



COUNCIL MEETING TUESDAY 4 AUGUST 2020

Table of Contents

No	Item	Decisions
1.	The Mayor's Business	Received
2.	Apologies	Alderman Finlay and Councillor C McShane
3.	Declarations of Members' Interests	Recorded
4.	Minutes of Council Meeting held Tuesday 7 July 2020	Confirmed
	Matters Arising	
4.1	Legal Opinion	Noted
4.2	Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor Peacock, Seconded by Councillor Bateson Referred from 2 June 2020 Council Meeting (Minute Item 6.3) <i>Additional wording 'as Site Visits are not currently taking place due to the Government Guidance on the Corona Virus pandemic.'</i>	Noted
5.	Minutes of Planning Committee Meeting held Wednesday 24 June 2020	Noted
6.	Leisure and Development Recovery and Outline Business Plans for 2020/2021	
	6.1 Recovery Plan for Sport & Wellbeing Facilities	AGREED - Option 3 Reduced Service Resumed but Phase 1 to commence 17 August 2020; Council to prioritise opening of Council operated Child Care facilities in Phase 1,

		<p>1st September 2020; Community Centres re-open early November 2020 for activities to take place before Christmas; remainder as detailed in the report</p> <p>Chief Executive to come back with a proposal on how Council would craft constructive messages to members of the public</p>
	6.2 Arts and Museums Facility Recovery Plan	AGREED - Option 3 - Reduced Service, with Arts and Museums facilities to re-open 1 January 2021
7.	Matters for Reporting to Partnership Panel – Local Government Side	None Chief Executive to check date if scheduled for next PP meeting
8.	Conferences	None
9.	Correspondence	None
10.	Consultation Schedule	Noted
11.	Seal Documents	Approved
12.	Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Dallat O Driscoll, seconded by Councillor Beattie 'Hospice Care'	Referred to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee

13.	Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor McCaw, seconded by Councillor Mulholland <i>'Litter Strategy for the Borough'</i>	<i>Referred to Environmental Services Committee</i>
14.	Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor McCaw, seconded by Councillor Mulholland <i>"Universal Basic Income (UBI)."</i>	<i>Referred to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee</i>
	IN COMMITTEE (ITEM 15)	
15.	VAT Adjustments at Holiday and Leisure Parks (<i>Agenda Item 6.3</i>)	<i>AGREED</i>

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD REMOTELY ON
TUESDAY 4 AUGUST 2020 AT 7:00PM**

In the Chair : The Mayor, Alderman Fielding (C)

Members Present : Alderman Baird, Boyle, Duddy, Hillis, McCorkell,
McKeown, S McKillop and Robinson
(All Remote Attendance)

Councillors Anderson, Bateson, Beattie, Callan, Chivers,
Dallat-O'Driscoll, Holmes, Hunter, Knight-McQuillan,
McAuley, McCandless, McCaw, McGurk, MA McKillop,
C McLaughlin, McLean, McMullan, McQuillan,
P McShane, Mulholland, Nicholl, Peacock, Quigley,
Schenning, Scott, Wallace, Watton and Wilson
(All Remote Attendance)

Officers Present : D Jackson, Chief Executive (C)
M Quinn, Director of Corporate Services (R)
A McPeake, Director of Environmental Services (R)
R Baker, Director of Leisure & Development (C)
P Donaghy, Democratic Services and Central Services
Manager (R)
P McColgan, Head of ICT (C)
J Winfield, ICT Operations Officer (C)
C Thompson, ICT Officer (C)
W McCullough, Head of Sport & Wellbeing (R)
P Thompson, Head of Tourism & Recreation (R)
P Beattie, Head of Prosperity & Place (R)
J Welsh, Head of Community & Culture (R)
B Tohill, General Manager Sport and Wellbeing (R)
P O'Brien, Funding Manager (R)
D Allen, Committee & Member Services Officer (C)
I Owens, Committee & Member Services Officer (R)

In Attendance : Public (3 No) (R)
Press (2 No) (R)

C = Chamber

R = Remote

1. THE MAYOR'S BUSINESS

The Mayor opened the meeting with prayer and welcomed those in the attendance in the Chamber and attending remotely.

'The Mayor stated that since the last Council Meeting he continued to visit a number of Community Groups who were involved in Community initiatives in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.'

The Mayor had a meeting with Tourism NI Chief Executive John McGrillen in Portrush and promoted a number of initiatives including doing a Radio interview with U105 Radio Frank Mitchell show promoting the 'Eat Out Help Scheme' on the North Coast.

The Mayor informed Members he had opened an Online Book of Condolence in Memory of John Hume who passed away on the 3rd August 2020.

The Mayor informed Members that under Standing Order 4 (3), as urgent business that Councillor MA McKillop had, before the meeting, requested to address Council on the life of the late John Hume.'

Councillor MA McKillop read out a prepared statement:

'Thank you to the Mayor for opening the online book of Condolences for our former leader John Hume.'

On behalf of my colleagues and I we would like to express our condolences to John's wife Pat and to all the Hume family at this very sad time.

John Hume has been a giant among political leaders not just locally but nationally and internationally. His enduring legacy will be his commitment to peaceful politics and reconciliation.

He is widely known as the article to of the Good Friday Agreement and to end political violence. We continue to be inspired by John's example and our pledge to promote reconciliation through partnership across our society.

I will finish with a quote I read today:

The greatest achievement of all is the fact that there are men and women and their children and grandchildren who walk this earth today because of what John Hume did.

Strip away everything else and nothing else matters."

