

July 28th, 2026

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the Council meeting to be held on **Monday, 3rd August 2026** at **6:00 pm** in **Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre**.

Agenda

1.0 Apologies and Chairperson's Remarks

2.0 Declarations of Interest

3.0 Action Sheet arising from Council Meeting held on

For Decision

Attachment: Action Sheet 2026 07 06.pdf

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Council Minutes For Adoption and Signing

4.0 Minutes of Council Meeting held on 6 July 2026

For Decision

Attachment: Council Minutes 2026-07-06.pdf

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5.0 Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 29 June 2026

For Decision

Attachment: Special Council Minutes - 2026-06-29.pdf

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Planning

6.0 Planning Section

For Information

P/050/2026: LDP PROGRESS REPORT

Read: Report from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Regeneration, presented by Mrs L Jackson, Development Plan Manager, regarding LDP Progress Report. (Copy circulated)

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Harte, seconded by Councillor S Murphy, to note the contents of the report.

Attachment: PC Report - LDP Progress July 2026 Update.pdf

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For Discussion/Decision

7.0 Letter from Department for Infrastructure regarding Appointment to Warrenpoint Harbour Authority Board

For Information

2 appointments to be made.

At least 6 Councillors to be nominated to be considered for appointment. DFI would particularly welcome nominations from under-represented groups: women; younger people; people with disabilities; and people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Any Councillor who has previously served 10 years or two terms on the Board will not be eligible for interview.

Completed Application Forms to be returned to publicappointmentsunit@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk no later than **12 noon on Friday 28 August 2026**

Attachment: Letter to Newry Mourne and Down Council inviting nominations - WHA.pdf **Page 32**

Attachment: Application Form.pdf **Page 34**

Attachment: Candidate Information Booklet - WHA Councillor Members 2026 (002).pdf **Page 42**

Attachment: Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form.pdf **Page 62**

Correspondence

8.0 Correspondence Report

Attachment: Correspondence Report Council 2026-08-03.pdf **Page 65**

8.1 Correspondence from Minister Kimmins MLA re NOM - Portaferry Bridge

Attachment: Correspondence from Minister Kimmins MLA re NOM - Portaferry Bridge.pdf **Page 67**

8.2 Correspondence from Secretary of State for Northern Ireland re NOM - Independent Environment Protection Agency

Attachment: Correspondence from Secretary of State for Northern Ireland re NOM - IEPA.pdf **Page 68**

Invitees

Cllr Terry Andrews

Cllr Callum Bowsie

Mr Caolain Boyd

Fionnuala Branagh

Cllr Jim Brennan

Lorraine/Emma Burns/McParland

Cllr Pete Byrne

Cllr Philip Campbell

Cllr William Clarke

Cllr Laura Devlin

Cllr Cadogan Enright

Cllr Killian Feehan

Cllr Doire Finn

Ms Joanne Fleming

Cllr Conor Galbraith

Cllr Mark Gibbons

Cllr Oonagh Hanlon

Ms Kathryn Hanna

Cllr Glyn Hanna

Mrs Catherine Hanvey

Cllr Valerie Harte

Mr Conor Haughey

Cllr Martin Hearty

Cllr Roisin Howell

Cllr Tierna Howie

Cllr Jonathan Jackson

Ms Aileen Jones

Cllr Geraldine Kearns

Miss Veronica Keegan

Mrs Sheila Kieran

Cllr Cathal King

Cllr Aurla King

Ms Elaine Kirk

Cllr Mickey Larkin

Cllr Niall Lawlor

Cllr David Lee-Surginor

Cllr Alan Lewis

Cllr Oonagh Magennis

Mr Conor Mallon

Cllr Aidan Mathers

Cllr Declan McAteer

Jonathan McGilly

Mr Martin McKibbin
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Ms Tracie McLoughlin
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Mr Sean McNulty
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Cllr Kate Murphy
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Cllr Selina Murphy
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Cllr Declan Murphy
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Sinead Murphy
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Ms Patricia Murtagh
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Cllr Siobhan O'Hare
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Mr Andy Patterson
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Cllr Áine Quinn
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Cllr Henry Reilly
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Cllr Michael Rice
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Ms Alison Robb
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Ms Maria Rogan
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Cllr Michael Ruane
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Mr Conor Sage
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Conor Smyth
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Mrs Amanda Smyth
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Donna Starkey
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Sarah Taggart
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Cllr David Taylor
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Mr David Telford
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Cllr Jarlath Tinnelly
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Cllr Jill Truesdale
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Mrs Marie Ward
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Cllr Helena Young
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ACTION SHEET – COUNCIL MEETING – MONDAY 1 JULY 2024

<i>Minute Ref</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Decision</i>	<i>Lead Officer</i>	<i>Actions taken/ Progress to date</i>	<i>Remove from Action Sheet Y/N</i>
<i>C/128/2024</i>	<i>Minutes of Council Meeting held on 01.07.2024</i>	It was agreed item C/058/2024: Twinning Newry with City of Ramallah should remain on the action sheet.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Noted</i>	<i>N</i>

ACTION SHEET – COUNCIL MEETING – MONDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2026

<i>Minute Ref</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Decision</i>	<i>Lead Officer</i>	<i>Actions taken/ Progress to date</i>	<i>Remove from Action Sheet Y/N</i>
<i>C/023/2026</i>	<i>Correspondence Report</i>	<i>Correspondence from Richard Pengelly, Chief Executive of Education Authority re NOM Voting at 18 C/184/2025</i> It was agreed that Council write to all schools within the District inviting them to permit elected representatives to attend and engage with pupils for discussion around policies, manifestos and to providing opportunities for pupils to question and scrutinise their local representatives.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>In progress</i>	<i>N</i>

ACTION SHEET – COUNCIL MEETING – MONDAY 6 JULY 2026

<i>Minute Ref</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Decision</i>	<i>Lead Officer</i>	<i>Actions taken/ Progress to date</i>	<i>Remove from Action Sheet Y/N</i>
<i>C/091/2026</i>	<i>Action Sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 01/06/26</i>	It was agreed to note the action sheet.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Noted</i>	<i>Y</i>

<i>C/092/2026</i>	<i>Minutes of Annual Meeting held on 01/06/2026</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Noted</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>C/093/2026</i>	<i>Minutes of Council Meeting held on 01/06/2026</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Noted</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>C/094/2026</i>	<i>Minutes of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held 08/06/2026</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Noted</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>C/095/2026</i>	<i>Minutes of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held 11/06/2026</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Noted</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>C/096/2026</i>	<i>Minutes of Active & Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held 15/06/2026</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Noted</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>C/097/2026</i>	<i>Minutes of Sustainability & Environment Committee Meeting held 17/06/26</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Noted</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>C/098/2026</i>	<i>Planning Section</i>	There were no issues arising.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Noted</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>C/099/2026</i>	<i>Correspondence Report</i>	It was agreed to note the correspondence report and the following correspondence: • Correspondence from Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs re NOM – Fires in the Mourne (C/074/2026). • Correspondence from Secretary of State for Northern Ireland re NOM - Inadequacy £17m Fund for NI Households (C/057/2026)	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Noted</i>	<i>Y</i>

<i>C/100/2026</i>	<i>Notice of Motion – SEN Provision</i>	The Motion was referred to the Active and Healthy Communities Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6	<i>A Patterson</i>	<i>To be considered at future AHC Meeting</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>C/101/2026</i>	<i>Notice of Motion – Suspension of Membership of the City and District of Sanctuary</i>	The Motion was lost.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Noted</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>C/102/2026</i>	<i>Notice of Motion – 150th Anniversary of the Catalpa Escape</i>	The Motion was referred to the Good Relations Forum Communities Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6	<i>C Moffett</i>	<i>To be tabled for consideration at next meeting of Councillors' Equality & Good Relations Reference Group (TBC)</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>C/103/2026</i>	<i>Notice of Motion – Additional Training Provision for Gaelic Games</i>	The Motion was referred to the Active and Healthy Communities Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6	<i>A Patterson</i>	<i>To be considered at future AHC Meeting</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>C/104/2026</i>	<i>Notice of Motion – Purchase of Saintfield Bus Depot for Parking</i>	The Motion was referred to the Strategic Finance Working Group in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6	<i>M Ward</i>	<i>To be considered at future SFWG meeting</i>	<i>Y</i>

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

NMD/C/

Minutes of Council Meeting held on Monday 6 July 2026 at 6.30pm in Council Chamber, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick

In the Chair: Councillor G Hanna

**In attendance in
Chamber:**

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor C Bowsie
Councillor J Brennan	Councillor P Byrne
Councillor P Campbell	Councillor W Clarke
Councillor K Feehan	Councillor D Finn
Councillor C Galbraith	Councillor O Hanlon
Councillor M Hearty	Councillor T Howie
Councillor J Jackson	Councillor G Kearns
Councillor A King	Councillor C King
Councillor M Larkin	Councillor N Lawlor
Councillor D Lee-Surginor	Councillor A Lewis
Councillor O Magennis	Councillor A Mathers
Councillor D McAteer	Councillor D Murphy
Councillor K Murphy	Councillor S Murphy
Councillor H Reilly	Councillor M Rice
Councillor M Ruane	Councillor J Tinnelly
Councillor H Young	

**In attendance
via Teams:**

Councillor C Enright Councillor D Taylor

Officials in attendance: Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism
Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability and Environment
Ms E Kirk, Assistant Director of People & Legal
Ms D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer
Mr C Smyth, Democratic Services Officer

C/089/2026

APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Devlin, Gibbons, Harte, Howell, O'Hare, Truesdale and Quinn and Mr Patterson, Director of Active and Health Communities.

C/090/2026

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

C/091/2026 ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 1 JUNE 2026

Read: Action sheet from Council Meeting held on 1 June 2026. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Campbell, seconded by Councillor D Murphy the Action Sheet from Council Meeting held on 1 June 2026 was agreed.**

COUNCIL MINUTES FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION

C/092/2026 MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON 1 JUNE 2026

Read: Minutes of Annual Meeting held on 1 June 2026 **(copy circulated).**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Bowsie, seconded by Councillor McAteer, the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 1 June 2026 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.**

C/093/2026 MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 1 JUNE 2026

Read: Minutes of Council Meeting held on 1 June 2026 **(copy circulated).**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Campbell, the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 1 June 2026 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.**

The Chairperson advised that he was affording Councillor Tinnelly the opportunity to make a personal statement regarding circumstances over the previous month or two.

Councillor Tinnelly referred to the tragic loss of his daughter on 20 April and advised that it was in that context that he wished to address Members regarding a matter of concern. He outlined that, like all other Elected Members, he had received an email on 19 May providing an update on the Judicial Review (JR) relating to the Civic and Regional Hub, which included the following sentence:
"The applicant's solicitor had failed to honour the timetable agreed and advised on 22 April they could not present their skeleton argument, as they required an affidavit from an elected member."

