



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD  
AT MOSSLEY MILL ON MONDAY 30 NOVEMBER 2020 AT 6.30 PM**

**In the Chair** : Mayor (Councillor J Montgomery)

**Members Present** : Aldermen – F Agnew, P Brett, T Burns, T Campbell, L Clarke,  
M Cosgrove, M Girvan, P Michael and J Smyth

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, N Ramsay, S Ross, L Smyth,  
M Stewart, R Swann, B Webb and R Wilson

**In Attendance:** David Porter - Divisional Roads Manager, DfI  
Stephen Gardiner - Section Engineer, DfI

**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  
Borough Lawyer and Head of Legal Services – P Casey  
Head of Media – J Hart  
Head of Governance – L Johnston  
Systems Support Officer – C Bell  
ICT Projects Officer – J Higginson  
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 physically attend the meeting. The public and the press can access those parts of the meeting which they are entitled to attend via live stream (a link to which is on the Council website). The meeting 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, and advised Members of the audio recording procedures.

The meeting opened with a Bible reading and prayer by The Venerable Dr Stephen McBride, Archdeacon of Connor.

Councillors Cushinan, Finlay, Goodman, Kelly, Kinnear, Logue and McGrann joined the meeting.

### **MAYOR'S REMARKS**

The Mayor commended and thanked the Officers involved in the Christmas switch-on activity for providing a professional and entertaining series of virtual events. Each show has attracted a viewing audience in excess of 10,000 and highlights the Christmas message along with key safety messages and encourages residents to shop local. The Mayor highlighted the difficulties faced by local traders and in particular one of the Borough's largest employers, Belfast International Airport.

## **2 APOLOGIES**

Councillor Robinson  
Alderman McGrath

## **3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Item 10.2 – Councillors Cooper, Dunlop, Finlay and Montgomery  
Item 12.8 – Councillor Wilson – non-pecuniary interest

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

Moved by Alderman Smyth  
Seconded by Councillor Finlay and

**RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Meeting of Monday 26 October 2020 be taken as read and signed as correct.**

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

Moved by Councillor Foster  
Seconded by Alderman Burns and

**RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Operations Committee Meeting of Monday 2 November 2020 be approved and adopted.**

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

Moved by Alderman Brett  
Seconded by Councillor Kelly and

**RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Policy and Governance Committee Meeting of Tuesday 3 November 2020 be approved and adopted.**

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

Moved by Councillor Cooper  
Seconded by Councillor Goodman and

**RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Community Planning Committee Meeting of Monday 9 November 2020 be approved and adopted with the exception of Item 4.2 which was referred back to the Community Planning Committee for further discussion.**

*ACTION BY: Nick Harkness, Director of Community Planning*

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

Moved by Alderman Campbell  
Seconded by Councillor Flanagan and

**RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee Meeting of Monday 16 November 2020 Part 1 be taken as read and signed as correct.**

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

Moved by Alderman Campbell  
Seconded by Councillor Flanagan and

**RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee Meeting of Monday 16 November 2020 Part 2 be approved and adopted.**

## **9 PRESENTATION BY DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE ROADS SERVICE**

The Mayor welcomed David Porter and Stephen Gardiner of the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) to the meeting and congratulated David on his new post of Director of Engineering.

The DfI representatives, who attended the meeting via Zoom, provided an overview of work being undertaken, future plans, responded to Members' questions and agreed to respond to individual Members.

The Mayor and Members thanked David Porter and Stephen Gardiner for their presentation, their work within the Borough, wished them a Merry Christmas and they left the meeting.

## **10 ITEMS FOR DECISION**

### **10.1 G/MSMO/008/VOL2 SONI CONSULTATION - TRANSMISSION DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR NORTHERN IRELAND 2020-2029**

Members were advised that correspondence had been received from SONI, a copy of which was circulated, who operates and plans the electricity grid in Northern Ireland. SONI was currently in the process of consulting on the

Transmission Development Plan for Northern Ireland (TDPNI) 2020-2029 a copy of which can be downloaded/viewed via the following link:-  
<http://www.soni.ltd.uk/media/documents/TDPNI2020-draft-for-SONI-consultation.pdf>

The proposals detailed within the TDPNI would ultimately support Northern Ireland's future renewable energy targets; with Minister Dodds MLA, recently outlining an ambition for no less than 70% of electricity generated from renewable sources by 2030 – a stronger and more flexible grid would be needed.

Within the TDPNI 2020-29 SONI was proposing a number of essential upgrades to the Northern Ireland grid including:

- Modernising parts of the grid in the Belfast Metropolitan Area, so that it can fuel long-term economic growth in the city centre
- They were also looking to mid-to-north County Antrim, here the grid is at capacity and needs to be strengthened to increase the flow of electricity from renewable sources
- The North West is another key region for works. SONI wants to strengthen the grid here to support economic development and to facilitate decarbonisation of Northern Ireland's electricity supply.

The consultation period runs from 10 November to 11 December 2020. Following this they would update their plans before submitting them to the Utility Regulator for consideration.

Submissions could be made by email to [info@soni.ltd.uk](mailto:info@soni.ltd.uk). Please include "Response to TDPNI Consultation" in the title of any email response. If sending by post, please address to: TDPNI 2020-2029, SONI Ltd, 12 Manse Road, Belfast, BT6 9RT.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson  
Seconded by Councillor Goodman and

**RESOLVED – that Members respond on an individual or Party basis.**

*NO ACTION*

*Having declared an interest in the next item, Councillor Finlay left the Chamber.*

## **10.2 CP/CD/351 ACCESS TO FOOD - CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR SUPPORT**

Members were advised that correspondence (circulated) had been received from the Department for Communities (DfC) advising of a fund of £3.5m from the NI Executive for Christmas/New Year food support. While DfC intended to distribute some of this centrally it was clear that they would rely on the 11 councils to help coordinate support at a local level.

While there was no formal confirmation of the individual Council allocations or detailed guidelines for how the funding can be used it was likely that the time scales would be too short to run an application process before Christmas. Early indications suggested that Antrim and Newtownabbey could be in receipt of around £120k from this fund.

DfC had suggested that Councils should target the following groups across the region, but with a focus on areas of disadvantage through Neighbourhood Renewal, key strategic VCS organisations in areas outside NR and Rural groups:

- a. Children and Young People;
- b. Carers;
- c. Older People;
- d. People Living with Disability;
- e. Anyone who has lost income as a direct result of the pandemic;
- f. Clinically extremely vulnerable (link to DoH and Trusts). This element is a contingency in case shielding is reintroduced.

DfC also proposed a focus on a more strategic and sustainable approach to food poverty/food insecurity issues and some specific support elements reflecting the ongoing challenges many of our citizens face.

Proposed uses for the funding in Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council include:

- Up to £2k each for all 8 x Fair Share members (list circulated) in the Borough to help with the purchase of stock
- Up to £10k each for the Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships in Rathcoole and Grange
- Up to £1.5k each to the current 18 recipients of Areas at Risk funding (list circulated)
- £16k for the older citizens Christmas events that has already been launched. A flexible approach to the timing of events is proposed to accommodate COVID restrictions
- Up to £1k to each of the 35 x CV groups on the circulated list who supported food distribution during the emergency COVID-19 relief. Members are requested to advise if there are other groups that should be added to this list.

Subject to DfC confirmation of what would be considered eligible under the programme; funding to the NR areas, AAR recipients, charities and CV groups could be used for a range of support including:

- Family/individual support packages, including food and seasonal items
- Cooked meal provision, perhaps in partnership with local restaurants/community food providers, reflecting private sector collaboration
- Providing 'meals on wheels' Christmas lunches and companionship to older people living alone.

- Support to safe spaces, offering somewhere safe to spend Christmas, and Christmas meals and activities.

DfC had been organising zoom calls with Councils in the coming days to hear views and help refine the details of the investment fund.

Equality Screening and Rural Proofing had been undertaken and an Equality Impact Assessment was not required. The screening forms were circulated for Members' information.

