



May 13th, 2024

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the Council meeting to be held on **Tuesday, 7th May 2024 at 6:00 pm** in **Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre & MS Teams.**

Agenda

1.0 Apologies and Chairperson's Remarks

2.0 Declarations of Interest

3.0 Action Sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 8 April 2024

For Information

[Action Sheet Council Meeting 2024 04 08.pdf](#)

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Council Minutes For Adoption and Signing

4.0 Minutes of Council Meeting held on 8 April 2024

For Approval

[Council Minutes 2024 04 08.pdf](#)

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Committee Minutes for Consideration and Adoption

5.0 Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 15 April 2024

For Approval

[Economy Regeneration and Tourism Minutes 2024 04 15.pdf](#)

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6.0 Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 18 April 2024

For Approval

[Strategy Policy Resources Meeting Minutes 2024-04-18.pdf](#)

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7.0 Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 22 April 2024

For Approval

[Active and Healthy Communities Minutes 2024 04 22.pdf](#)

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8.0 Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 23 April 2024

For Approval

[Sustainabilty_and_Environment_Committee_Minutes_2024_04_23.pdf](#)














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9.0 Planning Section

Correspondence

10.0 Correspondence Report

For Information

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 <i>Appendix 8 Response from Dept for Infrastructure C 061 2024 Rail Service Belfast to Dublin.pdf</i>	<i>Page 70</i>
 <i>Appendix 9 Response from Minister of Health C 081 2024 Cancer Treatment Waiting Times.pdf</i>	<i>Page 71</i>
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 <i>Appendix 11 Response from Minister of Health C 040 2024 Emergency General Surgery Services at Daisy Hill Hospital.pdf</i>	<i>Page 77</i>

Notices of Motion

11.0 Mental Health Service Providers across Newry, Mourne and Down

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Sharvin:

"This Council fully recognises and appreciates the work of mental health service providers within Newry,

Mourne and Down. It is vitally important that the service providers are supported to sustain and grow for the future demand. This Council will write to the Health Minister Robin Swann calling for him to commit financial funding to enable new contracts being awarded and procurement exercises to be undertaken via the local Trusts."

12.0 Road Maintenance

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Byrne:

"This Council expresses extreme disappointment at the continued deterioration of our rural roads and recognises the impact it has on motorists and the executive budget through subsequent compensation claims. This Council supports the recommendations made in 2019 in Jim Barton's Independent Review into the Funding Requirements for Structural Maintenance of the Northern Ireland road network. Council writes to the Minister for Infrastructure and Minister for Finance asking both departments to outline the steps taken to implement the Barton recommendations to date and commit to a multi-year budget to properly address the maintenance of our roads."

13.0 Right to Food

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Galbraith:

"This Council recognises the impact the scourge of food poverty is having on families right across this area, made worse by the cost of living emergency, and gives its formal backing to the Right To Food campaign, joining cities like Belfast, Derry and Liverpool in becoming a Right To Food City / Council.

We believe that this Executive and the British Government must prioritise food poverty, implementing a range of new measures including universal free school meals, support for community kitchens and enshrining the Right To Food for all through legislation.

This Council will also write to the Minister for Communities, calling for immediate action on the implementation of an anti-poverty strategy."

14.0 Ireland's Ancient East

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Feehan:

"Council affirms Newry Mourne and Down's unique positioning for inclusion in the Ireland's Ancient East destination marketing brand and will write to both the Economy Minister and the Irish Minister for Tourism Catherine Martin TD requesting that they meet with a cross-party delegation of councillors to advance Council's stated objective of securing the inclusion of counties Armagh and Down in Ireland's Ancient East."

15.0 Dog Fouling

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Howie:

"That this Council will be focused on providing long term solutions around enforcement and communication campaigns with regard to dog fouling. Council officers will also look at best-practice in Councils who already operate a customer reporting hub such as BCC.

This Council will use data provided by members of the public, elected members via a customer hub, hotspots will be identified and enforcement officers will know exactly areas of most need, this will then inform social media and posts by Council on areas experiencing high dog fouling, encouraging the public to become more aware of their responsibilities. Data may also be used to work out where bins are lacking in the district and inform their placement."

16.0 Baby Loss

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Howell:

"That this Council acknowledges the grief, pain and trauma caused by the loss of a baby during pregnancy; recognises that the trauma felt is exacerbated by bereaved parents having to travel to England for a post-mortem due to the absence of a local perinatal and paediatric pathologist; further recognises the potential of an all-island paediatric pathology service so bereaved parents can access post-mortems on the island of Ireland; believes parents should have the option to have their child's memory recorded with an official certificate free of charge; and supports the intention of the Finance Minister to develop a Baby Loss Certificate Scheme for those parents that have lost a baby during a baby pregnancy before 24 weeks."

Invitees

Cllr Terry Andrews
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Cllr Callum Bowsie
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Fionnuala Branagh
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Cllr Jim Brennan
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Cllr Pete Byrne
.....
Mr Gerard Byrne
.....
Cllr Philip Campbell
.....
Mr Andrew Cassells
.....
Cllr William Clarke
.....
Cllr Laura Devlin
.....
Ms Louise Dillon
.....
Cllr Cadogan Enright
.....
Cllr Killian Feehan
.....
Cllr Doire Finn
.....
Cllr Aoife Finnegan
.....
Ms Joanne Fleming
.....
Cllr Conor Galbraith
.....
Cllr Mark Gibbons
.....
Cllr Oonagh Hanlon
.....
Cllr Glyn Hanna
.....
Cllr Valerie Harte
.....
Cllr Roisin Howell
.....
Cllr Tierna Howie
.....
Cllr Jonathan Jackson
.....
Cllr Geraldine Kearns
.....
Miss Veronica Keegan
.....
Mrs Josephine Kelly
.....
Mrs Sheila Kieran
.....
Cllr Cathal King
.....
Cllr Mickey Larkin
.....
Cllr David Lee-Surginor
.....
Cllr Alan Lewis
.....
Cllr Oonagh Magennis
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Mr Conor Mallon
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Cllr Aidan Mathers
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Cllr Declan McAteer
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Cllr Leeanne McEvoy
.....
Jonathan McGilly
.....
Cllr Andrew McMurray
.....
Maureen/Joanne Morgan/Johnston
.....
Cllr Declan Murphy
.....
Cllr Kate Murphy
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Cllr Selina Murphy
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Cllr Siobhan O'Hare
.....
Mr Andy Patterson
.....
Cllr Áine Quinn
.....
Cllr Henry Reilly
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Cllr Michael Rice
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Ms Alison Robb
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Cllr Michael Ruane
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Cllr Gareth Sharvin
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Donna Starkey
.....
Nicola Stranney
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Sarah Taggart
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Paul Tamati
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Cllr David Taylor
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Cllr Jarlath Tinnelly
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Cllr Jill Truesdale
.....
Mrs Marie Ward
.....

ACTIONS OUTSTANDING FROM PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETINGS

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
<i>C/178/2019</i>	<i>Notice of Motion – C/131/2019: Live Animals in Circuses</i>	<i>At the request of Councillor McAteer it was agreed the motion remain on the action sheet.</i>	<i>Democratic Services</i>		<i>N</i>
<i>C/084/2022</i>	<i>Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 28.03.22 – with NIAS & SHSCT</i>	<i>It was agreed to bring forth problem solving solutions to the NIAS in all facets of their work and for this action to be retained on the Action Sheet to keep track of progress</i>	<i>Democratic Services</i>		<i>N</i>

ACTION SHEET – COUNCIL MEETING – MONDAY 8 APRIL 2024

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
<i>C/066/2024</i>	<i>Action Sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 04.03.2024</i>	<i>It was agreed to note the action sheet. Letter to the Mayor of Ramallah, regarding initiating the process of twinning Newry with the City of Ramallah</i>	<i>Democratic Services C Mallon</i>	<i>Noted Letter sent</i>	
<i>C/067/2024</i>	<i>Minutes of Council Meeting held on 04.03.2024</i>	<i>The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.</i>	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Noted</i>	

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
<i>C/068/2024</i>	<i>Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 26.02.2024</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	
<i>C/069/2024</i>	<i>Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 25.03.2024</i>	The Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on 25 March 2024 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted subject to amendments to be forwarded to Democratic Services from Councillor McAteer.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	
<i>C/070/2024</i>	<i>Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 11.03.2024</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted. It was agreed to amend proposal 4, ERT/032/2024 and sign Annex 1 as an associate partner.	<i>Democratic Services</i> <i>C Mallon</i>	Noted Noted	
<i>C/071/2024</i>	<i>Special Hearing of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 11 March 2024</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	
<i>C/072/2024</i>	<i>Minutes of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on 14.03.2024</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	
<i>C/073/2024</i>	<i>Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting 18.03.2024</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
<i>C/074/2024</i>	<i>Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting 20.03.2024</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	
<i>C/075/2024</i>	<i>Planning Section</i>	There were no issues arising	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	
<i>C/076/2024</i>	<i>Correspondence Report</i>	<p><i>Appendix 1: Correspondence from Minister for Health in relation to C/040/2024 Notice of Motion, Daisy Hill Hospital</i></p> <p>It was agreed that Council respond confirming it was willing to meet with senior health officials however there was a strong desire and insistence that the Health Minister be present at that meeting.</p> <p><i>Appendix 2: Correspondence from Education Authority in relation to C/195/2023 and C/013/2024, Notice of Motion, Transport & Availability of places for children with additional needs</i></p> <p>It was agreed that Council to seek further information and seek answers to the following:</p> <p>1. Was it appropriate to ask the family of any young person with a Statement of Education, to travel up to 60 miles a day to attend their placement of education?</p> <p>2. If placements had been offered in advance – via the annual review, why was it still taking up to four weeks beyond the new academic year to ensure transport was arranged? This often put a financial burden on already stretched families to pay for buses to try get their child to school.</p>	<p><i>Democratic Services</i></p> <p><i>Democratic Services</i></p>	<p>Correspondence sent</p> <p>Correspondence sent</p>	

<i>Minute Ref</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Decision</i>	<i>Lead Officer</i>	<i>Actions taken/ Progress to date</i>	<i>Remove from Action Sheet Y/N</i>
		<p>3.As per stage 2 mentioned in their letter, if they had key information as required why did parents not have communication with regards to placement and travel?</p> <p>4.If a child was in receipt of a taxi as per their statement of education, was this transport for that child only?</p> <p>5.Could the EA consider a fast track recruitment process or a waiting list to ensure staff were readily available should the situation arise where a child requires that additional support traveling to/from school?</p> <p>6.Could the Education Authority's cross-directorate team clarify what provisions would be in place for September 2024, to ensure there would be placements and travel arrangements for those requiring them and that these placements were within a reasonable distance from where the young people live?</p> <p>It was agreed to note the Correspondence report.</p>	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	
<i>C/077/2024</i>	Letter from National Association of Councillor's inviting elected members to attend a Conference on Leisure and Tourism	There were no nominations put forward to attend the conference.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	

C/078/2024	<i>Notice of Motion – Irish Language Resource Centre</i>	It was agreed that Council write to Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities asking that a re-consideration and grace period is offered to Glór Uachtar Tire and their application to Community Ownership Fund with regards to their pursuit to develop an Irish Language Resource Centre in Castlewellan. It was agreed that Council also write to Jacob Young, Levelling Up Minister.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Correspondence sent	
C/079/2024	<i>Notice of Motion – Evaluation of Council spends on SLAs and Council-run Events</i>	<p>"That this Council commits to bringing an improvement paper on options for a better evaluation of Council spends in SLAs and Council-run Events so we know the true impact on residents and value for money. That this Council makes improvements in reporting on the above so Councillors know the progress made over time through the inclusion of a baseline measurement, meaning there is a greater connectedness with departmental business plans and how they achieve the corporate plan through connected evaluation."</p> <p>The Motion was referred to the Strategic Finance Working Group in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.</p>	<p><i>Democratic Services</i></p> <p><i>J Kelly</i></p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Motion on Agenda for SFWG meeting on 21 May 2024.</p>	
C/080/2024	<i>Notice of Motion – Fisheries and Aquaculture Industries</i>	<p>It was agreed that Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognises the acute pressures that the Fisheries and Aquaculture Industries are currently under as a consequence of the severe shortage of seasonal workers. This Council calls on the UK Government to relax immigration rules to allow for visas for seasonal aquaculture to aid local businesses acquire necessary workers. • Requests the UK Government to allow for visas for seasonal aquaculture, relaxes rules on the current skilled worker scheme and aid local businesses to acquire necessary workers. 	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Correspondence sent and response received from DAERA.	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write to the new DEARA Minister in support of the Ministers requests to the UK Home Office to add fishing in NI as one of the industries to which seasonal working visas apply. 			
<i>C/081/2024</i>	<i>Notice of Motion – Cancer Treatment Waiting Times</i>	It was agreed that this Council recognises that waiting times for cancer treatments are still unacceptably long and commits to write to the Minister of Health to request delivery of the department's 10 year cancer strategy and also write to the Minister of Finance urging her to commit to the Department's identified funding plan for said strategy and deliver a multi-year budget to build on existing cooperation on an All Island basis to ensure all patients receive timely treatment and support which is appropriate and compassionate.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Correspondence sent</i>	
<i>C/082/2024</i>	<i>Notice of Motion – Cross Border Teaching Registration</i>	<p>"Newry, Mourne and Down District Council recognises the challenges faced by teaching graduates in securing permanent teachings posts in Northern Ireland, further recognises the obstacles faced by Northern teachers seeking to secure registration and employment in the Republic and commits to pursuing the submission of a bid to the Shared Island Unit, in conjunction with Louth and Monaghan County Councils, for a review of cross-border teaching registration and employment practises."</p> <p>The Motion was referred to the Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.</p>	<p><i>Democratic Services</i></p> <p><i>C Mallon</i></p>	<i>Motion on Agenda for ERT meeting on 13 May 2024.</i>	
<i>C/083/2024</i>	<i>Notice of Motion – Arts Sector Cuts</i>	It was agreed that Newry, Mourne and Down District Council recognises the financial pressures on our artists, arts and culture schemes and cultural organisations who have lost funding from Stormont	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Correspondence sent and response received.</i>	

