



March 3rd, 2025

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the Council meeting to be held on **Monday, 3rd March 2025** at **6:00 pm** in **Council Chamber, Downshire Civic Centre.**

Agenda

1.0 Apologies and Chairperson's Remarks

2.0 Declarations of Interest

3.0 Action Sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 3 February 2025

For Information

[Action Sheet 2025 02 03.pdf](#)

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Council Minutes For Adoption and Signing

4.0 Minutes of Council Meeting held on 3 February 2025

For Approval

[Council Minutes 2025 02 03.pdf](#)

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Committee Minutes for Consideration and Adoption

5.0 Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 10 February 2025

For Approval

[Economy Regeneration and Tourism Minutes 2025-02-10.pdf](#)

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6.0 Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 13 February 2025

For Approval

[Strategy Policy & Resources Committee Meeting Minutes 2025-02-13.pdf](#)

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7.0 Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 17 February 2025

For Approval

[Active and Healthy Communities Minutes 2025 02 17.pdf](#)

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8.0 Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 19 February 2025

For Approval

[Sustainabilty_and_Environment_Committee_Minutes_2025_02_19.pdf](#)

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9.0 Planning Section

There were no issues arising.

Correspondence

10.0 Correspondence Report

For Information

-  *Correspondence Report Council 2025 03 03.pdf* *Page 50*

10.1 Response from Department of Education: Notice of Motion, Support for Young People with Special Educational Needs over 19

For Information

-  *Response from Minister of Education re NOM Special Educational Need over 19.pdf* *Page 53*

10.2 Correspondence from Department for Communities: Storm Éowyn Response

For Information

-  *Letter from Department for Communities re Storm Eowyn Response.pdf* *Page 55*

10.3 Correspondence from Minister of Health: NOM Residential Rehabilitation Services

For Information

-  *Response from Minister of Health re NOM Residential Rehabilitation Service.pdf* *Page 57*

10.4 Response from Minister for Infrastructure: Newry Southern Relief Road


For Information

-  *Response from Minister for Infrastructure re Newry Southern Relief Road.pdf* *Page 61*

10.5 Northern Ireland Housing Council Minutes

For Information

-  *Housing Council Minutes - 9th January 2025.pdf* *Page 62*

-  *Housing Council Minutes - 12th December 2024.pdf* *Page 67*

Notices of Motion

11.0 Notice of Motion - Newcastle Lifeboat Station

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Clarke:

"The Newcastle Lifeboat Station, established in 1825, has been a cornerstone of maritime safety in South Down for two centuries. The station has played a pivotal role in saving countless lives and supporting the wellbeing of sea farers in our community. This year is the 200th anniversary of its formation, it is fitting that we, as a council, formally recognise and celebrate this significant milestone".

12.0 Notice of Motion - Arts Funding Distribution

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Finn:

"NMDDC expresses its deep concern at the lack of equitable distribution of funding for the arts across the North; with particular concern that while Belfast City Council received 71% of all Arts Council funding in the year 2023/24, Newry Mourne and Down Council received a mere 3.18%, further expresses its support for local creative artists, and agrees to write to the Communities Minister Gordon Lyons MLA calling on him to review the current allocation of resources to deliver a more equitable distribution of resources, and to better help support and sustain the arts across the North regardless of geographical area".

13.0 Notice of Motion - Learning Disability Service Model

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Andrews:

"Expressing our deep concern at the lack of delivery from the Department of Health of the learning Disability Service Model which would greatly help to deliver a more regional approach to delivering better service availability for those with a learning disability , Newry, Mourne & Down District Council expresses our solidarity and support with those who have a learning disability ,their families and health practitioners who contributed to establishing this model and have been waiting for the new service model.

Council will write to the Minister of Heath Mike Nesbitt MLA calling for the publication of the report without delay and the immediate implementation of what is being recommended with adequate funding to deliver a such a vital service to so many".

14.0 Notice of Motion - Fishing Industry Visa and Enhancement Support

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Sharvin:

"This Council expresses its continued support for those who work in the fishing industry, noting with concern the continued lack of progress to deliver easier access to skilled worker visas, and expressing its disapproval at the lack of progress to deliver the outcomes within the Fisheries and Seafood Development Programme. This Council agrees to writing to the DAERA Minister Andrew Muir MLA calling for enhanced working with his UK counterpart to deliver greater ease of access and affordability of the skilled worker visa, and to review the outcomes within the FSDP and outline what projects can be delivered upon in the next financial year".

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
.....
Cllr William Clarke
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Cllr Laura Devlin
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Cllr Cadogan Enright
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Cllr Killian Feehan
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Cllr Doire Finn
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Ms Joanne Fleming
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Cllr Conor Galbraith
.....
Cllr Mark Gibbons
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Cllr Oonagh Hanlon
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Cllr Glyn Hanna
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Cllr Valerie Harte
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Cllr Roisin Howell
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Cllr Tierna Howie
.....
Ms Catherine Hughes
.....
Cllr Jonathan Jackson
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Cllr Geraldine Kearns
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Miss Veronica Keegan
.....
Mrs Josephine Kelly
.....
Mrs Sheila Kieran
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Cllr Cathal King
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Cllr Mickey Larkin
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Cllr David Lee-Surginor
.....
Cllr Alan Lewis
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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
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Maureen/Joanne Morgan/Johnston
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Cllr Declan Murphy
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Sinead Murphy
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Cllr Kate Murphy
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Cllr Selina Murphy
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Cllr Siobhan O'Hare
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Mr Andy Patterson
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Cllr Áine Quinn
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Cllr Henry Reilly
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Cllr Michael Rice
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Ms Alison Robb
.....
Cllr Michael Ruane
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Cllr Gareth Sharvin
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Donna Starkey
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Sarah Taggart
.....
Cllr David Taylor
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Cllr Jarlath Tinnelly
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Cllr Jill Truesdale
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Mrs Marie Ward
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Cllr Helena Young
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ACTION SHEET – COUNCIL MEETING – MONDAY 3 FEBRUARY 2025

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
<i>C/128/2024</i>	<i>Minutes of Council Meeting held on 01.07.2024</i>	It was agreed item C/058/2024: Twinning Newry with City of Ramallah should remain on the action sheet.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Ongoing	<i>N</i>
<i>C/019/2025</i>	<i>To set a District Rate for the Financial Year 2024/25</i>	<p>It was agreed to approve the considerations and recommendations of the Strategic Finance Working Group in relation to the 2025/26 rate setting process and, having regard to the Chief Executive's statement as required by the Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve an increase in the district rate for 2025/26 of 3.98% based on an estimated penny product of 2,525,089 meaning a non-domestic rate of 30.1884 pence and a domestic rate of 0.4862 pence; 2. Approve the Medium Term Financial plan and authorise the 2025/26 expenditure included in the estimates (Appendix 1); 3. Approve the General Estimates of Rates form 2025/26 to be signed by the Chief Financial Officer (Appendix 2) 4. Approve the Capital Strategy Report for 2025/26 as required by the CIPFA Prudential Code. (Appendix 3); 5. Approve the Capital Programme (Appendix 4); 6. Approve the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2025/26 (Appendix 5); 7. Approve the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2025/26 (Appendix 6). 8. Approve the action sheets of the Strategic Finance Working Group relating to the rate setting process. (see Appendix 7: Restricted item) 	<i>M Ward</i> <i>J Kelly</i>		

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
C/020/2025	Action Sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 13.01.2025	It was agreed to note the action sheet.	Democratic Services	Noted	Y
C/021/2025	Minutes of Council Meeting held on 13.01.2025	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	Democratic Services	Noted	Y
C/022/2025	Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 20.01.2025	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	Democratic Services	Noted	Y
C/023/2025	Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 23.01.2025	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted. SPR/015/2025: Planning Department Update Updates to be tabled as the first item on the Planning Committee	Democratic Services Democratic Services C Mallon	Noted	Y
C/024/2025	Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 27.01.2025	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	Democratic Services	Noted	Y
C/025/2025	Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 29.01.2025	Councillor Taylor clarified that he had not enquired whether the Department for Communities had provided any resource but rather he had questioned the cost implications for council given that no funds were being provided by the Department.	Mrs S Murphy	Noted	Y

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
C/029/2025	Notice of Motion – Street Lighting	<p>"NMDDC notes with concern areas which are lacking or have no street lighting, particularly in light of the issue of women's safety and will in conjunction with the Department of infrastructure undertake a scoping exercise to identify areas which could avail of additional street lighting across the District".</p> <p>The Motion was referred to the Sustainability & Environment Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.</p>	<p>Democratic Services</p> <p>S Murphy</p>	Noted	Y
C/030/2025	Notice of Motion – Parking Strategy	<p>"That this Council; Recognises;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ·It's responsibility to make Newry, Mourne and Down an attractive, accessible and welcoming place to live, work, shop and socialise in • ·That our residents with disabilities face challenges in their day to day life and Council, like all public authorities, must do all they can to address these challenges • ·Off-street public car parking is a competency of Council • ·Access to off-street car parking can be a challenge for persons with disabilities. This challenge can be in physically accessing pay stations or in the use of mobile apps <p>Therefore, calls on Council;</p>	Democratic Services	Noted	Y

<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>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To examine the feasibility, and implement when viable, free car parking for 'Blue Badge' holders in all Council run car park.</i> • <i>To develop a publicity campaign to promote this change</i> • <i>To provide an urgent update to elected members on the new Park Strategy mandated by full Council in July 2024."</i> <p><i>The Motion was referred to the Sustainability & Environment Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.</i></p>	S Murphy		
END					

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**NMD/C/****Minutes of Council Meeting held on Monday 3 February 2025 at 6.00pm in
Council Chamber, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick**

In the Chair:	Councillor P Byrne	
In attendance in Chamber:	Councillor T Andrews Councillor P Campbell Councillor L Devlin Councillor K Feehan Councillor A Finnegan Councillor O Hanlon Councillor V Harte Councillor J Jackson Councillor C King Councillor A Lewis Councillor D McAteer Councillor D Murphy Councillor S Murphy Councillor M Rice Councillor G Sharvin Councillor J Truesdale	Councillor C Bowsie Councillor W Clarke Councillor C Enright Councillor D Finn Councillor C Galbraith Councillor G Hanna Councillor T Howie Councillor G Kearns Councillor D Lee-Surginor Councillor A Mathers Councillor S O'Hare Councillor K Murphy Councillor A Quinn Councillor M Ruane Councillor D Taylor Councillor H Young
In attendance via Teams:	Councillor M Gibbons Councillor M Larkin	Councillor R Howell Councillor H Reilly
Officials in attendance:	Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability and Environment Mr A Patterson, Director of Active and Healthy Communities Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting) Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer	

C/017/2025**APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Brennan, Magennis, McEvoy and Tinnelly.

The Chairperson thanked NIE crews, Council officers and elected representatives for all their work in the aftermath of Storm Éowyn, a once in a generation storm with damage felt by people right across the District.

The Chairperson congratulated the new High Sherriff of County Down, Peter Leckey who had taken over the post from outgoing Sherriff, Sue Wild and wished him all the best in his role for the year ahead.

Congratulations were extended to Ashley Steele of Hollymount Pipe Band who was crowned World Champion at the World Solo Drumming Championships in Glasgow. Ashley took the top spot among 25 other competitors in the U-14 Juvenile Section 1 Grade. The Chairperson said he looked forward to hosting Ashley and her family at Council in the coming weeks.

The Chairperson congratulated the new pool team from the Brain Injury Foundation, Camlough who won their division at the first attempt in the NI Disabled Pool League. They were the first team to represent brain injury survivors and had opened the door to similar groups to compete in future tournaments.

Condolences were extended to the family of former Councillor William Brown who had recently passed away. He sat as Ulster Unionist Councillor and was a past Chairman of the former Down District Council. The Chairperson along with Councillors Taylor and Lewis extended sympathies to his wife Evelyn and daughters Lorraine and Rosemary.

The Chairperson on behalf of everyone in the Chamber sent condolences to Councillor Magennis and her family on the recent passing of her brother Brian. Oonagh and her family would continue to be in the thoughts and prayers of many at this time.

Councillor McAteer took the opportunity to speak about connectivity issues he had with the NIE contact line for elected representatives and Fibrus following the storm and said he felt it was a disgrace. Councillor McAteer proposed Council write to NIE And Fibrus in relation to this.

A lengthy discussion ensued during which Councillors Hanlon, Taylor, Lewis and Truesdale praised the work of NIE in the aftermath of the recent storm and did not support Councillor McAteer's proposal.

Councillor Sharvin reiterated the work of NIE, Fibrus and all utilities was to be commended and that Councillor McAteer was looking at lessons learnt from the major event.