Proposed by Councillor Goodman

Seconded by Councillor Ross and

**RESOLVED – that, subject to confirmation of the programme details from DfC,**

**(i) Members approve the range of investments proposed and agree that officers have a degree of flexibility to vary the amounts and recipients to reflect the actual grant awarded by DfC;**

**(ii) Members approve the enclosed Equality Impact Assessment Form and Rural Needs Impact Assessment Form.**

*ACTION BY: Ronan McKenna, Community Planning Manager*

*Councillor Finlay returned to the Chamber.*

### **10.3 L/LEI/2 SPORTS CLUB HARDSHIP FUND**

Members were reminded that at the November meeting of the Operations Committee the establishment of a Sports Hardship Fund was considered to help smaller local sports club within the Borough to meet the additional costs of compliance with COVID-19 requirements.

Subject to approval at November meeting of Council, it was proposed that the £50,000 fund would be open to clubs for applications for up to a maximum of £1,000. The fund had been designed to try to ensure that applications are straightforward yet still meet good governance requirements to make it as assessable and inclusive as possible. The criteria for the scheme, which were circulated for consideration, had been developed to offer 100% funding and in addition, it was proposed to accept applications which include spend since 1 April 2020. This was to assist applicants to help to offset spend on COVID-19 measures to date which may have depleted funds.

In order to ensure that funding gets to clubs as quickly as possible Officers were requesting delegated authority to administer and vouch successful applications.

Proposed by Councillor Magill

Seconded by Councillor Foster and

**RESOLVED – that**

- (i) **the criteria for the Sports Hardship Fund be approved, and,**
- (ii) **delegated authority be granted to officers to approve assessed applications and vouch and make payment to successful applicants**

*ACTION BY: Matt McDowell, Head of Leisure*

#### **10.4 ED/ED/186 ERDF COLLABORATIVE FUNDING BID FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION**

Members were advised that Invest NI had invited local Councils to submit a collaborative bid for remaining funds under the ERDF Local Economic Development Measure. The overall resources available were in the region of £1.1million (based on £660,000 ERDF; £220,000 Invest NI and £220,000 match funding from Councils). Funding allocations were likely to be committed over two financial years.

Following discussion in relation to shared priorities, it had been agreed that the proposal should be focussed on Digital Transformation. This programme will be additional to any current digital support programmes which Councils are delivering and would seek to complement the proposals under the Belfast Region City Deal and the other Growth Deals

Based on preliminary findings, it was proposed that this programme will be focused on a relatively small number of businesses. These businesses will have the potential to embrace a digital transformation of their business. Another potential work strand would focus on increasing the number of companies that can engage with the range of Challenge Funds that are likely to emerge as part of some of the City Deals/Growth Deals work. Currently, the number of NI companies engaging in these initiatives was relatively limited and the uptake of funds from organisations such as Innovate UK was low compared to other UK regions.

In order to move forward, assistance was required to draft the technical application to Invest NI and it was proposed to appoint a consultant the indicative cost of which is £9,000 which will be shared across the Councils. This contribution will form part of the Councils collective match funding required as part of the overall £1.1 million programme.

A further report would be presented to Members in due course providing the detail of the programme.

Members were also aware of the Complementary Fund of £100 million linked to the City Deal/Growth Deals announced earlier this year. It was proposed that this fund could facilitate a relatively small-scale proposal (£3-4 million) to establish a flexible support fund providing capital grants for SMEs seeking to invest in digital transformation, for example new equipment, software etc. This opportunity whilst distinct from the collaborative ERDF application, has the potential to add value by providing a mechanism to address financial barriers to digital transformation. It could also substantially enhance the leverage that could be brought to the ERDF application and was likely to increase the chance of securing approval from Invest NI.

Proposed by Alderman Smyth  
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and

**RESOLVED – that the Council supports the development of the Digital Transformation Programme and provides a contribution of approximately £1,000 towards the costs of preparing the bid to Invest NI.**

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

*Alderman Michael left the meeting during the next item.*

## **10.5 CP/CP/122 SOCIAL ECONOMY – COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING SCOPING EXERCISE**

Members were aware that responsibility for Social Enterprise transferred to Local Government under the Review of Public Administration in 2015. The Council had supported the sector through delivery of a Pilot Social Enterprise programme. This was scheduled to conclude in March 2020 and supported 6 existing and 9 start-up social enterprises.

The programme was delivered by Mallusk Enterprise Park (MEP) at a total cost of £36,950. An end of project report indicated that the outcomes were good and there was good response to start-up spaces on the programme. Full evaluation will be received from MEP in due course. Participants included Extern NI, Transport Training Services (TTS NI), Alternative Angles (Triangle Housing), Lightwork NI, Crumlin United (Pakenham Community Hub), JC Todd, Laurelview Equestrian Centre, HICUP, The Mango Girl, The Yew Tree Doorstep Meals, Unique Ireland Tours, Riverside School and Quirky Emporium (Bridge Training Association). As a result of this programme 5 new businesses registered with Companies House and 10 paid positions were created.

The Council also supports a range of social enterprises across the Borough through various contracts, eg Bryson Recycling and Habitat for Humanity; Service Level Agreements for the operation of the Community Centres at Rathfern and Monkstown; a voluntary advice service contract with Community Advice Antrim and Newtownabbey and has acted as 'sponsor' for a number of groups through the Public Asset Disposal process.

In the current financial year to the end of September 2020, 16% of all council expenditure was with 383 local suppliers at a value of £2.4m. Only 14% of expenditure was outside of Northern Ireland (£2m) benefitting a further 380 local businesses. The remaining expenditure by Council in the NI supply chain for Council services is just under £10.5m. The Council will continue to support a buy-local ethos to stimulate economic recovery from COVID-19. To support this the Council delivers a Bid 2 Win programme to help businesses compete for public procurements.

The Council, working with its City Deal partners, was also exploring opportunities to include social clauses to promote apprenticeships, training/employment and other benefits through relevant City Deal contracts.



Development Trusts NI (DTNI) wrote to the Council earlier this year regarding a piece of work in relation to Community Wealth Building. DTNI had established a framework entitled 'Time to Build an Inclusive Local Economy, a copy of which was circulated. This includes a range of measures to support the social and economic rebuilding of the economy post COVID-19. Similar approaches have been adopted by Preston City Council, North Ayrshire Council and the Welsh Assembly.

DTNI drawing on project funding from Friends Provident Foundation, will be working with Centre for Local Economic Strategies and The Community Foundation to consider the immediate, short term strategic actions and medium and long term policy priorities needed to launch Community Wealth Building in Northern Ireland. The type of interventions which are proposed include harnessing the spending power of public bodies such as Councils and hospitals and Universities through local sourcing of products and services from social enterprises, facilitating the growth of products, employment and services that can be provided by social enterprises and promoting the uptake of land/buildings that are vacant/underused.

In advance of engaging directly with DTNI it was proposed that a Scoping Study be commissioned to explore the current status of the Social Economy sector in the Borough. Members knew that compared to other Council areas, the estimated number and range of social enterprises in Antrim and Newtownabbey is quite limited, potentially influenced by the fact that to date the unemployment level has been very low and employment opportunities have been plentiful due to the presence of large employers. It is also the case that whilst there is a large community and voluntary sector within the Borough, the majority of these groups have remained as constituted community groups and have not made the transition into social enterprise bodies such as community companies etc.

It will be important therefore in the first instance to understand the capability and ambition of organisations to grow and transition into this type of operating model and to explore the type of support which would be required to assist them on this journey.

This work will also ensure that the Council area is in a position to benefit from the Peace+ programme. The Programme will have two interlinked core objectives, firstly to take advantage of the opportunities and address the needs arising from the peace process, in order to boost economic growth and stimulate social and economic regeneration and secondly to take action to promote social inclusion, particularly for those at the margins of economic and social life. Funding of approximately £1 million would be available to support social enterprise development.

