



April 29th, 2025

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the Council meeting to be held on **Tuesday, 6th May 2025 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 7 April 2025

For Information

 [Action Sheet 2025 04 07.pdf](#)

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Council Minutes For Adoption and Signing

4.0 Minutes of Council Meeting held on 7 April 2025

For Approval

 [Council Minutes 2025 04 07.pdf](#)

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5.0 Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 31 March 2025

For Approval

 [Special Council Minutes - 2025-03-31.pdf](#)

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Committee Minutes for Consideration and Adoption

6.0 Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 14 April 2025

For Approval

 [Economy Regeneration and Tourism Minutes 2025-04-14.pdf](#)

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7.0 Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 17 April 2025

For Approval

 [Strategy Policy & Resources Committee Meeting Minutes 2025-04-17.pdf](#)

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8.0 Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 28 April 2025

For Approval

Copy to follow.

9.0 Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 29 April 2025

For Approval

Copy to follow.

10.0 Planning Section

There were no issues arising.

Correspondence

11.0 Correspondence Report

For Information

📎 *Correspondence Report Council 2025 05 06.pdf*

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11.1 Correspondence from Mid Ulster District Council

For Information

📎 *Mid Ulster District Council re NOM NI Road Traffic Law.pdf*

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11.2 Response from Scottish Government: Fishing Industry Visa & Enhancement Support

For Information

📎 *Response from Scottish Govt Fishing Industry Visa and Enhancement Support.pdf*

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Notices of Motion

12.0 Notice of Motion - 'Nip It In The Bud' Campaign

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Galbraith:

"That this Council notes the importance of farmers and rural dwellers to our society; recognises that farmers, agricultural workers and people living in rural communities can have lower access to cancer services due to the nature of their work and often living in isolated areas; we also recognise the impact that a cancer diagnosis can have on a family business such as a family farm, including housing, the extending family and the welfare of livestock; endorses the 'Nip It In The Bud' campaign delivered by the Farming Community Network in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support and acknowledges the benefits to the rural community; pledges to do all we can to raise awareness and save lives, particularly using our social media platforms, to help rural dwellers in this Council area be aware of the symptoms of cancer and to seek immediate medical advice if necessary, as evidence demonstrates that early diagnosis and treatment can save lives."

13.0 Notice of Motion - Mourne Mountain Gateway Project

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Truesdale:

"This Council notes the recent announcement that the National Trust has paused discussions with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council regarding the Mourne Mountain Gateway Project. The Council further notes the widespread concern expressed by residents across the district, and recognises that progressing this project in the absence of a secured lease presents significant financial and legal risks. This Council therefore agrees to:

- pause all further work and expenditure relating to the Mourne Mountain Gateway Project until clarity is obtained regarding the position of the National Trust;
- undertake a full review of the project, including the exploration of viable and sustainable alternative proposals to the gondola element of the project - such as the development of a visitor centre in Donard Park - to improve access and enhance tourism in the Mournes."

14.0 Notice of Motion - Funding to Pre-School Groups

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Andrews:

"Newry, Mourne and Down District Council expresses its deepest concern relating to the lack of available funding to pre-school groups across our District. This Council fully supports groups such as Little Stars Pre-School in Killyleagh who at this time are making strenuous efforts to secure the necessary funding through the Pathfinder Programme to maintain, enhance and continue the excellent standard of education and care that they provide to the community. We call upon the Education Minister and the Education Authority to expedite and release much needed funding to enable groups to do what they know best, providing a service of care and professionalism to their pupils."

Invitees

Cllr Terry Andrews

Cllr Callum Bowsie

Fionnuala Branagh

Cllr Jim Brennan

Mr Gerard Byrne

Cllr Pete Byrne

Cllr Philip Campbell

Cllr William Clarke

Cllr Laura Devlin

Ms Louise Dillon

Cllr Cadogan Enright

Cllr Killian Feehan

Cllr Doire Finn

Ms Joanne Fleming

Cllr Conor Galbraith

Cllr Mark Gibbons

Cllr Oonagh Hanlon

Cllr Glyn Hanna

Cllr Valerie Harte

Cllr Martin Hearty

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

Maureen/Joanne Morgan/Johnston

Sinead Murphy

Cllr Kate Murphy

Cllr Selina Murphy

Cllr Declan Murphy

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

ACTION SHEET – COUNCIL MEETING – MONDAY 7 APRIL 2025

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
<i>C/128/2024</i>	<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.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Ongoing	<i>N</i>
<i>C/045/2025</i>	<i>Chairpersons Remarks</i>	A Special Council Meeting to be convened inviting departments to come to present their work to date and the plans they had for wildfire prevention when heading into the summer months.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Ongoing	
<i>C//047/2025</i>	<i>Action Sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 03.03.2025</i>	It was agreed to note the action sheet.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	
<i>C/048/2025</i>	<i>Minutes of Council Meeting held on 03.03.2025</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	
<i>C/049/2025</i>	<i>Minutes of Audit Committee held on 30.02.2025</i>	The were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	
<i>C/050/2025</i>	<i>Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 10.03.2025</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	
<i>C/051/2025</i>	<i>Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 13.03.2025</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
C/052/2025	<i>Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 18.03.2025</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	
C/053/2025	<i>Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 19.03.2025</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	
C/054/2025	<i>Minutes of Special Strategy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 24.03.2025</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	
C/055/2025	<i>Planning Section</i>	The Minute extract from the Planning Committee Meeting held on 8 January 2025 was noted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	
C/056/2025	<i>Correspondence Report</i>	It was agreed to note the Correspondence report.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	
	<i>Response from DAERA re Fishing Industry Visa and Enhancement Support</i>	It was agreed to write back to the DAERA Minister to request he meet with the Scottish Counterparts in relation to shared learnings for the Fishing Industry and Visa and Enhancement Support.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Correspondence issued	
C/057/2025	<i>Request from Councillors to</i>	It was agreed to retrospectively approve attendance at conferences as outlined within the report,	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
	<i>attend Conferences</i>	following Party Representatives recommendation of approval.			
<i>C/058/2025</i>	<i>Notice of Motion – Enhancement of Services at Downe Hospital</i>	It was agreed that noting the contents and lack of detail within the Department of Health's Hospitals - Creating A Network For Better Outcomes document, and expressing its concern that after many years of public campaigning, this Council disputes that no recognition is given to the current Level 2 status of the Downe Hospital, and disagrees with the categorisation of the Downe as similar to other hospitals with minimal service delivery, this Council calls on the Department of Health to consider enhancing the classification of the Downe within its future hospital reconfiguration policy, and for the South Eastern Trust to continually review the potential for the safe enhancement of services including a 24x7 A&E service at the Downe.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Correspondence issued	
<i>C/059/2025</i>	<i>Notice of Motion – Removal of Red Telephone Boxes</i>	It was agreed that Council notes with Concern the Removal of Red Telephone Boxes. This Council notes with concern the impact of BT's decision to remove a number of red telephone boxes across the district. These iconic telephone boxes hold historical and cultural significance within our communities, and their removal would represent a loss to the character of our towns and villages. The Council further notes the imminent removal of these telephone boxes and expresses support for their retention in prominent locations where feasible. In light of this, the Council seeks to explore options for the adoption of these telephone boxes for community use through BT's 'Adopt a Kiosk' scheme at a limited charge.	<i>Democratic Services A Patterson</i>		

<i>Minute Ref</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Decision</i>	<i>Lead Officer</i>	<i>Actions taken/ Progress to date</i>	<i>Remove from Action Sheet Y/N</i>
		The Council calls for an investigation into the potential repurposing of these telephone boxes to serve community needs, including their use as defibrillator stations, book exchanges, or local information hubs, and urges engagement with BT and relevant stakeholders to facilitate this process.			
C/060/2025	<i>Notice of Motion – Paramilitary Groups Transitions from Violence and Crime</i>	The Motion was lost.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	
C/061/2025	<i>Notice of Motion - Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty & Air Quality Management Areas</i>	<p>“Recognising Northern Ireland’s commitment to achieve net zero by 2050, and Newry Mourne and Down’s previous motion recognising a climate emergency, Council will endorse the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, an initiative to secure an international and legally binding treaty to phase out fossil fuels and will write to the Northern Ireland Executive urging them to support this initiative. In line with this commitment, it will also review the effectiveness of the council’s Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA), and whether the number of air quality monitor stations can be expanded throughout the district”.</p> <p>The Motion was referred to the Sustainability and Environment Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6</p>	<p><i>Democratic Services</i></p> <p><i>S Murphy</i></p>		

<i>Minute Ref</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Decision</i>	<i>Lead Officer</i>	<i>Actions taken/ Progress to date</i>	<i>Remove from Action Sheet Y/N</i>
C/062/2025	<i>Notice of Motion – Cost of Living Crisis</i>	<p>It was agreed that:</p> <p>Council recognises the cost-of-living crisis continues to have a deep impact on workers and families and our most vulnerable; Acknowledges that planned cuts announced by the British Government to the welfare benefits system are attack on the most vulnerable in our community and we must stand together against them; Notes the concern that since coming into office that this British Government has targeted the most vulnerable by cutting winter fuel payments and entitlement to Personal Independence Payment; In voicing our opposition to these cuts; This Council will publicly outline our opposition as a voice of our citizens; We will write to the British Government outlining our opposition and calling for them to reverse this decision; commits to writing to the First and Deputy First Minister asking them to lobby the UK Government to reverse changes that will negatively impact vulnerable people; further commits to writing to the Minister for Communities to prepare, with the support of Executive colleagues a business case for a mitigation package which provides protections for current and future claimants from reductions in social security entitlements outlined in the Pathways to Work Green Paper; following decision and we will actively engage with groups and organisations working in this field to give public expression of our opposition to these cuts. Also calls on the UK Government not just to reverse the cuts but to increase taxes for the super wealthy as an alternative means of generating revenue that doesn't take away support from those who need it.</p>	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Correspondence issued</i>	

