



October 28th, 2025

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the Council meeting to be held on **Monday, 3rd November 2025** at **6:00 pm** in **Council Chamber, Downshire Civic Centre.**

Agenda

1.0 Apologies and Chairperson's Remarks

2.0 Declarations of Interest

3.0 Action Sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 6 October 2025

 *Action Sheet 2025 10 06.pdf*

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Council Minutes For Adoption and Signing

4.0 Minutes of Council Meeting held on 6 October 2025

 *Council Minutes 2025 10 06.pdf*

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5.0 Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 29 September 2025

 *Special Council Minutes - 2025-09-29.pdf*

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Committee Minutes for Consideration and Adoption

6.0 Minutes of Audit Committee held 25 September 2025

 *Audit Committee Minute 2025-09-25.pdf*

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7.0 Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 13 September 2025

 *Economy Regeneration and Tourism Minutes 2025-10-13.pdf*

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8.0 Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 16 October 2025

 *Strategy Policy & Resources Committee Meeting Minutes 2025-10-16.pdf*

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9.0 Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 20 October 2025

 *Active and Healthy Communities Minutes 2025 10 20.pdf*

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10.0 Minutes of Sustainability & Environment Committee Meeting

held on 22 October 2025

Copy to follow

11.0 Planning Section

Correspondence

12.0 Correspondence Report

- | | | |
|-------------|---|----------------|
| 12.1 | Response from Minister for Infrastructure in response to NOM, Resurfacing of main A Route between Kilkeel and Newcastle (C/137/2025)
 <i>Response from Minister for Infrastructure in response to NOM Resurfacing of main A Route between Kilkeel and Newcastle (C.137.2025).pdf</i> | <i>Page 57</i> |
| 12.2 | Correspondence from Mid Ulster District Council
 <i>Correspondence from Mid Ulster Council.pdf</i> | <i>Page 59</i> |
| 12.3 | Response from NI Office re NOM - Voting Age Reduction
 <i>Response from the NIO re NOM - Voting Age C.120.2025.pdf</i> | <i>Page 61</i> |
| 12.4 | Response from the Office of the Secretary General to the President regarding NOM - Irish President (C/136/2025)
 <i>Response from President Higgins.pdf</i> | <i>Page 64</i> |
| 12.5 | Response from SEHSCT re Enhancement of Services at Down Hospital C/058/2025)
 <i>Response from SEHSCT re Enhancement of Services at Down Hospital C.058.2025.pdf</i> | <i>Page 65</i> |
| 12.6 | Response from Health Minister re NOM - Ladies with Letters
 <i>Response from Health Minister re NOM - Ladies with Letters C.153.2025.pdf</i> | <i>Page 67</i> |

Notices of Motion

13.0 Notice of Motion - Reporting of Criminal Damage

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Hanna:

"This council should report all incidents of criminal damage to council property to PSNI, promptly, asap after damage has been discovered. This is to assist police building a picture of criminal damage in an area, so resources can be secured by local police to address the problem."

14.0 Notice of Motion - Closure of Local Primary Schools

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillors A King & Tinnelly:

"That this Council notes with deep concern the proposal to close St. Malachy's Primary School Kilclief, it recognises the deep roots and longstanding contribution of the schools to community life, and acknowledges the strong opposition to closure from parents, staff, pupils and residents, Council further believes that all efforts should be made to explore viable alternatives to closure, including the potential expansion of special educational needs (SEN) provision on the existing site, to serve families across the wider district, and will therefore write to the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) urging them to suspend the closure proposal and to engage meaningfully with the local community on sustainable alternatives; and request that the Education Authority and the Department of Education explore opportunities to invest in and expand SEN provision at the St. Malachy's site to meet growing regional demand."

15.0 Notice of Motion - Revitalisation Project

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Feehan:

"This Council acknowledges the ongoing issue of dereliction and dilapidation in town and city centres across the District.

Council recognises that the revitalisation of these derelict and dilapidated buildings is crucial, not only for the aesthetic renewal of our towns but also for unlocking the potential of underutilised spaces, creating new opportunities for business, and enhancing both civic pride and quality of life for residents.

Accordingly, this Council calls for the establishment of a pilot programme aimed at incentivising the restoration and redevelopment of vacant and derelict properties in Newry and Downpatrick. This pilot programme should focus on providing financial incentives, such as grants, low-interest loans, or other forms of support, to property owners who are committed to refurbishing these buildings to bring them back into productive use.

This Council also requests that a report be brought to the relevant committee within 3 months outlining the steps to develop the pilot programme, including potential eligibility criteria, financial incentives, available funding sources from existing government initiatives, and timelines for implementation. Additionally, Council is requested to explore collaboration with government agencies, including the Department for Communities, the Department for Infrastructure, and other relevant bodies, to co-opt existing funding mechanisms such as the Urban Regeneration and Community Development (URCD) schemes or Neighbourhood Renewal funding to support this initiative."

16.0 Notice of Motion - Festival for Newry City

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Finn:

"Newry, Mourne and Down District Council commends the work and success of Eats and Beats, Footsteps in the Forest and Wake the Giant and agree to commencing work towards a festival for Newry City."

Invitees

Cllr Terry Andrews

Mr Alan Beggs

Cllr Callum Bowsie

Cllr Jim Brennan

Mr Gerard Byrne

Cllr Pete Byrne

Cllr Philip Campbell

Cllr William Clarke

Cllr Laura Devlin

Cllr Cadogan Enright

Cllr Killian Feehan

Cllr Doire Finn

Ms Lynne Fitzsimons

Ms Joanne Fleming

Cllr Conor Galbraith

Cllr Mark Gibbons

Cllr Oonagh Hanlon

Cllr Glyn Hanna

Cllr Valerie Harte

Mr Conor Haughey

Cllr Martin Hearty

Cllr Roisin Howell

Cllr Tierna Howie

Ms Catherine Hughes

Cllr Jonathan Jackson

Joanne/Noelle Johnston

Cllr Geraldine Kearns

Miss Veronica Keegan

Mrs Josephine Kelly

Cllr Aurla King

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

Cllr Declan Murphy

Sinead Murphy
.....
Cllr Siobhan O'Hare
.....
Mr Andy Patterson
.....
Cllr Áine Quinn
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Cllr Henry Reilly
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Cllr Michael Rice
.....
Ms Alison Robb
.....
Ruth Rooney
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Cllr Michael Ruane
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Mr Conor Sage
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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
.....
Cllr Helena Young
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ACTION SHEET – COUNCIL MEETING – MONDAY 6 OCTOBER 2025

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
C/128/2024	<i>Minutes of Council Meeting held on 01.07.2024</i>	It was agreed item C/058/2024: Twinning Newry with City of Ramallah should remain on the action sheet.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Ongoing	N
C/142/2025	<i>Action Sheet Arising From Council Meeting Held On 1 September 2025</i>	It was agreed to note the action sheet.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	Y
C/143/2025	<i>Minutes Of Council Meeting Held On 1 September 2025</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	Y
C/144/2025	<i>Minutes Of Special Council Meeting Held On 26 August 2025</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	Y
C/145/2025	<i>Minutes Of Special Council Meeting Held On 22 September 2025</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	Y
C/146/2025	<i>Minutes Of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting Held On 8 September 2025</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	Y

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
C/147/2025	<i>Minutes Of Strategy Policy and Resources Committee Meeting Held On 11 September 2025</i>	The Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 11 September 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor McAteer, with the exception of SPR/145/2025. SPR/145/2025: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hanna, seconded by Councillor Lewis, to defer the item to allow additional information to be provided.	<i>Democratic Services</i> <i>J Kelly</i>	Noted Tabled at October SPR Meeting	Y Y
C/148/2025	<i>Minutes Of Active And Healthy Communities Committee Meeting Held On 15 September 2025</i>	The Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 15 September 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor Brennan, with the exception of AHC/080/2025. AHC/080/2025 – It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Hanna, to note the contents of the report on the development of the Newcastle Centre as the preferred site for the redevelopment into a modern leisure complex.	<i>Democratic Services</i> <i>A Patterson</i>	Noted Noted	Y Y
C/149/2025	<i>Minutes Of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting Held On 16 September 2025</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	Y
C/151/2025	<i>Correspondence Report</i>	It was agreed to note the Correspondence report.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	Y

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
		<i>Correspondence from SEHSCT in response to NOM, Enhancement of Services at Downe. (C/058/2025)</i> It was agreed that Council respond to the SEHSCT communication and ask that the original Notice of Motion be addressed, and that Council request a copy of the associated consultation report be formally tabled at the Health Working Group as an opportunity to remain informed, engaged and in the position to represent the community effectively with any future developments <i>Correspondence from Health Minister in response to NOM – CAR-T Cell Therapy (C/123/2025)</i> It was agreed that Council write to the Assembly Health Committee and request that they test the Minister's assertions in relation to timeline and capacity of delivering CAR-T Cell therapy at City Hospital, in conjunction with the relevant clinical experts. <i>Correspondence from NI Fish Producers Organisation in response to arranging a visit (C/128/2025)</i> It was agreed that any Member who wished to avail of the visit to the NI Fish Producers training facility in Portavogie should contact Democratic Services.	<i>Democratic Services</i> <i>Democratic Services</i> <i>Democratic Services</i>	Correspondence Sent Correspondence Sent Members to forward their wish to attend	Y Y Y
C/152/2025	<i>Notice Of Motion – Dunleath Park Safe Space For Dog Owners</i>	The Motion was referred to the Active & Healthy Communities Committee	<i>A Patterson</i>	Noted	Y

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
C/153/2025	<i>Notice Of Motion – Ladies With Letters</i>	It was agreed that 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.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Correspondence Sent	Y
C/154/2025	<i>Notice Of Motion – All-Island Citizens' Assembly</i>	The Motion was referred to the Equality and Good Relations Working Group.	<i>C Moffett</i>	Noted. To be tabled at next meeting, date TBC.	Y
C/155/2025	<i>Notice Of Motion – Murder of Charlie Kirk</i>	The Motion was withdrawn	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	Y
C/156/2025	<i>Notice Of Motion – Climate Change Act 2022</i>	The Motion was referred to the Sustainability & Environment Committee.	<i>S Murphy</i>	Noted	Y
C/157/2025	<i>Emergency Notice Of Motion – Freedom Flotilla</i>	It was agreed that this Council condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the illegal Israeli interception and boarding of boats in the Freedom Flotilla and the abduction of those on board, including at least 22 Irish citizens; Calls for the immediate release of all those abducted by Israel; Urges the Irish and British governments to begin legal proceedings against Israel for this latest breach of international law; Demands an end to the genocide in Palestine and an end to the Israeli blockade of humanitarian aid; And expresses solidarity and support with all those aboard the flotilla as well as the besieged people of Gaza.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Correspondence Sent	Y

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

NMD/C/

Minutes of Council Meeting held on Monday 6 October 2025 at 6.00pm in Council Chamber, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick

In the Chair: Councillor P Campbell

In attendance in Chamber:	Councillor C Bowsie	Councillor J Brennan
	Councillor P Byrne	Councillor W Clarke
	Councillor L Devlin	Councillor K Feehan
	Councillor D Finn	Councillor C Galbraith
	Councillor O Hanlon	Councillor G Hanna
	Councillor V Harte	Councillor M Hearty
	Councillor T Howie	Councillor J Jackson
	Councillor G Kearns	Councillor A King
	Councillor C King	Councillor M Larkin
	Councillor D Lee-Surginor	Councillor A Lewis
	Councillor O Magennis	Councillor A Mathers
	Councillor D McAteer	Councillor D Murphy
	Councillor S Murphy	Councillor A Quinn
	Councillor H Reilly	Councillor M Rice
	Councillor M Ruane	Councillor D Taylor
	Councillor H Young	

In attendance via Teams:	Councillor C Enright	Councillor R Howell
	Councillor K Murphy	Councillor S O'Hare
	Councillor J Tinnelly	Councillor J Truesdale

Officials in attendance: Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
 Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism
 Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services
 Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability and Environment
 Mr A Patterson, Director of Active and Health Communities
 Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager
 Mrs F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer
 Mr C Smyth, Democratic Services Officer

C/140/2025

APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Andrews, McEvoy and Gibbons.

