



December 2nd, 2024

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the Council meeting to be held on **Monday, 2nd December 2024** at **6:00 pm** in **Council Chamber, Downshire Civic Centre.**

Agenda

1.0 Apologies and Chairperson's Remarks

2.0 Declarations of Interest

3.0 Action Sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 4 November 2024

 [Action Sheet 2024 11 04.pdf](#)

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Council Minutes For Adoption and Signing

4.0 Minutes of Council Meeting held on 4 November 2024

For Approval

 [Council Minutes 2024 11 04.pdf](#)

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Committee Minutes for Consideration and Adoption

5.0 Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 11 November 2024

For Approval

 [Economy Regeneration and Tourism Minutes 2024 11 11.pdf](#)

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6.0 Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 14 November 2024

For Approval

 [Strategy Policy & Resources Committee Meeting Minutes 2024-11-14.pdf](#)

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7.0 Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 18 November 2024

For Approval

 [Active and Healthy Communities Minutes 2024 11 18.pdf](#)

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8.0 Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 20 November 2024

For Approval

 [Sustainability_and_Environment_Committee_Minutes_2024_11_20.pdf](#)

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9.0 Correspondence Report

-  **Correspondence Report Council 2024 12 02.pdf** **Page 62**
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- 9.1 Correspondence from Department of Health**
-  **Department of Health NOM Shimna House.pdf** **Page 65**
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- 9.2 Correspondence from Department of Health and Southern Health and Social Care Trust**
-  **Department for Health NOM Daisy Hill Maternity Services.pdf** **Page 66**
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-  **Southern Health and Social Care Trust letter NOM Daisy Hill Maternity Services.pdf** **Page 68**
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-  **SHSCT Provision of Obs_Gynae Services.pdf** **Page 70**
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- 9.3 Correspondence from Ards and North Down Borough Council & Department for Communities**
-  **Ards and North Down Borough Council Winter Fuel Payments.pdf** **Page 75**
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-  **CORR-1646-2024 - Winter Fuel Payments in Northern Ireland.pdf** **Page 76**
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- 9.4 Correspondence from BBC Director General**
-  **Communication from BBC Director General.pdf** **Page 78**
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- 9.5 Correspondence from NI Ambulance Service**
-  **Winter Plan 24 25.pdf** **Page 80**

Notices of Motion

10.0 Notice of Motion - Farmers Inheritance Tax

Notice of Motion from Councillor Rice:

"This Council recognises the vital role of family farms in supporting rural jobs, safeguarding food security, and promoting environmental stewardship, as well as their integral contribution to the all-island economy.

We acknowledge the significant challenges facing the farming community, including the £1 million inheritance tax threshold, which threatens generational farming, and the absence of a dedicated agricultural budget. Furthermore, the uncertainty and funding losses caused by Brexit has exacerbated these pressures on the sector.

This Council calls on the British Government to reverse the changes to the inheritance tax threshold and

urges the DAERA Minister to work with the Executive to establish a ring-fenced agricultural budget to secure the long-term future of farming in the north of Ireland".

11.0 Notice of Motion - Gender-based Violence Against Women

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Quinn:

"This Council notes the growing concern regarding the epidemic of gender-based violence against women. This concern has been heightened by recent sexual assaults in Derry and the tragic deaths of five women in the past seven weeks in the North.

In response to this, this Council writes to the Justice Minister and the Justice Department, urging them to expand the categories of "significant persons" when applying for a Non-Molestation Order, to include individuals who were in a significant relationship but did not cohabit. This would align with the provisions in the UK, where similar protections are offered, and with the "Safety Order" provisions in the Republic of Ireland.

Additionally, this Council calls on other councils in the North to support this motion, thereby advocating for the extension of similar protections to women in the North, ensuring they are afforded the same legal safeguards as those in the UK and the Republic of Ireland".

12.0 Notice of Motion - Trauma Informed Council

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Truesdale:

"That this Council commits to becoming a trauma informed council.

Trauma informed practice is grounded in the understanding that trauma has a significant impact on a person's life. The prevalence of trauma can have an impact on the emotional, physiological, and social well-being of a person.

We live in a post-conflict society and we don't have a shared narrative of the troubles. Some of us have been impacted more than others but the trauma will have hit most families in the province and it can be passed down through the generations also.

A trauma informed lens is one that means we all make the decision to avoid triggering others and are more conscious of sensitivities around troubles related incidents.

A trauma informed approach has already been implemented in many councils across the water - but, in my mind, the need for it is higher here.

As a Council we need to develop our understanding of what being trauma-informed means across councillors and council officers for this initiative to really benefit our residents.

As a post conflict society we need to do better and that means being careful with others around sensitive anniversaries.

There are organisations that do training in this area – I believe our Council would benefit from undertaking

such training and moving forward to becoming more trauma-informed. You never know who you are speaking to or who may hear you and be triggered....”.

13.0 Notice of Motion - Medium to Long Term Rates

Notice of Motion from Councillor Enright:

"That this Council recognises that the trajectory of our medium to long-term rates needs to be reduced as rates in NI are very high compared to other parts of these Islands.

Council needs to aim to sustainably live within its means – delivering front line services affordably and at the best cost available to for the ratepayer.

Council will ensure all discretionary non-front-line projects have a clear and dependable pay-back of 3 to 8 years that will increase revenues or reduce expenses within Council to ensure we can hold rate increases to a close to zero as possible for the next 5 years".

Invitees

Cllr Terry Andrews

Cllr Callum Bowsie

Fionnuala Branagh

Cllr Jim Brennan

Cllr Pete Byrne

Cllr Philip Campbell

Cllr William Clarke

Cllr Laura Devlin

Ms Louise Dillon

Cllr Cadogan Enright

Cllr Killian Feehan

Cllr Doire Finn

Cllr Aoife Finnegan

Ms Joanne Fleming

Cllr Conor Galbraith

Cllr Mark Gibbons

Cllr Oonagh Hanlon

Cllr Glyn Hanna

Cllr Valerie Harte

Cllr Roisin Howell

Cllr Tierna Howie

Ms Catherine Hughes

Cllr Jonathan Jackson

Cllr Geraldine Kearns

Miss Veronica Keegan

Mrs Josephine Kelly

Mrs Sheila Kieran

Cllr Cathal King

Cllr Mickey Larkin

Cllr David Lee-Surginor

Cllr Alan Lewis

Cllr Oonagh Magennis

Mr Conor Mallon

Cllr Aidan Mathers

Cllr Declan McAteer

Cllr Leeanne McEvoy

Cllr Andrew McMurray

Maureen/Joanne Morgan/Johnston

Cllr Declan Murphy

Cllr Selina Murphy

Sinead Murphy

Cllr Kate Murphy

Cllr Siobhan O'Hare
.....
Mr Andy Patterson
.....
Cllr Áine Quinn
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Cllr Henry Reilly
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Cllr Michael Rice
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Cllr Michael Ruane
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Cllr Gareth Sharvin
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Donna Starkey
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Nicola Stranney
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Sarah Taggart
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Cllr David Taylor
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Cllr Jarlath Tinnelly
.....
Cllr Jill Truesdale
.....
Mrs Marie Ward
.....
Cllr Helena Young
.....

ACTION SHEET – COUNCIL MEETING – MONDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2024

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
C/128/2024	<i>Minutes of Council Meeting held on 01.07.2024</i>	It was agreed item C/058/2024: Twinning Newry with City of Ramallah should remain on the action sheet.	Democratic Services	Ongoing	N
C/164/2024	Action Sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 07.10.2024	It was agreed to note the action sheet.	Democratic Services	Noted	Y
C/165/2024	<i>Minutes of Council Meeting held on 07.10.2024</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	Democratic Services	Noted	Y
C/166/2024	<i>Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 14.10.2024</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	Democratic Services	Noted	Y
C/167/2024	<i>Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 17.10.2024</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted. SPR/168/2024: Approval of Tender Award and Funding Applications It was agreed to award the contract in line with procurement processes.	Democratic Services A Patterson	Noted	Y
C/168/2024	<i>Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 21.10.2024</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	Democratic Services	Noted	Y

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
C/169/2024	Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 23.10.2024	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	Democratic Services	Noted	Y
C/170/2024	Minutes of Audit Committee Meeting held on 19.08.2024	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	Democratic Services	Noted	Y
C/171/2024	Correspondence Report	It was agreed to note the Correspondence report.	Democratic Services	Noted	Y
	Correspondence from the Executive Office in response to Emergency Notice of Motion, Winter Fuel Payments (C/147/2024)	It was agreed that Council write to the Minister for Communities to support that a hardship payment should be in place and that he works with all Executive colleagues to find appropriate funding to support those that would miss out due to the changes to Winter Fuel Payments.	Democratic Services	Correspondence issued	Y
	Correspondence from National Association of Councillors in relation to Conferences for 2024/25	It was agreed the matter of attendance at the National Association of Councillors AGM would be considered at the Party Representatives Group Meeting to the held on 7 November 2024.	Democratic Services	It was agreed at Party Representatives that no representatives should attend	Y
	Correspondence from Department for Infrastructure in relation to meeting with the Minister to	It was agreed once confirmed, details of the meeting with the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the Newry Southern Relief Road be forwarded to all Councillors.	Democratic Services	Actioned – meeting organised for 11 December 2024	Y

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
	discuss the Newry Southern Relief Road (C/143/2024) Correspondence from Fermanagh and Omagh District Council in relation to a Motion, Racism	It was agreed to write to Fermanagh and Omagh District Council in support for their motion on Racism and include details of Newry, Mourne and Down District Councils motion.	Democratic Services	Correspondence issued	Y
C/172/2024	Notice of Motion: Section 76 Order, Downpatrick Eastern Distributor Road	Council notes Council minutes of 9th April 2018 and file note of meeting with DfI Permanent Secretary of 9th March 2018. Council unanimously supported the Permanent Secretary's suggestion that Council's Section 76 powers be used to help build out the Downpatrick Eastern Distributor Road. The Chief Executive undertook to bring forward a policy paper using Council's section 76 power to levy developers on the Eastern and Southern side of Downpatrick for a contribution to the cost of the Downpatrick Eastern Distributor Road. Council notes that the DEDR is intended ultimately to connect the Downe Campus, Council HQ and Hospital to the Belfast Road per the Area Plan and will largely be delivered by private finance according to DfI. Council directs that this paper be brought forward in the current financial year so as to create a fair and equitable balance between those developers who are voluntarily building out sections of this road and those who are making no contribution. Council notes that several hundred units have been completed on zoned land in the area relevant to the DEDR since	Democratic Services	Noted	Y

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
		<p>2018. Council regrets the loss of potential hypothecated income needed to build out the road.</p> <p>The Motion was referred to the Planning Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6</p>	C Mallon		
C/173/2024	Notice of Motion – Failure of RAISE Programme in tackling educational underachievement	<p>That this Council recognises that socio-economic background is the biggest predictor of educational underachievement; acknowledges that a range of targeted interventions across government are required to tackle the issue and give children and young people the opportunity to reach their potential; welcomes the allocation of over £20 million from the Shared Island fund to help tackle educational underachievement; regrets that the resulting RAISE programme's eligibility formula excludes many schools in some of the most deprived working class communities; further regrets that, by design, this programme will not deliver based on objective need; and calls on the Minister of Education to replace the RAISE programme with a new programme which will target support to the schools and children that, based on objective evidence, need it most.</p> <p>The Motion was referred to the Active and Healthy Communities Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6</p>	Democratic Services	Noted	Y
			A Patterson		
C/174/2024	Notice of Motion – Establishment of a Newry Canal Regeneration Taskforce	<p>Council recognises the poor condition of Newry Canal and the significant untapped potential of our inland waterways as tourism, heritage and ecological assets, calls for a multi-agency response to lead the regeneration of Newry Canal, and will request the</p>	Democratic Services	Noted	Y

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
		<p>support of ABC Council in writing to both the Minister for Infrastructure and the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to request the urgent establishment of a Newry Canal regeneration taskforce that will work in partnership to deliver on the potential of our inland waterway.</p> <p>The Motion was referred to the Sustainability and Environment Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.</p>	S Murphy		
C/175/2024	Notice of Motion – Daisy Hill Maternity Services	<p>It was agreed that Council notes with concern the serious issues affecting maternity services across the Southern Trust, with a potential risk to Daisy Hill maternity services.</p> <p>This Council supports the retention of Maternity services at Daisy Hill Hospital and acknowledges the work of the management and staff who provide excellent care to mothers and babies.</p> <p>That this Council agrees to write to the Minister for Health and CEO of The Southern Trust, to note NMD Council's support for full retention of Maternity services at Daisy Hill and call for the trust and the Department to produce and present a detailed workforce plan and winter pressures plan; further calls on the Southern Trust to fully commit to protecting maternity services, to ensure mothers and babies across the Southern Trust have access to a safe and equitable service.</p>	Democratic Services	Correspondence issued,	Y
C/176/2024	Notice of Motion - Vaping	<p>That this Council recognises that the 2024 Northern Ireland Audit Office report on tackling the public health impacts of smoking and vaping, shows an increase in 11-16 year olds vaping;</p>	Democratic Services		Y

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
		<p>This Council is concerned that children vaping in schools is detrimental to a child's health and educational outcomes;</p> <p>Agrees that greater awareness must be raised with children in schools about the risks of vaping;</p> <p>Acknowledges that teachers and school staff must have the support and resources they require to raise awareness and inform children on the risks of vaping;</p> <p>We agreed to write to the Minister of Education and Minister for Health urging them to bring forward a plan to end vaping in school grounds and to reduce the number of young people vaping;</p> <p>We will also write to all other Councils in the North asking for their support in tackling this issue.</p> <p>The Motion was referred to the Sustainability and Environment Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.</p>	S Murphy		
C/177/2024	Notice of Motion – Professional Running Track	Acknowledging the sterling contribution made on the international athletic stage by local athletes from Newry Mourne and Down, this Council regrets the current lack of a professional running track within the east of the district and commits to carrying out a desktop review of all publicly available land in East Down that could accommodate a professional running track, with a view to delivering on this much needed sports amenity for current and future athletes within our district.	Democratic Services		Y

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
		<i>The Motion was referred to the Active and Healthy Communities Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.</i>	A Patterson		
END					

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

NMD/C/

**Minutes of Council Meeting held on Monday 4 November 2024 at 6.00pm in
Council Chamber, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick**

In the Chair: Councillor P Byrne

In attendance in Chamber:

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

In attendance via Teams:

Councillor W Clarke	Councillor M Gibbons
Councillor R Howell	Councillor O Magennis

Officials in attendance:

Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
 Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services
 Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism
 Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability and Environment
 Mr A Patterson, Director of Active and Healthy Communities
 Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer
 Mrs F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer

C/162/2024

APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Enright, McEvoy and K Murphy.

The Chairperson thanked the Tourism and Events staff for their work on the various Halloween festivals that took place across the District highlighting the Footsteps in the Forest, Newry Halloween Festival, Kilkeel Hallow Lights Community event and the Crossmaglen and Crossgar Halloween Festivals. Congratulations were extended to the community groups and Council workers involved in the events.

Thanks were extended to Deputy Chair David Lee-Surginor for accompanying the two nominees to the Pride of Place at a recent awards event in the Hillgrove Hotel, Monaghan. The Chairperson voiced recognition to the Rural Health Partnership and Cuan Mhuire for the work

they do across the community and congratulated Cuan Mhuire who were runners up in the Community Wellbeing Award.

The Chairperson thanked the Mayor of Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon, Sarah Duffy, for joining him in recognising of the All-Ireland winning Armagh team at a civic reception in the Canal Court Hotel and all Councillors who attended the reception. Thanks were extended to Sarah, Shelia and Patricia for their organisation of a remarkable night with a special thanks to the players and management on behalf of both councils.

The Chairperson congratulated Down Ladies GAA on their the 30th anniversary celebrations with an event held in the Canal Court Hotel and advised a donation had been made to Down Ladies GAA through the Chairpersons Fund.

The Chairperson welcomed the announcement of €15.4 million funding from the PEACEPLUS Programme for the development of Ballykinlar Centre of Participation, Well-being and Shared Learning Hub. The Council would be working closely with Ballykinlar going forward with the multi sports hub element of the project and congratulations to all involved in the bid.

On behalf of the Council, condolences were extended to former Chairperson, Charlie Casey, his wife Bridie and the extended Casey family on the passing of their daughter Catherine.

The Chairperson expressed his condolences to colleague Terry Andrews on the passing of his Aunt Betty who had passed away.

The Chairperson spoke of the shock and sadness on hearing of the former Down GAA coach and Abbey (CBS Newry) teacher Jody Gormley's terminal illness. He said the dignity and resilience shown by Jody in the most difficult circumstances was inspirational and the thoughts of all were with Jody, his wife Deirdre and their family, his colleagues and students at the Abbey, CBS, Newry and the wider community.