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were recorded for Alderman Finlay and Councillor C McShane.

3. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Declarations of Interest were recorded for the following Members:

- Alderman McCorkell in Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor McCaw, seconded by Councillor Mulholland to Department for Communities and Finance and the UK Treasury to design and deliver a recovery Universal Basic Income (UBI) for Northern Ireland.

Councillor P McShane requested to be allowed to ask a question in relation to the information that was to be sent to the Department for Communities.

The Mayor informed Councillor P McShane that he would not be permitted to raise this question as he had not informed The Mayor in advance of meeting of this and referred to Standing Order 4 (3).

4. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD TUESDAY 7 JULY 2020

Matters Arising

4.1 Legal Opinion

Councillor P McShane requested a correction to the minutes, advising that he had raised a concern last month about the legal advice (Call-In) not being presented at the meeting, .Councillor P McShane stated that this was linked to an enquiry previously made by the CEO to the Police. The Assistant Chief Executive had indicated that the Chief Executive had instructed that the legal opinion (Call-In) was not to be presented to Council in light of the ongoing police investigation.

4.2 Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor Peacock, Seconded by Councillor Bateson Referred from 2 June 2020 Council Meeting (Minute Item 6.3)

Alderman Boyle had previously asked that the last paragraph to be removed 'Alderman Boyle reiterated her plea for Planning Committee Members to share vehicles.'

Alderman Boyle subsequently requested for the following words to be added '*... as Site Visits are not currently taking place due to the Government Guidance on the Corona Virus pandemic.*'

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Council Meeting held Tuesday 7 July 2020 are confirmed as a correct record.

- * **The Mayor declared a recess at 7:25pm to address Members remote connection issues.**
- * **The meeting reconvened at 7:30pm.**

5. MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE 2020

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of Planning Committee Meeting held Wednesday 24 June 2020 are noted.

6. LEISURE AND DEVELOPMENT RECOVERY AND OUTLINE BUSINESS PLANS FOR 2020/2021

6.1 Recovery Plan for Sport & Wellbeing Facilities

Report, previously circulated was presented by the Director of Leisure and Development.

At the last Council meeting on 7 July Members were presented with a timeline for the reopening of all Leisure & Development facilities. Following this meeting, Leisure and Development held a Members Workshop on 22 July to present three recovery options and the relative affordability of each in terms of the annual revenue budget for 2020/21.

The option emerging from this discussion was the 'Reduced Service Resumption' with the reopening of all Major/Minor Leisure Centres and Community Centres from the 1 September 2020.

This preferred option aligns services with affordability and maximises the permanent staff complement across all facilities, in conjunction with reduced opening hours for activities which best reflect peak demand periods, and compliance with current Covid-19 restrictions.

The purpose of this paper is to provide the additional detail requested by Members on the 'Reduced Services' option and to request approval for a phased recovery plan for the reopening of facilities from the 1 September.

The following facilities are included within the scope of this paper:

- Coleraine Leisure Centre;
- Joey Dunlop Leisure Centre;
- Roe Valley Leisure Centre;
- Dungiven Sports Centre;
- Sheskburn Recreation Centre;
- Jim Watt Sports Centre; and
- 18 Community Centres.

The six leisure/sport facilities above have previously been the subject of the 'Shadow Bid' process and ongoing in-house transformation. Unfortunately this decision was deferred in March because of the Covid-19 outbreak. It is noted that transformation mobilisation plans are continuing, however the In-House Bid itself will require comprehensive review in light of the new operating environment.

Council took the decision to close Leisure/Sport/Community Centres on Tuesday 17 March. Centre staff initially commenced an intense cleaning regime in the facilities, however it soon became clear that reopening of the sites would not happen in the short term so the vast majority of the staff were stood down.

All agency employed casual staff and coaches were furloughed by Grafton Recruitment, followed by all agency staff filling vacant posts. Initially it was unclear as to whether or not Council staff could avail of the Government Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), so redeployment opportunities for Council staff was sought in the first instance.

As the implications of Covid-19 became clear Council's Sport & Wellbeing Staff became key in terms local delivery of the Department for Communities initiatives in relation to Community Support. This was most evident with the set-up of Council's 'Community Hub' at the Flowerfield Arts Centre and the distribution of food parcels at 3 of Council's sites. Members have been kept informed of this work through the weekly situation reports supplied by the Head of Sport & Wellbeing.

The reopening of the Household Recycling Centre's resulted in a request from Council's Operations Department for Sport & Wellbeing Staff to assist with the process of allowing those facilities to return to operation. Twelve staff were initially redeployed to the sites to assist on the ground, while the Business Support Staff deployed to the Community Hub operated a call centre for the Public to book their slots at the sites.

In June Council took the decision to avail of the CJRS, which resulted in all Sport & Wellbeing staff, not deemed essential to the operation of the 'Community Hub', redeployed to Household Recycling Centre's or those staff directly involved in Recovery Planning being furloughed.

At this point in time, the demands of the 'Community Hub' are decreasing with the expectation that there is no further requirement post 31 July. The Hub continues to facilitate bookings for the Household Recycling Centres and will initially be the coordination point for bookings for outdoor facilities, until such times as the Business Support Staff can return to their normal place of work in the Leisure Centre's.

In recent weeks Leisure Operations Managers have been anticipating announcements from Government and preparing sites for potential return to business, some of the work includes:

- Reception and physical restriction of designated areas;
- Industry guidelines for opening gyms and swimming pools;
- Intensive and deep cleaning regime;
- PPE sourcing and safe use; and
- COVID-19 checks and procedures.

