had undertaken to work with the Environmental Health Team to implement any relevant safety measures in line with government guidance.

Stiles Community Centre was normally staffed by the Council for the duration of after school opening hours. A key holder model for Dunanney Centre and Ballyduff Community Centre had been in place for tenants and had worked successfully both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this instance, tenants who had signed up to the Council's key holder policy have access the building, to open and close the centre when business need requires. Council staff continued to maintain daily cleaning and maintenance.

A similar key holder model had been discussed with Globe and would assist to reduce Council's costs associated with opening the building.

Servicing this request would require 12.5 hours per week to facilitate cleaning at a salary cost for a Community Centre Coordinator of £565.00 per month (scale 2 scp4). The monthly rental income, in July and August, of £1,700 would cover the costs of opening the building.

Councillor Dunlop asked that the reintroduction of counselling services be considered.

Moved by Councillor Montgomery
Seconded by Councillor Dunlop and

RESOLVED – that the Council facilitates a keyholder model to allow Globe Afterschools Club to re-open in Stiles Community Centre and that future requests be dealt with in line with this approach.

ACTION BY: Paul Townsend, Community Facilities Coordinator

11.7 AC/GEN/18 LIGHT UP REQUEST

Members were reminded that it was agreed at the Council meeting in July 2019 that the Council form an all-party working group to decide a policy of lighting the main Council Civic buildings at Mossley Mill and Antrim Civic Centre on days of celebratory occasions for the many diverse sections of our community. The work of this group had been temporarily suspended as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the existing Light Up policy, approved by the Operations Committee in November 2016, still applied.

Correspondence had been sent to the Mayor from the leader of the SDLP (copy circulated) requesting that the Council consider lighting up civic buildings with the Black Lives Matter message. The existing policy stated that:

- (i) Requests to support "light up" are only considered from the following:
 - a. Charitable organisations operating in or impacting upon the Borough.
 - b. Responses to world events.
- (ii) Requests received to be considered by the Head of Arts and Culture on the following basis:
 - a. If compliant with point **(i) a** above then requests will be approved and practical arrangements put in place including promotional activity to support the light up.
 - b. If request is not compliant with the policy it should be reported to the next available committee or Council meeting (except for those listed at (i) a.)

Moved by Alderman Brett
Seconded by Councillor Goodman and

RESOLVED – that this request be referred to the All-Party Working Group set up to look at requests of this nature.

ACTION BY: Ursula Fay, Head of Arts and Culture

Councillor Robinson left the meeting having declared an interest in the next item.

11.8 CP/CD/351 DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES FOOD PACKAGE DISTRIBUTION UPDATE & OPTIONS

BACKGROUND

The delivery of weekly food parcels to those in greatest need was developed as one of the key strands of the Department for Communities (DfC) emergency response to the current COVID-19 crisis. Food Package deliveries to vulnerable and isolated people started on 7 April 2020 and in the 10 weeks since the project started Council, along with the support of the community and voluntary sector, had distributed over 14,500 food boxes to those in need. Each box contained food for one person for one week.

The distribution model developed by Council included:

- DfC funded food boxes were delivered daily (Mon-Fri) from large wholesale food suppliers to the Environmental Services Depot (ESD) in Antrim
- From the ESD, redeployed council staff & vans were used to deliver boxes to identified local community & voluntary groups across the Borough
- Community & Voluntary groups across the Borough had delivered the food boxes to individual households
- A small number of emergency food boxes were retained at Mossley Mill in case of weekend food emergencies

Households in need of food were identified via the Advice NI helpline (triaged by the NHSCT) and by the local knowledge of the community groups.

THE SYSTEM IS CHANGING FROM 26 JUNE

The food boxes were an emergency response, and DfC had decided to transition to more sustainable forms of support enabling people to progress from current emergency interventions. A letter was circulated from Moira Doherty, Engaged Communities Group, DfC.

Across NI over 80,000 shielding letters were issued of which 4,365 (5.4 %) required food boxes. Current analysis of ANBC indicated that 226 individuals shielding were in receipt of a weekly food box via referral from the Advice NI helpline. However, the actual number may be slightly higher as not all referrals had come through the helpline directly but had instead been identified by local groups. The scheme was currently providing 18,000 boxes a week, 76% were going to those who signalled that they are in economic need of food.

From 26 June, DfC had indicated that food boxes would be limited to those in receipt of a shielding letter and had no other means of food support. Those not in receipt of a shielding letter but currently in receipt of a food box for economic hardship needs, should be signposted to other Advice services and Foodbanks. Those in receipt of a shielding letter but not registered with Advice NI would need to register if they had an ongoing need for food support.

IMPACT

There was an anticipated reduction in the current number of food weekly boxes from 1,490 to around 300. This would significantly reduce demands on Council and community group resources. Officers would be in touch with the community groups with an update on the situation and to establish their capacity to offer continued support with identified food box deliveries at local level to those still shielding. The community groups may choose to either continue or discontinue with food box deliveries.

From 26 June Council would only receive food boxes for those with a shielding letter and registered with the Advice NI Helpline and triaged by NHSCT.