		Departments, putting pressure on their ability to deliver existing arts and cultural schemes; and will write to the Communities Minister seeking his assurances that the cuts will be reversed.			
<i>END</i>					

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**NMD/C/****Minutes of Council Meeting held on Monday 8 April 2024 at 6.00pm in
Council Chamber, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick****In the Chair:** Councillor V Harte

In attendance in Chamber:	Councillor T Andrews	Councillor C Bowsie
	Councillor J Brennan	Councillor P Byrne
	Councillor P Campbell	Councillor W Clarke
	Councillor C Enright	Councillor K Feehan
	Councillor D Finn	Councillor A Finnegan
	Councillor C Galbraith	Councillor O Hanlon
	Councillor G Hanna	Councillor J Jackson
	Councillor G Kearns	Councillor M Larkin
	Councillor D Lee-Surginor	Councillor A Lewis
	Councillor O Magennis	Councillor A Mathers
	Councillor D McAteer	Councillor A McMurray
	Councillor S O'Hare	Councillor D Murphy
	Councillor K Murphy	Councillor S Murphy
	Councillor A Quinn	Councillor H Reilly
	Councillor M Rice	Councillor M Ruane
	Councillor G Sharvin	Councillor D Taylor
	Councillor J Tinnelly	Councillor J Truesdale

Officials in attendance: Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
 Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability and Environment
 Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services
 Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism
 Mr A Patterson, Director of Active and Healthy Communities
 Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)
 Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer

C/064/2024**APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Devlin, Gibbons, Howell, Howie, King and McEvoy.

The Chairperson expressed condolences to the families of those tragically killed on the Districts roads over the last month.

She also extended condolences to the families and friends of the following people who had lost their lives over the last few weeks:

- Council employee Indigo (Dougie) Wolfsbane
- Bobby McKee, brother of former Councillor Harold McKee,
- Lorcan Brannigan from Hilltown who tragically died in Australia
- Dean Dobbin from Downpatrick who tragically died in Lanzarote

Armagh Ladies Gaelic team were congratulated on winning the Division One National Football League.

The Chairperson took the opportunity to praise Timmy Mallett on his cycle around the North to raise awareness for Down's Syndrome and in doing so showcasing the District.

The Chairperson congratulated the Council and its staff on organising the recent fantastic St Patricks Day events in both Newry and Downpatrick and the Newry Arts Festival.

The Chairperson congratulated Councillor Tierna Kelly, now Councillor Howie, on her recent marriage and wished her well in her married life.

Congratulations were extended to Charlie Smyth from Mayobridge on becoming the first ever Irish player to come through the NFL's International Player Pathway.

C/065/2024 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

C/066/2024 ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 4 MARCH 2024

Read: Action sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 4 March 2024 (copy circulated).

Appendix 3: Derry City and Strabane District Council in relation to a motion passed regarding Violence in Gaza

Councillor Feehan enquired whether Council had sent a letter to the Mayor of Ramallah, regarding initiating the process of twinning Newry with the City of Ramallah and asked that the item remain on the action sheet until there was a response.

Mr Mallon confirmed the letter would be sent following the Council meeting.

Minutes of Special Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee Meeting 26.02.2024: C/029/2024 and SE/004/2024 Flood Relief Scheme

Councillor Lee-Surginor enquired when successful applicants would receive the Enhanced Flood Support Grant.

Mr Mallon advised applications were in the process of being assessed with a number of applications being allocated to the loss assessors with inspections and visit commenced. He stated there were two dedicated members of staff carrying out those inspections and it was hoped the process would be rolled out over the next number of

The proposal was **CARRIED**.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Sharvin to amend proposal 4, ERT/032/2024 and sign Annex 1 as an associate partner.

Agreed: The Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 11 March 2024 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted on the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Clarke, subject to the above amendment.

C/071/2024 **MINUTES OF SPECIAL HEARING OF ECONOMY, REGENERATION AND TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 MARCH 2024**

Read: Minutes of Special Hearing of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 11 March 2024 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of Special Hearing of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 11 March 2024 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted on the proposal of Councillor Kearns, seconded by Councillor Andrews.

C/072/2024 **MINUTES OF STRATEGY POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14 MARCH 2024**

Read: Minutes of Strategy Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 14 March 2024 (copy circulated).

SPR/043/2024: Mourne Mountain Gateway Project

Councillor Truesdale enquired whether the National Trust would be a stakeholder on the Project Board and if not, why not.

Mr Mallon confirmed it had been reported at the Programme Board that the National Trust had been invited to become Members of the Board and had declined as they deemed they could be conflicted if the application reached the stage where a commercial lease would be entered into.

Agreed: The Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 14 March 2024 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Quinn, seconded by Councillor Sharvin.

C/073/2024 **MINUTES OF ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19 MARCH 2024**

Read: Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 19 March 2024 (copy circulated).

Councillor Truesdale wished to point out there was no reference to the Newcastle Leisure Centre within the Corporate Plan and requested that this be included in the Council's 2024-27 Corporate Plan to show Council's commitment.

Mrs Ward explained that the project was listed within the Council's Capital Plan and not the Corporate Plan.

Agreed: **The Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 19 March 2024 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Mathers.**

C/074/2024 **MINUTES OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 20 MARCH 2024**

Read: Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 20 March 2024 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 20 March 2024 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Taylor.**

C/075/2024 **PLANNING SECTION**

In response to Councillor Reilly, Mr Mallon provided an update on recruitment for the Planning department stating a recent recruitment exercise had been undertaken and four posts had been offered to staff. He stated the department was continuing to engage in a recruitment process and was hopeful to achieve a full complement of staff as soon as possible.

Councillor Taylor voiced concern at the time taken to allocate planning applications due to the number of case officers and asked how far off was Council in having a full complement of staff.

Mr Mallon confirmed a report would be presented at the next Audit Committee and Strategy Policy and Resources Committee Meetings.

requirements of an education system, which is to keep schools open and safe and provide places for our most vulnerable learners.”

Councillor Galbraith proposed that given the response from the Education Authority he believed this provided suitable grounds for Council to seek further information and seek answers to the following:

1. Was it appropriate to ask the family of any young person with a Statement of Education, to travel up to 60 miles a day to attend their placement of education?
2. If placements had been offered in advance – via the annual review, why was it still taking up to four weeks beyond the new academic year to ensure transport was arranged? This often put a financial burden on already stretched families to pay for buses to try get their child to school.
3. As per stage 2 mentioned in their letter, if they had key information as required why did parents not have communication with regards to placement and travel?
4. If a child was in receipt of a taxi as per their statement of education, was this transport for that child only?
5. Could the EA consider a fast track recruitment process or a waiting list to ensure staff were readily available should the situation arise where a child requires that additional support traveling to/from school?
6. Could the Education Authority’s cross-directorate team clarify what provisions would be in place for September 2024, to ensure there would be placements and travel arrangements for those requiring them and that these placements were within a reasonable distance from where the young people live?

Councillor Byrne seconded Councillor Galbraith’s proposal.

Councillor Hanlon said that whilst the points made by Councillor Galbraith were very valid and she was not disputing that the questions be asked, she suggested they would be better placed as MLA questions as Councillors did not have the power to change this within Council.

Councillor Galbraith asked for support with his proposal as answers to his original proposal had not been answered by the Education Authority.

Agreed:

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Galbraith, seconded by Councillor Byrne that Council to seek further information and seek answers to the following:

- 1. Was it appropriate to ask the family of any young person with a Statement of Education, to travel up to 60 miles a day to attend their placement of education?**
- 2. If placements had been offered in advance – via the annual review, why was it still taking up to four weeks beyond the new academic year to ensure transport was arranged? This often put a financial burden on already stretched families to pay for buses to try get their child to school.**
- 3. As per stage 2 mentioned in their letter, if they had key information as required why did parents not have communication with regards to placement and travel?**
- 4. If a child was in receipt of a taxi as per their statement of education, was this transport for that child only?**

5. Could the EA consider a fast track recruitment process or a waiting list to ensure staff were readily available should the situation arise where a child requires that additional support traveling to/from school?
6. Could the Education Authority's cross-directorate team clarify what provisions would be in place for September 2024, to ensure there would be placements and travel arrangements for those requiring them and that these placements were within a reasonable distance from where the young people live?

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Magennis to note the correspondence report and appendices including the following:

Appendix 1: Correspondence from Minister for Health in relation to C/040/2024 Notice of Motion, Daisy Hill Hospital

Appendix 2: Correspondence from Education Authority in relation to C/195/2023 and C/013/2024, Notice of Motion, Transport & Availability of places for children with additional needs

Appendix 3: Correspondence from Department for Communities in relation to C/057/2024, Hybrid meetings

Appendix 4: Correspondence from Office of the Tánaiste in relation to C/061/2024 Notice of Motion, Rail Service from Belfast to Dublin.

Appendix 5: Correspondence from Department for Infrastructure in relation to C/029/2024 Notice of Motion – Flood Defences.

CONFERENCES

C/077/2024 **LETTER FROM NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNCILLORS REGARDING COUNCILLORS CONFERENCE ON LEISURE & TOURISM, THE ROYAL HOTEL, SCARBOROUGH 12-14 APRIL 2024**

Read: Letter dated 6 March 2024 from National Association of Councillors inviting elected members to attend a Conference on Leisure and Tourism at the Royal Hotel, Scarborough 12-14 April 2024.

Mrs Ward outlined the costs to attend the conference and suggested a discussion take place with Party leaders as to how to deal with this going forward to ensure value for

Community Ownership Fund with regards to their pursuit to develop an Irish Language Resource Centre in Castlewellan. It was agreed that Council also write to Jacob Young, Levelling Up Minister.

C/079/2024 NOTICE OF MOTION – EVALUATION OF SPEND ON SLAS AND COUNCIL EVENTS

The following motion was received from Councillor Truesdale:

"That this Council commits to bringing an improvement paper on options for a better evaluation of Council spends in SLAs and Council-run Events so we know the true impact on residents and value for money. That this Council makes improvements in reporting on the above so Councillors know the progress made over time through the inclusion of a baseline measurement, meaning there is a greater connectedness with departmental business plans and how they achieve the corporate plan through connected evaluation."

The motion was seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor.

Agreed: The Motion was referred to the Strategic Finance Working Group in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.

C/080/2024 NOTICE OF MOTION – FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE INDUSTRY PRESSURES

The following motion was received from Councillor Rice:

"This Council recognises the acute pressures that the Fisheries and Aquaculture Industries are currently under as a consequence of the severe shortage of seasonal workers. This Council calls on the UK Government to relax immigration rules to allow for visas for seasonal aquaculture to aid local businesses acquire necessary workers."

The motion was seconded by Councillor Clarke.

In presenting the motion, Councillor Rice said it was clear to see that sustainable employment was essential to keep fishing industries thriving and was a major economic driver in the communities of Ardglass, Kilkeel and Portavogie.

He said the acute pressures the local fishing industry were under was a direct consequence of the severe shortage of seasonal workers and that needed to be recognised. It was extremely worrying for small fishing businesses that immigration rules were restricting seasonal workers to the detriment of the productivity and sustainability of the local fishing industry.

The UK immigration authorities had begun to enforce a rule regarding foreign nationals having to stay outside 12 miles Offshore. The reality was enforcement officers were targeting the local ports resulting in numerous crews having to be sent home and told to

apply through the sponsorship route rather than the present transit visa system. The sponsor route had a process which included a very stringent language exam which many foreign nationals fail repeatedly.

Councillor Rice pointed out that if this issue was not resolved the future of the industry looked bleak and called on the British Government to relax immigration rules to allow seasonal workers to acquire visas and must act swiftly to ensure that issues surrounding seasonal work visas were rectified to ensure that the local fishing industry was supported.

Councillor Byrne spoke about a motion he had brought to Council in 2023 regarding mushroom pickers and seasonal workers visas. The response received from the Home Office received in August 2023 made reference to what they had done for the fishing industry through the Skilled Worker Visa route. There was no option for a seasonal visa for the fishing industry and that was wrong because the skilled worker visa meant people coming from overseas to do jobs in the water and seafood processing plants now had to meet the minimum salary threshold moved from £26,000 to £38,000 and that was going to destroy the sector. The Fisherman's Welfare Alliance representation had put forward a bespoke visa scheme for the industry to look at both seasonal and skilled workers.

In speaking in support of the motion on behalf of SDLP Councillor Byrne asked that the motion be amended to include requesting the UK Government to allow for visas for seasonal aquaculture, relaxes rules on the current skilled worker scheme and aid local businesses to acquire necessary workers.

Councillor Rice accepted Councillor Byrne's amendment.

Councillor Reilly spoke in support of the motion and the difficulties being faced by the fishing industry. He spoke of the need for the Home Office to get its priorities right and do all it could to retain and attract additional workers to the industry.

In supporting the motion Councillor Enright proposed a further amendment to write to the new DEARA Minister in support of the Minister's requests to the UK Home Office to add fishing in Northern Ireland as one of the industries to which seasonal working visas apply.

