

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

NMD/C/

Minutes of Council Meeting held on Monday 2 September 2024 at 6.00pm in Council Chamber, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick

In the Chair: Councillor P Byrne

In attendance in Chamber:

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor C Bowsie
Councillor J Brennan	Councillor P Campbell
Councillor W Clarke	Councillor L Devlin
Councillor C Enright	Councillor K Feehan
Councillor D Finn	Councillor A Finnegan
Councillor C Galbraith	Councillor O Hanlon
Councillor G Hanna	Councillor R Howell
Councillor T Howie	Councillor J Jackson
Councillor G Kearns	Councillor C King
Councillor M Larkin	Councillor D Lee-Surginor
Councillor A Lewis	Councillor O Magennis
Councillor A Mathers	Councillor D McAteer
Councillor L McEvoy	Councillor S O'Hare
Councillor A Quinn	Councillor H Reilly
Councillor M Rice	Councillor M Ruane
Councillor G Sharvin	Councillor D Taylor
Councillor J Truesdale	Councillor H Young

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

C/133/2024 APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillor Gibbons, Harte, D Murphy, K Murphy, S Murphy and Tinnelly.

The Chairperson advised an emergency motion had been received and would be dealt with later in the meeting.

On behalf of everyone at Council the Chairperson offered condolences to the family of the late Caolan Finnegan who sadly passed away with thoughts of all with his father Liam, Mother Jeanette, his brothers Stephen, Ronan, Patsy and Liam and girlfriend Emily at this sad time.

The Chairperson expressed condolences on behalf of the Council to the family of Tracey Crossan (nee McVerry) who had sadly passed away.

Congratulations were extended to all staff involved in the recent Wake the Giant Festival in Warrenpoint at which two new giants had joined Fionn the Giant this year.

The Chairperson offered congratulations to the Mourne Chamber Music Festival which the Deputy Chairperson had attended and from speaking with the audience they thoroughly enjoyed the festival and looked forward to it coming back to Newcastle next year.

At the request of Councillor Andrews, the Chairperson sent congratulations to the village of Shrigley on celebrating the bicentenary of the establishment of its foundation in 1824.

The Chairperson joined Councillor Howell in congratulating those who had qualified for the All-Ireland fleadh in Wexford and all who were successful in bringing medals home to the District. He also congratulated those clubs within South Armagh who had received 5 gold medals as well as an All-Ireland Senior Pipes Champion for the first time in South Armagh's history and spoke of the trad night held in Crossmaglen as part of the Lúnasa festival. The Chairperson commended the talent held across the District referring to An Bonnán Búí one of his charities for the year ahead, which would be launched in the coming weeks.

The Chairperson acknowledged the LGBTQ+ Women's Group for bringing Pride back after a five year gap and spoke of how it was a remarkable occasion where he and Councillor Lee-Surginor, Deputy Chairperson led the parade with the Lord Mayor of Belfast and the Mayor of Lisburn and Castlereagh and how that had sent out a such positive message. He further extended a huge well done to everybody involved in organising the event which he hoped would be back bigger and better next year.

Members were reminded to submit nominations for Civic Awards to Democratic Services as soon as possible as it was important Councillors used their role to acknowledge people across the District for the fantastic work being done.

C/134/2024 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

C/135/2024 ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 5 AUGUST 2024

C/132/2024: Emergency Notice of Motion, Shimna House, Ward 15

In acknowledging that a response had been received from the Chief Executive of the South Eastern Trust, Councillor Sharvin queried the Council's request for her to meet with Council regarding Shimna House at the earliest convenience.

Mrs Ward confirmed this request had been made and would be followed up on.

Agreed: **The Action Sheet from Council Meeting held on 5 Augst 2024 was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor McEvoy.**

C/136/2024 COUNCIL MINUTES FOR ADOPTION AND SIGNING OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 5 AUGUST 2024

Read: **Minutes of Council Meeting held on 5 August 2024 (copy circulated).**

Agreed: **The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 5 August 2024 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Sharvin.**

COMMITTEE MINUTES FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION

C/137/2024 MINUTES OF AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 31 JULY 2024

Read: Minutes of Audit Committee Meeting held on 31 July 2024 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of Audit Committee Meeting held on 31 July 2024 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Devlin.

