



February 6th, 2023

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the Council meeting to be held on **Monday, 6th February 2023** at **6:00 pm** in **Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre & MS Teams.**

Agenda

1.0 Apologies and Chairperson's Remarks

2.0 Declarations of Interest

3.0 To set a District Rate for the Financial Year 2023/24

- 📄 *Council Report re District Rate 2023-24.pdf* *Page 1*

- 📄 *Appendix 1 - MTFP - 6 Feb 2023.pdf* *Page 6*

- 📄 *Appendix 2 - General Estimate of Rates 2023-24 Form for Striking Combined District Rates.pdf* *Page 7*

- 📄 *Appendix 3 - Capital Strategy Report Template 2023-24.pdf* *Page 9*

- 📄 *Appendix 4 - NMDDC Capital Programme at 31.1.23.pdf* *Page 14*

- 📄 *Appendix 5 - Treasury Management Strategy Template 2023.24_.pdf* *Page 18*

- 📄 *Appendix 6 - Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2023-24.pdf* *Page 36*

3.1 Items deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of part 1 of schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014

- 📄 *App 7 Doc - Rates - EXEMPT PAPER.pdf* *Not included*

4.0 Action Sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 9 January 2023

- 📄 *Action Sheet Council Meeting 09-01-2023.pdf* *Page 38*

Council Minutes For Adoption and Signing

5.0 Minutes of Council Meeting held on 9 January 2023

For Approval

- 📄 *Council Minutes 09.01.2023.pdf* *Page 45*

Committee Minutes for Consideration and Adoption

6.0 Minutes of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 16 January 2023

For Approval

7.0 Minutes of Audit Committee Meeting held on 18 January 2023

For Approval

ERT Minutes 18 January 2023.pdf

Page 77

8.0 Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 19 January 2023

For Approval

SPR Minutes 19 January 2023.pdf

Page 87

9.0 Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 23 January 2023

For Approval

AHC Minutes 23 January 2023.pdf

Page 96

10.0 Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 25 January 2023

For Approval

Sustainability and Environment Committee Minutes - 25-01-2023.pdf

Page 103

11.0 Planning Section

There were no issues arising from the Planning Committee Meeting

Correspondence

12.0 Northern Ireland Housing Council Minutes dated 8 December 2022 and Bulletin - January 2023

For Information

Housing Council Minutes - 8th December 2022.pdf

Page 107

Members Bulletin - 12 January 2023.pdf

Page 119

13.0 Response from NIO re NOM C/183/2022: Cost of Living Crisis

For Information

Letter dated 12 January attached

14.0 Response from HM Treasury re NOM C/183/2022 - Government help with Cost of Living Crisis

Letter dated 18 January 2023 attached


 *Response from HM Treasury re NOM C.183.2022 - Cost of Living Crisis.pdf*

Page 123

15.0 Responses from Armagh, Banbridge Craigavon Council, Fermanagh & Omagh District Council, Mid Ulster District Council and Ards and North Down Borough Council re NOM C/207/2022: Workers Legal Right to Tips

For Information

Letters dated 4, 13 and 30 January 2023 and 6 February 2023 attached

 *Response from ABC re NOM C.207.2022 - Workers Legal Rights to Tips.pdf*

Page 125

 *Response from Fermanagh and Omagh DC re NOM C.207.2022 Workers Legal Right to Tips.pdf*

Page 127

 *Response from Mid Ulster DC re NOM C.207.2022 Workers Legal Rights to Tips.pdf*

Page 128

 *Response from Ards & N Down BC re NOM C.207.2022 - Workers Legal Right to Tips.pdf*

Page 129

16.0 Copy of letter to Colum Boyle, Permanent Secretary, Department for Communities re Rates Support Grant

For Information

Letter dated 18 January 2023 attached

 *Copy of letter to Colum Boyle 18.1.22.pdf*

Page 130

17.0 Response from NIO re NOM C/206/2022 - Cervical Screening in N. Ireland


Letter date 23 January 2023 attached.

 *Response from NIO re NOM C.206.2022 - Cervical Cancer Screening in N.I..pdf*

Page 131

18.0 Response from PSNI re NOM C/022/2023 - Former Warrenpoint Police Station

Letter dated 25 January attached

 *Response from PSNI re NOM C.022.2023 - Former Warrenpoint Police Station.pdf*

Page 132

19.0 Acknowledgement from Catherine Martin TD in response to letter ref. C/020/2023

Letter dated 26 January 2023 attached.

 *Acknowledgement from Catherine Martin TD in response to letter Ref. C.020.2023.pdf*

Page 133

Notices of Motion

22.0 Notice of Motion - Local Development Plan

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Hanlon:

"Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is responsible for the preparation of a development plan for the district and has commenced work on the Newry, Mourne and Down Local Development Plan (LDP). The LDP will provide a 15-year plan framework to support economic and social needs in the district, in line with regional strategies and policies, while providing the delivery of sustainable development. We commend the work our council planning staff and the diligent work to date by members of the planning committee in the preparation of the plan however, we are concerned the plan will not meet the huge housing need within the district. The councils Preferred Options Paper cites 10% of all households in the district reside in social housing tenure compared to the NI average of 15%. However, The need for social housing in the district has remained at a very high level since 2010 with a 31% increase from 2012. This council is committed to ensure housing need is met within this district and therefore will commit to developing a housing led regeneration plan through the strategic assessment and use of public sector land assets and adjoining private sector lands. Members will be consulted and included within the development of the strategy and good practice evidence will be gathered from similar councils to inform its development"

23.0 Notice of Motion - Recreational Sea Angling Strategy

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Clarke:

"This Council welcomes the increasing popularity of sea angling along the Down coast, recognises the potential for increased tourism and the benefits this will bring to the local economy. Calls for the development and introduction of a Recreational Sea Angling Strategy in consultation with local fishermen and the relevant agencies. Such a strategy should aim to;

Promote sea angling in a safe and sustainable way and

Capitalise on the opportunities for the local economy that an increase in sea angling would deliver"

24.0 Notice of Motion - Northern Ireland Electricity Suppliers

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Lee-Surginor:

"This Council notes with ongoing concern the cost of living energy crisis inflicted on our fellow citizens, hampered by the ongoing non-functioning of the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly; the lack of roll out of smart meters by Department for Economy; and agrees that more needs to be done by Northern Ireland Electricity suppliers to address these issues. In light of the 'Demand Flexibility Service' being implemented in GB to avoid blackouts and provide savings for consumers, this Council should write to NIE and all electricity suppliers encouraging them to work collaboratively to introduce a similar scheme encouraging consumers to avoid using electricity during peak times and begin rolling out smart meters for all households."

25.0 Notice of Motion - Holiday Homes

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Tinnelly:

"This council recognises that within our district, holiday home ownership is increasingly having a detrimental effect on the ability of first-time buyers to own a house in the area where they were born and raised. The long-term consequences of this may have a negative impact on local school populations, sports clubs, small family businesses and the general growth, wellbeing and sustainability of some of our towns & villages, particularly along the coast, as new and young families with generational ties to their own area are priced out of living in the place they call home. Further to a recent public statement from the Department for Infrastructure that whilst there are currently no plans to change any laws in relation to this problem, it is their view that local councils have the power to make bespoke arrangements within their own district. To that end, this council will now instruct our officials to bring forward a paper at the earliest opportunity outlining exactly what powers will be contained within our proposed local development plan to directly address this problem, powers that if robustly applied would discourage the purchase of holiday homes within our district"

26.0 Notice of Motion - School Street Schemes

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Sharvin

"Notes that the "School street" schemes in the Republic of Ireland and GB, which close the roads outside schools during drop-off and pick-up times, have the multiple benefits of improving road safety for pupils, encouraging active travel to school by walking, cycling and public transport, and improving the air quality around schools; Commends Fingal County Council which has successfully pioneered the scheme at many schools in North County Dublin; Recognises that we do not have the statutory powers to introduce such a scheme in Newry, Mourne and Down, either in pilot or permanent form; Calls on the Department for Infrastructure to bring forward urgently a School Streets pilot project in Newry, Mourne and Down, identifying a number of pilot schools across the district; Agrees that the DEA Forums will agree a number of schools in each area to recommend to the Department for Infrastructure as part of a pilot scheme; Shall explore further ways to work with all relevant partners to develop School Streets and support measures to cut vehicle emissions and pollution in the vicinity of schools, including enforceable No-Idling Zones, air quality measuring and tree planting as part of the one million trees initiative"

Invitees

- Cllr Terry Andrews
- Cllr Callum Bowsie
- Cllr Jim Brennan
- Cllr Robert Burgess
- Cllr Pete Byrne
- Mr Gerard Byrne
- Mr Andrew Cassells
- Cllr William Clarke
- Mrs Linda Cummins
- Cllr Dermot Curran
- Cllr Laura Devlin
- Ms Louise Dillon
- Cllr Cadogan Enright
- Cllr Aoife Finnegan
- Cllr Hugh Gallagher
- Cllr Mark Gibbons
- Cllr Oonagh Hanlon
- Cllr Glyn Hanna
- Cllr Valerie Harte
- Mrs Janine Hillen
- Cllr Roisin Howell
- Ms Catherine Hughes
- Cllr Jonathan Jackson
- Mr Colum 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
- Mr Michael Lipsett
- Mrs Regina Mackin
- Cllr Oonagh Magennis
- Mr Conor Mallon
- Cllr Gavin Malone
- Colette McAteer
- Cllr Declan McAteer
- Cllr Leeanne McEvoy
- Jonathan McGilly
- Cllr Harold McKee

Patricia McKeever
.....
Cllr Karen McKeivitt
.....
Cllr Andrew McMurray
.....
Catrina Miskelly
.....
Cllr Declan Murphy
.....
Cllr Barra Ó Muiri
.....
Cllr Gerry O'Hare
.....
Mr Andy Patterson
.....
Cllr Henry Reilly
.....
Cllr Michael Rice
.....
Ms Alison Robb
.....
Cllr Michael Ruane
.....
Cllr Michael Savage
.....
Mr Kevin Scullion
.....
Cllr Gareth Sharvin
.....
Donna Starkey
.....
Cllr Gary Stokes
.....
Sarah Taggart
.....
Paul Tamati
.....
Cllr David Taylor
.....
Cllr Jarlath Tinnelly
.....
Cllr John Trainor
.....
Mrs Marie Ward
.....

Report to:	Council
Date of Meeting:	6 February 2023
Subject:	District Rate 2023-24
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Marie Ward, Chief Executive Josephine Kelly, Director of Corporate Services
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Gerard Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Performance

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

For decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	For noting only	<input type="checkbox"/>
---------------------	-------------------------------------	------------------------	--------------------------

Members are asked to approve the recommendations at 3.1 below.

1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	District councils are obliged under legislation to fix for the next financial year the amount estimated to be required to be raised by means of rates made by the Council before 15 February each year; section 3 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and Regulation 3 of Part 2 of the Local Government (Capital Finance and Accounting) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011 refer.
2.0	Key issues
2.1	<p>Chief Executive's submission to Council on the adequacy of the Council's reserves position and robustness of the revenue estimates.</p> <p>In accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, the Chief Executive, as Chief Financial Officer is required to provide assurance to Members on the robustness of the revenue estimates and the adequacy of the Council's reserves position as part of the rate setting process prior to submission to the Department of Communities (DfC).</p> <p>Detailed estimates have been formulated, presented to and scrutinised by Members at Strategic Finance Working Group. These have taken into account outturns from previous years, corporate pressures, planned savings and efficiencies, current spending plans and projected future investment and that adequate funding is available to protect frontline services.</p> <p>There have been six SFWG since June 2022 in preparation for this year rates process. The action sheets for each meeting are attached at Appendix 7.</p> <p>As a result of this extensive process and the detailed analysis that was undertaken I am satisfied that the estimates presented should provide adequate financial resources to support the running costs of the Council for 2023/24 and that reasonable consideration of the financial risks to the Council have been made in the preparation of the estimates.</p> <p>Significant uncertainties highlighted by the Chief Executive</p>

Future impact of current Economic Shocks

We continue to operate in unprecedented times, the soaring levels of inflation and cost of living crisis has the equivalent adverse impact on Council as it does on our ratepayers. The effects COVID19 continues to have bearing on Council's operations and finances in the current year, for example, leisure income has not increased to pre COVID Levels. The future impact of these two Economic Shocks on operations, on our rate base and on our finances remains uncertain, and many assumptions are included within our budgets for 2023/24 (see 2.3).

In addition, there are a number of other significant uncertainties within the current estimates:

Workforce and Trade Union Uncertainties

Staff costs are approximately 50 % of expenditure for the Council. Any increases in rates of pay therefore can have a material impact on Council finances.

The Council was able to reach agreement on the Pay Award for 2022/23 with the financial impact detailed in section 2.3 below. However, with the rates of inflation and utilities remaining at unprecedented levels, the Council, like other employers, is likely to receive pay demands for 2023/24 reflecting the economic environment.

In setting the Rate for 2023/24, pay assumptions have had to be made as the Pay Award for 2023/24 will not be known until later in the year and also balancing the impact on ratepayers. The outcome of any pay processes will have been to be managed in year, if the Pay Award exceeds the working assumptions made.

Draft budget at NI Executive level

The NI Executive is currently not sitting and there is no budget set for 2023-24. Prior to the collapse of the Assembly, Ministers were determining a three-year budget for NI (2022-25), with a draft budget out for consultation in December 2021. This would have been a significant help to Local Councils in determining the Annual District Rate. In the absence of an agreed and legislated budget, there are some significant uncertainties which remain at the time of striking the district rate. The Regional Rate for 2023/24 has not yet been set by the Secretary of State.

Included within our 2023-24 estimates are various areas of funding received from central government. We have included amounts on the basis of our previous arrangements with central government. However, it is important to note that until such times as a budget is agreed by the Northern Ireland Executive these funding streams are uncertain.

Rates Support Grant (RSG)

DfC informed Councils on the 22 December 2022, of the Rates Support Allocation for the 2022/23 Financial Year, this amounted to £8.924m. The table below demonstrates the base level reduction in RSG since the formation of the new Councils.

Rates Support Grant Funding – Opening Budget							
2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
£18.3m	£18.3m	£17.6m	£16.9m	£15.9m	£15.9m	£11.9m	£8.9m

	<p>NMDDC's allocation for 2022/23 is £753,437. The 2020/21 level was £1,473,859. The 2023/24 District Rate is not impacted, as Officers have kept the RSG support at 2020/21 levels as per the 3-year Rates Strategy. The shortfall will have to be taken from reserves which has an impact on Council over the medium to long term.</p> <p>Until an NI Executive Draft Budget is agreed for 2023/24, the total amount of RSG to be awarded to the Local Government sector is not confirmed for the 2023/24 year. However, the table above demonstrates a worrying trend of significant reductions in the level of RSG being granted to the relevant Councils. This will have a significant impact on future years.</p> <p>On the 18 January 2023, the five party leaders issued a letter to the Permanent Secretary of the DfC to increase the support being allocated to Councils through the RSG.</p> <p>Uncertainties surrounding Brexit</p> <p>Various uncertainties remain as to the impact of Brexit on the NI Economy and the NMDDC rate base and funding streams, no provision has been made in the estimates for any financial implications arising. Furthermore, included within our 2023-24 estimates are various areas of funding received from the European Union under programmes which we have been advised will continue during the 2023-24 year.</p>
2.2	<p>Long Term Financing of Council</p> <p>I am satisfied that the estimates presented, subject to the significant uncertainties noted above, should provide adequate financial resources to support the running costs of the Council for 2023-24 and that reasonable consideration of the financial risks to the Council as known to us have been made in the preparation of the estimates.</p> <p>The minimum prudent level of reserves that the Council should maintain is a matter of judgement. CIPFA (the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) guidance does not set a statutory minimum level but advised Councils to have reserves appropriate to meet your medium term financial commitments. Therefore, it is up to the Council itself, taking into account all the relevant local circumstances, to make a professional judgement on what the appropriate level of reserves and balances should be.</p> <p>Reserves are the Councils safety net for unforeseen circumstances, the consequences of not keeping a prudent minimum level of reserves can be serious. In the event of a major problem or a series of events, the Council would run a serious risk of a deficit or of being forced to cut spending during the year in a damaging and arbitrary way. It is generally accepted and considered reasonable that 1 month's expenditure is a minimum level of prudence which must be maintained (approximately £9m).</p> <p>As noted above, there remain many significant financial uncertainties facing Council. The impact of the two economic shocks and the current challenges to Land and Property Services valuation lists could have a significant impact on our rate base, presently the impact is unknown. Officers and Members are to consider ring</p>

	<p>fencing a reserve to deal with this financial uncertainty going forward in the new term of Council.</p> <p>Councils capital programme is a corporate priority to ensure investment within the District. Council reserves will assist with any economic impacts in relation to the increasing costs of construction and future economic challenges.</p> <p>I am therefore content that the current reserves held by the Council are adequate to meet the medium term financial commitments of NMDDC.</p>
2.3	<p>Key factors contributing to proposed rate increase in 2023-24</p> <p>The impact of Cost of Living crisis and inflation will continue to affect Council services in 2023/24, with assumptions made and included within budgets as to the continuing impact on our trading operations;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National and Local Pay award agreed in September 2022 has a significant impact on the 2023/24 estimates. The pay award included the NJC payment of £1,925 plus two additional spinal points over two years plus a £250 one off cost of living payment. This has led to significant recurring costs for 2023/24. A further £962.50 national award has been predicted on top of the additional spinal point for 2023/24. This has seen the payroll cost grow by £4.6m compared with the 2022/23 estimates. The national insurance (Health and Social Care Levy) increase from April 2023 has also been factored into Council's budgets. • Council utility costs have increased at unprecedented levels in 2022/23. Significant increases in budgets for Electricity, Gas, Heating Oil and Fuel have been allowed for in line with 2022/23-year actuals and forecasted usage for 2023/24. • The increased tonnages and associated costs of waste and recycling across the District have been factored into the 2023/24 budgets. Waste contracts are linked with CPI, which was 9.2% in December 2022. • The Council Insurance budget has increased by £300k based on 2022/23 actuals. Our Brokers stressed that we are in unprecedented times, and the current increasingly hardening market is accelerating across a range of covers. This trend has been ongoing for 3 years due to a number of factors - however both Brexit & Covid have added to worsening conditions and increasing uncertainty. The restricted market for Local Authority risks is reflecting the hardening of the wider market - with few potential new entrants to what is an already limited market.
3.0	<p>Recommendations</p>
3.1	<p>Members are asked to approve the considerations and recommendations of the Strategic Finance Working Group in relation to the 2023-24 rate setting process (see Appendix 7) and, having regard to the Chief Executive's statement as required by the Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 (see 2.1 & 2.2 above):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve an increase in the district rate for 2023-24 of 5.99% based on an estimated penny product of 2,471,219 meaning a non-domestic rate of 27.2846 pence and a domestic rate of 0.4395 pence;

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Approve the Medium Term Financial plan and authorise the 2023-24 expenditure included in the estimates (Appendix 1); 3. Approve the Capital Strategy Report for 2023-24 as required by the CIPFA Prudential Code. (See Appendix 3); 4. Approve the capital programme (see Appendix 4); 5. Approve the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2023-24 (see Appendix 5); 6. Approve the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2023-24 (see Appendix 6). 7. Approve the action sheets of the Strategic Finance Working Group relating to the rate setting process. (see Appendix 7: Restricted item)
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	Resource implications are as detailed in the appendices.
5.0	Equality and good relations implications
5.1	No equality or good relations implications have been identified.
6.0	Rural Proofing implications
6.1	Due regard to rural needs has been considered in making the recommendation.
7.0	Appendices
	<p>Appendix 1: Medium Term Financial Plan Appendix 2: General Estimates of Rate 2023-24 – DfC Return Appendix 3: Capital Strategy Report 2023/24 Appendix 4: Capital Programme at 31/1/2023 Appendix 5: Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2023/24 Appendix 6: Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2023/24 Appendix 7: Action Sheets of meetings of Strategic Finance Working Group to consider rate setting process 2023/24 [Restricted item].</p>
8.0	Background documents
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

Newry, Mourne & Down District Council
Medium Term Financial Plan

Appendix 1

	Actual 2022/2023 £	Proposed Rate 2023/24 £
Revenue Income	-11,305,739	-13,346,371
Lost income due to Covid - DfC	-1,200,000	0
	-12,505,739	-13,346,371
Revenue Expenditure	31,748,553	33,695,578
Payroll	38,806,401	42,676,872
MRP	4,244,000	5,767,000
Loan Interest	2,001,000	2,357,000
Total Net Spend	64,294,215	71,150,079
Rate Support Grant	-1,473,859	-753,437
RSG loss - from reserves	0	-720,422
Economic Recovery Reserve	0	-2,250,000
Net to be raised	62,820,356	67,426,220
Est'd product of 1 penny	2,567,939	2,471,219
ND District Rate (pence)	24.4633	27.2846
Conversion factor for DR	0.016949	0.016107
Domestic Rate (pence)	0.4146	0.4395
0.4004	1.94%	5.99%

Department for Communities - General Estimates of Rates 2023/2024

Council:- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Total Amount to be Raised	71,150,079	
Reduced by Rates Support Grant	-1,473,859	Zero or negative amount to be entered
*/- Balance Applied	-2,250,000	
Amount to be Raised <i>(via District Rates, De-rating and Transferred Functions Grants)</i>	67,426,220	
Total Penny Product <i>(from table below)</i>	2,471,219	
Non-Domestic District Rate	27.2846	
Council Specific Conversion Factor	0.016107	
Domestic District Rate	0.4395	

Penny Product Information	
Estimated Penny Product (Rateable) - <i>(To be based on figure provided by LPS, DoF, which is total of non-domestic and domestic penny products, with rating policy reductions applied; as this is for rate setting the council specific conversion factor will have been applied to domestic capital values)</i>	2,338,950
Estimated Penny Product (De-rated) <i>(To be based on figure provided by DoF)</i>	105,930
Derived Penny Product (Transferred Functions Grant) (Fixed amount)	26,339
Total Penny Product	2,471,219

Grants payable by DfC	
Estimated De-rating Grant (DRG) <i>(De-rating Grant payable by DfC during year will be Estimated PP (De-rated) x Non-domestic District Rate)</i>	2,890,258
Transferred Functions Grant (TFG) <i>(includes NI Local Government Commissioner for Standards Costs) (Derived Penny Product (TFG) x Non-domestic District Rate)</i>	718,649
Rates Support Grant	1,473,859

Amount payable by DoF	
Estimated Amount to be Raised via District Rates (Rateable)	63,817,313

I certify that at a meeting of the council held on _____ these estimates, having been fully considered, and as applicable amended to the extent shown in red ink, were adopted and it was resolved to determine the rate shown here for the year commencing 1 April 2023.

Signed: _____

Chief Executive

Date: _____

APPENDIX 3

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Capital Strategy Report 2023/24

Introduction

This capital strategy report gives a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. It has been written in an accessible style to enhance members' understanding of these sometimes technical areas.

Decisions made this year on capital and treasury management will have financial consequences for the Authority for many years into the future. They are therefore subject to both a national regulatory framework and to local policy framework, summarised in this report.

Capital Expenditure and Financing

Capital expenditure is where the Authority spends money on assets, such as property or vehicles, that will be used for more than one year. In local government this includes spending on assets owned by other bodies, and loans and grants to other bodies enabling them to buy assets.

In 2023/24, the Authority is planning capital expenditure of £36.5m as summarised below:

Table 1: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Expenditure in £ millions

	2021/22 actual	2022/23 forecast	2023/24 budget	2024/25 budget *	2025/26 budget
General Fund services	9.4	16.5	36.5	32.6	16.9
Add: Leasing	-	-	-	1.7	1.7
TOTAL	9.4	16.5	36.5	34.3	18.6

*An estimated £1.7m of capital expenditure in 2024/25 arises from a change in the accounting for leases and does not represent cash expenditure.

The main General Fund capital projects in 2023/24 include (gross): City Centre Regeneration Project £19.4m, Castlewellan Forest Park £2.6m, Albert Basin Project £2.1m, Mourne Gateway Project £2m and Vehicles £2.9m. Following a change in the Prudential Code, the Authority will not incur capital expenditure on investments.

Governance: : Service managers prepare business cases on new projects which are included in the Authority's capital programme. Projections are collated by the Corporate Finance Department who calculate the financing cost (which can be nil if the project is fully externally financed). The Council's Finance Working Group appraises all projects based on a comparison of service priorities against financing costs and makes recommendations to Council. The final capital programme is then agreed by full Council at a special meeting to ratify the Council's Capital Programme in February each year.

All capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources (government grants and other contributions), the Authority's own resources (revenue, reserves and capital receipts) or debt (borrowing, leasing and Private Finance Initiative). The planned financing of the above expenditure is as follows:

Table 2: Capital financing in £ millions

	2021/22 actual	2022/23 forecast	2023/24 budget *	2024/25 budget	2025/26 budget
External sources	4.5	6.9	7.3	11.2	10.9
Capital receipts	0.8	0.1	-	-	-
Revenue resources	4.1	9.50	3.4	5.1	2.7
Debt	-	-	25.8	19.7	5.0
TOTAL	9.4	17.2	36.5	34.3	18.6

* An estimated £1.7m of debt financing in 2024/25 arises from a change in the accounting for leases and does not represent cash expenditure

Debt is only a temporary source of finance, since loans and leases must be repaid, and this is therefore replaced over time by other financing, usually from revenue which is known as minimum revenue provision (MRP). Alternatively, proceeds from selling capital assets (known as capital receipts) may be used to replace debt finance. Planned MRP and use of capital receipts are as follows:

Table 3: Replacement of prior years' debt finance in £ millions

	2021/22 actual	2022/23 forecast	2023/24 budget	2024/25 budget	2025/26 budget
Minimum revenue provision (MRP)	4.5	4.2	5.8	6.6	6.3
Capital receipts	0.8	0.1	-	-	-
TOTAL	5.3	4.3	5.8	6.6	6.3

- The Authority's full minimum revenue provision statement is shown at Appendix 6.

The Authority's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP and capital receipts used to replace debt. The CFR is expected to increase by £23.4m during 2023/24. Based on the above figures for expenditure and financing, the Authority's estimated CFR is as follows:

Table 4: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Financing Requirement in £ millions

	31.3.2022 actual	31.3.2023 forecast	31.3.2024 budget	31.3.2025 budget *	31.3.2026 budget
TOTAL CFR	90.5	96.6	120.0	136.6	136.1

* £1.7m of the CFR increase in 2024/25 arises from a change in the accounting for leases

Asset management: To ensure that capital assets continue to be of long-term use, the Authority has an asset management strategy in place.

Asset disposals: When a capital asset is no longer needed, it may be sold so that the proceeds, known as capital receipts, can be spent on new assets or to repay debt. Repayments of capital grants, loans

and investments also generate capital receipts. The Authority plans to receive minimal capital receipts in the coming financial year as follows:

Table 5: Capital receipts receivable in £ millions

	2021/22 actual	2022/23 forecast	2023/24 budget	2024/25 budget	2025/26 budget
Asset sales	0.8	0.1	-	-	-
Loans etc repaid	4.4	10.3	4.5	4.9	5.1
TOTAL	5.2	10.4	4.5	4.9	5.1

Treasury Management

Treasury management is concerned with keeping sufficient but not excessive cash available to meet the Authority's spending needs, while managing the risks involved. Surplus cash is invested until required, while a shortage of cash will be met by borrowing, to avoid excessive credit balances or overdrafts in the bank current account. The Authority is typically cash rich in the short-term as revenue income is received before it is spent, but cash poor in the long-term as capital expenditure is incurred before being financed. The revenue cash surpluses are offset against capital cash shortfalls to reduce overall borrowing.

Due to decisions taken in the past, the Authority at 31st December 2022 had £61.5m borrowing at an average interest rate of 5.07% and £10m treasury investments at an average rate of 2.52%.

Borrowing strategy: The Authority's main objectives when borrowing are to achieve a low but certain cost of finance while retaining flexibility should plans change in future. These objectives are often conflicting, and the Authority therefore seeks to strike a balance between cheaper short-term loans

Projected levels of the Authority's total outstanding debt (which comprises borrowing, PFI liabilities, leases and transferred debt) are shown below, compared with the capital financing requirement (see above).

Table 6: Prudential Indicator: Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement in £ millions

	31.3.2022 actual	31.3.2023 forecast	31.3.2024 budget	31.3.2025 budget	31.3.2026 budget
Debt (incl. PFI & leases)	69.7	59.4	80.7	95.5	95.4
Capital Financing Requirement	90.5	96.6	120.0	136.6	136.1

Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, except in the short-term. As can be seen from table 6, the Authority expects to comply with this in the medium term.

Liability benchmark: To compare the Authority's actual borrowing against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark has been calculated showing the lowest risk level of borrowing. This assumes that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level of £1m at each year-end. This benchmark is currently £69.1m and is forecast to rise to £114.6m over the next three years.

Table 7: Borrowing and the Liability Benchmark in £ millions

	31.3.2022 actual	31.3.2023 forecast	31.3.2024 budget	31.3.2025 budget	31.3.2026 budget
Outstanding borrowing	69.7	59.4	80.7	95.5	95.4
Liability benchmark	73.9	69.1	97.5	115.1	114.6

The table shows that the Authority expects to remain borrowed below its liability benchmark.

Affordable borrowing limit: The Authority is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the authorised limit for external debt) each year. In line with statutory guidance, a lower “operational boundary” is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

Table 8: Prudential Indicators: Authorised limit and operational boundary for external debt in £m

	2022/23 limit	2023/24 limit	2024/25 limit	2025/26 limit
Authorised limit - total external debt	126.1	130.0	146.6	146.1
Operational boundary - total external debt	116.1	120.0	136.6	136.1

- Further details on borrowing are included in the treasury management strategy.

Treasury investment strategy: Treasury investments arise from receiving cash before it is paid out again. Investments made for service reasons or for pure financial gain are not generally considered to be part of treasury management.

The Authority’s policy on treasury investments is to prioritise security and liquidity over yield, that is to focus on minimising risk rather than maximising returns. Cash that is likely to be spent in the near term is invested securely, for example with the government, other local authorities or selected high-quality banks, to minimise the risk of loss. Both near-term and longer-term investments may be held in pooled funds, where an external fund manager makes decisions on which particular investments to buy and the Authority may request its money back at short notice.

Table 9: Treasury management investments in £millions

	31.3.2022 actual	31.3.2023 forecast	31.3.2024 budget	31.3.2025 budget	31.3.2026 budget
Near-term investments	24.5	4.0	17.8	20.6	20.2

- Further details on treasury investments are included in the treasury management strategy.

Risk management: The effective management and control of risk are prime objectives of the Authority’s treasury management activities. The treasury management strategy therefore sets out various indicators and limits to constrain the risk of unexpected losses and details the extent to which financial derivatives may be used to manage treasury risks.

- The treasury management prudential indicators are included in the treasury management strategy.

Governance: Decisions on treasury management investment and borrowing are made daily and are therefore delegated to the Director of Corporate Services and finance staff, who must act in line with the treasury management strategy approved by Council. Quarterly reports on treasury management activity will be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Revenue Budget Implications

Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and MRP are charged to revenue. (Note investment income has been removed from the definition of financing costs). The net annual charge is known as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e. the amount funded from rates and general government grants.

Table 11: Prudential Indicator: Proportion of financing costs to net revenue stream

	2021/22 actual	2022/23 forecast	2023/24 budget	2024/25 budget *	2025/26 budget
Financing costs (£m)	2.0	1.9	2.4	3.4	3.7
Proportion of net revenue stream	9.9%	9.3%	11.9%	14.1%	13.9%

* £0.05m of the increase in financing costs in 2024/25 arises from a change in the accounting for leases and does not represent additional cost to the authority

Sustainability: Due to the very long-term nature of capital expenditure and financing, the revenue budget implications of expenditure incurred in the next few years will extend for up to 40 years into the future. The Director of Corporate Services is satisfied that the proposed capital programme is prudent, affordable and sustainable.

Knowledge and Skills

The Authority employs professionally qualified and experienced staff in senior positions with responsibility for making capital expenditure, borrowing and investment decisions.

Where finance staff do not have the knowledge and skills required, use is made of external advisers and consultants that are specialists in their field. The Authority currently employs Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisers. This approach is more cost effective than employing such staff directly and ensures that the Authority has access to knowledge and skills commensurate with its risk appetite.

Proposed

Project	Description		2023/2024										Total Gross	Income/Grant	Net Budget	
			2023/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31					
9316	New Benches and walkways at HRC's	NS	75,000											75,000		75,000
9314	WiFi Community Centres	AHC	75,000											75,000		75,000
9315	Kilbroney Pitches	AHC	1,100,000											1,100,000		1,100,000
9262	Kilbroney Cemetery Ph.2	NS	£100,000	205,793										305,793		305,793
9170	Community Centre Enhancements	AHC	71,520	50,000										121,520		121,520
9155	Newry - Albert Broom Park (Consultancy 2nd Access)	AHC	170,000	2,100,000	7,000,000	7,100,000								16,370,000	-16,250,000	170,000
9577	Warrenpoint PK (Planning)	ERT	96,000											96,000		96,000
9306	Playpark Signage	AHC	90,000	30,000										90,000		90,000
9023	Deramore Domain Improvement Scheme - 25 year lease - RESCUES	ERT	59,990											59,990	-50,000	9,990
9164	Forest Parks Development (REFCUS/Narrina 4M Bike Trails)	ERT	190,000											190,000		190,000
9344	Struel Cemetery (Amenity 80sq)	NS	£160,470											160,470		160,470
9078	RDP - Match Funding Various Capital Schemes	AHC	51,042											51,042		51,042
9994	GREENWAYS - NEWRY AND WARRENPOINT	ERT	90,000											90,000		90,000
9379	Hillman C.C.-Car Park	AHC	50,000											50,000		50,000
9111	Delamont	ERT	50,000											50,000		50,000
9126	Forkhill Regeneration	ERT	45,790											45,790	-45,790	0
9030	P.A. Enhancements(anc Grant)	ERT	43,599											43,599	-43,599	0
9203	16 The Square Rosstrevor Rebranding	AHC	590,400											590,400		590,400
9298	Kilkeel Bowling Pavilion	AHC	130,550	135,000	0									265,550		265,550
9159	Carlingford Tough Greenway - Site Investigation	ERT	40,000											40,000		40,000
	Active Travel Masterplan	AHC	40,000											40,000		40,000
9045	Multi-Sports Hubs Strategy	AHC	50,000											50,000		50,000

Approved

Project	Description	Approved										Total Gross	Income/Grant	Net Budget		
		2023/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31						
9214	Kilkeel L. Centre- Capital Works	AHC	40,000	190,000	750,000									980,000		980,000
9224	Tyneta Car Park/Beach-Car Park/Amenity Bldg	ERT	60,000											60,000		60,000
	Automatic Weighbridge at Drumahilly	NS	25,000											25,000		25,000
	Water Fountains	AHC	22,000											22,000		22,000
9921	Downpatrick Regeneration	ERT	20,000											20,000		20,000
9929	Newcastle Portbus	ERT	20,000											20,000		20,000
9159	Ferriarling Harbour	ERT	20,000											20,000		20,000
9093	Bus Shelters	NS	18,200											18,200		18,200
9356	Bin Canopy at Strongford Road Depot	NS	17,755											17,755		17,755
9257	Deerholme Complex Football Pitch	AHC	15,350											15,350		15,350
9377	Exernal Signage Newry Museum	ERT	15,000											15,000		15,000
9393	Warrenpoint Town Hall Ventilation	ERT	15,000											15,000		15,000
9341	Newcastle Rock Pool	AHC	50,000											50,000		50,000
9141	Camrrough Lake Recreational Hub	ERT	40,000	150,000	150,000									340,000		340,000
9154a	Forest Parks Development (REFCUS) into Bike Trails	ERT	0											0		0
9932	Moaine Gateway Project	ERT	2,046,065	1,042,168	3,940,287	7,927,142	11,522,168	16,965,232	1,111,170					44,554,232	29,796,879	14,787,362
9945	Newry - City Centre EIS	ERT												0	0	0
9332	Derbyshire Path Way BMX Trail SETUP	AHC	0	368,855	50,000									418,865	318,486	100,000
	Sports Facility Strategy/Hub	AHC		700,000	1,000,000	800,000								3,500,000		3,500,000
	Revised Waste Treatment Project	NS		0	1,947,306									1,947,306		1,947,306
	Financial Assistance for Tourist Accommodation	ERT	0	500,000	500,000									1,000,000		1,000,000
9313	Exhibition to Mercurii Cenotaph	NS	25,000											25,000		25,000
9786	Play Areas -New Equipment	AHC	36,000	25,000										61,000		61,000

Appendix 5

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2023/24

Introduction

Treasury management is the management of the Authority's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks. The Authority has and will be borrowing and investing substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk are therefore central to the Authority's prudent financial management.

Treasury risk management at the Authority is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2021 Edition* (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Authority to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year. In addition, the former Department of the Environment (DoE) issued *Guidance on Local Authority Investments* in October 2011 that requires the Authority to approve an investment strategy before the start of each financial year. This report fulfils the Authority's legal obligation under the *Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011* to have regard to both the CIPFA Code and the DoE Guidance.

Revised strategy: In accordance with the DoE Guidance, the Authority will be asked to approve a revised Treasury Management Strategy Statement should the assumptions on which this report is based change significantly. Such circumstances would include, for example, a large unexpected change in interest rates, in the Authority's capital programme or in the level of its investment balance.

External Context

Economic background:

The ongoing impact on the UK from the war in Ukraine, together with higher inflation, higher interest rates, uncertain government policy, and a deteriorating economic outlook, will be major influences on the Authority's treasury management strategy for 2023/24.

The Bank of England (BoE) increased Bank Rate by 0.5% to 3.5% in December 2022. This followed a 0.75% rise in November which was the largest single rate hike since 1989 and the ninth successive rise since December 2021. The December decision was voted for by a 6-3 majority of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), with two dissenters voting for a no-change at 3% and one for a larger rise of 0.75%.

The November quarterly Monetary Policy Report (MPR) forecast a prolonged but shallow recession in the UK with CPI inflation remaining elevated at over 10% in the near-term. While the projected peak of inflation is lower than in the August report, due in part to the government's support package for household energy costs, inflation is expected remain higher for longer over the forecast horizon and the economic outlook remains weak, with unemployment projected to start rising.

The UK economy contracted by 0.3% between July and September 2022 according to the Office for National Statistics, and the BoE forecasts Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will decline 0.75% in the second half of the calendar year due to the squeeze on household income from higher energy costs and goods prices. Growth is then expected to continue to fall throughout 2023 and the first half of 2024.

CPI inflation is expected to have peaked at around 11% in the last calendar quarter of 2022 and then fall sharply to 1.4%, below the 2% target, in two years' time and to 0% in three years' time if Bank Rate follows the path implied by financial markets at the time of the November MPR (a peak of 5.25%). However, the BoE stated it considered this path to be too high, suggesting that the peak in interest rates will be lower, reducing the risk of inflation falling too far below target. Market rates have fallen since the time of the November MPR.

The labour market remains tight for now, with the most recent statistics showing the unemployment rate was 3.7%. Earnings were up strongly in nominal terms by 6.1% for both total pay and for regular pay but factoring in inflation means real pay for both measures was -2.7%. Looking forward, the November MPR shows the labour market weakening in response to the deteriorating outlook for growth, leading to the unemployment rate rising to around 6.5% in 2025.

Interest rates have also been rising sharply in the US, with the Federal Reserve increasing the range on its key interest rate by 0.5% in December 2022 to 4.25%-4.5%. This rise follows four successive 0.75% rises in a pace of tightening that has seen rates increase from 0.25%-0.50% in March 2022. Annual inflation has been slowing in the US but remains above 7%. GDP grew at an annualised rate of 3.2% (revised up from 2.9%) between July and September 2022, but with official interest rates expected to rise even further in the coming months, a recession in the region is widely expected at some point during 2023.

Inflation rose consistently in the Euro Zone since the start of the year, hitting a peak annual rate of 10.6% in October 2022, before declining to 10.1% in November. Economic growth has been weakening with an upwardly revised expansion of 0.3% (from 0.2%) in the three months to September 2022. As with the UK and US, the European Central Bank has been on an interest rate tightening cycle, pushing up its three key interest rates by 0.50% in December, following two consecutive 0.75% rises, taking its main refinancing rate to 2.5% and deposit facility rate to 2.0%.

Credit outlook:

Credit default swap (CDS) prices have generally followed an upward trend throughout 2022, indicating higher credit risk. They have been boosted by the war in Ukraine, increasing economic and political uncertainty and a weaker global and UK outlook, but remain well below the levels seen at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic.

CDS price volatility was higher in 2022 compared to 2021 and the divergence in prices between ringfenced (retail) and non-ringfenced (investment) banking entities has emerged once again.

The weakening economic picture during 2022 led the credit rating agencies to reflect this in their assessment of the outlook for the UK sovereign as well as several local authorities and financial institutions, revising them from to negative from stable.

There are competing tensions in the banking sector which could impact bank balance sheet strength going forward. The weakening economic outlook and likely recessions in many regions increase the possibility of a deterioration in the quality of banks' assets, while higher interest rates provide a boost to net income and profitability.

However, the institutions on our adviser Arlingclose's counterparty list remain well-capitalised and their counterparty advice on both recommended institutions and maximum duration remain under constant review and will continue to reflect economic conditions and the credit outlook.

Interest rate forecast (December 2022):

The Authority's treasury management adviser Arlingclose forecasts that Bank Rate will continue to rise in 2022 and 2023 as the Bank of England attempts to subdue inflation which is significantly above its 2% target.

While interest rate expectations reduced during October and November 2022, multiple interest rate rises are still expected over the forecast horizon despite looming recession. Arlingclose expects Bank Rate to rise to 4.25% by June 2023 under its central case, with the risks in the near- and medium-term to the upside should inflation not evolve as the Bank forecasts and remains persistently higher.

Yields are expected to remain broadly at current levels over the medium-term, with 5-, 10- and 20-year gilt yields expected to average around 3.5%, 3.5%, and 3.85% respectively over the 3-year period to December 2025. The risks for short, medium and longer-term yields are judged to be broadly balanced over the forecast horizon. As ever, there will undoubtedly be short-term volatility due to economic and political uncertainty and events.

A more detailed economic and interest rate forecast provided by Arlingclose is attached at Appendix A.

For the purpose of setting the budget, it has been assumed that new treasury investments will be made at an average rate of 2.5%, and that new long-term loans will be borrowed at an average rate of 5%.

Local Context

On 31st December 2022, the Authority held £61.5m of borrowing and £10m of treasury investments. This is set out in further detail at *Appendix B*. Forecast changes in these sums are shown in the balance sheet analysis in table 1 below.

Table 1: Balance sheet summary and forecast

	31.3.22 Actual £m	31.3.23 Estimate £m	31.3.24 Forecast £m	31.3.25 Forecast £m	31.3.26 Forecast £m
Capital financing requirement	90.5	96.6	120.0	136.6	136.1
Less: Other debt liabilities *	-	-	-	-1.7	-1.7
Loans CFR	90.5	96.6	120.0	134.9	134.4
Less: External borrowing **	-69.7	-59.4	-80.7	-93.8	-93.7
Internal borrowing	20.8	37.2	39.3	41.1	40.7
Less: Balance sheet resources	-41.1	-31.5	-23.5	-22.5	-22.5
Treasury investments (or New borrowing)	20.3	-5.7	-15.8	-18.6	-18.2

* leases that form part of the Authority's total debt

** shows only loans to which the Authority is committed and excludes optional refinancing

The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while balance sheet resources are the underlying sums available for investment. The Authority's current strategy is to maintain borrowing and investments below their underlying levels, sometimes known as internal borrowing.

The Authority has an increasing CFR due to the capital programme, but minimal investments and will therefore be required to borrow up to £93.7m over the forecast period.

CIPFA's *Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities* recommends that the Authority's total debt should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next three years. Table 1 shows that the Authority expects to comply with this recommendation during 2023/24.

Liability benchmark: To compare the Council's actual borrowing against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark has been calculated showing the lowest risk level of borrowing. This assumes the same forecasts as table 1 above, but that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level of £1m at each year-end to maintain sufficient liquidity but minimise credit risk.

The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future, and so shape its strategic focus and decision making. The liability benchmark itself represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing the Council must hold to fund its current capital and revenue plans while keeping treasury investments at the minimum level required to manage day-to-day cash flow.

Table 2: Prudential Indicator: Liability benchmark

	31.3.22 Actual £m	31.3.23 Estimate £m	31.3.24 Forecast £m	31.3.25 Forecast £m	31.3.26 Forecast £m
Loans CFR	90.5	96.6	120.0	134.9	134.4
Less: Balance sheet resources	-41.1	-31.5	-23.5	-22.5	-22.5
Net loans requirement	49.4	65.1	96.5	112.40	111.9
Plus: Liquidity allowance	24.5	4.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Liability benchmark	73.9	69.1	97.5	113.4	112.9

Following on from the medium-term forecasts in table 2 above, the long-term liability benchmark assumes capital expenditure funded by borrowing, minimum revenue provision on new capital expenditure based on a 40 year asset life for Land & Buildings and income, expenditure and reserves all increasing by inflation of 2.5% a year. This is shown in the chart at Appendix D together with the maturity profile of the Authority's existing borrowing.

Borrowing Strategy

The Authority currently holds £59.4 million of loans, a decrease of £10.3 million on the previous year, as part of its strategy for funding previous years' capital programmes. The balance sheet forecast in table 1 shows that the Authority expects to borrow up to £80.7m in 2023/24. The Authority may also borrow additional sums to pre-fund future years' requirements, providing this does not exceed the authorised limit for borrowing of £130 million.

Objectives: The Authority's chief objective when borrowing money is to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving certainty of those costs over the period for which funds are required. The flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Authority's long-term plans change is a secondary objective.

Strategy: Given the significant cuts to public expenditure and in particular to local government funding, the Authority's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio. With short-term interest rates currently much lower than long-term rates, it is likely to be more cost effective in the short-term to either use internal resources, or to borrow short-term loans instead.

By doing so, the Authority is able to reduce net borrowing costs (despite foregone investment income) and reduce overall treasury risk. The benefits of internal / short-term borrowing will be monitored regularly against the potential for incurring additional costs by deferring borrowing into future years when long-term borrowing rates are forecast to rise modestly. Arlingclose will assist the Authority with this 'cost of carry' and breakeven analysis. Its output may determine whether the Authority borrows additional sums at long-term fixed rates in 2023/24 with a view to keeping future interest costs low, even if this causes additional cost in the short-term.

The Authority has previously raised the majority of its long-term borrowing from the Government Loans Fund via the Department of Finance but will consider long-term loans from other sources including banks, pensions and local authorities, and will investigate the possibility of issuing bonds and similar instruments, in order to lower interest costs and reduce over-reliance on one source of funding in line with the CIPFA Code. Government loans are no longer available to local authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield; the Authority intends to avoid this activity in order to retain its access to PWLB loans.

Alternatively, the Authority may arrange forward starting loans, where the interest rate is fixed in advance, but the cash is received in later years. This would enable certainty of cost to be achieved without suffering a cost of carry in the intervening period.

In addition, the Authority may borrow short-term loans to cover unplanned cash flow shortages.

In addition to the above the Council maintains an overdraft facility of £5m with Danske Bank, its main operating bank.

Sources of borrowing: The approved sources of long-term and short-term borrowing are:

- Government Loans Fund
- any institution approved for investments (see below)
- any other bank or building society authorised to operate in the UK
- any other UK public sector body
- UK public and private sector pension funds (except NILGOSC Pension Fund)
- capital market bond investors
- UK Municipal Bonds Agency plc and other special purpose companies created to enable local authority bond issues
- Other UK Local Authorities

Other sources of debt finance: In addition, capital finance may be raised by the following methods that are not borrowing, but may be classed as other debt liabilities:

- leasing
- hire purchase
- Private Finance Initiative
- sale and leaseback

Municipal Bonds Agency: UK Municipal Bonds Agency plc was established in 2014 by the Local Government Association. It issues bonds on the capital markets and lends the proceeds to local authorities. This is a more complicated source of finance than the PWLB for two reasons: borrowing authorities will be required to provide bond investors with a guarantee to refund their investment in the event that the agency is unable to for any reason; and there will be a lead time of several months between committing to borrow and knowing the interest rate payable. Any decision to borrow from the Agency will therefore be the subject of a separate report to full Council.

LOBOs: The Authority holds no LOBO (Lender's Option Borrower's Option) loans where the lender has the option to propose an increase in the interest rate at set dates, following which the Authority has the option to either accept the new rate or to repay the loan at no additional cost. Total borrowing via LOBO loans, should the Council decide to use this source of finance, will be limited to £3m.

Short-term and variable rate loans: These loans leave the Authority exposed to the risk of short-term interest rate rises and are therefore subject to the interest rate exposure limits in the treasury management indicators below. Financial derivatives may be used to manage this interest rate risk (see section below).