Councillor Rice accepted Councillor Enright's amendment.

Councillors Hanna and Taylor spoke of the challenges being faced by the industry and voiced support for motion.

Agreed: **It was unanimously agreed on the proposal of Councillor Rice, seconded by Councillor Clarke that Council:**

- **Recognises the acute pressures that the Fisheries and Aquaculture Industries are currently under as a consequence of the severe shortage of seasonal workers. This Council calls on the UK Government to relax immigration rules to allow for visas for seasonal aquaculture to aid local businesses acquire necessary workers.**

- Requests the UK Government to allow for visas for seasonal aquaculture, relaxes rules on the current skilled worker scheme and aid local businesses to acquire necessary workers.
- Write to the new DEARA Minister in support of the Ministers requests to the UK Home Office to add fishing in NI as one of the industries to which seasonal working visas apply.

Councillor Enright left the meeting at this point – 7.35pm.

C/081/2024

NOTICE OF MOTION – CANCER TREATMENT WAITING TIMES

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Hanlon:

"That this Council recognises that waiting times for cancer treatments are still unacceptably long and commits to write to the Minister of Health to request delivery of the department's 10 year cancer strategy and to build on existing cooperation on an All Island basis to ensure all patients receive timely treatment and support which is appropriate and compassionate."

The motion was seconded by Councillor Kearns.

In presenting the motion, Councillor Hanlon said the most recent figures were a clear indication that the North's healthcare system required immediate action from the Minister of Health and the situation for cancer sufferers was urgent and needed attention now.

Members were advised the Cancer Strategy needed to be urgently delivered, considering time delays and rising costs, with the need for the four party coalition to work collaboratively on budgets and timeframes to ensure sustainable, long-term planning and investment in cancer services.

Councillor Hanlon spoke of how behind every statistic there were hundreds of people waiting anxiously for treatment and healthcare staff stretched beyond their limits and to improve cancer prevention, diagnosis, treatment and quality of life, all tools available in the fight against cancer must be utilised including a greater north-south cooperation. An all-island approach would not only improve cancer services for patients, but also help to make healthcare across the island more sustainable.

Councillor Hanlon asked all members for support in writing to Mr Swann to work within the four party coalition collaboratively to deliver on budgets and timeframes to ensure sustainable, long-term planning and investment in cancer services.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Kearns stated that there was not one person in the Chamber who had not been touched by the devastation of a cancer diagnosis within family or friend groups and how for patients to receive a diagnosis and then have to wait for treatment was unacceptable and cruel. She spoke of how delays compounded the mental stress to patients and whilst many treatments had very positive outcomes the stress of having to wait presented other health problems.

Councillor Kearns spoke of how the cross-border health directive had proven to be a vital resource for those seeking a wide range of procedures and Sinn Féin had been lobbying to see that reinstated.

Councillor Kearns reiterated that to support the health service, all options to ensure patients get the care that they need and the cross-border health directive was something that needed to be looked at and built upon.

Councillor Andrews spoke at length in support of the motion on behalf of SDLP and stated that addressing the challenges facing the delivery of cancer services was a key priority for all, however cancer services in Northern Ireland were underfunded compared to other regions across the UK.

Councillor Andrews added that to deliver better health outcomes for the public and successfully implement the Cancer Strategy associated funding was essential and put forward the following amendment:

" Will also write to the Minister of Finance urging her to commit to the Department's identified funding plan for said strategy and deliver a multi-year budget."

Councillor Hanlon accepted Councillor Andrew's amendment.

Councillors Taylor and Lee-Surginor spoke in support of the motion.

In response to a query from Councillor Reilly regarding Council Health Forums Mrs Ward advised she would bring an update back to the Party Leaders Grouping for their information.

Agreed: **It was unanimously agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Kearns that this Council recognises that waiting times for cancer treatments are still unacceptably long and commits to write to the Minister of Health to request delivery of the department's 10 year cancer strategy and also write to the Minister of Finance urging her to commit to the Department's identified funding plan for said strategy and deliver a multi-year budget to build on existing cooperation on an All Island basis to ensure all patients receive timely treatment and support which is appropriate and compassionate.**

C/082/2024

NOTICE OF MOTION – CROSS-BORDER TEACHING REGISTRATION

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Feehan:

"Newry, Mourne and Down District Council recognises the challenges faced by teaching graduates in securing permanent teachings posts in Northern Ireland, further recognises the obstacles faced by Northern teachers seeking to secure registration and employment in the Republic and commits to pursuing the submission of a bid to the

Shared Island Unit, in conjunction with Louth and Monaghan County Councils, for a review of cross-border teaching registration and employment practises."

The motion was seconded by Councillor Byrne.

Agreed: The Motion was referred to the Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.

Councillor Clarke left the meeting at this point – 7.51pm.

C/083/2024 NOTICE OF MOTION – ARTS SECTOR CUTS

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Finn:

"Newry, Mourne and Down District Council recognises the financial pressures on our artists, arts and culture schemes and cultural organisations who have lost funding from Stormont Departments, putting pressure on their ability to deliver existing arts and cultural schemes; and will write to the Communities Minister seeking his assurances that the cuts will be reversed."

The motion was seconded by Councillor Sharvin.

In presenting the motion, Councillor Finn spoke of how across the north, the arts sector supported 33,000 people employed in creative industries and contributed to economic growth and output and night time economy. Along with this, creative industries enriched the lives of all of those who participated or were impacted by them, with Arts encouraging diversity and social inclusion and supporting community and voluntary sectors.

Councillor Finn made reference to numerous Oscar winners and theatre performances that had gained acclaim across the world with television programmes rising to global fame, however the funding dedicated to support artists did not reflect their talent and dedication.

Members were reminded of examples of the wealth of talent across the District and were asked as a Council to support the motion and take a stand against these cuts not only to protect artists who deserved to be working in a sector that was adequately funded, but to help ensure that locally groups who availed of vital funding would have the capacity to continue their valuable and much needed work.

Councillor Sharvin thanked Councillor Finn for bringing forward the motion and spoke at length of the importance of the Arts Sector across Newry, Mourne and Down District which had unfortunately faced unprecedented cuts over the last number of years. Councillors Lee-Surginor, Finnegan and Taylor all spoke in support of the motion reiterating the vital role Arts had within society and highlighting funding concerns.

Agreed: It was unanimously agreed on the proposal of Councillor Finn, seconded by Councillor Sharvin that Newry, Mourne and Down District Council recognises the financial pressures on our artists, arts and culture schemes and cultural organisations who have lost funding from Stormont

Departments, putting pressure on their ability to deliver existing arts and cultural schemes; and will write to the Communities Minister seeking his assurances that the cuts will be reversed.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 8.08pm.

For confirmation at the Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday 7 May 2024.

Signed:

Chairperson

Chief Executive

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL
RECORDED VOTE

DATE: 08/04/2024 VENUE: Downshire Civic Centre MEETING: Council Meeting

SUBJECT OF VOTE: Proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Clarke to amend proposal 4, ERT/032/2024 and sign Annex 1 as an associate partner

COUNCILLOR	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
T Andrews	1			
C Bowsie		1		
J Brennan	2			
P Byrne	3			
P Campbell	4			
W Clarke	5			
L Devlin				√
C Enright	6			
K Feehan	7			
D Finn	8			
A Finnegan	9			
C Galbraith	10			
M Gibbons				√
O Hanlon	11			
G Hanna		2		
V Harte	12			
R Howell				√
T Howie				√
J Jackson		3		
G Kearns	13			
C King				√
M Larkin	14			
D Lee-Surginor	15			
A Lewis		4		
O Magennis	16			
A Mathers	17			
D McAteer	18			
L McEvoy				√
A McMurray	19			
S O'Hare	20			
D Murphy	21			
K Murphy	22			
S Murphy	23			
A Quinn	24			
H Reilly		5		
M Rice	25			
M Ruane	26			
G Sharvin	27			
D Taylor		6		
J Tinnelly	28			
J Truesdale	29			
TOTALS	29	6	-	6

NEWRY MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting
held on Monday 15 March 2024 at 6.00pm in the Boardroom, Monaghan Row.**

Chairperson: Councillor M Ruane

**Committee Members
in attendance:**

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor C Bowsie
Councillor P Campbell	Councillor W Clarke
Councillor K Feehan	Councillor C Galbraith
Councillor G Hanna	Councillor G Kearns
Councillor A McMurray	Councillor S Murphy
Councillor A Quinn	Councillor J Tinnelly
Councillor J Truesdale	

Officials in attendance: Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism
Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Regeneration
Ms M Boyle, Head of Tourism Development and Visitor Experience
Ms A McVeigh, Head of Regeneration and Business Development
Ms S Burns, Head of Programmes
Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer
Mrs N Stranney, Democratic Services Officer

ERT/033/2024: APOLOGIES / CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillor King.

ERT/034/2024: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Campbell declared an interest in item 7 – Financial assistance Call 1.

ERT/035/2024: ACTION SHEET ECONOMY, REGENERATION & TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING MONDAY 11 MARCH 2024

Read: Action Sheet arising out of the Minutes of the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday 11 March 2024. **(Copy circulated)**

ERT/025/2024 – Councillor Campbell queried an update on the breakdown of the Peace Plus reserve list as requested previously. Ms Burns advised that she would forward the requested information to the Member.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Campbell, it was agreed to note the Action Sheet arising from the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday 11 March 2024.**

NOTICES OF MOTION**ERT/036/2024: NOTICE OF MOTION C/059/2024 – DEMOCRATIC IMPROVEMENTS IN COUNCIL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME**

Read: Report dated 15 April 2024 from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism, regarding Democratic Improvements in Council Financial Assistance Programme. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Bowsie noted his dissatisfaction with the report and reiterated his suggested improvement points again.

He advised that he had raised the issues contained within his motion for a period of a year, and believed his next option was to table a notice of motion at Council. He advised that he believed that officers had made decisions on his motion, prior to any elected member having spoken or voted on the motion.

Councillor Bowsie queried some responses contained within the report as follows:

- How it was possible that 99% applicants were surveyed as being satisfied given a 42% drop in funding?
- Were Council concerned that the judgement criteria remain the same, given a £20,000 decrease in funding?
- How could the appeals panel be independent, given they also work for the same organisation? Could an independent person be appointed?
- Why could an applicant not appeal a decision if it transpired that Council Officers were at fault when considering the application?
- Could the application questions be amended to be clearer to applicants?
- Why could Members not be more involved in the consideration of funding approval and oversight of the application process?

Councillor Bowsie then proposed an amendment to the report, seconded by Councillor Hanna, to add a fourth recommendation as follows:

“This Council requests a report to be brought back to committee to include options on ways to resolve the democratic shortcomings as outlined in the original notice of motion.”

Prior to the debate continuing, the Chairperson highlighted that Councillor Bowsie’s motion had been actioned following the same guidelines as all motions referred to Committee from Council.

Mr Mallon confirmed that the officer’s report contained factual information to inform the debate at the Committee meeting that officers had made recommendations for consideration.

Councillor Truesdale spoke in support of the motion, highlighted her experience with other UK funders and stressed her belief that Council’s process was cumbersome and inefficient. She highlighted that members had no detail on how a decision was reached on an application. She expressed her concerns at the lack of right of appeal at stage one and queried the ability of workshops to build capacity and be available to assist with the completion of applications. She supported Councillor Bowsie’s call for Councillors to have more information in relation to the outcome of applications. She then suggested a paper be brought back to committee following a review of processes.

Councillor Tinnelly queried how an independent appeals panel member could be identified, and what weight would be given to their decisions during the application process. He confirmed his

belief that Councillors should remain removed from the process as it was set up to negate any perceived bias.

Councillor Clarke reiterated Councillor Tinnelly's comment that Councillors remain removed from the process. He agreed there was the need to address shortfalls in certain areas, however stated an appeal process at stage 1 would not be beneficial if the application had not been completed correctly. He stressed that a mechanism was required if applicants were unsuccessful at that stage.

Councillor McMurray supported the belief that Councillors remain blind to the application process. He queried if the process was internally reviewed and refined at any stage to allow for ongoing improvements to be made. He agreed that capacity building needed to be included across all departments involved in the process.

Mr Mallon confirmed that policies, procedures, and processes were continually being reviewed with amendments as required.

In conclusion, Councillor Bowsie stated that an independent panel member should have been included as an option to be debated, and advised that they could be appointed from an external body that was familiar with an appeals process. He welcomed the capacity building plan but highlighted his motion arose from problems with existing applications.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Bowsie, seconded by Councillor Hanna, the following was agreed:**

- **To note the content of the report.**
- **That members agree that Council have implemented a consistent Financial Assistance process since Council adopted the policy at AHC on 21 March 2019 and Full Council on 1 April 2019.**
- **Members agree that further capacity building is undertaken to work with groups in areas where applications are low in number.**
- **That the policy and procedure of the financial assistance is reviewed, and a paper brought back to committee.**

FOR DECISION

ERT/037/2024: SMALL SETTLEMENTS SCHEME

Read: Report dated 15 April 2024 from Jonathan McGilly, Assistant Director, Regeneration, regarding Revitalisation Schemes in Annalong, Dundrum, Hilltown, Killyleagh and Killough/Strangford, Meigh and Newtownhamilton.
(Copy circulated)

Mr McGilly detailed the progress of the small settlement scheme and noted that Council was in the process of identifying underspend, which, if available, would be allocated to phase two of the Rostrevor Public Realm scheme.

