

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

NMD/C/

Minutes of Council Meeting held on Monday 3 October 2022 at 6.00pm in Downshire Chamber

In the Chair:

Councillor M Savage

In attendance in Chamber:

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor J Brennan
Councillor R Burgess	Councillor D Curran
Councillor L Devlin	Councillor C Enright
Councillor A Finnegan	Councillor O Hanlon
Councillor G Hanna	Councillor R Howell
Councillor D Lee-Surginor	Councillor A Lewis
Councillor O Magennis	Councillor D McAteer
Councillor L McEvoy	Councillor H McKee
Councillor K McKeivitt	Councillor A McMurray
Councillor D Murphy	Councillor G O'Hare
Councillor B Ó Muirí	Councillor K Owen
Councillor H Reilly	Councillor M Rice
Councillor M Savage	Councillor G Sharvin

In attendance via Teams

Councillor W Clarke	Councillor H Gallagher
Councillor M Larkin	Councillor G Malone
Councillor R Mulgrew	Councillor M Ruane
Councillor G Stokes	Councillor D Taylor
Councillor J Tinnelly	Councillor J Trainor

Officials in attendance in Chamber:

Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
Mr C Mallon, Director of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism
Mr A Cassells, Director of Sustainability and Environment
Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)
Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer

Officials in attendance via Teams:

Mr A Patterson, Assistant Director, Tourism, Culture and Events
Mrs P McKeever, Democratic Services Officer

C/154/2022

APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Byrne, Casey and Harte and from Mr M Lipsett, Director of Active and Healthy Communities.

C/155/2022

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

The Chairperson congratulated and wished the following clubs within the District well in reaching football finals including:

- Warrenpoint and Kilcoo on making the Down Senior Football Championship
- Rostrevor and Saval who were to play in the Intermediate Football Final
- Teconnaught and Dromara on reaching the Junior Football Final
- Killeavy and Crossmaglen in the Armagh Championship Football Semi-Final

A special mention was given to the Special Olympian, Bethany Firth on receiving her OBE.

The Chairperson congratulated Niamh Node from Bessbrook and Sophie Lennon from Mayobridge who had excelled to the semi-finals of the Junior Eurovision and wished them well in the rest of the competition.

The Chairperson congratulated Ardglass Skiffie Club on the recent launch of their new boat which had been a momentous day.

Reference was made to St Louis Grammar School, Kilkeel which had held centenary celebrations at the weekend and the Chairperson wished them well for the rest of the year in celebrating 100 years of education within the District.

The Chairperson spoke of his privilege in representing Council in Cavan at the Shared Island Local Authority Development Awards and pointed out Newry, Mourne and Down District Council had picked as many, if not more, than any other Council on the island to receive SEED and initial funding and congratulated Directors and Officers for the work carried out in securing the funding streams.

Lastly, the Chairperson spoke of the very successful Chairperson Civic Awards which had taken place and paid tribute to all the Civic Award winners. He commented that it was a humbling occasion and that the District was blessed to have so many dedicated people within it. He thanked Councillors for nominating such a wide range of remarkable people and organisations.

C/156/2022 **ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 5 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Read: Action sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 5 September 2022 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Action Sheet from Council Meeting held on 5 September 2022 was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Sharvin.**

COUNCIL MINUTES FOR ADOPTION AND SIGNING

C/157/2022 **MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 5 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Read: Minutes of Council Meeting held on 5 September 2022 (copy circulated).

C/142/2022: Minutes on Enterprise Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 8 August 2022 (ERT/125/2022, Tourism Events)

Councillor Devlin enquired if evidence had been submitted to Council to substantiate the claims made by the DUP at the Council Meeting regarding the recent Eats and Beats Festival Newcastle and enquired if an investigation had been launched and if so at what stage was the investigation at.

The Chief Executive confirmed she had met with DUP Councillors that afternoon and a report would be brought to the October Strategy Policy and Resources Committee Meeting. She added no formal investigation had been launched as yet and the matter was to be considered by the SP&R Committee.

Agreed: **The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 5 September 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor.**

C/158/2022 **MINUTES OF SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 12 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Read: Minutes of Council Meeting held on 12 September 2022 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 5 September 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor.**

COMMITTEE MINUTES FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION

C/159/2022 MINUTES OF ENTERPRISE, REGENERATION AND TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 SEPTEMBER 2022

Read: Minutes of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 12 September 2022 (copy circulated).

Mr Mallon advised an amendment was required as an incorrect recommendation had been recorded in the minute and on the audio recording.