The Chairperson expressed condolences on behalf of the Council to the family of Joseph Corr, former member of staff who had sadly passed away.

C/163/2024 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

C/164/2024 ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 7 OCTOBER 2024

Agreed: **The Action Sheet from Council Meeting held on 7 October 2024 was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor Kearns.**

C/165/2024 COUNCIL MINUTES FOR ADOPTION AND SIGNING OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 7 OCTOBER 2024

Read: **Minutes of Council Meeting held on 7 October 2024 (copy circulated).**

Agreed: **The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 7 October 2024 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Sharvin.**

COMMITTEE MINUTES FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION

C/166/2024 MINUTES OF ECONOMY, REGENERATION AND TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14 OCTOBER 2024

Read: Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 14 October 2024 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 14 October 2024 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted on the proposal of Councillor Lee-Surginor, seconded by Councillor Hanlon.

C/167/2024 MINUTES OF STRATEGY POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 OCTOBER 2024

Read: Minutes of Strategy Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 17 October 2024 (copy circulated).

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on item SPR/168/2024, which related to exempt information by virtue of para. 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

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

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

SPR/168/2024 APPROVAL OF TENDER AWARD AND FUNDING APPLICATIONS

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Hanna, it was agreed to award the contract in line with procurement processes.

Agreed: The Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 17 October 2024 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Sharvin.

C/168/2024 **MINUTES OF ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21 OCTOBER 2024**

Read: Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 21 October 2024 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 21 October 2024 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Finn.**

C/169/2024 **MINUTES OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 23 OCTOBER 2024**

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

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

C/170/2024 **MINUTES OF AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2024**

Read: Minutes of Audit Committee Meeting held on 19 September 2024 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting held on 19 September 2024 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Hanlon.**

C/171/2024 **CORRESPONDENCE REPORT**

Read: Report dated 4 November 2024 from Mrs Ward, Chief Executive, regarding an update on correspondence received for the attention of Council (copy circulated).

Correspondence from the Executive Office in response to Emergency Notice of Motion, Winter Fuel Payments (C/147/2024)

Councillor Finnegan welcomed the correspondence and how the Executive Ministers concerns mirrored that of Council and that they had written to the Prime Minister to voice concerns.

In welcoming the response Councillor Sharvin echoed the sentiments that the Executive was in agreement on impact of the cuts to Winter Fuel Payments and made reference to a recent Assembly Question put to Minister for Communities regarding hardship payments.

Councillor Sharvin proposed Council write to the Minister for Communities to support that a hardship payment should be in place and that he works with all Executive colleagues to find appropriate funding to support those that would miss out due to the changes to Winter Fuel Payments.

Councillor Finn seconded Councillor Sharvin's proposal.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Finn that Council write to the Minister for Communities to support that a hardship payment should be in place and that he works with all Executive colleagues to find appropriate funding to support those that would miss out due to the changes to Winter Fuel Payments.**

Correspondence from National Association of Councillors in relation to Conferences for 2024/25

Councillor Sharvin advised he had been made aware that the conference listed for 22-24 November 2024 included the National Association of Councillors Annual General Meeting and spoke of the importance of having representation at that from Council.

It was agreed the matter of attendance at the National Association of Councillors AGM would be considered at the Party Representatives Group Meeting to be held on 7 November 2024.

Agreed: **It was agreed the matter of attendance at the National Association of Councillors AGM would be considered at the Party Representatives Group Meeting to be held on 7 November 2024.**

Correspondence from Department for Infrastructure in relation to meeting with the Minister to discuss the Newry Southern Relief Road (C/143/2024)

Councillor Finn welcomed the Ministers offer to meet with Council regarding the important issue of the Newry Southern Relief Road.

It was agreed once a date was finalised that it would be forwarded to all Councillors.

Agreed: **It was agreed once confirmed, details of the meeting with the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the Newry Southern Relief Road be forwarded to all Councillors.**

Correspondence from Voice of Young People in Care in relation to Care Day 25 on 21 February 2024

On behalf of her Party, Councillor Young spoke in support of the request for civic buildings to be lit up on 21 February 2025 and that the planting of a tree would be a poignant gesture to mark the occasion of Care Day UK and Ireland. Councillor Young spoke at length about increases in the number of children in care and paid tribute to those who look after and provide care and support to children.

The Chairperson confirmed the lighting up of Council buildings for Voice of Young People in Care on 21 February and that the planting of a tree was to be considered at the Councillors' Equality & Good Relations Reference Group Meeting.

Correspondence from Fermanagh and Omagh District Council in relation to a Motion, Racism

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Byrne to write to Fermanagh and Omagh District Council**

in support for their motion on Racism and include details of Newry, Mourne and Down District Councils motion.

Correspondence from BBC in relation to Notice of Motion, Sign Language (C/160/2024)

Whilst acknowledging the response from BBC, Councillor Devlin stated she did not believe that the prominent slot on the BBC News website was anywhere on par with the lunchtime news segment that had been cut from their schedule.

Correspondence from NILGOSC in relation to Emergency Notice of Motion, NILGOSC Bonds (C/161/2024)

In welcoming the response from NILGOSC, Councillor Feehan said that whilst NILGOSC had stated it did not invest or divest for political reasons they did hold Israeli Government Bonds in their investment mix and now they did not. Councillor Feehan pointed out this was a good outcome and thanked Members for their support for the Motion.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Finn, seconded by Councillor O'Hare to note the correspondence report and the following correspondence:

- Correspondence from Voice of Young People in Care
- Correspondence from Fermanagh & Omagh District Council
- Correspondence from BBC NI and Department for Communities
- Correspondence from Executive Office
- Correspondence from NILGOSC
- Correspondence from Department for Infrastructure
- Correspondence from National Association of Councillors

C/172/2024

NOTICE OF MOTION – SECTION 76 ORDER, DOWNPATRICK EASTERN DISTRIBUTOR ROAD

The following Motion was received from Councillor Enright and presented by Councillor Truesdale:

"Council notes Council minutes of 9th April 2018 and file note of meeting with DfI Permanent Secretary of 9th March 2018. Council unanimously supported the Permanent Secretary's suggestion that Council's Section 76 powers be used to help build out the Downpatrick Eastern Distributor Road.

The Chief Executive undertook to bring forward a policy paper using Council's section 76 power to levy developers on the Eastern and Southern side of Downpatrick for a contribution to the cost of the Downpatrick Eastern Distributor Road. Council notes that the DEDR is intended ultimately to connect the Downe Campus, Council HQ and Hospital to the Belfast Road per the Area Plan and will largely be delivered by private finance according to DfI.

Council directs that this paper be brought forward in the current financial year so as to create a fair and equitable balance between those developers who are voluntarily building out sections of this road and those who are making no contribution. Council notes that several hundred units have been completed on zoned land in the area relevant to the DEDR since 2018. Council regrets the loss of potential hypothecated income needed to build out the road".

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Howie.

The Chairperson pointed out Councillors Truesdale and Howie should be invited to attend the Planning Committee Meeting.

Agreed: The Motion was referred to the Planning Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6

Councillor Reily left the meeting at this point – 6.35pm.

C/173/2024 NOTICE OF MOTION – FAILURE OF RAISE PROGRAMME IN TACKLING EDUCATIONAL UNDERACHIEVEMENT

The following Motion was received from Councillor O'Hare:

"That this Council recognises that socio-economic background is the biggest predictor of educational underachievement; acknowledges that a range of targeted interventions across government are required to tackle the issue and give children and young people the opportunity to reach their potential; welcomes the allocation of over £20 million from the Shared Island fund to help tackle educational underachievement; regrets that the resulting RAISE programme's eligibility formula excludes many schools in some of the most deprived working class communities; further regrets that, by design, this programme will not deliver based on objective need; and calls on the Minister of Education to replace the RAISE programme with a new programme which will target support to the schools and children that, based on objective evidence, need it most".

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Howell.

Agreed: The Motion was referred to the Active and Healthy Communities Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6

C/174/2024 NOTICE OF MOTION – ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEWRY CANAL REGENERATION TASKFORCE

The following Motion was received from Councillor Feehan:

"Council recognises the poor condition of Newry Canal and the significant untapped potential of our inland waterways as tourism, heritage and ecological assets, calls for a multi-agency response to lead the regeneration of Newry Canal, and will request the support of ABC Council in writing to both the Minister for Infrastructure and the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to request the urgent establishment of a Newry Canal regeneration taskforce that will work in partnership to deliver on the potential of our inland waterways".

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Finn

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

C/175/2024

NOTICE OF MOTION – DAISY HILL MATERNITY SERVICES

15

The following Motion was received from Councillor S Murphy:

"This Council notes with concern the serious issues affecting maternity services across the Southern Trust, with a potential risk to Daisy Hill maternity services.

This Council supports the retention of Maternity services at Daisy Hill Hospital and acknowledges the work of the management and staff who provide excellent care to mothers and babies.

That this Council agrees to write to the Minister for Health and CEO of The Southern Trust, to note NMD Council's support for full retention of Maternity services at Daisy Hill; further calls on the Southern Trust to fully commit to protecting maternity services, to ensure mothers and babies across the Southern Trust have access to a safe and equitable service".

In presenting the motion, Councillor S Murphy advised staff and service users in the Maternity Department of Daisy Hill Hospital had contacted Sinn Féin expressing their concerns following the Southern Trust outlining maternity services capacity issues due to a shortage of Obstetrics and Gynae consultants.

She stated that whilst this was an issue right across the North, it was concerning what this could mean going forward for maternity services at Daisy Hill and that any removal or relocation of maternity services would not be in the best interests of mothers and babies within the District. She spoke of potential implications for staff, expectant mothers and their babies if they had long journeys to travel to get to a maternity unit, which could result in emergency situations arising and patient safety compromised.

Councillor S Murphy welcomed that the Health Minister had stated his commitment to maternity services at Daisy Hill. She commended the invaluable care Midwives and Maternity staff provided for women of the District and pointed out the implementation of a stabilised and a robust long term work plan was needed for them to continue to provide quality care services.

Councillor S Murphy asked Members to support the Motion and that Council write to the Health Minister and Chief Executive of the Southern Trust outlining concerns and seeking assurances that services would be protected.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Harte.

Councillor Harte spoke of having her own children in Daisy Hill and the invaluable service the hospital had to offer. She said maternity was one of the vital services in Newry, Mourne and South Armagh and highlighted the risk to pregnant women in labour having to travel to Craigavon to give birth, especially if complications were to arise for either the mother or the baby during that travel. Councillor Harte pointed out that part of the District could not do without maternity services.

In supporting the Motion on behalf of her Party, Councillor Truesdale stated the stabilisation of services was crucial for the well-being of everyone involved. She spoke of how morale amongst those that delivered maternity services was at its lowest and she was not happy with the way the Southern Trust Management had conducted business with what seemed to be a game of who said what between the Health Minister and Trust Management.

Councillor Truesdale referred to midwife and consultant shortages and levels of sickness pointing out that she hoped HR departments were taking note of what type of sickness and was it work related in order to get to the nub of the issues.

Councillor Taylor voiced support for the Motion and that it would be unthinkable for the local community to have no maternity services at Daisy Hill Hospital. He spoke of his concern about the handling of it by the Trust and stated that measures needed to be put in place to deal with

the issues that had arisen. He welcomed the Ministers commitment to Daisy Hill Maternity Services however the Trust needed to get to work to address any concerns.

Councillor Hanna spoke in support of the Motion and the importance of maternity services in Daisy Hill to the whole of South Down, South Armagh and further afield. He added it was challenging that the staff were under pressure and there was a need for better staffing and better leadership from the Southern Trust and that Council should do all it could to secure its future.

Councillor Feehan echoed support for the motion and that making Councils position clear was vitally important and that a full suite of consultant led maternity services must be retained at Daisy Hill Hospital.

Councillor Feehan stated it was important to apply pressure for action on the key challenges that had been identified and proposed an amendment to the motion as follows:
to include a call for the Trust and the Department to produce and present a detailed workforce plan and winter pressures plan.

Councillor Feehan's proposed amendment was seconded by Councillor Finn.

Following clarity on what detail was included in correspondence issued regarding Motions by the Chief Executive Councillor S Murphy agreed to Councillor Feehan's amendment.

The Chairperson confirmed the Motion was unanimously approved.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor S Murphy, seconded by Councillor Harte that Council notes with concern the serious issues affecting maternity services across the Southern Trust, with a potential risk to Daisy Hill maternity services.
This Council supports the retention of Maternity services at Daisy Hill Hospital and acknowledges the work of the management and staff who provide excellent care to mothers and babies.
That this Council agrees to write to the Minister for Health and CEO of The Southern Trust, to note NMD Council's support for full retention of Maternity services at Daisy Hill and call for the trust and the Department to produce and present a detailed workforce plan and winter pressures plan; further calls on the Southern Trust to fully commit to protecting maternity services, to ensure mothers and babies across the Southern Trust have access to a safe and equitable service.

Councillor Lewis left the meeting at this point – 6.52pm.

C/176/2024

NOTICE OF MOTION – VAPING

The following Motion was received from Councillor Kearns:

"That this Council recognises that the 2024 Northern Ireland Audit Office report on tackling the public health impacts of smoking and vaping, shows an increase in 11-16 year olds vaping; This Council is concerned that children vaping in schools is detrimental to a child's health and educational outcomes;

Agrees that greater awareness must be raised with children in schools about the risks of vaping;

Acknowledges that teachers and school staff must have the support and resources they require to raise awareness and inform children on the risks of vaping;

We agreed to write to the Minister of Education and Minister for Health urging them to bring forward a plan to end vaping in school grounds and to reduce the number of young people vaping:

We will also write to all other Councils in the North asking for their support in tackling this issue".

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Campbell.

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

CI/177/2024 NOTICE OF MOTION – PROFESSIONAL RUNNING TRACK

The following Motion was received from Councillor Devlin:

"Acknowledging the sterling contribution made on the international athletic stage by local athletes from Newry Mourne and Down, this Council regrets the current lack of a professional running track within the east of the district and commits to carrying out a desktop review of all publicly available land in East Down that could accommodate a professional running track, with a view to delivering on this much needed sports amenity for current and future athletes within our district."

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Sharvin.

Agreed: The Motion was referred to the Active and Healthy Communities Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 6.54pm.

For confirmation at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 2 December 2024.

Signed: _____
 Chairperson

Chief Executive

NEWRY MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting
held on Monday 11 November 2024 at 6.00pm in the Boardroom, Monaghan Row**

Chairperson: Councillor A Lewis

**Committee Members
in attendance:**

Councillor T Andrews
Councillor K Feehan
Councillor G Hanna
Councillor G Kearns
Councillor M Ruane

Councillor W Clarke
Councillor O Hanlon
Councillor V Harte
Councillor A Quinn

**Committee Members
in attendance via Teams:**

Councillor D Lee-Surginor Councillor J Truesdale

Officials in attendance:

Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism
Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Regeneration
Ms A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth and Tourism
Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer
Mrs N Stranney, Democratic Services Officer

**Officials in attendance:
(via Teams)**

Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)

ERT/103/2024: APOLOGIES / CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Galbraith and S Murphy.

ERT/104/2024: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

ERT/105/2024: PRESENTATION

The Chairperson welcomed Mr Eoin Magennis from Ulster University Economic Policy Centre to the Committee Meeting and invited him to make his presentation.

Mr Magennis utilised a Power Point to update Members regarding 'Newry, Mourne and Down Economic Outlook'. (Copy appended to these minutes)

As there were no questions following the presentation, Councillor Lewis thanked Mr Magennis for his presentation.

**ERT/106/2024: ACTION SHEET ECONOMY, REGENERATION & TOURISM
COMMITTEE MEETING MONDAY 14 OCTOBER 2024**

Read: Action Sheet arising out of the Minutes of the Economy, Regeneration &

Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday 14 October 2024. (Copy circulated)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Clarke, it was agreed to note the Action Sheet arising from the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday 14 October 2024.

ERT/107/2024: MID YEAR REVIEW OF ERT BUSINESS PLANS 2024-25

Read: Report dated 11 November 2024 from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism regarding Mid-Year Review of Ert Business Plans 2024-25. (Copy circulated)

Mr Mallon advised that the Mid-Year Assessment of each directorate plan had been completed which reviewed progress from April to September, highlighting that the process was key to fulfilling the Council's statutory obligations for performance monitoring.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Ruane, it was agreed that Council agree the Mid-year Assessment of the ERT Directorate Business Plan 2024-25.

