



August 1st, 2025

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the Council meeting to be held on **Monday, 4th August 2025** at **6:00 pm** in **Mourne Room, 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 July 2025

For Information

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

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4.0 Call-in from Planning Committee held on 19th June 2025

Call in on Planning Application LA07/2023/2274/F - Lands at Abbey Way Multi-Storey Car Park Mill Street & Lower Water Street, Newry - Proposed Civic Hub Building accommodating Council room, meetings rooms, Council offices and associated ancillary accommodation. Associated public realm works to part of existing surface car park.

4.1 Call-in from Planning Committee held on 19th June 2025

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings. and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

Council Minutes For Adoption and Signing

5.0 Minutes of Council Meeting held on 7 July 2025

For Approval

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

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6.0 Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 26 June 2025

For Approval

 [Special Council Minutes - 2025-06-26.pdf](#)

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7.0 Planning Section

There were no issues arising.

Correspondence

8.0 Correspondence Report

8.1 Letter from from Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council re: Motion, second homes and short-term holiday rentals

☐ *Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council re second homes and short term holiday rentals.pdf*

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8.2 Letter from Derry City & Strabane District Council re: Motion, Call for central government policy and guidance on applications for data centres

☐ *Derry City and Strabane District Council re Data Centres.pdf*

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8.3 Correspondence from Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs re Notice Of Motion – Fishing Industry Visa and Enhancement Support

☐ *Response from DEFRA.pdf*

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Conferences/Events

9.0 Conference

☐ *Conference attendance.pdf*

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Notices of Motion

10.0 Notice of Motion - Voting age to be reduced to 16

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Andrews:

"Newry, Mourne and Down District Council welcomes the announcement that the voting age is to be reduced from 18 to 16 ahead of the next Council and Assembly elections in 2027.

Young people deserve a say in who represents them and the future of this island.

This Council calls on the UK government to work with Stormont to ensure the legalisation is implemented successfully".

11.0 Notice of Motion - President of Ireland

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Sharvin:

"This Council fully acknowledges the outstanding 14 years President Michael D Higgins has served to his country and the people of this island. Championing equality, inclusion, human rights, and civic ethics —

often speaking out on social justice and global solidarity. He notably undertook the first-ever state visit by an Irish President to the UK in April 2014, marking a significant step in post Troubles reconciliation and international diplomacy.

This Council will write to President Higgins to thank him for his commitment, passion, and duty of service to the people across this island".

12.0 Notice of Motion - Funding cuts by the Arts Council to the National Youth Choir

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Finn:

"Newry Mourne and Down District Council expresses disappointment and sadness at the funding cuts by the Arts Council to the National Youth Choir of Northern Ireland, acknowledges the significant cultural impact the organisation has on music in Northern Ireland, and calls on the Minister for Communities and Arts Council to intervene to prevent the closure".

13.0 Notice of Motion - CAR-T Cell Therapy

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Feehan:

"That this Council:

Recognises the urgent need for patients in Northern Ireland requiring CAR-T cell therapy to have timely and compassionate access to treatment closer to home.

Notes with deep sadness the death of Catherine Sherry, who passed away on 12th May 2025, aged just 42, in King's College Hospital, London, while receiving CAR-T treatment.

Commends the courage and commitment of Fergal Sherry and his sons, who are now advocating for CAR-T treatment to be made available to Northern patients at St James's Hospital in Dublin.

Acknowledges that the Department of Health in the Republic has an existing Memorandum of Understanding on All-Island Cancer Services, signed following the Good Friday Agreement in 1999 and renewed in 2021, which provides a framework for cross-border cooperation in oncology.

Further recognises that CAR-T treatment will not be available in Northern Ireland until 2030/31 at the earliest, and that access to St James's Hospital — where CAR-T services are already in place — would allow patients to receive treatment within driving distance of home, with the vital support of their families.

We therefore call on:

1. The NI Department of Health to immediately begin negotiations with their counterparts in the Republic to secure access to CAR-T therapy at St James's Hospital for eligible Northern Ireland patients;
2. The Irish Government to support and facilitate this cooperation as a matter of urgency;
3. This Council to write formally to Ministers Mike Nesbitt and Jennifer Carroll MacNeill requesting their

intervention;

4. Other councils across Northern Ireland to support this motion and stand in solidarity with Fergal Sherry, his family, and all others who may face similar hardship".

14.0 Notice of Motion - Autism Friendly Towns

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Truesdale:

"Acknowledging the Councils good work in the promotion of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Masterclasses for Employers. That this Council reinstates the action to continue the Promotion of Newcastle as an Autism Friendly town in the next Disability Action Plan as this was not included to sit within the finalised Disability Action Plan 2023-2027 and that the learning from this initiative now extends to all towns across the district in the next Action Plan. In the interim period Council sets up the disability forum and returns with regular progress updates on the inclusion of neurodiversity within the Disability Action Plan. This would include using best practice from Autism charities and Neurodiversity partnerships and the setting up of learning and awareness events".

Invitees

Cllr Terry Andrews

Mr Alan Beggs

Cllr Callum Bowsie

Fionnuala Branagh

Cllr Jim Brennan

Cllr Pete Byrne

Cllr Philip Campbell

Cllr William Clarke

Cllr Laura Devlin

Ms Louise Dillon

Cllr Cadogan Enright

Cllr Killian Feehan

Cllr Doire Finn

Ms Lynne Fitzsimons

Ms Joanne Fleming

Cllr Conor Galbraith

Cllr Mark Gibbons

Cllr Oonagh Hanlon

Cllr Glyn Hanna

Mrs Catherine Hanvey

Cllr Valerie Harte

Mr Conor Haughey

Cllr Martin Hearty

Cllr Roisin Howell

Cllr Tierna Howie

Ms Catherine Hughes

Cllr Jonathan Jackson

Joanne/Noelle Johnston

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

Sinead Murphy

Cllr Declan Murphy
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Cllr Kate Murphy
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Cllr Selina Murphy
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Cllr Siobhan O'Hare
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Mr Andy Patterson
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Cllr Áine Quinn
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Cllr Henry Reilly
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Cllr Michael Rice
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Ruth Rooney
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Cllr Michael Ruane
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Cllr Gareth Sharvin
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Conor Smyth
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Donna Starkey
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Sarah Taggart
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Cllr David Taylor
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Cllr Jarlath Tinnelly
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Cllr Jill Truesdale
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Mrs Marie Ward
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Cllr Helena Young
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ACTION SHEET – COUNCIL MEETING – MONDAY 7 JULY 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/100/2025</i>	<i>Action Sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 02.06.2025</i>	It was agreed to note the action sheet.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	
<i>C/101/2025</i>	<i>Minutes of Annual Meeting held on 02.06.2025</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	
<i>C/102/2025</i>	<i>Minutes of Council Meeting held on 02.06.2025</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	
<i>C/103/2025</i>	<i>Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 09.06.2025</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	
<i>C/104/2025</i>	<i>Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 12.06.2025</i>	<p>The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.</p> <p>It was agreed that officers put together a paper scoping out the scale of works and costs required to undertake similar restoration works from Lock 2 through to Lock 8.</p>	<p><i>Democratic Services</i></p> <p><i>C Mallon</i></p>	Noted	
<i>C/105/2025</i>	<i>Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities</i>	<p>The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.</p> <p>It was agreed that a report be brought back to AHC</p>	<p><i>Democratic Services</i></p> <p><i>A Patterson</i></p>	Noted	