C/138/2024 MINUTES OF ECONOMY, REGENERATION AND TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 AUGUST 2024

Read: Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 12 August 2024 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 12 August 2024 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted on the proposal of Councillor Bowsie, seconded by Councillor Andrews.

C/139/2024 MINUTES OF STRATEGY POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15 AUGUST 2024

Read: Minutes of Strategy Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 15 August 2024 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 15 August 2024 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Quinn.

C/140/2024 MINUTES OF SPECIAL STRATEGY POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 27 AUGUST 2024

Read: Minutes of Special Strategy Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 27 August 2024 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of Special Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 27 August 2024 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor McAteer.

C/141/2024

**MINUTES OF ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON 19 AUGUST 2024**

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

Agreed: The Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 19 August 2024 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Jackson, seconded by Councillor Finnegan.

C/142/2024

**MINUTES OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON 21 AUGUST 2024**

Read: Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 21 August 2024 (copy circulated).

SE/093/2024: Proposed Installation of Height Restriction Barriers at Council Car Parks
Councillor McAteer made reference to the Motor Home Strategy discussed at the Committee meeting and spoke of the importance that the Strategy was produced as soon as possible.

Mrs Murphy confirmed queries raised in relation to the Motor Home Strategy were to be brought to the next Sustainability and Environment Working Group Meeting and that the Strategy was to be finalised in joint working with the Economy, Regeneration and Tourism directorate.

Councillor Clarke welcomed that the Motor Home Strategy was to be finalised following on from a motion he had brought forward through the Economy, Resources and Tourism Committee and spoke at length about the need to look at areas to improve the infrastructure to take the pressure of popular areas and encourage visitors off-season.

Councillor Hanna also welcomed a Strategy and joined Councillors McAteer and Clarke's comments that there were unique opportunities throughout the Council area particularly for provision in rural areas for motorhome/caravan users e.g. at Ballyhornan, Spelga Dam.

Councillor Hanna commented that he would like to see the temporary height restrictions in place during the Irish Open to be made permanent.

Councillor Devlin suggested that an invite be extended to the DEAs and Mourne Councillors to attend the next working group meeting for consideration given some of the issues they were having and local knowledge.

Agreed: The Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 21 August 2024 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Young.

Read: Report dated 2 September 2024 from Mrs Ward, Chief Executive, regarding an update on correspondence received for the attention of Council.

Correspondence from the Department for Infrastructure: C/084/2024, C/129/2024 Newry Southern Relief Road

Councillor Finn proposed Council write back to the Department to confirm they were happy to meet with Mr Stevenson but would also like to meet with the Minister at any stage and Members would make themselves available to do so. Councillor Feehan seconded the proposal.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Finn, seconded by Councillor Feehan that Council write back to the Department to schedule a meeting with Mr Stevenson but that Council would also like to meet with the Minister at any stage.

Correspondence from NI Water regarding Economic Constraints

Councillor Hanlon stated it was really worrying that NI Water could not deliver on the amount of Units that were needed across the North but that it was welcome news that they were engaging with the top 20 developers and trying to roll that out to smaller developers because that might allow key developments to go ahead.

Councillor Hanna voiced concern at how constraints were going to have major impact on the Local Development Plan if it could not provide the infrastructure required and how there were no major developers within South Down.

Mr Mallon responded that the infrastructure deficit in terms of waste water was well known across all Council areas however work was undertaken on an individual application basis with NI Water to develop waste water assessments to determine if an application could proceed. He added that through the Local Development Plan (LDP) there was an opportunity to highlight areas for development and understand what the infrastructure deficit was during that process. Members were advised Council worked closely with NI Water and the LDP team would continue to do so along with all other statutory agencies with the development of the plan.

Councillor Hanna proposed Council write to NI Water to request when did they anticipate moving forward with developments being held up in areas such as Kilkeel and Warrenpoint and ask for some indication as to when that would move forward. Councillor Feehan seconded the proposal.

Councillor McAteer voiced his concerns that the letter received compounded the problems being faced with one crisis after another with no action and that as a Council Members could try their best for communities however it was not happening in terms of Central Government.