Debt rescheduling: The PWLB allows authorities to repay loans before maturity and either pay a premium or receive a discount according to a set formula based on current interest rates. Other lenders may also be prepared to negotiate premature redemption terms. The Authority may take advantage of this and replace some loans with new loans, or repay loans without replacement, where this is expected to lead to an overall cost saving or a reduction in risk. The recent rise in interest rates means that more favourable debt rescheduling opportunities should arise than in previous years.

Treasury Investment Strategy

The Authority holds significant invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. In the past 9 months, the Authority's treasury investment balance has ranged between £24m and £10 million, levels are expected to be lower in the forthcoming year but will fluctuate higher when funds are borrowed initially.

Objectives: Both the CIPFA Code and the DoE Guidance require the Authority to invest its treasury funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The Authority's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income. Where balances are expected to be invested for more than one year, the Authority will aim to achieve a total return that is equal or higher than the prevailing rate of inflation, in order to maintain the spending power of the sum invested. The Authority aims to be a responsible investor and will consider environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues when investing.

Strategy: As demonstrated by the liability benchmark above, the Authority expects to be a long-term borrower and new treasury investments will therefore be made primarily to manage day-to-day cash flows using short-term low risk instruments.

ESG policy: Environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations are increasingly a factor in global investors' decision making, but the framework for evaluating investment opportunities is still developing and therefore the Authority's ESG policy does not currently include ESG scoring or other real-time ESG criteria at an individual investment level. When investing in banks and funds, the Authority will prioritise banks that are signatories to the UN Principles for Responsible Banking and funds operated by managers that are signatories to the UN Principles for Responsible Investment, the Net Zero Asset Managers Alliance and/or the UK Stewardship Code.

Business models: Under the IFRS 9 standard, the accounting for certain investments depends on the Authority's "business model" for managing them. The Authority aims to achieve value from its treasury investments by a business model of collecting the contractual cash flows and therefore, where other criteria are also met, these investments will continue to be accounted for at amortised cost.

Approved counterparties: The Authority may invest its surplus funds with any of the counterparty types in table 3 below, subject to the limits shown.

Table 3: Treasury investment counterparties and limits

Sector	Time limit	Counterparty limit	Sector limit
The UK Government	50 years	Unlimited	n/a
Local authorities & other government entities	25 years	£3m	Unlimited
Secured investments *	25 years	£3m	Unlimited
Banks (unsecured) *	13 months	£3m	Unlimited
Building societies (unsecured) *	13 months	£3m	£6m
Registered providers (unsecured) *	3 years	£3m	£5m
Money market funds *	n/a	£3m	Unlimited

This table must be read in conjunction with the notes below

*** Minimum credit rating:** Treasury investments in the sectors marked with an asterisk will only be made with entities whose lowest published long-term credit rating is no lower than A-. Where available, the credit rating relevant to the specific investment or class of investment is used, otherwise the counterparty credit rating is used. However, investment decisions are never made solely based on credit ratings, and all other relevant factors including external advice will be taken into account.

For entities without published credit ratings, investments may be made where external advice indicates the entity to be of similar credit quality.

Government: Loans to, and bonds and bills issued or guaranteed by, national governments, regional and local authorities and multilateral development banks. These investments are not subject to bail-in, and there is generally a lower risk of insolvency, although they are not zero risk. Investments with the UK Government are deemed to be zero credit risk due to its ability to create additional currency and therefore may be made in unlimited amounts for up to 50 years.

Secured investments: Investments secured on the borrower's assets, which limits the potential losses in the event of insolvency. The amount and quality of the security will be a key factor in the investment decision. Covered bonds and reverse repurchase agreements with banks and building societies are exempt from bail-in. Where there is no investment specific credit rating, but the collateral upon which the investment is secured has a credit rating, the higher of the collateral credit rating and the counterparty credit rating will be used. The combined secured and unsecured investments with any one counterparty will not exceed the cash limit for secured investments.

Banks and building societies (unsecured): Accounts, deposits, certificates of deposit and senior unsecured bonds with banks and building societies, other than multilateral development banks. These investments are subject to the risk of credit loss via a bail-in should the regulator determine that the bank is failing or likely to fail. See below for arrangements relating to operational bank accounts.

Registered providers (unsecured): Loans to, and bonds issued or guaranteed by, registered providers of social housing or registered social landlords, formerly known as housing associations. These bodies are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing (in England), the Scottish Housing Regulator, the Welsh Government and the Department for Communities (in Northern Ireland). As providers of public services, they retain the likelihood of receiving government support if needed.

Money market funds: Pooled funds that offer same-day or short notice liquidity and very low or no price volatility by investing in short-term money markets. They have the advantage over bank accounts of providing wide diversification of investment risks, coupled with the services of a professional fund manager in return for a small fee. Although no sector limit applies to money market funds, the Authority will take care to diversify its liquid investments over a variety of providers to ensure access to cash at all times.

Operational bank accounts: The Authority may incur operational exposures, for example through current accounts, collection accounts and merchant acquiring services, to any UK bank with credit ratings no lower than BBB- and with assets greater than £25 billion. These are not classed as investments but are still subject to the risk of a bank bail-in, and balances will therefore be kept below £3 million per bank where practical. The Bank of England has stated that in the event of failure, banks with assets greater than £25 billion are more likely to be bailed-in than made insolvent, increasing the chance of the Authority maintaining operational continuity.

Risk assessment and credit ratings: Credit ratings are obtained and monitored by the Authority's treasury advisers, who will notify changes in ratings as they occur. The credit rating agencies in current use are listed in the Treasury Management Practices document. Where an entity has its credit rating downgraded so that it fails to meet the approved investment criteria then:

- no new investments will be made,
- any existing investments that can be recalled or sold at no cost will be, and
- full consideration will be given to the recall or sale of all other existing investments with the affected counterparty.

Where a credit rating agency announces that a credit rating is on review for possible downgrade (also known as "negative watch") so that it may fall below the approved rating criteria, then only investments that can be withdrawn on the next working day will be made with that organisation until the outcome of the review is announced. This policy will not apply to negative outlooks, which indicate a long-term direction of travel rather than an imminent change of rating.

Other information on the security of investments: The Authority understands that credit ratings are good, but not perfect, predictors of investment default. Full regard will therefore be given to other available information on the credit quality of the organisations in which it invests, including credit default swap prices, financial statements, information on potential government support, reports in the quality financial press and analysis and advice from the Authority's treasury management adviser. No investments will be made with an organisation if there are substantive doubts about its credit quality, even though it may otherwise meet the above criteria.

When deteriorating financial market conditions affect the creditworthiness of all organisations, as happened in 2008 and 2020, this is not generally reflected in credit ratings, but can be seen in other market measures. In these circumstances, the Authority will restrict its investments to those organisations of higher credit quality and reduce the maximum duration of its investments to maintain the required level of security. The extent of these restrictions will be in line with prevailing financial market conditions. If these restrictions mean that insufficient commercial organisations of high credit quality are available to invest the Authority's cash balances, then the surplus will be deposited with the UK Government, or with other local authorities. This will cause investment returns to fall but will protect the principal sum invested.

Investment limits: The Authority's revenue reserves available to cover investment losses are forecast to be £4 million on 31st March 2023 and £1 million on 31st March 2024. In order that no more than 10% of available reserves will be put at risk in the case of a single default, the maximum that will be lent to

any one organisation (other than the UK Government) will be £3 million. A group of entities under the same ownership will be treated as a single organisation for limit purposes.

Credit risk exposures arising from non-treasury investments, financial derivatives and balances greater than £3m in operational bank accounts count against the relevant investment limits.

Limits are also placed on fund managers, investments in brokers' nominee accounts and foreign countries as below. Investments in pooled funds and multilateral development banks do not count against the limit for any single foreign country, since the risk is diversified over many countries.

Table 4: Additional investment limits

	Cash limit
Any group of pooled funds under the same management	£3m per manager
Negotiable instruments held in a broker's nominee account	£3m per broker
Foreign countries	£4m per country

Liquidity management: The Authority uses cash flow forecasting to determine the maximum period for which funds may prudently be committed. The forecast is compiled on a prudent basis to minimise the risk of the Authority being forced to borrow on unfavourable terms to meet its financial commitments. Limits on long-term investments are set by reference to the Authority's medium-term financial plan and cash flow forecast.

The Authority will, where practical, spread its liquid cash over at least four providers (e.g. bank accounts and money market funds) to ensure that access to cash is maintained in the event of operational difficulties at any one provider.

Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

The Authority measures and manages its exposures to treasury management risks using the following indicators.

Security: The Authority has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted average credit rating of its investment portfolio. This is calculated by applying a score to each investment (AAA=1, AA+=2, etc.) and taking the arithmetic average, weighted by the size of each investment. Unrated investments are assigned a score based on their perceived risk.

Credit risk indicator	Target
Portfolio average credit rating	A

Liquidity: The Authority has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to liquidity risk by monitoring the amount of cash available to meet unexpected payments within a rolling three month period, without additional borrowing.

Liquidity risk indicator	Target
Total cash available within 3 months	£5m

Interest rate exposures: This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to interest rate risk. The upper limits on the one-year revenue impact of a 1% rise or fall in interest rates will be:

Interest rate risk indicator	Limit
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>rise</u> in interest rates	£250,000
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>fall</u> in interest rates	£250,000

The impact of a change in interest rates is calculated on the assumption that maturing loans and investments will be replaced at new market rates.

Maturity structure of borrowing: This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of borrowing will be:

Refinancing rate risk indicator	Upper limit	Lower limit
Under 12 months	20%	5%
12 months and within 24 months	10%	0%
24 months and within 5 years	20%	10%
5 years and within 10 years	30%	20%
10 years and above	50%	35%

Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment.

Long-term treasury management investments: The purpose of this indicator is to control the Authority's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The prudential limits on the long-term treasury management investments will be:

Price risk indicator	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	No fixed date
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£2m	£1m	£1m	£1m

Long-term investments with no fixed maturity date include strategic pooled funds and real estate investment trusts but exclude money market funds and bank accounts with no fixed maturity date as these are considered short-term.

Related Matters

The CIPFA Code requires the Authority to include the following in its treasury management strategy.

Financial derivatives: Local authorities have previously made use of financial derivatives embedded into loans and investments both to reduce interest rate risk (e.g. interest rate collars and forward deals) and to reduce costs or increase income at the expense of greater risk (e.g. LOBO loans and callable deposits). The general power of competence in section 79 of the *Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014* removes much of the uncertainty over local authorities' use of standalone financial derivatives (i.e. those that are not embedded into a loan or investment).

The Authority will only use standalone financial derivatives (such as swaps, forwards, futures and options) where they can be clearly demonstrated to reduce the overall level of the financial risks that the Authority is exposed to. Additional risks presented, such as credit exposure to derivative counterparties, will be taken into account when determining the overall level of risk. Embedded derivatives, including those present in pooled funds and forward starting transactions, will not be subject to this policy, although the risks they present will be managed in line with the overall treasury risk management strategy.

Financial derivative transactions may be arranged with any organisation that meets the approved investment criteria, assessed using the appropriate credit rating for derivative exposures. An allowance for credit risk calculated using the methodology in the *Treasury Management Practices* document will count against the counterparty credit limit and the relevant foreign country limit.

In line with the CIPFA Code, the Authority will seek external advice and will consider that advice before entering into financial derivatives to ensure that it fully understands the implications.

Markets in Financial Instruments Directive: The Authority has retained retail client status with its providers of financial services, including advisers, banks, brokers and fund managers, allowing it access to a smaller range of services but with the greater regulatory protections afforded to individuals and small companies. Given the size and range of the Authority's treasury management activities, the Chief Financial Officer believes this to be the most appropriate status.

Government Guidance: Further matters required by the DoE Guidance are included in Appendix C.

Financial Implications

The budget for investment income in 2023/24 is £75k, based on an average investment portfolio of £3m million at an interest rate of 2.5%. The budget for debt interest paid in 2023/24 is £2.4 million, based on an average debt portfolio of £70 million at an average interest rate of 5.07%. If actual levels of investments and borrowing, or actual interest rates, differ from those forecast, performance against budget will be correspondingly different.

Where investment income exceeds budget, e.g. from higher risk investments including pooled funds, or debt interest paid falls below budget, e.g. from cheap short-term borrowing, then 50% of the revenue savings will be transferred to a treasury management reserve to cover the risk of capital losses or higher interest rates payable in future years.

Other Options Considered

The CIPFA Code does not prescribe any particular treasury management strategy for local authorities to adopt. The Chief Financial Officer, having consulted the Director of Corporate Services, believes that the above strategy represents an appropriate balance between risk management and cost effectiveness. Some alternative strategies, with their financial and risk management implications, are listed below.

Alternative	Impact on income and expenditure	Impact on risk management
Invest in a narrower range of counterparties and/or for shorter times	Interest income will be lower	Lower chance of losses from credit related defaults, but any such losses may be greater
Invest in a wider range of counterparties and/or for longer times	Interest income will be higher	Increased risk of losses from credit related defaults, but any such losses may be smaller
Borrow additional sums at long-term fixed interest rates	Debt interest costs will rise; this is unlikely to be offset by higher investment income	Higher investment balance leading to a higher impact in the event of a default; however long-term interest costs may be more certain
Borrow short-term or variable loans instead of long-term fixed rates	Debt interest costs will initially be lower	Increases in debt interest costs will be broadly offset by rising investment income in the medium term, but long-term costs may be less certain
Reduce level of borrowing	Saving on debt interest is likely to exceed lost investment income	Reduced investment balance leading to a lower impact in the event of a default; however long-term interest costs may be less certain

Appendix A - Arlingclose Economic & Interest Rate Forecast - December 2022**Underlying assumptions:**

- The influence of the mini-budget on rates and yields continues to wane following the more responsible approach shown by the new incumbents of Downing Street.
- Volatility in global markets continues, however, as investors seek the extent to which central banks are willing to tighten policy, as evidence of recessionary conditions builds. Investors have been more willing to price in the downturn in growth, easing financial conditions, to the displeasure of policymakers. This raises the risk that central banks will incur a policy error by tightening too much.
- The UK economy is already experiencing recessionary conditions and recent GDP and PMI data suggests the economy entered a technical recession in Q3 2022. The resilience shown by the economy has been surprising, despite the downturn in business activity and household spending. Lower demand should bear down on business pricing power - recent data suggests the UK has passed peak inflation.
- The lagged effect of the sharp tightening of monetary policy, and the lingering effects of the mini-budget on the housing market, widespread strike action, alongside high inflation, will continue to put pressure on household disposable income and wealth. The short- to medium-term outlook for the UK economy remains bleak.
- Demand for labour appears to be ebbing, but not quickly enough in the official data for most MPC policymakers. The labour market remains the bright spot in the economy and persisting employment strength may support activity, although there is a feeling of borrowed time. The MPC focus is on nominal wage growth, despite the huge real term pay cuts being experienced by the vast majority. Bank Rate will remain relatively high(er) until both inflation and wage growth declines.
- Global bond yields remain volatile as investors price in recessions even as central bankers push back on expectations for rate cuts in 2023. The US labour market remains tight and the Fed wants to see persistently higher policy rates, but the lagged effects of past hikes will depress activity more significantly to test the Fed's resolve.
- While the BoE appears to be somewhat more dovish given the weak outlook for the UK economy, the ECB seems to harbour (worryingly) few doubts about the short term direction of policy. Gilt yields will be broadly supported by both significant new bond supply and global rates expectations due to hawkish central bankers, offsetting the effects of declining inflation and growth.

Forecast:

- The MPC raised Bank Rate by 50bps to 3.5% in December as expected, with signs that some members believe that 3% is restrictive enough. However, a majority of members think further increases in Bank Rate might be required. Arlingclose continues to expect Bank Rate to peak at 4.25%, with further 25bps rises February, March and May 2023.
- The MPC will cut rates in the medium term to stimulate a stuttering UK economy, but will be reluctant to do so until wage growth eases. We see rate cuts in the first half of 2024.
- Arlingclose expects gilt yields to remain broadly steady over the medium term, although with continued volatility across shorter time periods.
- Gilt yields face pressures to both sides from hawkish US/EZ central bank policy on one hand to the weak global economic outlook on the other. BoE bond sales and high government borrowing will provide further underlying support for yields.

	Current	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25
Official Bank Rate													
Upside risk	0.00	0.50	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.25	1.50	1.75	1.50	1.25	1.25	1.25
Arlingclose Central Case	3.50	4.00	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.00	3.75	3.50	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25
Downside risk	0.00	0.50	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
3-month money market rate													
Upside risk	0.00	0.50	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.25	1.50	1.75	1.50	1.25	1.25	1.25
Arlingclose Central Case	3.00	4.40	4.40	4.40	4.35	4.30	4.25	4.00	3.75	3.50	3.40	3.40	3.40
Downside risk	0.00	0.50	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
5yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.70	0.80	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Arlingclose Central Case	3.43	3.60	3.80	3.80	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30
Downside risk	0.00	0.80	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
10yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.70	0.80	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Arlingclose Central Case	3.47	3.50	3.60	3.60	3.60	3.60	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50
Downside risk	0.00	0.80	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
20yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.70	0.80	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Arlingclose Central Case	3.84	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85
Downside risk	0.00	0.80	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
30yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.70	0.80	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Arlingclose Central Case	3.44	3.60	3.60	3.60	3.60	3.60	3.60	3.60	3.60	3.60	3.60	3.60	3.60
Downside risk	0.00	0.80	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

Government loan rate = Gilt yield + 1.00%

Appendix B - Existing Investment & Debt Portfolio Position

	31/12/22 Actual portfolio £m	31/12/22 Average rate %
External borrowing:		
Government Loans Fund	61.5	
Local authorities	-	
Total gross external debt	61.5	5.07
Treasury investments:		
Banks (unsecured)	3.7	
Money market funds	6.3	
Total treasury investment	10.0	2.52
Net debt	51.5	

Appendix C - Additional requirements of the Government Investment Guidance

Specified investments: The DoE Guidance defines specified investments as those:

- denominated in pound sterling,
- due to be repaid within 12 months of arrangement,
- not defined as capital expenditure by legislation, and
- invested with one of:
 - the UK Government,
 - a UK local authority, parish council or community council, or
 - a body or investment scheme of "high credit rating", and
- where the principal sum to be repaid at maturity is the same as the initial sum invested, other than investments in the UK Government.

The Authority defines "high credit rating" organisations and securities as those having a credit rating of A- or higher that are domiciled in the UK or a foreign country with a sovereign rating of AA+ or higher. For money market funds and other pooled funds "high credit rating" is defined as those having a credit rating of A- or higher.

Non-specified investments: Any investment not meeting the definition of a specified investment is classed as non-specified. The Authority does not intend to make any investments denominated in foreign currencies, nor any that are defined as capital expenditure by legislation, such as unlisted bonds and shares. Non-specified investments will therefore be limited to long-term investments, i.e. those that are due to mature 12 months or longer from the date of arrangement; investments with bodies and schemes without high credit ratings; and investments where the principal sum to be repaid at maturity is not the same as the initial sum invested, for example corporate bonds. Limits on non-specified investments are shown in table C1 below.

Table C1: Non-specified investment limits

	Cash limit
Total long-term investments	£1m
Total investments without credit ratings or rated below A- (except UK Government and local authorities)	£2m
Total investments (except pooled funds) with institutions domiciled in foreign countries rated below AA+	£1m
Total investments where the principal amount varies (other than those with the UK Government)	£1m
Total non-specified investments	£5m

Investment training: The needs of the Authority's treasury management staff for training in investment management are assessed annually, and additionally when the responsibilities of individual members of staff change.

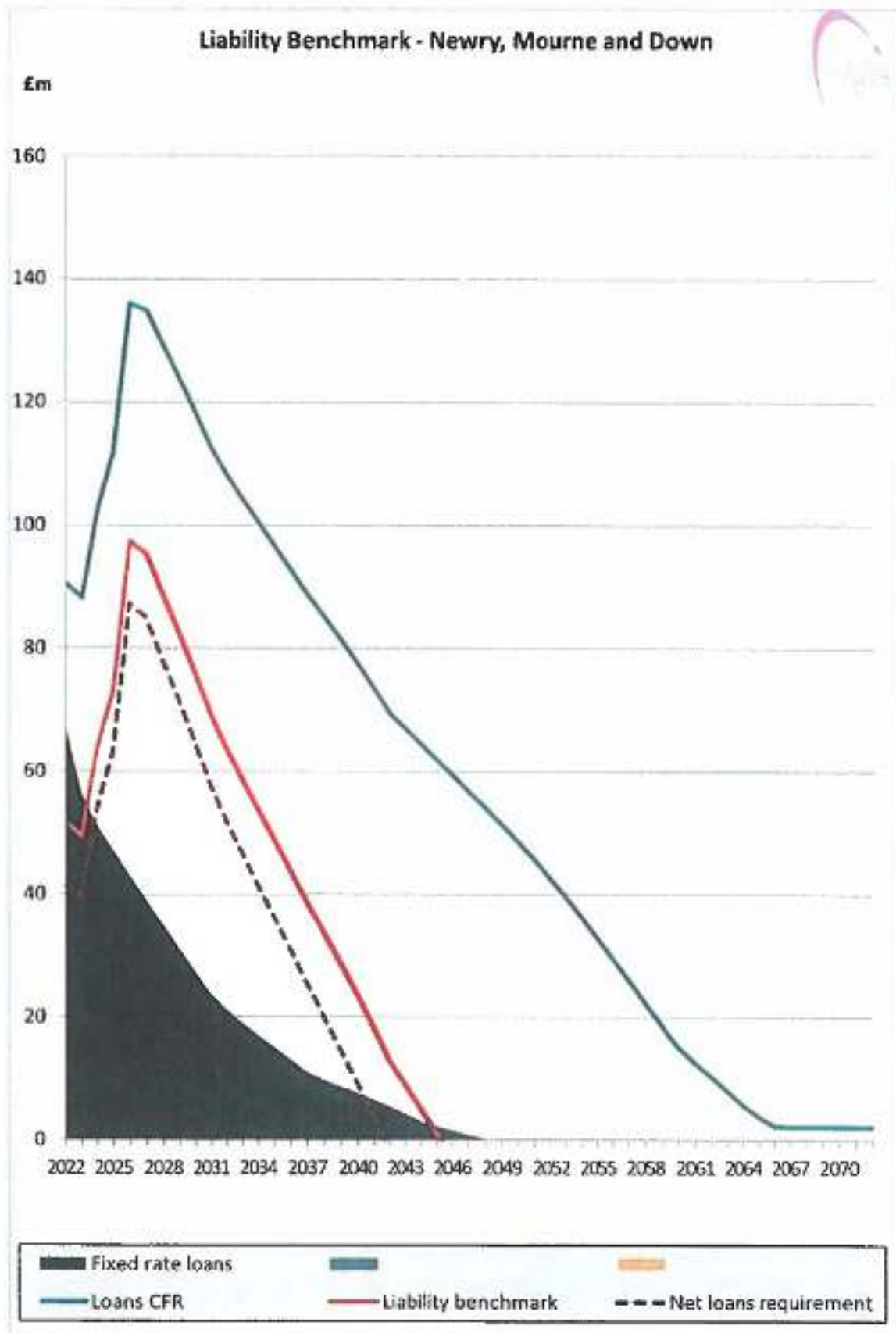
Staff regularly attend training courses, seminars and conferences provided by Arlingclose and CIPFA. Relevant staff are also encouraged to study professional qualifications as appropriate.

Investment advisers: The Authority has appointed Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisers and receives specific advice on investment, debt and capital finance issues.

Investment of money borrowed in advance of need: The Authority may, from time to time, borrow in advance of need, where this is expected to provide the best long-term value for money. Since amounts borrowed will be invested until spent, the Authority is aware that it will be exposed to the risk of loss of the borrowed sums, and the risk that investment and borrowing interest rates may change in the intervening period. These risks will be managed as part of the Authority's overall management of its treasury risks.

The total amount borrowed will not exceed the authorised borrowing limit of £[X] million. The maximum period between borrowing and expenditure is expected to be two years, although the Authority is not required to link particular loans with particular items of expenditure.

APPENDIX D



APPENDIX 6

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2023/24

Where the Authority finances capital expenditure by debt, it must put aside resources to repay that debt in later years. The amount charged to the revenue budget for the repayment of debt is known as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), although there is no statutory minimum. The Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 requires the Authority to have regard to the former Department of Environment's *Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision* (the DoE Guidance) most recently issued in 2011.

The broad aim of the DoE Guidance is to ensure that capital expenditure is financed over a period that is reasonably commensurate with that over which the capital expenditure provides benefits.

The DoE Guidance requires the Authority to approve an Annual MRP Statement each year and recommends a number of options for calculating a prudent amount of MRP. The following statement incorporates options recommended in the Guidance as well as locally determined prudent methods.

