

NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Ref: SE/2025

Minutes of Sustainability & Environment Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 17 June 2026 at 6.00pm in Boardroom, Warrenpoint Town Hall

Chair: Councillor M Ruane

**In attendance in
Chamber:**

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor J Brennan
Councillor M Hearty	Councillor J Jackson
Councillor D Murphy	Councillor S O'Hare
Councillor H Young	

**Committee Members in
Attendance via Teams:**

Councillor P Campbell	Councillor K Feehan
Councillor H Reilly	Councillor D Taylor
Councillor J Truesdale	

**Non-Committee Members
In Attendance via Teams:**

Councillor W Clarke	Councillor A Lewis
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Officials in Chamber:

Mrs S Murphy, Director, Sustainability and Environment
Mr C Sage, Assistant Director of Sustainability
Mrs S Trainor, Assistant Director of Environment
Mr C Smyth, Democratic Services Officer

**Officials in Attendance
via teams:**

Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer

SE/069/2026: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Finn and K Murphy

SE/070/2026: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

**SE/071/2026: ACTION SHEET: SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 20 MAY 2026**

Read: Action Sheet of the Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 20 May 2026. **(Copy circulated)**

Although not on the action sheet, Councillor Jackson enquired about a review of public toilets across the district. The Chairperson advised that officers would revert to him outside the meeting and the matter would be included on the action sheet for the next meeting.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Young, it was agreed to note the Action Sheet of the Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 29 April 2026.

SE/072/2026 **TO AGREE START TIMES FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUP MEETINGS 2026-27**

Read: Proposed Start Times for Sustainability & Environment Committee & Working Group Meetings 2026-2027 (**Copy circulated**)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor D Murphy, the start times for Sustainability & Environment Committee & Working Group Meetings 2026-2027 were agreed.

FOR CONSIDERATION AND/OR DECISION

SE/073/2025: **OFFICER REPORT ON NOTICE OF MOTION – WATER COURSES**

Read: Report from Mr C Sage Assistant Director of Sustainability, regarding Notice of Motion – Water Courses. (**Copy circulated**)

Councillor Truesdale thanked officers for progressing the matter. She acknowledged that, as the work had not been undertaken previously, it involved significant effort but emphasised the importance of identifying all watercourses for which the Council was the riparian owner, given the extent of flooding and delays caused by disputes over responsibility. She expressed the view that, in the longer term, this would save time in determining ownership and support cleaner, free-flowing watercourses discharging to the sea.

She advised that new information received the previous week regarding the weir had been submitted to the Council, DfI and DAERA. However, she noted that the associated retaining walls had remained in the planning system for approximately eighteen months. She reported having made repeated requests for a response from Planning to NIEA without success and stressed that the importance of the weir to Newcastle was being underestimated and residents were increasingly frustrated by the lack of meaningful action.

Councillor Truesdale highlighted that the weir, which connected to the retaining walls via concrete arms, was important for wildlife and fish and maintained a minimum water level in the Shimna River. She warned that failure to address the issue could have serious consequences. She further reported that, in recent months, three geese, a duck and an otter had died in the boating lake. Local anglers attributed this to fermenting debris accumulating due to insufficient water flow and inadequate clearance, leading also to exposed riverbeds and a strong sulphuric odour in warm weather.

While acknowledging the district's geographical challenges, she stressed the need for proactive preparedness rather than reactive responses and noted that it was encouraging to see progress being made.

Mr Sage advising the purpose of the report was to facilitate discussion on the Notice of Motion received and note the ongoing work of Council as detailed in section 2 of the officers' report.

Councillor Andrews welcomed the motion and expressed support for the recommendations.

In response to a query from Councillor Clarke regarding the weir, Mr Sage referred to section 2.3 of the report which noted that officers will continue to engage proactively with DFI Rivers and other stakeholders in order to clarify ownership and associated responsibilities in relation to the weir.

The proposal was put to a vote by way of a show of hands and voting was as follows:

FOR:	13
AGAINST:	0
ABSTENTIONS:	0

The motion was declared carried.

AGREED: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Young, to consider the recommendations of the Notice of Motion and note the ongoing work by Council as detailed in section 2 of the officers' report.**

SE/074/2025: DIRECTORATE BUSINESS PLAN

Read: Report from Mrs S Murphy, Director, Sustainability and Environment, regarding Directorate Business Plans. **(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Murphy presented the report, which provided an overview of 2025/26 activity and the Directorate Business Plan for 2026/27.

