



June 4th, 2024

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the Council meeting to be held on **Monday, 3rd June 2024** at **6:00 pm** in **Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre.**

Agenda

1.0 Apologies and Chairperson's Remarks

Josephine Kelly, Director of Corporate Services

2.0 Declarations of Interest

3.0 Action Sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 7 May 2024

For Information

 [Action Sheet Council Meeting 2024 05 07.pdf](#)

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Council Minutes For Adoption and Signing

4.0 Minutes of Council Meeting held on 7 May 2024

For Approval

 [Council Minutes 2024 05 07.pdf](#)

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5.0 Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 29 April 2024

For Approval

 [Special Council Minutes - 2024-04-29.pdf](#)

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Committee Minutes for Consideration and Adoption

6.0 Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 13 May 2024

For Approval

 [Economy Regeneration and Tourism Minutes 2024 05 13.pdf](#)

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7.0 Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 16 May 2024

For Approval

 [Strategy Policy Resources Meeting Minutes 2024-05-16.pdf](#)

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8.0 Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 20 May 2024

For Approval

 [Active and Healthy Communities Minutes 2024 05 20.pdf](#)

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9.0 Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 22 May 2024

For Approval

[Sustainabilty_and_Environment_Committee_Minutes_2024_05_22.pdf](#)

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10.0 Minutes of Audit Committee Meeting held on 23 May 2024

For Approval

[Audit Committee Minutes 2024-05-23.pdf](#)

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11.0 Minutes of Special Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 30 May 2024

[Special Strategy Policy Resources Meeting Minutes 2024-05-30.pdf](#)

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Conferences/Events

12.0 Somme Association

[Invite from The Somme Association.pdf](#)

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13.0 APSE NI: 'Enviro NI' and Annual General Meeting 2024

FREE: Thursday 6 June 2024, 10.00 - 15.00

Galgorm Hotel, Country Antrim

[APSE NI AGM 6 June 2024.pdf](#)

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Correspondence

14.0 Correspondence Report

For Information

[Correspondence Report Council 2024 06 03.pdf](#)

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[Appendix 1 Derry City and Strabane District Council Autism Assessments.pdf](#)

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[Appendix 2 Response from DAERA SC 006 2024 NIEA Information Sharing Protocol.pdf](#)





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[Appendix 3 Response from Dept for Levelling Up Housing and Communities C 078 2024.pdf](#)

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[Appendix 4 Response from Home Office C 080 2024 Seasonal Worker Visa Route.pdf](#)

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-  ***Appendix 5 Response from the Minister of Finance C 099 2024 Baby Loss.pdf*** ***Page 88***
-  ***Appendix 6 Response from Minister of Health C 099 2024 Baby Loss.pdf*** ***Page 89***
-  ***Appendix 7 Response from Dept for Communities re C 093 2024.pdf*** ***Page 91***
-  ***Additional Item Correspondence from the Department for the Economy C 088 2024 Notice of Motion Inclusion of Counties Armagh and Down in Irelands Ancient East.pdf*** ***Page 92***

Invitees

- Cllr Terry Andrews
- Cllr Callum Bowsie
- Fionnuala Branagh
- Cllr Jim Brennan
- Cllr Pete Byrne
- Mr Gerard Byrne
- Cllr Philip Campbell
- Cllr William Clarke
- Cllr Laura Devlin
- Ms Louise Dillon
- Cllr Cadogan Enright
- Cllr Killian Feehan
- Cllr Doire Finn
- Cllr Aoife Finnegan
- Ms Lynne Fitzsimons
- Cllr Conor Galbraith
- Cllr Mark Gibbons
- Cllr Oonagh Hanlon
- Cllr Glyn Hanna
- Cllr Valerie Harte
- Cllr Roisin Howell
- Cllr Tierna Howie
- Ms Catherine Hughes
- Cllr Jonathan Jackson
- Cllr Geraldine Kearns
- Miss Veronica Keegan
- Mrs Josephine Kelly
- Mrs Sheila Kieran
- Cllr Cathal King
- Cllr Mickey Larkin
- Cllr David Lee-Surginor
- Cllr Alan Lewis
- Cllr Oonagh Magennis
- Mr Conor Mallon
- Cllr Aidan Mathers
- Cllr Declan McAteer
- Cllr Leeanne McEvoy
- Jonathan McGilly
- Cllr Andrew McMurray
- Maureen/Joanne Morgan/Johnston
- Cllr Declan Murphy
- Sinead Murphy

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 Aine Quinn
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Cllr Henry Reilly
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Cllr Michael Rice
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Ms Alison Robb
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Mr Peter Rooney
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Cllr Michael Ruane
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Cllr Gareth Sharvin
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Donna Starkey
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Nicola Stranney
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Sarah Taggart
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Paul Tamati
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Cllr David Taylor
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Cllr Jarlath Tinnelly
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Cllr Jill Truesdale
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Mrs Marie Ward
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ACTION SHEET – COUNCIL MEETING – TUESDAY 7 MAY 2024

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
C/086/2024	Action Sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 08.04.2024	It was agreed to note the action sheet.	Democratic Services	Noted	
C/087/2024	Minutes of Council Meeting held on 08.04.2024	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	Democratic Services	Noted	
C/088/2024	Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 15.04.2024	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted. It was Council write to both the Economy Minister Conor Murphy and the Irish Minister for Tourism, Catherine Morton, requesting that they meet with a Cross-Party delegation of Councillors in order to advance the Council's stated objective of securing the inclusion of counties Armagh and Down in Ireland's Ancient East.	Democratic Services C Mallon	Noted	
C/089/2024	Minutes of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on 18.04.2024	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted. Mrs Ward to revert back to Councillor Reilly directly in relation to Good Relations Forum and 80 th anniversary of D-Day on 6 June 2024.	Democratic Services M Ward C Moffet	Noted	

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
C/090/2024	<i>Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting 11.04.2024</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	Democratic Services	Noted	
C/091/2024	<i>Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting 23.04.2024</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	Democratic Services	Noted	
C/092/2024	<i>Planning Section</i>	There were no issues arising	Democratic Services	Noted	
C/093/2024	<i>Correspondence Report</i>	It was agreed to note the Correspondence report.	Democratic Services	Noted	
	<i>Appendix 3: Response from Department for Communities in relation to C/083/2024 Notice of Motion, Arts Sector Calls</i>	It was agreed that Council write back to the Minister for Communities requesting that arts funding be kept on the agenda.	Democratic Services	Correspondence sent	
	<i>Appendix 6: Response from the Department of Infrastructure in relation to Newry Southern Relief Road</i>	It was agreed that Council write to the Minister for Infrastructure to request he meet with Council and explain why the decision was taken to proceed with a fixed bridge.	Democratic Services	Correspondence sent	

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
<i>C/094/2024</i>	<i>Notice of Motion – Mental Health Service Providers across Newry, Mourne and Down</i>	It was unanimously agreed that Council fully recognises and appreciates the work of mental health service providers within Newry, Mourne and Down. It is vitality important that the service providers are supported to sustain and grow for the future demand. This Council will write to the Health Minister Robin Swann calling for him to commit financial funding to enable new contracts being awarded and procurement exercises to be undertaken via the local Trusts and an action plan for engaging the voluntary and social enterprise sectors in its supply chain.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Correspondence sent	
<i>C/095/2024</i>	<i>Notice of Motion – Road Maintenance</i>	It was unanimously agreed that Council expresses extreme disappointment at the continued deterioration of our rural roads and recognises the impact it has on motorists and the executive budget through subsequent compensation claims. This Council supports the recommendations made in 2019 in Jim Barton's Independent Review into the Funding Requirements for Structural Maintenance of 9 the Northern Ireland road network. Council writes to the Minister for Infrastructure and Minister for Finance asking both departments to outline the steps taken to implement the Barton recommendations to date and commit to a multi-year budget to properly address the maintenance of our roads. Council write to the British Government requesting them to fulfil the demand from all parties that they adequately fund public services in the north.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Correspondence sent	

	<i>Notice of Motion – Right to Food</i>	It was unanimously agreed that Council recognises the impact the scourge of food poverty is having on families right across this area, made worse by the cost of living emergency, and gives its formal backing to the Right To Food campaign, joining cities like Belfast, Derry and Liverpool in becoming a Right To Food City Council. We believe that this Executive and the British Government must prioritise food poverty, implementing a range of new measures including universal free school meals, support for community kitchens and enshrining the Right To Food for all through legislation. This Council will also write to the Minister for Communities, calling for immediate action on the implementation of an anti-poverty strategy and write to the Minister for Education also, as they have a role to play in tackling food poverty.	Democratic Services	Correspondence sent	
C/097/2024	<i>Notice of Motion – Ireland's Ancient East</i>	This motion was withdrawn.	Democratic Services	Noted	
C/098/2024	<i>Notice of Motion – Dog Fouling</i>	That this Council will be focused on providing long term solutions around enforcement and communication campaigns with regard to dog fouling. Council officers will also look at best practice in Councils who already operate a customer reporting hub such as BCC. This Council will use data provided by members of the public, elected members via a customer hub, hotspots will be identified and enforcement officers will know exactly areas of most need, this will then inform social media and posts by Council on areas experiencing high dog fouling, encouraging the public to become more aware of their responsibilities. Data may also	Democratic Services		

		be used to work out where bins are lacking in the district and inform their placement.” Proposed by Cllr Howie, seconded by Cllr Truesdale. The Motion was referred to the Sustainability and Environment Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.	<i>S Murphy</i>	
<i>C/099/2024</i>	<i>Notice of Motion – Baby Loss</i>	It was unanimously agreed that this Council acknowledges the grief, pain and trauma caused by the loss of a baby during pregnancy; recognises that the trauma felt is exacerbated by bereaved parents having to travel to England for a post-mortem due to the absence of a local perinatal and paediatric pathologist; seeks the reinstatement of a regional paediatric pathology service in Northern Ireland, whilst recognising the potential for mutually beneficial cross-border cooperation; believes parents should have the option to have their child's memory recorded with an official certificate free of charge; and supports the intention of the Finance Minister to develop a Baby Loss Certificate Scheme for those parents that have lost a baby during a baby pregnancy before 24 weeks.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Correspondence sent. Response received and included within the Correspondence report.</i>
<i>END</i>				

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**NMD/C/****Minutes of Council Meeting held on Tuesday 7 May 2024 at 6.00pm in
Council Chamber, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick**

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

C/084/2024**APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Enright and Gibbons.

The Chairperson on behalf of Council expressed condolences on the sudden passing of Jennifer Fulton from Ulster Wildlife. Council worked closely with Jennifer and Ulster Wildlife as a project partner on a number of funded projects over the years and she would be sadly missed.

Condolences were expressed to Councillor Enright and his family following the passing of his mother in law.

The Chairperson congratulated Ryan Dornan from Loughinisland who had become the Northern Ireland under 16 Snooker Champion.

Congratulations to Tomás O'Ceallaigh from Mullaghbawn, a member of Ring of Gullion Cornhaltas who won the prestigious Senior Fiddler of Oriel Competition at the weekend.

C/085/2024 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

C/086/2024 ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 8 APRIL 2024

Read: Action sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 8 April 2024 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Action Sheet from Council Meeting held on 8 April 2024 was agreed on the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Andrews.**

C/087/2024 COUNCIL MINUTES FOR ADOPTION AND SIGNING OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 8 APRIL 2024

Read: Minutes of Council Meeting held on 8 April 2024 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 8 April 2024 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Murphy, seconded by Councillor Brennan.**

Councillor Lee-Surginor enquired whether the loss adjusters had completed their assessments with regard the Flood Scheme and if all applicants been notified of the outcome.

Mr Mallon advised it was anticipated the inspections would be completed within a week with reports to follow. Officers had engaged with applicants to the Hardship Fund and letters of offer had been issued to all those who were eligible for payments. Letters of offer were to be issued to the first tranche of applicants for the enhanced scheme with payments made once funding had been secured through DfE.

Members were advised a communications update would be issued to all applicants through the grants system to advise of the current position and progress with the scheme.

COMMITTEE MINUTES FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION**C/088/2024 MINUTES OF ECONOMY, REGENERATION AND TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15 APRIL 2024**

Read: Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 15 April 2024 (copy circulated).

ERT/040/2024: Tourism Strategy 2024-2029

A lengthy discussion ensued during which Councillor Jackson said it was with regret the DUP group could not support the proposed tourism strategy. He stated his Party had expressed a case for the need to highlight the biggest tourism attraction in the area, the Mourne Mountains and the rich history of Ulster Scots which made it distinctive from other areas.

Councillor Jackson said it was disappointing and unacceptable that the areas and culture that the DUP represented were ignored in the process.

Councillor Hanna voiced opposition to the use of Ireland's True Nature stating he felt it was inappropriate and did not identify the area any differently.

Councillor Hanlon pointed out the brand had been consulted on, market tested and was not just a decision for Councillors.

Having proposed the Tourism Strategy at the Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee, Councillor Feehan voiced support and proposed Council write to both the Economy Minister Conor Murphy and the Irish Minister for Tourism, Catherine Morton, requesting that they meet with a Cross-Party delegation of Councillors to advance the Council's stated objective of securing the inclusion of counties Armagh and Down in Ireland's Ancient East. Councillor Finn seconded the proposal.

Councillor Feehan confirmed he would therefore withdraw his motion as presented on item 14 of the Council agenda.

Councillor Bowsie stated his belief that the Tourism Strategy lacked cross community support, was politically charged and did not create the best promotion of the District. He spoke at length about how the Tourism Strategy created division and that the DUP had expressed strong opposition from the beginning to "Ireland's True Nature" and the selective culture and history associated with it in the strategy. He proposed an amendment for Ireland's True Nature to be replaced for branding that could gain cross-community support. This was seconded by Councillor Reilly.

Mr Mallon stated from an officer's perspective the Strategy presented had been developed in neutral format that did not support one side of the community or another and the branding was a separate piece of work that had been carried out in consultation with Members, members of the Tourism industry, the local tourism sector, had been market tested both locally and internationally and was presented to Members with a range of options.

The Chairperson advised that there would be a recorded vote (copy of which is appended to these minutes) on the proposal of Councillor Bowsie, seconded by Councillor Reilly for Ireland's True Nature to be replaced for branding that can gain cross-community support.

The results of the recorded vote were as follows:

FOR:	6
AGAINST:	31
ABSTENTIONS:	0

The proposal was LOST.

Agreed: The Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 15 April 2024 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted on the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Ruane.

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Feehan, seconded by Councillor Finn Council write to both the Economy Minister Conor Murphy and the Irish Minister for Tourism, Catherine Morton, requesting that they meet with a Cross-Party delegation of Councillors in order to advance the Council's stated objective of securing the inclusion of counties Armagh and Down in Ireland's Ancient East.

C/089/2024 **MINUTES OF STRATEGY POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 APRIL 2024**

Read: Minutes of Strategy Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 18 April 2024 (copy circulated).

Councillor Reilly advised he was unable to attend the Committee meeting and proposed that Council commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day on 6 June 2024 in some way. Councillor Taylor seconded the proposal. Mrs Ward advised that this would be a matter for the Good Relations Forum and she would revert to Councillor Reilly directly.

SPR/057/2024: Notice of Motion, MMR Vaccinations

Councillor Devlin thanked the Communications and Marketing team for their work in raising awareness for the MMR Vaccination Campaign.

Agreed: **The Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 18 April 2024 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Howell.**

C/090/2024 **MINUTES OF ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 22 APRIL 2024**

Read: Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 22 April 2024 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 22 April 2024 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor K Murphy.**

C/091/2024 **MINUTES OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 23 APRIL 2024**

Read: Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 23 April 2024 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 23 April 2024 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Reilly.**

C/092/2024 **PLANNING SECTION**

There were no issues arising.

C/093/2024 **CORRESPONDENCE REPORT**

Read: Report dated 7 May 2024 from Mrs Ward, Chief Executive, regarding an update on correspondence received for the attention of Council.

Appendix 6: Response from the Department of Infrastructure in relation to Newry Southern Relief Road

Councillor Feehan stated he strongly disagreed with the Infrastructure Minister's decision to proceed with a fixed bridge on the Southern Relief Road and spoke of Newry's maritime past and the history of the Canal being part of the town's DNA. He added that pressing ahead with the decision to close off access to the Canal for a range of ships and vessels would not only be a psychological blow for generations of Newry people but would be a short sighted, short term cost saving decision with long term consequences for the vitality of Newry Canal and the ability to invest in its regeneration in the long term.

Councillor Finn spoke in agreement with Councilor Feehan and how the decision taken was extremely disappointing and had been taken when there was no Minister in place. She proposed that Council write to the Minister for Infrastructure to request he meet with Council and explain why this decision was taken. Councillor Feehan seconded the proposal.