ERT/108/2024: DEVELOPMENT NAMING, POSTAL NUMBERING & ERECTION OF NAMEPLATES POLICY

Read: Report dated 11 November 2024 from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth and Tourism, regarding Development Naming, Postal Numbering and Erection of Nameplates Policy. (Copy circulated)

Mr McGilly explained that a review of the policy had been conducted following a recent tribunal concerning the disclosure of information related to dual language sign surveys, highlighting that a subsequent recommendation was that the breakdown of the dual language survey results should not be published. Therefore, it was proposed that there was to be no changes to the existing policy which would remain in effect for the next three years.

Following a query from Councillor Hanna regarding clarification on the withholding of results, Mr McGilly advised that an outcome recommendation of the investigation was to withhold the information to maintain anonymity for those involved.

Councillor Hanna noted his disagreement with the recommendations, stating that the results should be published while still maintaining anonymity for the participants.

Mr McGilly reiterated the recommendations following the tribunal that stated that the results should not be published.

As there was dissent within the chamber, a roll call vote was carried out with the results as follows:

FOR	10
AGAINST	2
ABSTENTION	0

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Clarke, it was agreed to approve the Development Naming, Postal Numbering and Erection of Nameplates Policy.

ERT/109/2024: BELFAST CITY AND REGIONAL PLACE PARTNERSHIP

Read: Report dated 11 November 2024 from Ms A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth and Tourism, regarding Membership with Belfast City and Regional Place Partnership. **(Copy circulated)**

Ms Smyth noted that Newry, Mourne and Down District Council had membership of the Belfast City Region Place Partnership for a number of years, highlighting that the partnership was focused on investment events and brought benefits such as an engagement and advocacy programme and research and media engagement. She stated that it was based around the Belfast region city deal, geography and partners and the cost for the forthcoming year would be £15,000.

In proposing the recommendations, Councillor Feehan noted that following the presentation from Ulster University he was happy to propose the recommendation, highlighting the positive impact the City Deal would have along with the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor.

In seconding the recommendations, Councillor Hanlon echoed the sentiments already expressed by Councillor Feehan.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Feehan, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to approve Membership with Belfast City and Regional Place Partnership for 2025/26 period at the cost outlined in section 4 of the officer's report.

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

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Harte, 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 Clarke, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to come out of Closed Session.

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

FOR DECISION

ERT/110/2024: ECONOMICS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Read: Report dated 11 November 2024 from Ms A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth and Tourism, regarding the Economics Development Strategy. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Clarke, it was agreed to approve the recommendations as set out within the officer's report.

ERT/111/2024: GO SUCCEED PROGRAMME

Read: Report dated 11 November 2024 from Ms A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth and Tourism, regarding the Economics Development Strategy. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to approve the recommendations as contained within the officer's report.

ERT/112/2024: MAKE IT LOCAL CAMPAIGN

Read: Report dated 11 November 2024 from Ms A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth and Tourism, regarding the Economics Development Strategy. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Hanna, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to approve the business case attached to the officer's report for the delivery of a Make it Local campaign in Spring of 2025.

ERT/113/2024: ST PATRICKS AVENUE

Read: Report dated 11 November 2024 from Ms A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth and Tourism, regarding the Economics Development Strategy. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Andrews, it was agreed to approve the recommendations contained within the officer's report.

ERT/114/2024: REVIEW OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Read: Report dated 11 November 2024 from Ms A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth and Tourism, regarding the Economics Development Strategy. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to note the Financial Assistance review findings and agree the recommendations in section 2.2 of the officer's report.

FOR NOTING

ERT/115/2024: DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION FLEXIBLE FUND

Read: Report dated 11 November 2024 from Ms A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth and Tourism, regarding the Economics Development Strategy. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Andrews, it was agreed to note the contents of the report providing an update on delivery of the Digital Transformation Fund and to note that Call 4 of the DTFF issue to launch in March 2025 and expressions of interest are currently open.

ERT/116/2024: REMOVAL OF BALLYKINLAR HUT

Read: Report dated 11 November 2024 from Ms A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth and Tourism, regarding the Economics Development Strategy. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Andrews, it was agreed to note the Expression of Interest process for the removal of Ballykinlar Hut.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 18.43.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 2nd December 2024.

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

Signed: Conor Mallon
Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism





Northern Ireland Outlook: Uncertainty rising



Against expectations and a modest fall in UK GDP in the second half of 2023, the local economy performed relatively well. UUEPC forecast GVA growth of 1.4% in 2024 and 1.7% in 2025 for NI. But much now depends on global impacts on our neighbours.



UUEPC estimate that there will be employment growth of 1.3% in 2024 before slowing slightly to 0.7% in 2025. Unemployment to remain at historic lows.



Global outlook is increasingly uncertain with election results dominating forecasts – most being revised downwards.

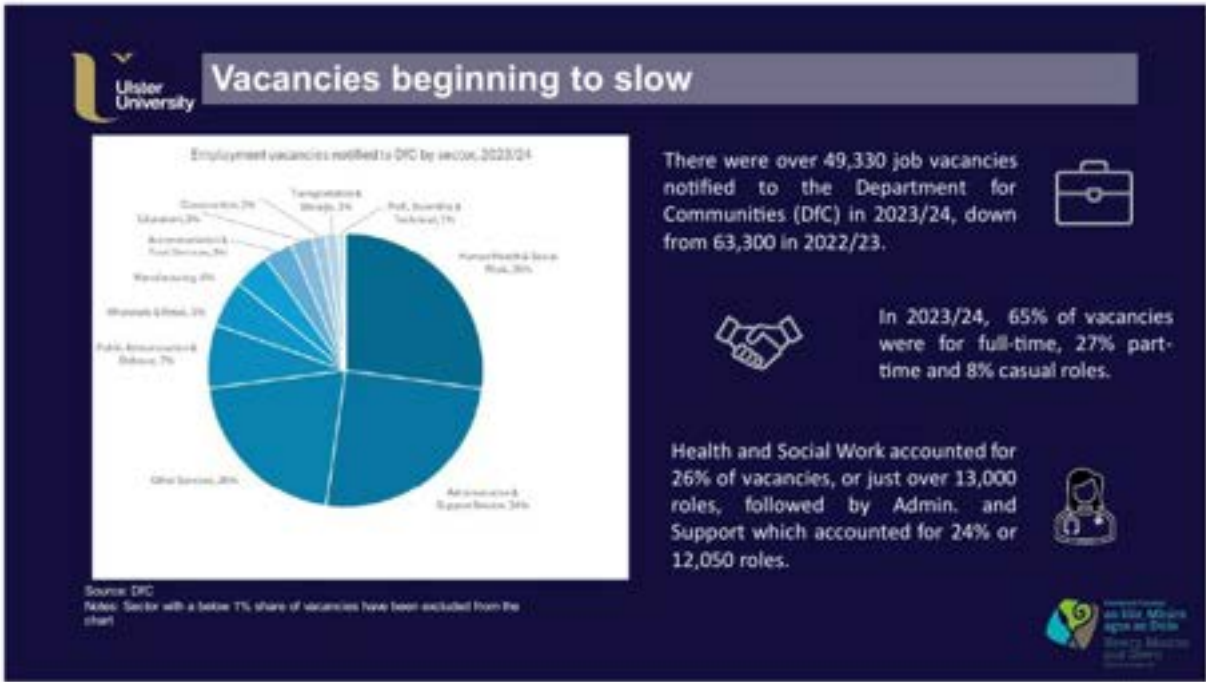
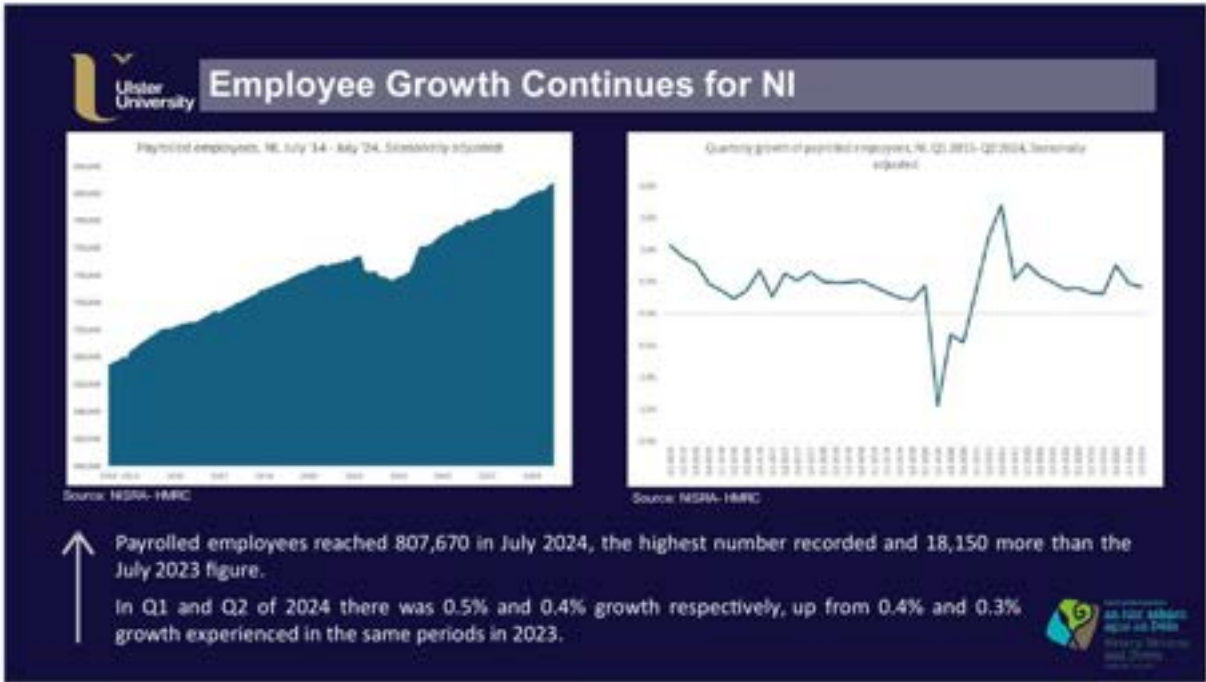


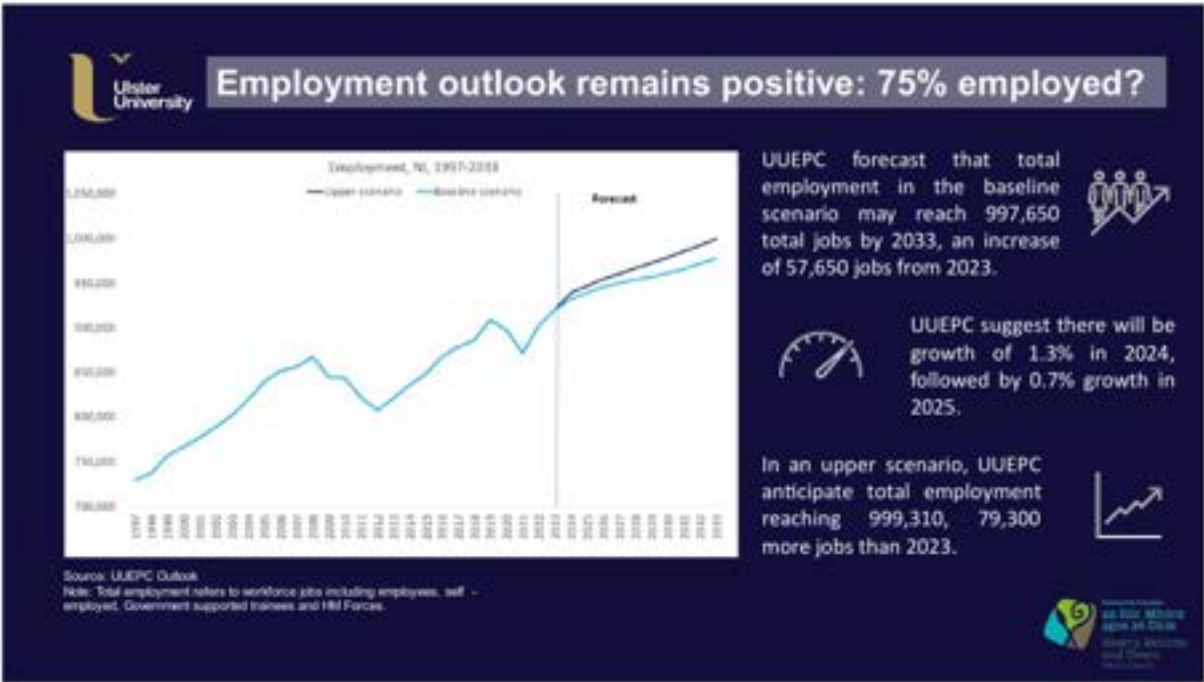
The most recent quarterly data (Q1 2024) shows that employment grew in the first quarter, underpinned by strong expansion in the Health, Transport and Construction sectors and was largely facilitated by migrant labour. With tighter migration rules, initiatives to incentivise the economically inactive back into the workforce, will be key to fully harnessing future economic growth opportunities.



Interest rates and inflation continue to make up the headlines. UUEPC anticipate inflation will pick up slightly in the latter half of 2024, reaching 2.6% in Q4, before falling to 2.3% in 2025. Interest rates are forecasted to reduce to 4.75% by the end of 2024, with further (small) cuts in 2025.





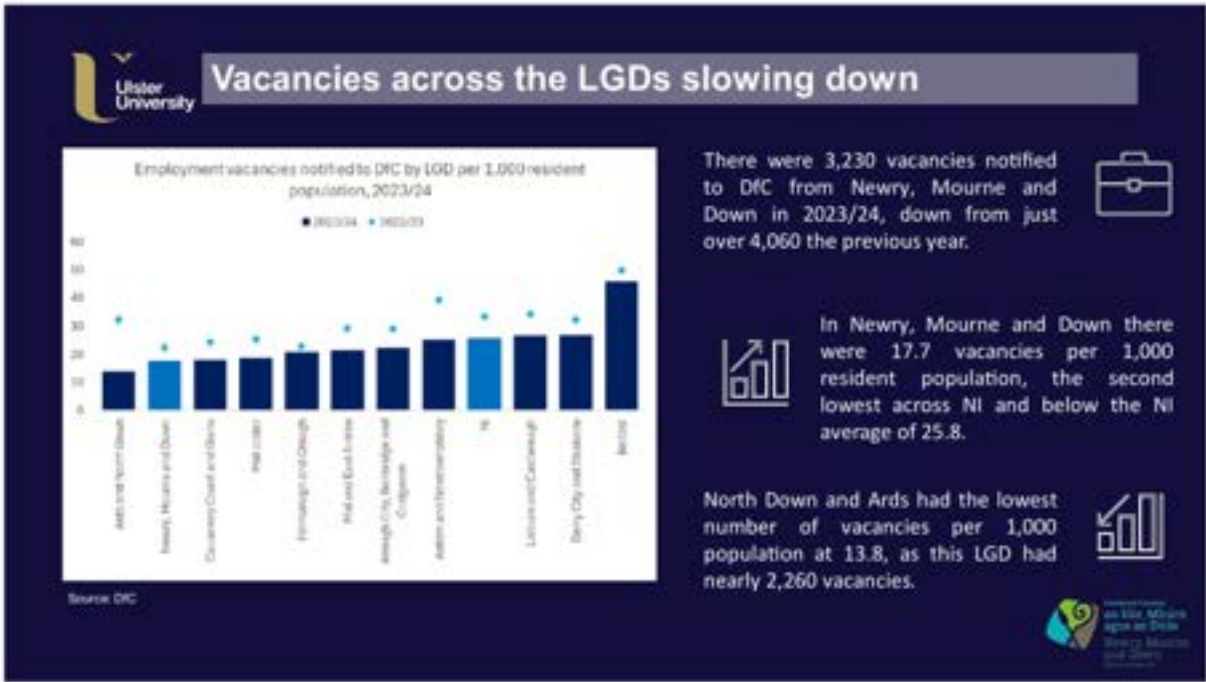
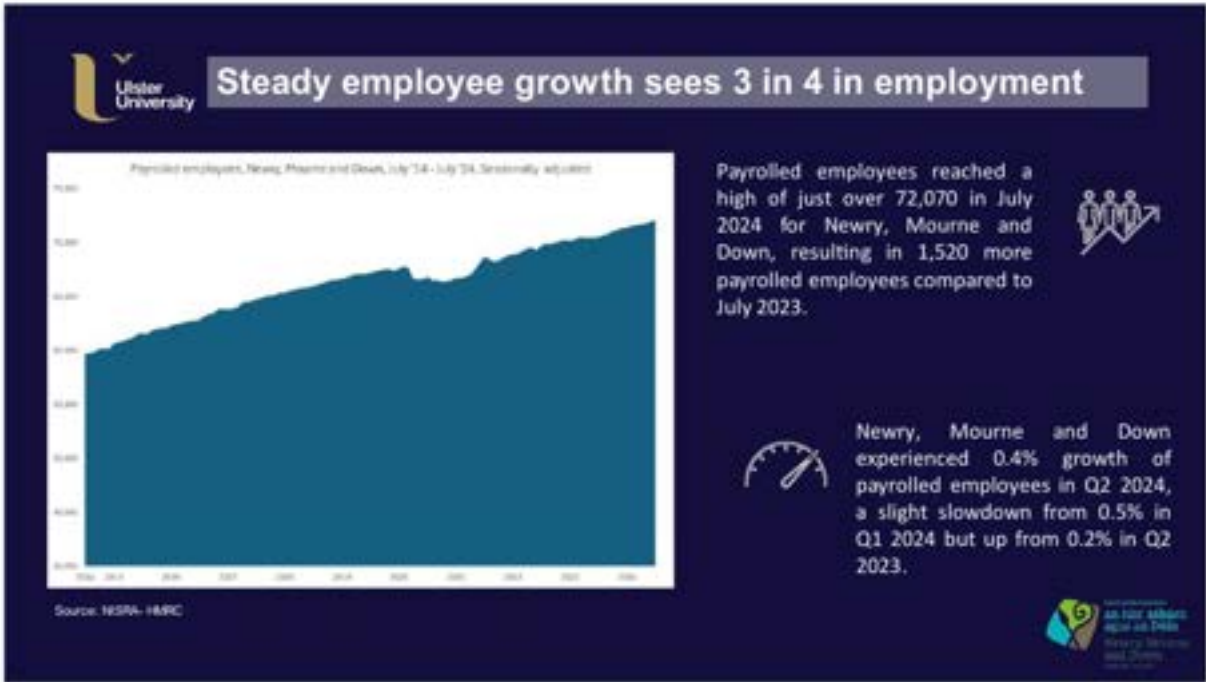