<i>Minute Ref</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Decision</i>	<i>Lead Officer</i>	<i>Actions taken/ Progress to date</i>	<i>Remove from Action Sheet Y/N</i>
C/063/2025	<i>Notice of Motion – Outdoor Adventure Revamp of Delamont Country Park</i>	<p>"This Council recognises the magnificent 200-acre landscape of Delamont Country Park on the shores of Strangford Lough and its untapped tourism potential close to the greater Belfast area. Acknowledges that following the success of the miniature railway over 25 years ago, it is important that the Council invests in innovative new experiences, particularly for the secondary school age. Calls for market research to be conducted into the potential of Delamont being home to a major new outdoor adventure that utilises its scenic drumlins and shoreline and thus would make Delamont a landmark tourist attraction for the north of the district".</p> <p><i>The Motion was referred to the Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6</i></p>	<p><i>Democratic Services</i></p> <p><i>C Mallon</i></p>		
C/064/2025	<i>Notice of Motion – Newry Canal</i>	<p>It was agreed that this Council reaffirms its commitment to the regeneration of Newry Canal to realise its full potential as a key recreation, tourism, biodiversity, and economic development asset. Council will write to the following local authorities and statutory bodies, in pursuit of best practice learnings, and to request information sharing on waterways strategies and management plans;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fermanagh & Omagh District Council, Leitrim County Council and Cavan County Council • (Shannon-Erne Waterway) • Derry City & Strabane District Council (Foyle Maritime Festival) • Birmingham City Council (Birmingham Canal Navigations) 	<p><i>Democratic Services</i></p> <p><i>C Mallon</i></p>		

<i>Minute Ref</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Decision</i>	<i>Lead Officer</i>	<i>Actions taken/ Progress to date</i>	<i>Remove from Action Sheet Y/N</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waterways Ireland <p>Council will write to the following bodies to request a breakdown of their funding priorities and to identify synergies between funding opportunities and the regeneration of Newry Canal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Shared Island Unit The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) <p>Council will also write to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Inland Waterways Association of Ireland Chesterfield Canal Trust <p>Council will also commission an independent review of all economic assessments related to Newry Canal to ensure our decision-making is informed by best practice in heritage economics and aligned with international standards, with findings to be presented to Council no later than six months from this motion's passing.</p> <p>Also agree that a task group be set up within Council and in conjunction with ABC Council to future plan for the Canal with a vision to make it a tourist attraction for both areas to boost tourism and bring much needed investment along the length of this historic canal.</p>			
C/065/2025	<i>Notice of Motion - Endometriosis</i>	It was agreed that welcoming news that relugolix combination therapy has been approved by NICE for NHS England which will help approximately 1,000 women per year suffering from endometriosis; noting that this therapy will be of use to women who have explored multiple other interventions to treat endometriosis, this Council stands with the many	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Correspondence issued</i>	

<i>Minute Ref</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Decision</i>	<i>Lead Officer</i>	<i>Actions taken/ Progress to date</i>	<i>Remove from Action Sheet Y/N</i>
		women across our society suffering from endometriosis who have been ignored, or made to feel that their symptoms were exaggerated, affirms that menstrual taboos are unhelpful and detrimental to our society, will write to the Department of Health to seek an update on the efficacy of relugolix combination therapy, and seek views on the possibility of its introduction here, and commits to ending menstrual taboos in this District to allow women the space to be heard and believed when discussing menstrual health.			
C/066/2025	<i>Emergency Notice of Motion – Wildfires in the Mourne Mountains</i>	It was agreed that Council voices their grave concern over the most recent spree of gorse fires across the Mourne Mountains. Council acknowledges the devastating impact these fires have had on our rural countryside and will write to DAERA Minister calling on him to bring forward a comprehensive management plan. Council commends the work of local authorities in combating these devastating fires, with firefighters from across the North battling the flames to protect life and property. Recognises the ongoing preservation work from The Forever Mournes Partnership.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Correspondence issued	
END					

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

NMD/C/

**Minutes of Council Meeting held on Monday 7 April 2025 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 P Campbell	Councillor W Clarke
Councillor L Devlin	Councillor C Enright
Councillor K Feehan	Councillor D Finn
Councillor C Galbraith	Councillor O Hanlon
Councillor G Hanna	Councillor V Harte
Councillor M Hearty	Councillor T Howie
Councillor J Jackson	Councillor D Lee-Surginor
Councillor A Lewis	Councillor O Magennis
Councillor A Mathers	Councillor D McAteer
Councillor S O'Hare	Councillor D Murphy
Councillor H Reilly	Councillor M Ruane
Councillor G Sharvin	Councillor D Taylor
Councillor J Truesdale	Councillor H Young

In attendance via Teams:

Councillor J Brennan	Councillor R Howell
Councillor G Kearns	Councillor M Larkin
Councillor L McEvoy	Councillor K Murphy
Councillor S Murphy	Councillor A Quinn

Officials in attendance:

Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
 Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services
 Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism
 Mr A Patterson, Director of Active and Healthy Communities
 Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager
 Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer

**Officials in attendance
Via Teams:** Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability and Environment

C/045/2025

APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Gibbons, Rice and Tinnelly.

The Chairperson advised an emergency motion had been submitted and this would be dealt with during the Notices of Motion discussions.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Hearty to his first Council Meeting and wished him well.

The Chairperson referenced the devastation that the fires in the Mourne Mountains had caused and praised the volunteers in the frontline services who had worked tirelessly in response to these fires, in conjunction with all Members particularly Councillors Devlin, Clarke and Truesdale. He advised he had asked the Chief Executive and Democratic Services to call a Special Council Meeting inviting departments to come to present their work to date and the plans they had for wildfire prevention when heading into the summer months.

The Chairperson highlighted some of the very successful events he had attended over the last month including:

- The Council's Sports Awards – he thanked the Council staff for organising a fantastic event recognising those sporting heroes across the District.
- Chairperson's Reception held in Kilkeel for Kilkeel High School U14s, U16s and U18s who had won the Ulster Championships in their respective age groupings with thanks to Councillors Hanna and Reilly who were in attendance at the event.
- St Patrick's Day parades in Downpatrick and Newry were a huge success – thanks to the Council staff that took part and organised the event along with the Elected Members who sit on the Committee. He praised the inclusion of the Fireside Stories as part of the events which were a huge success.
- Recognition event for Council staff who were recognized for 40 year service for around 17 members of staff. He stated it was a great night to award these employees and thank them for their service.
- Conference for Ending Violence Against Women – it was an excellent conference which was incredibly moving. He highlighted the work of Women's Aid during the conference which he found very impactful.
- Conference organised by Boster Community – it was an incredible conference celebrating Everyday Heroes.
- There was an exhibition currently being hosted in Down Museum regarding the Oughley Shed. It was a fantastic exhibition and he encouraged people to attend.
- Congratulated Ashgrove Social Soccer Ladies who celebrated International Women's Day and hosted a kickabout in the Newry showgrounds with Dame Mary Peters in attendance.
- He congratulated Councillor Enright on receiving an award at the NILGA Awards recently held in the Game of Thrones Studio.
- Council's recent Investment Symposium held in Slieve Donard Hotel which showcased what was happening within the District.

The Chairperson advised he had Crossmaglen Youth Club and Knockevin School in attendance in the chamber over the last number of weeks. He stated the visits were very enjoyable, the discussions included those Members that ate the most biscuits across the chamber and the young people had asked him to clarify from Members why a 99p ice-cream was not 99p.

The Chairperson offered his congratulations to the following:

- Castlewellan's Donagh Keary on his professional boxing debut in Madison Square Gardens who had put the District on an international stage, highlighted by Councillor Devlin.
- New Point Players on reaching the All Ireland Drama Festival finals, highlighted by Councillor Finn.
- Down Hurling Team who won the Division Two Title, highlighted by Councillor Sharvin.
- Chris Hagan from Killyleagh who received the Community Champion Award in the Housing Executive Northern Ireland rural champion awards for his work within the local community for more than 40 years.

He expressed his condolences to the family, friends and all at Drumgath GAC following the tragic passing of Oran McConville. He also expressed his sadness at the recent passing of former Council officer Margaret Quinn. He offered his condolences to her husband Sean and son's Cormac and Gary and her extended family.

There were no declarations of interest.

Councillor Feehan enquired about the Newry City Canal Regeneration Taskforce and asked why it was not on the Council action sheet. The Chief Executive clarified it was included within the action sheet of the Sustainability and Environment Committee and confirmed a letter had been sent to the Minister with no response received to date.

In response for an update on the Festival of Flight from Councillor Bowsie, the Chief Executive advised that would be included within the action sheet from the Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee and Mr Mallon confirmed he would revert to Councillor Bowsie directly.

Agreed: The Action Sheet from Council Meeting held on 3 March 2025 was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Finn, seconded by Councillor Andrews.

Read: Minutes of Council Meeting held on 3 March 2025 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 3 March 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Hanlon.

C/049/2025 MINUTES OF AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 20
FEBRUARY 2025

Read: Minutes of Audit Committee Meeting held on 20 February 2025 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of Audit Committee Meeting held on 20 February 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted on the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Bowsie.

**C/050/2025 MINUTES OF ECONOMY, REGENERATION AND TOURISM
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 10 MARCH 2025**

Read: Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 10 March 2025 (copy circulated).

In response to a query from Councillor Enright it was agreed Mr Mallon would circulate the terms of reference of the Local Economic Partnership.

Agreed: **The Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 10 March 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted on the proposal of Councillor Lee-Surginor, seconded by Councillor Hanlon.**

**C/051/2025 MINUTES OF STRATEGY POLICY AND RESOURCES
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 13 MARCH 2025**

Read: Minutes of Strategy Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 13 March 2025 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 13 March 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Howie.**

**C/052/2025 MINUTES OF ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON 18 MARCH 2025**

Read: Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 18 March 2025 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 18 March 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor Mathers.**

**C/053/2025 MINUTES OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON 19 MARCH 2025**

Read: Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 19 March 2025 (copy circulated).

SE/037/2025: Response to Department of Health Consultation on Hospitals – Creating a network for better outcomes

Councillor Reilly requested that it be noted that the DUP were not in agreement with the contents of the reply to the consultation.

Agreed: **The Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 19 March 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Young.**

C/054/2025 **MINUTES OF SPECIAL STRATEGY POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24 MARCH 2024**

Read: Minutes of Special Strategy Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 24 March 2025 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of Special Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 24 March 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Hanlon.**

C/055/2025 **PLANNING SECTION**

Read: Minute extract from Planning Committee Meeting held on 8th January 2025 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minute extract from the Planning Committee Meeting held on 8 January 2025 was noted the on the proposal of Councillor Murphy, seconded by Councillor McAteer.**

C/056/2025 **CORRESPONDENCE REPORT**

Read: Report dated 7 April 2025 from Mrs Ward, Chief Executive, regarding an update on correspondence received for the attention of Council (copy circulated).

Response from Minister of Health Consultation on Hospitals – Creating a network for better outcomes

Councillor Feehan thanked the Minister of Health for a comprehensive response and for his reassurance that there would be no move to downgrade Daisy Hill Hospital or to remove its acute hospital status. He also welcomed the Minister's pragmatism and recognition of the fact that north-south Partnership made sense.