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Byrne to adjourn the meeting at this point.

Meeting adjourned at 7.02pm.

Meeting resumed at 7.15pm.

Councillor King stated this was a project that had been around for some time and Members were conscious not to delay transformation for Newry. He added it was disappointing that the decision had been taken at a time when the Assembly was down and no Minister in place.

Councillor King advised Sinn Féin had worked hard lobbying for a lifting bridge and were pleased that the current infrastructure Minister had carried out a review of the decision to try to ensure all options were exhausted. He stated significant financial constraints placed on the Executive due to Tory Government underfunding had meant a lifting bridge was not affordable. A key point for needing a lifting bridge was to ensure that Newry's canal was being utilised to its fullest and was therefore looked at as part of the larger regeneration project such as the development around Newry City Park and the new Greenway.

Councillor Reilly spoke in support of the Minister's agreement and said the Minister had made a very difficult decision and shown courage as everyone wanted the road in place as quickly as possible to take all the heavy traffic out of Newry town centre which would be beneficial to the health and well-being of the people of Newry.

Councillor Hanna said he felt it was unnecessary to bring Minister O'Dowd to Council to explain what he believed was a difficult but forward-thinking decision.

Councillor McAteer spoke of how the lifting bridge was policy of Council and that it should not move from that without any discussion on the decision taken.

Councillor Hanlon said she had no issue with any party writing to the Minister however she believed that scrutiny should come from the MLAs of the Assembly. She added it had been decided on the back of a review and the problem was that there was a serious issue with funding coming from the British Government.

Councillor Byrne responded that Council did have jurisdiction over Ministers as this was a Council City Deal Project and reminded Members that the last Infrastructure Minister had met with a delegation from Council in June 2022 to hear the views on this project to take it forward. He said it was therefore imperative that the Minister came to Council to outline the reasons for the decision taken.

A show of hands vote was requested on Councillor Finn's proposal that Council write to the Minister for Infrastructure to request he meet with Council and explain why this decision was taken to proceed with a fixed bridge, seconded by Councillor Feehan, the results of which were as follows:

FOR: 31
AGAINST: 5
ABSTENTIONS: 0

The proposal was declared CARRIED.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Finn, Seconded by Councillor Feehan that Council write to the Minister for Infrastructure to request he meet with Council and explain why the decision was taken to proceed with a fixed bridge.

Appendix 3: Response from Department for Communities in relation to C/083/2024 Notice of Motion, Arts Sector Calls

In referring to the response received from the Communities Minister, Councillor Finn proposed Council write back requesting that Arts funding be kept on the agenda as it had been badly cut over the last 10 years. Councillor Devlin seconded the proposal.

Councillor Campbell spoke in agreement with Councillor Finn's proposal as he had worked for 17 years within Community Arts and knew the benefits of the arts across the community.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Finn, seconded by Councillor Devlin that Council write back to the Minister for Communities requesting that arts funding be kept on the agenda.

Appendix 4: Correspondence from Department for Communities, Head of Housing Investment in relation to protecting and enhancing the social housing funding.

Councillor Finnegan welcomed the correspondence from the Department for Communities and reiterated that social and affordable homes must be prioritised and that building more social, affordable homes was a priority and action was needed to demonstrate this and ensure that housing was delivered, especially for rural communities.

Appendix 5: Correspondence from Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in relation to C/080/2024 Notice of Motion, Fisheries and Aquaculture Industries.

In welcoming the response from the Minister, Councillor Byrne enquired whether a letter had been sent to the Home Office and if not to ensure that the Home Office was contacted in the same manner as previously done with the issue of seasonal workers in the mushroom industry. Mrs Ward advised the letter had been sent however there had been no response as yet.

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

Appendix 1 & 2: Correspondence from General Register Office in relation to Coronavirus Act 2020 (Registration of

Deaths and Still-Births) (Extension) (No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024.

Appendix 3: Correspondence from Department for Communities in relation to C/083/2024 Notice of Motion, Arts Sector Calls.

Appendix 4: Correspondence from Department for Communities, Head of Housing Investment in relation to protecting and enhancing the social housing funding.

Appendix 5: Correspondence from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in relation to C/080/2024 Fisheries and Aquaculture Industries.

Appendix 6: Correspondence from Department for Infrastructure in relation Newry Southern Relief Road.

Appendix 7: Correspondence from the NI Public Service Ombudsman in relation to changes in the investigation process and a leaflet on the service.

Appendix 8: Correspondence from the Department for Infrastructure in relation to C/061/2024, Notice of Motion, Rail Service Belfast to Dublin.

Appendix 9: Correspondence from the Department of Health in relation to C/081/2024, Notice of Motion, Cancer Treatment Waiting Times.

Appendix 10: Correspondence from the Department of Finance in relation to C/081/2024, Notice of Motion, Cancer Treatment Waiting Times.

Appendix 11: Correspondence from the Department of Health in relation to C/040/2024, Emergency General Surgery at Daisy Hill Hospital.

C/094/2024

NOTICE OF MOTION – MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE PROVIDERS ACROSS NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN

The following motion was received from Councillor Sharvin:

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

The motion was seconded by Councillor Devlin.

In presenting the motion, Councillor Sharvin spoke of how the District was fortunate to have the best mental health service providers, supporting residents in the most difficult of circumstances and how the outstanding work of those organisations provided a life saver for many within the community. He stated it was vitally important that Council supported them at all times.

Councillor Sharvin went on to outline how local organisations were running year to year, month to month as funding cuts and further reduction of opportunity via the Department of Health and local Trusts had an impact. He made reference to how in recent weeks a local mental health charity faced an uncertain future as the Mental Health Support Fund launched in 2021 was ending with no communication or information on what financial support they would receive going forward.

Councillor Sharvin highlighted the majority of organisations reported their biggest financial income was fundraising and in the cost-of-living crisis this had been a challenge. He stated he had brought the motion to call on the Health Minister to appropriately fund mental health service providers in Newry, Mourne and Down and get serious about mental health for all.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Devlin spoke of the work of charities and organisations District wide and how often it went unnoticed unless you were the person or family member of someone in need. These organisations were plugging the hole of Trusts and central Government, and the hole was ever deepening.

In thanking Councillor Sharvin for bringing the motion, Councillor Hanlon paid tribute to the many mental health charities who supported the residents of the District. She spoke of how the Mental Health crisis continued to grow with increasing numbers of people waiting for mental health support and more people losing their lives as a result of alcohol and drug issues. Those struggling with mental health and addiction issues on a daily basis could not wait and the Minister and his officials needed to commit to the funding model as a matter of priority.

In concurring with the remarks made regarding service providers Councillor Truesdale said there was more depth to the problem that could not be solved in Council. She pointed out statutory mental services were funded by the Trust, and in the voluntary sector there were charities who applied for PHA contracts and charities who managed on grants and donations.

Councillor Truesdale proposed an amendment that the motion include the following: *and an action plan for engaging the voluntary and social enterprise sectors in its supply chain.*

Councillor Sharvin accepted the amendment.

Councillors Jackson and Reilly voiced their support for the motion.

Agreed: **It was unanimously agreed on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Devlin that Council fully recognises and appreciates the work of mental health service providers within Newry, Mourne and Down. It is vitality important that the service providers are supported to sustain and grow for the future demand. This Council will write to the Health Minister Robin Swann calling for him to commit financial funding to enable new contracts being awarded and procurement exercises to be undertaken via the local Trusts and an action plan for engaging the voluntary and social enterprise sectors in its supply chain."**

C/095/2024

NOTICE OF MOTION – ROAD MAINTENANCE

The following motion was received from Councillor Byrne:

"This Council expresses extreme disappointment at the continued deterioration of our rural roads and recognises the impact it has on motorists and the executive budget through subsequent compensation claims. This Council supports the recommendations made in 2019 in

Jim Barton's Independent Review into the Funding Requirements for Structural Maintenance of the Northern Ireland road network. Council writes to the Minister for Infrastructure and Minister for Finance asking both departments to outline the steps taken to implement the Barton recommendations to date and commit to a multi-year budget to properly address the maintenance of our roads."

The motion was seconded by Councillor McAteer.

In presenting the motion Councillor Byrne said people across the District were fed up with the poor state and the constant deterioration of roads year on year with rural communities particularly impacted negatively (rural roads made up 77% of the entire road network across the north, which was 20,000 out of 26,000 kilometres of roads and nearly 61% of those roads were unclassified and not fit for purpose). He spoke about pothole patching and the unsafe requirements and the rest of a road being left in disrepair due to operating on a limited service and referred to a report from the Northern Ireland Audit Office which recommended the gathering and reporting of statistics on road networks and how the figures over the last number of years painted a grim picture for the District.

Reference was made to a number of statistics including that in 2023 there were 100,487 defects across the whole of the north showed one in five of the defects were in within this Council area. In comparison to other Council areas in last four years up to 2023 there were 73,000 defects in Newry, Mourne and Down compared to Ards and North Down which was 16,000.

Councillor Byrne pointed out that the DFI had a statutory duty to maintain roads in a safe and serviceable condition. He said guidance and standards related to inspections and defects to keep in line with their statutory duty however those standards had been changed 12 times in a 3 year period. He questioned how could get consistency in inspections or fixing defects when the standards and the guidance had changed 12 times in 36 months.

In seconding the motion, Councillor McAteer said it was important to note that the Northern Ireland Audit Office made recommendations to assist the Department going forward and that needed to be listened to. He pointed out the real situation on the ground was being masked and the fact was there could be 20% savings with a 5 year programme committed budget.

Councillor McAteer made reference to another recommendation to engage with all stakeholders involved including local Councils and that the SDLP would encourage that taking a step further by devolving financing responsibilities for non-trunk roads to ensure a fair distribution and managed appropriately.

In speaking in support of the motion Councillor D Murphy stated the big issue for many was living under years of Tory austerity which had manifested itself in the North with regards to infrastructure, education, health etc. He stated all parties agreed that there was a massive underspend that could not be ignored and proposed the following amendment:

That Council write to the British Government requesting them to fulfil the demand from all parties That they adequately fund public services in the north.

Councillor Byrne agreed to accept Councillor D Murphy's amendment.

Councillors Hanna and Lee-Surginor voiced support for the motion on behalf of their Parties.

Agreed: **It was unanimously agreed on the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor McAteer that Council expresses extreme disappointment at the continued deterioration of our rural roads and recognises the impact it has on motorists and the executive budget through subsequent compensation claims. This Council supports the recommendations made in 2019 in Jim Barton's Independent Review into the Funding Requirements for Structural Maintenance of**

the Northern Ireland road network. Council writes to the Minister for Infrastructure and Minister for Finance asking both departments to outline the steps taken to implement the Barton recommendations to date and commit to a multi-year budget to properly address the maintenance of our roads. Council write to the British Government requesting them to fulfil the demand from all parties That they adequately fund public services in the north.

C/096/2024

NOTICE OF MOTION – RIGHT TO FOOD

The following motion was received from Councillor Galbraith:

"This Council recognises the impact the scourge of food poverty is having on families right across this area, made worse by the cost of living emergency, and gives its formal backing to the Right To Food campaign, joining cities like Belfast, Derry and Liverpool in becoming a Right To Food City Council. We believe that this Executive and the British Government must prioritise food poverty, implementing a range of new measures including universal free school meals, support for community kitchens and enshrining the Right To Food for all through legislation. This Council will also write to the Minister for Communities, calling for immediate action on the implementation of an anti-poverty strategy."

The motion was seconded by Councillor Andrews.

In presenting the motion, Councillor Galbraith said he believed poverty was not inevitable, that poverty was a political choice and asked members to support the motion in recognising that access to food should be a basic human right for all and as a Council would continue to strive to respond to the hunger that exists within communities and called on Government to tackle the issue head on.

Councillor Galbraith said it was unacceptable that 1 in 5 children were experiencing poverty and that a large percentage of households were unable to afford the basic items. There was a responsibility for Council to tackle poverty and hold the Executive to account for failing to implement an anti-poverty strategy that would pull so many out of hardship and place the Right to Food as a priority for all.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Andrews thanked Councillor Galbraith for bringing the motion forward highlighting the impact food poverty was having on the suffering of many. Reference was made to the impact of Welfare reform and the cost-of-living crisis and how within a few weeks, schools would be closing for a lot of children who depend on a meal at school.

Councillor Andrews said Council needed to send a powerful message of solidarity that it was with the many people within the District who faced crisis and hardship and by becoming a Right to Food Council ensure that the proper funding and compassion from the government to give help.

Speaking in support of the motion, Councillor O'Hare commended the excellent work of local food banks and the work of the County Down Rural Community Network in setting up social supermarkets and the introduction of free school meal payments during holidays.

Councillor O'Hare made reference to a recent report from the NI Audit Office on child poverty which outlined in detail that one in five children was living in poverty. Children receiving free school meals were twice as likely to leave school with no GCSEs, and there were ongoing concerns about school attendance. All evidence showed that children who grow up in poverty were more likely to experience health inequalities, have lower levels of educational attainment and to experience poverty as adults.

Councillor O'Hare proposed an amendment to the motion to include the following:
to write to the Minister for Education also, as they have a role to play in tackling food poverty.

Councillor Galbraith accepted the amendment.

Councillors Lee-Surginor and Hanna voiced support for the motion on behalf of their Parties.

In supporting the motion Councillor Bowsie commended the work of local community groups and said he would like to see the Council working with churches and parish church organisations and work to support their food banks and the different grant schemes that they give out.

Agreed: **It was unanimously agreed on the proposal of Councillor Galbraith, seconded by Councillor Andrews that Council recognises the impact the scourge of food poverty is having on families right across this area, made worse by the cost of living emergency, and gives its formal backing to the Right To Food campaign, joining cities like Belfast, Derry and Liverpool in becoming a Right To Food City Council.**
We believe that this Executive and the British Government must prioritise food poverty, implementing a range of new measures including universal free school meals, support for community kitchens and enshrining the Right To Food for all through legislation.
This Council will also write to the Minister for Communities, calling for immediate action on the implementation of an anti-poverty strategy and write to the Minister for Education also, as they have a role to play in tackling food poverty.

C/097/2024 **NOTICE OF MOTION – IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST**

Agreed: **The Motion was withdrawn by Councillor Feehan.**

C/098/2024 **NOTICE OF MOTION – DOG FOULING**

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Howie:

"That this Council will be focused on providing long term solutions around enforcement and communication campaigns with regard to dog fouling. Council officers will also look at best-practice in Councils who already operate a customer reporting hub such as BCC. This Council will use data provided by members of the public, elected members via a customer hub, hotspots will be identified and enforcement officers will know exactly areas of most need, this will then inform social media and posts by Council on areas experiencing high dog fouling, encouraging the public to become more aware of their responsibilities. Data may also be used to work out where bins are lacking in the district and inform their placement."

The motion was seconded by Councillor Truesdale.

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

C/099/2024

NOTICE OF MOTION – BABY LOSS

17

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Howell:

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

The motion was seconded by Councillor S Murphy.

In presenting the motion, Councillor Howell said there was not a Member in the chamber who had not been impacted or knew of a family who had been impacted by baby loss, a loss that brought indescribable grief which stayed with parents and families for the rest of their lives. Members were informed pregnancy loss affected approximately 1 in 4 pregnancies, and sadly, where this loss occurred prior to 24 weeks the lack of support and acknowledgement for that baby and their families was stark.

Councillor Howell spoke of how receiving the earth-shattering news that your baby had passed away was the worst news imaginable for many parents and spoke of her own personal loss when at 28 weeks pregnant, her little girl Blánaid in 2010 it felt like her world had ended.

Councillor Howell advised her Sinn Féin colleagues had tabled a motion in the Assembly calling for the official recognition of this loss by committing to deliver a baby loss certificate scheme for parents who lost a child before 24 weeks of pregnancy and to acknowledge the absence of a local perinatal and paediatric pathologist and further recognise the potential of an all-island paediatric pathology service.

Councillor Howell pointed out the devastation of loss was only further compounded when families faced the further heartbreak by having to take their child to Liverpool's Alder Hey Children's Hospital for post-mortem services and spoke of her own experience that if her family had wanted a postmortem carried out on Blánaid she would have to travel to Liverpool. She spoke of how to this day it was very hard to understand why they could not access the services here and how they still had so many unanswered questions.

Councillor Howell commended the Finance Minister who had committed to work towards the delivery of this certificate scheme and the Economy Minister who was working to expand Parental Bereavement Leave to include those who had lost a baby prior to 24 weeks.

In seconding the motion, Councillor S Murphy said it was important that the needs and wishes of those families that had been impacted by baby loss be put first, especially when it came to perinatal and paediatric pathology services. She spoke of families within her constituency who have had to endure being separated from their precious baby's and it was something they would never get over.