- For capital expenditure incurred before 1st April 2012, MRP will be equal to the principal repayments of the associated borrowing.
- For capital expenditure incurred after 31st March 2012, MRP will be determined by charging the expenditure over the expected useful life of the relevant asset either in equal instalments or as the principal repayment on an annuity with an annual interest rate equal to the average relevant PWLB rate for the year of expenditure, starting in the year after the asset becomes operational. MRP on purchases of freehold land will be charged over 50 years. MRP on expenditure not related to fixed assets but which has been capitalised by regulation or direction will be charged over an appropriate period.
- For assets acquired by leases or the Private Finance Initiative, MRP will be determined as being equal to the element of the rent or charge that goes to write down the balance sheet liability.
- Where former operating leases have been brought onto the balance sheet due to the adoption of the *IFRS 16 Leases* accounting standard, and the asset values have been adjusted for accruals, prepayments, premiums and/or incentives, then the annual MRP charges will be adjusted so that the total charge to revenue remains unaffected by the new standard.
- Capital expenditure incurred during 2023/24 will not be subject to a MRP charge until 2024/25 or later.

Based on the Authority's latest estimate of its capital financing requirement (CFR) on 31st March 2023, the budget for MRP has been set as follows:

	31.03.2023 Estimated CFR £m	2023/24 Estimated MRP £m
Capital expenditure before 1.4.2012	25.7	1.5
Supported capital expenditure after 31.3.2012	70.9	4.3
Total	96.6	5.8

ACTIONS OUTSTANDING FROM PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETINGS

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

ACTION SHEET – COUNCIL MEETING – MONDAY 5 DECEMBER 2022

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
C/003/2023	Action Sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 09.01.23	The Action Sheet was agreed. AHC/200/2022 – Newry Leisure Centre, Swimming Pool At the request of Councillor Hanna, it was agreed officers would report back to the Mourmes Councillors with an update on staffing issues at the Killeel Leisure Centre. It was also agreed on the request of Councillor Harte for an update on Newry Leisure Centre to be provided.	Democratic Services M Lipsett P Tamati	Noted Actioned Actioned	

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
C/004/2023	Minutes of Council Meeting held on 09.01.23	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	Democratic Services	Noted	
C/005/2023	Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 28.11.22	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	Democratic Services	Noted	
C/006/2023	Minutes of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 12.12.22	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	Democratic Services	Noted	
C/007/2023	Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 15.12.22	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, subject to the agreed amendment as follows: "Councillor McMurray outlined the Alliance Party opposition to the Civic Centre development." SPR/188/2022 – Castlewella Forest Park In welcoming the progression of works at Castlewella Forest Park Councillor Devlin expressed concern at the recent damage to the park gate and asked that officers meet to consider how to move forward and protect the heritage at the park.	Democratic Services C Mallon J McGilly	Noted Discussions on-going	
C/008/2023	Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 19.12.22	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	Democratic Services	Noted	

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
C/009/2023	Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 20.12.22	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	Democratic Services	Noted	
C/011/2023	NI Housing Council Minutes – 10 November 2022	The Minutes were noted.	Democratic Services	Noted	
C/012/2023	NI Housing Council Bulletin – 10 November 2022	The bulletin was noted.	Democratic Services	Noted	
C/013/2023	Response from Mid Ulster DC re NOM C/183/2022 – Cost of Living Crisis	The letter was noted.	Democratic Services	Noted	
C/014/2022	Response from NIO re. NOM C/184/2022 – Electronic Travel Authorisation	The letter was noted. It was agreed that Council write back to the Secretary of State pointing out that Council had written to him and asked him for his comments regarding the concerns raised by Council and express Council's dissatisfaction at his lack of personal reply to Council.	Democratic Services	Noted Letter sent	

C/015/2022	Acknowledgement from office of Minister for Justice re. NOM C/184/2022 – Electronic Travel Authorisation	The letter was noted.	Democratic Services	Noted	
C/016/2023	Response from Office of Minister of Affairs And Minister for Defence re. NOM C/184/2022 – Electronic Travel Authorisation	The letter was noted.	Democratic Services	Noted	
C/017/2023	Response from Causeway Coast & Glen BC re. NOM C/183/2022 – Cost of Living Crisis	The letter was noted.	Democratic Services	Noted	
C/018/2023	Response from Dept. for Economy re. NOM C/207/2022 – Workers Legal Rights to Tips	The letter was noted.	Democratic Services	Noted	
C/019/2023	Response from ABC re. NOM C/185/2022 – Inclusion of Armagh & Down in Ireland's Ancient East Destination Mktg Brand	The letter was noted.	Democratic Services	Noted	
C/020/2023	Response from Catherine Martin TD re NOM	The letter was noted.	Democratic Services	Noted Letter sent	

	C/185/2022 – Inclusion of Armagh and Down in Ireland's Ancient East Destination Marketing Brand	It was agreed that Council write back to Catherine Martin TD Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media and ask her to use all powers she had to develop the inclusion of Armagh and Down in Ireland's Ancient East and that she discusses at the next meeting with the Department the informal ways Armagh and Down can play a role in All Ireland tourism.		
C/021/2023	SOLACE local Government Conference 23.02.23	It was agreed that any Members wishing to attend the SOLACE Local Government Conference on 23 February 2023 were to contact the Democratic Services Department as soon as possible.	Democratic Services	Noted
C/022/2023	Notice of Motion – Warrenpoint PSNI Station	<p>It was agreed Council recognises that the vacant Warrenpoint PSNI station has been surplus to requirements for a number of years;</p> <p>Recognising the strategic location and the size of the site, this Council believes that efforts should be undertaken to return the vacant PSNI station to community use for the benefit of local people;</p> <p>Acknowledging that approximately 2,000 people are currently in housing stress across South Down this Council recommends that the site of the old PSNI station in Warrenpoint be used to address the identified need for affordable housing in the Warrenpoint & Rostrevor areas;</p> <p>Given that the Housing Executive and Choice Housing Association have officially expressed an interest in acquiring the site via the D1 process;</p> <p>This Council should extend its full support behind them throughout this process and offer whatever practical assistance may be required to ensure the Housing Executive and Choice Housing Association successfully acquire this site in order to deliver much needed social housing.</p> <p>Council should also write to the Chief Constable and to the Chair of the Policing Board to put on record the Council's support for this proposal".</p>	Democratic Services	Noted Letter sent

C/023/2023	Notice of Motion – Business Improvement Districts	<p><i>It is also agreed that the Reilly family from Warrenpoint are notified and fully briefed on any development on the site and that Joanne's memorial is appropriately sited with the families input and approval.</i></p> <p><i>The Motion was referred to the ERT Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.</i></p>	Democratic Services C Mallon	Noted	
C/024/2023	Notice of Motion – Non Functioning NI Executive & Assembly	<i>The Motion was lost.</i>	Democratic Services	Noted	
C/025/2023	Notice of Motion – 180 th Anniversary of the Newcastle Fishing Disaster	<i>The Motion was referred to Good Relations in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6</i>	Democratic Services C Morfett	Noted For discussion at the Councillors' Equality & Good Relations Reference Group meeting on 27 February 2023	
C/026/2023	Notice of Motion – Daisy Hill Hospital Elective Overnight Stay Centre	<i>The Motion was referred to the SPR Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6</i>	Democratic Services J Kelly	Noted. Report to go to February meeting.	
C/027/2023	Notice of Motion – Funding Cuts by the Education Authority	<i>It was unanimously agreed this Council recognises the potential for devastating funding cuts by the Education Authority on youth services; We accept that the impact of these cuts will be devastating for youth providers, for youth services and ultimately for young people across this council area. Youth groups are already under immense</i>	Democratic Services	Letter sent	

			<p><i>pressure and further cuts will have a detrimental impact that will be felt for years to come; It has been extremely disappointing in the manner in which these matters have been communicated to youth service providers and service users. The lack of clarity and effective communication has meant that Youth Groups have been left in limbo wondering what the outcome of these cuts will have on the services they can provide for our young people;</i></p> <p><i>This Council commits to writing to the Education Authority urging them to scrap any plans which cut youth services in Newry Mourne & Down and also ask the Education Authority to ensure in the absence of a set budget that maximum flexibility is shown to successful applicants regarding expenditure across budget headlines.</i></p> <p><i>This Council requests a Special Council meeting to discuss the proposed cuts by the EA, told allow us to voice our dissatisfaction and opposition to the cuts to youth services.</i></p>		
C/028/2023	Notice of Motion – Good Friday/ Belfast Agreement	The Motion was referred to Good Relations in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6	Democratic Services C Moffett	Noted. For discussion at the Councillors' Equality & Good Relations Reference Group meeting on 27 February 2023	
C/029/2023	Notice of Motion – Former Down District Council Building	The Motion was referred to the ERT Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.	Democratic Services C Mallon	Noted	
	END				

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**NMD/C/**

Minutes of Council Meeting held on Monday 9 January 2023 at 6.00pm in Downshire Chamber

In the Chair: Councillor M Savage

In attendance in Chamber:	Councillor T Andrews	Councillor C Bowsie
	Councillor R Burgess	Councillor P Byrne
	Councillor D Curran	Councillor C Enright
	Councillor G Hanna	Councillor V Harte
	Councillor J Jackson	Councillor G Kearns
	Councillor C King	Councillor A Lewis
	Councillor D McAteer	Councillor A McMurray
	Councillor D Murphy	Councillor G O'Hare
	Councillor H Reilly	Councillor M Rice
	Councillor M Savage	Councillor G Sharvin
	Councillor D Taylor	Councillor J Trainor

In attendance via Teams:	Councillor J Brennan	Councillor W Clarke
	Councillor L Devlin	Councillor A Finnegan
	Councillor H Gallagher	Councillor M Gibbons
	Councillor O Hanlon	Councillor R Howell
	Councillor M Larkin	Councillor D Lee-Surginor
	Councillor O Magennis	Councillor G Malone
	Councillor L McEvoy	Councillor H McKee
	Councillor B Ó Muirí	Councillor M Ruane
	Councillor G Stokes	Councillor J Tinnelly

Officials in attendance in Chamber:

Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
 Mr A Cassells, Director of Sustainability and Environment
 Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services
 Mr C Mallon, Director of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism
 Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)
 Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer

Officials in attendance via Teams:

Mrs P McKeever, Democratic Services Officer

C/001/2023**APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillor McKevitt and Mr Lipsett, Director of Active and Healthy Communities.

The Chairperson wished everyone a happy new year and welcomed four new Members to Council including Councillors Kearns and King replacing Sinn Féin councillors for Newry and Councillors Bowsie and Jackson replacing DUP Councillors for the Rowallane area.

The Chairperson wished to acknowledge the passing of Reverent Deacon Brendan McAllister and passed on deepest sympathies of Council to his wife Elizabeth, daughter Anna and sons Joseph and Tom.

The Chairperson congratulated the Clonduff camogie team on becoming newly crowned All-Ireland Intermediate Champions and advised a suitable reception to honour their achievements would be organised in due course.

C/002/2023**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors McMurray and Howell declared an interest in item 27: Notice of Motion – Funding Cuts by the Education Authority.

Councillor Stokes declared an interest in item 22: Notice of Motion – Warrenpoint PSNI Station.

C/003/2023**ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 5 DECEMBER 2022**

Read: Action sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 5 December 2022 (copy circulated).

AHC/200/2022 – Newry Leisure Centre, Swimming Pool

At the request of Councillor Hanna, it was agreed officers would report back to the Mourne Councillors with an update on staffing issues at the Kilkeel Leisure Centre.

It was also agreed on the request of Councillor Harte for an update on Newry Leisure Centre to be provided.

Agreed:

The Action Sheet from Council Meeting held on 5 December 2022 was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Gallagher, seconded by Councillor Burgess.

COUNCIL MINUTES FOR ADOPTION AND SIGNING**C/004/2023 MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 5 DECEMBER 2022**

Read: Minutes of Council Meeting held on 5 December 2022 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 5 December 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Burgess, seconded by Councillor Andrews.

C/005/2023 MINUTES OF SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 28 NOVEMBER 2022

Read: Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 28 November 2022 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on 28 November 2022 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/006/2023 MINUTES OF ENTERPRISE, REGENERATION AND TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 DECEMBER 2022**

Read: Minutes of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 12 December 2022 (copy circulated).

ERT/190/2022 - Tourism Strategy and Branding

Councillor Devlin took the opportunity to highlight that there was a workshop organised for 17 January 2023 in the Down Arts Centre and spoke of the importance of encouraging attendance from as many tourism businesses as possible.

ERT/191/2022 – Newcastle Harbour, Pilot Fishing Tours

In welcoming the approval for a pilot programme of fishing tours Councillor Devlin appealed to boat owners to come forward and submit expressions of interest.

Agreed: The Minutes of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 12 December 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Hanna, seconded by Councillor Burgess.

C/007/2023 **MINUTES OF STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15 DECEMBER 2022**

Read: Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 15 December 2022 (copy circulated).

SPR/196/2022 - Minutes of Newry City Centre Regeneration Partnership Board Meeting, 1 December 2022

Councillor McMurray asked that his comments at the meeting in relation to the Alliance Party's opposition be included within the minute. The Democratic Services Manager agreed the amendments to the minute would be added accordingly.

SPR/188/2022 – Castlewellan Forest Park

In welcoming the progression of works at Castlewellan Forest Park Councillor Devlin expressed concern at the recent damage to the park gate and asked that officers meet to consider how to move forward and protect the heritage at the park.

Agreed: **The Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 15 December 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor McMurray, seconded by Councillor Hanlon subject to the agreed amendment as follows: "Councillor McMurray outlined the Alliance Party opposition to the Civic Centre development."**

C/008/2023 **MINUTES OF ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19 DECEMBER 2022**

Read: Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 19 December 2022 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The minutes of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 19 December 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Gallagher.**

C/009/2023 **MINUTES OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 20 DECEMBER 2022**

Read: Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 20 December 2022 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 20 December 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by**

Councillor Curran.**C/010/2023 PLANNING SECTION**

There were no planning issues.

CORRESPONDANCE AND CONFERENCES**C/011/2023 NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING COUNCIL MINUTES – 10 NOVEMBER 2022**

Read: Northern Ireland Housing Council Minutes – 10 November 2022.
(Copy circulated)

Agreed: **The Northern Ireland Housing Council Minutes dated 10 November 2022 were noted on the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Curran.**

C/012/2023 NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING COUNCIL BULLETIN – 10 NOVEMBER 2022

Read: Northern Ireland Housing Council Bulletin – 10 November 2022.
(Copy circulated)

Agreed: **The Northern Ireland Housing Council Bulletin dated 10 November 2022 was noted on the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Curran.**

C/013/2023 RESPONSE FROM MID ULSTER DISTRICT COUNCIL RE: NOM C/183/2022 – GOVERNMENT HELP WITH COST OF LIVING CRISIS

Read: Correspondence from Mid Ulster District Council re: NOM C/183/2022. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Curran to note the correspondence from Mid Ulster District Council.**

Agenda items 14, 15 and 19 were taken together.

C/014/2023 RESPONSE FROM NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE RE: NOM C/184/2022 ELECTRONIC TRAVEL AUTHORISATION

Read: Correspondence from re: NOM C/184/2022, Electronic Travel Authorisation. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor McAteer spoke at length of his disappointment at the Secretary of State not responding himself to Council's concerns regarding electronic travel authorisation and instead a response was sent from the Minister of State for Northern Ireland on his behalf. He added that the response received had been in total contrast to that received from the Office of Foreign Affairs, who had grasped the seriousness of the matter and the implications for tourism and collaboration between north and south for work, health provision etc.

Councillor McAteer proposed Council write back to the Secretary of State highlighting that Council had written to him asking for his own comments and expressing Council's dissatisfaction at his lack of personal reply to the Council.

This was seconded by Councillor Devlin.

Councillor Devlin stated the reply from NIO was pathetic and showed no understanding of the uniqueness of the island of Ireland and the border and spoke of how the proposals were a huge barrier to tourism.

Councillor Reilly stated the DUP took reassurance from the reply received from the Secretary of State and spoke of the republic abusing the principles for a common travel area and growing concerns about immigration problems being out of control. He also spoke of how the proposals for electronic travel authorisation were a minor imposition on tourism.

Councillor Taylor pointed out a debate had already taken place at a recent Council meeting and that he was unsure of what the issue was that Councillor McAteer had with the response as Ministers responding on behalf of others happened on regular occasions. He added discussions were ongoing between the Irish and British Government and space should be given in order for those issues to be ironed out.

Councillor Enright spoke of how diverse the Republic of Ireland was and wished to distance himself from Councillor Reilly on that issue. Councillor Reilly replied that he was not against anyone based on colour, creed or religion but rather he was referring to concerns raised and safeguarding for the people.

The Chairperson then put Councillor McAteer's proposal to a vote, the results of which were as follows:

For:	31
Against:	8

Councillor McAteer's proposal was carried.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Curran to note the correspondence from the Northern Ireland Office.

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Devlin that Council write back to the Secretary of State pointing out that Council had written to him and asked him for his comments regarding the concerns raised by Council and express Council's dissatisfaction at his lack of personal reply to Council.

C/015/2023 **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FROM PRIVATE SECRETARY TO MINISTER FOR JUSTICE RE: NOM C/184/2022 – ELECTRONIC TRAVEL AUTHORISATION**

Read: Correspondence from Minister for Justice re: Electronic Travel Authorisation. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Curran to note the correspondence from the Minister for Justice.

C/016/2023 **RESPONSE FROM OFFICE OF MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND MINISTER FOR DEFENCE RE. NOM C/184/2022 – ELECTRONIC TRAVEL AUTHORISATION**

Read: Correspondence from Office of Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence re: Electronic Travel Authorisation. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Curran to note the correspondence from the Office of Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence.

C/017/2023 **RESPONSE FROM CAUSEWAY COAST AND GLEN BOROUGH COUNCIL RE: NOM C/183/2022 GOVERNMENT HELP WITH COST OF LIVING CRISIS**

Read: Correspondence from Causeway Coast and Glen Borough Council re: Government Help with Cost of Living Crisis. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Curran to note the correspondence from the Causeway Coast and Glen Borough Council.

C/018/2023 RESPONSE FROM DEPARTMENT FOR THE ECONOMY RE: NOM C/207/2022 – WORKERS LEGAL RIGHTS TO TIPS

Read: Correspondence from Dept. for the Economy re: Workers Legal rights to Tips. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Curran to note the correspondence from the Department for the Economy.**

Agenda items 18 and 20 were taken together.

C/019/2023 RESPONSE FROM ARMAGH, BANBRIDGE CRAIGAVON COUNCIL RE: NOM C/185/2022 – INCLUSION OF COUNTIES ARMAGH AND DOWN IN IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST DESTINATION MARKETING BRAND

Read: Correspondence from Armagh, Banbridge Craigavon Council re: Inclusion of Counties Armagh and Down in Ireland's Ancient East Destination Marketing Brand. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Curran to note the correspondence from Armagh, Banbridge Craigavon Council.**

C/020/2023 RESPONSE FROM CATHERINE MARTIN TD RE: NOM C/185/2022 - INCLUSION OF COUNTIES ARMAGH AND DOWN IN IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST DESTINATION MARKETING BRAND

Read: Correspondence from Catherine Martin TD re: Inclusion of Counties Armagh and Down in Ireland's Ancient East Destination Marketing Brand. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Byrne voiced his disappointment at the response received from the Minister and acknowledged that whilst it was known it was going to be tricky to get a formal arrangement to take Armagh and Down into Ireland's Ancient East it was to be fought for and believed in. He highlighted that within the response the Minister outlined that Fáilte Ireland's remit did not allow for the counties to be included but outlined numerous ways it could be included; all be it informally.

Councillor Byrne spoke at length about upcoming meetings and the importance of this matter being raised by the Minister including the details of the motion.

Councillor Byrne proposed Council write back to Catherine Martin TD Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media and ask her to use all powers she

had to develop the inclusion of Armagh and Down in Ireland's Ancient East and that she discusses this at the next meeting with the Department the informal ways Armagh and Down can play a role in All Ireland tourism.

This was seconded by Councillor Devlin.

The Chairperson referred to the recent activity in relation to the expansion to the Wild Atlantic Way into Causeway Coast and Glens.

Councillor Tinnelly voiced his support for the proposal.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Curran to note the correspondence from Catherine Martin TD.**

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Devlin Councillor Byrne that Council write back to Catherine Martin TD Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media and ask her to use all powers she had to develop the inclusion of Armagh and Down in Ireland's Ancient East and that she discusses at the next meeting with the Department the informal ways Armagh and Down can play a role in All Ireland tourism.

C/021/2023 SOLACE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE 23 FEBRUARY 2023

Read: Notification of 2023 Local Government Conference to be held on Thursday 23 February, Silverbirch Hotel Omagh

Agreed: **It was agreed that any Members wishing to attend the SOLACE Local Government Conference on 23 February 2023 were to contact the Democratic Services Department as soon as possible.**

NOTICES OF MOTION

C/022/2023 NOTICE OF MOTION – WARRENPOINT PSNI STATION

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Ruane:

"This Council recognises that the vacant Warrenpoint PSNI station has been surplus to requirements for a number of years; Recognising the strategic location and the size of the site, this Council believes that efforts should be undertaken to return the vacant PSNI station to community use for the benefit of local people; Acknowledging that approximately 2,000 people are currently in housing stress across South Down this Council recommends that the site of the old PSNI station in Warrenpoint be used to address the identified need for affordable housing in the Warrenpoint & Rostrevor

areas; Given that the Housing Executive and Choice Housing Association have officially expressed an interest in acquiring the site via the D1 process;

This Council should extend its full support behind them throughout this process and offer whatever practical assistance may be required to ensure the Housing Executive and Choice Housing Association successfully acquire this site in order to deliver much needed social housing;

Council should also write to the Chief Constable and to the Chair of the Policing Board to put on record the Council's support for this proposal".

Councillor Ruane stated an addition to the end of the Motion should be added to read: *"It is also agreed that the Reilly family from Warrenpoint are notified and fully briefed on any development on the site and that Joanne's memorial is appropriately sited with the family's input and approval"*

The Motion was seconded by Councillor O'Hare.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Ruane said there was a total lack of affordable social housing in the area, and this was an opportunity to do something about it.

Councillor O'Hare seconded the motion echoing Councillor Ruane's sentiments and said the current housing crisis was very disheartening for people who were struggling to find any type of accommodation.

Councillor McAteer expressed support for the Motion but said whilst he acknowledged there was a need for housing in the area, he said there was also a need for health care facilities, and he considered the vacant PSNI station could accommodate the health centre as well as social housing. He added the current situation in Warrenpoint with the library and the health centre sharing a building was far from ideal with not enough space for both entities to operate satisfactorily. He said there was a real danger of losing the health care facility which covered a wide area and he proposed to amend the Motion as follows:

"This Council recognises that the vacant Warrenpoint PSNI station has been surplus to requirements for a number of years; Recognising the strategic location and the size of the site, this Council believes that efforts should be undertaken to return the vacant PSNI station to community use for the benefit of local people; Acknowledging that approximately 2,000 people are currently in housing stress across South Down this Council recommends that the site of the old PSNI station in Warrenpoint be used to address the identified need for affordable housing in the Warrenpoint & Rostrevor areas; Given that the Housing Executive and Choice Housing Association have officially expressed an interest in acquiring the site via the D1 process;

This Council should extend its full support behind them throughout this process and offer whatever practical assistance may be required to ensure the Housing Executive and Choice Housing Association successfully acquire this site in order to deliver much needed social housing;

And also invite exploratory discussions between Libraries NI, Department of Health the Housing Executive and Housing Association and the current owners to consider

relocating the library to part of the site in order to facilitate the expansion of Warrenpoint health centre.

It is also agreed that the Reilly family from Warrenpoint are notified and fully briefed on any development on the site and that Joanne's memorial is appropriately sited with the family's input and approval"

Councillor Gallagher seconded the proposal.

Councillor Ruane rejected the amendment saying he considered it detracted from the Motion and the library and health centre was a separate issue that would need separate discussions.

Councillor Tinnelly expressed support for the original Motion and said the Housing Executive was the only respondent to the D1 Process. He said the importance of the D1 Process in this instance could not be overstated as it ensured the Housing Executive could seek to acquire the premises without competition from private developers. Councillor Tinnelly said it was a matter of public record that Paul and Anne Reilly's 20 year old daughter Joanne had been tragically killed by a bomb at the PSNI site in 1989 and a commitment had been given to retain a memorial.

Councillor Gibbons expressed support for the Motion and asked Councillor McAteer if he was speaking on behalf of either Libraries NI or the Health Centre in relation to his proposed amendment. Councillor McAteer said he had not, but he was aware the Health Centre had expressed a need to extend their current facility and it was up to local people to drive things forward in an effort to try and stop the collapse of the health service and he, as a local councillor wanted to draw awareness to it.

