

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

NMC/SC

**Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 28 January 2019 at 6pm in the
Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre,
Downpatrick**

In the Chair: Councillor O McMahon

In attendance:

(Councillors)

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor P Brown
Councillor R Burgess	Councillor G Craig
Councillor D Curran	Councillor L Devlin
Councillor G Hanna	Councillor H Harvey
Councillor T Hearty	Councillor R Howell
Councillor M Larkin	Councillor J Macauley
Councillor D McAteer	Councillor R Mulgrew
Councillor B Quinn	Councillor H Reilly
Councillor J Rice	Councillor M Ruane
Councillor M Savage	Councillor G Stokes
Councillor D Taylor	Councillor J Tinnelly
Councillor B Walker	

(Officials)

Mr. L Hannaway, Chief Executive
Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer
Ms L O'Hare, Democratic Services Officer

Also in attendance:

Northern Ireland Electricity Networks

Mrs E Creery, Head of Communications & Customer
Engagement
Mr. D Keys, Customer Service Manager

SC/01/2019

APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Bailie, Casey, Clarke, Enright, Harte, Kimmins, Murnin, McMurray and Trainor.

SC/02/2019

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

SC/03/2019

**PRESENTATION FROM NORTHERN IRELAND
ELECTRICITY NETWORKS**

The Chairperson welcomed the delegation from Northern Ireland Electricity Networks and invited them to make their presentation. A copy of the presentation is appended to these minutes.

Mr Keys asked Members to encourage constituents with specific medical equipment at home to ensure they joined the NIE Networks Medical Customer Care Register.

Mrs Creery advised NIE Networks was developing plans to meet the changing energy needs of the future to achieve the best possible technical solutions at the lowest cost to customers. Members were urged to respond to a consultation which was due to be launched mid February 2019. Details to be made available at www.nienetworks.co.uk/future.

Members raised the following points:

- Were there plans to update the network within the Crossmaglen area, particularly to get the best from renewable energy?
- The cost of domestic supply had increased dramatically.
- Reference was also made to the cost of three phase connections. Was there assistance or grants available particularly for small business start-up costs?
- There had been occasions when the Department for Infrastructure had attributed street lighting issues to be because of a NIE Networks supply issue. Was this the case?
- The Annalong area continued to experience intermittent cuts to supply.
- Concerns were raised about the timing and wording of letters from NIE Networks advising customers of maintenance work.
- Was it possible to have an electric pole within Killyleagh repositioned to free up car parking spaces. Was it the case that the cost to do so was £12,000?
- Was there ongoing rollout for installation of new electric meters? Concerns were raised regarding problems associated with old meters in the Kilkeel area, in particular two charities which had been left with substantial payments to make.
- Was there any plans to upgrade supply in those areas at the end of the line of supply e.g. South down, Warrenpoint Harbour?

- Was it possible to simplify the numbering system on street lighting poles to assist with identifying and reporting faults. Ivy growth on poles was also problematic.
- Was there any assistance for line changes for those renovating or building within rural areas?
- Concerns were raised regarding the length of time to deal with repairs to a breakage in cable at Kelly Park, Newry.
- NIE Networks were asked to resolve problems associated with a break in cable at Sugar Island, Newry.

The delegation responded to the queries as follows:

- All Members were urged to respond to the consultation process to help get the best from service provision in the future. It was stressed that input from Councillors from different areas was required to help shape electric provision for customers in all areas.
- NIE Networks' connections were designed with safety at the forefront. As a regulated business, they must provide the customer with the 'Least Cost Technically Acceptable' solution, so the price quoted is the absolute lowest they can deliver it for. The connection market was however open to competition with alternative providers.
- NIE Networks had a good working relationship with the Department for Infrastructure. Issues with street lighting could be examined on a case to case basis and details should be forwarded to have matters resolved.
- NIE Networks as an organisation wanted to be as accessible as possible and encouraged contact to be made through Customer Relations Managers.
- The figure for 'Customer Minutes Lost' had reduced significantly over the last number of years however any issues being experienced should be reported to NIE Networks.
- Councillors played a vital role in communicating with customers and providing reassurance, particularly when problems occur.
- Installation of new meters was included in the NIE Networks Investment Plan. An update on the Kilkeel area to be provided.
- There was an ongoing programme to clear vegetation from NIE Networks' equipment. Details of problematic areas should be reported so they could be addressed.
- The delegation confirmed they were unaware of any assistance for connections in rural areas. NIE Networks had agreed a plan of work with the Regulator over the next few years.
- Matters raised regarding Sugar Island, Newry were to be examined as soon as possible.

The delegation responded to the questions that were raised and have committed to follow up with Councillors directly on some specific issues highlighted.