Councillor Feehan took the opportunity to highlight the reference to General Hospital designation for Daisy Hill Post consultation. In the consultation response it was made clear that Council's view was that Daisy Hill should be designated as an area hospital. Council would await the outcome of the consultation but he believed a designation of Daisy Hill as a General Hospital would constitute a downgrade.

Councillor Young welcomed the response and said it was encouraging to have the Minister categorically confirm that Daisy Hill would not be downgraded.

National Association of Councillors – Council's 2025 Local Enterprise Champions

In response to a query from Councillor Enright, Ms Taggart advised that should approval be granted under item 13: Request from Councillors to attend Conferences, representatives would be able to attend the Council's 2025 Local Enterprise Champions and should contact Democratic Services.

Response from DAERA re Fishing Industry Visa and Enhancement Support

Councillor Hanna voiced disappointment at the response received from the DAERA Minister which he felt could have been more robust.

Councillor Hanlon proposed Council write back to the DEARA Minister to request he meet with his Scottish Counterparts in relation to shared learnings for the Fishing Industry and Visa and Enhancement Support. Councillor Hanna seconded the proposal.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Hanna to write back to the DAERA Minister to request he meet with the Scottish Counterparts in relation to shared learnings for the Fishing Industry and Visa and Enhancement Support.

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

- National Association of Councillors – Council's 2025 Local Enterprise Champions
- Correspondence from Derry City & Strabane District Council: Notice of Motion
- Response from Minister for Health: Consultation on Hospitals, Creating a Network for Better Outcomes
- Response from Ards and North Down Borough Council: Gender Based Violence Against Women
- Northern Ireland Housing Council Minutes - 13 February 2025
- Response from HM Treasury: Notice of Motion C/181/2024 Inheritance Tax
- Correspondence from Fermanagh and Omagh District Council: Motion on Diversity and Inclusion
- Response from DAERA re: Fishing Industry Visa and Enhancement Support
- Response from Health Minister re: Learning Disability Service Model

C/057/2025

REQUEST FROM COUNCILLORS TO ATTEND CONFERENCES

Read: Report dated 7 April 2025 from Mrs Ward, Chief Executive, regarding a request from Councillors to attend conferences (copy circulated).

Ms Taggart advised that any Councillor wishing to attend any conference would be expected to complete a feedback form and return to Democratic Services. This would be circulated to all Councillors for information and to ascertain if a conference was worthwhile and any learning from it.

Councillors Hanna and Taylor welcomed this and Mrs Ward confirmed it would be an item for inclusion on future Council agendas.

In response to a query from Councillor Sharvin in terms of a timeframe for conferences and if Council or the Party leaders grouping considered attendance, Ms Taggart pointed out notification for conferences were generally received well in advance and details should be

forwarded to Democratic Services at the earliest opportunity for Council approval. Councillor Sharvin also spoke of the importance of sharing materials issued at conferences.

Ms Taggart took the opportunity to remind Members she had issued a training needs analysis for completion and asked that this be returned to assist with identifying types of training and conferences elected members should be attending.

Councillors Andrews advised he followed that process for the National Association of Councillors and had information from a presentation on Artificial Intelligence and would forward a copy to Democratic Services for circulation to Members.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Hanlon to retrospectively approve attendance at conferences as outlined within the report, following Party Representatives recommendation of approval.**

C/059/2025 **NOTICE OF MOTION – ENHANCEMENT OF SERVICES AT THE DOWNE**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Galbraith:

"Noting the contents and lack of detail within the Department of Health's Hospitals - Creating A Network For Better Outcomes document, and expressing its concern that after many years of public campaigning, this Council disputes that no recognition is given to the current Level 2 status of the Downe Hospital, and disagrees with the categorisation of the Downe as similar to other hospitals with minimal service delivery, this Council calls on the Department of Health to consider enhancing the classification of the Downe within its future hospital reconfiguration policy, and for the South Eastern Trust to continually review the potential for the safe enhancement of services at the Downe."

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Sharvin.

In presenting the Motion, Councillor Galbraith said the Health Service was in crisis and it had been known for many years there was a need to transform how services were delivered.

Councillor Galbraith spoke of a depleted workforce and lessons learnt from the COVID pandemic and how this underscored the need for people to be able to avail of treatment where and when they need it most and those involved in the campaign for the Downe Hospital over the years knew how hard a battle that had been and he paid tribute to the Down Community Health Committee.

Members were advised the Downe currently existed as a Level 2 hospital however in within their reconfiguration document, the Department had changed the status of the Downe by categorising it as a "local" hospital. There were currently only three Level 2 hospitals, the Downe, Dalriada and Lagan Valley all with specific needs. The change in status of the Downe by categorising it as a "local" hospital was akin to centres such as the Robinson Hospital, Ballymoney and Moyle Hospital in Larne which were both excellent facilities but very much community care centres and the Downe offered much more than this.

Councillor Galbraith advised a suggestion had been put forward to the Department to consider an additional enhanced category of service for the Downe Hospital and he hoped Members would endorse that call.

Councillor Hanlon queried what was meant by level 2 hospital as she wanted to be clear on what the Motion was asking for. Councillor Galbraith responded that level 2 was same level as a local hospital.

Councillor Enright proposed the following amendment for the Motion to read as follows:

"Noting the contents and lack of detail within the Department of Health's Hospitals - Creating A Network For Better Outcomes document and expressing its concern that after many years of public campaigning this Council calls for the issues around recruitment of staff be resolved in a timely manner to provide for the long-promised 24 hour A and E on the Downe site".

Councillor Lee-Surginor seconded Councillor Enright's amendment.

For Members information, Ms Taggart emailed an extract from a Special Council Meeting in November 2024 when the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust Chief Executive stated the following:

"Ms Coulter then confirmed that there were no plans to reopen the Downe Hospital Emergency Department, stating that the Bengoa report championed the model to have one major acute hospital at the Ulster Hospital, supported by local hospitals which were Lagan Valley and the Downe. She stated that a consultant led urgent care model was safer for patients, clinically appropriate and sustainable, further stressing the need to be honest and clear with the public about the Trust's plans for the Downe Hospital site".

Councillor Galbraith confirmed he did not accept Councillor Enright's proposed amendment as he believed the Motion was achievable, however he was willing to accept the inclusion of the last sentence to include a 24 hour A&E service at the Downe.

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Hearty to have an adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned – 7.05pm
The meeting did then resume - 7.15pm.

Councillor Sharvin took the opportunity to clarify Councillor Galbraith's motion and that within Department of Health's Hospitals - Creating A Network For Better Outcomes document the Downe had been associated with other centres like Bangor and Ards Community Hospitals and the Robinson Hospital. He explained the Motion was aiming to remove the opportunity for the Trust to strip even more services away from the Downe and being associated to lesser hospitals right across the north.

He added the suggestion for 24hour by 7 A&E to be included within the motion was to be welcomed rather than removing the substantive motion. He said there was a need to protect what services were there and by removing the wording as suggested by Councillor Enright would reduce that protection, and what was being asked for was the correct status of the Downe to be acknowledged and not being associated with other hospitals that were under that categorisation.

Councillor Sharvin said he wanted to see services enhanced in a safe manner and through the proper review process and to just go for recruitment of the A&E did not take into consideration all the other services that the Downe delivered.

In thanking Councillor Galbraith for tabling the Motion, Councillor Hanlon put on record thanks to the staff at the Downe Hospital who provided a fantastic service to the local

community and also to the Down Community Health Campaign. She added Sinn Féin were supportive of any proposal that would enhance services at the hospital but noted concerns that the document cited had little mention of the Downe Hospital given the services it provided.

Councillor Hanlon stated to remove the full body of the motion would not be sensible as it would make it just an A&E issue, while important, it was required that all stakeholders need to look at what the Community actually wanted. She wanted to be clear that Council were not just asking for A&E provision but for enhancement right across all services.

Councillor Enright responded by stating a large number of services had moved to the Downe Hospital over the last number of years including services of regional importance and the key obstacle to more services being transferred was the absence of the promised 24 hour A&E service.

Councillor Enright said the problem with not having the A&E service as promised and which was budgeted for, was that services like mental health could no longer be based in the Downe. There was a need to focus on what really mattered to the local people and being able to have a 24 hour accessible A&E which facilitated other services which were currently blocked from coming to the Downe on the grounds there was no A&E.

Councillor Sharvin questioned if Councillor Enright did not recognise that in the body of the Motion as presented by Councillor Galbraith that the categorisation of this particular level potentially removed some of those regional services from the Downe and if not given the right category those regional services may not continue to exist.

Councillor Hanlon implored Councillor Enright to include the body of the Motion as it was calling for enhanced services and said it was dangerous of him to say there was no mental health services in the Downe given that Council had only recently called for the restoration of services at Shimna House, Ward 15 which was a mental health unit for addictions.

The Chairperson put Councillor Enright's amended Motion, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor to a vote, the results of which were as follows:

FOR:	5
AGAINST:	32

The Chairperson declared the amended Motion was lost.

Councillor Jackson stated the DUP recognised the health service was undeniably the most precious of public services and there was a responsibility on everyone to work together to make health and social care in Northern Ireland a success and ensure services and structures effectively met the needs of the changing population. As a Party, they stood ready to work alongside the Health Minister, clinicians and staff, local communities and patients to improve and transform outcomes for all and no services should be removed without strong local consultation and input.

Councillor Hanlon reiterated Sinn Féin's position on the Motion and noted her disappointment with the Alliance Party at not taking the opportunity to back Council support for enhancing the hospital services.

Councillor Taylor spoke on support of the Motion and acknowledged the strong community support for the Downe hospital, a vital part of the health service within the District and as elected representatives should take the opportunity to make stronger representations to protect and enhance the delivery of services at sites like the Downe.

Councillor Sharvin proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor Hanlon for the Motion to read as follows:

*"Noting the contents and lack of detail within the Department of Health's Hospitals - Creating A Network For Better Outcomes document, and expressing its concern that after many years of public campaigning, this Council disputes that no recognition is given to the current Level 2 status of the Downe Hospital, and disagrees with the categorisation of the Downe as similar to other hospitals with minimal service delivery, this Council calls on the Department of Health to consider enhancing the classification of the Downe within its future hospital reconfiguration policy, and for the South Eastern Trust to continually review the potential for the safe enhancement of services **including a 24x7 A&E service at the Downe.**"*

Councillor Galbraith accepted Councillor Sharvin's amendment.

Councillor Sharvin's proposed amendment, seconded by Councillor Hanlon was unanimously agreed.