Councillor Tinnelly expressed his concern over a potential impact of a delay on the lead in time for granite, stating he believed it to currently be 3-4 months from order to delivery. He queried the lack of a figure within the report, and stated that it was unclear what percentage of phase 2 any underspend would cover. He proposed an amendment to the wording of section 3.2 of the Officer's Report, that "*subject to confirmation of funding availability proceed with all elements of Rostrevor EI Scheme Phase 2*" and noted that it was his understanding that Council would cover a shortfall in any of these schemes, once any underspend had been reallocated, following a notice of motion agreed at full Council.

Mr Mc Gilly advised that it was not currently possible to confirm the level of funding as there were still elements of the scheme to be delivered, stating the purpose of the report was to ensure maximum spend within the overall envelope of funding and it was not feasible to go outside of the agreed funding contract.

Mr Mallon added that if any additional capital investment was required, it would have to follow normal governance procedures to allocate the fund. He reiterated that the proposal was to ensure that all the funding allocated was spent in full.

Following a query from Councillor Ruane, Mr McGilly advised that over the next few months an accurate figure would be available with regards to underspend as a number of schemes were due to be completed.

Following a query from Councillor Andrews, Councillor Ruane confirmed that any underspend within a particular area must still be spent on that scheme, it could not be allocated to other projects within the area.

Councillor Hanna noted that the Annalong Revitalisation Project was still incomplete, and highlighted some difficulty contacting the officer involved. Mr McGilly advised he would follow up with the Member following the meeting.

- AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Hanna, seconded by Councillor Tinnelly, the following was agreed:**
- **To accept the DFC/DFI/DEARA Letter of Offer Extension until the 30 June 2024 (4 EI Schemes) and 30 September 2024 (7 Revitalisation Schemes).**
 - **That subject to confirmation of funding availability, proceed with elements of Rostrevor EI Scheme Phase 2.**

ERT/038/2024: TOURISM ACCOMMODATION GRANT FUND

Read: Report dated 15 April 2024 from Michelle Boyle, Head of Tourism, Product Development & Visitor Experience, regarding Tourist Accommodation Funding Call. **(Copy circulated)**

Ms Boyle outlined the report and proposed revised criteria.

Councillor Campbell queried the revision from 30 beds to 15 from the original proposal, and asked whether the fund was an annually recurring fund, or a one off spend.

Ms Boyle noted the reduction in required beds was taken following engagement from local businesses regarding demand and a minimum of 15 beds was required to achieve hotel status. She confirmed that the call for funding was open but would be reviewed after 12 months.

Councillor Clarke proposed the report stating that it was an excellent initiative and would boost tourism and construction within the district. He advised that this fund would also help boost attendance at major festivals and events, as accommodation was a necessity for some.

Councillor Andrews queried whether any efforts had been made by officers regarding hotel provision for Rowallane area. Mr Mallon advised that it was an open call across the District that anyone could apply for, subject to meeting the criteria as outlined.

Following a query from Councillor Hanna, Ms Boyle advised that the requirement had to be 15 beds within one establishment, and that this could be either a new development

or an extension of an existing establishment.

Following a query from Councillor Tinnelly, Ms Boyle advised that the final draw down of the funding was subject to the establishment having achieved hotel grading from Tourism NI, and subject to approval of planning permission.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Andrews, it was agreed to proceed with the Financial Assistance capital grant programme as outlined in section 2.1.**

FOR INFORMATION

ERT/039/2024: **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE CALL 1**

Read: Report dated 15 April 2024 from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism, regarding Financial Assistance Call 1 2024 – 2025 Schemes. **(Copy circulated)**

Having declared an interest in this item, Councillor Campbell left the chamber for discussion on this item – 06.47pm

Ms Burns advised that due to the number of applicants they had to be scored and ranked, with some placed on a reserve list. She noted that those on the reserve list would be contacted, subject to budget, through the year.

Councillor Bowsie expressed his disappointment that only 6 of the successful applications were from the Rowallane area and stated that he could not support the recommendations.

Ms Burns advised there were plans to work with the DEA coordinators to look at capacity issues within Rowallane. She noted that 29 applications had been received from Rowallane.

Ms Burns advised that there were 14 successful applicants from Rowallane, with some having been placed on the reserve list, due to both budget constraints and quality of application.

Following dissent with the chamber, the Chairperson put the recommendations to a show of hands vote, with the results as follows:

For	10
Against	0
Abstentions	3

The motion was declared carried.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor S Murphy, the following was agreed:**

- **To approve the attached appendices for revenue projects and issue letter of offers post Council ratification and Call-in.**
- **Pre-letter of offer conditions met prior to issue of full letter of offer issued and where this is not satisfied budget to be re-allocated.**

ERT/040/2024: TOURISM STRATEGY 2024-2029

Read: Report dated 15 April 2024 from Ms M Boyle, Head of Tourism, Product Development and Visitor Experience, regarding the consultation analyses and approve the Tourism Strategy 2024-2029. **(Copy circulated)**

Ms Boyle presented the report, and noted that this was compiled following a 12 week consultation and feedback from the industry database of tourism businesses.

Councillor Feehan commended the report and noted his thanks to all officers involved. He proposed an additional recommendation, that "Council facilitates a tourism workshop in Newry with tourism providers and tourism stakeholders to share and discuss the strategy in detail, prior to the public launch of the 2024-2029 strategy." This was seconded by Councillor Andrews.

Mr Mallon noted that Council holds a number of themed industry days throughout the year. He suggested the tourism strategy could be discussed as one of the themes. Councillor Feehan was content with this.

Councillor Truesdale raised the following concerns regarding the strategy:

- She noted a poor response rate and queried how the consultations could be improved.
- She noted the valuable comments in Appendix 1 and highlighted that there were no supportive gondola comments.
- She noted a lack of detail about how the strategy would be implemented.
- She highlighted concerns surrounding roads, car parking facilities and rubbish within the areas.

Councillor Hanna reiterated Councillor Truesdale's comments, with the exception of the gondola project. He noted his Party's work in contributing to the Tourism Strategy and his belief that this had not been reflected within the strategy and stated that his Party would not support the recommendations.

Councillor Clarke thanked everyone involved in compiling the strategy. He noted in particular the outdoor activity tourism and highlighted the increasing number of people now utilising the outdoor spaces. He stated that while the document was a high-level strategy and would not provide details on its implementation, it was important to ensure that the basic facilities were right for visitors arriving.

Councillor Campbell queried the title of Mourne, Gullion and Strangford, and noted that two were Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) while one was a village and strayed into another Council area. He further noted that he had suggested Mourne, Gullion and Lecale and queried if there had been any consideration given to changing this.

Ms Boyle noted that this was the brand that had been consulted on and tested in the market.

Mr Mallon noted this had been debated through a number of workshops, and the consensus was that Mourne, Gullion and Strangford was the preferred option.

Following dissent within the chamber, the recommendations of the report were put to the floor for a show of hands vote, with the results as follows:

For	12
Against	2
Abstentions	0

The motion was declared carried.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Feehan, seconded by Councillor Andrews, it was agreed to note the consultation analyses recommendations in Appendix 1 and to Approve the Tourism Strategy 2024 – 2029 as Appendix 2.

ITEMS RESTRICTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 6 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (NI) 2014

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Campbell, seconded by Councillor Andrews, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on the following matters which related to exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Campbell, it was agreed

The Chairperson advised the following had been agreed while in closed session.

ERT/041/2024: SIGNAGE TENDER 2024

Read: Report dated 15 April 2024 from Jonathan McGilly, Assistant Director, Regeneration, regarding Tender for Street Nameplates. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor S Murphy, it was agreed to consider the contents of the report and approve the business case proposal (Appendix 1) to tender for street nameplates

ERT/042/2024: TOURISM EVENTS PROCUREMENT

Read: Report dated 15 April 2024 from Ms M Boyle, Assistant Director Tourism Culture & Events, regarding procurement of a supplier for upcoming Wake the Giant **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Kearns, seconded by Councillor Campbell, it was agreed to note the contents of the report.

FOR NOTING

ERT/043/2024: BUILDING CONTROL 6 MONTHLY REPORT

Read: Building Control 6 Monthly Report 01 September 2023 – 29 February 2024 **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Feehan, seconded by Councillor Campbell, it was agreed to note the Building Control 6 Monthly Report 01 September – 29 February 2024.

ERT/044/2024: CARLINGFORD LOUGH GREENWAY UPDATE

Read: Report dated 15 April 2024 from Jonathan McGilly, Assistant Director, Regeneration, regarding Carlingford Lough Greenway Update **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Feehan, seconded by Councillor Campbell, it was agreed to note the letter of offer now received from the shared Islands Fund totalling €1.5 million and to note the update on completed scheme procurement and current programme.**

ERT/045/2024: LICENSING 6 MONTHLY REPORT

Read: Licensing 6 Monthly Report dated 01 September 2023 – 31 March 2024. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Feehan, seconded by Councillor Campbell, it was agreed to note the Licensing 6 Monthly Report dated 01 September 2023 – 31 March 2024.**

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 07.10pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday 7 May 2024.

Signed: **Councillor M Ruane**
Chairperson
Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee

Signed: **Mr C Mallon**
Director Economy, Regeneration & Tourism

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Minutes of Strategy Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on
Thursday 18 April 2024 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, Downshire Civic Centre**

In the Chair: Councillor S O'Hare

In Attendance in Chamber:

Councillor P Byrne	Councillor O Hanlon
Councillor R Howell	Councillor A Lewis
Councillor D McAteer	Councillor A Mathers
Councillor M Rice	Councillor D Taylor

**Non-Committee Members
In Attendance in Chamber:** Councillor A McMurray Councillor K Murphy

**Officials in Attendance
in Chamber:**

Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
 Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services
 Ms S Murphy, Director of Sustainability and Environment
 Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy Regeneration & Tourism
 Mr A Patterson, Director of Active & Healthy Communities
 Ms V Keegan, Assistant Director: Digital and
 Communications
 Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director: Finance and Performance
 Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director: Regeneration
 Mr P Rooney, Head of Legal Administration
 Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)
 Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer
 Mrs N Stranney, Democratic Services Officer

SPR/53/2024: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Enright, Howie, McEvoy, Quinn, Reilly, and Sharvin.

The Chairperson noted that Item 6 was to be tabled at the May Committee, as agreed with the proposer of the original Notice of Motion.

SPR/054/2024: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

**SPR/055/2024: ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM STRATEGY, POLICY AND
RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON THURSDAY
14 MARCH 2024**

Read: Action Sheet of the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on Thursday 14 March 2024. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to approve the action sheet from the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 14 March 2024.**

NOTICE OF MOTION

SPR/056/2024

NOTICE OF MOTION – ETHICAL PROCUREMENT

Read: Report dated 18 April 2024 from Ms J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Notice of Motion – Ethical Procurement Policy. **(Copy circulated)**

Ms Kelly advised Members that Council would be reviewing its Procurement Policy due to the implementation of new legislation later in the year.

Councillor Hanlon proposed the Report stating that the purpose of the initiative was to ethically advance how Councils tender and who they were affiliated to in accordance with international law obligations. She advised that by adopting this policy, Council could exclude businesses and companies involved in human rights and international law violations. She queried whether there was a time frame for the review of the Policy to begin, and whether Council would meet companies to assess compliance with the new policies.

Ms Kelly advised that the review process had started, and detail would be brought back to a future Committee. She further advised that Council's role in assessing compliance would require legal guidance.

Following a query from Councillor Byrne, Ms Kelly confirmed that the item would remain on the action sheet until such time as the new policies were considered at the Committee.

Following queries from Councillors Taylor and Lewis, Ms Ward confirmed that the Committee was to note that Council was going to consider a section on ethical procurement and that a policy would be brought back to Committee for agreement.

Following a query from Councillor McMurray regarding the difference between ethical procurement and being recognised as a fair-trade Council, Ms Kelly advised that legal advice would need to be sought as there were a number of Legal Regulations required to be adhered to in procurement process.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to note that Council will be updating its Procurement Policy following the implementation of the new Procurement Regulations 2024.**
It was also agreed that within the new policy, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council affirms to consider a section under ethical procurement and will review the Council's tender processes.

It was further agreed that the matter would remain on the action sheet until such time as new Policies were forthcoming to the Committee.

SPR/057/2024**NOTICE OF MOTION – MMR VACCINATIONS****Read:**

Report dated 18 April 2024 from Ms V Keegan , Assistant Director of Digital and Communications, regarding Notice of Motion – MMR Vaccinations. **(Copy circulated)**

Ms Keegan outlined the contents of the Report following referral to Committee from Council on 5 February 2024. She confirmed that Council had worked closely with the Public Health Authority to deliver an online education campaign between 11 March and 25 March 2024. She highlighted the key issues contained within the Report outlined that Council's own social media channels had reached over 52,000 people and the Council's Media Monitoring Agency had found that the campaign's total potential reach across both digital and print media channels were just under 400,000.

Councillors Byrne and Hanlon welcomed the Report, thanked the Communications and Marketing Team for their work and also thanked Councillor Devlin for bringing the motion to Council.

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to note the contents of the report.

SPR/058/2024**NOTICE OF MOTION – PROJECTED RATES INCREASE****AGREED:**

It was agreed that this item be tabled at the May SPR Committee Meeting.

FOR DECISION**SPR/059/2024****FUNDING OPPORTUNITY****Read:**

Report dated 18 April 2024 from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism, regarding Multiply Programme – Funding opportunity. **(Copy circulated)**

Mr Mallon outlined the detail of the Report and highlighted the need for a recruitment exercise to appoint a dedicated officer to fill the role.

