

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

NMD/C/

Minutes of Council Meeting held on Monday 5 December 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 P Byrne
Councillor C Casey	Councillor D Curran
Councillor L Devlin	Councillor A Finnegan
Councillor O Hanlon	Councillor G Hanna
Councillor V Harte	Councillor R Howell
Councillor D Lee-Surginor	Councillor A Lewis
Councillor O Magennis	Councillor D McAteer
Councillor L McEvoy	Councillor K McKeivitt
Councillor Y Moore	Councillor R Mulgrew
Councillor D Murphy	Councillor G O'Hare
Councillor B Ó Muirí	Councillor K Owen
Councillor H Reilly	Councillor M Rice
Councillor G Sharvin	Councillor D Taylor

In attendance via Teams

Councillor W Clarke	Councillor C Enright
Councillor H Gallagher	Councillor M Gibbons
Councillor M Larkin	Councillor G Malone
Councillor H McKee	Councillor M Ruane
Councillor J Tinnelly	Councillor J Trainor

Officials in attendance in Chamber:

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

Officials in attendance via Teams:

Mrs P McKeever, Democratic Services Officer

Apologies were received from Councillors McMurray and Stokes.

The Chairperson spoke of the violence that had returned to the streets with the brutal murder of Mark Lovell in Ardcarne, Newry and conveyed his sympathies to the family of the deceased at this traumatic time and offered support to the people of Ardcarne. He advised he had received assurances from the PSNI that they had upscaled their presence in the area and encouraged residents to continue to go about their business as normal. He also encouraged anyone with information which may assist the police with their investigation to contact the PSNI.

The Chairperson congratulated Liatroim Fonenoy's who became the first Down Club to win the Ulster Intermediate Hurling Title and wished them well for the All-Ireland Semi Finals.

The Chairperson wished Kilcoo GAC well in the Ulster Senior Football Final and hoped they would bring back the Ulster Title and continue their journey to retain the All Ireland Crown.

The Chairperson wished Strangford FC and Celtic Bhoys FC best wishes as they contest the Bobby Dalzell Cup on St. Stephen's Day and wished Drumanness Mills FC every success when they contest the Border Cup Final on December 27th.

On behalf of Council, the Chairperson passed on best wishes to Sophie Lennon from Mayobridge who was representing Ireland in the Junior Eurovision Song Contest in Armenia on December 11th.

The Chairperson then advised it was the last full Council meeting for two long serving Councillors, Councillor Charlie Casey and Councillor Roisin Mulgrew.

Councillor Casey had been a Councillor since 2001 and was a former Mayor of Newry and Mourne District Council in 2011 and of Newry Mourne and Down District Council in 2019.

Councillor Mulgrew had been a Councillor for 9 years and was Chair of Newry Mourne and Down District Council in 2017.

The Chairperson paid tribute to them both and wished Charlie, Roisin and their families well for the years to come.

C/188/2022

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

C/189/2022

ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER 2022

Read: Action sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 7 November 2022 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Action Sheet from Council Meeting held on 7 November 2022 was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Curran, seconded by Councillor Andrews.

COUNCIL MINUTES FOR ADOPTION AND SIGNING

C/190/2022

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER 2022

Read: Minutes of Council Meeting held on 7 November 2022 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 7 November 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Hanna, seconded by Councillor Ó Muirí.

C/191/2022

MINUTES OF SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 31 OCTOBER 2022

Read: Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 31 October 2022 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on 31 October 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor.

COMMITTEE MINUTES FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION

C/192/2022 MINUTES OF ENTERPRISE, REGENERATION AND TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14 NOVEMBER 2022

Read: Minutes of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 14 November 2022 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 14 November 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Burgess, seconded by Councillor Curran.

C/193/2022 MINUTES OF STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2022

Read: Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 17 November 2022 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 17 November 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Magennis.

C/194/2022 MINUTES OF ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21 NOVEMBER 2022

Read: Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 21 November 2022 (copy circulated).