<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>
	<i>Committee Meeting held on 16.06.2025</i>	Committee outlining the process for Council of Sanctuary and what it meant including the Charter for the Council of Sanctuary to alleviate any concerns that people had.			
<i>C/106/2025</i>	<i>Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 18.06.2025</i>	The Minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	
<i>C/108/2025</i>	<i>Correspondence Report</i>	<p>It was agreed to note the Correspondence report.</p> <p>It was agreed that Council write formally once again to the Chief Executive of the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust and go further by requesting clear consideration to enhance services at Downe Hospital, not just maintain the status quo.</p> <p>It was agreed that officers examine a more economical and better value for money to attend the commemoration of the 110th Anniversary of the 10th Division's actions on the Gallipoli Peninsula.</p> <p>It was agreed a report would be brought back to the August Strategy Policy and Resources Committee including costs for consideration.</p>	<p><i>Democratic Services</i></p> <p><i>Democratic Services</i></p> <p><i>J Kelly</i></p> <p><i>Democratic Services</i></p> <p><i>J Kelly</i></p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Correspondence issued</p>	
<i>C/109/2025</i>	<i>Notice of Motion – Nutrient Action Plan</i>	It was agreed that this Council finds the current proposals out for consultation by the DAERA minister for the Nutrient Action Plan unacceptable. The current proposals would decimate the local farming	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Correspondence issued	

<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>
		industry. Calls on the minister to collaborate with farmers rather than punish farmers. Calls on the DAERA to continue to invest in new technologies to improve farming practices, remove phosphates and work together collegiately to improve our Environment, Rivers and Loughs.			
C/110/2025	Emergency Notice Of Motion – Urgent Action Needed To Address Regen Waste Storage Operation At Warrenpoint Port	It was agreed that this Council condemns in the strongest possible terms the ongoing and escalating negative impact that the storage and handling of household waste by ReGen at Warrenpoint Port is having on the people of Warrenpoint and the surrounding area; Highlights with deep concern the serious and persistent deterioration in environmental and public health conditions, including overwhelming odours, an increased presence of flies and vermin; Notes that these conditions are not only a major nuisance but represent a growing public health risk to residents, particularly those living in close proximity to the port, including families with young children and vulnerable individuals; Further condemns the reappearance of these unacceptable environmental nuisances during the recent Wake the Giant Festival, an event central to the district's cultural and tourism offering, and warns of the likely disruption to other summer festivals and community activities should this issue remain unresolved; Asserts that the ongoing presence of RDF waste in a densely populated, residential and recreational area is wholly inappropriate and has resulted in residents	Democratic Services	Correspondence issued	

<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>
		being forced to endure foul smells, an inability to open windows, enjoy outdoor spaces, or run local businesses without disruption; Warns that Warrenpoint’s economic prosperity, social wellbeing, and long-term reputation are under serious threat if immediate action is not taken to end this situation, which has persisted for over two years; Agrees to write urgently to the Chair of the Warrenpoint Harbour Authority Board, the Minister for Infrastructure, Liz Kimmins MLA; the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Andrew Muir MLA, and the Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) to make clear this council’s position: that the handling and storage of RDF waste in Warrenpoint in such close proximity to homes, community and public spaces is unacceptable and unsuitable; And calls on them to initiate formal discussions with ReGen. It was also agreed to invite the Warrenpoint Harbour Authority to Council to provide an update on the ongoing situation.			

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

NMD/C/

Minutes of Council Meeting held on Monday 7 July 2025 at 6.00pm in Council Chamber, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick

In the Chair: Councillor P Campbell

In attendance in Chamber:	Councillor C Bowsie Councillor P Byrne Councillor C Galbraith Councillor V Harte Councillor J Jackson Councillor C King Councillor Lee-Surginor Councillor A Mathers Councillor K Murphy Councillor M Rice Councillor G Sharvin Councillor H Young	Councillor J Brennan Councillor K Feehan Councillor O Hanlon Councillor M Hearty Councillor G Kearns Councillor M Larkin Councillor A Lewis Councillor D McAteer Councillor H Reilly Councillor M Ruane Councillor J Truesdale
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In attendance via Teams:	Councillor W Clarke Councillor S O'Hare Councillor A Quinn	Councillor O Magennis Councillor S Murphy Councillor D Taylor
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Officials in attendance:

- Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
- Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services
- Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability and Environment
- Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager
- Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer

C/098/2025

APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Andrews, Devlin, Enright, Finn, Gibbons, Hanna, Howell, Howie, McEvoy, D Murphy and Tinnelly. Apologies were also received from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, and Mr Patterson, Director of Active & Healthy Communities.

The Chairperson spoke of how since stepping into his role he had been privileged to represent the District visiting a variety of events and community programmes that showcased the best of the people and Council.

He spoke of the vibrant Wake the Giant Tourism Festival in Warrenpoint which once again showcased the creativity and spirit of local communities while underlining the growing importance of tourism to the District's economy.

The Chairperson also had the opportunity to host a wide range of visiting groups, including local primary schools, young ambassadors and community organisations that offered the chance to engage directly with those who were shaping the future of the District whether through education, civic engagement or grassroots action.

The Chairperson advised that throughout his term as Chair young people and communities would be at the core of the work he delivered and he was honoured to have attended a number of local events over the past few weeks including visiting Newry Street Unite in Kilkeel, a remarkable cross-community organisation led by passionate volunteers who provided essential services and support to local people.

The Chairperson said a significant milestone that month was the announcement of the Newry, Mourne and Down Draft Local Development Plan Strategy to shape the District's future with this long-term vision setting out a framework for sustainable growth, improved infrastructure and strengthened communities across the District. He said he was proud to have played a part in its launch and to support the planning that would shape the region for future generations.

The Chairperson wished to note another positive interagency meeting held in Newry in relation to the flooding in 2023, however it had been agreed there had been a lack of Council representation he hoped that going forward there would representation to address this issue.

C/099/2025 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

C/100/2025 ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 2 JUNE 2025

Read: Action sheet from Council Meeting held on 2 June 2025.

Agreed: The Action Sheet from Council Meeting held on 2 June 2025 was agreed on the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Harte.

*Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 15.05.2025:
SPR/073/2025: Approach to City, Town and Village Signage*

Councillor Bowsie advised he would withdraw his comment in relation to criticism for not putting the consultation into the report.

He spoke of the Call-in that had been lodged with only the six Unionist Councillors having signed it and not the seven Members required, thereby making it invalid. He said there were outstanding procedural issues on the call-in sheet and asked the Chief Executive to explain those procedures as it should not be the case that legitimate concerns by Unionists about procedural irregularities should only be examined if there was enough political weight to do so by a solicitor.

The Chief Executive advised the Call-in process was set within legislation determined by the Local Government Act and she was happy to revert to the Members on the issue outside of the meeting.

C/101/2025 COUNCIL MINUTES FOR ADOPTION AND SIGNING OF ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON 2 JUNE 2025

Read: Minutes of Council Meeting held on 2 June 2025 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 2 June 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Mathers.**

C/102/2025 COUNCIL MINUTES FOR ADOPTION AND SIGNING OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 2 JUNE 2025

Read: Minutes of Council Meeting held on 2 June 2025 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 2 June 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Larkin.**

COMMITTEE MINUTES FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION

C/103/2025 MINUTES OF ECONOMY, REGENERATION AND TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9 JUNE 2025

Read: Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 9 June 2025 (copy circulated).

ERT/057/2025: ERT Business Plans

Councillor Byrne referred to the Tourism Strategy and the update provided at the meeting that work was ongoing and new branding would be delivered towards the end of the year and into next year. He enquired as to the timeframe for works in relation to the branding including the website, use of hashtags for events etc. and requested an update on work to date and a timetable be presented to the next ERT Committee.

The Chief Executive advised she would refer the matter to the Director.

Agreed: **The Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 9 June 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted on the proposal of Councillor Lee-Surginor, seconded by Councillor Ruane.**

C/104/2025

**MINUTES OF STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 JUNE 2025**

Read: Minutes of Strategy Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 12 June 2025 (copy circulated).

SPR/099/2025: Kilkeel Lower Square and River Walk EI Scheme

Councillor Reilly spoke of NI Water plans to remove a concrete manhole structure from the river and how that would inhibit work being carried out to improve the aesthetics of that area. He said he would like an urgent meeting with NI Water in relation to that, if even through the Mournes DEA forum.

The Chief Executive confirmed she would pick the matter up with the officer overseeing that project.

SPR/097/2025: Newry Canal Restoration Works – Lock 6

Councillor Feehan thanked officers for their work on Newry Canal restorations works on lock 6 stating it was a vital piece of the puzzle for the restoration of Newry Canal.

Councillor Feehan proposed officers put together a paper scoping out the scale of works and costs required to undertake similar restoration works from Lock 2 through to Lock 8.

Councillor Byrne seconded Councillor Feehan's proposal.

Agreed: The Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 12 June 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Reilly.

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Feehan, seconded by Councillor Byrne that officers put together a paper scoping out the scale of works and costs required to undertake similar restoration works from Lock 2 through to Lock 8.

C/105/2025

**MINUTES OF ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16 JUNE 2025**

Read: Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 16 June 2025 (copy circulated).

Councillor Jackson stated that following the concerns raised at Committee by the DUP Group, his Party continued to have the same concerns and were still worried that the Charter might encourage illegal immigrants to come to the country. He added that it could create a barrier to the lawful & justified removal of those who did come illegally and who posed a threat to law and order within the community.

Councillor Jackson said there were people who had serious concerns about the impact of illegal and uncontrolled immigration and the impact that it was having within their

communities. He also said anyone that ignored or denied that there was no issue with immigration was not living in reality and therefore the Party would not be supporting the Council of Sanctuary.

Councillor Jackson proposed Council did not support the Council of Sanctuary. This was seconded by Councillor Lewis.

Councillor Byrne pointed out the Report presented to AHC Committee was generic and broad.

He spoke of the importance of being an open, inclusive and welcoming City and Council. He stated that while he understood the questions that Councillors were being asked by the community, at this stage it was to initiate the process for Council to begin working towards formal recognition as a Council of Sanctuary only.

Councillor Byrne proposed a report be brought back to AHC Committee outlining the process for Council of Sanctuary and what it meant including the Charter for the Council of Sanctuary to alleviate any concerns that people had.

Councillor Sharvin seconded Councillor Byrne's proposal.

Councillor Harte spoke in support of Councillor Byrne's proposal.

Councillor Reilly spoke in support of Councillor Jackson's proposal and the perception it would create leading to an influx of refugees and migrants. He added there was a lot of concern within the community and also made reference to section 75 of the 1998 Northern Ireland Act.

Councillor Taylor advised he had also received numerous calls and emails since Council had taken forward a position and whilst not a Member of the AHC committee he would like more information about what it actually entailed before supporting the proposal.

Councillor Truesdale spoke in support of Councillor Byrne's proposal stating that the terms refugee backgrounds and illegal immigrants were being referenced in the wrong context therefore she felt that education was required.

In referring to Councillor Reilly's comments, the Chief Executive advised that the City of Sanctuary had been taken on board by a number of other Councils in Northern Ireland including Belfast City Council, Mid Ulster Council as well as Queens University and a number of schools. She added that the purpose of City of Sanctuary was to encourage inclusivity, solidarity and compassion for people from a forced displacement background such as people who had lived experience of the asylum system.

The Chief Executive further clarified that what it meant was that as a Local Authority Council would be committed to being welcoming to everyone in the community, the process involved making that formal promise and she stated that further information would be brought back to the AHC Committee. The Chairperson put Councillor Jackson's proposal, seconded by Councillor Lewis to a recorded vote, the results of which were as follows (copy attached):

FOR:	5
AGAINST:	23
ABSTENTIONS:	0

The Chairperson declared Councillor Jackson's proposal was lost.

Councillor Harte was not in the chamber for the above recorded vote.

The Chairperson put Councillor Byrne's proposal, seconded by Councillor Sharvin to a recorded vote, the results of which were as follows (copy attached):

FOR:	25
AGAINST:	4
ABSTENTIONS:	0

The Chairperson declared Councillor Byrne's proposal carried.

Agreed: **The Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 16 June 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Lee-Surginor, seconded by Councillor Galbraith.**

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Sharvin that a report be brought back to AHC Committee outlining the process for Council of Sanctuary and what it meant including the Charter for the Council of Sanctuary to alleviate any concerns that people had.

C/106/2025 **MINUTES OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 JUNE 2025**

Read: Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 18 June 2025 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 18 June 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Larkin, seconded by Councillor Young.**

C/107/2025 **PLANNING SECTION**

There were no issues arising.

C/108/2025

CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

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

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

- **A response from South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust regarding C/058/2025 Notice of Motion on Enhancement of Services at the Downe.**
- **Correspondence from Fermanagh & Omagh District Council in relation to a Motion relating to Parliaments.**
- **A response from Department for Communities and Department for Work and Pensions regarding C/062/2025 Notice of Motion on Cost of Living Crisis**
- **A response from the Department for the Economy regarding C/095/2025 Notice of Motion on 'Good Jobs' Employment Rights Legislation.**
- **Response from Department of Health regarding C/065/2025, C/093/2025 Notice of Motion on Endometriosis.**
- **Response from DAERA re C0662025 and C0932025 Wildfires in The Mournes.**
- **Invitation received from Dalaradia Cultural & Historical Society to attend Tour to Gallipoli and participate in an Act of Remembrance.**

Response from South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust regarding C/058/2025 Notice of Motion on Enhancement of Services at the Downe

Councillor Hanlon asked that Sinn Féin's disappointment at the response received from the Chief Executive of the South Eastern Health and Social Trust be noted. She referred to the success of a petition circulated by the Down Health Committee and how that demonstrated the depth of concern within the local community about the perceived reduction of services at the Downe.

Councillor Hanlon stated that the response from the Trust was completely dismissive of the voice of local community and that she hoped that when the petition was submitted that the Trust examined more detail and took on the concerns of the people of the District.

Councillor Galbraith expressed his disappointment with the minimal response received from the Chief Executive of Trust regarding the future of Downe Hospital adding that it was unacceptable at continually being told there were no plans to reopen the Emergency Department despite repeated calls from Council and the community. He said it was even more concerning the lack of response on how Downe Hospital was being classified within the wider Future Hospital Reconfiguration Policy.

Councillor Galbraith proposed Council write formally once again to the Chief Executive of the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust and go further by requesting clear consideration to enhance services at Downe Hospital, not just maintain the status quo.

Councillor Sharvin seconded Councillor Galbraith's proposal.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Galbraith, seconded by Councillor Sharvin that Council write formally once again to the Chief Executive of the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust and go further by requesting clear consideration to enhance services at Downe Hospital, not just maintain the status quo.**

Invitation received from Dalaradia Cultural & Historical Society to attend Tour to Gallipoli and participate in an Act of Remembrance

Councillor Lewis proposed officers examine a more economical and better value for money method for attending the commemoration of the 110th Anniversary of the 10th Division's actions on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

Councillor Reilly seconded Councillor Lewis's proposal.

Councillor Harte said that Sinn Féin agreed in principle however would like to have sight of costings involved.

The Chief Executive confirmed a report would be brought back to the August Strategy Policy and Resources Committee including costs for consideration.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Lewis, seconded by Reilly that officers examine a more economical and better value for money to attend the commemoration of the 110th Anniversary of the 10th Division's actions on the Gallipoli Peninsula.**

It was agreed a report would be brought back to the August Strategy Policy and Resources Committee including costs for consideration.

In response to a query from Councillor Bowsie as to whether a response had been received from the National Trust regarding meeting with Council in relation to the Gondola project the Chief Executive advised officers were in the process of coordinating dates with the National Trust.

C/109/2025

NOTICE OF MOTION – NUTRIENT ACTION PLAN

The following Motion was received from Councillor Hanlon:

"This Council finds the current proposals out for consultation by the DAERA Minister for the Nutrient Action Plan unacceptable.

The current proposals would decimate the local farming industry.

Calls on the Minister to collaborate with farmers rather than punish farmers.

Calls on the DAERA to continue to invest in new technologies to improve farming practices, remove phosphates and work together collegiately to improve our Environment, Rivers and Loughs."

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Rice.

In presenting the Motion, Councillor Hanlon said Sinn Féin had raised concerns with the proposals set out in the Nutrient Action Programme which was out for Public Consultation and although there had been some progress since submitting the Motion, the Party's concerns were still relevant. She advised that she had recently met with representatives for local farmers and that for many, the proposals to reduce the P balance to 8kg/ha 2029 would force them to either reduce their livestock or increase the amount of land they farm and this could put many farmers out of business, impacting the rural and wider economy.

Concerns had been raised that DAERA was aligning the NAP proposals for the UK Fertiliser Manual BB209 which was previously rejected here as it failed to take out the account of local grass growing conditions.

Farmers had a vital role to play in protecting waterways, but they needed to be properly supported to do that and the timelines currently set out would be very difficult for many farmers. Whilst new technologies such as Sustainable Use of Livestock Slurry Project were showing promising results it was relatively new and not yet in widespread use.

Likewise, DAERA had linked the NAP proposals to the Soil Nutrient Health Scheme, which is was not as yet completed across the North.

The NAP review proposals for the mandatory use of the Low Emissions Slurry Spreading Equipment (LESSE) by 2030 was hugely challenging with most LESSE equipment not accessible or affordable, especially for small hill farmers in the areas of natural constraint.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Rice stated proposals as they stood could risk putting their farms out of business and that farmers were not just vital to protecting waterways, but also vital stakeholders in protecting rural habitats.

Councillor Rice encouraged everyone to share their views through the Public Consultation on the NAP review, before it closed on 24 July 2025.

Councillor Jackson on behalf of his Party supported the Motion and called on Minister Muir to urgently withdraw the current DAERA consultation on the Nutrients Action Programme. He added that for too long farmers had been environmental scapegoats and this consultation failed to deal with the real issues and risks crippling farmers. There was growing concern across the farming and agri-food sector about the direction of the consultation and the proposals on the table would do real damage to local agriculture, risking jobs, cutting livestock numbers and threatening Northern Ireland's ability to produce food and spelt disaster not only for family farms but for the wider community. He referred to the huge pressures farmers and producers were already under and how they wanted to be part of the solution when it came to protecting the environment but stressed that they needed a fair and workable plan.

The Minister needed to realise that this was not about ignoring environmental responsibilities but finding a sensible way forward, not one that felt more like a punishment than a partnership.

Councillor Jackson advised calculations showed that farmers would potentially need more than twice their acreage to comply with slurry spreading rules and that was unrealistic and would force farms to reduce livestock numbers with beef and sheep farms being driven out of business as the compulsory use of LESSE by 2030 was beyond financial viability.

In voicing support for the Motion, Councillor Reilly spoke of how the Minister seemed to give the impression that farmers were responsible for dirty water and questioned the role of NI Water. He highlighted concerns for pig farmers for example who had quite intensive livestock facilities and would go out of business if the NAP proposals went through.

On behalf of Alliance, Councillor Truesdale spoke against the Motion stating it fundamentally misunderstood the urgent need for action. She spoke of the need for good quality produce, soil health, reduced inputs, a healthy ecosystem, clean air and clean water and that was why DAERA launched a consultation into the Nutrient Action Plan.

Councillor Truesdale said there had to be Regulations for agriculture as part of the Lough Neagh Action Plan to improve water quality across NI and that education and incentivisation was needed along with stronger regulation and more enforcement because 40% of agricultural fields had too much phosphorus. She added that difficult decisions should have been taken years ago and that there were 28 proposals overall, 12 new and 16 strengthening of existing measures.

Councillor Truesdale stated the point of consultation was collaboration and evaluation and farmers were not being punished but being asked to play their part in the recovery process alongside DAERA's legal environmental obligations. She added it was not just farmers and that there was an urgent need to invest in wastewater infrastructure, with NI Water in particular needing to play its role, given its significant contribution to water pollution.

Councillor Sharvin said Members were aware the Nutrients Action Programme was designed to reduce agricultural pollution and meet legal obligations under the Water Framework Directive but despite being in place since 2007 water quality had deteriorated in recent years, particularly in Lough Neagh. He acknowledged that something needed to be done but it had to be fair, workable and in genuine partnership with farmers tackling the challenges facing water quality.

Councillor Sharvin stated the scale of the water quality crisis could not be ignored and action was overdue and the SDLP continually highlighted the need for a dedicated Agricultural Water Quality Working Group with financial incentives, advice and education, not just regulation, and the need for a support package that mirrored the South's response to include water quality advisors, substantial grant funding for low admission spreading and slurry storage.

Councillor Taylor thanked Councillor Hanlon for bringing forward the Motion stating there were genuine concerns about the Nutrient Action Plan proposals with the responses similar to what had been raised following the changes to inheritance tax. Farmers had just come through one major threat to generational farming and this created more fear for the sustainability and viability of the farming sector. He added improving water quality and protecting the environment, must be done together, working with farmers and not against

them and that they deserved respect and partnership and policies that could be realistically implemented.

The Chairperson requested a show of hands for Councillor Hanlon's Motion, seconded by Councillor Rice and declared the Motion carried.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Rice that this Council finds the current proposals out for consultation by the DAERA minister for the Nutrient Action Plan unacceptable. The current proposals would decimate the local farming industry. Calls on the minister to collaborate with farmers rather than punish farmers. Calls on the DAERA to continue to invest in new technologies to improve farming practices, remove phosphates and work together collegiately to improve our Environment, Rivers and Loughs.**

Councillor Clarke joined the meeting online during above discussion – 6.48pm.

C/110/2025 EMERGENCY NOTICE OF MOTION – URGENT ACTION NEEDED TO ADDRESS REGEN WASTE STORAGE OPERATION AT WARRENPOINT PORT

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:	30
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 Ruane:

"That this Council condemns in the strongest possible terms the ongoing and escalating negative impact that the storage and handling of household waste by ReGen at Warrenpoint Port is having on the people of Warrenpoint and the surrounding area; Highlights with deep concern the serious and persistent deterioration in environmental and public health conditions, including overwhelming odours, an increased presence of flies and vermin; Notes that these conditions are not only a major nuisance but represent a growing public health risk to residents, particularly those living in close proximity to the port, including families with young children and vulnerable individuals; Further condemns the reappearance of these unacceptable environmental nuisances during the recent Wake the Giant Festival, an event central to the district's cultural and tourism offering, and warns of the likely disruption to

other summer festivals and community activities should this issue remain unresolved; Asserts that the ongoing presence of RDF waste in a densely populated, residential and recreational area is wholly inappropriate and has resulted in residents being forced to endure foul smells, an inability to open windows, enjoy outdoor spaces, or run local businesses without disruption; Warns that Warrenpoint's economic prosperity, social wellbeing, and long-term reputation are under serious threat if immediate action is not taken to end this situation, which has persisted for over two years; Agrees to write urgently to the Chair of the Warrenpoint Harbour Authority Board, the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Andrew Muir MLA, and the Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) to make clear this council's position: that the handling and storage of RDF waste in such close proximity to homes, community and public spaces is unacceptable and unsuitable; And calls on them to initiate formal discussions with ReGen".

The Motion was seconded by Councillor K Murphy.

In presenting the Motion, Councillor Ruane said that this had not just been a reaction to the most recent smells obvious within the town but had been ongoing for a number of years. He advised that he along with colleagues had met with the Warrenpoint Harbour Authority and ReGen both separately and together where it had been said from the outset that if a solution to the issue could not be reached there would be a call for the RDF waste to be removed from the Port.

Councillor Ruane spoke of the anger and disappointment of people living within Warrenpoint that this matter was continuing to interrupt their lives. He referred to the recent Wake the Giant festival which had brought many people to the town and how everybody commented on the smell as it was so obvious. He pointed out the Ulster Fleadh was coming to Warrenpoint in less than a few weeks, with many visitors expected to flock to the town and stressed that the reputation of the town would be in tatters, potentially putting future events at risk.

Councillor Ruane advised that from the outset space and time had been given to both the Harbour Authority and ReGen to come up with solutions and asked Members for their support for the Motion.

Councillor Reilly agreed that the smell in Warrenpoint was atrocious and questioned why storage could not be well away from a densely populated area. He spoke of how the Minister for Infrastructure should be added to the list of those to be written to as she held responsibility for the Port.

Councillor Ruane agreed to accept the amendment to the Motion to include writing to the Minister for Infrastructure.

Councillor Sharvin proposed a 15-minute recess to allow Members time to consider the Emergency Motion and to ensure that the Council was supportive of alleviating, rather than adding, to the problems. He questioned the inclusion of the wording of close proximity to homes and communities and what that would mean for other sites across the District.

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

**The meeting was adjourned – 7.12pm
The meeting did then resume - 7.30pm.**

Councillor Ruane advised he wished to amend the Motion to include Warrenpoint to read as follows: *"that the handling and storage of RDF waste in Warrenpoint in such close proximity to homes, community and public spaces is unacceptable and unsuitable;"*

Councillor McAteer spoke in support of the Motion and reflected back to a meeting held in March 2024 with the Warrenpoint Harbour Authority, NIE and ReGen and yet 18 months on the issue had still not been resolved and the problems were unacceptable.

Councillor McAteer proposed an amendment to the Motion to include inviting the Warrenpoint Harbour Authority to Council to provide an update on the ongoing situation.

Councillor Ruane agreed to accept Councillor McAteer's amendment to the Motion.

Councillor Truesdale proposed that Council also write to Minister for Infrastructure, seconded by Councillor Young.

Councillor Ruane agreed to accept Councillor Truesdale's amendment to the Motion.

During discussion Councillor Sharvin spoke of how it was any materials that were stored at the Harbour that could cause odour e.g. recent odours from telegraph poles being stored and therefore emphasised the need to have that taken into consideration and have them attend to address all highlighted issues and not just ReGen.

Councillor Taylor voiced support for the Motion and the need for the matter to be addressed and resolved for Warrenpoint residents and tourism.

In response to a query from Councillor Bowsie, Councillor Brennan advised he had resigned from the board as a non-executive member of the Warrenpoint Harbour Authority as he could not see a credible plan to resolve the ongoing issue.

Councillor Ruane thanked Members for their support for the Motion.

The Chairperson declared the amended Emergency Motion carried.

AGREED:

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor K Murphy that this Council condemns in the strongest possible terms the ongoing and escalating negative impact that the storage and handling of household waste by ReGen at Warrenpoint Port is having on the people of Warrenpoint and the surrounding area; Highlights with deep concern the serious and persistent deterioration in environmental and public health conditions, including overwhelming odours, an increased presence of flies and vermin; Notes that these conditions are not only a major nuisance but represent a growing public

health risk to residents, particularly those living in close proximity to the port, including families with young children and vulnerable individuals; Further condemns the reappearance of these unacceptable environmental nuisances during the recent Wake the Giant Festival, an event central to the district's cultural and tourism offering, and warns of the likely disruption to other summer festivals and community activities should this issue remain unresolved; Asserts that the ongoing presence of RDF waste in a densely populated, residential and recreational area is wholly inappropriate and has resulted in residents being forced to endure foul smells, an inability to open windows, enjoy outdoor spaces, or run local businesses without disruption; Warns that Warrenpoint's economic prosperity, social wellbeing, and long-term reputation are under serious threat if immediate action is not taken to end this situation, which has persisted for over two years; Agrees to write urgently to the Chair of the Warrenpoint Harbour Authority Board, the Minister for Infrastructure, Liz Kimmins MLA; the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Andrew Muir MLA, and the Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) to make clear this council's position: that the handling and storage of RDF waste in Warrenpoint in such close proximity to homes, community and public spaces is unacceptable and unsuitable; And calls on them to initiate formal discussions with ReGen. It was also agreed to invite the Warrenpoint Harbour Authority to Council to provide an update on the ongoing situation.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 7.25pm.

For confirmation at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 4 August 2025.

Signed:

Chairperson

Chief Executive

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL
RECORDED VOTE

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

SUBJECT OF VOTE: Councillor Jackson's proposal that Council did not support the Council of Sanctuary, seconded by Councillor Lewis.

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

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL
RECORDED VOTE

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

SUBJECT OF VOTE: Councillor Byrne's proposal proposed a report be brought back to AHC Committee on the process for Council of Sanctuary, seconded by Councillor Sharvin.

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

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL
RECORDED VOTE

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

SUBJECT OF VOTE: Qualified Majority Vote to Suspend Standing Orders to hear Emergency Motion – Urgent action needed to address RE-Gen Waste Storage Operation at Warrenpoint Port.

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

Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 26 June 2025 at 5.00pm in Downshire Chamber

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Clarke declared an interest as an employee of the Mourne Heritage Trust.

The Chairperson welcomed the delegations and invited each of them to make their presentations.

SC/006/2025

NI FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (NIFRS)

Mr Rooney presented a PowerPoint overview of the detail regarding the NIFRS response to recent incidents, a copy of which is appended to these minutes. He spoke of the resourcing requirements and plans in the run up to the Wildfire Season, noting the acquisition of new wildfire equipment on frontline appliances alongside the renewal of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) for all personnel. He also spoke of ongoing partnership working with organisations such as The Mourne Heritage Trust, The Forest Service and NI Water in preparation for and management of wildfires. He stated that while scheduled preparation meetings did not take place this year due to storm Éowyn and the ensuing damage, this had no adverse effect on the response of all statutory bodies to the recent wildfires.

Mr Rooney also commended the collaboration of numerous partners who all played a valuable part during the recent wildfires, reminding those present that there was still considerable remnants of damage from the recent storms followed by a long period of dry weather which exacerbated the wildfires.

Mr Rooney also spoke of community engagement as an effective preventative measure regarding wildfires but stressed that while NIFRS did strive to have a visible presence in potential hot spot areas, their resource was always prioritised to cover risk to life.

SC/007/2025

THE NATIONAL TRUST

Mr Fisher utilised a power point presentation to highlight images of fire damage within the Mournes and also to the considerable recorded data with regard to habitat regrowth and controlled grazing within the Mournes. (Copy appended to the minutes)

Mr Fisher noted that the Mournes were designated both a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and an Area of Specific Scientific Interest (ASSI) and provided an overview of the work that the National Trust had carried out since the devastating wildfires of 2021 where almost a third of their property within the Mournes had been damaged.

Mr Fisher further detailed the plans to help reduce the risk of wildfire, notably the plans to re-wet areas of peatland and the controlled grazing of both sheep and cattle to help manage shrubbery on lower lands to reduce the fire risk. He also detailed the engagement with outdoor event organisers to help plan routes for participants away from certain areas of the Mournes to assist in wildlife and habitat recovery.

Mr Fisher outlined that the National Trust were the leading partner as part of the Forever Mournes alongside the Mourne Heritage Trust, NI Water, the Woodland Trust with Council as an observing party with the aim of working together to enhance cooperation between strategic partners to protect the special landscape.

Councillor Rice joined the meeting during the above presentation – 5.28pm

SC/008/2025**NI WATER**

Ms Allen outlined that NI Water owned some 9,000 acres within the Mourne Wall and had their own challenges to oversee, and their main issue was to provide clean drinking water, with Silent Valley being the main strategic catchment for drinking water.

Ms Allen noted that the fires in April that had damaged around 1700 acres around Silent Valley, however she wished to stress that although damage was evident to habitats and foliage the incident did not have any adverse effect on the quality of the drinking water available. She advised that although water run-off into the water courses and reservoirs would likely contain burn damaged foliage, she stressed that treatment works were designed to deal with anything. She caveated this by advising that there may, in time, be additional costs that would arise in the future from this.

Ms Allen advised that NI Water took their responsibility as land owners seriously, confirming that they were not permitted to allow the degradation of designated areas and that NI Water had been working with the Mourne Heritage Trust for some time regarding land management and path restoration. She expressed her opinion that controlled burns were one option with regard to fire preventions but stressed that she was not an expert and that they required a lot of groundwork to prevent them burning out of control. She confirmed that NI Water were also engaging as part of the Forever Mournes group to develop a recovery plan following the most recent fires to help build resilience while waiting on the official NI Wildfire Strategy from the Department.

SC/009/2025**THE MOURNE HERITAGE TRUST**

Mr Carey echoed Mr Rooney's comments regarding recent storm damage, further stressing the impact of the previous storm Darragh before Christmas 2024 as the largest storm in terms of damage. He outlined that following storm Darragh, the trails that the Mourne Heritage Trust maintained on behalf of Council had suffered significant damage and that the subsequent impact of storm Éowyn was catastrophic with long lasting implications as they were still clearing damage from this. He confirmed that the recent fires were the third major incident within a five-month period, noting the detrimental impact this had on resource availability.

Mr Carey commended his team for their ability to be on call throughout the recent fires to assist with the delivery of specialist kit to NIFRS such as all terrain vehicles. He confirmed that they also had a grazing ranger on site during the incidents to guide fire crews on the ground as someone familiar with the terrain. He advised that the grazing ranger were employed with funds provided by NI Water.

Mr Carey also noted that the scope of the work of the Mourne Heritage Trust had expanded in relation to maintenance and expansion of trails and as a result of this, they were unable to provide more assistance to NIFRS and landowners within the Mournes with regard to land maintenance and fire prevention. He stressed that Council's contribution to the Mourne Heritage Trust had not increased since 2015 while NIEA's contributions had more than doubled in that time. He stressed that more funding was required to enable them to provide services such as Engagement Ranger services, which acted as a preventative measure and providing education on the ground with those using the Mournes.

Mr Carey also stressed that with the impact of climate change since 2012, the science with regard the NI Wildfire Strategy would need validated regarding the best fire management plan. He further stressed the importance of the NI Wildfire Strategy as all agencies were operating within a vacuum until such time as a framework document was created to work from.

Mr Carey ended by appealing to Members and Council to reconsider their role within the wider management of the Mourne and the funding allocation to the Mourne Heritage Trust as the funding allocation at present was fully utilised and currently subsidised from their own charitable reserves which was solely focused on trail management.

SC/010/2025

NI ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Mr McDaid outlined the support steps that had been put in place since Covid with regard to pre fire season actions, noting that in agreement with NIFRS, four wildfire ATVs has been located in strategic positions with an open use to all emergency personnel. He further outlined the plans to have an onsite presence to advise NIFRS and other strategic partners with regard to ecological areas of importance during a fire season.

Mr McDaid confirmed that the NI Wildfire Strategy was currently undergoing its final draft revision and would be before the Minister within the coming days. He also noted his disappointment that there had been no response to the tender regarding wildfire prevention but outlined the steps that had been taken following feedback from those that had expressed an interest but had not submitted a response. He advised that a new tender process was underway and expressed his hope that the amendments made would encourage a response, with the scope of the tender to include the following:

- Both Mourne specific, but also including some other areas with regard to wildfire prevention
- To deliver 3 wildfire management plans to include a new / updated wildfire management plan for the Eastern Mourne.
- Undertake a scoping exercise across the Western Mourne with regard to wildfire prevention and management
- Undertake research across the Mourne to consider the cause and driver of wildfire
- To work in partnership with NIFRS colleagues with consideration given to fuel modelling and information gathering relating to habitat type

Mr McDaid also advised Members that NIEA was providing support to the Mourne Heritage Trust through grant aid funding to allow for the ongoing maintenance of the Eastern Mourne Wildfire Project that was in place, and the intention for the Forever Mourne partnership to deliver on the new management plan when it was available.

Following the presentations the Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members present.

- Members thanked the delegations for the information presented and the work that had been done to date regarding wildfire prevention.
- Was there a clear timeline for the NI Wildfire Strategy to be signed off by the Minister?
- When the NIFRS were unable to be present onsite in hotspot areas in a preventative stance, what other partnership agencies were available to undertake that role?

- Members noted their disappointment at the lack of response for the wildfire management tender and queried whether the amendments would result in a successful tender.
- How would controlled burns be managed by landowners and how could they be integrated into the wider management plan?
- Members commended the work of the Engagement Ranger and queried how this role could be continued.
- What was an acceptable level of funding that would result in the retention of the Engagement Ranger service?
- The Mourne Heritage Trust fire plan was originally drafted in 2012, what would the cost of a refresh and completion of an updated plan be?
- When was the last time a controlled burn had been carried out on the Mournes?
- NI Water were commended for the introduction of a barbeque ban within Silent Valley, but Members stressed that this should be extended across the Mournes.
- Forever Mournes were encouraged to work with the farming community to encourage cohesive working with regard to land management and fire prevention.
- The Engagement Ranger Service was commended for their preventative role and those present were encouraged to share resources as much as possible to maintain the service.
- Councillor Clarke suggested that an app could be developed for smart phones to report high risk activity as there were times when it was difficult to get through to the 101 number.
- Could the recent fires have been better controlled if the NIFRS had access to a helicopter?
- Members stated that farmers had approached them to raise concerns with regard to the impact of the management techniques that had been forced upon them as a large contributor to the increased wildfire events.
- Engagement and co-operation between the Forever Mournes partners and local farmers was encouraged, especially following the publication of the NI Wildfire Strategy.

The delegations responded as follows:

- The NI Wildfire Strategy Framework document would be finalised in the coming weeks; however, Mr McDaid was unable to give a definitive timeline but advised that the Minister was requesting the document as soon as possible.
- The tender process feedback outlined the concerns that had been raised, with Mr McDaid confirming that they were in regard to the management of the tender and not the tender outputs.
- Mr McDaid confirmed that work had been undertaken with procurement to ensure that the feedback received with regard to the management aspects of the tender were taken on board prior to the new tender process getting underway.
- Mr Rooney from NIFRS advised that they were reliant on PSNI colleagues and the public to raise any concerns with regard to fire, advising that NIFRS would prefer to be called to a smaller fire before it got out of control.
- Ms Allen advised that she was not an expert with regard to controlled burns but outlined how she believed that a trial of introducing controlled burns in areas where vegetation appeared out of control could prevent a fire jumping.
- Controlled burns should only be carried out in conjunction with the landowner and strategic partners to prevent the burn getting out of control as they required significant planning and appropriate training.

- The Engagement Ranger Service a strategic preventative tool and it was difficult to put a limit on the funding that would be required.
- Landscape management was notoriously underfunded however any increase in funding from Council would be spent on wildfire management and visitor engagement.
- A helicopter was one tool for fighting fires, but its deployment was not always appropriate. They had been utilised in the past in partnership with other organisations however the decision was not one taken lightly as it was not always the best resource.
- A helicopter had been considered as part of the recent fire management; however, it was discounted when considered alongside all other actions that were being taken to manage the fires.

During the discussions, Councillor Sharvin noted the significant level of devastation following the recent wildfires and proposed that the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee look at the SLA that was currently in place with the Mourne Heritage Trust to consider whether there were any opportunities that may exist to provide further support. This was seconded by Councillor Andrews.

Mr Mallon advised that the SLA that was in place had been agreed through the rate setting process and would be reconsidered for the 2026/27 rate setting process.

Following a request for clarity from Councillor Hanlon, Councillor Sharvin amended his proposal to reflect the mid financial year position of Council and proposed that officers should engage with the Mourne Heritage Trust to consider ways that Council could develop the partnership, what could be done in year, and how the 2026/27 SLA could reflect the required needs.

Mr Mallon confirmed that he would engage with and discuss options with the Mourne Heritage Trust to scope out positive ways to move forward.

Councillor Campbell clarified that everyone present was in agreement with the proposal.

Members wished Mr Carey well on his upcoming retirement, noting that he would be sorely missed.

AGREED On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Andrews, it was agreed that officers engage and discuss options with the Mourne Heritage Trust to scope out positive ways to move forward in relation to funding allocation.

Councillor O'Hare left the meeting during the above discussions - 6.21pm
Councillors Enright and Feehan left the meeting during the above discussions – 6.22pm

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 6.23pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 7 July 2025.

Signed:

Chairperson

Chief Executive

Report to:	Council
Date of Meeting:	4 August 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
			That Council considers and notes the following correspondence:
3.1			Correspondence from Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Council received correspondence from Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council in relation to a Motion, second homes and short-term holiday rentals.
3.2			Correspondence from Derry City & Strabane District Council Council received correspondence from Derry City & Strabane District Council in relation to a Motion, call for central government policy and guidance on applications for data centres.
3.3			Correspondence from Dept for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) Council received correspondence from DEFRA in response to NOM – Fishing Industry Visa and Enhancement Support. (C/044/2025, C/056/2025, C/093/2025)
4.0			Resource implications
4.1			Not applicable.
5.0			Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1			<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



5.2	<p><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.3	<p><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>
6.0	<p>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</p>
6.1	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If no, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy / strategy / plan / public service is not influenced by rural needs <input type="checkbox"/></p>
7.0	<p>Appendices</p>
8.0	<p>Background Documents</p> <p>None</p>



Mayor's Office
Councillor Oliver McMullan
Mayor of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

Marie Ward, Chief Executive
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
via Email: aisling.murray@nmandd.org

9 July 2025

Dear Chief Executive,

At its Council Meeting held Thursday 26th June 2025, Council considered a Notice of Motion and adopted the undernoted resolution:

This Council notes the impact of second homes and short-term holiday rentals on the housing stock supply for residents of the Borough and the character of many local communities, which are changing beyond recognition; notes with concern that there is no formal audit of such properties throughout the Borough and resolves to complete such an audit to inform the development of an agreed lobbying plan for Council in discussions with the Northern Ireland Executive.

Council believes that any plan should recognise the need to address regulatory gaps in managing short-term holiday accommodation and consider the impact of second homes and short-term holiday rentals as part of the implementation of the Housing Supply Strategy.

Once developed and adopted, an update on the matter will be a standing item on the agenda of the Corporate Policy & Resources Committee. Additionally, the Mayor and Chief Executive will write to all other councils in Northern Ireland to encourage them to engage in similar lobbying efforts.

I would appreciate your urgent attention to this request.

Mayor's Office, Cloonavin, 66 Portstewart Road, Coleraine, BT52 1EY
Telephone: 028 7034 7010 ~ Email: mayorsoffice@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

Yours faithfully,

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Councillor Oliver McMullan
Mayor



David Jackson
Chief Executive



Derry City & Strabane
District Council
Comhairle
Chathair Dhoire &
Cheantar an tSratha Báin
Derry Cittie & Strabane
Districk Council

Our ref: TJ C260/25

Marie.Ward@nmandd.org

Dear Chief Executive

At a meeting of Derry City and Strabane District Council held on 25 June 2025, the following proposal was passed:

That Members recognise that data centres are major consumers of electricity that currently threaten Ireland's energy security as well as this Council's commitment to play its part in meeting our obligations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as set out in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement, our Local Development Plan 2032 and the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.

Given Ireland operates a single electricity market, this Council notes with concern the significant demand that data centres in the 26 counties now impose on the national grid, which is expected to rise dramatically over the next five years. Moreover, this Council is concerned that the absence of any overarching government policy or guidance on planning for data centres in the Six Counties is not conducive to monitoring and managing energy security and greenhouse gas emissions at a strategic level.

Therefore, in the national interests of energy security and climate change, this Council will write to the Ministers for Infrastructure and the Economy calling for their Departments to: Urgently develop a co-ordinated strategic policy on how planning applications for data centres across all council areas are to be managed and monitored for; their impacts on climate change; their demands on the national grid; including whether proposals that are large scale emitters should be considered as regionally significant developments.

Further, this Council will write to other local authorities calling on them to support our call for a central government policy and guidance on applications for data centres.

Derry

C/o Council Offices
98 Strand Road
Derry
BT48 7NN

Strabane

C/o Council Offices
47 Derry Road
Strabane
BT82 8DY

John Kelpie MEng., CEng., MStructE., MIEI

Chief Executive
Derry City and Strabane District Council

+44 (0) 2871 253 253
chiefexecutive@derrystrabane.com
www.derrystrabane.com

f Derry City & Strabane District Council
@dcscouncil

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

Yours Sincerely



**John Kelpie
Chief Executive
Derry City and Strabane District Council**



Department
for Environment,
Food & Rural Affairs

Daniel Zeichner MP
Minister of State

Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

T: +44 (0) 3459 335577
E: correspondence.section@defra.gov.uk
W: gov.uk/defra

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Marie Ward
Chief Executive
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
Downpatrick Office
Downshire Civic Centre
Downshire Estate, Ardglass Road
Downpatrick, BT30 6GQ
democratic.services@nmandd.org

Your ref: C/044/2025,
C/056/2025, C/093/2025
Our ref: PO2025/13208/FA

30 July 2025

Dear Marie,

Thank you for your letter of 16 June to the Secretary of State following the meeting of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council on 2 June about the Fishing Industry Visa and Enhancement Support Motion. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

The government has been clear about the need to reduce the reliance on migrant labour and for UK businesses to find ways to recruit locally in order to build a long-term, resilient, and sustainable workforce. We are, however, aware of concerns around labour shortages in the seafood sector and are working with industry to understand how we can support them to overcome labour shortages in a way that does not impinge on wider immigration policy objectives. This includes our UK Seafood Careers Project, which has been co-designed with industry, and aims to improve the rate at which domestic workers enter and stay within the seafood workforce.

I note the Council's concerns and appreciate the importance of ensuring that funding from the Fishing and Coastal Growth Fund (FCGF) delivers meaningful outcomes for our coastal communities.

The FCGF will invest £360 million over the next 12 years in the fisheries and seafood sector, and coastal communities. We are currently developing the scheme and will engage with fishing and seafood industries, alongside coastal communities, to target investment where it matters most. We will set out further details in due course, including when we will launch the funding.

Thank you again for writing and for highlighting the Council's commitment to the sustainable growth of the fishing industry. I look forward to sharing further updates in due course.

Yours sincerely,

DANIEL ZEICHNER MP

Report to:	Council
Date of Meeting:	4 August 2025
Subject:	Request from Councillors to attend conferences
Reporting Officer:	Marie Ward, Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Sarah Taggart, Democratic Services Manager

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

For decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	For noting only	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	<p>Nominations are being sought for 6 Councillors to attend the first of a series of Insights Exchange Events by NILGA.</p> <p>It has been agreed by Senior Management that Mr P McAulfield, Acting Procurement Manager will attend.</p>
2.0	Key issues
2.1	The Insights Exchange event will take place on 2 October 2025 from 9.30am – 2.30pm in The Junction, Dungannon.
2.2	<p>The theme for this event is embedding social value in Councils and will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overview of the policy context • Showcase of council case-studies on social value • Panel discussion
2.3	The names of attendees to be confirmed and forwarded to NILGA by 1 September 2025.
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	Members to approve attendances at the event as outlined in 2.0 of the report, with nominations to be forwarded to Democratic Service Department.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	There is no cost to attend the event.
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)

5.1	<p>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.3	<p>Proposal initiating consultation</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>
7.0	Appendices
	N/A
8.0	Background Documents
	N/A