Councillor S Murphy commended the work of organisations who provided invaluable support to families through their loss e.g. SANDS, Cradle, Little Forget Me Nots, Aching Arms, and Tiny Life and how they brought a wealth of experience and expertise to help develop the compassionate care and support for bereaved parents. They had emphasised just how significant the implementation of a baby loss certificate scheme was in recognising the loss for families and facilitate the grieving process.

In speaking of his own personal experience with a family member and the loss of their baby, Councillor Lewis proposed the following amendment to omit further recognises to an all-Ireland: *seeks the reinstatement of a regional paediatric pathology service in Northern Ireland, whilst recognising the potential for mutually beneficial cross-border cooperation.*

Councillor Howell accepted the amendment.

Councillors Devlin and Truesdale voiced support for the motion on behalf of their Parties.

Agreed: **It was unanimously agreed on the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor S Murphy that this Council acknowledges the grief, pain and trauma caused by the loss of a baby during pregnancy; recognises that the trauma felt is exacerbated by bereaved parents having to travel to England for a post-mortem due to the absence of a local perinatal and paediatric pathologist; seeks the reinstatement of a regional paediatric pathology service in Northern Ireland, whilst recognising the potential for mutually beneficial cross-border cooperation; believes parents should have the option to have their child's memory recorded with an official certificate free of charge; and supports the intention of the Finance Minister to develop a Baby Loss Certificate Scheme for those parents that have lost a baby during a baby pregnancy before 24 weeks."**

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 8.28pm.

For confirmation at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 3 June 2024.

Signed:

Chairperson

Chief Executive

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL
RECORDED VOTE

DATE: 07/05/2024 **VENUE:** Downshire Civic Centre **MEETING:** Council Meeting

SUBJECT OF VOTE: Proposal of Councillor Bowsie, seconded by Councillor Reilly for Ireland's True Nature to be replaced for branding that can gain cross-community support

COUNCILLOR	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
T Andrews		1		
C Bowsie	1			
J Brennan		2		
P Byrne		3		
P Campbell		4		
W Clarke		5		
L Devlin		6		
C Enright				√
K Feehan		7		
D Finn		8		
A Finnegan		9		
C Galbraith		10		
M Gibbons				√
O Hanlon		11		
G Hanna	2			
V Harte		12		
R Howell		13		
T Howie		14		
J Jackson	3			
G Kearns		15		
C King		16		
M Larkin		17		
D Lee-Surginor		18		
A Lewis	4			
O Magennis		19		
A Mathers		20		
D McAteer		21		
L McEvoy		22		
S O'Hare		23		
D Murphy		24		
K Murphy		25		
S Murphy		26		
A Quinn		27		
H Reilly	5			
M Rice		28		
M Ruane		29		
G Sharvin		30		
D Taylor	6			
J Tinnelly				√
J Truesdale		31		
TOTALS	6	31	-	3

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

NMC/SC

Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 29 April 2024 at 6.00pm in Downshire Chamber

In the Chair:	Councillor V Harte	
In attendance in Chamber:	Councillor T Andrews Councillor J Brennan Councillor P Campbell Councillor A Finnegan Councillor J Jackson Councillor C King Councillor A Lewis Councillor D McAteer Councillor K Murphy Councillor A Quinn Councillor G Sharvin	Councillor C Bowsie Councillor P Byrne Councillor L Devlin Councillor O Hanlon Councillor G Kearns Councillor D Lee-Surginor Councillor A Mathers Councillor D Murphy Councillor S O'Hare Councillor H Reilly Councillor J Truesdale
In attendance in Chamber: (Officials)	Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting) Mrs F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer Mrs N Stranney, Democratic Services Officer	
Also in attendance in Chamber:	NI Water Mr Ronan Larkin, Director of Finance, Regulation and Commercial Dr Steve Blockwell, Head of Investment Management, Engineering & Sustainability Directorate	

SC/010/2024 APOLOGIES & CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Clarke, Enright, Feehan, Finn, Galbraith, Gibbons, Howell, Larkin, McEvoy, McMurray, S Murphy, Rice, Ruane and Taylor.

The Chairperson wished former Councillor Andy McMurray best wishes following his promotion to MLA.

SC/011/2024 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no interests declared.

SC/012/2024 NI WATER

The Chairperson welcomed the Mr Ronan Larkin and Dr Steve Blockwell to the meeting and invited them to make their presentation. (Copy attached to these minutes)

Following the presentation the Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members:

- With the limited budget mentioned, and significant investment outlined within the presentation, how would NI Water prioritise the planned works as outlined?
- Did NI Water have any details regarding sewage discharges into the Newry, Mourne and Down area and how much was above the regulation limit?
- Was there an overall plan for upgrading capacity issues within existing networks in the Mourne area?
- Impact Assessments were understood to be carried out by outside consultants – was this an expertise issue and did it ultimately have an impact on budget?
- There was an ongoing problem in Killeavy Road area in Newry with residents experiencing sewage backing up into houses during times of heavy rain. It was understood that remedial work had been carried out but what was the long-term plan to address this as any flooding issues such as this would have budget implications?
- With 200 new houses proposed and approved within the Newry area, where would the wastewater feed into if the system was already at capacity?
- Were the facilities in Silent Valley scheduled for upgrades or repair as the paths were not currently accessible?
- Was there an issue with the toilets at the far end of Silent Valley as it had been reported that they were regularly closed, and also a wasp's nest was reported to be located within the toilet block?
- There was an ongoing billing issue with NI Water with a local charity for several months could this be addressed?
- With a development restriction within the Dundrum area was it possible for permission be given to demolish and rebuild a building with plans to connect this to the main drainage system at a later date, once restrictions were lifted?
- With the current development constraints in the Newry area, and with this Council receiving such a high number of planning applications, could NI Water provide a list of delegated areas that currently had capacity to allow progression of planning applications?
- Was NI Water information up to date in relation to available capacity with regard to reductions as well as projected increases, such as knowledge of business closing or relocating?
- Could urgent attention be directed towards the recording of discharges into the sea, specifically at Warrenpoint Harbour?
- Would the proposed investment in Kilkeel free up capacity in the sewage system? A housing application in the area was denied due to infrastructure so the development could not proceed, with the agent having been advised to create their own wastewater treatment works which could then link in with drainage system,
- Would consideration be given to free access for local residents to Silent Valley?
- Was it possible to address the issue of sewage being released into Annalong during heavy rainfall?
- Why was Saintfield not on the PC21 list of proposed development works even though there were some development constraints?
- Would it be beneficial to split NI Water into two agencies, one for drinking water and one for sewage so there weren't any potential competing priorities within the organisation?
- Were any plans being considered to invest in areas like Derryboy or Darragh Cross, as they had almost quadrupled in size in the last number of years with no infrastructure investment?
- Concerns were raised over water quality in Strangford Lough and Killyleagh. Could NI Water monitor and make freely available the results of water quality testing so the public was aware of where to find relevant information?

- Was there a plan to address the apparent capacity issues in Saintfield as during heavy rainfall water was gushing from manhole covers.
- Following a pre-development enquiry, why were some applicants asked to then pay for an Impact Assessment, which costs a lot of money that hadn't been budgeted for?

The delegation responded as follows:

- Planned works were prioritised using a matrix in association with NI Environment Agency (NIEA) Drinking Water Inspectorate to ensure drinking water quality.
- NIEA were responsible for granting consent to discharge into the waterways of treated effluent. All discharges were sampled and tested on a regular basis. Unfortunately, there was not enough data to answer the question, but NI Water held a lot of information about discharges and about the consents and standards to which they were held.
- The PC21 schemes were listed in size order, but not necessarily priority order. There was work ongoing alongside plans to invest in the medium to long term.
- The Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) which was fed into from a flushing toilet or emptying sink. As with all parts of the UK, this was heavily combined with the storm water and drainage system, and was constantly monitored to ensure that no out of sewer flooding or property flooding occurred. During heavy rains the drainage system could overflow so some work was required to address the volumetric issue to stop this from happening.
- NI Water did have extensive data on discharges, but not as much as would prefer. With budget constraints, the decision came down to whether funding was better spent on measuring tools for accurate measuring or on the many required upgrades.
- There was a planned upgrade to Mourne and Kilkeel as outlined in PC21 slide, and when funding was secured, these planned upgrades would progress.
- Impact assessments were carried out by both internal and external teams, they were outsourced at times to help ensure the workload continued quickly and effectively.
- Killeavy Road area was noted as being in need of significant modernisation, and it was currently being addressed. Mr Larkin stated that when issues arose, NI Water responded well to get the system back to capacity and ensure any overflow had been cleared up. This was not ideal for residents, but any investment would improve this recurring issue.
- There were areas within the Newry drainage system that had their own staff and contractors, but the area needed significant modernisation. There was more volume than ever going through the system, and NI Water need to invest wisely to ensure fewer issues arose going forward.
- Mr Larkin advised that Newry was at maximum capacity and NI Water were currently working with the Department to secure investment to continue all upgrade works.
- The Silent Valley paths had been damaged by weather and a programme of repair works was underway; the paths would be opened again when this was complete.
- The Silent Valley toilet schedule would be investigated, and the wasps nest dealt with.
- With regard to the query regarding billing for a local charity, the delegation advised they would follow up with the Member directly following the meeting.
- Dundrum was outlined twice on the PC21 plans with NI Water committed to optimising funding, but without knowing any details of the case regarding connecting to the network at a later date they would not be able to comment. In respect to Dundrum, Mr Larkin advised that there had been an extra requirement placed on them by NIEA in terms of the sand dunes being designated an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) and as such their proposed works were taking longer than anticipated.

- With existing capacity constraints within the Newry area, Mr Larkin advised he would look at a boundary map to see if it was possible to issue a delegated area list in relation to capacity issues and planning applications.
- NI Water did take into account closing businesses in relation to capacity as it was continuously being monitored.
- With a particular reference to Warrenpoint Harbour, Mr Larkin noted that sewage, by its nature, smells. When in a treatment works facility, there was no smell as the effluent was well mixed with water, and NI Water were therefore confident that any smells were not coming from their Warrenpoint Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW).
- There had been some remedial work completed within the Kilkeel area. In relation to the development refusal and advice given to put in the applicant's own WwTW, Mr Larkin advised that this was not recommended as too many smaller satellite WwTW facilities were harder to amalgamate and would inadvertently put a burden on the system elsewhere. He stated it would also result in increased costs for buyer, resulting in unaffordable housing.
- Charging into Silent Valley was seen as a potentially sensitive issue. Mr Larkin advised that charges were in place to meet and recover costs for assets hosted onsite and queried where to draw the boundary line for free access.
- With regard to Annalong Harbour discharges during heavy rainfall, Dr Blockwell advised he would have to review the issue and would respond to the Member directly.
- Any funding spends in Saintfield required a decision regarding the prioritisation of need within constrained capacity and the optimal use of available funds. Saintfield was noted within the PC27 plan which covered the 6-year period from 2027 – 2033. Mr Larkin advised that Saintfield would be considered in relation to available funds and optimisation of the overall drainage system.
- Dividing NI Water into two agencies would end up as two entities with competing priorities and smaller budgets. Maintaining both together allowed for maximising available funds, and a knowledge of both systems that ensured one did not negatively impact the other.
- Mr Larkin advised that NI Water would look at making information more accessible on their website for everyone. He advised people to contact NI Water direct if they had any queries in relation to water quality.
- A pre-development enquiry urged developers to discuss their plan, which enabled NI Water to offer advice on capacity availability within a certain time frame. An Impact Assessment allowed an application to progress further, to set out further detail around the scheme and how it would connect to the network. It was then modelled through any planned improvements and upgrades to help influence a decision. Each case was looked at in its own merits, and solutions to issues were often discovered during these models that hadn't been considered. With each case being looked at on its own merits, there were times when NI Water refused to accept an Impact Assessment payment as they knew that specific applications were simply not feasible at current capacity.

The Chairperson thanked the delegation for their presentation and time.

Councillor Howie left the meeting during the above discussions – 7:00pm

Councillor Magennis left the meeting during the above discussions – 7:11pm

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 07.30pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 3rd June 2024.

Signed: _____

Chairperson

Director



Newry & Mourne and Down District Council & NI Water 29th April 2024

Ronan Larkin Director of Finance, Regulation & Commercial

Dr Stephen Blockwell, Head of Investment Management, Engineering & Sustainability Directorate

Contacting NI Water:

Elected Representative Direct Line - 0345 3006461

Waterline - 03457 440088 or waterline@niwater.com



NI Water was formed in 2007

- Independently regulated and bound by Companies Act 2006
- Government (DfI) is our sole shareholder
- Utility Regulator determines the funding that is necessary to deliver required business plan
- Our efficiency and performance is independently benchmarked against GB peers
- Our shareholder is our only source of capital funding
- 'PC21' Price Control period runs from 2021 -2027



NI Water: Vital Infrastructure

About NI Water

It costs around £200 m each year to deliver water services in Northern Ireland. Thousands of people at a total of around £200 m, are paid staff and contractors to provide these services. It operates our 1400 miles of water mains and sewers, 100,000+ watermains, 1000+ km² of sewerage network, 1000+ km² of water treatment works, 1000+ km² of sewerage treatment works, 1000+ km² of water treatment works, 1000+ km² of sewerage treatment works.

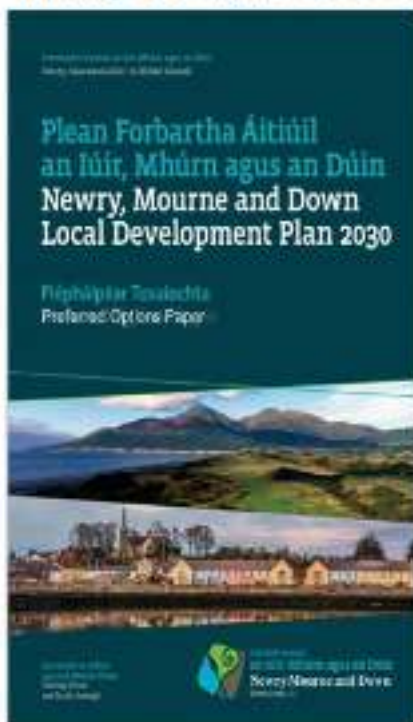
- Households and businesses**
The customers who use the services we provide
- Water treatment works**
We clean the water, making it safe to drink
- Water mains length**
We install the network of pipes that deliver water through our pipes
- Pumping stations**
We use pumping stations to get the drinking water to our customers
- Service reservoirs**
We store the drinking water to supply our customers
- Households and businesses**
We collect wastewater from our customers
- Length of sewers**
We collect and transport the wastewater using a network of pipes
- Pumping stations**
We use pumping stations to get the wastewater to our treatment works
- Wastewater treatment works**
We treat wastewater and make it safe to be released to the environment
- Sludge management centres**
Sludge is the waste left after we've treated the wastewater

Fats, Oil and Grease (FOG) Campaign

'Stop & Think - Not in the Sink' campaign to reduce and prevent Fatbergs



Newry Mourne & Down District Council Ambitions LDP



Vision:

Newry, Mourne and Down is a place with strong, safe and vibrant communities where everyone has a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices and high-quality services which are sustainable, accessible and meet people's needs.

By 2030

- ▶ 15,000+ new homes
- > 9000+ new jobs

City and Main Town - Newry, Downpatrick

Local Towns - Newcastle, Warren point, Kil keel, Ballynahinch, Saintfield, Killyleagh, Castlewellan, Bessbrook, Crossmaglen.

Villages - 23

Small Settlements - 55



Silent Valley 100 years Celebration



100 years since cutting the first sod local schools, relatives of original workers, elected representatives and competition winners join NI Water to celebrate



Delivered Capital Schemes - Mourne Wall



Latest Phase

- More than 300 repairs completed
- Across 15 mountains
- 900 collapses fixed
- Overall, 900 collapses fixed over 22 miles since 2017



Delivered Capital Schemes



Warrenpoint WwTW £16m
SWELL Project



Fofanny Clear Water Basin £9m



Key PC21 Proposed Investments: Newry Mourne & Down District Council Area

Wastewater Investment - Project Name	PC21 Planned Investment (€m)
Newry WwTW	41.6
Downpatrick WwTW	23.5
Anneborough	17.8
WwTW MelghWwTW	7.0
Drumness WwTW	4.6
Newcastle WwTW Tertiary Treatment Appraisal	3.8
Dunrum WwTW Phase 2	2.0
Dunrum DAP, UIDs Upgrades	6.8
Anneborough DA/UD Mill Hill Castlewellan WwPS	5.2
Kikeel DAP	3.7
Ballyrobert DAP	1.4
Newry DA Newpoint Greenbank TPS	1.1
Cranfield Catchment, Kikeel Storm Separation	2.8

KEY:
 DAP = Drainage Area Plan
 SO = Storm Overflow
 LWWP = Living With Water Programme
 UD = Unsanitary Infiltrant Discharge
 TPS = Terminal Pumping Station
 WwPS = Wastewater Pumping Station
 WwTW = Wastewater Treatment Works

Water Investment - Project Name	PC21 Planned Investment (€m)
Fishery to All Track Main Phase 2	1.3
Drumroad WTW PC21 Improvements Phase 2	1.0



What is NI Water doing to address the Development Constraints Problem?