The Chief Executive advised Members the storm had been a significant event for which Council had activated its emergency plan with various communications from Council. Once the decision was taken to stand the emergency plan down officers would within six weeks be carrying out a lesson learned exercise with feedback from elected members to feed into the process through multi agency platforms. Members were assured any comments and learning would be collated at that point.

C/018/2025

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Howell declared an interest in item 6: Minutes of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 20 January 2025.

Councillor Finnegan declared an interest in item 11.1: Correspondence from Northern Ireland Housing Council.

C/019/2025

TO SET A DISTRICT RATE FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2025/26

Read: Report from Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive and Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services regarding the District Rate 2025/26 dated 3 February 2025. **(Copy circulated)**

The Chief Executive stated, in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, the Chief Executive, as Chief Financial Officer was required to provide assurance to Members on the robustness of the revenue estimates and the adequacy of the Council's reserves position as part of the rate setting process prior to submission to the Department of Communities (DfC).

The Chief Executive confirmed detailed estimates had been formulated, presented to and scrutinised by Members at Strategic Finance Working Group (SFWG) Meetings. These had taken into account out-turns from previous years, corporate pressures, planned savings and efficiencies, current spending plans and projected future investment and that adequate funding was available to protect frontline services.

There had been five Strategic Finance Working Group meetings since November 2024 in preparation for striking of the 2526 rate. As a result of this extensive process and the detailed analysis that had been undertaken, the Chief Executive confirmed she was satisfied that the estimates presented should provide adequate financial resources to support the running costs of the Council for 2025/26 and that reasonable consideration of the financial risks to the Council had been made in the preparation of the estimates. The Chief Executive put the recommendations to Council to strike a District Rate of 3.98%.

Councillor Hanlon proposed striking the new rate of 3.98%, seconded by Councillor D Murphy.

Councillor Hanlon spoke of how the Council team had worked diligently with Finance Officers, Directors and the Chief Executive with many meetings held over the past year to discuss striking a rate for Newry Mourne and Down Council and that 3.98% was lower than the 4.5% predicted on the 3 year projections set in 2023. She pointed out that this equated to approximately 47p per week for the average rate payer.

She added that as elected representatives it was their job to oversee and scrutinise the financial management of the Council and that Sinn Féin took this responsibility very seriously as they wanted to secure a stable financial budget for the district and secure funding for capital projects and continued delivery for communities. The party had agreed an increased budget to implement a cleansing schedule across the district, create more jobs and purchase modern equipment which would ensure towns and villages were maintained to the highest of standards and support the teams who worked hard to deliver those services.

Councillor Hanlon said it was imperative that Council continued to move forward with plans to regenerate towns and city and improve tourism offerings and referred to projects being delivered such as a new play strategy, digital transformation in Newry, the pump and skate park in Downpatrick and regeneration projects, upgrades to Castlewellan Forest Park, progression on the Newcastle Leisure Centre and Rock Pool, refurbishment of Kilkeel Leisure Centre and upgrades and maintenance of walking trails across the district. The Council would also be providing a comprehensive Financial Assistance programme that supported local communities across a variety of themes.

Councillor Hanlon said fiscal stability was critical to these plans and a further reduction of the rate would result in cutting services, service level agreements and support for community events and there was a need to ensure jobs were safe for staff.

Councillor Hanlon pointed out this had been another challenging year with challenges for local government in terms of the increase for National Insurance contributions and the rise in overall costs. Sinn Féin believed it was incumbent on all parties to work together for the benefit of the ratepayers and local businesses particularly in the continued challenging times.

Councillor Truesdale reiterated her party's position on seeking cost-effective and cost-efficient outcomes for rates and said whilst they would accept the democratic will of Council, the Alliance Party could not support any rise in the face of the ongoing unknown total expenditure of the Newry Civic Centre and the Gondola Project, especially during a time of great economic difficulty and uncertainty. She said these large capital projects would result in additional borrowing which, in turn, would be passed onto the ratepayer.

Councillor Truesdale said her party had produced a series of green initiative proposals that would drive down any rise in rates, which had been very well received across all Councils in NI. The produced document was not a Council document and was an ongoing work in progress which they were happy to share. She added Alliance were pleased to see sustainability considerations noted and were appreciative of the ongoing work in Sustainability and Environment on sustainability considerations but would like to see a more definitive set of explicitly time-framed targets.

Councillor Truesdale advised the party had worked with the Council's Senior Management Team and engaged as they looked for cost saving measures to implement and keep the rates rise as low as it could be. However, these were cursory measures in the face of the huge expenditure to come if they continued on this path of progress with projects which were heavily opposed by the public and lacked appropriate transparency in terms of their development.

She said the Alliance Party were urging all parties to look realistically at what was coming down the track and that there were far greater projects of urgency, more cost-effective projects that made sense for residents right across Newry, Mourne and Down that money could be spent on as Council attempted to rebuild after years of austerity and cut backs.

Councillor Truesdale confirmed that with that in mind, Alliance would be abstaining on the rates for 2025.

Councillor Sharvin reflected on the position Council was in November at the beginning of the rates process when faced with a potential rate of 9.18% which would have had a significant impact on local businesses and the people of the district. He made reference to National Insurance contributions and the continuous cuts to the rate support grant attributing to 1.8% on the rate to be struck. He said Council had also seen cuts on animal welfare, PCSP, Community Event Grants etc and that all had to be picked up by the Council to make the Community safer, animals protected and first class events to go ahead.

Councillor Sharvin asked Members to be mindful that there was no programme for government, Council did not know what the assembly was going to do and without the continuous cuts and lack of support for local government there would have been different figures presented with the highest rate of 2.18%, and potentially sub 2%.

Councillor Sharvin pointed out Council was delivering an ambitious plan with new refuge and cleansing vehicles across the District, progressing the Rock Pool Newcastle to design stage,

investing in play parks, Ballykinlar Centre of Excellence, Downpatrick Regeneration Projects and providing financial assistance, not just in Sports Capital but also Community Capital, the Newry City Park at Albert Basin with £16.2million of grant funding and Council only having to give £2.5million, investing in Castlewellan Forest Park and a Sports Facility Strategy of £1.8 million.

Councillor Sharvin stated there was nothing more could be done to reduce the rate without impacting on front line services and the plan that Council continued to drive. He said Members needed to be honest with the people and the continued cuts by central government was tying hands and unfortunately Council could go no further than the rate presented and therefore SDLP was supporting the rate of 3.98%.

The Chairperson stated he wanted to make it very clear that in his position as Chairperson of Council and of SFWG that there was openness and transparency when considering proposals brought before the group to try and reduce the rate increase. He made reference to proposals referred to by Councillor Truesdale and the Alliance group that did not impact the rate this year but would impact the rate in future years and there would be conversations regarding that going forward.

He stated that if any parties felt that they could get the rate down below 3.98% then they needed to raise that at SFWG or at Council this evening as that was what the process was for.

The Chairperson referred to the cuts on National Insurance contributions and how costs due to cuts from the Support Grant over the last number of years had brought costs that Council could not reverse.

The Chairperson then put Councillor Hanlon's proposal, seconded by Councillor D Murphy to approve the considerations and recommendations of the Strategic Finance Working Group (as outlined within the report) and an increase in the district rate for 2025/26 of 3.98% to a vote, the results of which were as follows:

FOR:	26
AGAINST:	5
ABSTENTIONS:	5

The Chairperson declared Councillor Hanlon's proposal carried.

Councillor Sharvin referred to the point made by the Chairperson that the SFWG was the mechanism for parties to bring suggestions of how to reduce the rate and given how Members had voted was interested to hear from the DUP if they had any suggestions of how Council could have reduced the rate rather than striking the rate.

Councillor Jackson on behalf of his party said that as a group they had identified a number of efficiency areas that they thought could be improved upon but that suggestions were made and that they were not listened to so needed to go back to that.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor D Murphy, to approve the considerations and recommendations of the Strategic Finance Working Group in relation to the 2025/26 rate setting process and, having regard to the Chief Executive's statement as required by the Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011:

1. Approve an increase in the district rate for 2025/26 of 3.98% based on an estimated penny product of 2,525,089 meaning a non-domestic rate of 30.1884 pence and a domestic rate of 0.4862 pence;
2. Approve the Medium Term Financial plan and authorise the 2025/26 expenditure included in the estimates (Appendix 1);
3. Approve the General Estimates of Rates form 2025/26 to be signed by the Chief Financial Officer (Appendix 2)
4. Approve the Capital Strategy Report for 2025/26 as required by the CIPFA Prudential Code. (Appendix 3);
5. Approve the Capital Programme (Appendix 4);
6. Approve the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2025/26 (Appendix 5);
7. Approve the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2025/26 (Appendix 6).
8. Approve the action sheets of the Strategic Finance Working Group relating to the rate setting process. (see Appendix 7: Restricted item)

C/020/2025

ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 13 JANUARY 2025

Agreed:

The Action Sheet from Council Meeting held on 13 January 2025 was agreed on the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor McAteer.

C/021/2025

COUNCIL MINUTES FOR ADOPTION AND SIGNING OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 13 JANUARY 2025

Read:

Minutes of Council Meeting held on 13 January 2025 (copy circulated).

Agreed:

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 13 January 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Sharvin.

COMMITTEE MINUTES FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION**C/022/2025 MINUTES OF ECONOMY, REGENERATION AND TOURISM
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 20 JANUARY 2025**

Read: Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 20 January 2025 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 20 January 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted on the proposal of Councillor Kearns, seconded by Councillor Hanlon.

**C/023/2025 MINUTES OF STRATEGY POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2025**

Read: Minutes of Strategy Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 23 January 2025 (copy circulated).

SPR/012/2025: Castlewellan Forest Park

Councillor Devlin welcomed the additional spend in terms of utilities at Castlewellan Forest Park. She took the opportunity to acknowledge the devastating damage caused following the recent storm and put on record her thanks to all the staff and enquired if there was any indication as when some of the park might open again including the lake walk.

The Chief Executive advised she had visited Castlewellan Forest Park that day and met with staff on site and confirmed the damage was very extensive and staff were devastated by the damage. Staff were working to try to get the lake walk open however a significant amount more work was required to be done with safety inspections prior to opening.

Mrs Ward advised more work would be undertaken from a publicity perspective over the coming days in relation to all of the forest parks across the district because there had been significant damage.

Mrs Ward advised Members parks were really important tourism facilities for Council and having seen the damage including a loss of approximately ten of the champion trees which were hundreds of years old costs were going to be significant. The public were urged to bear with Council because from a safety perspective Council must ensure everything was right before people could have access.

Mr Mallon advised there were no timelines for opening yet with drone surveys being undertaken to identify the areas within the heavily wooded parts of Castlewellan Forest Park to understand the full scale of damage and challenges ahead with infrastructural works. He added some of the trails may need to be rebuilt so it would be a slow process and that needed to be done in safe manner with public and staff safety at the forefront of decisions on how to move forward.

SPR/015/2025: Planning Department Update

In response to a request from Councillor Hanna for more detailed answers to the questions raised in relation to Planning, Mr Mallon advised a detailed report had been presented to the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee providing rationale and answers to the challenges being faced including backlog, validating applications and allocation of

applications.

Members were reminded that all reports for all committees were accessible via Decision Time and should any Members have difficulty accessing those they should contact Democratic Services.

The Chief Executive pointed out Planning Department updates were presented to the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee on a quarterly basis and the Audit Committee also. She confirmed updates would be tabled as the first item on the Planning Committee.

Agreed: **The Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 23 January 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Howie, seconded by Councillor Mathers.**

C/024/2025 **MINUTES OF ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 27 JANUARY 2025**

Read: Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 27 January 2025 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 27 January 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor Finn.**

C/025/2025 **MINUTES OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2025**

Read: Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 29 January 2025 (copy circulated).

SE/004/2025: Electrical Safety Standards for Private Tenancies Regulations (NI) 2024

Councillor Taylor clarified that he had not enquired whether the Department for Communities had provided any resource but rather he had questioned the cost implications for council given that no funds were being provided by the Department.

Agreed: **The Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 29 January 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Jackson, seconded by Councillor Enright.**

Councillor Larkin left the meeting at this point – 6.56pm.

C/026/2025 **PLANNING SECTION**

There were no issues arising.

Due to technical difficulties it was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor K Murphy to have a recess at this point of the meeting – Meeting reconvened 6.56pm.

C/027/2025

CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

Read: Report dated 3 Feb 2025 from Mrs Ward, Chief Executive, regarding an update on correspondence received for the attention of Council (copy circulated).

Correspondence from the Department for Infrastructure: Newry Southern Relief Road

In referring to the fixed bridge over Newry Canal, Councillor Finn reminded Members this was something that she and Councillor Feehan had raised on a number of occasions. She took the opportunity to thank the outgoing Infrastructure Minister.