Councillor Enright expressed support for the Motion saying there was an acute shortage of affordable housing, and the Newry Mourne and Down District was the worst in N. Ireland.

The Chairperson put Councillor McAteer's proposed amendment to the motion to a vote, the results of which were as follows:

FOR: 9
AGAINST: 28

The proposal was lost.

Councillor Hanna expressed full support for the motion and agreed it was appropriate to recognise a victim of terrorism.

In summing up, Councillor Ruane thanked members for their support and said he assumed it would have been a very straightforward motion and would not have required such in depth discussions. He said it was vital everything should be done to try and ease the current housing crisis.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor O'Hare this Council recognises that the vacant Warrenpoint PSNI station

has been surplus to requirements for a number of years;

Recognising the strategic location and the size of the site, this Council believes that efforts should be undertaken to return the vacant PSNI station to community use for the benefit of local people;

Acknowledging that approximately 2,000 people are currently in housing stress across South Down this Council recommends that the site of the old PSNI station in Warrenpoint be used to address the identified need for affordable housing in the Warrenpoint & Rostrevor areas;

Given that the Housing Executive and Choice Housing Association have officially expressed an interest in acquiring the site via the D1 process; This Council should extend its full support behind them throughout this process and offer whatever practical assistance may be required to ensure the Housing Executive and Choice Housing Association successfully acquire this site in order to deliver much needed social housing.

Council should also write to the Chief Constable and to the Chair of the Policing Board to put on record the Council's support for this proposal".

It is also agreed that the Reilly family from Warrenpoint are notified and fully briefed on any development on the site and that Joanne's memorial is appropriately sited with the families input and approval.

C/023/2023 NOTICE OF MOTION – BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Enright:

"This Council recognises the important role that Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) can play in promoting regeneration, leading economic development, and providing a collective voice for local businesses. It also recognises the excellent work already being done by Newry BID, and that this can serve as an exemplar for BIDs across the district. Council will use its human or other resources to enthusiastically welcome and support plans to establish new BIDs across the district, particularly in our main towns".

The Motion was seconded by Councillor McMurray.

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

C/024/2023**NOTICE OF MOTION – NON FUNCTIONING
NORTHERN IRELAND EXECUTIVE AND ASSEMBLY**

57

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor McMurray:

"This Council notes with concern previous, current and prolonged non-functioning of the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly. This Council shall communicate to both the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, of our opinion that structural reform of the institutions is a pressing necessity to end ransom politics and support continuous governance for the betterment of all in our society".

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor McMurray said the Motion had been borne out of a frustration relayed to him by many regarding the current and previous, non-functioning of the Stormont Assembly and Executive. He said regardless of the current impasse, or indeed previous stalemates, structural reform of how the institutions operate was required to facilitate continuity of functioning democracy for the betterment of all in society and for it not to function only eroded the public trust and faith in political institutions. He said the current collapse was stymying the progress and development of many aspects of peoples' lives including the Health Service reform, cost of living crisis, economy stimulation, climate crisis and the green economy and educational underachievement and systemic challenges.

Councillor McMurray said reforming how the Executive and Assembly functioned did not alter the fundamental principles of the Good Friday Agreement and reforming Stormont would be significant in restoring public confidence in devolution and in ensuring the long-term stability of the Assembly and Executive and ending ransom politics. He said the Alliance Party recommended the following package of measures be implemented immediately:

1. To facilitate Executive formation - the process of nominating First and deputy First Ministers must be amended. If an eligible party are unwilling to do so, they should form an opposition and allow those willing to govern to do so.
2. To facilitate a functional Assembly - a weighted majority of approximately two-thirds should replace parallel consent in 'cross-community' votes
3. To facilitate a functional Executive – the threshold for triggering a 'cross-community' vote within the Executive should also be reformed.

Councillor Sharvin proposed an amendment to the Motion to read as follows:

"This Council notes with concern previous, current and prolonged non-functioning of the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly. This Council shall communicate to both the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, of our opinion that structural reform of the institutions in the spirit of the Good Friday Agreement is a pressing necessity to end ransom politics and support continuous governance for the betterment of all in our society".

Councillor Stokes seconded the proposal. Councillor McMurray accepted the amendment.

Councillor Reilly said the Belfast agreement had been designed to protect minorities in N. Ireland, ensure parity of esteem of both communities & enshrine the principle consent in underpinning NI's constitutional status as an integral constituent part of the UK. He said the constitutional balance had been totally upended by the NI Protocol and a recent report published by the Nuffield Institute outlined that N. Ireland was being deprived of up to 30% of medical drugs that were available to people in England, Scotland and Wales. He said the Alliance Party was virtually mute on the reform of Stormont when Sinn Féin refused to take their seats for three years and he said the DUP would continue to work for the benefit of all, and it would not be supporting the Motion.

Councillor Taylor said whilst the UUP wanted to see Stormont operating to its full extent, it had concerns with the Motion and it was important to note that how Stormont operated was an internal affairs matter for the UK government to deal with. He said the Belfast Agreement had been voted for by the people of N. Ireland via a referendum. Councillor Taylor said it was important to note the protections in place within the Agreement and said there were genuine unionist concerns regarding the N. Ireland Protocol that could not be dismissed. He said the Alliance Party did not call for change when Stormont was not functional for three years as a result of Sinn Féin's demands and consequently the UUP would not be supporting the Motion.

Councillor Murphy said Sinn Féin agreed with the first sentence of the Motion and many of the sentiments therein but would have difficulty with the words 'structural reform' without having proper debate and discussions within the relevant institutions and would therefore not be supporting the Motion.

A vote was taken on the amended substantive Motion, the results of which were as follows:

FOR:	14
AGAINST:	24

The Motion was declared lost.

In summing up, Councillor McMurray expressed his deep disappointment and said the Motion had been about good governance and not the N.I. Protocol and the Alliance Party had called for reform previously when Sinn Féin had not taken their seats in Stormont.

**C/025/2023 NOTICE OF MOTION – 180TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
NEWCASTLE FISHING DISASTER**

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Clarke:

"This Council acknowledges that this month (January) is the 180th Anniversary of the Newcastle fishing disaster in which 73 fishermen lost their lives; This Council in partnership with The Harbour Heritage Association, and the harbour community should install a memorial garden as a permanent and fitting tribute to those who lost their lives in the 1843 tragedy as well as all those who have lost their lives through the dangerous occupation of fishing".

The motion was seconded by Councillor Rice.

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

C/026/2023 **NOTICE OF MOTION – DAISY HILL HOSPITAL ELECTIVE OVERNIGHT STAY CENTRE**

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor O'Hare:

"That this Council acknowledges the announcement on the 19th October 2022, by the then Health Minister, Robin Swann that Daisy Hill Hospital would become an Elective Overnight Stay Centre for patients requiring intermediate complexity surgery with an overnight stay. Accepts that this announcement demonstrates the confidence of the Minister, Department of Health and clinicians that Daisy Hill Hospital can provide this regional service and improve access and reduce waiting times for planned elective surgical care for the people of Newry, Mourne, South Armagh and Down. Further accepts that key to implementing plans to make Daisy Hill an Overnight Elective Stay Centre will require acquisition of the Monaghan Row Council site. Commits as a matter of priority, to make public its plan to facilitate the transfer of the Monaghan Row site to the Southern Trust, so that Daisy Hill can join the Elective Care Centre model and play an important role in tackling our lengthy waiting lists and improving outcomes for our patients."

Councillor Murphy seconded the motion.

Councillor O'Hare expressed his disappointment the Motion was to be referred to the Strategy Policy and Resources Committee and not heard at full Council, Councillor Savage said it had been referred as it was a policy / resources matter.

Agreed: **The Motion was referred to the Strategy Policy and Resources Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.**

C/027/2023 **NOTICE OF MOTION – FUNDING CUTS BY THE EDUCATION AUTHORITY**

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Rice:

*"This Council recognises the potential for devastating funding cuts by the Education Authority on youth services;
We accept that the impact of these cuts will be devastating for youth providers, for youth services and ultimately for young people across this council area. Youth groups are already under immense pressure and further cuts will have a detrimental impact that will be felt for years to come;"*

It has been extremely disappointing in the manner in which these matters have been communicated to youth service providers and service users. The lack of clarity and effective communication has meant that Youth Groups have been left in limbo wondering what the outcome of these cuts will have on the services they can provide for our young people;

This Council commits to writing to the Education Authority urging them to scrap any plans which cut youth services in Newry Mourne & Down.

This Council further calls on the DUP to get back to work around the Executive table with the other parties to get locally elected ministers in place and support the public against British Government budget cuts”.

Councillor Rice said he wished to add the following sentence to the end of the Notice of Motion: *“ This Council requests a Special Council meeting to discuss the proposed cuts by the EA, to allow us to voice our dissatisfaction and opposition to the cuts to youth services.”*

Councillor King seconded the motion saying the proposed cuts would have a detrimental impact to youth services and many young people would be disadvantaged especially those who were not part of a sports club.

Councillor Bowsie proposed to amend the Motion as follows:

“This Council recognises the potential for devastating funding cuts by the Education Authority on youth services;

We accept that the impact of these cuts will be devastating for youth providers, for youth services and ultimately for young people across this council area. Youth groups are already under immense pressure and further cuts will have a detrimental impact that will be felt for years to come;

It has been extremely disappointing in the manner in which these matters have been communicated to youth service providers and service users. The lack of clarity and effective communication has meant that Youth Groups have been left in limbo wondering what the outcome of these cuts will have on the services they can provide for our young people;

This Council commits to writing to the Education Authority urging them to scrap any plans which cut youth services in Newry Mourne & Down.

This council is disappointed that the Sinn Fein Finance Minister failed to make education a priority in his draft budget, which among other things, resulted in the majority of other parties in the Executive refusing to agree to that budget.

This council firmly believes that education should be a priority for any future Executive and calls on all parties to support this position.”

Councillor Hanna seconded the proposal. Councillor Rice rejected the amendment.

The proposal to amend the Motion was put to a vote, the result of which was as follows:

FOR:	7
AGAINST:	29

The proposal was lost.

Councillor Byrne expressed his disappointment at Members' homing in on the last paragraph of the Motion and said he was involved in his local youth centre and realised first-hand the devastating impact of the cuts. He said it was a very difficult process trying to retain jobs whilst dealing with soaring overhead costs. He said the argument should not be brought down to party political level as all youth centres across the district would be similarly affected and the focus should be on funding. Councillor Byrne advised youth clubs had received letters from the Youth Club Alliance regarding funding and due to the concerns expressed, the application process had been paused until 18 January 2023 with information on additional funding streams being made available around the 16 January. He said this timeframe was not acceptable and it was extremely difficult for youth clubs to outline their three year spend, which was a requirement, and yet the Education Authority did not currently have a budget. Councillor Byrne said maximum flexibility across expenditure was needed and proposed the Motion be amended to read as follows:

"This Council recognises the potential for devastating funding cuts by the Education Authority on youth services;

We accept that the impact of these cuts will be devastating for youth providers, for youth services and ultimately for young people across this council area. Youth groups are already under immense pressure and further cuts will have a detrimental impact that will be felt for years to come;

It has been extremely disappointing in the manner in which these matters have been communicated to youth service providers and service users. The lack of clarity and effective communication has meant that Youth Groups have been left in limbo wondering what the outcome of these cuts will have on the services they can provide for our young people;

This Council commits to writing to the Education Authority urging them to scrap any plans which cut youth services in Newry Mourne & Down and also ask the Education Authority to ensure in the absence of a set budget that maximum flexibility is shown to successful applicants regarding expenditure across budget headlines.

This Council further calls on the DUP to get back to work around the Executive table with the other parties to get locally elected ministers in place and support the public against British Government budget cuts.

This Council requests a special council meeting to discuss the proposed cuts by the EA, told allow us to voice our dissatisfaction and opposition to the cuts to youth services."

Councillor Trainor seconded the proposal. Councillor Rice accepted the amendment.

Councillor Trainor expressed support for the Motion and said he fully agreed with the amendment proposed by Councillor Byrne.

Councillor Taylor said it was an extremely serious issue that affected all youth clubs across the district, and he proposed in the interest of unanimity that the final paragraph be removed and the Motion to read as follows:

"This Council recognises the potential for devastating funding cuts by the Education Authority on youth services;

We accept that the impact of these cuts will be devastating for youth providers, for youth services and ultimately for young people across this council area. Youth groups

are already under immense pressure and further cuts will have a detrimental impact that will be felt for years to come;

It has been extremely disappointing in the manner in which these matters have been communicated to youth service providers and service users. The lack of clarity and effective communication has meant that Youth Groups have been left in limbo wondering what the outcome of these cuts will have on the services they can provide for our young people;

This Council commits to writing to the Education Authority urging them to scrap any plans which cut youth services in Newry Mourne & Down and also ask the Education Authority to ensure in the absence of a set budget that maximum flexibility is shown to successful applicants regarding expenditure across budget headlines.

This Council requests a special council meeting to discuss the proposed cuts by the EA, told allow us to voice our dissatisfaction and opposition to the cuts to youth services."

Councillor Tinnelly seconded the proposal. Councillor Rice accepted the amendment.

Agreed:

On the proposal of Councillor Rice, seconded by Councillor King it was unanimously agreed this Council recognises the potential for devastating funding cuts by the Education Authority on youth services;

We accept that the impact of these cuts will be devastating for youth providers, for youth services and ultimately for young people across this council area. Youth groups are already under immense pressure and further cuts will have a detrimental impact that will be felt for years to come;

It has been extremely disappointing in the manner in which these matters have been communicated to youth service providers and service users. The lack of clarity and effective communication has meant that Youth Groups have been left in limbo wondering what the outcome of these cuts will have on the services they can provide for our young people;

This Council commits to writing to the Education Authority urging them to scrap any plans which cut youth services in Newry Mourne & Down and also ask the Education Authority to ensure in the absence of a set budget that maximum flexibility is shown to successful applicants regarding expenditure across budget headlines.

This Council requests a Special Council meeting to discuss the proposed cuts by the EA, told allow us to voice our dissatisfaction and opposition to the cuts to youth services."

C/028/2023

NOTICE OF MOTION – GOOD FRIDAY / BELFAST AGREEMENT

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Stokes:

NEWRY MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Enterprise, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting
held on Monday 16 January 2023 at 6.00pm in the Boardroom, Monaghan
Row, and remotely via Microsoft Teams**

Chairperson: Councillor R Burgess (Chamber)

Deputy Chairperson: Councillor D Curran (Chamber)

In attendance: **(Committee Members)**
Councillor T Andrews (Chamber)
Councillor W Clarke (via Teams)
Councillor C Enright (Teams)
Councillor G Hanna (via Teams)
Councillor V Harte (Chamber)
Councillor R Howell (Teams)
Councillor M Larkin (via Teams)
Councillor D Lee-Surginor (Teams)
Councillor H Reilly (via Teams)
Councillor M Ruane (via Teams)
Councillor G Stokes (via Teams)

Non Members: Councillor O Magennis (via Teams)
Councillor H McKee (via Teams)

Officials in Attendance: Mr C Mallon Director Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism
Mr A Patterson, Assistant Director Tourism, Culture & Events
Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director Enterprise, Employment Regeneration
Ms L Dillon Democratic Services Officer
Ms P McKeever Democratic Services Officer
Ms T McLoughlin PA Director ERT

ERT/001/2023: APOLOGIES / CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Councillor J Trainor

ERT/002/2023: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hanna declared an interest in Item 13 regarding Warrenpoint Harbour Authority SLA, as he is a board member.

**ERT/003/2023: ACTION SHEET
MINUTES OF ENTERPRISE, REGENERATION &
TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING
MONDAY 12 DECEMBER 2022**

Read: Action Sheet arising out of the Minutes of the Enterprise, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday 12 December 2022. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Curran seconded by Councillor Andrews it was agreed to note the Action Sheet arising from the Enterprise, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday 12 December 2022.**

NOTICE OF MOTION**ERT/004/2023: NOTICE OF MOTION
RE: EU COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY
SINGLE FARM PAYMENT**

The following Notice of Motion came forward for consideration in the name of Councillor O Magennis:-

"This Council recognises the significant investment in rural communities and businesses, and the wider economy derived from the Single Farm Payment under the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP); agrees that CAP Single Farm Payments were critical to farm profitability, particularly for small family farms; is concerned with the significant uncertainty facing our farming community with the loss of CAP Single Farm Payments as a result of Brexit and the end of the replacement Basic Payment Scheme, worth £300m a year, beyond 2025; and calls on the British Government and the Permanent Secretary of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to set out urgently what replacement funds will be put in place to support our farmers and the wider agricultural sector."

Councillor Magennis formally proposed the Notice of Motion which was seconded by Councillor Howell.

Councillor Magennis said the loss of direct payments would be felt by over 25,000 farm businesses affecting 40,000 farmers and workers with financial support from these payments representing over 80% of farm income each year. She said many farms in the north or less favoured areas such as Armagh and the Mourne, west Tyrone, north Antrim, mid Ulster and Fermanagh South Tyrone would be directly impacted and that the total amount of payments per year for her constituency of Newry and Armagh totalled £26.5m, with South Down on £27.5m.

She said direct payments have assisted farmers to produce safe, healthy affordable food, look after the countryside and environment, animal health and welfare and while farmers incomes remained below the average, direct payments allowed these farms to survive. She referred to the negative impact on the health and wellbeing of our farming community and believed a fair standard of living should be provided for farmers.

She said Queens University produced a paper highlighting that without direct financial support approximately 30% of farms are likely to cease functioning leading to unemployment, land abandonment and knock on effects in the agri-food sector and rural communities.

Councillor Magennis stressed the need for clarity and certainty regarding these direct payments going forward as agriculture was key to the economy and that the British Government must commit to certainty of farm payments in the future and beyond 2024. She said approximately £300m of farm payments comes into the North to farms and the agriculture sector which was vital to the development of the economy and sustainability of rural communities.

She said the European Union places priority on farming and protected it through the common agricultural policy - this Common Agricultural Policy Pillars 1 and 2, has been an important policy to farmers and rural communities since Brexit. She said farm payments come from Treasury and the Tory manifesto committed to make payments until the end of their mandate. She also added that the Key Rural Issues Report from DEARA 2021 highlighted more than half of businesses dominant in rural areas more than an hour from Belfast are engaged in agriculture, forestry and fishing with a further 17% in construction.

She asked Members to support the Motion and call on the British Government and the Permanent Secretary for Agriculture to set out plans on how they will proceed after 2024 with regard to the Common Agriculture Policy Single Farm Payments.

Councillor Burgess requested if Councillor Magennis would amend the Motion to refer to

"all family farms", as opposed to small family farms.

Councillor Magennis accepted the amendment to the Motion as requested by Councillor Burgess.

Councillor Burgess said agriculture was one of Northern Ireland's most important industries turning over more than £4.5 billion per year and representing one in every 8 jobs in the UK, made it the cornerstone of Northern Ireland's economy. He referred to the key role of farmers and the need for certainty regarding the direct payments which are crucial for many farm businesses and secure the production of affordable high quality food for the consumer. He said it was essential for Northern Ireland to receive a share of the UK funding so we have the ability to regionalise the agriculture policy to ensure the delivery of funding to best suit the needs of the structure and industry in Northern Ireland. He also called for support for a mechanism that allows Northern Ireland farmers to be able to produce food and continue to be the guardian of environment.

Councillor Reilly referred to the work done by Minister Edwin Poots MLA in obtaining the best deal for farmers and developing a DEARA policy which was supported across the spectrum. He referred to the consultation process which sought ideas on how the farming industry could go forward from now to 2027 and the plan developed by DEARA under Minister Poots, has been hailed as the best agriculture policy in the UK which focused on productivity, sustainability and a maximum farm payment of £60,000 with the focus on small farmers. He referred to the policy in the Republic of Ireland which although underwent consultation, it also has to receive approval from the European Union. He referred to countries who have had their plans approved by the EU but added these plans were not beneficial for farming as they seemed to favour industrialised scale production similar to that in the United States.

Councillor McKee said there would be no guarantee beyond the current term of the EU Parliament with regard to the continuation of the funding therefore it would not be accurate to say Brexit is responsible. He said lobbying needed to continue to ensure money is made available for everyone. He said he partially agreed with Motion but stated we needed to keep lobbying for the continuation of the money withing the UK.

Councillor Andrews, on behalf of the SDLP, supported the Motion stating it was very important that the issues highlighted are addressed.

Read: Report dated 16 January 2023 from Mr J McGilly Assistant Director Enterprise, Employment & Regeneration, regarding a Notice of Motion on EU Common Agricultural Policy Single Farm Payments.
(Circulated)

Councillor Howell proposal and Councillor Curran seconded that the Council support the

Notice of Motion on EU Common Agricultural Policy Single Farm Payments, subject to amending the Motion by removing the wording "small family farms" and including "all family farms", and to raise the concerns highlighted in the Motion with the relevant Government departments as required.

The proposal was put to a vote and voting was as follows:

For:	10
Against:	0
Abstentions :	2

The proposal was declared carried.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Howell seconded by Councillor Curran it was agreed the Council support the Notice of Motion on EU Common Agricultural Policy Single Farm Payments, subject to amending the Motion by removing the wording "small family farms" and including "all family farms", and to raise the concerns highlighted in the Motion with the relevant Government departments as required.**

ERT/005/2023: NOTICE OF MOTION
RE: FISHING AND FISH PROCESSING

The following Notice of Motion came forward for consideration in the name of Councillor D Curran:-

"That this Council noting the valuable contribution made to our local and national economy at the ports of Ardglass and Kilkeel; expressing its concern that the impact Brexit continues to have on our fishing and fish processing industry across Newry Mourne and Down; affirming its support for our fishing and fish processing industry, and expressing its concern for the absence of a functioning Assembly and Executive to promote and support our fishing and fish processing industry; that this Council will write to the United Kingdom Home Office to highlight the valuable contribution made by our local fishing and fish processing industry; calls for the recognition of the Fish Processing Industry in Northern Ireland as Seasonal, and further calls for the Home Office to recognise exemptions for EEA and non-EEA staff employed in fishing and fish processing in Northern Ireland, to enable the industry to employ foreign workers during the summer months; and continue its valuable contribution to our local economy."

Councillor Curran formally proposed the Notice of Motion. He stressed that the fishing industry needed to employ foreign workers to sustain it. Presently workers from the EEA and the non EEA are not permitted to work outside the UK and must apply for a special licence from the Government in order to work in the industry outside the UK. He said the Government must be requested to grant these licences in order to maintain a successful fishing industry here in Northern Ireland.

Councillor Andrews formally seconded the Motion and supported the sentiments expressed by Councillor Curran and paid tribute to the work done by Councillor Curran in supporting the fishing industry and bring improvements and enhancements. He said he was supportive of any measures to address the challenges faced with regard to the supply of a workforce in particular for the fishing and processing sector and added these concerns had previously been raised at the Northern Ireland Strategic Migrationary Partnership Board as there appeared to be no issue in the supply of foreign workers in other agri-sectors.

Councillor Hanna supported the Motion. He spoke of the enormous part fishing has played within communities and made particular reference to the memorial in Newcastle in memory of the substantial loss of life at sea throughout the 1800s and early part of the 20th century. With regard to fish processing, he said that in Kilkeel and Portavogie there were up to 1000 people employed alone in this part of the fishing industry. He referred to the difficulties in finding people to crew boats as many foreign workers are only permitted to stay for 6 month periods. He also said Brexit had not delivered what the fishing men voted for, ie, to take back from the EU control of their waters, and until such times as the Protocol was dealt with these issues will remain.

Councillor McKee said he supported much of the content of the Motion. He said the fishing processing industry was not seasonal but permanent as fishing continues 24/7. He said in April next year, foreign fishermen working out of Ardglass and Kilkeel will not be permitted on a boat and only will be permitted if they are outside a 12 mile fishing zone of the harbour and therefore it was critical that foreign workers are granted permanency to continue to fish even within the 12 mile zone and be given a passage through this zone to the harbours.

He therefore requested if the Motion could be reworded to remove references that fishing was seasonal and reflect that fishermen work all year round.

Councillor Clarke on behalf of Sinn Fein, supported the Motion. He said labour was one of the biggest issues facing the fishing industry and Brexit has had a massive impact on obtaining foreign workers. He also referred to the lack of young people entering the industry and said this was alarming and needed to be addressed by DEARA.

Councillor Reilly referred to Brexit and the Protocol and said although the Protocol has

hindered the fishing industry, going forward in the long-term, Brexit will help fishermen immensely. He referred to future increases in quota and said it was vital that the necessary infrastructure would be in place to improve our harbours at Kilkeel and Ardglass, and added his support for the Motion.