Councillor Campbell offered heartfelt sympathy to the family and friends of Oran Marron, a young Crossmaglen man who had moved to Australia and had, sadly, recently made his final journey home. He extended his condolences to Oran's Crossmaglen Rangers teammates.

The Chairperson also expressed the Council's sorrow on the passing of Manchán Magan, who had made a significant contribution to Irish culture, heritage, history, folklore, and the Irish language. He noted that Mr. Magan was a unique character and a national treasure who would be sadly missed.

Councillor Campbell condemned the disgraceful and cowardly act in which a viable device had been left outside the constituency office of Liz Kimmins MLA and Daire Hughes MP, describing it as a blatant disregard for the safety of the citizens of Newry.

Reflecting on the previous month, Councillor Campbell stated that he was reminded of the principles of care and support in service of others and wished to acknowledge four remarkable groups that embodied those values. He commended PIPS for its work in raising awareness of suicide; Positive Futures, which recently celebrated its 30th anniversary; Downpatrick Family and Autism Support for its advocacy on behalf of families with children with autism; and Cuan Mhuire for its continuous and tireless support for families and individuals affected by addiction across the District.

Councillor Campbell emphasised that organisations such as these served as reminders of shared humanity that offered support to all, regardless of background, ethnicity, or religion. He highlighted that their collective endeavours represented the best of community and exemplified selfless service. He added that their compassion and understanding should inspire everyone to build stronger and kinder communities.

Councillor Campbell extended his thanks to Councillor Sharvin for his many years of service and wished him every success in his future endeavours.

Councillor Campbell also noted that an emergency Notice of Motion had been received, which would be dealt with at the appropriate time during the meeting.

C/141/2025 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

C/142/2025 ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 1 SEPTEMBER 2025

Read: Action sheet from Council Meeting held on 1 September 2025.

Agreed: **The Action Sheet from Council Meeting held on 1 September 2025 was agreed on the proposal of Councillor D Murphy, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor.**

COUNCIL MINUTES FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION

C/143/2025 MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 1 SEPTEMBER 2025

Read: Minutes of Council Meeting held on 1 September 2025 (copy circulated).

C/110/2025 – Notice of Motion, ReGen Waste, Warrenpoint: In response to a query from Councillor Ruane, Mrs Ward advised that a response had not yet been received as yet.

Councillor Ruane stated that the odour surrounding the harbour in recent weeks was foul and that the lack of response from the Minister, following a request to meet to discuss the issue, was unacceptable.

Agreed: **The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 1 September 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Devlin.**

C/144/2025 **MINUTES OF SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 26 AUGUST 2025**

Read: Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 26 August 2025 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on 26 August 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Hearty, seconded by Councillor Quinn.**

C/145/2025 **MINUTES OF SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 22 SEPTEMBER 2025**

Read: Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 22 September 2025 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 22 September 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor D Murphy.**

COMMITTEE MINUTES FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION

C/146/2025 **MINUTES OF ECONOMY, REGENERATION AND TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8 SEPTEMBER 2025**

Read: Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 8 September 2025 (copy circulated).

ERT/086/2025 – Establishment of Arts Working Group – Notice of Motion

Councillor Bowsie commended Councillor Finn for bringing the motion forward and expressed his eagerness to be involved. He referred to a previous motion to establish an Ulster Scots Working Group, which received a response at the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee in October 2022 that stated that Council aimed to reduce the number of working groups due to their volume. He expressed concern regarding what he perceived as inconsistency towards his community and queried when the Council's position on working

groups had been amended.

Mrs Ward advised that the Ulster Scots Working Group was being considered under the Equality and Good Relations Forum and was included on the agenda for its upcoming meeting. She explained that it would be for the Forum to discuss and make a recommendation to the Committee for action.

Councillor Taylor expressed his wish to contribute to the Arts Working Group and queried how its members would be identified.

Mr Mallon confirmed that the first meeting of the Arts Working Group was scheduled for the current week with a skeleton membership and advised that it would be for the members of the group to determine any expansion to the membership.

Councillor Bowsie welcomed the public consultation, noting that it was long overdue, but expressed concern that the Arts Working Group had been established within a short timeframe, with its first meeting arranged prior to ratification at full Council. He stated that both the Irish Language and Ulster Scots had legal recognition, yet more than ten years after Council amalgamation, an Ulster Scots Working Group had still not been established.

Councillor Hanlon stated that her Party had always been, and continued to be, supportive of establishing an Ulster Scots Working Group, expressing her confusion as to why the Arts Working Group had progressed more quickly.

Agreed: **The Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 8 September 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted on the proposal of Councillor Lee-Surginor, seconded by Councillor Kearns.**

C/147/2025 **MINUTES OF STRATEGY POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 SEPTEMBER 2025**

Read: Minutes of Strategy Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 11 September 2025 (copy circulated).

SPR/150/2025 – Castlewellan Forest Park Resources

Councillor Devlin welcomed the additional resource, stating that there was a notable difference within the area.

SPR/145/2025 – Reserves Policy

Councillor Hanna expressed concern that the item had been tabled with limited detail, stating that he would be unable to support the policy without further information. He urged all Councillors to adopt the same position and proposed that the item be deferred to allow additional information to be provided. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Lewis.

Mrs Kelly advised that she had previously discussed the document in detail with other Members and confirmed she would be happy to meet with Councillor Hanna regarding the matter. She reminded Members that a policy, by its nature, was a high-level principle of governance and therefore would not contain extensive operational detail.

Councillor Hanna reiterated his objection to approving a policy he believed lacked sufficient detail and queried whether an existing reserves policy was already in place.

Mrs Kelly clarified that the item before Members was to establish a formal reserves policy, noting that the current process operated as an agreed procedure rather than a policy.

Councillor Taylor stated that he supported the principle of a reserves policy but wished to ensure that all Members were clear about what was being proposed. He supported Councillor Hanna's proposal to defer the item to allow for further information, acknowledging the policy's importance for governance but emphasising the need for Member confidence in its content.

Councillor Hanlon advised that she had previously engaged in a detailed discussion with officers regarding the policy in order to provide feedback to her Party. She reiterated that, in line with good governance, the policy would strengthen the Council's financial position, but she supported Councillor Hanna's proposal to allow for additional scrutiny.

Councillor Byrne highlighted the importance of good governance in relation to reserves and expressed his Party's frustration concerning the rates-setting process and usable reserves. He supported the proposal to defer the item but requested that it be re-tabled before the commencement of the rates-setting process.

Councillor Reilly stated that he had full confidence in Mrs Kelly to present a comprehensive paper on the matter and although he had voted against the proposal at Committee, he recognised that some colleagues wished to obtain an independent view from the auditor.

SPR/147/2025 – AHC Capital Projects Delivery

Councillor Finn wished to congratulate the officers involved in progressing the project to date and welcomed the forward momentum of the project.

Agreed: **The Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 11 September 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor McAteer, with the exception of SPR/145/2025.**

SPR/145/2025: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hanna, seconded by Councillor Lewis, to defer the item to allow additional information to be provided.

C/148/2025

MINUTES OF ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15 SEPTEMBER 2025

Read: Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 15 September 2025 (copy circulated).

AHC/074/2025 – Council of Sanctuary

Councillor Byrne stated that the Council chamber was a place for political debate where differing views should be respected and discussions conducted with honesty, openness,

respect and transparency. He emphasised that while political disagreement was expected, debate must be grounded in truth and integrity and he reminded members that Councillors were also human beings, motivated by concern for the safety, dignity, and truth that should underpin the Council's work.

Councillor Byrne clarified that "Council of Sanctuary" status did not relate to immigration policy, describing claims to the contrary as false and dangerous, reiterating that immigration policy was determined by Westminster and the Home Office, not by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council. He criticised the DUP for what he described as a deliberate misrepresentation of this fact, alleging that DUP members had voted against receiving further information about the proposal, then claimed publicly that such information had been withheld. Councillor Byrne asserted that this was dishonest and had contributed to the spread of misinformation and hostility.

Councillor Byrne stated that the misinformation had fuelled unprecedented levels of abuse directed at councillors, including online attacks labelling members as "traitors" and directing misogynistic slurs at female councillors. He cited examples of such language, describing it as violent, degrading, and hypocritical. He condemned the racist abuse directed at a Councillor from a Chinese-background and noted other instances of threats, intimidation, and accusations of corruption, describing them as a "coordinated campaign of threats and intimidation" and asked the DUP directly whether they supported or condemned such behaviour.

Councillor Byrne further condemned attempts to vilify members who supported inclusion and diversity, referencing online posts questioning councillors' support for LGBT people, ethnic minorities, and Palestinians. He affirmed that this representation reflected his own values and stated, as a gay councillor, that he would not apologise for standing publicly with the LGBT community.

He stated that he had represented the Council at events at the DUP's request and asked whether that same inclusivity extended to LGBT people and ethnic minorities, or whether those groups were to be excluded under a false narrative that they were a threat. He declared that he would not be intimidated or silenced for standing for inclusion and justice.

Councillor Byrne posed direct questions to the DUP, asking whether they accepted the accuracy of information provided by Council officers regarding the Council of Sanctuary proposal, whether they condemned threats made against councillors, and whether they believed that people who looked, worshipped, or loved differently should be excluded from the protections of the Council.

Councillor Hanna responded to comments made by Councillor Byrne, stating that he perceived them as a rant and that they had insulted himself, his Party, and everyone who worked alongside the DUP. He confirmed that he had attended and spoken at a recent rally but emphasised that he had not threatened anyone nor had he shared false information. He further stated that he did not believe the information received from Council had been substantiated by any other sources and that he had been advised of contrary information. He reiterated that his Party's position was that immigration should be properly managed to ensure available resources, such as housing and healthcare, could be effectively allocated.

Councillor Hanna also stated that it had been a Council officer who had suggested the option to join the Council of Sanctuary initiative, and confirmed that he would not support the proposal, asserting that such an item should have been tabled by a Councillor rather than a

Council officer.

Councillor Jackson stated that any response from the DUP regarding the item had focused solely on the information provided and was not related to accusations about immigration. He acknowledged that there was an immigration crisis both domestically and in Europe and emphasised that the DUP was listening to the public and sought to give voice to those with genuine concerns regarding the impact of illegal and uncontrolled immigration, particularly given the unprecedented pressures on schools and healthcare. He highlighted that ratepayers should not face additional burdens resulting from the unauthorised arrival of individuals.

Councillor Jackson queried the merit of introducing a policy that might encourage further illegal and uncontrolled immigration, noting that it could grant external bodies influence over Council policy. He further stated that the Council already had policies in place that aligned with the principles of the Council of Sanctuary charter.

Cllr O'Hare left the meeting at this stage – 6.54pm

Councillor Lewis condemned any threats directed towards elected representatives, emphasising that all individuals should be able to carry out their duties without fear of violence. He stated that Councillor Byrne had encouraged the perception that the DUP were bigoted or racist, despite their actions reflecting a democratic objection to a policy that Council officers were attempting to progress.

Councillor Lewis referenced members of the public present in the chamber, noting that they had contacted every elected representative, but the DUP were the only group who had listened. He stated that he welcomed legal immigrants and that the entire District should be a District of Sanctuary, regardless of your background but asked that the policy was examined fully. He clarified that the objections raised were not against immigration in general but specifically concerned singling out a particular minority for special status.