Councillor Tinnelly stated that, over the following weeks, he had been informed by a number of fellow Councillors that the elected member referred to in the email was himself. He stated that any suggestion he had played a part in the JR was false. He further stated that, in his view, it was unacceptable that a Council officer had identified him in that manner without first discussing the matter with him, particularly during what had been an extremely difficult personal period.

Councillor Tinnelly informed Members that he had subsequently spoken with the Council officer concerned but stated that they did not accept that any wrongdoing had occurred and had declined to apologise. He further stated that, during that conversation, he had been informed of a legal letter dated 23 April from a Belfast-based solicitor to the High Court, which indicated that an affidavit from him was awaited. He said that he had been advised the Council had received a copy of the letter and, although it was not legally privileged, it had been brought to the attention of Party Group Leaders, who were expected to treat the matter confidentially.

Councillor Tinnelly stated that this explanation was undermined when he became aware that, subsequent to that discussion, he had also been identified by the same Council officer at a number of Party Group meetings with the senior management team, together with another meeting attended by Councillors other than Party Group Leaders.

Councillor Tinnelly questioned why he had been the last Councillor to become aware of the matter. He referred to the letter dated 23 April which named him and stated that the same Council officer had attended his daughter's funeral on 24 April whilst, in his view, already being aware of the contents of that correspondence. He stated that he believed his name had subsequently been repeated in an attempt to undermine his integrity, call into question his credibility and create difficulties for him in his role as an Elected Member.

Councillor Tinnelly further stated that, despite the impression given that the JR depended upon the affidavit referred to, the case had since proceeded and was listed for a full High Court hearing later in the year. He stated that the Council officer had failed to recognise the seriousness of the matter, had not accepted that an error of judgement had been made and had declined the opportunity to apologise.

Councillor Tinnelly requested the support of Members in asking the Council officer to reflect upon the matters raised in the Chamber, acknowledge that erroneous and inaccurate information had been presented as fact without first verifying its accuracy, recognise the hurt caused and issue a full, unqualified and unequivocal apology within the following week. He stated that such an apology would bring the matter to a close. He added that, should this not occur, he would have no alternative but to request an external independent investigation by the appropriate body, which could potentially involve a number of individuals within the Chamber being called as witnesses, together with the associated reputational implications for the Council.

Councillor Tinnelly stated that he wished to place this request before his fellow Elected Members but advised that, should Members not support his request, he would pursue the matter independently, including exploring the possibility of initiating civil proceedings. He also appealed to Council officers who were aware of the matter to reflect upon the circumstances and, where appropriate, use their influence to assist in bringing the matter to a resolution.

In response to the statement made by Councillor Tinnelly, Ms Kirk confirmed, firstly, that the statement had been made in open session and that she had previously advised Councillor Tinnelly that any comments made in open Council were a matter for him. Secondly, Ms Kirk advised that, in relation to the ongoing JR proceedings, it was incumbent upon her to protect the interests of the Council as a body corporate. She stated that, where any conflicts of interest arose and no declarations had been made in relation to the relevant item, consideration would need to be given to the existence and management of any such conflict.

Ms Kirk further advised that, in light of the serious allegations made concerning the legal representations provided to the Council through the JR proceedings, she would be obliged to consider those matters further on behalf of the Council, having regard to the legal representations made to both the Court and the Council.

She added that, given the ongoing JR proceedings, it would be inappropriate to comment further in open session on matters relating to legal advice or legal correspondence and confirmed that she would take the matter forward accordingly.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Tinnelly, seconded by Councillor Howie to allow a week to have the issues raised by Councillor Tinnelly to be resolved privately.**

The Chairperson then went on to outline the following which he had intended to raise under Chairperson's Remarks

- Along with Councillor Truesdale congratulations were extended to Tom Crudgington on winning the prestigious Slieve Donard race on May 30th 2026 with a record time of 52.01.6 seconds setting a new course record and on also securing a victory at the Hill & Dales 2026 Loughshannagh race in June 2026.

An overview of events attended were highlighted as follows:

- Eco-Schools Green Flag Presentation with a number of schools recognised for their support of the environment.
- The Deputy Chairperson had attended the Summit of the Cities dinner alongside a tour of Crumlin Road Goal.
- A number of welfare events across the District for Men's Health Week.
- The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson had attended triathlons in Camlough and Castleward with Councillor Hanlon thanked for the tour of Castleward, noting it was a fabulous spot.
- Opening ceremony of the Galeaon Andalucia arriving in Warrenpoint, and an evening on board the Waverly.
- Unveiling a plaque in support of a 1910 fallen firefighter in Newry.
- A support event in Daisy Hill hospital to support international workers following the recent troubles.
- Opening of Down High School, a fantastic facility for supporting students
- Newry Agricultural Show.
- The Chairperson along with Councillors Bowsie, Reilly, Lewis & Taylor attended the Somme commemoration.
- Primary School children had attended the Chamber to get an idea of local politics.
- 16th Irish divisions memorial.
- A number of Ulster Scots Events hosted throughout the District.

COMMITTEE MINUTES FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION

C/094/2026 MINUTES OF ECONOMY, REGENERATION AND TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8 JUNE 202

Read: Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 8 June 2026 (**copy circulated**).

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Young, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, the Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 8 June 2026 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.**

C/095/2026 MINUTES OF STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 JUNE 2026

Read: Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 11 June 2026 (**copy circulated**).

SPR/096/Greenway Feasibility and Design: Warrenpoint to Newcastle

Councillor Rice asked that specific enquiries be made to see if there were any proposed Greenways that could link the centre of Ballymartin village and the GAA grounds. He explained this had been raised with him by local residents following Committee approval of the feasibility study.

Mr Mallon advised approval was for a Greenway from Warrenpoint to Newcastle around the coast which would encompass Ballymartin and that other linkages that were required could be a local linkage as opposed to part of project. He added the route had not yet been determined and that was what the feasibility study would do.

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, the Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 11 June 2026 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.**

C/096/2026 MINUTES OF ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15 JUNE 2026

Read: Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 15 June 2026 (**copy circulated**).

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Brennan, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, the Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 15 June 2026 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.**

C/097/2026

**MINUTES OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 JUNE 2026**

Read: Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 17 June 2026 **(copy circulated)**.

SE/076/2026: Bus Shelter Requests

In response to a query from Councillor Lewis regarding the approval granted for the bus stop in Spa and the timeframe for works to begin, Mrs Murphy confirmed that following approval by Council and the subsequent call in period, works could commence in 5 days' time.

Councillor Reilly asked for an update on the amount of income generated from the waste at recycling centres and bottle banks.

Mrs Murphy advised there were a number of different waste contracts that were income based and that in 2025/26 there had been an income of £125,000 for items such as things like scrap metal, cardboard, glass etc.

Councillor Reilly stated that was really encouraging as it was a huge amount of money and there was incentive for the public to know that recycling was generating an income for Council and how it was important to put that message out.

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Campbell, seconded by Councillor Hearty, the Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 20 May 2026 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, subject to a minor amendment to the attendance sheet.**

C/098/2026

PLANNING SECTION

There were no planning issues arising.

C/099/2026

CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

Read: Report from Mrs Ward, Chief Executive, regarding an update on correspondence received for the attention of Council **(copy circulated)**.

In response for an update from Councillor Bowsie in relation to correspondence sent to the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the Portaferry Bridge, the Chief Executive advised a response had been received late that day and would be tabled at the August Council Meeting.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Bowsie, seconded by Councillor D Murphy, to note the correspondence report and the following correspondence:**

- **Correspondence from Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs re NOM – Fires in the Mourne (C/074/2026).**
- **Correspondence from Secretary of State for Northern Ireland re NOM - Inadequacy £17m Fund for NI Households (C/057/2026)**

C/100/2026: NOTICE OF MOTION – SEN PROVISION

The following Motion had been received from Councillor C King:

"This Council notes the urgent need for increased SEN provision across Newry, Mourne and Down and South Armagh, particularly for rural families who face barriers accessing support and services."

Council welcomes the £27.5 million allocation in March 2025 by Finance Minister O'Dowd SEN allocation secured to develop pilot programmes in early intervention and workforce training, but expresses concern at the how the Department of Health, Communities and Education are administering this within our constituency.

Council therefore agrees to write to the Departments of Education, Health and Communities seeking a breakdown of SEN funding and investment allocated to the Newry, Mourne and Down and South Armagh areas, including support for rural families, specialist provision and summer schemes.

Council also agrees to develop a local action plan recognising the growing need for SEN provision across the district, with a focus on improving support, accessibility, and opportunities for children and families."

This was seconded by Councillor K Murphy.

Agreed: The Motion was referred to the Active and Healthy Communities Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6

C/101/2026: NOTICE OF MOTION – SUSPENSION OF MEMBERSHIP THE OF
CITY AND DISTRICT OF SANCTUARY

The following Motion was received from Councillor Reilly:

"Given the uncertainty regarding the effect that the Republic of Ireland joining the EU migration and asylum pact will have on border areas in Northern Ireland, that this Council suspends any move towards membership of the City and District of Sanctuary for asylum seekers and refugees scheme."

This was seconded by Councillor Bowsie.

In presenting the Motion, Councillor Reilly stated from 13th of June 2026, the Republic of Ireland overhauled aligned its immigration laws with the EU immigration pact, which he stated handed over responsibility for immigration to Brussels. He further stated that some

people in the Republic viewed what was happening as an attack on Irish sovereignty, but would also mean implementing harsh, fast-track border detentions and deportations. The DUP group was concerned that many illegals now resident in the Republic of Ireland would be displaced to Northern Ireland and especially to Newry Mourne and Down District.

Councillor Reilly said as Council had recently voted through plans to designate the District as a sanctuary region for refugees and asylum seekers, his Party was concerned that as the Irish government established accelerated processing and return hubs to comply with EU legislation, Newry Mourne and Down District could be inundated with foreign nationals who would become eligible for deportation from the Republic. He stated this was something that could not be coped with as public services were already at breaking point and unable to cope with present demands. The DUP called on the UK authorities to closely liaise with the Irish authorities to prepare and initiate rigorous checks with stop and search, and any person not in possession of a standard visitor visa or UK electronic travel authorisation arrested and detained until deportations could be arranged. He said it could not be allowed for the Newry Mourne Down District to develop as an escape hatch for illegals who were no longer eligible to remain in the Republic of Ireland.

Councillor Reilly pointed out his Party did not lack compassion for people genuinely fleeing oppression and danger but believed that the needs and interests of locals must be put first in order to preserve way of life and maintain the District as a safe and prosperous place for future generations.

Councillor Reilly added that this was a place where Protestant, Catholic and dissenter could now live together peacefully. He stated that, at present Council was a non-awarded member of the City and District of Sanctuary and to become a full member would be a highly political exercise that would bind the District to do things that were not in the interest of the community. He argued that the issue required public consultation and would potentially result in expenses that would be imposed on the ratepayer at a time when families were already struggling.

