

May 1st, 2024

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Thursday, 9th May 2024** at **7:00 pm** in **Church Street, Newtownards.**

Agenda

Agenda

[PP 09.05.2024 Agenda.pdf](#)

Page 1

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Deputation - Northern Ireland Geo Diversity Charter

Reports for Noting

4. Developing a New Economy - NAC NI Outcome Report

Report attached

[4. Developing a New Economy - NAC NI Outcome Report.pdf](#)

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[4.1 Appendix 1 - NAC NI Outcome Report Mar 2024.pdf](#)

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5. Development of new Village Plans - Engagement Process Outlined

Report attached

[5. Development of new Village Plans - Engagement Process Outlined.pdf](#)

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6. Any Other Notified Business

*** IN CONFIDENCE ***

Reports for Approval

7. Shared Island Funding Application Update Report

Feasibility Study for an All Island Columban Way Walking Route

(Report attached)

[7. Shared Island Funding Application Update Report - All Island Columban Way Feasibility Study.pdf](#)

Not included

[7.1 Appendix 1 Executive Summary - ORNI.pdf](#)

Not included

 **7.2 Appendix 2 Business Case Cogent.pdf**

Not included

8. Paddington Bear UK Trail

Report attached

 **8. Paddington Bear UK Trail.pdf**

Not included

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

1 May 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby invited to attend an in-person meeting of the Place and Prosperity Committee of the Ards and North Down Borough Council which will be held in the Council Chamber, 2 Church Street, Newtownards on **Thursday 9 May 2024**, commencing at **7.00pm**.

Yours faithfully

Susie McCullough
Interim Chief Executive
Ards and North Down Borough Council

A G E N D A

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Deputation - NI Geo Diversity Charter

Reports for Noting

4. Developing a New Economy – NAC NI Outcome Report (report attached)
5. Development of new Village Plans - Engagement Process Outlined (report attached)
6. Any Other Notified Business

*****IN CONFIDENCE – Items 7 & 8*******Reports for Approval (in confidence)**

7. Shared Island Funding Application Update Report - Feasibility Study for an All Island Columban Way walking route (report attached)
8. Paddington Bear UK Trail (report attached)

MEMBERSHIP OF PLACE AND PROSPERITY COMMITTEE (16 MEMBERS)

Alderman Adair	Councillor Kennedy
Alderman Armstrong-Cotter	Councillor Thompson
Alderman McDowell	Councillor McCracken
Councillor Ashe	Councillor McCollum
Councillor Blaney	Councillor McKimm
Councillor Edmund	Councillor McLaren
Councillor Gilmour	Councillor Rossiter
Councillor Hollywood	Councillor Smart

Unclassified

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Item 4

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	09 May 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Prosperity
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Economic Development
Date of Report	22 April 2024
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Developing a New Economy - NAC NI Outcome Report
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Outcome Report March 2024 NAC NI

Background

The National Association of Councillors (Northern Ireland) (NAC NI) engaged in a series of strategic initiatives to enhance its remit as a membership and services organisation for councillors in the 11 local authorities. These initiatives have been developed using the principle of co-design and included events in January 2024, designed with Ulster University, on Developing a New Economy.

In addition to 40 councillors, independent and from all parties, 20 partner bodies contributed. The objectives were to:

- develop a better understanding of the potential leadership, knowledge and partnership harnessing by elected members in the area of the economy, of local enterprise and community investment;
- bring together elected members, officers, and a network of capable, credible, committed partners in order to develop more innovative and inclusive policies and initiatives for economic development;

Unclassified

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- realise at local council level the convening role of councils in regard to tangible partnerships to foster better enterprise locally and sub regionally; and
- realise leadership, learning and development training on the economy / enterprise for elected members and partners.

The outcomes of the events, key messages and next steps are detailed in the attached report.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes the NAC NI report.