COUNCIL'S NEW FOOD BOX DELIVERY MODEL

- Deliveries to and distribution from the ESD will be concentrated on one day per week

- South Antrim Community Transport (SACT) had indicated a willingness to undertake the majority of the deliveries
- Where the community groups want to continue with the deliveries to the door SACT would deliver the appropriate number of boxes to the groups
- Where there is a gap in community sector delivery capability SACT would undertake the end to end deliveries
- This would make it possible to stand down some of the Council assets to allow for the implementation of recovery plans
- Like other community groups, SACT were funded £2k from Council for their COVID-19 relief efforts and had indicated that they have sufficient remaining budget to undertake the above duties for a few weeks but may require a small top up if the requirement continued far beyond that
- Council can make a claim for these costs from the Scheme of Emergency Financial Assistance but there was no guarantee of the claim being successful

Moved by Alderman Kinahan
 Seconded by Councillor Cooper and

RESOLVED – that the report be noted and that the reasonable expenses of South Antrim Community Transport be reimbursed.

ACTION BY: Ronan McKenna, Community Planning Manager

Councillor Robinson returned to the meeting.

11.9 PBS/PS/007 PUBLIC TOILET RE-OPENING PLAN

Introduction

At the Council meeting held on 11 June, Members requested a paper be brought to the Council to include the health and safety implications and the costs of re-opening public toilets.

It was recognised that the availability of public conveniences is critical in supporting the reopening of our towns, parks and visitor attractions. There was therefore a need to consider reopening our public conveniences in line with the general relaxation of COVID-19 lockdown rules in Northern Ireland and Government advice.

This included increased cleaning frequency, additional investment in sanitising products, social distancing and takes account of anticipated public demand.

Members noted that Ballyclare Main Street Public Convenience was currently closed and therefore it was proposed that a service be provided at Ballyclare Town Hall.

A reopening plan had been developed for each facility (circulated). The plan ensured no greater than four hours between cleans for all high use facilities. Medium and low use facilities would receive two cleans per day.

Cost Implications

The additional cleaning at some venues and other measures would have cost implications for the Council. Indicative costs were detailed in the reopening plan. By aligning opening hours it had been possible to manage the additional cost to Council to around £30,000 which was due largely to the costs of sanitising products specific to COVID-19, but also to additional cleaning visits and initial costs around ensuring social distancing.

This assumed that the special measures were required until March 2021.

Timescale for Reopening

All of the Public Conveniences could be opened to the public for use from Monday, 6 July 2020 at the latest. This would allow the contractor time to mobilise staff currently on furlough.

Moved by Alderman Cosgrove
Seconded by Alderman Brett and

RESOLVED – that the re-opening plan be approved.

ACTION BY: Graham Reid, Senior Assets Officer

11.10 CP/GR/107 REVISED GOOD RELATIONS ACTION PLAN

Members were aware that the draft Good Relations Action Plan 2020/21 was approved at Council on 16 December 2019.

Due to the measures put in place in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic there was a significant impact on the Good Relations Action Plan 2020/21 delivery for quarter 1, with an anticipated impact for the remainder of the year due to social distancing measures. In light of this impact the Good Relations Action Plan 2020/21 had been amended to reflect delivery of the action plan utilising alternative methods. A copy of the revised Good Relations Action Plan 2020/21 was circulated for Members' consideration.

The Good Relations Action Plan 2020/21 was requesting a total budget allocation of £193,195.00; which consists of £105,992.00 programme costs, and £87,203.00 staff costs. The Good Relations Action Plan 2020/21 is joint funded by The Executive Office (TEO) and Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (ANBC) at a split of 75% TEO (£144,896), and 25% ANBC (£48,299).

A Letter of Offer for the Good Relations Programme was received from The Executive Office on 15 June 2020. The Letter of Offer was conditional upon receipt of the revised Good Relations Action Plan 2020-2021.

Moved by Councillor Webb
Seconded by Councillor Bennington and

RESOLVED – that the revised Good Relations Action Plan 2020/21 be approved and a multi-cultural event be organised in due course.

ACTION BY: Amy Dunlop, Community Safety and Good Relations Coordinator

11.11 CP/GEN/034 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT AID PROGRAMME 2020/21 FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS – SMALL GRANTS

Members were reminded of the Small Grants Programme which was agreed by the Council in October 2014 as part of the new Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Community Development Grant Aid Programme.

The purpose of the Small Grants programme is to provide financial assistance to groups within the Borough of up to a maximum of £500 towards seeding costs and/or insurance or a small activity and/or insurance. Members were advised that groups who apply for a small grant are not permitted to apply for any other funding available under the wider Community Development Grant Aid Programme during the course of the 2020/21 financial year.

In December 2019 Members agreed that from 1 April 2020 all Small Grant requests of £500 or less be assessed on the basis of Pass/Fail against eligibility criteria and not subjected to a scored assessment process. All proposed awards were subject to the receipt of a Group Constitution, List of Committee Members, Bank Statement, Annual Accounts and a signed disclosure from the group confirming that all other appropriate supporting documentation was in place and can be provided on request or the offer of funding will be withdrawn.

In June 2020, two applications were received and assessed by Officers as outlined below.

Group Name/Project Promoter	Project Description/Title	Pass/Fail	Amount Requested	Amount Awarded
Burnside Village Committee	Small Activity Grant for Insurance Costs	Pass	£500.00	£500.00
CORE New Mossley	Small Activity Grant for Insurance Costs	Pass	£500.00	£500.00

The total budget available for the Community Development Small Grant Aid Programme 2020/21 was £10,000 with a budget of £7,100 remaining.

The total amount of financial assistance requested by the two applications outlined above was £1,000 and if both applications were approved by Council it would leave a balance of £6,100 to fund further applications submitted during the course of the current financial year.

Moved by Alderman Girvan
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and

RESOLVED – that the two Small Grant Applications outlined be approved.