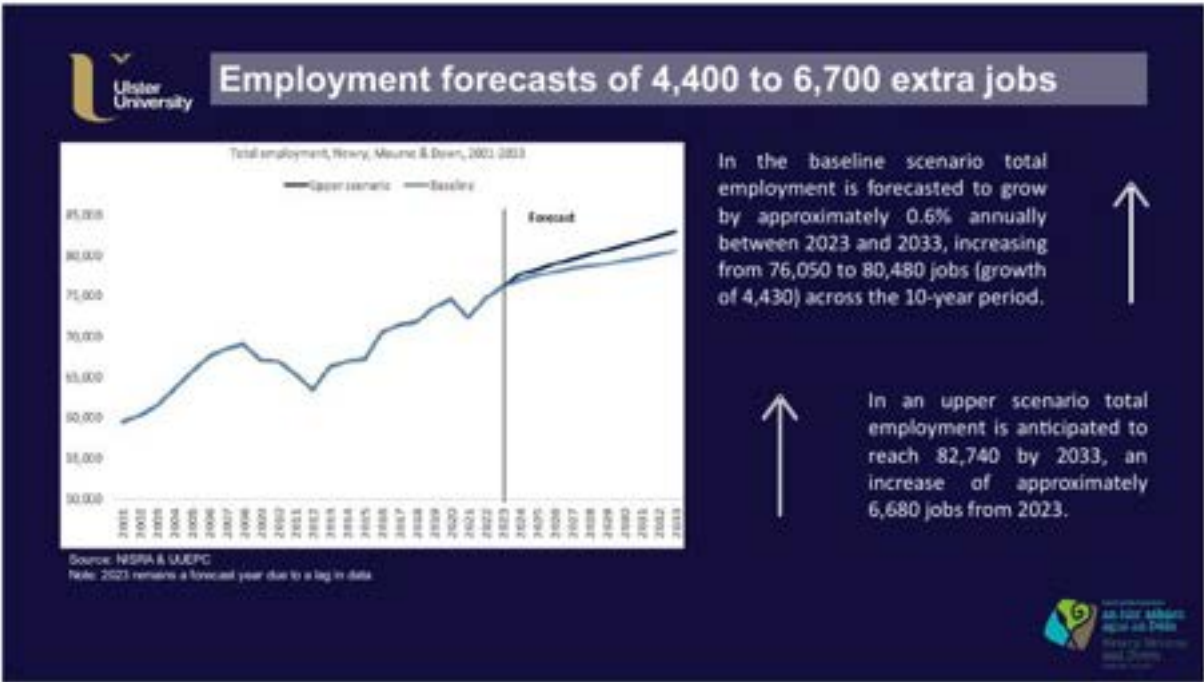



Newry, Mourne and Down

Recent performance and economic outlook

Section 3








Key Discussion Points and Issues

Northern Ireland
Tight labour markets and forecasts of economic growth reinforce the pressing need to address challenges such as low productivity and wage growth, and high economic inactivity rates. Reducing inactivity by supporting those who would like to work, into work requires a number of initiatives – all at once – including access to childcare, greater flexibility in terms of recruitment (recognizing sickness and caring responsibilities) and looking again at welfare traps. Other ministerial vision areas, such as improving productivity or increasing numbers of good jobs, require a similar mind-shift by all partners.

Newry, Mourne and Down (NMD)
Numbers of payrolled employees have continued to rise in the Council area (to a new high of 72,070) and employment growth is anticipated to continue over the next decade – by between 4,300 and 6,700 new jobs. Employment opportunities – both within the Council area and for those able or willing to commute – are no longer the issue for many residents of NMD, present and future. Not so great for those with a disability or older women. Belfast City Region Deal, location on the Dublin/Belfast Economic Corridor and the new Local Economic Partnership priorities all throw up further opportunities – question becomes one of what's best to do?
Sub-regional picture for NMD presents two very clear challenges:

- Productivity performance of local firms is (and has been) poor and is reflected in local wages – exporting levels are good but not clear to me that this goes beyond selling to neighbours for most.
- Business births and entrepreneurship levels have been slipping in recent years – does this mean less local competition and less drive to create new products and services?






Thank you

Economic Outlook
Summer 2024

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of Special Strategy Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on Thursday 14 November 2024 at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Downshire Civic Centre

In the Chair: Councillor T Howie

In Attendance in Chamber:

Councillor C Bowsie	Councillor W Clarke
Councillor C Enright	Councillor O Hanlon
Councillor C King	Councillor D McAteer
Councillor S O'Hare	Councillor H Reilly
Councillor M Rice	Councillor G Sharvin

Committee Members in Attendance via Teams:

Councillor P Byrne	Councillor A Quinn
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Non-Committee Members In Attendance: Councillor T Andrews

Officials in Attendance in Chamber:

Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services
 Ms C Mallon, Director Economy, Regeneration & Tourism
 Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability & Environment
 Mr A Patterson, Director of Active & Healthy Communities
 Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Performance
 Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer
 Mrs N Stranney, Democratic services Officer

SPR/173/2024: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Mathers and Taylor, and from Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive.

SPR/174/2024: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

SPR/175/2024 ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM STRATEGY, POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 17 OCTOBER 2024

Read: Action Sheet of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee meeting held 17 October 2024 **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Rice, seconded by Councillor O'Hare, it was agreed to approve the action sheet of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee meeting of 17 October 2024.**

FOR CONSIDERATION

SPR/176/2024

MID-YEAR ASSESSMENT – PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2024-2025

Read:

Report from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Improvement, regarding Mid-Year Assessment – Performance Improvement Plan 2024-2025. **(Copy circulated)**

Mr Byrne outlined the overview of Council's progress in implementing the Performance Improvement Plan for 2024 – 2025 between April and September 2024, highlighting that the information may be subject to change following the verification of year end data.

Councillor Reilly expressed his shock at 10% target being met with regard to dog fouling and littering enforcement, stating that it was not nearly sufficient enough for such a large geographical area. He stated that Council needed to be issuing more fixed penalty notices, stressing that officers should be more proactive in identifying illegal dumpers and dog fouling, and to start bringing criminal cases forth if required.

Councillor Hanlon echoed Councillor Reilly's sentiments, stating that while she did not know what the solution was, she stressed that more needed to be done to increase enforcement action to address the littering and fouling issues.

Councillor Enright noted that Council should compare enforcement statistics with other Councils, suggesting Ards and North Down Council as one with a high level of enforcement activity.

On a point of clarity, Councillor Hanlon stated that a private company was in use regarding enforcement action on dog fouling and therefore any comparison would not be fair for Council.

Councillor Sharvin noted that an educational plan regarding dog fouling was particularly important, stating that education campaigns had a positive impact on the issue being highlighted, and further stated that a league table would be a better comparison tool.

Mrs Murphy acknowledged that there had been a significant reduction in the fixed penalty notices issued against the annual target, taking account of the change in staffing within the enforcement team and reminded Members that the department was working through a recruitment initiative following approval of a recent restructure. She highlighted that one of the new roles included an education and enforcement manager who would be responsible for bringing forward an education campaign and enforcement plan to deal with the issues highlighted. She further advised that resources were currently being directed to administering the legislative changes that had recently come into effect regarding XL Bully breed dogs.

Councillor Howie then brought Members attention to a recent Notice of Motion that had been tabled at last month's Sustainability and Environment Committee, commending the work that had gone into the report and the positive discussions within the Chamber regarding that, further highlighting that an online reporting tool was being considered by the Directorate.

Councillor Byrne acknowledged that some targets were being met but stressed that Council could not stop aiming to improve, further acknowledging that it was difficult to catch and

report an instance of dog fouling and requested that street cleanliness be addressed to help tackle the issue.

Councillor Clarke supported the education and awareness campaign already mentioned, highlighting the importance of gaining community buy in alongside an awareness and accountability campaign, referencing the success of previous campaigns on the same issue. He then queried what action had been taken on consulting with fast food outlets regarding littering and the option of using less packaging.

Mrs Murphy advised that there was ongoing engagement with fast food outlets and reiterated that the ongoing work was linked to specific roles with the recently approved Sustainability & Environment structure that was currently being implemented.

Mrs Murphy asked Members to forward reports of fouling to the relevant officer as these helped officers address problematic areas, and further encouraged Members to consider the recommendations that arose from the Notice of Motion that had been tabled at Committee last month.

Councillor Hanlon queried the decrease in leisure membership, stating that she was aware people were paying for private gyms and queried what market research and customer feedback was being carried out in order to help attract new members.

Mr Patterson acknowledged the need to increase the number and variety of classes within the leisure centres, noting that some feedback had been received regarding this, and a report was due to be tabled at the Active and Healthy Communities Committee in the coming months with a proposed new programme. He further advised that the next quarter would focus on a satisfaction survey to help drive ideas for the new year and highlighted that Newry Leisure Centre re-opening in the new year would help drive activity.

Councillor Clarke queried the decrease in activity at the Tropicana site and what the reasons for this were, to which Mr Patterson advised that the weather over the summer period did not help to boost numbers and stressed that he was mindful to look at progressing the redevelopment of the Newcastle Centre with a report being tabled in the coming months regarding this.

Councillor McAteer referenced the planning statistics, noting that he was aware of the ongoing discussions and plans regarding improving those, but stated that he felt that more needed to be done to address the issue, suggesting liaising with the public and exploring outsourcing opportunities to address the delay.

Councillor Clarke echoed these comments, further stating that applicants were contacting Councillors and querying whether they had oversight of Council activity, stressing that delays resulted in escalating costs due to construction prices which could lead to job losses as planned works were not carried out due to lack of timely planning approvals.

Councillor Byrne noted that these issues were discussed each time a Planning item was tabled and stressed that Council was aware of the issues and despite an ongoing recruitment campaign the issues persisted, further stressing that it was time to explore options to resource long term and encouraged officers to think outside the box for solutions to help tackle the issue.

Mr Mallon acknowledged the challenging environment and labour market regarding planning staff, highlighting that there was competition for employees across all 11 Councils and also Councils in the South, with the District being a border Council. He highlighted that Council

was continuing to look at options, noting that engagement had been initiated with the Department regarding long term planning for resources into Planning Departments across all Councils. He further noted that engagement events had been conducted with the public, agents, applicants and developers and further events were planned for the new year.

Councillor Sharvin then queried the activity relating to Go Succeed, stating that the new jobs promoted through business start activity was lower than expected and whether Council was seeing challenges that needed further consideration, or whether it was the nature of the objective and the target would be met by the end of the year.

Mr Mallon confirmed that 69 jobs had been created, which represented 49% of the statutory target and confirmed that Council would be continuing to work to achieve the target by the end of the year.

Councillor O'Hare requested further information regarding the number of trees still to be planted and whether the target was an aspirational or realistic target.

Mrs Murphy referenced the Tree Planting Strategy, noting that the target was realistic, but she would respond to the Member outside the meeting regarding specific plans.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Enright, seconded by Councillor Clarke, the Mid-Year Assessment of the Performance Improvement Plan 2024 - 25 was agreed.**

SPR/177/2024

MID-YEAR ASSESSMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE – CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE BUSINESS PLANS 2024-2025

Read: Report from Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive, and Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Mid-Year Assessments of Chief Executive – Corporate Services Directorate Business Plans 2024 – 2025. **(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Kelly outlined the report, advising that it was the mid-year assessment of the two Directorate Business Plans, commending the work carried out by Officers over the summer to present the information in a user-friendly format.

Councillor Sharvin queried the 95% target set against Corporate Objective *CS1: Provide an efficient and professional Compliance function meeting statutory obligations*, and whether this was a statutory target and were there any penalties for not meeting the target, such as financial or reputational impact.

Mrs Kelly stated that any delays to requests, or if Council was unable to fulfil a request, were communicated to the relevant individuals, but she believed that as the target was set by Council there were no fines in place for not meeting the target.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, the Mid-Year Assessment of the Chief Executive – Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2024 - 25 was agreed.**

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

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Clarke, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on the following matters which related to exempt information by virtue of 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 Enright, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

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

SPR/178/2024 FUNDING APPROVAL – PUBLIC REALM SCHEME, DOWNPATRICK

Read: Report from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, regarding Funding Approval – Public Realm Scheme, Downpatrick. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Enright, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to approve the recommendations as outlined in the Officer's Report.

SPR/179/2024 CONTRACTOR APPOINTMENT, DOWNPATRICK

Read: Report from Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director of Capital, Estates & Procurement, regarding Contractor Appointment, Downpatrick. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to appoint the preferred bidder as identified in Appendix 1 and to approve the recommendations as outlined in the Officer's Report.

SPR/180/2024 SALE OF LAND - NEWCASTLE

Read: Report from Mr P Rooney, Acting Head of Legal Administration, regarding Sale of Land - Newcastle. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Clarke, it was agreed to progress

the proposed sales at market value to the adjoining house owners for plots of land as outlined in the Officer's Report, subject to valuation by Council's valuer and discharge of associated Valuation and Legal costs by each purchaser.

SPR/181/2024

SALE OF LAND - KILKEEL

Read:

Report from Mr P Rooney, Acting Head of Legal Administration, regarding Sale of Land - Kilkeel. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Bowsie, Members agreed to the sale of the lands shaded green within the Officer's Report to the party detailed for the market value to be determined by Council's Valuer.

SPR/182/2024

SINGLE TENDER ACTION – FINANCE & PAYROLL SYSTEMS

Read:

Report from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Performance, regarding Single Tender Action – Finance and Payroll Systems. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Enright, seconded by Councillor Howie, the following was approved:

- The Financial Systems STA to ensure continuity of financial systems.
- The Payroll Systems STA to ensure continuity of Council's payroll processes.

Costs for both are already included within Council's revenue budgets.

SPR/183/2024

SINGLE TENDER ACTION – HEALTH PLAN FOR EMPLOYEES

Read:

Report from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Single Tender Action – Health Plan for Employees. **(Copy Circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor McAteer, it was agreed to approve the recommendations as outlined within the Officer's Report.

SPR/184/2024

SINGLE TENDER ACTION – TIME & ATTENDANCE SYSTEM

Read:

Report from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Single Tender Action – Time and Attendance System. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor McAteer, it was agreed to approve the recommendations as outlined within the Officer's Report.

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

SPR/185/2024

MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

Read:

Report from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Performance, regarding Management Accounts. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Bowsie, seconded by Councillor McAteer, it was agreed to note the quarter 2 2024/25 Management Accounts.

Councillor Reilly left the meeting at this stage – 7.22pm

SPR/186/2024

MINUTES OF NEWRY CITY CENTRE REGENERATION MEETING HELD 10 OCTOBER 2024

Read:

Minutes from Newry City Centre Regeneration Meeting held 10 October 2024. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor King, it was agreed to note the minutes.

FOR NOTING

SPR/187/2024

IMPACT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM ON SERVICE DELIVERY AND COST EFFECTIVENESS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Read:

Report from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding the Impact of Local Government Reform on Service Delivery and Cost Effectiveness in Northern Ireland. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Bowsie referenced the Planning section of the report, noting that it had previously been acknowledged it was in need of assistance, and queried what Council's position on the amalgamation of Councils and whether there had been improved efficiencies within the Planning Department.