Councillor Finn proposed Council write to the new Infrastructure Minister, Liz Kimmins to congratulate her and to ask if she shared the same opinion on a fixed bridge as her predecessor. Also that Council responds to the ongoing consultation by the Department for Infrastructure on the Newry Southern Relief Road to affirm its opposition for any proposal on a fixed bridge.

Councillor Feehan seconded Councillor Finn's proposal.

Councillor Enright advised his party noted the order was for a bridge over a navigable river and that it was their view to keep the river navigable. He said that the approach road to the bridge started to rise towards the new bridge too late and needed to be sloping from the moment it left the dual carriageway.

Councillor Enright proposed an amendment that it be added that Council request that the design needed to be examined with a view to bringing the height of the bridge to an appropriate level for navigability by starting the slope as soon as it left the dual carriageway.

Councillor Finn did not accept Councillor Enright's amendment.

It was agreed by all to accept Councillor Finn's proposal, seconded by Councillor Feehan.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Finn, seconded by Councillor Feehan that Council write to the new Infrastructure Minister, Liz Kimmins to congratulate her and ask if she shared the same opinion on a fixed bridge as her predecessor. Also that Council responds to the ongoing consultation by the Department for Infrastructure on the Newry Southern Relief Road to affirm its opposition for any proposal on a fixed bridge.

Response from the Minister for the Economy: Notice of Motion, Young People with Special Education Needs under 19

Councillor Howie thanked the Minister for the Economy for his response and that the Department were working on the issues raised and with the new Minister, Dr Caoimhe Archibald she looked forward to what she would bring to the post and hoped that she can also bring forward legislation on this matter.

Late Item Circulated to Members at the Meeting - Response from the Minister of Health: Notice of Motion, Young People with Special Educational Needs over 19

The Chief Executive advised a response had been received from the Minister of Health before the meeting and had been circulated to Members from Ms Taggart for their information.

Response from Chief Executive South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust: Notice of Motion, Residential Rehabilitation Service

Councillor Truesdale put on record her thanks to Roisin Coulter for the audit of current provision.

Councillor Truesdale asked if Council officers could update information booklets on the Council website in line with what had been sent through from the Trust.

Mrs Ward confirmed she would have officers look into that and update as appropriate.

- Agreed:**
- It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Howie, seconded by Councillor Bowsie to note the correspondence report and the following correspondence:**
- **Correspondence from Northern Ireland Housing Council: Minutes from Meetings held in September, October and November 2024**
 - **Response from the Minister for the Economy: Notice of Motion, Young People with Special Education Needs under 19**
 - **Correspondence from the Department for Infrastructure: Newry Southern Relief Road**
 - **Response from the Minister for Health: Notice of Motion, Residential Rehabilitation Service**
 - **Response from Fermanagh and Omagh District Council: Notice of Motion, Gender Based Violence Against Women**
 - **Response from Chief Executive South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust: Notice of Motion, Residential Rehabilitation Service**
 - **Late Item circulated to Members at the Meeting - Response from the Minister of Health: Notice of Motion, Young People with Special Educational Needs over 19**

C/028/2025

**NOTICE OF MOTION – DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH'S
CONSULTATION ON HOSPITAL RECONFIGURATION
FRAMEWORK RE: DAISY HILL HOSPITAL**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Feehan:

"This Council notes the Department of Health's ongoing consultation on the hospital reconfiguration framework; expresses its dissatisfaction that the Department has failed to schedule a public meeting in Newry as part of their consultation exercise; registers its concern at the proposed designation of Daisy Hill Hospital as a General Hospital.

This Council calls on the Department of Health to schedule a public meeting in Newry on the hospital reconfiguration framework before the February 28th deadline; commits to submitting a consultation response that supports the designation of Daisy Hill as an Area Hospital and further calls for the Department of Health to engage with the Irish Government to identify mechanisms for establishing Daisy Hill as a cross-border Area Hospital."

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Finn.

In presenting the motion, Councillor Feehan explained he had brought the Motion before Council as it was the last opportunity to do so before the consultation ended and questioned why the Department of Health had scheduled a series of public consultations across the north but had opted to place the Southern Trust consultation meeting in Armagh City.

Councillor Feehan explained that this was despite a draft recommendation that Daisy Hill Hospital should be downgraded to a General Hospital, which was defined by the consultation documentation as 'providing defined secondary care services geared to a specific, more isolated geographical location' and he did not believe that this was an appropriate designation for Daisy Hill. He said he struggled to understand the reason for the Departments exclusion of Newry from their public consultation given that people in the area had shown tremendous enthusiasm for engagement in relation to health.

Councillor Feehan spoke at length about the clear need for an area hospital in Newry to cater a wide geographic area, a dense population and pronounced medical needs and how under the proposed recommendations there would be no area or significant acute hospital.

Members were asked to note there were 161,308 people registered with GPs in Newry and District, the second highest in the north after Derry with over 36,000 children and young people under 18, also second highest after Derry. Newry & Mourne legacy Council also had the 3rd largest landmass in Northern Ireland.

Councillor Feehan advised the Department of Health had said Newry and District had some of the highest prevalences of patients with heart failure and non-diabetic hyperglycaemia, as well as coronary heart disease, cancer, arterial fibrillation, hypertension and asthma. It had the 4th highest rates of kidney disease, stroke, diabetes and COPD.

In addition to the health challenges Daisy Hill had best clinical practice, most notably in renal cure where it was ranked the number one in the entire NHS network. In addition there were over 800 years of amassed experience in the Daisy Hill midwifery team and also the Nuffield Trust report in 2023 had recommended that Daisy Hill Hospital should be bolstered with hyper-specialist services e.g. stroke.

Councillor Feehan was asking Council to submit a response to the ongoing consultation as there was an obligation to take a clear position on what was essentially a proposed downgrade of Daisy Hill Hospital and advocate for the placement of an area hospital within the District and in the place where the need was greatest.

He added the call for the Department of Health to engage with the Irish Government to identify mechanisms for establishing Daisy Hill as a cross-border Area hospital made perfect sense and whilst acknowledging some councillors might feel that an uncomfortable proposition he was making it for pragmatic reasons. Reference was made to how, when it was working, the Cross-Border Healthcare Directive had acted as a lifeline for people who were languishing on northern waiting lists. He added another example of sensible partnership was found in the North West Cancer Centre, a life changing initiative that allowed people in the North West to access cancer treatment without having travel hundreds of miles.

Councillor Feehan said it was his view that Daisy Hill Hospital was unfairly disadvantaged because of proximity to the border and that the Department of Health viewed it as a peripheral hospital in a peripheral region and yet Newry sat in the heart of the Belfast-Dublin corridor, in the most populated region on the island.

Councillor Feehan asked where was the plan to establish Daisy Hill as a Cross-Border Area Hospital and stated the reason he brought the Motion was to state the case, clearly, to contribute to the ongoing consultation and to set an aspirational direction of travel for Daisy Hill Hospital.

Councillor King confirmed Sinn Féin were supporting the motion and fully supported Daisy Hill Hospital. Newry was a major population centre with an excellent hospital and it was only right that a public meeting on this consultation was held in Newry and that local people had the opportunity to contribute their views and shape decisions that affected their healthcare.

Councillor King stated Daisy Hill Hospital was a vital facility, staffed by dedicated professionals who provided outstanding care and expanding Daisy Hill must be a priority. It served a population beyond Newry, Mourne, and Down, and its proximity to the border meant the Department of Health must continue working with the Irish government to maximize its potential.

Sinn Féin would continue to hold decision-makers to account to ensure that the local hospital got the resources it needs.

Councillor Campbell took the opportunity to draw attention to the ongoing consultation within the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, especially with regards to the Downe Hospital.

Councillor Hanna spoke in support of Daisy Hill Hospital, however, did not support the last sentence of the Motion and queried how an area hospital would transit across an international border and how it work financially and stated therefore the DUP would not be supporting the Motion.

Councillor Taylor said irrespective of what party you belong to everyone wanted to have the best health service provision available to all and as elected representatives there was a role to make representations to the Department of Health and local Health Trusts to secure the delivery of that. He urged the local community to respond to the consultation to get the message across hospital services at Daisy Hill had to be retained and enhanced.

Councillor Taylor voiced concern about the last remark of the Motion and how there was a political context to it. He spoke of having issues regarding the governance of a cross-border hospital and how it was not straightforward but that it did not mean he was against cross-border cooperation, as he had seen constituents that had benefited from schemes as a result of the cross-border scheme that was in place previously.

Councillor Taylor said whatever the outcome Daisy Hill needed to be retained as a key component of the hospital network.

On behalf of the Alliance Party, Councillor Truesdale advised they viewed the motion as anti-transformational and therefore opposed the motion in its current form.

Councillor Truesdale proposed the following amendment:

*“This Council notes the Department of Health’s ongoing consultation on the hospital reconfiguration framework; expresses its dissatisfaction that the Department has failed to schedule a public meeting in Newry as part of their consultation exercise; **‘agrees that transformation is critical for the survival of Northern Ireland’s Health and Social Care system and must be supported by all stakeholders in all Health Trust areas; calls on the Department of Health to schedule a public meeting in Newry on the hospital reconfiguration framework before the February 28th deadline; and further calls for the Department of Health to engage with the Irish Government to identify mechanisms for expanding cross-border healthcare opportunities.’**”*

Councillor Howie seconded Councillor Truesdale’s proposed amendment.

Councillor Feehan did not accept the amendment as he believed the Motion was pointing to a transformation and that the amendment muddied the waters around the cross-border undertaking.

The Chairperson put Councillor Truesdale’s amended Motion, seconded by Councillor Howie to a vote, the results of which were as follows:

FOR:	5
AGAINST:	24
ABSTENTIONS:	4

The Chairperson declared the amended Motion was lost.

The Chairperson then put Councillor Feehan’s Motion, seconded by Councillor Finn to a vote, the results of which were as follows:

FOR:	23
AGAINST:	9
ABSTENTIONS:	1

The Chairperson declared the amended Motion was carried.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Feehan, seconded by Councillor Finn that this Council notes the Department of Health’s ongoing consultation on the hospital reconfiguration framework; expresses its dissatisfaction that the Department has failed to schedule a public meeting in Newry as part of their consultation exercise; registers its concern at the proposed designation of Daisy Hill Hospital as a General Hospital. This Council calls on the Department of Health to schedule a public meeting in Newry on the hospital reconfiguration framework before the February 28th deadline; commits to submitting a consultation response that supports the designation of Daisy Hill as an Area Hospital and further calls for the Department of Health to engage with the Irish Government to identify mechanisms for establishing Daisy Hill as a cross-border Area Hospital.

C/029/2015 NOTICE OF MOTION – STREET LIGHTING

The following Motion was received from Councillor Finn:

"NMDDC notes with concern areas which are lacking or have no street lighting, particularly in light of the issue of women's safety and will in conjunction with the Department of infrastructure undertake a scoping exercise to identify areas which could avail of additional street lighting across the District".

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Devlin.

Agreed: The Motion was referred to the Sustainability & Environment Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.

C/030/2025 NOTICE OF MOTION – PARKING STRATEGY

The following amended Motion was received from Councillor Mathers :

*"That this Council;
Recognises;*

- *·It's responsibility to make Newry, Mourne and Down an attractive, accessible and welcoming place to live, work, shop and socialise in*
- *·That our residents with disabilities face challenges in their day to day life and Council, like all public authorities, must do all they can to address these challenges*
- *·Off-street public car parking is a competency of Council*
- *·Access to off-street car parking can be a challenge for persons with disabilities. This challenge can be in physically accessing pay stations or in the use of mobile apps*

Therefore, calls on Council;

- *To examine the feasibility, and implement when viable, free car parking for 'Blue Badge' holders in all Council run car park.*
- *To develop a publicity campaign to promote this change*
- *To provide an urgent update to elected members on the new Park Strategy mandated by full Council in July 2024."*

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Harte.

Agreed: The Motion was referred to the Sustainability & Environment Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 7.40pm.

For confirmation at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 3 March 2025.

Signed:

Chairperson

Chief Executive

NEWRY MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting
held on Monday 10 February 2025 at 6.00pm in the Boardroom, Monaghan Row**

Chairperson: Councillor A Lewis**Committee Members
in attendance:**

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor W Clarke
Councillor K Feehan	Councillor O Hanlon
Councillor G Hanna	Councillor V Harte
Councillor G Kearns	Councillor D Lee-Surginor
Councillor S Murphy	Councillor M Ruane
Councillor A Quinn	

Committee Members**in attendance via Teams:** Councillor C Galbraith Councillor J Truesdale**Officials in attendance:**

Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Regeneration
 Ms A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth and Tourism
 Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)
 Mrs S Kieran, Democratic Services Officer

ERT/012/2025: APOLOGIES / CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism.