Councillor Reilly proposed that Newry and Mourne and Down District Council suspend its obligation to become a full member of the City and Region of Sanctuary.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Bowsie pointed out the new EU Migration and Asylum Pact was significantly tougher on irregular immigration and asylum and when voted on in the Republic last month, Sinn Fein had voted against these stricter border controls. He stated that he believed that Sinn Fein would rejoin the EU tomorrow if they could and would hand over control of these borders to Brussels.

Councillor Bowsie said that whilst the EU's new asylum rules would be stricter and streamline the asylum process, it was uncertain what impact this would have on encouraging asylum seekers to illegally cross the Irish border. With up to 90% of asylum seekers in the Republic of Ireland being 'secondary movers' from another EU country, stricter measures against secondary movement could see asylum seekers from the South come north to UK to evade the EU's immigration system and deportation to the country of first entry.

He continued that whilst this was ultimately a problem for the UK government to deal with, the last thing as a border Council needed to be doing was to incentivise the use of this loophole further by having 'District of Sanctuary' written across the border.

Councillor Bowsie spoke at length about how the City of Sanctuary UK Network seemed harmless however he felt it was nonsense with page after page of meaningless talk about solidarity and compassion, devoid of any specific policy points and did nothing to improve the immigration system for anyone. He continued by highlighting points and criteria that Council would need to meet in order to achieve accreditation, which he believed would be a waste of Council resources and stated Council needed to stop the gesture politics and start delivering for local communities.

Councillor D Murphy stated Sinn Féin was opposed to the motion, commenting that despite stating clearly that the DUP was uncertain about the effect of Ireland joining the EU Migration Pact, they had deliberately and knowingly sought to use it to revisit an issue which had been hijacked by the Far Right in 2025 to spread hatred and fear within the District.

Councillor D Murphy stated it had to be one of the most dangerous and provocative motions to come before Council in many years. He said it was dangerous, in the dog whistling sense, given last year in the City of Newry and this year in many loyalist areas of Belfast, the Far Right was on standby to use all opportunities to racially attack international workers and decent people who were willing to protect them. He stated that this motion had sent a signal to the Far Right, a group that did not distinguish between illegal immigrants and the international workers who complimented the highly skilled and dedicated people that were keeping hospitals open and the economy from collapsing.

Councillor D Murphy highlighted that the people who were targeted merely a few weeks ago in Belfast were NHS workers, who were here legally, and how the fear, fermented by the Far Right, was constant and aimed to distract from the inadequacies of failing capitalist governments and systems generating fear, hate and division throughout the world. He made reference to a bomb being placed outside the Sinn Féin office last year and how death threats being received by Members had brought home the fact that the criminal Far Right was intent on creating fear within the District and in particular the City of Newry, a city which was investing a significant amount of money to regenerate it and the surrounding areas, and compared that with what the Far Right had to offer, which was faux concern about housing and our health system.

Councillor D Murphy stated immigration policy needed to be comprehensive, compassionate and enforceable, unlike this motion, and reiterated that Sinn Féin was categorically opposed to the motion.

On behalf of her Party Councillor Howie stated she was deeply disappointed that the Motion was before Council particularly in the wake of the riots and violence that Northern Ireland experienced only weeks ago and went on to condemn, without reservation, the violence that was witnessed.

Councillor Howie stated people across Northern Ireland had every right to be frustrated as they were living with real pressures that deserved real political attention referring to the pressures on the health system, children living in poverty, unaffordable housing, the highest rates of violence against women and how political institutions had suffered repeated periods of instability and collapse. She stated that these were the things people were angry with, and needed solutions, none of which had been caused by asylum seekers or immigrants.

Councillor Howie spoke at length on how the Motion was asking Council to accept the false premise that migration was to blame for the challenges currently facing communities and that it was a false and convenient scapegoat for the DUP from difficult decisions and their

policy failures that had left many people feeling let down, such as successive former DUP Ministers failing to get to grips with the structural barriers to build more homes leading to the housing crisis that working families found themselves in, workers in NI struggling under low wages and exploitative workplace practices that had fallen behind the rest of the UK yet the DUP were blocking the Good Jobs Bill, children were living in poverty yet the DUP's anti-poverty strategy was not worth the paper it was written on.

Councillor Howie pointed out that none of the issues cited were due to immigration or asylum seekers in NI and that the District of Sanctuary initiative was about committing to being a welcoming, inclusive and compassionate community for people who had fled war, persecution and violence.

Councillor Byrne stated the SDLP would be voting against the Motion and voiced dismay and disappointment at its wording despite months of conversations held across Partys within the Chamber. He asserted that the DUP were not interested in facts or correct information and were fanning the flames with misleading information. He questioned how many times did it have to be said that the Council of Sanctuary, the City Sanctuary Network did not control nor have bearing on immigration.

Councillor Byrne spoke at length about what people in Belfast and other areas were facing, such as being burnt out of their homes, hospital workers living in fear and how as elected representatives, Members should be serving everybody within the community no matter what background they come from to make the District welcoming for all.

Councillor Byrne reminded Members that it was requested at the first Committee meeting that all questions be put forward to be answered and further information would be brought back to Committee, yet the DUP had voted against that proposal and continued to use divisive language and failed to recognise that they had it within their own government policy in the New Decade, New Approach.

Councillor Byrne pointed out that the language being used was designed to provoke emotion and that decisions made within the Chamber should be done so on facts, evidence and the information presented only, not emotion. He said there were genuine questions that people had around immigration and around housing, healthcare, government failure and funding from the UK government. He added pointing the finger was to cover up for the lack of delivery in government and not the fault of the vulnerable people who had been settled here and who were welcomed into the community. He stated that the talk about immigration and floodgates was simply not true, and everybody from a vulnerable minority group or a vulnerable background was as welcome in this Council area as anyone else

Councillor Byrne asked that Members treat people with compassion and humanity and put out the correct facts and stop politicking on the issue as he believed it was putting people's lives in danger.

Councillor Jackson agreed with Councillor Byrne's point that things were real and these issues were real in the community, continuing that people did have genuine concerns, and those concerns were centred around illegal and uncontrolled immigration and the impact that that was having in some communities. He argued that what the DUP was saying was those genuine concerns were not being listened to.

Councillor Taylor spoke in support of the Motion highlighting there were genuine concerns about the issue of immigration and it was essential to decouple legal and illegal immigration

in politics and public debate as mixing the two was a disservice to those who had come here lawfully and contributed enormously to society. However he said illegal immigration was a serious issue and one that needed to be tackled head on.

Councillor Taylor said there were genuine concerns regarding what the city of sanctuary actually entailed and he did not think Council had taken enough time to reflect on those concerns.

Councillor Tinnelly joined in voicing support for the Motion, stating that he believed there were legitimate concerns raised by numerous citizens within the District and that he personally had noticed drastic changes within the city of Newry and whilst he supported those that were here to support and enhance essential services, he believed there were those that did not, and for that reason he was convinced Council needed to know more about what the City of Sanctuary entailed and therefore pause to obtain further information.

Councillor Reilly took the opportunity to voice his disappointment in Sinn Féin's description that it was a dangerous motion and that it was not about being anti-immigrant, it was about being pro-controlled immigration and requested Councillor D Murphy withdraw his comments. He added Council had to live in the real world and put local people, Catholic, Protestant, and dissenter, the people who have lived here for generations, first, and that was where his Party stood with them.

On a point of clarity Councillor Byrne asked that Councillor Reilly look at the figures and spoke of how from Belfast City Council signed up to the Council of Sanctuary the number of people that were placed that year to the following year had dropped by 24% and to say that it was going to open the floodgates was misleading as it had done the opposite.

As there was dissent in the chamber the Chairperson put the matter to a recorded vote, the results of which were as follows: (copy attached)

FOR: 7
AGAINST: 27
ABSTENTIONS: 0

The Chairperson declared the proposal lost.

Agreed: **The Motion was lost.**

Cllr Enright left the meeting at this point – 7.23pm.

**C/102/2026: NOTICE OF MOTION – 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CATALPA
ESCAPE**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Mathers:

"This Council notes the 150th anniversary of the Catalpa Escape which occurs this year. The audacious escape of 6 Fenian prisoners from the British penal colony of Western Australia was one of the greatest ever prison breaks."

One of the escapees was James McNally, from Newry. It was McNally who actually wrote the famous 'Voice from the Tomb' letter to the IRB leaders in America which put the escape in motion.

On this the 150th anniversary, this Council notes the limited commemorative events taking place in Ireland and compares this to events which have been organised in Australia and America, including a 9-day Fenian Festival in Fremantle Western Australia which has recently concluded.

This Council will write to the Minister for Communities in the Executive and the Minister for Culture, Communications and Sport in the Dublin government to request the hosting of commemorative events.

This Council will also examine the possibility of hosting a commemorative event in the district to acknowledge the bravery of the escapees, in particular James McNally, and those who planned and participated in the Catalpa Rescue."

This was seconded by Councillor C King.

Agreed: **The Motion was referred to the Good Relations Forum Communities Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6**

C/103/2026: NOTICE OF MOTION – ADDITIONAL TRAINING PROVISION FOR GAELIC GAMES

The following Motion was received from Councillor Campbell:

"This Council recognises the significant growth in participation levels across Gaelic Games within the district and acknowledges that a number of clubs are experiencing increasing pressure on existing training and playing facilities.

We would ask that Council Undertake a review of Council owned sporting facilities and land assets to identify opportunities for additional training provision for Gaelic Games. Engage with clubs that have demonstrated, through membership figures, participation rates, facility demand and development plans, that their existing sporting infrastructure is insufficient to meet current need.

Explore options for the temporary, seasonal or permanent use of underutilised Council facilities and lands to accommodate training activity where such use is compatible with existing operational requirements and community need.

Consider such arrangements as an interim measure to support clubs experiencing capacity pressures until the completion and full operation of the Down GAA Centre of Excellence at Ballykinlar."

This was seconded by Councillor Rice.

Agreed: **The Motion was referred to the Active and Healthy Communities Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6**

C/104/2026: NOTICE OF MOTION – PURCHASE OF SAINTFIELD BUS DEPOT FOR PARKING

The following Motion was received from Councillor Bowsie:

"This Council recognises the chronic lack of parking in Saintfield and the impact this has on a flourishing high street. The sole off-street carpark on Downpatrick Street has merely 66 spaces and is at full capacity most days, causing parking problems elsewhere in the village. The former Saintfield Bus Depot on Belfast Road has the potential to create 42 much-needed additional parking spaces in Saintfield. Translink has agreed to sell this 1/3-acre site to NMD Council. This offer will be honoured until the end of August, before the site is put onto the open market."

"This council agrees to buy this last remaining brown-field site in Saintfield for the purposes of creating additional public car parking to meet local community needs."

This was seconded by Councillor Jackson.

