

# Agenda

- 1.0 Apologies and Chairperson's Remarks
- 2.0 Declarations of Interest
- 3.0 Action Sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 2 March 2026

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*Council Minutes For Adoption and Signing*

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- 4.0 Minutes of Council Meeting held on 2 March 2026

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*Committee Minutes for Consideration and Adoption*

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- 5.0 Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 9 March 2026
- 6.0 Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 12 March 2026
- 7.0 Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 16 March 2026
- 8.0 Minutes of Sustainability & Environment Committee Meeting held on 18 March 2026

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- 9.0 Planning Section

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*Correspondence*

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- 10.0 Correspondence Report

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- 10.1 Correspondence from Health Minister re NOM Physician Associates C/186/2025
  - 10.2 Correspondence regarding Isle of Man Legislation
  - 10.3 Correspondence from Health Minister re NOM CAR T Cell Therapy C/034/2026
  - 10.4 Correspondence from Health Minister re NOM Sudden Unexplained

## Notices of Motion

### 11.0 Notice of Motion - Independent Environmental Protection Agency

The following Motion was received from Councillor Truesdale:

*"That this Council strongly condemns the blocking of the establishment of an Independent Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) by the DUP in the Assembly and Executive; further condemns the hypocrisy of those who express concern over the Lough Neagh crisis, the illegal dump at Mobuoy and wider environmental degradation, but refuse to support plans to enhance environmental accountability and safeguards; notes that a commitment to an IEPA was contained within the New Decade, New Approach Deal; agrees to write to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to ask him to urgently convene a process of institutional reform, in consultation with the Irish Government and local parties, to remove blockages and vetoes from Stormont's system of government; and to ask the Secretary of State to take meaningful steps to ensure that commitments in New Decade, New Approach are implemented."*

### 12.0 Notice of Motion - St. Patrick Centre Review

The following Motion was received from Councillor Hanlon:

*"This Council recognises the significant contribution St Patrick Centre Downpatrick has made to Tourism and Heritage. As Ireland's only exhibition centre dedicated to the life & legacy of our patron Saint we must recognise the significant role it plays in promoting our patron Saint.  
This Council will pledge cross party support for the centre and a review is initiated based on the Tim Husband report presented to Council in Oct 2019.  
We will write to DFC and DFE seeking support for the centre"*

### 13.0 Notice of Motion - Basic Income for Artists

The following Motion was received from Councillor Finn:

*"This Council notes that the arts, culture and creative sectors are central to our social fabric, wellbeing, identity, and local economy. Many artists, performers and creative workers in the district and across the North continue to experience insecure, low and irregular incomes, worsened by the long-term impacts of COVID-19 and the ongoing cost of living crisis.*

*The Irish Government introduced a Basic Income for Artists pilot in 2022, providing an unconditional weekly payment to artists and creative workers, which has been independently evaluated as improving financial stability, wellbeing, and time spent on creative practice. The Irish Government has now committed to making this scheme permanent, recognising the structural precarity faced by those working in the creative industries.*

*This Council believes that Artists and creative workers should not be forced out of their professions due to financial insecurity. Newry Mourne and Down's creative sector is a vital public good, contributing to*

*community cohesion, regeneration, tourism, mental health, youth engagement and cultural life. A Basic Income for Artists scheme in the north would help protect creative livelihoods, retain local talent, and strengthen the districts cultural ecosystem.*

*This Council resolves to call on the Executive to introduce and fund a Basic Income for Artists scheme, modelled on the Irish Government's programme, providing regular, unconditional income support to eligible artists and creative workers.*

*Request that the Minister for Communities lead on the development of this scheme, in partnership with the Department for the Economy and the Department of Finance, engaging directly with the arts and creative sectors in its design.*

*Write to the First Minister and deputy First Minister urging that this proposal be treated as a priority within the Executive's Programme for Government and budget-setting process."*

## **14.0 Notice of Motion - Strangford - Portaferry Bridge**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Bowsie:

*"Newry, Mourne & Down District Council recognises the importance of improving connectivity in East Down and the huge benefits this can bring to the wider district; in terms of boosting the local economy, enhancing tourism and tackling isolation. This council is also committed to supporting more reliable, affordable and sustainable forms of travel for residents and visitors within our district.*