ERT/013/2025: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

**ERT/014/2025: ACTION SHEET ECONOMY, REGENERATION & TOURISM
COMMITTEE MEETING MONDAY 20 JANUARY 2025**

Read: Action Sheet arising out of the Minutes of the Economy,
 Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday 20
 February 2025 **(Copy circulated)**

In response to Councillor Hanlon, Ms Smyth confirmed that the first meeting regarding the Sub Regional Economic Plans had taken place with relevant stakeholders. She advised that the LEP would begin within the coming months to consider potential investment projects, and when the information was available an update would be provided at a future meeting of the Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee.

In response to Councillor Andrews, Ms Smyth confirmed there was no further information currently regarding the Sustainable Tourism Conference. She said further information would be tabled at a future Committee Meeting.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surgionr, it was agreed to note the Action Sheet arising from the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday 20 January 2025.**

FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION

ERT/015/2025: **DOWNPATRICK PUBLIC REALM SCHEMES: CHURCH STREET AND DECOURCY PLACE**

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism regarding Downpatrick Public Realm Schemes: Church Street and DeCourcy Place. **(Copy circulated)**

Ms Smyth presented the report and confirmed a conditional letter of offer had been received from the Department for Communities to fund the capital works associated with Public Realm Schemes at Church Street and De Courcy Place, Downpatrick.

In response to Councillor Andrews, Ms Smyth confirmed the Department of Communities had been working with other departments on the future roll out of funding for regeneration schemes. She stated that Council was waiting for further information from the Department, which would be tabled at a future meeting of ERT.

Councillor Hanlon welcomed the scheme for the Downpatrick area, noting that it was the result of many years of hard work by the Downpatrick Regeneration Group, Elected Members and the Living High Street. She praised it as a great example of collaborative working between Departments and Council.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, the following was agreed:**

- **To accept the Department for Communities Letter of Offer for Downpatrick Church Street and DeCourcy Place Public Realm Scheme.**
- **To re-appoint design consultants via framework procurement to take forward RIBA Design Stages 4 – 7.**
- **To approve commencement of the required procurement and appointment of contractor to deliver the capital scheme.**

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

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Kearns, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor, 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 Hanna, seconded by Councillor Harte, it was agreed to come out of Closed Session.

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

ERT/016/2025: PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS FOR 2025/26

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding Partnership Agreements for 2025/26. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to approve the list of Service Level Agreements, Memorandum of Understanding, Letters of Offer and Partnership Agreements for 2025/26 as outlined within the Officer's Report.

ERT/017/2025: TOURISM EVENTS PROGRAMME 2025/26

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding Tourism Events Programme 2025/26. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Kearns, the following was agreed:

- To approve the proposed schedule of Giant Events for 2025-26 as outlined within the Officer's Report.
- To approve the financial assistance awards associated with the delivery of community events, community Christmas events and community Halloween events as detailed within the Officer's Report.
- To approve the necessary procurements and appointment of suppliers for the delivery of the annual tourism events programme.

FOR NOTING

ERT/018/2025: PEACEPLUS THEME 1.1

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth and Tourism, regarding Peace Plus Theme 1.1. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Lee-Surginor, seconded by Councillor Murphy, it was agreed to note the minutes of the Peace Plus Partnership Board meeting of 19 December 2024, ratified at the Peace Plus Partnership Board meeting of 23 January 2025.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 6.28 pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 3 March 2025.

**Signed: Councillor A Lewis
Chairperson
Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee**

**Signed: Conor Mallon
Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism**

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Minutes of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on
Thursday 13 February 2025 at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Downshire Civic
Centre**

In the Chair: Councillor T Howie

**In Attendance
in Chamber:**

Councillor C Bowsie	Councillor C Enright
Councillor W Clarke	Councillor O Hanlon
Councillor C King	Councillor A Mathers
Councillor D McAteer	Councillor M Rice
Councillor G Sharvin	

**Committee Members in
Attendance via Teams:**

Councillor P Byrne	Councillor S O'Hare
Councillor A Quinn	Councillor H Reilly
Councillor D Taylor	

Non-Committee Members

In Attendance: Councillor T Andrews

Non-Committee Members in

Attendance via Teams: Councillor G Hanna

**Officials in Attendance
in Chamber:**

Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services
Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)
Mrs F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer

**Officials in Attendance
Via Teams:**

Mr C Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy

SPR/018/2025:

APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability & Economy and Mr A Patterson, Director of Active & Healthy Communities.

SPR/019/2025:

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

SPR/020/2025:

**ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM STRATEGY, POLICY &
RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 23 JANUARY
2025**

Read: Action Sheet of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee meeting held 23 January 2025 **(Copy circulated)**

SPR/054/2024 – Notice of Motion – Ethical Procurement:

Councillor Hanlon queried when an update to the item would be provided, to which Mrs Kelly advised that an update report would be tabled at March Committee Meeting.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Bowsie, it was agreed to approve the action sheet of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee meeting of 23 January 2025.**

FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION

SPR/021/2025: FUEL POLICY

Read: Report from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director: Sustainability, regarding Fleet Fuel Management Policy. **(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Kelly presented the Report, advising that its aim was to ensure Council was compliant with health and safety, environmental and governance requirements in relation to fuel used in Council vehicles.

Following a query from Councillor Enright regarding a change to electric as a fuel source, Mrs Kelly advised that policies were continually kept under review and would be updated as new fuel sources were utilised.

Councillor Reilly noted that it would be inadvisable to prioritise one fuel source over another in the changing times, and queried if Council could avail of cheaper fuel sources in other locations or if a company account was required.

Mrs Kelly advised she would revert to the Member on the query but stated that an account was usually required to obtain fuel.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Howie, it was agreed to approve Council's Fleet Fuel Management Policy as presented at Appendix 1 of the Officer's Report.**

SPR/022/2025: OFFICER REPORT ON NOTICE OF MOTION – 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF VE AND VJ DAY

Read: Report from Mr C Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy, regarding Officer Report on Notice of Motion – 80th Anniversary of VE and VJ Day. **(Copy circulated)**

Mr Moffett outlined the Report, noting that there had been two productive meetings to discuss the detail of the Notice of Motion and advised that due to the tight timeline for the implementation of the recommendations, approval was being sought to proceed with the recommendations prior to ratification at full Council meeting of 3 March 2025.

On proposing the Report, Councillor Bowsie noted that it was right that Council provided a way to remember this significant event in history, and it would be a way to remember the sacrifice and victory that allowed the way of life that was led today.

In seconding the Report, Councillor Sharvin noted the lengthy discussions involved at the reference group in agreeing the recommendations, stating he believed it was a fair and balanced approach to commemorating the event.

Councillor Hanlon spoke in support of the Report, noting that commemoration of these anniversaries would be welcome.

Following a query from Councillor McAteer regarding the recipients of the commemorative bowl detailed within the report, Mr Moffett confirmed that it would be presented to the organisers of any commemorative event that the Chairperson would be invited to.

Councillor Taylor spoke in support of the Motion, noting the importance of marking the momentous occasion and further commended the educational element of the recommendations. He proposed a slight amendment to the recommendations that a commemorative plaque be placed in Newry and Mourne Museum, not just Down County Museum. This was seconded by Councillor Bowsie.

Mr Moffett advised that there was an outline of a soldier within the Down County Museum grounds, which lent itself to the placing of a commemorative plaque there but stated that a plaque within Newry and Mourne Museum could be investigated.

Councillors Reilly and Hanna spoke in support of the Report, welcoming the opportunity to recognise the sacrifice of so many for the benefit of everyone, and the importance of Council recognising the outcome of World War II.

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Bowsie, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to note that the Notice of Motion had been considered and discussed at the Councillor's Equality & Good Relations Reference Group on 31 January 2025 and 12 February 2025 and that the consensus was to recommend the following:

- **Establishment of an 80th Anniversary of VE and VJ Day financial assistance programme with a fund of £35,000; and where the chairperson receives an invitation to attend a Council funded event that a commemorative bowl acknowledging the 80th anniversary be presented by the Chairperson.**
- **The development and delivery of a programme of events by the Museums and where possible this to include an education leaflet on World War II.**
- **Council to place a plaque within Down County Museum to acknowledge the 80th anniversary of VE and VJ Day.**

In addition, approval is sought to proceed to open the 80th Anniversary of VE and VJ financial

assistance theme call week beginning 17 February 2025 prior to the ratification of the decision at Council meeting on 3 March 2025.

It was also agreed on the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Bowsie, to explore the placing of a commemorative plaque within Newry and Mourne Museum.

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

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Enright, seconded by Councillor Rice, 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 Bowsie, seconded by Councillor Rice, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

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

SPR/023/2025: BELFAST LEGAL SERVICES

Read: Report from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Belfast Legal Services. **(Copy circulated)**

As there was dissent within the chamber the proposal to accept the officer's recommendations were put to a vote, with the results as follows:

FOR	12
AGAINST	0
ABSTENTIONS	3

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor McAteer, it was agreed to enter into a one-year SLA with Belfast City Council Legal Services Department from 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026 on a non-profit / cost recovery basis by virtue of the provisions of section 105 of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972 in relation to the legal services as outlined within the Officer's Report.

SPR/024/2025: INSURANCE PREMIUMS

Read: Report from Mrs S Trainor, Assistant Director: Environment, regarding Insurance Premiums. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Enright, it was agreed to approve the payment of the insurance premiums for 2025/2026**

FOR NOTING**SPR/025/2025: IMPACT OF STORM ÉOWYN ON COUNCIL ESTATE**

Read: Report from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Impact of Storm Éowyn on Council Estate. **(Copy circulated)**

Following a query from Councillor Enright regarding the impact of the storm damage on insurance premiums, Mrs Kelly advised that insurance renewal was an ongoing annual discussion regardless of extreme weather events, however insurance premiums might be impacted by any damage and subsequent claims.

Councillor Hanlon queried if Council had communicated with businesses and sports groups that operated from Castlewellan Forest Park to advise them of any expected timeframes for re-opening given the extensive damage onsite.

Mrs Ward advised that she would revert to the Member on the query.

Councillor Sharvin noted the significant amount of damage caused by the storm across the province and proposed that if no support was made available to aid in the cost of repairs that Council write to the Minister of Finance to highlight the both the cost incurred from the storm and subsequent financial implications, and to enquire if support would be made available. This was seconded by Councillor McAteer.

Councillor Bowsie commended the work of officers to date in clearing up damage incurred as a result of the storm and queried if work could be expedited on Tievenadarragh Wood to allow for part of it to be reopened for those who relied on it for their walking routes.

Mrs Kelly advised that she would raise the request with the relevant officers to address.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Bowsie, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to note contents of the Officer's Report.**

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor McAteer, to write to the Minister of Finance to highlight the cost incurred from Storm Éowyn, the subsequent financial implications and to enquire if support would be made available to assist with repairs.

There being no further business, the Meeting concluded at 6.57pm
For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 3 March 2025.

Signed: **Councillor Tierna Howie**
 Chairperson

Signed: **Josephine Kelly**
 Director of Corporate Services

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**Ref: AHC/2025**

**Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on
Monday 17 February 2025 at 6.00pm in the Mourne Room,
Downshire Civic Centre**

Chairperson: Councillor C Galbraith**In attendance
in Chamber:**

Councillor L Devlin	Councillor J Jackson
Councillor Lee-Surginor	Councillor A Mathers
Councillor D Murphy	Councillor K Murphy

**Committee Members in
attendance (via Teams):**

Councillor R Howell	Councillor M Gibbons
Councillor A Lewis	Councillor H Young

Officials in Chamber: Mr A Patterson, Director, Active and Healthy Communities
Mr C Haughey, Assistant Director, Healthy Living
Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development
Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)
Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer**Also in attendance:
(via Teams)** Mr Tony Morrison, Otium Consultants**AHC/010/2025: APOLOGIES & CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Finn, Magennis and McEvoy.

The Chairperson congratulated local Saul man Conor Hazard on an outstanding performance in nets against Liverpool in the FA Cup recently.

Congratulations were extended to Downpatrick and County Down Railway on their two awards at the Heritage Railway Association Awards which was very well deserved after the journey they had been on since the devastating floods in the town.

Newcastle's Unit T were congratulated on being crowned Regional Champions at the Live Here, Love Here Community Awards. They were recognised for their work in reducing isolation and promoting health and wellbeing through projects such as clean ups, recycling, community lunches and the Newcastle Community Fridge.

The Chairperson also congratulated runners up in the same category, Crossgar's Community Village Green for their efforts to improve the local village through planting flowers, installing picnic tables and securing funding for the Riverside Project.

AHC/011/2025: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

AHC/012/2025: ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM ACTIVE & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 27 JANUARY 2025

Read: Action sheet of the Active & Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 27 January 2025. **(Copy circulated)**.