Councillor Reilly addressed Councillor Byrne's statement that the DUP had not received any information from Council regarding the Council of Sanctuary prior to attending the rally in Newry. He noted that Councillors had received a restricted document and stated that Members had been advised that an Equality Impact Assessment was unnecessary, as the matter was not considered controversial.

Councillor Reilly emphasised that, according to the rules of the Council of Sanctuary, any proposal to join must be brought to Council via a Notice of Motion and it was therefore inconceivable for a Council officer to act independently in bringing the item forward for consideration. He also remarked that statements asserting that immigration was managed by the Home Office were irrelevant, given that the Home Office had subcontracted aspects of immigration handling to private companies and questioned whether Members could be confident that these private companies would not acquire properties within the District.

Councillor Taylor condemned the threats made against elected representatives, urging Members to exercise caution with their language and to avoid making accusations without supporting evidence. He stated that, following his engagement with the public, he had raised concerns about the Council signing up to a proposal over which it would effectively have no control. He emphasised the importance of wording in the documentation, noting that the decision stating an Equality Impact Assessment was not required because there were "no adverse impacts at this time" did not guarantee that there would be no adverse impacts in

the future.

Councillor Finn addressed the recent abuse she had received, emphasising that individuals did not come into office to be treated in such a manner. She refuted claims that she had ignored the people of Newry and requested that any questions regarding the information provided by Council be addressed within the Council chamber, which she stated was the appropriate forum for open and frank discussion on the relevant matters.

Councillor D Murphy offered his solidarity to those who had been subjected to abuse, commending them for standing up for their beliefs. He stated that it appeared some individuals either did not want to understand the information provided or simply did not read it. He referenced recent staffing challenges at Daisy Hill Hospital, noting the recruitment of clinical staff from India to maintain services for the District and surrounding areas. He highlighted that some of these staff members had been targets of racist abuse, which had led a trade union to hold a rally in support of international staff, commenting on those who had attended and those who had not. He commended colleagues who had faced abuse while standing up for their principles and expressed hope that, following the Council's decision, the matter would be concluded, stating that he did not want to live in a world dominated by hatred and division.

Councillor Howie expressed support for Councillor Byrne's statement and conveyed her disappointment with the DUP and UUP Parties. She extended her solidarity to those who had suffered recent abuse as a result of misinformation that had been circulated. She emphasised that the issue was not about illegal immigration and stated that she did not believe there was an immigration crisis, citing recent ONS figures that showed only a marginal increase in net population, with this District being the only area to record a decrease. She reiterated that misinformation was misleading and was impeding the critical work of supporting minority communities within the Council area.

Councillor Lewis stated that it was not his responsibility to raise questions on behalf of the objectors, noting that he understood they were not DUP supporters but were simply engaging with a Councillor who had responded to them.

The Chairperson called the meeting to order following interjections by Councillors Finn and Hanna. He reprimanded Councillor Finn for her interruption and Councillor Hanna for his language directed towards a fellow Councillor.

Councillor Finn subsequently apologised for her interruption.

Councillor Reilly stated that Councillor D Murphy was deliberately conflating the issues of immigration and illegal immigration, emphasising that the DUP was fully supportive of Daisy Hill staff. He addressed Councillor Byrne, condemning a statement made suggesting the DUP was anti-gay, describing it as wholly inappropriate.

Councillor Reilly also highlighted that certain issues remained unresolved, including the need for a coordinated approach among all UK Councils and the potential implications for Council actions within the District. He noted that this information had not yet been provided by Council officers.

Councillor Jackson queried whether an Equality Impact Assessment had been carried out and, if so, whether it would be possible for Members to have sight of it.

Mr Patterson advised that equality screening had been conducted and would be reported in the quarterly screening report as per Council Policy, confirming that this information had already been provided to all Members on several occasions.

Councillor Hanna proposed to remove the item from the agenda entirely. This was seconded by Councillor Reilly.

Councillor Hanna requested a recorded vote, the results of which were as follows: (copy attached)

FOR	6
AGAINST	31
ABSTENTION	0

The proposal was declared lost.

AHC/080/2025 – Newcastle Centre Site Selection

Councillor Clarke emphasised the importance of agreeing the next steps regarding the Newcastle Centre Site Selection, stating that the project could not tolerate further delays. He noted that many considered the proposed location appropriate, particularly given the active travel measures required to help mitigate climate change. Highlighting that the issue had been under discussion for 24 years with numerous public consultation events, he proposed that the contents of the report on the development of the Newcastle Centre be noted, identifying it as the preferred site for redevelopment into a modern leisure complex.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Hanna, who expressed concern over the level of misinformation surrounding the project and stated that it was now time for action.

Councillor Devlin emphasised the importance of maintaining momentum on the project, noting that Councillor Truesdale had not been an elected representative during the majority of discussions and suggested meeting with the Director of Active and Healthy Communities to review the project's progress to date. She stressed the need for all Members to be united on moving the project forward.

Councillor Truesdale stated that her inquiry had been limited to understanding which sites had been scoped and the reasons for any rejections, referencing a previous proposal to build a base station in Donard Park if available space in Newcastle was so limited.

Councillor Reilly thanked officers for their work to date and stressed that the project should remain a high priority for Council.

Mr Patterson advised that Council would soon be in a position to appoint a consultancy team to advance the proposal to the planning stage. He confirmed that this would be tabled for decision at a forthcoming Active & Healthy Communities Committee meeting and that details of the site selection process could be provided at a DEA meeting if required.

Councillor Campbell confirmed that all Members were in agreement with the proposal.

Agreed:

The Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 15 September 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor

Brennan, with the exception of AHC/080/2025.

AHC/080/2025 – It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Hanna, to note the contents of the report on the development of the Newcastle Centre as the preferred site for the redevelopment into a modern leisure complex.

C/149/2025

MINUTES OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2025

Read: Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 16 September 2025 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 16 September 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Feehan.**

C/150/2025

PLANNING SECTION

There were no issues arising.

C/151/2025

CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

Read: Report dated 6 October 2025 from Mrs Ward, Chief Executive, regarding an update on correspondence received for the attention of Council (copy circulated).

Correspondence from SEHSCT in response to NOM, Enhancement of Services at Downe. (C/058/2025)

Councillor Hanlon both welcomed and expressed concern over the communication, noting that it detailed the good services available in the Downe, however she stated that it did not address what had been asked for within the Notice of Motion. She proposed to write back to the SEHSCT and request that the Notice of Motion be addressed.

Councillor Galbraith seconded the proposal and also to include a request that the associated consultation report be formally tabled at the Council's Health Working Group as an opportunity to remain informed, engaged and in a position to represent the community effectively with any future developments. Councillor Hanlon accepted this as part of her proposal.

Correspondence from Home Office in response to NOM – Fishing Industry & Enhancement Support (C/044/2025)

Councillor Rice noted the cross-party consensus that the motion had achieved, stating that the response did not give him any confidence that the issues raised would be addressed, but exacerbated. He expressed his frustration that the fishing industry was under immense pressure and would only get worse.

Correspondence from Health Minister in response to NOM – CAR-T Cell Therapy (C/123/2025)

Councillor Feehan expressed his disappointment with the response, stating that it largely reiterated the Department of Health's (DoH) position. He highlighted that, since the motion had been passed, his Party had tabled the item at Stormont for debate and had facilitated a blood cancer round table at Parliament, which included senior clinicians, haematologists, representatives from Blood Cancer UK, and families impacted by the diseases. He noted that the outcomes of the round table were concerning, as they conflicted with the DoH information regarding timelines for delivery and capacity issues.

Councillor Feehan confirmed that the Minister had invited Members of Stormont to test the assertions of his Department at the Health Committee if they were dissatisfied with its position. He proposed that Council write to the Assembly Health Committee requesting that they examine the Minister's assertions regarding the timeline and capacity for delivering CAR-T Cell therapy at City Hospital, in consultation with the relevant clinical experts.

This was seconded by Councillor Byrne.

Cllr Enright left the meeting at this stage – 7.33pm

Councillor Hearty noted the positive note that the communication had opened on, recognising the benefits of establishing cross border health care and patient care. He noted the disappointing end of the communication, summarising the communication as the Minister advising that things just were the way they were, with patients having to travel to England while suffering from a horrific illness. He expressed his support for Councillor Feehan's proposal.

Correspondence from NI Fish Producers Organisation in response to arranging a visit (C/128/2025)

Councillor Reilly proposed all Councillors to take up the invite from NI Fish Producers Organisation, which was seconded by Councillor Hanna.

Councillor Campbell requested that any interested Councillors advise Democratic Services so that a date could be arranged.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Galbraith, that Council respond to the SEHSCT communication and ask that the original Notice of Motion be addressed, and that Council request a copy of the associated consultation report be formally tabled at the Health Working Group as an opportunity to remain informed, engaged and in the position to represent the community effectively with any future developments**

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Feehan, seconded by Councillor Byrne, Council write to the Assembly Health Committee and request that they test the Minister's assertions in relation to timeline and capacity of delivering CAR-T Cell therapy at City**

Hospital, in conjunction with the relevant clinical experts.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Hanna that any Member who wished to avail of the visit to the NI Fish Producers training facility in Portavogie should contact Democratic Services.

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

- Correspondence from SEHSCT in response to NOM – Enhancement of Services at Downe (C/058/2025)
- Correspondence from Health Minister in response to NOM – CAR-T Cell Therapy (C/123/2025)
- Correspondence from Home Office in response to NOM – Fishing Industry & Enhancement Support (C/044/2025)
- Correspondence from NI Fish Producers Organisation in response to arranging a visit (C/128/2025)

C/152/2025 NOTICE OF MOTION – DUNLEATH PARK SAFE SPACE FOR DOG OWNERS

The following Motion was received from Councillor Galbraith:

"This Council acknowledges growing concerns from members of the public regarding dog fouling and incidents involving off-lead dogs at Dunleath Playing Fields. In response, this Council agrees to explore the feasibility of creating a secure, fenced area within Dunleath Playing Fields where dog owners can safely exercise their dogs off-lead. Such a facility would help promote responsible dog ownership, reduce the risk of dog-related incidents in shared public areas, and provide a dedicated, safe space for dogs and their owners."

The Motion was seconded by Councillor A King.

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

C/153/2025 NOTICE OF MOTION – LADIES WITH LETTERS

The following Motion was received from Councillor Finn (deferred from September 2025):

"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".

Councillor Finn noted that the week commencing 6 October 2025 marked two years since 17,500 women within the Southern Health and Social Care Trust were informed that their cervical smear tests may have been reviewed incorrectly. She acknowledged the courage of those affected and expressed concern over continued delays in follow-up reports. She supported the Ladies with Letters campaign and reaffirmed the Council's call for an independent inquiry, urging women to continue attending screening appointments.

Councillor A King seconded the motion and described it as deeply personal to many. She praised the bravery of the campaigners and stated that the scandal represented a betrayal of trust. She called for a statutory inquiry and affirmed the SDLP's full support.

Councillor K Murphy welcomed the motion and confirmed Sinn Féin's support for an independent inquiry. She emphasised the importance of listening to the lived experiences of affected women and stated that answers were long overdue.

Councillor Young confirmed Alliance Party support for the motion. She highlighted the long-standing impact of cervical screening failures and called for a fully independent public inquiry, recognising the dignity and persistence of those affected.

Councillor Devlin stated that many women in the district had been devastated by the scandal and continued to seek truth and accountability. She supported a statutory inquiry and urged the Council to send a clear message to the Department of Health. She encouraged continued participation in screening and expressed full support for the motion.

Councillor Hanna described the situation as a disgrace and questioned the lack of scrutiny in the screening process. He emphasised the urgency of addressing the failings and confirmed the DUP's support for the motion.

Councillor Taylor commended the Ladies with Letters group for their advocacy and supported their call for a statutory independent public inquiry. He expressed hope that their concerns would be addressed and that confidence in the screening system would be restored.