Sport & Wellbeing's Business Support Manager & Commercial Manager have been working to ensure that our systems are such that they lend themselves to the operational adjustments required assist with Covid-19 protocols:

- Legend/booking systems;
- Contact and Trace compliance;
- Financial procedures;
- Communications; and
- Customers Journeys.

As the main facilities have been 'semi' mothballed, i.e. Pool and pool hall temperatures dropped to a safe level to maximise the potential utilities savings and the majority of staff remain on the CJRS, an amount of work is required to bring the facilities back to their normal operating state. Likewise, there will be a process involved in bringing staff off Furlough, this coupled with the pre-opening cleaning and training requirements which marry with the indicative timescale for bringing the pool back into operation, potentially 3 weeks lead in time before opening.

Subject to Member approval Management are working on the planning assumption of reopening facilities on 1 September 2020.

The report detailed Benchmarking Research & Industry Guidance.

The Council agreed net budget position for each directorate and service area remains as the 2020/21 annual target budgetary position.

Furthermore budget management is allowing the corporate body to rebuild General Reserves. To offset the loss of income (and include contingency savings) an estimated £2.5m reduction in expenditure is necessary.

Therefore stringent financial analysis and cost control are an absolute necessity as outlined below:

1. **Financial Analysis and Planning** - accurately understand the net budgetary shortfall by Directorate, Head of Service Area, Tier 4 Service Area and Programme/Project/Activity.
2. **The Reinstatement of Services** - no services, activities and programmes beyond those currently on-going during the Lockdown Period, are to be reinstated unless with the agreement of the Director / Council decision.
3. **Service Prioritisation** - the reinstatement of services, activities and programmes is based upon prioritised recovery themes.
4. **Pathway to Recovery** - the financial and practical planning necessary to allow for the considered reinstatement of facilities and activities based upon affordability and the basic essential functions to allow safe public use. Affordability options to be presented:
 - a) Option 1 - Closure. Remain closed for the entire year i.e. 'hibernation', calculating the net estimated position based upon:
 - i. 12 month loss of all income.
 - ii. Costs reduced to the essential minimum.
 - b) Option 2 - Normal Services Resume. Open the facility from a given date, calculating the net estimated position based upon:
 - i. Baseline' operating costs.
 - ii. Estimated increased operating costs to comply with the ongoing Covid-19 social distancing requirements and increased infrastructure / decontamination / hygiene regimes.
 - iii. Loss of income from 1 April 20 to the date of opening.
 - iv. Reduced income estimate for the remaining annual period, considering the restricted income opportunities.

- c) Option 3 - Services Aligned to Affordability. Consider the option of opening a facility based upon a reduced service to meet the target net annual revenue budget, calculating the net estimated position based upon:
- i. A reduced service resulting in reduced operating costs to provide basic functionality.
 - ii. Estimated increased operating costs to comply with the ongoing Covid-19 social distancing requirements and increased infrastructure / decontamination / hygiene regimes.
 - iii. Loss of income from 1 April 20 to the date of opening.
 - iv. Reduced income estimate for the remaining annual period, considering the restricted income opportunities.

Affordability Analysis

On the basis of the corporate direction as outlined, the Sport & Wellbeing Unit has fully appraised the three options:

- Option 1: Remain closed.
- Option 2: Service resumed.
- Option 3: Reduced service resumed.

The preferred option emerging from the Members Workshop was Option 3 'Reduced Services resumed from 1 September. This option depicted by the green line in the graph detailed in the report requires an annual subvention of £2.227m representing a small overspend of £46k against the annual budget of £2.181m. This annual subvention is broken down as £1.926m for the three Major Leisure Centres and £0.301m for the three Minor Sports Centres.

The 'Reduced Services' option for Community Centres has a projected annual subvention of £413k representing a small underspend of £38k against the annual budget of £451k.

Reduced Service Resumed

It is recognised in the industry that a phased approach to opening will be required to ensure control measures can be put in place to manage the risk of Covid-19. In terms of affordability the management of phased opening will give Officers the flexibility to remain within budget.

There are potentially multiple sub-options around reduced service (in terms of hours/sites/facilities) and phased timing for the return of services. However, this would be very difficult to plan and coordinate particularly in terms of the return of permanent staff and maintaining equality in access to

service provision right across the Borough. Therefore it is proposed to resume with basic and essential service provision across all facilities as follows:

- Bring back all permanent staff to determine reduced service capability (requiring flexibility to move across all six sites);
- Bring back agency staff as required to cover leave/sick and other adhoc permanent staff absence.
- Reduced opening hours across sites (to cover peak usage/demand);
- Focus on gyms and memberships utilising halls/studios to accommodate additional space (no other hall use/income in short term);
- Only major pools reopen in short term (loss of schools income in minor pools);
- Community centres focussed on covid-19 response and local support services initially.

To ensure Council meets its obligations in terms of implementation of Covid-19 guidance, operational changes will be in place during the initial phase of reopening. These may include but are not limited to:

- All activities will need to be booked and limited to individual use;
- Bookings will be unavailable during programmed cleaning;
- Re-configuration of gyms due to Social Distancing Guidelines;
- Swimming is likely to be restricted to lane swimming only;
- Exercise classes which limit the use of equipment will be on offer; and
- Limited changing facilities will be offered.

The recovery phase is currently 1 September 2020 – 31 March 2021 and is therefore seen as short term interim measure requiring no permanent changes to structure or staffing requirements. The planning assumptions for next year will be kept under review and Council advised accordingly.