Councillor Mathers read an extract from the Newry Reporter prior to the Christmas period that reported works would be completed in December with the recommissioning of the swimming pool hall, including the refilling of the pools taking approximately 4 weeks. He made reference to a meeting he and Daire Hughes MP had with the Chief Executive and Mr Patterson when it was stated that the works were on track for the pools to reopen mid-February and asked for an update.

Mr Patterson confirmed very good progress had been made over the last number of weeks on the work within the pool hall and reminded members that it was a very significant piece of work, essentially removing all tiles and screed back to the concrete substructure within the main pool hall. Significant work had also been undertaken in the village changing area.

Members were advised the majority of those works had been completed and the pools were being recommissioned with the main pool refilled and heated and the learner pool to be filled by the end of the week.

Mr Patterson acknowledged the frustration of the public and stated that Council had to be cognisant of final safety checks and the importance of ensuring works were delivered to the highest quality standards. Mr Patterson confirmed updates would be issued later in the week.

Mr Patterson advised he invited Councillors to visit the site if they wished to have a look around and see the progress with the work themselves.

Councillor Mathers thanked Mr Patterson for the update advising that he was being contacted daily by members of the public and there was a need to ensure communication was provided to the public.

Mr Patterson reiterated the need for pool safety checks and protocols being in place and confirmed there were more meetings with contractors that week.

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, to note the Action Sheet of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 27 January 2025.

AHC/013/2025: PRESENTATION: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND WELLBEING STRATEGY

The Chairperson welcomed Mr Tony Morrison from Otium Consultants to the Committee Meeting and invited him to deliver his presentation.

Mr Morrison took Members through a presentation entitled 'Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, Be Active Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2025-2030' (Copy attached to these minutes).

Members were advised the aim of the presentation was to give a flavour of the document that had been prepared for Council and its importance with the potential to make a difference in everybody's lives, not only people who were currently active, but more importantly, people who were probably not currently active enough.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Morrison for the presentation and invited questions and comments from Members with the following points raised:

- There were a superb variety of sporting clubs and activities that were run by the Council as well but there was always the need to do more.
- The need for the Be Active Sport and Physical Activity Strategy to be taken in tandem with the Sports Facility Strategy.
- The references made to female participation in sports was welcomed. This had been acknowledged within the District and there was a need to keep a focus on that and encourage it, particularly as data showed an increase in women in sports with leaderships roles and how that equated to success in working life and confidence.
- In relation to the Community Survey and the response of 600, was that an open call for information or targeted to certain people?
- It was felt there were more than the 20% figure of inactive people within the wider population.
- Reference was made to the figure of 27% for jogging and running and how a few months ago a Notice of Motion had been tabled at Council regarding the need for a running track. The survey underpinned that it was the backbone of most physical activity right across the District particularly with high female participation in running clubs locally and an update would be very welcome on progress of a track.
- In terms of the Education Survey, it was encouraging to see that more schools were open to arrangements for use of facilities outside of curriculum activities with Assumption Grammar School and Shimna College mentioned as examples.
- There was a need for more schools to come onboard as they were publicly funded facilities and usage should be maximised.
- Reference was made to Tollymore United and how they had accessed financial assistance for the delivery of Summer Sports Camps. The importance of these types of schemes was acknowledged.
- The importance of Sports Association Newry, Down and South Armagh (SANDSA) was raised and it was asked what was the role of SANDSA going forward.

Mr Morrison responded with the following key points:

- The Community Survey was an online survey which Council had been instrumental in helping with by pushing it through social media platforms, to sports clubs etc. There had been several repeated calls within the survey period, which was approximately 6 weeks to maximise the returns received from that.
- It was felt 600 was a very good level of response to a Community Survey knowing that there were many Community Surveys out there.

- One action was to review the future role and function of SANDSA with the view of developing a Sports Forum for the district.
- In terms of what the Council was doing in the longer term, there was much more potential in schools, particularly schools that currently had facilities that were underused by the public outside of curriculum time or not used at all.
- Several challenges for schools were highlighted in the provision for their facilities for community use, including management, insurance, etc. More work was needed to engage with schools to present the options and benefits of shared-use of facilities.
- Reference was made to case studies throughout the report and how they demonstrated the local benefits, whether it was a summer sports camp, financial grants, people attending the Be Active for Life programmes, etc. These emphasised the importance of Council's work and the input that Council had to people's lives and the potential to make a difference.

AHC/014/2025: SPORT, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND WELLBEING STRATEGY

Read: Report dated 17 February 2025 from Mr C Haughey, Assistant Director Healthy Living regarding Council's new Physical Activity and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-30. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor D Murphy, seconded by Councillor Devlin, to approve the adoption and launch of the Physical Activity and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-30.**

AHC/015/2025: DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREA (DEA) FORUMS UPDATE REPORT

Read: Report dated 17 February 2025 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development regarding an update on District Electoral Area (DEA) Forums. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor D Murphy, seconded by Councillor Devlin, to note the report and approve the actions in the action sheets attached for:**

- **Slieve Gullion DEA Forum Private Meeting held on 14 January 2025.**
- **Mournes DEA Forum Private Forum Meeting held on 21 January 2025.**
- **Rowallane DEA Private Forum Meeting held on 30 January 2025.**

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

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Mathers, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on items 5 to 7, which related to exempt information by virtue of para. 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) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Jackson, 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/016/2025: BE ACTIVE PROGRAMME

Read: Report dated 17 February 2025 from Mr C Haughey, Assistant Director, Healthy Living, regarding the public tender for a Programme Delivery Partner for leisure programme initiatives and classes. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor D Murphy, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, to approve business case and appointment of a suitable supplier through a public procurement process for a Programme Delivery Partner as outlined within the officer's report.

AHC/017/2025: FUEL POVERTY STRATEGY NI

Read: Report dated 17 February 2025 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development regarding a response in relation to the Consultation on a new Fuel Poverty Strategy for Northern Ireland. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Lee-Surginor, seconded by Councillor D Murphy, to approve the attached response within the officer's report be submitted to the Department for Communities on behalf of Council.

FOR NOTING**AHC/018/2025: POLICING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP (PCSP) & NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL PARTNERSHIP (NRP) REPORT**

Read: Report dated 17 February 2025 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development regarding an update on Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) & Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership (NRP). **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Jackson, to note the report and the following:**


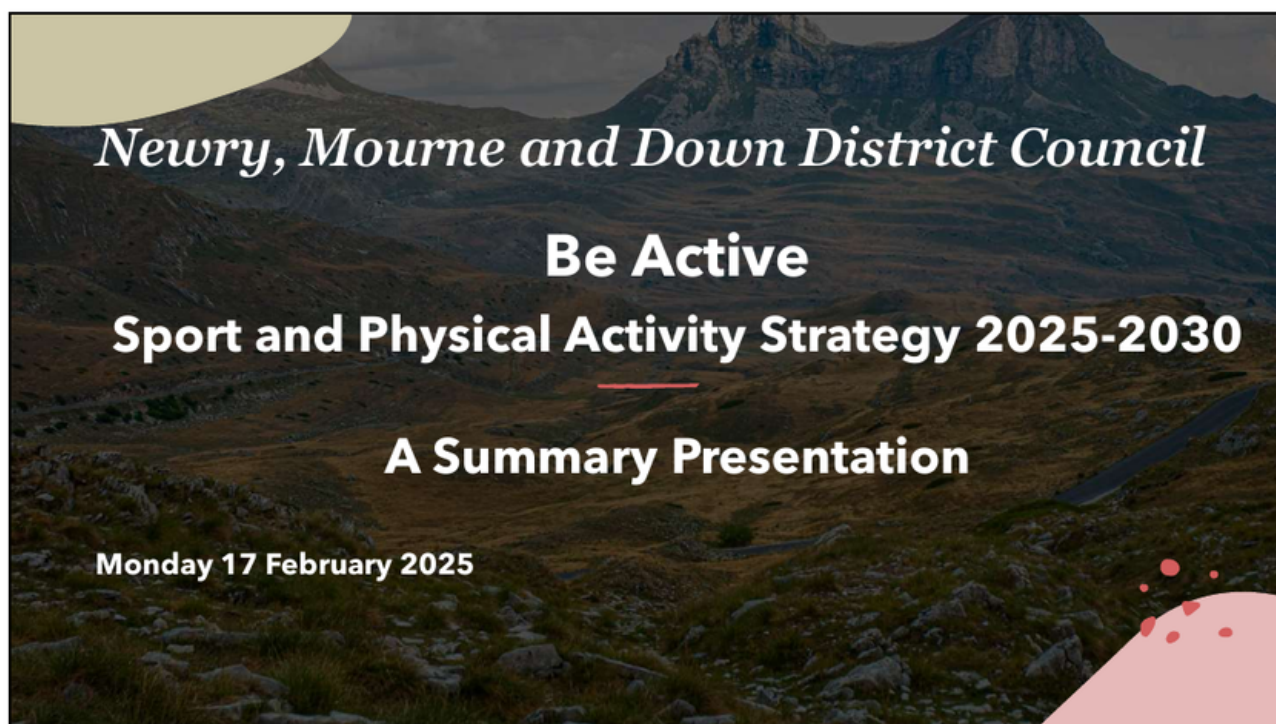
- **Minutes of the Policing Committee & PCSP held on 26 November 2024, approved at the Policing Committee & PCSP Meeting on 28 January 2025.**
- **Minutes of the Newry Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Meeting held on 20 November 2024, approved at the Newry NRP Meeting held on 15 January 2025.**

There being no further business the meeting ended at 6.52pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 3 March 2025.

Signed: Councillor Galbraith
Chairperson

Signed: Andrew Patterson
Director Active and Healthy Communities



Be Active - Rationale

Be Active has sprung from the clear message that participation in physical activity and sport leads to significant health and wellbeing benefits. This message is found in every strategic approach put forward by government and its agencies.

Be Active – The Picture

-  The Council - facilities and services.
-  Sports Clubs - extent of; volunteers; support.
-  Community Survey - level and type of activity; motivation.
-  Education Survey - partnership, community use and barriers.
-  Activity Providers' Survey - partnership, locations.
-  Living Longer - case studies, benefits of being more active.

Be Active – Vision, Objectives, Themes

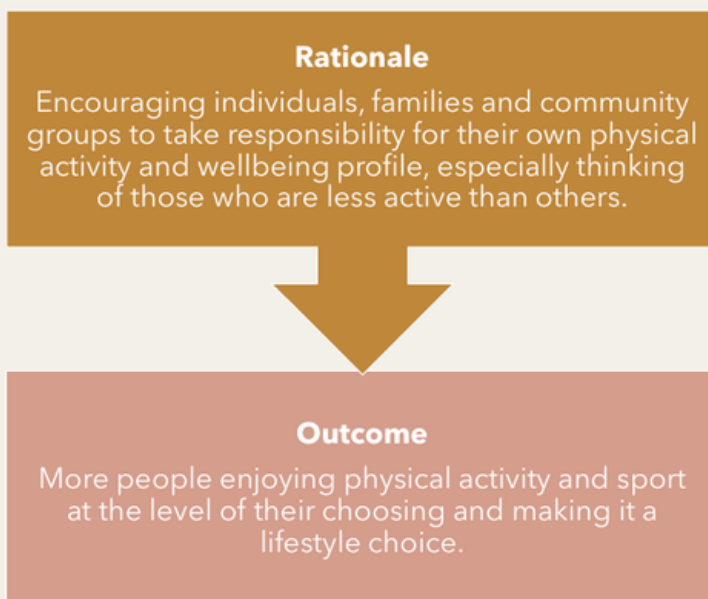
Vision	Objectives	Themes
Being active is a lifestyle choice for everyone in Newry, Mourne and Down.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Activity and Sport ▪ Active Lifestyle ▪ Programme Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community • Sports Providers • Partnerships • Telling Everyone

Objectives

Fitness	Lifestyle	Support
Activity and Sport	Active Lifestyle	Programme Support
Activities and sports suited to all ages and abilities for fun, fitness and competition.	Organisations working together to promote active lifestyles and deliver programmes in partnership.	Supporting the district's sports clubs and activity providers in delivering activity programmes that suit everyone's needs.

Theme 1 – Community

5 strategic actions



Theme 2 – Sports Providers ***5 strategic actions***

Rationale

A focus on the district's sports clubs and activity providers, encouraging them to embrace physical activity and wellbeing alongside their primary sport.



Outcome

Sports clubs and activity providers welcome the whole community and promote athletes and officials development at all levels of participation.

Theme 3 – Partnerships ***3 strategic actions***

Rationale

Working together to make the best use of resources and influence more people to adopt active lifestyles, especially people who are mostly sedentary.



Outcome

Shared responsibility and commitment by stakeholder organisations.

Theme 4 – Telling Everyone ***3 strategic actions***

Rationale

With the help of role models and effective marketing we need to constantly put the benefits of an active lifestyle in front of everyone in such a way that they decide to have a go and keep at it.