Councillor Byrne welcomed the Report and highlighted the need within the workplace to improve numeracy skills. He queried the progress of the action plan given its short due date and advised that it should contain short targets to ensure maximum uptake. He queried the presence of Council within the vast number of available online learning resources associated with this funding. He further queried the appointment of the dedicated officer and whether there was any possibility of an extension for the role.

Councillor McAteer also welcomed the Report and noted the benefits of numeracy skills for many across the District.

Mr Mallon advised that the action plan was under development and welcomed feedback from Members . He stated that he was unable to confirm the date of the appointment of a dedicated officer as it had to follow a recruitment exercise. He noted that there was no discussion regarding an extension of the post but confirmed Council would query this and

revert to Members

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor McAteer, the following was agreed:

- **Confirm to Department for Economy (DfE) that Council will recruit for a dedicated officer for Multiply Programme following receipt and acceptance of a Letter of Offer (for employment only)**
- **Liaise with SRC and SERC to ensure there is no duplication of delivery in the district regarding interventions and targets.**
- **Develop an action plan through LMP and Community Development and submit to DfE by 26 April 2024.**

SPR/060/2024:

ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT CHARTER

Read:

Report dated 18 April 2024 from Ms J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Elected Member Development Charter. **(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Kelly outlined the Member Development Charter, noted the importance of training and development for Members and asked for their commitment to the Charter.

On proposing the Report Councillor Hanlon stated that her Party would support the use of all resources available to upskill Councillors across the district.

Agreed:

On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Lewis, Members agreed to the following:

- **To commit to the requirements of the Member Development Charter.**
- **To nominate Party Leaders as the Members to progress this Charter Requirements.**
- **That training and development requirements for Councillors will progress through the Charter arrangements.**

SPR/061/2024:

DRAFT PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES

Read:

Report dated 18 April 2024 from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance and Performance, regarding Draft Performance Improvement Objectives 2024-25. **(Copy circulated)**

Mr Byrne presented the paper noting that the objectives contained within were developed with consideration given to the 2021-2023 Corporate Plan and the draft Corporate Plan 2024-2027. He confirmed that if approved, a 6-week consultation would begin immediately and would cease on 31 May 2024.

Councillor McMurray highlighted that of the 5 outlined objectives, he and his Party would continue to campaign for a Leisure Centre in Newcastle, would continue to highlight ongoing dog fouling and expressed hope that businesses would feel supported in the coming year.

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor McAteer, it was agreed to note the five draft performance improvement objectives 2024-25 as outlined in Appendix 1 of the Officer's Report. It was also agreed to approve the timetable for publishing the Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25 as outlined in Appendix 2, including approval to commence the consultation and engagement process on 19 April 2024.**

SPR/062/2024: **LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION FOR NI.**

Read: Report dated 18 April 2024 from Ms J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Local Government Staff Commission. **(Copy circulated)**

Ms Kelly noted that this item was usually discussed in closed session but following a request for clarity from the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC) it was confirmed that this could be discussed in open session as it was publicly held information. Ms Kelly outlined the background of the LGSC and detailed the payment required from Council.

Councillor Byrne expressed his confusion regarding the payment and queried the downsizing of the LGSC had been resulted in a reduced cost. He acknowledged that Council was duty bound to pay the cost but queried the cost benefit analysis of four employees serving 11 Councils.

Mrs Kelly and Mrs Ward both noted the excellent service received from the LGSC by Council and although the staff levels had reduced there had been no issues in contacting them. Mrs Ward also noted the difficult position the employees were in and highlighted that they had been proactive in engaging with Council on various issues.

Following a query from Councillor McAteer regarding replacement of the service, Mrs Ward advised that this would likely be part of ongoing discussions between NI Local Government Association (NILGA) and Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE).

Following reservations expressed by Councillor Byrne regarding approving payments up to 2027, Mrs Kelly asked Members to note that payments would be required until 2027 and confirmed that the annual payment would continue to be tabled at Committee on an annual basis.

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor McAteer, it was agreed to approve the payment of the Commission of £26,316 from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council for the period of April 2024 to March 2025. It was also agreed to note this ongoing contribution of running costs up until 31 March**

2027, with annual costs being brought back to committee.

FOR DECISION

SPR/063/2024: PLANNING DEPARTMENT QUARTERLY UPDATE.

Read: Report dated 18 April 2024 from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Regeneration, regarding a Planning Department Update. **(Copy circulated)**

Mr McGilly outlined the reasons the paper had been tabled, the background to the ongoing work within the Planning Department and highlighted that this Council was consistently receiving high levels of applications in comparison to other Council areas, with the exception of Belfast City Council.

Councillor McAteer thanked the officers for the detailed Report and noted his appreciation for officers on their efforts and ongoing work. He encouraged further work to continue to address any issues and queried whether Council had engaged with staff to highlight issues. He noted that it wasn't possible to sustain the current situation as the Planning Department could expect an increase in applications in the coming summer months.

Councillor Hanlon welcomed the paper and highlighted the fact that this Council was in receipt of the second highest number of applications. She commended the efforts of officers to overcome the backlog and noted in particular the high number of applications awaiting statutory consultee responses and suggested some work be carried out to address this matter.

Councillor Byrne echoed these sentiments and queried if it was possible to apply some resource management to current staffing levels within the Planning Department, to which Mrs Ward advised that staffing matters would be discussed in closed session.

Councillor Taylor noted that the Report highlighted that Council did not have the resources to deal with the volume of applications and stated that this ongoing issue could have major implications for the economy of the District especially if a perception existed regarding delayed planning applications. He queried whether Council had attempted to engage with other Councils to discuss recruitment or ways to encourage applicants both into Council, and to remain in Council.

Mr McGilly confirmed that the Planning Department was continually engaging with the Human Resources Department regarding recruitment, alternative short-listing management, and ongoing discussions with neighbouring Councils regarding resource sharing.

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor McAteer, it was agreed to note the contents of the report.**

It was also agreed that Officers continue to table quarterly reports to update Members on progress or otherwise against actions outlined above.

ITEMS RESTRICTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 6 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (NI) 2014

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on the following matters which related to exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person(including the Council holding that information).

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

The Chairperson advised the following had been agreed whilst in closed session:

RESTRICTED - FOR DECISION

SPR/064/2024: **PROPOSED LEASE OF LANDS AT LISMORE PARK, CROSSMAGLEN**

Read: Report dated 18 April 2024 from Mr P Rooney, Head of Legal Administration, regarding the lease of lands at Lismore Park, Crossmaglen under Council's Sports and Community Leasing Policy. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to enter into a lease with the club noted in the Officer's Report at Lismore Park, Crossmaglen as outlined in red on the map attached to the Officer's Report for a term of 25 years at a peppercorn rent subject to Departmental Consent.**

It was further agreed that a report be brought back to Committee detailing all lands leased at a peppercorn rent, whether they are in use and if not, be added to the surplus asset register.

SPR/065/2024: **LEASE PROPOSAL**

Read: Report dated 18 April 2024 from Mr A Patterson, Director of Active & Healthy Communities, regarding a lease review. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor McAteer, it was agreed to approve the recommendations as outlined within the Officer's Report.**

SPR/066/2024: **STA – ASSET MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

Read: Report dated 18 April 2024 from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance and Performance, regarding Asset Management System – Single Tender Action (STA). **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Lewis, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to approve recommendations as outlined within the Officer's Report.**

FOR NOTING - ITEMS RESTRICTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 6 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (NI) 2014

SPR/067/2024: RATE SUPPORT GRANT UPDATE

Read: Report dated 18 April 2024 from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance and Performance, regarding Rate Support Grant Update – Independent Review. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Lewis, to note that an independent review of the Rate Support Grant is to commence and should be completed by October 2024.**

SPR/068/2024: COMMUNICATIONS

Read: Report dated 18 April 2024 from Ms V Keegan, Assistant Director of Digital and Communications, regarding Communications. **(Copy circulated).**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed to note the contents of the Officer's Report.**

SPR/069/2024: EXEMPT MINUTES OF NEWRY CITY CENTRE REGENERATION PROGRAMME BOARD MEETING OF 5 FEBRUARY 2024.

Read: Exempt Minutes of the Newry City Centre Regeneration Programme Board Meeting of 5 February 2024. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed to note the minutes.**

FOR NOTING

SPR/070/2024: MINUTES OF NEWRY CITY CENTRE REGENERATION PROGRAMME BOARD MEETING OF 5 FEBRUARY 2024.**Read:** Minutes of the Newry City Centre Regeneration Programme Board Meeting of 5 February 2024. **(Copy circulated)****Agreed:** **On the proposal of Councillor Rice, seconded by Councillor Mathers, it was agreed to note the minutes.****SPR/071/2024: MINUTES OF MOURNE MOUNTAIN GATEWAY PROJECT BOARD MEETING OF 8 FEBRUARY 2024****Read:** Minutes of the Mourne Mountain Gateway Project Board Meeting of 8 February 2024. **(Copy circulated)****Agreed:** **On the proposal of Councillor Rice, seconded by Councillor Mathers, it was agreed to note the minutes.****SPR/072/2024: RESPONSE FROM MINISTER MURPHY RE ENHANCED FLOOR RELIEF SCHEME****Read:** Communication dated 9 April 2024 from Minister Murphy regarding Enhanced Floor Relief Scheme **(Copy circulated).**

Councillor McAteer welcomed the response and noted that it was now recognised that there were businesses with damages in excess of the maximum available funds through the enhanced flood relief scheme.

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Rice, seconded by Councillor Mathers, it was agreed to note the communication.**

There being no further business, the Meeting concluded at 8.16pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday 7 May 2024.

Signed: **Councillor Siobhan O'Hare**
Chairperson**Signed:** **Josephine Kelly**
Director of Corporate Services

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Ref: AHC/2024

**Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on
Monday 22 April 2024 at 6.00pm in the Mourne Room,
Downshire Civic Centre**

Chairperson: Councillor R Howell (Chamber)

In attendance in Chamber:

Councillor L Devlin	Councillor D Finn
Councillor C Galbraith	Councillor J Jackson
Councillor Lee-Surginor	Councillor O Magennis
Councillor A Mathers	Councillor A McMurray
Councillor D Murphy	Councillor K Murphy
Councillor S O'Hare	

Non-Committee Members**in Attendance in Chamber:** Councillor T Andrews

Officials in Chamber:

Mr A Patterson, Director, Active and Healthy Communities
 Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development
 Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer
 Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)

AHC/031/2024: APOLOGIES & CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Finnegan and Lewis.

There were no Chairperson's remarks.

AHC/032/2024: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

AHC/033/2024: ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM ACTIVE & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19 MARCH 2024**Read:** Action sheet of the Active & Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 19 March 2024. **(Copy circulated).****Agreed:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Lee-Surginor, seconded by Councillor Devlin, to note the Action Sheet of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 19 March 2024.**

AHC/034/2023: DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREA (DEA) FORUMS UPDATE REPORT

Read: Report dated 22 April 2024 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development regarding an update on District Electoral Area (DEA) Forums. **(Copy circulated)**

In response to a query from Councillor Jackson in relation to notifications of Downpatrick DEA meetings it was agreed the matter would be picked up with Mrs Robb outside of the meeting.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Finn, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, to note the report and approve the actions in the action sheets attached for:

- The Mournes DEA Forum Private Meeting held on Tuesday 19 March 2024.
- Newry DEA Forum Private Meeting held on Thursday 28 March 2024.
- Downpatrick DEA Forum Private Meeting held on Tuesday 9 April 2024.
- Rowallane DEA Forum Private Meeting held on Wednesday 10 April 2024.
- Slieve Gullion DEA Forum Private Meeting held on Tuesday 16 April 2024.
- Crotlieve DEA Forum Private Meeting held on Tuesday 16 April 2024.

AHC/035/2023: COMMUNITY COORDINATION HUB (CCH) UPDATE REPORT

Read: Report dated 22 April 2024 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development regarding an update on Community Coordination Hub. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Magennis, to note the report and approve the actions in the action sheet attached for the Community Coordination Hub Meeting held on Wednesday 21 February 2024.

ITEMS RESTRICTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 6 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (NI) 2014

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on items 6 to 8, which related to exempt information by virtue of para. Three of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local /Government (Northern Ireland) 2014 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Devlin, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

The Chairperson advised the following had been agreed whilst in closed session:

AHC/036/2024: PUBLIC TENDER – STAFF UNIFORMS

Read: Report dated 22 April 2024 from Mr P Tamati, Assistant Director, Leisure and Sport presented by Mr A Patterson regarding a Public Tender and associated business case for Leisure uniforms in line with Councils procurement procedures.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor D Murphy, seconded by Councillor Devlin, to approve the following:

- The Business Case as per appendix 1 of the officer's report and approve procurement via a public tender for the supply of leisure uniforms.
- That officers undertake the appropriate evaluation of the above public tenders in line with procurement guidelines and appoint a preferred bidder and enter into a contract for up to 3 years as per the appendix 1 business case.

AHC/037/2024: LEASING OF NIHE LAND – SPRING HILL DRIVE NEWRY

Agreed: It was agreed to remove this item from the agenda and to bring forward a report to a future Committee Meeting.

AHC/038/2024: NEWRY POOL UPDATE

Report: Report dated 22 April 2024 from Mr P Tamati, Assistant Director, Leisure and Sport presented by Mr A Patterson regarding an update for the Newry Pool.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Finn to approve the recommendation in the officer's report to progress remedial works at Newry Leisure Centre pool.