“Developing A New Economy”

Ulster University & NAC NI Joint Workshops

UU Belfast Campus, 19th January 2024

UU Derry-Londonderry Campus, 26th January
2024



Outcome Note

1. Introduction & Context

The National Association of Councillors (Northern Ireland) is fully engaged in a series of strategic initiatives to enhance its remit as a membership and services organisation for councillors in the 11 local authorities.

These initiatives have been developed using the principle of co-design, including workshops on Corporate Planning (September 2022), Leadership and Change Development (March 2023) and subsequent NAC NI Executive approvals in advance of the Council elections of May 2023. Developing as NAC NI a leadership role in learning and development for councillors, in partnership, was a cornerstone of this dynamic process.

To this end, NAC NI has committed in its Corporate planning to:

“ensure that the values, governance, resource requirements, purpose and work of the NAC NI are effectively communicated and understood by its membership and its partner organisations.”

A proactive approach followed, with the development of two events in January 2024, entitled “Developing a New Economy”. Crucially, these were co-designed and sponsored with Ulster University, with the support of Professor Duncan Morrow and the material input of Steve Pollard, both of whom seek to further practical and innovative partnerships harnessing local democratic and community networks.

Equally importantly, a diverse group of specialist contributors – change makers, local economic drivers, entrepreneurs, community wealth enablers and policy makers willingly engaged in the events in advance and on the day, further embedding the partnership / co-design principles.

In addition to around 40 councillors, from all parties and also independent members, 20 partner bodies contributed, included:

- Ulster University
- Council Senior Officials (via SOLACE, Society of Local Authority Chief Executives)
- Department of the Economy
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Enterprise NI
- Ethnic Minority Economic Empowerment Network
- South Eastern Regional College
- North Western Regional College
- Family Business Forum
- AccessoLoo
- Northern Mutual Bank Campaign
- National Living Wage Campaign
- Development Trusts NI
- NAC UK
- Association of Irish Local Government (AILG)
- Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA)
- Councils (NI, RoI & England)

Furthermore, bodies including the East Border Region Network (EBRN), Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) and the Association of Public Sector Excellence (APSE) will be involved in the outcomes of this strategic initiative.

2. Objectives of the Joint Workshops

- To develop a better understanding of the potential leadership, knowledge and partnership harnessing by elected members in the area of the economy, of local enterprise and community investment;

- To bring together elected members, officers, and a network of capable, credible, committed partners in order to develop more innovative and inclusive policies and initiatives for economic development;
- To realise at local council level the convening role of councils in regard to tangible partnerships to foster better enterprise locally and sub regionally
- To realise leadership, learning and development training on the economy / enterprise for elected members and partners;
- To ensure that NAC NI is recognised as a leadership body in driving & fulfilling the above objectives.



The objectives are also succinctly explained in the One Page Flyer used to inform potential attendees of the events, as per Appendix One.

3. Interactive Format of the Workshops

The format combined contributions from panellists, all of whom were charged with adopting a “forward look, key messages” approach, together with two substantial interactive sessions with attendees, and this successfully happened (judging from formal and informal feedback) in both Belfast and Derry-Londonderry.

This interactive approach enabled dynamic, open, practical, learning and policy messages to be heard and retained, again in accordance with the participative co-design ethos.

A major trend emanating from this approach was a *hunger* and a *capacity* for change. The *hunger* was evident from panellists and attendees alike, with many constructive examples given of local enterprise initiatives which were working, but which were part of a congested space, competing for budgets and time / human resources, in a policy and procurement environment which was constraining,

bureaucratic and static, overrun with strategies but undervaluing transformative action itself. Put summarily, the appetite for a culture change, not just tweaks here and there, was palpable.

The *capacity* – inside and outside of the two rooms where the workshops were staged – was widely accepted as being in existence, capacity which, if harnessed, offered transformative potential – in terms of policies, practices and also doing collaboration *better, more dynamically and more inclusively*, caveated by the need to have a cultural change at all levels of the economy to make for a more sustainable, e, fairer, local wealth retaining approach.

