Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Civic Headquarters
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December 22nd, 2022

Chairperson: Alderman A G Ewart MBE

Vice Chairperson: Alderman A Grehan

Aldermen: J Baird, W J Dillon MBE and D Drysdale

Councillors: R T Beckett, F Cole, J Gallen, A Givan, H Legge, G McCleave, C McCready, U Mackin, S Mulholland and
A Swan

Ex Officio: The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor S Carson
 Deputy Mayor, Councillor M Guy

Notice of Meeting

A meeting of the Development Committee will take place on **Thursday, 5th January 2023** at **6:00 pm** in the Council Chamber and remote locations for the transaction of business on the undernoted Agenda.

For those Members attending this meeting remotely, the Zoom link and passcodes are contained within the Outlook invitation that has been issued.

A hot buffet will be available in Lighters Restaurant from 5.30 pm.

DAVID BURNS
Chief Executive
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Agenda

1.0 Apologies

2.0 Declarations of Interest

(i) Conflict of Interest on any matter before the meeting (Members to confirm the specific item)

(ii) Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interest (Members to complete the Disclosure of Interest Form

3.0 Report of Head of Economic Development

3.1 New Tourism Strategy Proposals

   1. Tourism Strategy.pdf   *Page 1*

4.0 Report of the Head of Planning and Capital Development

4.1 Proposed Amendment to the Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (NI) 2015 to introduce Validation Checklists for Planning Applications

   2. Consultation - Report Validation Checklist.pdf   *Page 6*

5.0 Confidential Report of Director of Service Transformation

5.1 Service Transformation Estimates 2023-2024

Confidential for reasons of:

a) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information), and

b) Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Council or a Government Department and employees of, or office holders under, the Council.

   1. Estimates report Jan 23.pdf   *Not included*

   Appendix 1a   Estimates Book report.pdf   *Not included*

   Appendix 1b Transformation Payroll, non-payroll, income 21 Dec 22.pdf   *Not included*

   Appendix 1c Location report.pdf   *Not included*

   Appendix 1d Detailed Estimates overview - Service Unit Narrative Service...pdf   *Not included*

5.2   Award of Delivery Agent to deliver the Economic Inactivity Linked to Disability Programme

Confidential due to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information)

5.3   Business Growth and Entrepreneurship Support Programme Proposals

Confidential due to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information)

6.0 Any Other Business

Development Committee

5 January 2023

Report from:

Head of Economic Development

Item for Decision

TITLE: **New Tourism Strategy proposals**

Background and Key Issues:

Background

1. The Council's Tourism Strategy 2018-2022 is set to expire and needs reviewed, revised and updated to reflect the Council's vision for tourism for the next five year period. A copy of the summary document of the current strategy is attached and a copy of the wider Tourism Strategy document are available via the following links: Decision Time (Summary) and Decision Time (Wider Strategy).

2. The strategy sets an overall target of 10% growth in staying visitors and revenue spend over the period, which was significantly adversely impacted by the onset of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020. That said, in spite of the pandemic, notable progress has been made in terms of tourism product development over the period by the Council and its industry partners, including:
    - The development of the Destination Royal Hillsborough programme (including the confirmation of the "Royal" designation), the ongoing physical development programme at Hillsborough Forest and the complementary investment by HRP at Hillsborough Castle.
    - Supporting the growing speciality food and drink sector, and delivering an established programme of artisan markets.
    - Delivering annual major and minor third party events programmes across the Council area.

- Working in partnership to develop and market product offerings such as the ongoing relationship with Visit Belfast and Tourism NI, working with key tourism products such as new events at Eikon Centre, and developing the Rural Tourism Collaborative Experience programme that has leveraged commercial buy-in to new Royal Hillsborough and historic Moira packaging concepts.
- Growing tourism accommodation locally across the self-catering, bed and breakfast and guesthouse sectors, including a new city centre hotel, with a new hotel planned to open in Hillsborough.

3. The new strategy should take cognisance of the recent impacts and opportunities arising from the pandemic, the Destination Royal Hillsborough (Belfast Region City Deal) programme, and significant increases in the cost of living and energy costs. The overarching aim of the next 5 year strategy will be to continue to grow tourism bed-nights, visitor trips, and tourism revenue across the Council area.

4. The new strategy should also reflect other government and Council wide strategies, including the Council's Community Plan, the new Corporate Plan, the draft Tourism NI Strategy, the Visit Belfast Strategy, and the Hillsborough Tourism Masterplan Review.

Key Issues

1. The new Lisburn and Castlereagh Tourism Strategy will be a document that is essential for applying for grant funding. It will provide strategic direction and a road map for tourism activity over the next 5 years as the tourism landscape continues to change.

