

At the Council meeting held on 13 April 2026, the following amendment was agreed by Members:

SE/033/2026: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, to reject the Proposed Waste Management Services Scale of Charges 2026/27 as set out in Appendix 1 of the officers' report.

**NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Ref: SE/2025**

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**Minutes of Sustainability & Environment Committee Meeting held on  
Wednesday 18 March 2026 at 6.00pm in Boardroom, Warrenpoint Town  
Hall**

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**Chair:** Councillor O Magennis

**In attendance in  
Chamber:**

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor M Hearty
Councillor M Larkin	Councillor K Murphy
Councillor M Ruane	Councillor D Taylor

**Committee Members in  
Attendance via Teams:**

Councillor W Clarke	Councillor K Feehan
Councillor J Jackson	Councillor S O'Hare
Councillor H Reilly	Councillor H Young

**Officials in Chamber:**

Mrs S Murphy, Director, Sustainability and Environment  
Mr C Sage, Assistant Director of Sustainability  
Mrs S Trainor, Assistant Director of Environment  
Ms Therese Siddall, Head of Refuse & Cleansing  
Mr C Smyth, Democratic Services Officer

**Officials in Attendance  
via teams:**

Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer

**SE/025/2026: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

An apology was received from Councillor Finn.

**SE/026/2026: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**SE/027/2026: ACTION SHEET: SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT  
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 FEBRUARY 2026**

Read: Action Sheet of the Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 18 February 2026. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:**

**On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Ruane, it was agreed to note the Action Sheet of the Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 18 February 2026.**

*SE/019/2026 – The Path to Net Zero – Fleet Fuel Options*

In response to a query from Councillor Andrews, Mr Sage advised that the consultation on the Sustainability and Climate Strategy had recently closed, feedback was being reviewed, and a report outlining proposed amendments would be brought to the April Committee prior to the strategy's launch.

*SE/004/2024 and SE/005/2024 – Report on Notice of Motion – Flood Defences*

In response to a query on above items from Councillor Young regarding whether this work had been carried out, Mrs Murphy advised she would revert to Councillor Young outside of the meeting.

*SE/091/2024 – Notice of Motion – Dog Fouling*

In response to a query from Councillor Young, Mrs Murphy advised that dog-fouling reports submitted through the online form were reviewed by the Education and Enforcement Team. She confirmed that officers were analysing data from two sources and developing how this information would be reported to Members and residents as part of the Education and Enforcement Plan.

**FOR CONSIDERATION AND/OR DECISION**

**SE/028/2025:**

**DRAFT NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY NI-CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

Read: Report from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director of Sustainability, regarding Draft NI Nature Recovery Strategy Consultation Response. **(Copy circulated)**

Mr Sage outlined the report, which sought approval for the Council's response to the DAERA consultation on the NI Nature Recovery Strategy. He advised that, following representations from stakeholders, DAERA had granted a four-week extension to the consultation period, allowing sufficient time for Members' suggested amendments to be incorporated.

Councillor Hearty welcomed the report and highlighted that biodiversity was sometimes overlooked within wider environmental discussions. He stated that the consultation response lacked an all-island dimension and proposed that, for items 6, 8, 11, 14, 17 and 20, an additional recommendation be included to emphasise the need for cooperation with counterparts across the rest of Ireland in delivering all-island biodiversity approaches. Councillor Magennis seconded the proposal.

Councillor Andrews welcomed the report and supported Councillor Hearty's comments.

Councillor Young also supported the response and reiterated the importance of ring-fenced funding, baseline data and a clear delivery mechanism.

Councillor Reilly expressed concern regarding Councillor Hearty's proposal. He stated that, while both jurisdictions could learn from each other, he did not wish to see farmers in Northern Ireland subjected to the level of pressure experienced by farmers and landowners in the Republic of Ireland.