An exact timeframe cannot be projected for each phase. The timeframe between phases may be short, but will ultimately be driven by the lifting of restrictions (avoiding local 'lock downs' / possible second wave), governing body/club evidence of compliance and the facilities and staffing capacities to manage potential increased footfall and adhere to Covid-19 operating procedures.

Critically, management require the flexibility to increase or reduce the level of service according to local demands and facility constraints. The phased

re-opening may operate on differing timescales for each leisure centre, sports centre and community centre.

The Phased Recovery Plan is summarised in Table 1 below. A number of number of key actions required to support this recovery plan as detailed in the report (previously circulated)

FACILITIES	NO SERVICE	REDUCED SERVICE: 1 SEPTEMBER - 31 MARCH			FULL SERVICE	
		PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3		
		→	→	→		
1. Leisure/Sports Centres	Tier 1 & 2 closed	Tier 1 & 2 Open			Tier 1 & 2 Open	
Leisure facilities:						
Reception	All facilities currently closed. Deep cleaning and essential maintenance ongoing. Opportunity for physical adaptations to spaces / staff training / member comms etc....	Opened with reliance on Legend MIS	Opened with reliance on Legend MIS	Opened with reliance on Legend MIS	All facilities returned to 'normal use' subject to ongoing review against Covid-19 restrictions	
Gym		Booked sessions with limited numbers	Booked sessions with limited numbers	Booked sessions with limited numbers		
Studios/Classes		Limited class offering	Return of Exercise Referral Classes	Return of wider class offering		
Main Hall		Re-purposing of space for gyms	Use of space for Gym training/classes	Club usage subject to governing body		
Minor Hall		Re-purposing of space for gyms	Use of space for Gym training/classes	Club usage subject to governing body		
Dry Changing		Closed initially	Opened for changing and no showers	Full usage of changing		
Main Pool		Lane swimming and club usage	Swimming lessons and family swims	Full use of pool		
Minor Pool		Closed initially	Swimming lessons and family swims	Water slides / childrens parties		
Health Suite		Closed initially	Booked sessions with limited numbers	Full use of health suite		
Wet Changing		Swimmers come 'beach-ready'	Opened for changing and no showers	Full usage of changing		
Soft Play		Closed initially	Booked sessions with limited numbers	Full usage of soft play / childrens parties		
Café			Consulting with leaseholders			
Leisure Opening Hours:						
Leisure Centres	Closed	Mon-Fri: 6:30-21:00 / Sat: 8:00-16.30 / Sun: 11:00-16:00 (intermittent closure for cleaning and staff updates)			Normal Hours	
Sport Centres	Closed	Mon-Fri: 15:00:21:00 / Sat: 8:00-16:30 / Sun: closed (intermittent closure for cleaning and staff updates)			Normal Hours	
2. Community Centres	Closed	Covid-19 response/support services	Wellbeing Services: exercise/childcare	Full use of hall space	Normal Use	
3. Changing Pavilions	Closed	Site specific reopening based on demand and risk assessment of compliance with Covid-19 guidance			Normal Use	

It is recommended that on the basis of the additional analysis and detail provided within the report, 'Reduced Service' resumed on 1 September is the preferred option for recommendation to Council.

This option is financially challenging to deliver this year within budget, however it allows essential services to be delivered across all sport and wellbeing facilities and most importantly for improved health and wellbeing outcomes to be realised in local communities across the Borough.

Given the uncertain operating environment it is also recommended that the Recovery Plan is implemented in three phases with ongoing performance monitoring and review points at the end of each phase (in accordance with the 'Phased Recovery Plan', Table 1 (previously circulated)).

* **Councillor McLaughlin left the meeting during consideration of this item.**

Councillor McAuley stated that elite athletes were having to travel to Dublin to train. He also commented that he would like to see the opening of Phase 1 brought forward as he believed it should not take 3 to 4 weeks to open these Swimming Pools and Gyms.

The Head of Sport and Wellbeing informed Members that the quickest lead in time would be 3 to 4 weeks. Risk assessments are currently being undertaken; the training of staff would take a significant period of time to complete and Council need to re-engage with furloughed staff and acknowledge any concerns that that may have.

She clarified that the Swim Ulster had made a general statement in relation to elite athletes and that she was not aware of any elite athletes in the Boroughs three Swimming Clubs. Councillor McAuley commented that the information had been relayed by the local swimming clubs.

The opening of Leisure Centres would be a costly operation and that it was preferred that Gyms are kept in Gym Studios rather than be relocated to Sports Hall due to the required ventilation systems. Council need to be mindful of Health and Safety Guidance; tests for Legionella take 10 days.

Councillor McAuley commented that private sector Gyms had re-opened within days of being notified. The Head of Sport and Wellbeing informed Members that Council were following guidance from the Health and Safety Executive. The private sector may chose not to follow the guidance.

The Director of Leisure and Development informed Members that Council had lost 6 months income as a consequence of Covid-19, and it would require a significant cost to make facilities fit for purpose. Footfall, when facilities are re-opened, would be significantly lower than the same time last year; Council will not be on budget due to this pandemic.

In response to Councillor Baird's concerns the Head of Sport and Wellbeing commented as below:

- (i) **Community Centres** 1 November 2020 is a realistic target for the reopening of Community Centres
- (ii) **Town Halls** Council is aiming to open Arts facilities in Coleraine and Ballymoney from 1 September 2020
- (iii) **Child Care** A meeting took place this morning with the Community Development Officers – plans are being set in place to support

communities.