The Chairperson declared the amended Motion was carried.

Councillor Galbraith thanked Members for their support for the Motion.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Galbraith, seconded by Councillor Sharvin that noting the contents and lack of detail within the Department of Health's Hospitals - Creating A Network For Better Outcomes document, and expressing its concern that after many years of public campaigning, this Council disputes that no recognition is given to the current Level 2 status of the Downe Hospital, and disagrees with the categorisation of the Downe as similar to other hospitals with minimal service delivery, this Council calls on the Department of Health to consider enhancing the classification of the Downe within its future hospital reconfiguration policy, and for the South Eastern Trust to continually review the potential for the safe enhancement of services including a 24x7 A&E service at the Downe.**

CI/060/2025

NOTICE OF MOTION – REMOVAL OF RED TELEPHONE BOXES

The following Motion was received from Councillor Lewis:

*"Council Notes with Concern the Removal of Red Telephone Boxes
This Council notes with concern the impact of BT's decision to remove a number of red telephone boxes across the district. These iconic telephone boxes hold historical and cultural significance within our communities, and their removal would represent a loss to the character of our towns and villages. The Council further notes the imminent removal of these telephone boxes and expresses support for their retention in prominent locations where feasible. In light of this, the Council seeks to explore options for the adoption of these telephone boxes for community use through BT's 'Adopt a Kiosk' scheme at a limited charge. The Council calls for an investigation into the potential repurposing of these telephone boxes to serve community needs, including their use as defibrillator stations, book exchanges, or local information hubs, and urges engagement with BT and relevant stakeholders to facilitate this process".*

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Bowsie.

In presenting the Motion, Councillor Lewis spoke of how something small, yet instantly recognisable, the iconic red phone box added to the historic and picturesque nature of villages and towns and how the bright red booths were more than just a place to make a phone call. They were a piece of history, which local communities were proud of, often kept, maintained and looked after by the communities locally.

Councillor Lewis spoke at length of the history of red phone box with the first one known as the K2 being designed in 1924 by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott and how over the decades, newer models like the K6 became more common and placed all over the UK, especially during King George V's Silver Jubilee.

Councillor Lewis advised he was asking Council to produce a report as to how it could help local communities that wished to keep or repurpose phones within areas identified by BT.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Bowsie commended Councillor Lewis for his efforts in saving and encouraging the appreciation of the iconic red telephone boxes dotted throughout the UK and provided Members with a breakdown of where the red phone boxes were located within the District.

Councillor Campbell spoke in support of the Motion and how it was something that impacted the community he represented, especially in Strangford where there was a strong community bond with the kiosk.

Councillor Truesdale confirmed her party were than happy to support the Motion and queried if there was information on the specific red paint you have to use and the refurbishment of steel frames for the windows.

Councillor Taylor, in voicing support for the Motion, agreed the red telephone boxes were an important part of local heritage and any town or village and it was regrettable that BT were seeking to remove them from areas across the District.

Councillor Sharvin confirmed the SDLP fully supported the motion and how they provided access to communication for those that needed it.

Councillor Sharvin suggested Council write to BT to express to them that Council was carrying out this piece of work and ask that they halt any removal until Council had completed the exercise.

The Chairperson declared the Motion was unanimously passed.

Councillor Lewis thanked Members for their support for the Motion.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Lewis, seconded by Councillor Bowsie that Council notes with Concern the Removal of Red Telephone Boxes.**
This Council notes with concern the impact of BT's decision to remove a number of red telephone boxes across the district. These iconic telephone boxes hold historical and cultural significance within our communities, and their removal would represent a loss to the character of our towns and villages. The Council further notes the imminent removal of these telephone boxes and expresses support for their retention in prominent locations where feasible.

In light of this, the Council seeks to explore options for the adoption of these telephone boxes for community use through BT's 'Adopt a Kiosk' scheme at a limited charge.

The Council calls for an investigation into the potential repurposing of these telephone boxes to serve community needs, including their use as defibrillator stations, book exchanges, or local information hubs, and urges engagement with BT and relevant stakeholders to facilitate this process.

C/061/2025

NOTICE OF MOTION – PARAMILITARY GROUPS TRANSITIONS FROM VIOLENCE AND CRIME

The following Motion was received from Councillor Howie:

“That this Council categorically opposes proposals from the UK and Irish Governments to appoint an independent expert to scope out a new process of engagement for to bring about paramilitary group transitions to disbandment; agrees that, more than 25 years after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, there is no place for paramilitarism in our society, and that such groups should either immediately disband or face a robust law enforcement approach like other organised crime gangs; welcomes the work of the Executive Programme on Paramilitarism and Organised Crime; and agrees to write to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and the Taoiseach to call for them to abandon plans for this paramilitary transition scoping and engagement exercise and reinvest the associated funding in law enforcement approaches to paramilitary activity”.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Truesdale.

In presenting the Motion, Councillor Howie said having been born after the Good Friday Agreement she had grown up in a post-conflict society and that paramilitarism and violence had no place in society.

Councillor Howie stated the idea to now appoint an independent expert to scope out a new process of engagement with paramilitary groups, rather than reinforcing a clear and lawful path to disbandment sent the wrong message. It risked legitimising those who continued to exploit and threaten communities, especially young people.

Councillor Howie stated Council must send a clear message, one that supported peace, justice and accountability and write to the Secretary of State and the Taoiseach to oppose these proposals and call for funds to be redirected to robust, front-line action against paramilitary activity.

Councillor Hearty proposed the following amendment:

*“That this Council **notes the proposals from the British and Irish Governments** to appoint an independent expert to scope out a new process of engagement to bring about paramilitary group transition to disbandment; agrees that, more than 25 years after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, there is no place for paramilitarism in our society, and that such groups should either immediately disband or face a robust law enforcement approach like other organised crime gangs; **welcomes the work of the Executive Programme on Paramilitarism and Organised Crime; and calls on the British and Irish Governments to set out a short and strictly limited timeline for the scoping and engagement exercise”.***

Councillor Hearty said he had no doubt that most of the Members would agree with many of the points in the Motion but it did not make sense to limit approaches when it came to tackling paramilitarism. Almost 30 years past the Good Friday Agreement, and despite what may be claimed, no armed group that existed today had any political purpose or legitimacy and the armed groups that remained active were doing nothing more than using the conflict of the past as a cloak to cover up their true purpose, which was organised criminality.

Councillor Hearty said many would agree with the overall sentiment of the Motion however it should not be limited to a single approach and should not be dismissed but rather it should be tested and urged Members to support the Sinn Féin amendment.

The Chief Executive referred to Standing Orders and advised any amendment must not be a direct negative.

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Finn to have an adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned – 7.55pm
The meeting did then resume – 8.08pm

In response for clarity from the Chairperson, Councillor Hearty confirmed that in accordance with Standing Orders he would withdraw the amendment and unfortunately due to the wording of the Alliance Motion, Sinn Féin would not be able to support it but fully agreed with the sentiment of it.

Councillor Taylor stated on behalf of his party there was no place for paramilitary gangs and they should disband immediately. He said that whilst he agreed with the sentiment of the Motion it was premature, not in the sense not to get rid of paramilitaries but to find out exactly what was being planned and then take time to make a decision. He added there should be no concessions to incentivise any transition and nobody should be above the law and any past crimes could not form any part of any new process that aimed to bring about transition to disarmament and any the proposal by the UK and Irish Governments should ensure that agencies such as the Paramilitary Crime Task Force, PSNI, National Crime Agency and HMRC continued their work through any process taken forward.

Councillor Jackson stated the DUP recognised that political parties, Executive departments and the criminal justice system had a collective responsibility to challenge the existence of paramilitary organisations and it remained their position that where there was evidence that any individual was a member of a proscribed organisation or was otherwise involved in criminal activity should face the full rigour of the law.

He said the independent expert appointed should be given the time and space to conduct their work and part of that scoping exercise would gauge levels of support for such a process and capture not just the appetite for engagement by paramilitary organisations but those impacted or victimised by their unacceptable activities.

He wished to make it clear that the concept of transition could only occur where individuals or organisations were fully committed to leaving their past behind and there was a need for caution and safeguards to avoid any perception that transition rewards paramilitaries.

The Chairperson put Councillor Howie's Motion, seconded by Councillor Truesdale to a vote, the results of which were as follows:

FOR:	6
AGAINST:	23

ABSTENTIONS: 8

The Chairperson declared the Motion was lost.

C/062/2025 **NOTICE OF MOTION – FOSSIL FUEL NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY & AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREAS**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Truesdale:

“Recognising Northern Ireland’s commitment to achieve net zero by 2050, and Newry Mourne and Down’s previous motion recognising a climate emergency, Council will endorse the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, an initiative to secure an international and legally binding treaty to phase out fossil fuels and will write to the Northern Ireland Executive urging them to support this initiative. In line with this commitment, it will also review the effectiveness of the council’s Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA), and whether the number of air quality monitor stations can be expanded throughout the district”.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Enright.

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

C/063/2025 **NOTICE OF MOTION – COST OF LIVING CRISIS**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Hanlon:

“This Council recognises the cost-of-living crisis continues to have a deep impact on workers and families and our most vulnerable; Acknowledges that planned cuts announced by the British Government to the welfare benefits system are attack on the most vulnerable in our community and we must stand together against them; Notes the concern that since coming into office that this British Government has targeted the most vulnerable by cutting winter fuel payments and entitlement to Personal Independence Payment; In voicing our opposition to these cuts; This Council will publicly outline our opposition as a voice of our citizens; We will write to the British Government outlining our opposition and calling for them to reverse this decision; and we will actively engage with groups and organisations working in this field to give public expression of our opposition to these cuts”.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Magennis.

In presenting the Motion, Councillor Hanlon stated Council would publicly outline its opposition and write to the British Government calling for them to reverse the decision and actively engage with groups and organisations working in this field to give public expression of opposition to the cuts and yet another callous act.

Councillor Hanlon stated austerity was a political choice and if money could be found for weapons of war and mass destruction, then money could be found to support people into employment whilst protecting those were unable. She added this was another blow after previous cuts by Labour since taking up office including the winter fuel payments for pensioners, it was clear interest lay with the wealthy and elite and not those in society who were struggling through no fault of their own.

Councillor Hanlon reminded Members that this Labour government had led an all-out assault on the elderly, family farms, small businesses and now the disabled and once again this

highlighted the need to build a new and united Ireland where decisions were made in the best interests of workers, families, the vulnerable and communities.