- Commitment to maximising the infrastructure we have
- Investigating options for targeted interventions
- Promoting Developer led and financed solutions through our solution engineering team
- Providing robust planning responses, with conditions that are necessary to manage the impact on the Environment



NI Water's 3 Stage Planning Process



NI Water will support applications where:

- a valid Pre -Development Enquiry (PDE) identifies no capacity issues
- a solution has been agreed following the Impact Assessment process (this will be conditioned on delivery of solution)

NI Water will recommend refusal where:

- the PDE planning process has not been followed.

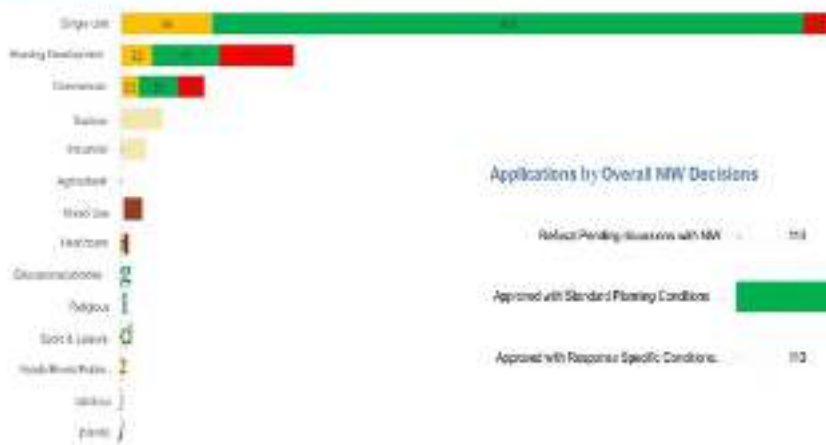
We are happy to reconsider after PDE/ Impact Assessment has been completed

NI Water - Solutions Engineering

Wastewater Impact Assessments received by NI Water for Newry Mounne & Down District Council Area	
Solutions Engineering Reports Issued to Developers	63
Closed off: like for like development/ Developer provided WwTW / extant planning approval	22
Ww Impact Assessment being progressed	56
Total	141

Newry Mourne & Down District Council Apr 2023 to Mar 2023

Applications by Classification



Applications by Overall MW Decisions



In Summary



NI Water continues to transform as a publicly owned company

Our services play a pivotal role in protecting NI's environment and growing the NI Economy

Approval of the PC21 plan gave the green light to start to reduce pollution and enable more customers to connect throughout our region

We will continue to work with DfI over the coming months to enable capital delivery





NEWRY MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting
held on Monday 13 May 2024 at 6.00pm in the Boardroom, Monaghan Row.**

Chairperson: Councillor M Ruane**Committee Members
in attendance:**

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

Officials in attendance: Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism
Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Regeneration
Ms M Boyle, Head of Tourism Development and Visitor Experience
Ms A McVeigh, Head of Regeneration and Business Development
Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)
Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer
Mrs N Stranney, Democratic Services Officer**Also in attendance:** **Northern Ireland Co-Ownership:**
Mr M Graham, Chief Executive
Mr C O'Neill, Director of Product Development**ERT/046/2024: APOLOGIES / CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillor Campbell.

ERT/047/2024: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Andrews declared an interest in item ERT/025/2024 which appeared on the action sheet.

**ERT/048/2024: ACTION SHEET ECONOMY, REGENERATION & TOURISM
COMMITTEE MEETING MONDAY 15 APRIL 2024****Read:** Action Sheet arising out of the Minutes of the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday 15 April 2024. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Andrews requested an update on the status of Ballykinlar hut and was informed this was an ongoing process and a report would be brought to Committee at a future date.

Having declared an interest in ERT/025/2024, Councillor Andrews left the meeting at this stage – 6.04pm

Regarding concerns raised by Councillor Truesdale on the Tourism Strategy, the Chairperson stated that the Tourism Strategy had already been approved at the last meeting.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Kearns, seconded by Councillor S Murphy, it was agreed to note the Action Sheet arising from the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday 15 April 2024.**

Councillor Andrews returning to the meeting at this stage – 6.06pm

PRESENTATION

ERT/049/2024: PRESENTATION FROM MARK GRAHAM – CO-OWNERSHIP

The Chairperson welcomed Mr Mark Graham and Mr Charlie O'Neill to the meeting and invited them to make their presentation. (Copy attached to these minutes)

Mr Mark Graham, Chief Executive, Co-Ownership thanked the Chairperson for the invitation to attend the meeting and stated Co-Ownership was founded in 1978 and were funded by the Department of Communities and throughout their time had assisted over 33,000 people into home ownership. He stated Co-Ownership represented around 7% of the first-time buyer market in Northern Ireland. He advised the purpose of presenting to local Councils was to begin conversations around local development plans and where Co-Ownership may fit into this as well as ensuring that people were made aware that Co-Ownership exists to enable people to buy property.

Following the presentation the Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members:

- Would Co-Ownership review the current capped amount of £195,000 as this area, in particular, along coastal areas that figure would not be sufficient to purchase property?
- Could the over 55 scheme be developed to include assisting current homeowners with existing homes?
- Was the buyout amount calculated at the original purchase price or market value?
- When considering Co-Ownership who would be responsible for paying valuation and conveyancing fees?
- Was there any data to suggest why the uptake of Co-Ownership within Newry, Mourne and Down District was so low?
- If a landowner had availability of land, what would trigger the role that the Housing Executive would play in the scenario?
- In order to apply for Co-Ownership, would applicants need to be in employment?

The delegation responded to the queries as follows:

- The capped amount was reviewed periodically by the Department of Communities and in the future, Local Development Plans would include requirements that new build developments must incorporate a certain proportion of affordable homes in their plans.
- The over-55 scheme could be assessed to determine if it could be developed to cater to specific circumstances.
- Co-Ownership subsidises fees, however if the applicant was to sell the house, they would pay the conveyancing fees.
- With regard to low numbers of uptake in the area, it could be that higher housing transactions usually mean more business and potentially higher property prices in some areas contribute to this trend. An advertising campaign would be launched soon, covering digital platforms, TV, and billboards. Events were held with every opportunity taken to share information, however customer choice was always paramount, and Co-Ownership

was committed to assisting individuals throughout Northern Ireland, regardless of their location.

- Not sure of what Newry, Mourne and Down Planning Policies are but would normally be triggered by a particular size.
- Applicants would need to be employed and affordability assessments and credit checks were carried out before being approved for Co-Ownership, however, each case would be assessed on its individual requirements.

NOTICES OF MOTION

ERT/050/2024: NOTICE OF MOTION C/082/2024 – CROSS BORDER TEACHING REGISTRATION

Read: Report dated 13 May 2024 from Ms A McVeigh, Head of Regeneration and Business Development regarding Cross Border Teaching Registration. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Feehan thanked the officers for the paper and proposed the recommendations with an addition for engagement with Louth and Monaghan County Councils. He stated he had received feedback from young teaching graduates about the difficulties achieving permanent teaching posts in the North and also with progressing through the registration process in the South. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Andrews.

Councillor Truesdale addressed the ongoing challenges faced by individuals in the South, particularly focusing on the disparities within the multid denominational education system and the requirement to have an Irish Language qualification. She queried whether the obstacles as she had outlined would go across the entire Republic rather than just Louth and Monaghan. Councillor Truesdale expressed scepticism about the potential impact of the Labour Partnership or the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor in relaxing these conditions. She asked what the proposer of the motion and officials would hope the review would contain without requesting more favourable terms being given over to teachers in the North of Ireland.

Councillor Quinn supported the motion and stated that it was a language qualification and not specifically the Irish Language that was required for some teaching posts in the Republic.

As there was dissent in the chamber, the Chairperson put the proposal to a vote, the results of which were as follows:

FOR:	10
AGAINST:	1
ABSTENTIONS:	2

In summing up, Councillor Feehan thanked Members for supporting his motion, while highlighting his disappointment at those who voted against.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Feehan, seconded by Councillor Andrews, it was agreed that Council will engage through the LMP to review and identify opportunities for synergies between key stakeholders, including the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor in respect of cross-border teaching registration and employment practices.**

It was also agreed that engagement be undertaken with Louth and Monaghan County Councils.

FOR DECISION**ERT/051/2024: DUBLIN-BELFAST ECONOMIC CORRIDOR (DBEC)**

Read: Report dated 13 May 2024 from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism regarding Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor Partnership: Update. **(Copy circulated)**

- AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Feehan, seconded by Councillor Kearns, the following was agreed:
- To note the update provided against the Dublin Belfast economic Corridor Partnership
 - To approve that council, as the administrative lead for the DBEC Partnership process two procurement processes as detailed below.
 - Feasibility Study for Cluster Development: Offshore wind supply chain (subject to funding approval)
 - External consultancy support for development of bid to Peace Plus theme 6.1: Strategic Planning and Engagement

FOR INFORMATION**ERT/052/2024: FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE CALL 1 – GOOD RELATIONS**

Read: Report dated 13 May 2024 from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism regarding Financial Assistance Call 1 – Good Relations. **(Copy circulated)**

- AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Galbraith, seconded by Councillor Andrews, the following was agreed:
- To note the appendices attached to the officer's report for Good Relations and issue letters of offer.
 - Pre-letter of offer conditions met prior to issue of full letter of offer issued and where this is not satisfied budget to be re-allocated.

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

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

- AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Quinn, seconded by Councillor Andrews, it was agreed to come out of Closed Session.

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

FOR DECISION

ERT/053/2024: AONB AND GEOPARK – SLA's

Read: Report dated 13 May 2024 from Ms A McVeigh, Head of Regeneration and Business Development regarding AONB and Geopark – SLA's. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Quinn, seconded by Councillor Feehan, it was agreed to approve funding letters of offer through SLAs for the delivery of the series of projects as contained in the officer's report.

FOR INFORMATION

ERT/054/2024: LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP (LMP) REVIEW OF 2023/2024 ACTION PLAN

Read: Report dated 13 May 2024 from Mr C Mallon, Director of economy, Employment and regarding Labour Market Partnership (LMP) Review of 2023/24 Action Plan **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Kearns, it was agreed to note the outputs for NMD LMP for 2023/2024.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 6.39pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 3 June 2024.

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

Signed: Mr C Mallon
Director Economy, Regeneration & Tourism

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Minutes of Strategy Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on
Thursday 16 May 2024 at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Downshire Civic Centre**

In the Chair: Councillor S O'Hare

In Attendance in Chamber:

Councillor P Byrne	Councillor C Enright
Councillor O Hanlon	Councillor R Howell
Councillor T Howie	Councillor A Lewis
Councillor A Mathers	Councillor A Quinn
Councillor L McEvoy	Councillor H Reilly
Councillor M Rice	Councillor G Sharvin
Councillor D Taylor	

**Non-Committee Members
In Attendance in Chamber:** Councillor J Truesdale

**Officials in Attendance
in Chamber:**

Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
 Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services
 Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy Regeneration & Tourism
 Mr A Patterson, Director of Active & Healthy Communities
 Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director Capital and Procurement
 Mr P Rooney, Head of Legal Administration
 Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)
 Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer

SPR/073/2024: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillor McAteer.

SPR/074/2024: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Taylor declared an interest in Item 6 – Proposed Renewal of Lease of lands adjacent to Cloughreagh Community Centre.

SPR/075/2024: ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON THURSDAY 18 APRIL 2024

Read: Action Sheet of the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on Thursday 18 April 2024. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed to approve the action sheet from the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 18 April 2024.**

NOTICE OF MOTION**SPR/076/2024****NOTICE OF MOTION – PROJECTED RATES INCREASE****Read:**

Report dated 16 May 2024 from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism, regarding Notice of Motion – Projected Rates Increase (C/060/2024). **(Copy circulated)**

In proposing his motion, Councillor Enright outlined three investment categories that he believed Council should invest money into and stated that the new proposed Newry Civic Centre at Abbey Way was an example of a product that was not financially responsible. He noted that he still had a large number of unanswered questions, queried the governance of the project, and reminded Members that his issue had been referred to the NI Audit Office and the local government ombudsman.

He advised that estimates for the project ranged between £14 and £17 million for a building he believed was much larger than necessary to house Newry based Council staff. He confirmed that his Party believed that a "Plan B" was needed for the proposed project that provided no on-site parking for staff. He stated that he believed his motion should be forwarded to the Strategic Finance Working Group (SFWG) with a clear instruction to reduce long term borrowing, advising that frontline services like parks or leisure centres should be prioritised and that projects such as the Newry Civic Centre should be minimised to try to minimise any rates increases.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Howie referenced the inappropriateness of a large administration building consuming a large portion of Council's capital budget. She referenced planning and statutory consultees objections regarding the plans and called for Council to consider a Plan B for the Civic Centre. She stressed her concerns regarding parking provision within the City and noted that DFI Roads had advised that 376 parking spaces would be needed, which would be difficult given the loss of parking space required to build the new civic centre.

Councillor Sharvin requested clarification on the aim of Councillor Enright's Motion as he believed it referenced one capital project despite Council having numerous ongoing capital projects.

Councillor Enright clarified that he believed that Council must tailor its investment plans to ensure there were minimal rates increases and that this required a re-examination of capital expenditure to attempt to reduce the impact on budgets relating to borrowing. He stated that he focused on the Newry Civic Centre as it was the largest investment going forward.

Mr Mallon noted that the Officer's Report detailed responses to Councillor Enright's Motion in relation to rates and financial scrutiny, office accommodation and outlined that Council proposed to provide accommodation with an employee to desk ratio of 75% due to agile working, a model which was replicated across other public sector bodies. He addressed Councillor Howie's statement regarding objections from statutory consultees and noted that they weren't objections but concerns and this was not unusual and part of the planning process for such a large project. The Planning Department and statutory consultees had been in discussion, and further responses would be issued in the coming days in response to issues raised.

Mr Mallon further advised that the North Street site was not a formal car park, although it had been temporarily used as such. He advised that Council had entered into discussions with the

Department in respect of a lease for the site and agreed that a planning application would run in parallel to the lease discussions. He further noted that within the Report it detailed parking requirements for Council staff, that 182 staff currently utilise public parking spaces within Newry, and this relocation of staff to the new Civic Centre would not increase demand on public spaces within the City. He further noted that numerous alternative sites (33 in total) had been assessed and it had been agreed at a 2019 Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee, which was appended to the Officer's Report that the Abbey Way site had been selected as the most appropriate site.

Councillor Mathers stated that continuous underfunding within Newry had resulted in families, friends and neighbours leaving the area due to increasing unemployment. He noted that he had witnessed the hope that was returning to Newry following on from the proposed investment from people in the voluntary, community, public and private sectors and believed that the Alliance Party was attempting to prevent these projects. He noted that the young people of the area were witnessing almost £200million investment which would grow the local economy, create more jobs and provide better working conditions for Council staff and would, in turn, encourage further potential investment into the area.

Councillor Byrne noted his support for the recommendations in the Officer's Report and stated that he shared in the optimism for the future of the area given the potential for future investment from the private sector. He referenced a meeting he had recently attended with American investors where the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor (DBEC) had been discussed and it had been raised that there was a lack of investment along the economic corridor. He advised that elected representatives had to grasp every opportunity to secure investment to enhance the district. He understood the concerns regarding capital projects and advised that it was the role of the Programme Board to practice their due diligence, but they needed the work to progress the project as approved.

Councillor Byrne noted that projects progress through a stringent process with both the Department and independent economists, and the Civic Hub had been approved which all supported the regeneration of Newry. He supported a review of capital project spend overall but urged caution when drilling down into singular issues such as parking and stated that Council had an obligation to deliver investment for the whole city and projects could not be hampered if parking was unavailable at the front door.

Councillor Taylor noted that he was a member of the Programme Board and urged Members not to be deliberately obstructive but advised that there did appear to be genuine concerns that should be addressed while allowing the Planning process to continue. He confirmed that the job of an elected representative was to be responsible and constructive when raising issues and concerns, especially in relation to large amounts of money.