Mr Mallon advised that the position of Council on efficiencies within the Planning Department would be for Council to determine.

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Enright, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to note Report that has been published on the DfC Website.

SPR/188/2024

**MINUTES OF MOURNE MOUNTAIN GATEWAY
PROGRAMME BOARD MEETING HELD 28 AUGUST 2024**

Read:

Minutes from Mourne Mountain Gateway Programme Board Meeting held 28 August 2024. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Hanlon queried the layout of the minutes for noting and requested clarity on the comments noted on the minutes and further sought clarity on the individual referenced within the document.

Mr Mallon advised that the minutes had been shared with Programme Board Members following the meeting of 28 August 2024, with the noted comments received from a Member who noted her disagreement with the published minutes. He advised that they had been tabled at this Committee as minutes not agreed for noting in the current format to identify the areas of disagreement.

Following requests for clarity from Councillors Bowsie, McAteer and Hanlon as to whom the "I" referred to within the noted disagreements, Mr Mallon confirmed that the individual was Councillor Truesdale.

Councillor Enright stated that Councillor Truesdale did not feel that her comments were accurately reflected within the minutes and had highlighted her proposed amendments within the minutes.

Councillor Byrne requested that moving forward, should there be dissent regarding the minutes that they be tabled as minutes not agreed and should any Member wish to speak on that, that they do so at the relevant meeting.

Councillor McAteer echoed Councillor Byrne's sentiments, further advising that anyone not at that particular meeting would likely not understand the highlighted annotations as they were referencing detail that other Members may not be fully aware of.

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Enright, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to note the minutes.

SPR/189/2024

**MINUTES OF MOURNE MOUNTAIN GATEWAY
PROGRAMME BOARD MEETING HELD 17 OCTOBER
2024**

Read:

Minutes from Mourne Mountain Gateway Programme Board Meeting held 17 October 2024. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Enright, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to note the minutes.

There being no further business, the Meeting concluded at 7.35pm

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 2 December 2024.

Signed:

Councillor Tierna Howie
Chairperson

Signed:

Josephine Kelly
Director of Corporate Services

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Ref: AHC/2024

**Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on
Monday 18 November 2024 at 6.00pm in the Mourne Room,
Downshire Civic Centre**

Chairperson: Councillor C Galbraith

In attendance in Chamber: Councillor D Finn Councillor A Finnegan
Councillor R Howell Councillor J Jackson
Councillor D Lee-Surginor Councillor A Lewis
Councillor A Mathers Councillor D Murphy
Councillor H Young

**Committee Members
in attendance (via Teams):** Councillor O Magennis Councillor L McEvoy
Councillor K Murphy

**Non-Committee Members
in Chamber:** Councillor T Andrews Councillor G Sharvin

**Non-Committee Members
in attendance (via Teams):** Councillor S O'Hare Councillor J Truesdale

Officials in Chamber: Mr A Patterson, Director, Active and Healthy Communities
Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development
Mr C Haughey, Head of Outdoor Leisure
Mrs M Flynn, Head of Engagement (Acting)
Mr G Scott, Safeguarding Co-ordinator
Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer
Mrs F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer

Also in the Chamber: Ms C Archibold, Executive Office
Ms J McCarthy, Executive Office
Ms F French, Executive Office

AHC/097/2024: APOLOGIES & CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

An apology was received from Councillor Devlin.

The Chairperson welcomed Claire Archibald, Jane McCarthy and Fionnuala French from the Executive Office who were presenting on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls.

The Chairperson extended thanks to all Council officers and Mr Gary Scott who had worked hard in making the topic of Ending Violence against Women and Girls a priority since his Motion was passed at Council in February 2024, details of which were read out as follows:

***"This Council upholds its commitment to ending violence against women and girls;
reaffirms that violence, abuse and harm against women and girls cuts across all***

generations and communities; calls for the delivery of a fully funded strategy to end violence against women and girls and commits to instituting November 25th as Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls Day across the district with a series of events to help educate, raise awareness and end this abhorrent humanitarian abuse."

The Chairperson commended the hard work to deliver on this topic with support from the Executive Office. Members were informed there would be a campaign launch with a number of information sessions to provide necessary support and signposting in association with all relevant agencies.

The Chairperson pointed out the reality was that in just 4 years, 24 women had been killed in Northern Ireland, a tragic statistic and stated we absolutely must do better.

AHC/098/2024: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

AHC/099/2024: PRESENTATION – ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

The Chairperson welcomed Claire Archibold, Jane McCarthy and Fionnuala French from the Executive Office to the Committee Meeting.

Ms Archibold took Members through a presentation entitled 'Ending Violence Against Women and Girls.' (Copy attached to these minutes).

Members were advised hard copies of the Strategic Framework and First Delivery Plan were available to anyone who wished to avail of them.

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

- More could be done in terms of collaboration, there was a need for joined up action to bring perpetrators to justice and to protect those who fell victim.
- The criminal justice system continued to fall short in supporting women and girls with the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) and the Courts failing to provide the necessary support, which contradicted the protective measures established by other agencies.
- There was a need to advocate for systemic change to ensure that the voices of women and children were heard and their rights upheld.
- Prevention was key however part of prevention was deterrence. An example of a recent case was provided whereby an individual convicted of rape was able to engage in a campaign against another victim. The person had been charged with four different criminal offences, with the case in the Magistrates Court, with a maximum of a six month sentence and it was asked where was the deterrent.
- There was little confidence in the PPS or the criminal justice system to deal with these issues, and that was why they had become more prevalent.
- 24 women had died over a period of time with the vast majority mothers, murdered in their own homes, along with the many other people that were fortunate to not have been killed, but people who had the potential to kill were slipping through the system. Where were they being dealt with?
- As elected representatives it was frustrating and difficult because they spoke to a lot of the victims that do not get the opportunity to speak to those putting papers together about all that was occurring within communities.

- As a PCSP member concerns had been raised about for example a victim arriving at the Ardmore station in Newry having to speak in public in front of other people with no privacy.
- Reference was made to the murder of Mary Ward and recent attacks in Derry. A lot more women now felt unsafe when they were out particularly in the dark evenings. In terms of the local grant scheme that was to be delivered from April 2025, was there anything that elected members could direct people to in terms of resources now and any recommendations that could be given to people who were feeling unsafe?
- In terms of education, were there any resources that could be shared with Council to issue via social media to highlight and take steps towards prevention and to make clear that that kind of behaviour was unacceptable in society.
- There had been 22,000 reports of violence against women recorded in the last year and urgent action was needed to drive a complete change in people's attitudes.
- Recognition was given to the work of Newry, Mourne and Down PCSP.
- Can you identify who the experts would be? Working with the victims sector there had been an ability to provide funding without the building blocks in place first. What work had been done to date?
- What work was being done on the ground to progress the Strategy and urgently change the mechanisms alluded to?
- From the research and statistics available, how long were women and girls actually experiencing violence?
- Sometimes people were ashamed that they were in this scenario and therefore it was important to break down that stigma to say, do you know what you are experiencing is wrong and you need to speak up about that.
- How would the impact and success of this Strategy be measured?
- What was the level of funding and was there a goal to set a band within that funding that Council would be able to give to organisations.
- Were libraries included as they could be a safe space with the ability to connect with an older population.

The representatives from the Executive Office responded as follows:

- Work in close partnership with the justice agencies.
- The Delivery Plan contained touch points into measures to help victims and worked closely with the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy which contained measures aimed at supporting victims better, speeding up the processes and providing rehabilitation and assistance for offenders (an ambitious challenge).
- It was easy to be daunted by what was not working however there was need to examine what could be working better.
- Through the lived experience women in the Co design process, some had actually said of their case that their police liaison officer was very good or that their experience had been part of their journey to things getting better for them.
- As the team reach out to each different agency to look at their part, their role was to coordinate action across government and society sectors to focus on the root causes and identify what were the other things needed to stop more people becoming victims.
- It was not just dealing with the people for whom the problem had already happened but trying to make sure that in future generations it happened to fewer people, that it happened less often and the ambitious target of actually ending it could be met.
- Any issues that elected members would like the team to bring to the attention of other partners, let them know, as part of their job was joining up the different parts of the system.
- Acknowledgement and awareness of some of the horrific stories that had been experienced, and reference was made to two reports on the website that provided a wide range of experiences, one was the 'Voices of Women' and the other was the

'Voices of Girls'.

- The team had heard the concerns raised by elected members through the co design space and had discussed it with PSNI, the justice system and PPS. The next step was how to address these together.
- One thing being done with the justice system was looking at the justice journey from a woman and girls perspective and what could be brought to that.
- It was important to speak with the women and girls who had been through that system and hear their journeys and what it was that they needed on the way to support them and to keep them engaged when they felt they could not go on e.g. Court space and having to face the perpetrator in front of them. There should be options available to them, places to keep them safe. They should have a good understanding of what was happening at any one time e.g. the technical language used in the court system which could throw vulnerable women and girls who pass through this system.
- That was one piece of a very big jigsaw that needed to be addressed and it was important to build confidence into the system and let women and girls feel like they were being listened to, looked after and helped through that system so that they get a better result.
- This was the start of a journey and the delegations job was to coordinate and make sure that everybody had sight of everything that was going on including education for women and girls. It was about how to be safe and feel safe, to understand safe and healthy relationships and for young men to not just be safe, but to be safe to be around.
- There was education not only for schools but also for communities, community groups and for supporting families. Council was involved in that at the very grassroots and there were opportunities for Council to work further on that.
- The importance of making sure that the one safe adult e.g. a youth worker, sports coach whoever that may be, had the knowledge, skills and ability to signpost those who confided and needed help.
- Working with Council officials to develop on what could be done. Funding was available and it was about building capacity in the community, and the opportunity to get the message out there about prevention as opposed to putting emphasis or responsibility on a woman to have to protect herself.
- It was about the root causes, why was it happening in the first place rather than having any kind of responsibility associated with the victim.
- There was an element of funding available to build the capacity about why it was happening and where safe spaces could be and how to make a safe space within in your organisation. Next year when the funding comes forward for the local change fund it was hoped community groups would be in a position to apply for funding to build on that because they understand the recourses and how to target their participants and groups.
- The best way to get the message out there was the campaign due for release in January 2025 and that was about starting the conversation, getting people to take notice and for people to deal with that.
- There had been good work with young people across the whole of the region in putting the campaign together and building a 10 point tool kit for young people to use and for circulation around different youth settings such as schools and youth clubs.
- It was also about helping people understand coercive control and how begin to even have a conversation with a GP, social worker or a friend and ways to help people to identify and articulate that as a first point and provide resources for how to take action and provide support.
- This was a whole government, whole society approach and one of the reasons to come to Councils early was that Councils know what was happening within communities.
- A day in the local Civic Centre, church or business, where people who have a domestic abuse problem could come and talk to police, housing executive, benefit

services and education all in the same place would be beneficial and was one of the proposals of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

- The Councils help in connecting with grassroots was essential.
- There was a co design process with over 50 people across Northern Ireland including those from the community, voluntary, academic, business and public sectors. There was also expertise by the lived experience and from service provision and study.
- There would be overarching regional support of organisations to deliver throughout Northern Ireland which would be filtered down to support in local communities with plans to work with each local Council area.
- There was funding available for Councils this year to use to best respond to the urgent and emerging issue and for community and voluntary organisations who want to do something but did not have the capacity to so at the minute.
- Provision was there to fulfil a range of age groups from preschool to older age groups, primary to secondary school, young adults and families and those who had multiple needs and barriers to getting services to bring about as broad a spread as possible.
- As a Council and elected members it was important to make sure that the information about signposting and organisations was known and that there was a connection with organisations within this area.
- The importance of elected representatives and others looking after themselves as when you hear a lived experience it can take a toll, being trauma informed was a really important part of making sure that you were continually able to give people the help that they need.
- Measure impact at a project level and society wide level.
- In the Local Change Fund each Council is being asked to operate their own schemes depending on what is needed within that area with 3 tiers of funding on offer.
 - Tier 1: funding between £1 and £5000 aimed at small organisations who want to get involved and do something, who might not have a lot of background knowledge in this area e.g. a one-off event or awareness raising events.
 - Tier 2: funding between £5000 and £15000 for planned or prolonged activities for organisations who were more knowledgeable of the issue to raise awareness and to highlight the preventative measures that were hoping to be achieved
 - Tier 3: funding between £15,000 and £25,000, similar to Tier 2 but with the added dimension of collaboration, mentoring and recognising that not everybody or every group was ready to deliver, but with the assistance of a larger organisation
- Funding was not enough but it was a start, and it was hoped that this would continue over the seven years of the strategy.
- In terms of how long women suffer, there was no official statistic however the Foyle Women's Aid research stated that it was 37 incidents, on average, before a woman left. From lived experience, sometimes it was less and sometimes it was more.
- The question to ask was how do make this better? How to change the story for all of those women and the key for each of them was going to be different.

Councillors Truesdale and Sharvin left the meeting at this point – 7.24pm

It was agreed by all to take a short recess – 7.25pm – 7.33pm.

AHC/100/2024: PARTNERSHIP WITH THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE (TEO) TO HELP END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (EVAWG)

Read: Report dated 18 November 2024 from Mr G Scott, Safeguarding Co-ordinator regarding Partnership with the Executive Office (TEO) to help End Violence against Women and Girls (EVAWG). **(Copy circulated)**

Mr Scott provided a detailed overview of the report. Members were advised the Council website had support material around safety planning for people who wanted to leave abusive relationships along with the Safeguarding Co-ordinators contact number for any Councillor that wanted advice.

He advised that with the funding as detailed within the report there was as an opportunity for change and for the Council as an organisation to increase awareness and effect change in this area.

Members were informed that as part of ongoing work regarding the Motion passed by Council that meet and greet sessions in collaboration with Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, the relevant Trusts and key partners were taking place in Newry Leisure Centre on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls Day on 25 November, Down Leisure Centre on 26 November and South Lake Leisure Centre on 27 November 2024.

In response to Councillor Finnegan who sought clarity on the funding, Mrs M Flynn advised it was an emergency response fund for Council to respond fairly quickly to the issues that were presented through the potential proposals outlined within the report. It was also to raise awareness of End of Violence against Women and Girls involving partner agencies and stakeholders including Education and other stakeholders.

Councillor Lewis asked that it be noted that the partnership with the Executive Office to help End Violence against Women and Girls was unanimously agreed by all Members.

- AGREED:**
- It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Finnegan, seconded by Councillor Lewis to note the contents of the Officer's report and the following draft proposals:**
- INTERIM FUNDING (2024/25):**
- Conference (March 2025) – potentially in conjunction with the Education Authority and other partners
 - Publicity Campaign – bespoke publicity campaign with elements to appeal to both young people and the general public – potential to launch at the above Conference
 - Project focusing on local outreach and development support/awareness raising – in conjunction with the DEA Team
 - Training and awareness initiatives in partnership with GP federations and other stakeholders
- CHALLENGE FUND (2025/26):**
- TEO has provided a General Guidance Booklet for Applicants to help frame the grant scheme. Officers will work with colleagues in the Grants and Funding Unit to administer this. It is proposed calls for funding will go out early in the new year for projects to be delivered in the 2025/26 Financial Year.

AHC/101/2024: ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM ACTIVE & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21 OCTOBER 2024

Read: Action sheet of the Active & Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 21 October 2024. **(Copy circulated)**.

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Jackson to note the Action Sheet of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 21 October 2024.

AHC/102/2024: MID YEAR ASSESSMENT OF BUSINESS PLAN

Read: Report dated 18 November 2024 from Mr A Patterson, Director of Active and Healthy Communities regarding Active and Healthy Communities Directorate Business Plans. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Young wished to put on record her thanks to the Ethnic Minority Support Centre for its commitment and support.

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Young, seconded by Councillor Howell, to approve the Mid-Year Assessment of the AHC Directorate Business Plan 2024-25.

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

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor D Murphy, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on items 7 to 9, which related to exempt information by virtue of para. 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor D Murphy, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

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

AHC/103/2024: FUNDING FROM DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES (DfC) FOR FRONTLINE ADVICE SERVICES

Read: Report dated 18 November 2024 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development presented by Mrs M Flynn, Head of Engagement (Acting) regarding Funding from Department for Communities (DfC) for Advice Services. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor, to note the Officer's report and agree to award additional funding as outlined within the Officer's report from the Department for Communities (DfC) to Community Advice Newry, Mourne and Down, alongside funding for Generalist Advice Services for 2024/2025.