It was anticipated that the cost of the initial scoping study would be between £5,000 to £10,000.

Proposed by Councillor Goodman  
Seconded by Councillor McWilliam and

**RESOLVED – that the Scoping Study be progressed at a cost of £5,000 to £10,000.**

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

#### **10.6 EH/EHS/LR/011 SCHEME OF DELEGATED FUNCTIONS – ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

Members were reminded that the Department of Health made regulations in response to the serious threat to public health arising from the incidence and spread of the COVID-19 Coronavirus in Northern Ireland.

The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2020 came into force on 28 March 2020.

The latest revision of these regulations includes allowing Councils to designate staff as Enforcement Officers for the purposes of issuing an improvement notice where there is a breach of specific regulations.

The premises improvement notice must:

- specify any premises to which it relates;
- specify the measures the enforcement officer requires a person to take in order to ensure that the person complies with any requirement or requirements of the specified regulations; and
- specify a time limit within which the measures must be taken (which must not be less than 48 hours beginning with the time the notice is issued).

A copy of the improvement notice must also be displayed in a prominent position near every entrance to the premises, and a copy posted on the Council's website.

Following this new designation, it was necessary to update the Scheme of Delegated Functions for the Director of Operations and the Head of Environmental Health. Copies of the revised Schedules were circulated.

Proposed by Councillor McClelland  
Seconded by Councillor Foster and

**RESOLVED – that the Scheme of Delegated Functions for the Director of Operations, Geraldine Girvan and Head of Environmental Health, Clifford Todd are adopted.**

*ACTION BY: Clifford Todd, Head of Environmental Health*

#### **10.7 ED/TOU/070 VOL 2 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM STRATEGIES**

Members recalled the detailed engagement undertaken to inform the Economic Development Strategy and associated Socio Economic Profile which were approved 'in principle' in November 2018. A further action plan

was developed to articulate the immediate priorities emerging from these documents and this was approved by the Council in August 2019. All of this documentation had been used to inform the economic aspects of the Local Development Plan (LDP).

Similarly, the draft Tourism strategy was agreed 'in principle' in September 2017 and a detailed action plan followed in July 2018. A subsequent prioritisation exercise was then undertaken by Tim Husbands on behalf of the Council, as summarised in the circulated presentation which was presented to the Strategic Economic Working Group in February 2020. The Group asked that a detailed report on the presentation be provided to the full Council. Due to COVID restrictions it was not possible to facilitate this as a presentation by Mr Husbands however a copy of the presentation was reported to the July Council meeting and approval granted to proceed with a number of key elements at a cost of £82,000, including: Marketing & Communications and Attraction & Product Development approved in February 2020. It was indicated that a number of other priorities and initiatives within the presentation would be revisited at a later stage.

These documents had been used to inform the tourism aspects of the LDP.

On a practical level these documents were used as the Council's agreed approach to Economic Development and Tourism however prior to moving into the Independent Examination stage of the LDP, these documents must be confirmed as final versions and made available publicly.

Proposed by Councillor McWilliam  
Seconded by Alderman Cosgrove and

**RESOLVED – that the Economic Development & Tourism Strategies and their associated action plans/documents be confirmed as final and made available publicly.**

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

## **10.8 ED/GEN/015, ED/ED/184 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REVITALISE FUNDING AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY SUPPORT**

The Action Plan relating to funding from the Department for Communities (DfC) for recovery had been approved previously by the Council and is informed by discussions at the Retail and Town Centre COVID-19 Recovery Mobilisation Team. It details a range of projects across the themes of Communications, Minor Capital Works, Infrastructure and Animation. The total approved budget allocation is £899,000. This consists of £430k DFC Capital Funds, £26k DFC Revenue Funds, £80k DAERA Rural Development Funds and £363k DFI Capital Funds for blue and green infrastructure. DFC had also expressed the potential for future slippage funds as the Department approaches the end of the financial year.

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the status of the various initiatives being advanced to meet the funding timescale of March 2021 although the funders have indicated some flexibility to move this to June 2021. The report also frames some initiatives being advanced to support economic recovery for which provision is made in the Council's Economic Development budgets.

**Town Centre Grant Administration:**

Letters of Offer were awarded to 98 businesses within town centres at the end of October. The total value of grants to these businesses was £80,000. 15 businesses, mostly from the finance and professional services or healthcare sector were kept on a reserve list subject to funding being available to support their applications. It was recommended that the 15 businesses be issued Letters of Offer at a maximum value of £15,000 (£1,000 max. each).

Members were aware that there are a range of social enterprises which operate across the Council area, in some cases providing vital workspace and office accommodation within our Town Centres. Two of these facilities, namely Foundry House and the Co-Working space are located in Ballyclare. They were keen to open their doors as soon as possible to provide vital 'safe' workspace and wish to avail of the £1,000 Revitalise grant for essential equipment and supplies. As they were not open in Feb/March they do not meet the current eligibility criteria however due to their importance as part of the Recovery programme, it was proposed that assistance of £1,000 for each premise be provided.

Should further requests from social enterprises providing workspace/office accommodation in town centres be received these will be reported to the Retail and Town Centre Re-opening Mobilisation Team for consideration.

The original budget set for this activity within the action plan was £100,000 to date including the request presented in the report, £97,000 has been allocated.

**Outside of Town Centre Grant Administration:**

The town centre application criteria were applied to this grant and promoted on Friday 13 November with a deadline for applications of Friday 4 December 2020. The indicative budget for this scheme is £120,000. This grant is being administered on a first come first served basis. As with the Town Centre Grant process, businesses from the finance and professional services or healthcare sector will be kept on a reserve list subject to budget availability. At the August Council meeting £50,000 Council revenue funding was approved for the recovery of other commercial areas agreed by Council. This budget will be used in conjunction with the DfC and DAERA funds to support these businesses.

The approach being adopted by Officers in the administration of all schemes is pro-business so therefore we aim to administer support as quickly and efficiently as possible. Significant resource is allocated to support businesses through the process. In light of the new restrictions there is an increased urgency to expedite the programme delivery. Therefore, approval is sought

to delegate the award of Letters of Offer to businesses to the Chief Executive with a report to be provided retrospectively to the January Council meeting.

On 23 November The Minister of Finance provided details on financial support to mitigate the impact of the current COVID-19 restrictions. The total value of this support is £338.1M. £4.1M of this amount has been allocated to support Bed and Breakfasts. This is aimed at certified accommodation businesses that were excluded from previous support because they pay domestic rates rather than business rates. Further details of the scheme and the criteria were awaited. Officers were considering support for tourism accommodation providers who were not able to apply for the Localised Restriction Support Scheme. A particular need was to direct support to self-catering accommodation providers who did not qualify for the £10k grant support at the beginning of lock-down because they have less than 5 bed-spaces. While Officers keep a watching brief on how the NI Executive is targeting support to this sector it was proposed that a provisional budget of £10,000 be made available to support providers not deemed eligible for the support being developed by the NI Executive with the potential to award grants of up to £1,000 per eligible business.

#### **Awnings Scheme:**

At the October meeting the Council granted delegated authority to the Chief Executive to award the awnings contract post-tender. This tender had been awarded to Sign Reload Limited. The tender is for the design, manufacture and installation of 95 awnings across 85 businesses in Antrim (24 awnings), Ballyclare (28 awnings), Crumlin (7 awnings), Glengormley (13 awnings) and Randalstown (23 awnings). A separate delegated authority tender report was included in the agenda for Members' information. The project is advancing with final installations scheduled by the end of March 2021.