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

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 7.28pm.

For confirmation at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 3 August 2026.

Signed:

Chairperson

Chief Executive

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL
RECORDED VOTE

DATE: 6th July 2026 **VENUE:** Downshire Civic Centre **MEETING:** Council

SUBJECT OF VOTE: Notice of Motion - Suspension of Membership the of City and District of Sanctuary

COUNCILLOR	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
T Andrews		1		
C Bowsie	1			
J Brennan		2		
P Byrne		3		
P Campbell		4		
W Clarke		5		
L Devlin				1
C Enright		6		
K Feehan		7		
D Finn		8		
C Galbraith		9		
M Gibbons				2
O Hanlon		10		
G Hanna	2			
V Harte				3
M Hearty		11		
R Howell				4
T Howie		12		
J Jackson	3			
G Kearns		13		
A King		14		
C King		15		
M Larkin		16		
N Lawlor		17		
D Lee-Surginor		18		
A Lewis	4			
O Magennis		19		
A Mathers		20		
D McAteer		21		
D Murphy		22		
K Murphy		23		
S Murphy		24		
S O'Hare				5
A Quinn				6
H Reilly	5			
M Rice		25		
M Ruane		26		
D Taylor	6			
J Tinnelly	7			
J Truesdale				7
H Young		27		
TOTALS	7	27	0	7

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

NMC/SC

**Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on Monday 29 June 2026 at 6.00pm in
Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick**

- In the Chair:** Councillor D Finn
- In attendance in Chamber:**
- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Councillor C Bowsie | Councillor P Campbell |
| Councillor C Galbraith | Councillor O Hanlon |
| Councillor M Hearty | Councillor J Jackson |
| Councillor M Larkin | Councillor D Lee-Surginor |
| Councillor A Lewis | |
- In attendance via Teams:**
- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Councillor P Byrne | Councillor K Feehan |
| Councillor M Gibbons | Councillor V Harte |
| Councillor R Howell | Councillor A King |
| Councillor O Magennis | Councillor H Reilly |
| Councillor M Rice | Councillor M Ruane |
| Councillor H Young | |
- In attendance in Chamber (Officials):** Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager
Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer
- Also in attendance in Chamber:**
- NI AMBULANCE SERVICE**
Ms J Maguire, Area Manager South
Ms R Steele, Area Manager South East

SC/005/2026 APOLOGIES

As the Chairperson had tendered an apology, the Deputy Chairperson assumed the role of Chair for the meeting.

Apologies were received from Councillors Devlin, Hanna, Howie, Kearns, Lawlor, Mathers and Truesdale.

SC/006/2026 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

SC/007/2026 NI AMBULANCE SERVICE

The Deputy Chairperson welcomed the delegation and invited them to make their presentation.

Ms Steele, Area Manager for the South East Area of the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS), introduced herself and Ms Joanne McGuire, Southern Area Manager, and outlined the current position of NIAS and its vision for developing a modern clinical delivery model, explaining that the Service aimed to provide more care closer to home by increasing remote clinical assessment, integrating care pathways and reducing unnecessary conveyance to Emergency Departments. She advised that the long-term ambition was to reduce the proportion of patients conveyed to Emergency Departments from 75% to 45%, with the remaining patients receiving appropriate treatment or referral through alternative pathways.

Ms Steele advised that NIAS had attended almost 158,000 emergency incidents during 2025/26 and had safely managed almost 20,000 patients through its "hear and treat" service without the need for an ambulance response.

She highlighted the primary challenges facing the Ambulance Service, including hospital handover delays, limited alternatives to Emergency Departments, response time performance and workforce resourcing. She outlined the positive impact of the Release to Rescue initiative, introduced in April 2026, explaining that it had significantly reduced ambulance hours lost while waiting outside Emergency Departments and had substantially decreased the number of patients experiencing delays of more than two hours before handover. She advised that the initiative had improved ambulance availability and response capacity across the region, with Daisy Hill Hospital and Craigavon Area Hospital demonstrating particularly strong performance, while work continued to address challenges at the Ulster Hospital.

Turning to alternative pathways, Ms Steele advised that NIAS continued to expand opportunities for paramedics to refer patients directly to appropriate community services rather than transporting them to hospital. She noted that while progress had been made, further work was required to increase capacity and improve access to alternative services.

In relation to workforce planning, Ms Steele advised that NIAS had proactively recruited additional paramedics during the previous year and continued to increase staffing levels across the district. She also highlighted the development of the Advanced Paramedic role and the contribution of clinically trained paramedics working within the Integrated Clinical Hub (ICH), enabling more patients to be assessed remotely and reducing pressure on frontline ambulance resources.

Ms Steele advised that response times remained a challenge in comparison with national targets of eight minutes for Category 1 incidents and 18 minutes for Category 2 incidents. However, she noted that performance had improved during 2026/27, with further improvements expected following the implementation of Release to Rescue.

Concluding her presentation, Ms Steele outlined opportunities for collaboration with Council and community partners, including strengthening community referral pathways, supporting Community First Responder schemes, promoting CPR training, increasing access to public defibrillators and raising awareness through community events. She advised that there were currently 88 active Community First Responders within the Council area, 436 registered Automated External Defibrillators (AED), 81% of which were emergency ready, and that almost 400 defibrillator deployments had taken place during the previous year.

Following the presentation, the Deputy Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

Comments and questions from Members were as follows:

- The delegation was thanked for their time and for the information provided, alongside the ongoing services delivered by NIAS.
- Members welcomed the positive impact of the Release to Rescue initiative to date and queried whether it had resulted in any unintended consequences within the Emergency Departments.
- Clarification was sought on the measures being taken to improve ambulance response times, particularly where a Category 2 call could deteriorate into a Category 1 emergency.
- Members asked whether estimated arrival times (ETAs) were provided to patients awaiting an ambulance, citing an example where a family had transported a patient to hospital after waiting four hours for an ambulance.
- Further information was sought on measures being implemented to support hospital staff as a consequence of the Release to Rescue initiative.
- Members asked about current vacancy levels within the Ambulance Service, where vacancies existed and the career pathways available for those wishing to become paramedics.
- Members queried whether the process for accessing AEDs could be streamlined, with reference made to difficulties experienced in accessing an AED in a rural area.
- Members enquired what support could be provided by Elected Members and local communities to assist the Ambulance Service in addressing current challenges.
- Concern was expressed regarding the distances travelled by ambulance crews during a shift and whether this left local areas without adequate cover. Members queried whether data was available on the deployment of crews outside their base areas.
- While improvements in average response times were welcomed, Members noted that response times in rural areas remained significantly longer and asked whether greater consideration could be given to retaining crews within rural localities to improve response times.

The delegation responded as follows:

- The delegation was unable to comment on the operational impact of Release to Rescue within Emergency Departments, although Ms Maguire confirmed that the Health and Social Care Trusts continued to monitor and assess its effects.
- The ICH played an important role in supporting patients whose condition deteriorated while awaiting an ambulance by maintaining contact and providing ongoing clinical advice. Ms Maguire also confirmed that where a Category 1 incident arose, ambulance crews waiting at Emergency Departments were immediately released with the support of hospital staff.
- While the delegation could not comment on individual incidents, they confirmed that calls were continually reassessed and re-categorised where appropriate if callers re-contacted the control room.
- The Release to Rescue initiative had reduced hospital handover delays to a maximum of two hours, with hospitals implementing measures to facilitate the new arrangements. Work continued with the Trusts to ensure sufficient resources were in place, with the longer-term aim of reducing handover times further.
- Ms Maguire advised that she was unable to provide details of current vacancy levels but was aware that vacancies were greater within the Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) workforce than amongst paramedics. She explained that paramedic training was delivered through Ulster University, supported by a range of in-house development opportunities.

- In relation to AED access, Ms Maguire advised that some defibrillators were subject to restricted access due to their location and opening hours. While she could not comment on individual circumstances, she invited the Member to discuss the matter with her following the meeting.
- Community support remained vital, particularly through Community First Responders, awareness of AED locations and CPR training. The delegation undertook to provide Members with information to share with their constituents.
- The Ambulance Service operated on a regional basis and crews were deployed according to clinical need rather than geographical boundaries. The delegation advised that it would not be practical to hold crews within a particular locality if a higher priority incident arose elsewhere, emphasising that patient safety remained the overriding consideration when allocating resources.

Councillor Finn thanked the delegation for their presentation and time, reiterating the request that any information regarding future training events be forwarded to Council for sharing.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 6.31pm

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 3 August 2026.

Signed:

Deputy Chairperson

Chief Executive



**Working together
to Improve
Emergency
Response**

2026

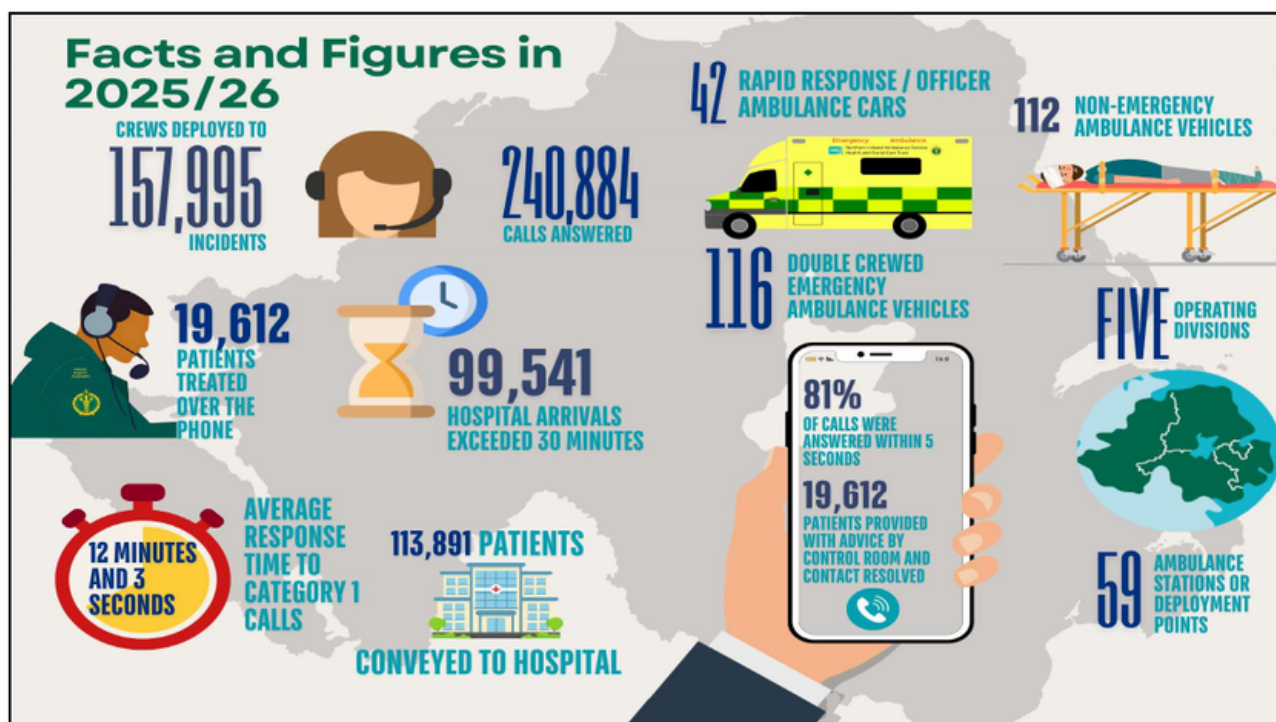
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Contents

- Outline of NIAS position
- Clinical Delivery Model
- Challenges
- Opportunities

2



3

The landscape is changing!