Read: Report dated 16 January 2023 from Mr J McGilly Assistant Director Enterprise, Employment & Regeneration, regarding a Notice of Motion on Fishing and the Fish Processing. **(Circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Curran seconded by Councillor Andrews it was agreed Council support the Notice of Motion on Fishing and Fish Processing as raise the concerns highlighted in the Motion with the relevant Government departments as required.**

ENTERPRISE EMPLOYMENT & REGENERATION

ERT/006/2023: FUTURE BUSINESS SUPPORT - REGIONAL WORKING GROUP

Read: Report dated 16 January 2023 from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director Enterprise Employment and Regeneration regarding Future Business Support Regional Working Group. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Andrews seconded by Councillor Curran it was agreed:**

- 1. To increase the contract value of NMD Business Growth, delivered by Full Circle, by an amount up to £50,000, subject to agreement by CPD, Invest NI and the delivery agent.**
- 2. To note the update provided on the development of a regional approach for future business support activity post ERDF funding (ERDF – European Regional Development Fund)**

TOURISM CULTURE AND EVENTS**ERT/007/2023: NEWRY ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE PROJECT**

Read: Report dated 16 January 2023 from Mr A Patterson, Assistant Director Tourism Culture & Events, regarding Newry Architectural Heritage Project. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Stokes seconded by Councillor Harte it was agreed to deliver a project to showcase the rich architectural heritage of Newry in partnership with the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society (UAHS) via a Service Level Agreement.**

EXEMPT INFORMATION

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Hanna seconded by Councillor Howell 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 Curran seconded by Councillor Andrews it was agreed to come out of Closed Session.**

ERT/008/2023: ANNALONG REVITALISATION ART PROJECT SLA

Read: Report dated 16 January 2023 from Mr J McGilly Assistant Director Enterprise Employment & Regeneration regarding Annalong Revitalisation Art Project SLA. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Hanna seconded by Councillor Harte it was agreed to approve a Service Level Agreement with the Annalong Community Empowerment to implement an art project in Annalong Village as agreed in the Annalong Small Settlement Scheme Action Plan.**

**ERT/009/2023: JANE'S SHORE PATHWAY PROJECT
LETTER OF OFFER**

Read: Report dated 16 January 2023 from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director Enterprise Employment & Regeneration regarding the Jane's Shore project. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **Following a vote of 11 for, and 2 against with no abstentions, it was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Curran seconded by Councillor Andrews, that Council accept the DFI Letter of Offer for the Downpatrick Jane's Shore pathway upgrade and note the previously completed and approved Council and DFI Business Cases.**

ERT/010/2023: KILBRONEY FOREST PARK YOUTH CAMPING SITE

Read: Report dated 16 January 2023 from Mr A Patterson, Assistant Director Tourism, Culture and Events, regarding Kilbroney Forest Park Youth Camping Site. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Ruane seconded by Councillor Harte it was agreed to approve the recommendation to operate a camp site for registered youth groups under the same model currently in place at Castlewellan Forest Park as detailed in this report.**

ERT/011/2023: KILKEEL HARBOUR WORKS

Read: Report dated 16 January 2023 from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director Enterprise Employment & Regeneration regarding Kilkeel Harbour Works. **(Copy circulated).**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Hanna seconded by Councillor Reilly it was agreed NMDDC include in budgets for the next 3 financial years subject to agreed funding package being secured and a suitable mid term review of progress against objectives and targets.**

ERT/012/2023: SERC EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Read: Report dated 16 January 2023 from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director Enterprise Employment & Regeneration regarding SERC Excellence Awards. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Clarke seconded by Councillor Andrews it was agreed to approve sponsorship to the South Eastern Regional College's 2023 Excellence Awards as a headline sponsor and category sponsor for the Apprenticeship of the Year.

ERT/013/2023: WARRENPOINT HARBOUR AUTHORITY SLA

Read: Report dated 16 January 2023 from Mr A Patterson, Assistant Director Tourism Culture and Events regarding a Service Level Agreement with SERC. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Ruane seconded by Councillor Howell it was agreed to enter into a Service Level Agreement with Warrenpoint Harbour Authority to showcase the District to inbound cruise passengers, and to secure the visit of the Grace O Malley tall ship in 2023.

ERT/014/2023: KILBRONEY PARK CAFÉ LICENCE EXTENSION

Read: Report dated 16 January 2023 from Mr A Patterson, Assistant Director Tourism Culture and Events regarding a Service Level Agreement with SERC. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Stokes seconded by Councillor Andrews it was agreed to note the content of Report dated 16 January 2023 from Mr A Patterson Assistant Director Tourism Culture & Events, regarding Kilbroney Park Café Licence Extension.

FOR NOTING**ERT/015/2023: UPDATE RE: CARLINGFORD LOUGH GREENWAY**

Read: Report dated 16 January 2023 from Mr J McGilly Assistant Director Enterprise, Employment & Regeneration regarding an update on Carlingford Lough Greenway. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Andrews seconded by Councillor Curran it was agreed to note progress to date and the update contained in the above Report.**

ERT/016/2023: ERT HISTORIC ACTION TRACKER

Read: Action Tracker Report for Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism Committee. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Andrews seconded by Councillor Curran it was agreed to note the Historic Action Tracker Report for Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism Committee.**

**ERT/017/2023: ERT SCHEME OF DELEGATION
6 MONTHLY REPORT
– 01 APRIL 2022 – 30 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Read: ERT Scheme of Delegation 6 Monthly Report dated 01 April 2022 – 30 September 2022. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Andrews seconded by Councillor Curran it was agreed to note ERT Scheme of Delegation 6 Monthly Report dated 01 April 2022 – 30 September 2022.**

ERT/018/2023: UPDATE RE: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Read: Report dated 16 January 2023 from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director Enterprise, Employment and Regeneration, regarding an update on International Relations. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews seconded by Councillor Curran it was agreed to note the update provided against recent international relations activity.

ERT/019/2023: UPDATE RE: MAKE IT LOCAL CAMPAIGN

Read: Report dated 16 January 2023 from Mr J McGilly Assistant Director of Enterprise, Employment and Regeneration regarding an update on the Make it Local Campaign. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews seconded by Councillor Curran it was unanimously agreed to note the update provided under the Make it Local campaign.

ERT/020/2023: SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION (SEO) RENEWAL

Read: Report dated 16 January 2023 from Mr A Patterson Assistant Director Tourism Culture & Events regarding Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) Renewal. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews seconded by Councillor Curran it was agreed to note the renewal of the SEO contract for 2023 and 2024 with Simpleview via the Tourism NI Deed of Indemnity at an annual cost of £9,240.

ERT/021/2023: TASTE TO TOURISM SUMMIT – FEBRUARY 2023

Read: Report dated 16 January 2023 from Mr A Patterson Assistant Director Tourism Culture & Events. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews seconded by Councillor Curran it was agreed to note a one off sponsorship fee of £1,500, to the Northern Ireland Hotel Federation as a co-sponsor of the Taste of Tourism Summit & Artisan Market 2023.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 7.10pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 06 February 2023.

Signed: Councillor R Burgess
Chairperson
Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism Committee

Signed: Mr C Mallon
Director of Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of Audit Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 18 January 2023 in the Mourne Room Downshire Civic Centre Downpatrick and via Microsoft Teams.

Chairperson: Ms B Slevin Independent Chairperson
(Via Teams)

In attendance: **(Committee Members)**
 Councillor C Bowsie Chamber
 Councillor P Byrne Chamber
 Councillor L Devlin via Teams
 Councillor A Lewis via Teams
 Councillor D McAteer Chamber
 Councillor D Murphy via Teams

Officials in attendance: Mrs M Ward Chief Executive
 Mrs J Kelly Director Corporate Services
 Mr A Cassells Director Environment &
 Sustainability
 Mr G Byrne Assistant Director Finance &
 Performance
 Ms C Hughes Head of Performance
 (Acting)
 Ms E Cosgrove Head of Compliance
 Ms S McConville Procurement Manager
 (Acting)
 Ms S Taggart Democratic Services
 Manager
 Ms L Dillon Democratic Services Officer

Also in attendance: Ms C Hagan ASM via Teams
 Ms J McGuckin ASM via Teams
 Ms K Costley NIAO via Teams

AC/001/2023: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

An apology was received from Councillor G Kearns.

AC/002/2023: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest.

**AC/003/2023: ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM:
AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING
THURSDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Read: Action Sheet arising from Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting held on Thursday 22 September 2023.
(Copy circulated)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Murphy seconded by Councillor Devlin it was agreed to note the Action Sheet for Audit Committee Meeting held on Thursday 22 September 2022.

CORPORATE SERVICES (OPEN SESSION)

AC/004/2023: CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

Read: Report dated 18 January 2023 from Ms J Kelly Director of Corporate Services regarding the Corporate Risk Register including the Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism Directorate Risk Register. **(Copy circulated)**

Mr Byrne said the Corporate Risk Register had been reviewed by Senior Management Team on 05 January 2023. He referred to the overview of the 11 Corporate Risks as detailed at Appendix 1 pointing out change to the scores on the following risks:

CR 6 – score has lowered
CR 11 – score has lowered

He referred to the ERT Directorate Risk Register explaining directorate risk registers are tabled at Audit Committee quarterly, on a rotational basis.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor McAteer seconded by Councillor Murphy it was agreed as follows:

- (a) 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)**
- (b) To note the revised ERT Directorate Risk Register at Appendix 3.**

AC/005/2023: PROMPT PAYMENT STATISTICS

Read: Report dated 18 January 2023 from Mr G Byrne Assistant Director Finance & Performance regarding Prompt Payment Statistics – Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 2022-2023. **(Copy circulated)**

Mr Byrne referred to the new Purchase to Pay system which went live from January 2022 during which up to the period June 2022, two systems were running side by side. Since then he said significant progress had been made and he explained figures as follows:

Quarter 2

- 88% of invoices were paid within 30 days
- 42% paid within 10 days
- average of 26 days within which to pay suppliers

Quarter 3 (up to 31 December 2022)

- 91% of invoices paid within 30 days
- 51% paid within 10 days
- average of 26 days within which to pay suppliers

He said the Department would aim to reduce the number of invoices paid outside the payment period of 30 days and reduce the average days with which to pay suppliers but that statistics were positive since the introduction of the new Purchase to Pay system.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor McAteer seconded by Councillor Devlin it was agreed to note the Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 2022-23 Prompt Payment statistics.**

AC/006/2023: MEMBERS' REGISTER OF INTERESTS

Read: Report dated 18 January 2023 from Ms J Kelly Director of Corporate Services regarding Members' Register of Interests. **(Copy circulated)**

Ms Kelly presented the Report on Members' Register of Interests which was for information purposes and added that 4 new Councillors had now joined the Council.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Murphy seconded by Councillor McAteer it was agreed to note the 6 month review Report on Members' Register of Interests.**

NIAO (OPEN SESSION)**AC/007/2023: ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2021-22**Read: NIAO Annual Audit Letter 2021-22. **(Copy circulated)**

Ms Costley presented the NIAO Annual Audit Letter 2021-22 which she said sets out the results of the Audit Office work over the course of the year, taking into account work on the external audit of the Annual Report and Accounts, as certified in September 2022, work to establish that Council has proper arrangements in place, and work on performance improvement.

She referred to key statistics and highlighted the following:

Absence statistics – these have increased which was not unusual due to the impact of covid however the Council need to ensure absence is properly managed.

Unused reserves – importance that plans are in place for unused reserves and good basis is provided on projections going forward.

Ms Slevin asked for information on measures to ensure no further increase in staff absence, adding she was aware increases in staff absence was also currently an issue in other Councils.

Ms Kelly explained procedures were in place to deal with staff absence. She said staff absence statistics were regularly reviewed by Senior Management across all the directorates and Council as a whole, and assured this issue would be closely monitored over the coming months.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Murphy seconded by Councillor McAteer it was agreed to note the NIAO Annual Audit Letter 2021-22.

NIAO (CLOSED SESSION)

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor McAteer seconded by Councillor Lewis it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on 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.

On the proposal of Councillor Bowsie seconded by Councillor McAteer it was agreed to come out of Closed Session.

When the Committee came out of Closed Session the Chairperson reported the following decisions had been taken on the items discussed:

AC/008/2023: FINAL
– NIAO REPORT TO THOSE CHARGED WITH
GOVERNANCE

Read: Letter dated 02 November 2022 regarding the Final Report to Those Charged with Governance and Annual Audit Letter for year ended 31 March 2022.
(Copy circulated)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Devlin seconded by Councillor Murphy it was agreed to note the Final Report to Those Charged with Governance.

AC/009/2023: NIAO AUDIT FEES

Read: Letter dated 05 December 2022 from NIAO regarding changes to audit approach for the 2022-23 audit cycle.
(Copy circulated)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Bowsie seconded by Councillor Devlin it was agreed to note NIAO letter dated 05 December 2022 regarding changes to audit approach for the 2022-23 audit cycle.

CORPORATE SERVICES (CLOSED SESSION)

AC/010/2023: UPDATE
RE: AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Read: Report dated 18 January 2023 from Ms E Cosgrove Head of Compliance regarding an update on Audit Recommendations. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Murphy seconded by Councillor Byrne it was agreed to note the update in relation to legacy audit recommendations.

AC/011/2023: DIRECT AWARD CONTRACTS

Read: Report dated 18 January 2023 from Ms S McConville Procurement Manager regarding DAC/STA Register – Quarter 3. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Murphy seconded by Councillor McAteer it was agreed to note the Quarter 3 update in relation to Single Tender Actions.

AC/012/2023: FRAUD & WHISTLEBLOWING

Read: Report dated 18 January 2023 from Mr G Byrne Assistant Director Finance & Performance, regarding an update on Fraud and Raising Concerns. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Lewis seconded by Councillor McAteer it was agreed:

- a) **To note the update in relation to Fraud and Raising Concerns cases which have been detailed at Appendix 1.**
- b) **To note the progress on actions arising from the NIAO Internal Fraud Risk Self Assessment.**

INTERNAL AUDIT (CLOSED SESSION)**AC/013/2023: ASM INTERNAL AUDIT SUMMARY REPORT**

Read: ASM Internal Audit Summary Report dated 18 January 2023. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor McAteer seconded by Councillor Byrne it was agreed to note the ASM Internal Audit Summary Report.

AC/014/2023: ASM INTERNAL AUDIT FINAL REPORT RE: CASH HANDLING

Read: ASM Internal Audit – Audit Fieldwork 2022/23- Report dated 08 December 2022 regarding Cash Handling. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor McAteer seconded by Councillor Byrne it was agreed to note ASM Internal

Audit - Fieldwork 2022/23- Report dated 08 December 2022 regarding Cash Handling.

AC/015/2023:

**ASM INTERNAL AUDIT
FINAL REPORT RE: PROJECT GOVERNANCE**

Read:

ASM Internal Audit – Audit Fieldwork 2022/23- Report dated 10 January 2023 regarding Project Governance. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor McAteer seconded by Councillor Byrne it was agreed to note ASM Internal Audit - Fieldwork 2022/23- Report dated 10 January 2023 regarding Project Governance.

AC/016/2023:

**ASM INTERNAL AUDIT
RE: PAYROLL**

Read:

ASM Internal Audit – Audit Fieldwork 2022/23 – Report dated 09 December 2022 regarding Review of Payroll and Travel and Subsistence. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor McAteer seconded by Councillor Byrne it was agreed to note ASM Internal Audit -Audit Fieldwork 2022/23 – Report dated 09 December 2022 regarding Review of Payroll and Travel and Subsistence.

AC/017/2023:

**ASM INTERNAL AUDIT
RE: WASTE MANAGEMENT**

Read:

ASM Internal Audit – Audit Fieldwork 2022/23 – Report dated 13 January 2023 regarding Waste Management. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor McAteer seconded by Councillor Byrne it was agreed to note ASM Internal Audit Audit Fieldwork 2022/23 – Report dated 13 January 2023 regarding Waste Management.

AC/018/2023:

**ASM INTERNAL AUDIT
RE: REVIEW OF DFC FUNDING**

Read:

ASM Internal Audit – Audit Fieldwork 2022/23 – Report dated 19 December 2022 regarding Review of applications for funding to the Department of Communities. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor McAteer seconded by Councillor Byrne it was agreed to note ASM Internal Audit - Audit Fieldwork 2022/23 – Report dated 19 December 2023 regarding Review of DfC Funding.

PERFORMANCE (CLOSED SESSION)

AC/019/2023: **IMPROVEMENT AUDIT & ASSESSMENT 2022-23**

Read: Letter dated 29 November 2022 from NIAO regarding Newry Mourne & Down District Council Improvement Audit and Assessment – Final Audit and Assessment Report 2022-23. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Byrne seconded by Councillor McAteer it was agreed:

- a) To note correspondence 29 November 2022 from NIAO regarding Newry Mourne & Down District Council Improvement Audit and Assessment – Final Audit and Assessment Report 2022-23.
- b) The Director of ERT provide a report at the Audit Committee Meeting regarding narrative statistics for Planning.

PERFORMANCE (OPEN SESSION)

AC/020/2023: **MID YEAR ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE**

Read: Report dated 18 January 2023 from Mr G Byrne Assistant Director of Finance, Finance & Performance, regarding Mid Year Assessment – Performance Improvement Plan 2022-23. **(Copy circulated)**

Ms Hughes explained the above Report was tabled and approved at the Strategy Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on 17 November 2023 and has been tabled at Audit Committee for noting.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Lewis seconded by Councillor Murphy it was agreed to note Report dated 18 January 2023 from Mr G Byrne Assistant Director of Finance, Finance & Performance, regarding Mid Year Assessment – Performance Improvement Plan 2022-23.

CIRCULARS**AC/021/2023: DAO 06/22 – DIRECT AWARD CONTRACTS**

Read: Letter dated 30 September 2022 from Department of Finance regarding Direct Award Contracts. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Murphy seconded by Councillor McAteer it was agreed to note the above correspondence.

AC/022/2023: DAO 05/22 – GRANT OR PROCUREMENT

Read: Letter dated 30 September 2022 from Department of Finance regarding Grant or Procurement. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Murphy seconded by Councillor McAteer is was agreed to note the above correspondence.

AC/023/2023: RATES SUPPORT GRANT ALLOCATION 2022/23

Read: Letter dated 30 September 2022 from Department for Communities regarding Rates Support Grant Allocation. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Byrne said although the reduction in the Rate Support Grant was disappointing, he asked if Management were content the reduction would not impact the future financial sustainability of the Council and if change to the Risk Register was required.

Mr Byrne referred to Corporate Risk10 regarding financial implications for Council. He said management were aware this reduction would happen which is presently being substituted by Council reserves in 2022–23 and 2023-24 after which efficiencies will have to be identified within Council to continue provision of services in light of losing this significant amount of money. He said this is reflected in the Corporate Risk Register and that SOLACE were lobbying central government to have some of this funding reinstated next year.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Murphy seconded by Councillor McAteer it was agreed to note the above correspondence.

AC/024/2023: DATE FOR NEXT MEETING
AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING

It was noted the next Meeting of the Audit Committee was scheduled for Tuesday 25 April 2023 but due to Local Government Elections being held on 18 May 2023 this date may have to be changed due to the period of purdah, and the Chairperson suggested Members consider holding an Audit Committee Meeting in early April 2023, and another Audit Committee Meeting following the Local Government Elections.

AGREED: It was unanimously agreed to hold an Audit Committee Meeting early April 2022 and a further Meeting of the Audit Committee be held after the Local Government Elections.

Ms Slevin welcomed the two new Members to the Committee, Councillor Callum Bowsie and Councillor Geraldine Kearns, and to the newly appointed Director of Corporate Services, Ms Josephine Kelly, and to the new Council Officers, Ms Catherine Hughes, Ms Edel Cosgrove and Ms S McConville, who now report to the Audit Committee.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 3.35pm.

For consideration at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 06 February 2023.

Signed: Ms J Kelly
Director Corporate Services

Signed: Ms B Slevin
Independent Chairperson

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**Minutes of Strategy Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on
Thursday 19 January 2023 at 6.00pm via Microsoft Teams &
Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre**

In the Chair:	Councillor O Hanlon (Chamber)
In Attendance in Chamber	Councillor G Hanna Councillor A McMurray Councillor A Lewis Councillor D Murphy Councillor B Ó Muirí Councillor G Sharvin
In Attendance via Teams:	Councillor P Byrne Councillor H Gallagher Councillor R Howell Councillor O Magennis Councillor M Rice Councillor D Taylor
Non-Members:	Councillor J Brennan (Chamber) Councillor C Enright (Chamber) Councillor A Finnegan (Chamber) Councillor D McAteer (via Teams) Councillor H McKee (via Teams) Councillor H Reilly (via Teams) Councillor J Tinnelly (via Teams)
Officials in Attendance:	Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director Administration Mrs R Mackin, Assistant Director Corporate Planning and Policy Mrs C Miskelly, Assistant Director Corporate Services (HR & Safeguarding) Mr A Patterson, Assistant Director Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism. Mr P Rooney, Legal Advisor Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting) Mrs L Cummins, Democratic Services Officer

SPR/001/2023: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

No apologies were received.

SPR/002/2023: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest

SPR/003/2023: ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON THURSDAY 15 DECEMBER 2022

Read: Action Sheet of the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on Thursday 15 December 2022. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Gallagher, seconded by Councillor Magennis to approve the action sheet from the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 15 December 2022.**

NOTICE OF MOTION

SPR/004/2023: NOTICE OF MOTION – KINGS CORONATION

Read: Report dated 19 January 2023 from Mrs R Mackin, Assistant Director Corporate Planning and Policy regarding Notice of Motion – Kings Coronation **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Lewis proposed the Notice of Motion, seconded by Councillor Hanna.

Mrs Mackin advised members that the call for the application would now open on the 13th March 2023 and not 20th March 2023 as previously advised, and would then close on 3rd April 2023, giving the applicants 3 weeks to complete and submit applications.

Councillor Sharvin stated that the SDLP party were supportive of the establishment of the fund and respected that there were people within the district who wished to celebrate the King's Coronation, however, the Council needed to be conscious and financially prudent. He stated he had raised some concerns at the Good Relations forum regarding the level of funding, particularly given the rates process and challenges that the Council was currently facing. He queried what the implications would be on the rates process and where the funding would come from as this was not within budget.

Mrs Mackin advised under 4.1 of the report it stated that proposed allocation of £40,000 was an additional financial resource not agreed within the current 23/24 revenue budget but was to be included in the 23/24 budget if external funding was not available.

Mrs Kelly advised this was a new request and would be found within the next financial year and incorporated into the budget.

Councillor Ó Muirí advised that on behalf of his Party they supported the Motion and recognised there were Councillors within the Chamber and Unionists within the community wanting to celebrate the event.

Mrs Ward advised that there would be a review of all existing internal revenue budgets to provide the allocated funds, if required and that it would be highlighted at next Strategic Finance Working Group. Mrs Ward also confirmed that the level of £40,000 had been determined by the demand expressed during the Jubilee and by reducing the level of funding would most likely end in oversubscription.

Councillor Taylor spoke in support of the Motion, stating that the amount of money being provided was minimal in comparison to what other Councils were providing. Asking members to be mindful that this was an important once in a lifetime occasion and there would be other potential external funding source opportunities available.

Councillor Byrne agreed with previous comments made regarding marking the event across the district however the Council was in a very different financial position than when the Queen's Jubilee took place, and any additional funding would need to be found within current budgets so as not to have an impact on the rates process.

Councillor Byrne proposed the following amendment:

'That Elected Members give consideration to establishing a King Charles III Coronation Financial assistance programme within the existing budget, to be brought back to the next Strategic Finance Working Group for consideration and ratification at full Council.'

This was seconded by Councillor Gallagher.

After lengthy discussions on the matter and all parties confirming they unanimously supported the event, Councillor Sharvin and Byrne confirmed that there was no suggestion of a reduction in budget for the event, it was about finding it within an existing budget and being financially prudent and respectful to the ratepayer.

Councillor Taylor, Lewis, Reilly and Hanna voiced their disappointment and concerns that it was an attempt to reduce the budget and scupper the event, however agreed that it be brought to the next Strategic Finance Working Group for further discussion to see if the funding could be found within existing resource budgets.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Gallagher, that Elected Members give consideration to establishing a King Charles III Coronation financial assistance programme within the existing budget and be brought back to the next Strategic Finance Working Group for consideration and ratification at full Council.**

SPR/005/2023: **NOTICE OF MOTION – ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ALL-IRELAND CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY**

Read: Report dated 19 January 2023 from Mrs R Mackin, Assistant Director Corporate Planning and Policy regarding Notice of Motion – Establishment of an ALL-Ireland Citizens' Assembly **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Ó Muirí proposed the Notice of Motion, seconded by Councillor Magennis.

Councillor Ó Muirí and Byrne spoke in support of the Motion.