ACTION BY: Jonathan Henderson, Community Services Coordinator

11.12 CE/GEN/004 DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE – CONSULTATION: ADULT RESTORATIVE JUSTICE STRATEGY

Members were advised that correspondence had been received from the Department of Justice in relation to their launch of the proposed development of an Adult Restorative Justice Strategy.

The consultation document had been developed in partnership with the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland (PPSNI), Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI), Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS), Victim Support NI (VSNI), Community Restorative Justice Ireland (CRJI), and, Northern Ireland Alternatives (NIA). It asked readers to consider how they might develop a strategic, co-ordinated approach to restorative practices at all stages of the criminal justice system, from early intervention in the community, formal diversion by statutory agencies, court-ordered disposals, custody and reintegration.

At the heart of the work is a desire to:

- place victims front and centre;
- develop appropriate structures and opportunities to allow victims to be involved, whether directly or indirectly, in the justice system and in decisions which affect them;
- engage and challenge offenders to understand the effects of their actions on victims and the wider community; and
- improve outcomes for all those affected by offending behaviour, whether victims, offenders, families or communities.

All information on the consultation, including the full consultation document, and ways to respond, could be found on the Department's website at: <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/development-adult-restorative-justice-strategy-ni>

Given the current coronavirus pandemic, it was not possible to hold public consultation events. To take account of these unique circumstances, the consultation would run for 12 weeks to allow additional time for consideration and response.

The deadline for response is Friday 11th September 2020.

Moved by Councillor Logue
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and

RESOLVED – that Members respond on an individual or party basis.

NO ACTION

11.13 PK/GEN/171 RIGHT TO SELL FOODSTUFFS AND HOT/SOFT DRINKS IN COUNCIL PARKS

Vending opportunities at Council parks, where they are in place, are either provided through franchise arrangements in associated facilities or through specific arrangements. For example, at the Valley the catering franchisee has an offering at V36 and in Hazelbank, there were separately advertised opportunities.

Currently–(i) ice cream and drinks and (ii) foodstuffs are provided by third parties with the contract expiry dates January 2021 and November 2020 respectively.

Normally, arrangements would start to be made to advertise these opportunities with a view to a seamless transition at contracts ending. However, due to Government guidance on the COVID-19 pandemic Council closed all car parks associated with Parks from Mid-March 2020, meaning that both traders were unable to gain access to their allocated selling pitch for a period of around 3 months. Council considered offering extensions to both traders which would mean that the ice-cream and hot/soft drinks opportunity would be extended to the end of April 2021 and the foodstuffs, to the end of February 2021. If approved, both opportunities would be advertised in time for a handover at the end of the extended contracts in the normal way.

Officers had also considered the potential for any opportunities to offer 'pitches' at other council parks. It was proposed that opportunities at Sixmile Park in Ballyclare, Threemilewater Park and Lilian Bland Community Park for ice cream and hot/soft drinks and, foodstuffs be advertised so that the market could be tested and potential interest explored.

Moved by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Alderman Girvan and

RESOLVED – that

- (i) the existing contracts at Hazelbank Park for ice cream, hot/soft drinks and foodstuffs are extended by 3 months as set out above, to take account of closures during the COVID-19 pandemic and,**
- (ii) opportunities for the sale of ice cream, hot/soft drinks and foodstuffs are advertised at Sixmile Park in Ballyclare, Threemilewater Park and Lilian Bland Community Park, for 1 year with an option by Council to extend for a further period of 12 months, subject to review and performance.**

ACTION BY: Ivor McMullan Head of Parks

12. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

12.1 FI/AUD/02 REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

Members were advised that Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Audit Committee – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police 2018, places a requirement on Audit Committees to

“Report regularly on their work, and at least annually report an assessment of their performance”.

On 4 February 2020, Members of the Audit Committee participated in a facilitated self-assessment review of the performance of the Audit Committee, where they completed the 'Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Audit Committee' self-assessment checklist. The results of this review were agreed by the Audit Committee at their meeting in March 2020, along with an action plan for enhancing the Audit Committee's performance (a copy of the results and action plan was circulated).

The Audit Committee had also prepared an Annual Report (circulated) which was agreed at their meeting in June 2020. This report outlined the Audit Committee's activities during 2019/20 and how the Committee had discharged its roles and responsibilities as set out in the Audit Committee Terms of Reference.

Moved by Alderman Brett
Seconded by Councillor Goodman and

RESOLVED – that the Council notes the Review of Effectiveness of the Audit Committee and the Audit Committee Annual reports.

NO ACTION

12.2 G/MSMO/2/VOL 2 CHANGE IN NOMINATIONS BY DUP

Alderman Brett, Nominating Officer for the Democratic Unionist Party, had advised of the following changes in nominations:-

Alderman Girvan - Police and Community Safety Partnership (from 6 June 2020)

Councillor Robinson - Peace IV (from 18 June 2020)

Moved by Alderman Brett
Seconded by Councillor Goodman and

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

NO ACTION

12.3 CE/OA/013 NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING COUNCIL – MINUTES AND BULLETIN – MARCH 2020

As agreed at the August 2019 meeting of the Council, the Northern Ireland Housing Council's March 2020 monthly bulletin was circulated for Members' information. A copy of the minutes of the Housing Council meeting on 12 March 2020 was also circulated.

Moved by Alderman Brett
Seconded by Councillor Goodman and

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

NO ACTION

12.4 AC/GEN/14 TOURISM NI QUALITY GRADING SCHEME

Members were advised that Tourism Northern Ireland (TNI) operates a Quality Grading Scheme for visitor attractions, which gives operators an independent quality assurance award. The scheme is a practical example of TNI's commitment to increasing visitor numbers and experiences through developing a quality experience.