In neither workshop did the “more money is needed” message come through, rather, a powerful, repeated comment was that a substantial redirection of resources to local (council level) design and delivery is needed – both in policy and practice.

4. **Key Messages Presented**

This section offers a flavour of some (by no means all) key messages from panellists, rather than being a comprehensive set of detailed policy statements. The NAC NI’s Leadership Series presentation material is currently being compiled and will allow for full presentations to be made available from these workshops in due course and upon request. For (a) and (b) below, see also Appendix Two.

(a) **“We Must, We Can”** – contributors referenced that developing enterprise initiatives were an investment, not a cost, emphasising that harnessing local knowledge was urgent in the fragile global, national and local arenas. Local Enterprise Partnerships – whether existing or new - could be driven by local enterprise champions, at elected member level, drawing on committed, capable, local expertise. Changing current models should be the norm, not the exception, with induction and more in-depth training being designed and delivered in partnership with enterprises wanting to invest in the future local economy.

More rates, more skilled people and more wealth were council priorities, with elected members being ambassadors, in a proactive way with officials and partner bodies, enabling better employment, better planning and better programmes from business start up to trade missions.

The flexibility and responsiveness of local councils and local partnerships, together with their convening powers – getting the right people round a table to do the right things at the right time – was emphasised on many occasions, seen as a strength not possible in more central institutions. Again, in frank exchanges, this was something that could be done better, rethought and remodelled, for example by looking again at the partnership models present in each local authority and recalibrating these to be more forward looking, more efficient and more inclusive.

(b) “Power Panel” Sessions – contributors emphasised both new, urgent, ideas and the need to enhance existing work, how small and family businesses were engines of the economy, how community wealth was evident in social enterprises, in many localities across NI, with communities taking ownership of “problem buildings” and turning them into productive assets, with next steps fully planned for but requiring much better integration within and between the many bodies with a stake in the future. These initiatives, if further unlocked, together with a much more living wage employers, combine to achieve sustainable, productive, local wealth retention. An economy which was fairer and inclusive in practice not just in theory was emphasised, with mutual banking giving the potential to complement existing financial services not available to many in society, targeting local new green deals whilst reducing wealth inequality.

The importance of small, micro, family businesses not just as engines of growth, but as a sector which help to celebrate local people and make local places was messaged, looking ahead more workspace, improved wellbeing, local prosperity was in our collective hands. Data and wider intelligence was now in place to support better local economic development, where “better” includes local prosperity, wellbeing, meaningful jobs, civic pride and improved health.

Harnessing the skills of the many, not just the obvious and privileged few, was emphasised, with further education colleges speaking purposefully about apprenticeships for all and vocational training, which must be ever more accessible to all in society, including include Plumbing, Renewables, Green Technologies, Construction, Electrical, Leadership & Management, Hospitality & Tourism, Digital Transformation, ICT & Creative Industries, Lean Manufacturing, Mechatronics, Welding, Robotics, Pneumatics, Motor Vehicle, Health & Care and Trade and Export. “As Further Education takes learners on a journey of developing, changing mindsets, providing motivation and, opportunities as well as skills and knowledge - they become enterprising employees and business owners impacting society and the economy”, with councils helping to remove barriers to becoming skilled, productive citizens by creating the right environment through planning and related enterprise development.

The importance of being seen as colleagues, not competitors, and to act selflessly, in a common cause, was emphasised, thereby breaking down silos and avoiding the perpetuation of old thinking. A new energy in achieving this collaboratively was evident from many who articulated their views, as was the need to avoid creating a “false economy” – only involving usual suspects where the rest of society is at best a consumer – “don’t be strapped to your metrics” was one such message, to ensure that a really modern economy was for all people and all localities, prioritising the global climate crisis but doing so sustainably, sensitively, and locally.