Councillor Finn thanked Members for their input and support for the Motion.

The Chairperson declared the Motion passed unanimously.

Agreed:

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Finn, seconded by Councillor A King that 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.

C/154/2025

NOTICE OF MOTION – ALL-ISLAND CITIZENS’ ASSEMBLY

The following Motion was received from Councillor Quinn:

"This Council notes the growing public discussion on the constitutional future of this island and recognises the provision within the Good Friday Agreement for the people of Ireland to decide that future through referendums. Accordingly, this Council agrees to write to the Office of An Taoiseach, urging the Irish Government to plan and prepare for Irish unity through the following actions:

- Establish an all-island Citizens’ Assembly and a Joint Oireachtas Committee on Irish Unity;*
- Produce and publish a plan towards Irish unity in conjunction with civic society and key stakeholders, including local government;*
- Work to secure a date for a referendum on unity, as provided for in the Good Friday Agreement.*

This Council further commits to ensuring that the voices of people across Newry, Mourne and Down are heard as part of this important conversation about the future of our island."

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Hanlon.

AGREED:

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

Councillor Tinnelly left the meeting at this stage – 7.49pm

Councillor Byrne raised a point of order seeking clarity on the referral of the previous Motion to the Equality and Good Relations Working Group suggesting that this represented an overstretch of Standing Orders, as in his view the Motion did not fall within the remit of any committee.

He stated that the Motion simply proposed writing a letter to the Irish Government on a matter only it could enact. He noted that it had long been the Council’s position that motions involving correspondence with external bodies beyond its remit should not be referred to committee. He argued that the Motion was being incorrectly conflated with a previous New Ireland Motion, which involved establishing a working group within the Council’s remit. Councillor Byrne expressed concern that referring such motions under Standing Order 16.1.6 to the Equality and Good Relations Working Group was inappropriate, particularly when unanimous agreement was required for their return. He maintained that the Council had the authority to write to external bodies and that the Motion should be heard.

Councillor Taylor expressed support for the Motion being referred to the Equality and Good Relations Working Group, acknowledging the potential implications for community relations and the importance of appropriate scrutiny.

The Chairperson clarified that the referral had been prompted by the wording of the Motion’s final sentence. Councillor Byrne referenced a separate Motion involving correspondence with the United States and underscored the need for consistency.

He also cited a previous instance in which the Council had issued a letter concerning the Irish Presidential Election, which had been discussed in the Chamber.

The Chairperson affirmed that the decision to refer the Motion had been made at his discretion and stated that he stood by that decision.

C/155/2025**NOTICE OF MOTION – MURDER OF CHARLIE KIRK**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Lewis:

"That this Council notes with deep concern the murder of Charlie Kirk, a prominent American political commentator, who was shot and killed while exercising his right to speak at a public event; believes that freedom of speech and expression are hard-won cornerstones of democracy; remembers those who have been targeted by terrorists in Northern Ireland due to their political and religious beliefs; resolves to condemn the murder of Charlie Kirk and reaffirm our commitment to the principle of free speech; and further, that Newry, Mourne and Down District Council sends our condolences to his wife Erika and their two young children."

In presenting the Motion, Councillor Lewis expressed deep concern over the murder of Charlie Kirk, a prominent American political commentator, who was killed while exercising his right to free speech. He stated that the attack represented both a personal tragedy and a broader assault on democratic principles. Councillor Lewis reflected on Northern Ireland's history of politically motivated violence and stressed the importance of defending democratic values and protecting freedom of expression. He noted Mr Kirk's global influence, particularly among young people, and requested that the Council send condolences to Mr Kirk's wife and children.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Bowsie reaffirmed the Council's commitment to free speech and non-violence. He paid tribute to Mr Kirk as a respected advocate of conservative Christian values, noting his respectful approach to public debate and his influence on young people and described Mr Kirk as a man of faith who was killed for expressing his beliefs.

Councillor Mathers proposed an amendment to the Motion as follows;

"That this Council notes with deep concern the murder of Charlie Kirk, a prominent American political commentator, who was shot and killed while exercising his right to speak at a public event; believes that freedom of speech and expression are hard-won cornerstones of democracy; Notes with grave concern recent politically motivated violence and attacks on free speech; acknowledges that free speech and expression, within the law, are foundational to any democratic system and celebrates the diversity of our identities, religious or none, sexual orientation, gender, disability, age or ethnic origin that NMDDC send our condolences to his wife and two young children."

Councillor D Murphy seconded the amendment proposed by Councillor Mathers.

Councillor Lewis declined to accept the proposed amendment.

The Chairperson put Councillor Mathers' proposed amendment to the Motion to a recorded vote, the results of which were as follows (copy attached):

FOR: 28
AGAINST: 6
ABSTENTIONS: 0

Councillor Lewis expressed disappointment with the proposed amendment and requested that the Motion be withdrawn.

Mrs Ward advised that, under Standing Orders, the amended and agreed Motion now constituted the substantive Motion before the Council.

Councillor Taylor opposed the amendment and expressed concern over attempts to diminish the realities of the Troubles. He condemned the incident involving a device left at the Newry office of MLAs Kimmons and Hughes, stating that no elected representative should face threats or intimidation.

The Chairperson proposed an adjournment to seek advice from Democratic Services regarding the withdrawal request. It was agreed, on the proposal of Councillor Campbell and seconded by Councillor Taylor, that the meeting be adjourned.

The meeting did then recess – 8.12pm
The meeting did then resume – 8.21pm

Mrs Ward advised that in accordance with Standing Orders the amended motion was the substantive motion on the floor, however, subject to the Chamber's agreement, the Motion could be withdrawn. Following discussion, Members unanimously agreed to withdraw the Motion.

Agreed: It was agreed to withdraw the Motion.

C/156/2025 NOTICE OF MOTION – CLIMATE CHANGE ACT 2022

The following Motion was received from Councillor Reilly:

"That this Council requests the Northern Ireland Assembly to repeal the Northern Ireland Climate Change Act (2022) and replaces it with workable legislation".

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Hanna

AGREED: The Motion was referred to the Sustainability & Environment Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6

EMERGENCY NOTICE OF MOTION

The Chairperson advised an Emergency Notice of Motion had been received, the wording of which had been emailed to all Councillors and to enable it to be heard, it would be necessary to suspend Standing Order 16.1 for which a qualified majority vote was required, no fewer than 80% of Members present and voting.

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

FOR: 28
AGAINST: 6
ABSTENTIONS: 0

Ms Taggart confirmed that as there were 34 Members present and voting, a qualified majority had been reached.

The Chairperson advised that Standing Order 16.1 would be suspended by qualified majority vote to hear the motion.

C/157/2025 EMERGENCY NOTICE OF MOTION – FREEDOM FLOTILLA

The following Motion was received from Councillor Hearty:

"That this Council condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the illegal Israeli interception and boarding of boats in the Freedom Flotilla and the abduction of those on board, including at least 22 Irish citizens; Calls for the immediate release of all those abducted by Israel; Urges the Irish and British governments to begin legal proceedings against Israel for this latest breach of international law; Demands an end to the genocide in Palestine and an end to the Israeli blockade of humanitarian aid; And expresses solidarity and support with all those aboard the flotilla as well as the besieged people of Gaza."

In presenting the Motion, Councillor Hearty condemned the Israeli military's interception of the Global Sumud Flotilla, which had been delivering humanitarian aid to Gaza. He stated that the flotilla was hijacked in international waters and carried essential supplies, including baby formula. He reported that approximately 500 participants from over 40 countries, including 22 from Ireland and his party colleague Seanadóir Chris Andrews, were forcibly taken and mistreated.

Councillor Hearty referenced international legal findings and human rights reports which, in his view, confirmed the illegality of the blockade and the interception. He cited Article 55 of the Fourth Geneva Convention and statements from organisations including Amnesty International and the United Nations. He further stated that the individuals were abducted without due process and referenced recent rulings and expert opinions describing Israel's actions in Gaza as genocide. He urged Members to consider the moral implications of their vote.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor C King.

Councillor Devlin described the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the interception of the flotilla as deeply distressing stating that those aboard acted out of compassion and deserved recognition. She emphasised the need for unity around the principles of humanity, justice, and peace, and concluded by quoting Palestinian writer Jean Zaru.

Councillor Hanna stated that it was incorrect to describe the interception as abduction, noting the vessels had entered Israeli sovereign territory. He described the mission as a publicity stunt and affirmed the DUP's support for increased humanitarian aid, however he also stated that any peace proposal should recognise Israel's right to exist and cautioned against motions that failed to consider the impact on local Jewish communities.

Councillor Taylor described the flotilla as a political stunt and noted that those involved were now in Slovakia. He referenced the current peace plan and expressed hope for resolution in the region.

Councillor Howie supported the Motion and expressed disappointment at Councillor Taylor's characterisation of the flotilla. She stated that its aim was to deliver humanitarian aid and had been blocked by Israel.

Councillor Reilly described the situation in Gaza as terrible and expressed hope for peace. While acknowledging Councillor Hearty's concerns, he proposed an amendment: "That this Council recognises the State of Israel and its right to exist."

Councillor Hanna seconded the amendment proposed by Councillor Reilly.

Councillor Hearty declined to accept the proposed amendment.

The Chairperson put Councillor Reilly's proposed amendment to the Motion to a recorded vote, the results of which were as follows (copy attached):

FOR:	7
AGAINST:	16
ABSTENTIONS:	11

The Chairperson declared Councillor Reilly's proposal lost.

The Chairperson requested a show of hands for Councillor Hearty's Motion, seconded by Councillor C King and the results were as follows:

FOR	28
AGAINST	6
ABSTENTIONS	0

The Motion was carried.

Agreed:	It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hearty, seconded by Councillor C King that this Council condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the illegal Israeli interception and boarding of boats in the Freedom Flotilla and the abduction of those on board, including at least 22 Irish citizens; Calls for the immediate release of all those abducted by Israel; Urges the Irish and British governments to begin legal proceedings against Israel for this latest breach of international law; Demands an end to the genocide in Palestine and an end to the Israeli blockade of humanitarian aid; And expresses solidarity and support with all those aboard the flotilla as well as the besieged people of Gaza.
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There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 8.46pm.

For confirmation at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 3 November 2025.