Councillor McMurray stated he broadly supported the Motion however added that a Unionist Outreach i.e a Northern Ireland office may have eased it slightly. He was still not convinced that Council should be planning for constitutional change at such an early stage. He stated on a positive note there was a lot of good work being done regarding the Shared Island Unit.

Councillor Hanna and Taylor stated their parties did not support the Motion, stating it was very much one sided with no mention of the British Government with a total disregard and disrespect to the vast majority who wanted to remain as part of United Kingdom.

The Chairperson put the matter to a vote, the results of which are as follows:

FOR: 10
AGAINST: 3
ABSTENTIONS: 0

The proposal was carried.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Byrne, that Elected Members consider the Notice of Motion – Establishment of an All-Ireland Citizens' Assembly noting the content of the report.

CORPORATE PLANNING AND POLICY

SPR/006/2023: NEW IRELAND WORKING GROUP

Read: Report dated 19 January 2023 from Mrs R Mackin, Assistant Director Corporate Planning and Policy regarding New Ireland Working Group (**Copy circulated**)

Councillor Ó Muirí informed members that it had been a productive first meeting and a very good initiative.

Councillor Taylor stated he had been very clear in terms of his position with regards the establishment of the group and it was important to note his objections on the opposition of setting up of the group.

Councillor Byrne concurred with Councillor Ó Muirí's comments highlighting that more information being collated from experts in their field and being made available on the Council website for people to read the research in one place was a positive step. He stated that working closely with other Councils i.e Strabane and Derry that had established similar types of working groups would help to improve conversation around the issue.

Councillor McMurray asked to note going forward that in the Terms of Reference it stated supporting people of different constitutional backgrounds and officers should be conscious of this when they were collating various academic journals.

Councillor Hanna reinforced his Party's position by stating they decided not to take part in the working group as they seen no benefit in it. He asked for clarity if the Council website would be promoting in a fair and even-handed manner what was published as a result of the working group.

Mrs Ward referred to 1.2 of the report where it stated 'It should be noted the actions undertaken in relation to the Notice of Motion do not presuppose a corporate position, support or endorse an outcome in relation to constitutional change' and advised that would be the position that would remain.

The Chairperson advised Councillor Enright he should bring any queries he may have to the next New Ireland Working Group meeting as all Councillors were invited to attend and this was the platform at which they should be discussed.

The Chairperson put the matter to a vote, the results of which are as follows:

FOR: 9
AGAINST: 3
ABSTENTIONS: 1

The proposal was carried.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Byrne that Elected Members approve the following recommendations from the meeting of the New Ireland working group:

- 1) To collate and gather all the relevant research, reports, presentations and articles in relation to the issue of Constitutional Change from government agencies and academia and upload these to the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council website. Where possible, the information should be categorised and include those related to economic, environmental, cultural and social policy impacts, including health and education.
- 2) Council increase engagement with Intertrade Ireland.
- 3) An Executive summary to be produced on the Newry-Dundalk-Drogheda economic zone research.
- 4) Engage with local Councils on an annual basis to share information and best practice.

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Gallagher, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on items 9-17 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 Rice, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

Councillors Hanna and Lewis left the meeting at 19.04pm and 19.07pm.

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

SPR/007/2023: REQUEST TO DISPOSE OF LANDS AT HEATHER PARK, NEWRY

Read: Report dated 19 January 2023 from Mr P Rooney, Head of Legal Administration, regarding request to dispose of lands at Heather Park, Newry. **(Copy circulated).**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Murphy, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed Elected Members agree to the sale of the lands outlined in blue on the attached map to the party detailed in the report for the value determined by Council's valuer subject to the interested party paying Council's legal and valuation costs. The purchaser shall erect at their own cost a suitable boundary to be agreed with Council Officers.**

SPR/008/2023: PLAY PARK AT RIVERSIDE, LEITRIM

Read: Report dated 19 January 2023 from Mr P Rooney, Head of Legal Services (Acting) regarding, Play Park at Riverside, Leitrim **(Copy circulated).**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Gallagher, it was agreed that Elected Members approve the transfer of the Riverside Play Park from Armagh Banbridge Craigavon Council to ensure compliance with the Scheme of Transfer and subject to the Assignment of Lease.**

SPR/009/2023: ARDGLASS ROWING CLUB

Read: Report dated 19 January 2023 from Mr P Rooney, Head of Legal Administration regarding, Ardglass Rowing Club **(Copy circulated).**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed that Elected Members approve to continue to encourage and support Ardglass Rowing Club and additional water sports provision across the district via Councils Sport and Community Leasing Policy and Financial Assistance Programme.**

SPR/010/2023:**ASSET DISPOSAL****Read:**Report dated 19 January 2023 from Mr A Patterson, Assistant Director ERT regarding Asset Disposal **(Copy circulated)**.**Agreed:****On the proposal of Councillor Murphy, seconded by Councillor Ó Muirí, it was agreed Elected Members approve to auction non-fixed assets as detailed in the report.****SPR/011/2023:****DIRECTOR RECRUITMENT****Read:**Report dated 19 January 2023 from Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive regarding Director Recruitment **(Copy circulated)**.**Agreed:****On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor McMurray, it was agreed Elected Members approve the following:**

- A) The Recruitment for Director: Active and Healthy Communities.**
- B) The decision in relation to 2.3 of the report.**
- C) The nominations to the selection panel.**

FOR NOTING – This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the October 2022 Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014**SPR/012/2023:****NOTICE OF MOTION C/205/2022 BROADENING RATES BASE, INCREASING DIRECT INCOME AND REDUCING COSTS****Read:**Report dated 19 January 2023 from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Notice of Motion C/205/2022 Broadening Rates Base, Increasing Direct Income and Reducing Costs. **(copy circulated)****Agreed:****On the proposal of Councillor Gallagher, seconded by Councillor Ó Muirí, it was agreed to note the recommendations contained within the officer's report.****SPR/013/2023:****STRATEGIC FINANCE WORKING GROUP ACTION SHEET – 12 JANUARY 2023****Read:**Strategic Finance Working Group Action Sheet – 12 January 2023. **(Copy circulated)****Agreed:****On the proposal of Councillor Gallagher, seconded by Councillor Ó Muirí, it was agreed to note the Strategic Finance Working Group Action Sheet – 12 January 2023.**

FOR NOTING**SPR/014/2023:****STATUTORY REPORTING – SECTION 75 POLICY
SCREENING REPORT – QUARTERLY REPORT FOR PERIOD
OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2022****Read:**

Report dated 19 January 2023 from Mrs R Mackin, Assistant Director Corporate Planning and Policy, regarding Statutory reporting - Section 75 Policy Screening Report – Quarterly Report for period October – December 2022 **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed:

On the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed Elected Members note the Statutory reporting - Section 75 Policy Screening Report – Quarterly Report for period October – December 2022

SPR/015/2023:**RATES SUPPORT GRANT ALLOCATION 2022/23****Read:**

Rates Support Grant Allowance dated 22 December 2022 **(Copy circulated)**

The Chairperson advised members there would be a copy of the letter, that all 5 party leaders wrote to the Permanent Secretary and Secretary of State asking that they give consideration to an increase of support to local Councils, going to the next Council meeting.

Councillor Sharvin proposed that the Council write also to the Permanent Secretary and the Secretary of State urging them to provide further financial assistance giving the challenges we as a Council face in striking a rate and to lessen the burden to the ratepayer.

This was seconded by Councillor Hanlon.

Councillor Byrne supported the proposal to write a letter as a Council, however stated the wording of the letter received from the Department for Communities was disappointing, as there hadn't been a move away from the principle of what the Rate Support Grant was set up for and last year was a set of extreme circumstances right across all Councils. This needed reinstated to some level that would go towards the meaning of why the Rates Support Grant was set up in the first place.

Agreed:

On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed Elected Members note the Rates Support Grant Allocation 2022/23, and Council write to the Permanent Secretary and the Secretary of State urging them to provide further financial assistance giving the challenges we as a Council face to strike a rate and to lessen the burden to the ratepayer.

There being no further business, the Meeting concluded at 19.36pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 06 February 2023.

Signed: **Councillor Oonagh Hanlon**
 Chairperson

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

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**Ref: AHC/2023**

**Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on
Monday 23 January 2023 at 6.00pm in the Mourne Room, Downshire Civic
Centre and via Microsoft Teams**

Chairperson: Councillor H Gallagher (Chamber)**In attendance in Chamber:** Councillor J Jackson
Councillor A Lewis
Councillor D McAteer
Councillor G O'Hare
Councillor G Sharvin**In attendance via Teams:** Councillor J Brennan
Councillor A Finnegan
Councillor D Lee- Surginor
Councillor G Malone
Councillor L McEvoy
Councillor K McKeivitt
Councillor J Tinnelly**Non-Members
in attendance on Teams:** Councillor D Curran
Councillor O Hanlon
Councillor M Larkin
Councillor H McKee**Officials in attendance
in Chamber:**Mr E Devlin, Assistant Director, Health & Wellbeing
Mrs J Hillen, Assistant Director, Community Engagement
Mr P Tamati, Assistant Director, Leisure & Sport
Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer**Officials in attendance
via Teams:**Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
Ms L Cummins, Democratic Services Officer

AHC/001/2023: APOLOGIES & CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

There were no apologies.

The Chairperson thanked Translink, PSNI, NIFRS and The Southern Trust for assisting the Health and Wellbeing Department in running the annual Bee Safe event which was attended by 32 schools and over 1000 P7 pupils.

The Chairperson advised events would take place in the week commencing 6 February 2023 for schools in the legacy Down District Council area when vital information on mental wellbeing, home safety, fire safety, online safety and road safety would be provided.

Councillor's Sharvin and Lewis referred to the upcoming Newry, Mourne and Down District Sports Awards and encouraged people from clubs and community groups across the District to put forward nominations to the award.

Councillor Sharvin congratulated Conor Gelston from Drumaness on receiving 4 3rd Place medals in the Commonwealth Powerlifting Championship in Auckland.

AHC/002/2023: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

AHC/003/2023: ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM ACTIVE & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19 DECEMBER 2022

Read: Action sheet of the Active & Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 19 December 2022. **(Copy circulated).**

AHC/222/2022: Report on Cost of Living Initiatives

Mr Devlin advised an update report on cost of living initiatives would be provided to the Active and Healthy Communities Committee in February 2023. Members were informed the first of the 'Keeping Warm Well' events had been held in Newry that day and was well supported with over 200 people in attendance and a further session was scheduled to take place in the Down Arts Centre on 30 January 2023.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor McAteer to note the Action Sheet of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 19 December 2022.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

AHC/004/2023: FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE CALL 2 APPROVALS

Read: Report dated 17 January 2023 from Mrs J Hillen, Assistant Director, Community Engagement regarding Financial Assistance. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Sharvin referred to letters received by Members in relation to the Arts and Culture theme as part of the grant call and concerns raised regarding funding not being confirmed and that the level of funding would be less than last year. He sought assurances that the Arts and Culture grant was going ahead and the level of funding would be the same as last year.

Mrs Hillen advised all themes referred to within the report and the previous report on financial call 1 operate at risk and have a caveat that it was subject to funding.

Mrs Hillen went on to advise she had not been made aware of any cuts to Arts and Culture funding or any difference in the threshold. She added it was the Enterprise Regeneration and Tourism (ERT) Directorate that set the budget for Arts and Culture and advised she would forward concerns raised to ERT so that Members could be updated.

Councillor Sharvin requested the ERT directorate bring a paper on to the Strategic Finance Working Group Meeting on Thursday 26 January 2022 if there were any concerns in relation to the level of funding for Culture and Arts.

Councillor McEvoy asked that given concerns raised in relation to Arts and Culture that consideration be given to shorter approval timeframes for events, similar to those proposed for the Kings Coronation. This would allow groups such as SOMA, Down Time and Eat and Beats to bring forward their applications to allow time to plan for these events.

Mrs Hillen confirmed she would advise ERT of the Committees' concerns raised as it was that department that had control of the budget and themes.

In response to a point raised by Councillor Lewis, Mrs Hillen confirmed that should any community groups have concerns in relation to financial assistance that they contact Council officers at any time.

Agreed:

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor McEvoy to approve the following:

- **Recommendations for Call 1 and letters to be issued in February 2023 with themes focusing on events/festivals in April 2023 being prioritised.**
- **Approval for Call 2 themes and time frame as above.**
- **Delegated authority for Director approval regarding the Kings Coronation and other Call 2 themes requiring approval through Purdah.**

Mrs Hillen to advise ERT Directorate of concerns raised and that a paper be brought to the Strategic Finance Working Group Meeting on 26 January 2023 if cuts were proposed to this theme.

AHC/005/2023: DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREA (DEA) FORUMS UPDATE REPORT

Read: Report dated 17 January 2023 from Mrs J Hillen, Assistant Director, Community Engagement regarding an update on District Electoral Area Forums. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Brennan, to note the report and approve the actions in the Action Sheets attached for the following:**

- **Downpatrick DEA Forum Private Meeting held on Tuesday 13 December 2022.**
- **Newry DEA Forum Private Meeting held on Thursday 15 December 2022 (amended).**

AHC/006/2023: COMMUNITY CO-ORDINATION HUB – UPDATE REPORT

Read: Report dated 17 January 2023 from Mrs J Hillen, Assistant Director, Community Engagement regarding an update report for the Community Co-ordination Hub. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor McEvoy, to note the report and approve the actions in the Action Sheet attached for the Community Coordination Hub (CCH) Meeting held on Wednesday 14 December 2022.**

AHC/007/2023: COMMUNITY CONSULTATION FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES STRATEGY

Read: Report dated 17 January 2023 from Mrs J Hillen, Assistant Director, Community Engagement regarding community consultation for community facilities. **(Copy circulated)**

In response to Councillor Sharvin, Mrs Hillen advised approval was being sought prior to purdah to be able to progress the public consultation so that once elections were over it could proceed and provided assurance that the draft consultation would not be issued without Committee, CMT and SMT approval.

Councillor McAteer suggested that Members be provide with a list of those being consulted.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor O'Hare subject to approval of the draft strategy at CMT and SMT that a public consultation be progressed in due course.**

HEALTH AND WELLBEING**AHC/008/2023: OFFICE OF PRODUCT SAFETY AND STANDARDS (OPSS)
FUNDING FOR PRODUCT SAFETY WORK**

Read: Report dated 17 January 2023 from Mr E Devlin, Assistant Director, Health and Wellbeing regarding funding from the Office of Product Safety and Standards for product safety work. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor McAteer to accept the offer of funding and approve that the relevant Officer sign the required contract.**

**AHC/009/2023: CONSULTATION RESPONSE: PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE
FOOD LAAW CODE OF PRACTICE (NORTHERN IRELAND) IN
RELATION TO A NEW FOOD STANDARDS DELIVERY MODEL**

Read: Report dated 17 January 2023 from Mr E Devlin, Assistant Director, Health and Wellbeing regarding funding from the Office of Product Safety and Standards for product safety work. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor McEvoy to return the attached Consultation response and note the response had been submitted by the required date (9 January 2023) on the proviso that it was subject to Council approval.**

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor McEvoy it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on items 12-16 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 Lee-Surginor, seconded by Councillor O'Hare, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

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

AHC/010/2023 UPGRADE WORKS AT BARCROFT AND THREEWAYS COMMUNITY CENTRE

Read: Report dated 17 January 2023 from Mrs J Hillen, Assistant Director, Community Development regarding the appointment of the preferred bidder to undertake upgrade works at Barcroft and Three Ways Community Centres. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Lewis, seconded by Councillor Sharvin to note the content of the report and approve the appointment of the preferred bidder to carryout upgrade works at Barcroft and Three Ways Community Centres subject to contract and completion of due diligence checks.

AHC/011/2023 COMMUNITY TRAILS UPDATE

Read: Report dated 17 January 2023 from Mr P Tamati, Assistant Director Leisure and Sport regarding an update in relation to Community Trails. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Lee-Surginor, seconded by Councillor McAteer to approve the update on Community Trails as per appendix 1 of the officer's report.

END OF CLOSED SESSION

FOR NOTING**AHC/012/2023****SOCIAL INCLUSION UPDATE**

Read

Report dated 17 January 2023 from Mr J Hillen, Assistant Director, Community Engagement regarding an update on the social inclusion work. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed:

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor McEvoy to note the contents of the officer's report.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 6.33pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 6 February 2023.

Signed: Councillor H Gallagher
Chairperson

Signed: Michael Lipsett
Director Active and Healthy Communities

NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 25 January 2023 at 6.00pm in the Boardroom, District Council Offices, Monaghan Row, Newry and via MS Teams.

Chair: Councillor O Magennis (Chamber)

Members: Councillor T Andrews (Teams)
Councillor C Bowsie (Teams)
Councillor D Curran (Teams)
Councillor A Finnegan (Teams)
Councillor C King (Teams)
Councillor G Malone (Teams)
Councillor D Murphy (Chamber)
Councillor K McKeivitt (Teams)
Councillor A McMurray (Chamber)
Councillor G Stokes (Teams)
Councillor M Ruane (Teams)
Councillor D Taylor (Teams)
Councillor J Tinnelly (Teams)

Officials in Attendance: Mr A Cassells, Director Sustainability and Environment
Mr K Scullion, Assistant Director Facilities Management and Maintenance
Ms S Murphy, Acting Assistant Director Waste Management
Mr A Mallon, Head of Maintenance
Ms G Kane, Head of Facilities Management
Ms C McAteer, Democratic Services Officer
Ms L Dillon, Democratic Services Officer

SE/001/2023: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

No apologies were received.

SE/002/2023: DECLARATIONS OF "CONFLICTS OF INTEREST"

No declarations of conflicts of interest were made.

SE/003/2023: ACTION SHEET OF THE SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 20 DECEMBER 2022

Read: Action Sheet of the Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 20 December 2022. *(Circulated)*.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Murphy, seconded by Councillor Curran, it was agreed the Action Sheet of the**

Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 20 December 2022 be noted and actions removed as marked.

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

SE/004/2023: SOCIAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP OFFER FOR PLANTING OF TREES ON COUNCIL LAND

Read: Report dated 25 January 2023 from Kevin Scullin Assistant Director, Facilities Management and Maintenance, re: update on social enterprise partnership offer for planting trees on Council land. *(Circulated)*.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor McMurray, seconded by Councillor Magennis, it was agreed to note the contents of the report and accept the recommendation that existing Council policy and procedures for addressing requests to plant trees on Council property are adequate without the need to form a partnership with a not-for-profit organisation as per recommendation approved by Council in November 2021.**

WASTE MANAGEMENT

SE/005/2023: PROPOSED MOBILE PHONE INSTALLATION AT DOWNPATRICK HRC SITE

Read: Report dated 25 January 2023 from Sinead Murphy, (Acting) Assistant Director, Waste Management, re: proposed mobile phone installation at Downpatrick HRC site. *(Circulated)*.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Curran, seconded by Councillor Murphy, it was agreed to note the contents and agree to:-**

- **Cornerstone progressing with their proposal to install mobile phone infrastructure at Downpatrick HRC site to replace a nearby site to provide continuation of service in the immediate area for both 02 and Vodafone, subject to them obtaining all necessary statutory consents.**
- **That the matter of any lease, wayleave or other legal agreement be properly referred to the Strategy Policy and Resources Committee.**

EXEMPT INFORMATION ITEMS

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

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Finnegan, seconded by Councillor Murphy, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on items 05-10 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 McMurray, seconded by Councillor McKeivitt, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

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

SE/006/2023: ECONOMIC APPRAISAL FOR PROVISION OF CHRISTMAS ILLUMINATIONS AND AD HOC CELEBRATORY LIGHTING

Read: Report dated 25 January 2023 from Mr K Scullion re: economic appraisal for the provision of Christmas illuminations and ad hoc celebratory lighting. *(Circulated)*.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Stokes, seconded by Councillor Tinnelly, it was agreed to note the content of the report and approve the recommendation from the Economic Appraisal that Option 3 was the preferred option. Option 3 would see the Council enter into contract with a provider of Christmas and ad hoc illuminations for a five-year period. The contract would include both use of the Council's own illuminations and where appropriate and agreed by Council the hire of illuminations.

SE/007/2023: WOOD WASTE PROCESSING CONTRACT – CONTRACT UPLIFT

Read: Report dated 25 January 2023 from Ms S Murphy re: Wood Waste Processing Contract – Contract Uplift. *(Circulated)*.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Murphy, it was agreed to note the content of the report.

SE/008/2023: OPTIONS CONSIDERED UNDER OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COUNCIL'S PUBLIC TOILET STRATEGY

Read: Report dated 25 January 2023 from Mr K Scullion re: options considered under outline business case for the implementation of the Council's Public Toilet Strategy. (*Circulated*).

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Murphy, it was agreed to note the content of the report

FOR NOTING

SE/009/2023: HISTORIC ACTIONS TRACKING SHEET

Read: Historic Actions Tracking Sheet (*Circulated*).

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Bowsie, seconded by Councillor Ruane, it was agreed the Historic Actions Tracking Sheet of the Sustainability and Environment Committee Meetings be noted and actions removed as marked.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 6.40 pm

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 6 February 2023.

Signed: Councillor O Magennis
Chairperson of Sustainability & Environment Committee

Signed: Mr A Cassells
Director of Sustainability & Environment



**Minutes of the 496th Meeting
of the Northern Ireland Housing Council held on
Thursday 8th December 2022 at 10 am via Zoom**

Present

Cllr Anne-Marie Fitzgerald	Fermanagh & Omagh District (Chair)
Cllr Mark Cooper	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough (Vice Chair)
Ald Jim Speers	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough
Ald Adrian McQuillan	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough
Ald Allan Bresland	Derry & Strabane Borough
Cllr Catherine Elattar	Mid Ulster Borough

In Attendance:

Paul Price	Director of Social Housing Policy & Oversight, Department for Communities
David Polley	Director, Housing Supply Policy, Department for Communities
Nicole Lappin	Chair, NIHE (Joined the meeting 11 to 11.20 am)
Catherine McFarland	Director of Audit Assurance & Finance, NIHE
Tim Gilpins	Rural & Regeneration Manager (Acting), NIHE
Kelly Cameron	Secretary (NIHE Secretariat)

Apologies:

Cllr Victoria Moore	Ards & North Down Borough
Ald Tommy Nicholl	Mid & East Antrim Borough
Cllr Michael Ruane	Newry, Mourne & Down District

1.	<p><u>Welcome</u></p> <p>The Chair welcomed Paul Price and David Polley from the Department for Communities and from the Housing Executive, Catherine McFarland.</p> <p>She also welcomed the Presenter Tim Gilpins from the Housing Executive.</p> <p>The Chair reported that Alderman Nicholl was ill in hospital and the Secretary was asked to pass on their best wishes for a speedy recovery.</p> <p>It was noted that the new Chair of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Nicole Lappin will be joining Members during the meeting to introduce herself to Members.</p>	Sec
2.	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>No declarations were received.</p>	

3.	<p><u>To adopt the Minutes of the 495th Housing Council Meeting held on Thursday, 10th November 2022</u></p> <p>It was proposed by Councillor A McQuillan and seconded by Alderman J Speers and resolved, that the Minutes of the 495th Meeting of the Housing Council held on Thursday 10th November 2022 be approved and signed by the Chair.</p>	
4.	<p><u>Matters Arising from the Minutes</u></p> <p>Matters arising were dealt with through the Meeting.</p>	
5.	<p><u>Forward Workplan</u></p> <p>The forward workplan was noted.</p>	
6.	<p>Report from Paul Price & David Polley from the Department for Communities on the Housing Top Issues.</p> <p>A summary of the current / emerging issues are outlined <i>as follows</i>:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Newbuild starts <p>Councillor Cooper referred to the 83 schemes programmed to start in 2022/23, which will remain amber until year end when final figures are confirmed. He requested further breakdown of these schemes.</p> <p>Mrs McFarland suggested by that the Housing Executive would be happy to attend a future Meeting to give a presentation on the Social Housing Development Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ownership <p>Councillor McQuillan requested further information on Co-ownership's Over 55's Scheme. It was agreed that a future presentation would be arranged.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme for Social Reform • Fundamental Review of Social Housing Allocations Policy • Housing Executive's House Sales Scheme • Supporting People Delivery Strategy • Homelessness Strategy <p>David Polley undertook to provide Members with a breakdown by Council are on Homeless Presenters.</p> <p>Councillor McQuillan requested detailed information on use of Bed and Breakfasts/ Hotels in Causeway Coast and Glens and Garvagh.</p> <p>It was agreed that an update on the Homelessness Strategy and statistics to be put on the Forward Workplan.</p>	<p>P Price</p> <p>Sec</p> <p>Sec</p> <p>D Polley</p> <p>D Polley</p> <p>Sec</p>

- Regulation of the Private Rented Sector
- Increasing Housing Supply
- Affordable Warmth Scheme

David Polley to provide breakdown by council area, on referrals, successful referrals and completions.