5. Key Issues Presented – Interactive Sessions

Appendix 2 also refers. This section is a succinct summary of key issues rather than a detailed essay, with many of the detail being available in associated documents and learning tools, much of which can be accessed via the appendices and links attached. This Outcome Note is more about recommendations and actions to ensure that what the NAC NI can achieve in partnership is considered on a piece-by-piece approach (NAC NI budgets are small, but its influence can be very substantial), whilst looking also at the policy level change (at a time when Stormont has just returned, February 2024) that clearly requires legislative and regulatory changes at national and regional level – for the betterment of local people and places.

- “We don’t have a problem with poverty in Northern Ireland, we have a problem with wealth”;
- “Don’t repeat the same mistakes of the past, reports in 2018, 2021, drawn up, not actioned”;
- Making change stick, doing it in chunks at a time, creating local autonomy to take risks, invest in entrepreneurial / community led work and don’t “tick the boxes of (failing) bureaucratic programmes”;
- Communicate in language which ordinary people and communities understand;
- Northern Ireland’s councils have demonstrably improved their local economies in the past decade, whilst being constrained in developing new ideas to harness entrepreneurship and skills development, primarily for legislative and procurement reasons rather than a lack of desire / resource, more exploration of community wealth building including community asset transfer can retain wealth (jobs, decent standards of living and opportunities to be enterprising within an for an entire community including unemployed, economically inactive makes for , sustainable growth, accessible, ethical banking services and greater wellbeing
- Councillors engaging in strategic learning on enterprise development will benefit greatly and are keen to co-design such training, contributing to both a wider programme / evidence base and a new, ambitious, growth mindset & culture;
- Councils constrained until they obtain the full package of devolved placemaking powers, resources, and finances to drive economic growth and prosperity;
- Councils constrained by complex procurement policies and practices unique to N. Ireland but must be more innovative themselves (self-help, use the powers you have, take more accountable risks in enterprise development, pay your local businesses on time);
- Avoid prioritising consultants and investment programmes which are procured without local knowledge, local sourcing, local wealth retention and community impact);
- The private sector and the social economy partners must be drivers and be more included at design stage and delivery level, a more efficient administration must include more tax payers and wealth creators;

- LOCAL direct investment, including the Preston model (see appendices) and exploring mutual banking in High Streets of our villages, towns and cities COMPLETELY re-aligned in terms of use of buildings and space will counter the extraction of wealth to outside investors
- High Streets – must have more footfall and requires radical change to planning policies, use of buildings (“build and come solves market failure”) and infrastructure of our diverse, locally unique, places across Northern Ireland, full of community pride and resolve;
- Artificial Intelligence and emerging technologies must be understood and applied as a priority from government to communities, rather than feared or avoided;
- The micro business sector is a mainstay of the economy but conversely is constrained by lack of space – radical planning and innovative use of buildings and space will lead to sustainable development;
- Sustainable growth is needed not relentless growth for growth’s sake, we can combine environmental stewardship with sustainable enterprise and unlock the “development logjam” associated with water / sewerage infrastructure;
- Co-operatives have worked across scores of towns, villages and cities in Northern Ireland, as per small and family businesses the potential to go further, faster, is there; also invest further in markets – in villages, towns, cities and virtually to sustain local products produce;
- New thinking needed to stem declines in business rates, dormitory / commuter settlements are anti-society and wellbeing;
- Market failure needs urgent addressing, with land use and prices favouring housing without associated very local employment, green spaces and public services;
- Young people and their talents cannot continue to be exported, economically inactive must be included too, develop all age apprenticeships;
- The risk appetite (culture) needs to be more dynamic and embrace local solutions / change;
- Learning and development for councillors and partners in enterprise need not be academic nor virtual, “it can be like today’s event” – experiential, a network of ideas, a coalition – right through to accredited, modular courses, capacity and interest can be determined by questionnaires.