#### **Regeneration Schemes:**

The following schemes were proposed under the DFC and DAERA funding at an estimated total value of £13,800:

<b>Location</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Value and Funding Source</b>
Randalstown	Refurbishment of lighting on two trees upon arrival on the right hand side close to McManus Hardware.	£7,000 DFC
Toome	Canal Walk improvements. Outdoor seating to support local businesses. 2 benches, 2 picnic tables and 2 parasols.	£2,800 DAERA
Killead	2 picnic tables (1 at security fence at airport and 1 near housing estate) and a bench on linear park.	£1,000 DAERA
Dunadry	Benches opposite Dunadry Hotel	£1,000 DAERA

Moneyglass	Moneyglass: Picnic tables at the walking track St Ergants GAA Club. Screens and sanitiser dispensers at GAA Club.	£1,000 DAERA
Carnmoney	Outdoor seating and environmental improvements for businesses.	£1,000 DAERA

In action plans reported previously to the Council the following schemes had already been granted approval: Templepatrick (£8k), Glengormley (£13k), Antrim (signage at Castle Mall at £15k) and Ballyclare (signage at McConnell's Yard at £4k).

### **Economic Development Initiatives:**

#### **Tourism Signage:**

Brown signage for attractions and facilities helps visitors orientate themselves and can play a significant role in the quality of the visitor experience in the Borough. Local Councils are responsible for promoting tourism in the local area and coordinating applications for tourism signage in each respective area. In assessing an application the Council liaises with TNI on the eligibility of tourist destinations and with TransportNI in relation to the design, location and extent of signing. The final decision about brown signage is taken by TransportNI, taking into consideration road safety and traffic management issues.

Following recent engagement, 33 businesses had identified brown signage as a key issue and were seeking consideration of new or replacement signage. Key Council owned destinations such as Antrim Castle Gardens & Antrim Lough Shore Park were also to be mapped by TNI and Council to better understand the visitor journey and identify brown signage improvements.

An indicative budget to support private sector liaison with the implementation of signage improvements was £20,000. A meeting with Tourism NI and DFI would be held in due course to discuss those deemed eligible and who will be invited to submit an application.

Separately, in 2017 the Council previously allocated £6,150 towards the Lough Neagh Landscape Partnership Scheme Signage Project. This was part of a joint contribution from Mid Ulster and Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon Councils that allowed Lough Neagh Partnership to lever in additional funds from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for interpretation panels and brown signage. The Partnership was continuing to work to secure additional brown directional signage for the Lough Neagh region. Proposed sites for new or improved brown signage through this project were Antrim Lough Shore Park, Randalstown Forest & Farr's Bay, Cranfield and Toome Lockhouse & Canal.

#### **Prince's Trust Development Awards:**

Members recalled that the Council has supported The Prince's Trust Development Awards over the past number of years to the value of £10,000. In the current year a financial contribution was not awarded due to the implications of COVID-19. The Prince's Trust Development Awards target support at young people aged 16 -30 who live within the Council area. The

aim is for 90% of young people who receive a Development Award to achieve a positive outcome, progressing into self-employment/employment, education, or training. The Prince's Trust was experiencing demand from the local area and had requested a contribution from the Council of £2,000 for the remainder of the financial year to the end of March 21 to support their awards scheme. £1,500 of the amount would be allocated to help participants remove barriers to support and the remaining £500 would support the Prince's Trust in their delivery of the scheme.

Should the financial commitments detailed within this report exceed the funding amount provided by DfC and DAERA the necessary budget will be met from the Economic Development Revenue Budget of £50,000 originally assigned to Town Team activities.

Proposed by Councillor Webb  
Seconded by Councillor Ross and

**RESOLVED - that**

- i. Revitalise grants of up to £1,000 each be awarded to the 15 businesses, which were previously held on a reserve list;**
- ii. Revitalise grants of up to £1,000 each be awarded to the Social Enterprise premises at Foundry House and the Co-Working Space in Ballyclare;**
- iii. delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive to expedite grant funding being issued to businesses outside of local centres. The maximum total value of awards being £120,000 for outside of Town Centre Businesses and £10,000 for self-catering accommodation providers should they not qualify for the support announced for B&B's by the NI Executive. A report to be brought back to Council in January;**
- iv. the regeneration schemes, totalling £13,800 be approved including, Randalstown, Toome, Killead, Dunadry, Moneyglass and Carnmoney;**
- v. budget of £20,000 be approved to support the private sector with the implementation of brown signage;**
- vi. a budget of £2,000 be approved for the Prince's Trust Development Awards, up until 31 March 2021.**

*ACTION BY: Colin McCabrey, Head of Economic Development*

*Councillor Magill left the Chamber*

## **10.9 ED/ED/183 COVID-19 SUNDAY OPENING**

Members were aware that the Council agreed in April 2020 to relax enforcement action in relation to the Sunday Opening hours of large supermarkets. This action was taken as a response to the unprecedented impact of COVID-19 and sought to facilitate key workers, healthcare workers and customers with disabilities. The period between 10.00 am and 1.00 pm

was set aside for these categories. Normal liquor licensing provisions were not affected by this relaxation.

Over recent weeks, representations had been made by local retailers requesting that the Council does not enforce Sunday Trading hours in the run up to Christmas. This is to facilitate 'safe' shopping environments and social distancing for staff and customers and to allow the effective management of customer volumes. Retailers would in all cases be expected to comply with all current COVID-19 related legislation and regulations.

To this end, it was recommended that the Council does not undertake enforcement action against large retail shops (in excess of 280 m<sup>2</sup>), should they choose to open or deliver on a Sunday from 10.00 am onwards. Normal liquor licensing provisions would not be affected by this relaxation. This will apply to all retail units across the Borough. This arrangement is temporary and will be in place from Sunday 29 November 2020 and those Sundays when shops are allowed to open until Sunday 10 January 2021. There was no change to smaller retail shops (under 280 m<sup>2</sup>), which can continue to trade up to 24 hours.

The legal advice was that during the current COVID-19 pandemic it was reasonable and proportionate for the Council to relax its enforcement powers in relation to Sunday trading hours under The Shops (Sunday Trading &c.) (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 for the period as outlined above.

Members were advised that should this approach be approved, Officers would communicate the new arrangements accordingly.

Proposed by Councillor Kelly  
Seconded by Alderman Cosgrove and

**RESOLVED – that the Sunday Trading arrangements as proposed be retrospectively approved.**

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

## **11. ITEMS FOR NOTING**

### **11.1 G/MSMO/107 CORRESPONDENCE FROM UNITED NATIONS**

Members were advised that correspondence had been received from the United Nations to express appreciation for participation in the UNRIC-supported initiative Turn Europe UN Blue across Europe, in the context of the United Nations' 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (UN75) and for UN Day on 24 October 2020.

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

Proposed by Alderman Brett  
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and



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

*NO ACTION*

*Councillor Magill returned to the Chamber during the following item.*

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

As agreed at the August 2019 meeting of the Council, the Northern Ireland Housing Council's November 2020 monthly bulletin was circulated for Members' information. A copy of the minutes of the Housing Council meeting on 8 October 2020 was also circulated.

Proposed by Alderman Brett  
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and

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

*NO ACTION*

#### **11.3 G/MSMO/14 MOTIONS – NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Members were advised that correspondence has been received from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council regarding Motions adopted by that Council requesting Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council's support.

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

Proposed by Alderman Brett  
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and

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

*NO ACTION*

#### **11.4 ED/ED/185 FREEPORTS – INNOVATION ENTERPRISE ZONES**

The UK Government recently published proposals regarding an ambitious Freeport policy. A Bidders Prospectus was due to be published in Autumn 2020.

The Government's ambitious proposals for the Freeport policy, containing measures which will increase trade and investment, kick start regeneration through job creation and boost innovation across the four nations of the UK.

The Government is keen for a new Global Britain to be a hub for international trade and investment. Revitalising port regions through an ambitious Freeport policy is seen as a key component of realising this vision and unlocking the deep potential of all nations and regions of the UK.

The UK Government is focused on economic recovery and long-term, sustainable growth for the whole of the UK. Freeports are designed to be

innovative hubs that boost the economy by helping businesses to invest in their machinery, infrastructure and staff. They will help to level up the country by bringing jobs, investment and prosperity to some of our most deprived communities around the UK, and will boost global trade, by showcasing the best of British industry, technology and innovation to the rest of the world. Freeports will also be a key element of the Government's 2025 Border Strategy.