Ms Taggart advised an amendment was required as the incorrect information had been circulated due to a duplication. The minute was to read as follows:

AHC/194/2022: Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2028

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Lee-Surginor, seconded by Councillor McAteer that the Biodiversity Officer drafts a Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for NMDDC to lead biodiversity action across the district for the next 5 years.

**Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor McKevitt, seconded by Councillor Gallagher to approve the minutes of the Active and Healthy Community Committee Meeting held on 21 November 2022 as follows:
*AHC/194/2022: Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2028***

CORRESPONDANCE AND CONFERENCES

C/197/2022 **NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING COUNCIL MINUTES – 13 OCTOBER 2022**

Read: Northern Ireland Housing Council Minutes – 13 October 2022.
(Copy circulated)

Agreed: **The Northern Ireland Housing Council Minutes dated 13 October 2022 were noted on the proposal of Councillor Gallagher, seconded by Councillor Sharvin.**

C/198/2022 **NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING COUNCIL BULLETIN – 10 NOVEMBER 2022**

Read: Northern Ireland Housing Council Bulletin – 10 November 2022.
(Copy circulated)

Agreed: **The Northern Ireland Housing Council Bulletin dated 10 November 2022 was noted on the proposal of Councillor Gallagher, seconded by Councillor Sharvin.**

C/199/2022 **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT LETTER FROM OFFICE OF THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND MINISTER FOR DEFENCE RE: NOM C/168/2022**

Read: Correspondence from the Office of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence re: NOM C/168/2022. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Gallagher, seconded by Councillor Sharvin to note the correspondence from the Office of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence.**

C/200/2022 **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT LETTER FROM MINISTER OF JUSTICE, REPUBLIC OF IRELAND RE: NOM C/184/2022 ELECTRONIC TRAVEL AUTHORISATION**

Read: Correspondence from the Minister of Justice, Republic of Ireland re: NOM C/184/2022, Electronic Travel Authorisation. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Gallagher, seconded by Councillor Sharvin to note**

**the correspondence from the Minister of Justice,
Republic of Ireland.**

**C/201/2022 LETTER FROM DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RE: REGULATION
OF COSMETIC TREATMENTS**

Read: Correspondence from Department of Health re: Regulation of
Cosmetic Treatments. **(Copy circulated)**

**Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor
Gallagher, seconded by Councillor Sharvin to note
the correspondence from Department of Health.**

NOTICES OF MOTION

C/202/2022 NOTICE OF MOTION – COST OF LIVING CRISIS, STUDENTS

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Rice:

"This Council recognises the impact that the cost of living crisis is having on local students who either live away from home or who commute to campuses every day. The stark rise in the cost of fuel, heating, and rent has left students struggling to get by. This has had a detrimental impact on their health, wellbeing, and studies. This Council condemns the DUP for their boycott of the Assembly which has prevented the Executive from supporting people during this cost of living crisis. This Council expresses its frustration with the increase in student loans announced for Undergraduates and Postgraduates, which will take effect next September. Students, particularly those from a working-class background, are being priced out of education. This will have an untold negative impact on society for generations to come. This Council is deeply concerned that due to Brexit, the loss of the European Social Fund puts funding for apprenticeships, traineeships and skills programmes all at risk. Therefore, this Council calls on the DUP to end its boycott of government, which is punishing hard pressed students. We call on them to get back into the Executive so that we can support students and get money into their pockets."

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Hanlon.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Hanlon said she seen first-hand the pressures that students were under as she had a child who was a student and he and his peers were having to work full time hours in what should be part time jobs in order to make ends meet and to avoid putting pressure on their parents. Any assistance students could get should be given as this had to be impacting on their studies due to being unable to give the time they should be to their education.

Councillor Hanna made comment that it was wrong for Sinn Féin to be using this as a political football. He added students across the United Kingdom and the world were having difficulty and complaining about money issues but ultimately, they would come out with better prospects than those undertaking apprenticeships or traineeships.

Councillor Hanna spoke of assurances provided from the British Government for apprenticeships etc with new colleges in Armagh and Portadown and that he believed the motion presented was wrong. He added students in Northern Ireland were supported with fees being less than other parts of the United Kingdom.