Councillor McAteer referred to a previous Council Meeting with NI Water and asked that what was asked of NI Water at that meeting be addressed.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hanna, seconded by Councillor Feehan that Council write to NI Water to request when did they anticipate moving forward with developments being held up in areas such as Kilkeel and Warrenpoint and ask for some indication as to when that would move forward.

It was agreed to follow up and request a response on actions following the Special Council Meeting with NI Water held on 29 April 2024.

Correspondence from Department of Health regarding request for Local Government representatives to be members of Area Integrated Partnership Boards

In response to a query from Councillor Taylor the Chief Executive clarified that it was an independent Expression of Interest managed by the Department of Health and Council required only a list of names of nominees for record purposes.

Agreed: It was agreed names of nominees to the Area Integrated Partnership Board be forwarded to Democratic Services by end of 2 September 2024.

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

- **South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust: Notice of Motion C/132/2024 Shimna House, Ward 15.**
- **Department for Infrastructure: C/084/2024, C/129/2024 Newry Southern Relief Road.**
- **NI Water regarding Economic Constraints.**
- **Department of Health regarding request for Local Government representatives to be members of Area Integrated Partnership Boards.**
- **NI Courts and Tribunals Service regarding an increase to Court Fees from 1 October 2024.**

C/144/2024 **NOTICE OF MOTION – GOOD RELATIONS PROGRAMMES**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Truesdale:

"That this is Council recognises the vital role of Good Relations programmes in supporting reconciliation in a society recovering from conflict, bringing communities together, creating shared spaces, challenging sectarian, racism and other forms of prejudice, and promoting respect for all cultural identities; strongly condemns the recent violence and targeting of businesses; encourages greater support and investment for sporting and cultural events as a mechanism for uniting local communities; registers its disappointment that an enhanced and fully-funded regional Good Relations Strategy has not been prioritised since the restoration of the NI Assembly; further records its disappointment that the reduction in good relations funding granted in 2023/24 to Councils by The Executive Office has not been reinstated to previous levels; and requests a review from Officers of the progress and future opportunities available to enhance Good Relations programmes in [council area] to be completed within 6 months".

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Young.

Agreed: **The Motion was referred to the Good Relations Forum in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Finn:

"Newry, Mourne and Down District Council recognises the impact that addiction has on individuals, families and communities across our district. This Council commends the work of those organisations who are supporting people on their path to recovery and will write to the Health Minister to invite him to meet with organisations across the district along with a delegation of councillors to discuss how best we can work in partnership to support the invaluable work they do".

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Galbraith.

In presenting Motion, Councillor Finn began by stating that alcohol and drug addiction within society was one of the biggest public health issues that had to be addressed and was one which since the pandemic had only become more prevalent and damaging. She made reference to statistics and Members were minded that behind every statistic there were families who had lost a loved one and that many within the chamber had in some way experienced addiction within their own family units or friend groups.

Councillor Finn spoke of how there was still a stigma when speaking about addiction and that was something as Councillors working within communities must work towards breaking. Open conversations about addiction should be had and anyone struggling with addiction should know there was support and help out there.

Councillor Finn spoke of a meeting with representatives of Davina's Ark in Newry and how it offered hope and new opportunity to many within society who were affected by addiction and the work carried was critically important. Davina's Ark was just one of a number of organisations such as Cuan Muire and AA who worked across the greater Newry area and it was hoped the motion would provide an opportunity to show that as public representatives Members supported and stood in solidarity for those working within that sector as well as those people and families facing addiction.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Galbraith stated everyone was aware of the invaluable work organisations provided not only to support a person trying to recover from an addiction, but also in supporting family members who suffered.

Councillor Galbraith added that from speaking with some families he had learnt it was vital that everyone involved including the individual, family and community were helped in recognising the early stages of addiction at which the chances of success in recovery were greatest. This in turn lead to less chance of serious health issues, family breakdowns, job loss and even take some pressure of the already struggling health services.

Councillor Hanlon voiced support for the motion on behalf of Sinn Féin agreeing that there were few families who would be touched by addiction in whatever form it presented itself. She spoke of how only last month Council had discussed the threat to Ward 15 locally and how thankfully there had been temporary measures put in place which needed to be ratified into something more permanent. Referring to Davina's Arc. as well as Cuan Mhuire and Friends of Ward 15 who both were celebrating their 50th anniversary, Councillor Hanlon pointed out that without such organisations people would die and were being saved by the work being undertaken as too were their families who suffered as well as the person going through the addiction.