2. It is proposed that strategic elements of the existing strategy will be rolled forward by officers, with some external technical support bought in to provide some additional analysis, challenge and introduction of contemporary best practice in terms of tourism policy and future visitor servicing provision. The objectives and indicative actions will have to be balanced against available resources, and will set the context to leverage third party financial support where possible.

3. The methodology will include formal engagement with the elected members and appropriate officers, stakeholder organisations such as the NI Tourism Alliance, Visit Belfast, Tourism NI, and the local commercial sector, as well as benchmarking the Council's programme against competitors.

4. It is anticipated that current tourism priority themes will carry forward – including:
   - sustainable tourism, and the development of the Destination Royal Hillsborough concept in line with the Belfast Region City Deal opportunity, and leveraging this opportunity for the wider tourism product across the Council area
   - the completion of the Council's proposals for Hillsborough Forest
   - the further promotion of Royal Hillsborough and historic Moira packaging, jointly with the commercial sector
   - the ongoing promotion of the Council's Food and Drink offering, including the seasonal delivery of a programme of artisan markets

- using high-quality events balanced across the Council area to drive visitor footfall, connected to packaging opportunities
- using the Integrated Marketing Campaign to continue to drive awareness and footfall to the area, including Lisburn city centre
- future proofing the promotion of the local tourism product offering through the use of digital technologies
- a focus on growing the accommodation sector locally over the five year period

5. It is proposed to commission technical assistance in order to refresh and validate the evidence base for the drafting of the new strategy. It is important for the purposes of attracting and assisting funding applications for LCCC, that the strategy is aligned to the NI Tourism Strategy. It is critical that the new strategy can demonstrate how to assist in the post covid recovery and post Brexit era forecast growth for tourism in NI pertaining to our Council.

6. In addition Members should note that there have been a number of economic returns that have been realised form the existing strategy. This includes additional funding for new and existing businesses. Specifically for Royal Hillsborough, officers are working with Corporate Comms to celebrate the cluster of six new businesses in the village. A separate item on reinvigorating the planned Royal Hillsborough and Wider Tourism Offer to the Palace of Westminster will be brought forward to Members next month.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Members consider and approve the technical assistance to assist officers in developing a new 5 year Tourism Strategy (2023 – 2028) for the Council area.

Finance and Resource Implications:

It is estimated that a budget of up to £15,000 will be required, which would be sourced from the existing Economic Development budget estimates for 2022/23 and 2023/24. This will involve stakeholder engagement, facilitation of workshops and data analysis to support Members determining the relative prioritisation of emerging actions.

Screening and Impact Assessment

1. Equality and Good Relations

Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out on the proposal/project/policy?   No

If no, please provide explanation/rationale

To be progressed.

If yes, what was the outcome?:

Option 1 Screen out without mitigation	Yes/No	**Option 2** Screen out with mitigation	Yes/No	**Option 3** Screen in for a full EQIA	Yes/No

Rationale for outcome/decision (give a brief explanation of any issues identified including mitigation and/or plans for full EQIA or further consultation)

Insert link to completed Equality and Good Relations report:

2. **Rural Needs Impact Assessment**:

Has consideration been given to Rural Needs?	Yes	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) template been completed?	No

If no, please given explanation/rationale for why it was not considered necessary:

A full Equality Screening document and Rural Needs Impact Assessment will be completed if approval is granted to progress a new Tourism Strategy for the Council area.

If yes, give brief summary of the key rural issues identified, any proposed actions to address or mitigate and include the link to the completed RNIA template:

SUBJECT TO PLANNING APPROVAL: No

If Yes, "This is a decision of this Committee only. Members of the Planning Committee are not bound by the decision of this Committee. Members of the Planning Committee shall consider any related planning application in accordance with the applicable legislation and with an open mind, taking into account all relevant matters and leaving out irrelevant consideration".

APPENDICES: Appendices – see links (as indicated in the report) Decision Time (Summary doc) and Decision Time (Wider Strategy doc)

HAS IT BEEN SUBJECT TO CALL IN TO DATE? Yes/No

If Yes, please insert date:

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Development Committee

05 January 2023

Report from:

Head of Planning and Capital Development

Item for Decision

TITLE: **Proposed amendment to the Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (NI) 2015 to introduce validation checklists for planning applications**

Background and Key Issues:

Background

1.   The need to improve the quality of planning applications entering the planning system and the potential benefits this could bring in terms of improving processing times, the quality of decisions and in turn the delivery of development on the ground, was highlighted by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) in a Review of the Implementation of the Planning Act (NI) 2011.

2.   The DfI explain that the review, which was informed by a wide range of stakeholders, recognised the importance of front-loading the planning application process to ensure applications are accompanied with all necessary supporting documentation needed to reach a decision at the point of submission.

3.   Validation checklists are part of the planning legislation framework in other jurisdictions, and an important tool in improving the quality and completeness of planning applications coming into the system. The need to bring legislation in Northern Ireland in line with other jurisdictions is recognised.