Councillor Hanna proposed an amendment to the motion with the removal of the line that read "This Council condemns the DUP for their boycott of the Assembly which has prevented the Executive from supporting people during this cost of living crisis" and for the motion to be as follows:

"This Council recognises the impact that the cost of living crisis is having on local students who either live away from home or who commute to campuses every day; The stark rise in the cost of fuel, heating, and rent has left students struggling to get by. This has had a detrimental impact on their health, wellbeing, and studies. This Council expresses its frustration with the increase in student loans announced for Undergraduates and Postgraduates, which will take effect next September. Students, particularly those from a working-class background, are being priced out of education. This will have an untold negative impact on society for generations to come. This Council is deeply concerned that due to Brexit, the loss of the European Social Fund puts funding for apprenticeships, traineeships and skills programmes all at risk; Therefore, this Council calls on the DUP to end its boycott of government, which is punishing hard pressed students. We call on them to get back into the Executive so that we can support students and get money into their pockets."

Councillor Owen seconded the proposed amendment.

Councillor Rice rejected Councillor Hanna's proposed amendment.

Councillor Hanna's proposed amendment was put to a vote, the results of which were as follows:

For:	8
Against:	30

The amendment proposed by Councillor Hanna was lost.

Councillor Sharvin spoke of how the cost of living crisis knew no boundary and students of today faced some of the toughest of challenges with the ever increasing rises in fuel, oil, food, travel, electric and accommodation. Students were having to decide between moving to the area closer to university/college to stay at home, as all costs continued to increase, impacting on the hopes of living a student lifestyle.

He referred to an announcement from Queen's University in mid-October for a £7.69 million package for students and staff facing the current cost of living crisis. Students from families earning £25,000 or below would get a one-off payment of £400 and all other students receiving £150.

Councillor Sharvin stated that interest rates for student loans charges continued to increase with the new loan repayment threshold for this new plan was set at £25,000, decreasing from the current £27,295 meaning more graduates will start repaying sooner.

Councillor Sharvin proposed an amendment with an addition to the motion stating that Council write to the University of Ulster calling on them to establish a hardship one-off payment scheme fund similar to one offered by Queens University.

Councillor McKeivitt seconded Councillor Sharvin's proposed amendment.

Councillor Rice accepted Councillor Sharvin's amendment.

Councillor Taylor stated that the UUP wanted to see a fully functioning Assembly and Executive in operation and did recognise that, whilst having it in place might not have all the answers for the cost of living crisis, it would be able to assist with the difficulties that many sections of society were encountering including students.

Councillor Taylor spoke about his concern about the heavy party political content of the motion and proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor Burgess to read as follows:

"This Council recognises the impact that the cost of living crisis is having on local students who either live away from home or who commute to campuses every day; The stark rise in the cost of fuel, heating, and rent has left students struggling to get by. This has had a detrimental impact on their health, wellbeing, and studies. This Council recognises that a fully functioning Executive could assist in supporting people during this cost of living crisis. This Council expresses its frustration with the increase in student loans announced for Undergraduates and Postgraduates, which will take effect next September. We have concerns that Students, particularly those from a working-class background, are being priced out of education. This will have an untold negative impact on society for generations to come. This Council would ask the UK Government to ensure that a necessary funding programme for apprenticeships, traineeships and skills schemes is secured as a replacement for the European Social Fund programme".

Councillor Rice rejected Councillor Taylor's proposed amendment.

Councillor Taylor's proposed amendment was put to a vote, the results of which were as follows:

For: 8
Against: 30

The amendment proposed by Councillor Taylor was lost.

Councillor Ó Muirí pointed out it was too serious an issue and that any party taking a motion to Council had to be party political. He added the motion was to support students in a cost of living crisis and that it was Sinn Féin's view that the DUP were making a mistake.

Councillor Reilly responded by voicing his disappointment at Sinn Féin playing party politics and that it was a worldwide crisis being faced and that recession was coming due to sanctions from Russia and that we were going to have to adjust how we live lives and how Government spend money. Councillor Reilly made reference to the UK Government having published the 2022/2025 Proposals for Shared Prosperity Fund which was going to be more superior than the EU Social Fund. He also wished to point

out that if the Assembly was up and running it would make no difference to the cost of living crisis and that Westminster was the only place that would affect that.