Outcome

Everyone knows about the opportunities for participation in sport and physical activity.

NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Ref: SE/2025

**Minutes of Sustainability & Environment Committee Meeting held on
Wednesday 19 February 2025 at 6.15pm in Council Chamber,
Monaghan Row, Newry**

Chair: Councillor G Kearns**In attendance in
Chamber:**

Councillor P Campbell	Councillor C Enright
Councillor D Finn	Councillor V Harte
Councillor J Jackson	Councillor D Taylor
Councillor H Young	

**Committee Members in
Attendance via Teams:**

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor M Larkin
Councillor M Ruane	

**Non-committee Members in
Attendance via Teams:**

Councillor J Truesdale

Officials in Chamber:

Mrs S Murphy, Director Sustainability and Environment
 Mrs S Trainor, Assistant Director Environment
 Ms G Kane, Head of Facilities Management
 Mr E Keavney, Head of Sustainability
 Mrs F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer
 Mrs S Kieran, Democratic Services Officer

SE/014/2025:**APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Magennis and Brennan, and from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director of Sustainability.

SE/015/2025:**DECLARATIONS OF "CONFLICTS OF INTEREST"**

There were no declarations of interest.

SE/016/2025:**ACTION SHEET: SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2025**

Read:

Action Sheet of the Sustainability and Environment Committee
 Meeting held on 29 January 2025. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

**On the proposal of Councillor Campbell, seconded
 by Councillor Finn, it was agreed to note the Action**

**Sheet of the Sustainability and Environment
Committee Meeting held on 29 January 2025.**

NOTICE OF MOTION

SE/017/2025:

**NOTICE OF MOTION – SHARING FINANCIAL
INFORMATION WITH OTHER COUNCILS REGARDING
CLIMATE CHANGE**

Read: Report from Mrs S Murphy, Director: Sustainability & Environment, regarding Notice of Motion – Sharing Financial Information with Other Councils Regarding Climate Change **(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Murphy advised that the report aimed to facilitate discussion on a Notice of Motion received from Councillor Enright.

Councillor Enright thanked officers for the report and enquired if it was possible for officers to consider two documents he had highlighted prior to the meeting that outlined how Council could make a considerable income from proposed solar farms at former landfill sites.

Mrs Murphy reiterated that reports that contained financial or business affairs were held in closed session and unavailable for public discussion.

Following a request for clarity from Councillor Campbell, a discussion ensued regarding Councillor Enright's request. Councillor Enright stated he was requesting that any commercially sensitive information be removed from the aforementioned reports to enable the sharing of any lessons learned from the proposal of solar farms on the former landfill sites that could be a benefit to other Councils. Mrs Murphy advised that there may not be any value in producing a report that had all significant data removed, but it would be considered.

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Enright, seconded by Councillor Young, it was agreed to note the following:

- **Councils' governance arrangements in relation to Sustainability & Climate Change**
- **Councils' participation in forums to enable sharing of information and best practice**
- **Councils' participation in regional procurement programmes to maximise return**

SE/018/2025:

NOTICE OF MOTION – VITAL ROLE OF TREES

Read: Report from Mrs S Murphy, Director: Sustainability & Environment, regarding Notice of Motion – Vital Role of Trees **(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Murphy advised the report aimed to facilitate discussion on a Notice of Motion received from Councillor Truesdale.

Councillor Truesdale thanked officers for the comprehensive paper that she stated laid out some shocking statistics regarding woodland cover across the Province. She confirmed the vital

role of trees was recognised within the Biodiversity Strategy and stressed the Tree Strategy needed updated with regard to planting the right tree species in the appropriate location, further stressing that organisations such as the Forest Service and Mourne Heritage Trust should be engaged.

Councillor Truesdale commended the Biodiversity Strategy, particularly the ongoing work in Castlewellan Forest Park tree nursery. She stated this fed into the Active & Healthy Communities tree theme around Castlewellan Tree Top Walk, alongside other river walks across the District that if managed and presented properly, could be a great attraction and resource for the residents of the District. She further stated that old trees needed rigorous protection, particularly as a result of the recent storm damage.

On proposing the report, Councillor Taylor noted the devastating scenes of damaged woodlands following the storm. He noted the woodland figures in comparison to other areas in Europe and queried how Council could improve on that.

Mrs Murphy advised that the Tree Strategy had been tabled at the October 2023 Committee Meeting with a final draft version to be tabled for approval. She stated a number of schemes were available to encourage planting and further schemes were under consideration by the Sustainability Directorate.

Councillor Finn thanked Councillor Truesdale for bringing the Motion, highlighting her shock at the low tree coverage across the Province. She spoke of the damage she recently viewed at forest parks across the District and proposed that Council write to the Minister for Agriculture to highlight the damage suffered and to request if any support was to be put in place to mitigate the loss suffered due to fallen trees, and to request the support of other Councils in that regard. This was seconded by Councillor Taylor.

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Campbell, it was agreed to note the following:

- **Council continues to implement actions within the Biodiversity Strategy and Tree Strategy**
- **Council continues to work with local community groups, businesses and stakeholders on creations of new woodlands across the District**
- **Council continues to raise awareness of Sustainability and Biodiversity issues at Council events and workshops**

It was also agreed on the proposal of Councillor Finn, seconded by Councillor Taylor, to write to the Minister for Agriculture to highlight the damage as a result of storm Éowyn and to request if any support was to be put in place to mitigate the loss of fallen trees. It was also agreed to contact other Councils to request support in this regard.

FOR CONSIDERATION AND/OR DECISION**SE/019/2025: REVISION OF SUSTAINABILITY CHARGES FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2025/26**

Read: Report from Mrs S Trainor, Assistant Director: Environment, regarding Revision of Sustainability Charges for Financial Year 2025/26 (**Copy circulated**)

Mrs Trainor outlined the report, confirming that the figures were applications from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. She advised that the waste and environmental health charges remained unchanged while the Ship Sanitation Inspection Charges were amended in line with other UK ports.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Campbell, seconded by Councillor Jackson, it was agreed to approve the Proposed Waste management Services Scale of Charges 2025/26 as set out in Appendix 1 of the Officer's Report.

SE/020/2025: APPLICATION FOR BUS SHELTER AT HILLTOWN ROAD, NEWRY

Read: Report from Mrs G Kane, Head of Facilities Management, regarding Application for Bus Shelter at Hilltown Road, Newry (**Copy circulated**)

Mrs Kane outlined the report, detailing the history of the original site and the reason for the new proposed site to be agreed.

Councillor Harte proposed the officer's report, seconded by Councillor Feehan.

Councillor Feehan asked that officers consider the repair of a damaged bus shelter at the junction of Sturgeon Bray and Ballynalack Road.

Mrs Kane advised that this would be examined and she would revert back to Councillor Feehan directly.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Harte, seconded by Councillor Feehan, it was agreed to the installation of a new bus shelter at Hilltown Road, Newry as per the recommendations stated in Appendix 1 of the Officer's Report.

SE/021/2025: DFI CONSULTATION ON ACTIVE TRAVEL

Read: Report from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director: Sustainability, presented by Mr E Keaveney, Head of Sustainability, regarding DFI Consultation on Active Travel (**Copy circulated**)

Mr Keavney outlined the report and sought Member approval for the consultation response related to the Northern Ireland's Active Travel Delivery Plan due for submission on 28 February 2025. He advised the consultation focused on the Northern Ireland Active Travel Delivery Plan as set by the Department for Infrastructure (DFI), which aimed to transform the active travel infrastructure over the next 10 years and beyond. The plan's ultimate goal was to create a sustainable transport system that addressed climate change and offered safe travel options for all citizens.

Mr Keaveney highlighted the plan prioritised urban areas with populations over 5,000, as these had the greatest potential for modal shift. He advised Council's response expressed concerns that the plan's development over the next 10 years appeared unambitious in that it excluded smaller villages and rural areas which may need active travel infrastructure, especially those with rural schools and amenities.

Mr Keaveney noted the importance of active travel infrastructure in urban areas and that more attention should be given to connectivity between towns and villages. He welcomed the proposed greenways development over the next 10 years which could improve connectivity for work, school and leisure purposes. Additionally he stressed the need for a clear plan to finance ongoing maintenance and repairs to keep the new infrastructure safe and usable.

Mr Keaveney confirmed the response, if agreed by Members, would be forwarded to DFI before the March Council meeting with the caveat that it would be subject to review by Council.

Councillor Young asked questions as follows:

- Why did the document suggest locating a park and ride facility in Newcastle when it was not noted in the Active Travel Masterplan of 2019, while congestion within Newcastle was at an all-time high?
- Was there any park and ride usage data available for the last 5 years, excluding any Council run events?
- Newcastle benefited from a Translink busy bus service during tourist season, alongside private businesses servicing mountain hikers. Had any research been carried out as to how this draft could potentially impact those services?

Mr Keaveney responded as follows:

- The 2019 Active Travel Master Plan was subject to ongoing discussion with DFI and relevant active travel units and issues such as congestion would be solely managed by DFI Road Service.
- The park and ride site had been used for Council events however no data was available on its usage through the Committee. The proposal would create an active travel hub which would support existing bus routes as well as cyclists and walkers. The final site had not yet been agreed and was subject to ongoing discussions between DFI and Translink.

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Campbell, seconded by Councillor Enright, it was agreed to approve the submission of the consultation response on behalf of NNDDC to Department of Infrastructure on the proposed Active Travel Delivery Plan for NI as outlined at Appendix 1 of the Officer's Report.

SE/022/2025: ON STREET RESIDENTIAL CHARGE POINT SCHEME (ORCS) UPDATE

Read: Report from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director: Sustainability, presented by Mr E Keaveney, Head of Sustainability, regarding On Street Residential Charge Point Scheme (ORCS) Update **(Copy circulated)**

Mr Keaveney outlined the report, advising this was the result of a joint procurement exercise led by Derry and Strabane Council. He advised the successful applicant had the opportunity to increase the number of charge points and that they had to be in close proximity to residential areas with limited charging space, such as terraced houses or flats.

Following requests for clarity on the selection of some car parks from Councillors Campbell and Harte, Mr Keaveney advised that the options were selected prior to him becoming involved in the project but he believed that there would have been a rationale as to the choices made. He advised he would take on board the points made regarding some locations and further advised there could be the opportunity to amend some locations depending on the availability of NIE power supply.

Following a query from Councillor Enright regarding future expansion of the project, Mrs Murphy advised that as noted within the report, the locations of chargers would be subject to approval from the Department of Infrastructure and connection applications to NIE Networks.

Following a further query from Councillor Harte about the use of the spaces, Mr Keaveney advised that there would be plans put in place for enforcing the use of charging spaces for charging vehicles only.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Enright, seconded by Councillor Campbell, it was agreed to continue to proceed with the ORCS EV Charger Project following successful appointment of a ChargePoint Operator.

SE/023/2025: REFUSE COLLECTION AND HRC ARRANGEMENTS FOR PUBLIC HOLIDAYS 2025/26

Read: Report from Mrs S Trainor, Assistant Director: Environment, regarding Refuse Collection and HRC Arrangements for Public Holidays 2025/26 **(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Trainor outlined the report, confirming that the alternative dates were in line with key dates over the Christmas and New Year period. She advised that a public relations (PR) campaign would be rolled out to highlight the schedule of bin collections to residents of the District, along with the availability of the bin collection calendar from the website.

On proposing the report, Councillor Finn welcomed the PR campaign and briefly mentioned the issues that had been raised over the previous Christmas period, encouraging the campaign to be rolled out as soon as possible.

Mrs Trainor advised that stickers would also be placed on to bins to highlight the amended collection schedule over the Christmas period.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Finn, seconded by Councillor Young, it was agreed to approve the alternative Refuse Collection Services and opening arrangements for Household Recycling Centres on Public Holidays applying to the 2025/26 financial calendar.

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Harte, seconded by Councillor Campbell, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on the following items, 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 Harte, seconded by Councillor Finn, it was agreed to come out of closed session.

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

RESTRICTED – FOR DECISION

SE/024/2025: WASTE CONTRACTS

Read: Report from Mrs S Trainor, Assistant Director: Environment, regarding Waste Contracts. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Campbell, seconded by Councillor Harte, it was agreed to approve the Direct Award Contracts as detailed at Appendix 1 of the Officer's Report.

