

**NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**NMD/SC/**

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**Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on Monday 22 May 2017 at 6pm in the  
Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick**

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**In the Chair:** Councillor P Brown

**In attendance: (Councillors)**

Councillor R Burgess	Councillor W Clarke
Councillor D Curran	Councillor C Enright
Councillor H Harvey	Councillor T Hearty
Councillor K Loughran	Councillor J Macauley
Councillor A McMurray	Councillor B Ó Muirí
Councillor B Quinn	Councillor W Walker

**(Officials)**

Mr L Hannaway, Chief Executive  
Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Officer

Also in attendance: Mr S Richardson, Transport NI  
Mr S Duffy, Transport NI  
Ms C Noble, Transport NI

**As an apology had been received from the Chairperson and the Vice-Chair it was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Curran, seconded by Councillor McMurray that Councillor Brown assume the Chair.**

**SC/11/2017      APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Andrews, Bailie, Burns, Carr, Craig, Devlin, Fitzpatrick, Hanna, D McAteer, Murnin, Stokes, Taylor and Trainor.

**SC/12/2017      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**SC/13/2017      PRESENTATION BY TRANSPORT NI**

The Chairperson welcomed Mr Richardson, Mr Duffy and Ms Noble from Transport NI and invited them to present their Annual Report 2017/2018.

Mr Richardson thanked the Chairperson for the opportunity to present the Annual Report and stated he had hoped the earlier clinics held in Newry and Downpatrick had been useful for the Members. He advised that Transport NI had been given an initial opening financial allocation which was less than the opening budget last year

therefore there would likely be impacts upon routine maintenance and they would be reliant on additional resources becoming available during the year. He highlighted the following:

- Grass cutting would only occur once between April and October except sightlines which will be cut as and when required.
- Traffic signal maintenance will continue as well as any urgent public safety concerns.
- Repairs of lower priority defects such as potholes will only occur if the in-year budget comes forward.
- The amount of resurfacing work carried out last year was much larger than will be planned for the incoming year.
- Due to the significant loss of staff through the Voluntary Exit scheme, Southern Division had to develop new staffing structures to try to maintain the level of service. The Department therefore was proposing to deal with correspondence which was only reporting routine defects differently from general correspondence. Routine defects would be logged onto the work systems and an automated response with a reference number would be issued to the correspondent. If, however, the query was a more general roads issue, a substantive reply would be issued in the normal way.

Mr Richardson referred to the report, copy of which had been circulated to all Members, highlighting the following:

- Strategic Road Improvements – there had been a significant amount of work carried out regarding Ballynahinch By-pass and, subject to funding, the scheme would be going ahead.
- Newry Southern Relief Road – the first stage was substantially completed and the next stage to identify a preferred option will include geotechnical investigation surveys which were scheduled for late Summer 2017. A public information event was programmed for Autumn 2017 to provide an update on progress and to invite feedback.
- Maintenance of Structures – Kilmore Bridge replacement was now complete and had significant benefits in terms of road safety and connectivity.
- Rural Roads Initiative – the scheme was very successful with section engineers having developed a programme of the highest priority locations to repair rural roads.
- Winter Service – although there was a relatively mild winter, staff were always on standby to react as and when required.
- Minor Works had been carried out at Vianstown Road-Bishops Brae junction Downpatrick; Riverside Crescent, Bessbrook; Foundation Street, Downpatrick; Kingsmill Road-Drumnahunshin Road junction, Whitecross.
- Strangford Ferry – it was intended to rotate the new vessel with the existing vessel to ensure both were used regularly.

The Chairperson thanked the delegation for their presentation and stated questions would be taken by DEA, alphabetically.

Downpatrick DEA

- There was no reference within the report to traffic congestion in Downpatrick. Were there any planned schemes coming forward to alleviate this?
- Welcome the improvement to sightlines at Vianstown Road however these were only completed on the left side of the road, were there any plans to provide sightlines at the right hand side?
- Junctions need to be worked on as part of the creation of the public sector campus include Killough Road at the bottom, Ardglass Road, Edward Street one-way system, lower part of Racecourse Road which has now become a rat-run for people accessing the Downshire Estate.
- Was there any progress on the Pound Lane/Killough Road junction to put an additional lane onto Pound Land?
- East Down Distributor Road not mentioned within the report.
- One-way system behind Irish Street carpark, need to move forward on this issue in order to open up opportunities for retailers within the town.
- Issue of Southern Relief Road from Asda/Ballydugan Industrial Estate out to the back of the Cinema to eliminate queues in St Patricks Avenue and Market Street.
- Updates should be provided each year without the need for Members to continually submit questions on the same schemes.
- The Eastern Distributor Road was initially a developer-led scheme, were there any thoughts on how this could be rolled out.

Mr Richardson responded to the queries as follows:

- At the Autumn meeting the short, medium and long term strategies were presented to deal with traffic study for Downpatrick. This report was a programme of work going forward.
- The cost of completing work on 9 junctions within Downpatrick was 9 times more than the budget that exists. The strategy for dealing with congestion in Downpatrick was still there however the short-term elements were contained within the report.
- Eastern Distributor Road would be reported on within the next month or so and issued then. Hopefully progression had been seen however the scheme was limited by budget constraints.
- Transport NI would work closely with Council to bring in the key stakeholders in terms of the Eastern Distributor Road. The feasibility study would provide detail and costings and there would then be debate as to where the funding would come from.