FOR NOTING

AHC/039/2024 LEISURE AND SPORT – SCALE OF CHARGES

Report: Report dated 22 April 2024 from Mr P Tamati, Assistant Director, Leisure and Sport presented by Mr A Patterson regarding scale of charges for Leisure and Sport.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor O'Hare to note the contents of the officer's report and the Leisure and Sport Scale of Charges 2024/25 as set out in appendix 1.

AHC/040/2024 **POLICING & COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP (PCSP) AND
NEWRY NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL PARTNERSHIP REPORT**

Report: Report dated 22 April 2024 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development regarding Policing & Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) and Newry Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor O'Hare to note the report and the following:**

- **Minutes of the Policing Committee & PCSP Meeting held on Tuesday 30 January 2024, approved at the Policing Committee & PCSP Meeting on Tuesday 26 March 2024.**
- **Minutes of the Newry Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Meeting held on Wednesday 17 January 2024, approved at the Newry Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Meeting on Wednesday 27 March 2024.**

There being no further business the meeting ended at 6.13pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday 7 May 2024.

Signed: Councillor Howell
Chairperson

Signed: Andrew Patterson
Director Active and Healthy Communities

NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Ref: SE/2024

**Minutes of Sustainability & Environment Committee Meeting held on
Wednesday 23 April 2024 at 6.00pm in Council Chamber, Monaghan Row,
Newry**

Chair: Councillor T Andrews**Committee Members****In Attendance in Chamber:** Councillor J Brennan Councillor W Clarke
Councillor K Feehan Councillor D Finn
Councillor J Jackson Councillor G Kearns
Councillor M Larkin Councillor O Magennis
Councillor K Murphy Councillor H Reilly
Councillor D Taylor Councillor J Truesdale**Officials in Attendance:** Mrs S Murphy, Director Sustainability and Environment
Mr C Sage, Assistant Director Sustainability
Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer
Mrs N Stranney, Democratic Services Officer**Officials in attendance
via teams:** Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)**SE/043/2024: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillor Enright.

The Chairperson noted that Item 10 had been deferred to a future committee meeting.

The Chairperson also offered his condolences to the family, colleagues and friends of Indigo Wolfsbane following his recent passing.

SE/044/2024: DECLARATIONS OF "CONFLICTS OF INTEREST"

There were no declarations of interest.

**SE/045/2024: ACTION SHEET: SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 20 MARCH 2024****Read:** Action Sheet of the Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting
held on 20 March 2024. **(Copy circulated)***SE/128/2023: Upgrade to Town Centre CCTV and Council Facilities CCTV:*
Councillor Jackson queried the progress of this in relation to Ballynahinch Town Centre. Mrs
Murphy advised that the upgrade was currently addressing legacy Newry and Mourne Council
areas, and a business case was under review to address the legacy Down areas.

Following a query from Councillor Truesdale regarding specific locations concerning CCTV Mrs Murphy reiterated the intention to present a business case for legacy Down Council areas.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Finn, seconded by Councillor Taylor, it was agreed to note the Action Sheet of the Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 20 March 2024.**

NOTICE OF MOTION

SE/046/2024: **NOTICE OF MOTION – NEWRY MARKET C/063/2024**

Read: Report dated 23 April 2024 from Ms S Murphy, Director of Sustainability and Environment, regarding Notice of Motion – Newry Market. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Finn thanked officers for the detailed report and stated she was saddened by the decline in yearly figures. She noted differing trends in shopping habits which had an impact on the figures, however stated that Council must support the existing market and traders who attend every week. She queried further detail regarding the expression of interest process and called for applications received to be actioned to ensure revitalisation work continued. She emphasised the prime location of the market and noted a number of potential uses that could help assist in footfall to the area. She called for the local Councillors to be invited to any promotional activities that the Chairperson was involved.

Councillor Kearns noted her Party's recognition of the significance of Newry Market and the support it provided to the local economy. She commended past activities held within the market in attracting visitors but stressed that it was yet to reach its full potential. She suggested some areas of improvement alongside those contained within the Officer's Report to include a review of toilet facilities, the development of an ambitious publicity plan and ongoing engagement with stakeholders over various issues and concerns.

Councillor Reilly supported the motion, noting the significance of the market over the years and stated it had offered many entrepreneurs the chance to start their business. He queried whether the price of a stall was prohibitive and whether it could be hired on an ad-hoc basis or required a contract.

Ms Murphy responded that the price of a stall varied depending on its location and confirmed they could be hired on an ad-hoc basis each month.

Councillor Taylor spoke of the importance of the market on the economy of the area, both historically and present. He noted his disappointment in the decline of the market over the years and referenced the change in shopping habits of many. He commended the diversification of events held within the market area and stressed the importance of Council maintaining this and further queried what research was being carried out into the success of other markets.

Ms Murphy advised that Council was carrying out ongoing research as it recognised the importance of the historical asset of the market.

Councillor Feehan thanked Councillor Finn for bringing the motion. He commended the planned work on behalf of the Communications and Marketing team and queried whether targets could be included within the work to assist in measuring any progress made. He further noted that additional visitors to the market would have the opportunity to continue their shopping in nearby shopping locations, which would have a positive impact on the area.

Ms Murphy advised that measurable statistics could be provided by the Communications and Marketing department in relation to number of engagements on social media and that this could be measured against any recorded increase in footfall and generated income.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Finn, seconded by Councillor Taylor, it was agreed to approve the continuing commitment of Officer to revitalise the market through engagement with traders, the business community, and other potential stakeholders.**

It was also agreed that Officers reach out to other local councils with successful markets and explore additional uses to encourage footfall, including with arts and community groups.

It was further agreed that a report would be brought to committee in 6 months outlining the progress to date.

FOR DECISION

SE/047/2024: REVIEW OF CARAVAN SITE LICENCE CONDITIONS

Read: Report dated 23 April 2024 from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director: Sustainability, regarding Caravan Site Licence Conditions. **(Copy circulated)**

Ms Murphy highlighted that the current licence conditions had last been reviewed in 2019, and if approved, a new review would be conducted in consultation with current site owners, and any amendments would be brought back to Committee.

Councillor Taylor proposed the report and highlighted the importance of these sites for the local economy and tourism.

Councillor Truesdale stated there was a need for a motorhome site or for caravan sites to have capacity to accommodate motorhomes. She noted that motorhomes had been parked overnight in Castle Park in Newcastle with no facilities such as sluice or electric and that it was also against Council by-laws to have overnight stays. She noted an increase in waste relating to this and highlighted the loss of available parking spaces for residents, visitors and employees of nearby office or retail space. She further noted a recent weekend of good weather had resulted in increased waste from visitors to the area. She commended the refuse team in maintaining the area but noted that they had struggled to do so and further noted the solar powered compactor bins were a help to the refuse team. She queried what provisions Council would put in place relating to issues such as street cleansing, waste collection, dog wardens and enforcement with the potential increase in footfall during the summer months.

Ms Murphy noted the parked motorhome issue and advised that as she was new in the role of Director she would speak to officers and respond to the Member directly. She welcomed the comments on the solar powered bins and work of the refuse team and confirmed that a review of litter bins was underway which would be fed back to Committee. She highlighted a large number of bins in the Newcastle area and noted the benefit of the solar powered compactor bins which could help address the waste generated during summer. She noted an increase in staff resources in the summer period with extended working hours to combat the increased waste. She noted that not all caravan site owners were customers of Council in terms of waste collection provision but would engage with all caravan site owners during the review regarding recycling. She further noted that all Council customers have a residual and recycle collection on alternate weeks and additional collections could be facilitated during busy periods.

Councillor Reilly supported the review and highlighted a particular issue in Cranfield relating to anti-social behaviour which could impact on future tourism potential. He queried the role of Community Safety Officer as being a potential aid to this issue.

Ms Murphy advised that she would raise the issue with PCSP colleagues to query what role the Community Safety Officer would have.

Councillor Clarke noted that motorhome bays had been installed at Castle Park as there were problems at the Downs Road and Glen River car parks, with barriers being placed to prohibit motorhome parking. He referenced a Notice of Motion he had tabled previously relating to a motorhome strategy and proposed that the previous report regarding motorhome strategy be reviewed, working in partnership with all relevant Directorates, alongside addressing the relevant by-laws to ensure that a strategy could be developed that suited the needs of the motorhome community and the local population. This was seconded by Councillor Magennis.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Clarke, it was agreed to approve a review of Council's Caravan Site Licence conditions for Residential Caravan sites and for Holiday and Touring Caravan sites.

It was further agreed to revisit the motorhome strategy in partnership with all relevant Directorates, alongside addressing the relevant by-laws, to ensure a strategy could be developed that suited the needs of the motorhome community and the local population.

ITEMS RESTRICTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 6 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (NI) 2014

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Brennan, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on the following matters, which related to exempt information by virtue of para. 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local /Government (Northern Ireland) 2014 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Kearns, seconded by Councillor Brennan, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

The Chairperson advised the following had been agreed whilst in closed session:

RESTRICTED – FOR DECISION

SE/048/2024: CHRISTMAS ILLUNINATION DISPLAYS 2024-2026

Read: Report dated 23 April 2024 from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director: Sustainability, regarding a business case for Council Christmas Illuminations Displays. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Brennan, it was agreed to note the content of the report and

associated Business Case. It was also agreed to accept the recommendations as contained within the officer's report.

It was further agreed that a report would be brought back to a future Committee meeting on the re-establishment of the Sustainability & Environment Working Group

SE/049/2024: STA – LUBRICANTS FOR FLEET WORKSHOPS

Read: Report dated 23 April 2024 from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director: Sustainability, regarding the procurement of Lubricants for Fleet Workshops. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Finn, it was agreed to approve the STA for the procurement of fleet related lubricants for the Fleet Workshops.

SE/050/2024: DISTRICT COUNCIL COLLABORATIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT RESOURCE

Read: Report dated 23 April 2024 from Ms S Murphy, Director Sustainability & Environment, regarding District Council Collaborative Waste Management Resource. **(copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Truesdale, seconded by Councillor Clarke, the following was agreed:

- To note the update on discussions at a national level with regard to UK-wide proposals in respect of draft regulations for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging scheme.
- To approve the proposed annual financial contribution in 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 to appoint a District Council collaborative waste specialist to deal with the implications of EPR.

SE/051/2024: STA – WASTE MANAGEMENT

Read: Report dated 20 March 2024 from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director: Sustainability, regarding the Allocation of Moorings at Newcastle Harbour. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Magennis, it was agreed to approve the extension of the STA for the collection, treatment and processing of residual waste, rigid plastics and mixed paper from Downpatrick, Ballynahinch and Castlewellan Recycling Centres as outlined in the Officer's Report.

SE/052/2024: OCCASIONAL HIRE OF HOOK LIFT VEHICLE AND DRIVER

AGREED: It was agreed to defer this item to a future Committee meeting.

SE/053/2024: CONSULTATION ON RETHINKING RESOURCES – CLIMATE ACTION

Read: A verbal update was provided by Ms S Murphy, Director Sustainability and Environment, regarding a Consultation on Rethinking Resources – Climate Action.

Ms Murphy advised that a consultation was currently open from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) regarding rethinking resource measures for climate action. She noted that DAERA have agreed to extend the deadline due to the extensive consultation. She highlighted that proposed models could dramatically change Council's delivery in terms of kerbside collections and as such Council wanted to give careful consideration to any changes in policies. She advised that a paper would be tabled at the following Committee meeting

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Clarke, to note the verbal update.

Following a query from Councillor Jackson, Ms Murphy advised that the next meeting of the Cleansing and Refuse Task Force would be held in the next month.

Councillor Reilly queried if Council was aware of any issues of fish coming from Great Britain into Warrenpoint. Ms Murphy advised that she was not aware of any issues but would look into the matter.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 06:58pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday 7 May 2024.

Signed: **Councillor Terry Andrews**
Chairperson

Signed: **Ms Sinead Murphy**
Director of Sustainability & Environment

Report to:	Council
Date of Meeting:	7 May 2024
Subject:	Correspondence to Council
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

For decision	x	For noting only	
1.0			Purpose and Background
1.1			To provide an update on correspondence received for attention of Council.
2.0			Key issues
2.1			This paper refers to correspondence to be brought to the attention of Council. Items are referred to in 3.0 below.
3.0			Recommendations
			That Council considers and notes the following correspondence:
3.1			Correspondence from General Register Office Council received a response from General Register Office in relation to Coronavirus Act 2020 (Registration of Deaths and Still-Births) (Extension) (No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024. Refer to Appendix 1 and 2.
3.2			Correspondence from Department for Communities Council received a response from Department for Communities in relation to C/083/2024 Notice of Motion, Arts Sector Calls. Refer to Appendix 3.
3.3			Correspondence from Department for Communities, Head of Housing Investment Council received correspondence in relation to protecting and enhancing the social housing funding. Refer to Appendix 4.
3.4			Correspondence from Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Council received a response from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in relation to C/080/2024 Notice of Motion, Fisheries and Aquaculture Industries. Refer to appendix 5.