Covid-19 Risk Assessments are being undertaken and Council is liaising with Playgroup organisers in Council Centres.

This is included in Phase 2 however Council is working towards the earliest possible date to enable Child Care facilities to re-open.

Councillor McQuillan raised concerns that private Gyms were offering free Membership.

The Head of Sport and Wellbeing informed Members that 3 free months membership was built into Councils Recovery Plan, the service that Members will come back to is not the service that they left. There would be no children's pools or facilities for families to use; there would be lane swimming only; Members would have to book slots in advance to use the gym facilities or pool and water slides would not be open before Christmas.

She informed Members that the best possible Recovery Plan that is affordable had been submitted and has been endorsed.

Councillor McCaw raised concerns on the time Council was taking to re-engage with furloughed staff – this should have been done earlier.

The Director of Leisure and Development informed Members that Line Managers had been in constant contact with furloughed staff and that Council could not re-engage with furloughed staff prior to Council making a decision. He stated that staff safety would not be compromised.

In response to queries raised by Councillor Bateson the Director of Leisure and Development stated that the Kilrea Sports facility was classified as a Community Centre and would re-open as indicated and that Kilrea Town Hall was transferred to the community so was outside of the scope of the report.

The Head of Sport and Wellbeing informed Members that Council facilities for Club use was included in Phase 3.

Councillor Wilson raised a query in relation to press release that had been issued during the last few months since facilities had closed, to keep the public informed of what was happening.

The Head of Sport and Wellbeing stated that a statement was initially release released on executive decisions made; all information requests had been responded to; Members queries had been responded to and that there has been a continuous channel of communication open.

Councillor Wilson felt that the Councils PR response could have been much better – regular PR information should be relayed. Discussion needed to take place on how Councils PR could be improved.

The Chief Executive informed Members that PR within Council was just one person at present; however he would come back with a proposal on how Council would craft constructive messages to members of the public.

Councillor Callan raise the following concerns:

- Facilities should have been well maintained during lockdown. The private sector are already opening their pools and gyms and taking Councils customers outing Council staff jobs at risk.
- Communication between Council and the public was very poor – only one post on Facebook since 9 July 2020.
- Difficulties with the Booking System in Recycling Centres.

The Head of Sport and Wellbeing informed Members that maintenance had been on going during lockdown, but on a scaled back basis. Swimming pool temperatures had been reduced in order to minimise costs and that the temperature now has to be increased and that it takes time to reach the required temperature. As already discussed Legionella tests can take up to 10 days to complete. Council has 40-50 staff to consider so cannot react as quickly as the private sector.

The Head of Sport and Wellbeing acknowledged the difficulties experienced during lockdown by members of the public trying to book slots; however Council would be launching a new app for recycling centres.

The Head of Sport and Wellbeing informed Members that Council had an Engagement Plan in place for the communication of re-opening of Council facilities. Council would engage with staff tomorrow morning and if there was no 'Call In' received would engage with Members. This would be communicated via Facebook, emails and a video instruction. Details would also be available on the Council website. Front desk staff would be back at work to deal with bookings.

Amendment

Proposed by Councillor Baird

Seconded by Councillor Hunter

- that Council prioritises the opening of Council operated Child Care facilities in Phase 1, 1st September 2020 and that Community Centres re-open early November 2020 to allow for activities to take place before Christmas.

Councillor McAuley agreed that his proposal could be reworded to include Councillor Baird's amendment.

The Mayor put the following Motion to Council to vote.

Proposed by Councillor McAuley

Seconded by Councillor Quigley

- that Council adopt **Option 3** – Reduced Service Resumed with the exception to the commencement of Phase 1 to be brought forward and implemented in 2 weeks on 17 August 2020, and that Council prioritises the opening of Council operated Child Care facilities in Phase 1, 1st September 2020 and that Community Centres re-open early November 2020 to allow for activities to take place before Christmas; the remainder as detailed in the report.

The Mayor put the Motion to Council to vote. 27 Members voted For, 6 Members voted Against and 1 Member Abstained.

The Mayor declared the Motion **CARRIED**.

6.2 Arts and Museums Facility Recovery Plan

Report, previously circulated was presented by the Director of Leisure and Development informing Members of the proposed Arts and Museums Facility Recovery Plan and to seek direction and approval for the timing of re-opening Council's Arts and Museums venues.

At the last Council meeting on 7 July Members were presented with a timeline for the reopening of all Leisure & Development facilities. Following this meeting, Leisure and Development held a Members Workshop on 22 July to present three recovery options and the relative affordability of each in terms of the annual revenue budget for 2020/21. The preferred option emerging from this discussion was the 'Reduced Service Resumption' with the re-opening of facilities from the 1 September 2020.

This preferred option aligns services with affordability and maximises the permanent staff complement with reduced opening hours for activities which best reflect peak demand periods and compliance with current Covid-19 restrictions.

The purpose of this paper is to provide the additional detail requested by Members on the Reduced Services and to request approval for the phased recovery plan for the reopening of Cultural facilities from 1 September. The following venues are included within the scope of this paper:

- Flowerfield Arts Centre
- Roe Valley Arts & Cultural Centre, inc. museum gallery
- Ballymoney Museum (in Ballymoney Town Hall)
- Coleraine Museum (temporary exhibition space, Coleraine Town Hall).
- Ballycastle Museum (seasonal)
- Green Lane (seasonal).