Councillor Hanlon noted her Party's support for the officer's recommendations and echoed Councillor Taylor's sentiments of elected representatives being responsible and constructive. She noted her frustration at having gone through this subject matter numerous times, despite it having already been scrutinised by governance processes and an external audit company with no issues being raised. She stated that the Newry Civic Centre was not a non-essential project and highlighted that the Downshire Civic Centre was a successful public sector hub that housed numerous public services.

Councillor Hanlon reiterated the agreement that was taken during the Shadow Council period that there would be two administrative hubs within the Council area due to the size of the district and it was unhelpful to pit one against the other when discussing the new Civic Centre. She stated that there may come a time when a Plan B was needed, but now was not the time. She argued that hybrid working was the future as the need for high quality flexible

workspaces continued to soar and it showed Council as being innovative in securing that space.

Councillor Sharvin confirmed Downpatrick was very important to Newry, Mourne and Down and that Downpatrick staff would not be impacted by a new Civic Centre. He noted that there seemed to be a theme of parking and reminded Members that dedicated parking was not a requirement of a role as many had to secure their own parking, particularly in Belfast. He urged Members not to get caught up in singular issues such as parking as there was a planning process in place with DFI Roads to manage this and it was being addressed. He queried other elements of the capital project programme that didn't appear to have any issues from Members, such as the Theatre and Conference Centre that was fully funded by Council. He then proposed an amendment to the report to include a further recommendation that *"Council carry out a review of the capital projects programme at SFWG to identify whether the planned capital projects were an accurate reflection of Council's objectives"*. This was seconded by Councillor Hanlon.

Mrs Ward queried if the amendment was agreed that Council would continue to deliver on the Newry Civic Centre to which Councillor Sharvin confirmed that his proposal would not stop work on the Newry City Centre but was in addition to the Officer Recommendations, to review whether the planned capital projects were an accurate reflection of Council's objectives.

Councillor Byrne left the meeting at this stage – 6:47pm

Following a query from Councillor Quinn regarding time frames, Mrs Ward advised that Abbey Way was agreed pre-covid and a programme of works had been put in place, but a number of issues had happened that slowed the delivery progress. Mrs Ward highlighted that all delays cause further cost increases which was a concern for Council, but Planning was underway.

Councillor Reilly noted his Party's concerns regarding the site selection from the outset and stated he had hopes of it being built on a few acres in the Middlebank area and Council would have had a facility for Newry that would have been world renowned. He also expressed his Party's recognition of the importance of a civic centre hub within Newry in relation to the regeneration of the City. He queried whether the acquisition of the unofficial North Street car park land would alleviate the parking issues as noted within the Report.

Mrs Ward noted that Council took governance very seriously and reassured Members that Council would continue to do so. She highlighted that various structures were in place to manage capital projects; scrutiny was provided by SFWG, and the SP&R Committee and external specialist consultants were appointed to work through every stage of delivery of a project. She reminded Members that qualified quantity surveyors determined costs of a project and monitored them throughout. She further outlined the social aspect of the project in that the current building in Monaghan Row had been sold to the Southern Trust to allow for expansion of their services.

Mrs Ward further highlighted the significant consideration of sites for the Civic Centre and made particular reference to Councillor's mention of a civic centre on the Albert Basin. She stressed to Members that this was not an option as a lot of work had gone into agreeing the Albert Basin as a 15-acre park following a notice of motion to Council and Council was committed to delivering this park. She further highlighted that Planning issues arose during any significant project however any concerns would be addressed through the appropriate channels, especially relating to transport and parking. She noted the movement from the green agenda and the need to consider sustainable transport and confirmed that North

Street parking would address some parking concerns, but it would be DFI Roads who would make that determination.

Mrs Ward confirmed that the governance process regarding the site selection had been audited by an external auditor and independent internal consultants and neither had found any cause for concern. She highlighted that when plans were being discussed and progressed for the Downshire Civic Centre that there had been concerns raised too, and the site was now a success. She finally confirmed that there would be no requirement for staff based in Downpatrick to relocate and for Members to consider Newry based staff who had been very co-operative to date in working from various locations but who now needed assurance that they too were valued, and their work space was being invested in.

In summing up, Councillor Enright reiterated his concerns regarding cost and section 2.5 of the Officer's Report, which detailed the decision making of Council in 2019. He stated that the Report implied a lack of understanding of how to manage large projects, and the fact that a Plan B was needed immediately and stressed that Council needed to look at other sites. He stressed that he was supportive of an office for Newry based staff but that the cost implications of the build needed reconsideration. He detailed some site options again, those of Lidl, Dunnes or the Albert Basin.

Councillor Hanlon noted her disagreement for a Plan B and urged Members to focus on the project that was tabled and to not go through all the detail of the project as had happened numerous times in the past and received external and internal auditor approval.

Councillor Sharvin requested clarity on a statement made during the debate and queried if the Alliance Party were requesting that the design for the Newry City Park be amended and impacted with the inclusion of the Newry Civic Centre plans. He stressed that this would impact external funding already secured and require a public consultation following amended designs being agreed with the Department.

Councillor Hanlon queried whether Councillors Enright and Howie understood the Report tabled, the governance report regarding the site selection of Abbey Way and how it came to be. She reminded Members that this was decided on in 2019. She highlighted that the Lidl site referred to was number 8 on the recommendations report, and Dunnes was not an option as it was not for sale.

Councillor Enright noted that he understood the Report and highlighted that it was several years old and statutory consultees had current objections to the Abbey Way site.

Councillor Hanlon reminded Councillor Enright that as a Planning Committee member he would be aware of the process of major Planning applications, and regular consultations occur with statutory consultees and return with conditions to be adhered to. She urged Members to follow the process, to allow for Planning applications to be processed as usual and any conditions or amendments would be tabled accordingly. She further queried a point of clarity whether the Alliance Party were requesting that the design for the Newry City Park at Abbey Basin be amended to allow for the inclusion of the Newry Civic Hub.

Councillor Quinn queried whether Council was at risk of losing the Belfast City Region Deal (BRCD) funding if the projects were not to be completed.

Mrs Ward advised that the projects were all linked with the BCRD and needed to continue to ensure that funding was realised. She highlighted to Members that inaccurate and misleading statements were unhelpful and potentially a breach of the Councillor's Code of Conduct, stressed that Council had no issue with challenge on projects and

recommendations but reminded Members that it needed to be reflective of facts. She further stressed that Council would not be looking at constructing a Civic Hub at the Albert Basin and reiterated Council's commitment to building a City Park at that location. She responded directly to Councillor Enright's statement regarding Council's lack of understanding on delivering large projects and highlighted the immense skill set of every member of the capital projects team and noted the numerous leisure centres, community centres and parks that had been delivered to date.

Councillor Taylor thanked Mrs Ward for the clarity of the project in relation to the the Albert Basin and noted that the community had made their expectations very clear regarding this project. He queried whether Councillor Enright wanted to deliver the Civic Centre project as he noted his confusion as the debate continued. He requested clarity from Councillor Enright regarding his expectations and noted his support for Councillor Sharvin's amendment. He called for the Programme Board to be updated on a more regular basis but stressed that concerns did need to be addressed.

Councillor Enright stressed that the Abbey Way site was running into difficulties and highlighted that his understanding of parking requirements was not wrong and therefore not inaccurate.

Following further debate regarding parking requirements, Mr Mallon confirmed that as previously advised by the CEO the current demand for the new building, as agreed with DfI, was 133 spaces.

Mrs Ward reminded Members that Council had considered 33 sites within Newry for the Civic Centre, and it was agreed at an SP&R committee in August 2019 that Abbey Way site was the preferred site. She further reminded Members that Council had made a public call to developers to establish if there was an interest in developing on their sites.

Councillor Lewis queried the role of the Project Board as he believed that this was something that should have been covered under that remit. He queried the purpose of continually debating the same topic at different meetings, especially a 90-minute debate that had already been discussed at length. He queried if all Parties had representatives on the Project Board.

Councillor Rice left the meeting at this stage – 07.15pm

Following a further query from Councillor Lewis regarding a reminder of the decisions and process to date for all Councillors, Mrs Ward confirmed that a controlled read had been offered to all Councillors regarding the process audited in 2021 over a number of dates during the past week and was available by request to read as needed. She further advised that Project Boards oversee and manage a project and they would highlight and report any major changes to this Committee. She further noted that the democratic mandate as referred to in Councillor Enright's Motion led to this item being debated again at Committee, and further stressed that Council deliver on the democratic mandate of Council.

As there was dissent within the Chamber, the item was put to a vote with Councillor Sharvin's amendment and the results were as follows:

FOR	8
AGAINST	2
ABSTENTIONS	2

The proposal was declared carried.

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, the following was agreed:

- To proceed as per the Council decision to deliver the NCCR Programme of works as agreed including development of the Civic and Regional Hub at Abbey Way Newry.
- To note Council's decision for two offices, one in Newry and one in Downpatrick.
- To note the new Civic Hub in Newry provides the facilities to deliver on the needs of the Council going forward in respect of accommodation for both staff and elected members and is in line with the Council's Agile working policy.
- To note that an extensive site selection exercise was completed in 2019, that considered the Lidl site, and Council approved Abbey Way site as the preferred location for the Civic Hub.
- To note that it is anticipated that the carpark income levels at Abbey Way will not be negatively impacted.
- Council carries out a review of the capital projects programme at SFWG to identify whether the planned capital projects were an accurate reflection of Council's objectives, alongside the continued delivery of Newry Civic Centre.

Councillor Rice rejoined the meeting at this stage – 7.23pm

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

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor McEvoy, seconded by Councillor Mathers, 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 Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

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

SPR/077/2024

PROPOSED LEASE OF LANDS AT ORIOR PARK, BESSBROOK

Read: Report dated 16 May 2024 from Mr P Rooney, Head of Legal Administration, regarding Lease of Playing Fields at Orior Park, Bessbrook. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Quinn, seconded by Councillor Mathers, it was agreed to enter into a lease with the club noted in the Officer's Report for a term of 25 years at a peppercorn rent subject to Departmental consent.**

Councillor Talyor left the meeting for discussion on this item, having previously declared an interest – 07.25pm

SPR/078/2024 **PROPOSED RENEWAL OF LEASE OF LANDS ADJACENT TO CLOUGHREAGH COMMUNITY CENTRE.**

Read: Report dated 18 April 2024 from Mr P Rooney, Head of Administration, regarding the Proposed Renewal of Lease of Lands adjacent to Cloughreagh Community Centre, Bessbrook. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to grant a renewal of lease in respect of the lands shaded red to the party noted for a period of 25 years subject to the market rent all as outlined within the Officer's Report.**

Councillor Talyor re-entered the chamber at this stage – 7.30pm

SPR/079/2024: **DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE RIVERS AND NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL LEGAL AGREEMENT**

Read: Report dated 16 May 2024 from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism, regarding a Contract with DFI Rivers. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to approve the draft agreement to be signed.**

SPR/080/2024: **NEWRY LEISURE CENTRE**

Read: Report dated 16 May 2024 from Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director: Capital Projects and Procurement, regarding Newry Leisure Centre. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed to approve**

the final invoice and retention owed to Contractor as outlined within the Officer's Report.

It was also agreed to approve the Final Account of Newry Leisure Centre – Phase 1 as outlined within the Officer's Report.

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

SPR/081/2024:

IT UPDATE

Read:

Report dated 16 May 2024 from Mrs J Kelly, Director Corporate Services, regarding an IT Programme Highlight Report. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed:

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

SPR/082/2024:

NEWRY SWIMMING POOL UPDATE

Read:

A verbal update was provided by Mr A Patterson, Director of Active and Healthy Communities, regarding an update on Newry Swimming Pool.

Agreed:

On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Quinn, it was agreed to note the verbal update from Officers regarding Newry Swimming Pool.

SPR/083/2024:

LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP FUNDING UPDATE

Read:

Report dated 16 May 2024 from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism, regarding Labour Market Partnership (LMP) Update. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed:

On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Quinn, it was agreed to note the contents of the Officer's Report.

SPR/084/2024:

SPECIFIC DELEGATED AUTHORITY

Read:

Report dated 16 May 2024 from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding a specific delegated authority. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed:

On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Quinn, it was agreed to note that

delegation had been exercised by the Chief Executive regarding a legal health and safety matter in the best interests of the Council and is being reported in accordance with 3.1.11 of the Council's Scheme of Delegation for Officers.

FOR NOTING

SPR/085/2024:

STATUTORY REPORTING – RURAL NEEDS ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT FOR PERIOD 1 APRIL 2023 – 31 MARCH 2024

Read:

Report dated 16 May 2024 from Mr C Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy, regarding Statutory Reporting – Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report for Period 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed:

On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed to note the completed annual return prepared and submit to DAERA to meet their requested deadline of 21 June 2024.

SPR/086/2024:

STATUTORY REPORTING – SECTION 75 POLICY SCREENING REPORT – QUARTERLY REPORT FOR PERIOD JANUARY – MARCH 2024

Read:

Report dated 16 May 2024 from Mr C Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy, regarding Statutory Reporting – Section 75 Policy Screening Report – Quarterly Report for Period January – March 2024. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed:

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

SPR/087/2024:

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 2023 – 31 MARCH 2024 ON REQUESTS RELATED TO NAMING COUNCIL FACILITIES, PLANTING TREES AND TO LOCATE ARTWORKS/SCULPTURES ON COUNCIL PROPERTY

Read:

Report dated 16 May 2024 from Mr C Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy, regarding annual report for the period 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024 on requests related to naming Council facilities, planting trees and to locate artworks/sculptures on Council property. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed:

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Howell, to note the contents of the report.

There being no further business, the Meeting concluded at 7:41pm

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 3rd June 2024.

Signed: **Councillor Siobhan O'Hare**
Chairperson

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

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Ref: AHC/2024

**Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on
Monday 20 May 2024 at 6.00pm in the Mourne Room,
Downshire Civic Centre**

Chairperson: Councillor R Howell (Chamber)

In attendance in Chamber:

Councillor D Finn	Councillor A Finnegan
Councillor C Galbraith	Councillor M Gibbons
Councillor J Jackson	Councillor D Lee-Surginor
Councillor O Magennis	Councillor A Mathers
Councillor S O'Hare	

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

Officials in Chamber:

Mr A Patterson, Director, Active and Healthy Communities
 Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development
 Mr A Beggs, Head of Evidence and Research, Community Planning and Performance
 Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer
 Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)

Also in attendance in Chamber: Mr N McCrickard and Ms R McDonnell, Strategic Stakeholder Forum

AHC/041/2024: APOLOGIES & CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Devlin, Lewis, D Murphy and S Murphy.

There were no Chairperson's remarks.

AHC/042/2024: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

AHC/043/2024: ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM ACTIVE & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 22 APRIL 2024

Read: Action sheet of the Active & Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 22 April 2024. **(Copy circulated).**

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Finn, to note the Action Sheet of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 22 April 2024.

AHC/044/2023: THE STRATEGIC STAKEHOLDER FORUM: PARTNERING WITH CV SECTOR TO ACHIEVE BETTER OUTCOMES

The Chairperson welcomed Mr N McCrickard and Ms R McDonnell from the Strategic Stakeholder Forum to the meeting and invited them to make their presentation. (Copy attached to these minutes)

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their presentation and commended the work undertaken by the Forum with reference made to the fantastic community response during Covid. In referring to the work carried out regarding social prescribing within the community she highlighted the need for it to be built upon.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members:

- The work of the Strategic Stakeholder Forum was commended with reference made to all that was being undertaken within DEAs including the Social Supermarket in Newry.
- The services provided by the Forum helped so many particularly those living in rural areas.
- How could Councillors assist particularly in terms of social prescribing to encourage people within communities to take part?

The delegation responded as follows:

- Members were encouraged to contact representatives of the Strategic Stakeholder Forum at any time.
- Multi-Disciplinary teams being rolled out by the Department of Health were a version of social prescribing undertaken within the community and voluntary sector and required merging over the next number of years to make it more accessible for people with less barriers.
- There was a need for a solid programme budget for the hiring of local clubs and facilities for example and to enable Partner Agencies to come and meet people within their own locations.
- Members should continue to encourage the Department of Health to involve community and voluntary groups more with the provision of funding for programming for the sector.

- The multi-disciplinary teams being rolled out are included within the Programme for Government and so far the model had almost excluded the voluntary and community sector which was a failure.
- There was a need for funding to be redirected to the community and voluntary sector to enable more to be done for the health system at a local level within communities.

Councillor Finnegan proposed Council write to the Minister for Health and the Minister for Communities with a call to make budget available for the projects being delivered by the community and voluntary sectors. Councillor Magennis seconded the proposal.