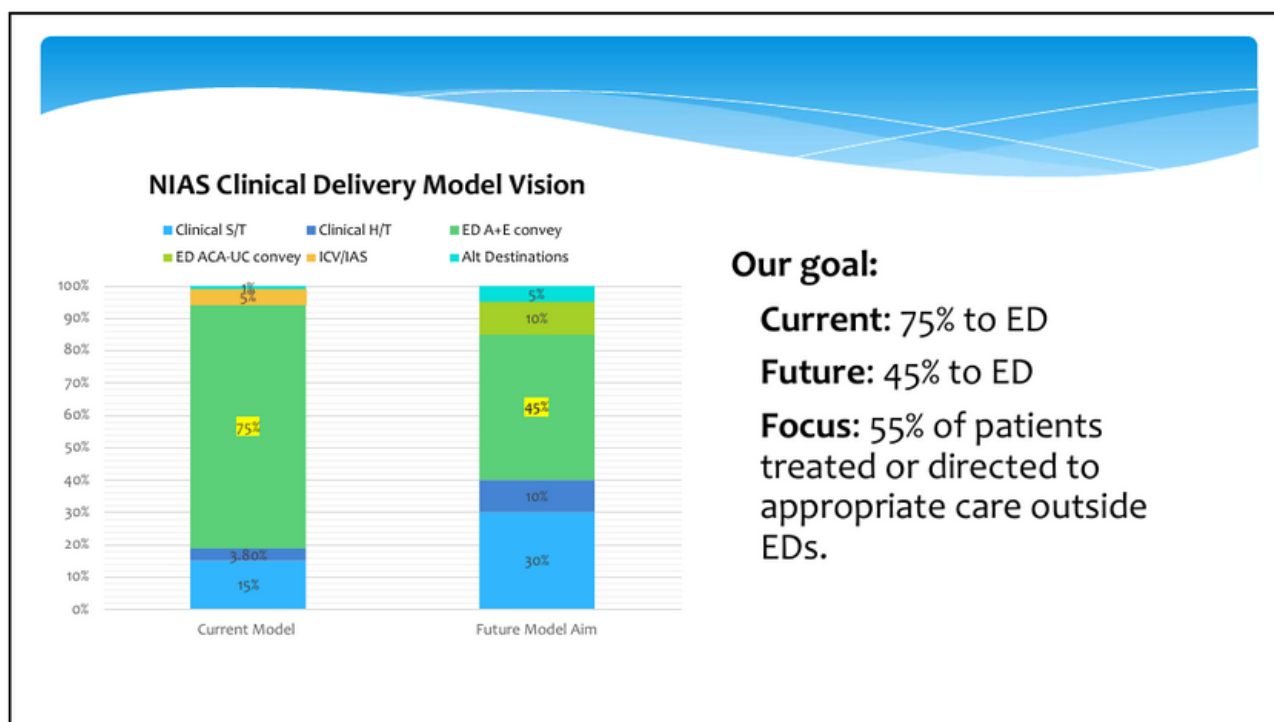


ASSOCIATION OF AMBULANCE CHIEF EXECUTIVES

Core remit of any statutory ambulance service: *always* to provide an emergency response to those who have a life-threatening health need, and to major incidents

- Simplify access to care and co-ordinate care navigation
- Assess more people remotely and enhance mobile care
- Share data and learning across systems
- Integrate care pathways
- Reduce avoidable conveyance and admission to hospital

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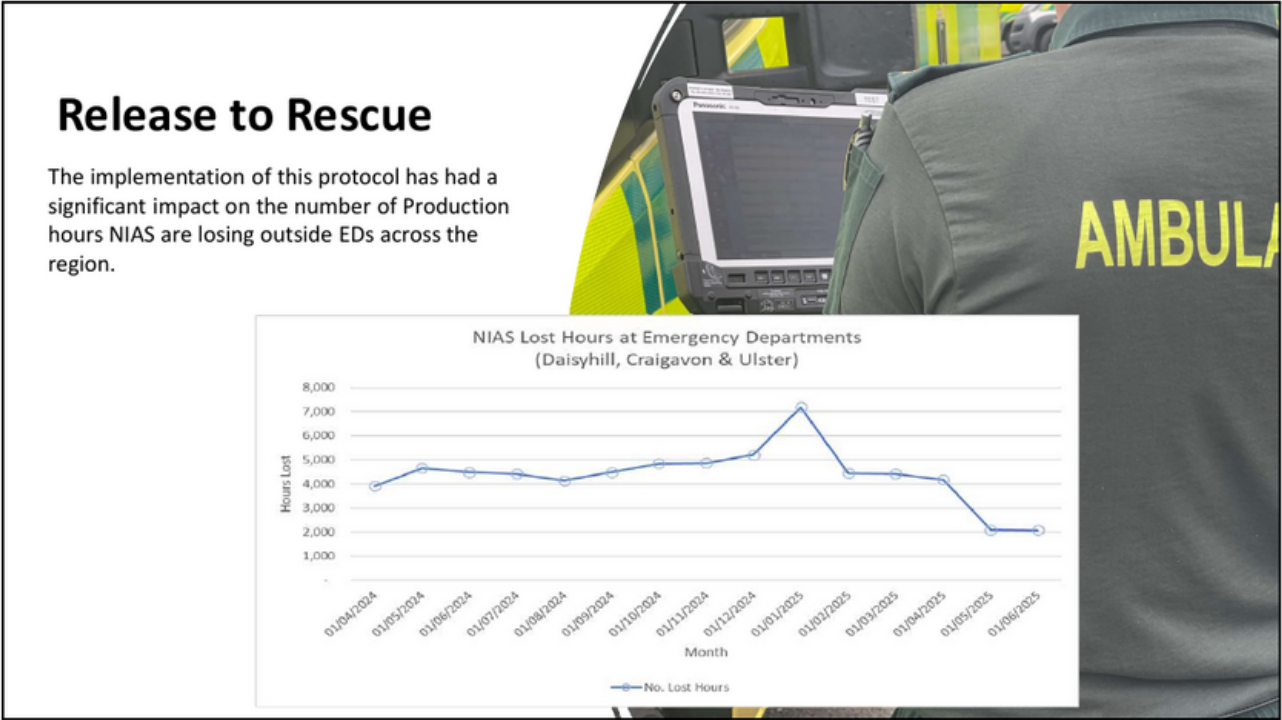


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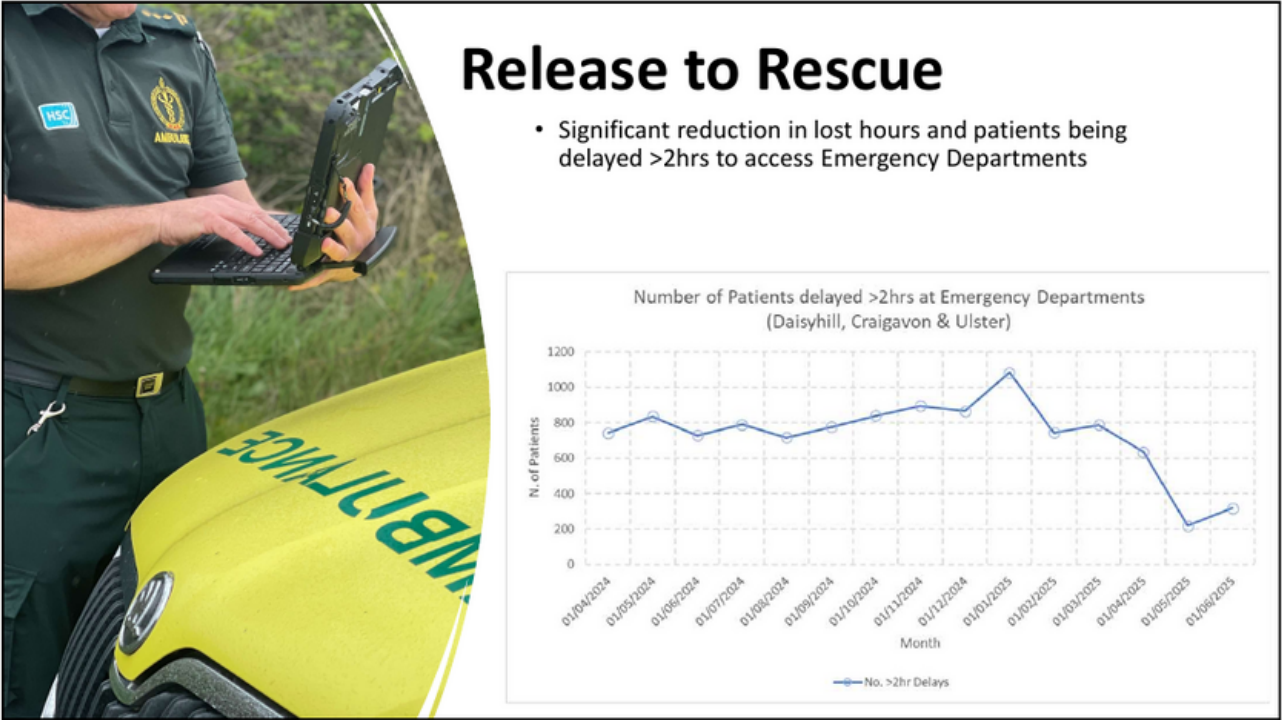
High level challenges:

1. Hospital handovers
2. Alternatives to Emergency Departments
3. Response times
4. Resourcing

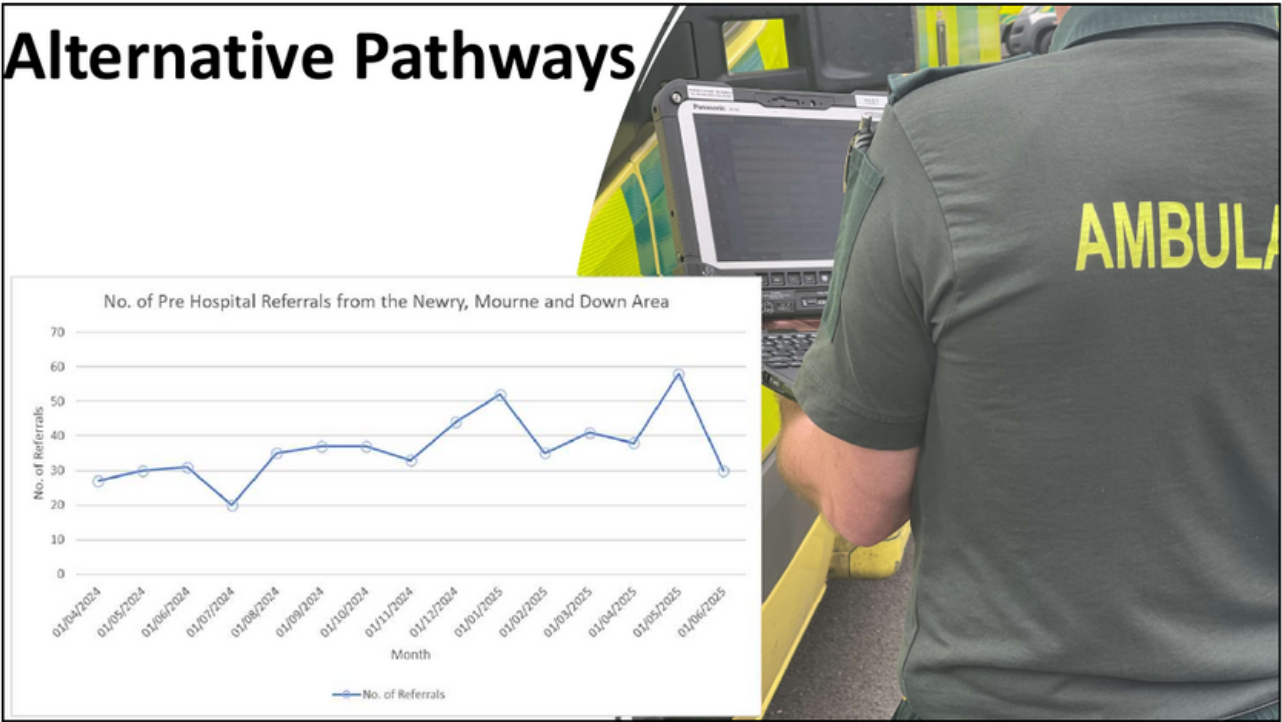
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Resourcing

NIAS has proactively recruited over the past 12 months and now has 398 paramedics across its Emergency Ambulance tier, the table below breaks down the paramedic numbers by station within your area.

This year has also saw a significant milestone in its development with the inaugural Advanced Paramedic tier being recruited to.

Paramedic Staffing Growth by Station				
Month	Newry	Kilkeel	Newcastle	Downpatrick
Mar-25	17.76	3	4	10.4
Jun-25	17.76	4	4	13.24
Sep-25	16.4	4	4	11.24
Dec-25	16.4	3	4	10.6
Mar-26	20.76	5	3	12.6
Jun-26	20.76	5	3	12.6
Sep-26	21.76	5	3	12.6
Dec-26	21.76	5	3	14.6
Mar-27	21.76	5	3	14.6

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Response Times

Response Times are a challenge for NIAS against the National Target, however 2026.27 has seen an improvement with response times.
Newry, Mourne and Down is a challenge and there is a requirement for resource growth in the area.

Financial Year 2025.26 Average Response Times			Financial YTD 2026.27 Average Response Times		
Local Authority	Category 1	Category 2	Local Authority	Category 1	Category 2
Antrim and Newtownabbey	0:11:35	1:16:58	Antrim and Newtownabbey	0:10:24	0:58:17
Ards and North Down	0:13:29	1:56:20	Ards and North Down	0:12:16	1:31:50
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	0:12:59	1:19:00	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	0:11:25	1:03:44
Belfast	0:08:18	1:36:36	Belfast	0:07:15	1:13:33
Causeway Coast and Glens	0:14:18	1:04:30	Causeway Coast and Glens	0:13:43	0:48:28
Derry City and Strabane	0:10:01	0:43:15	Derry City and Strabane	0:08:37	0:36:41
Fermanagh and Omagh	0:12:19	0:43:36	Fermanagh and Omagh	0:11:28	0:40:46
Lisburn and Castlereagh	0:11:22	1:43:20	Lisburn and Castlereagh	0:10:39	1:19:12
Mid and East Antrim	0:14:14	1:17:15	Mid and East Antrim	0:12:33	1:00:19
Mid Ulster	0:15:58	1:18:43	Mid Ulster	0:15:39	0:58:58
Newry, Mourne and Down	0:17:35	1:35:48	Newry, Mourne and Down	0:15:30	1:17:48
Regional	0:12:03	1:21:29	Regional	0:10:56	1:04:12

Targets
Cat 1 mean = 8mins
Cat 2 mean = 18mins

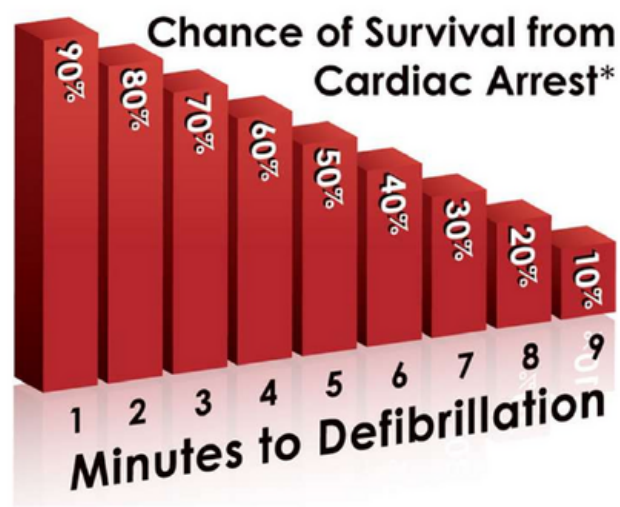
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Opportunities for collaboration?

- Access to alternatives in the community for referrals
- Community First Responders
- Resus Strategy - CPR training, access to defibrillators?
- Awareness at events



12



- Keady, Newtownhamilton, Crossmaglen, Mournes, Slieve Croob CFR schemes.
- 88 Active CFRs
- 436 AEDs registered at present
- 81% of AEDs are emergency ready
- 398 AED deployments in the last year
- 60% of the AEDs are 24/7 availability, 40% have varied access

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Thank you,
Any questions?



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Report to:	Planning Committee
Date of Meeting:	1 July 2026
Subject:	LDP: Progress – July 2026 Update
Reporting Officer:	Jonathan McGilly, Assistant Director Regeneration
Contact Officer:	Lois Jackson, Development Plan Manager and Planning Enforcement

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

For decision	For noting only	x
---------------------	------------------------	----------

1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on progress in respect of the preparation of the Local Development Plan (LDP).
1.2	The report sets out what is programmed for the next quarter (July-September 2026).
2.0	Key issues
2.1	Following a detailed review of submissions received during the initial public consultation on the LDP draft Plan Strategy (27 June – 22 September 2025) and the subsequent period for submission of counter-representations (30 January – 20 April 2026), work continues on revising the draft Plan Strategy through a series of focused and minor amendments. • <u>Draft Plan Strategy (dPS) Public Consultation Report</u> - Preparation and drafting of the dPS Public Consultation Report is ongoing. This sets out the Council's position on the issues raised in representations to the dPS and what changes, if any, are proposed. This meets the requirements of Regulation 20(2)(f)(i) and (ii) of the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. • <u>Updating of the dPS Supporting Documents</u> – Regional Planning policy contained within the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) requires LDPs to be informed by robust and up to date evidence. Work is ongoing to update the dPS evidence base including the Sustainability Appraisal, Technical Supplements and other supporting documents to ensure compliance with the SPPS and to address specific issues raised through the public consultations. • <u>Legal review</u> – A legal review of the proposed changes to the dPS is being sought on the proposed changes to the dPS document to ensure that these are not considered to be fundamental changes. DfI Plan Practice Note 10 (Soundness) highlights that where a change is considered fundamental, i.e. being of such significant nature and scale, a Council may be required to withdraw the Plan document.

2.2	A key feature of the local development plan system is 'soundness' which requires the dPS to be assessed against three soundness categories relating to how the Plan document has been produced, its alignment with regional plans, policy and guidance and the coherence, consistency and effectiveness of the content of the Plan. Two key documents are currently being progressed to help demonstrate this: the Self-Assessment of Soundness Report and Compliance with SCI Report. • <u>Self-Assessment of Soundness Report</u> – This will demonstrate how the dPS complies with the 12 Soundness Tests set out in DfI Plan Practice Note 10. It will also demonstrate how it meets the regulatory requirements set out in the Planning Act 2011 and LDP Regulations 2015. This will be submitted to the Department for Infrastructure as part of the evidence base underpinning the self-assessment of soundness. • <u>Compliance with SCI Report</u> - Section 8(4) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 requires the LDP to be prepared in accordance with the Council's SCI. In order to demonstrate this a Compliance with SCI Report is being drafted. This will also be submitted to the Department for Infrastructure as part of the evidence base underpinning the self-assessment of soundness.
2.3	Following finalisation of the proposed focused and minor changes further public consultation will be undertaken. • <u>Public Consultation on Proposed dPS Changes</u> – DfI Plan Practice Note 10 states that a Council should prepare, publish and consult on its focused changes. An addendum to the dPS will be produced which will set out all proposed focused changes and this will be published for public consultation for a period of 8 weeks in line with Regulation 16 of the LDP Regulations 2015.
2.4	Annual Land Monitoring – The 2026 annual housing monitor was completed in June 2026, work has now commenced on the 2026 employment land monitor.
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	It is recommended that the Planning Committee note the content of this report.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	N/A
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i> It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations ☒

5.2	<i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i> Yes ☒ No ☐ If yes, please complete the following: The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened ☒ The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation ☐
5.3	<i>Proposal initiating consultation</i> Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves ☐ Consultation period will be 12 weeks ☐ Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) ☒ <i>Rationale:</i> 8 week consultation on focused changes to the dPS is in line with Regulation 16(2)(a) of the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)
6.1	Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service Yes ☒ No ☐ If yes, please complete the following: Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed ☒
7.0	Appendices
8.0	Background Documents • LDP draft Plan Strategy (dPS). • dPS Assessments (Sustainability Appraisal SA), SA Scoping Report, draft Habitats Regulations Assessment, draft Equality Impact Screening Report and Rural Needs Assessment). • dPS Technical Supplements. • dPS Representations. • dPS Counter Representations.

Public Appointments Unit



32

Ms Marie Ward
Chief Executive
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Issued via email to:
marie.ward@nmandd.org

Public Appointments Unit & Business Support,
Corporate Strategy and Performance Directorate.
Department for Infrastructure
James House,
2-4 Cromac Avenue,
Belfast BT7 2JA
Email: publicappointmentsunit@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Date: 1 June 2026

Dear Marie

Appointment of Councillors to the Board of Warrenpoint Harbour Authority (WHA)

I am writing to invite you to submit a number of Council nominees to be considered by the Minister for the Department for Infrastructure (DfI), for appointment to the Board of Warrenpoint Harbour Authority.