The following amendment was outlined for Members:

ERT/151/2022: Update re: AONB and Geopark

On the proposal of Councillor Larkin, seconded by Councillor Harte, it was agreed:

- 1. To approve the Service Level Agreement (SLA, Appendix 1) with Bluebell Lane Glamping for 2022 – 2023 at a maximum cost as outlined in the officer's report*
- 2. To amend the SLA with ORNI for 2022 – 2023. SLA will be at a maximum cost as outlined in the officer's report for the following projects: SLA with ORNI for 2022 – 2023 for a maximum cost of as outlined in the officer's report for delivery against the below 3 projects.*
 - Develop costed proposal for visitor management at Minerstown Beach.*
 - Detailed visitor management survey and costed proposals for the Ring of Gullion*
 - Camlough Mountain Access feasibility Study.*
 - SLA with ORNI for 2022 – 2023 for a maximum cost as contained within the officer's report for delivery against the below project, subject to funding being secured*
 - Develop costed programme of upgrade, repair and maintenance for the Lecale Way*

ERT/149/2022: Halloween and Christmas Events 2022

In response for an update from Councillor Devlin regarding Hallowtides in Newcastle 2022, Mr Mallon confirmed expressions of interest had been secured from a group within Newcastle and other major centres and would be communicated to them following Council approval at this meeting and subject to call in.

Agreed: The Minutes of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 12 September 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Lee- Surginor, seconded by Councillor Larkin subject to the following amendment:

ERT/151/2022: Update re: AONB and Geopark

On the proposal of Councillor Larkin, seconded by Councillor Harte, it was agreed:

- 1. To approve the Service Level Agreement (SLA, Appendix 1) with Bluebell Lane Glamping for 2022 – 2023 at a maximum cost as outlined in the officer's report**

2. To amend the SLA with ORNI for 2022 – 2023. SLA will be at a maximum cost as outlined in the officer's report for the following projects: SLA with ORNI for 2022 – 2023 for a maximum cost of as outlined in the officer's report for delivery against the below 3 projects:

- Develop costed proposal for visitor management at Minerstown Beach.
- Detailed visitor management survey and costed proposals for the Ring of Gullion
- Camlough Mountain Access feasibility Study.
- SLA with ORNI for 2022 – 2023 for a maximum cost as contained within the officer's report for delivery against the below project, subject to funding being secured
- Develop costed programme of upgrade, repair and maintenance for the Lecale Way.

C/160/2022 **MINUTES OF STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Read: Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 15 September 2022 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 15 September 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Sharvin.**

C/161/2022 **MINUTES OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 20 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Read: Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 20 September 2022 (copy circulated).

SE/130/2022: Household Recycling Centre Usage and Access Policy

Councillor McKee highlighted concerns regarding problems associated with the introduction of height restriction barriers at Kilkeel Recycling Centre and queried who decided upon what was commercial waste and suggested it would create cost for Council as there would be an increase in flytipping.

A lengthy discussion ensued during which Councillors Hanna and Reilly also spoke of problems associated with height restriction barriers and suggested they be removed on all sites and see how the online booking system would work. Councillor Owen supported this and referred to similar issues for Ballynahinch recycling centre.

Councillor Hanna proposed height restriction barriers were removed completely and a booking system introduced for anyone wishing to dispose of commercial waste only in recycling centres. This was seconded by Councillor Reilly.

Councillor McAteer stated that whilst an online booking system was well intentioned, he had concerns and that it was best to trust operatives on site to do their job.

During discussion Councillors Ó Muirí, McMurray and Sharvin voiced support for the recommendation as agreed by the Committee, and it was pointed out that any complaints received could be dealt with by the Councils Complaints Procedure.

Mr Cassels suggested the proposal could proceed as was and that the online booking system would be introduced in the next month and an update report brought back to the Sustainability and Environment Committee.

The Chairperson then put Councillor Hanna's proposal, seconded by Councillor Reilly for height restriction barriers to be removed completely and an online booking system introduced for anyone wishing to dispose of commercial waste only in recycling centres to a vote, the results of which were as follows:

FOR: 7
AGAINST: 29

The proposal was lost.

Agreed: The Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 20 September 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor McKeivitt, seconded by Councillor Owen.

C/162/2022 MINUTES OF AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 22 SEPTEMBER 2022

Read: Minutes of Audit Committee Meeting held on 22 September 2022 (copy circulated).

Audit Committee Annual Report 2021/22 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of Audit Committee Meeting held on 22 September 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Devlin.

Agreed: The Audit Committee Annual Report 2021/22 was approved on the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor.

C/163/2022

**MINUTES OF ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 22 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Read: Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 22 September 2022 (copy circulated).