<p>3.5</p> <p>3.6</p> <p>3.7</p> <p>3.8</p> <p>3.9</p> <p>3.10</p>	<p>Correspondence from Department for Infrastructure Council received a response from Department for Infrastructure in relation Newry Southern Relief Road. Refer to appendix 6.</p> <p>Correspondence from NI Public Service Ombudsman Council received information from the NI Public Service Ombudsman in relation to changes in the investigation process and a leaflet on the service. Refer to appendix 7 and attached leaflet.</p> <p>Correspondence from Department for Infrastructure Council received a response from the Department of Infrastructure in relation to C/061/2024 Notice of Motion, Rail Service from Belfast to Dublin. Refer for appendix 8.</p> <p>Correspondence from Department of Health Council received a response from the Department of Health in relation to C/081/2024 Notice of Motion, Cancer Treatment Waiting Times. Refer to appendix 9.</p> <p>Correspondence from Department of Finance Council received from the Department of Finance in relation to C/081/2024 Notice of Motion, Cancer Treatment Waiting Times. Refer to appendix 10.</p> <p>Correspondence from Department of Health Council received a response from the Department of Health in relation to C/040/2024, Correspondence from Minister for Health in relation to C/040/2024 Notice of Motion, Daisy Hill Hospital. Refer to appendix 11.</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Resource implications</p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>
<p>5.0</p>	<p>Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)</p>
<p>5.1</p>	<p><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>5.2</p>	<p><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p>

	The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/>
5.3	<p>Proposal initiating consultation</p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>
6.0	<p>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</p>
6.1	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If no, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy / strategy / plan / public service is not influenced by rural needs <input type="checkbox"/></p>
7.0	<p>Appendices</p>
	<p>Appendix 1: General Register Office Appendix 2: General Register Office Appendix 3: Department for Communities Appendix 4: Department for Communities Appendix 5: Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Appendix 6: Department for Infrastructure Appendix 7: NI Public Service Ombudsman Appendix 8: Department for Infrastructure Appendix 9: Department of Health Appendix 10: Department of Finance Appendix 11: Department of Health</p>
8.0	<p>Background Documents</p>
	<p>None</p>



GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE
Colby House
Stranmillis Court
Belfast,
BT9 5RR
Telephone: 0300 200 7890

Email: GRO_nisra@finance-ni.gov.uk

Website: www.nidirect.gov.uk/gro

Council Chief Executive

Date

18 April 2024

via email

Dear Chief Executive,

Coronavirus Act 2020 (Registration of Deaths and Still-Births) (Extension) (No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024

I am writing to advise you that the current temporary coronavirus provisions contained in the Coronavirus Act 2020 (Registration of deaths and still-births) (Extension) (No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024 will be debated in the Assembly on 22 April 2024. As you will be aware, these powers facilitate the remote registration of deaths and still-births and the electronic exchange of documents between stakeholders in the registration process.

The Order sets out a further six-month extension of these powers until 24 September 2024. It is our intention to use this time to bring forward legislation which will make these temporary powers permanent – solidifying the current registration process. To come into effect, the Order has to be approved by the Assembly. We hope that the Assembly will approve the Order and enable current registration practices to continue until permanent powers are in place.

However, it is also possible that the Assembly will decline to support this Order, and that these provisions fall on 22 April 2024. Should this occur, the procedures covered by this Order would have to revert to those in place before the pandemic with effect from Tuesday 23 April 2024. This would require Registrars to resume face-to-face registrations of death and still-births. The electronic transfer of documents between the medical practitioner, the registrar and the funeral director would also need to cease and revert to pre-pandemic practice.

I am hopeful that the Order will be approved by the Assembly. However, in view of the possibility that these powers will fall, we wanted to bring this debate to your attention. We hope that this will enable you to make any necessary arrangements for the notification of Registrars, to ensure that the registration process can continue to operate smoothly.

I would also be grateful if the Registrars could impart this information to any funeral director contacts which they have to ensure that they are prepared for this possibility. I would stress that we are committed to putting the current registration practice on a permanent footing and hope that the Assembly will support the Order to maintain the existing arrangements. However, the outcome of the debate on Monday 22 April should not be taken for granted: we want to prepare stakeholders for the possibility of a change, and to do everything we can to ensure the registration process continues to run smoothly. GRO will provide an update as soon as the outcome is known.

If you have any specific questions, please contact NIROS.Support@finance-ni.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,



Becci Riley

Assistant Registrar General

cc
Registrars' Line Management
Registrars



GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE
Colby House
Stranmillis Court
Belfast,
BT9 5RR
Telephone: 0300 200 7890

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Email: GRO_nisra@finance-ni.gov.uk

Website: www.nidirect.gov.uk/gro

Council Chief Executive
via email

Date

22 April 2024

Dear Chief Executive,

Coronavirus Act 2020 (Registration of Deaths and Still-Births) (Extension) (No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024

I am writing to advise you that the current temporary coronavirus provisions contained in the Coronavirus Act 2020 (Registration of deaths and still-births) (Extension) (No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024 have been debated in the Assembly today. As you will be aware, these powers facilitate the remote registration of deaths and still-births and the electronic exchange of documents between stakeholders in the registration process.

I am pleased to confirm that the Assembly has approved the continuation of the extension Order until 24 September 2024.

As stated previously, it is our intention to use this time to bring forward legislation which will make these temporary powers permanent – solidifying the current registration process.

I would be grateful if the Registrars could impart this information to any funeral director contacts.

If you have any specific questions, please contact NIROS.Support@finance-ni.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Becci Riley", written in a cursive style.

Becci Riley
Assistant Registrar General

cc
Registrars' Line Management
Registrars





Department for
Communities
www.communities-ni.gov.uk

An Roinn
Pobal

Department fur
Commonities

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**Arts Branch
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG**

e-mail: arci@communities-ni.gov.uk
Our ref: TOF-1296-2024
Date: 19 April 2024

Marie Ward
Chief Executive
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
Newry Office
O'Hagan House
Monaghan Row
Newry BT35 8DJ

Via email: Donna.Starkey@nmandd.org; democratic.services@nmandd.org

Dear Marie,

NOTICE OF MOTION – ARTS SECTOR CALLS

Thank you for your letter of 16th April to Minister Lyons regarding funding for the arts sector in Northern Ireland, I have been asked to reply on his behalf. I have noted the concerns raised and assurance request in the Notice of Motion at Council's meeting on 8th April 2024.

The Department recognises and values the impact of the arts sector in areas as diverse as social inclusion, health, education, regeneration, good relations, tourism, the wider economy as well as on the enrichment of the quality of life of people here.

The 2023-24 budget required very difficult decisions to be taken across the public service. The Budget for 2024-25 has not yet been agreed by the Executive, however the financial outlook for 2024-25 is likely to be extremely challenging. The Minister will continue to seek to support all sectors within the Department's remit, including Arts, to the greatest extent possible.

Yours sincerely,

Iain Greenway
Director of Culture



Department for
Communities
www.communities-ni.gov.uk

An Roinn
Pobal

Department for
Commonities

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**Housing Investment
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG**

e-mail:

Gerry.McAreavey@communities-ni.gov.uk

Our Ref: TOF-1289-2024

Date: 25 April 2024

Marie Ward
Chief Executive
Newry Mourne and Down District Council

Via email: fionnuala.branagh@nmandd.org

Dear Marie,

SOCIAL HOUSING DELIVERY

Thank you for your correspondence dated 16th April in which you request on behalf of members of Newry Mourne and Down District Council Members that Minister protects and enhances the funding for social housing delivery, in order to service the growing demand. As the Department's Head of Housing Investment, I have been asked to respond.

Minister is on record as stating that Housing is a priority for him. In his engagements to date, he has stated that more social housing is needed to ensure that everyone in our society has a place to call home. Minister is committed to investing in more social housing and working to increase the rate at which they are built.

It will be for the Executive to decide on the level of funding allocated to each NI Department. However, Minister will seek to maximise the funding allocated to the Department through his engagement in the 2024-25 budget process.



Department for
Communities
www.communities-ni.gov.uk

An Roinn
Pobal

Department for
Commonities

Kind regards,

Gerry McAreevey
Head of Housing Investment
Department for Communities

**From the Office of the
Minister of Agriculture,
Environment and Rural Affairs**



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Marie Ward
Chief Executive
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
Downpatrick Office
Downshire Civic Centre
Downshire Estate, Ardglass Road
Downpatrick
BT30 6GQ

Donna.Starkey@nmandd.org

DAERA Private Office
First Floor
Clare House
303 Airport Road West
Sydenham Intake
Belfast
BT3 9ED
Telephone: 028 9052 4140
Email: private.office@daera-ni.gov.uk

Our ref: COR-1186-2024
Date: 29 April 2024

Dear Marie,

Notice of Motion – Fisheries and Aquaculture Industries

Thank you for your correspondence of 12th April 2024 informing me of the recent Notice of Motion agreed by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council regarding the acute pressures that the Fisheries and Aquaculture Industries are currently under as a consequence of severe labour shortages.

I welcome the support of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council on this issue and agree that sustainable employment is an essential component in ensuring our fishing industry can be productive and can thrive. There is no doubt that changes to the UK Immigration System and the rules regarding working visas, have had a significant impact on our local economy and made it extremely difficult for our fishing industry to secure and retain the much-needed migrant workers required to drive this sector forward.

I can confirm that I wrote to the Home Secretary on 8th March 2024 to express my concerns about the effects of the Immigration rule changes on our wider Agri-food and fisheries sectors. I noted the vulnerability of our fishing industry given its reliance on migrant workers and highlighted that without adequate labour, the NI fishing sector would be unable to utilise the additional fishing opportunities arising from EU exit or indeed, maintain current catch levels. I urged the UK Government to consider the specific needs of this sector, like it did with the Health and Care sector, and agree that a threshold lower than £30,960 should apply to occupations in this sector.

I received a response to this letter on 10th April 2024, from Mr Tom Pursglove MP, the Minister of State for Legal Migration and the Border stating that the Home Office has delivered a comprehensive package of support to the fishing industry, in respect of the skilled worker visa route, including familiarisation and engagement events, ensuring capacity for English language testing, and offering priority visa and sponsor application services without the usual additional costs. Furthermore, against the recommendations of the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC), the Home Office have decided to retain fishing

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.

If you are deaf or have a hearing difficulty you can contact the Department via the Next Generation Text Relay Service by dialling 18001 + telephone number.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE
We invest in people Standard

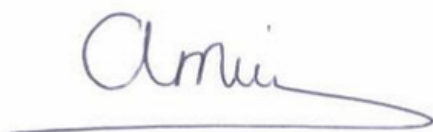
occupations on the ISL (ensures occupations pay workers 20% less than the £38,700). Despite this however, it is unlikely that NI fishing businesses will be able to meet the new minimum salary threshold of £30,960.

I have met with representatives from our local fishing industry to hear first-hand about the issues they face, and I will continue to strive to support them through this difficult time. I am aware that the Fishermen's Welfare Alliance has written to the Home Office regarding the inclusion of fishing occupations on the seasonal worker visa route. I understand that the MAC had already completed their Inquiry of this route before the letter was issued and that they are due to make recommendations about the future of the route to the Home Office later this year.

My officials continue to engage with Home Office officials and the MAC to highlight the repercussions of immigration policy changes on our local fishing sector. My Department will continue to engage with stakeholders and ensure their concerns are highlighted in any subsequent work undertaken by the Migration Advisory Committee regarding the Immigration Salary List.

Once again, I thank you for your letter and I hope this update is helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "A. Muir". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a long, horizontal stroke.

ANDREW MUIR MLA
Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

From the office of the Minister for Infrastructure
JOHN O'DOWD MLA

Chris Hazzard MP

Mickey Brady MP

Newry and Armagh MLAs

South Down MLAs

Marie Ward NMDDC Chief Ex

Room 708
Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
BELFAST
BT2 8GB
Telephone: (028) 9054 0540
Email: Private.office@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Your reference:
Our reference: DFI SUB-1209-2024
25 April 2024

A chairde,

NEWRY SOUTHERN RELIEF ROAD

In my position as Minister for Infrastructure, I committed to a review of the previous decision made in the absence of an Executive under the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc) Act 2022. I have now completed this review and can confirm that the decision for a 50m span fixed bridge remains unchanged.

I have come to this decision after detailed consideration of a range of factors, including engineering, economic, heritage impact and environmental assessments including the impact on the Scheduled Monument of Newry Canal. I am also conscious of the significant benefits that the scheme offers to the residents and businesses of Newry both economically and environmentally and the desirability of progressing it towards a final statutory decision as quickly as reasonably possible.

This confirmation will now allow for the completion of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and the draft Statutory Orders for the scheme. A public consultation is planned for Summer 2024.

Is mise le meas,



JOHN O'DOWD MLA
Minister for Infrastructure



26th April 2024

Marie Ward
Newry, Mourne and District Council

By email

Dear Marie

I am writing to let you know that we have made changes to the way we describe the three stages of our investigation process.

Previously we used the following terms:

- Stage One - **Initial Assessment**
- Stage Two - **Assessment**
- Stage Three – **Investigation**

These have now been changed to:

- Stage One - **Assessment**
- Stage Two - **Investigation**
- Stage Three - **Further Investigation**

The main reason for deciding to rename the stages is because the new terms more accurately describe the work undertaken at each stage. This is particularly the case at Stage Two, which has changed from 'Assessment' to 'Investigation'.

At this stage our Investigating Officers obtain a detailed understanding of the issues of complaint and apply their professional judgment to decide on the most appropriate course of action. They can, for example, decide whether to facilitate a settlement between the public body and the complainant, whether to close a complaint without taking any further action, or whether the complexity of the case means it needs further or more detailed investigation.

As they obtain and analyse evidence from a variety of sources to help them make this decision, we believe 'Investigation', not 'Assessment', is the more suitable term to use at this stage.

Although our terminology has changed, all our other processes remain the same. The questions we ask and the type of information we request at each stage will not change. However, the change in terminology will be reflected when we report on the numbers of cases investigated or further investigated at the end of each business year.

Previously only those cases which progressed to Stage Three were referred to as being 'Investigated'. From now on (2024-25) we will also include all those cases which have progressed to Stage Two.