*Furthermore, this Council is concerned about the increase in traffic along roads on both sides of Strangford Lough which could be better served by a fixed crossing between Strangford village and Portaferry. This may also alleviate increasing congestion in parts of Rowallane and Downpatrick DEAs, as well as in the Ards district, thus shortening journey times and improving road safety.*

*NMD Council, therefore, agrees to write to the Infrastructure Minister to request that she secure funding for a feasibility study into a bridge across Strangford Lough from Strangford to Portaferry."*

## **15.0 Notice of Motion - Areas with Natural Constraints (Payments) Bill**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Rice:

*"This Council notes the introduction of the Areas with Natural Constraints (Payments) Bill in the Assembly.*

*This Council Recognises the importance of Areas with Natural Constraints (ANC) payments in sustaining family farms, supporting rural communities, and maintaining agricultural activity in marginal and upland areas.*

*This Council Welcomes the Bill's requirement that the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs make regulations under the Agriculture Act 2020 to ensure continued and inflation-linked payments to eligible farmers.*

*This Council calls on all parties in the Assembly, and the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, to support and progress this legislation without delay."*

## **16.0 Notice of Motion - Wastewater Infrastructure**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Feehan:

*"This Council notes the growing social, economic and environmental crisis caused by lack of capacity within the district's wastewater infrastructure which is impeding housing and commercial development; recognises that NI Water has identified nine wastewater treatment works locally which do not have any available capacity, and a further nine with capacity issues, also identifying its networks in Newry, Saintfield and Kilkeel as "high polluting".*

*Council notes the contents of the recent report, Newry Next: Building a Regional Powerhouse by 2035, which indicates that wastewater constraints are blocking 1,300 housing units in planning locally and that 29 major commercial schemes have been delayed; recognises the extraordinary pressures on housing supply in the Newry Mourne and Down District Council area and the consequent increase in local house purchase and rent prices.*

*Council registers its concern at further evidence of the housing crisis in the Newry Mourne and Down District Council area:*

- 3,922 applicants on the social housing waiting list of which 3,207 are in housing stress, the third highest level in the North.*
- 1,197 housing units recommended for refusal by NI Water, and a further 122 units that will not get a connection to the public foul network due to closed catchments.*
- Only 385 new housing starts locally Q1-Q3 2025, the third lowest in the North.*
- The highest annual rent increases in Northern Ireland at 7.2% and the highest annual house price increases in Northern Ireland at 12.4%.*

*Council therefore agrees to take the following actions:*

*Write to the Minister for Infrastructure requesting that she:*

- confirms that the long-term funding required by NI Water to upgrade its wastewater infrastructure locally will be provided*
- commission an independent review of NI Waters funding and governance arrangements as recommended by the Northern Ireland Audit Office*
- Invite the authors of the Newry Next report to attend a Special Council Meeting to interrogate the recommendations of the report and ascertain the necessary action required to realise its ambition."*

## **17.0 Notice of Motion - Cold Water Swimming Facilities at Tyrella Beach**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Lewis:

*"This Council notes the growing popularity of cold water swimming across the district, including at Tyrella Beach, which provides a picturesque and accessible natural setting for such activity.*

*Council further notes the recognised physical and mental health benefits associated with cold water swimming, including improved circulation, reduced stress levels, enhanced mood, and its increasing use as a complementary activity promoted through health initiatives.*

*This Council acknowledges that a number of organised groups and individuals make regular use of Tyrella Beach throughout the year, including during the winter months, often without access to appropriate facilities.*

*Accordingly, this Council agrees to:*

- Engage with local cold water swimming groups to assess current usage and demand*
- Engage with the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust to explore any existing or potential health-led initiatives involving cold water swimming*
- Assess the feasibility of opening existing shower and changing facilities at Tyrella Beach during the winter period*
- Consider the introduction of a pilot scheme to provide such facilities, with a view to gauging demand, usage, and overall benefit*

*This Council further agrees that any such pilot should be reviewed following its implementation to inform future provision."*

## **18.0 Notice of Motion - Inadequacy of £17m fund for Northern Ireland Households**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Kearns:

*"This Council recognises the immense pressure being placed on workers, families and businesses as a result of huge price hikes on energy costs, especially home heating oil as a result of the US-Israeli war on Iran; notes that homes across Newry, Mourne and Down, like the rest of the North, are predominantly heated by home heating oil, making us much more vulnerable to price shocks; acknowledges that we are already in the midst of a cost of living crisis and workers, families and businesses here need real support; calls on the Communities Minister who has the responsibility for tackling fuel poverty to set up a scheme to get this money into the pockets of those who are struggling with heating costs."*