Councillor Byrne stated the motion had huge merit and that students were really struggling and it provided a voice for the people and tell Stormont to get back in and make decisions. He added all other parties want back to help those that are struggling and do what is right for the people and one party does not.

Councillor Owen wished to take the opportunity to point out the DUP had been clear that they did want back to the Assembly but until there was fundamental change to the protocol that could not happen.

Following the lengthy debate the Chairperson asked for a vote on the motion, proposed by Councillor Rice, seconded by Councillor Hanlon and including the agreed addition from Councillor Sharvin as outlined above. The results of the vote were as follows:

For: 30
Against: 8

The motion was carried.

Agreed:

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Rice, seconded by Councillor Hanlon that this Council recognises the impact that the cost of living crisis is having on local students who either live away from home or who commute to campuses every day. The stark rise in the cost of fuel, heating, and rent has left students struggling to get by. This has had a detrimental impact on their health, wellbeing, and studies.

This Council condemns the DUP for their boycott of the Assembly which has prevented the Executive from supporting people during this cost of living crisis.

This Council expresses its frustration with the increase in student loans announced for Undergraduates and Postgraduates, which will take effect next September. Students, particularly those from a working-class background, are being priced out of education. This will have an untold negative impact on society for generations to come. This Council is deeply concerned that due to Brexit, the loss of the European Social Fund puts funding for apprenticeships, traineeships and skills programmes all at risk.

Therefore, this Council calls on the DUP to end its boycott of government, which is punishing hard pressed students. We call on them to get back into the Executive so that we can support students and get money into their pockets.

Agreed: **The Motion was referred to the Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.**

C/205/2022 **NOTICE OF MOTION – BROADENING RATES BASE, INCREASING DIRECT INCOME AND REDUCING COSTS**

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Enright:

"Council notes that a Notice of Motion was passed by Council last year, requiring Management to report back to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee by April 2022 on delivery dates and detailed plans for Council to glean the benefits of the 'Green Electrified Economy'. The purpose of the motion was to help tackle our budget shortfall. So far, no plans have been presented to meet these targets. The detail of the original motion is; "Council formally adopts indicative revenue targets from renewables as follows; 2022 - £1 million per annum, 2025 - £5 million per annum, 2030 - £10 million per annum. Council directs that these targets can be met by rates from renewables projects, income from councils own renewables and from a revitalised energy savings programme." Council thus resolves that Council Management are required to create an inter-departmental team to report by 31st January 2023 with detailed plans to fulfil these indicative targets so they can be included in the rates estimate looking forward. Council notes that this motion is primarily aimed at improving Council's financial position, but it will also have the effect of delivering on Councils "Climate Change Emergency" policy as well."

The motion was seconded by Councillor Hanlon.

Agreed: **The Motion was referred to the Strategic Finance Working Group in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.**

C/206/2022 **NOTICE OF MOTION – CERVICAL CANCER SCREEING IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Devlin:

"This Council expresses serious concern that cervical cancer screening in NI is less accurate than the rest of the UK. Women in NI are being tested using a different method called cytology, which is less sensitive than HPV screening. Cervical cancer is one of the few cancers that are preventable, and it is estimated that in a well-screened population, eight out of ten cervical cancers can be prevented. The introduction of HPV testing was included in the Regional Cancer Strategy but is yet to be introduced. This Council writes to the Permanent Secretaries for the Department of Health and Finance, as well as the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and calls for a start date for this urgent and lifesaving change".

Councillor McKevitt seconded the motion.

In presenting the motion, Councillor Devlin spoke of how at present women in Northern Ireland were tested using a different method called cytology despite the rest of the UK using HPV (high-risk human papillomavirus) and despite the NI Cervical Screening Programme recommending HPV as the primary screening test.

