

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