AHC/104/2024: PLAY PARK REVIEW STRATEGY BUSINESS CASE

Read: Report dated 18 November 2024 from Mr A Patterson, Director of Active and Healthy Communities presented by Mr C Haughey, Head of Outdoor Leisure regarding the new Play Park Review 2024-2029. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor D Murphy, to approve the Play Park Review Business Case 2024-2029 and its proposed programme of works.

Councillor Magennis left the meeting at this point – 7.57pm.

AHC/105/2024: LEASING OF COUNCIL LAND

Read: Report dated 18 November 2024 from Mr A Patterson, Director of Active and Healthy Communities presented by Mr C Haughey, Head of Outdoor Leisure regarding an Expression of Interest (EOI) for a lease of Council land at the Rope Walk pitch located at the Three-ways Community Centre, High Street, Newry. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Finn, seconded by Councillor Mathers, to approve proceeding with the EOI process for leasing as outlined within the Officer's report, in accordance with the Council's Sports and Community Facility Management and Leasing Policy (2016).

AHC/106/2024: DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREA (DEA) FORUMS UPDATE REPORT

Read: Report dated 18 November 2024 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development presented by Mrs M Flynn, Head of Engagement (Acting) regarding an update on District Electoral Area (DEA) Forums. **(Copy circulated)**

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

- Rowallane DEA Forum Private Meeting held on 29 October 2024.
- Newry DEA Forum Private Meeting held on 31 October 2024.

AHC/107/2024: NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL PARTNERSHIP UPDATE REPORT

Read: Report dated 18 November 2024 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development regarding an update Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Young, seconded by Councillor Finn, to note the Minutes of Downpatrick Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Meeting held on 4 June 2024 approved at Downpatrick Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Meeting held on 5 November 2024.**

There being no further business the meeting ended at 8.01pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 2 December 2024.

Signed: Councillor Galbraith
Chairperson

Signed: Andrew Patterson
Director Active and Healthy Communities

ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS

Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Framework
Update and areas for collaboration
Newry, Mourne and Down Council Meeting
28 October 2024

Claire Archbold
Director, Ending Violence Against Women & Girls

 Northern Ireland Executive



ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS

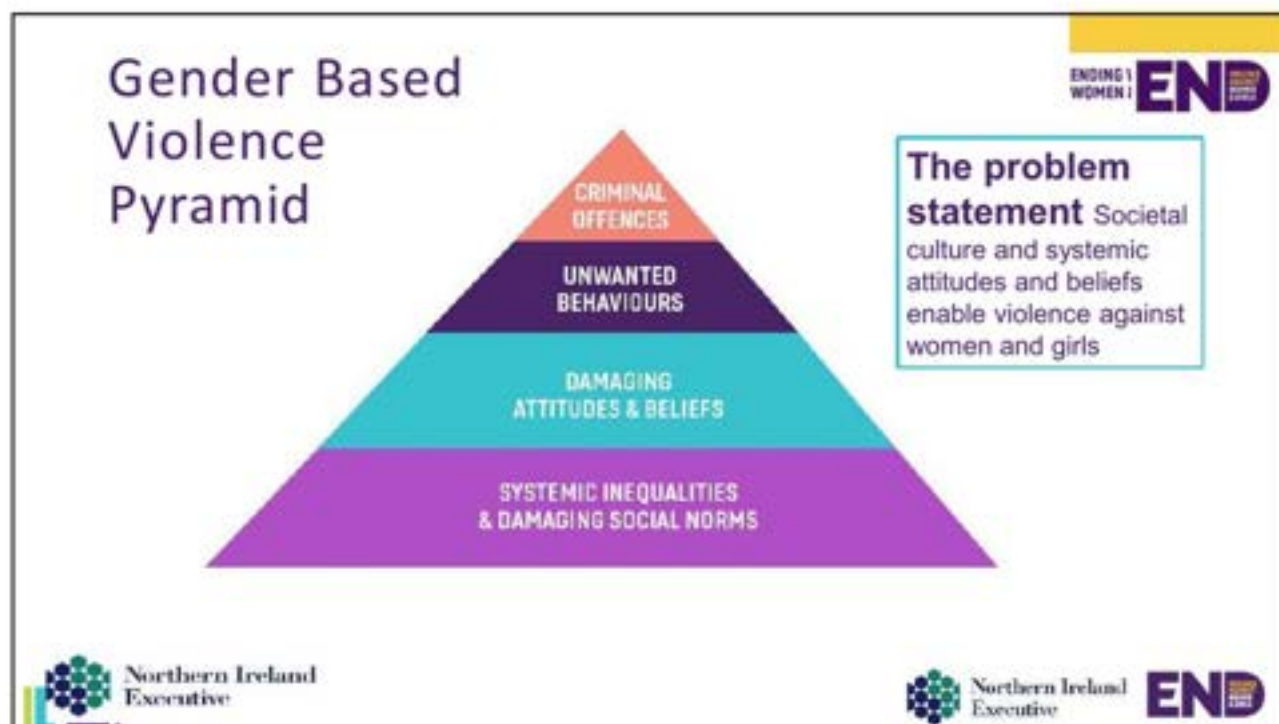
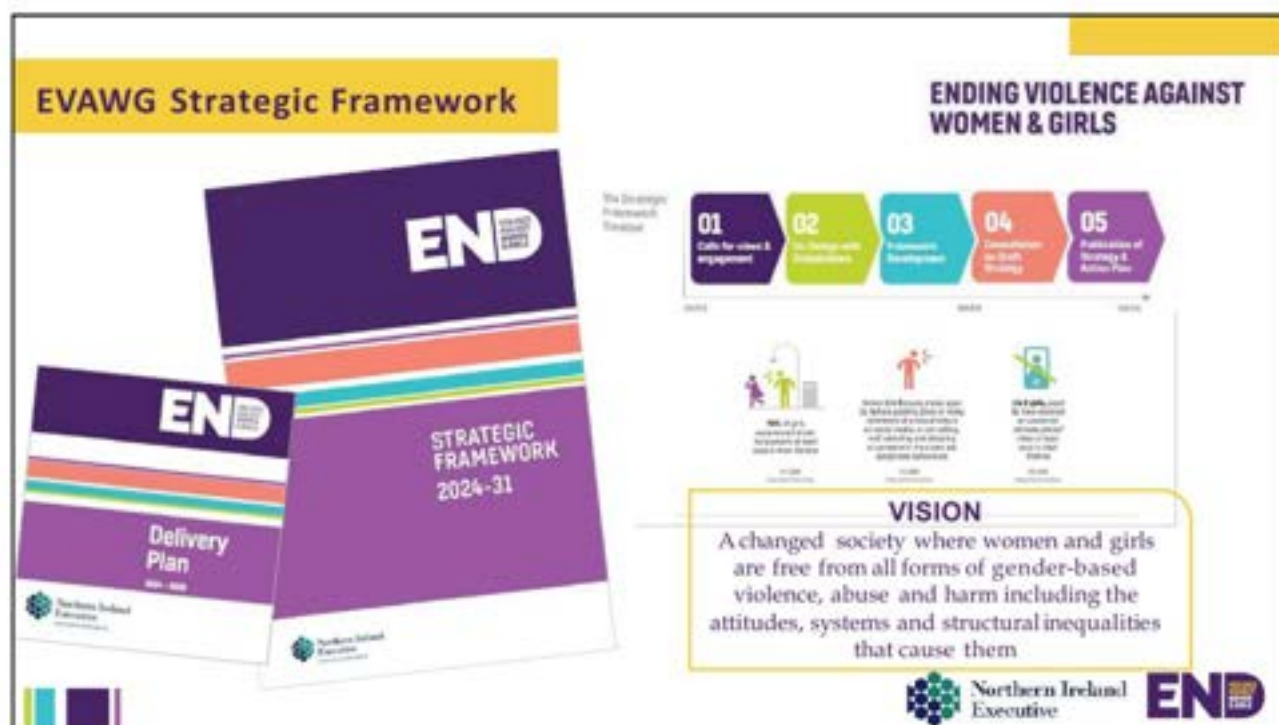
ALERT

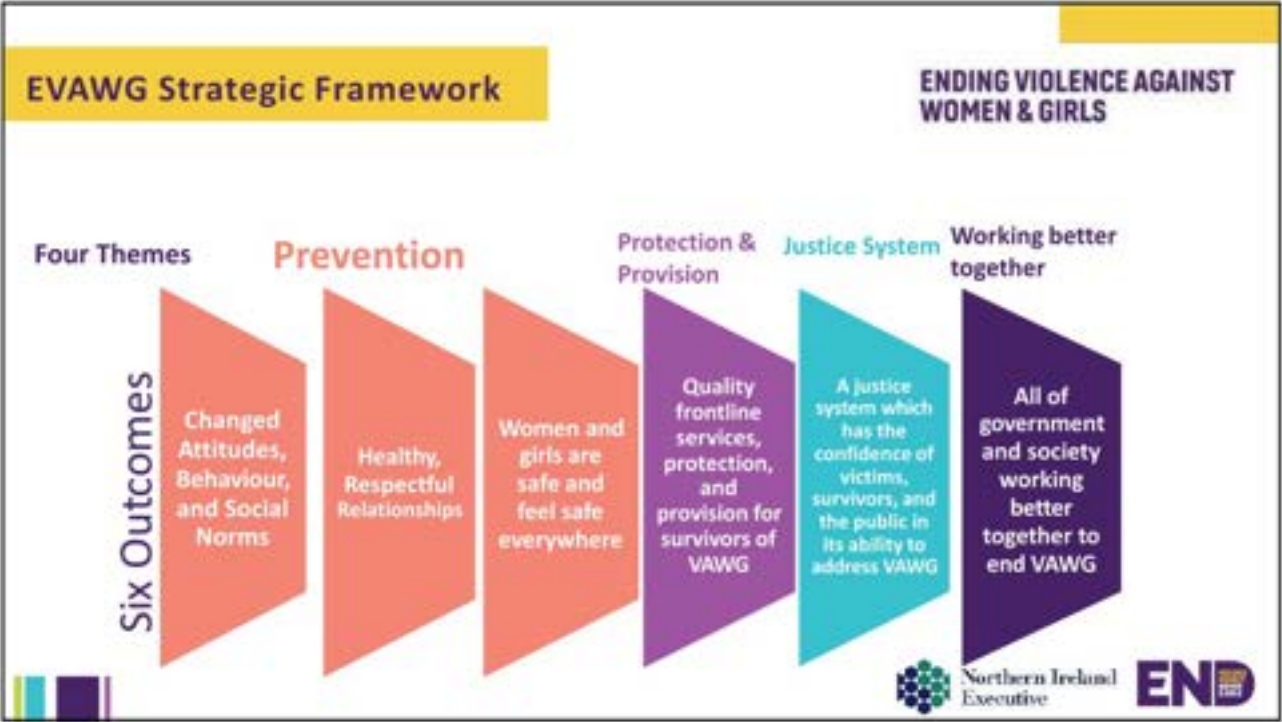
This is a sensitive subject matter, and we are aware
people in the room may be triggered by the
discussion.

There is a quiet space for you to go to! →
And we can signpost you to other services.

 Northern Ireland Executive







Community Investment EVAWG Change Fund

ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST
WOMEN & GIRLS

The Change Fund is a fundamental part of delivering the EVAWG Strategic Framework and focuses on **PREVENTION**

- challenging attitudes, behaviors and culture,
- education on healthy and respectful relationships and
- ensuring women and girls feel safe and are safe everywhere.

LOCAL GRANT SCHEME - will support grassroots community groups to build capacity, to develop EVAWG approaches they know will work, to provide people and communities with the support they need to achieve change.

REGIONAL GRANT SCHEME - will support regional CVS EVAWG Experts to deliver tried and tested prevention-based training and/or activities.



Northern Ireland
Executive



Campaigns and collaboration

ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST
WOMEN & GIRLS

**We need to change attitudes,
behaviours and culture**

- partnering across government and with stakeholders in wider society to develop joint messaging to address the root causes, drivers, and the impact of violence against women and girls, and on the role that everybody has to prevent it
- co-creating campaigns with young people and children, and those with lived experience of abuse, harm, and violence
- delivery of campaigns in partnership with different sectors and aimed at all kinds of people across all stages of life
- using innovative ways to spread awareness on key messages to all parts of our society, including collaborative work in sports, arts, leisure, and social media



Northern Ireland
Executive



EVAWG & PfG

- **Priority & Visibility**
- **Leadership**
- **Accountability**
- **Focus on EVAWG throughout government**



ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS







Local government supporting EVAWG


Outcome 6

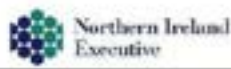

All of government and society working better together to end violence against women and girls

A whole system approach with collaboration and cooperation by default across central and local government, statutory bodies, and with, within and between the community, voluntary, trade unions, employers, business and other sectors



ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS



There is something that all of us can do

ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS

Thank you

EVAWG@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk

 Northern Ireland Executive



NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Ref: SE/2024

**Minutes of Sustainability & Environment Committee Meeting held on
Wednesday 20 November 2024 at 6.15pm in Council Chamber, Monaghan Row, Newry**

Chair: Councillor G Kearns

In attendance in Chamber: Councillor T Andrews Councillor P Campbell
Councillor C Enright Councillor K Feehan
Councillor V Harte Councillor J Jackson
Councillor M Larkin Councillor H Reilly
Councillor M Ruane Councillor D Taylor
Councillor H Young

Committee Members in attendance via Teams: Councillor J Brennan Councillor O Magennis

Non-Committee Members in attendance via Teams: Councillor C Bowsie

Officials in Chamber: Mrs S Murphy, Director Sustainability and Environment
Mr C Sage, Assistant Director Sustainability
Mrs S Trainor, Assistant Director Environment
Mrs F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer
Mrs N Stranney, Democratic Services Officer

SE/131/2024: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Finn

SE/132/2024: DECLARATIONS OF "CONFLICTS OF INTEREST"

Councillor Andrews and Taylor declared an in interest to item 11 – PeacePlus funding call for Clean Air

SE/133/2024: ACTION SHEET: SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 23 OCTOBER 2024

Read: Action Sheet of the Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 23 October 2024. **(Copy circulated)**

NS/091/2022 – Enforcement Improvement Plan Update

Councillor Enright referenced a league table produced by the Belfast Telegraph regarding statistics on number of fines issued by Councils across Northern Ireland. He proposed submitting the league table to the Strategic Finance Working Group for validation, suggesting that if Council adopted similar practices, the resulting figures would help cover workforce wages. Councillor Young seconded the proposal.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Enright, seconded by Councillor Young, it was agreed to submit a league table of other Councils' enforcement practices to the Strategic Finance Working Group.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Campbell, it was agreed to note the Action Sheet of the Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 23 October 2024.

FOR DECISION

SE/134/2024: **MID-YEAR ASSESSMENT OF S&E DIRECTORATE BUSINESS PLAN**

Read: Report dated 20 November 2024 from Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability and Environment, regarding the Mid-Year Assessment of the Sustainability and Environment Directorate Business Plan 2024-25 **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Jackson, it was agreed to approve the Mid-Year Assessment of the Sustainability and Environment Directorate Business Plan 2024-25.

SE/135/2024: **POWERS UNDER ARTICLE 4 & 5 OF THE WASTE AND CONTAMINATED LAND ORDER (NI) ORDER 1997**

Read: Report dated 20 November 2024 from Mrs S Trainor, Assistant Director: Environment, regarding the Powers under Article 4 & 5 of the Waste and Contaminated Land Order (NI) 1997 **(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Trainor presented the report on new enforcement powers granted to the Council under Articles 4 and 5 of the Waste and Contaminated Land Order (NI) 1997 to address fly-tipping. She outlined the higher penalty levels compared to the Litter Order (NI) 1994, noting that the use of these powers was discretionary based on the incident's nature and scale.

Councillor Enright sought clarification on the use of the powers, particularly under Article 4 highlighting that, previously, officers needed an admission from an individual, even if fly-tipped rubbish contained identifying information, as this alone was not enough for prosecution. Councillor Enright asked whether Articles 4 or 5 addressed these issues and whether the new powers would allow the installation of cameras in fly-tipping hotspots.

Mrs Trainor clarified that issuing fixed penalty notices was based on the information found, and once issued, the offence was confirmed. She advised that the process was similar to litter enforcement, but with higher fines, and it was particularly relevant for addressing large-scale dumping issues regularly investigated across the District.

Councillor Taylor raised concerns about recurring fly-tipping black spots in the district, which he reported regularly and questioned how the £400 fine compared to the actual cost of clearing up these areas. He asked whether any research had been done to compare the costs of these clean-ups and requested that a range of figures, from the lowest to the highest costs, be brought back on specific spots affected.

Mrs Trainor stated that small-scale dumping differed from large-scale dumping, with the latter falling under Article 4, based on the volume of waste disposed of.

Councillor Taylor acknowledged that while £400 might have seemed high, it was reasonable given the severity of the issue highlighting that those responsible for fly-tipping were likely saving money by deliberately dumping waste, which incurred costs for the Council.