Councillor Devlin advised that in recent years an average of 81 people had been diagnosed with cervical cancer in Northern Ireland per year which unfortunately resulted in an average of 21 deaths per year. Cervical cancer was one of the few cancers that was preventable, and it was estimated that in a well-screened population, eight out of ten cervical cancers could be prevented. In Northern Ireland women were given less of a chance to survive, a postcode lottery for women whilst across the water screening was more accurate and more precise giving women a greater chance of survival.

Councillor Devlin questioned why the introduction of HPV testing which had been included in the Regional Cancer Strategy had never implemented. Women in Northern Ireland continued to be left behind by outdated measures used and were being failed. It was pointed out the change to HPV had been approved by the Department before the collapse of the institutions and an Executive in place was needed.

Councillor McKevitt advised that since the vaccination for HPV introduced in 2008 for young women, women from the age of 25 were coming forward for smear tests which would see reduction in cases and that with the introduction of the vaccine for young men in 2019 that would strengthen the argument for less HPV in society.

To those that fought hard in raising awareness and highlighting the seriousness of cervical cancer like Vicky Phelan who recently passed away with the illness this motion made sense and would save lives, time and money.

Councillors Hanna, Lee-Surginor, Taylor, Hanlon and McKee all spoke in support of the motion.

Councillor Lee-Surginor spoke of a personal experience on how this impacted upon women and how things needed to change for Cervical Cancer Screening in Northern Ireland.

Councillor Devlin thanked all Members for their support for the motion and appealed to those blocking a devolved government to think about this issue and that this is what politics should be about.

Agreed:

It was unanimously agreed on the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor McKevitt that Council expresses serious concern that cervical cancer screening in NI is less accurate than the rest of the UK. Women in NI are being tested using a different method called cytology, which is less sensitive than HPV screening. Cervical cancer is one of the few cancers that are preventable, and it is

estimated that in a well-screened population, eight out of ten cervical cancers can be prevented. The introduction of HPV testing was included in the Regional Cancer Strategy but is yet to be introduced. This Council writes to the Permanent Secretaries for the Department of Health and Finance, as well as the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and calls for a start date for this urgent and lifesaving change.

C/207/2022

NOTICE OF MOTION – WORKERS LEGAL RIGHTS TO TIPS

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Andrews:

"Newry Mourne and Down District Council calls upon the extension of laws that are being proposed at Westminster giving workers a legal right to their tips be extended here to Northern Ireland . If this motion is adopted, we write to the other ten local authorities seeking their support and also to the Permanent Secretary at the Department of the Economy and the relevant Minister at Westminster strongly urging that the legislation in Northern Ireland be brought into line with the mainland and the Republic of Ireland as a matter of urgency."

It was noted that Councillor Andrews advised there was a change to the wording of the motion in that mainland would be changed to Great Britain.

In presenting the motion, Councillor Andrews called upon Westminster Government to use the legislative means at its disposal to bring in and extend the necessary legislation that would enable Northern Ireland to come into line with what was going through the House of Commons, mirroring a new law that recently came into force in the Republic, that gave employees a legal entitlement to get the service charge paid in electronic form.

He added this would be a positive step towards improving the rights and entitlements of lower paid workers and whilst a whole lot of employers treated their workers and staff fairly, this legislation would help stamp out bad practice and give customers confidence that gratuities/tips were paid to staff who work so hard and go the extra mile in providing a service second to none to customers and patrons and help boost their income.

Councillor Andrews urged that the terms of the Bill that was currently going through Parliament were extended, and the Secretary of State could do this by bringing in order to Council to make this happen as a matter of urgency.

Councillor McAteer seconded the motion and spoke of the importance of having the legislation into Northern Ireland.

Councillor Taylor, Hanna and Clarke on behalf of their party's each took it in turn to speak in support of the motion and thanked Councillor Andrews for bringing the motion to Council.

Councillor Andrews thanked Members for their support and stated that he hoped sooner rather than later that the legislation be implemented.