D Polley

- Review the Caravans Act (NI) 2011
- ERDF Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme 2014 -2020

In response to Councillor Cooper’s question, Paul Price confirmed that the Housing Executive are seeking approval to reduce the number of units whilst maintaining the level of funding. The original programme of 2000 units will be taken forward, more of the programmed units may have to be funded by Housing Executive, if not completed in time. Paul Price added that the overall programme is on track to deliver the programme by December 2023.

- Housing Executive historical debt and exclusion from having to pay Corporation Tax
- Programme for Government (PfG) Outcomes Framework
- Long term rent trajectory
- Affordability of social rents
- Housing Executive Rent

Paul Price undertook to provide details on proposed NIHE rent increase for tenants.

P Price

- Non ACM Cladding Remediation Scheme
- Climate Act DfC will lead on the ‘Residential and Buildings Sector Plan’

It was agreed that a presentation will be given to Members during the public consultation.

D Polley

7. **Latent Demand Testing in Rural Areas**

Tim Gilpins gave Members a presentation by the Housing Executive on Latent Demand Testing in Rural Areas (Copies of the Slides are appended to these Minutes – Appendix A).

Members noted that following the introduction of the Rural Needs Act for public authorities on 1st June 2018, the Housing Executive has a statutory duty to have due regard to the needs of people in rural areas when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the, policies, strategies, plans and services. A robust rural housing need testing policy is crucial in helping to have due regard to people in rural areas when identifying and planning to meet housing need.

The Housing Executive is been committed to working with local communities to identify hidden or ‘latent’ housing need in rural settlements.

The following 5 policy objectives are proposed:

- To plan and enable the provision of affordable homes (both social and intermediate) which meet rural housing needs.
- To improve the condition of rural housing stock and reduce fuel poverty

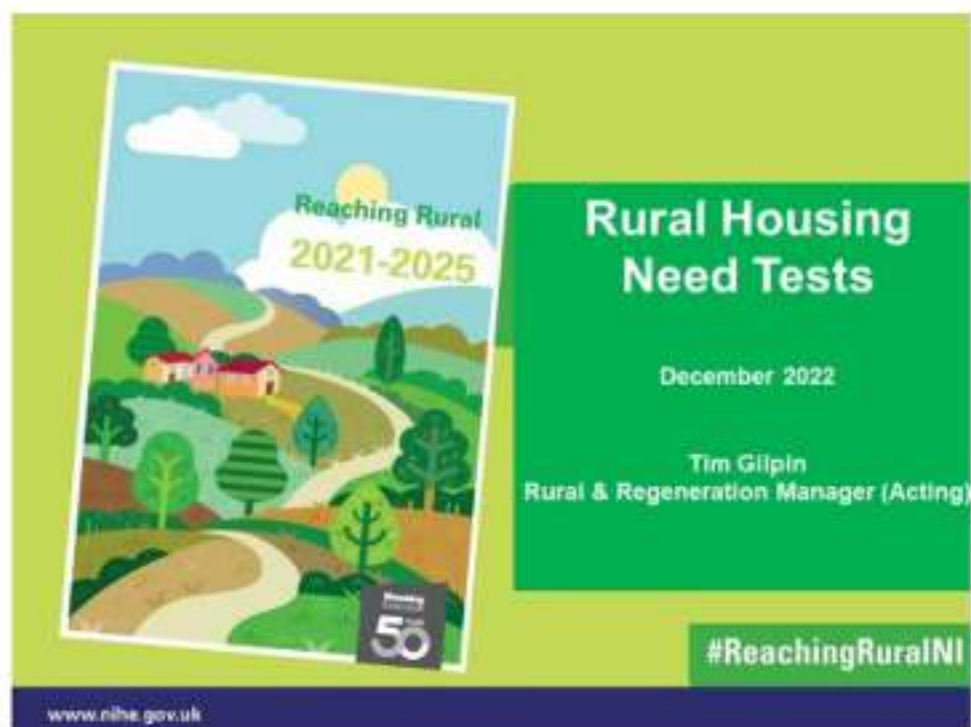
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide housing support to vulnerable people in rural areas • To contribute to the development of safe, cohesive and engaged rural neighbourhoods. • To work in partnership with others to assist in rural development <p>Concern was expressed at the accessibility to services in rural areas and questioned how this could be tackled in the long-term.</p> <p>Several Members expressed concerned that the waiting list doesn't match the 'real' need on the ground and people are reluctant to put their name forward for an area in which they feel they have on chance of getting an offer and stressed that identifying hidden need required to be addressed and other options addressed.</p> <p>It was noted that the Housing Executive would welcome local Councils identifying land in their areas, for potential social housing, through their local offices/Place Shapers and will be subsequently passed to the Rural Housing Team.</p> <p>Members agreed that as the Councils are drawing up their Local Area Plans, it is important that land should be identified/zoned for social housing.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Mr Gilpin for an informative presentation.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>All</p>
8.	<p>New Chair of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Nicole Lappin</p> <p>The new Chair of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Nicole Lappin joined the Meeting to introduce herself and said she looked forward to working with the Housing Council, in the future.</p> <p>The Chair, Councillor Fitzgerald wished her all the best in her new role and welcomed her to attend a meeting in the New Year and looked forward to building a working relationship with her.</p>	<p>Sec</p>
9.	<p><u>Housing Starts – November 2022</u></p> <p>The Report was noted.</p>	
10.	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>10.1 Letter to Building Regulations in relation to Lifetime Homes and Response letter</p> <p>Members noted the response letter from Building Regulations.</p> <p>Paul Price requested a copy of the response.</p> <p>10.2 Letter to Councils re Lifetime Homes</p> <p>Members noted the letter.</p>	<p>Sec</p>

<p>10.3</p>	<p>New Leasehold Policy</p> <p>Members noted the new Policy.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">111</p>
<p>10.4</p>	<p>Response from Water Service</p> <p>Members noted that a representative from the Water Service will be attending the January Meeting.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Sec</p>
<p>10.5</p>	<p>Planned Maintenance Contracts</p> <p>Referring to the ten contractors released from planned maintenance contracts as a result of escalating construction costs. Members requested a list of the schemes which were affected in each Area.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Sec</p>
<p>10.6</p>	<p>Repair of Solar Panels fitted by the Housing Executive</p> <p>Mr Bresland undertook to provide more information, in order for a response.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">A Bresland</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p><u>Date of next Meeting</u></p> <p>The next Housing Council Meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday, 12th January 2023 at 10 am in the Housing Centre or via Zoom,</p> <p>The Chair wished Members a Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year.</p>	

The Meeting concluded at 11.45 am

Appendix A

112

**Focus****Housing
Executive**

1. How do we consider the needs of rural communities?
2. Our rural housing need testing process?
3. Test programme

Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

To have due regard to rural needs in the development of all policy and public service delivery decisions



Rural Strategy 2021-2025:

3 Themes,
3 Outcomes,
12 Priorities.

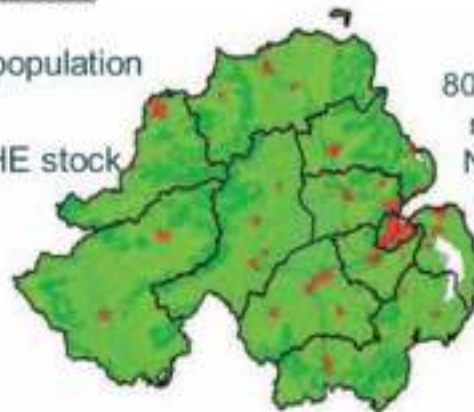


Rural context

36% of total population

17.7% of NIHE stock

14.8% of waiting list applicants



80% of land mass of Northern Ireland

7.5% of SHDP in 2021/22

Supply/demand cycle





www.nihe.gov.uk

Choosing where to test...

Housing
Executive

- Social waiting list analysis;
- Local representation;
- Availability of land.

www.nihe.gov.uk

The test:

- Engagement with **community reps**;
- Adverts in the **local press**;
- Posters, flyers, leaflets throughout **the village**;
- Posts on **social media**;
- An art competition with the **local primary school** 'design my dream home';
- Promotion through housing advisors in our **local office**;
- A **public** meeting or housing information event.

www.nthe.gov.uk

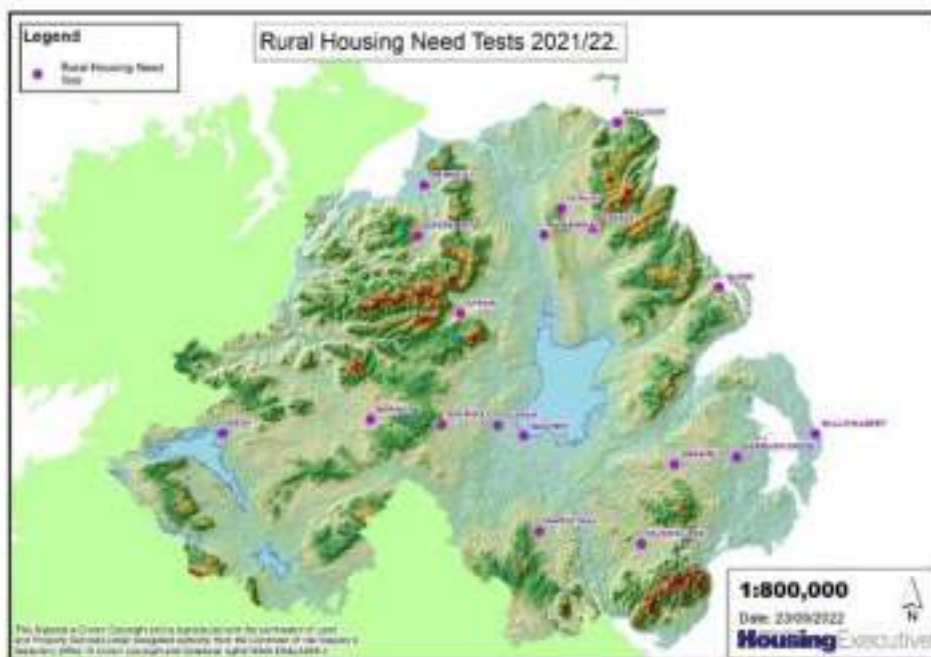


Rathlin

Housing Executive



www.nhe.gov.uk



www.nhe.gov.uk

Current programme



Causeway Coast & Glens	Derry & Strabane	Fermanagh & Omagh	Mid & East Antrim	Mid Ulster	Newry, Mourne & Down
Burnfoot	Tannaherin	Newtownbutler	Carnalbanagh	Ardboe	Clough
Moneydig		Mounfield		Clady	Ballymartin
Kilrea		Clabby		The Loup	Spa
Glenullin		Garrison		Drumullan	Kilren
Boleran				Ballymagulgan /Creagh	Leitrim
Garvagh				Lissan	
Lislagan				Moneyneena	
Dervock				Draperstown	
Loughgiel					



CHAIR
Councillor Anne-Marie Fitzgerald

The Housing Centre
 2 Adelaide Street
 Belfast BT2 8PB

T: (028) 9598 2752
 E: kelly.cameron@nihe.gov.uk
 W: nihousingcouncil.org

119

JANUARY HOUSING COUNCIL BULLETIN

The Northern Ireland Housing Council met on Thursday, 12th January 2023 at 10.00 am in the Boardroom, the Housing Centre of via Conference Call.

For Information, a report of the attendance is undernoted:-

Present

Anne-Marie Fitzgerald	Fermanagh & Omagh District (Chair)
Mark Cooper	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough (Vice Chair)
Victoria Moore	Ards & North Down Borough
Jim Speers	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough
Amanda Grehan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City
Adrian McQuillan	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough
Allan Bresland	Derry City & Strabane District
Tommy Nicholl	Mid & East Antrim Borough
Catherine Elattar	Mid Ulster Borough
Michael Ruane	Newry & Mourne District

Apologies

Micky Murray	Belfast City
--------------	--------------

Discussions on the undernoted matters took place as follows:-

Report from Grainia Long, Chief Executive, Housing Executive

The Report provided the Housing Council with a monthly update summarising a range of strategic, major or routine matters, including any emerging issues. A summary of the current / emerging issues are outlined as follows:-

- Industrial Relations
- Review following Awaab Ishak inquest
- Ark Housing Association, Derrytrasna - New Build Property Addition & Allocation issue
- Green End, Rathcoole
- NIHE Revitalisation Programme - Progress Update
- Corporate Plan
- NIHE - Asset Management Strategy
- Sustainable Development Strategy Update
- Contribution to the Development of the NI Climate Action Plan
- Implementation of the NIHE Cost of Living Plan
- Future Working Practices and Accommodation Strategy

- Ongoing Engagement with Political Parties and other stakeholders
- Fundamental Review of Allocations (FRA)
- Bonfires
- Ukrainian Resettlement Programme
- Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation
- Review of Muckamore Abbey Hospital Resettlement
- Review of Disabled Facilities Grants
- Finlock Gutters and Contribution to Costs by Homeowners

Members also received a Presentations by the Water Service on **Storm Water Separation**.

Once the minutes of the meeting are ratified at the February Meeting, they can be accessed on the Housing Council website: www.nihousingcouncil.org

The next Housing Council Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 9th February 2023 at 10.00 am via conference call.

Should you require any further information or have any questions regarding the content.

Contacts

Secretary, Kelly Cameron

The Housing Centre,

2 Adelaide Street

Belfast

BT2 8PB

Kelly.cameron@nihe.gov.uk Tel: 028 95982752



Northern
Ireland
Office

Steve Baker MP

Minister of State
Northern Ireland Office

1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

Erskine House
20-32 Chichester St
Belfast
BT1 4GF

E: correspondence@nio.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/nio
Follow us on Twitter @NICgov

Marie Ward

Chief Executive - Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

By email: aisling.murray@nmandd.org

12 January 2023
Our ref: MC/22/310

Dear Marie,

Thank you for your letter addressed to the Prime Minister of 14 November 2022 regarding the cost of living in Northern Ireland. The Prime Minister has asked that I respond on his behalf.

I fully appreciate the difficulty of the current situation. As you allude to, there are a variety of factors driving the cost of living crisis, including consequences of the war in Ukraine and other global supply chain pressures that predate the war.

I agree that it is vitally important that people across Northern Ireland are supported with rising costs this winter, and that is why the UK Government is taking the necessary steps to ensure that this is delivered to people and businesses. The one-off Cost of Living Payments announced in May will include £650 for those on means-tested benefits, £300 for pensioners, and £150 for those with a disability. Households in Northern Ireland will also benefit from a £400 discount on bills through the Northern Ireland Energy Bills Support Scheme, the same as that available to households in Great Britain. In addition, the Northern Ireland Energy Price Guarantee is already reducing the unit cost of electricity and gas for households in

Northern Ireland. As well as the £200 Alternative Fuel Payment that is being paid to all households in Northern Ireland, The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy are working to deliver the Energy Bills Support Scheme and Alternative Fuel Scheme as quickly as possible.

Of course, the inability of the Northern Ireland Executive to agree a Northern Ireland Budget has compounded the cost of living crisis and exacerbated the systemic and long term challenges. As the Secretary of State set out in his Statement to Parliament on 24 November, the UK Government was disappointed to have inherited a Budget that had a funding gap of £660 million. We did not want to be in the position of setting the budget for Northern Ireland, but have done so in order to protect Northern Ireland's finances and the delivery of public services. We believe that, given the very difficult circumstances, the agreed Budget represents a fair outcome. However, it is imperative that the Northern Ireland Executive is restored so that local politicians can once again take the key decisions on behalf of the people who elected them.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Baker', with a horizontal line underneath it.

STEVE BAKER MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

POA2022/24412



HM Treasury, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

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



Your ref: C/183/2022
 18 January 2023

Dear Marie,

Thank you for your letter of 14 November to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on behalf of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council about the cost of living support available for residents of the district. I am replying as the Minister responsible for public spending.

I am sorry to hear of the challenges your residents are facing.

The Government understands that people across the UK are worried about the cost of living. This is why we have taken decisive action to support households with these pressures over this year and the next, whilst remaining fiscally responsible.

For example, the Government is supporting millions of the most vulnerable households across the UK over 2023-24 through a £900 Cost of Living Payment for those on means-tested benefits (plus an additional £300 for pensioner households and £150 for individuals on disability benefits). This is in addition to the £650 Cost of Living Payment for households on means-tested benefits (with additional support for pensioners and those claiming disability benefits) already made this year, with an estimated 309,000 households in Northern Ireland eligible for the payment to those on means tested benefits.

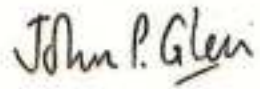
The Government is also continuing to provide support to all UK households with the cost of energy. The Energy Price Guarantee will support households this winter and over 2023-24, saving the average household £500 in 2023-24. This is in addition to the support for all UK households provided this year through the £400 Energy Bill Support Scheme.

We are continuing to keep the situation under review and focus support on the most vulnerable whilst ensuring we act in a fiscally responsible way.

- ① Democrotra Services - FYA
- ② MW - Info.

Thank you for taking the trouble to make me aware of these concerns.

Yours sincerely,



THE RT HON JOHN GLEN MP

Roger Wilson
Chief Executive



Armagh City
Banbridge
& Craigavon
Borough Council

4 January 2023

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

Dear Marie

NOTICE OF MOTION – WORKERS LEGAL RIGHTS TO TIPS

I refer to your letter dated 12 December 2022 in connection with the above which was considered by the Council at its meeting held on 19 December 2022.

The Council would give its full support to this Notice of Motion.

Yours sincerely

Roger Wilson
Chief Executive

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



Date: 09 JAN 2023

Chief Executive
Marie Ward

Armagh Office
The Palace Demesne
Friary Road
Armagh
BT60 4EL

Banbridge Office
Civic Building
Downshire Road
Banbridge
BT32 3JY

Craigavon Office
Craigavon Civic &
Conference Centre
Lakeview Road
Craigavon
BT64 1AL

☎ 0300 0300 900

✉ info@armaghibanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk
🌐 armaghibanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

①. Democratic Services - FYA.

Alison McCullagh
Chief Executive



Fermanagh & Omagh
District Council
Comhairle Ceantair
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí

127

Our Ref: Democratic Services

Date: 13 January 2023

Email: democratic.services@fermanaghomagh.com

Ms Marie Ward
Chief Executive
Newry Mourne and Down District Council
Oifig Dhún Pádraig
Downpatrick Office
Downshire Civic Centre
Ardglass Road
BT30 6GQ

Dear Ms Ward,

Re: Notice of Motion – Workers' Legal Rights to Tips

At the Council meeting held on 10 January 2023, Members considered your correspondence of 12 December 2022. In noting the Motion adopted by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, Members asked me to write to you to convey their concerns that the motion did not address the issue of low wages within the hospitality industry which necessitate tips being required to supplement employees' income.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alison McCullagh".

Alison McCullagh
Chief Executive



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

128

30 January 2023

Our ref: C014/23

By Email: patricia.McKeever@nmandd.org

Ms Marie Ward
Chief Executive
Newry Office
O'Hagan House
Monaghan Row
Newry
BT35 8DJ

Dear Ms Ward

Council at its January meeting considered your correspondence dated 12 December 2022 regarding the motion passed in relation to Workers Legal Rights to Tips. Council agreed to support the motion and will also write to the Permanent Secretary at the Department of the Economy and the relevant Minister at Westminster.

Yours sincerely

Joseph McGuckin
Head of Strategic Services & Engagement



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

Sent via email only: Marie.Ward@nmandd.org

06 February 2023

Dear Marie,

At a recent meeting of Ards and North Down Borough Council, your letter dated 12 December 2022 regarding a Notice of Motion agreed at a meeting of the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council pertaining to the extension of laws around workers legal rights to their tips to Northern Ireland was considered.

The Council unanimously agreed to show support for this motion. The Council agreed that I write on their behalf to you, confirming this support as well as write to the Department for the Economy and the Secretary of State for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy advocating for such legislation to be extended to Northern Ireland but with any identified loopholes closed that would allow tips to be kept by the employer and not issued to staff. This has now been completed.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Reid", enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

STEPHEN REID
Chief Executive

18 January 2023

Colum Boyle
Permanent Secretary, Department for Communities
Level 9, Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG

Dear Colum

We are writing to call on you, with the utmost urgency, to increase support being allocated to Councils through the Rates Support Grant (RSG).

Councils are at the forefront of providing public services and employment but have been devastated by the ongoing cost of living crisis and soaring energy prices.

Work exploring options relating to Councils 2023/24 rate is ongoing. However, we have huge concern that our citizens will face further financial pressures if Councils are forced to increase their rates to the percentages currently being considered.

Representatives from the five Parties met with NILGA who outlined the stark realities of the financial pressures Councils face. These pressures include, but are not limited to, impact of increased inflation, payroll pressures, energy costs, capital costs etc.

NILGA also stressed the negative impact of potential reductions in government grants, in particular the rates support grant.

Support provided to Councils through RSG in 2020/21 and 2021/22 was over £20m. At the end of December, the Department for Communities notified Councils that the 2022/23 quantum will be £8.924million.

We are aware that although the RSG is statutory, the quantum is discretionary. However, this is a significant reduction which can only have a negative outcome for Councils. This negative impact will ultimately be paid for by those already struggling financially.

We ask that immediate short term financial assistance is provided to ALL Councils, and the RSG is restored to recent year levels in order to help support Councils, and the Rate Payer, through this difficult time

Your sincerely

Michelle O'Neill MLA
Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP
Naomi Long MLA
Doug Beattie MLA
Colum Eastwood MP

Cc. Chris Heaton-Harris MP, Secretary of State



Northern
Ireland
Office

Steve Baker MP
Minister of State for Northern
Ireland

1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

Erskine House
20-32 Chichester St
Belfast
BT1 4GF

E: correspondence@nio.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/nio
Follow us on Twitter @NIOgov

Marie Ward
Chief Executive
Newry, Mourne and District Council
By email: council@nmandd.org

23 January 2023
Our reference: MC/23/5
Your reference: C/206/2022

Dear Marie

Thank you for your letter regarding cervical cancer screening in Northern Ireland addressed to the Rt Hon Chris Heaton-Harris MP, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, dated 12 December 2022. I am responding on his behalf and I apologise for the delay.

I am acutely aware of the severe challenges facing the health service in Northern Ireland. A programme of reform at the devolved level is needed to tackle long standing and systemic problems, including on cervical cancer screening and, more widely, implementation of the Regional Cancer Strategy.

The absence of a functioning Executive is exacerbating severe delays to health reform in Northern Ireland. In the absence of an Executive, the Government passed legislation in December that clarifies the powers for Northern Ireland Departments to maintain delivery of public services and has set a Budget for this financial year which protects spending to address critical health pressures in Northern Ireland.

The Secretary of State's immediate priority remains facilitating the restoration of a fully functioning Executive. It remains our hope that the parties will recognise the importance of getting back to work so that an Executive is in place to take the decisions and action needed to address the challenges facing health services in Northern Ireland at this critical time.

Yours sincerely,

STEVE BAKER MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND



Police Service of Northern Ireland

132

Office of the Assistant Chief Operating Officer
Police Headquarters
65 Knock Road
Belfast BT5 6LE
Email: comsec1@psni.police.uk

Our Ref: Com Sec 1384-23
Your Ref: C/022/2023

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

25 January 2023

Dear Ms Ward

You Ref C/022/2023 – Notice of Motion – Former Warrenpoint Police Station

Thank you for your letter of 16th January 2023.

Your correspondence will be forwarded to the Northern Ireland Policing Board as the asset owner. When the disposal of the former Police Station at Warrenpoint site concludes, excluding the Joanne Reilly memorial part of the land, all asset owners will be advised accordingly when in a position to do so.

As mentioned, the D1 disposal process, managed by Department of Finance, Land & Property Services (LPS), excludes the portion of wall and land upon which the memorial to Joanne Reilly stands, and this portion of land will be retained by Northern Ireland Policing Board. This has previously been communicated to the Reilly family and the disposal is being progressed on that basis.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aldrina Magwood'.

Aldrina Magwood
Assistant Chief Operating Officer
Strategic Planning & Transformation

**An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán**
Department of Tourism, Culture,
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media



133

Ms. Marie Ward
O'Hagan House,
Monaghan Row,
Newry,
BT35 8DJ

26 January 2023

Our Ref: CHG-MO-00176-2023

Dear Ms. Ward,

I wish to acknowledge receipt of your recent correspondence to Catherine Martin, TD, Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media in connection with the inclusion of counties Armagh and Down in the Ireland's Ancient East destination marketing brand.

Yours sincerely,

Ryan Higgins
Minister's Office