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Enright, seconded by Councillor Campbell the following was agreed:

- **Approve Fixed Penalty Notices for the offence of illegally depositing waste contrary to Article 4 of the Order is set at the maximum of £400, with an early payment option of £300 if paid within 14 days from receipt of the Notice.**
- **An early payment option for the £300 Fixed Penalty Notice for the duty of care offence, contrary to Article 5 of the Order, is set to £200 if paid within 14 days from receipt of the Notice.**
- **The Director of Sustainability and Environment and the Assistant Director of Environment be authorised to take decisions on behalf of Council as to when it is appropriate to use council's discretionary powers under the Order.**

SE/136/2024:

UPDATE ON THE REVIEW OF CARAVAN SITE LICENSE CONDITIONS

Read:

Report dated 20 November 2024 from Mrs S Trainor, Assistant Director: Environment, regarding a business case for the procurement of litter bins.
(Copy circulated)

Mrs Trainor provided an update on the review of the Council's caravan site licence conditions stating that Environmental Health officers consulted with 25 caravan site owners and 5 sites requested an amendment to condition 2 to allow year-round operation. The total number of caravans on sites was updated, and the main waste management challenge identified was the segregation of food waste.

Councillor Young raised on behalf of Cllr Truesdale inquired whether only site owners were consulted during the review process and asked. She also how the sites could remain open year-round without being used as permanent residences. She stated that given the ongoing capacity issues in Newcastle and Annalong, had NI Water been consulted and she raised concerns about enforcement, particularly considering the existing challenges in towns and villages. Finally, she asked whether caravan owners would incur additional costs for 365-day access, regardless of their preference.

Mrs. Trainor clarified that the Council issue caravan site licences to site owners, not individual caravan owners, and to consult all caravan owners would be extensive, therefore only site owners were consulted in line with the Caravan licenses. The Environmental Health Department was responsible for enforcing caravan site licence conditions therefore they deal directly with site owners. Caravan site owners must ensure caravan owners have a permanent residential address, as per the lease agreement, and it was their responsibility to enforce this, not the Council. Mrs Trainor further confirmed that NI Water had not been consulted, however, officers would assess the need for consultation. She stated that given the additional usage in January and February amounted to up to eight weekends a year, it was not deemed excessive. Regarding extra costs that may be incurred, she advised that this was a matter between caravan site owners and caravan owners, and the Council is not involved in caravan site fees.

- AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Campbell, the following was agreed:
- The amendment of condition 2 of the Static Holiday and Touring Caravan Site License conditions for the five sites that have requested the amendment and should further amendments be requested that should be actioned accordingly.
 - That the Council's recycling officers focus resource to educate the caravan site owners and caravan owners on the importance of waste segregation and recycling.

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

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

- AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Harte, seconded by Councillor Jackson, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

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

SE/137/2024: BUSINESS CASE FOR THE REMOVAL OF NEWCASTLE SAND BAR

Read: Report dated 20 November 2024 from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director: Sustainability, regarding a business case for the removal of sand bar at Newcastle Harbour. **(Copy circulated)**

- AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Larkin, seconded by Councillor Campbell it was agreed to note the contents of the report and associated business case and to approve the preferred option of the business case, to progress a tender for the sand bar removal at Newcastle Harbour for a 3-year period from 2025 – 2027 in accordance with the Marine Construction License.

SE/138/2024: REPAIR OF CORRY'S CORNER, DRUMANESS BUS SHELTER AND ADOPTION BY TRANSLINK

Read: Report dated 20 November 2024 from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director: Sustainability, regarding the repair of the bus shelter at Corry's Corner, Drumaness and then Adoption of the bus shelter by Translink. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Young it was agreed to adopt the bus shelter at Corry's Corner, and to consider future proposals from Translink regarding the adoption of bus shelters.

SE/139/2024: BUSINESS CASE FOR DEEP CLEANING SERVICES

Read: Report dated 20 November 2024 from Mrs S Trainor, Assistant Director: Environment, regarding a business case to procure a contract for the deep cleaning of paved surfaces in public realm areas. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Campbell it was agreed to commence the procurement of contract for the provision of deep cleaning of public realm and other areas within the district for a period of up to three years.

SE/140/2024: DIRECT AWARD CONTRACT APPROVALS AND EXTENSIONS

Read: Report dated 20 November 2024 from Mrs S Trainor, Assistant Director: Environment, regarding approval for four Direct Award Contracts that exceed the Directors delegated limit, in line with the Councils Procurement Policy. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Larkin seconded by Councillor Ruane it was agreed to approve the four Direct Award Contracts as detailed in the officer's report.

Councillors Andrews and Taylor left the meeting at this stage - 18.53pm

SE/141/2024: PEACEPLUS FUNDING CALL FOR CLEAN AIR

Read: Report dated 20 November 2024 from Mrs S Trainor, Assistant Director: Environment, regarding approval for the development of a proposal to submit a multi-agency application for PEACEPLUS funding under Theme 6, Investment Area **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Young seconded by Councillor Larkin it was agreed to approve the development of a proposal to submit a multi-agency application for PeacePlus funding under Theme 6, Investment Area from Council as outlined in the officer's report.

Councillors Andrews and Taylor re-entered the meeting at this stage - 18.55pm

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

SE/142/2024: **ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE MEMBERS' MONTHLY BULLETIN FROM 31st OCTOBER 2024 and ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING IN COMMITTEE MINUTES OF 26th SEPTEMBER 2024**

Read: Arc21 Joint Committee "in committee" minutes of meeting held 26th September 2024 and to note the Arc21 Joint Committee Members' bulletin from 31st October 2024. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Young, seconded by Councillor Jackson it was agreed to note the documents.

FOR NOTING

SE/143/2024: **ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF 26 SEPTEMBER 2024**

Read: Arc21 Joint Committee Meeting Committee Minutes of 26 September 2024. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Ruane, to note the minutes of the Arc21 Joint Committee meeting of 26 September 2024.

SE/144/2024: **NI LOCAL AUTHORITY COLLECTED MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STATISTICS - QUARTERLY PROVISION ESTIMATES FOR APRIL TO JUNE 2024**

Read: NI Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics - quarterly provision estimates for April to June 2024. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Ruane, to note the content of the document.

SE/145/2024: **CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR ARRANGEMENTS - REFUSE COLLECTIONS AND HRC ARRANGEMENTS**

Read: Report dated 20 November 2024 from Mrs S Trainor, Assistant Director: Environment, regarding refuse collections over the festive period along with the opening and closing dates of all HRC sites. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Ruane, to note the content of the report.

SE/146/2024: 2024 CHRISTMAS ILLUMINATIONS UPDATE

Read: Report dated 20 November 2024 from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director: Sustainability, regarding Christmas Illuminations provided by the Council during the 2024 festive period **(Copy circulated)**

Following a query regarding the possibility of adding additional illuminations in Annalong this year, Mr. Sage responded that the Council would not have the capacity to add illuminations this year but would bring the matter to the S&E working group for review in the new year. He noted that any future considerations would need to account for costs, including maintenance and electricity, which were increasing over time.

AGREED: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Ruane, to note the content of the report**

There being no further business the meeting ended at 7.00pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 2nd December 2024.

Signed: **Councillor Geraldine Kearns**
Chairperson

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

Report to:	Council
Date of Meeting:	2 November 2024
Subject:	Correspondence to Council
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)

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

For decision	x	For noting only	
1.0			Purpose and Background
1.1			To provide an update on correspondence received for attention of Council.
2.0			Key issues
2.1			This paper refers to correspondence to be brought to the attention of Council. Items are referred to in 3.0 below.
3.0			Recommendations
			That Council considers and notes the following correspondence:
3.1			Correspondence from Department of Health Council received a response from Minister Nesbitt, Minister for Health, regarding emergency NOM C/032/2024 - Shimna House.
3.2			Correspondence from Department of Health and Southern Health and Social Care Trust Council received a response from Minister Nesbitt, Minister for Health and Dr Stephen Austin on behalf of Dr Maria O'Kane, Chief Executive of the Southern Health and Social Care Trust, regarding NOM C/175/2024 – Daisy Hill Maternity Services.
3.3			Correspondence from Ards and North Down Borough Council & Department for Communities Council received correspondence from Ards and North Down Borough Council in relation to the UK Governments recent Winter Fuel Payment Policy change on 12 November 2024. Council received a response from Minister Lyons, Minister for Communities, regarding motion on Winter Fuel Payments.
3.4			Correspondence from BBC Director General Council received a response from BBC Director General in relation to NOM C/160/2024 Sign Language on 12 November 2024.

3.5	Correspondence from NI Ambulance Service Council received correspondence from NI Ambulance Service in relation to the Winter Plan 2024-2025
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	Not applicable.
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<p><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.3	<p><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)
6.1	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>

	<p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If no, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy / strategy / plan / public service is not influenced by rural needs <input type="checkbox"/></p>
7.0	Appendices
8.0	Background Documents
	None

FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH



Marie Ward
democratic.services@nmandd.org

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

Our Ref: COR-2073-2024

Date: 7 November 2024

Dear Marie,

Thank you for your correspondence dated 7 August 2024 informing me of your elected members' emergency notice of motion with regards to services at Ward 15 at the Downshire Hospital in Downpatrick.

I note your members' concerns in relation to Ward 15 which provides a valued service to not only the South Eastern Trust population but also to others within the Belfast and Southern Trust areas.

Please be assured that Department officials within the Strategic Planning and Performance Group are aware of the current challenges. They are working closely with South Eastern Trust officials to actively pursue all options available to ensure continued safe provision of these services, including permanent recruitment options and contingency planning.

Thank you again for your concern and support for this service.

Yours sincerely

Mike Nesbitt MLA
Minister of Health

FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH

Marie Ward
 Chief Executive
 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
democratic.services@nmandd.org

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

Your Ref:

Our Ref: COR-2506-2024

Date: 20 November 2024

Dear Marie,

RE: Daisy Hill Hospital Maternity services

Thank you for your correspondence dated 11 November in which you have raised concerns in relation to the retention of maternity service at Daisy Hill Hospital due to a shortage of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Consultants and the implications this has for staff and service users.


I wish to assure you that maintaining Obstetrics and Gynaecology services on the Daisy Hill Site is a key priority. My departmental officials are currently in daily contact with Southern Health and Social Care Trust regarding the delivery of services in both Daisy Hill and Craigavon Hospitals. My officials are currently engaging with the Trust to support them to work through the challenges they have outlined and to develop a short, medium and long-term action plan to overcome any barriers to achieving this.

I have been advised by my officials that Newry, Mourne and Down District Council have been in contact with the Southern Health and Social Care Trust and that there is a meeting scheduled for 25th November to discuss this matter.

I have asked to be provided with an update from this meeting.

Thank you for your interest in this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mike Nesbitt', is positioned below the text 'Yours sincerely'.

Mike Nesbitt MLA
Minister of Health

Quality Care - for you, with you

Your Ref: C/175/2024
Our ref: CEx_NMDC_20241121

Chair
Eileen Mullan MBE

Chief Executive
Dr Maria O'Kane

21st November 2024

VIA EMAIL –
Donna.Starkey@nmandd.org,
democratic.services@nmandd.org

Ms Marie Ward
Chief Executive
Newry Office
O'Hagan House
Monaghan Row
Newry BT35 8DJ

Dear Ms Ward

RE: Notice of Motion – Daisy Hill Maternity Services

Thank you for your correspondence and for your continued support for Daisy Hill Hospital and the work of our staff. Please be assured that our primary aim has been, and will continue to be, safe care for mothers, babies and women across the Southern Trust.

The Southern Trust provides an area wide obstetric and gynaecology service, across community facilities and from our two hospital sites - Daisy Hill Hospital and Craigavon Area Hospital. Like many other specialties throughout health and social care, obstetrics and gynaecology services have been facing growing staffing challenges, impacting midwifery and consultant teams. Work is ongoing to assess how best we can stabilise and safely sustain obstetric and gynaecology services across the Trust area. We appreciate the ongoing support of the Council as we work through these challenges.

You have requested information regarding our winter pressures plan. Earlier this month Health Minister Mike Nesbitt announced a series of initiatives to protect key health and social care services during the challenging winter period. The 2024/25 Winter Preparedness Plan can be read here:

www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/department-health-winter-preparedness-plan-2024-25

[View the Southern Trust Winter Preparedness Plan 20242025 HERE](#)

Please also find attached the latest update regarding obstetric and gynaecology services in the Newry and Mourne area which was discussed at our Public Trust Board meeting today, Thursday 21 November. The report details the significant efforts which have been and continue to be made to manage immediate workforce issues and to develop a longer term safe and sustainable model for obstetrics and gynaecology services across both hospitals.

We appreciate the opportunity to attend the Special Council Meeting next Monday 25 November and will be happy to discuss these matters further with members. Thank you again for your continued interest and support.

Yours sincerely



DR STEPHEN AUSTIN,
ON BEHALF OF

Dr Maria O’Kane
CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Provision of Obstetric & Gynaecology Services

The Southern Trust provides an area wide obstetric and gynaecology service from our two inpatient hospital sites, Daisy Hill Hospital (DHH) and Craigavon Area Hospital (CAH), and across our community settings.

Like many other specialties throughout health and social care nationally and regionally, obstetrics and gynaecology has been increasingly challenged by workforce issues across professional groups, rising demand and associated pressures across both hospital sites. Recent recruitment to consultant posts in CAH (1 post) and DHH (2 posts) has been unsuccessful. Current recruitment process for these 3 posts is ongoing.

While the Trust has been successful in recruiting 14.3 WTE additional midwifery staff, who are coming in to post and completing their registration between now and January 2025, however high levels absence is still a challenge. The situation with our medical workforce is becoming more challenging given the shortage of consultant staff in this specialty within Northern Ireland and nationally.

Scope of Concern

Initially the focus of concern was on midwifery staffing availability across the Trust which has resulted in several temporary service diverts between the two acute hospital sites when staffing levels are below the minimum levels required to run a safe service. Diverts are only initiated after all other options have been explored, including:

- Offer of overtime and additional hours to midwifery staff.
- Specialist midwives and team leaders redeployed to clinical areas.
- The use of Bank staff.
- Amended rota patterns to cover shifts dependent on acuity and planned work.

Challenges in the midwifery workforce have been addressed through the recruitment of 14 WTE midwives who will be joining the Trust between now and January 2025. The section overleaf on Midwifery Staffing provides more detail.

The Trust more recently is also experiencing difficulties having sufficient medical Obstetrics & Gynae (O&G) workforce to maintain safe medical cover on both sites. Medical cover particularly on the DHH site has become more challenging with reliance on locums both in and out of hours.

Medical Staffing

Consultant O&G Teams are in place for both Craigavon Area Hospital and Daisy Hill Hospital. There are on call rotas for each site which cover both obstetrics and gynaecology. The current consultant staffing levels are summarised in the table below:

Currently the out of hours rota gaps in DHH is being covered by the substantive consultant staff undertaking locum shifts to cover gaps and vacancies. Out of hours rota gaps in CAH are similarly covered by substantive consultant staff undertaking

locum shifts. This is an added pressure on the substantive staff, particularly when they take leave.

In addition to the staffing above, through the Trust's International Medical Recruitment programme, a new O&G Senior Doctor is working on the DHH site and is undergoing a period of induction and upskilling to enable them to work at Consultant level. It is expected that this will take approximately 6-9 months.

The Trust continues to progress recruitment across all vacant posts with the objective of filling the vacant substantive positions. Recruitment for consultant O&G vacant posts (2 DHH and 1 CAH) is ongoing including exploring sourcing medical locums outside NI. The Trust is actively looking at innovative recruitment solutions to attract the permanent workforce required to safely deliver this service on both sites.

As part of the Trust's O&G Stabilisation Plan, further urgent actions to stabilise and support the retention of the Trust's existing O&G consultant workforce are underway including:

- Sourcing of further locums from UK.
- Seeking further international recruitment options.
- Scoping to determine if any retired consultants would be interested in locum opportunities (one retired consultant providing cover one day a week since the 11th November 2024).
- Ongoing discussion with the medical teams on both the CAH and DHH sites to consider service sustainability with the intention to develop a workforce plan for the short / medium term focusing on recruitment and retention, review of the medical models of care to provide sustainable quality and safe obstetric services across the Southern Trust area.

Midwifery Staffing

Midwifery services are provided across Craigavon Area Hospital, Daisy Hill Hospital and Community Areas of Craigavon & Banbridge, Newry & Mourne and Armagh and Dungannon localities.

Our midwifery teams provide a full range of antenatal, delivery and post natal services and the Trust has two new Maternity Continuity of Care teams – Team Emerald based at Craigavon and Team Sapphire based at Daisy Hill.