There are five-quality grades awarded for the standard of services and facilities and are represented like hotels by 1 to 5 stars, which convey the following standards:

- **Five Stars Exceptional**
- **Four Stars Excellent**
- **Three stars Very Good**
- **Two Stars Good**
- **One Star Acceptable**

Assessments are carried out without advance warning through in the main incognito visits by assessors but also with pre-visit research online and on the telephone. Having identified the scheme as an excellent tool in the ongoing continuous improvement strategy an application for Antrim Castle Gardens was submitted to TNI in late 2019. This venue was previously assessed in early 2019 and awarded a four star rating.

The mystery visit was carried out in February 2020 with the outcome report received mid-March. The report was circulated for Members' information. Antrim Castle Gardens had retained its four star/excellent rating just one star lower than the highest grading possible which is 5 star/exceptional.

Members were advised that the report would be used to inform an improvement plan for implementation when the service resumes with a view to improving performance in 2021 and potentially achieving the 5 star grading. The assessment reports are excellent tools to support the ongoing strategy to continuously improve visitor experiences and it was proposed to remain in this scheme and apply for reassessment of the facility in 2021.

Moved by Councillor Lynch
Seconded by Councillor Montgomery and

RESOLVED – that the results of the TNI Quality Grading for Antrim Castle Gardens be noted and the Council participates in the scheme in 2021.

ACTION BY: Ursula Fay, Head of Arts and Culture

Councillor McClelland left the meeting having declared an interest in the next item.

12.5 AC/GEN/008 REQUESTS FOR FACILITY USE

Members were aware that most arts and culture and leisure services remain suspended as the Council begins its recovery of non-essential service with all indoor facilities of both services remaining closed at present. However, in response to requests for assistance from two organisations for facilities in Antrim, arrangements were being made to provide access as follows:

- Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service (NIBTS) – Arrangements were being made to provide access for this service to the main hall in Antrim Forum on 23 and 24 July 9am to 7pm to allow members of the public to give blood. The NIBTS had taken advice from the Public Health Agency and other blood services in the UK and Ireland to ensure that the service operates with all the appropriate health and safety measures in place in relation to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. They had also given a commitment to meet the additional cost of contract cleaning to facilitate these sessions.
- St Johns Ambulance – This charity had made a request for facilities at Antrim Civic Centre in July so they can run training courses for their members. The specific details were still to be finalised however officers will work with the charity to ensure facilities can be made available at the usual community hire rate whilst ensuring compliance with all required health and safety considerations relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A further enquiry had also been made by Deloitte acting on behalf of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and Department of Health in NI to support the national COVID-19 testing programme. In addition to running four Regional Test Sites there were four Mobile Test Units (MTUs) which are essentially pop up test centres. An appropriate site in Antrim was being researched for an MTU to be located for 3-4 seven day periods until the end of August (our current planning horizon).

The requirements from a site perspective were

- Parking for 30-40 cars i.e. car park bays
- Ability to implement a one-way traffic system on site
- Access to toilet facilities for MTU staff

Antrim Civic Centre overflow car park had been identified as a potential location, although this has not yet been confirmed.

Moved by Councillor Montgomery
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and

RESOLVED – that the report be noted and the NI Blood Transfusion Service be promoted on the Council’s social media platforms.

ACTION BY: Andrea McCooke, Director of Organisation Development

Councillor McClelland returned to the meeting.

The Mayor advised that the Motion would be taken at this point of the meeting.

14. MOTION

*Proposed by Alderman Danny Kinahan
Seconded by Councillor Leah Smyth*

"This Council congratulates all those frontline workers who have worked tirelessly throughout this COVID-19 pandemic on all our behalf's, often at great risk to themselves, and calls on the Council to organise an "Event of Appreciation" to be held at some suitable future date so that we can show our gratitude and publicly thank them for all they have done."

RESOLVED – that the Motion be declared unanimously carried and a Working Group be established to take this forward.

ACTION BY: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive/Nick Harkness, Director of Community Planning

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN COMMITTEE'

Moved by Councillor Robinson
Seconded by Alderman McGrath and

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

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

13. ITEMS IN COMMITTEE

13.1 **IN CONFIDENCE** PBS/PS/012 STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT – PROPERTY ASSETS DISPOSAL STUDY

In October 2019, Members considered a report in relation to the disposal of land assets and agreed a number of recommendations. The following report provides an update on the current status.

[REDACTED]

|

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

■

Members were reminded that the Council is the registered owner of Sandyknowes Park, Newtownabbey. An adjoining landowner had written to the Council to indicate that a small portion of their side garden (approximately 6 square meters) falls within the Council's Folio and had asked the Council to consider transferring this portion of land to them. The area in question was shaded yellow in the circulated maps.

Land and Property Services (LPS) had been instructed to carry out a valuation of this potential transfer of Council's land. They had valued the transaction at £500 plus any associated costs of the transfer, including the Council's legal costs and outlay.

The request by the neighbouring landowner reflected what had been in existence since they purchased their property in 1995.

The landowners had agreed to pay the £500 and costs to the Council. They had also provided an assurance that the transfer was simply to regularise the Land Registry mapping, and that the boundaries on the ground as they were at present would remain in situ.

Council's Head of Parks had been consulted and had indicated that he had no objection to this transfer taking place.