Signed:

Chairperson

Chief Executive

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL
RECORDED VOTE

DATE: 06/10/2025

VENUE: Downshire Civic Centre

MEETING: Council

SUBJECT OF VOTE: Cllr Hanna's proposal to remove AHC/074/2025 - Council of Sanctuary minute from AHC Minutes of 15 September 2025

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		6		
K Feehan		7		
D Finn		8		
C Galbraith		9		
M Gibbons				2
O Hanlon		10		
G Hanna	2			
V Harte		11		
M Hearty		12		
R Howell		13		
T Howie		14		
J Jackson	3			
G Kearns		15		
A King		16		
C King		17		
M Larkin		18		
D Lee-Surginor		19		
A Lewis	4			
O Magennis		20		
A Mathers		21		
D McAteer		22		
L McEvoy				3
D Murphy		23		
K Murphy		24		
S Murphy		25		
S O'Hare				4
A Quinn		26		
H Reilly	5			
M Rice		27		
M Ruane		28		
D Taylor	6			
J Tinnelly		29		
J Truesdale		30		
H Young		31		
TOTALS	6	31	0	4

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL
RECORDED VOTE

DATE: 06/10/2025

VENUE: Downshire Civic Centre

MEETING: Council

SUBJECT OF VOTE: Cllr Mathers amendment to Cllr Lewis' Motion – Murder of Charlie Kirk

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	6			
D Finn	7			
C Galbraith	8			
M Gibbons				3
O Hanlon	9			
G Hanna		2		
V Harte	10			
M Hearty	11			
R Howell	12			
T Howie	13			
J Jackson		3		
G Kearns	14			
A King	15			
C King	16			
M Larkin	17			
D Lee-Surginor	18			
A Lewis		4		
O Magennis	19			
A Mathers	20			
D McAteer	21			
L McEvoy				4
D Murphy	22			
K Murphy	23			
S Murphy	24			
S O'Hare				5
A Quinn	25			
H Reilly		5		
M Rice				6
M Ruane	26			
D Taylor		6		
J Tinnelly				7
J Truesdale	27			
H Young	28			
TOTALS	28	6	0	7

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL
RECORDED VOTE

DATE: 06/10/2025

VENUE: Downshire Civic Centre

MEETING: Council

SUBJECT OF VOTE: Suspension of Standing Orders requiring Qualified Majority Vote

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	6			
D Finn	7			
C Galbraith	8			
M Gibbons				3
O Hanlon	9			
G Hanna		2		
V Harte	10			
M Hearty	11			
R Howell	12			
T Howie	13			
J Jackson		3		
G Kearns	14			
A King	15			
C King	16			
M Larkin	17			
D Lee-Surginor	18			
A Lewis		4		
O Magennis	19			
A Mathers	20			
D McAteer	21			
L McEvoy				4
D Murphy	22			
K Murphy	23			
S Murphy	24			
S O'Hare				5
A Quinn	25			
H Reilly		5		
M Rice				6
M Ruane	26			
D Taylor		6		
J Tinnelly				7
J Truesdale	27			
H Young	28			
TOTALS	28	6	0	7

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL
RECORDED VOTE

DATE: 06/10/2025

VENUE: Downshire Civic Centre

MEETING: Council

SUBJECT OF VOTE: Cllr Reilly's amendment to Cllr Hearty's motion – Freedom Flotilla

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

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

NMC/SC

**Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 29 September 2025 at 6.00pm in
Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick**

In the Chair:	Councillor P Campbell	
In attendance in Chamber:	Councillor T Andrews Councillor O Hanlon Councillor A King Councillor D McAteer Councillor H Reilly Councillor M Rice	Councillor J Brennan Councillor J Jackson Councillor D Lee-Surginor Councillor S O'Hare Councillor H Reilly
In attendance via Teams:	Councillor C Bowsie Councillor W Clarke Councillor K Feehan Councillor G Hanna Councillor M Hearty Councillor G Kearns Councillor A Lewis Councillor K Murphy Councillor D Taylor Councillor H Young	Councillor P Byrne Councillor L Devlin Councillor D Finn Councillor V Harte Councillor R Howell Councillor M Larkin Councillor O Magennis Councillor A Quinn Councillor J Truesdale
In attendance in Chamber: (Officials)	Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability & Environment Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer	
Also in attendance in Chamber:	DFI Roads Ms C Noble – Divisional Roads Manager Ms B Gillespie – Section Engineer (NMD West) Mr H Morgan – Section Engineer (NMD East)	

SC/017/2025 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Galbraith, Howie, C King, Mathers, Ruane and Tinnelly. Apologies were also received from the Chief Executive.

SC/018/2025 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

SC/019/2025**DFI ROADS**

The Chairperson welcomed the delegation and invited them to present.

Ms Noble introduced herself and her team and thanked Members for the opportunity to attend. She noted that a significant volume of work had been completed over the past year, as detailed in the annual report circulated to Members, which also included proposals for the coming year.

She stated that infrastructure played a vital role in daily life and that the road network represented the largest and most strategic public asset, confirming that the Department's proposals aimed to protect and improve this network while maximising limited resources to deliver positive outcomes.

Ms Noble advised that the 2024/25 Resource Budget allocation remained challenging despite an increase of £77.6m, which required difficult prioritisation decisions. This had resulted in the continued implementation of a limited-service policy for essential maintenance such as defect repair, grass cutting, and gully emptying. She confirmed that the opening Capital Budget also fell short of requirements, which meant that only high-priority resurfacing, road stability, and drainage projects could be delivered. She noted that some funding had been ringfenced for local transport safety measures, which allowed for targeted improvements such as collision remedial works, traffic calming, and pedestrian crossings. She highlighted internal capacity issues which had constrained delivery and confirmed that programmes had been prioritised according to greatest need.

Ms Noble outlined the introduction of 20mph speed limits around schools, describing this as a significant intervention to improve road safety for pupils and parents. She confirmed that an additional 40 schools across Northern Ireland would benefit from this programme, including five within the District.

She also referenced progress on the Newry Southern Relief Road, advising that the public consultation had closed in March 2025 and that responses were under review.

Ms Noble further noted the recent announcement from Minister Kimmons on the Ballynahinch Bypass and confirmed that preparatory steps were underway. She referenced ongoing work on the Transport Strategy 2035, which would guide infrastructure planning for the next decade, highlighting that transport decarbonisation would be a key focus in promoting walking, wheeling, and cycling infrastructure.

Ms Noble concluded by outlining winter service preparations, confirming that a fleet of 12 gritters would salt 833km of roads as and when required. She reiterated that, given staffing pressures, public safety remained the Department's priority and encouraged Members to report road defects using the online portal to ensure timely triage and response.

Following the presentation, Councillor Campbell invited comments and questions from Members, reminding them to focus on strategic issues rather than local matters.

Comments and questions from members were as follows:

- Thanks were expressed to the delegation for their informative presentation, and for their ongoing hard work and dedication in difficult circumstances.
- Concern was raised that road gullies and verges in the Mournes area had remained blocked for nearly two years, increasing flood risk.
- Members asked whether the criteria for speed and safety assessments be shared, as some roads locally considered dangerous did not meet current thresholds.

- Members expressed frustration that the Kilkeel Road into Hilltown had remained closed for almost three years despite previous assurances it would reopen.
- Questions were raised about reliance on PSNI reports for prioritising works, as not all incidents were formally reported.
- The announcement of progress on the Ballynahinch Bypass was welcomed.
- What was the expected timeline for addressing congestion at Edward Street, Downpatrick.
- What was the expected timeline for implementing the 20mph limits around schools.
- Clarification was requested on whether updated legislation for street adoption would apply retrospectively or only to new developments.
- Concern was raised about delays in completing smaller works and maintenance tasks, and how this could have a larger financial impact as defects worsened.
- It was noted that gullies were not always inspected after cleaning as they were often not fully cleared of blockages which resulted in further flood risks.
- Could private landowners still assist with flooding mitigation, as had happened in previous years.
- What was the budget for minor repairs, such as potholes and other minor defects.
- A request was made for improved street lighting around Loughinisland.
- Concerns were expressed regarding dangerous junctions and poor sightlines.
- A review of DFI policies was requested, in light of ongoing public safety risks.
- The slow updating of the online reporting portal and delay in completing repairs were criticised.
- Could additional schools could be added to the 20mph list, and what were the requirements for this.
- What progress had been made on implementing the NIAO recommendation to extend utility company street works warranties from two to six years.

The delegation responded as follows:

- The maintenance of roads and gullies was essential to road longevity, however, limited resources restricted delivery. Members were asked to highlight priority areas for triage.
- Road safety remained a priority, but decisions were guided by established departmental policies, which were available on the DFI website. These policies were influenced by PSNI personal injury accident data.
- While acknowledging known hotspots that were not always reported, Ms Noble confirmed that prioritisation depended on PSNI statistics and DFI engineer assessments and asked for Members to encourage reporting accidents to the PSNI.
- The Kilkeel Road, Hilltown issue was described as technically complex, but the Department was confident a solution would be found within the financial year.
- Improvements were planned for Edward Street, Downpatrick, with a new crossing to be installed before year end. Consultation was also ongoing on measures near the primary school.
- Implementation of 20mph zones around schools was subject to legislative and contractor coordination requirements; completion was expected before the end of the financial year. The inclusion of new schools was also a legislative matter.
- The Department welcomed the new street adoption procedures, confirming they would apply to new developments, with historic cases reviewed in line with existing bonding issues.
- The Department continued to prioritise resurfacing based on road classification, traffic volume, and defect severity, to be progressed as funding allowed.
- Work with landowners continued through regulatory channels to address recurring flooding issues.

- Only issues reported through official channels could be included in prioritisation lists due to budget constraints, with Members and the public encouraged to use the available tools at their disposal.
- Dangerous junctions should be reported via the appropriate system for assessment against current design standards.
- The Department was considering NIAO recommendations regarding utility company works, with a progress update due in the next quarter.

The Chairperson thanked the delegation for their presentation and time.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at **6.47pm**

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 3 November 2025.

Signed:

Chairperson

Director

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Ref: AC/2025

Minutes of Audit Committee Meeting held on Thursday 25 September 2025, at 2.00pm, in the Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick

Chairperson: Ms B Slevin, Independent Chairperson

**In attendance
in Chamber:**

Councillor C Bowsie
Councillor O Hanlon

Councillor J Brennan
Councillor K Murphy

**In attendance
Via Teams:**

Councillor P Byrne

Councillor L Devlin

**Officials in attendance
in Chamber:**

Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services
Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability & Environment
Mr A Patterson, Director of Active & Healthy Communities
Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director of Capital & Procurement
Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Performance
Mrs C McClean, Assistant Director of Corporate Services
Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager

**Also in attendance
in chamber:**

Ms K Doey NIAO
Ms C Hagan Sumer NI

AC/077/2025:

APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Howie, King and O'Hare and from Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive and Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism.

AC/078/2025:

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

AC/079/2025:

ACTION SHEET OF AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 31 JULY 2025

Read: Action Sheet arising from Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting held on 31 July 2025. **(Copy circulated)**

In response to a query from Councillor Bowsie, Mrs Kelly advised the update report on Mourne Mountain Gateway Project would come to a future Audit Committee following tabling at the SPR Committee Meeting.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor Brennan, it was agreed to note the Action Sheet for Audit Committee Meeting held 31 July 2025.**

AC/080/2025: ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE 2025/26

Read: Report from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Performance, regarding Assessment of Performance 2025/26. **(Copy circulated)**

In response to a query from Councillor Bowsie regarding the introduction of an employee satisfaction survey, Mrs Murphy advised that Council had an internal Health and Wellbeing Working Group who had plans to carry out an employee survey, stress risk assessment and review of health and wellbeing provision within the Council as well as reviewing the previously carried out risk assessment.

Councillor Bowsie welcomed the update stating it would be beneficial to receive comparisons from previous surveys to understand how staff satisfaction and morale was improving within the Council.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Bowsie, it was agreed to note the Assessment of Performance 2024-25, including the summary document 'Our Performance Looking Back, Going Forward'.**

CORPORATE SERVICES – OPEN SESSION

AC/081/2025: OFFICERS REGISTER OF INTERESTS

Read: Report from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, regarding Officer's Register of Interests. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Bowsie proposed that the ICO guidance stating that the content of senior officers' declarations of interest did not need to be uploaded to the website be tabled at the next Audit Committee. This was seconded by Councillor K Murphy.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Bowsie, seconded by Councillor K Murphy it was agreed that ICO guidance issued in respect of Senior Officers' Declarations of Interest be tabled at the next Audit Committee Meeting.**

Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Brennan, it was agreed to note the Conflicts of Interest Policy & Procedure as approved by Council in 2023.

AC/082/2025: CORPORATE RISK REGISTER – S&E DIRECTORATE ALSO TO BE TABLED

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

Mrs Kelly advised the Risk Register had been updated and informed by Assurance Statements and there had been no changes in the overall score.

CR12 - Councillor Brennan queried whether the Planning Department was now fully staffed or if there were still recruitment issues. Councillors Devlin and Hanlon stated there had been an increase in complaints regarding the processing of simple planning applications planning issues therefore asked whether the risk needed to be increased. Mrs Kelly advised she would ask the Director responsible to revert to the Councillor Brennan on the issue of recruitment. With regard to the need to increase the risk, Mrs Kelly stated the risk score reflected the fact that numbers were going down and more staff had been recruited however service delivery would be reflected at the next Review Report to be tabled at SPR and Audit Committees.