Councillor Truesdale noted that the plan demonstrated the extent of work undertaken by the Sustainability and Environment Directorate and welcomed its proactive approach to reducing waste at source, rather than addressing issues after they arose.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Jackson, the Assessment of the Sustainability and Environment Directorate Business Plan 2026-26 and the Sustainability and Environment Directorate Business Plan 2026-27 were agreed.**

SE/075/2025: UPDATE REPORT ON NOTICE OF MOTION - LISLEA MEN'S SHED PROPOSED WILDFOWL & WILDLIFE PRESERVE AT CAMLOUGH LAKE

Read: Report from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director of Sustainability, regarding Update re Notice of Motion - Lislea Men's Shed proposed Wildfowl & Wildlife Preserve at Camlough Lake. **(Copy circulated)**

Mr Sage advised that the purpose of the report was to provide an update following a site meeting between the Council Sustainability Team and members of Lislea Men's Shed on 22 May 2026 at Camlough Lake, as a follow-up to the Notice of Motion deferred from the Council meeting on 13 April 2026.

Councillor D Murphy proposed to accept the officers' recommendations. He enquired whether the Council had determined ownership of the area opposite the lake known locally as 'The Commons'.

Mr Sage confirmed that ownership had not yet been established and advised this would be investigated, with an update to be brought to a future Committee meeting.

Councillor Young expressed support for the recommendations and described the plans as very impressive.

Councillor Andrews concurred with Councillor Young and commended all those involved in the project.

AGREED: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor D Murphy, seconded by Councillor Andrews, that officers continue to engage with and support the Lislea Men's Shed where possible with the project and bring back a further report to S&E Committee when appropriate.**

SE/076/2025: BUS SHELTER REQUESTS

Read: Report from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director of Sustainability, regarding Bus Shelter Requests. **(Copy circulated)**

Mr Sage advised that the purpose of the report was to seek approval for the replacement and relocation of an existing bus shelter at Ballymacarn Road, Spa, and the installation of two new bus shelters at Annacloy Road, Teconnaught. He noted the relocation in Spa was fully funded by the developer, while the two shelters in Teconnaught were to be funded through the capital programme.

Referring to the proposed shelters in Teconnaught, Councillor Brennan stated that the provision was not solely for passenger comfort but also significant health and safety considerations, particularly in relation to pupils crossing the road to access bus services. He advised that he had previously approached Translink regarding the matter but was informed that no funding was available, and welcomed the Council's intervention to bringing the proposal forward.

Councillor Andrews welcomed the proposals and noted many had been lobbying on the matter for some time.

Councillor Lewis thanked officers for the work undertaken, noting that the developer was willing to work with the Council regarding the location of the new shelter in Spa. He highlighted that the relocation of the shelter had been a planning stipulation, with the report issued over a year previously, and suggested a more streamlined process be considered for similar cases in future.

AGREED: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Brennan, seconded by Councillor Andrews, to approve the request to relocate and replace the**

existing shelter at Ballymacarn Road, Spa and for the erection of two new bus shelters at Annacloy Road, Teconnaught.

SE/077/2025: MARKET STREET CAR PARK, DOWNPATRICK

Read: Report from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director of Sustainability regarding Market Street Car Park, Downpatrick. **(Copy circulated)**

Mr Sage advised the purpose of the report was seek approval for use of Market Street car parks and associated spaces in Downpatrick for the Fleadh Cheoil An Dúin and Rallye Lecale in June and July 2026.

Councillor Campbell thanked officers and noted that Rallye Locale would have a significant impact on the town. He added that the Downpatrick Regeneration Working Group had been working towards this since March and welcomed the collaborative efforts across Council departments in delivering the initiative.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Campbell, the request for use of Market Street car parks and associated spaces in Downpatrick for the Fleadh Cheoil An Dúin and Rallye Lecale in June and July 2026 respectively was agreed.