Moved by Alderman Cosgrove
Seconded by Councillor Goodman and

RESOLVED – that Council approves the sale of land for the sum of £500 plus all Council's costs and outlay being paid by the purchaser, and that there is no change to the boundaries which are currently in place on site

ACTION BY: Elaine Keenan, Legal Services Officer (Solicitor)

13.3 IN CONFIDENCE ED/ED/070 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOVERY REPORT

Members were aware of the immediate impact that the COVID-19 Pandemic had had on the economy at a global, regional and local level. Over the period of lockdown from Mid-March, much of the economy in the Borough had closed with employees furloughed and employers/businesses seeking government assistance through the various support packages on offer such as the Self-Employed grant, Tourism grant, Hardship Fund and the Business Interruption Loans Fund. This financial assistance had been critical to sustaining employment and keeping businesses operational, however, there was now growing concern that Northern Ireland is facing a deep and severe recession with many redundancies forecast as the Furlough scheme begins to taper off and end in October 2020.

It was estimated that over 21,000 employees are currently furloughed in the Borough, with a directly linked decline in productivity. Over recent weeks, businesses had started to reopen, however, it would take some time before they return to the productivity levels experienced before the pandemic.

There had been an estimated 35% immediate decline in GVA in the Borough equating to a rank of 262 out of 382 Local Authorities across the UK (based on projected GVA impact).

	Total Furloughed and Laid Off	% decline in GVA 2020
Antrim & Newtownabbey	21,200	-11.5%
Ards & North Down	12,400	-10.6%
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	25,200	-10.6%
Belfast	67,200	-10.6%
Causeway Coast & Glens	14,300	-13.3%
Derry City & Strabane	15,900	-9.5%
Fermanagh & Omagh	13,000	-11.9%
Lisburn & Castlereagh	19,600	-9.3%
Mid & East Antrim	15,800	-15.2%
Mid Ulster	22,900	-16.3%
Newry Mourne & Down	22,000	-12%
Northern Ireland	249,500	-12.7%

Source: UUEPC Analysis

Across the various sectors of the economy the impact had been varied with the accommodation and food services sector in NI most negatively affected with over four-fifths (81%) of workers in this sector unable to work. The Wholesale and Retail sector accounts for one in four (25%) workers affected with the Retail trade (excluding motor vehicles), accounting for one fifth (20%) of total workers furloughed or laid off.

Projections anticipated that the sectors at highest risk were Accommodation & Hospitality, Retail (at least non-food segments), Manufacturing and Real Estate. The sectoral impact for the Borough was shown on the table below:

Table: Shares of workplace employment by sectoral risk, NI, with high and low concentrations in LGDs

Risk Rating	Sector	NI share	Highest Council share	Lowest Council share
High	Real Estate	1.2%	Belfast	Mid Ulster
	Accommodation & Food Service Activities	6.0%	Causeway Coast & Glens	Antrim & Newtownabbey
	Manufacturing	10.8%	Mid Ulster	Belfast
	Wholesale & Retail Trade	15.8%	Antrim & Newtownabbey	Belfast
High/Medium	Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	2.3%	Belfast	Mid Ulster
	Transportation & Storage	3.5%	North Down & Ards	Lisburn & Castlereagh
Medium	Construction	6.4%	Mid Ulster	Belfast
	Mining & Quarrying	0.2%	Mid Ulster	Belfast
	Financial & Insurance	2.3%	Belfast	Antrim & Newtownabbey
Low/Medium	Agriculture	3.3%	Fermanagh & Omagh	Belfast

Low	Electricity, Gas, Steam & Air Conditioning Supply	0.3%	Mid & East Antrim	Newry, Mourne & Down
	Water Supply, etc.	0.8%	Newry, Mourne & Down	Mid Ulster
	Public Administration	6.0%	Belfast	Mid Ulster
	Education	8.4%	Derry City & Strabane	Lisburn & Castlereagh
	Human Health & Social Work	15.2%	Lisburn & Castlereagh	Mid Ulster
Unclassified	Other Service	2.9%	North Down & Ards	Fermanagh & Omagh
	Information & Communication	2.5%	Belfast	Mid & East Antrim
	Professional, Scientific & Technical	5.1%	Belfast	Mid & East Antrim
	Administrative & Support Service	6.9%	Belfast	Fermanagh & Omagh

Source: UUEPC analysis using 2019 Workplace Jobs data

Unemployment & Redundancies

The unemployment rate had risen from circa 2.8% to over 5% in Antrim and Newtownabbey since March 2020 (UUEPC Labour Market Impacts). It was estimated that 4,400 claims were made under the Self Employed Income Support Scheme from 5,500 claimants that were eligible.

In Antrim and Newtownabbey, it was estimated 20% of the population (aged 16+) were furloughed and there had been a number of redundancies already announced with Belfast International Airport to make 45 of its 195 employees redundant. Ulster University had also recently announced that it may have to reduce staff costs in the current context of its already stretched finances.

Unfortunately, there had also been a closure announced with Homebase, Newtownabbey set to close in 2020.

Positive Signs

Against the backdrop of the pandemic there had been some positive news particularly in the Life and Health Sciences sector in the Borough which was vitally important at this time. RANDOX recently announced a £30 million investment at its Headquarters in Antrim to create a new COVID testing lab and 300 jobs with Fortress Diagnostics recently completing a major investment in its Antrim facility.



Interest in Global Point remained strong with a number of potential investors continuing to explore options whilst it was also anticipated that the Antrim Technology Park, owned by Invest NI would come to the market over the next 2-3 months.