Councillor Hanlon queried whether there was enough staff resource to enable the delivery of the new cleansing schedule and whether the residual risk score reflected where Council was at currently. Mrs Murphy advised that the recent recruitment exercise was highly successful, however, there were a number of unfilled posts that remained. She advised interim solutions to fill posts were being implemented to ensure services remained operational pending permanent recruitment.

CR01 – Councillors Byrne and Devlin asked that the risk score and actions to mitigate to reduce the risk be looked at with regard to the BRCD projects. Mrs Kelly advised she would feed back the comments raised and SMT would look at the register to review the scores.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Brennan, 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 S&E Directorate Risk Register summary at Appendix 3, and detailed S&E Directorate Risk Register at Appendix 4.**

AC/083/2025: NMDDC STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2024/25

Read: Report from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Performance, regarding NMDDC Statement of Accounts 2023/24. **(Copy circulated)**

Mr Byrne advised the NIAO audits were almost complete and an unqualified audit opinion had been given. He stated there was one reclassification required on the balance sheet.

Mrs Slevin thanked Mr Byrne and his team for their work in preparing the accounts.

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

**Statement of Accounts for year ending 31 March 2025
for signing by the Chief Executive and Chairperson.**

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, 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 K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to come out of Closed Session.

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

NIAO – CLOSED SESSION

AC/084/2025: REPORT TO THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE 2024/25 - DRAFT

Read: Correspondence from NI Audit Office, regarding Report To Those Charged With Governance 2024/25 – Draft. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Brennan, it was agreed to note the draft Report To Those Charged With Governance 2024/25.

CORPORATE SERVICES (CLOSED SESSION)

AC/085/2025: UPDATE OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

AC/086/2024: DIRECT AWARD CONTRACTS REPORT

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

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

- The Q2 Financial Year ending March 2026 in relation to Direct Award Activity.
- To note the DAC register as at 31 August 2025
- To note the developmental work bring carried out, including the Active DAC register as at 31 August 2025.

AC/087/2025: 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 Bowsie, seconded by Councillor Brennan, it was agreed to note the update and progress in relation to Procurement and the Directorate Procurement Action Plans**

AC/088/2025: 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 Bowsie, seconded by Councillor Devlin, 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

AC/089/2025: SUMER NI SUMMARY REPORT

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

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

- HR Policy Review
- PCSP Audit
- Mid-Year Follow Up

AC/090/2025: INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2025/26 - REVISION

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

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to approve the Internal Audit Plan 2025/26 - Revised

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 3.30pm

For consideration at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 3 November 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 13 October 2025 at 6.00pm in Boardroom, Warrenpoint Town Hall**

Chairperson: Councillor D Lee-Surginor

**Committee Members
in attendance:**

Councillor G Hanna
Councillor S Murphy
Councillor M Ruane
Councillor H Young

Councillor G Kearns
Councillor A Quinn
Councillor J Tinnelly

Committee Members

in attendance via Teams:

Councillor W Clarke
Councillor C Galbraith

Councillor K Feehan

Non-Committee Members

in attendance via Teams:

Councillor C Bowsie

Officials in attendance:

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

**Officials in attendance
via Teams:**

Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director, Regeneration

ERT/094/2025

APOLOGIES / CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillor Andrews, Hanlon, Harte and Lewis.

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.

ERT/095/2025

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

ERT/096/2025

**ACTION SHEET ECONOMY, REGENERATION & TOURISM
COMMITTEE MEETING MONDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2025**

Read:

Action Sheet arising out of the Minutes of the Economy,
Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday 8

September 2025 (Copy circulated)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Hanna, seconded by Councillor Kearns, it was agreed to note the Action Sheet arising from the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday 8 September 2025.

FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION

ERT/097/2025 **INCOMING TOUR OPERATORS ASSOCIATION IRELAND WORKSHOP 2025**

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism regarding ITOA Ireland Workshop 2025 (**Copy circulated**)

Mrs Smyth outlined the benefits of the ITOA Workshop, which was scheduled to take place in November 2025 at the Slieve Donard Hotel, Newcastle, advising the costs were provided in Appendix 1 of the officer's report.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor S Murphy, it was agreed to provide sponsorship for the ITOA Ireland Workshop which in November 2025 is being hosted in the Slieve Donard Hotel, Newcastle.

ERT/098/2025 **SUMMIT OF THE CITIES 2026**

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, regarding Summit of the Cities 2026. (**Copy circulated**)

Mrs Smyth explained that the report sought Council approval for its role as a key partner in the Summer of the Cities 2026 event. She provided an overview of the Summit of the Cities and its associated benefits, as outlined in Sections 2.1 and 2.2 of the officer's report.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Quinn, it was agreed to approve Council as a key partner on the Summit of the Cities 2026 event.

ERT/099/2025 **WARRENPOINT BATHS**

Read: Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, regarding Warrenpoint Baths Update. (**Copy circulated**)

Mrs Smyth presented the report and referred to Section 2.0, which had been shared with Members at the meeting held on 10th September. Members were asked to approve the recommendations set out in Sections 3.1 and 3.2 of the report, and to note the associated costs

as outlined in Appendix 1.

AGREED:

- On the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor S Murphy, the following was agreed:
- Commission a comprehensive intrusive structural condition survey of the Baths structure and buildings.
 - Continue to explore and progress any relevant / appropriate funding opportunities for delivery of the approved project.

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

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Quinn, seconded by Councillor Kearns, it was agreed to come out of Closed Session.

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

ERT/100/2025

BELFAST INNOVATION REGION FUNDING

Read:

Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding Belfast Innovation Region Funding application. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

- On the proposal of Councillor Young, seconded by Councillor Quinn, it was agreed to:
- Approve acceptance of the Letter of Offer from Department for Science, Innovation & Technology (DSIT) for Castlewellan Forest Park,
 - Approve the business case for the procurement for the project via the Crown Commercial Service Network Services 3 Framework (RM6116),
 - Approve the allocation of match funding towards the project, as set out in Section 4.

FOR NOTING

ERT/101/2025

BUILDING CONTROL X 6 MONTHLY UPDATE

Read:

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

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Quinn, seconded by Councillor S Murphy, it was agreed to note the report.

ERT/0102/2025

EBR BRIDGE PROJECT

Read:

Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding PEACE PLUS – BRIDGE Report. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Quinn, seconded by Councillor S Murphy, it was agreed to note the award of funding to East Border Region, from the SEUPB PEACEPLUS Programme for the BRIDGE Project.

ERT/0103/2025

LICENSING 6 X MONTHLY UPDATE

Read:

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

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Quinn, seconded by Councillor S Murphy, it was agreed to note the contents contained within the Licensing 6 monthly report.

ERT/0104/2025

NMDDC ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Read:

Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding UUEPC – Economic Outlook NMDDC. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Quinn, seconded by Councillor S Murphy, it was agreed to note the update on the Council's Economic Outlook compiled by Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC).

ERT/0105/2025

PEACEPLUS

Read:

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

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Quinn, seconded by

Councillor S Murphy, it was agreed to note the minutes of the PEACEPLUS Partnership on 18th September 2025 and the Partnership’s agreement on the next phase of implementation against action plan:

- **Strand 3.7 Piece Work Embroidery – Flowering in the Mournes**
- **Strand 2.3 Learn the language of my neighbour**
- **Strand 3.6 Crossing Paths: Stories in Motion**
- **Strand 3.6 Home is a Journey: Migration in Film and theatre**

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 6.18pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 3 November 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 16 October 2025 at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Downshire Civic
Centre**

In the Chair: Councillor O Hanlon

**In Attendance in
Chamber:**

Councillor C Enright	Councillor T Howie
Councillor A King	Councillor C King
Councillor A Lewis	Councillor A Mathers
Councillor S O'Hare	Councillor H Reilly
Councillor M Rice	
Councillor D Taylor	

**Committee Members in
Attendance via Teams:**

Councillor P Byrne	Councillor M Hearty
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**Non-Committee Members
In Attendance:**

Councillor C Bowsie	Councillor J Truesdale
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Non-Committee Members

In Attendance via teams: Councillor J Jackson

**Officials in Attendance
in Chamber:**

Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services
Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism
Mr A Patterson, Director of Active & Healthy Communities
Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of People & Legal
Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Regeneration
Mr C Sage, Assistant Director of Sustainability
Ms S Andree, Head of Administration & Customer Service
Ms M Hughes, HR & OD Manager
Mr C Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy
Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager
Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer

**Officials in Attendance
via Teams:**

Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Performance

SPR/161/2025:

APOLOGIES & CHAIRPERSONS REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Howell, O'Hare, Mrs Ward, Chief Executive, and Mrs Murphy, Director of Sustainability & Environment.

SPR/162/2025:

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Byrne declared an interest in item 6 – SRA Allowances.

SPR/163/2025: ACTION SHEET OF STRATEGY, POLICY & RESOURCES MEETING HELD ON 11 SEPTEMBER 2025

Read: Action Sheet of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee meeting held 11 September 2025. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Mathers, it was agreed to approve the action sheet of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee meeting of 11 September 2025.**

FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION

SPR/164/2025: ANNUAL COMPLAINT HANDLING REPORT

Read: Report from Mrs C McClean, Assistant Director of Legal & People, regarding Annual Complaint Handling Report. **(Copy circulated)**

Ms McClean presented the Report, noting that the new complaints process was in accordance with NIPSO requirements and would be reported on annually.

In proposing the Report, Councillor Reilly highlighted the small number of complaints. He noted that, in his view, Councillors often received complaints relating to missed bin collections and stated that he did not encourage such complaints to be formally raised as he would regularly action them to Council himself.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed to approve the Annual Complaint Handling Report for publication.**

SPR/165/2025: COUNCILS APPROACH TO DEVELOPING ULSTER SCOTS

Read: Report from Mrs C McClean, Assistant Director of Legal & People, regarding Council's Approach to Developing Ulster Scots. **(Copy circulated)**

Ms McClean noted that the paper had been tabled following discussion at the Equality and Good Relations Forum held on 8 October, at which a unanimous recommendation had been agreed that Council proceed to establish an Ulster Scots Working Group.

Councillor Taylor proposed to accept the recommendation, noting the Unionist representation over the years and the desire to see greater recognition of the Ulster Scots contribution to the area. He stated that this was not the end of the journey, but an opportunity to explore the benefits that increased support for promoting the culture could bring.

Councillor McAteer seconded the proposal, echoing Councillor Taylor's sentiments.

Councillor Hanlon noted that this was the start of the journey, emphasising the importance of the working group in promoting Ulster Scots.

Councillor Reilly welcomed the report, noting the high number of respondents to the consultation. He stated that the new Commissioner for Ulster Scots had amended the title to "Commissioner for Ulster Scots and British Ulster Culture and Traditions." He welcomed that the Report included and reflected on the British Ulster identity and expressed his hope that the Group would be able to support a wide range of projects to promote Ulster Scots.

Councillor Howie also welcomed the Report and the potential to celebrate and promote Ulster Scots within the District.

Councillor Byrne welcomed the Report, noting that recommendations coming from the Equality & Good Relations Reference Group required unanimous agreement, and commented that it was positive to see such a recommendation brought forward with the full backing of all Parties.

Councillor Bowsie welcomed the report, noting the District's Ulster Scots heritage as something to be proud of. He also noted the reference to the Ulster British identity within the report, stating that the desire for the Ulster British dimension to be reflected without it being explicitly requested was significant and should be considered in the naming of the working group.

Following a query from Councillor Reilly, a discussion took place regarding deferring the item for a month to discuss the title of the Working Group. Councillor Lewis proposed and Councillor Reilly seconded that the proposed title of the Working Group would be "Ulster Scots Ulster British Working Group" which could then be ratified along with the Terms of Reference at the first meeting of the Group. It was agreed by the original proposer, Councillor Taylor and seconder, Councillor McAteer to amend the officer's recommendation.