In voicing support for the motion on behalf of their respective parties, Councillors Hanna and Taylor spoke of how it was such an important issue for families across the District particularly with the suicide levels and how there was a need for government to be more proactive and support the charitable sector.

Councillor Taylor spoke of how the health and wellbeing of the people was one of the main principles for Council and therefore it should do all it could to find a way of improving that further to ease anybody's suffering from addiction.

Councillor Howie echoed the sentiments of Members on behalf of her party and that it was important to write to the Department of Health to get their support in tackling the issue to addiction and ensure provision of essential support.

Councillor Finn thanked Members for their support for the motion which was unanimously agreed.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Finn, seconded by Councillor Galbraith that Newry, Mourne and Down District Council recognises the impact that addiction has on individuals, families and communities across our district. This Council commends the work of those organisations who are supporting people on their path to recovery and will write to the Health Minister to invite him to meet with organisations across the district along with a delegation of councillors to discuss how best we can work in partnership to support the invaluable work they do.**

C/146/2024 **NOTICE OF MOTION – FAST TRACKED CITIES**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Feehan:

“This Council recognises that ending the HIV epidemic requires a comprehensive approach that allows all those in need, to access quality lifesaving treatment, enhances prevention, care, and support services for HIV, tuberculosis (TB), and viral hepatitis.

Council further recognises that integrating these services into sexual, reproductive, and mental health services is critical to achieving universal access to health care. Seeks to eliminate stigma and discrimination by building on scientific evidence. Understanding that successful HIV treatment and viral suppression prevents HIV transmission which can help reduce stigma and encourage people living with HIV to initiate and adhere to HIV treatment.

Acknowledges by working together, cities and municipalities can accelerate local actions towards ending the HIV, TB, and viral hepatitis epidemics globally by 2030. As called for by the New Urban Agenda, we will leverage our reach, infrastructure, and human capacity to build a more equitable, inclusive, prosperous, and sustainable future for all our residents, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, and social and economic circumstances.

Therefore, this Council will sign up to the Paris Declaration supporting the Fast-Track Cities aim of eliminating the stigma associated with HIV and AIDS as well as aiming for no new HIV diagnosis by 2030.”

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Andrews.

In presenting the Motion, Councillor Feehan spoke at length about the need to destigmatise HIV and AIDS as a condition. He made reference to the Chairperson speaking earlier in the meeting about the recent Pride Parade in Newry and how 10/15 years ago that would have been unimaginable in this part of the world, and whilst a lot of progress had been made certain stigmas that still existed and HIV diagnosis and status was one of them.

Councillor Feehan stated it was not about reinventing the wheel or investing billions of pounds in medical research, but rather it was about connecting people who were at risk with the

resources and treatment needed to live long lives. This disease could be managed and was no longer a death sentence.

In asking for support, Councillor Feehan said there was still a lot of work to do in reassuring people and as leaders of the local community it was important to get the message out clearly from Council that there was absolutely no shame in HIV and no reason to keep it hidden as it was treatable and preventable.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Andrews spoke of the importance of the overall aims and aspirations by supporting the Fast Track Cities in eliminating the stigma associated with HIV and AIDS as well as aiming for no new HIV diagnosis by 2030.

Councillor Hanlon, on behalf of Sinn Féin, spoke in support of the motion and the importance of encouraging conversations about the continued risks and impacts of HIV and the need for ongoing awareness and allow people to take advantage of the support that was available.

Councillor Lee-Surginor stated Alliance was fully supportive of the Motion and Council signing up to the Paris Declaration and endorsed the initiative. He spoke of how the declaration represented a bold commitment to creating a healthier, more inclusive urban environment and taking a significant step towards addressing the public health challenges that affect communities and this would require a concerted effort from all sectors of society, including local government, healthcare providers and community organisations.

The Chairperson spoke of as Chairperson he had met with Positive Life and would be working during his term to raise awareness around testing and publicly doing testing to raise awareness of the issue because to destigmatise issues like this was so important.