Officers were working in tandem with key partners including TNI to recover the Tourism sector which will be reliant on the local domestic market for the next

18-24 months. The Galgorm Group had invested £2m in the (previous) Templeton hotel which was due to re-open in July 2020.

Match funding of £350 million had been confirmed by the NI Executive for the Belfast Region City Deal, in addition to which a further £100 million had also been agreed for complementary projects where partners can demonstrate a viable capital project which is complementary to the City/Growth Deals. The focus was currently on bringing forward Digital and Innovation proposals that can aid recovery.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Immediate Economic Response

- Information and advice promoted on www.antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk /coronavirus-business-info with over 500 businesses supported on a 1:1 basis and 22,392 views on the business information page
- 200 business social media posts to date reaching 546,508 persons across Council's LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter platforms.
- Initiated a business text help number
- Initiated business webinars on the following subjects directing businesses to 1:1 mentoring support under each: *Keeping Staff & Customers Safe*, Critical financial analysis, A guide to e-commerce, Personal resilience, Innovation and changing work practices, Remote working guidance and Re-opening with greatest impact
- Promoted a COVID-19 Business Resilience and Revival Package immediately upon lock-down
- Dedicated free Chartered Accountancy support to businesses, primarily targeting sole traders / self-employed and partnerships. Also offered specialist mentoring relating to risk assessments and reopening safely.
- Easement of planning enforcement as appropriate
- Since the lockdown was announced on 23 March, 18 grant payments with a total value of £264,843.36 have been authorised for payment via GROW to assist businesses with cash-flow
- Expedited claims for the Antrim Revitalise shopfront scheme in Fountain and Bridge Street, £89,106.17 funded by DFC to assist cash-flow
- Expedited claim for Antrim and Newtownabbey Promotion and Marketing, funded by DFC for £48,393.26
- Expedited claim for Antrim and Newtownabbey Garden Show Ireland Promotions, funded by DFC for £19,312.9
- Supported 152 local businesses to adjust their business models to survive and promoted the innovative solutions via a local directory and GIS map. Categories of service are: Grocery/Fresh Food; Hardware; Health Services; Food Takeaway/Delivery/Other Services providing information about business opening hours; ordering/payment facilities; safety measures and delivery service (if available). Pages have generated in excess of 11,000 views
- Agreed a Memorandum of Understanding with Department for the Economy to support the administration of the £25,000 grant payment to tourism, hospitality and retail businesses

- Participated on the Tourism NI Business Support Recovery Working Group
- SOLACE representation on Labour Relations Agency NI Forum informing list of NI essential businesses and guidance documents

In tandem with this the Planning section had not sought to pursue enforcement except where priority breaches had occurred.

In order to support the reopening of retail from 19 June, the Council provided business packs to over 100 businesses across the main towns which contained key supplies such as hand sanitizer, hazard tape, signage, gloves and masks. As demand had proven strong from businesses the contents required for a further 400 bags had now been ordered.

Moving Forward

As we move forward into the 'Recovery' phase and social distancing becomes the 'norm' for an extended period, the Council would play a proactive role in aiding the recovery of the local economy. These measures would include;

1. Establishment of a Retail Re-Opening Mobilisation Forum and Tourism Recovery Forum

Officers had been working closely with the Department for Communities and Tourism NI to progress support plans for the Town Centres and Tourism sector. A focussed group of stakeholders had been identified for each that will now work collaboratively to bring forward appropriate recovery plans. In the case of tourism, it was estimated that for the next 18-24 months the main market will be local domestic tourists from NI, Republic of Ireland and the rest of the UK in that order.

A survey of the Council's tourism businesses had indicated that their key concerns/issues relate to;

- Challenges with the application of 2m social distancing and the introduction of new operating procedures
- Customer confidence to visit attractions and stay in accommodation (kite-mark)
- 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

Retail NI's Independents' Day was due to be launched on 1 July and will be for whole month of July. Shoppers were being called on to shop local as the annual Independents' Day campaign in Northern Ireland is launched. The Council would promote the campaign and engage with local independent

traders to publicise their offers.

2. Bid to Department for Communities (DfC) for Town Centre support

DfC had written to the Council to outline plans for a COVID Recovery Revitalisation Programme which would be rolled out from the end of June. It was anticipated that this could attract approximately £430,000 to the town centres of the Borough to aid recovery. A very short turnaround time was stipulated due to the need to provide this funding at the earliest opportunity therefore a Tranche 1 bid was submitted on 22 June, circulated. It was anticipated that the delivery of Tranche 1 would be kept under review and subject to change depending on the feedback received and in line with the needs of the businesses. Members would be consulted on the preparation of a Tranche 2 bid.

3. City Deal

Work was continuing to progress the City Deal initiatives with a draft business case submitted for the Queen's university AMIC project and Atkins appointed by the Department for Infrastructure to take forward the Glider expansion business case. £100 million was also announced by the Finance Minister for a contingency fund which is focussed on Digital & Innovation projects to support the economy in the wake of the pandemic.

The Council Panel was due to meet on 24 June but as this was not possible a progress update had been provided, circulated.

4. Town Centre Recovery & Pavement Café Legislation

The Minister for the Department for Communities wrote to the Council on 10 June circulated, to offer the use of DfC assets, eg land in Town Centres, to assist with social distancing and recovery plans and also to support On Street Café legislation to assist businesses to achieve the space needed to trade effectively. The correspondence highlighted the need to be cognisant of those with disabilities and their requirements.