SE/078/2026: CONSULTATION FROM WASTE TO WORTH: NORTHERN IRELAND WASTE PREVENTION PROGRAMME

Read: Report from Mrs S Trainor, Assistant Director of Environment, regarding DAERA "From Waste to Worth: Northern Ireland Waste Prevention Programme" Consultation. **(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Trainor advised that the purpose of the report was to seek Committee approval of the Council's response to the consultation as detailed in Appendix 1. She noted the Department had published a Waste Prevention Programme for Northern Ireland, outlining its strategic approach to reducing waste generation and supporting the transition to a circular economy.

Councillor Young welcomed the report and queried if there were plans to provide funding to the National Trust to assist with managing high levels of litter and plastic pollution at Murlough Beach. Mrs Trainor confirmed that this would be examined and that an officer would revert to her outside the meeting.

Councillor O'Hare also welcomed the report. She noted the proposed Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) and described it as a positive initiative but highlighted that issues had arisen in the South of Ireland, where a scheme was already in place, including increased and unforeseen costs.

Mrs Trainor responded that Council receive regular updates on the DRS and would take on board all information received from their colleagues in the South of Ireland.

Councillor Andrews expressed support for the recommendations but highlighted the importance of costs being met by central government, not local Councils.

Councillor Reilly referred to Extended Producer Responsibility, describing the Department's proposals as lacking clarity and suggesting that they did not provide a clear structural approach to recycling or delivering tangible benefits. He further noted that some companies utilised anaerobic digestion to generate energy, which the Council could potentially use, and added that all such options would require careful consideration if the Council was to address these issues effectively.

In response to a query from Councillor Reilly regarding income figures from waste, Mrs Murphy advised that, as the matter related to the financial affairs of the Council, the figures would be shared in closed session.

Councillor Truesdale stated that the programme would require a data-led approach, given variations in waste across Council areas, and noted that the transition to new ways of working would involve all stakeholders, including the community and voluntary sector.

She referred to Question 3 of the response document and sought clarification on whether existing kerbside systems, including collection frequency, would be impacted by the DRS and Extended Producer Responsibility. She also asked whether consideration had been given to reintroducing standalone glass collections or bottle banks, and whether the Council was exploring improved arrangements for the disposal of lithium batteries, highlighting concerns about their incorrect disposal in general waste.

Mrs Murphy advised that she would respond further to Councillor Truesdale's query regarding (DRS) and the associated transition. She noted that the removal of DRS materials from existing kerbside collections would impact the composition of recycling waste streams and could affect reported recycling rates, as those materials would be processed separately. She added that the Council would still be required to achieve high recycling rates from the remaining waste stream and that ongoing analysis was informing future collection models.

In relation to glass collections, she advised that the Council currently operated a co-mingled kerbside system, with glass separated and recycled by its contractor and reported through waste data returns. She noted that any potential changes to the collection model would require careful consideration, particularly in light of the Council's response to the *Rethinking Resources* consultation.

Mrs Murphy further advised that the Council received funding through Extended Producer Responsibility and that workstreams were underway, including waste data modelling, to inform future proposals. She indicated that reports would be brought back to Members in the coming months for consideration.

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Young, seconded by Councillor O'Hare, it was agreed to approve the consultation response as detailed at appendix 1 of the officers' report, on the DAERA "From Waste to Worth – Northern Ireland Waste Prevention Programme", and note the potential future operational and financial implications for local government arising from implementation of waste prevention and circular economy initiatives.

SE/079/2026:

CONSULTATION RESPONSE ON PROPOSED ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY REFORMS

Read: Report from Mrs S Trainor, Assistant Director of Environment regarding Proposed Animal Welfare Policy Reforms in Northern Ireland. (**Copy circulated**)

Mrs Trainor presented the report, which sought Members' approval for the Council's response to the DAERA public consultation on proposed animal welfare policy reforms in Northern Ireland. She noted that the proposals aimed to strengthen welfare protections for companion animals, including the regulation of rescue and rehoming organisations, revisions to dog licensing fees, restrictions on aversive training devices, and enhanced microchipping requirements.

Councillor Truesdale stated that the public held strong expectations regarding animal welfare standards in Northern Ireland and that Councils would need to meet these through the assumption of additional responsibilities. She noted the limited capacity of the Council's dog warden service, with four wardens covering a large, predominantly rural district.