SE/025/2025: BUSINESS CASE FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF PUBLIC ANALYST SERVICES

Read: Report from Mrs S Trainor, Assistant Director: Environment, regarding Business Case for the Procurement of Public Analyst Services **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Campbell, it was agreed to approve the business case to procure a Public Analyst for a period of three years starting from the 1 April 2025

SE/026/2025: BUSINESS CASE FOR SOLAR POWERED BINS

Read: Report from Mrs S Trainor, Assistant Director: Environment, regarding a Business Case for Solar Powered Bins. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Young, seconded by Councillor Jackson, it was agreed to approve the business case to procure solar powered compacting litter bins for the expansion across main towns and villages throughout the district.**

FOR NOTING - ITEMS RESTRICTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 6 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (NI) 2014**SE/027/2025: ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING IN COMMITTEE MINUTES OF 3 DECEMBER 2024 AND ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE MEMBERS MONTHLY BULLETIN OF 30 JANUARY 2025**

Read: ARC21 Joint Committee Meeting In Committee Minutes of 3 December 2024 and ARC21 Joint Committee Members Monthly Bulletin of 30 January 2025. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Harte, seconded by Councillor Taylor, it was agreed to note the minutes.**

SE/028/2025: MINUTES OF SUSTAINABILITY & ENVIRONMENT WORKING GROUP OF 18 DECEMBER 2024

Read: Minutes of Sustainability & Environment Working Group of 18 December 2024 **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Harte, seconded by Councillor Taylor, it was agreed to note the minutes.**

Cllr Taylor left the meeting at this stage – 7.12pm

FOR NOTING**SE/029/2025: NI LOCAL AUTHORITY COLLECTED MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STATISTICS JULY – SEPTEMBER 2024 PUBLICATION**

Read: NI Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics July – September 2024 Publication. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Young, seconded by Councillor Finn, it was agreed to note the publication.**

SE/030/2025: **ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 3 DECEMBER 2024**

Read: ARC21 Joint Committee Meeting Minutes of Meeting held 3 December 2024. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Young, seconded by Councillor Finn, it was agreed to approve note the minutes.**

There being no further business the meeting ended at 7.13pm

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 3 March 2025

Signed: **Councillor Geraldine Kearns**
Chairperson

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

Report to:	Council
Date of Meeting:	3 March 2025
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 Department of Education Council received a response from Department of Education in relation to Notice of Motion, Support for Young People with Special Educational Needs over 19.
3.2			Correspondence from Department for Communities Council received correspondence from the Permanent Secretary in relation to Storm Éowyn Response.
3.3			Correspondence from Minister for Health Council received correspondence from the Minister for Health re NOM Residential Rehabilitation Services.
3.4			Correspondence from Minister for Infrastructure Council received correspondence from the Minister for Infrastructure in relation to Newry Southern Relief Road.
3.5			Northern Ireland Housing Council Minutes Council received copies of Minutes from Meetings held on 12 December 2024 and 9 January 2025.

4.0	Resource implications
4.1	Not applicable.
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<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>
5.2	<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> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.3	<p><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></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	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)
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>

	The policy / strategy / plan / public service is not influenced by rural needs <input type="checkbox"/>
7.0	Appendices
8.0	Background Documents
	None

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTER

Marie Ward
Chief Executive
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

email:donna.starkey@nmandd.org
cc:democratic.services@nmandd.org



Department of
Education

www.education-ni.gov.uk

Rathgael House
43 Balloo Road
Rathgill
BANGOR
BT19 7PR

private.office@education-ni.gov.uk

6th February 2025

Your Ref: C/014/2025
CORR 0094-2025

Dear Ms Ward

Thank you for your letter of 22 January 2025 outlining the recent Notice of Motion agreed by the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council regarding post-19 support for young people with special educational needs (SEN).

I am committed to ensuring that young people with statements of SEN are supported in their transition from school into adulthood.

My officials continue to work closely with colleagues across the Departments of Economy (DfE), Health (DoH) and Communities (DfC) as part of the SEN Reform Agenda and Delivery Plan (published on 4 February 2025) to develop and enhance clear and appropriate pathways for young people transitioning from education into adulthood.

I trust you find this information useful.

Yours sincerely

Paul Givan MLA
Minister of Education



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

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Pobal

Department fur
Commonities

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From: Colum Boyle
Permanent Secretary

Level 9
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
BELFAST
BT2 7EG

Telephone: 028 90 823301
E-mail: Colum.Boyle@communities-ni.gov.uk
Our Ref: PSC0048.25
Date: 21st February 2025

Via email: Marie.ward@nmandd.org

Dear Marie,

STORM ÉOWYN RESPONSE

Storm Éowyn was a unique and exceptional experience for many working in the NI Civil Contingencies response. The Recovery Phase of the Civil Contingencies response has now concluded, and departments and agencies are continuing with the restoration work that will take a little more time including removal of debris, fixing of related damage etc. The work of all involved was key in informing practical responses that could reach those most in need and restore services as quickly as possible.

I would like to thank you for the commitment of your organisation and particularly the individuals within your organisation who participated in the Recovery Phase of the response effort. You and your organisation showcased resilience in handling what had been a difficult situation and in doing so displayed great collaboration across a wide range of partners. This effort contributed to the support provided to so many affected by the storm.



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

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Commonities

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colum Boyle'.

Colum Boyle
Permanent Secretary

FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH

Mr Keith McBride
Clerk
Committee For Health



Committee.Health@niassembly.gov.uk

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

Our Ref: COR-0194-2025

Date: 17 February 2025

Dear Keith,

RE: CORRESPONDENCE FROM NEWRY MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Thank you for forwarding on the correspondence received by the Health Committee in relation to Newry Mourne & Down District Council's Notice of Motion on the provision of a Residential Rehabilitation Service. Similar correspondence was also sent to the First and deputy First Ministers and myself, which I have already responded to.

In my reply, I assured Council Members that I, and my Department, shared their concerns about the levels of harms that can be caused by substance use, and acknowledged the very real and long-lasting impact on individuals, on families and on communities. There is no doubt that the harm associated from the use of alcohol and other drugs is one of the key public health challenges facing Northern Ireland. I also relayed how very conscious I am of the links that substance use has with areas of deprivation, mental health, suicide and self-harm, relationship breakdown, debt, crime, domestic and sexual violence.

My Department leads on the NI Executive's 10-year substance use strategy "Preventing Harm, Empowering Recovery". As the Council motion alludes to, full implementation of the strategy will require additional resources and in the current challenging financial climate, it is unlikely that we will be able to do all that needs done within the proposed timescales. However, significant progress is being made across a number of critical areas.

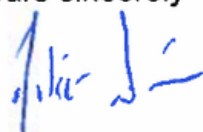
As part of the delivery of the strategy's outcomes, the Public Health Agency and the Strategic Planning & Performance Group have co-produced a new outcomes-focused strategic service delivery plan to replace the current Alcohol & Drug Services Commissioning Framework, covering all tiers of service provision. I launched the Substance Use Strategic Commissioning & Implementation 2024-28 last November.

The Plan outlines a number of key strategic priority areas and associated actions for the short, medium and longer term over a four-year period. An Independent Review of Inpatient Tier 4 Detoxification & Residential Rehabilitation Services across Northern Ireland was also published at this time – the recommendations relating to the Tier 4 Review can be found at: <https://consultations2.nidirect.gov.uk/hsc/independent-review-of-tier-4-detoxification-and-re/>

This Review was commissioned to understand whether current service provision meets population need and will meet future demand. Its recommendations are currently subject to a 12-week public consultation open until 19 February 2025. A number of these recommendations support the development of a Regional Specialist Assessment, Treatment and Recovery Service Network. This will include enhanced community detoxification services, community services to support people to achieve a state of readiness for recovery, and to maintain recovery, improved pathways for people throughout these services, a multi-disciplinary approach in current elective detoxification hospital services, and a regional evidence-based service specification for residential rehabilitation services.

I would like to thank Health Committee Members for their interest and ongoing support in this important matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mike Nesbitt', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mike Nesbitt MLA
Minister of Health

Marie Ward
Chief Executive



Comhairle Ceantair
**an Iúir, Mhúrn
agus an Dúin**
**Newry, Mourne
and Down**
District Council

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Our ref: C/013/2024

22 January 2025

Ms Liz Kimmins MLA
Chairperson
Committee for Health

Email: liz.kimmins@mla.niassembly.gov.uk

Dear Chairperson

Re: Notice of Motion – Residential Rehabilitation Service

At a Meeting of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council held on 13 January 2025, the following Notice of Motion was unanimously agreed:

'This Council notes with grave concern the 2024 report from NISRA on drug-related and drug misuse deaths, which found a significant increase in the number of deaths attributed to drugs and alcohol. This Council further notes the intrinsic connection between isolation, social deprivation, poverty, addiction and mental health issues. This Council acknowledges with concern the NISRA figures which show that drug related deaths are highest among 25-34 year olds.

This Council calls on the Minister for Health, in co-operation with the Executive Ministerial Committee for Public Health, to urgently implement the provisions aimed at harm prevention, harm reduction and tackling addiction within the Substance Use Strategy 2021-31, including plans to develop a residential rehabilitation service in a regionally strategic location; and further calls on the Executive to commit to providing appropriate subsequent resources in the 2025-26 Budget for the Department of Health.'

This Motion was discussed at length and received unanimous support from all Members who are deeply concerned about how drug abuse and mental health issues within communities are causing serious difficulties for many individuals and families.

Members were joined in the chamber by a mother, Sinead, whose story and that of her son Seán was heard and an appeal was made for Members to join the campaign to see drug rehabilitation services developed.

Members spoke of the real need for services to be provided to ensure that no families experience what this mother has had to endure.

Council are calling on the Executive to provide appropriate subsequent resources in the 2025-26 Budget for the Department of to prevent the devastating loss of young citizens and ensure the necessary resources are provided to bring things can forward in a positive way for families that require this service whenever a loved one is battling addiction.



I would ask that you give this matter serious consideration and I look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marie Ward', is written over a faint, light-colored rectangular stamp or watermark.

Marie Ward
Chief Executive



Department for
Infrastructure

An Roinn

Bonneagair

Department for

Infrastructure

www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

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From the office of the Minister for Infrastructure
LIZ KIMMINS MLA

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

Private Office, 3rd Floor,
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2 - 4 Cromac Avenue,
Belfast, BT7 2JA
Telephone: (028) 9054 0540
Email: Private.office@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Your reference: C/084/2023, C/093/2024, C/129/2024,
C/142/2024, C/027/2025

Our reference: COR-0130-2025
03 March 2025

Marie, a chara,

NEWRY SOUTHERN RELIEF ROAD

Thank you for your letter dated 17 February 2025 regarding Newry Southern Relief Road and your council members kind comments.

As you are aware, the Newry Southern Relief Road scheme entered a six-week period of statutory public consultation between 21 January and 4 March 2025. This was prior to my appointment as Minister for Infrastructure which began on 3 February 2025.

The public consultation is being conducted on the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and the Statutory Orders which were progressed and published on the basis that the structure over the Shipping Canal is fixed.

The decision to proceed with a fixed bridge was taken after detailed consideration of a range of factors, including engineering, economic, heritage impact and environmental assessments.

At the closure of this consultation period a report will be compiled for my consideration. This report along with the number and the nature of the representations received will inform my decision to progress to the delivery of the scheme or if a Public Inquiry is to be convened.

Is mise le meas,

LIZ KIMMINS MLA
Minister for Infrastructure



Minutes of the 513th Meeting of the Northern Ireland Housing Council held on Thursday, 9th January 2025 at 10.30 in the Housing Centre, Belfast

Present:

Cllr Mark Cooper	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
Cllr Aaron Skinner	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
Cllr Mary O’Dowd	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council
Ald Keith Kerrigan	Derry City & Strabane District Council

Virtual:

Cllr Anne Marie Fitzgerald	Fermanagh & Omagh District Council
Ald Amanda Grehan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Cllr Sean McGlinchey	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council
Cllr Deirdre Varsani	Mid Ulster Borough Council
Cllr Aoife Finnegan	Newry, Mourne & Down District Council
Ald Stephen McIlveen	Ards & North Down Borough Council
Kelly Cameron	Secretary, Housing Council

In Attendance:

David Polley	Department for Communities
Christopher Mills	Department for Communities
Grainia Long	Chief Executive, NIHE
Jonny Blease	Head of Communications, NIHE
Maria McLaughlin	Executive Assistant, CX & Chair Support Office
Ana Angelova	Observer, CX & Chair Support Office

Apologies:

There were no apologies.

1.	Welcome The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting.	
2.	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations.	