Councillor Finn thanked Councillor Hanlon for bringing the motion given the impact that this decision would have for so many of the most vulnerable across the District. She said like many in the chamber she worked in a constituency office and spent time supporting constituents who come for assistance with PIP forms, often already distressed by the lengthy process and have been plunged into even more anxiety following the announcement a number of weeks ago.

Councillor Finn said SDLP supported the motion and whilst it was fair to say nobody expected the Executive to mitigate the estimated £150m to cover these costs, they could not wash their hands of the situation. Many of the proposed changes would not come into effect imminently, buying important time to work on and put mitigations in place.

Councillor Finn proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor Andrews for the Motion to read as follows:

*"This Council recognises the cost-of-living crisis continues to have a deep impact on workers and families and our most vulnerable; Acknowledges that planned cuts announced by the British Government to the welfare benefits system are attack on the most vulnerable in our community and we must stand together against them; Notes the concern that since coming into office that this British Government has targeted the most vulnerable by cutting winter fuel payments and entitlement to Personal Independence Payment; In voicing our opposition to these cuts; This Council will publicly outline our opposition as a voice of our citizens; We will write to the British Government outlining our opposition and calling for them to reverse this decision; **commits to writing to the First and Deputy First Minister asking them to lobby the UK Government to reverse changes that will negatively impact vulnerable people; further commits to writing to the Minister for Communities to prepare, with the support of Executive colleagues a business case for a mitigation package which provides protections for current and future claimants from reductions in social security entitlements outlined in the Pathways to Work Green Paper**".*

Councillor Hanlon accepted Councillor Finn's amendment stating categorically that this lay with the British Government and that the business case for a mitigation package went to the them.

Councillor Truesdale proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor Young for the Motion to read as follows:

*"This Council recognises the cost-of-living crisis continues to have a deep impact on workers and families and our most vulnerable; Acknowledges that planned cuts announced by the British Government to the welfare benefits system are attack on the most vulnerable in our community and we must stand together against them; Notes the concern that since coming into office that this British Government has targeted the most vulnerable by cutting winter fuel payments and entitlement to Personal Independence Payment; In voicing our opposition to these cuts; This Council will publicly outline our opposition as a voice of our citizens; We will write to the British Government outlining our opposition and calling for them to reverse this decision; commits to writing to the First and Deputy First Minister asking them to lobby the UK Government to reverse changes that will negatively impact vulnerable people; further commits to writing to the Minister for Communities to prepare, with the support of Executive colleagues a business case for a mitigation package which provides protections for current and future claimants from reductions in social security entitlements outlined in the Pathways to Work Green Paper; **following decision and we will actively engage with groups and organisations working in this field to give public expression of our opposition to these cuts. Also calls on the UK Government not just to reverse the cuts***

but to increase taxes for the super wealthy as an alternative means of generating revenue that doesn't take away support from those who need it".

Councillor Hanlon accepted Councillor Truesdale's amendment.

Councillor Reilly advised the DUP agreed largely with the sentiment of the motion and commended MP Lockhart for emphasising at Westminster the fact that under the new provisions, that for someone with a mental health condition that had qualified for PIPS it would be almost impossible to receive that now. He spoke of the unfairness of people who had lived and contributed to the system in the United Kingdom to have that spent on schemes for migrants.

In speaking in support of the Motion, Councillor Taylor referred to his work as a welfare support officer and dealing with some of the most vulnerable in society and how the impact of continued changes to the welfare system over recent years was causing fear and despair to those in need within communities. He added anyone in receipt of disability benefits deserved some stability and a level of support that allowed them to live their lives without the constant fear and challenge.

Councillor Andrews voiced support for the Motion and spoke of those impacted by welfare reform having witnessed the fear and trepidation regarding PIP. He also spoke of how PIP forms were constructed and how the Scottish model was a better system to operate with PIP and welfare claimants who needed help the most.

Councillor Bowsie commended Councillor Hanlon for bringing the Motion and the Communities Minister Gordon Lyons, MLA who had recently announced £17million to ensure every pensioner in Northern Ireland received some energy support this winter.

The Chairperson declared the Motion was unanimously passed.

Councillor Hanlon thanked Members for support for the Motion expressing concern that people felt that there was no point in applying as they felt they now would not receive PIP and that was a very worrying trend with vulnerable people being left even more destitute. She also welcomed and acknowledged the Communities Minister for the winter fuel payment that had been mitigated against.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Magennis that:**
Council recognises the cost-of-living crisis continues to have a deep impact on workers and families and our most vulnerable;
Acknowledges that planned cuts announced by the British Government to the welfare benefits system are attack on the most vulnerable in our community and we must stand together against them;
Notes the concern that since coming into office that this British Government has targeted the most vulnerable by cutting winter fuel payments and entitlement to Personal Independence Payment;
In voicing our opposition to these cuts;
This Council will publicly outline our opposition as a voice of our citizens;
We will write to the British Government outlining our opposition and calling for them to reverse this decision;
commits to writing to the First and Deputy First Minister asking them to lobby the UK Government to reverse changes that will negatively impact vulnerable people;
further commits to writing to the Minister for Communities to prepare, with the support of Executive colleagues a business case for a mitigation package which

provides protections for current and future claimants from reductions in social security entitlements outlined in the Pathways to Work Green Paper; following decision and we will actively engage with groups and organisations working in this field to give public expression of our opposition to these cuts. Also calls on the UK Government not just to reverse the cuts but to increase taxes for the super wealthy as an alternative means of generating revenue that doesn't take away support from those who need it".

C/064/2025

NOTICE OF MOTION – OUTDOOR ADVENTURE REVAMP OF DELAMONT COUNTRY PARK

The following Motion was received from Councillor Bowsie:

"This Council recognises the magnificent 200-acre landscape of Delamont Country Park on the shores of Strangford Lough and its untapped tourism potential close to the greater Belfast area. Acknowledges that following the success of the miniature railway over 25 years ago, it is important that the Council invests in innovative new experiences, particularly for the secondary school age. Calls for market research to be conducted into the potential of Delamont being home to a major new outdoor adventure that utilises its scenic drumlins and shoreline and thus would make Delamont a landmark tourist attraction for the north of the district".

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Jackson.

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

Councillor Ruane left the meeting at this point – 8.39pm.

C/065/2025

NOTICE OF MOTION – NEWRY CANAL

The following Motion was received from Councillor Feehan:

"This Council reaffirms its commitment to the regeneration of Newry Canal to realise its full potential as a key recreation, tourism, biodiversity, and economic development asset. Council will write to the following local authorities and statutory bodies, in pursuit of best practice learnings, and to request information sharing on waterways strategies and management plans;

- *Fermanagh & Omagh District Council, Leitrim County Council and Cavan County Council (Shannon-Erne Waterway)*
- *Derry City & Strabane District Council (Foyle Maritime Festival)*
- *Birmingham City Council (Birmingham Canal Navigations)*
- *Waterways Ireland*

Council will write to the following bodies to request a breakdown of their funding priorities and to identify synergies between funding opportunities and the regeneration of Newry Canal:

- *The Shared Island Unit*
- *The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)*
- *The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)."*

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Finn.

In presenting the Motion, Councillor Feehan asked Council to imagine a future where Newry Canal, the oldest summit-level canal in Ireland or Britain as not just a relic of the past, but a driver of economic renewal, tourism, and community wellbeing and a place where heritage propelled opportunity, and where the canal once again became the lifeblood of Newry.

Councillor Feehan said Newry Canal had that same transformative potential with targeted and strategic investment and unlock new avenues for tourism and recreation. This was not about just enhancing aesthetics it was about creating jobs, boosting footfall for local businesses, increasing property values and building a stronger, more resilient economy. It would also improve and enhance to quality of life for people living in Newry and a revitalised canal would mean more space for recreation and exercising, socialising.

Councillor Feehan stated Newry Canal once fuelled trade and prosperity and with vision and commitment, it could do so again and urged Council to reimagine Newry Canal, not as a forgotten waterway, but at the heart of a renewed and prosperous community.

In welcoming the Motion Councillor Finn proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor Devlin to add to the motion as follows:

Council will also write to:

- *The Inland Waterways Association of Ireland*
- *Chesterfield Canal Trust*

Council will also commission an independent review of all economic assessments related to Newry Canal to ensure our decision-making is informed by best practice in heritage economics and aligned with international standards, with findings to be presented to Council no later than six months from this motion's passing.

Councillor Finn said she appreciated that there had been a previous economic assessment completed but in order to ensure a vibrant and thriving canal, particularly in light of the tremendous progress made with Newry City Park and the UNESCO geopark status for the area that it was important other avenues were explored.

Councillor Feehan accepted Councillor Finn's amendment.

In welcoming the Motion, Councillor Mathers proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor Harte to add to the motion as follows:

Also agree that a task group be set up within Council and in conjunction with ABC Council to future plan for the Canal with a vision to make it a tourist attraction for both areas to boost tourism and bring much needed investment along the length of this historic canal."

The Chief Executive advised there was an action within the S&E Committee to write to the Minister in relation to the establishment of a task force in conjunction with ABC, however, the amendment from Councillor Mathers was to establish an internal task force.

Councillor Young voiced support for the Motion and said it had much potential for tourism, economy and the environment, alongside the new city park would be a gamechanger for the District. As a member of Newry Maritime Association she had already been engaging with Birmingham City Council to arrange a virtual meeting with them to discuss how they rejuvenated and redeveloped their canal and Councillor Feehan would be involved with that meeting and ensure that there was collaboration and welcomed support from all.

Councillors Reilly and Taylor voiced support for the Motion behalf of their respective parties.

The Chairperson declared the Motion was unanimously passed.

Councillor Feehan thanked Members for their support for the Motion.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Feehan, seconded by Councillor Finn that this Council reaffirms its commitment to the regeneration of Newry Canal to realise its full potential as a key recreation, tourism, biodiversity, and economic development asset.

Council will write to the following local authorities and statutory bodies, in pursuit of best practice learnings, and to request information sharing on waterways strategies and management plans;

- Fermanagh & Omagh District Council, Leitrim County Council and Cavan County Council
- (Shannon-Erne Waterway)
- Derry City & Strabane District Council (Foyle Maritime Festival)
- Birmingham City Council (Birmingham Canal Navigations)
- Waterways Ireland

Council will write to the following bodies to request a breakdown of their funding priorities and to identify synergies between funding opportunities and the regeneration of Newry Canal:

- The Shared Island Unit
- The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)
- The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

Council will also write to:

- The Inland Waterways Association of Ireland
- Chesterfield Canal Trust

Council will also commission an independent review of all economic assessments related to Newry Canal to ensure our decision-making is informed by best practice in heritage economics and aligned with international standards, with findings to be presented to Council no later than six months from this motion's passing.