Councillor Finn proposed that Council write to the Minister of Finance also.

Councillor Finnegan agreed to accept Councillor Finn's proposal.

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Finnegan, seconded by Councillor Magennis that Council write to the Ministers for Health, Communities and Finance to make budget available for the projects being delivered by the community and voluntary sectors.

AHC/045/2023: DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREA (DEA) FORUMS UPDATE REPORT

Read: Report dated 20 May 2024 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development regarding an update on District Electoral Area (DEA) Forums. **(Copy circulated)**

In referring to the Funding Fair held on 24 April 2024 Councillor Magennis welcomed that a Sporting Funding Information Session had been arranged for the Newry and Downpatrick area.

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

- Slieve Croob DEA Forum Private Meeting held on Tuesday 23 April 2024.
- Rowallane DEA Forum Private Meeting held on Thursday 16 May 2024.

AHC/046/2023: COMMUNITY COORDINATION HUB (CCH) UPDATE REPORT

Read: Report dated 20 May 2024 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development regarding an update on Community Coordination Hub. **(Copy circulated)**

In response to Councillor Lee-Surginor querying if the Executive Office had been contacted about lack of information for funding for refugees and asylum seekers, Mrs Robb advised

officers attended a number of meetings, both at an operational and strategic level and sought to reinforce the need for funding at those. A formal approach had not been made to date as officers were awaiting confirmation of the final budget.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor, to note the report and approve the actions in the action sheet attached for the Community Coordination Hub Meeting held on Wednesday 17 April 2024.

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

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

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

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

AHC/047/2024: **ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES SERVICE DELIVERY PARTNER**

Read: Report dated 20 May 2024 from Mr A Patterson, Director of Active and Healthy Communities regarding Active and Healthy Communities Service Delivery Partner. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Lee-Surginor, seconded by Councillor Galbraith, to approve the extension of the current service provider as set out within the officer's report to ensure service delivery.

AHC/048/2024: MARKETING AND DESIGN SERVICES

Read: Report dated 20 May 2024 from Mr A Patterson, Director of Active and Healthy Communities regarding Active and Healthy Communities Service Delivery Partner. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor, to approve the business case and appointment of a supplier via public procurement for marketing and design services for the AHC Directorate as detailed within the officer's report.**

AHC/049/2024: MULTI SPORTS HUB

Report: Report dated 20 May 2024 from Mr A Patterson, Director of Active and Healthy Communities regarding Multi Sports Hub.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Finn to approve the business case and appointment of an ICT utilising Council's current framework to advance the potential sports hub project as detailed with the officer's report.**

The Chairperson pointed out that this was her last meeting as Chair of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee and thanked Members and Officers for their support.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 6.48pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 3 June 2024.

Signed: Councillor Howell
Chairperson

Signed: Andrew Patterson
Director Active and Healthy Communities



Strategic Stakeholder Forum: Partnering with the CV sector to achieve better outcomes

Nicholas McCrickard & Rosemarie McDonnell: SSF Chairs

AHC Briefing

Introduction and background

Our Vision:

" To co-ordinate, communicate and engage with the priorities of the voluntary and community sector on community planning and other wider issues for the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area on an ongoing basis."

- Formed in 2016
- 28 umbrella Community Voluntary organisations
- Set up to involve community involvement at all local levels
- Representatives on CP working groups and all DEA Forums
- Chair of Community Planning Partnership board
- Anchor organisations with proven track record over many years and embedded within and trusted by local community



SSF Members

MyMy	Santitasignig Well partnership	KDA	Kilkeel DA	WAAD	Bulmer
Down BC	Volunteer Now	Clarye	Action for Children	EDBV	Clarye
MHT	Farm Garden	CDRCN	and community growers	DCT	CCG
Adrian NMD	ETAS hope&support	NMD Custom transport	NMD Enterprise Agency	NMD Health Partner	Annaveigh House
	NMD Custom Growers	RHPSA	Ballynamin Counselling	Harmony Community trust	

Covid Response and Cost of Living Crises

- Through the Community Co-ordination hub, SSF co-ordinated local food box distribution, advice and sign posting
- 18,407 food boxes distributed
- £76,143.91 of funding distributed using trusted partners scheme
- Hardship Fund EOI Scheme
- Addressing Digital Poverty
- Social Supermarket – set up across NMD in 2023
- Recovery and Renewal Publication – Gaining traction with DfC
- Social Prescribing – 6 year project – May lead to a Pilot in South East (majority of GP patients do not need a tablet)



Challenges

- Unprecedented demands for our services
- Falling Income and rising costs
- Budget & funding Cuts
- Sustainability & Full cost recovery almost impossible to achieve
- Uncertain job prospects in C&V sector makes recruitment problematic
- Increasing mental health issues in the population

Planning for Recovery and Renewal in Newry, Moirne and Down

Opportunities

- Trust and good relations across the C&V sector and with Statutory partners (esp in NMD)
- Quick response to emergent trends and public emergencies
- Flexible and skilled workforce available to meet local needs
- C&V sector can adapt more efficiently and at lower cost to public sector
- Can and does work collaboratively across Government and Councils
- DfC, D&H, Trusts and others appear willing to pilot projects and programmes with C&V to test a better way of working

Planning for Recovery and Renewal in Newry, Moirne and Down

NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Ref: SE/2024

**Minutes of Sustainability & Environment Committee Meeting held on
Wednesday 22 May 2024 at 6.00pm in Council Chamber, Monaghan Row, Newry**

Chair: Councillor T Andrews**Committee Members
in Attendance:**

Councillor J Brennan	Councillor W Clarke
Councillor D Finn	Councillor J Jackson
Councillor G Kearns	Councillor M Larkin
Councillor O Magennis	Councillor K Murphy
Councillor H Reilly	Councillor D Taylor
Councillor J Truesdale	

Officials in Attendance: Mrs S Murphy, Director Sustainability and Environment
Mr C Sage, Assistant Director Sustainability
Ms S Trainor, Assistant Director Environment
Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer
Mrs N Stranney, Democratic Services Officer**SE/054/2024: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Enright, Feehan and McEvoy.

The Chairperson congratulated Sinead Trainor on her appointment as Assistant Director.

SE/055/2024: DECLARATIONS OF "CONFLICTS OF INTEREST"

There were no declarations of interest.

**SE/056/2024: ACTION SHEET: SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 23 APRIL 2024****Read:** Action Sheet of the Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 23 April 2024. **(Copy circulated)***SE/046/2024: Notice of Motion – Newry Market:*

Councillor Finn queried cleansing at Newry Market during the revitalisation work that was being carried out at present. Mrs Murphy advised that she would respond to the Member outside of the meeting.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Brennan, seconded by Councillor Kearns, it was agreed to note the Action Sheet of the Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 23 April 2024.****FOR DECISION**

SE/057/2024: WORKING GROUPS AND FORUMS

Read: Report dated 22 May 2024 from Ms S Murphy, Director: Sustainability and Environment, regarding Working Group and Forum. **(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Murphy provided some background stating a review into working groups had been undertaken in October 2022 and it had been agreed to amalgamate former working groups into the Sustainability & Environment Working Group. She requested feedback from Members as to the requirement and frequency of meeting of the Health Fora.

Councillor Taylor proposed the recommendations with an addition that the Health Fora should meet every six months as a minimum with other meetings convened if emerging issues regarding hospitals etc that require immediate action or response arise. This was seconded by Councillor Andrews.

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

- **Sustainability and Environment Working Group to be held Quarterly prior to Sustainability and Environment Committee meetings, commencing in June 2024.**
- **Cleansing and Refuse Task Group meetings to be held in a hybrid format, quarterly prior to the Sustainability and Environment Committee meetings.**
- **It was further proposed that the Health Fora should meet every six months as a minimum, with other meetings convened if emerging issues regarding hospitals etc that require immediate action or response arise.**

SE/058/2024: REPORT ON TREATMENT OF INVASIVE SPECIES ON COUNCIL ESTATE

Read: Report dated 22 May 2024 from Mr Conor Sage, Assistant Director: Sustainability, regarding the Treatment of Invasive Species on Council Estate. **(Copy circulated)**

Mr Sage provided some background to the usage of treatments for invasive species on Council estate. He advised that since it had been agreed in March 2020 to phase out the use of herbicides containing glyphosate, this was having a significant impact on the ability of Council to manage invasive species, particularly at Albert Basin.

Councillor Larkin asked whether the report was specifically regarding the Albert Basin site and whether Council already address invasive species in other areas.

Mr Sage confirmed that Council's first priority was dealing with the risk at the Albert Basin, where there had been an increased spread of giant hogweed within the last year. He advised an invasive species management plan would then be established. He stated that high risk areas were known and dealt with on a risk-based approach however the issue at Albert Basin was due to the spread of giant hogweed in particular.

Councillor Truesdale stated there had been a hard won battle by Alliance over the reduction of glyphosate and the Newry City Park therefore was disappointed to hear them pitted against each other within the report. She acknowledged a commendable 75% reduction since the target

was set in 2020 to phase it out within 3 years, however expressed concern about its ongoing application. She asked the following questions:

- Was there an issue with Council sticking to the original target of 100% reduction in the use of glyphosate?
- How many grounds maintenance staff did Council employ, and where were the allocation area numbers?
- Where was the data regarding the alternative methods that had been explored?
- How had the site allowed to get out of control with giant hogweed?
- Had the Council permitted hogweed seeds to drift into the adjacent watercourse with possibly spread to Carlingford Lough and other water bodies since they acquired the site?
- Had Council considered hiring a specialist contractor for digging and disposing of hogweed and why had this not been costed?
- Why had the Council resumed spraying around Newcastle tennis courts and Ballyhorman beach, with no invasive species present?

Mr Sage responded to the queries as follows:

- Council was still operating with 25% of the original 500 litres as the volume was extended in March 2023 at the Sustainability & Environment Committee Meeting.
- He would respond to the Member on the allocation and distribution of grounds maintenance staff numbers throughout the Council.
- Alternative means had been explored, and in situations where manual removal was feasible, it would be acceptable if dealing with single or small numbers of invasive species. However, in the Albert Basin the use of machinery was not feasible, therefore the chemical option would be the most advantageous in this respect.
- The area had been treated in October 2023, however, this was limited due to the reductions in usage of glyphosate. He stated it could be a 5-yr programme to eradicate invasive species with a monitoring period of 7 years afterwards.
- There was a specific type of glyphosate that was safe and approved for use near watercourses, which was what would be utilised for use at the Albert Basin.
- Regarding the use of glyphosate in low-risk areas around Newcastle, Mr Sage reassured Councillor Truesdale that he would investigate why alternative methods were not used and chemical treatments prioritised for invasive species.

Councillor Finn expressed concern over the use of glyphosate and also noted that it wasn't just the Alliance Party, but also colleagues from across the chamber and cross-Parties who could take credit for Newry City Park. She inquired about the immediate risk to the park project and whether the ongoing eradication of giant hogweed posed a concern for its progress.

Mr Sage stated the proliferation of the invasive species throughout the site posed a risk to the contractor from an environmental point of view when they mobilised on site. He stated the removal and disposal of hogweed was treated as contaminated waste and had to be carried out by licensed contractors. He advised that stem injections had been utilised along with targeted application using particular applicators to limit the use of glyphosate.

Councillor Reilly stated that only systemic herbicides such as glyphosate that would kill plants that had very deep root structures, and without the option it would be difficult to control these invasive species. He stated members of the public should not be afraid as after 24 hours of spraying a field, there was virtually no residue present.

Councillor Brennan asked what the potential dangers or adverse health risks from glyphosate would be. Mr Sage advised he would revert to the Member on this query.

Councillor Clarke stated the officers and grounds maintenance staff were stating this was a requirement to eradicate the problem. It had been agreed to reduce the use of glyphosate, and anything that could be done to ensure Council were using less of this was to be encouraged. He

stated there had been an eradication programme for Japanese Knotweed in Newcastle which took around 5 years and given the potential risk to children walking along waterways, Council did need to eradicate the issue, and he felt the recommendations within the report outlined the way forward for officers. He highlighted that a lot of these invasive species had come from ornamental gardens in stately homes however Council should continue to utilise alternative methods as much as possible.

Mrs Murphy assured Members that any areas being treated within the Albert Basin site would be cordoned off to public access.

As there was dissent within the chamber, the matter was put to a vote, the results of which were as follows:

FOR:	10
AGAINST:	1
ABSTENTIONS:	0

The proposal was agreed.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Clarke, it was agreed to note the content of the report and approve the use of herbicides containing glyphosate for controlling invasive species at Albert Basin outside of the current allocation for normal weed control and the development of an Invasive Species Management Plan for the Council Estate.

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

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

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

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

SE/059/2024: **REPORT ON SUSTAINABILITY & ENVIRONMENT SINGLE TENDER ACTION**

Read: Report dated 22 May 2024 Ms S Murphy, Director: Sustainability and Environment, regarding Single Tender Actions. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Kearns, it was agreed to approve the Single Tender Actions as contained within Appendices 1 and 2 of the officer's report.

SE/060/2024: BUSINESS CASE FOR THE OCCASIONAL HIRE OF HOOK LIFT AND DRIVER

Read: Report dated 22 May 2024 from Ms S Murphy, Director: Sustainability and Environment, regarding the Business case for the Occasional Hire of Hook Lift and Driver. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Larkin, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, it was agreed to approve the business case to procure a contract for the Occasional Hire of Hook Lift Vehicle and Driver.

SE/061/2024: WASTE MANAGEMENT – CONTRACT EXTENSIONS

Read: Report dated 22 May 2024 from Ms S Murphy, Director Sustainability & Environment, regarding Waste Management – Contract extensions. **(copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, it was agreed to approve the extension of waste collection and processing contracts listed in Appendix 1 in line with the extension end date in the table and rate increases in line with CPI.

FOR NOTING - ITEMS RESTRICTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 6 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (NI) 2014**SE/062/2024: ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE MEMBERS' MONTHLY BULLETIN HELD ON 25 APRIL 2024**

Read: Arc21 Joint Committee Members' Monthly Bulletin held on 25 April 2024 **(copy circulated)**

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Kearns, to note the document.

SE/063/2024: ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING IN COMMITTEE MINUTES OF THURSDAY 29 FEBRUARY 2024

Read: Arc21 Joint Committee In Committee Minutes of Thursday 29 February 2024 **(copy circulated)**

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Kearns, to note the document.

FOR NOTING**SE/064/2024: ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF THURSDAY 29 FEBRUARY 2024**

Read: Arc21 Joint Committee Meeting Minutes of Thursday 29 February 2024
(copy circulated)

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Truesdale,
seconded by Councillor Brennan, to note the minutes.

SE/065/2024: **REPORT ON NORTHERN IRELAND ENVIRONMENT FORUM 2024**

Read: Report by Councillor Enright on attendance at Northern Ireland
Environment Forum 2024. (copy circulated)

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Truesdale,
seconded by Councillor Brennan, to note the Councillor's
conference update.

As this was his final Committee Meeting, the Chairperson thanked the Committee and officers
for their support during his time as Chairperson.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 07:15pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 3rd June 2024.

Signed: Councillor Terry Andrews
Chairperson

Signed: Ms Sinead Murphy
Director of Sustainability & Environment

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Ref: AC/2024

**Minutes of Audit Committee Meeting held on Thursday 23 May 2024, at 2.00pm,
in the Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick**

Chairperson: Ms B Slevin, Independent Chairperson

**In attendance
in Chamber:**

Councillor J Brennan	Councillor O Hanlon
Councillor T Howie	Councillor C King
Councillor S O'Hare	Councillor G Sharvin

**Officials in attendance
in Chamber:**

Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
 Mrs J Kelly, Director Corporate Services
 Mr C Mallon, Director Economy, Regeneration & Tourism
 Ms S Murphy, Director Sustainability & Environment
 Mr A Patterson, Director Active & Healthy Communities
 Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Performance
 Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director Capital and Procurements
 Ms E Cosgrove, Assistant Director of Administration (Acting)
 Ms C Hughes, Head of Performance and Improvement (Acting)
 Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)
 Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer

**Also in attendance
in chamber:**

Ms C Hagan	ASM
Mr S Wade	NIAO

AC/028/2024: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Bowsie, Devlin and Quinn.

AC/029/2024: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor King declared an interest in item 17 – Planning Update as per Action Sheet, item 21 – ASM Summary Report and item 28 – Planning – Review of Overturned Decisions.

Mrs Ward declared an interest in item 16 – Update on Kilbroney Pitches.

Ms Slevin declared an interest in item 8 – Annual Assessment of Chairperson's Performance.