Arts & Museums venues closed following Government advice in March, creating loss of income for independent arts venues and local authority owned venues. This had an immediate impact on practitioners with an increase of unemployment within the sector through tutor roles, workshop facilitators, within arts management and administration roles and a loss of income for artists as venues represented a primary outlet for sales, performances, exhibitions, workshops etc. There has been an immediate loss of access to arts/cultural heritage events and activities for general public, particularly at a time of increased mental health issues and anxiety related conditions.

The cultural landscape of the Borough may be severely affected in the longer term, due to loss of some voluntary arts organisations and cultural businesses. This has crippling impact on tourism/economic and community development council objectives (e.g. arts/music festivals stopping; community arts groups no longer existent, damaging to borough-wide arts and cultural development).

As a short term measure in response to these issues, and in an effort to support the creative sector, including local artists, cultural services have been planning (programme budget allowing), bespoke online activities which will commission local arts practitioners/organisations, sharing local cultural initiatives and profiling local arts providers via social media platforms. Additionally teams have been researching funding opportunities/good practice to enable partnership project delivery and hosting online visual arts exhibitions promoting and connecting borough-based creative practitioners.

As centres remain closed to the general public, cultural services as a whole has moved its focus to delivery of online activities. These include a broad range of activities from online daily children's activities and competitions, on line challenges for adults, virtual exhibitions for the creative sector and

community groupings, digital museum projects, promotion of local producers, mental wellbeing activities etc.

On line activities, including a significant social media presence have proved to be very successful with over 80,700 individuals engaging in 116 on line activities for the arts and 17,329 engaging in 53 online activities for museums, both locally and from across the globe and has created a more accessible service for all. Additionally Museums have distributed information/articles through traditional media to circa 80,000 individuals.

Flowerfield is being used as the location of the Covid-19 community hub, while also working in partnership with CRUN to produce PPE (visors) for health and social care.

These approaches will continue with the expectation that guided by Council's decisions and NI Executive's recovery plan, cultural venues will re-open with a blend of distance based learning, events and activities and smaller scale centre based activities, with appropriate social distancing measures in place (reduced numbers and increased Health & safety regimes).

Leisure & Development's proposed approach

The following approach, alongside NI Executive's guidance is considered, provides options by which to proceed. Based on the approach below, options have been provided in the section below which consider:

- Financial Position/implications Arts Service & Museums.
- Programming/service provision impact.
- Staffing impact.

The options are based (using the L&D criteria below) on:

- Centres remaining closed for the entire year.
- Normal/immediate (within current restrictions) opening of services in July/August.
- Affordability options of opening in September or January.

Options are considered further in the section below.

The Financial Approach During Recovery

The Council agreed net budget position for each directorate and service area remains as the 2020/21 annual target budgetary position. Furthermore budget management is allowing the corporate body to rebuild General Reserves. To offset the loss of income (and include contingency

savings) an estimated £2.5m reduction in expenditure is necessary. Therefore stringent financial analysis and cost control are an absolute necessity as outlined below:

1. **Financial Analysis and Planning** - accurately understand the net budgetary shortfall by Directorate, Head of Service Area, Tier 4 Service Area and Programme/Project/Activity.
2. **The Reinstatement of Services** - no services, activities and programmes beyond those currently on-going during the Lockdown Period, are to be reinstated unless with the agreement of the Director / Council decision.
3. **Service Prioritisation** - the reinstatement of services, activities and programmes is based upon prioritised recovery themes.
4. **Pathway to Recovery** - the financial and practical planning necessary to allow for the considered reinstatement of facilities and activities based upon affordability and the basic essential functions to allow safe public use. Affordability options to be presented:
 - a) Option 1 - Closure. Remain closed for the entire year i.e. 'hibernation', calculating the net estimated position based upon:
 - i. 12 month loss of all income.
 - ii. Costs reduced to the essential minimum.
 - b) Option 2 - Normal Services Resume. Open the facility from a given date, calculating the net estimated position based upon:
 - i. 'Baseline' operating costs.
 - ii. Estimated increased operating costs to comply with the ongoing Covid-19 social distancing requirements and increased infrastructure / decontamination / hygiene regimes.
 - iii. Loss of income from 1 April 20 to the date of opening.
 - iv. Reduced income estimate for the remaining annual period, considering the restricted income opportunities.
 - c) Option 3 - Services Aligned to Affordability. Consider the option of opening a facility based upon a reduced service to meet the target net annual revenue budget, calculating the net estimated position based upon:
 - i. A reduced service resulting in reduced operating costs to provide basic functionality.

- ii. Estimated increased operating costs to comply with the ongoing Covid-19 social distancing requirements and increased infrastructure / decontamination / hygiene regimes.
- iii. Loss of income from 1 April 20 to the date of opening.
- iv. Reduced income estimate for the remaining annual period, considering the restricted income opportunities.

Affordability Analysis

On the basis of the corporate direction as outlined, Community & Culture has appraised the three options:

- Option 1: Remain closed.
- Option 2: Reduced Service, Covid-19 restrictions resumed September.
- Option 3: Reduced service, Covid-19 restrictions resumed January.

The preferred option emerging from the Members Workshop is a 'Reduced Services resumed from 1 September. This option for direct facility costs is depicted by the yellow line in the graph as detailed in the report which requires an annual subvention of £839,426 for museums and arts facilities combined, representing an underspend of £39k against the annual budget of £878,604 (excluding costs not attributed to venues of an additional £221,423*).