4.   The consultation document further highlights reports on the Northern Ireland Planning System by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) (February 2022), and the Public

Accounts Committee (PAC) (March 2022), both of which reference the need for, and benefits of, the introduction of validation checklists.

5.   A copy of the consultation document can be viewed at the following link:

https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-changes-improve-quality-planning-applications

6.   Comments are sought and the closing date for responses is 06th January 2023.

Key Issues

1.   The consultation document sets out the current statutory arrangements for making an application provided for by Section 40 of the Planning Act, while the detailed form and content of a planning application is specified in Article 3 of the Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (NI) 2015.

2.   It also details the information required to accompany an application for planning permission. This includes a written description of the development; an address or location of the land; the name and address of the applicant; a plan sufficient to identify the land; such other plans and drawings necessary to describe the development; a design/access statement, where required; a certificate of ownership/interest; and any fee.

3.   It is noted in the document that the requirements are basic and many applications when submitted do not contain all the information needed to determine them. This can result in further request(s) to the applicant which can subsequently lead to delays in processing with a consequent negative impact on resources and efficiency.

4.   The Department acknowledges that everything possible is done to keep improving the timeframes for processing applications and to do so jointly with Councils, statutory consultees and other stakeholders.

5.   The validation checklist is intended to provide guidance to applicants about the level and type of information required to be submitted with a planning application. The requirements are intended to be proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposal.

6.   The proposed amended Order proposed by the Department would enable a planning authority to prepare and publish 'checklists', above the current minimum statutory requirements which would remain unchanged, setting out the additional supporting information/evidence which would be required to accompany different types of planning application.

7.   The overall objective of such an amendment is to enhance the quality of applications entering the system, to front-load the decision making process, which should result in better processing times and more efficient consultee responses.

8.   Applications will not be considered valid until they comply with the required information contained in the published checklists and, therefore, the clock will not start ticking in terms of meeting statutory processing time targets. Ultimately, the requirement to ensure

applications are accompanied by all necessary information should result in overall improved planning performance.

9.   The report highlights the need for the introduction of validation checklists, and there would also require to be a 'validation dispute' mechanism, otherwise the only recourse available to an applicant would be judicial review proceedings. Two examples of dispute resolution processes operated in England and Wales are explained.

10.   The Department seeks agreement in the consultation on the need to provide a statutory basis for planning authorities to introduce a Validation Checklist for planning applications and for a 'dispute mechanism' to be available to applicants.

11.   The benefits of introducing a validation checklist on a statutory basis are to be welcomed by officers and consistent with a wider duty of continuous improvement.   Front loading applications is preferred and a better and more efficient use of time and resources.

12.   A dispute mechanism is important to protect the rights of applicants to a fair hearing without the need to consider judicial review proceedings. The example from England is preferred by officers and places the burden on the applicant to demonstrate why the information is not required and the dispute resolution process does always give rise to a formal appeal process.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Committee considers and agrees:

1.   The amendment to the Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (NI) 2015 to introduce validation checklists for planning applications submitted to the Council.

2.   To support the English based dispute resolution process associated with the proposed validation process.

Finance and Resource Implications:

There are no finance and resource implications.

Screening and Impact Assessment

1. Equality and Good Relations

Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out on the proposal/project/policy?   No

If no, please provide explanation/rationale

This is a report in relation to an amendment to the Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (NI) 2015 to introduce validation checklists for planning applications. EQIA is not required as this is screened separately by the Department.

If yes, what was the outcome?:

| **Option 1** Screen out without mitigation | N/A | **Option 2** Screen out with mitigation | N/A | **Option 3** Screen in for a full EQIA | N/A |

Rationale for outcome/decision (give a brief explanation of any issues identified including mitigation and/or plans for full EQIA or further consultation)

Insert link to completed Equality and Good Relations report:

2. **Rural Needs Impact Assessment**:

| Has consideration been given to Rural Needs? | No | Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) template been completed? | No |

If no, please given explanation/rationale for why it was not considered necessary:

This is a report in relation to an amendment to the Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (NI) 2015 to introduce validation checklists for planning applications. RNIA is not required as this is screened separately by the Department.

If yes, give brief summary of the key rural issues identified, any proposed actions to address or mitigate and include the link to the completed RNIA template:

SUBJECT TO PLANNING APPROVAL: No

If Yes, "This is a decision of this Committee only. Members of the Planning Committee are not bound by the decision of this Committee. Members of the Planning Committee shall consider any related planning application in accordance with the applicable legislation and with an open mind, taking into account all relevant matters and leaving out irrelevant consideration".

APPENDICES:

Consultation document:
https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-changes-improve-quality-planning-applications

HAS IT BEEN SUBJECT TO CALL IN TO DATE?   No

If Yes, please insert date: