



September 1st, 2025

**Notice Of Meeting**

You are requested to attend the Council meeting to be held on **Monday, 1st September 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 4 August 2025

*For Information*

 [Action Sheet 2025 08 04.pdf](#)

*Page 1*

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### *Council Minutes For Adoption and Signing*

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## 4.0 Minutes of Council Meeting held on 4 August 2025

*For Approval*

 [Council Minutes 2025 08 04.pdf](#)

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### *Committee Minutes for Consideration and Adoption*

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## 5.0 Minutes of Audit Committee Meeting held on 31 July 2025

*For Approval*

 [Audit Committee Minutes 2025-07-31.pdf](#)

*Page 21*

## 6.0 Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 11 August 2025

*For Approval*

 [Economy Regeneration and Tourism Minutes 2025-08-11.pdf](#)

*Page 31*

## 7.0 Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 14 August 2025

*For Approval*

Update on SPR/119/2025:

Dear Sir/Madam,

We recently wrote to you to invite your Council to be represented on a Tour to the Gallipoli peninsula, Turkey in October to commemorate the 110th Anniversary of the actions of the 10th Irish Division, a Division recruited from throughout Ireland.

We regret that although the response from Councils in Northern Ireland has been most positive the response from Councils in the Republic of Ireland has been disappointing, and we therefore have not the

numbers to make the visit viable.

We have therefore reluctantly decided to postpone the Tour until next Spring and we will be in contact with a revised invitation in due course,


Yours Sincerely,

Robert Williamson

Chairman, Dalaradia Cultural and Historical Society


**\*Further Update also attached\***

 **Strategy Policy & Resources Committee Meeting Minutes 2025-08-14.pdf** **Page 37**

 **Gallipoli Commemoration.pdf** **Page 46**

## **8.0 Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 18 August 2025**

*For Approval*

 **Active and Healthy Communities Minutes 2025 08 18.pdf** **Page 47**

## **9.0 Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 19 August 2025**

*For Approval*

 **Sustainabilty\_and\_Environment\_Committee\_Minutes\_2025\_08\_19.pdf** **Page 61**

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## **10.0 Planning Section**


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### **Correspondence**

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## **11.0 Correspondence Report**







*For Information*

 **Correspondence Report Council 2025 09 01.pdf** **Page 67**

### **11.1 Responses from Minister for Infrastructure, NIEA and Minister of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs re: Motion, ReGen Waste Warrenpoint**

*For Information*

 **C.110.2025 Response from Minister for Infrastructure NOM ReGen Waste** **Page 70**

	 <i>C.110.2025 Response from NIEA NOM ReGen Waste Warrenpoint.pdf</i>	<i>Page 71</i>
	 <i>C.110.2025 Response from Minister of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs ReGen Waste Warrenpoint.pdf</i>	<i>Page 72</i>
<b>11.2</b>	<b>Response from Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs re Motion - Nutrient Action Plan</b>	
	 <i>C.109.2025 Response from Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs NOM NAP.pdf</i>	<i>Page 75</i>
<b>11.3</b>	<b>Response received from Arts Council re NOM Funding Cuts</b>	
	 <i>C.122.2025 Response from Arts Council re NOM - Funding Cuts.pdf</i>	<i>Page 77</i>
	 <i>C.122.2025 Response from Department for Communities re NOM - Funding Cuts.pdf</i>	<i>Page 79</i>
<b>11.4</b>	<b>NILGA Executive Summary</b>	
	 <i>NILGA Executive Summary August 2025 meeting.pdf</i>	<i>Page 81</i>

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## ***Notices of Motion***

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### **12.0 Notice of Motion - President of Ireland**

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Sharvin (deferred from August 2025):

"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".

### **13.0 Notice of Motion - Resurfacing and Long Term Repair of Main A route between Kilkeel and Newcastle**

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Devlin:

"Noting with concern the ongoing deterioration of the main A route between Newcastle, Kilkeel and onto Rostrevor recognising its strategic importance for local residents, businesses and the tourism economy, and expressing frustration at the continued lack of proper resurfacing, this Council agrees to write to the Infrastructure Minister Liz Kimmins MLA to request that this road be prioritised for full resurfacing and long-term repair."

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## **1.0 Notice of Motion - Real Living Wage Accreditation**

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Hanlon:

"This Council supports the Real Living Wage and believes that all workers including casual staff and agency workers deserve fair pay that reflects the cost of living. We note that Belfast City Council and Ards and North Down Borough Council are accredited Real Living Wage employers. The Executive has also formally become an accredited Real Living Wage Employer. This means all staff including agency and contract workers receive at least the Real Living Wage, above the British government's statutory minimum wage, bringing real benefits: improved staff morale, better retention, stronger recruitment, and a clear statement of commitment to fairness and workers' rights.

Becoming a Real Living Wage employer also strengthens our leadership role in promoting social value through procurement and sets a positive example for businesses and organisations across our District.

therefore, this Council agrees to:

1. Bring forward a plan in consultation with Advice NI and other key stakeholders to implement the Real Living Wage across all staff categories, including casual workers and agency staff.
2. Work toward accreditation with the Living Wage Foundation and aim to become a fully accredited Real Living Wage employer.
3. Bring a report to Council outlining options, costs, and a proposed timeline to deliver these changes.

We believe fair pay is a foundation of dignity in work and essential to building a stronger, fairer local economy."

## **15.0 Notice of Motion - 'Ladies with Letters' campaign**

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Finn:

"Newry, Mourne and Down recognises the courage and bravery of the 'ladies with letters' campaign group who are representing 17,500 women, will amplify their frustration with the Department of Health and will write to the Minister of Health to show our support for their continued calls for an independent inquiry."

# Invitees

Cllr Terry Andrews

Cllr Callum Bowsie

Fionnuala Branagh

Cllr Jim Brennan

Cllr Pete Byrne

Cllr Philip Campbell

Cllr William Clarke

Cllr Laura Devlin

Cllr Cadogan Enright

Cllr Killian Feehan

Cllr Doire Finn

Cllr Conor Galbraith

Cllr Mark Gibbons

Cllr Oonagh Hanlon

Cllr Glyn Hanna

Cllr Valerie Harte

Cllr Martin Hearty

Cllr Roisin Howell

Cllr Tierna Howie

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

Cllr Kate Murphy

Cllr Selina Murphy

Sinead Murphy

Cllr Declan Murphy

Cllr Siobhan O'Hare

Mr Andy Patterson

Cllr Áine Quinn

Cllr Henry Reilly

Cllr Michael Rice  
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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 4 AUGUST 2025**

<b>Minute Ref</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Actions taken/ Progress to date</b>	<b>Remove from Action Sheet Y/N</b>
<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>	<b>Ongoing</b>	<i>N</i>
<i>C/113/2025</i>	<i>Action Sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 07.07.2025</i>	It was agreed to note the action sheet.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<b>Noted</b>	
<i>C/114/2025</i>	<i>Minutes of Council Meeting held on 07.07.2025</i>	<p>The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.</p> <p><i>Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 15.05.2025:</i>  <i>SPR/073/2025: Approach to City, Town and Village Signage</i>  The Chief Executive reiterated that she had previously responded to perceived procedural concerns and she could bring a Report back through the SP&amp;R Committee, where the Equality Relations reported and then, if necessary, it would follow through to the Audit Committee.</p>	<i>Democratic Services</i>  <i>M Ward</i> <i>J Kelly</i>	<b>Noted</b>	
<i>C/115/2025</i>	<i>Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 26.06.2025</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<b>Noted</b>	
<i>C/116/2025</i>	<i>Call-In from Planning Committee held on 19 June 2025</i>	<p>It was agreed following a recorded vote to accept the legal advice as provided.</p> <p>It was agreed that a Report be brought back to the relevant Committee outlining the costs to Council associated with obtaining the legal advice on this matter.</p>	  <i>M Ward</i> <i>J Kelly</i>		

<b>Minute Ref</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Actions taken/ Progress to date</b>	<b>Remove from Action Sheet Y/N</b>
C/118/2025	<i>Correspondence Report</i>	<p>It was agreed to note the Correspondence report.</p> <p><i>Correspondence from Derry City &amp; Strabane District Council in relation to Motion, call for central government policy and guidance on applications for data centres</i></p> <p>It was agreed to write to Derry City &amp; Strabane Council offering support to their Motion calling for central government policy and guidance on applications for data centres.</p> <p><i>Correspondence received from Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in response to NOM – Fishing Industry Visa and Enhancement Support (C/044/2025, C/056/2025, C/093/2025)</i></p> <p>It was agreed to write to the Southern Regional Education College asking that they work with Council to devise a scheme for the creation of a course to train fishermen.</p> <p><i>Correspondence from Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council in relation to second homes and short-term holiday rentals</i></p> <p>It was agreed that Council write to Causeway Coast and Glens Council to request if they had an approach that Newry Mourne and Down District Council could adopt in order to carry out a scoping exercise into the second homes and short-term holiday rentals.</p>	<p><i>Democratic Services</i></p> <p><i>Democratic Services</i></p> <p><i>Democratic Services</i></p> <p><i>Democratic Services</i></p>	<p><b>Noted</b></p> <p><b>Correspondence sent</b></p> <p><b>Correspondence sent</b></p> <p><b>Correspondence sent</b></p>	
C/119/2025	<i>Conferences / Events</i>	<p>It was agreed to note the Conference/Event report with nominations for 6 Councillors to attend the Insights Exchange Event by NILGA to be forwarded to the Democratic Services Department.</p>	<i>Democratic Services</i>		

<b>Minute Ref</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Actions taken/ Progress to date</b>	<b>Remove from Action Sheet Y/N</b>
C/120/2025	Notice of Motion – Voting Age to be reduced to 16	It was agreed that 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. Council calls on the UK government to work with Stormont to ensure the legalisation is implemented successfully and request a timeframe and urgent clarification that it would be implemented by the 2027 elections.	Democratic Services	<b>Correspondence sent</b>	
C/121/2025	Notice Of Motion – President of Ireland	The Motion was deferred to September Council.	Democratic Services	<b>Noted Included on September Council Agenda</b>	
C/122/2025	Notice of Motion – Funding Cuts by Arts Council to National Youth Choir	It was agreed that 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 and write to ask the other 10 Councils to do the same.	Democratic Services	<b>Correspondence sent</b>	
C/123/2025	Notice of Motion – CAR-T Cell Therapy	It was agreed that 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.			

<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>
		<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>We therefore call on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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;</li> <li>2. The Irish Government to support and facilitate this cooperation as a matter of urgency;</li> <li>3. This Council to write formally to Ministers Mike Nesbitt and Jennifer Carroll MacNeill requesting their intervention;</li> <li>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.</li> </ol>	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<b>Correspondence sent</b>	
C/124/2025	Notice of Motion – Autism Friendly Towns	<p>The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Truesdale:</p> <p>"Acknowledging the Councils good work in the promotion of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</p>	<i>C Moffett</i>	<b>Notice of Motion – Autism Friendly Towns will be discussed at the</b>	

<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>
		<p>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".</p> <p><b>The Motion was referred to the Equality and Good Relations Working Group in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.</b></p>	<i>C Moffett</i>	<b><i>Councillors' Equality &amp; Good Relations Reference Group on 8 October 2025.</i></b>	



## **NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**NMD/C/**

### **Minutes of Council Meeting held on Monday 4 August 2025 at 6.00pm in Council Chamber, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick**

**In the Chair:** Councillor P Campbell

**In attendance in Chamber:**

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor C Bowsie
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 J Jackson	Councillor C King
Councillor Lee-Surginor	Councillor A Lewis
Councillor A Mathers	Councillor D McAteer
Councillor S O'Hare	Councillor D Murphy
Councillor K Murphy	Councillor S Murphy
Councillor A Quinn	Councillor H Reilly
Councillor G Sharvin	Councillor J Tinnelly

**In attendance via Teams:**

Councillor P Byrne	Councillor M Gibbons
Councillor M Larkin	Councillor O Magennis
Councillor L McEvoy	Councillor M Rice
Councillor D Taylor	Councillor J Truesdale
Councillor H Young	

**Officials in attendance:**

Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive  
 Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services  
 Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability and Environment  
 Mr A Patterson, Director of Active and Health Communities  
 Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager  
 Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer  
 Mr C Smyth, Democratic Services Officer

**Also in attendance:** Mr K O'Donnell, Belfast Legal Services

**C/111/2025**

### **APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Brennan, Howell, Kearns and Ruane and Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism.

The Chairperson stated that the last month had been nothing short of inspiring across Newry, Mourne and Down as he continued to be moved by the selfless spirit of individuals who were committed to bettering their communities, not for recognition but out of genuine

care for others. He stated that these people dedicated their time and energy to causes that built civic pride, preserved shared heritage and enriched local culture.

The Chairperson said that from meeting the volunteers behind brilliant cultural and heritage events like the Ulster Fleadh, Fiddlers Green Festival, Castlewellan Show and the Leitrim Festival he had seen first-hand how community-led efforts helped the community to learn more about traditions and each other.

The Chairperson advised he had had the privilege of spending time with local groups and societies who worked tirelessly to support those in need. He took the opportunity to speak of Marian McGreevy of Newcastle Lions, recently elected District Governor for all Lions Clubs in Ireland and Joan McAteer, now High Chief Ranger of the Irish National Foresters, the first woman to hold the title in the organisation's 146 year history.

The Chairperson said it had been an honour to welcome Economy Minister, Dr Caoimhe Archibald to his hometown of Downpatrick to discuss the important regeneration work being driven by the Downpatrick Regeneration Working Group.

## **C/112/2025      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Sharvin declared an interest in Item 8.2: Letter from Derry City & Strabane District Council in relation to Motion, Call for Central Government Policy and Guidance on applications for data centres.

## **C/113/2025      ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 7 JULY 2025**

Read:                      Action sheet from Council Meeting held on 7 July 2025.

*C/104/2025: Minutes of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee Meeting 12 June 2023: Newry Canal*

Councillor Feehan raised his concerns at the lack of progress on the regeneration of Newry Canal. He made reference to two motions passed at Council that supported the regeneration in November 2024 and April 2025 and despite a call for urgent and visible steps to revitalise the canal there had been no meaningful progress update brought to Councillors.

Councillor Feehan asked that a written update on the Newry Canal Regeneration be brought to the next Council Meeting including a timeline of actions taken since November 2024 including any barriers that had been identified by officers and a plan going forward with milestones.

The Chief Executive advised that in line with Standing Orders reports of that nature did not go to Council but were brought through the relevant Committee and confirmed a report would be brought to the Sustainability and Environment Committee in September 2025

In response to a request from Councillor Feehan, Mrs S Murphy agreed to endeavour to have a report for the August Committee and if not, confirmed it would be presented at September Committee Meeting.

Mrs Murphy took the opportunity to advise work was ongoing in the background at officer level with steps progressing and an update report would be provided as soon as possible.

*C/109/2025: Nutrient Action Plan*

In response to Councillor Reilly who spoke of the anguish within the farming community and whether a response from the DAERA Minister had been received as yet, the Chief Executive advised any responses were included within the correspondence report presented at item 8 on the agenda.

**Agreed:** **The Action Sheet from Council Meeting held on 7 July 2025 was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor D Murphy.**

The Chairperson advised item 4: Call in from Planning Committee held on 19 June 2025 would be taken after items 5 and 6 on the agenda.

**C/114/2025** **COUNCIL MINUTES FOR ADOPTION AND SIGNING OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 7 JULY 2025**

Read: Minutes of Council Meeting held on 7 July 2025 (copy circulated).

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

In referring to the above and procedural issues he had raised, Councillor Bowsie stated the Chief Executive had not reverted to the Party as she had advised.

The Chief Executive stated she would revert to the DUP after the meeting pointing out that at the time when Councillor Bowsie had raised procedural concerns, she had advised Call-In procedures were set in legislation and not set by Council.

Councillor Bowsie stated his Party had concerns about how the consultation had been dropped from the Report at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour and that still needed to be looked into regardless of a successful Call-In. He added that if the DUP were to rejoin the Equality and Good Relations Working Group those concerns needed to be taken seriously.

The Chief Executive replied that those concerns had been addressed previously in correspondence with the Party and were taken seriously.

Councillor Sharvin took the opportunity to point out that if Councillor Bowsie had concerns from a procedural perspective that the Audit Committee should consider such.

The Chief Executive reiterated that she had previously responded to those perceived procedural concerns and she could bring a Report back through the SP&R Committee, where the Equality Relations reported and then, if necessary, it would follow through to the Audit Committee.

**Agreed:** **The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 7 July 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Hanlon.**

**C/115/2025**

**COUNCIL MINUTES FOR ADOPTION AND SIGNING OF  
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 26 JUNE 2025**

**Read:** Minutes of Council Meeting held on 26 June 2025 (copy circulated).

**Agreed:** The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 26 June 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor O'Hare.

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

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Quinn, 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 in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

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

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

**C/116/2025**

**CALL-IN PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 19 JUNE 2025**

**Read:** Report from Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive, regarding Call-In Planning Committee held on 19 June 2025. **(Copy circulated)**

The Chief Executive highlighted that legal opinion was provided for Members and to go against this may be to their detriment, however, it was their decision to make as to whether they accepted the legal opinion.

**Agreed:** It was agreed following a recorded vote, the results of which were 21 for, 11 against and no abstentions, to accept the legal advice as provided. (copy attached)

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor D Murphy that a Report be brought back to the relevant Committee outlining the costs to Council associated with obtaining the legal advice on this matter.

## **C/117/2025      PLANNING SECTION**

There were no issues arising.

## **C/118/2025      CORRESPONDENCE REPORT**

Read:                      Report dated 4 August 2025 from Mrs Ward, Chief Executive, regarding an update on correspondence received for the attention of Council (copy circulated).

*Correspondence from Derry City & Strabane District Council in relation to Motion, call for central government policy and guidance on applications for data centres*

Councillor Reilly spoke of the importance of this issue as it was putting enormous stress on the electricity system with growing concern among the business community in the South at rising costs of electricity due to the demands data centres were putting on it and that it could affect the whole community.

Councillor Reilly proposed writing back in support of the Motion from Derry City & Strabane Council calling for central government policy and guidance on applications for data centres. Councillor Hanna seconded the proposal.

**Agreed:                      It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Hanna to write to Derry City & Strabane Council offering support to their Motion calling for central government policy and guidance on applications for data centres.**

*Correspondence received from Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in response to NOM – Fishing Industry Visa and Enhancement Support (C/044/2025, C/056/2025, C/093/2025)*

Referring to the correspondence received, Councillor Reilly commented that the Home Office was saying to employ local people to do this work yet there was no training facility in Northern Ireland for fishing and that should be examined. He spoke of a commitment several years ago that a College course specifically aimed at the fishing community would be established for skipper's licences, health and safety etc however that had not transpired.

Councillor Reilly pointed out that this would be an incentive that could improve the fishing industry, especially with investment.

Councillor Reilly proposed to write to Southern Regional Education College asking them to work with Council to devise a scheme for the creation of a course to train fishermen. Councillor Hanna seconded the proposal.

**Agreed:                      It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Hanna to write to the Southern Regional Education College asking that they work with Council to devise a scheme for the creation of a course to train fishermen.**

*Correspondence from Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council in relation to second homes and short-term holiday rentals*

Councillor Truesdale proposed Council carry out a scoping exercise similar to that carried out by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council in relation to the second homes and short-term holiday rentals. Councillor Young seconded the proposal.

In voicing support for the proposal, Councillor Clarke said this was raised by Mournes Councillors a number of years ago and spoke of the importance of establishing a clear picture of the number of second homes and short term holiday lets within the Council area particularly in coastal and major tourism areas.

Councillor Clarke spoke of difficulties faced by low income residents to buy or rent due to increases in price and the exercise would be useful to feed into the Housing Supply Strategy and the Council's Local Development Plan.

In welcoming Councillor Truesdale's proposal, Councillor Sharvin suggested Council write back to Causeway Coast and Glens Council to understand how they were undertaking the exercise to establish if they had an approach Newry Mourne and Down Council could adopt rather than recreating the wheel and if there were any learnings that would be beneficial.

**Agreed:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Andrews that Council write to Causeway Coast and Glens Council to request if they had an approach that Newry Mourne and Down District Council could adopt in order to carry out a scoping exercise into the second homes and short-term holiday rentals.**

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

- **Correspondence from Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council in relation to second homes and short-term holiday rentals.**
- **Correspondence from Derry City & Strabane District Council in relation to Motion, call for central government policy and guidance on applications for data centres.**
- **Correspondence received from Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in response to NOM – Fishing Industry Visa and Enhancement Support (C/044/2025, C/056/2025, C/093/2025).**

**C/119/2025**

**CONFERENCES/EVENTS**

**Read:** Report dated 4 August 2025 from Mrs Ward, Chief Executive, regarding Conferences/Events (copy circulated).



Ms Taggart advised nominations were being sought for 6 Councillors to attend the first of a series of Insights Exchange Events by NILGA. Members were asked to forward nominations to the Democratic Services Department.

**Agreed:** **It was agreed to note the Conference/Event report with nominations for 6 Councillors to attend the Insights Exchange Event by NILGA to be forwarded to the Democratic Services Department.**

## **C/120/2025      NOTICE OF MOTION – VOTING AGE TO BE REDUCED TO 16**

The following 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".*

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Finn.

In presenting the Motion, Councillor Andrews said this was the third time he had spoken on what was a very important topic, a vote for 16 years up. On previous occasions it had been knocked back by the previous administration but with Labour Governments recent announcement of bringing it through on to the statute book it was to be welcomed and supported.

Councillor Andrews spoke at length at how young people were already active in politics as they marched, organised and the campaigned for change. At 16 they could work, pay tax, marry and serve in armed forces and deserved the right to vote as well. He added young people cared deeply about the future and were often ahead of politicians on major issues such as climate and equality and letting them vote could shift politics to better reflect their needs and priorities.

In the interest of all young people the Motion should go further with the First Minister and and the Deputy First Minister seeking the devolution of the required powers to introduce the legislation. Councillor Andrews asked for support in the interests of the 45,000 young people who were aged 16 and 17 in Northern Ireland by giving them the say that they deserved in their society and in democracy.

Councillor Quinn voiced support for the Motion on behalf of Sinn Féin, stating that every time Members sat in the Chamber they made decisions that directly affected the lives of all people but importantly young people and now finally they would have a direct role in shaping those decisions through the ballot box.

She spoke of how for too long, young people had been sidelined from the democratic process, despite being at the heart of real and lasting change and how at 16, young people could start work, make decisions about their education and pay tax and National Insurance.

In Scotland and Wales, 16 and 17 year olds already had the right to vote and across Europe in Austria, Germany, Malta and others voting rights had been extended to over 16s and the results were clear, a more engaged, informed and representative electorate.

On behalf of the Alliance Party, Councillor Lee-Surginor voiced support for the Motion welcoming the decision to lower the voting age to 16 ahead of the next Council and Assembly elections in 2027. He said young people were already engaged in many aspects of public life and were informed, passionate and directly affected by the decisions made in Council chambers and other legislatures and it was only right that they had a democratic say in shaping the future of this island.

Councillor Lee-Surginor agreed it was vital the UK Government worked closely with Stormont to ensure legislation was implemented smoothly and effectively with proper education and support in place to help young voters make informed choices.

Councillor Bowsie questioned what the Motion was meant to achieve, referring to previous debates where the position on it was clear with the DUP voting against it. He added that the other parties had got what they wanted and that this Motion was just asking for it to be done successfully.

Councillor Bowsie spoke at length about how throughout the globe voting rights were generally reserved for adults. He said 18 was the international recognised age for adulthood and the UN Convention of Rights for the child defined a child as human beings below the age of 18 years and his Party were against children being the target of political campaigns. He spoke of how until 18 they could not take out mortgages, credit cards or personal loans, serve on a jury, get married without permission, watch certain movies or purchase alcohol, tobacco, fireworks etc and for that reason the DUP would be voting against the Motion.

In supporting the Motion, Councillor Truesdale proposed an amendment to include a timeframe and a request for urgent clarification that it would be implemented by the 2027 elections.

Councillor Andrews accepted Councillor Truesdale’s amendment.

The Chairperson put Councillor Andrews’s amended Motion to a vote, the results of which were as follows:

<b>FOR:</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>AGAINST:</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>ABSTENTIONS:</b>	<b>0</b>

The Chairperson declared the amended Motion passed.

Councillor Andrews thanked Members for their support for the Motion.

<b>Agreed:</b>	<b>It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Finn that 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. Council calls on the UK</b>
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**government to work with Stormont to ensure the legalisation is implemented successfully and request a timeframe and urgent clarification that it would be implemented by the 2027 elections.**

**C/121/2025**

**NOTICE OF MOTION – PRESIDENT OF IRELAND**

The following 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".*

**AGREED:**

**The Motion was deferred to September Council.**

**C/122/2025**

**NOTICE OF MOTION – FUNDING CUTS BY THE ARTS COUNCIL TO THE NATIONAL YOUTH CHOIR**

The following 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".*

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Sharvin.

In presenting the Motion, Councillor Finn said it seemed like Groundhog Day that Council were yet again speaking about cuts to an already beleaguered arts budget.

Members were provided with background information about the National Youth Choir of Northern Ireland which was founded in 1999 and how over its 26 year life span the choir had been an exemplar of inclusivity and integration, with a current membership of 360 young people. The choir had been a platform for thousands of young singers from across Northern Ireland and a career platform for well-known performers many of whom who had gone on to represent Northern Ireland on the world stage.

Councillor Finn stated that whilst this cut was appalling, it was not at all a surprise given the current arts picture across the North. Since 2009 there had been 66% fall in public spending in this region on arts, comparatively to 18% in Wales and 22% in Scotland and this region would now be the only one across the islands without a choir for young people.

Councillor Finn pointed out the purpose of the Motion was not to place blame but to ask that action was taken to prevent an act of cultural vandalism and support young people who wanted to develop their talents and write to the Communities Minister and the Arts Council

to find a way forward to prevent the collapse of this institution as well as writing to ask the other 10 Councils to do the same.

The amended Motion read as follows:

*"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 and write to ask the other 10 Councils to do the same".*

Councillor King on behalf of Sinn Féin voiced support for the Motion and expressed concern over the recent decision by the Arts Council to withdraw funding from the National Youth Choir. He stated this was a major blow for the North especially to the young people of Newry and Armagh who had benefited so much from this organisation over the years.

Councillor King stated this decision was the direct result of over a decade of austerity forced upon public services by a British government that had shown time and again that it did not prioritise the arts and the wellbeing of communities.

Councillor Jackson stated the DUP also shared concern at the impact of the decision by the Arts Council had on those involved in the National Youth Chor for Northern Ireland including individuals and communities benefiting from their activities. He added his Party believed youth art should receive fair and adequate funding and whilst the Communities Minister was unable to intervene in what was an operational matter he was continuing to make the case for increased investment in the Arts.

Councillor McAteer voiced support for the Motion stating he was flabbergasted when the news broke and how the Youth Choir was unique and very important for young people to get involved in broadening their horizons in culture and arts and hoped it would be reinstated.

Councillor Young confirmed the Alliance Party supported the Motion and spoke of how this decision meant Northern Ireland was the only one of the UK's national regions not to support a youth choir. She added over the past year four organisations had been forced to close and a fifth with Coleraine's Riverside Theatre, closing its doors for the last time on 1 August.

The Chairperson declared the Motion was unanimously passed.

Councillor Finn thanked Members for their support for the Motion.

**AGREED:**

**It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Finn, seconded by Councillor Sharvin that 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 and write to ask the other 10 Councils to do the same.**



**C/123/2025****NOTICE OF MOTION - CAR-T CELL THERAPY**

The following 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".*

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Devlin.

In presenting the Motion, Councillor Feehan advised he had brought it forward on behalf of the family of Catherine Sherry, wife to Fergal and mother of three young boys along with Catherine's aunts who cared for her sons whilst she was receiving treatment in London. Catherine's aunts had joined Members in the chamber.

Councillor Feehan spoke of how Catherine had passed away in May this year while undergoing CAR-T treatment in King's College Hospital in London. The treatment was working but the repeated air travel, while severely immune suppressed had weakened Catherine and left her unable to fight the infection which led to her death. Catherine passed away far from home and far from her children.

Members were advised the treatment that Catherine needed was available just 60 miles away in Dublin but she could not access it as there was still no agreement between the Department of Health in the North and their counterparts in Dublin to allow Northern patients to access the specialist therapy in the Republic despite it being routinely delivered in St James's.

Councillor Feehan pointed out it was not a capacity issue nor a funding issue, it was a political failure and note there had already been a commitment both North and South to work together on cancer care and referred to how following the Good Friday, a tripartite

arrangement had been established to enhance cancer research, promote education and training and underpin improved cancer care on the island of Ireland.

Councillor Feehan further advised that Lymphoma Action UK warned that flying put cancer patients at serious risk of blood clots, deep vein thrombosis and increased risk of infection and asked Members to support the motion and make a strong and collective call on government to act now and establish an All-Island pathway for CAR-T treatment.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Devlin stated operating on a cross-border basis in terms of health and proposals of this nature were right and proper and had to happen from a humane perspective. She added no family should be separated and the heartbreak that Catherine's family had to endure should not happen to any family ever again.

Councillor Lee-Surginor expressed full support for the Motion and commended the compassion and urgency behind it and spoke of how it was tragic that the Sherry family had to travel to London for CAR-T cell therapy, a journey made more difficult by distance, stress, and the emotional toll of separation when such treatment could have been accessed a few hours away from their home in Northern Ireland.

Councillor Lee-Surginor spoke of how Northern Ireland was lagging behind when it came to new medical technology being implemented and how his mother had to travel to Hong Kong for Proton therapy. He said whilst he acknowledged that CAR-T treatment was not yet available in Northern Ireland, that could not be an excuse for inaction.

Councillor Hearty on behalf Sinn Féin voiced support for the Motion and reiterated previous points made that the specific treatment Catherine needed was not available in the north, it was available in Dublin, just over an hour away from the family home and the stress that caused in an already stressful situation with air travel presenting additional risks for patients undergoing this treatment. He confirmed Sinn Féin fully supported the family's campaign for all-Ireland provision of CAR T-cell therapy to make sure no other family had to endure what this family went through. He stated it was owed to all patients, present and future to fight for the highest level of healthcare to be accessible to all citizens going forward.

Councillor Hanna on behalf of DUP voiced support for the Motion and the need to expedite the work required to embed this service within Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland as soon as possible. He stated his Party supported cross-border corporation for health and care mutual benefit in terms of timely access to vital services and treatment however this should not be at the expense of Northern Ireland and access to the wider NHS and should enable referrals which could not be delivered in Northern Ireland. He added decisions should be taken not on the basis of politics but on clinical evidence and what was best in terms of maximising outcomes of cancer patients and everybody should get the same treatment.

The Chairperson declared the Motion was unanimously passed.

Councillor Feenan thanked Members for their support for the Motion and asked all Councillors to work with party colleagues to influence change at the Executive to facilitate access for this treatment in Dublin.

On behalf of Council, Members from each Party passed on their condolences to Catherine's family.

**AGREED:**

**It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Feehan, seconded by Councillor Devlin that 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.**

**C/124/2025**

**NOTICE OF MOTION – AUTISM FRIENDLY TOWNS**

The following 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".*



The Motion was seconded by Councillor Young.

**Agreed:**                      **The Motion was referred to the Equality and Good Relations Working Group in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6**

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 8.45pm.

For confirmation at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 1 September 2025.

**Signed:**                      \_\_\_\_\_  
   **Chairperson**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Chief Executive**

**NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**RECORDED VOTE**

**DATE:** 4 August 2025 **VENUE:** Downshire Civic Centre **MEETING:** Council

**SUBJECT OF VOTE:** Vote to accept the Legal Advice as provided regarding Call-in

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

**NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Ref: AC/2025**

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**Minutes of Audit Committee Meeting held on Thursday 31 July 2025, at 3.00pm, in the Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick**

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**Chairperson:** Ms B Slevin, Independent Chairperson

**In attendance  
in Chamber:**

Councillor C Bowsie	Councillor L Devlin
Councillor O Hanlon	Councillor A Mathers
Councillor K Murphy	Councillor S O'Hare
Councillor G Sharvin	

**Officials in attendance  
in Chamber:**

Mrs J Kelly, Director Corporate Services  
 Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism  
 Mr A Patterson, Director Active & Healthy Communities  
 Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director of Capital & Procurement  
 Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Performance  
 Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager  
 Mrs F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer

**Officials in attendance  
via Teams:**

Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Regeneration

**Also in attendance  
in chamber:**

Mr P Brady      Sumer NI

**Also in attendance  
via Teams:**

Ms K Doey      NIAO

**AC/058/2025: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Gibbons, Howie and King and Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability & Environment.

**AC/059/2025: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Ms Slevin declared an interest in item 15 – Annual Assessment of Chairperson's Performance.

**AC/060/2025: ACTION SHEET OF AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8 AND 25 MAY 2025**

**Read:** Action Sheet arising from Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting held on 8 and 25 May 2025. **(Copy circulated)**



*AC/036/2025: Corporate Risk Register*

Councillor Bowsie requested an update on the discussed Report concerning the Mourne Mountain Gateway Project and asked when it would be tabled.

Mr Mallon advised the Report would be tabled at a Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee once an update was available, as discussions regarding the next steps were still ongoing.

Following a query from Ms Slevin, Mr Mallon confirmed the Report would also be tabled at Audit Committee.

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor Mathers, it was agreed to note the Action Sheet for Audit Committee Meeting held on 8 and 25 May 2025.**

**AC/061/2025: AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2024/2025**

Read: Report from Ms B Slevin, Independent Chair of Audit Committee, regarding Audit Committee Annual Report 2024/2025. **(Copy circulated)**

Ms Slevin presented the 2024–2025 Annual Report, noting that the Committee had performed to the required standard, in line with best practice, and had operated effectively. She advised the NIAO checklist used to assess effectiveness had identified some elements requiring further consideration, which could enhance the Audit Committee’s performance. These were detailed in section 3.1 of the Annual Report.

Ms Slevin thanked Members for their co co-operation and input over year.

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor O’Hare, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to approve the Audit Committee Annual Report**

**CORPORATE SERVICES – OPEN SESSION**

**AC/062/2025: CORPORATE RISK REGISTER – INCLUDING AHC DIRECTORATE RISK REGISTER**

Read: Report from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding the Corporate Risk Register. **(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Kelly confirmed the Senior Management Team (SMT) had met recently on 22 July 2025 to review the Corporate Risk Register, noting the Annual Assurance Statement 24/25 was reflected within the Risk Register. She advised Members that SMT had met prior to the announcement by Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Minister regarding Kilbroney Forest Park, noting that it was part of an ongoing discussion with Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) and updates would be issued in due course.

Councillor Bowsie noted the potential reputational damage on Council to continually fail to deliver projects and queried whether anything could have been done to mitigate barriers

for example, was it known that Kilbroney was dependent on DAERA approval and if so, why was this not noted within the Risk Register.

Mr Mallon stressed the importance of what had happened following the National Trust announcement, stating that Council had agreed to explore the opportunity of moving the project to another site, and had not explicitly agreed to move the project but was merely exploring the opportunity to do so. He stated that following the Minister's announcement, that exploration had concluded.

Councillor Bowsie queried whether Council was aware of the need for DAERA approval, and if so, had it been considered that the DAERA Minister was an Alliance Party Member and stressed that it was clear that the Alliance Party had a clear position on the project.

Mr Mallon advised a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was in place with the Forestry Service that detailed tourism facility arrangements on Council leased lands and this formed the basis of discussions with DAERA, and this MOU had been in place for a number of years.

Councillor Sharvin requested confirmation of his understanding that Council had not identified Kilbroney as the next potential site for the project, but that Tourism NI had reviewed a list of potential projects and had suggested Kilbroney as the next potential to explore.

Mr Mallon confirmed that a range of options had been submitted to Tourism NI as suggested by both the public and Elected Members, and they had been assessed against the criteria as set out within the BRCD ambitions and Kilbroney was the only option suitable for further exploration.

Councillor Sharvin queried whether the Minister was informed of how the proposal would look, and if he had all the information required to make an assessment and if not, should that have been recorded on the Risk Register.

Mr Mallon confirmed that Council was unaware of what information had been provided to the Minister prior to him reaching his decision as Council had met with DAERA to discuss the potential of exploring Kilbroney Park, but stated that as detail such as landing zones, height, entry points, exit points or termination points currently did not exist then the Minister would not have been aware of these.

Councillor Sharvin queried whether there was anything further from an officer perspective that could have been carried out in a different manner given Council was unaware of what information had been presented to the Minister.

Mrs Ward stated that the MOU with the Forest Service had been operational since 2017 and in that time, Council had invested over £10m in forest parks across the District, with plans already underway to invest further. She stated the MOU outlined each partner's roles and responsibilities, and that projects must meet staff approvals. She further confirmed Council spent in the region of around £300k annually maintaining and operating the forest parks. She stated Council now had to give consideration to the MOU and report back through the relevant committees on how that MOU was managed given how decisions were taken at a Departmental level.

Councillor Hanlon stated Council had a very good working relationship with the Forest Service, noting that the Ministers decision was taken at a Departmental level and stressed the positive working relationship must not be damaged as a result of a decision being made with no exploration of any proposal given that information did not currently exist.

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor O'Hare, the following was agreed:

- To approve the updates to the Corporate Risk Register highlighted within the summary at Appendix 1. Full Corporate Risk Register can be evidenced at Appendix 2.
- To note the revised AHC Directorate Risk Register summary at Appendix 3 and detailed AHC Directorate Risk Register at appendix 4.

Read: Report from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Procurement, regarding Performance Improvement Plan 2025/26  
(Copy circulated)

Councillor Bowsie acknowledged that, while not the most appropriate forum for suggestions, he queried whether it would be possible to include community halls alongside allocation of funding to sports clubs within the Plan as they also hosted a range of fitness and wellness programmes that supported less active and socially isolated individuals.

Councillor Sharvin noted the reported improvement in enforcement cases, citing similar statistics from the previous year, and queried whether further detail could be provided on cases that had been open for more than 12 months.

Mr Byrne advised a quarterly report on planning data was tabled at the Audit Committee, Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee and Planning Committee, containing more detail than what was included in the Performance Improvement Plan. He added further detail could be incorporated into that Report.

Mr McGilly advised that this would be included within subsequent reports.

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Bowsie, it was agreed to note the Performance Improvement Plan 2025/26 (including the five performance improvement objectives), Consultation, Engagement Report 2025/26 and Objective Delivery Plans 2025/26.**

**AC/064/2025: PLANNING UPDATE**

Read: Report from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Regeneration, regarding Planning Department Update. **(Copy circulated)**

Mr McGilly outlined the Report, advising it had been tabled at multiple committees as an update on challenges facing the Planning Department and the measures being taken to address them. He noted that some issues were within the Department's control while others, such as responses from statutory consultees or agents, were not.

Councillor Bowsie expressed concern about the ongoing challenges and reiterated his request for staffing statistics, including retention rates compared to the NI average, reasons for staff departures, and the steps the Council was taking to mitigate these issues. He stated his belief that staff retention was the primary reason the Council was failing to meet targets and requested that more detailed staffing information be presented to address his concerns.

Mr McGilly advised the recent recruitment campaign was unsuccessful as applicants did not meet the essential criteria and confirmed interviews were scheduled over the next two weeks following other successful recruitment campaigns. He noted additional details could be included in subsequent reports relating to staffing.

Mrs Ward interjected to state that attributing the issue solely to staffing was incorrect. She explained this was a challenge affecting all council areas and was more complex than staffing alone, as detailed within the Report.

Councillor Bowsie stated that, following each of his requests for updates on planning applications, he was told the delays were due to staffing issues rather than the Department awaiting responses from agents, statutory consultees or applicants.

Councillor Devlin queried the progress of the validation checklists, to which Mr McGilly confirmed would be tabled at the Planning Committee meeting in August and were expected to reduce the number of incomplete applications submitted.

Councillor Devlin asked if there had been a response to the Council's approach to the Department for Infrastructure (DFI) regarding statutory consultation response times. Mr McGilly advised discussions were ongoing with all statutory consultees and noted that some, such as NI Water, had agreed to a pilot scheme aimed at alleviating delays.

Councillor O'Hare queried whether additional support could be provided to applicants and agents to help speed up processing times. Mr McGilly advised regular engagement already

occurred and highlighted the validation checklist should further reduce the number of incomplete applications.

Councillor O'Hare then asked if the Department contacted both the applicant and the agent for outstanding information or what the process entailed. Mr McGilly confirmed the Department communicated only with the party who submitted the application, explaining that contacting both the applicant and agent would increase and duplicate the Department's workload especially when the applicant had outsourced the work to an agent.

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to note the contents of the report.**

**AC/065/2025: PROMPT PAYMENT STATISTICS**

Read: Report from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Procurement, regarding Prompt Payment Statistics **(Copy circulated)**

Mr Byrne confirmed the Quarter 1 prompt payment statistics, advising 30% of invoices had been paid within 10 days and 90% within 30 days.

Councillor Sharvin queried the reduction in the statistics compared to both the previous quarter and the previous year. Mr Byrne responded that several factors had contributed to the decline, including the introduction of a new control on non-Purchase Order (PO) invoices and staff absences. He confirmed measures were in place to address the non-PO invoice issue, staffing levels had returned to normal, and he hoped the statistics would improve and remain stable.

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Bowsie, it was agreed to note the Quarter 1 Prompt Payment Statistics 2025/26**

**AC/066/2025: NMDDC ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK AND CODE OF GOVERNANCE**

Read: Report from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Procurement, regarding NMDDC Assurance Framework & Code of Governance. **(Copy circulated)**

Mr Byrne confirmed the Assurance Framework was an Annual Report tabled for approval, with a summary provided in Appendix 1 of the Officer's Report. He explained it demonstrated how the Council monitored its governance arrangements and provided evidence to support the Annual Governance Statement.

In relation to supporting principle A2 within the framework (page 9), Councillor Bowsie noted the Register of Members' Interests was published online and queried whether a register of senior officers' interests should also be published as the relevant section of the website had been blank for some time.

Mrs Ward advised officers' declarations of interest were managed in line with established procedures and consistent with practices across other councils. She added she could forward the process to Members if required.

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Bowsie, it was agreed to note the Council's Assurance Framework and the Code of Governance, illustrated and described at Appendix 1.**

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

**Agreed:** **On the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during the following items which related to exempt information by virtue of Part 3 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during these items of business.**

**Agreed:** **On the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor Bowsie, it was agreed to come out of Closed Session.**

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

**CORPORATE SERVICES (CLOSED SESSION)**

**AC/067/2025:** **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2024/25**

**Read:** Report from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Performance, regarding an Annual Governance Statement and Statement of Accounts 2024/25 **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to approve the Annual Governance Statement 2024/25, subject to any amendments, and to note the draft Statement of Accounts and Financial Statement at Appendix 1 of the Officer's Report.**

**AC/068/2025: UPDATE ON AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS – TO INCLUDE RISK PROFILE**

Read: Report from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Performance, regarding an Update on Audit Recommendations – To Include Risk Profile. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Devlin, it was agreed to note the progress in implementing both internal and external audit recommendations.**

**AC/069/2024: DIRECT AWARD CONTRACTS**

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

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, it was agreed to note the Q1 Financial Year ended 31/03/2025 update in relation to Direct Award Activity and to note the developmental work being carried out including the Active DAC register at 30 June 2025.**

**Cllr Hanlon left the meeting during discussion on the above item – 4.35pm**

**AC/070/2025: PROCUREMENT ACTION PLANS**

Read: Report from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Procurement Action Plans. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, it was agreed to note the update and progress in relation to Procurement and the Directorate Procurement Action Plans**

**AC/071/2025: UPDATE ON FRAUD AND WHISTLEBLOWING**

Read: Report from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Performance, regarding Update on Fraud and Whistleblowing. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Bowsie, it was agreed to note the following:**

- **The update in relation to fraud and raising concerns cases as detailed at Appendix 1**
- **The progress on actions arising from the NIAO Internal Fraud Risk self-assessment**
- **The update in relation to the National Fraud Initiative**



**Having previously declared an interest, Ms Slevin left the room for discussion on the following item – 4.46pm**

**AC/072/2025: ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF CHAIRPERSON'S PERFORMANCE**

Read: Report from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Annual Assessment of Chairperson's Performance. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor O'Hare, it was agreed to note the assessment of the Chairperson's performance

**Ms Slevin rejoined the meeting – 4.49pm**

**INTERNAL AUDIT (CLOSED SESSION)**

**AC/073/2025: SUMER NI SUMMARY REPORT**

Read: Sumer NI Summary Report **(Copy circulated)**

Ms Slevin welcomed Mr Padraig Brady to the chamber as the new Audit Manager.

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Bowsie, it was agreed to note the Sumer NI Summary Report

**AC/074/2025: INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2025/26**

Read: Internal Audit Plan 2025/26. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, it was agreed to approve the Internal Audit Plan 2025/26

**AC/075/2025: INFORMATION GOVERNANCE AUDIT REPORT**

Read: Information Governance Audit Report. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Bowsie, it was agreed to note the Information Governance Audit Report

**AC/076/2025: STRATEGY BRIDGING LETTER**

Read: Strategy Bridging Letter. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Bowsie, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, it was agreed to note the Strategy Bridging Letter.



There being no further business the meeting concluded at 5.09pm

For consideration at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 1 September 2025.

**Signed:**                    **Ms J Kelly**  
                                 **Director Corporate Services**

**Signed:**                    **Ms B Slevin**  
                                 **Independent Chairperson**

**NEWRY MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**Minutes of the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting  
held on Monday 11 August 2025 at 6.00pm in Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre**

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**Chairperson:** Councillor D Lee-Surginor

**Committee Members  
in attendance:**

Councillor T Andrews  
Councillor G Hanna

Councillor C Galbraith  
Councillor A Lewis

**Committee Members  
in attendance via Teams:**

Councillor V Harte  
Councillor S Murphy  
Councillor M Ruane

Councillor G Kearns  
Councillor A Quinn  
Councillor H Young

**Officials in attendance:**

Ms A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth and Tourism  
Ms S Stephenson, Head of Programmes  
Ms F Brannagh, Democratic Services Officer  
Mr C Smyth, Democratic Services Officer

**ERT/052/2025**

**APOLOGIES / CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Feehan and Hanlon, and Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism and Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Regeneration.

The Chairperson advised that in an effort to be more transparent, many of the reports were tabled in open session while the appendices were in closed session. He asked that should Members have any questions regarding an appendix that they wait until the meeting was in closed session to raise any queries.

Councillor Galbraith expressed sincere condolences to the victim of the recent tragedy in Downpatrick and extended best wishes for a full and speedy recovery to Canon Murray. The Chairperson and Councillor Andrews echoed these sentiments.

**ERT/068/2025**

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**ERT/069/2025**

**ACTION SHEET ECONOMY, REGENERATION & TOURISM  
COMMITTEE MEETING MONDAY 9 JUNE 2025**

Read:

Action Sheet arising out of the Minutes of the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday 9 June 2025 **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:**

**On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Galbraith, it was agreed to note the**

**Action Sheet arising from the Economy,  
Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held  
on Monday 9 June 2025.**

*ERT/080/2024 – Down County Museum Café,*

Councillor Andrews enquired about an update on the above item. Ms Smyth advised that works at Down County Museum were ongoing and expected to be completed within the next few weeks, after which an expression of interest would be issued to appoint a suitable provider.

*ERT/056/2025 – Outdoor revamp of Delamont Country Park*

Councillor Andrews enquired about an update on the above item. Ms Smyth confirmed that, as the outdoor revamp of Delamont Country Park had been approved at the July Council meeting, officers would proceed to implement the actions and appoint an agent to progress the works.

**FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION**

**ERT/070/2025**

**OFFICER REPORT ON NOTICE OF MOTION –  
ESTABLISHMENT OF ARTS WORKING GROUP**

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism regarding Arts Working Group. **(Copy circulated)**

The Chairperson stated that a request had been received from Councillor Finn to defer this item until September's meeting.

**AGREED:**

**On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Galbraith, it was agreed to defer the item.**

**ERT/071/2025**

**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

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

Ms Stephenson advised that the report sought approval for financial assistance under Call One for 2026/2027, proposed to open in November 2025, subject to internal and external budget confirmation. She confirmed that relevant approval was also being sought for the updated assessment of financial assistance for the VJ Day Arts and Culture theme, as detailed in Appendix 1.

Members were informed that the capital call for Community Capital Works and minor capital items would open on 26 August 2025 for six weeks. Two in-person workshops were scheduled for early September, followed by an online session.

Councillor Hanna noted that several groups had missed out on Christmas funding last year due to being unaware of changes to the process, including the requirement to submit information by mid-January and raised concern this may occur again this year. In response, Ms Stephenson confirmed that all relevant financial assistance information was advertised annually through local press and Council social media channels. She also confirmed that she had spoken with the group in question and outlined the amended timeframes, which the group acknowledged.

**AGREED:**

**On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Galbraith, the following was agreed,**

- **To approve that Financial Assistance Call 1, Revenue for 2026/2027 will open in November 2025. The call will be opened, and managed subject to confirmation of budgets both internal and external for 2026/27**
- **To approve the outcome of the updated assessment in Financial Assistance 2025/2026 call - themes VJ Day and Arts and Culture which are summarised at appendix 1.**

**ERT/072/2025**

**PEACEPLUS**

Read:

Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, regarding PEACEPLUS Theme 1.1.  
**(Copy circulated)**

Ms Stephenson advised that the paper was presented for members to note the minutes of the PEACEPLUS Partnership Board Meeting held on 20 July 2025. She reported that several business cases required approval before progressing to procurement, including enhancements to community facilities, development of shared outdoor spaces and walking trails, and management of verification services under the SEUPB framework.

Ms Stephenson noted that SEUPB had established a framework for appointing first-level control to verify all expenditure under the PEACEPLUS programme, highlighting capital project strands 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3, which were selected through an expression of interest process conducted last year. She confirmed that the aim was to complete these projects by this time next year.

Councillor Hanna stated that his party had concerns regarding an individuals' role working on the PEACEPLUS programme. Ms Stephenson and Ms Smyth clarified that this was a HR consideration and that the person in question was not an employee of the Council.

**AGREED:**

**On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor, the following was agreed:**

- **To approve the minutes of the PEACEPLUS Partnership on 24 July 2025 which are attached at Appendix 1 to this report.**
- **To approve the business case for procurement of a First Level Controller to provide management verification services under the SEUPB framework.**
- **Approval for business cases:**
  1. **Strand 1.2 Enhancement of community facilities.**
  2. **Strand 1.3 Development of shared outdoor spaces.**
  3. **Strand 1.3 Development of walking trails.**

**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 Lewis, 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 Lewis seconded by Councillor Hanna, it was agreed to come out of Closed Session.

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

**ERT/073/2025**

**ARTISAN MARKETS**

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

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor, it was agreed to:

- Note attendance figures of the three Council Artisan Markets.
- Note Council will deliver a Make it Local campaign highlighting artisan crafters.
- Approve that Council continues to focus delivery and growth of the artisan markets provided in Downpatrick, Newcastle and Warrenpoint.

**ERT/074/2025**

**BRCD ANNUAL REPORT**

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth and Tourism, regarding Belfast Region City Deal – Annual Report. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Galbraith, it was agreed to accept the BRCD Annual Report 2024/25 which has been approved by the BRCD Executive Board.

**ERT/075/2025**

**RURAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GRANTS SCHEME**

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth

& Tourism, regarding Labour Market Partnership. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:**

**On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor, it was agreed that, pending DAERA approval of the Rural Business Development Scheme for 2025/26, Council to administer the Rural Business Development Grant Scheme in line with the terms and conditions set by the Department.**

**FOR NOTING**

**ERT/076/2025**

**EATS & BEATS GRANT APPLICATION**

Read:

Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding Eats and Beats Grant Application to DAERA (Northern Ireland Regional Food Programme). **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:**

**On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed to note the report.**

**ERT/077/2025**

**ERT SCHEME OF DELEGATION 2024-2025**

Read:

ERT Scheme of Delegation 2024-2025. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:**

**On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed to note the document.**

**ERT/078/2025**

**HERITAGE, CULTURE AND CREATIVITY PROGRAMME**

Read:

Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding Heritage, Culture and Creativity Programme: Framework document. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:**

**On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed to note the report.**

**ERT/079/2025**

**KILKEEL LOWER SQUARE/RIVER WALK EI SCHEME**

Read:

Report from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding Kilkeel Lower Square/River Walk EI Scheme. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:**

**On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed to note the report.**

**ERT/080/2025**

**MULTIPLY PROGRAMME DELIVERY**

Read:

Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding Multiply Programme. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:**

**On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed to note the report.**

**ERT/081/2025**

**MUSEUM ACCREDITATION**

Read:

Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding NMD's Museum' Accreditation. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:**

**On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed to note the report.**

**ERT/082/2025**

**CHINA – NI SISTER-CITY COOPERATION SEMINAR**

Read:

Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding China-NI Sister-City Cooperation Seminar. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:**

**On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed to note the report.**

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 6.36pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 1 September 2025

**Signed: Councillor D Lee-Surginor**  
**Chairperson**  
**Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee**

**Signed: Conor Mallon**  
**Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism**



**NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**Minutes of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on  
Thursday 14 August 2025 at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Downshire Civic  
Centre**

**In the Chair:** Councillor D McAteer

**In Attendance in  
Chamber:**

Councillor P Byrne	Councillor C Enright
Councillor M Hearty	Councillor A Lewis
Councillor A Mathers	Councillor S O'Hare
Councillor H Reilly	Councillor M Rice
Councillor G Sharvin	

**Committee Members in  
Attendance via Teams:**

Councillor R Howell	Councillor D Taylor
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**Non-Committee Members  
In Attendance:**

Councillor T Andrews

**Officials in Attendance  
in Chamber:**

Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services  
Mr A Patterson, Director of Active & Healthy Communities  
Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability & Environment  
Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director of Capital, Estates & Procurement  
Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of People & Legal  
Mr C Sage, Assistant Director of Sustainability  
Ms M Hughes, HR & OD Manager  
Mrs F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer  
Mr C Smyth, Democratic Services Officer

**Officials in Attendance  
Via Teams:**

Ms C Hughes, Head of Performance & Improvement (Acting)

**SPR/114/2025:**

**APOLOGIES & CHAIRPERSONS REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillor Hanlon, Councillor King, Mrs Ward, Chief Executive and Mr Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism.

As the Chairperson for the Committee was an apology, Deputy Chairperson Councillor McAteer assumed the role of Chair for the meeting.

The Chairperson advised that he had received a request to defer item 7- Procurement Policy and item 10 – Reserves Policy, to allow further time for scrutiny of the information provided within the documents and asked if the Members present were in agreement with the request. Councillor Reily proposed the deferrals, which was seconded by Councillor O'Hare.

**SPR/115/2025:**

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**SPR/116/2025: ACTION SHEET OF STRATEGY, POLICY & RESOURCES MEETING HELD ON 12 JUNE 2025**

**Read:** Action Sheet of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee meeting held 12 June 2025. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed to approve the action sheet of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee meeting of 12 June 2025.**

**FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION**

**SPR/117/2025: PORTABLE APPLIANCE TESTING POLICY**

**Read:** Report from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director of Sustainability, regarding Portable Appliance Testing Policy. **(Copy circulated)**

Mr Sage provided an overview of the Policy, noting that it had been tabled and approved at both the Corporate Management Team meeting in June and the Senior Management Team meeting in July and was now tabled for Members consideration.

Councillor Reilly proposed to accept the Officer's Recommendations, emphasising the importance of ensuring the required actions were completed.

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed to approve the Portable Appliance Testing Policy.**

**SPR/118/2025: REVISED CORPORATE PRIVACY NOTICE**

**Read:** Report from Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of People & Legal, regarding Revised Corporate Privacy Notice. **(Copy Circulated)**

Ms McClean advised that the existing Privacy Notice required updating to reflect recent legislative changes and to provide greater clarity for users regarding the reasons for, and methods by which, the Council collected and used personal data in the delivery of its services and the performance of its functions.

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Reilly, it was agreed to approve the revised Privacy Notice and Email Disclaimer.**

**SPR/119/2025: 110<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF 10<sup>TH</sup> (IRISH) DIVISIONS ACTIONS ON THE GALLIPOLI PENINSULA**

**Read:** Report from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding 110<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Divisions Actions on the Gallipoli Peninsula. **(Copy Circulated)**

Mrs Kelly confirmed that, following a request at Council, the cost of travel to the event had been reviewed and a more cost-effective option had been identified, as outlined within the Report. She advised that she understood that three Members wished to attend and that it was now a matter for Members to determine the next steps regarding attendance

Councillor Lewis welcomed the reduced cost and proposed that three Members attend the event.

Councillor Sharvin sought clarification on the proposal, noting that the report asked Members to consider whether a delegation should be sent. He queried the proposed number of attendees, given the associated costs, and further questioned whether the Council could instead mark the event within the District, as had been done for previous commemorations.

Councillor Lewis acknowledged the official invitation received and stated that Newry, Mourne and Down District Council should be represented. He indicated he would be content with two attendees rather than three and expressed support for also holding a local event to mark the commemoration. Councillor Taylor echoed these views.

A discussion then ensued concerning the established process for determining attendance at such events, the outcome of which was that it was agreed that Council representation at the event was important, and that the matter should be referred to a forthcoming Party Leaders' meeting for further consideration.

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed that the item would be tabled at a forthcoming Party Leaders meeting.**

**SPR/120/2025:** **PROCUREMENT POLICY**

**Read:** Report from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Procurement Policy **(Copy Circulated)**

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor O'Hare, it was agreed to defer the item to September's Committee Meeting.**

**SPR/121/2025:** **ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE 2024/25.**

**Read:** Report from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Assessment of Performance 2024/25 **(Copy Circulated)**

Mrs Kelly outlined the report, noting that the item had been tabled at various committees, highlighting Council's progress in relation to the Corporate Plan 2024 – 2027.

Councillor Enright queried whether an explanatory note could accompany the documents, noting that the number of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued within the Cleansing service remained relatively low and required attention. He further emphasised the need to set

targets relating to electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the District's car parks, highlighting the potential for financial gain through engagement with the green economy.

Mrs Murphy advised that these matters had been addressed and prioritised within the 2025–2026 Sustainability & Environment Business Plan. She noted that actions and targets relating to climate change, such as electric vehicle charging, had been incorporated with proposals and that specific targets, currently under development, would be published towards the end of 2025.

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Reilly, it was agreed to approve the Assessment of Performance 2024/25, including the summary document "Our Performance Looking Back, Going Forward".

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

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Rice, 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 Lewis, seconded by Councillor O'Hare, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

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

**SPR/122/2025: PURCHASE TO PAY SYSTEM DAC 2025/26**

**Read:** Report from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Purchase to Pay System DAC 2025/26 (**Copy circulated**)

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to approve the Purchase to Pay DAC to ensure continuity of financial systems. Cost already included within the Council's Revenue Budgets.

**SPR/123/2025: RESERVES POLICY**

**Read:** Report from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Reserves Policy. (**Copy circulated**)

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor O'Hare, it was agreed to defer the item to September's Committee Meeting.

**SPR/124/2025:** **PROPOSED LICENCE OF FISHING RIGHTS AT DONAGHAGUY LAKE**

**Read:** Report from Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of Legal and People, regarding Proposed Licence of Fishing Rights at Donaghaguy Lake. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Rice, seconded by Councillor McAteer, it was agreed to grant a licence to the party named within the Officer's Report for the fishing rights for Donaghaguy Lake, Warrenpoint, for a period of up to five years at a Peppercorn Licence Fee, subject to Departmental Consent.

**SPR/125/2025:** **PROPOSED LEASE OF AREA AT DOWNPATRICK HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING CENTRE**

**Read:** Report from Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of Legal and People, regarding Lease of Area at Downpatrick Household Recycling Centre. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed to enter into a lease with the group noted in this report in respect of the area outlined in red for the term outlined, subject to the requested detail being shared with Members prior to ratification at Full Council. Proposed rent to be determined by Council's valuer.

**SPR/126/2025:** **LEASE OF LANDS AT ST ANNES PARK, MAYOBRIDGE**

**Read:** Report from Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of Legal and People regarding Lease of Lands at St Anne's Park, Mayobridge. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to amend the name of the proposed tenant of the lands at St Anne's Park, Mayobridge noted in the Report to Committee of 12 December 2024 to the correct group as noted in the Officer's Report, subject to revised Departmental Consent.

**SPR/127/2025:**

**LICENCE FOR CONTAINER AT MILLTOWN STREET, WARRENPOINT**

**Read:**

Report from Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of Legal and People, regarding Licence for Container at Milltown Street, Warrenpoint. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:**

**On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to enter into five one-year licenses with the club noted within the Officer's Report in respect of the lands outlined in red on the map attached for a peppercorn licence fee, subject to Departmental Consent.**

**SPR/128/2025:**

**BALLYNAHINCH COMMUNITY CENTRE**

**Read:**

Report from Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director of Capital Projects and Procurement, regarding Ballynahinch Community Centre. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:**

**On the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Hearty, it was agreed to approve the additional costs set out in this report and to update Council's Capital Plan to reflect the change.**

**SPR/129/2025:**

**REPLACEMENT OF PLAY PARK SURFACES**

**Read:**

Report from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director of Sustainability, regarding the Replacement of Play Park Surfaces. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:**

**On the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to approve the Capital Business Case as detailed at Appendix 1 of the Officer's Report.**

**SPR/130/2025:**

**UPGRADE OF COUNCIL FACILITIES CCTV SYSTEMS**

**Read:**

Report from Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability & Environment, regarding Upgrade of Facilities CCTV Systems. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:**

**On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Reilly, it was agreed to approve the Business Case at Appendix 1 of the Officer's Report, to upgrade Council facilities CCTV Systems.**



**SPR/131/2025:**

**TYRELLA BEACH AMENITY BUILDING**

**Read:**

Report from Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director of Capital Projects & Procurement, regarding Tyrella Beach Amenity Building. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:**

**On the proposal of Councillor Lewis, seconded by Councillor O'Hare, it was agreed to approve the additional spend and the updating of the Council's Capital Plan as detailed within the Officer's Report.**

**SPR/132/2025:**

**FACILITY REFURBISHMENT**

**Read:**

Report from Mr A Patterson, Director of Active & Healthy Communities Committee, regarding Facility Refurbishment. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:**

**On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to approve the variation of the project budget on the Council's Capital Programme as outlined within the Officer's Report.**

**SPR/133/2025:**

**CAPITAL BUILD PROJECT**

**Read:**

Report from Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director of Capital Projects & Procurement, regarding Capital Build Project. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:**

**On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Rice, it was agreed to appoint the Contractor to provide the full delivery of the proposed extension and refurbishment works to the facility and the increase in the Capital Plan as detailed in section 2.1 of the Officer's Report.**

**SPR/134/2025:**

**BUSINESS CASE – AGENCY WORKERS**

**Read:**

Report from Mrs C McClean, Assistant Director of People & Legal, regarding Business Case – Agency Workers. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:**

**On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Reilly, it was agreed to approve the Business Case to enter into a further contract with effect from August 2025 for a period of two years, with the option to extend, by mutual agreement, up to a total of 4 years.**

**SPR/135/2025: BUSINESS CASE – RESIDUAL WASTE CONTRACT**

**Read:** Report from Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability & Environment, regarding Business Case – Residual Waste Contract. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Rice, it was agreed to accept the recommendation as outlined in section 2.4 of the Officer's Report.**

Councillor Enright left the meeting during discussion on the above item – 8.09pm  
Councillor Reilly left the meeting during discussion on the above item – 8.11pm

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

**SPR/136/2025: SICKNESS ABSENCE REPORT**

**Read:** Report from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Sickness Absence Reporting. **(Copy circulated)**

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

**SPR/137/2025: LAND & PROPERTY SERVICES NI VALUATIONS 2025**

**Read:** Report from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Land & Property Services NI Valuations 2025. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed to note the payment to LPSNI for the 2025 valuations.**

**SPR/138/2025: CONTRACT MANAGAMENT & PROCUREMENT UPDATE**

**Read:** Report from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Contract Management & procurement Update. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed to note the update and progress in relation to the Contract Management & Procurement across Council.**

**SPR/139/2025: MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS UPDATE QUARTER 1 2025/26**

**Read:** Report from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Management Accounts Update Q1 2025/26. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed to note the quarter 1 2025/26 Management Accounts.**

# **FOR NOTING**

**SPR/140/2025:** **STATUTORY REPORTING**

**Read:** Report from Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of Legal & People, regarding Statutory Reporting. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Rice, seconded by Councillor Mathers, it was agreed to note the following:**

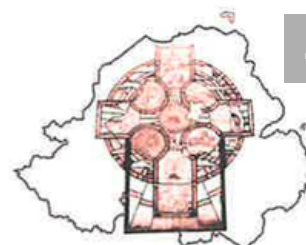
- **Section 75 Policy Screening Report – Quarterly Report for period April – June 2025**
- **Newry, Mourne & Down District Council’s Public authority Equality & Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report for period 2024 – 2025 for submission to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland by 31 August 2025.**

There being no further business, the Meeting concluded at 8.26pm

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 1 September 2025.

**Signed:** **Councillor Declan McAteer**  
**Deputy Chairperson**

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



Dalaradia Cultural and Historical Society @ The Whitehouse , 28-34 Whitehouse Park, BT37 9SQ

[whitehouse21@gmail.com](mailto:whitehouse21@gmail.com) 02890 801690

August 4th , 2025

The Chief Executive  
Each County Council  
Northern Ireland  
Southern Ireland

Dear Chief Executive,

May I extend our thanks to you and your staff for acknowledging and replying to our invitation to attend the Gallipoli Commemoration with colleagues from each council in Northern and Southern Ireland.

The overall reaction has been both welcoming and encouraging and bodes well for future cross community engagements. Unfortunately we have not secured enough numbers to make the trip viable on this occasion and must regrettfully inform you that the proposed trip will not proceed as planned.

May I extend an invitation to you to visit The Whitehouse Museum in Newtownabbey at any time and assure you of a warm welcome from our Dalaradia Cultural and Historical Society

Yours faithfully,

Robert Williamson  
Chair  
0044 7795274433



**NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Ref: AHC/2025**

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**Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on  
Monday 18 August 2025 at 6.00pm in the Council Chambers,  
Downshire Civic Centre**

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**Chairperson:** Councillor C Bowsie

**In attendance  
in Chamber:**

Councillor L Devlin	Councillor C Galbraith
Councillor R Howell	Councillor J Jackson
Councillor D Lee-Surginor	Councillor A Mathers
Councillor L McEvoy	Councillor D Murphy
Councillor K Murphy	

**Committee Members in  
attendance (via Teams):**

Councillor J Brennan	Councillor D Finn
Councillor J Truesdale	

**Non Committee Members  
in attendance:**

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor G Sharvin
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**Officials in Chamber:**

Mr A Patterson, Director, Active and Healthy Communities  
Mr C Haughey, Assistant Director, Healthy Living  
Mrs M Flynn, Head of Engagement  
Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer  
Mrs F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer

**Also in attendance:**

**NMD Strategic Stakeholder Forum**  
Mr L Devine  
Mr N McCrickard

**AHC/060/2025: APOLOGIES & CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Gibbons and Magennis and Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development.

**AHC/061/2025: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**AHC/062/2024: PRESENTATION – NMD STRATEGIC STAKEHOLDER FORUM – SOCIAL SUPERMARKET INITIATIVE**

The Chairperson welcomed Mr Devine and Mr McCrickard from NMD Strategic Stakeholder Forum to the Committee Meeting and invited them to make their presentation.

Mr McCrickard and Mr Devine took Members through a presentation entitled 'Strategic Stakeholder Forum' highlighting the work of the Forum that operated a collaborative model to drive a joined up community focused approach across the District. (Copy attached to these minutes).

During the presentation Members were provided with an overview of the Social Supermarket Programme as well as the Employ Me initiative that highlighted the value in terms of collaboration, particularly using the strengths of the voluntary and community sector to produce real, tangible and long lasting results for participants on programmes.

Mr McCrickard spoke of how the collective forum, where working collaboratively and in partnership was the way forward, especially given the current financial constraints, resulted in better results for everyone involved.

Members were advised that the Department of Health, for example, had initiatives where the Area Integrated Partnership Boards were trying to realign health to involve the community sector and also work with the Department for Communities working on test and learn pilots. Those two central government bodies alone would enable more to be done at local level.

Mr McCrickard advised they were trying to engage in those conversations and were seeking the support of Council to ensure that, if given an opportunity to engage on local initiatives with Government departments, that they had the backing of Council.

The Strategic Stakeholder Forum through initiatives such as the Social Supermarket had proven that working closely and collaboratively with the local community sector made things happen.

Councillors Devlin, Lee-Surginor, D Murphy and Andrews each took the opportunity to commend the work of the Strategic Stakeholder Forum and the impact its programmes had for countless people, particularly with the cost of living crisis.

Councillor Finn proposed the Active and Healthy Committee provide letters of support for the Strategic Stakeholder Forum working with the various Government Departments and write on their behalf to offer support for applications when required. Councillor Devlin seconded the proposal.

Mr McCrickard and Mr Devine thanked Members for their time and for their support.

**AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Finn, seconded by Councillor Devlin that the Active and Healthy Communities Committee provide letters of support for the Strategic Stakeholder Forum working with the various Government Departments and write on their behalf to offer support for applications when required.**



**AHC/063/2025: ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM ACTIVE & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16 JUNE 2025**

Read: Action sheet of the Active & Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 16 June 2025. **(Copy circulated)**.

*AHC/058/2025 – Summer Activity Programme*

Councillor Devlin took the opportunity to thank officers for the summer activity programme that had been rolled out across the District. She spoke of the quality of youth work involved and how it was delivered at a cost that was value for money and the importance of that particularly given that poverty affected many parents especially over the summer months.

**AGREED:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Howell, to note the Action Sheet of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 16 June 2025.**

**AHC/064/2025: DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREA (DEA) FORUMS UPDATE REPORT**

Read: Report dated 18 August 2025 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development presented by Mrs M Flynn, Head of Engagement regarding an update on District Electoral Area (DEA) Forums. **(Copy circulated)**

*Action Sheet from Downpatrick DEA Meeting: Request to use Lower Green, Strangford for funfair site*

Councillor Galbraith enquired if an officer had consulted with everyone involved with the funfair to reach a solution to noise disturbances for residents. Mrs Flynn advised she would follow up on the matter and revert back to Councillor Galbraith directly with an update.

*Action sheet from the Mournes DEA Meeting: Newcastle Leisure Centre*

Councillor Devlin requested an update on the procurement process regarding consultants and enquired if there would be public consultation on the design process for the new Leisure Centre, specifically outside the statutory planning process.

Mr Patterson confirmed the procurement process was ongoing and it was hoped that in the next few weeks an update would be brought back to Members regarding the next steps. Mr Patterson also confirmed there would be consultation with regards to the design of the scheme that would precede the statutory planning consultation process.

In thanking the Director for the update, Councillor Devlin spoke of the importance of all elected members placing information in the public domain that was factually correct. She added that if any Members were aware of a bigger site that could accommodate and better serve the leisure and community needs of Newcastle that they inform the Senior Management Team to allow for investigation in advance of the next Council meeting so that Council could move forward

collectively to progress the leisure centre plans.

- AGREED:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Lee-Surginor, seconded by Councillor Devlin, to note the report and approve the actions in the action sheets attached for:**
- Rowallane DEA Forum Meeting held on 10 June 2025
  - Downpatrick DEA Forum Meeting held on 10 June 2025
  - Slieve Croob DEA Forum Meeting held on 17 June 2025
  - Newry DEA Forum Meeting held on 8 July 2025
  - Slieve Gullion DEA Forum Meeting held on 1 July 2025
  - Mourne DEA Forum Meeting held on 22 July 2025

**AHC/065/2025: LEISURE CENTRE CLOSURE ARRANGEMENTS 2025/26**

Read: Report dated 18 August 2025 from Mr C Haughey, Assistant Director of Healthy Living, regarding Leisure Centre Closure Arrangements. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Galbraith enquired whether new members were made aware of scheduled closures.

Mr Haughey confirmed new members were informed and once the closure arrangements for 2025/26 were approved, they would be communicated to all members.

Councillor Mathers spoke of the importance of communication with service users well in advance.

Councillor Mathers highlighted a minor error within the report that was noted.

- AGREED:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Galbraith, to approve the leisure closure arrangements for the 2025/26 period as detailed within the officer's report.**

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

- AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on the following items, 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 Howell, seconded by Councillor Devlin, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.**

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

**AHC/066/2025: 2025/26 COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAMME AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS**

Read: Report dated 18 August 2025 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development presented by Mrs M Flynn, Head of Engagement regarding 2025/26 Community Support Programme and Community Development Service Level Agreements. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor McEvoy, to award funding from the 2025/26 Community Support Programme budget and to enter into Service Level Agreements with the named organisations with regards to their funding and service provision, as detailed within the officer's report.**

**AHC/067/2025: AREAS AT RISK PROGRAMME FUNDING**

Read: Report dated 18 August 2025 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development presented by Mrs M Flynn, Head of Engagement regarding Areas at Risk Programme Funding. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor D Murphy, seconded by Councillor Mathers, to note receipt of Letters of Offer for the continuation of programme delivery for the period 2025/26 as set out within the officer's report.**

**AHC/068/2025: COMMUNITY FESTIVAL AND EVENTS PROGRAMME FUNDING**

Read: Report dated 18 August 2025 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development presented by Mrs M Flynn, Head of Engagement regarding Community Festival and Events Programme Funding. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor D Murphy, to note receipt of Letters of Offer for the continuation of programme delivery for the period 2025/26 as set out within the officer's report.**

## FOR NOTING

### **AHC/069/2025: POLICING & COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP (PCSP) AND NEWRY & DOWNPATRICK NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL PARTNERSHIP (NRP) REPORT**

Read: Report dated 18 August 2025 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development regarding actions arising from recent Newry and Downpatrick Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership (NRP) Meetings and the PCSP Meeting. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Andrews took the opportunity to thank the new Chair and Vice Chair for sending him a letter following his term as Chair of the PCSP.

**AGREED:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor D Murphy, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, to note the following:**

- **Minutes of the Newry Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership (NRP) Meeting held on 28 May 2025 and approved on 25 June 2025**
- **Action Sheet of the Downpatrick Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership (NRP) Meeting held on 31 March 2025 and approved on 24 June 2025**
- **Minutes of the Policing Committee & PCSP Meeting held on 27 May 2025, approved at the Policing Committee & PCSP Meeting on 29 July 2025.**

### **AHC/070/2025: PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING EVENTS**

Read: Report dated 18 August 2025 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development regarding actions arising from recent Newry and Downpatrick Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership (NRP) Meetings and the PCSP Meeting. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor McEvoy, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor, to note the contents of this report, including the upcoming Participatory Budget events in each of the 7 District Electoral Areas.**

There being no further business the meeting ended at 6.40pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 1 September 2025

Signed: Councillor C Bowsie  
Chairperson

Signed: Andrew Patterson  
Director Active and Healthy Communities



Presentation to the Active & Healthy Communities Committee  
Monday 18<sup>th</sup> August 2025

## Introduction

- The Strategic Stakeholder Forum (SSF) operates via a collaborative model **driving a joined-up, community-focused approach** across the district.



## Our partners



## Setting the Scene: SSF Approach G Governance



Overview of SSF's approach: multi-agency coordination, shared governance, and cross-sector decision-making.



Success during the pandemic in uniting services quickly and efficiently.



Council's continued support, including a **G% funding uplift this year**, has enabled programme growth.





## Taking Action



### Parliament Buildings - September 2022

The SSF came together to highlight their policy paper, 'Living Well Together – Planning for Recovery and Renewal' to ask for solutions to the challenges our community faces.

The event provided an opportunity for the SSF Forum to showcase what can be achieved with Community Organisations through partnership working.



## The Power of Collaboration



Through the SSF, multiple agencies and community partners **coordinate efforts** to provide **holistic support** for residents—aligning food support with health and employment initiatives.



Collaborative working has improved outreach, reduced duplication, and delivered tangible community benefits.



## Spotlight Initiative #1 – Social Supermarket Programme (SSM)

- Throughout the lifetime of this programme the SSM has provided **vital support to 484 individuals** with affordable groceries each week PLUS a vital wraparound support service.
- The biggest results reported by participants have included:
  - Reduced household **stress**
  - **Financial** education and support
  - Reduced social **isolation**
  - Access to **mental health** support
  - **Community referrals** for additional support
  - Positive employability outcomes – **employment, education / training**



## SSM Video



## Social Supermarket results

- **2023/2024 – 121** individuals supported (Pilot scheme)
- **2024/2025 - 256** individuals supported
- **2025/2026 – 107** individuals supported (in Q1)

### Quarter 1 Figures

- Single Membership - 15
  - Double Membership - 10 (20)
  - Family Membership - 18 (72)
- Total - 43 Households (107 Individuals)**

On track to support approximately **300 individuals** in **2025/2026 (target is 250)**.



## Social Supermarket in action



**Clanrye Group's Social Supermarket Relocates**  
Clanrye Group's vital Social Supermarket has been relocated from The Quays to Ballybot House in...



The initiative aims to positively influence the eating habits and overall health of people living in low-income communities through practical, locally delivered support.



From newryreporter.com



## Personal stories

Finlay

"I couldn't have continued without this support, I just wouldn't have managed. It has been such a help to me.

I received essentials for the baby – something I was so guilty not having.

I felt at ease, supported and cared for. I really enjoyed the relaxation classes. I needed them more than I thought. I've loved it. Thank you from the bottom of my heart!"



## Personal stories

Sean

"I hit rock bottom when my wife died. I didn't want to get out of bed or speak to anyone. I was slowly giving up.

Life changed 6 months ago when the Social Supermarket open a door to get help and support I didn't know I needed.

Life is a little brighter now. Thank you."



## Spotlight Initiative #2 – employme



- A unique partnership developed as a results of SSF collaboration.
- Employment and skills programme connecting jobseekers to training, employers, and wraparound support.
- **2127** participants supported since inception
- **G23** Employment Outcomes
- **Localised results for Downpatrick :**
  - 395 Participants supported
  - 215 Employment outcomes



## New Initiatives G Future Plans



# Our ask

**NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Ref: SE/2025**

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**Minutes of Sustainability & Environment Committee Meeting held on  
Wednesday 19 August 2025 June at 6.15pm in Council Chamber,  
Downshire Hospital, Downpatrick**

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<b>Chair:</b>	Councillor M Hearty	
<b>In attendance in Chamber:</b>	Councillor T Andrews	
<b>Committee Members in Attendance via Teams:</b>	Councillor K Feehan Councillor M Larkin Councillor M Ruane Councillor H Young	Councillor D Finn Councillor K Murphy Councillor D Taylor
<b>Non-Committee Members In attendance in Chamber:</b>	Councillor C Bowsie	
<b>Non-Committee Members In Attendance via Teams:</b>	Councillor G Hanna	
<b>Officials in Chamber:</b>	Mrs S Murphy, Director, Sustainability and Environment Mr C Sage, Assistant Director of Sustainability Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer Mr C Smyth, Democratic Services Officer	

**SE/082/2025: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON’S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Jackson, Magennis, O’Hare and Reilly.

**SE/083/2025: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Bowsie declared an interest in a matter raised under the Action Sheet – SE/005/024 – Report on Notice of Motion – Flood Preparedness.

**SE/084/2025: ACTION SHEET: SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 JUNE 2025**

Read: Action Sheet of the Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 18 June 2025. **(Copy circulated)**



*SE/073/2025 - BT Line Rental for Town Centre CCTV Systems*

In response to a query from Councillor Andrews, Mr Sage advised that the Council awaited the final programme from the PSNI / BT and were hopeful the programme would be confirmed in time for the next Committee Meeting.

*SE/005/2024 - Report on Notice of Motion – Flood Preparedness*

Councillor Young expressed concern that the Newcastle Flood Resilience Group was at risk of disbanding due to insufficient support from statutory agencies and enquired whether Council could assist. Mrs Murphy advised that the group was supported through Active & Healthy Communities and stated she would request the relevant officers to respond directly to Councillor Young regarding this matter.

In response to a query that Councillor Andrews raised on behalf of Councillor Galbraith, Mr Sage confirmed that he would provide Councillor Galbraith with the requested update. Councillor Bowsie declared an interest in the matter, citing his membership of the Drainage Council.

*SE/091/2024 - Notice of Motion – Dog Fouling*

Councillor Young asked whether the dog fouling reporting tool had been developed and if the mapping exercise had been completed, if not, requested the potential timeframe for its completion. Mrs Murphy advised that some initial work had commenced and stated she would follow up directly with Councillor Young to provide an update on the anticipated timeframes.

*SE/036/2025 - Home to Hospital update*

Councillor Young enquired whether a suitable volunteer sector had been secured, highlighting that the service did not currently cover the Newcastle area. Mrs Murphy responded that a volunteer sector was now in place and asked that Councillor Young forward any information, which could be shared with the officer responsible for the scheme.

Although not appearing on the action sheet, Councillor Finn took the opportunity to ask whether the management of weeds and graffiti was within the responsibility of the Council and highlighted difficulties in reading signage in several areas within Newry which posed challenging for tourists. Mrs Murphy responded that responsibility for weed management was shared between the Council and the Department for Infrastructure, depending on the location of the growth and advised that the matter would be addressed as part of the initial rollout of the Cleansing Review. Regarding graffiti, Mrs Murphy advised that the Council was responsible for Council owned buildings and facilities, while other areas could potentially be addressed through regeneration programmes. She also confirmed that the signage issues raised by Councillor Finn would be reviewed to determine whether cleaning or replacement was required.

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Young, it was agreed to note the Action Sheet of the Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 18 June 2025.**

**FOR CONSIDERATION AND/OR DECISION**

**SE/085/2025: CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO DAERA - NEW RULES FOR SELLING AND SUPPLYING PUPPIES AND KITTENS**

Read: Report from Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability & Environment, regarding Consultation on proposed new rules for the sale and supply of puppies and kittens in Northern Ireland.  
**(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Murphy summarised the proposals in sections 1.2 and 1.3 of the report, which aimed to strengthen animal welfare protections by introducing a registration system for individuals transferring ownership of puppies and kittens under six months old. She noted that while the proposals promoted transparency and safeguarding, they posed significant practical and financial implications for councils in terms of enforcement and administration.

Councillor Andrews welcomed the consultation, describing the proposals as long overdue and important to constituents. He supported the requirement for individuals to register with Councils when transferring ownership of young animals, noting it addressed concerns around irresponsible breeding. He expressed frustration that central government expected Councils to deliver services without adequate funding, especially following DAERA cuts and endorsed the Council's response and concerns over resourcing.

Councillor Young noted that five years had passed since the introduction of Lucy's Law in England, which banned third-party sales of puppies and kittens to improve animal welfare. She expressed concern that Northern Ireland was falling behind in regulating large-scale breeding, which often involved inhumane practices and misled the public about animal health.

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Ruane, it was agreed to approve the DAERA consultation response in appendix 1, on the proposed new rules for the sale and supply of puppies and kittens in Northern Ireland.**

## **SUSTAINABILITY & ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE**

**SE/086/2025:** **FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2025/26**

Read: Report from Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability & Environment, regarding Food Service Plan 2025/26 (**Copy circulated**)

Mrs Murphy presented the report seeking approval of the Food Service Plan 2025/26 advising that the Council maintained the plan in line with Food Standards Agency requirements, ensuring it was regularly reviewed and publicly accessible. The plan outlined how food law was enforced and reflected joint working with other Councils.

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Andrews, it was agreed to note the report and agree to adopt the Food Service Plan 2025/26 attached in appendix 1.**

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

**Agreed:** **On the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Ruane, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on the following items, which related to exempt information by virtue of para. 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local /Government (Northern**

**Ireland) 2014 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.**

**Agreed:** **On the proposal of Councillor Larkin, seconded by Councillor Finn, it was agreed to come out of closed session.**

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

**RESTRICTED – FOR DECISION**

**SE/087/2025: SUSTAINABILITY CONTRACTS**

**Read:** Report from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director: Sustainability, regarding Sustainability Contracts. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Andrews, it was agreed to approve the awards of contracts as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.**

**SE/088/2025: CYCLE TO WORK SCHEME**

**Read:** Report from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director: Sustainability, regarding Appointment of Provider for Cycle to Work Salary Sacrifice Scheme. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Ruane, the following was agreed:**

- **To proceed with the appointment of a new Provider for the Council's Cycle to Work Scheme as detailed in section 2.2 of the report.**
- **To increase the upper limit for purchases via the Cycle to Work scheme and that the scheme remains open for applications all year round as detailed in section 2.3 of the report.**

**SE/089/2025: VARIATION TO FUEL CARD CONTRACT**

**Read:** Report from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director of Sustainability, regarding Variation to Fuel Card Contract. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Ruane, it was agreed to approve the extension of the Fuel Card Contract to the end of March 2026.**

**SE/090/2025: FLEET FUEL VERIFICATION PROCESS**

**Read:** Report from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director of Sustainability, regarding Enhancements to Fuel Infrastructure and Monitoring. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Larkin, it was agreed to approve the recommended fuel infrastructure changes, as detailed in table 2, to ensure that the Council's fuel stock counting procedure are consistent, robust and meet the recommendations highlighted in the Fuel Management Audit.**

**SE/091/2025: WASTE CONTRACTS**

**Read:** Report from Mrs S Murphy, Director: Sustainability & Environment, regarding Waste Management Contracts. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Larkin, it was agreed to approve the Direct Award Contract extensions as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.**

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

**SE/092/2025: ACTION SHEET FROM SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT WORKING GROUP ON WEDNESDAY 18 JUNE 2025**

**Read:** Action Sheet from Sustainability and Environment Working Group on Wednesday 18 June 2025 **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Finn, seconded by Councillor Larkin, it was agreed to note the document.**

**SE/093/2025: ARC 21 JOINT COMMITTEE MEMBERS' MONTHLY BULLETIN HELD ON 26 JUNE 2025 & JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING IN COMMITTEE MINUTES OF THURSDAY 29 MAY 2025**

**Read:** ARC 21 Joint Committee Members' Monthly Bulletin Held On 26 June 2025 & Joint Committee Meeting in Committee Minutes of Thursday 29 May 2025. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Finn, seconded by Councillor Larkin, it was agreed to note the documents.**

## FOR NOTING

**SE/094/2025:** **ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 29 MAY 2025**

Read: ARC21 Joint Committee Meeting No 096 Minutes Thursday 29 May 2025. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Finn, it was agreed to note the document.**

**SE/095/2025:** **NORTHERN IRELAND LOCAL AUTHORITY COLLECTED MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STATISTICS FOR JANUARY TO MARCH 2025**

Read: Northern Ireland Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics for January to March 2025. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Finn, it was agreed to note the report.**

**SE/096/2025:** **CLEANSING REVIEW UPDATE**

Read: Cleansing Review Update. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Finn, it was agreed to note the report.**

**Councillor Bowsie left the meeting at 6.59pm.**

There being no further business the meeting ended at 7.01pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 1 September 2025.

**Signed:** **Councillor Martin Hearty**  
**Deputy Chairperson**

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

<b>Report to:</b>	Council
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	1 September 2025
<b>Subject:</b>	Correspondence to Council
<b>Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):</b>	Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
<b>Contact Officer (Including Job Title):</b>	Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)

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

<b>For decision</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>For noting only</b>	
<b>1.0</b>			<b>Purpose and Background</b>
1.1			To provide an update on correspondence received for attention of Council.
<b>2.0</b>			<b>Key issues</b>
2.1			This paper refers to correspondence to be brought to the attention of Council. Items are referred to in 3.0 below.
<b>3.0</b>			<b>Recommendations</b>
			That Council considers and notes the following correspondence:
3.1			<b>Correspondence from Minister for Infrastructure, NIEA and Minister of Agriculture, Environment &amp; Rural Affairs</b>  Council received correspondence from Minister for Infrastructure, NIEA and the Minister of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs in response to NOM, ReGen Waste Warrenpoint (C/110/2025)
3.2			<b>Correspondence from Minister of Agriculture, Environment &amp; Rural Affairs</b>  Council received correspondence from Minister of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs in response to NOM, NAP (C/109/2025).
3.3			<b>Correspondence from Arts Council and the Department for Communities</b>  Council received correspondence from Arts Council and the Department for Communities in response to NOM Funding Cuts by Arts Council to National Youth Choir (C/122/2025).
3.4			<b>NILGA Executive Summary</b>  Executive Summary from NILGA August 2025 Executive Meeting.
<b>4.0</b>			<b>Resource implications</b>
4.1			Not applicable.
<b>5.0</b>			<b>Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)</b>

5.1	<p><b><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></b></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p><b><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></b></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><b><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></b></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	<b>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</b>
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	<b>Appendices</b>
8.0	<b>Background Documents</b>
	<b>None</b>







**From the office of the Minister for Infrastructure**  
**LIZ KIMMINS MLA**

Marie Ward  
Chief Executive  
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Via Email to Conor Smyth  
(Democratic Services Officer)  
[conor.smyth@nmandd.org](mailto:conor.smyth@nmandd.org)

cc [democratic.services@nmandd.org](mailto:democratic.services@nmandd.org)

Private Office, 3rd Floor,  
James House, Gasworks Site,  
2 - 4 Cromac Avenue,  
Belfast, BT7 2JA  
Telephone: (028) 9054 0540  
Email: [Private.office@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Private.office@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk)

Your reference: ReGen – Warrenpoint Port  
Our reference: COR-0634-2025  
08 August 2025

Marie, a chara,

### **Council Notice of Motion - ReGen at Warrenpoint Port**

Thank you for your letter dated 10 July, relating to the Notice of Motion agreed by the Council.

The Department has no regulatory remit in relation to the work carried out by ReGen at their site at Warrenpoint Port.

The Department does have responsibility in relation to Trust Ports, of which Warrenpoint Harbour Authority (WHA) is one. The Department's role is limited to ensuring that the Port is adhering to good governance and appointing the board to WHA.

The Department is keeping in regular contact with Warrenpoint and is aware that this matter is a priority for the Port and its Board and they are taking all reasonable steps to deal with the matters raised, given their role as landlord. My officials will continue to engage with the Port and receive updates on the issues outlined.

Is mise le meas,

**LIZ KIMMINS MLA**  
**Minister for Infrastructure**



Northern Ireland Environment Agency  
Gníomhaireacht Comhshaoil Thuaisceart Éireann  
Norlin Airlan Environment Agency

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Your Reference: C/110/2025  
Our Reference: CEQ 98-25

Marie Ward  
Chief Executive  
Newry, Mourne & Down District Council

Chief Executive's Office  
NIEA Lisburn  
17 Antrim Road  
Tonagh  
Lisburn  
BT28 3AL

By email: [democratic.services@nmandd.org](mailto:democratic.services@nmandd.org)

Telephone: 028 7744 2053  
Email: [davidp.reid@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:davidp.reid@daera-ni.gov.uk)

20 August 2025

Dear Marie

**Re: Notice of Motion – Urgent Action Needed to Address Regen Waste Storage  
Operation at Warrenpoint Port**

Thank you for your correspondence dated 10 July but received on 1 August. We note similar correspondence was received by Minister Muir and can advise that a single response from Minister Muir has been issued to you today (Our Ref: COR-0572-2025).

Yours sincerely,

**DAVID REID,**  
**Chief Executive**



An Agency within the Department of  
Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs  
[www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)

Gníomhaireacht de chuid na Roinne  
Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil  
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe

An Agency within the Department of  
Fairmin, Environment  
an' Kintra Matthers

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**From the Office of the  
Minister of Agriculture,  
Environment and Rural Affairs**



Department of  
**Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs**

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil  
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department of

**Fairmin, Environment  
an' Kintra Matthers**

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Marie Ward  
Chief Executive  
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council  
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Downshire Civic Centre  
Downshire Estate, Ardglass Road  
Downpatrick BT30 6GQ  
[democratic.services@nmandd.org](mailto:democratic.services@nmandd.org).

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303 Airport Road West  
Sydenham Intake  
Belfast, BT3 9ED  
Telephone: 028 9052 4140  
Email: [private.office@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:private.office@daera-ni.gov.uk)

Our Ref: COR-0572-2025  
Your Ref: C/110/2025  
Date: 20 August 2025

Dear Marie

**NOTICE OF MOTION – WARRENPOINT HARBOUR**

I refer to your correspondence dated 1 August 2025 of the Council's notice of motion, passed on 7 July 2025, regarding the Re-Gen Waste Limited ("Re-Gen") facility at Warrenpoint Harbour and highlighting council members concern regarding *"serious and persistent deterioration in environmental and public health conditions"*.

To clarify, my department does not determine land use classification or planning approval validity. Planning approval must be obtained prior to any consideration of a waste management license application by my department. Planning approval for the Re-Gen facility at Warrenpoint Harbour was granted in May 2013. My department subsequently issued a waste management licence (LN/13/35) in October 2013, with relevant conditions, for the activity specified in the approved planning application.

My officials regularly monitor compliance with the conditions of that licence and since March 2024 have:

- Completed 18 inspections, with 17 confirming the site was in compliance with license conditions. The most recent inspection was on 22 July 2025, deeming the site compliant.
- Conducted off-site odour assessments on 23 separate days, recorded odours attributed to the Re-Gen facility on 3 days (13 June 2024, 26 June 2024 and 6 August 2024). On the 13 June 2024 a minor non-compliance of licence conditions for odour was recorded; however, the other two occasions did not constitute a breach of licence conditions.

If you are deaf or have a hearing difficulty you can contact the Department via the Next Generation Text Relay Service by dialling 18001 + telephone number.

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My officials have also:

- Proactively participated in 11 stakeholder engagement meetings, working collaboratively with your environmental health representatives, Re-Gen, and their consultants Taggarts.
- Hosted 3 multi-agency meetings, fostering strong partnerships with your environmental health team, the Health and Safety Executive, the Public Health Agency and the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service. The most recent being 6 August 2025 with the next meeting planned for November 2025.