Also agree that a task group be set up within Council and in conjunction with ABC Council to future plan for the Canal with a vision to make it a tourist attraction for both areas to boost tourism and bring much needed investment along the length of this historic canal.

C/066/2025

NOTICE OF MOTION – ENDOMETRIOSIS

The following Motion was received from Councillor Devlin:

"Welcoming news that relugolix combination therapy has been approved by NICE for NHS England which will help approximately 1,000 women per year suffering from endometriosis; noting that this therapy will be of use to women who have explored multiple other interventions to treat endometriosis, this Council stands with the many women across our

society suffering from endometriosis who have been ignored, or made to feel that their symptoms were exaggerated, affirms that menstrual taboos are unhelpful and detrimental to our society, will write to the Department of Health to seek an update on the efficacy of relugolix combination therapy, and seek views on the possibility of its introduction here, and commits to ending menstrual taboos in this District to allow women the space to be heard and believed when discussing menstrual health."

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Finn.

In presenting the Motion, Councillor Devlin advised she spoke not only as an elected member but also as someone who understood the personal struggles that many women faced with endometriosis and other chronic gynae conditions. Members were informed March had been Endometriosis awareness month and April Adenomyosis awareness month and these were conditions she had not heard of until her own diagnosis with both.

Members were informed Endometriosis occurred when tissue similar to the uterine lining grew outside the uterus with symptoms that could include painful periods, chronic back and abdomen pain, fatigue and even Infertility and Adenomyosis occurred when uterine lining tissue grew into the uterine wall, a condition often causing unbearable pain.

Councillor Devlin made reference to the two tiered system with those stuck on a never-ending NHS waiting list and those who were able to go private which was completely wrong. Endometriosis was a very common condition but one that often went undiagnosed and there should be a breaking the taboo when it comes to menstrual health.

Councillor Devlin spoke about the need for and absence of a Women's Health Care Strategy in Northern Ireland which was fully funded with specific targets. She added it was crucial to advocate for better treatment options and support systems for women and by supporting the motion affirm commitment to improving menstrual health, breaking down barriers and ensuring every woman feels validated and supported in her health journey.

In welcoming the Motion, Councillor O'Hare spoke of the lack of awareness, delayed diagnosis and lack of access to appropriate treatment which meant women suffer needlessly with an extremely painful and debilitating disease that can result in limited mobility, regular episodes of violent vomiting and extreme, life-altering pain.

Councillor O'Hare stated access to treatments that could alleviate symptoms was so important and as a Council it must support that the NICE recommendations were implemented in the North.

Councillor Lee- Surginor spoke in support of the Motion having known someone who faced chronic pain with the condition and to hear of a therapy definitely represented a significant advancement for those who had explored multiple other interventions without much success and looked forward on receiving a response from the Department of Health regarding the efficacy of the therapy and exploring the possibility of introduction here in Northern Ireland.

In voicing support for the Motion on behalf of their respective party's Councillors Taylor and Hanna commended Councillor Devlin for highlighting the debilitating condition for women.

The Chairperson declared the Motion was unanimously passed.

Councillor Devlin thanked Members for their support for the Motion.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor Finn that welcoming news that relugolix combination therapy has been approved by NICE for NHS England which will help approximately 1,000 women per year suffering from endometriosis; noting that this therapy will be of use to women who have explored multiple other interventions to treat endometriosis, this Council stands with the many women across our society suffering from endometriosis who have been ignored, or made to feel that their symptoms were exaggerated, affirms that menstrual taboos are unhelpful and detrimental to our society, will write to the Department of Health to seek an update on the efficacy of relugolix combination therapy, and seek views on the possibility of its introduction here, and commits to ending menstrual taboos in this District to allow women the space to be heard and believed when discussing menstrual health.

C/067/2025 EMERGENCY NOTICE OF MOTION – WILDFIRES IN THE MOURNE MOUNTAINS

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

It was agreed to suspend Standing orders 16.1.1 at this point in the meeting to allow for the tabling of the emergency motion.

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

FOR:	35
AGAINST:	0
ABSTENTIONS:	0

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

The following Emergency Motion was received from Councillor Clarke:

“This Council voices their grave concern over the most recent spree of gorse fires across the Mourne Mountains.

This Council acknowledges the devastating impact these fires have had on our rural countryside and will write to DAERA Minister calling on him to bring forward a comprehensive management plan.

This Council commends the work of local authorities in combating these devastating fires, with firefighters from across the North battling the flames to protect life and property. Recognises the ongoing preservation work from The Forever Mournes Partnership.”

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Devlin.

In presenting the Motion, Councillor Clarke said the deliberate wildfires in the Mourne Mountains were nothing short of a heinous act against nature and the community which not only devastated the beautiful landscapes and habitats to countless species but also posed severe risk to human life and property. He said the intentional destruction of such a precious natural resource was utterly reprehensible and could not be tolerated and it was imperative

that those responsible were held accountable and that efforts were strengthened to prevent such senseless acts of environmental vandalism in the future.

Councillor Clarke referred to April 2021 when fire ripped through the Mourne and there was promised prompt action and a comprehensive fire prevention and management plan to ensure such devastation could never happen again but the same nightmare was being faced. The Mourne were on fire once more with terrified people having to be evacuated from their homes in the middle of the night.

Councillor Clarke stated four years on, a robust fire prevention management strategy that was pledged still lacked. He expressed his thanks and gratitude to the Fire and Rescue personnel who had battled 146 fires in recent days in difficult terrain and conditions to get blazes under control with the emergency far from over with the Mourne still burning.

Councillor Clarke added that with the Easter holidays approaching, everyone needed to be vigilant and Council and other statutory and environmental organisations needed to work in partnership to ensure the Mourne were respected by visitors and locals alike.

Councillor Clarke advised he was calling on the Minister to urgently review the current 'burn period' and to deliver on the promise of a Fire Prevention and Management Plan for the Mourne. This was not just about protecting the natural heritage but about safeguarding communities, biodiversity and the future of the environment. The ongoing fires posed severe risks to health, the environment and the species that inhabit the lands. The Mourne were home to a variety of species, many of which had been severely impacted by the fires and the destruction of habitats and the impact on the tourism product was of significant concern.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Devlin acknowledged how difficult the weekend had been and paid tribute to the Fire and Rescue Service and volunteers on the ground who took risks to protect the community. She also referred to the fires in April 2021 when the Mourne burned for days and it was happening again with lives and homes at risk, widespread environmental damage and loss of wildlife. She welcomed that the Chairperson had called for a Special Council Meeting as it was so important to hear from the different departments in terms of what had been done since 2021 as a lot was promised at the time and strongly urged action from central government.

Councillors Taylor, Hanna, Truesdale, McAteer and Reilly spoke at length in support of Motion on behalf of their party's and paid tribute to the Fire and Rescue personnel and volunteers who had worked tirelessly to contain the fires.

The Chairperson declared the Motion was unanimously passed.

Councillor Clarke thanked Members for their support for the Motion and as previously eluded to by Councillor Hanna to this was a risk to like and someone would die if things did not change.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Devlin that Council voices their grave concern over the most recent spree of gorse fires across the Mourne Mountains. Council acknowledges the devastating impact these fires have had on our rural countryside and will write to DAERA Minister calling on him to bring forward a comprehensive management plan. Council commends the work of local authorities in combating these devastating fires, with firefighters from across the North battling the flames to protect life and

property. Recognises the ongoing preservation work from The Forever Mournes Partnership.”

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 9.24pm.

For confirmation at the Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday 6 May 2025.

Signed:

Chairperson

Chief Executive

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL
RECORDED VOTE

DATE: 7 April 2025 **VENUE:** Downshire Civic Centre & Teams **MEETING:** Council Meeting

SUBJECT OF VOTE: Qualified Majority Vote to Suspend Standing Orders to hear Emergency Motion – Wildfires in the Mourne Mountains

COUNCILLOR	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
T Andrews	1			
C Bowsie	2			
J Brennan	3			
P Byrne	4			
P Campbell	5			
W Clarke	6			
L Devlin	7			
C Enright				1
K Feehan	8			
D Finn	9			
C Galbraith	10			
M Gibbons				2
O Hanlon	11			
G Hanna	12			
V Harte	13			
M Hearty	14			
R Howell	15			
T Howie	16			
J Jackson	17			
G Kearns	18			
C King				3
M Larkin	19			
D Lee-Surginor	20			
A Lewis	21			
O Magennis	22			
A Mathers	23			
D McAteer	24			
L McEvoy	25			
S O'Hare	26			
D Murphy	27			
K Murphy	28			
S Murphy	29			
A Quinn	30			
H Reilly	31			
M Rice				4
M Ruane				5
G Sharvin	32			
D Taylor	33			
J Tinnelly				6
J Truesdale	34			
H Young	35			
TOTALS	35	0	0	6

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

NMC/SC

Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 31 March 2025 at 6.00pm in Downshire Chamber

In the Chair: Councillor D Lee-Surginor

In attendance in Chamber:

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor C Bowsie
Councillor P Campbell	Councillor C Enright
Councillor O Hanlon	Councillor V Harte
Councillor J Jackson	Councillor A Lewis
Councillor A Mathers	Councillor D McAteer
Councillor G Sharvin	

In attendance via Teams:

Councillor P Byrne	Councillor W Clarke
Councillor L Devlin	Councillor K Feehan
Councillor C Galbraith	Councillor R Howell
Councillor M Larkin	Councillor O Magennis
Councillor L McEvoy	Councillor D Murphy
Councillor K Murphy	Councillor S O'Hare
Councillor H Reilly	Councillor M Ruane
Councillor H Young	

Officials In attendance in Chamber:

Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
 Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism
 Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Regeneration
 Mrs L Jackson, Development Plan Manager
 Mr M McQuiston, Senior Planning Officer: Development Plan
 Ms L O'Connor, Senior Planning Officer: Development Plan
 Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager
 Mrs F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer

Also in attendance: Mr C Fegan, Belfast Legal Services

SC/001/2025 APOLOGIES & CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Brennan, Finn, S Murphy and Taylor. Apologies were also received from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, Mr A Patterson, Director of Active & Healthy Communities, and from Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability & Environment.

As the Chairperson was in attendance remotely, it was agreed that the Deputy Chairperson would host the meeting.