Councillors Taylor, Bowsie, and Jackson noted that the naming convention was intended to align with the new Commissioner in Central Government, while Councillors Byrne, Hanlon, and McAteer noted that the naming of a Working Group should be decided by those who would be members of the Group, some of whom would likely not be present at the Committee meeting.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor McAteer, it was agreed to establish an Ulster Scots Ulster British Working Group, the title of which, along with the Terms of Reference would, be agreed at the first meeting of the Working Group.**

SPR/166/2025: SRA ALLOWANCES

Read: Report from Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive, regarding SRA Allowances. **(Copy circulated)**

Ms Taggart outlined the Report, noting that there was one outstanding SRA following the reallocation of the DUP Party Representative position on 5 October 2025. She advised the Report recommended that, as in previous years, the outstanding SRA would be distributed among existing positions already in receipt of such allowances.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Rice, seconded by Councillor Reilly, it was agreed to retain the current position of allocating any outstanding**

SRAs among those positions that receive SRA positions.

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

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

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

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

SPR/167/2025: RESERVES POLICY

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

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Howie, it was agreed to approve the Reserves Policy.

SPR/168/2025: PROPOSED UPGRADES OF EV CHARGEPOINTS AT COUNCIL CAR PARKS

Read: Report from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director of Sustainability, regarding Proposed Upgrades of EV Charge-points at Council Car Parks **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Hearty, seconded by Councillor McAteer, it was agreed to approve the leasing of the areas outlined in red on the maps contained within Appendices 1, 2 and 3 of the Officer's Report for the purposes of upgrading the EV charge-points for the term outlined and the proposed rent as detailed within the report.

SPR/169/2025: HIGHER LEVEL APPRENTICESHIP - PLANNING

Read: Report from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Regeneration, regarding Higher Level Apprenticeship – Planning. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Rice, seconded by Councillor Howie, it was agreed that this Council participate in the Planning Apprenticeship programme and seek to recruit an Apprentice as per the timeline outlined within the Officer’s Report and that an update be brought to SP&R in due course.**

SPR/170/2025: NEWCASTLE CENTRE – INTEGRATED CONSULTANCY TEAM (ICT) APPOINTMENT

Read: Report from Mr A Patterson, Director of Active & Healthy Communities, regarding Newcastle Centre – Integrated Consultancy Team (ICT) Appointment. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Reilly, it was agreed to approve the appointment of the Integrated Consultancy Team to progress the delivery of a new leisure centre on the Newcastle Centre site following the recent procurement exercise.**

SPR/171/2025: DOWN LEISURE CENTRE CAPITAL WORKS

Read: Report from Mr A Patterson, Director of Active & Healthy Communities, regarding Down Leisure Centre Capital Works. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed to procure and appoint a suitable supplier for delivery of the works at Down Leisure Centre as detailed within the Officer’s Report, with the budget requirement added to Council’s Capital Programme.**

SPR/172/2025: MEIGH COMMUNITY CENTRE CAPITAL WORKS

Read: Report from Mr A Patterson, Director of Active & Healthy Communities, regarding Meigh Community Centre Capital Works. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor C King, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to procure and appoint a suitable supplier for delivery of the works at Meigh Community Centre as detailed within the Officer’s Report, with the budget**

requirement added to Council's Capital Programme.

SPR/173/2025: LEASE OF ROPEWALK PITCH, WELLS LANE, NEWRY

Read: Report from Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of People & Legal, regarding Lease of Ropewalk Pitch, Wells Lane. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor A King, it was agreed to enter into a lease with the Group noted within the Officer's Report in respect of the lands for a term of 25 years at a peppercorn rent, subject to Departmental and NI Housing Executive Consent.

SPR/174/2025: PROPOSED LEASE AT LOUGH PARK, BALLYNAHINCH FOR NIEN SUBSTATION

Read: Report from Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of People & Legal, regarding Proposed Lease at Lough Park, Ballynahinch for NIEN Substation. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Howie, seconded by Councillor McAteer, it was agreed to enter into a lease with NI Electricity Networks in respect of the portion of lands outlined in red on the map attached to the officer's report for a term of 99 years, subject to the market value premium. It was also agreed to enter into the associated wayleaves required in respect of the substation, subject to NI Electricity Networks reimbursing Council for the valuation costs.

SPR/175/2025: PROPOSED LEASE OF PLAYING FIELDS, DUNDALK ROAD, NEWTOWNHAMILTON

Read: Report from Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of People & Legal, regarding Proposed Lease of Playing Fields, Dundalk Road, Newtownhamilton. **(Copy circulated)**

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

- To enter into a lease with the club noted in the officer's report for a term of 25 years at a peppercorn rent, subject to Departmental Consent.
- To enter into such deeds as are required to rectify the title to the lands.

SPR/176/2025:

REQUEST TO PURCHASE LAND ADJACENT TO CANAL

Read:

Report from Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of People & Legal, regarding Request to Purchase Land Adjacent to Canal. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor McAteer, it was agreed to sell the lands to the party identified within the Officer's Report for the market value.

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

SPR/177/2025:

NILGA SUBSCRIPTIONS 2025/26

Read:

Report from Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive, regarding NILGA Subscriptions 2025/26 **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Lewis, seconded by Councillor C King, it was agreed to note the annual NILGA subscription fee for 2025/26.

SPR/178/2025:

SPECIFIC DELEGATED FUNCTION

Read:

Report from Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive, regarding Specific Delegated Function. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Lewis, seconded by Councillor C King, it was agreed to note that delegation has been exercised by the Chief Executive regarding a HR matter in the best interests of the Council and is being reported in accordance with 3.1.11 of the Council's Scheme of Delegation for Officers.

SPR/179/2025:

SFWG ACTION SHEET OF MEETING HELD 7 OCTOBER 2025

Read:

SFWG Action Sheet of Meeting Held 7 October 2025. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Lewis, seconded by Councillor C King, it was agreed to note the action sheet.

FOR NOTING

SPR/180/2025:

**STATUTORY REPORTING: SECTION 75 POLICY
SCREENING REPORT – QUARTERLY REPORT FOR
PERIOD JULY – SEPTEMBER 2025**

Read:

Report from Ms C McClean, Assistant Director of People & Legal, regarding Statutory Reporting: Section 75 Policy Screening Report – Quarterly Report for Period July – September 2025.
(Copy circulated)

Councillor Reilly stated that his Party had expected a more rigorous investigation in relation to the Council of Sanctuary and expressed disappointment that the matter had not been subject to a full Equality Impact Assessment. He further noted concern regarding comments by an SDLP Member.

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Rice, it was agreed to note the Section 75 Policy Screening Report

SPR/181/2025:

**WOMENS WORKING GROUP ACTION SHEET OF MEETING
HELD 2 OCTOBER 2025**

Read:

Women's Working Group Action Sheet of Meeting Held 2 October 2025. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Rice, it was agreed to note the action sheet.

SPR/182/2025:

**NILGA GUIDE TO DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY FOR
COUNCILLORS IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

Read:

NILGA Guide to Digital Connectivity for Councillors in Northern Ireland. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Rice, it was agreed to note the documents.

There being no further business, the Meeting concluded at 7.25pm

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 3 November 2025.

Signed:

**Councillor Oonagh Hanlon
Chairperson**

Signed:

**Josephine Kelly
Director of Corporate Services**

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Ref: AHC/2025

**Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on
Monday 20 October 2025 at 6.00pm in the Council Chambers,
Downshire Civic Centre**

Chairperson: Councillor C Bowsie

**In attendance in
Chamber:**

Councillor J Jackson	Councillor A King
Councillor D Lee-Surginor	Councillor O Magennis
Councillor A Mathers	Councillor D Murphy
Councillor K Murphy	

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

Councillor J Brennan	Councillor D Finn
Councillor R Howell	Councillor J Truesdale

Non-Committee Members

in attendance via teams: Councillor O Hanlon

Officials in Chamber:

Mr A Patterson, Director, Active and Healthy Communities
Mr C Haughey, Assistant Director, Healthy Living
Ms Sarah Taggart, Democratic Services Manager
Mr C Smyth, Democratic Services Officer

Officials in attendance

Via teams: Ms Martina Flynn, Head of Engagement

AHC/083/2025: APOLOGIES & CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

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

Councillor Bowsie highlighted the success of the participatory budgeting events that had been held recently across the district's seven DEAs, commending its role in promoting community ownership and engagement. He praised Mr Alan Beggs and his team for their hard work and expressed support for similar future initiatives.

AHC/084/2025: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

**AHC/085/2025: ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM ACTIVE & HEALTHY
COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15
SEPTEMBER 2025**

Read: Action sheet of the Active & Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 15 September 2025. **(Copy circulated)**.

AHC/080/2025 – Newcastle Centre Site Selection

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Truesdale regarding the timeframe for providing information on site selections and reasons for rejection, Mr Patterson advised that he did not have the information to hand but would revert to Councillor Truesdale outside of the meeting.

Councillor Mathers took the opportunity to commend the recent boxing event hosted by St John Bosco Boxing Club at Newry Leisure Centre, which drew hundreds of families. He emphasised the value of such events and called for greater efforts to attract and retain them within the district's leisure facilities.

AGREED: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Lee-Surginor, seconded by Councillor Mathers, to note the Action Sheet of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 15 September 2025.**

AHC/086/2025: DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREA (DEA) FORUM UPDATE

Read: Report dated 20 October 2025 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director: Community Development, regarding DEA Forum Update Report. **(Copy circulated)**

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

- **Slieve Gullion DEA Forum Meeting held on 2 September 2025**
- **Newry DEA Forum Meeting held on 11 September 2025**
- **Slieve Croob DEA Forum Meeting held on 23 September 2025**

AHC/087/2025: ROWALLANCE DEA MULTI-SPORTS HUB REVIEW

Read: Report dated 20 October 2025 from Mr C Haughey, Assistant Director of Healthy Living, regarding Rowallane Multi-Sports Hub Review. **(Copy circulated)**

Mr Haughey presented the report and recommendations, noting that 39 one-hour training slots had been identified for multi-sports clubs in the Rowallane DEA.

Councillor Jackson proposed the report, welcomed its content, and outlined his early engagement regarding inadequate facilities at Langley Road. He highlighted that a shared vision for a Ballynahinch sports hub had been put forward, including proposed pitches and a master plan for the site with potential involvement from Ulster Hockey, Ulster Rugby, and the Irish FA. He described it as an exciting project for the local community and thanked all involved for their support.

Councillor Lee-Surginor seconded the proposal, describing it as a positive step and looked forward to collaborative work between Council and stakeholders to implement the review's findings.

Councillor D Murphy supported the proposals, noting the benefits for young people.

Councillor Bowsie referred to section 3.1 of the report and requested examples of infrastructure required to support the Langley Road masterplan. Mr Haughey cited examples of drainage infrastructure or ducting being installed to support the future development potential of the site.

In response to a request from Councillor Brennan for a breakdown of expenditure between Langley Road and St Colman's sites, Mr Haughey advised that exact costings were not yet available but would be provided to Members in due course.

AGREED:

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Jackson, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor, to note the updated Multi-Sports Facilities Review for Rowallane DEA, and grant approval for:

- **Replacement of the existing AstroTurf pitch at St Colman's High and Sixth Form College with a 3G surface.**
- **Development of a new AstroTurf pitch at Langley Road Playing Fields, to accommodate Ballynahinch hockey club and to install any required infrastructure to assist with the future masterplan for Langley Road project.**
- **Council to commission a masterplan for the Langley Road site and to engage the local constituted group, including sports clubs and representative sports bodies, to progress a lease of the site, allowing the group to seek external funding in order to develop the site for other sports usage.**

AHC/088/2025: DOWNPATRICK DEA MULTI-SPORTS HUB REVIEW

Read: Report dated 20 October 2025 from Mr C Haughey, Assistant Director of Healthy Living, regarding Downpatrick Multi-Sports Hub Review.
(Copy circulated)

Mr Haughey presented the report seeking approval to appoint a specialist consultant to engage with sports clubs and stakeholders to address the identified gap of 24 one-hour training slots within the Downpatrick DEA.