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Hearty, seconded by Councillor Magennis, it was agreed to approve the response to DAERA's Draft Nature Recovery Strategy Consultation as detailed at Appendix 1 of the officers' report, subject to the additional recommendation relating to items 6, 8, 11, 14, 17 and 20 in the consultation response, an additional recommendation be included stating that any biodiversity strategy should involve working with counterparts across the rest of Ireland to deliver all-Ireland biodiversity approaches.

**SE/029/2025: SUSTAINABILITY CHARGES FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2026/27**

Read: Report from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director of Sustainability, regarding Sustainability – Facility Charges 2026/27. **(Copy circulated)**

Mr Sage outlined the report, noting that it presented the annual review of facility charges for 2026/27, to take effect from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027. He confirmed that charges had not increased in the previous financial year.

Councillor K. Murphy referred to the low number of traders in Newry Market and requested that a paper outlining long-term plans for the market be brought to committee. Mr Sage confirmed that an update would be provided at the April committee meeting.

Councillor Andrews highlighted current cost-of-living pressures on businesses and households and proposed rejecting the suggested increases until the next financial year. Councillor Taylor seconded the proposal.

Councillor Magennis confirmed that all Members were in agreement.

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Taylor, it was agreed to reject the suggested increase in facility charges for 2026/27 until the next financial year.

**SE/030/2025: HOME TO HOSPITAL**

Read: Report from Mrs S Trainor, Assistant Director of Environment, regarding Home to Hospital Scheme. **(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Trainor presented the report, which sought approval to continue funding the Home to Hospital volunteer driver schemes in Slieve Gullion and the Mourne from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027, and to fund a pilot in the Crotlieve DEA from 1 September 2026 to 31 March 2027. She advised that it also sought approval to invite expressions of interest from community and voluntary organisations to administer the Slieve Gullion and Mourne scheme from 1 April 2026. She referred Members to section 2.3, which outlined current-year service-user activity.

Councillor Magennis proposed to accept the officers' recommendations, describing the service as a lifeline for rural residents. Councillor Taylor seconded the proposal and welcomed the planned extension into a new DEA.

Councillor Andrews commended the work of Home to Hospital and noted that Down Community Transport provided similar support in the Rowallane and Downpatrick areas and relied on their own fundraising and queried whether Council could assist with financial support to ensure the continuation of that service. Mrs Trainor advised that she would clarify the funding arrangements and report back to him outside the meeting.

Councillor Young welcomed the extension to the Crotlieve DEA, highlighted the absence of a similar service in the Newcastle and Annalong areas and queried whether there were plans to provide coverage there.

Councillor Reilly noted the number of bus changes required for Annalong residents travelling to the Ulster or Craigavon Hospitals and expressed his disappointment that the service was not available in the Annalong and Newcastle areas.

Councillor Ruane emphasised the significant work undertaken to establish the scheme in Crotlieve and encouraged Members from other areas to be proactive in progressing a service for their DEA.

Mrs Trainor referred to section 2.2, noting that consultation and funding for the Crotlieve scheme had taken approximately one year, and that a similar timeframe would apply to any extension into the Newcastle and Mourne DEA. She confirmed she was willing to discuss this further with Members outside the meeting.

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Taylor, it was agreed to provide continued funding for the Mournes and Slieve Gullion DEA's Home to Hospital Volunteer driver schemes from 01 April 2026 to 31 March 2027, provide funding to pilot the Home to Hospital Volunteer driver scheme in Crotlieve DEA from 01 September 2026 to 31 March 2027 and seek Expressions of Interest from suitable Community / Voluntary sector organisations to administer the Schemes.**

**SE/031/2025:** **HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION – LICENCE FEE**

Read: Report from Mrs S Trainor, Assistant Director of Environment, regarding Houses in Multiple Occupancy. (**Copy circulated**)

Mrs Trainor outlined the report, which sought approval to increase the licensing fee for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) under the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, along with the associated costs of varying an HMO licence as detailed in section 2.4 of the officers' report.

Councillor Andrews proposed to accept the officers' recommendation, highlighting the ongoing housing shortage in the district, referred to the restoration of building powers to the Housing Executive, and queried whether any funding or potential sites had been identified to help

replenish housing stock. Mrs Trainor advised that she would respond to him outside the meeting.