3.	<p>Draft Minutes – Housing Council Meeting held on Thursday, 12th December 2024</p> <p>The minutes were proposed by Cllr Mary O'Dowd and seconded by Cllr Aaron Skinner</p> <p>The Minutes were approved.</p>	
4.	<p>Matters Arising from the Minutes</p> <p>4.1 Invitation to the new Minister of Communities</p> <p>It was noted that the Minister for Communities, Gordon Lyons has agreed to meet the Housing Council and his Office will liaise with the Secretary to get a suitable date.</p> <p>It was noted that, due to the Ministers recent announcements in relation to Housing Supply Strategy and Intermediate Rents, Members to review the list of questions, prior to the meeting with the Minister.</p> <p>4.2 Housing Executive Board Membership</p> <p>It was noted that interviews had taken place in relation to the Housing Council appointments to the Housing Executive Board. The outcome is awaited.</p> <p>4.3 Non attendance at meetings</p> <p>In accordance with Housing Council Standing Orders, a letter had been issued to Belfast City Council in relation to their representative's non-attendance at meetings. The Lord Mayor responded advising he has passed the letter to John Walsh, Chief Executive for response.</p> <p>All other matters arising will be dealt with through the agenda.</p>	Secretary
5.	<p>Housing Executive's Emerging Issues & Strategic Items</p> <p>Grainia Long gave an update on emerging issues, by exception, under the following headings:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget & Monitoring Round update and completion of bid for 2025/26; • Corporate Plan for consultation and finalisation of the Business Plan for 2025/26; • Final quarter completion; major focus on new build programme, completion of our planned maintenance programme; • Winter provision (SWEP) and ongoing work to increase temporary accommodation portfolio; • Working with DfC on early delivery priorities for the Housing Supply Strategy; • Awaiting decision on rent in January- rolling out rent decision; and • New Foundations programme. 	

	<p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G Long suggested that it may be useful meeting some of the Housing Apprentices who have joined the Housing Executive through the new Foundations programme. • G Long undertook to provide an update on the new build programmed schemes for the remainder of 2024/25 financial year, subject to additional monies being made available by Council area. <p>Councillor O'Dowd commended Housing Executive staff during the severe weather period and asked that her appreciation be noted.</p> <p>Councillor Skinner welcomed the Housing Executive's commitment to a collaborative vision for tackling youth homelessness for young people leaving care and asked if it was possible to provide information digitally to these young people. J Blease explained that, as there are a number of people not on-line, this wouldn't be suitable and while the Housing Executive had a tenant portal only around one quarter of tenants had registered on it.</p> <p>The Chair added that it might be helpful to reach out to communities through the Central Housing Forum and HCN.</p> <p>The Chair thanked G Long for a very useful and informative update.</p>	<p>Secretary</p> <p>GL</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Presentation on Housing Supply Strategy 2024-2039</p> <p>The Chair welcomed David Polley & Christopher Mills who were giving a presentation on the Housing Supply Strategy.</p> <p>Members noted that the Housing Supply Strategy 2024-39 was agreed and published by the Executive in December 2024.</p> <p>The aim of this 15-year Strategy is to create a housing system that can deliver on housing needs and demands. This includes an ambition to deliver at least 100,000 homes and more, if needed, with one third of these being social homes.</p> <p>The housing challenges faced are significant. Nearly 48,000 households are currently on the social housing waiting list, of which over 36,000 are in housing stress. With numbers increasing, it is clear this trend is not sustainable.</p> <p>Housing affordability is a growing problem. Construction costs continue to increase, borrowing rates are as high, the private rented sector is under pressure and home energy costs are placing a disproportionate burden on household budgets.</p> <p>A new approach is required and issues such as water infrastructure constraints, land-use planning, construction skills and land availability must be addressed.</p>	

Members noted the five main objectives of the Strategy, as follows:-

- Creating Affordable options;
- Prevention and Intervention;
- Improving Housing Quality and Safety;
- Better Places;
- A Fair Path to Low Carbon Housing.

D Polley explained that the ambition (it is not a target) is to create a housing system that can deliver at least 100,000 homes and more, if needed. One third of these will be social homes, alongside an increased supply of intermediate homes delivered throughout the strategy lifetime.

Members welcomed this Strategy and commended all the relevant government departments working collaboratively and the partnership approach taken in its development.

Responding to Councillor Cooper, D Polley confirmed that he hoped there would be an announcement on the Intermediate Rents policy soon.

Several Members expressed concern on the high rental costs charged by private landlords and who sets the amount, as well as how often a landlord can increase rents for a property. D Polley advised the amount charged is the responsibility of the landlord. He also undertook to provide an update on landlords increasing rent multiple times a year.

DP

Councillor Varsani reiterated her concerns on the water infrastructure that is prohibiting several schemes proceeding, and if they have to provide water plants, in turn adding an extra cost, of approximately £30,000, to each property within the scheme, which adds more pressure to housing stress. She suggested that a mapping system, from DfC, in relation to viable land and sites would be beneficial, in order to progress schemes etc.

D Polley agreed that the infrastructure in wastewater capacity is a challenge. He added that it is vital to work collaboratively with NI Water to help identify how best to facilitate housing growth and encourage Housing Associations / developers to engage early with NI Water, to identify and try to resolve any wastewater capacity issues.

Agreed:

- D Polley undertook to provide a link for the Ordnance Survey for Northern Ireland;
- An update on the introduction of the limitation of frequency of private rent increases to once a year (and the requirement for 3 months notice of rent increases).

DP

The Chair thanked David Polley and Christopher Mills for a very informative presentation.

DP

513th Meeting of the Northern Ireland Housing Council

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7.	Any Other Business	
7.1	Village Catalyst Grant Scheme Members noted the information provided by DfC.	
8.	Date of Next Meeting The next meeting would be held on Thursday 13 th February 2025 at 10 am in the Mid Ulster Council offices, Magherafelt.	

Meeting ended 12.05 pm.



Minutes of the 513th Meeting of the Northern Ireland Housing Council held on Thursday, 12th December 2024 at 10.30 in Corrs Corner Newtownabbey

Present:

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| Cllr Mark Cooper | Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council |
| Cllr Aaron Skinner | Mid & East Antrim Borough Council |
| Cllr Mary O’Dowd | Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council |
| Cllr Aoife Finnegan | Newry, Mourne & Down District Council |
| Ald Stephen McIlveen | Ards & North Down Borough Council |
| Ald Keith Kerrigan | Derry City & Strabane District Council |
| Cllr Deirdre Varsani | Mid Ulster Borough Council |

Virtual:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Cllr Anne Marie Fitzgerald | Fermanagh & Omagh District Council |
| Ald Amanda Grehan | Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council |
| Cllr Sean McGlinchey | Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council |
| David Polley | Department for Communities |
| Gerry McAreavy | Department for Communities |

In Attendance:

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| Brian O’Kane | NI Housing Executive |
| James McFall | NI Housing Executive |
| Maria McLaughlin | Executive Assistant |
| Kelly Cameron | Secretary, Housing Council |

Apologies:

There were no apologies.

1.	Welcome The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting.	
2.	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations.	

<p>3.</p>	<p>Draft Minutes – Housing Council Meeting held on Thursday, 14th November 2024</p> <p>Amendment to the Minutes, it was noted that Deirdre Varsani had tried to join the meeting last month via the Teams link, but due to technical difficulties was unable to join.</p> <p>Subject to the above amendment, the minutes were Proposed by Cllr Mary O’Dowd and Seconded by Cllr Aaron Skinner</p> <p>The Minutes were approved.</p>	
<p>4.</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p>	<p>Matters Arising from the Minutes</p> <p>4.1 Invitation to the new Minister of Communities</p> <p>It was noted that the Minister for Communities, Gordon Lyons has agreed to meet the Housing Council and his Office the liaise with the Secretary early in the New Year to get a suitable date.</p> <p>It was noted that due to the Ministers recent announcements in relation to Housing Supply Strategy and Intermediate Rents, the list of questions will be reviewed at the ‘Closed Session’ in January, prior to the meeting with the Minister.</p> <p>4.2 Housing Executive Board Membership</p> <p>It was noted that the three vacancies from the Housing Council to the NIHE Board will have taken place by 19th December and it is hoped that appointments should be made early in the New Year.</p> <p>4.3 Non attendance at meetings</p> <p>In accordance with the Housing Council Standing Orders, a letter had been sent to Belfast City Council, in relation to their representative’s non-attendance at meetings and a reply has not been received.</p> <p>It was agreed that a letter should now be sent to the Lord Mayor, Belfast City and the Leaders of the main political groups expressing total disappointment and lack of regard towards the Housing Council.</p> <p>Cllr O’Dowd expressed her dismay that Cllr McCusker has been unfairly criticising the Housing Executive in the media in relation to homelessness over recent weeks, and added that if he attended the Housing Council he would have an excellent platform to address and contribute to resolving some issues.</p> <p>All other matters arising will be dealt with through the agenda.</p>	<p>Secretary</p> <p>Secretary</p>

5.	<p>Department for Communities – Housing Top Issues</p> <p>Members noted the Report.</p>	
6.	<p>Update on Homelessness (In attendance Brian O’Kane & James McFall)</p> <p>Brian O’Kane gave Members an update on Homelessness. Members noted that the figures as of March 2024 were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 47,312 applicants on the Waiting List in Northern Ireland; • 35,464 applicants deemed to be in ‘housing stress’ (award of over 30 points); • 29,394 applicants accepted as statutorily homeless (FDA); where a statutory duty is owed to accommodate. <p>Members received useful statistical data and B O’Kane explained the ways in which the Housing Executive are attempting to tackle homelessness through several programmes, action plans and projects.</p> <p>In relation to Domestic Abuse victims, Members concerns are that there is not enough places for women & children when they present themselves.</p> <p>Members welcomed that the Minister for Communities had met with the Housing Associations to seek void properties in their areas which may be used potentially for temporary accommodation.</p> <p>David Polley also highlighted that it was recently published that the Loan to Acquire Move-on Accommodation (LAMA), aims to fund the purchase of properties by homelessness charities as a route into housing for those who cannot access permanent social housing or private rented accommodation. A £10m fund running for five years will be made available to Homelessness charities in Northern Ireland, projected to provide 80 – 100 units off supported accommodation for clients with a range of support needs who would benefit from a move away from the traditional staircase model approach to homelessness.</p> <p>Cllr Grehan commended the change in Chapel Hill Mews, Lisburn which was a difficult area and has been taken on by a Social Enterprise providing accommodation with wraparound services for tenants and would be keen for more of these schemes to progress through Social Enterprises.</p> <p>Several Members alluded to the Finland model in tackling homelessness and Chair & Vice Chair undertook to provide slides from the Housing Conference they had attended in September.</p> <p>Referring to the lack of social housing, Members were encouraged locally to challenging planning for developments and welcomed the Housing Executive powers being reinstated to build again. Several Members also reiterated the challenging issue of the infrastructure, in particular the major problem of the water service needing to be addressed, which is vital for new developments.</p>	<p>CH/VC</p>

	<p>Agreed: Brian O’Kane agreed to provide the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated - Demand Waiting List (as at October 2024); • Breakdown of ‘Out of Hours’ figures by new Presenters in each Council area and summary details of the underlying issues; • Breakdown of Domestic Abuse & Single Lets presenters & services by Council area; • A copy of the Youth Homelessness Action Plan; • Homewards Coalition/Steering Group to check why a representative from the Housing Council was not invited to sit on the Group. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic Abuse Action Plan to be circulated to Members. • Referring to the former ‘Living over the Shops’ initiatives - D Polley to seek more information on housing led regeneration scheme in various villages; <p>The Chair thanked B O’Kane and J McFall for a very informative presentation.</p>	<p>B O’Kane</p> <p>Secretary</p> <p>D Polley</p>
<p>7.</p> <p>7.1</p> <p>7.2</p> <p>7.3</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>NIFHA Responses</p> <p>Members noted the responses.</p> <p>Updated NIFHA – Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)</p> <p>It was noted that NIFHA had updated the MOU, which the Chair has now signed off, it will be presented to the NIFHA Board on 11th December, which will give the opportunity to develop a close working relationship.</p> <p>Conduct of Meetings</p> <p>Cllr Finnegan referred to a recent meeting where she had referred to a case in her area, as a way of illustration of as a greater issue, only to be stopped and told by the Chair at that particular meeting, that a Housing Executive official could not respond. She felt the role of the Chair should be clearly understood and how it is managed.</p> <p>It was noted this particular meeting, was not Chaired by Cllr Cooper.</p> <p>In response, Cllr Cooper felt in his role as Chair he is transparent and open in his conducting of meetings. He added that specific local issues should be passed to either local area staff or to the Secretary who can triage to the relevant Officers.</p> <p>The Chair assured Cllr Finnegan’s her concerns will be taken Into account.</p>	

7.4	<p>It was also noted that in the event of both the Chair and Vice Chair being absent from a meeting, the Members present shall nominate a representative to preside over the meeting.</p> <p>Review of the Housing Council Standing Orders</p> <p>It was agreed that the Standing Orders required to be reviewed and a date will be arranged early in the New Year.</p>	Secretary
8.	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting would be held on Thursday 9th January 2025 at 10 am in the Housing Centre, Belfast.</p>	

Meeting ended 12.30 pm.