Councillor Truesdale expressed support for proposals to increase dog licensing fees and to enable full cost recovery for registration and licensing, while noting uncertainties regarding how much projected income this would raise. She also supported the proposed ban on aversive training devices and acknowledged the cross-departmental nature of the proposals.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Andrews, it was agreed to approve the Council's response to the DAERA Consultation on proposed animal welfare policy reforms and that the response as detailed in Appendix 1 of the officers report be submitted to the Department on behalf of NMDDC within the required timeframe, subject to ratification by Council.**

SE/080/2026: **SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT FOR DELIVERY OF SERVICES BETWEEN COUNCILS AND THE DRINKING WATER INSPECTORATE**

Read: Report from Mrs S Trainor, Assistant Director of Environment, regarding The Drinking Water Inspectorate Service Level Agreements. (**Copy circulated**)

Mrs Trainor advised that the purpose of the report was to seek Committee approval for the Service Level Agreements between Council and the Drinking Water Inspectorate NI for services provided by the Environmental Health Department, as outlined in Appendix 1. She noted that the previous Service Level Agreement was updated in 2021.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor D Murphy, seconded by Councillor Jackson, it was agreed to approve the Service Level Agreements between Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and the Drinking Water Inspectorate for Northern Ireland in relation to services provided by the Council's Environmental Health Department as detailed in the officers' report.**

SE/081/2026: **EDUCATION AND ENFORCEMENT PLAN 2026-2029**

Read: Report from Mrs S Trainor, Assistant Director of Environment, regarding Education and Enforcement Plan 2026-2029. (**Copy circulated**)

Mrs Trainor advised that the purpose of the report was to present the Council's Education and Enforcement Plan 2026–2029 and to seek Committee approval for its implementation. She explained that the Plan had been developed to provide a structured and measurable framework to improve enforcement outcomes across key environmental issues, including fly-tipping, littering and dog fouling, alongside the promotion of recycling.

She noted that the Plan set out a multi-year programme of work focused on enforcement, education, partnership working, and the use of data and technology, adding that the draft had been considered by the Sustainability and Environment Working Group in May 2026, where Members had reviewed the proposed approach and supported its progression to Committee for approval.

Councillor Young welcomed the Plan and thanked officers for the significant work involved in its preparation, noting the strong focus on the use of data and technology, particularly in light of recent motions brought by Councillors Howie and C King. Councillors Andrews and O'Hare concurred with these remarks.

Councillor O'Hare queried the involvement of schools in the various competitions and programmes and asked whether participation was evenly distributed across the district and sufficiently wide in uptake. She further enquired whether participation could be broadened, suggesting that greater involvement from English and other relevant school departments might assist in increasing engagement.

Mrs Murphy responded that engagement with schools fell across both the Sustainability and Environment sections, and that all schools were included on a database used by Education Officers to distribute programme information. She advised that specific figures on uptake were not available at the time but could be reviewed. She further noted that, in implementing the Plan, consideration could be given to broadening engagement, including targeting specific school departments, and suggested that a consultation exercise could be undertaken prior to rollout.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Young, seconded by Councillor O'Hare, it was agreed to approve implementation of the Education and Enforcement Plan 2026-2029 and the proposed programme of actions across enforcement, education, technology and partnership working as outlined within the Plan.**

SE/082/2026: **ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH FOOD SAFETY PLANS**

Read: Report from Mrs S Trainor, Assistant Director of Environment, regarding Environmental Health, Food Safety Plans. (**Copy circulated**)

Mrs Trainor advised that the purpose of the report was to seek approval for the Food Service Plan 2026–27, the Chemical Sampling Plan 2026–27, and the Food Sampling Policy. She also provided an update on the outcome of the recent Food Standards Agency audit of approved

premises, which recognised the professionalism, diligence and strong performance of the Environmental Health Team, demonstrating their capacity to deliver consistently high standards of food safety regulation under significant work pressures and providing assurance on the effectiveness of this key public protection service.