AHC/156/2022: Donard Park Car Parking

In welcoming the reconfiguration works for Donard Park Car Park, Councillor Devlin enquired how soon the work would be taking place. The Chief Executive confirmed Mr Lipsett who was absent from the meeting would come back directly to Councillor Devlin on the matter.

Agreed: The Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 22 September 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Lewis, seconded by Councillor McAteer.

Mr Lipsett to contact Councillor Devlin regarding works for Donard Park Car Parking.

C/164/2022

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL STRATEGY POLICY AND RESOURCES
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Read: Minutes of Special Strategy Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 26 September 2022 (copy circulated).

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Curran, seconded by Councillor Burgess, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on item 3 which related to exempt information by virtue of paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 – information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Council or a government department and employees of, or office holders under, the Council, and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Burgess, seconded by Councillor Curran, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

When the Committee came out of closed session the Chairperson reported a recorded vote (copy of which is appended to these minutes) was taken on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Gallagher regarding SPR/147/2022: Trade Union Dispute Update.

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Gallagher and following a recorded vote (copy of which is appended to these minute), the results of which were 31 FOR and 4 AGAINST, it was agreed to approve the local pay offer in full and final settlement of this current dispute. It was also agreed to note the cost implications as set out in the officer's report and further agreed to an efficiency programme as set out at paragraph 2.6 in the officer's report.**

Agreed: **The Minutes of Special Strategy Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 26 September 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Gallagher.**

Councillor Mulgrew left the meeting during the above discussion – 6.59pm.

C/165/2022 PLANNING SECTION – LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Read: Extract from Minutes of Planning Committee Meeting held on 24 August 2022 Re: LDP Progress Report, Quarterly Update. (Copy circulated)

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor O'Hare to note the extract from the Minutes of Planning Committee held on 24 August 2022 regarding the LDP Progress Report, quarterly update.**

CORRESPONDANCE AND CONFERENCES

C/166/2022 LETTER FROM DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES – COUNCIL REMOTE/HYBRID MEETINGS

Read: Correspondence dated 26 September 2022 from the Department for Communities regarding Council remote/hybrid meetings. (Copy circulated)

Agreed: **The correspondence from the Department for Communities regarding Council remote/hybrid meetings was noted on the proposal of Councillor Lee-Surginor, seconded by Councillor**

NOTICES OF MOTION

**C/167/2022 NOTICE OF MOTION – REVENUE FROM EV CHARGING
INFRASTRUCTURE**

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Enright:

"Council notes that last year's notice of motion seeking a target of between 80 and 181 EV charging points in NM&D car-parks resulted in a management report in May 2022 suggesting that such charging points would cost £12,000 each and as much as £2.7 million in total with no business case. Thus a target of 1% of parking spaces (80) or 1 per Council car-park (181) was unrealistic from a cost point of view.

Council notes that new information has emerged to back the suggestion that EV charging companies want to lease car-parking spots from Council throughout the District and are prepared to share charging revenue with Council. Far from costing money, EV infrastructure going forward can be seen as a new form of Council revenue.

Council resolves to seek long-term rental and revenue sharing opportunities with EV infrastructure companies to keep Newry Mourne and Down District Council competitive in Tourism, Business and to replace the rates being lost by the on-going closure of filling stations across the district.

Within 3 months of this motion, Council will make an open offer of 6 tranches of 20 parking spots to all 3 EV charging companies operating on the Irish/NI grid system as a trial run for a 2-year period.

Following the 2 year trial of the offerings by the different EV charging companies; and based on service and value for money to Council; long-term contracts should be made with companies offering the best solutions to residents and visitors alike to Newry Mourne and Down District Council'.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor McMurray.

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

Councillor Enright left the meeting at this point – 7.11pm.

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Hanlon:

"This Council acknowledges the increased demand for Irish citizens in the North, particularly since the Brexit referendum and calls for additional services to be put in place to manage the demand.

This Council reiterates the call made in 2018 for an Irish Passport Office to be located in the North of Ireland.

Council will write to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney, expressing concern at the current backlog and delays for Irish Passport applications, and request a passport office to be established in the North of Ireland to help manage this demand."

The Motion was seconded by Councillor McEvoy.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Hanlon said there was a clear need for an Irish Passport Office in the North to help meet the rising demand for Irish passport services and she said this was evident by the many requests received by elected representatives from constituents for assistance with passport applications due to the backlog.

Councillor Hanlon said she had been liaising with people who had been forced to cancel holiday plans, travel to Dublin and spend hours on the phone to the passport office without success, all of which had resulted in the utmost stress and expense.