In response to a query from Councillor Reilly regarding whether HMOs required formal planning approval before inspections were undertaken, Mrs Trainor advised that Belfast City Council maintained HMO licensing on behalf of all councils in Northern Ireland. She confirmed that she would speak with their officers and report back to him and would also consult NMD Council's Planning Department regarding his planning query.

Mrs Murphy confirmed that the revised licensing fee would apply to both new and existing HMOs.

Councillor Young stated her support for the proposal, noting that the Alliance Party supported tighter regulation of HMOs to protect community cohesion, prevent over-concentration, hold landlords accountable, and strengthen tenants' rights, including rent controls.

**AGREED:**

**On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Young, it was agreed to approve the following,**

- **The increase of the HMO licence application fee to £62 per person per year from the 1 April 2026**
- **The costs of varying a HMO license as detailed in section 2.4 of the officers' report.**

**SE/032/2025:**

**REFUSE COLLECTION/HRC ARRANGEMENTS FOR PUBLIC HOLIDAYS 2026/27**

Read:

Report from Mrs S Trainor, Assistant Director of Environment, regarding Refuse Collection/HRC Arrangements For Public Holidays 2026/27. **(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Trainor outlined the report, which set out refuse collection and Household Recycling Centre arrangements for the 2025/26 public holidays, noting that sections 2.2 and 2.3 detailed how this information would be communicated to residents.

Councillor Ruane recorded his appreciation for the work carried out by the Street Cleansing Team in Warrenpoint on St Patrick's Day.

Councillors Andrews, Young and Larkin echoed these remarks in relation to work undertaken across the district before and after the celebrations.

Mrs Trainor thanked Members for their feedback and confirmed it would be passed to the relevant teams.

**AGREED:**

**It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Ruane to approve the alternative Refuse Collection Services and opening arrangements for Household Recycling Centres on Public Holidays applying to the 2026/27 financial year.**

**SE/033/2025:**

**ENVIRONMENT CHARGES FOR FINANCIAL YEAR  
2026/2027**

Read: Report from Mrs S Trainor, Assistant Director of Environment, regarding Waste Charges 2026/27. (**Copy circulated**)

Mrs Trainor outlined the report, noting that it presented the annual review of facility charges for 2026/27, to take effect from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027. She confirmed that charges had not increased in 2025/26 and that the only proposed increases for 2026/27 related to wheeled bins and spare parts and advised that Members were asked to approve the scale of charges set out in Appendix 1.

Councillor Andrews again highlighted the current cost-of-living pressures on businesses and households and proposed to reject the suggested increases until the next financial year. Councillor Taylor seconded the proposal.

In response to a query from Councillor Larkin regarding the impact of not applying the 5% uplift on the Council's ability to sustain services, Mrs Trainor confirmed that the uplift related to cost recovery. Councillor Larkin stated that he was therefore not in support of Councillor Andrews' proposal.

As there was dissent within the Chamber, the proposal was put to a vote by way of a role call vote and voting was as follows:

FOR:	7
AGAINST:	6
ABSTENTIONS:	0

The proposal was declared fallen.

In response to a query from Councillor Reilly, Mrs Trainor confirmed that residents who qualified for a larger bin on medical grounds were required to pay the charge set out in Appendix 1.

Councillor Reilly noted that the Committee had previously agreed that commercial waste could be disposed of at HRC sites using trailers smaller than 8ft x 4ft, but this now appeared to have changed to 2m x 1m. He also referred to small twin-axle trailers being refused entry and suggested clearer communication to ensure commercial users understood the regulations.

Mrs Trainor confirmed that Council policy did not permit twin-axle trailers at HRC sites. She acknowledged the point regarding trailer dimensions, confirmed the matter would be reviewed, and undertook to update him outside the meeting. She added that commercial waste would be accepted once commercial charges were reinstated, but this was not currently in place.

Councillor Reilly reiterated that the issue of trailer dimensions had previously been raised and proposed that criteria should be based solely on trailer size rather than axle number.