In proposing the report, Councillor K Murphy described it as great news for the area.

Councillor A King seconded the proposal and requested clarification on the timeframe for completion. Mr Haughey advised that the process was expected to take 8–12 weeks, allowing for the views of all interested parties to be gathered and subsequently reported back to the committee.

Councillor Hanlon welcomed the report as a positive step forward, noting that the development of a suitable sports hub in Downpatrick had been long awaited and that such

facilities were urgently needed.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor A King, it was agreed to appoint a specialist provider to undertake a new consultation process with local sports clubs and stakeholders within the Downpatrick DEA, and to identify viable sites and delivery models for the Multi-Sport Hub provision.

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

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

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

AHC/089/2025: LEISURE CENTRE SERVICE DELIVERY

Read: Report dated 20 October 2025 from Mr C Haughey, Assistant Director of Healthy Living, regarding Leisure Centre Service Delivery. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Magennis, to approve the enhanced service delivery arrangements within leisure facilities as outlined within the officer's report.

AHC/090/2025: LEASING OF COUNCIL LAND

Read: Report dated 20 October 2025 from Mr C Haughey, Assistant Director of Healthy Living, regarding Leasing of Council Land. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, to progress an Expression of Interest for Leasing of Council land via

Councils Sport and Community Leasing Policy as outlined within the officer's report.

AHC/091/2025: LICENSE AGREEMENT FOR PROGRAMME DELIVERY

Read: Report dated 20 October 2025 from Mr C Haughey, Assistant Director of Healthy Living, regarding License Agreement for Programme Delivery. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor A King, to approve a license agreement for programme delivery as outlined within the officer's report.**

AHC/092/2025: COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAMME – ADVICE SERVICES FUNDING

Read: Report dated 20 October 2025 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director: Community Development, regarding Community Support Programme – Advice Services Funding. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor D Murphy, to note the report and award additional funding from the Department for Communities (DfC) to Community Advice Newry, Mourne and Down for enhanced provision of the Integrated Advice Partnership Fund in 2025/26.**

FOR NOTING

AHC/093/2025: ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS – UPDATE ON COUNCIL PROGRAMMES

Read: Report dated 20 October 2025 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director: Community Development, regarding Ending Violence Against Women and Girls – Update on Council Programmes. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Magennis, to note the update provided on Council Programmes on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls**

AHC/094/2025: POLICING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP REPORT

Read: Report dated 20 October 2025 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development regarding Policing & Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) Report. **(Copy circulated)**

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

of the Policing Committee & PCSP Meeting held on 29 July 2025, approved at the Policing Committee & PCSP Meeting on 30 September 2025.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 6.29pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 3 November 2025

Signed: **Councillor C Bowsie**
 Chairperson

Signed: **Andrew Patterson**
 Director Active and Healthy Communities



From the office of the Minister for Infrastructure
LIZ KIMMINS MLA

Marie Ward
Chief Executive
Newry, Mourne & Down District Council

fionnuala.branagh@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

Your reference: XXXX
Our reference: COR-0824-2025
06 October 2025

Marie, a chara,

RESURFACING AND LONG-TERM REPAIR OF MAIN A ROUTE BETWEEN KILKEEL AND NEWCASTLE

My Department has been operating in a difficult financial environment for several years due to the underfunding and austerity by the British Government and this has had a significant impact on our ability to deliver essential services.

Road safety remains an extremely high priority for my Department and we are committed to working proactively to make our roads safer and address the needs of all road users.

Regrettably, structural maintenance funding which is used to deliver resurfacing projects has not kept pace with what is needed to keep our roads in a reasonable condition resulting in a need for my Department to prioritise roads that are in the worst condition.

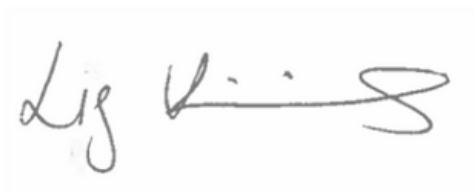
My Department completed two resurfacing schemes on the A2 Newcastle Road in Kilkeel during 2024/25 with over 3km of the road resurfaced at a cost of some £1.25 million. There are currently no immediate plans to undertake any further resurfacing along this route however its condition will be kept under review.

A road-widening scheme along Ballagh Road was assessed and received a low priority due to the positive safety record at this location. There are currently no plans to undertake any road widening along this route.

The latest data from the PSNI, highlights 6 collisions resulting in death or injury within the past 3 years along this route. Of the six, one resulted from impairment by drugs or alcohol, and another was due to a defective vehicle.

My officials will continue to review and assess the A2 Kilkeel to Newcastle Road through regular inspections and will also take forward the repair of defects in line with my Department's Limited Service policy.

Is mise le meas,



LIZ KIMMINS MLA
Minister for Infrastructure



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

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29 September 2025

Our ref: C174/25

By Email: marie.ward@nmandd.org

Ms Marie Ward
Chief Executive
Newry, Mourne & Down District Council

Dear Ms Ward

Council at its September meeting carried the undernoted motion:

That 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 campaigning for CAR-T treatment to be made available to Northern Ireland patients at St James's Hospital, Dublin.
- Acknowledges that the Department of Health in the Republic of Ireland has an existing Memorandum of Understanding on All-Island Cancer Services, first signed after the Good Friday Agreement in 1999 and renewed in 2021, which already 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 established — would allow patients to receive life-saving treatment within driving distance of home, supported by their families.

This Council therefore calls 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;



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

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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 those who may face similar hardship.

I would therefore ask if you would report this request to your elected Members for consideration. I would also welcome a response to this request so that I can report back to our Members in due course.

Yours sincerely

Joseph McGuckin
Head of Strategic Services & Engagement



The Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP

**Secretary of State for
Northern Ireland**

1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

Erskine House
20-32 Chichester St
Belfast
BT1 4GF

E: correspondence@nio.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/nio
Follow us on X: @NIOgov

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

By email: aisling.murray@nmandd.org

16 October 2025

Your reference: C/120/2025
Our reference: MC/25/545

Dear Marie,

Thank you for your letter regarding Votes at 16. I am pleased that the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council welcomes the Government's plans to introduce votes for 16 and 17-year-olds in all non-devolved elections across the UK, including in Northern Ireland.

The Government's Strategy, *Restoring Trust in Our Democracy*, sets out the steps we will take to simplify, protect and promote our democracy. These changes will help to keep our elections secure, build public trust and encourage more people to engage and participate. The Government will legislate to introduce votes for 16 and 17-year-olds, toughen up rules to guard against foreign political interference, and crack down on intimidation and abuse in politics. These changes will apply to elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly and local government elections, as well as parliamentary elections.

The Government's intention is for the franchise change to be in place in good time ahead of the next General Election. However, this will not be in place for the May 2027 Northern Ireland Assembly and local elections. This Bill will include a number of major changes to our electoral system, as well as expanding the franchise, and we need to get these right. Changes to electoral law of this magnitude require careful planning and preparation and should not be rushed.

Thank you again for getting in touch on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,



**THE RT HON HILARY BENN MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

Marie Ward
Chief Executive



Our ref: C/120/2025

14 August 2025

The Rt. Hon. Keir Starmer MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister

Re: Notice of Motion – Voting Age to be reduced to 16

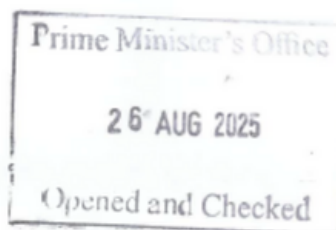
At a Meeting of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council held on 4 August 2025, the following Notice of Motion was agreed:

"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".

I would ask that the UK Government give this matter consideration and look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully

Marie Ward
Chief Executive



Oifig an Iúir
Newry Office
O'Hagan House
Monaghan Row
Newry BT35 6DJ

Oifig Dhún Pádraig
Downpatrick Office
Downshire Civic Centre
Downshire Estate, Ardglass Road
Downpatrick BT30 6GQ

0330 137 4000 (Council)
council@nmandd.org
www.newrymournedown.org

Ag freastal ar an Dúin
agus Ard Mhacha Theas
Serving Down
and South Armagh



OIFIG ARD-RÚNAÍ AN UACHTARÁIN
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL TO THE PRESIDENT

15 October, 2025

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

Dear Ms Ward,

I wish to acknowledge receipt of your letter regarding the Notice of Motion to President Higgins, which he has seen and for which I would like to express appreciation.

The President sends his good wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Orla O'Hanrahan
Secretary General to the President





Chairman
Jonathan Patton

Chief Executive
Roisin Coulter

23 October 2025

Marie Ward
Chief Executive
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
Downpatrick Office
Downshire Civic Centre
Downshire Estate, Ardglass Road
Downpatrick BT30 6GQ

Dear Marie

RE: NOTICE OF MOTION – ENHANCEMENT OF SERVICES AT THE DOWNE

Thank you for your correspondence received 16 October 2025.

The Consultant led service which the South Eastern Trust delivers in the Downe Hospital Urgent Care Centre has not changed.

In September 2023 the Department of Health (DOH) adopted new Emergency Department definitions to align Northern Ireland's definitions with those used by NHS England.

This was an administrative amendment which did not change or downgrade any services provided in the Urgent Care Centres.

When the new definition was adopted, both the Downe and Lagan Valley Hospitals' Urgent Care Centres were reclassified from a Type 2, to a Type 3. There are now no Type 2 facilities in Northern Ireland. Please see related points 6 and 9 in the DoH press release below, which was published on the 28 August 2025.

[Emergency Care Waiting Time Statistics \(April-June 2025\) | Department of Health](#)

The Trust remains committed to the Downe hospital which provides excellent services to the community it serves.

It has been made clear on numerous occasions, most recently in May and September 2025, that a 24 / 7 Emergency Department is neither sustainable nor clinically safe at the Downe hospital.

This has now been clarified to the council in this further correspondence and the Trust will not be making any further comments on a simple administrative alignment across the NHS.

In relation to the Department of Health's consultation on 'Hospitals – Creating a Network for Better Outcomes' - the Department of Health (DOH) has not yet released the consultation outcome report.

Yours sincerely



ROISIN COULTER
Chief Executive

FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH



Marie Ward
Chief Executive
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
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Our Ref: COR-1622-2025

Date: 28 October 2025

Dear Marie

Thank you for your correspondence of 16 October 2025 and I note the Notice of Motion agreed by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

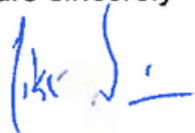
I have given this issue my full attention and concern and I have listened intently to those that have been affected, and they remain the key focus for myself and my Department. I acknowledge the concerns raised by the 'Ladies with Letters,' group and recognise the support the group provides to some of the women included in the Cervical Cytology Review. I have met with representatives from the group on three occasions and I have committed to staying in regular contact with them.

For information, there are three cervical screening related reports due to be published shortly, these are:

- independent experts' opinion on the two factual reports published in December 2024;
- NHS England's Peer Review report of the Public Health Agency's Quality Assurance function in relation to cervical screening; and
- a summary of the findings and learnings from a multi-patient Serious Adverse Incidents (SAIs) learning review.

These reports will help inform my next steps, but I remain committed to understanding what happened; why it happened; who is responsible and what can be done to prevent it happening again.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mike Nesbitt', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mike Nesbitt MLA
Minister of Health