Councillor Hanlon concluded, saying it made sense for the Irish Government to set up a passport office in the North to ease the burden on the service and to support applicants living here.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor McEvoy said the huge rise in the number of people holding Irish passports was a clear indication of the need for an Irish Passport Office in the North. She stated the 2021 Census figures revealed a staggering 63% rise in the number of people who had become Irish passport holders over the last 10 years.

Councillor McEvoy asked that Council write to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney, to highlight the importance of this office, not only to help applicants but also to take the pressure off staff to help meet the rising demand for Irish Passport services.

Councillor Andrews expressed support for the Motion on behalf of the SDLP, and asked it be noted, his appreciation to the staff in the Passport Offices in Balbriggan, Dublin and Cork, who, he said were very courteous and efficient when he spoke with them on behalf of his constituents.

Councillor Andrews acknowledged lots of family holidays had been ruined due to the backlog and he said the establishment of a Northern Ireland Passport Office would create jobs in addition to reducing the waiting list and would mean less travelling time for those people who required emergency passports.

Councillor Reilly stated he would not be supporting the Motion. He said he did not consider there was a need for a passport office in the North given there was no office

in either Donegal or the West of Ireland. He said people from all backgrounds in the North had Irish passports for convenience purposes and the reason people were experiencing difficulty getting through via telephone was due to Covid 19 and staff working from home, he said this was the same situation in the UK. Councillor Reilly said it was unrealistic to expect the Irish Government to fund an Irish Passport Office in the North as they had cut back on public spending, they were promoting online passport applications and they did not have passport offices in either the West of Ireland or Donegal.

Councillor Taylor said the UUP would not be supporting the Motion and although he acknowledged an increased demand for Irish Passports, he said it did not warrant a dedicated office in N. Ireland. He said a reason for some of the delays was as a result of forms not being completed correctly and he considered the demand for Irish passports was more to do with political significance than necessity.

Councillor McMurray expressed support for the Motion and said there was an Irish Passport Office in Galway. He said it was not a political endorsement to have an Irish passport but was as a result of a political decision that had been made.

Councillor McKee stated he would not be supporting the Motion and said the Irish passport website indicated a shorter wait time for processing applications compared to the UK passport website. He said the delay could be, in part, contributed to more people travelling following the Covid lockdown period.

Councillor McAteer expressed support for the Motion saying statistics indicated there was an increase in the demand for Irish passports, and a decrease in the demand for UK passports.

In summing up Councillor Hanlon said some of the comments raised by Members had been contradictory. She said it should not be about geography, but rather demand. Councillor Hanlon said it was taking months to process Irish passports, resulting in many holidays being ruined.

A vote was taken to ascertain support for the Motion, the results of which were as follows:

FOR:	26
AGAINST:	7
ABSTENTIONS:	0

The Motion was carried.

Agreed: **“This Council acknowledges the increased demand for Irish citizens in the North, particularly since the Brexit referendum and calls for additional services to be put in place to manage the demand.**

This Council reiterates the call made in 2018 for an Irish Passport Office to be located in the North of Ireland.

Council will write to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney, expressing concern at the current backlog and delays for Irish Passport applications, and request a passport office to be established in the North of Ireland to help manage this demand.”

Councillor Trainor left the meeting during the above discussion – 7.23pm.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 7.29pm.

For confirmation at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 7 November 2022.

Signed:

Chairperson

Chief Executive

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL
RECORDED VOTE

DATE: 3rd October 2022 VENUE: Downshire Civic Centre MEETING: Council Meeting

SUBJECT OF VOTE: Item SPR/147/2022 – Proposal by Cllr Sharvin, seconded by Cllr Gallagher to approve the minute

COUNCILLOR	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
T Andrews	X			
J Brennan	X			
R Burgess	X			
P Byrne				X
C Casey				X
W Clarke	X			
D Curran	X			
L Devlin	X			
C Enright	X			
A Finnegan	X			
H Gallagher	X			
M Gibbons				X
O Hanlon	X			
G Hanna		X		
V Harte				X
R Howell	X			
M Larkin	X			
D Lee-Surginor	X			
A Lewis		X		
O Magennis	X			
G Malone	X			
D McAteer	X			
L McEvoy	X			
H McKee	X			
K McKeivitt	X			
A McMurray	X			
R Mulgrew				X
D Murphy	X			
G O'Hare	X			
B Ó Muirí	X			
K Owen		X		
H Reilly		X		
M Rice	X			
M Ruane	X			
M Savage	X			
G Sharvin	X			
G Stokes	X			
D Taylor	X			
J Tinnelly	X			
J Trainor	X			
B Walker				X
TOTALS	31	4	0	6