SC/002/2025 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

ITEMS RESTRICTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 6 OF THE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (NI) 2014

- AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Enright, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on item 3, 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 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:

**SC/003/2025 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN – DRAFT PLAN STRATEGY
CONTENT, PUBLICATION AND CONSULTATION
ARRANGEMENTS**

- Read:** Report dated 31 March 2025 from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director, Regeneration regarding Local Development Plan, Draft Plan Strategy Content, Publications and Consultation Arrangements. **(Copy circulated)**
- AGREED:** It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Jackson, to approve the following:
- The content of the draft plan strategy, including its objectives, strategic and operational policies
 - Publication, launch and consultation arrangements
- It was also agreed to note the proposed launch date of the publication of the draft Plan Strategy on Friday 27 June 2025 (venue to be confirmed).

Councillor Lewis, Sharvin, Reilly, Young, Devlin and McEvoy left the meeting during the above discussion at 7.15pm, 7.30pm, 7.35pm, 7.37pm, 7.44pm and 7.49pm respectively.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 7.59pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday 6 May 2025.

Signed:

Chairperson

Chief Executive

NEWRY MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

35

Minutes of the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday 14 April 2025 at 6.00pm in the Boardroom, Monaghan Row

Chairperson: Councillor W Clarke

**Committee Members
in attendance:**

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor K Feehan
Councillor O Hanlon	Councillor G Hanna
Councillor V Harte	Councillor D Lee-Surginor
Councillor S Murphy	Councillor M Ruane

Committee Members

in attendance via Teams: Councillor C Galbraith Councillor A Quinn
Councillor J Truesdale

Non-Committee Members

in attendance via Teams: Councillor C Bowsie

Officials in attendance:

Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism
Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Regeneration
Ms A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth and Tourism
Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager

Officials in attendance

via Teams: Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer

ERT/027/2025:

APOLOGIES / CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

An apology was received from Councillor Kearns and Lewis.

As the Chairperson was an apology for the meeting, it was agreed that the Deputy Chairperson would Chair the meeting.

Councillor Clarke advised that due to technical difficulties the video feed from the Chamber was unavailable, however the audio was working therefore the meeting could be facilitated.

Councillor Bowsie requested clarity on why Item 7 – Financial Assistance Call 1 was to be held in closed session as he believed that the information should be available to the public.

Mr Mallon advised that the restriction applied as the item related to the business or financial affairs of an individual, or the Council holding that information.

Councillor Bowsie reiterated his disagreement with this position and advised he still believed that it should be held in open session, Mr Mallon stated that he was satisfied that the item met the test to be in closed session due to the financial information contained within the item.

Councillor Clarke offered his congratulations to Rory McIlroy following his win at the Masters, stating that it highlighted the golfing product for the island in general, and would hopefully

provide a tourism boost for the District.

ERT/028/2025: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

ERT/029/2025: ACTION SHEET ECONOMY, REGENERATION & TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING MONDAY 10 MARCH 2025

Read: Action Sheet arising out of the Minutes of the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday 10 March 2025 **(Copy circulated)**

ERT/022/2025 – Ballykinler Hut Removal Update:

Councillor Andrews requested an update on any actions taken to date, to which Mr Mallon advised that the agreement was subject to approval at full Council meeting of 7 April 2025 and following the 5-day call in period, all appropriate actions would be taken.

ERT/125/2024 – Procurement for Tourism & Culture Events:

Councillor Hanna requested an update on the provision of sand at Warrenpoint foreshore, to which Mrs Smyth advised that work was underway and sand would be placed by mid-May.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Andrews, it was agreed to note the Action Sheet arising from the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday 10 March 2025.**

FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION

ERT/030/2025: COASTAL MONITORING AND ADAPTATION PLAN (CMAP) ADVANCED MOORING SYSTEM

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism regarding Coastal Monitoring and Adaptation Plan (CMAP) Advanced Mooring System. **(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Smyth provided an overview of the report, advising that a funding application was led by Ulster University, in partnership with Council, to SEUPB Peace Plus fund. She confirmed that a Letter of Offer had been issued to Ulster University as the project lead. Council, as a partner, would lead elements of the project as outlined within the Officer's Report.

In response to Councillor Hanna's request for further detail regarding the advanced mooring techniques in comparison to traditional techniques, Mrs Smyth advised that it involved replacing mooring systems that used chainage techniques that damaged sea grass but would provide further information to the Member.

As Councillor Truesdale advised that she had a query relating to the exempt appendix relating to the item, the Chairperson asked for a proposer and seconder to go into closed session.

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

- AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor S Murphy, 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 S Murphy, seconded by Councillor Ruane, it was agreed to come out of Closed Session.
- AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor, the following was agreed:
- To note Coastal Monitoring and Adaptation Plan Project (CMAP) grant award – 1 April 2025 for 48 months
 - To approve the completion of required documentation, including partnership agreement with Ulster University and associated legal agreements to allow commencement of CMAP.
 - To commence the recruitment process for 1 FTE according to the terms and conditions of the Letter of Offer.
 - To approve the Business Case for the implementation of the Advanced Mooring Systems project which is the identified lead partner for the Coastal Monitoring and Adaptation Plan Project.

ERT/031/2025: GO SUCCEED UPDATE

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism regarding Go Succeed Update. **(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Smyth outlined the report, advising that the Go Succeed programme was the mechanism through which Council delivered support for business startups and support for businesses that were in the early stages of growth. She advised that the report outlined the number of businesses that had received support from April 2024 to March 2025, alongside those that had benefitted from grant funding over the same time period.

Mrs Smyth confirmed that Belfast City Council were leading on the Go Succeed programme for all eleven Councils, confirming that a Memorandum of Understanding had been issued by the funder to Belfast City Council to advise of an extension of the programme for a further year.

In proposing the report, Councillor Andrews welcomed any programme that helped support local businesses within the District.

Councillor Hanna queried whether there were any statistics highlighting whether those businesses in receipt of grant funding were still trading.

Mrs Smyth advised that the businesses would still currently be trading as this was a recent programme delivery with many businesses still in the implementation stage, however she confirmed that Council would be monitoring the businesses as part of the ongoing support to assess the impact of any support grant.

- AGREED:**
- On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Hanna, the following was agreed:**
- To note the update provided on the implementation of Go Succeed 2024/25
 - To approve Council entering into a MoU / Collaboration agreement with Belfast City Council (subject to Legal approval) to guarantee implementation of Go Succeed in 2025/26.

ERT/032/2025: LDP REVISED STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI)

Read: Report from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Regeneration, regarding LDP Revised Statement of Community involvement (SCI). **(Copy circulated)**

Mr McGilly advised that the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was a required step within the Local Development Plan (LDP) process, which had recently been tabled at Council on 31 March 2025, with an agreement to launch the consultation of the draft LDP at the end of June 2025. He advised that the minor changes were detailed at section 2.3 of the Officer's Report.

- AGREED:**
- On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Ruane, the following was agreed:**
- The amendments to the Statement of Community involvement (SCI) as contained within the Officer's Report and the associated appendix.
 - To submit the revised SCI to the Department for Infrastructure for their agreement.

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

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

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

ERT/033/2025: FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE CALL 1

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding Financial Assistance Call 1. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Hanna, it was agreed to allocate the letters of offer to projects as per Council Policy to the groups recommended for the award of funding within the budget allocation for each theme.

It was also agreed on the proposal of Councillor Feehan, seconded by Councillor Andrews, that the level of funding available within the Irish Language revenue stream be considered for increase through communication with the Irish Language Working Group and DfI.

FOR NOTING

ERT/034/2025: BUILDING CONTROL 6 MONTHLY UPDATE

Read: Report from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director: Regeneration, regarding Building Control 6 Monthly Update. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Ruane, it was agreed to note the contents of the Officer's Report.

ERT/035/2025: LICENSING 6 MONTHLY UPDATE

Read: Report from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director: Regeneration, regarding Licensing 6 Monthly Update. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Ruane, it was agreed to note the contents of the Officer's Report.

ERT/036/2025: LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP 2024/25 UPDATE

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director: Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding Labour Market Partnership 2024/25 Update. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Ruane, it was agreed to note the outputs to date against targets per initiative delivered by NMD Labour Market Partnership against 24/25 Action Plan regarding Employability and Skills Programme.

ERT/037/2025: PEACEPLUS

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director: Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding Peace Plus. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Ruane, it was agreed to note the minutes of the PEACEPLUS Partnership on 23 January 2025 and 27 March 2025 as attached and outlined at section 2.2 of the Officer’s Report.

ERT/038/2025: RURAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director: Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding Rural Business Development Scheme. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Ruane, it was agreed to note the update provided on the 2024 Rural Business Development Grant Scheme.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 6.37pm

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday 6 May 2025.

Signed: Councillor W Clarke
Deputy Chairperson
Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee

Signed: Conor Mallon
Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

41

**Minutes of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on
Thursday 17 April 2025 at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Downshire Civic Centre**

In the Chair: Councillor T Howie

**In Attendance in
Chamber:**

Councillor C Bowsie
Councillor O Hanlon
Councillor H Reilly

Councillor P Byrne
Councillor A Mathers
Councillor G Sharvin

**Committee Members in
Attendance via Teams:**

Councillor M Hearty
Councillor M Rice

Councillor A Quinn
Councillor D Taylor

Non-Committee Members

In Attendance: Councillor T Andrews

Non-Committee Members in

Attendance via Teams: Councillor W Clarke

**Officials in Attendance
in Chamber:**

Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services
Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism
Mr A Patterson, Director of Active & Healthy Communities
Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability & Environment
Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of People & Legal
Mr P Rooney, Head of Legal Administration
Ms M Hughes, HR & OD Manager
Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager
Mrs F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer

**Also in Attendance
in Chamber:**

Mrs A Reavey, Capaxo Management Consulting

SPR/052/2025:

APOLOGIES & CHAIRPERSONS REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Enright, McAteer and O'Hare.

Councillor Howie offered her condolences to Councillor Enright on the recent passing of his brother.

SPR/053/2025:

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

SPR/054/2025:

**ACTION SHEET OF STRATEGY, POLICY & RESOURCES
MEETING HELD ON 13 AND 24 MARCH 2025**

Read: Action Sheet of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee meeting held 13 and 24 March 2025. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Bowsie, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to approve the action sheet of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee meeting of 13 and 24 March 2025.**

FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION

SPR/055/2025: OFFICER REPORT ON NOTICE OF MOTION – NEWCASTLE LIFEBOAT STATION

Read: Report from Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of Legal & People, presented by Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Officer Report on Notice of Motion – Newcastle Lifeboat Station.