Mrs Murphy clarified that the twin-axle restriction formed part of the Council's waste-acceptance policy and was reflected in the current refuse-collection policy. She agreed to review previous minutes on the matter and confirmed that any change would require a policy amendment to be brought back through Committee.

Councillor Ruane noted that Members may not be not fully clear on the details of Councillor Reilly's proposal and suggested a paper be brought to the next Committee meeting to outline the differences.

Councillor Reilly confirmed he was content to withdraw his proposal

**AGREED:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Larkin, seconded by Councillor Ruane, to approve the Proposed Waste Management Services Scale of Charges 2026/27 as set out in Appendix 1 of the officers' report.**

**ITEMS RESTRICTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 6 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (NI) 2014**

**Agreed:** **On the proposal of Councillor Larkin, seconded by Councillor Ruane, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on the following items, which related to exempt information by virtue of para. 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local /Government (Northern Ireland) 2014 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.**

**Agreed:** **On the proposal of Councillor Ruane, seconded by Councillor Larkin, it was agreed to come out of closed session.**

**The Chairperson advised the following had been agreed whilst in closed session:**

**RESTRICTED – FOR DECISION**

**SE/034/2026: MIXED DRY RECYCLABLES CONTRACT**

**Read:** Report from Mrs S Trainor, Assistant Director of Environment, regarding Extension of Mixed Dry Recycling Contracts. (**Copy circulated**)

**AGREED:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Larkin, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, to approve the extension of the contract for the Receipt and Processing of Mixed Dry Recyclables from 31 March 2026 to 30 September 2026 and the extension of the current haulage contract with the organisation named in the officers' report from 31 March 2026 to 30 September 2026.**

**SE/035/2026: CONTRACT EXTENSIONS**

Read: Report from Mrs S Trainor, Assistant Director of Environment, regarding Waste Management Contract Extensions. (**Copy circulated**)

**AGREED:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Larkin, to approve the Contract / Direct Award contract extensions as detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 of the officers' report.**

**SE/036/2026: BUSINESS CASE – VEHICLE TYRES**

Read: Report from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director of Sustainability, regarding Business Case for the Provision of Tyres and Associated Services. (**Copy circulated**)

**AGREED:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Larkin, seconded by Councillor Andrews, to approve the business case at appendix 1 of the officers' report.**

**FOR NOTING - ITEMS RESTRICTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 6 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (NI) 2014**

**SE/037/2026: ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING IN-COMMITTEE MINUTES OF THURSDAY 29 JANUARY 2026 & JOINT COMMITTEE MEMBERS' MONTHLY BULLETIN HELD ON 26 FEBRUARY 2026**

Read: Arc21 Joint Committee Meeting In-Committee Minutes Of Thursday 29 January 2026 & Joint Committee Members' Monthly Bulletin Held On 26 February 2026. (**Copy circulated**)

**AGREED:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Hearty, to note the documents.**

**SE/038/2026: ACTION SHEET AND PRESENTATIONS FROM THE S&E WORKING GROUP MEETING OF 18 FEBRUARY 2026**

Read: Action Sheet and Presentations from the S&E Working Group Meeting of 18 February 2026. (**Copy circulated**)

**AGREED:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Hearty, to note the documents.**

**FOR NOTING**

**SE/039/2025: ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 29 JANUARY 2026**

Read: Arc21 Joint Committee Meeting Held on Thursday 29 January 2026. (**Copy circulated**)

**AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Hearty, to note the document.**

**SE/040/2025: BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY – ACTION PLAN REVIEW**

Read: Report from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director of Sustainability, regarding Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan Review. (**Copy circulated**)

**AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Hearty, to note the many achievements for biodiversity across the district this year as outlined in Appendix 1 of the officers' report.**

There being no further business the meeting ended at 7.05pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 13 April 2026.

**Signed: Councillor Oonagh Magennis**  
**Chairperson**

**Signed: Mrs Sinead Murphy**  
**Director of Sustainability & Environment**