AC/030/2024: ACTION SHEET OF AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 1 FEBRUARY 2024

Read: Action Sheet arising from Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting held on Thursday 1 February 2024. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Sharvin it was agreed to note the Action Sheet for Audit Committee Meeting held on 1 February 2024.**

AC/031/2024: **TO AGREE DATE AND START TIMES FOR 2024/2025**

Read: Proposed dates and start times for Audit Committee meetings for 2024/2025 **(Copy circulated)**

Following a query from Councillor Brennan regarding hybrid meetings, Mrs Kelly advised that meetings would continue to be in person until such time as legislation was updated.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to approve the start dates and times for Audit Committee meetings for 2024/2025.**

AC/032/2024: **AUDIT COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND TIMETABLE**

Read: Report dated 23 May 2024 from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Performance, regarding Audit Committee Terms of Reference and timetable for 2024/2025. **(Copy circulated)**

Mr Byrne noted that terms of reference were updated in line with best practice, and any significant changes had been highlighted within the Officer's Report.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Brennan, seconded by Councillor O'Hare, it was agreed to approve the Audit Committee Terms of Reference and to note the timetable for the year ahead.**

AC/033/2024: **AUDIT COMMITTEE SELF ASSESSMENT**

Read: Report dated 23 May 2024 from Ms B Slevin, Independent Chair of Audit Committee, regarding Audit Committee Self-Assessment. **(Copy circulated)**

Ms Slevin outlined the report and highlighted a few key issues that she believed required consideration moving forward. She noted in particular the continuity of Elected Members on a Committee, Elected Member training and referenced the need for reports from officers to allow time for Members to read the reports. She further noted the need to consider and outline the ways the Audit Committee added value to the organisation and requested that officers address that specifically.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor O'Hare, it was agreed to approve the contents of the Officer's Report.**

AC/034/2024: UPDATE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

Read: Report dated 23 May 2024 from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding the Register of Members' Interests. **(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Kelly reminded Members that they had a responsibility to keep Council up to date in relation to any potential conflicts of interest.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor King, seconded by Councillor O'Hare it was agreed to note the six-month review report.

Having previously declared an interest, The Audit Chairperson, Ms B Slevin, left the chamber for discussion on the following item – 2.26pm

Items restricted in accordance with Part 3 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Howie, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during the following items which related to exempt information by virtue of Part 3 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during these items of business.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor King, it was agreed to come out of Closed Session.

AC/035/2024: ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF CHAIRPERSON'S PERFORMANCE

Read: Report dated 23 May 2024 from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance and Performance, regarding the Annual Assessment of the Chairperson's Performance. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to note the assessment of the Chairperson's performance.

The Audit Chairperson, Ms B Slevin, re-entered the chamber at this stage – 2.30pm

CORPORATE SERVICES – OPEN SESSION**AC/036/2024: CORPORATE RISK REGISTER – CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE RISK REGISTER ALSO TO BE TABLED**

Read: Report dated 23 May 2024 from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding the Corporate Risk Register. **(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Kelly advised that one Directorate had its risk register reviewed at an Audit Committee Meeting in line with best practice and outlined the updated Corporate Services Risk Register. She noted that the Senior Management Team had reviewed the Corporate

Services Risk Register and advised that although the overall risk assessment was similar to the last meeting, she highlighted the reduced risk in relation to industrial action as there was an agreement in place and an industrial relations framework was being progressed.

Following a query from Councillor Sharvin relating to an increased risk score within appendix 3, Ms Cosgrove advised that this had been reviewed and amended in line with the IT analysis of the all-staff mandatory training requirements.

Following a further query from Councillor Sharvin regarding implementing a type of league table for compliance in relation to the mandatory training, Mrs Kelly advised that she had had sight of the current compliance status, that Council had to be cognisant of Data Protection and advised that a department breakdown was being considered by the Senior Management Team.

Ms Slevin queried whether other issues should be reflected within the Risk Register or identified as an additional risk to that outlined in CR02 relating to non-compliance of legislative requirements such as health and safety and legionella.

Mrs Kelly advised that the Risk Register was a live document and the Senior Management Team addressed this regularly by looking at control measures and identifying standalone risks.

- AGREED:**
- On the proposal of Councillor Howie, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, the following was agreed:**
- to approve the updates to the Corporate Risk Register highlighted within the summary at Appendix 1. Full Corporate Risk Register can be evidenced at Appendix 2.
 - to note the revised Corporate Services Directorate Risk Register summary at Appendix 3 and detailed Corporate Services Risk Register at Appendix 4.
 - that Senior Management Team would be taking account of the risks identified in the ASM report within the next updated Risk Register.

AC/037/2024: PROMPT PAYMENTS

Read: Report dated 23 May 2024 from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Performance, regarding the Prompt Payment Statistics – Quarter 4 2023/24. **(Copy circulated)**

Mr Byrne outlined the paper and highlighted the compliance of 95% of payments being completed within the required 30-day period and advised that the new software had enabled the compliance rate.

- AGREED:**
- On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor O'Hare, it was agreed to note the Quarter 4 Prompt Payment Statistics.**

AC/038/2024: DRAFT PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES 2024-2025

Read: Report dated 23 May 2024 from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director, Finance & Performance, regarding the Draft Performance Improvement Objectives 2024-2025 **(Copy circulated)**

Ms Hughes advised that the Report had been considered and agreed by the SP&R Committee in April, with four of the five objectives being carried over from the previous year and one that had been amended to better reflect the economic development programme now in place. She highlighted an ongoing consultation in relation to the corporate objectives which would cease on 31 May 2024.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor King, it was agreed to note the following:

- The five-point draft performance objectives 2024-25, as outlined in Appendix 1.
- The proposed approach and timetable for publishing the Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25, as outlined in Appendix 2, including approval to commence the consultation and engagement process on 19 April 2024.

Items restricted in accordance with Part 3 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Howie, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on this matter which related to exempt information by virtue of Part 3 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during these items of business.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Howie, it was agreed to come out of Closed Session.

CORPORATE SERVICES (CLOSED SESSION)**AC/039/2024: UPDATE ON AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS – TO INCLUDE RISK PROFILE**

Read: Report dated 23 May 2024 from Ms E Cosgrove, Assistant Director of Administration (Acting), regarding an update on Audit Recommendations. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor King left the meeting during discussion on this item – 2.34pm

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor O'Hare, it was agreed to note the update in relation to legacy audit recommendations.

Councillor King rejoined the meeting at this stage – 2.40pm

AC/040/2024: DIRECT AWARD CONTRACTS

Read: Report dated 23 May 2024 from Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director – Capital and Procurement, regarding DAC/STA Register – Quarter 4. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Brennan, seconded by Councillor Howie, it was agreed to note the Q4 update in relation to Single Tender Actions with an action plan to be brought to the September Audit Committee Meeting

AC/041/2024: PROCUREMENT ACTION PLANS

Read: Report dated 23 May 2024 from Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director – Capital and Procurement, regarding procurement action plans. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor O’Hare, it was agreed to note the update in relation to the Procurement Action Plans for each Directorate.

AC/042/2024: UPDATE ON FRAUD AND WHISTLEBLOWING (INCLUDING NFI)

Read: Report dated 23 May 2024 from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Performance, regarding Fraud and Raising Concerns Update. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor King, it was agreed to:

- Note the update in relation to Fraud and Raising Concerns cases which have been detailed at Appendix 1 of the Officer’s Report.
- Note the National Fraud Initiative matches testing, with an update being brought to the July Committee in relation to the recouping the duplicate payments.
- Note the progress on actions arising from the NIAO Internal Fraud Risk self-assessment.
- Approve the revisions to the Fraud Policy and the Fraud Response Plan at Appendix 2 and 3 of the Officer’s Report.

It was also agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, that a report be brought to SP&R Committee regarding an issue with a repayment under the Covid-19 Revitalisation Scheme.

Having previously declared an interest, Mrs Ward left the chamber for discussion on the next item– 3.08pm

AC/043/2024: UPDATE ON KILBRONEY PITCHES

Read: Report dated 23 May 2024 from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding an update on Kilbroney Pitches. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor King, it was agreed to that the matter was closed and that no further independent audit services are engaged on this issue.

Mrs Ward rejoined the meeting at this stage – 3.11pm

Having previously declared an interest. Councillor King left the meeting prior to the next item – 3.12pm

AC/044/2024: PLANNING UPDATE PER ACTION SHEET

Read: Report dated 23 May 2024 from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Regeneration, regarding a Planning Department update. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Brennan, it was agreed to note the contents of the Report, and that Officers continue to table quarterly reports to update Members on progress or otherwise against actions as contained within the Officer's Report.

Councillor King rejoined the meeting – 3.14pm

AC/045/2024: RECRUITMENT UPDATE PER ACTION SHEET

The update had been provided under Item 17.

AC/047/2024: LETTER TO NIAO RE NEWRY CITY CENTRE REGENERATION

Read: Report dated 23 May 2024 from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding a Letter to NIAO. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to note the following:

- Response to the complaint correspondence to be issued shortly after the Audit Committee
- The Notice of Motion was discussed at SPR on 16 May 2024 and after a full debate, it was agreed that the Project should continue in line with the Outline Business Case and also in line with the other recommendations made at the SPR as noted in the officer's report.
- When the Full Business Case is completed for the Newry City Centre Regeneration Project, the

updated projected capital costs will go to the Programme Board, the SPR Committee and then to full Council for approval.

NIAO (CLOSED SESSION)

AC/048/2024: **AUDIT STRATEGY 2023/24**

Read: Audit Strategy 2023-24 (Copy circulated)

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor King, seconded by Councillor O'Hare, it was agreed to note the contents of the Audit Strategy for 2023-24.**

INTERNAL AUDIT (CLOSED SESSION)

AC/049/2024: **ASM SUMMARY REPORT**

Read: Summary Report dated 23 May 2024 regarding a Summary Report to the Audit Committee.
(Copy circulated)

Councillor King left the meeting at this stage – 3.43pm

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to approve the ASM Summary Report.
It was also agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, that the recommendations contained with the ASM Summary Report regarding Planning – Review of Overturned Decisions be tabled at Party Reps Forum.**

AC/050/2024: **ASM ANNUAL ASSURANCE REPORT**

Read: Annual Assurance Report dated 21 May 2024 regarding the Annual Assurance Report to the Audit Committee.
(Copy circulated)

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor O'Hare it was agreed to approve the ASM Annual Assurance Report.**

Councillor Brennan left the meeting at this stage – 4.32pm

AC/051/2024: **INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2024/25**

Read: Internal Audit Plan 2024/25 (Copy circulated)

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to accept the Internal Audit Plan 2024/25.**

AC/052/2024: ABSENCE MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2023/24

Read: Absence Management 2023/24 (Copy circulated)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to approve the Absence Management Review.

AC/052/2024: CONTRACTS MANAGEMENT REVIEW

Read: Contract Management Review 2023/24 (Copy circulated)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to approve the Contracts Management Review 2023/24.

AC/053/2024: NMDDC COMPLIANCE CHECKING – FACILITIES REVIEW

Read: NMDDC Compliance Checking – Facilities Review. (Copy circulated)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to approve the NMDDC Compliance Checking – Facilities Review.

AC/054/2024: LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP REVIEW

Read: Labour Market Partnership Review 2023/24. (Copy circulated)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to approve the Labour Market Partnership Review.

AC/055/2024: PLANNING – REVIEW OF OVERTURNED DECISIONS

Read: Planning Review of Overturned Decisions. (Copy circulated)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to approve the Planning Review of Overturned Decisions.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 4:37pm.

For consideration at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 3rd June 2024.

Signed: **Ms J Kelly**
 Director Corporate Services

Signed: **Ms B Slevin**
 Independent Chairperson

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**Minutes of Special Strategy Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on Thursday 30 May 2024 at 5.30pm in the Council Chamber, Downshire Civic Centre****In the Chair:** Councillor S O'Hare

In Attendance in Chamber:

Councillor C Enright	Councillor O Hanlon
Councillor T Howie	Councillor A Lewis
Councillor D McAteer	Councillor A Mathers
Councillor H Reilly	Councillor G Sharvin
Councillor D Taylor	

**Non-Committee Members
In Attendance in Chamber:** Councillor C Bowsie

**Officials in Attendance
in Chamber:**

Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
 Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services
 Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy Regeneration & Tourism
 Ms S Murphy, Director of Sustainability & Environment
 Mr A Patterson, Director of Active & Healthy Communities
 Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)
 Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer

SPR/088/2024: APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Byrne, Howell, McEvoy, Quinn and Rice.

The Chairperson noted that under Standing Orders 4.3, the issues discussed were to be considered as a matter of urgency.

SPR/089/2024: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

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

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Howie, seconded by Councillor Taylor, 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 Lewis, seconded by Councillor Mathers, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

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

SPR/090/2024

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

Read: Report dated 30 May from Mr Conor Mallon, Director Economy, Regeneration and Tourism, regarding Financial Assistance Programme. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Lewis, seconded by Councillor Taylor, it was agreed to take a short recess.**

The meeting did then recess – 6.28pm

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed to resume the meeting.**

The meeting did then resume – 7.22pm

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Taylor, the following was agreed:**

- to note the contents of the report and that a full review of the financial assistance programme and procedures, as agreed at ERT Committee in April 2024, will be carried out when Call 2 has been closed;
- the re-allocation of a portion of the existing Council's Tourism Events Programme Budget to the Tourist & Events Theme under Call 1 of the Financial Assistance Programme as set out within the officer's report;
- that the Council will utilise Council budgets across each directorate to a minimum level to meet the financial shortfall of the Call 1 Financial Assistance Programme. This will be actioned in the 2024/25 year but the review of financial assistance will determine that the budget set at Rates process will be the allocation available in future years. It is noted that this will only apply to Call 1;
- will write to the department for communities to ask for any support they might provide to assist the programme themes within the Financial Assistance, recognising that Newry Mourne and Down is an area of deprivation which has faced cuts in Rate Support Grant in recent years;
- officers will table a report at SPR Committee on the implications across Directorates.

Councillor Howie left the meeting during the above discussions – 6.44pm

Councillor Enright left the meeting during the above discussions – 7.15pm

SPR/091/2024**SINGLE TENDER ACTION APPROVAL**

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Read: Report dated 30 May 2024 from Ms S Murphy, Director of Sustainability and Environment, regarding Single Tender Action Approval. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to approve the Single Tender Action as detailed in the Officer's Report.**

There being no further business, the Meeting concluded at 7:31pm

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 3rd June 2024.

Signed: **Councillor Siobhan O'Hare**
Chairperson

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

THE SOMME ASSOCIATION



Vice-President
The Viscount Brookeborough, DL

Chairman
Mr Alan McFarland

Director
Mrs Carol Walker MBE

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Face Book: The Somme Association

Honorary President:
H.R.H The Duke of Gloucester, KG, GCVO

7th May 2024

Marie Ward
Chief Executive
Newry Mourne and Down District
Council
Monaghan Row
Newry
BT35 8DJ

Dear Ms Ward

May I on behalf of the Officers of the Somme Association, invite representatives from your Council to attend the services to commemorate the 108th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme in France.

A Commemoration Service shall be held at the Ulster Memorial Tower, Thiepval, France, at 14.30hrs on 1st July 2024 and at 16.30hrs at the 16th (Irish) Division Memorial in the village of Guillemont.

For further assistance or if you have any questions, please email me at sommeassociation@btconnect.com

Your Councils attendance would be greatly appreciated and I hope that representatives shall be able to attend.

Yours sincerely

Carol Walker MBE
Director



May 2024



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To all APSE Northern Ireland member contacts

Dear Colleagues,

APSE Northern Ireland FREE Member Event 'Enviro NI' and Annual General Meeting 2024 **Thursday 6 June, 10.00 to 15.00**

I write to invite you to attend the APSE Northern Ireland Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2024. This meeting will be held at the Galgorm Hotel, Co Antrim.

Incorporating the AGM, APSE is holding a special seminar – FREE to attend for members. The seminar – Enviro NI – is designed to help those on the frontline stay on top of the latest legislative and technological developments. Whether via: Waste management strategies; Investment in renewable energy; Action on biodiversity; Transitioning to alternative fuel fleets. All APSE Northern Ireland members can attend this event FREE of charge. [Speakers and booking information can be found here.](#)

Lunch will be provided for all seminar and AGM delegates at the rise of the AGM meeting at around 1pm allowing an opportunity for networking amongst our council colleagues from across APSE Northern Ireland.

Date and time: Thursday 6 June 10.00-15.00. (The AGM will begin at 12.30 prompt).

Galgorm Hotel, Co Antrim, BT42 1EA (Once registered to attend you will receive an Outlook invite).

I attach a copy of the agenda.