The recent pattern of short temporary service diverts between the two maternity units, and primarily from DHH to CAH, was driven by midwifery staffing shortages largely due to sickness absence and maternity leave which has increased on both sites but with a higher impact on the smaller midwifery team in DHH.

While short diverts due to midwifery staffing gaps may continue to be necessary over the coming months, it is anticipated that the midwifery staffing issues will be resolved for the longer term with new staff joining the midwifery teams as outlined earlier in this paper. In the interim, staffing risks are being managed by:

- Offering overtime and additional hours to midwifery staff;

- Specialist midwives and team leaders redeployed to clinical areas;
- The use of Bank staff;
- Recruitment for bank only posts to enhance the bank pool of staff;
- Amended rota patterns to cover shifts dependent on acuity and planned work;
- Twice daily huddles each morning on both sites to ensure safe staffing and to address any staffing or safety concerns with appropriate escalation as required.
- Twice weekly review meetings to assist with managing staffing gaps; and
- Management of sickness levels in accordance with Trust policy.

Additional actions include:

- The Interim Assistant Director of IMWH and the Interim Executive Director of Nursing, Midwifery & AHPs have met with the midwifery team leads to discuss the ongoing situation and potential solutions;
- The Trust has agreed to pay Enhanced Special Payment to midwives to cover critical shifts when necessary;
- A request for Interim midwifery cover for vacant shifts from other Trusts has been made;
- Provision of a daily report to nominated Directors within SLT.
- Recording and audit of accurate activity relating to diverts.
- Agenda item on December's regional Maternity collaborative (PHA leads this with Trusts as members).
- The Interim Executive Director of Nursing, Midwifery & AHPs is monitoring Nursing Quality Indicators on both sites and providing support as necessary to ensure safe care.

Governance

To ensure the safe delivery of services, the Trust is monitoring any unintended consequences due to increased temporary diverts. There have been no issues identified through the Trust risk escalation system, Datix, or complaints in relation to the diverts that were put in place over recent months.

The Trust is tracking the actions in the immediate plan and gathering information to assess the impact of the actions and to identify any concerns in relation to the ongoing delivery of the maternity aspect of the O&G service.

The Chief Nursing Officer, Chief Midwifery Officer and the Deputy Medical Director have visited the Trust on separate occasions to meet with staff and senior managers to understand the current pressures and measures being undertaken to mitigate against the risks.

The Trust recognises that there is a reduction in the ability to continue some provision of gynaecology services due to the medical workforce needing to focus on the delivery of services within obstetrics, which will further increase waiting times for



gynaecological outpatient appointments. This is being considered with a view to addressing same.

Escalation Arrangements

An internal Trust escalation plan has been developed and implemented providing opportunities for early resolution of challenges where possible.

Engagement with PHA, SPPG and DOH colleagues has taken place over recent weeks including regional discussion to explore the potential of mutual aid to assist in stabilising obstetrics in the SHSCT. A weekly meeting between SPPG and SHSCT occurs to provide an update on the action plan and to address any new issues.

Regional Support

The Trust is working closely with PHA and SPPG to understand patient demand, capacity, impacts and consequences of patient flow and pathways. Support is being provided to the Trust to undertake demand modelling that will support an evidence-based model and decision-making process regarding next steps and any potential for implementing a contingency arrangement.

Engagement

The Trust will continue to engage with a wide range of stakeholders including staff, SPPG, and senior management to agree the next appropriate steps. Women and their families who use the service will be engaged through existing and additional forums. The Trust has an active Maternity Voice's Partnership, and those members will be pivotal to the co-design of the future maternity services. A detailed engagement and communication plan will be developed with the objective of keeping stakeholders updated and involved.

The Trust has identified several key immediate actions to support engagement with key stakeholders regarding the presenting challenge to the service. This includes:

- Support to O&G staff on both sites – including formal meetings and briefings alongside discussions with senior management team as and when required. This also includes proactive HR support for staff.
- Meetings and discussions with Trade Union representatives.
- Ongoing engagement with the Trust's Senior Leadership Team and Trust Board to ensure regular updates on emerging issues, plans, mitigations, and actions.
- Planned communications to wider staff groups.
- Scheduled meetings with elected reps as requested.
- Schedule meetings with interested external stakeholders including DHH Future's Group.
- Ongoing discussions with PHA, SPPG and DOH colleagues alongside discussions with other Trusts.

Next Steps



The Trust has set up a project structure to deliver on medium and long term plans (following the 3-4 month timeframe) to provide sustainable obstetric and gynaecology services.

While the immediate action plan is focused on the maternity element of the O&G service, the medium- and longer-term plans must consider the stability of the full O&G service given the fact that the safe delivery of Obstetrics and Gynaecology services are intrinsically linked.

Conclusion

While the Trust enacts these mitigations to manage the immediate risk, we will work towards development of a medium-term plan including contingency planning to stabilise O&G services across Southern Trust. In addition, longer term planning will be required to enable identification of a future sustainable safe service model for O&G services Trust wide. Any service developments including sustaining the current model will take cognisance of report – Enabling Safe Quality Midwifery Services and Care in Northern Ireland (22 October 2024)

Given the nature of this emerging issue, the Trust will continue to work on developing detail analysis and understanding implications of existing risks alongside development of plans to support any contingency requirements in the immediate term.

The Trust welcomes the ongoing engagement and involvement from local stakeholders, Department of Health and the Public Health Agency colleagues on the issues outlined above, with the expectation of gaining a shared understanding of the existing challenges and availing of support to take necessary actions to safely deliver O&G services to the Southern Trust population.



12 November 2024

Sent via email only

Dear Chief Executive,

At the meeting of Ards and North Down Borough Council on 30th October, Council stated a position that it was strongly opposes the UK Government's recent Winter Fuel Payment policy change.

Further, Council has agreed to write to the Prime Minister to urge the Government to reverse this harmful decision, which will have a far-reaching and devastating impact on pensioner households across the UK. It also seeks assurance that, at the very least, the Pension Credit minimum income guarantee will be increased, ensuring that more low-income pensioner households, particularly those who narrowly miss out, become eligible for pension credit.

Council have also resolved that I write to the other Councils in Northern Ireland urging them to do the same. I would therefore ask if you would report this request to your elected Members for consideration. I would also welcome a response to this request so that I may report back to our Members in due course.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susie McCullough", written in a cursive style.

Susie McCullough
Chief Executive



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

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From: The Minister

**Level 9
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG**

Telephone: (028) 9051 2692
e-mail: private.office@communities-ni.gov.uk

Our Ref: CORR-1646-2024

Date: 29 November 2024

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

Via Email: democratic.services@nmandd.org

Dear Ms Ward,

Winter Fuel Payments in Northern Ireland

I am writing in response to your correspondence, dated 11 November 2024, concerning the introduction of a hardship payment to support pensioners not eligible for a Winter Fuel Payment.

I am pleased to advise that I have secured £17 million, with the support of my Executive colleagues, to help mitigate the winter fuel payment policy changes introduced by the UK Government.

Based on the available funding, I had asked my officials to explore options to help and support the pensioners impacted by the loss of the winter fuel payment.

Following careful examination of each of these options, I can confirm a one-off emergency fuel payment of £100 will be paid to all pensioner households affected by the winter fuel payment policy changes this winter.



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

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This one-off emergency fuel payment will be made before the end of March 2025.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Gordon Lyons MLA
Minister for Communities

Dear Ms Ward,

I wanted you to know that I'd read your letter of 15 October regarding BBC Newsline.

I understand that you had also sent a similar letter directly to our Director BBC NI, Adam Smyth, and I know that you have since had a reply from our team in Belfast. I've included a copy below.

We welcome all feedback and I appreciate you taking the time to raise this with us.

Best wishes,

Tim Davie
Director-General

Response from BBC NI – 22 October 2024:

Dear Marie,

Editorial Enquiry – BBC Newsline

I'm replying to your recent letter (15 October) to Adam Smyth on behalf of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

We understand the importance of making the BBC's local news services as accessible as possible, including on different platforms.

BBC Newsline's lunchtime bulletin has become part of an extended, UK-wide news programme. This was the immediate context for the transfer of its BSL sign language summary to our digital news platforms/services in May 2024.

Our sign-interpreted BBC Newsline summary is now available each weekday afternoon in a dedicated (and prominent) slot on the BBC News NI website. This is in addition to its availability on the website's 'rolling news' section, the BBC News NI app and BBC Newsline Facebook page – all of which have helped to maintain its broad reach and easy accessibility. The bulletin's format, duration and presentation have been unaffected by its move to a new digital home. And we think that there is significance also in the fact that our sign-interpreted news summary has its own distinct identity (and place) within our portfolio of local news services, underscoring the value that we attach to it.

We're continuing to work with our team of on-screen translators to promote awareness of the different ways in which local BBC audiences can access this bulletin (which has included on-air mentions and signposting) and are keen to ensure its success – meeting the needs of existing viewers and hopefully finding many new ones as well.

Our digital platforms attract large audiences and are now a mainstream (and fast developing) part of the BBC's work – reflecting changes in technology and how people engage with our output.

What we are doing is intended to safeguard a BBC news service that we care about. And we'll keep all of this under review over the next period, including audience engagement with/consumption of this service and suggestions about how it might be further developed and/or improved.

We note the points that the Council has raised and welcome its interest in/support for local BBC news provision in this area.

I hope this is useful and appreciate your interest in this aspect of our local news service and the benefits that it provides.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Kelly
Head of News and Current Affairs, BBC NI



Northern Ireland Ambulance Service
Health and Social Care Trust



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WINTER PLAN

2024/25





NIAS Locality Plan – Winter 2024/25

The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) faces considerable operational challenges throughout the year due to various factors. These include delayed hospital handovers, broader reconfigurations of Health and Social Care (HSC) services, and result in late finishes for staff and impact on health and wellbeing.

The forthcoming winter months will be a challenging time across NIAS, primary care, hospital services and community services and specific actions are being taken to coordinate and respond to patient and service user needs. As always, NIAS relies on the dedication and resilience of all our staff who continue to support new initiatives while delivering existing services with compassion and care.

Below we set out some of the agreed actions to support the additional pressures expected over winter. As a NI system, a regional coordination centre will ensure the Ambulance Service, Primary and Secondary Care work together to enhance patient flow and reduce service pressures across the following four priority areas:

- Pre-hospital demand management
- Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC)
- Improving patient flow through hospitals
- Improving complex discharge processes.

NIAS supports Health and Social Care Trusts across all four areas; however, the focus of our locality plan is on pre-hospital demand management and maximising ambulance capacity across the region to support Trusts with timely discharge of medically fit patients.





Our Commitment to the Community

At NIAS, we aim to provide safe, timely, and compassionate care. This Winter Plan outlines our priorities and the steps we are taking to build resilience into our services, support our healthcare partners, and respond to the needs of the community.



Key Areas of Focus:

Maximising Ambulance Capacity

Objective:

To increase efficiency and reduce the need for hospital transport wherever possible by expanding alternative care pathways.

Actions:

- Fully staffing our Clinical Hub to offer more effective call assessments.
- Expanding the Mental Health Practitioner (MHP) service across the region to provide mental health support directly over the phone, reducing ambulance trips for mental health cases.

Expected Benefits:

- Improved patient care without the need for Emergency Department (ED) visits, reducing pressure on hospitals and providing patients with faster, more appropriate responses.

Emergency
Department
(A&E) ↑



Strengthening "Hear & Treat" and "See & Treat" Services

Objective:

Enhance services that allow for patient treatment over the phone or at home, without needing hospital visits.

Actions:

- Introducing Urgent Care Liaison Desks within our Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) to support crews in making clinical decisions.
- Collaborating with local trusts to expand the "Hospital at Home" initiative for patients with chronic conditions.

Expected Benefits:

- Fewer ambulance transports to ED, quicker access to appropriate care, and better health outcomes for patients in their own homes or communities.





Supporting Patients with Chronic Health Conditions

Objective:

Ensure patients with chronic conditions receive timely support without requiring emergency transport.

Actions:

- Developing specialised referral pathways for patients with conditions such as diabetes and epilepsy.
- Strengthening our Falls Pathway and establishing a Safer Mobility Group to prevent falls and manage them effectively when they occur.

Expected Benefits:

- Reduced need for ED visits, safer community-based care, and better support for individuals managing long-term health issues.





Enhancing Timely Hospital Discharges

Objective:

Work with hospital partners to streamline the discharge process for patients who no longer need acute care.

Actions:

- Improving coordination for Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC) pathways and complex discharges to avoid prolonged ED stays.

Expected Benefits:

- The situation regarding hospital discharges in Northern Ireland has worsened over the past few years. Improving the speed of hospital discharges will free up hospital resources, enhance the flow of patients through the system, and ensure that ambulances can hand over patients and make crews available to attend other emergency calls.





Measurement

Each priority area is designed with measurable targets in mind, including:

- **Reduction in ED Visits:** By providing suitable alternatives, we aim to decrease ambulance conveyances to EDs.
- **Increased Use of Alternative Care Pathways:** This includes Hear & Treat and See & Treat, which help us deliver care without hospital visits.
- **Improvement in Patient Flow and Discharges:** Enhancing patient flow through hospitals will reduce wait times in ED

Enablers

The success of this strategic plan will be dependent on a number of enablers working and interacting across NIAS, all hospital trusts and the community in general.

Work collaboratively with other partners:

All Trusts in Northern Ireland have agreed to work at scale, standardise practices, and share resources to tackle pre-hospital demand, address patient flow, and improve discharge processes which will enable people to recover at home when they are medically fit. This will ultimately help to reduce the number of ambulances delayed in handing patients over at ED, due to blockages in the hospital system. All Trusts in Northern Ireland have agreed to work towards this as a shared vision.

Resource Allocation and Flexibility:

We must ensure resources are available and adaptable to meet fluctuating demands throughout the winter period. NIAS continues to plan and optimise resources based on delayed handovers and anticipated sickness levels which both have a significant impact on the levels of cover available to respond to latent demand in the community. NIAS has recently increased its paramedic workforce which will help strengthen capacity to respond to patient demand across the province.

Increasing the range of alternative pathways available for patients:

NIAS cannot work in isolation to deal with the levels of out-of-hospital demand across Northern Ireland. We will increasingly work with our partners in HSC and other stakeholders to provide appropriate alternative pathways for patients to reduce demand on ED's and improve discharge processes. These pathways may be in other healthcare services, based in the community, or within services provided by the community and voluntary sector.

Community Engagement and Education:

We need to increasingly empower the community to manage minor health issues and understand when to seek emergency care, and which conditions can be self-managed appropriately, based on symptoms. We will continue to deliver public awareness campaigns on using alternative care pathways.

Technology:

We must harness the power of technology to ensure efficient and effective care for patients. Increasing operability between health and social care providers in Northern Ireland will enable NIAS to more effectively direct patients to the right care, at the right time and in the right place.





What the public can do over winter

If you become ill or injured and need medical help or advice, choose well by using the right health service for your needs.

Play your part help our Health and Care Service
Please choose the service most appropriate for your symptoms

Selfcare - to treat an ache, pain, upset stomach, cough or cold, get plenty of rest, take simple pain killers if needed and use over-the-counter medicines.

Your local pharmacist - they are there to give confidential, expert advice and can treat a number of minor ailments such as aches and pains, skin conditions, allergies, eye conditions or upset stomach and emergency contraception.

Your GP - they will give expert medical advice and diagnosis, referring you for further care or consultation as needed.

Primary Eyecare Assessment & Referral Service - treats sudden eye conditions such as red eyes, sudden reduction in vision, eye pain or a foreign body in the eye.
Go to: <https://online.hscni.net/our-work/ophthalmic-services/eyes/>

Mental Healthcare - if you experiencing mental health difficulties there are a range of services available to help you.
Go to: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/mental-health-support>

Emergency Dental Treatment - if patients have an urgent dental need then they can follow the advice on the HSC website.
<https://online.hscni.net/our-work/dental-services/out-of-hours-emergency-dental-treatment/>

Minor Injuries Unit - treats injuries that are not life threatening such as broken bones, sprains, bites and burns.

Urgent Care Centres - treats injuries that are not life threatening such as broken bones, sprains, minor scalp wounds and suturing of minor wounds.

Emergency Department - provides the highest level of emergency care for patients, especially those with acute illnesses or trauma, such as heart attacks, stroke, serious accidents or head injuries.
Call 999 when there is a risk to life or serious injury.

Progress and Next Steps

NIAS will continue to monitor and report on the effectiveness of these initiatives throughout 2024/25. By collaborating with healthcare providers and responding to the needs of the community, we are committed to delivering an accessible and resilient ambulance service.

This document and other key Corporate Trust plans and policy documents are published on our website [NIAS | NIAS \(hscni.net\)](#).