Agreed:

It was unanimously agreed on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor McAteer that Newry Mourne and Down District Council calls upon the extension of laws that are being proposed at Westminster giving workers a legal right to their tips be extended here to Northern Ireland . If this motion is adopted, we write to the other ten local authorities seeking their support and also to the Permanent Secretary at the Department of the Economy and the relevant Minister at Westminster strongly urging that the legislation in Northern Ireland be brought into line with Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland as a matter of urgency.

C/208/2022

NOTICE OF MOTION – FISHING AND FISH PROCESSING INDUSTRY

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Curran:

“That this Council noting the valuable contribution made to our local and national economy at the ports of Ardglass and Kilkeel; expressing its concern that the impact Brexit continues to have on our fishing and fish processing industry across Newry Mourne and Down; affirming it’s support for our fishing and fish processing industry, and expressing it’s concern for the absence of a functioning Assembly and Executive to promote and support our fishing and fish processing industry, that this Council will write to the United Kingdom Home Office to highlight the valuable contribution made by our local fishing and fish processing industry; calls for the recognition of the Fish Processing Industry in Northern Ireland as Seasonal, and further calls for the Home Office to recognise exemptions for EEA and non-EEA staff employed in fishing and fish processing in Northern Ireland, to enable the industry to employ foreign workers during the summer months, and continue its valuable contribution to our local economy.”

Councillor Devlin seconded the motion.

Agreed:

The Motion was referred to the Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.

The Chairperson advised Councillor Ó Muirí wished to bring forward an Emergency Notice of Motion and in order to do so, it would be necessary to suspend Standing Orders, for which a qualified majority vote of 80% of the Members present and voting was required. (30 out of the 38 Members present at the meeting).

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

FOR: 30
AGAINST: 8
ABSENTIONS: 0

It was agreed by qualified majority vote to suspend Standing Order 16.1. (Copy attached, appendix 1).

AGREED: It was agreed that Standing Order 16.1 be suspended in order to allow the Emergency Notice of Motion received from Councillor Ó Muirí.

C/209/2022

EMERGENCY NOTICE OF MOTION - £600 ENERGY SUPPORT PAYMENT

The following motion was received from Councillor Ó Muirí:

"This Council is deeply concerned that the £600 energy support payment due to people across the North of Ireland who are enduring severe cost-of-living pressures has not yet been made, despite DUP assurances it would be paid in November. Notes that as a result of the DUP boycott of power-sharing, responsibility for delivering this payment rests with the British government. Is further concerned that as temperatures drop and winter deepens many families struggling to pay soaring energy bills will have budgeted for this payment being made before Christmas as promised. And therefore, calls on the British government to urgently provide clarity on the delivery of the payments, it is well past time that these were delivered with no more broken promises."

The motion was seconded by Councillor Howell.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Ó Muirí said families were struggling and it was deeply concerning the £600 energy support payment would not be paid before Christmas to assist with energy bills. He said a functioning Executive was urgently needed and parties working together to ensure families received the payment without delay. Councillor Ó Muirí said as a result of the DUP boycotting government, people were suffering and worrying about a cold winter without support. He said people should and could have had the payment and the DUP had promised the payment would be made in November.

Councillor Hanna said the DUP was in no way responsible for the payment not having been paid out, it was entirely the responsibility of the British Government, and he said the British Government had moved the goalposts. Councillor Hanna said the DUP had

passed on in good faith, what it had been told by the British Government, which was that the money should be paid by November. He said the DUP wanted the protocol addressed and without that happening, there would not be a functioning Executive for the foreseeable future. He said the British Government could, if they wished, have the money paid out straight away and the Sinn Féin was using this issue as a political football.

Councillor Taylor said the UUP wanted to see an Executive and Assembly established to work on peoples' behalf, however like the DUP, it had concerns regarding the protocol. He said it was important to note the Sinn Féin party had boycotted the Assembly for three years during which time fuel poverty strategies could have been implemented. Councillor Taylor said the Notice of Motion did not call for action, just clarity and he said action was needed urgently.