The Government wants Freeports around the world to operate as secure customs zones, usually located at ports, where business can be carried out inside a country's land border, but where different customs rules apply.

Secure Freeport customs sites will enable UK businesses to access a range of benefits to boost their international competitiveness in a high productivity cluster. Countries around the world have adapted this basic model by adding different elements to create their own bespoke Freeports, combining a mixture of customs flexibilities, to provide relief from duties, import taxes and administrative burdens; tax measures to incentivise private investment; regulatory flexibilities; and investment in infrastructure, all concentrated in the geographical area around the Freeport.

The Government is committed to the design of a bespoke, world-leading UK Freeport model aiming to achieve three objectives:

- Establish Freeports as national hubs for global trade and investment across the UK;
- Promote regeneration and job-creation; and,
- Create hotbeds for innovation.

The Government had proposed combining five sets of measures – customs, tax reliefs, planning, regeneration funding, and innovation – to achieve these objectives by encouraging the maximum number of businesses to open, expand and invest in our Freeports.

The UK Government is working with the devolved administrations on establishing at least one Freeport in each of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The location of the English Freeports will be established by a bidding process based on the Freeports objectives and this is anticipated to commence early in the New Year. The location of the Freeports in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland will be determined collectively by both the UK Government and the devolved administration and should align objectives, processes and timescale where possible.

The UK Freeport model will maximise geographic flexibility to reflect best the different assets and needs of ports and regions across the UK. The UK Government has designed this model to apply effectively to areas with seaports, airports and rail ports, and to regions featuring multiple ports – no mode of port or area is excluded.

As stated previously further details would be outlined in the 'Freeport Bidding Prospectus', which was expected to be published in the autumn. The full

response to the consultation was circulated as Appendix 1 for Members' information and can be accessed via the link below:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/924644/FINAL - 200923 - OFF SEN - Freeports Con Res - FINAL.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/924644/FINAL_-_200923_-_OFF_SEN_-_Freeports_Con_Res_-_FINAL.pdf)

At a Northern Ireland wide level Invest NI had been facilitating some initial discussions with stakeholders including local government and central government departments to establish what the opportunities from a Freeport model might be and how best such an approach could strategically fit with initiatives such as the City & Growth Deals currently being progressed.

Officers to update Members as further information becomes available.

Proposed by Alderman Brett  
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and

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

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

## **11.5 ED/ED/167 SHARED PROSPERITY FUND**

Earlier this year SOLACE NI commissioned Ekosgen to undertake a Northern Ireland specific study on the potential impacts on Local Government of the UK Government's proposed Shared Prosperity Fund, the successor funding to the EU Structural funds.

The Ekosgen paper had been developed in consultation with each of the 11 Councils, relevant Government departments and EU funded delivery projects. A copy of the final report was circulated which will be used by Local Government to influence the future design and delivery of the Shared Prosperity Fund across the 11 Council areas.

An Executive Summary, a copy of which was also circulated highlights the following key principles for a new approach.

<b>Principles and Recommendations for a New Approach in Northern Ireland</b>	
<b>Principle</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
National Framework	UKSPF should set a national framework defining <i>high level</i> strategic direction, objectives and priorities and alignment with UK strategies.
Regional and sub-regional priority setting	There must be a commitment and processes at regional level to set strategic priorities. These should be developed in partnership and based on an evidence-based assessment of need. At a sub-regional level, there must be scope to identify and invest in activities that will address local priorities and reflect the local context. This must be an underpinning principle that all stakeholders sign

	up to. Ownership of sub-regional funded activities should rest with local partners.
Outcomes based	Progress and achievements should be measured as outcomes and impacts, rather than activities and outputs. KPIs should be set that capture progress as well as final outcomes e.g. progress towards employment.
Flexible, single pot	There must be an assumption of trust so that monies can be disbursed with as few restrictions as possible, balanced with the right degree of scrutiny. Monies should be provided in Northern Ireland with no restrictions on capital and revenue allocations or prescriptive allocations by theme. Spend should be based on identified need and a holistic approach covering, for example, investment in skills, business support, infrastructure, innovation and so forth. There should be a strategic approach to spend, combining all available funding sources to maximise value for money. Business support (including social enterprises) should be business-led and include support to invest in the workforce, in equipment, in processes, as well as advice, and specialist business development support.
Maximum devolution of management and delivery	Northern Ireland should work towards devolving management and delivery to sub-regions where there is sufficient capacity and capabilities. For some activities, there will be a rationale for clusters of areas and partnerships who could act as intermediate bodies, and a regional approach with flexibility for distinctive local need. Where appropriate, the approaches used successfully through the city and growth deals could be replicated.
Attitude to risk	Being overly risk averse can inhibit impacts and limits the opportunity to test and learn from new and innovative approaches. SPF at UK and regional levels should set an attitude to risk that allows for innovation and moves away from simply funding 'more of the same'.
Fit for purpose systems and processes that are actively used	Management, appraisal, monitoring and verification processes should be fit for purpose, not overly complex and proportionate to the level of funding and scale of activities. They should be used to review and drive performance. Additional layers and processes should not be added over time unless there is a clear rationale and demonstration of added value. Management and monitoring systems and processes should be, as far as possible, harmonised with those of other funds and their activities. This will make for a

	more efficient use of project management and administration time and generate consistent data.
<b>Maximum devolution of management and delivery</b>	Northern Ireland should work towards devolving management and delivery to sub-regions where there is sufficient capacity and capabilities. For some activities, there will be a rationale for clusters of areas and partnerships who could act as intermediate bodies, and a regional approach with flexibility for distinctive local need. Where appropriate, the approaches used successfully through the city and growth deals could be replicated.
<b>Attitude to risk</b>	Being overly risk averse can inhibit impacts and limits the opportunity to test and learn from new and innovative approaches. SPF at UK and regional levels should set an attitude to risk that allows for innovation and moves away from simply funding 'more of the same'.
<b>Fit for purpose systems and processes that are actively used</b>	Management, appraisal, monitoring and verification processes should be fit for purpose, not overly complex and proportionate to the level of funding and scale of activities. They should be used to review and drive performance. Additional layers and processes should not be added over time unless there is a clear rationale and demonstration of added value. Management and monitoring systems and processes should be, as far as possible, harmonised with those of other funds and their activities. This will make for a more efficient use of project management and administration time and generate consistent data.

The means by which the Shared Prosperity Fund would be managed and delivered is an important as the finance available. There is an opportunity to move away from the Structural Fund programme approach and its limitations, to more effective arrangements, which take account of how partnerships and policy have evolved over the last EU programme period in Northern Ireland.

It was important to note that a recent session of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee heard from Mr Bill Pauley, Director of Strategic Policy and Reform in the Department of Finance on behalf of the Northern Ireland Civic Service. He highlighted the following in relation to the Executive position on the role of Local Government in the future Shared Prosperity Fund:-

"One area worth highlighting from this paper is in relation to the Executive's position on the Role of Local Government in the future SPF: -

*'There has been some indication that MHCLG is considering a local government based approach as a model to simplify the disbursement of funds, but this approach would be problematic for NI.*

*The local government landscape in NI is substantially different to GB with local authorities possessing a considerably narrower remit. Many functions exercised by local authorities in GB (such as education and skills) are reserved for Stormont where the Northern Ireland Act 1998 enshrines protections for the different communities into the political system.*

*For these reasons we do not believe delivery directly via local Government is a viable option in Northern Ireland and that engagement of local*

*government in replacement programmes should be a matter for the NI Executive under similar terms as current programmes’.*

This submission highlights the potential challenges associated with Local Government involvement moving forward.