These Councillor appointments are not positions of responsibility. They are, as defined under the 2014 Local Government Act, required to be shared across the parties using d'Hondt or Saint-Lague formula of the Single Transferrable Vote method. These are appointments to be made by DfI after consultation with the Council, and in compliance with the Commissioner for Public Appointment Northern Ireland (CPANI) Code.

The Warrenpoint Harbour Authority Order (Northern Ireland) 2002, provides that a maximum of three Commissioners shall be Members of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council. There is currently one Councillor in post and two vacancies.

The Non-Executive Members of the Board, together with the Chair, have corporate responsibility for ensuring that Warrenpoint Harbour Authority complies with all relevant statutory or administrative requirements including requirements in respect of the use of public funds. The role will be to work as a member of the Board to bring experience and judgement to bear on issues of strategy, performance, and governance. Members should bring wide experience and critical detachment to the work of the organisation and be prepared to constructively criticise and assist executive management in the development of strategic objectives and policies.

The remuneration is £8,772.48 (under review) per annum, based on anticipated attendance of up to two business days per month. New appointees will be expected to attend the full monthly Board meetings and other ad hoc meetings as required. Board meetings may vary in time commitment from month to month. The appointment may involve a commitment both inside and outside of normal working hours. Meetings are normally held at the Harbour Office, The Docks, Warrenpoint BT34 3JR.

To provide the Minister with a choice of nominees, as required by the Commissioner for Public Appointment Northern Ireland (CPANI), the Department invites your Council to nominate six to eight Councillors to be considered for appointment.

The Commissioner for Public Appointments also requires that public appointees should serve no more than two terms in the same position and no more than ten years in total. Please

ensure that those who you are considering nominating have not previously served 10 years / two terms on the Board of Warrenpoint Harbour Authority, as they will not be eligible for interview.

I enclose copies of the Information Booklet and Application and Monitoring Form for completion by each nominee to be considered for appointment. Full details of the process are set out in the Information Booklet.

The date of the new appointment will be as soon as possible following Ministerial decision. It will last for as long as the appointee remains on the Council, up to a maximum of four years. A reserve list may also be created to address any vacancies arising in the following year.

Nominees should complete the short application form. They will be invited to attend an interview at a date to be confirmed. The interview panel will comprise two departmental officials and an independent assessor allocated by CPANI. The interview will explore the nominees' understanding and experience of corporate governance and the role of a board member. Integrity, conflicts of interest and the time commitment involved in the appointment will also be discussed. The panel will draft a record of these discussions to be sent to the Minister to help her considerations on who to appoint.

Finally, DfI wants to improve diversity on our Boards. We would particularly welcome nominations from the following under-represented groups: women; younger people; people with disabilities; and people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

I should be grateful if you could arrange for the completed application form for each nominee to be returned no later than **12 noon on Friday 28 August 2026** to:

publicappointmentsunit@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk or,

Jennifer Macrory
DfI Public Appointments Unit
James House,
2-4 Cromac Avenue,
Belfast BT7 2JA

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

ANGELA STARKEY
DfI Equality, Public Appointments and Business Support



DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

APPLICATION FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF:

**NON-EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR MEMBER
OF WARRENPOINT HARBOUR
AUTHORITY**

**NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Closing Date – 12 noon on Friday 28 August 2026

Candidate No: _____

APPLICATION FORM FOR NON-EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR MEMBER TO THE BOARD OF WARRENPOINT HARBOUR AUTHORITY

The Application Form is in two parts. The closing date for the return of completed application forms is Noon Friday 28 August 2026.

PART A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

- Typewritten or electronic versions of the application forms are welcome and should be completed in Arial with a minimum font size of 12. Handwritten applications should be completed using **black ink**.
- If your application is submitted by e-mail, we will require you to sign Part A when you attend interview.
- Please do not staple, tape, or stick additional information to this form. CVs, letters, or any other supplementary material in place of or in addition to the completed application form will **not** be accepted.
- We would advise you to retain a copy of your application for your own information.
- Applications will not be reviewed until after the closing date.
- We will only process the personal data you provide us for the purpose of recruiting members to the Board of Warrenpoint Harbour Authority Harbour and in line with the Commissioner for Public Appointments NI Code of Practice. For more information, please see our Privacy Notice at [DfI Public Appointments - Privacy Notice | Department for Infrastructure](#).

Please send the two parts of your completed application to:

Department for Infrastructure
Public Appointments Unit
Corporate Strategy and Performance Directorate
James House, Gasworks Site,
2-4 Cromac Avenue, Belfast,
BT7 2JA

Or by email to: publicappointmentsunit@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

PART A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

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1. PERSONAL DETAILS

Title (Prof/Dr/Mr/Mrs/Ms/etc):											
Surname:											
Forename(s):											
Former surname(s) (if any):											
National Insurance Number: (if applicable)	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </table>										

CONTACT DETAILS:

Permanent address, including postcode:	
Telephone No (including STD code):	
Mobile:	
E-mail address:	
Address for correspondence, including postcode: (if different from above)	
Telephone No of correspondence address (including STD code): (if different from above)	

We will normally contact you by email; however, if you would prefer to be contacted by a different means then please indicate this here.

By Telephone

☐

By Mobile

☐

By Post

☐

2. OTHER INFORMATION

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence (other than minor motoring offences) which is not spent in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Are you the subject of any legal, criminal, or statutory investigations or actions, or are any pending?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Have you ever been adjudged bankrupt or made a composition or arrangement (such as those set out in Note 1 below) with your creditors over the past 10 years?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Were you dismissed from any public office over the past 10 years?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If you answered **yes** to any of the questions above, please provide details below.

Note 1

- Individual Voluntary Arrangements (IVAs) and Fast-Track Voluntary Arrangements (FTVAs);
- Bankruptcy Restrictions Orders or Undertakings (BROs/BRUs);
- Debt Relief Orders (DROs); and
- Debt Relief Restrictions Orders or Undertakings (DRROs/DRRUs).

3. Reasonable Adjustments

Please let us know if you require any reasonable adjustments, or arrangements to enable you to attend for interview or take up an offer of appointment. The selection panel will only be advised of any adjustments they need to know about to manage the interview process.

PART B: PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS

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Candidate No: _____

4. **PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS** – please list all current public appointments, giving the name of the public body, the position held, the length of the appointment and any remuneration paid. Departmental Boards only, as outlined within [‘List of bodies we regulate | The Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland \(publicappointmentsni.org\)’](#)

4.

Public Body	Position Held	Dates		Remuneration
		From	To	

Have you ever been a member of the Board of WHA?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If you have previously served on this board, please indicate when and the positions held	Position Held	From	To

PART B: PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS

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5. PROBITY AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Before you complete this section, it is important that you read the guidance on probity and conflicts of interest contained in your information pack.

- a) Are you prepared to abide by the seven principles of public life?

Yes

☐

No

☐

- b) Have you, your partner, or your immediate family, any business or other interests or personal connections that might be construed as being in conflict with the appointment for which you have nominated for?

Yes

☐

No

☐

- c) Are there any other probity issues which might cause embarrassment if, in the future, they are raised in public?

Yes

☐

No

☐

If you answered **yes** to questions b) and/or c) above, please provide details below.

Any potential probity issues or conflicts of interest detailed above will not prevent you from being called for interview but will be explored with you at that time to establish how you would address the issue should you be successful in your application.

PART B: PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS

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6. DECLARATION

I have read and understood the information provided in the Candidate Information Booklet. I declare that I am available to meet the time commitment required for this role.

I have read the 'Probity and Conflicts of Interest: Guidance for Candidates' information leaflet and I understand that, if appointed, I must raise with the Departmental Permanent Secretary and the Chief Executive of the public body, any probity or conflict of interest issues that might arise during my term of appointment and that my failure to do so could lead to my appointment being terminated.

I undertake to inform DfI Public Appointments Unit in writing of any change in my circumstances which may occur between the date of my application and any possible date of appointment.

I have read the information pack and understand my responsibilities in relation to statutory disqualifications and public appointments. I declare that the information I have given in support of my application is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief and is a reflection of my own individual experience, personal achievements and undertakings and all statements contained therein relate to me personally. I understand that if I am found to have suppressed any material fact or to have given false answers, I will be liable to disqualification or, if appointed, to dismissal.

I understand and accept that the information I have provided will be processed by the Department for Infrastructure, in accordance with its Data Protection Registration, for the purposes of making these public appointments; and that this may involve disclosing information to other Government Departments, the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland, or anonymously in response to Assembly Questions and other enquiries.

I also understand and accept that, if appointed, my name will be published in the Public Appointments Annual Report. Also, that some of the information I have provided will be included in a press release announcing my appointment and therefore placed in the public domain.

Signed: _____ Date: _____



Public Appointments Candidate Information Booklet

**NON-EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR MEMBERS
OF WARRENPOINT HARBOUR AUTHORITY**

**NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

This information pack can be made available in other formats, such as Braille, large print, audio etc. To request this or any other information on the appointment process please contact:

Public Appointments Unit,
Corporate Strategy and Performance Directorate,
Department for Infrastructure,
James House, Gasworks Site, 2-4 Cromac Avenue,
Belfast, BT7 2JA

Tel: 028 9054 1002

Text relay service: 18001 028 9054 1002

E-mail your request to: publicappointmentsunit@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

CONTENTS OF THIS BOOKLET

Section 1	Information about Warrenpoint Harbour Authority (WHA)
Section 2	Role Profile and Person Specification
Section 3	Application and Selection Process
Section 4	Equal Opportunities Monitoring and Complaints Procedure
Annexes	Expenses Form & Probity and Conflicts of Interest Guidance

KEY APPOINTMENT PROCESS STAGES

Stage in Process	Timescale
Closing Date for applications	12:00 Noon Friday, 28 August 2026
Interviews	21 & 22 September 2026
Date of appointments	As soon as possible following the Minister's decision

Privacy Notice

The Department for Infrastructure will only process the personal data you provide us for the purpose of recruiting members to the Board of Warrenpoint Harbour Authority and in line with the Commissioner for Public Appointments NI Code of Practice. For more information, please see our Privacy Notice at [DfI Public Appointments - Privacy Notice | Department for Infrastructure](#).

Section 1

1. Applications from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council are invited for two Non-Executive Councillor Member positions for the Board of Warrenpoint Harbour Authority. These appointments will take effect as soon as possible from the appointment decision date. A reserve list may be created to fill any vacancies that may arise within twelve months from the date of appointment.