The following items may be downloaded from the APSE Website

- [APSE Constitution](#)
- [The APSE NI Constitution](#)
- [Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 6 June 2023, Galgorm Hotel](#)

Please ensure your authority is represented at the APSE Northern Ireland AGM. We particularly welcome the involvement of elected members. The AGM is open to all councillors, officers and trade union representatives from APSE member authorities and organisations. **As the APSE Northern Ireland Chair and Secretary and additional representatives to National Council are subject to biennial election there are no elections to these positions this year.**

If you wish to put a motion before the AGM or you wish to propose an amendment to the NI Constitution, these must be received by **Thursday 30 May**. Please send any motions or proposed amendments to Matt Ellis on mellis@apse.org.uk. A two thirds majority is required for any constitutional amendments.

Please confirm your attendance [using this link](#)

Agenda

1. **Welcome to meeting**
Cllr Terry Andrews, APSE Northern Ireland Chair 2023-2025
2. **Confirmation of National Council representatives 2024-2025** (this is a biennial issue so no elections required at the AGM)
3. **Finance Report and APSE Northern Ireland Accounts 2023-2024**
Mo Baines, APSE Chief Executive
4. **Annual Report of the Association**
Mo Baines, APSE Executive APSE Head of Communication and Coordination
5. **Annual Report of the Association in Northern Ireland**
Mo Baines, APSE Chief Executive
6. APSE Northern Ireland – Proposed changes to NI Constitution or motions - if received
7. To reaffirm APSE support for nominations to the APSE Annual General Meeting for:
 - One advisory group chair
 - One strategic forum chair

*NB. APSE's AGM elects representatives from across its UK member authorities to act as advisory group or strategic forum chairs. In the interests of geographic, political and gender balance APSE Northern Ireland will ask for nominations for **two** positions at its' AGM to ensure that APSE Northern Ireland is able to put forward nominations to the AGM in September 2024. The nominations for Advisory Group and Strategic Forum chairs is the property of APSE's AGM.*

7. Any other business
8. Closing Remarks

Please confirm your attendance [using this link](#)

And please do forward the link to colleagues in your council

Matt Ellis, APSE Principal Advisor for Northern Ireland

On behalf of Cllr Terry Andrews, APSE Northern Ireland Chair and
Ellen Cavanagh, APSE Northern Ireland Secretary

Report to:	Council
Date of Meeting:	3 June 2024
Subject:	Correspondence to Council
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)

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

For decision	x	For noting only	
1.0			Purpose and Background
1.1			To provide an update on correspondence received for attention of Council.
2.0			Key issues
2.1			This paper refers to correspondence to be brought to the attention of Council. Items are referred to in 3.0 below.
3.0			Recommendations
			That Council considers and notes the following correspondence:
3.1			Correspondence from Derry and Strabane District Council Council received correspondence from Derry and Strabane District Council in relation to a Notice of Motion, Autism Strategy . Refer to Appendix 1.
3.2			Correspondence from Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Council received a response from Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in relation to SC/006/2024 following Special Council Meeting on 25 March 2024 in relation to NIEA Sharing Information Protocol. Refer to Appendix 2.
3.3			Correspondence from Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Council received a response from Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in relation to C/078/2024 Notice of Motion, Irish Language Resource Centre Glór Uachtar Tíre. Refer to Appendix 3.
3.4			Correspondence from Home Office Council received a response from the Home Office in relation to C/080/2024 Notice of Motion, Fisheries and Aquaculture Industries and Seasonal Worker Visa Route. Refer to appendix 4.

<p>3.5</p>	<p>Correspondence from Department of Finance</p> <p>Council received a response from Department of Finance in relation C/099/2024 Notice of Motion, Baby Loss. Refer to appendix 5.</p>
<p>3.6</p>	<p>Correspondence from Minister for Health</p> <p>Council received a response from Minister for Health in relation C/099/2024 Notice of Motion, Baby Loss. Refer to appendix 6.</p>
<p>3.7</p>	<p>Correspondence from Department for Communities</p> <p>Council received a response from Department for Communities in relation C/093/2024 Notice of Motion, Arts Sector. Refer to appendix 7.</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Resource implications</p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>
<p>5.0</p>	<p>Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)</p>
<p>5.1</p>	<p><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></p>
<p>5.2</p>	<p><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>5.3</p>	<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>

	<i>Rationale:</i>
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> <p>The policy / strategy / plan / public service is not influenced by rural needs <input type="checkbox"/></p>
7.0	<p>Appendices</p> <p>Appendix 1: Derry and Strabane District Council</p> <p>Appendix 2: Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs</p> <p>Appendix 3: Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities</p> <p>Appendix 4: Home Office</p> <p>Appendix 5: Department of Finance</p> <p>Appendix 6: Minister for Health</p> <p>Appendix 7: Department for Communities</p>
8.0	Background Documents
	None



Mayor / Mhára
Councillor / An Comhairleoir
Patricia Logue

Our Ref: TJ/C216/24

9 May 2024

Dear Chief Executive

At a Meeting of Derry City and Strabane District Council held on 24 April 2024, the following Motion was passed:

That this Council acknowledges the unacceptable waiting times for autism assessments in the North of Ireland, causing significant hardship and developmental delays.

Council recognises that early intervention is critical for developing key skills in children with autism, yet the backlog hinders timely support, impacting individual potential and straining educational and healthcare services.

Council resolve to formally write to the Minister of Education and the Minister for Health to urgently develop and present a comprehensive business case outlining specific, actionable strategies to address and resolve this backlog including a detailed analysis of its impacts, clear reduction targets, proposed measures for ongoing assessments, and the necessary financial and staffing resources.

This plan should involve and support families throughout the process.

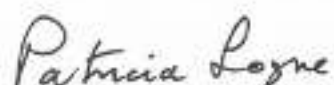
Council demands immediate action and insists on a collaborative effort among the Minister for Health, Minister for Education, and Minister for Finance, together with key stakeholders to develop a detailed report on the business case

and action plan, including a clear implementation timeline, within this mandate period to immediately address and resolve the existing backlog.

Council will seek collaboration from ALL NI councils to support this call pledging to facilitate and support the development of the business case and action plan.

I would appreciate your consideration in this important matter and would be grateful for a response at your earliest opportunity.

Yours Sincerely



**Councillor Patricia Logue
Mayor
Derry City and Strabane District Council**

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



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department of

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Marie Ward
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council,
Downpatrick Office,
Downshire Civic Centre,
Downshire Estate,
Ardglass Road, Downpatrick,
BT30 6GQ
fionnuala.branagh@nmandd.org
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DAERA Private Office
First Floor, Clare House
303 Airport Road West
Sydenham Intake
Belfast, BT3 9ED
Telephone: 028 9052 4140
Email: private.office@daera-ni.gov.uk

Your ref: SC/006/2024
Our ref: COR-1189-2024
Date: 9 May 2024

Dear Marie,

Northern Ireland Environment Agency Information Sharing Protocol

Thank you for your letter of 16 April 2024, relating to the proposal taken by council members during the special council meeting held in Downpatrick on 25 March 2024. This proposal is requesting that I examine the legislative framework with a view to creating a mechanism for the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) to share issues with relevant landlords and stakeholders in a redacted format.

Given the context of the meeting and your correspondence, I presume that 'shared issues' refers to reports and assessments produced by the NIEA in respect of the regulation of authorised waste management facilities.

Departmental records in relation to the determination and regulation of an authorised waste management facility are retained in a records management system. Some of these records form part of a public register (Article 34 of the Waste and Contaminated Land Order 1997) and upon request, subject to data protection restrictions, can be viewed. These records may also be available through a request made to the department under the Freedom of Information Act and/or the Environmental Information Regulations.

Given the above I would not intend to examine any changes to the legislative framework.

Yours sincerely

ANDREW MUIR MLA
Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

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

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

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE
We invest in people Standard



Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

Jacob Young MP
Minister for Levelling Up
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Your Reference: C/078/2024
Our reference: MC2024/10213

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

12 May 24

Dear Marie,

Thank you for your email of 16 April to the Secretary of State, the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, about Glór Uachtar Tíre. I am responding as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

Glór Uachtar Tíre was awarded £204,316 in December 2022 to support its 12-month programme to purchase and renovate a former bank building and operate it as a community hub. The former bank building was then taken off the market by the vendor and the organisation was granted its first project change in September 2023 to buy a different local property and scale back the ambition as to what could be delivered in terms of additionality (e.g. café, outside space). The group was paid in October 2023 so that it could buy this new premises.

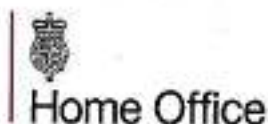
In November 2023, a second project change request was approved to give Glór Uachtar Tíre further time to purchase and renovate the premises. The group said that it would purchase the premises in January 2024 and deliver refurbishments by the end of February 2024. The organisation then requested a third project change for additional time, as it had not started or delivered since receiving its second project change in November 2023.

The group was informed via its grant manager in March 2024 that it would not receive a third project change, as the Community Ownership Fund's (COF) eligibility criteria state that projects must be able to deliver within 12 months and Glór Uachtar Tíre was awarded funding on that basis. Glór Uachtar Tíre had already been granted additional time to deliver, over this 12-month requirement.

I understand that Glór Uachtar Tíre is disappointed with this outcome; however, there is never any guarantee that project change requests will be granted for any project. In total, Glór Uachtar Tíre has been paid £117,500 by the COF to support the purchase of a premises, as well as attendant costs. The COF has ensured that the organisation has been able to buy a usable premise.

Thank you for writing on this important matter.


JACOB YOUNG MP
Minister for Levelling Up



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Marie Ward
Newry Office
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Monaghan Row,
Newry
BT35 8DJ

DECS Reference: TRO/1133609/24
Your Reference: C/080/2024



26 April 2024

Dear Marie Ward,

Thank you for your letter of 16 April 2024 addressed to the Prime Minister about the Seasonal Worker visa route. Your letter was transferred to the Home Office on 24 April 2024, and I have been asked to reply.

The Seasonal Worker immigration route is specifically designed to support the UK horticulture and poultry sectors, both sectors which typically require higher volumes of labour, for relatively short-term periods of time, in line with seasonal production peaks. The route is not designed to support non-seasonal roles, operating on a year-round basis, such as fishing or fish processing. I am not persuaded that the labour need is seasonal, even if there is a seasonal dimension to activity in the sector, it is not clear the workforce itself is seasonal.

The Government regularly monitors labour market data to review the labour needed in different sectors. There are, however, no plans to extend the scope of the Seasonal Worker route or the maximum visa grant beyond the existing six months. Employers should look to recruit from the domestic labour market in the first instance which includes those who have EU settled status (over 5.2 million people) to fill vacancies such as those described in your correspondence.

In April 2022, the Government announced bespoke arrangements for the fishing sector to assist them in obtaining sponsor licenses and visas for fishermen. The support includes a direct point of contact in UKVI and expedited processing of licenses and visas at no extra cost. The Government is committed to maintaining this support for the sector and has

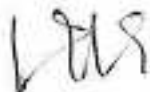
seen an uptake of fishermen successfully using the Skilled Worker route since the extra support was announced. This is a very good visa offering which is not replicated for other sectors.

On 17 January, we commissioned the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) to carry out a rapid review of the Shortage Occupation List (SOL) to inform which occupations should be temporarily added to an Immigration Salary List (ISL).

In that review they recommended removing jobs in the fishing industry due to concerns over migrant exploitation.

The Government rejected the MAC's recommendations and in its response to the MAC noted – and shared – the MAC's concerns about exploitation in the sector and the limited evidence of its efforts to reduce reliance on immigration. These are issues which need to be addressed, however, we believed that the sector needed further support to solve them including identifying what other (non-immigration) support can be provided to the sector to help. The decision not to remove the salary threshold discount, means employers in the catching sector only have to meet the new £30,960 salary level.

Yours sincerely,



PP

S Carson

Email: Public.Enquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk

From the Minister of Finance



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Chief Executive
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O'Hagan House
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Your reference: C/099/2024
Our reference: GM-1317-2024
Date: 24 May 2024

Marie, a chara

NOTICE OF MOTION – BABY LOSS

Thank you for your letter of 14 May 2024, in which you relayed the discussion which the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council recently held regarding the motion on baby loss in Northern Ireland.

I have read your letter and I wanted to thank you for the unanimous support that Council members are lending to this important work. As I had opportunity to say in the Chamber recently, the loss of a baby is a tragic thing for any family to experience. It is right that we should do everything in our power to support those who have had to endure this pain. Although a certificate cannot reverse or undo the pain which baby loss inflicts on women and on families, the introduction of a voluntary Baby Loss Certificate Scheme may help many of them to process their loss.

As you will likely be aware, I have directed my officials to examine how a scheme of this nature would work in our context. I have also directed that they should work with the Department of Health in bringing this forward, and I will ensure you are kept informed as we progress this important work.

Is mise le meas,

**DR CAOIMHE ARCHIBALD MLA
MINISTER OF FINANCE**

FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Máinistiríe O Póistíe

www.health-ni.gov.uk

Marie Ward
Chief Executive
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

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Your Ref: C/099/2024

Our Ref: COR-1648-2024

Date: 30 May 2024

Dear Marie

BABY LOSS CERTIFICATE SCHEME AND PAEDIATRIC PATHOLOGY SERVICE

Thank you for your correspondence of 14 May 2024, regarding the establishment of a Baby Loss Certificate Scheme for Northern Ireland for parents who have lost a baby during pregnancy before 24 weeks.

I recognise the impact that pregnancy loss at any stage can have on parents and welcome the recent introduction of pre-24-week pregnancy loss certificates in England.

My Department will continue to engage with their counterparts in the Department of Health and Social Care in England as the new system is embedded there, with a view to understanding whether it might be possible to implement such a scheme in Northern Ireland, including any associated costs.

Following a debate in the Assembly on 15 April regarding baby loss certificates and the paediatric pathology service, it has been agreed that my officials will work with their counterparts in the Department of Finance's General Register Office to consider the introduction of such a scheme in Northern Ireland.

Officials have now met on a number of occasions and will continue to liaise to consider the introduction of a scheme for Northern Ireland.

With regards to paediatric pathology, Alder Hey NHS Trust in Liverpool continues to provide an interim paediatric pathology service for Northern Ireland families. This arrangement has been in place since 3 January 2019, when the service in Belfast became unsustainable following the resignation of the sole paediatric pathologist in Northern Ireland.

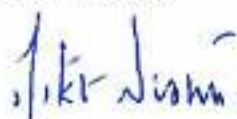
Significant efforts have been made to retain a service within Northern Ireland; however, access to perinatal and paediatric pathology services remains under considerable pressure across the UK and globally due to a national shortage of paediatric pathologists.

My Department remains committed to progressing scoping work with the Department of Health in Ireland to explore the feasibility of an all-island approach to these services. Progressing the feasibility assessment would require the commitment of Governments in both jurisdictions to proceed.

In the meantime, my Department's priority is to ensure that bereaved parents receive pathology reports as quickly as possible through the current arrangements with Alder Hey Children's Hospital, which will continue to guarantee Northern Ireland families access to the full range of high quality, reliable and timely paediatric pathology services.

I trust you find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Nesbitt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

Mike Nesbitt MLA
Minister of Health



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

An Roinn
Pobal

Department for
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91

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E-mail: culturealbsponsorship@communities-ni.gov.uk

Our ref: TOF-1421-2024

Date: 30 May 2024

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Newry BT35 8DJ

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

Dear Marie,

NOTICE OF MOTION – ARTS SECTOR CALLS

Thank you for your follow-up letter of 14 May to Minister Gordon Lyons providing an update from the Council Meeting on 7 May. I have been asked to reply on his behalf.

I can confirm that the NI Executive has now agreed the 2024/25 budget however budget allocations within this Department are not yet settled and therefore I cannot provide you with any details at this stage.

The financial outlook for this year is extremely challenging, however, I can assure you that the Department recognises the wide range of benefits that the arts deliver and will continue to reflect that in the allocations that we are able to provide.

Yours sincerely,

IAIN GREENWAY
Director of Culture

**From the Office of the Minister
CONOR MURPHY MLA**



Marie Ward
Chief Executive, Newry, Mourne & Down District Council

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Our ref: INV-1624-2024

3 June 2024

Marie a chara,

THE INCLUSION OF COUNTIES ARMAGH & DOWN IN IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST

Thank you for your email of 20 May 2024 inviting me to meet with the Council to discuss the inclusion of Counties Armagh and Down in Ireland's Ancient East.

I would be delighted to attend, subject to any urgent Northern Ireland Assembly business that I may be called to at short notice.

My Diary Manager, Nichola Bewley, will be in touch to make the necessary arrangements.

Is mise le meas



**Conor Murphy MLA
Minister for the Economy**