Members were aware that DAERA had initiated some discussion in relation to the future of the Rural Development Programme and had indicated that it intends to roll out a number of pilot initiatives. At this point however it was anticipated that there will be a significant gap period between the end of the current programme due to complete in early 2021 and any successor programme which may be progressed. It was also unclear whether or not any successor programme would include individual allocations to Councils and local structures which was currently the case.

Officers to update Members as further information becomes available.

Proposed by Alderman Brett  
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and

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

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

#### **11.6 ED/ED/141 MIPIIM – RENEWED AMBITION PROGRAMME**

Members were reminded that the Council had previously agreed to participate in MIPIIM 2020, however the event was subsequently cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to maintain the momentum of the City Deal Councils' collaborative efforts to attract investment, the Renewed Ambition Programme had been developed.

The programme sought to deliver the Belfast City region's real estate ambitions by showcasing and promoting key sites across the 6 partner Council areas. There would be a greater focus going forward on recovery, investment and sustainability as well as the green agenda and a recommitment to delivering results through public private partnership.

A taskforce was in place which will extend its focus beyond MIPIIM to concentrate on collective marketing and positioning of the city region for investment. Joe O'Neill, Chief Executive of Belfast Harbour is chairing the Taskforce, which had produced an outline programme, as summarised in the circulated presentation.

A series of online events would kickstart the programme. Further details would be shared with Members as they are made available.

Proposed by Alderman Brett  
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and

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

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

13. MOTION

*Proposed by Councillor Webb  
Seconded by Councillor Foster*

*"This Council is concerned about the impact the economic crisis, caused by the coronavirus pandemic, is having on our residents and recognises the need for a reformed fairer welfare system that gives protection to everyone in our community. The Council recognises the necessity to provide economic security for all, and the need for investment in people to protect livelihoods, and also to help kickstart the economy.*

*Therefore the Council calls on the Department for Communities, the Department of Finance and the UK Treasury to design and deliver a recovery Universal Basic Income (UBI) for Northern Ireland.*

*Additionally, this Council supports in principle the investigation by the Treasury and the NI Executive of a full permanent UBI for Northern Ireland, recognising the need for a radical overhaul of the welfare system and the positive impact this would have on poverty alleviation, inequality and mental health."*

*On the Motion being put to the meeting, 32 Members voted in favour, 0 against and 5 abstentions.*

**The Motion was declared carried.**

*ACTION BY: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive*

14. MOTION

*Proposed by Councillor Finlay  
Seconded by Councillors Bennington, Logue, McClelland, Ramsay and Stewart*

*"We call upon the Council to recognise the impact of all gender discrimination and those affected by it. We recognise that misogyny plays a role in attitudes towards a variety of crimes including harassment, assault, sexual assault and hate crimes and should be recognised as a factor when determining these crimes. We also recognise that societal misogyny plays a part in the career choices and personal lives of women and girls in this country.*

*We ask that the Chief Executive writes to Judge Desmond Marrinan, Head of DoJ's Hate Crime Review asking the panel to recognise gender as a category*

*of hate crime and to recognise crimes targeted at women as hate crimes based on misogyny."*

*We ask that Council supports the Raise Your Voice Project, which tackles sexual harassment and sexual violence across Northern Ireland by placing posters in Council buildings so that those affected can avail of those services.*

**The Motion was declared unanimously carried.**

*ACTION BY: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive*

**MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN COMMITTEE'**

Moved by Alderman Smyth  
Seconded by Councillor Foster 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.

*Alderman Girvan left the meeting.*

**12. ITEMS IN COMMITTEE**

**12.1 IN CONFIDENCE PT/CI/105 CORPORATE PLANNING WORKSHOP 2020**

Members were reminded that the Corporate Planning Workshop was held in Mossley Mill Council Chamber on Friday 16 October 2020.

A workshop report was circulated at Appendix A along with presentation slides, for Members' information.

Proposed by Councillor Lynch  
Seconded by Councillor Webb and

**RESOLVED – that the report be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Denise Lynn, Personal Assistant*

**12.2 IN CONFIDENCE WM/arc21/008 RESIDUAL WASTE TREATMENT PROJECT**

Correspondence had been received from arc21 setting out responses to issues raised by noarc21. Copies of both sets of correspondence were circulated.

Proposed by Councillor Goodman  
Seconded by Councillor Foster and

**RESOLVED –**



*ACTION BY: Jacqui Dixon, Chief Executive*

**12.3 IN CONFIDENCE P/FP/LDP/001 VOL 4 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN – SUBMISSION OF DRAFT PLAN STRATEGY DOCUMENTS TO DFI FOR INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION**

Members were reminded that the Council published the first stage of its new Local Development Plan, the Draft Plan Strategy (DPS) on 28 June 2019. The DPS was supported by 21 Evidence Papers and 3 Assessments namely; a Sustainability Appraisal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment); a Section 75 & Rural Needs Assessment; and a Draft Habitats Regulations Assessment.

In order to engage the public, statutory consultees and other interested parties, the Council provided a pre-consultation period from 28 June to 25 July 2019 when all the DPS documents could be reviewed. This was followed by the formal 8-week public consultation from 26 July to 20 September 2019 and a dedicated 8-week period for counter representations to be submitted between 11 October and 6 December 2019.

The public consultation on the DPS elicited 122 responses, including representations from Government Departments, other statutory bodies, environmental and residents' groups, planning consultants and the development industry. There were 26 further responses at the counter representation stage from a range of sources.

Following public consultation, the next stage of the Local Development Plan process is the formal submission of the DPS and relevant documentation by the Council to the Department for Infrastructure seeking it to cause an Independent Examination before the Planning Appeals Commission into the plan document. The Council was required to submit a number of documents including all documentation already published in relation to the Preferred Options Paper and the Draft Plan Strategy.

In terms of additional documentation at this stage, Officers were required to prepare a report on the main issues received to the public consultation on the DPS. Over 1,000 issues were raised within the representations made which have been analysed by Officers in the Planning Section's Forward Planning team under each section of the DPS. This information was summarised in the DPS Public Consultation Report which was uploaded to Members' iPads. This Report provides a high level summary of the main issues raised through the public consultation on the contents of the DPS itself, as well as comments on the accompanying Assessments and Evidence Papers. Members noted that this is a working document and Officers would continue to refine and enhance it (and the more detailed associated spreadsheets accompanying it) in advance of submission to the Department, however there would be no substantive changes to the approach set out to Members. It was also noted that where submissions had been made which were seeking the identification

of development lands and designations, Officers considered that these were matters for the next stage of the LDP process i.e. the Local Policies Plan. The Planning Appeals Commission would decide how these representations will be considered at the Independent Examination.

In general, there are 3 key aspects of the DPS which had been commented upon which are central to the Council's approach to the future development of the Borough. These relate to the following: Housing, Retail and Employment. The PowerPoint presentation uploaded onto Members' iPads provided further detail on the matters raised in relation to these topics which were discussed in detail at the 2 briefing sessions held for Members on 28 and 29 October 2020 respectively.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The PCR will be accompanied by a number of spreadsheets which will provide greater detail on the issues raised in the representations and the Council's position on these.

To address the issues raised in representations relating to housing matters, specific topic papers had been produced on Housing Growth and Affordable Housing and these had also been uploaded to Members' iPads.

Central to the Local Development Plan process is the Soundness Report which must accompany the submission of the DPS. This report demonstrates the Council's legal compliance with the legislative requirements. Once again this Report had been uploaded onto Members' iPads. Denise Kiley BL is acting as the Council's legal advisor in this regard and was currently reviewing all of the relevant documentation and would provide an opinion in due course. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Should this be the case Officers would present a further report to the Council in December.

Members noted that all the documentation associated with this stage of the Plan process and that had been uploaded to Members' iPads should be treated in strictest confidence until such time as legal clearance is received and the documentation is sent to the Department in due course.