Budget Re opening Cultural services venues				
Budget Options re: re-opening Cultural Venues				
	Arts	Variance	Museums	Variance
Baseline Budget	*605,231		**273,373	
Option 1 Closure Apr - March	414,401	190,830	230,058	43,315
Option 2 affordability (Sept 20)	561,792	43,439	277,634	-4,261
Option 3 affordability (Jan 21)	484,705	120,526	251,553	21,820

Note:

* Excludes Riverside Theatre £107,500 and Arts engagement/outreach provision, outreach classes and community grants £103,761 (total Arts service budget including all venue and non-venue related costs = £816,492)

** Excludes museums storage costs, Garvagh Museum grant costs £10,162 (total museums service budget including all venue and non-venue related costs = £283,535)

Reduced Service Resumed

It is recognised that a phased approach to opening will be required to ensure control measures can be put in place to manage the risk of Covid-19. In terms of affordability the management of phased opening will give Officers the flexibility to remain within budget.

It is proposed to resume with reduced service provision for cultural facilities (arts and museum venues) to comply with Covid-19 safety measures in place as detailed in the Committee report (previously circulated).

The Phased Recovery Plan is summarised in Table 1 below. The Action Plan for the re-opening of Cultural facilities is provided in the Committee report (previously circulated),

FACILITIES	CLOSED	REDUCED SERVICE: 1 SEPTEMBER - 31 MARCH		OPEN
		PHASE 1	PHASE 2	
Arts Centres:				
Gallery/Exhibitions	On line/digital experiences, learning opportunities & access to resources for the customer Research and development for 20/21 projects, particular focus for museums Digital programming for schools, communities Sales/marketing promotion ongoing digitally for creative sector artists Community cultural projects continue, including community partnership projects	Restricted Access / Bookings Only	Potential for increased Access if restrictions relax	All facilities returned to 'normal use' subject to ongoing review against Covid-19 restrictions
Courses/Workshops		Reduced numbers by 30-40%	Potential for increased numbers if restrictions relax	
Digital/Online Programme		On line Live events/digital educational activity	On line Live events/digital educational activity	
Partnership Projects		Mental health/wellbeing in venue & off-site	Mental health/wellbeing in venue & off-site	
External Hire		Booked with numbers limited to 30-40% room capacity	Potential for increased numbers if restrictions relax	
Auditorium Events		Not viable with 15-25% occupancy	Phased in small scale live events / cabaret style initially	
Museums:				
Access to Facilities		Restricted access to Ballymoney/Coleraine Only - Dependent on Town Hall opening/access	Ballycastle/Green Lane access by appointment or potential 'pop-up' museum/exhibition	
Programming Exhibitions		Permanent Exhibitions Only	Permanent Exhibitions Only	
Interactive Displays		No access to touch displays	Restricted access to touch displays (depending on Govt change in guidance)	
Digital/Online Programme	On line/digital projects continued	On line/digital projects continued		
Partnership Projects	Community heritage projects off-site	Community heritage projects off-site		
Opening Hours:				
Arts Centres	Closed	Wed & Thurs: 10:00-18:00 and 19:00-21:00 / Fri: 10:00-15:00 / Sat: 10:00-13:00 (public access 4 days per week and 2 evenings)		Normal Hours
Museums	Closed	Wed & Thurs: 10:00-16:00 and 19:00-21:00 / Fri: 10:00-15:00 / Sat: 10:00-13:00 / Sun: closed		Normal Hours

It is recommended that On the basis of the additional analysis and detail provided above, 'Reduced Service' resumed on 1 September is the preferred option for recommendation to Council.

This option allows Council to deliver venue based cultural services with a projected underspend of £39k against the annual net budget.

Given the uncertain operating environment it is also recommended that the Recovery Plan is implemented in two phases with ongoing performance monitoring and review points at the end of each phase.

- * **Councillors Anderson and Chivers left the meeting during consideration of this item.**

Proposed by Councillor Callan
Seconded by Councillor McQuillan and

- that Council adopt **Option 3** - Reduced Service, with the Arts and Museums facilities to re-open 1 January 2021.

In response to Members queries as to the rationale of re-opening the Arts and Museums facilities on 1 January 2021 Councillor Callan stated that the majority of the services Arts and Museums provide would be summer based and as most of the tourism has been missed this year due to Covid-19, this would give the Arts and Museums facilities time to prepare for re-opening in 2021.

Councillor Boyle disagreed with Councillor Callan and stated the Arts and Museums provide all year round facilities.

The Mayor put the Motion to Council to Vote. 22 Members voted For, 20 Members voted Against and 1 Members Abstained.

- * **Councillors P McShane and Schenning did not take part in the vote.**

The Mayor declared the Motion **CARRIED**.

The Director of Leisure and Development requested that Item Agenda Item 6.3 - VAT Adjustments at Holiday and Leisure Parks be taken 'In Committee' at the end of the meeting.

AGREED - that Agenda Item 6.3 - VAT Adjustments at Holiday and Leisure Parks be taken 'In Committee' at the end of the meeting.

7. MATTERS FOR REPORTING TO PARTNERSHIP PANEL – LOCAL GOVERNMENT SIDE

There were no matters for reporting to the Partnership Panel.

The Chief Executive to enquire if a date has been scheduled for a meeting of the Partnership Panel.

8. CONFERENCES

There were no conferences for consideration.

9. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

10. CONSULTATION SCHEDULE

The Chief Executive presented the report, previously circulated.

The following Consultation documents were presented:

- Belfast Health & Social Care Trust - Phase 2 Covid Response Plan and Equality Screening
- Department of Justice - Proposals to Amend the Legislation Governing the Retention of DNA and Fingerprints in Northern Ireland
- Fermanagh and Omagh District Council - Fermanagh and Omagh Local Development Plan (LDP) Draft Plan Strategy - Consultation on Proposed Changes Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs – Review of Further Education Support and Charging at the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE)

RESOLVED – that Council note the Consultation schedule.