Mrs Creery thanked Members for the opportunity to meet with Council and appealed to all Members to contact NIE Networks about any issues they come across within their respective areas.

The Chairperson thanked the delegation for their presentation.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 6.45pm.

For adoption at Meeting of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council to be held on Monday 4 March 2019.

Signed:

Chairperson

Chief Executive



NIE NETWORKS OVERVIEW

Newry, Mourne & Down Special Council meeting

Monday 28th January 2019

NIE Networks - We own and manage the electricity network in Northern Ireland



Network Maintenance Development



Connections – Commercial & Domestic



Connecting Renewables



Meter reading



Power cuts

NIE Networks Overview



Customers	c880,000
Annual Electricity Demand	c8 TWh
Transmission Network	c2,200 km
Distribution Network	c47,000 km
Substations	c300 major
Price Control Overall Total Expenditure (October 17– March 2024)	c£1.2bn



Connecting with our customers



EVERYONE in Northern Ireland is a **CUSTOMER**

Everything we do is for the benefit of our customers

We're helping to **grow communities**

We're enabling NI Plc to **flourish** on a global stage

We connect **6,000** homes & businesses per year

We're **powering businesses**

We're a **CUSTOMER FOCUSED** business

Investment in Newry, Mourne and Down during RP6 (up to March 2024)



Category	Detail
Network Reinforcement	(5 projects)
Network Refurbishment	Substation plant and switchgear (5 projects)
	Overhead lines (702km)
	Subtotal
Total Costs	£6m

Weather Ready – Preparation and Resource



- Emergency Plan reviewed annually and always post an event
- 9000 critical care customer contacted annually
- Powercheck tool developed to give public near-real time information in their area
- 12 Local Incident Centres across NI
- Winter Ready Campaign launched each year – use traditional press, digital media, radio
- We write to Councils to remind Councillors of their Hotline Number
- Staff receive refresher training
- Storm simulations completed every year
- All employees have a storm role but we use ESB and GB resources through agreement
- The Critical National Infrastructure Provider (CNIP) Mutual Aid Protocol

What happens in a Storm? Storm Ali Example



- At 11:00hrs on 18 September we escalated i.e.
 - ❖ mobilised the Duty Incident Team and opened the Incident Centre in Craigavon from 06:00hrs 19th Sept.
 - ❖ Mobilised all 12 Local Incident Centres from 07:00hrs.
 - ❖ Planned work cancelled
 - ❖ Additional call handling resources and control engineers were mobilised.
- Trees brought down overhead lines and windborne debris disrupted electricity supplies to c102,000 customers mainly across Co. Antrim, Armagh & Down
- 209 broken poles & 1066 faults on the distribution network
- Repairs started once safe to do so
- c95% customers restored < 24 hours
- All customers restored < 72 hours



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Resources deployed



- >600 employees and local contractors 'in the field' to repair storm damage and restore supplies
- On 20 September resources moved from North and West to South and East counties (to the areas worse affected)
- Operational field staff working from c07:00 to c23:00 each night (and in some cases into the early hours)
- Call agents and Duty Incident Teams working round the clock



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Restoring Power to Your Community



When it is safe to do so, emergency teams locate the fault, survey the damage and start repairs

Process of restoration

- 1) High voltage transmission lines
- 2) Major power lines that serve a large number of customers
- 3) Distribution power lines that serve a smaller number of customers
- 4) Individual homes and businesses still without power



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Communication with customers



- c35,600 telephone fault calls answered between 19-21 September by call agents and High Volume Call Handling (HVCA)
- c7300 customers logged faults via 'Report a Powercut' on nienetworks.co.uk
- 47,000 customers used Powercheck to access latest fault restoration information
- 500 private or direct messages managed through social media
- Up to 52 call agents (at any one time) were deployed to answer calls
- By mid-night on 20 September fault calls being answered almost entirely by agents
- By evening on 21 September able to gradually reduce number of call agents
- Our media team had direct communication with broadcast and press media
- Social Media engagement was considerably higher than previous storms.
- Increased use of on-line reporting



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Critical Care & Stakeholder Communication



- c9000 customers on our Medical Customer Care Register
- Calls from Critical Care customers were given priority and call agents provided these customers with the best available information on restoration times
- Teams of dedicated staff regularly contacted 327 Critical Care customers
- 42 small generators were installed and maintained
- Dedicated Stakeholder Engagement Manager supported the Duty Incident Manager in ensuring effective communication with key stakeholders
- Key stakeholders (including DfE, Utility Regulator and Consumer Council) regularly updated during the storm and until all customers restored
- Positive feedback received



The Future of Energy – The Potential Customer Benefits



You can find out more by visiting: www.nienetworks.co.uk/future



Thank you

Follow us @NIElectricity
www.nienetworks.co.uk
Customer Helpline 03457 643643