The multi-agency meetings allow relevant authorities to share information and discuss any potential issues regarding the activities at this site, with the aim of working collaboratively to address these.

During the meeting on 6 August 2025, I am advised that the recent disruptions to a community festival in Warrenpoint, during late June and early July 2025, were discussed. During that period my department received an increased volume of odour reports resembling creosote, Jeyes fluid, and burning rubber, which were traced to the storage of creosote-treated timber at the harbour. The importation and storage of creosote-treated timber is not an activity that falls under the regulatory remit of my department. I am advised that the environmental health officers from your Council are currently considering formal action on this matter.

Aside from the above, no significant issues were identified in respect of the waste management activities at the harbour.

Further, I can confirm that as Minister, I have had formal discussions with Re-Gen regarding their activities at Warrenpoint Harbour and, despite the already significant oversight mentioned above, I have asked the NIEA Chief Executive to arrange a follow-up meeting with Re-Gen to ensure a focus is maintained on compliance with the relevant environmental authorisations and that there is no unacceptable impact on the local amenity.

These efforts reflect my department's ongoing commitment to transparency, collaboration, and maintaining the highest regulatory standards in response to community concerns. My officials remain committed to fulfilling the departments regulatory responsibilities concerning the Re-Gen facility and will continue to monitor the facility engaging with relevant agencies and community representatives on local concerns, as appropriate. I can assure you that my officials will, and with regard to the DAERA Enforcement Policy, take appropriate enforcement action as and when necessary.

Finally, any public health concerns would primarily be a matter for the Public Health Agency (PHA). However, I am advised that the PHA are unaware of any reports concerning public health and currently there are no concerns in that regard.

I trust you find the above helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Muir', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**ANDREW MUIR MLA**  
**Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs**



**From the Office of the  
Minister of Agriculture,  
Environment and Rural Affairs**



Department of  
**Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs**

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil  
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Department of

**Fairmin, Environment  
an' Kintra Matthers**

[www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)

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Email: [private.office@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:private.office@daera-ni.gov.uk)

Our Ref: COR-0571-2025  
Date: 20 August 2025

Dear Marie,

## **NOTICE OF MOTION - NUTRIENT ACTION PLAN**

Thank you for your correspondence of 1 August 2025 on behalf of the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council advising of a motion agreed by the Council at its meeting of 7 July 2025.

The Nutrients Action Programme (NAP) was introduced 18 years ago to fulfil our legal requirement to reduce water pollution from agricultural sources, with much good work undertaken to date by farmers. The legally required review of the NAP is an important opportunity to shape the actions we can take together over the next four years.

I listened to concerns raised by stakeholders and extended the NAP consultation period by four weeks, as I recognise the complex and scientific nature of many of the proposals. The public consultation on proposed updates to the NAP has provided all stakeholders and the wider public an opportunity to comment. It needed to continue to give everyone an opportunity to have their say as part of the policy development process to support changes to the regulations, in line with the legislative process.

The current consultation on the Nutrients Action Programme 2026-2029 closed on 24 July 2025 and I welcome all the responses received. These are being collated and considered over the coming weeks.

In addition, I have recently announced the following further update to the consultation process which I am sure the council will be aware of. Now that the current consultation has closed, it is my intention to set up a timebound stakeholder task and finish group with an external facilitator and representatives from farming, agri-food, environmental groups and the Department.

If you are deaf or have a hearing difficulty you can  
contact the Department via the Next Generation Text  
Relay Service by dialling 18001 + telephone number.

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Working collaboratively and taking into account the consultation responses, plus any other potential solutions, the group will be asked to propose measures and actions, that are evidence based and workable at farm level within realistic timeframes, as well as meeting legislative requirements. During this process, consideration will be given to the economic impact of these revised proposals and a draft Economic Impact Assessment will also be prepared on the revised proposals.

When the group's work is completed, I will then undertake a further, statutory compliant, eight-week consultation to give the public and wider stakeholders an opportunity to provide views on any updated proposals, before taking my final decisions on the updated NAP to the Executive for agreement.

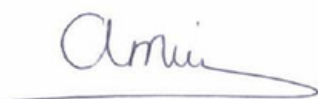
I recognise the vital role farmers play in environmental protection and sustaining rural communities. We continue to invest in new technologies to improve farming practices and remove phosphates from water bodies. This is demonstrated through DAERA's investment of over £12 million in the Sustainable Use of Livestock Slurry research initiative and some £37 million in the Soil Nutrient Health Scheme.

I fully acknowledge that some of the proposed measures in the NAP consultation will of course require investment and officials within my department will consider how we can help meet that funding need in the time ahead. I am firmly committed to a Just Transition not just in relation to climate change but also about other environmental issues. I recently met the Finance Minister to discuss the support we can provide, building upon the £12m plus already secured as part of the Just Transition Fund for Agriculture.

On the issue of wastewater and sewage pollution, I have previously been on the record and wish to repeat my clear view that agriculture is not the only contributor to what has been happening at Lough Neagh and many other water bodies across Northern Ireland. I have consistently stated that the separate regulatory regime with NI Water on wastewater known as SORPI needs to change and I will be bringing proposals to my Executive colleagues on the matter over the time ahead. Everyone must play their part in improving water quality.

The Nutrients Action Programme is concerned with managing excess nutrients from agriculture that are contributing to water pollution and damage to natural habitats. Improving water quality in Northern Ireland is important to everyone. Finding workable solutions is in all our interests, and I believe the level of engagement we have had recently on the NAP will help ensure a positive outcome for all.

Yours sincerely



**ANDREW MUIR MLA**  
Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

## Arts Council of Northern Ireland

Comhairle Ealaíon Thuaisceart Éireann  
Airts Cooncil o Norlin Airlann  
The MAC, 10 Exchange Street West, Belfast BT1 2NJ

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15<sup>th</sup> August 2025

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

Dear Marie

Thank you for your letter dated 14<sup>th</sup> August 2025.

I can confirm that the National Youth Choir of Northern Ireland (NYCNI) did not receive funding from the Arts Council's 25-26 Annual Funding Programme. The decision not to fund the NYCNI this year was based on the assessment of the application against the programme criteria; it was not related to budgetary constraints. I know you will understand that the Arts Council cannot disclose specific information about the rejection of any application without explicit permission to do so from the rejected applicant.

Applications to the Annual Funding Programme were assessed in keeping with the criteria and process as published in the guidance notes which can be viewed at <https://artscouncil-ni.s3-assets.com/Annual-Funding-Programme-2025-26-Guidance-Notes.pdf>.

Please note for ease of reference: Applications are assessed against the following 4 criteria, in addition to an assessment against Risk:

- Criterion 1 : Artistic excellence and creative innovation
- Criterion 2 : Contribution to Sectoral Development
- Criterion 3 : Public Benefit and Engagement
- Criterion 4 : Organisational Capacity and Governance

Applications are rated against each criterion and attributed a Rating which can be Outstanding, Strong, Met or Unmet. An application must achieve a Rating of at least Met against each of the programme criteria or it cannot proceed to the financial recommendation stage of the process.

Assessing Officers consider applications using their professional judgement, based on the information provided within the application, knowledge of an organisation's track record (in relation to both arts delivery and its previous management of ACNI funding), knowledge of the wider arts landscape, and the competitive context in which all applications are evaluated. All assessments are also moderated through a series of meetings which consider recommendations

in relation to the budgetary provision and risk, and to ensure balance across the entire AFP portfolio. Recommendations are then sent to the board of the Arts Council, which makes the final decisions in relation to all AFP awards.

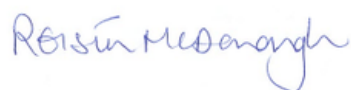
Further to the release of the decision to the NYCNI in April, ACNI staff members provided the company with detailed feedback on their application and also discussed their immediate plans and future funding opportunities. Following the decision, a funding review process was also open to the organisation – as signposted in their rejection letter. NYCNI chose not to submit a funding review request. The organisation also chose not to submit an application to ACNI's next major funding round, which opened in May for awards up to £75k: the National Lottery Project Funding programme. This would have been the only route open to the Board of NYCNI for funding from the Arts Council, we cannot reverse the decision on the Annual Funding Programme 2025/26 which will reopen at the end of this year for 2026/27.

We have spoken to the Chair of the organisation and met with her and another Board member on 24<sup>th</sup> July along with three Ulster Unionist politicians, which was a productive meeting. The organisation was not in a position to apply for alternative funding, while it addresses a number of internal issues.

We recognise the vacuum and concern created by the organisation's decision not to consider applying for other sources of Arts Council funding and we share those. We aim to convene discussions with relevant stakeholders in the near future to assess alternative options to provide high quality youth choral provision in Northern Ireland, building on the track record and achievements of NYCNI and to chart a path forward.

I am of course available to discuss further with you if that would be helpful. I hope this addresses the main points of concern you have raised and I take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support for the arts in Northern Ireland.

Yours sincerely



**Roisín McDonough**  
Chief Executive





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

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Telephone: (028) 9051 2692  
e-mail: [private.office@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:private.office@communities-ni.gov.uk)  
Our ref: CORR 0555 -2025  
Date: 1 September 2025

**From: The Minister**

Marie Ward  
Chief Executive  
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Via email: [democratic.services@nmandd.org](mailto:democratic.services@nmandd.org)

Dear Marie

## **NATIONAL YOUTH CHOIR OF NORTHERN IRELAND (NYCNI)**

Thank you for your correspondence of 14 August following the Council's meeting on 4 August when it agreed the motion in respect of the National Youth Choir of Northern Ireland. Minister Lyons has asked me to respond.

The Minister is in no doubt as to the impact this decision has had on those involved in NYCNI and those benefitting from their work.

The Arts Council has a well-established, published process for the Annual Funding Programme to which the organisation applied. While the Minister cannot intervene in what is an operational matter for an arm's-length body of the Department, he is committed to continuing to make the case for increased investment in the arts at the Executive table.

As part of the Heritage, Culture and Creativity Programme which was announced last year, a new Arts Policy is being developed. The HCC Purpose and Framework<sup>1</sup> document was published recently. This important work will help close the policy vacuum that has existed for too long.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/heritage-culture-and-creativity-hcc-programme>

I trust this response is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Louise Anderson', written in a cursive style.

**Louise Anderson**  
**Private Secretary**

## NILGA SUPPORTING COUNCILS

NILGA has agreed to continue to fund a subscription for all councillors and officers to the **Local Government Information Unit (LGIU)**. The partnership benefits include daily emails, access to international best practice and training, as well as the promotion of local council successes.

NILGA has purchased licence agreements for all councils to use national **recruitment campaign** materials which were developed by the LGA in England. The campaign will be adapted for the needs of the 11 councils here and will aim to attract the best possible people to work in local government and position the local government sector as an attractive career opportunity.

NILGA will explore **Embedding Social Value in Councils** at the first of its series of Insights Exchanges on 2 October in Dungannon. Each council has been offered 7 places at this event for members & officers which will include policy updates, sharing of best practice and debate. Councils have also been invited to present their case studies / best practice on social value.

NILGA has called on the NIO and MHCLG to engage with councils on its plans for **local growth funds** (the successor to Levelling Up & Shared Prosperity funds) to allow adequate preparation for their launch in April 2026.

NILGA has organised a session for councillors on **Area Integrated Partnership Boards** on 19 September, focusing on roles, responsibilities and best practice sharing.

NILGA represented the councils in the negotiations for the 2025/26 **Pay Deal**, which has been agreed at national level with trade unions and communicated to all councils for implementation.

## KEY ISSUES RAISED BY NILGA MEMBERS THIS MONTH

Following a presentation by The Executive Office on **Ending Violence Against Women & Girls** and the collaboration with councils, members raised the following points:

- Police and health service failures with mental health issues emerging in investigations, highlighting the need for coordinating effort
- The incidence rate in rural communities required action & collaboration
- The challenge of measuring impact in harder-to-reach communities
- Absence of funding for womens' groups on EVAWG initiatives

NILGA is working with the Department for Infrastructure to deliver a range of initiatives under the **planning improvement programme**, including training & engagement opportunities for elected members and establishing a Planning Panel, involving elected members, which would meet the Minister annually on politically relevant matters. Members highlighted a range of concerns around planning including:

- Planning legislation hasn't kept pace with the climate change act, creating appeals vulnerabilities
- The relevance of council climate emergency declarations to local planning decisions
- Overly restrictive site-specific requirements and the perception that the planning system works against farming families
- Conflicts where a town centre first approach was overturned by Planning Appeals Commission, despite council recommendations.

Members were disappointed at the decision to stand down the **High Streets Task Force**, and called for better coordination across councils and the Departments to address the challenges facing town centres, noting the loss of employment, rates base and community heartbeat if town centres demise.

## NILGA PROMOTING COUNCILS

NILGA is hosting two round table debates at the UK Association of Public Administration's conference at Ulster University on 11 September. Elected members and officers will share their perspectives on learning from the reorganisation of local government in 2015, with participation from the Welsh, Scottish and English local government associations.

## KEY DIARY DATES

4 September – NILGA **Strategic Policy Network Meeting**, Craigavon - DFC Anti-Poverty Policy Team will be in attendance.

9 September – **Voice Automation sessions**, Newtownabbey & Craigavon

12 September – **NILGA Executive Meeting**, Downpatrick

19 September – **Elected Member Development Network meeting**, Antrim

19 September – **Briefing on AIPBs**, Craigavon

2 October – NILGA Insights Exchange – **Embedding Social Value in Councils**, Dungannon

10 October – **NILGA Executive Meeting (In-Person Only)**, Bangor

**For more information, email [office@nilga.org](mailto:office@nilga.org)**

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