The Minister for the Department for Infrastructure wrote to Councils on 12 June (circulated) to ask that Councils in exercising their functions under planning legislation temporarily take a flexible and pragmatic approach to the use of on-street seating for cafés and bars, beer gardens and similar outdoor areas to accommodate physical/social distancing. She goes on to state that planning authorities should not seek to undertake planning enforcement which will unnecessarily restrict such establishments providing on street seating however notes that other matters such as consenting and licensing regimes will need to be considered.

In order to progress arrangements, the Environmental Health team would now progress the relevant paperwork and procedures that will be required and the Economic Development team will survey ground floor businesses with ground floor street access to ascertain the level of demand. A separate

report had been prepared with fuller detail which proposed that the Council would not take enforcement action in order to support businesses to maximise this opportunity.

5. Department for the Economy (DfE) Rebuilding a Stronger Economy

Minister for the Economy had approved the re-allocation of £30 million from within her Departmental budget to address emerging COVID-19 budget pressures. This was part of the June Budget Monitoring exercise in which Departments had been given special dispensation to re-allocate non-ring fenced budget to fund emerging COVID-19 pressures. The funding, made of up almost £24 million in resource/day-to-day funding and £6 million in capital funding, would focus firmly on the recovery and rebuild phases of the Department's response to the pandemic.

The Minister also announced the strategy for economic recovery entitled: REBUILDING A STRONGER ECONOMY - THE MEDIUM TERM RECOVERY TOWARDS A MORE COMPETITIVE, INCLUSIVE AND GREENER ECONOMY

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/Rebuilding-stronger-economy-medium-term-economic-response.DOCX>

There were four sectors highlighted where NI is already a global leader and which have high potential to provide much higher paid jobs. These sectors would be the target of future investment.

- Life and health sciences
- Advanced manufacturing
- Clean energy
- Digital

With specific reference to Clean Energy Members were advised that officers are liaising with the City Deal team regarding potential funding for training and with Belfast City Council and Mid & East Antrim Council to progress an application to the Industrial Energy Transformation Fund for an initial scoping study/business case to explore the potential for a Hydrogen Centre of Excellence and an interim training facility.

6. Broadband FFNI

One of the key challenges that had emerged as a result of the pandemic particularly in rural areas has been the lack of/poor broadband coverage as people have sought to work from home. The Council was involved in a number of initiatives to redress this situation including FFNI with service providers expected to be appointed in July 2020 to roll out the infrastructure.

7. Working collaboratively with partners eg. DfC and Invest NI to support those furloughed and those who become unemployed to provide appropriate responses.

As previously noted there were 21,000 employees across the Borough currently furloughed. The unemployment rate was also increasing steadily with major concerns particularly for young people and those in the hospitality/leisure sectors who may be most adversely affected. It would therefore be important that appropriate support packages are put in place to assist e.g. online job fairs, early signalling of new job opportunities, potential for retraining and conversion etc. Officers would therefore work in tandem with key partners to promote a local response to the challenges ahead.

Moved by Councillor Bennington
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and

RESOLVED – that updates and resource requests from the Retail and Tourism recovery forums and actions related to unemployment and redundancies be brought to the Council on a regular basis.

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

13.4 IN CONFIDENCE WM/arc21/4 arc21 JOINT COMMITTEE PAPERS

As agreed at the November (2015) meeting of Council, the papers and Bulletin for the arc21 Joint Committee Meeting were circulated for:

- June 2020

Members were reminded that these documents are confidential and may be legally privileged or otherwise protected from disclosure so therefore Members should not disclose this information to any third party and the information must be kept secure.

Moved by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Goodman and

RESOLVED – that the papers be noted.

NO ACTION

13.5 IN CONFIDENCE PK/GEN/026 FERRIS WHEEL AT LOUGH SHORE PARK, JORDANSTOWN

Members were reminded that approval was given in July 2019 to appoint an operator to supply and operate a Ferris Wheel attraction the next month at Jordanstown Lough Shore Park including the period of the Shoreline Festival for a fee of £1,500. The arrangement involved the operator retaining all income.

Officers had been approached by the 2019 Operator, G force Amusements with a similar request, for the month of August 2020 whereby a fee is paid to Council and the operator retains income and covers all costs.

The operator had indicated that a COVID-19 Safety Plan and Social Distancing Plan, approved by the HSE was in place.

In view of the need to comply with social distancing and the impact on the operator, it was proposed to vary the normal charge for commercial hire of a council park and offer the same fee as 2019, £1,500 thereby taking account of the more challenging conditions. Such an attraction would enhance the visitor experience at Jordanstown Lough Shore Park during the summer season. Payment of the normal bond would apply to cover any damage that may be caused to the site.

Moved by Councillor Cooper
Seconded by Councillor Magill and

RESOLVED – that the Council agrees to the proposal by G Force Amusements to supply and operate a Ferris Wheel at Jordanstown Lough Shore Park for a fee of £1,500 for the month of August 2020.

ACTION BY: Ursula Fay, Head of Arts and Culture/ Ivor McMullan, Head of Parks

13.6 IN CONFIDENCE FI/FIN/043 EMERGENCY FINANCIAL PLAN

Members were reminded that it had been agreed to keep the current financial position under review.

Members were aware of the need to meet the needs and expectations of our residents and ratepayers within the current financial constraints.

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

Officers had prepared a revised budget for the current financial year based on reasonable "do something" scenario (copy circulated). This showed a shortfall of £5.7m taking into account COVID-19 related grants and furlough.