## **19.0 Notice of Motion - Lislea Men's Shed proposed Wildfowl & Wildlife Preserve at Camlough Lake**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Magennis:

*"That this Council; Recognises the huge environmental, educational, and recreational potential of the Camlough Lake Wildfowl and Wetland Centre, as promoted by Lislea Men's Shed; Commends the Lislea Men's Shed group for their efforts so far, including the excellent Wildfowl and Wetlands Family Festival; acknowledges the Council's commitment to, "embedding sustainability across all its operations and providing leadership for the wider community"; recognises that Council's support for the project is both welcome and necessary, and innkeeping with its own sustainability goals; commits to working with Lislea Men's Shed and their partners, to deliver this project as a key environmental initiative, with educational,*

*recreational and tourist potential and further commits to engaging with relevant funders, both internal and external, to see this project through to completion."*

## **20.0 Notice of Motion - Opposing Aspirational Climate Targets**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Jackson:

*"That this Council expresses deep concern that aspirational climate targets are impeding the delivery of high-quality public services and infrastructure that ratepayers deserve; notes that the provisions of the Climate Change Act 2022 have been found by the courts to obstruct the progression of A5 Road Upgrade, with far-reaching consequences for other major projects such as the A4 Enniskillen Southern Bypass; is alarmed, furthermore, that the current legal requirement for minimum spend on active travel perversely acts as a barrier to vital investment in roads maintenance and repairs; believes Council should conduct a cost-benefit analysis of all climate-related policies and funding streams; calls on the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to withdraw the current draft Climate Action Plan, which contains a range of proposals that are not quantified and would place additional burdens on farmers and households during a cost-of-living crisis; and further calls on the Minister to urgently bring proposals to the Executive to amend the net zero by 2050 emissions target in Northern Ireland."*

## **21.0 Notice of Motion - Tollymore Mountain Centre**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Lawlor:

*"This Council notes the ongoing review and current status of Tollymore National Outdoor Centre in Bryansford and recognises the significant concern within the local community and the wider outdoor recreation sector regarding its future. This Council recognises that Tollymore National Outdoor Centre is a world class facility in the heart of the Mourne, providing an essential public service in safety training and the development of mountain leadership. This service must be protected in the context of increasing visitor numbers to the Mourne, ensuring the safety of those using our natural environment. This Council resolves to write to the Chief Executive of Sport NI to reiterate its support for the reopening of Tollymore National Outdoor Centre at the earliest possible opportunity, alongside the development of a long-term, financially sustainable operating model which protects core education and training services while improving access for the local community. The Council will also request that the findings of the ongoing review, and any proposed operating models, are shared with the Council to ensure alignment with local development and tourism strategies."*

## **22.0 Notice of Motion - St Patricks Day**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Campbell:

*"This Council recognises the local, national and international significance of St Patrick's Day, and commits to establishing a dedicated working group comprising representatives from the community, voluntary and business sectors. The purpose of this group will be to enhance and develop existing St Patrick's Day events in Downpatrick and Newry, with a view to increasing*

*economic opportunities and strengthening the district's tourism offering"*

## **23.0 Notice of Motion - Unauthorised use of off-road vehicles on Council-owned land**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Mathers:

*"That this Council notes the ongoing and widespread community concern regarding the dangerous and unauthorised use of scramblers, quad bikes and other off road vehicles on Council owned land, open spaces, parks and public pathways; that our parks and public spaces are vital resources for the people of Newry, Mourne and Down, and should be protected, enhanced and kept safe for people; the increased risk these vehicles pose to members of the public, including children, older people, dog walkers and other users of shared public spaces; the sometimes considerable damage caused to green spaces and sports pitches by repeated off road vehicle activity and the negative effect this has on biodiversity and our local environment; that existing legislation which restricts the use of mechanically propelled vehicles on land without the landowner's permission.*

*This Council will proactively engage with police and the community to enforce this policy; audit all parks that are currently being used by these vehicles to ensure that entrance and exit points are properly secured and access to these sites are safe and pedestrian friendly.*

*Calls on the Council to develop and enforce an implementation plan in collaboration with the PSNI and local stakeholders, including:*

- Regular joint operations and patrols in hotspot areas.*
- Clear reporting pathways for the public.*
- Use of signage and all other appropriate deterrent measures."*