The Motion which was unanimously agreed.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Feehan, seconded by Councillor Andrews that Council recognises that ending the HIV epidemic requires a comprehensive approach that allows all those in need, to access quality lifesaving treatment, enhances prevention, care, and support services for HIV, tuberculosis (TB), and viral hepatitis.

Council further recognises that integrating these services into sexual, reproductive, and mental health services is critical to achieving universal access to health care. Seeks to eliminate stigma and discrimination by building on scientific evidence. Understanding that successful HIV treatment and viral suppression prevents HIV transmission which can help reduce stigma and encourage people living with HIV to initiate and adhere to HIV treatment.

Acknowledges by working together, cities and municipalities can accelerate local actions towards ending the HIV, TB, and viral hepatitis epidemics globally by 2030. As called for by the New Urban Agenda, we will leverage our reach, infrastructure, and human capacity to build a more equitable, inclusive, prosperous, and sustainable future for all our residents, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, and social and economic circumstances.

Therefore, this Council will sign up to the Paris Declaration supporting the Fast-Track Cities aim of eliminating the stigma associated with HIV and AIDS as well as aiming for no new HIV diagnosis by 2030.

EMERGENCY NOTICE OF MOTION

The Chairperson advised an emergency Notice of Motion had been received, the wording of which had been emailed to all Councillors and to enable it to be heard, it would be necessary to suspend Standing Order 16.1.1 for which a qualified majority vote was required. (80% of Members present and voting).

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Finnegan, seconded by Councillor Quinn to suspend Standing Order 16.1.1 at this point of the meeting to allow the tabling of the emergency Notice of Motion received by the Chairperson from Councillor Finnegan.

The Chairperson put the matter to a recorded a vote, the results of which were as follows: (copy attached)

FOR:	35
AGAINST:	0
ABSTENTIONS:	0

It was agreed by a qualified majority vote to suspend Standing Orders 16.1.1 (copy attached)

Councillor Enright left the meeting at this point – 6.54pm.

C/147/2024: EMERGENCY NOTICE OF MOTION – WINTER FUEL PAYMENTS

The following Emergency Motion was received from Councillor Finnegan:

“This Council notes with concern the recent decision by the British Government to cut Winter Fuel Payments.

*- Write to British Government raising our concern at the cruel cuts to this payment
- Write to Minister of Communities asking that he prioritises the Anti-Poverty and Fuel Poverty Strategies*

The most vulnerable in our society need to be protected”.

The Emergency Motion was seconded by Councillor Quinn.

In presenting the Motion, Councillor Finnegan said it was deeply concerning that one of the first acts of the new British Government was to cut fuel payments and all Executive parties had collectively highlighted those concerns in a letter to the British Prime Minister.

Councillor Finnegan said that working every day in a constituency office she saw first hand that people were already struggling with the cost of living, including increased fuel and energy bills. She said the new British Government needed to leave behind the Tory austerity policies of the past 14 years and work to protect workers, families and public services and it was essential that everything possible was done to protect those in need.

Councillor Finnegan said it was vital that the Executive continued to do all in its power to protect those in most need and urged the Communities Minister to bring forward the Anti-Poverty and Fuel Poverty Strategies soon as possible. Whilst acknowledging the difficult position of the Executive, and in particular the Communities Minister it was imperative to understand the origin of these cuts was the British government at Westminster.

Councillor Sharvin stated the SDLP agreed that the most vulnerable within society needed to be protected, and the only way that could be done was to reverse the decision and restore winter fuel payment support. He said it was important to state that this had not just been a decision by the Communities Minister but a decision made by the Executive.

Councillor Sharvin proposed an amendment that Council write to the Communities and Finance Minister to ask that they reverse the decision with a clear statement that the impact that this would have on the most vulnerable in our society.

Councillor Finn seconded Councillor Sharvin's proposed amendment.

Councillor Finnegan did not accept the proposed amendment put forward by Councillor Sharvin.

The Chairperson asked for a show of hands for Councillor Sharvin's proposed amendment, seconded by Councillor Finn, the results of which were as follows:

For:	8
Against:	26
Abstentions:	0

The proposed amendment was lost.

Councillor Sharvin stated that as a Council there was a responsibility to represent the people of District and to write to those that were making these extremely difficult but wrong decisions that were attacking the most vulnerable in our society.