The scenario assumed the following:

- Leisure Centres will reopen on a limited basis in August
- Theatres, etc, will reopen by Christmas with Social Distancing
- 75% of all grants reinstated
- Outdoor events resuming from 1 August
- A decision to be made in due course about Capital Schemes

This scenario would reduce the number of staff who would be furloughed.

Officers had also prepared a rates calculation scenario for 2021/22 based on normal service delivery (copy circulated) and a detailed breakdown of the cost of statutory and non-statutory services (circulated).

Members noted the following legislation regarding Leisure, Economic Development, Tourism and Arts and Culture:-

(1) Section 10 of the Recreation and Youth Services (NI) Order 1986:

F1 "(1) Each district council shall secure the provision for its area of adequate facilities for recreational, social, physical and cultural activities and for that purpose may, either alone or together with another district council or any other person -

(2) A district council shall, in carrying out its functions under paragraph (1), have regard to the facilities provided by other district councils or by other persons ..."

(2) Section 107 of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972:

(Contributions for development of trade, tourism and cultural activities):

F131 "(1) A council may –

(a) contribute towards the expense of any voluntary body which carries on activities within the district of the council, being activities for the purpose of –

(i) furthering the development of trade, industry or commerce in the district, or

(ii) encouraging the pursuit by persons residing in the district of interests of a cultural or artistic nature;

(b) contribute towards the expenses of any association which carries on activities calculated to assist the development of tourist traffic in Northern Ireland.

F131 (2) A council may contribute under subsection (1)(a) towards the expenses of a voluntary body incurred on publicity only where the publicity is incidental to the main purpose for which the contribution is given."

Income

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

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

- Domestic rates income will reduce by at least 2% i.e. £500,000
- Non Domestic rates will reduce by 25% i.e. £5m in line with forecasted reduction in GVA in line with the projected economic downturn – this assumes that LPS will continue to pay the Council for rates not collected as a result of the rates exemption scheme
- The Council's earned income will reduce by £7.5m in this financial year
- COVID-19 additional spend will be approximately £400,000

This impact would be partially mitigated by applications for 'Furlough' through the HMRC Job Retention Scheme and the Northern Ireland Assembly emergency funding package at an amount of approximately £1.9m.

Furlough

Outline of Scheme

The Scheme from the 19 March to 31 July allows employers to apply for grant based on 80% of an employee's usual wage plus employer's national insurance and a 3% contribution to employer pension costs.

Furlough grant claims had been submitted for the period March to May. Claim amounts and estimated claim amounts for June and July were tabled below:

Month	Employees	Claim Amount
March	309	65,966
April	310	246,874
May	355	250,544
June (estimated)	350	245,000
July (estimated)	350	245,000

Scheme changes

The chancellor on 12 May announced an extension to the Scheme to 31 October. Further detail of the scheme extension was announced on 29 May. The main impacts for Council are

- August – employers will pay employers NIC and pension costs – there is no discretion around this;
- September – 80% funding reduces to 70%; employer to subsidise the 10% funding gap – there is no discretion around this;
- October – further reduction to 60% funding; employer to subsidise the 20% funding gap – there is no discretion around this.

The total intervention funding from the Job Retention Scheme to the end of July is estimated at £1.1m.

Use of Reserves

Council Total Reserves are made up of a number of Balances and Reserves. Some of these have been set up for specific purposes eg Rates Appeal Reserve. The Council's General Fund (usable reserve) at 31 March 2019 was £7.3m. However, this Reserve would be impacted when the Financial Statements for 2019/20 are finalised. Also, the estimates process for 2019/20 provided for £700,000 to be released from this Reserve. This means that the estimated General Fund at 31 March 2020 is £5.6m. This was subject to any changes after the NIAO process is complete. The Council Reserves Policy is set at 9% of Gross Revenue spend of £66m (£5.9m).

The use of Reserves beyond this would require a change to the Reserves

Policy of Council. Members were aware that it is prudent to hold a minimum of one month's expenditure in reserves (£5.5m).

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

The General Fund Reserve (£5.6m) is an accumulation of surpluses over time. It does not sit as cash in the bank but has been invested by the Council in the assets and facilities throughout the Borough as part of prudent treasury management. In normal circumstances, the Council operates to have neither surplus cash nor a significant overdraft at the end of each month. Use of reserves would not therefore assist in the current situation.

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

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

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

In normal circumstances the Council's reserves were adequate to cushion uneven cash flows and prevent unnecessary temporary borrowing as well as a contingency for unexpected events. They were, however, insufficient to cover an event of the scale of the current situation.

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

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

Cash Position

The current reduction in income is having an immediate impact on the Council's cash flow.

Members were already aware that the Council has other significant cash outlays over the next six months including repayment of rates appeals monies to Belfast International Airport (BIA):

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

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

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

Members noted that unless measures were put in place soon to mitigate the situation as outlined above the "business as usual" rates calculation for 2021/22 estimates an increase of 28%. Members also noted that to proceed with a reasonable "do something" option in the current year would exhaust the Council's current level of reserves.

Moved by Alderman Brett
 Seconded by Alderman Cosgrove and

RESOLVED – that

- (a) Officers carry out a review of resources to reduce costs related to capital projects, revenue spending and staffing and that these proposals be presented to Council for decision;**
- (b) the Chief Executive continues to engage the Department for Communities and the Department for Finance to stress the financial pressures being faced by the Council;**
- (c) a briefing workshop be organised for Members.**

ACTION BY: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive

MOTION TO PROCEED 'OUT OF COMMITTEE'

Moved by Councillor Hamill
 Seconded by Alderman Kinahan 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.

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and the meeting concluded at 7.46 pm.

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.