Proposed by Councillor Webb  
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and

**RESOLVED – that**

- i. the approach to representations submitted on the Draft Plan Strategy set out in the PowerPoint presentation be approved;**
- ii. the Draft Plan Strategy and the key documents (a), (b) and (c) detailed below be approved and, subject to legal clearance, be submitted to the Department for Infrastructure with a request to initiate an Independent Examination.**
  - a. The Public Consultation Report**
  - b. The Soundness Report; and**
  - c. The Housing Growth & Affordable Housing Topic papers.**

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

**12.4 IN CONFIDENCE ED/ED/130 FULL FIBRE NI SCHEME PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACT AWARD**

Following a collaborative public procurement exercise led by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council on behalf of all ten partner Councils, Fibrus was identified as the preferred bidder for the Full Fibre Network project. Delegated authority was granted to the Chief Executive to enter into the contract between Council and Fibrus in order to meet the programme funding timeline for the project.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council is a key partner in the FFNI consortium, which aims to utilise available funding (approx £24m) through the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), to address the issue of fibre provision in Northern Ireland, and specifically in respect of upgrading public sector connectivity (i.e. the corporate estate). A secondary impact of the initiative is that it is expected to stimulate a private sector intervention to advance the deployment of full fibre into nearby business and domestic/residential premises.

DCMS had extended the project timeline to December 2021. Members noted that in accordance with the supplier's scheduled delivery model, the majority of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough council sites would be connected in Q3 of 2021. The recent sale of the Central Service Depot (CSD) removed one of the previously approved local sites for connection. Officers submitted representations to substitute this site with the proposed crematorium site, and this had been met with a positive response.

[REDACTED]

As Members recognised, fibre broadband is a major driver for economic growth and for the development of an inclusive society for our citizens. It enables the public sector to deliver better services and allows citizens to avail of those services more effectively. As such, the initiative remains a strategic priority for the Council. In parallel with other schemes such as the Department for the Economy's Project Stratum and further investment by the private sector, the FFNI Scheme will help to secure Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough's position as one of the best fibre broadband connected local authority areas in the UK over the next 18-24 months.

Officers would continue to update Members on the progress of the initiative locally and the contract was expected imminently for signature.

The schedule of Council sites included in the FFNI Programme was circulated for Members' information. Members noted that this was subject to change.

Proposed by Alderman Burns  
Seconded by Councillor Bennington and

**RESOLVED – that the report be noted and that an update be presented to a meeting of the Operations Committee.**

*ACTION BY: Alastair Law, Innovation & Funding Officer/Member Services/Director of Operations*

## **12.5 IN CONFIDENCE FI/PRO/TEN/356 TENDER FOR SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF AWNINGS**

At the Council Meeting on 26 October 2020, the Council approved procurement of the supply and installation of awnings. To expedite delivery, delegated Authority was granted to the Chief Executive for the award of the Contract. The project would be supported by DFC Revitalise Funding.

This tender opportunity was made available on eSourcingNI on Friday 23 October 2020. Three tenders for the supply and installation of awnings were opened via the eSourcingNI Portal on 11 November 2020 and referred to the

evaluation panel for assessment. The tenders were evaluated on a two stage basis as follows:

#### **STAGE 1 – SELECTION STAGE**

The tenders were evaluated on a pass/fail basis for mandatory exclusion and financial compliance, economic and financial standing (insurances), previous relevant experience, management systems and practices and declarations and form of tender. All tenders met the requirements of Stage 1 of the evaluation process and proceeded to Stage 2.

#### **STAGE 2 – AWARD STAGE 1**

The tenders were evaluated on a pass/fail basis for confirmation that their proposals met the specification, confirmation of provision of image(s) as requested and completion of schedules of works. Two of the tenders met all the requirements of this stage and proceeded to the next stage of evaluation.

#### **Award Stage 2 Commercial Assessment (100%)**

The tenders were evaluated on the basis of total estimated cost (100%) per lot. The decision on award for all lots is as follows:

<b>Supplier</b>	<b>Cost Assessment (out of 100%)</b>	<b>Total Estimated Cost for all Lots (£) (excl. VAT)</b>
<b>Sign Reload Ltd</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>£[REDACTED]</b>

DECISION ON AWARD: that having achieved the highest score of 100% for all lots, Sign Reload Ltd be appointed for the supply and installation of awnings.

Proposed by Councillor Bennington  
Seconded by Alderman Smyth and

**RESOLVED – that the appointment of Sign Reload Ltd for the supply and installation of awnings be noted.**

*ACTION BY: Colin McCabrey, Head of Economic Development/Julia Clarke, Procurement Officer*

#### **12.6 IN CONFIDENCE FI/PRO/TEN/354 MULTI-COUNCIL TENDER FOR THE PROVISION OF INSURANCE SERVICES FOR THE SOUTH EASTERN SUB-REGION**

**CONTRACT PERIOD 1 APRIL 2021 TO 31 MARCH 2023 WITH AN OPTION TO EXTEND FOR A FURTHER ONE YEAR PLUS ONE YEAR SUBJECT TO SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE**

This collaborative tender had been progressed on a sub-regional cluster basis as follows:

<b>Eastern Sub-region</b>	Ards and North Down Borough Council Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.
<b>South Eastern Sub-region</b>	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.
<b>Western Sub-region</b>	Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Derry City and Strabane District Council Fermanagh & Omagh District Council.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council took the procurement lead for the South Eastern sub-region and once awarded, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council will assume administrative lead which will entail contract management of the contract on behalf of the Councils included in the sub-region.

This tender opportunity was made available on eTendersNI on Wednesday 30 September 2020. One tender for the provision of insurance services was opened via the eTendersNI Portal on Monday 9 November 2020 and referred to the evaluation panel for assessment. The panel consisted of representatives from each of the three Councils included in the sub-region, along with a consultant from Davison Lamont, business insurance and claims management consultants. The tender was evaluated on a two stage basis as follows:

#### **STAGE 1 – SELECTION STAGE**

The tender was evaluated on a pass/fail basis for mandatory exclusion and financial compliance, economic and financial standing, minimum standards of experience, management systems and practices and declarations and form of tender. The tender met the requirements of Stage 1 of the evaluation process and proceeded to Stage 2.

#### **STAGE 2 – AWARD STAGE**

##### **Stage 1 – Technical Assessment**

The tender was evaluated on a pass/fail basis for confirmation that the tender fully meets all the requirements of the specification of services. The tender met the requirements and proceeded to the next stage of evaluation.

##### **Stage 2 - Quality/Commercial Assessment (45%/55%)**

The tender was evaluated on the basis of broker (cover related service provision) (10%), proposed insurer (scope of cover) (10%), method statement (25%) and cost, service fee (15%) and indicative insurance costs (40%) and the recommendation is as follows:

<b>Supplier</b>	<b>Quality Assessment (out of 45%)</b>	<b>Cost Assessment (out of 55%)</b>	<b>Total % Score</b>	<b>Service Fee (3 Councils) (£) (Excl. VAT)</b>	<b>Indicative Insurance Costs (£) (Excl. VAT)</b>

Willis Towers Watson Insurances (Ireland) Limited	■%	■%	96%	£ ■■■■■ (£ ■■■■■ per Council per annum)	£ ■■■■■ (for Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council)
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Whilst only one tender was received the evaluation panel are content that costs are acceptable, based on market knowledge and expectations provided by the consultant.

Proposed by Councillor Goodman  
Seconded by Councillor Lynch and

**RESOLVED – that having achieved a score of 96%, Willis Towers Watson Insurances (Ireland) Limited be appointed for the provision of insurance services for the south eastern sub-region for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2023 with an option to extend for a further one year plus one year, subject to satisfactory performance.**

*ACTION BY: Julia Clarke, Procurement Officer*

## **12.7 IN CONFIDENCE HR/GEN/004 CHRISTMAS EVE 2020**

Members were reminded that in line with the requirements of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE), employees from the former Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Councils and the former Northern Ireland Civil Service Planning Department, transferred to the new Council on 1 April 2015.

Members were advised that the purpose of TUPE is to protect employees if the organisation in which they were employed changes hands. Its effect is to transfer employees and any liabilities associated with them, from the old employer to the new employer by operation of law.