Councillor Sharvin proposed an amendment that Council write to all Executive parties to ask that they work together to find the solution to this.

Councillor Andrews seconded Councillor Sharvin's proposed amendment.

Councillor Finnegan accepted the proposed amendment put forward by Councillor Sharvin.

Councillor Hanna welcomed what was a very important motion and agreed with Councillor Sharvin in that the Executive had made the decision and that DUP MPs in Westminster were working hard to mitigate that, if even for it to be a little bit more flexible would make a difference to a lot of people.

Councillor Hanna said it was going to cost £44 million for Stormont to cover what Westminster had removed and with the Communities Minister facing a £110 million overspend he questioned where would the money come from. He said the removal of the payment was a vicious attack on the elderly and needed to be reversed or mitigated in some way that not as many people were impacted.

Councillor Taylor spoke about the position the Northern Ireland Executive had found itself in following on from the decision taken by the Prime Minister in the Labour Government and having to find money to preserve the universal approach to winter fuel payments in an already challenging budget environment.

He said he understood there were some who would argue that the universal distribution of the winter fuel payment was unsustainable but the position that the Executive had found itself in risked leaving many pensioner households in significant hardship. He spoke of the outcomes in terms of health and how the cuts were both socially and economically detrimental and the Executive was in a very difficult position as a result of that.

Councillor Taylor said he hoped any representations that could be made from Council could be looked upon favourably, to allow at least a solution that worked for those that were going to be impacted within society here in Northern Ireland.

Councillor Reilly spoke of his disbelief at the decision taken by Prime Minister Starmer referring to moneys to be given to Ukraine and immigration costs.

The Chairperson requested that Councillor Reilly remain on the subject of the motion to which he replied it was relevant to the motion as the people who built the country up over 60 to 80 odd years were being denied a cold weather payment. Councillor Reilly made reference to the Republic of Ireland which had a cold weather scheme that was heavily means tested.

Councillor Truesdale, on behalf of Alliance, voiced support for the motion as it was not as simple as reversal and there would be consequences with public finances in Northern Ireland severely stretched and the cost of breaking parity on the winter fuel payment would result in less money on the spend of healthcare, schools, policing, justice and other services.

Councillor Truesdale asked that it be known that older people who were struggling with fuel costs could also apply for help through discretionary support which provided grants and loans to help with living costs for those in severe financial hardship and had considerably wider eligibility in terms of annual income compared to pension credit.

The Chairperson declared the Motion unanimously agreed.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Finnegan, seconded by Councillor Quinn that this Council notes with concern the recent decision by the British Government to cut Winter Fuel Payments.**
- Write to British Government raising our concern at the cruel cuts to this payment
- Write to Minister of Communities asking that he prioritises the Anti-Poverty and Fuel Poverty Strategies
- Write to all Executive parties to ask that they work together to find the solution to this

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 7.15pm.

For confirmation at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 7 October 2024.

Signed:

Chairperson

Chief Executive

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL
RECORDED VOTE

DATE: 2 September 2024

VENUE: Downshire Civic Centre

MEETING: Council

SUBJECT OF VOTE: Suspension of Standing Orders to hear Emergency Motion

COUNCILLOR	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
T Andrews	X			
C Bowsie	X			
J Brennan	X			
P Byrne	X			
P Campbell	X			
W Clarke	X			
L Devlin	X			
C Enright	X			
K Feehan	X			
D Finn	X			
A Finnegan	X			
C Galbraith	X			
M Gibbons				X
O Hanlon	X			
G Hanna	X			
V Harte				X
R Howell	X			
T Howie	X			
J Jackson	X			
G Kearns	X			
C King	X			
M Larkin	X			
D Lee-Surginor	X			
A Lewis	X			
O Magennis	X			
A Mathers	X			
D McAteer	X			
L McEvoy	X			
D Murphy				X
K Murphy				X
S Murphy				X
S O'Hare	X			
A Quinn	X			
H Reilly	X			
M Rice	X			
M Ruane	X			
G Sharvin	X			
D Taylor	X			
J Tinnelly	X			X
J Truesdale	X			
H Young	X			
TOTALS	35	-	-	6