11. SEAL DOCUMENTS

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

11.1 Grave Registry Certificates, No's 4985 – 5002

Proposed by Councillor Hunter
Seconded by Alderman Baird and

RESOLVED - that the sealing of documents as listed (Item 11.1) be approved.

12. NOTICE OF MOTION PROPOSED BY COUNCILLOR DALLAT O'DRISCOLL, SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR BEATTIE

“This Council recognises that hospice care is a vitally important part of our care system; considers it necessary that people approaching the end of life, their families and carers get the right care and support where and when they need it; notes that hospice staff deserves recognition for world-class medical care and emotional support they provide not just to patients but also to their families; and looks forward to the hospice movement going from strength to strength in years to come.”

Accordingly, this council agrees to write to the Minister of Health, Robin Swann MLA, calling upon him to ensure fair and transparent funding enabling affordable pay parity for hospice staff with their NHS counterparts, and continued high quality palliative and end of life care.'

In accordance with Standing Order 15 (6), the Mayor advised the Notice of Motion would be referred to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

**13. NOTICE OF MOTION PROPOSED BY COUNCILLOR MCCAWE,
SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR MULHOLLAND**

'Council notes with concern the rise in the amount of litter in the Borough over the previous months, in particular the effect this has on the natural environment and on our reputation as a tourism destination. Therefore, Council tasks officers to develop a comprehensive Litter Strategy for the Borough, to incorporate a review of the litter infrastructure, lifting and disposal of waste, education and engagement with the community and local stakeholders. Council officers should use best practice from other Council areas across the UK and Ireland as a blueprint for this.'

In accordance with Standing Order 15 (6), the Mayor advised the Notice of Motion would be referred to the Environmental Services Committee.

**14. NOTICE OF MOTION PROPOSED BY COUNCILLOR MCCAWE,
SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR MULHOLLAND**

'In the wake of the economic crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic, this Council recognises the need for a reformed, fairer welfare system that protects everyone in society. It recognises the need to provide economic security for all and invest in people to protect livelihoods and kick start the economy.'

Therefore, it calls on the Departments for Communities and 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 of a full, permanent UBI for Northern Ireland, recognising the need for a radical overhaul of the welfare state and the positive impact this would have on poverty alleviation, inequality and mental health in particular. Council will commit to producing a plan for how a pilot of a full UBI would be implemented within the District, and formally expresses its support for said pilot.'

In accordance with Standing Order 15 (6), the Mayor advised the Notice of Motion would be referred to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN COMMITTEE'

Proposed by Councillor Knight-McQuillan
Seconded by Councillor Mulholland and

AGREED – that Council move 'In Committee'.

15. VAT Adjustments at Holiday and Leisure Parks (Agenda Item 6.3)

The Director of Leisure and Development informed apologised to Members for the lateness of the report; he did not receive the report until 5.30pm the previous evening.

Confidential report, previously circulated was presented by the Director of Leisure and Development informing Members of the UK Government HMRC changes to VAT which has a charging consequence upon Council's Holiday and Leisure Parks. The VAT rate reduces from 20% to 5%, which affects the make-up of the fees charged. Council must decide on the approach for both static and touring caravans (the treatment of each may differ).

Following Council's decision to apply a refund (Option 4 of the relevant report) for the period of the Covid 19 Lockdown and the need to initiate the Direct Debit Payments for the 2020 annual period, Council is respectfully requested to consider this report and recommendations promptly.

It is recommended:

- (i) Touring Caravans, Camping, Glamping and all Other HALP Facilities
- that Council benefits from the VAT reduction and maintains gross fees and charges for Touring Caravans, Camping, Glamping and all other HALP Facilities for the period 15 July 2020 to the 12 January 2021. This will have a positive financial impact on the Council.
- (ii) Static and Seasonal Caravan Customers
- that Council maintains the net cost of the "Pitch Fee" in accordance with the annual licence agreement, applies the VAT reduction and reduces the gross cost accordingly for the period 15 July 2020 to the 12 January 2021. This will have a zero net financial impact on the Council.

The Director of Leisure and Development clarified that the announcement made by the UK Government on 8 July 2020, '**allowing**' VAT registered businesses to temporarily reduce the VAT rate from 20% to 5%. There were no disadvantages to Council by temporarily reducing the VAT rate, but by not availing of this Council may lose goodwill.

Proposed by Councillor Callan
Seconded by Councillor McLean

- that Council

- (i) Touring Caravans, Camping, Glamping and all Other HALP Facilities
- benefits from the VAT reduction and maintains gross fees and charges for Touring Caravans, Camping, Glamping and all other HALP Facilities for the period 15 July 2020 to the 12 January 2021. This will have a positive financial impact on the Council.
- (ii) Static and Seasonal Caravan Customers
- maintains the net cost of the "Pitch Fee" in accordance with the annual licence agreement, applies the VAT reduction and reduces the gross cost accordingly for the period 15 July 2020 to the 12 January 2021. This will have a zero net financial impact on the Council.

The Mayor put the Motion to Council to Vote. 31 Members voted For, 0 Members voted Against and 3 Members Abstained.

The Mayor declared the Motion **CARRIED**.

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN PUBLIC'

Proposed by Councillor Boyle
Seconded by Alderman S McKillop and

AGREED: that Council move 'In Public'.

This being all the business, the Mayor thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting closed at **9.30pm**.

Mayor