To this end, all employees from the former Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Councils and the former Northern Ireland Civil Service Planning Department, had transferred to the new Council in accordance with their existing terms and conditions, in line with our legal obligations.

Historically, legacy Newtownabbey Borough Council had a half day holiday for Christmas Eve. Where it was not possible to close the service early, a half day leave in lieu was awarded, to be taken by agreement at a later date.

Since 2015, Members have approved the half day Christmas Eve for all staff as a good will gesture and Members may wish to consider granting a half day Christmas Eve this year as a further good will gesture given the current circumstances relating to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Proposed by Councillor Webb  
Seconded by Councillor Bennington and

**RESOLVED – that the Council grants a half day leave for all staff on Christmas Eve.**

*ACTION BY: Andrea McCooke, Director of Organisation Development*

## **12.8 IN CONFIDENCE HR/ER/010 STAFFING MATTERS - SEVERANCE**

### **Background**

As a result of the anticipated economic crisis arising from the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Council had reluctantly agreed a package of measures to reduce expenditure next year in relation to capital projects, revenue spending and staffing costs in July 2020. The reason for doing this was that the Council wants to avoid imposing significant rates increases next year on local residents and businesses who are already experiencing financial difficulties.

To summarise, the review of staffing resources included a reduction across the current workforce by approximately 100 FTE posts (32 vacant posts are not essential to fill leaving a remaining reduction of 68 FTE posts). This reduction is expected to achieve an annual saving of approximately £3.3M.

As part of this process, the Council introduced a voluntary severance scheme. It had also identified a number of suitable vacancies and redeployment opportunities for staff affected by the proposed reductions.

The significant Trade Union contribution throughout this process should be recognised and appreciated by the Council during these unprecedented and challenging times.

Members were reminded that in September 2020 the Council agreed that:

- a) The 17.59 (FTE) voluntary severance applications from staff directly affected, be approved, as these meet the business case with a total approximate cost of £708K and an estimated saving of £621K p.a. resulting in a payback period of 1.14 years.**
- b) Individual consultation now commences in relation to the remaining reduction of posts, required to realise the necessary salary cost reduction, previously agreed by the Council.**
- c) Following individual consultation, a further report be brought to the Council in November 2020.**

### **Update**

The approved voluntary severance applications have been progressed.



Individual consultation had commenced with relevant staff and throughout this exercise all reasonable steps were actively being explored to avoid any potential redundancies.

During this stage in the process, a small number of employees directly at risk had indicated an interest in voluntary severance and it is proposed that any applications received be approved, subject to the business case being met.

Members were also reminded that in September, it was reported that applications for voluntary severance had also been received from 11.14 FTE employees working in roles which could reasonably be viewed as being suitable alternative employment opportunities for employees who are at risk.

Following individual consultations, a further review of the full list of voluntary severance applications had been completed and 17 additional roles were identified as suitable alternative employment for staff at risk. The total number of roles now identified is 28.14 FTE. The total cost of these is £616K with a total annual salary saving of approximately £560K, resulting in an estimated payback period of 1.10 years.

It was proposed that these severance applications be approved, subject to redeployment opportunities being confirmed.

Members were also advised that the Council currently now had 40 vacant posts that are being held as potential suitable alternative employment options. Having reviewed the nature of the services where a cost reduction was required, and the nature of the vacant posts, it was still anticipated that up to 14.11 full time equivalent staff could be offered suitable alternative employment.

To meaningfully support all redeployed employees, thorough induction and training programmes would be developed. A reduction in pay will arise for some redeployed to roles available at a lower grade, and the Trade Unions have requested that the Council considers a Pay Tapering Policy. If considered, the Policy would provide a cushion for those employees, which would be time limited and allow the employee to make the financial adjustments required. A small number of redeployed staff would be required to relocate to a new work base and it is proposed that, consistent with previous practice, excess mileage be paid to those affected.

## **Summary**

**Officers were confident that the recommendations contained within this report would allow the Council to avoid any compulsory redundancies.**

The table below summarises implementation measures to realise the required workforce reduction, along with the associated cost savings, based on the information currently available.

## Implementation Measures - Summary

Implementation Measure	Workforce Reduction (FTE)	Associated Cost (Est.)	Associated Cost Saving (Est.)
	Note: Agreed to reduce by 100 FTE with 32 vacant posts not being filled, the remaining reduction is 68FTE	Note: Costs to be capitalised over 4 years	Note: agreed to be £3.3M
Non Essential Vacant Posts	32		£1.02M
<b>V1</b> -Voluntary Severance Applications (from staff <b>directly affected</b> by job reductions)	17.59	£708K	£621K
<b>V2</b> - Voluntary Severance Applications (from staff <b>not directly affected</b> by job reductions, but that may be reasonable <b>suitable alternative employment opportunities</b> , following completion of individual consultations with affected staff)	*11.14	*£380K	*£367K
<b>V3</b> – further Voluntary Severance Applications (from staff <b>not directly affected</b> by job reductions, but that may be reasonable <b>suitable alternative employment opportunities</b> , following completion of individual consultations with affected staff)	*17	*£616K	*£560K
Redeployment to <b>vacant posts</b> , following the completion of individual consultation with affected staff.	*14.11	N/A	*£461K
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£1.7M</b>	<b>£3M</b>

\*Estimated and to be confirmed following the completion of the individual consultation exercise.

Proposed by Alderman Cosgrove

Seconded by Alderman Brett that, subject to individual consultation and to avoid potential redundancies,

- (a) Authority is delegated to the Chief Executive to approve any voluntary severance applications from staff directly at risk, subject to the business case being met and in line with the Redundancy Procedure.
- (b) Authority is delegated to the Chief Executive to approve the 28.14 FTE voluntary severance applications from staff in roles suitable for redeployment for those at risk, subject to these being confirmed as successful deployment opportunities.

These applications meet the business case with a total approximate cost of £996K and an estimated saving of £927K p.a. resulting in a payback period of 1.07 years.

- (c) A Pay Tapering Policy be drafted for the Council's consideration in December 2020.
- (d) A further update be brought to the Council in January 2021.
- (e) A statement be released to update relevant stakeholders accordingly.

On the Motion being put to the meeting, and a recorded vote having been requested by Councillor Kelly, Members voted as follows:

<b>In favour of the Motion 32 Members viz</b>	<b>Against the Motion 0 Members viz</b>	<b>Abstention 4 Members viz</b>
Aldermen – Agnew, Brett, Campbell, Clarke, Cosgrove and J Smyth Councillors – Archibald, Bennington, Cooper, Cushinan, Dunlop, Finlay, Flanagan, Foster, Gilmour, Goodman, Hamill, Irwin, Kelly, Kinnear, Logue, McAuley, McGrann McWilliam, Magill, Montgomery, Ramsay, Ross, L Smyth, Stewart, Swann and Webb		Alderman Burns Councillors – Lynch, McClelland and Wilson

The Motion was declared carried and it was

**RESOLVED – that, subject to individual consultation and to avoid potential redundancies,**

- (a) Authority is delegated to the Chief Executive to approve any voluntary severance applications from staff directly at risk, subject to the business case being met and in line with the Redundancy Procedure.
- (b) Authority is delegated to the Chief Executive to approve the 28.14 FTE voluntary severance applications from staff in roles suitable for redeployment for those at risk, subject to these being confirmed as successful deployment opportunities.

These applications meet the business case with a total approximate cost of £996K and an estimated saving of £927K p.a. resulting in a payback period of 1.07 years.

- (c) A Pay Tapering Policy be drafted for the Council's consideration in December 2020.
- (d) A further update be brought to the Council in January 2021.
- (e) A statement be released to update relevant stakeholders accordingly.

*ACTION BY: Andrea McCooke, Director of Organisation Development*

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

Moved by Councillor Magill  
Seconded by Councillor Dunlop and

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

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and the meeting concluded at 8.49 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.***