Rowallane DEA

- Thanks to Transport NI for the upgrading of minor roads and Kilmore Bridge works.
- Was Ballynahinch By-pass a priority scheme?
- Where there any plans to put in a place for slow vehicles to pull in on the A7?
- Any timescale for completion of A7?
- Can assurances be given that sightlines will be cut more than once?
- Could the crossing at Crossgar roundabout be improved?

- The old busstop on Belfast Road in Saintfield, potentially a park and ride site?
- Were there any plans to roll out weed spraying using quads in the area and what type of chemicals were used?
- Timing in replying to Councillor enquiries was too long, was it possible to put in place something to expedite the queries from Councillors?

Mr Richardson responded to the queries as follows:

- Ballynahinch By-pass was not one of the Executive's flagship schemes however it was the Departments role to bring the scheme as far as possible so that it was ready to go when funding became available.
- A7 was substantially complete design-wise and it was down to funding now.
- There were no passing bays put into the scheme due to the length of road.
- The funding received was reduced by 30% this year so far.
- There would be one cut done between April and October, due to resources and funding.
- Regarding Crossgar roundabout and Saintfield busstop, he would speak with the traffic engineer.
- Weed spraying may be carried out slightly differently within different Council areas.
- Timing of replies was a work in progress and the department was endeavouring to be more efficient.

Slieve Croob DEA

- Carnreagh Road flooding issues.
- Bann Road/Dublin Road roundabout – safety issues regarding sightlines for pedestrians. How to report these issues?

Mr Richardson responded to the queries as follows:

- The Carnreagh Road has flooding history and had been closed, the Department was investigating the possibility of raising the road which should reduce the levels of flooding.

Slieve Gullion DEA

- A29 Dundalk road into Newtown with the junction at Cullyhanna Road – campaigning to get resurfaced. Traffic measures also need to be installed before the primary school.
- Tullyvannon West Road – very large potholes need to be fixed.
- Coldbrae Road was sinking, both sides of the road have gone.
- B30 Silverbridge-Newry road – the small portion that was resurfaced was good however the rest of the road needs to be done also.
- Some of the roads in the Slieve Gullion area were impassable and were beyond repair as they had been ignored for so long.
- Concession Road in Crossmaglen – Louth and Monaghan Council had spent money on it.

- Ballycarry Road needs investigated as there were two bad throws in the road pulling lorries out of line.
- Not cutting sightlines and grass and weeds overgrowing causing people to walk onto roads was putting people's lives in danger.
- Could a breakdown of spend across DEAs be provided as there has not been the same amounts of money invested in Slieve Gullion as other DEA areas.
- Scheme at Creamery Road was a top priority for Councillors and has now been taken off the report altogether.

Mr Richardson responded to the queries as follows:

- Took note of the roads listed and would get traffic officers to have a look at the 30 mile an hour near the primary school.
- The level of funding in South Armagh had been raised and was not taken lightly. Last year the rural road initiative was brought in and some areas within the DEA were completed.
- In the past budgets were done on a 4 yearly basis and schemes were able to be planned and taken forward. This year there was no budget and the Department was endeavouring to complete as much work as possible within the tight constraints they were placed under.

The Mourne DEA

- Commend the Department for the work undertaken on Mill Road in Kilkeel.
- Castlewellan Road from Rathfriland A25 near Cabragh needs investigated.
- A2 just after Bloody Bridge on the Annalong side there had been incidents where large stones were coming loose and falling.
- Bloody Bridge carpark caused major problems in the area and a meeting needed to take place between Council officials, Transport NI officials and Councillors to discuss options.
- Zebra crossing in Newcastle was a deathtrap as motorists do not stop. Was there any update on the traffic study undertaken?
- Congestion in Newcastle would likely increase if the Ballynahinch by-pass was put in place, how do Transport NI plan to alleviate this increase?
- Valentia Place/Bryansford Gardens was seriously congested and residents cannot get parked. Was it possible to introduce residents only parking or a one-way system?
- Crash barrier at the S at Spelga needs looked at.
- Traffic management survey in Kilkeel needs undertaken and possibly a set of traffic lights installed rather than the roundabout.
- Would it be possible to see figures for compensation paid to drivers due to damage caused by road defects?

Mr Richardson responded to the queries as follows:

- Meeting regarding Bloody Bridge would be welcomed and officials would be happy to meet with Councillors and Council officials to discuss same.
- Newcastle roundabout and crossing – there were a number of preliminary designs and it was dependent on funding.

- Dundrum crossing – hope to complete this year, subject to funding.
- Residents’ parking was very difficult to implement and perhaps would be better discussed when looking at the roundabout in Newcastle.
- Traffic study would be subject to funding but would raise the issue with engineers in case there was relevant information from previous surveys.
- Would reply separately on changing roundabout to traffic lights in Kilkeel.
- The claims unit had published figures in relation to the total amount paid out in vehicle damage claims and he would send this onto Members.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Richardson, Mr Duffy and Ms Noble for their attendance at the meeting.

**There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 7.22pm.**

For adoption at Meeting of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council to be held on Monday 5 June 2017.

**Signed:**

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**Chairperson**

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**Chief Executive**