Councillor Taylor proposed an amendment to the Motion as follows:

"This Council is deeply concerned that the energy support payments promised to people across Northern Ireland who are enduring severe cost-of-living pressures has not yet been made, despite assurances it would be paid in November. Notes with concern that during the 3 years Stormont was collapsed previously (2017-2020) vital work to tackle the root causes of poverty were severely inhibited. Acknowledges that as a result of the latest lack of functioning power-sharing executive, responsibility for delivering equivalent support rests with the UK government. Is further concerned that as temperatures drop and winter deepens many families struggling to pay soaring energy bills will have budgeted for this payment being made before Christmas as promised. And therefore, calls on the UK government to immediately deliver on the payments, as it is well past time that these were delivered with no more broken promises."

Councillor Burgess seconded Councillor Taylor's proposed amendment.

Councillor Ó Muirí rejected Councillor Taylor's proposed amendment.

Councillor Taylor's proposed amendment was put to a vote, the results of which were as follows:

For: 8
Against: 30

The amendment proposed by Councillor Taylor was lost.

Councillor Sharvin spoke at length about how it was disgraceful that people in the North had yet to receive a single penny whilst money had begun to be paid to those in England, Scotland and Wales and the Irish Government had also brought forward a number of policies to support people. He stated the then DUP Economy Minister Gordon Lyons had clearly indicated the money would arrive in November, raising the hopes of people who desperately need this money.

Councillor Sharvin stated the lack of urgency from the British government showed how little they cared about people here and issues impacting them. The inability of both the DUP and British government to deliver any help to the people during emergency would have devastating impact on people's physical and mental wellbeing.

Councillor Sharvin then proposed an amendment with the addition of the wording "despite Tory Government and DUP assurances" for the motion to read as follows:

"This Council is deeply concerned that the £600 energy support payment due to people across the North of Ireland who are enduring severe cost-of-living pressures has not yet been made, despite Tory Government and DUP assurances it would be paid in November.

Notes that as a result of the DUP boycott of power-sharing, responsibility for delivering this payment rests with the British government.

Is further concerned that as temperatures drop and winter deepens many families struggling to pay soaring energy bills will have budgeted for this payment being made before Christmas as promised.

And therefore, calls on the British government to urgently provide clarity on the delivery of the payments, it is well past time that these were delivered with no more broken promises."

Councillor Byrne seconded Councillor Sharvin's proposed amendment.

Councillor Ó Muirí accepted Councillor Sharvin's proposed amendment.

Councillor Reilly pointed out the payment was made more difficult because the protocol tied into an All-Ireland Energy Policy and that was the reason why DUP was adamant there needed to be changes to the Protocol.

He added the Tories did take note of local sentiment and changed it to allow the cash out and would facilitate those that had coal fires and oil fired central heating. Councillor Reilly stated to blame DUP for everything was ridiculous and that Sinn Féin were hypocritical. He said the DUP were thinking of the long term and welfare of the people.

Councillor Lewis said it worth noting that Sinn Féin had brought down the Executive for almost three years. He added it was right and proper that the fuel payment was made, and that DUP MPs were making that case in Westminster as was SDLP. He stated that the motion would have held more sway if all parties of the chamber had said on a united front that the payment needed to be paid.

Councillor Lee-Surginor supported the motion on behalf of the Alliance Party.

The Chairperson asked for a vote on the motion, proposed by Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Howell including Councillor Sharvin's amendment, the results of which were as follows:

For: 30
Against: 7

The motion was carried.

Councillor Ó Muirí wished to state he was glad to see the motion go through and in making reference to comments made that party political agenda should not be confused with the wish of the people.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Howell that Council is deeply concerned that the £600 energy support payment due to people across the North of Ireland who are enduring severe cost-of-living pressures has not yet been made, despite Tory Government and DUP assurances it would be paid in November. Notes that as a result of the DUP boycott of power-sharing, responsibility for delivering this payment rests with the British government. Is further concerned that as temperatures drop and winter deepens many families struggling to pay soaring energy bills will have budgeted for this payment being made before Christmas as promised. And therefore, calls on the British government to urgently provide clarity on the delivery of the payments, it is well past time that these were delivered with no more broken promises.**

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 8.03pm.

Signed:

Chairperson

Chief Executive