I have attached our 'About our Service' leaflet which explains our investigation process in more detail. This leaflet is also sent out to complainants when they contact our Office.

If you have any questions about the changes, or indeed any aspect of our service, please contact us on nipso@nipso.org.uk.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret Kelly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Margaret Kelly
NI Public Services Ombudsman



About our Service

We are here to help. If you need advice about making a complaint please get in touch.

 **Freephone**
0800 34 34 24

 **nipso.org.uk**



We investigate unresolved complaints about public services in Northern Ireland. We are independent of government, and our service is free.

If you have been treated unfairly by a public body, we may be able to help.

We make decisions on each case by taking into account all the available facts and evidence.

We are not an advocacy agency (an agency that acts in favour of a particular person), but we do make sure that the rights of people who complain are respected.

Our aim is to help public services improve through our investigations and reports.

How we deal with your complaint

Assessment



Investigation



Further Investigation

Assessment:

We first check to see whether the organisation you have complained about is on a list of those we are legally able to investigate.

We also check whether you have already complained to the public body, and if it has finished dealing with your complaint.

We would not generally investigate if:

- you complain to us more than six months after the public body completed its complaints process
- you are simply unhappy with the policy of a public body, or;
- you intend to take the issue to court.

If we can't take your complaint forward, we'll write to you and give you information about what you can do next.

If we can look at it in more detail we will progress it to the Investigation stage.

Investigation:

We will look at any evidence you have given us and how you have been personally affected by what happened.

We try to help resolve complaints early, so at this stage we may ask if the organisation has any proposals for settling the case without the need for any further investigation.

If there is no evidence to support the complaint or allegation, or if your complaint seems to be about minor breaches of policy and procedure we may close your case at this stage.

If we have gathered enough information to make a decision on your complaint we will explain our findings to you.

We may decide the public body behaved fairly. However, we may also conclude that it delivered a service badly or failed to deliver a service. If so, we will ask it to put things right.

Most of the complaints we receive are determined at this stage. However in some cases we will need to progress your complaint to the Further Investigation before we can make a decision.

Further Investigation:

At this stage we might ask the public body for more information to help us understand what happened. We may also need to interview witnesses.

If your complaint is about a complex medical issue, we may get advice from an independent professional advisor.

We will look at the relevant policies and procedures available to the public body at the time, and refer to our Principles of Good Administration and Good Complaint Handling to help us work out what should have happened.

During our investigation our job is to be unbiased and fair. We will evaluate all the information and make a decision on your complaint. This will be explained in a report which will be sent to you and the public body.

If we think that a public body got things wrong we will say so. We may ask it to apologise or to make changes to the way it does things. In other cases, for example if you have been affected financially because of mistakes by a public body, then we can recommend it gives you your money back.

On the rare occasions our recommendations are not accepted we can send a special report to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Publishing our reports

To help others understand what we do we may produce a summary of the report for our website, case digest or Annual Report. These will not name individuals but will usually include the name of the public body.

Our service standards:

We aim to:

- Acknowledge your correspondence within 3 working days of the date of its receipt
- Let you know within 10 working days of your complaint being received whether the assessment of your case has been completed
- Interview you by phone or arrange a face to face meeting where we believe this would be beneficial in considering your complaint
- Let you know within 50 working days of your complaint being received if it has been progressed for further investigation
- Let you know if we are unable to meet a target timescale and the reasons for this.
- We will also provide you with a revised timescale for response
- Explain your options if you disagree with our decision.

If we have referred your complaint to the Further Investigation stage, we aim to:

- Update you either by phone, email or letter approximately every 8 weeks on the progress of the investigation
- Agree a settlement or produce a draft report with our proposed findings and conclusions, within 50 weeks of informing you that your complaint was at this stage.

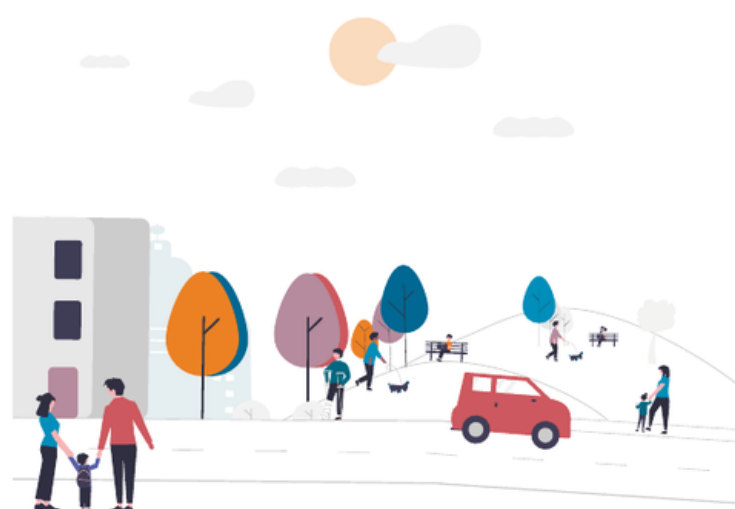
At all times we aim to treat you with respect and courtesy, and ask that you treat our staff in the same way.

Data Protection & Confidentiality

We will collect your personal information in order to process your complaint. We conduct our investigations in private, and are committed to protecting all of the information we hold. Further details relating to our information handling can be found in our Privacy Notice.

Complaints about our service

You have the right to make a complaint about us if you feel that the service you have received has fallen short of the standards you expect. If this is the case please see our Standards of Service complaints procedure on our website for more information.





Northern Ireland
Public Services
Ombudsman

**Please contact us if you
would like this form in
another language or format
(such as large print or Braille).**



Freephone
0800 34 34 24



nipso.org.uk



NIPSO_Comms



NIPublicServicesOmbudsman



nipso_comms



From the office of the Minister for Infrastructure
JOHN O'DOWD MLA

Ms Marie Ward
Chief Executive
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
(democratic.services@nmandd.org)



Room 708
Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
BELFAST
BT2 8GB
Telephone: (028) 9054 0540
Email: Private.office@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Your reference: XXXX
Our reference: COR-1168-2024
02 May 2024

Marie, a chara,

Rail Service between Belfast and Dublin including scheduled stops in Newry

Thank you for your letter of 12th March from the Council in which you request a commitment from my Department that the proposed new hourly rail service between Dublin and Belfast will include scheduled stops at Newry Train Station in both directions.

Translink, in conjunction with Irish Rail, have been working to increase railway service frequency between Dublin, Newry and Belfast.

An hourly service is planned to commence in Autumn 2024 which will double service frequency across a longer operating day, including earlier services. This will be operated by the existing Enterprise trains and local train sets from Translink and Irish Rail. All of these services will stop at Newry.

Is mise le meas,

JOHN O'DOWD MLA
Minister for Infrastructure

FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH

Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Máinnistiríe O Poustie

www.health-ni.gov.uk

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Marie Ward
Chief Executive
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
Via: Donna.Starkey@nmandd.org

Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
BELFAST, BT4 3SQ
Tel: 028 9052 2556
Email: private.office@health-ni.gov.uk

Your Ref: C/081/2024

Our Ref: COR-1444-2024

Date: *2nd* May 2024Dear *Marie,*

Thank you for your correspondence dated 16 April 2024 in which you detail a Notice of Motion which was agreed at a council meeting on 8 April 2024. In the Motion, it requests delivery of the Department's 10 year Cancer Strategy to ensure all patients receive timely treatment and support which is appropriate and compassionate.

I am committed to ensuring that everyone in Northern Ireland should have equitable and timely access to cancer diagnosis and treatment.

The Cancer Strategy recognises that the current system is unsustainable and that transformational change is urgently needed. The implementation of the NI Cancer Strategy remains a priority for my Department and despite the many challenges presented over the proceeding years considerable progress has been made by my Departmental officials and across the Health and Social Care system in response to the current service challenges within the constrained budgetary resources available.

It is essential that we ensure that cancer diagnostic and treatment pathways are as efficient as possible, I have prioritised the development of two Rapid Diagnosis Centres (RDCs) at Whiteabbey and South Tyrone Hospitals. This is a key step in helping to address some of the current challenges that patients are facing in terms of waiting for a diagnosis and preventing unacceptable delays for treatment. The service is currently available to patients in four out of five Trust areas, with plans to roll out to the South Eastern Trust by Summer 2024.

My Department has also recently completed reviews of the three core haematological cancer pathways, for Myeloma, Lymphoma and Leukaemia services that have seen significant and sustained service demand and work is currently underway to progress the implementation of the identified pathway review recommendations as part of service transformation and to ensure that we can provide optimal services for patients both now and in the future.

Work is also underway to implement the optimal care pathway for pancreatic cancer. Northern Ireland is the first part of the UK to commit to implementing an optimal care pathway for pancreatic cancer. This was developed by Pancreatic Cancer UK and the Department is working with the Upper Gastro-Intestinal (GI) Clinical Reference Group, service users and charities to implement this pathway. This will help to streamline the service and reduce patient waiting times.

An urgent review of regional breast cancer services has also commenced in response to the current unacceptable performance against the 14 day performance target. This, like other services outlined, require significant transformational changes to improve overall service performance to reduce current waiting times. Departmental officials are also considering other possible measures to help stabilise the service in the interim to ensure that those patients waiting the longest for appointments are seen quicker. This includes patients being offered appointments at other Trusts, to speed up the assessment and treatment process. Additional clinics are also being provided to help reduce the current waiting time for patient appointments.

An all-Island approach to the delivery of cancer services was established in October 1999 following the Good Friday Agreement. This continues to operate under The Ireland-Northern Ireland Cancer Consortium and is a tripartite partnership involving Ireland, Northern Ireland and the National Cancer Institute (NCI) in the USA, which aims to enhance cancer research and cancer care on the island of Ireland. The All-Island Cancer Consortium's core aim is 'to reduce cancer incidence and mortality on the Island of Ireland through cross-border and transatlantic collaborations in cancer research and education'.

A shared Island approach for service delivery is particularly important for cancers which require specialist treatment, or rare cancers where clinicians must have access to a larger population base to ensure that they can develop and maintain their clinical expertise in these specialisms.

However, the implementation of the full 10 year Cancer Strategy will not be possible without further significant and sustained investment. We must not underestimate the scale of the crisis at hand. My Department is now entering a further financial year with a budget shortfall. The cumulative impact of the financial squeeze will mean we cannot deliver the service we want, and demand will continue to outstrip capacity.

I made it clear that the Executive's Budget falls far short of the funding needed to tackle waiting times for both our long waiting patients and for our cancer/urgent patients. Additional targeted waiting list activity will not be possible, and my Department will not be able to move forward with additional clinics and additional capacity to address the needs of our cancer patients.

I trust you find this response helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Robin Swann'.

Robin Swann MLA
Minister of Health

From the Minister of Finance

*Marie Ward
Chief Executive
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council*

Private Office
2nd Floor
Clare House
303 Airport Road West
BELFAST
BT3 9ED

Tel: 028 9081 6236
Email: private.office@finance-ni.gov.uk

Your reference: C/081/2024
Our reference: COR-1200-2024
Date: 07 May 2024

Marie, a chara

COR-1200-2024: CANCER TREATMENT WAITING TIMES

Thank you for your letter of 16 April 2024, regarding unacceptably long waiting times for cancer treatments, requesting my commitment to the funding plan for the Department of Health's 10-year Cancer Strategy and delivery of a multi-year budget.

I agree that waiting times across the North are unacceptable and appreciate the devastating impact cancer can have on individuals and their families.

I note that you have also sent your letter to the Health Minister. Given that funding for the Cancer Strategy is a matter for the Department of Health, the issues you have raised are a matter for Mr Swann in the first instance.

You may be aware that the Executive has recently set its Budget for departments for 2024-25 and it is now for Ministers to manage their priorities with their department's agreed budget position. Unfortunately, the reality is that the level of public spending provided for here by the British Government via the Block Grant simply isn't enough to meet all the demands that are placed on it from across each of the Executive departments. I will continue to make the case to the British Government for public services here to be funded on a sustainable basis.

With regards to a multi-year budget, this is unfortunately outside of the Executive's control and Budget 2024-25 will be for one year only. But I have pressed the British Government on the need to make sure that the next budget, which will follow the outcome of the upcoming Spending Review later this year, is on a multi-year basis, so that the Executive can plan its finances on a more effective basis from 2025-26 onwards.

Is mise le meas

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Archibald.', is centered on the page. The signature is fluid and cursive.

**DR CAOIMHE ARCHIBALD MLA
MINISTER OF FINANCE**

FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH

Ms Marie Ward
Chief Executive
Newry, Mourne and Down Council

Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
BELFAST, BT4 3SQ
Tel: 028 9052 2556
Email: private.office@health-ni.gov.uk

Your Ref:
Our Ref: NV-1343-2024
Date: 2nd May 2024

Dear *Marie,*

Thank you for your letter of 16th April 2024. I note the Council members' disappointment that I will not be attending the proposed meeting with senior officials from the Department of Health.

As previously advised in my letter of 21st March, Mr Paul Cavanagh, Director of Hospital Care and Mr Tomas Adell, Director of Elective Care have been directly involved in the service review and closure of Emergency General Surgery at Daisy Hill Hospital, and will clearly set out the decision-making process that led to this conclusion which was ultimately made on managing patient safety and longer-term service sustainability.

I would ask you to contact Ms Sophie Lusby at Sophie.Lusby@hscni.net to make the arrangements for this meeting to take place in the first instance. Should your members remain unsatisfied with the Department of Health's decision-making process, I would ask that you write to me outlining these reasons.

Yours sincerely,



Robin Swann MLA
Minister of Health