6. Initial Analysis

Purely as a guide, since this Outcome Note needs refinement and approval from the NAC NI Executive, before being circulated for action more widely, the feedback in terms of the Questionnaire’s received do suggest a call to action:

Question 1 - 30 Yes responses = 100% - for Strategic Enterprise Training

Question 2 - 30 Yes responses = 100% - for Enterprise Induction Training

The more detailed feedback around Local Enterprise Partnerships, Local Enterprise Champions, accreditation options for training will be analysed further, and individual queries will also be responded to, but it must be stated that general feedback – from non-Council and Council responses, across both events, was wholly positive, whether about the tone, content, facilitation, or venues, with an eagerness for “more of the same” (12 written suggestions). This is very much appreciated, but also confers a responsibility to make things happen, to follow up.

7. Practical Next Steps / Conclusion

NAC NI is respectfully asked to consider the above and ultimately, after discussion and amendment, approve this Outcome Note for wider circulation to attendees and panellists.

In doing so, it may wish to develop the following recommendations, which, deliberately, include some proposed in previous position pieces:

- (i) Consider applying for investment to lead / co-lead future events of this kind, being mindful *at all times* of the *capacity* of NAC NI, married with its ambition (in short, combine realism with vision).
- (ii) Ensure the NAC NI communicates and co-ordinates actions around recruiting Enterprise Champions, and co-ordinating Enterprise Learning and Development, initially at induction level, across the 11 councils.
- (iii) Commit to a series of engagements with SOLACE, UU, & NILGA to establish a core resource, timetable and delivery plan, respecting the limitations of each organisation but also accepting the need for ambition, delivery and urgent change.
- (iv) Consider formally retaining use of the bodies (additional to those referenced in (iii) above) presenting at the workshops as strategic partners, writing to them accordingly, as part of developing an NAC NI enterprise leadership network, to enhance the strategic learning, relationship building and associated member services roles of NAC NI, and to consider offering the delivery of such workshops on a cross border and wider UK basis (mindful of feedback from NAC UK attendees and expressions of support / commitment from East Border Region, AILG and APSE UK).

Thanks are due to the NAC leadership, Executive and staff together with UU's Steve Pollard for their sustained support and assistance in delivering another very positive set of workshops.

Prepared / submitted without prejudice, and upon receipt without liability in good faith by the author / facilitator as a guidance document only for NAC NI.

Derek McCallan, Draft, 5th February 2024.

Final, policy approved by the NAC Executive 4th March 2024.

Appendix One – Flyer For Events



Flyer Jan 24 Events
NAC.pdf

Appendix Two – Event Agenda (26/1/24)

[Working Agenda UU NAC Enterprise Events Jan 26 2024.docx](#)

Appendix Three – DTNI Next Steps in Community Wealth Building Document Link

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/qcap/filestore/Filetoupload,1756547,en.pdf>

Appendix Four – The Preston Model of A New Local Economy

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MObfh_VNqs4&ab_channel=TheLauraFlandersShow

Appendix Five – Ethnic Minority & Migrant Entrepreneurs Paper 2023 (click on DOWNLOAD)

<https://www.emeen.co.uk/researchanddevelopment>

Unclassified

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ITEM 5**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	09 May 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Place
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Regeneration
Date of Report	26 April 2024
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Development of new Village Plans - Engagement Process Outlined
Attachments	

1. Background

With the existing Village Plans now expired or nearing their end date, there is a need for the development of new plans to continue to guide the growth and development of the rural villages.

As members will be aware, it was agreed the Regeneration Unit would commence the development of the new Village Plans, with the aim to have them available early 2025.

2. Engagement Process

The process for developing the Village Plans will include extensive engagement, this is a critical step towards ensuring community involvement and buy-in. By encouraging input and feedback from a diverse range of stakeholders, such as residents, local businesses, and community groups, the review process can benefit from a broader perspective and build consensus around the proposed new Village Plans.

Not Applicable

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This inclusive approach not only fosters transparency and accountability but also develops a sense of ownership and collaboration amongst all stakeholders involved. This ultimately will lead to more effective and tailored outcomes that truly reflect the needs and aspirations of the villages.