She further updated Members on the statistical return to the Food Standards Agency for quarters three and four of 2025–26, which showed sustained improvement in performance, with the Council assessed as having a low level of concern, the highest performance category.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Brennan, seconded by Councillor Hearty, it was agreed that Council adopt the Food Service Plan 2026/27, the Chemical Sampling Plan 2026/27 and The Food Sampling Policy.**

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

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Murphy, seconded by Councillor Jackson, 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 Jackson, seconded by Councillor Hearty, 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/083/2026: NEWRY MARKET REPORT

Read: Report from Mr Conor Sage, Assistant Director of Sustainability regarding Newry Market Update. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor D Murphy, seconded by Councillor Young, to readvertise an Expression of Interest (EOI) for a third party to assist Council with the revitalisation of Newry Market and that the charges for the Christmas Market remain the same as detailed in section 2.4 of the officers' report.**

SE/084/2026: BUSINESS CASE FOR FLEET REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME

Read: Report from Mr Conor Sage, Assistant Director of Sustainability regarding Fleet Procurement Programme 2023-27 – Business Case. (**Copy circulated**)

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Jackson, to approve the recommended options within the Fleet Replacement Business Cases as detailed in section 2.3 of the officers' report.

SE/085/2026: SUSTAINABILITY CONTRACTS

Read: Report from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director of Sustainability regarding Sustainability Contracts. (**Copy circulated**)

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor D Murphy, seconded by Councillor Jackson, to approve the award of contracts as detailed in Appendix 1 and 2 of the officers' report.

SE/086/2026: BUSINESS CASE - FEMININE HYGIENE CONTRACTS

Read: Report from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director of Sustainability regarding Business Case for supply of Feminine Hygiene Products. (**Copy circulated**)

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Young, seconded by Councillor O'Hare, to approve the recommendation of the business case as outlined in Section 2.3 of the officers' report.

SE/087/2026: BUSINESS CASE – VENTILATION AND AIR CONDITIONING

Read: Report from Mr C Sage, Assistant Director of Sustainability regarding Business Case for Maintenance of Ventilation & Air Conditioning Systems. (**Copy circulated**)

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor D Murphy, seconded by Councillor Andrews, to approve the recommendation of the business case as outlined in Section 2.2 of the officers' report.

SE/088/2026: WASTE MANAGEMENT CONTRACTS

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

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Hearty, to approve the contract extensions as outlined in Appendix 1 of the officers' report.

SE/089/2026: LOCAL AUTHORITY DEEDS FOR CLOSED LANDFILL SITES

Read: Report from Mrs S Trainor, Assistant Director of Environment regarding Local Authority Deeds for Closed Landfill Sites. (**Copy circulated**)

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Brennan, to approve Council entering into Local Authority Performance Deeds with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency in respect of Drumanakelly and Aughnagun landfill sites and provide consent for the Deeds to be signed and sealed in accordance with Council standing orders. It was further agreed to note that this is a statutory requirement to ensure compliance with PPC permit conditions and to support the ongoing management and aftercare obligations associated with these closed landfill sites.

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

SE/090/2026: ACTION SHEET AND PRESENTATIONS FROM S&E WORKING GROUP ON WEDNESDAY 20 MAY 2026

Read: Action Sheet and Presentations From S&E Working Group on Wednesday 20 May 2026. (**Copy circulated**)

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

SE/091/2026: ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING IN-COMMITTEE MINUTES OF THURSDAY 30 APRIL 2026 & JOINT COMMITTEE MEMBERS' MONTHLY BULLETIN HELD ON 28 MAY 2026

Read: Arc21 Joint Committee Meeting In-Committee Minutes of Thursday 30 April 2026 & Joint Committee Members' Monthly Bulletin Held On 28 May 2026. (**Copy circulated**)

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

FOR NOTING

SE/092/2026: **ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 30 APRIL 2026**

Read: ARC21 Joint Committee Meeting No 104 Minutes Thursday 30 April 2026. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Young, seconded by Councillor Jackson, to note the document.**

SE/093/2026: **SCHEME OF DELEGATION - REQUESTS FOR USE OF COUNCIL LAND - 1 MARCH 2024 - 31 MAY 2026**

Read: Report from Mrs S Murphy, Director: Sustainability and Environment, regarding Scheme of Delegation – requests for use of Council land – 1 March 2024 to 31 May 2026. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Young, seconded by Councillor Jackson, to note the decisions taken by the Sustainability and Environment Director from 1 March 2026 to 31 May 2026 in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation for Officers.**

There being no further business the meeting ended at 6.59pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 6 July 2026.

Signed: **Councillor M Ruane**
Chairperson

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