Mrs Kelly stated that the Notice of Motion, as raised by Councillor Clarke, had been discussed at a recent meeting of the Equality & Good Relations Reference Group. She advised that the group was unanimous in their support for Council to consider an appropriate planting scheme within Newcastle and that the Museum Section suitably recognise the 200-year anniversary of the lifeboat station.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to note the Notice of Motion had been discussed at the Councillor's Equality and Good Relations Reference Group on 26 March 2025 and that members of the Reference Group agreed to recommend an appropriate planting scheme within Newcastle and that the Museum's Section suitably recognise the anniversary.**

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

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

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

SPR/056/2025: NCCR FULL BUSINESS CASE (FBC)

Read: Report from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, regarding NCCR Full Business Case (FBC). **(Copy circulated)**

As there was dissent within the Chamber, Councillor Reilly requested a recorded vote on the item, results of which are appended to these minutes. The results of the vote were as follows:

FOR	7
AGAINST	4
ABSTENTIONS	0

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Byrne, the following was agreed:

- To note the minutes of the NCCR Programme Board meeting of 28 March 2025.
- To approve the FBC as set out in Appendix 1 for formal submission to Department for Communities, with any significant amendments brought back to Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee.
- That Members approve Council's updated allocation in the Capital Plan as set out in section 4 of the Officer's report.
- That Members acknowledge the level of risk that remains within the project and the allowance included in the FBC.

Councillor Bowsie left the meeting – 7.20pm
 Councillors Sharvin and Taylor left the meeting – 7.21pm
 Councillors Hearty and Rice left the meeting – 7.22pm

SPR/057/2025: LICENCE AT DOWN LEISURE CENTRE

Read: Report from Mr P Rooney, Head of Legal Administration, regarding Licence of Land at Down Leisure Centre. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to renew the licence with the group noted in this report of the lands shaded pink on the map attached hereto being a strip at Downpatrick Leisure Centre for a further licence period of 3 years at a peppercorn rent fee subject to Departmental consent.

SPR/058/2025: RENEWAL OF LICENCE AT CASTLE PARK, NEWCASTLE

Read: Report from Mr P Rooney, Head of Legal Administration, regarding Renewal of Licence at Castle Park, Newcastle. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to grant a Licence to National Westminster Bank permitting them to operate a mobile banking unit at Castle Park each Thursday from 10am until 12pm for a further 2-year period subject to a yearly Licence fee as detailed within the Officer's Report.**

SPR/059/2025: REQUEST TO PURCHASE LAND AT NEWTOWNCLOGHOGE

Read: Report from Mr P Rooney, Head of Legal Administration, regarding a Request to Purchase Land at Newtowncloghoge. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to sell the lands hatched green on the map attached to the Officer's Report to the party identified for the market value.**

SPR/060/2025: SURRENDER OF LEASE FOR SUBSTATION AT ALBERT BASIN

Read: Report from Mr P Rooney, Head of Legal Administration, regarding a Surrender of Lease for Substation at Albert Basin. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Reilly, it was agreed to the surrender of the Lease of substation as outlined within the Officer's Report, subject to any consents which may be required from the Lands Tribunal.**

Councillor Quinn left the meeting – 7.41pm

SPR/061/2025: SURRENDER OF LEASE AT BOG ROAD, FORKHILL

Read: Report from Mr P Rooney, Head of Legal Administration, regarding a Surrender of Lease at Bog Road, Forkhill. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to the surrender**

of the Lease for lands at Bog Road, Forkhill subject to the terms as outlined within the Officer's Report. It was also agreed that officers provide further requested information to Members prior to ratification at the full Council meeting.

SPR/062/2025:

LEASE AT CARRIGENAGH ROAD, KILKEEL

Read:

Report from Mr P Rooney, Head of Legal Administration, regarding a Lease at Carrigenagh Road, Kilkeel. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to enter into a Lease with the group noted within the Officer's Report in respect of the lands at Carrigenagh Road, Kilkeel as coloured blue on the map attached hereto for a term of 25 years at a peppercorn rent, subject to Departmental consent.

SPR/063/2025:

FUNDED PROGRAMMES – PROJECT SUPPORT WORKER

Read:

Report from Mr A Patterson, Director of Active & Healthy Communities, regarding Funded Programmes – Project Support Worker. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to appoint a Project Support Officer within the AHC Directorate.

SPR/064/2025:

PAY PROTECTION ARRANGEMENTS

Read:

Report from Mr A Patterson, Director of Active & Healthy Communities, presented by Ms M Hughes, HR & OD Manager, regarding Pay Protection Arrangements. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to proceed with the implementation of the Pay Protection Arrangements for staff as set out within the Officer's Report.

SPR/065/2025:

NLHF CASTLEWELLAN FOREST PARK

Read:

Report from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, regarding NLHF Castlewellaan Forest Park. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to apply to National Lottery Heritage Fund in May 2025 for an increase in grant support for the project and to approve the match funding as set out in section 4 of the Officer's Report, if successful.

SPR/066/2025: **DIRECT AWARD CONTRACT**

Read: Report from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Direct Award Contract. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Mathers, it was agreed to approve the continuation of use of the Direct Award Contract for the organisation named within the Officer's Report for the year ending 31 March 2026.

Councillor Reilly left the meeting – 7.46pm

FOR NOTING

SPR/067/2025: **COMMUNICATION FROM DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES**

Read: Communication dated 27 March 2025 from the Department for Communities. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed note the communication.

SPR/068/2025: **ANNUAL REPORT FOR PERIOD 1 APRIL 2024 – 31 MARCH 2025 ON REQUESTS RELATED TO NAMING COUNCIL FACILITIES, PLANTING TREES AND TO LOCATE ARTWORKS / SCULPTURES ON COUNCIL PROPERTY**

Read: Report from Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of Legal and People, regarding Annual Report for 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025 on Requests Related to Naming Council Facilities, Planting Trees and to Locate Artworks / Sculptures on Council Property. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed note the report for the period 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025 related to naming Council facilities, plant trees and locate artworks / sculptures on Council property.

SPR/069/2025:

**STATUTORY REPORTING – SECTION 75 POLICY
SCREENING REPORT – QUARTERLY REPORT FOR
PERIOD JANUARY – MARCH 2025**

Read:

Report from Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of Legal and People, regarding Statutory Reporting – Section 75 Policy Screening Report – Quarterly Report for Period January – March 2025. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed note the Section 75 Policy Screening Report – Quarterly Report for period January – March 2025.

There being no further business, the Meeting concluded at 7.47pm

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday 6 May 2025.

Signed:

**Councillor Tierna Howie
Chairperson**

Signed:

**Josephine Kelly
Director of Corporate Services**

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL
RECORDED VOTE

48

DATE: 17/04/25

VENUE: Downshire Civic Centre

MEETING: SPR Committee

SUBJECT OF VOTE: NCCR Full Business Case (FBC) to accept the officer's recommendations

COUNCILLOR	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
C Bowsie		1		
P Byrne	1			
C Enright				1
O Hanlon	2			
M Hearty	3			
T Howie		2		
C King				
A Mathers	4			
D McAteer				2
S O'Hare				3
A Quinn	5			
H Reilly		3		
M Rice	6			
G Sharvin	7			
D Taylor		4		
TOTALS	7	4	0	3

Report to:	Council
Date of Meeting:	6 May 2025
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
3.1		That Council considers and notes the following correspondence: Correspondence from Mid Ulster District Council Council received correspondence from Mid Ulster District Council in relation to a Notice of Motion regarding safeguarding measures at school bus stops.
3.2		Correspondence from the Scottish Government Council received a response from the Scottish Government in relation to a Notice of Motion on Fishing Industry Visa and Enhancement Support.
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		<i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i> It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.2		<i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	<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



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

51

1 April 2025

Our ref: C058/25

By Email: marie.ward@nmandd.org

Marie Ward
Chief Executive
Newry Mourne & Down District Council

Dear Ms Ward

Council at its March meeting carried the following motion:

This Council:

- Notes that under current Northern Ireland road traffic law, there is no legal requirement for other vehicles to stop when a school bus is picking up or dropping off pupils.
- Recognises that child safety is of paramount importance and that measures akin to the U.S. “stop-arm” system—requiring traffic to halt while schoolchildren board or alight—could significantly reduce the risk of accidents and injuries.
- Highlights the growing public concern and the desire of parents, educators, and local communities for stronger safeguarding measures at school bus stops, especially in rural areas where road layouts can pose additional risks.
- Believes that introducing legislation mandating vehicles to stop when a school bus is actively loading or unloading students would enhance road safety and offer additional protection to schoolchildren across Northern Ireland.

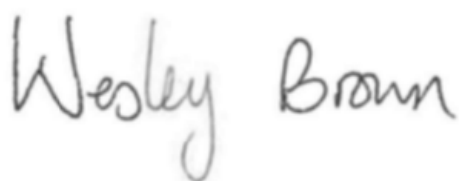
This Council Resolves To:

- (i) Call upon the Northern Ireland Assembly to develop and pass legislation requiring vehicles to stop for school buses that are picking up or dropping off pupils, in line with best practices observed in other jurisdictions.
- (ii) Write to all other local councils in Northern Ireland, urging them to support and pass similar motions, thereby demonstrating widespread local government backing for this measure.

- (iii) Write to the Minister for Infrastructure and the Minister of Education, highlighting the need for such legislation and requesting that they prioritise this issue within the Executive; and
- (iv) Undertake any additional measures within Mid-Ulster District's remit—such as awareness campaigns or pilot schemes—aimed at strengthening school transport safety until statutory changes are in effect.

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

Yours sincerely



Councillor Wesley Brown
Deputy Chair



Sarah-Louise Taggart
Sarah-Louise.Taggart@nmandd.org

Our Reference: 202500458775

Your Reference: Correspondence re Fishing Industry Visa and Enhancement Support

16 April 2025

Dear Marie

I am responding on behalf of the Cabinet Secretary to your letter of 10 March 2025 which expressed concern about access difficulties to skilled worked visas for Northern Ireland's fishing industry.

Scottish Government has also consistently called on the UK Government for changes to Skilled Worker Visa provision to be made to ensure that route is genuinely proportionate and accessible to all parts of the fishing fleet. While we would not otherwise wish to prolong the use of transit visas given their wider detrimental effects, the 2023 visa changes produced a significant change in workforce availability for the Scottish fishing industry, and within the wider seafood supply chain.

Scottish Government will continue to look to collaborate with the UK Government, and alongside DAERA, to address labour shortages given the significant impact this continues to have on our fishing industry.

Yours sincerely

Kyle Malcolm
DMARINE : Directors Office

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1
3DG
www.gov.scot