An extensive engagement period will commence mid-May 2024 through to the end of September 2024. This will include public workshops, community group and local school engagement, attendance at events/ activity groups, on-street surveys, and online surveys, as detailed below:

1. Public Engagement Opportunity/ Workshop
Incorporating public engagement opportunities/ workshops as part of the engagement process is crucial to provide a platform for residents and stakeholders to voice their concerns, ideas, and feedback directly to the officers leading the development of the plans.

A series of public engagement opportunities/ workshops have been arranged for the following dates/ locations:

Ballygowan | Tuesday 25 June 4-6pm | Ballygowan Community Centre
 Ballyhalbert | Wednesday 05 June 4pm-6pm | Talbot House
 Carrowdore | Wednesday 12 June 4-6pm | Carrowdore Community Centre
 Cloughey | Thursday 20 June 4-6pm | The Pavilion
 Conlig | Monday 24 June 4-6pm | Conlig Community Centre
 Groomsport | Tuesday 09 July 4-6pm | Groomsport Boat House
 Greyabbey | Thursday 27 June 4-6pm | Greyabbey Village Hall
 Helens Bay & Crawfordsburn | Tuesday 18 June 4-6pm | Crawfordsburn Primary School
 Lisbane & Lisbarnett | Monday 01 July 4-6pm | Lisbane Community Hub
 Killinchy | Thursday 08 August 4-6pm | Killinchy Community Hall
 Kircubbin | Tuesday 18 June 4-6pm | Kircubbin Community Centre
 Millisle | Tuesday 20 August 4-6pm | Millisle Community Hub
 Portavogie | Thursday 22 August 4-6pm | Portavogie Community Centre
 Portaferry | Wednesday 28 August 4-6pm | Market House

Note – Ballywalter – To Be Confirmed.

2. Local School Engagement
The initiative of involving local schools in interactive workshops and a drawing competition is a way to engage young minds and encourage the younger residents to share their ideas and creativity, giving them a sense of ownership in their village whilst promoting civic engagement from an early age. The incorporation of the winning drawings in the Village Plan will further foster a sense of pride and connection.

Officers have reached out to the schools within each village and are actively arranging workshops to take place prior to the summer holidays.

3. Community Group Engagement

Not Applicable

Officers have engaged with each of the community groups in each village to discuss the process for the development of the new Village Plans.

A series of workshops will be delivered with each of the Community Groups throughout the process:

Workshop 1 – Shaping the New Village Plan

Workshop 2 – Discussion on findings/ outcomes – prioritisation of projects.

Workshop 3 – Review of Draft Document

Throughout the process, officers will issue a monthly newsletter to each community group to keep them informed of upcoming events and progress to date. By keeping the groups informed and involved throughout the process, the plans are likely to be more collaborative and successful. It is hoped that this level of engagement and participation in shaping the Village Plan, will ensure the plans are reflective of the needs and aspirations of the various stakeholders.

4. Attendance at Events/ Local Activity Groups

Previous experience has demonstrated that public meetings are not always a successful method in gathering public views. Officers aim to capture a more varied and representative set of views by attending public events and local activity groups, ensuring a higher level of engagement and inclusivity in the development process. This method shows a progressive approach towards reaching a wider cross section of the community and should generate a greater range of perspectives.

5. On-street and Online Surveys

By offering a user-friendly, online survey and conducting on-street surveys, the engagement process becomes more inclusive and accessible to a broader audience. Surveys are an effective way of collecting data efficiently and will enable officers to analyse trends throughout the engagement process. This method of consultation will improve transparency as survey results will be made publicly available.

3. Marketing & Promotion

A marketing and promotion campaign will support the engagement activity. The campaign will include digital (website, social media, and email) and print (flyers, posters, local newspapers). The focus of materials will be to generate awareness, encourage participation and provide key information.

The campaign messaging will be **Your Village | Your Voice**. Supported by the strapline **Shaping the Future**.

A dedicated email address has been created village.plans@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk and a dedicated webpage within the new Council website www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/villageplans

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes this report.