Information about Warrenpoint Port an Warrenpoint Harbour Authority (WHA)

Warrenpoint Port

2. Warrenpoint is a Public Trust Port. The Port was established in 1971 and in general cargo terms, is the second largest port in Northern Ireland, with 3.4 million tonnage handled by the Port in 2024. Warrenpoint is one of Northern Ireland's main commercial ports, serving a hinterland in the region of 100 square miles. The Port's geographic position constitutes a major strategic advantage located half way on the main strategic network of the Belfast to Dublin economic corridor.
3. The published 2024 accounts for WHA showed a turnover of £8.6 million and a Pre Tax profit after tax of £0.94 million.

Warrenpoint Harbour Authority

4. WHA is a corporate body, having perpetual succession and was first constituted by the Warrenpoint Harbour Authority Order (Northern Ireland) 1971. Its constitution is now enshrined in the Warrenpoint Harbour Authority Order (Northern Ireland) 2002.
5. Warrenpoint Harbour Authority Orders of 1971 and 2002 conferred powers on the Authority to preserve, improve and manage the Port of Warrenpoint. The Authority also has the power to construct and maintain specific works, to levy dues, to deal with abandoned vessels, and to make bylaws.

Constitution of WHA

6. The constitution of the Authority is set out in the Warrenpoint Harbour Authority Order (Northern Ireland) 2002. The order provides for the following:
 - The Authority shall consist of not less than eight and not more than 12 persons who shall be appointed by the Department for a period of four years or such lesser period as the Department may determine. The authority shall appoint a person to act as Chief Executive and may include one other officer of the Authority.
 - The Department shall designate a member of the Authority as Chairman of the Authority and may designate another member of the Authority as Deputy Chairman.
 - A maximum of three of the persons appointed to the Authority shall be members of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council appointed by the Department following consultation with the Council. Such an appointment will remain valid only while the person so appointed remains a member of the Council.
7. There are currently ten members of the Authority, including the Chair, Chief Executive, the Finance Director, six Non-Executive Members and one member of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

Key Priorities

8. In April 2018, Warrenpoint Harbour Authority (WHA) published its draft Masterplan for Warrenpoint Port 2018-2043. The Masterplan sets out the port's five core objectives to address the key issues affecting the future operation of the port, these are:
 - **Improve transportation and circulation** – Including the Newry Southern Relief Road and better road access into the Port.

- **Improve Port capacity, operations and facilities** – Better access, storage facilities and better cargo handling by investment in new cranes, plant and machinery.
- **Grow a diverse customer base** – Developing better cargo handling facilities and specialist storage solutions and enhance shipping access through improved dredging scheme.
- **Develop and improve linkages with the Town** – Including redeveloping the Town Dock Office as the port's administration centre so it faces the Town Square and open up access to the Marina.
- **Develop a long term expansion strategy** – looking at long term options beyond the next 25 years for increasing dockside capacity and on and off site storage and distribution capacity.

Governance Arrangements

9. WHA is committed to high standards of Corporate Governance consistent with the requirements of a Trust Port. This covers all financial reporting issues, the control environment and any governance matters.
10. For further information please consult the Annual Report which can be accessed by the link below:
[WHA-Annual-Report-2024.pdf](#) (warrenpointport.com).

Section 2 – Role Profile and Person Specification

11. The Non-Executive Members of the Board, together with the WHA Chair, have corporate responsibility for ensuring that Warrenpoint Harbour Authority complies with all relevant statutory or administrative requirements including requirements in respect of the use of public funds.
12. The role will be to work as a member of the Board to bring experience and judgement to bear on issues of strategy, performance and governance. Members should bring wide experience and critical detachment to the work of the organisation and be prepared to constructively challenge and assist executive management in the development of strategic objectives and policies.
13. The Board Member will be expected to:
 - Contribute to the work of the Board in embedding Warrenpoint Harbour's Business Plan which sets out the overall strategic direction for the Port.
 - Make a full contribution to the business of the Warrenpoint Harbour Authority Board, including the formulation of strategy for the organisation.
 - Participate in any training or facilitated workshops relating to Board business.
 - Work to ensure that Warrenpoint Harbour complies with relevant legislation, licence and governance arrangements.
 - Respect and abide by the rules of confidentiality that apply to the business of Warrenpoint Harbour as a commercial organisation.
 - Support the Chair to challenge and scrutinise the Chief Executive and management team to ensure that Warrenpoint Harbour achieves its objectives and targets and achieves value for money and efficiency in its operations.
 - Help to improve the value and quality of service provided to customers and ensure that these are key priorities for Warrenpoint Harbour.
 - Carry out the tasks associated with membership of Committees of the Board.
 - Comply with the UK Corporate Governance Code and the "seven principles of public life".

- Ensure appropriate representation of the views of WHA to the general public and all other stakeholders.
- Use their judgement and experience to safeguard the public interest in relation to WHA.

Interview

14. The Selection Panel will evaluate all candidates at interview against an agreed scoring framework. Nominated Councillors will be expected to demonstrate at interview, an understanding of the role of a board member, a high standard of probity and integrity and an understanding of the seven principles underpinning public life.
15. Potential or perceived Conflicts of Interest will be explored at interview.
16. An understanding or experience of Corporate Governance will also be explored at interview.
 - **Governance is about the leadership, direction and supervision of an organisation. It means making sure that the organisation is well run (or governed) and carries out the work it was set up to do.** The Selection Panel will ask questions to gain your understanding or experience of Corporate Governance. You may talk through an example/s from your community involvement or voluntary work, as well as those experiences found within the employment field. You can use examples from working or personal life.

Period of Appointment

17. The appointments will be for up to four years from appointment date. The appointments will only remain valid while the persons appointed remains a member of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.
18. It is the policy of the Department that there is no automatic reappointment. Previous members who have served one term on the Board may be eligible to serve a second term by again being nominated by the Council and then going through the competition

process. His or her application will also be subject to evidence of an appropriate standard of performance having been achieved during the initial period in office and evidence of continued adherence to the seven principles of public life.

Training

19. Appropriate induction training will be provided to the new appointee.

Time Commitment and Remuneration

20. The remuneration is £8,772.48 (under review) per annum, based on anticipated attendance of up to two business days per month. The new Members will be expected to attend the full monthly Board meetings and other ad hoc meetings as required. Board meetings may vary in time commitment from month to month. Meetings are normally held at the Harbour Office, The Docks, Warrenpoint BT34 3JR.

Expenses

21. If you are invited to interview, expenses incurred for attendance may be reimbursed. A claim form will be provided with your invitation. Reasonable travel expenses will normally be refunded at the public transport rate of 25.7p per mile. Taxi fares will only be refunded in exceptional circumstances and prior agreement for the use of a taxi must be obtained from the Public Appointment Unit. Where appropriate, receipts should be submitted to support any expenses claimed.
22. Following appointment, reasonable travelling expenses and subsistence will be paid to attend meetings in accordance with WHA's processes. Any additional costs associated with childcare, dependents or having a disability will also be considered to enable the Member to attend meetings. All remuneration and expenses are subject to deduction of income tax and national insurance.
23. The appointment is not pensionable.

Code of Practice

24. A Code of Practice governs the activities of the Commissioners. To ensure that public service values remain at the heart of the Warrenpoint Harbour Authority, Members are required, on appointment, to demonstrate high standards of corporate and personal conduct and to subscribe to the Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies.

Section 3 – Application and Selection Process

Diversity in Public Appointments

24. The Department of Infrastructure is committed to the principles of public appointments based on merit with independent assessment, openness and transparency of process. The Department is also committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes application forms from all suitably qualified applicants irrespective of religious belief, gender, race, political opinion, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or whether they have dependants.
25. The Department is committed to taking measures to improve the diversity of its Boards. Women, younger people, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities are currently underrepresented on the Board and applications from these groups would be particularly welcome.
26. This appointment is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPA NI) and the competition may be examined by CPA NI for compliance with the Commissioner's Code of Practice.

Application Procedure

27. Application forms or further information about the process can be obtained from the address on the cover of this document or by e-mailing a request to:
publicappointmentsunit@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk.
28. Hard copy or electronic versions of the application form are acceptable. You must not reformat the electronic application form. CVs, letters, or any other supplementary material in place of, or in addition to, completed application forms will not be accepted.
29. Applications should be fully completed and be as clear as possible using black ink or Arial typescript minimum font size 12. All sections of the application form should be completed.

30. Information documents and application forms can be provided in alternative formats. Any applicants who require assistance should contact the Public Appointments Unit. All reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate the needs of Councillors with a disability.
31. Application forms should be submitted by post, email or in person to arrive by **12:00 Noon Friday 28 August 2026** (see contact details on cover sheet).

Selection Process

32. All eligible nominees submitted by the Council will be interviewed by a selection panel comprising three members, two officers from the Department, and an Independent Member.
33. The Selection Panel will explore issues of probity, conflict of interest, time commitment, and assess; an understanding of the role of a board member, and an understanding or experience of corporate governance with each nominee. A written record will be made of the Panel discussions for each nominee. The scoring framework is only used by the Panel to assess performance at interview, and will subsequently be utilised to complete applicant's summaries to provide the Minister with information about each nominee.

Presentation of Results to the Minister

34. In preparation for this competition, the Minister was asked to approve its launch and to state her preference for the presentation of the outcome of interviews, i.e. ranked or unranked list, she choose an unranked alphabetical list of candidates. She also chose to create a reserve list, if possible, to cover any unforeseen vacancies that arise within 12 months of the date of her decision to appoint.
35. On conclusion of the competition, the Minister will be presented with an unranked list of appointable candidates, along with an applicant summary which will provide an objective analysis of each applicant's skills and experience, based on the information provided by each applicant during the appointment round and the selection panel's assessment of that applicant.

Timetable / Time Frame

36. The deadline for receipt in all cases is **12:00 Noon on 28 August 2026**. Applications will be individually date-stamped, and the time of receipt formally recorded. It is the responsibility of the applicant, taking into account their chosen method of delivery, to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for their application to arrive with the Department on or before the deadline. **Late applications will only be considered under exceptional circumstances.** Please ensure that posted applications bear the correct amount of postage as any shortfall may lead to a delay in delivery, causing you to miss the deadline. Applicants who send their application form electronically are also required to meet the closing deadline for receipt in this office.
37. Interviews are expected to be held on 21 and 22 September **2026**, with the successful nominees confirmed as soon as possible thereafter.

Disqualified Candidates

38. There are no statutory disqualification criteria for this post.

Probity and Conflicts of Interest

39. The Department must ensure that any individual appointed is committed to the seven principles of conduct underpinning public life and values of public service. **These principles are: Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, and Leadership.** The successful candidate will be asked as part of their appointment to sign a declaration committing to the seven principles.
40. The information pack includes copies of the leaflets entitled “Probity and Conflicts of Interest – Guidance for Candidates” and an information leaflet from the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (NI) about “Conflicts of Interest, Integrity and Making a Complaint”. These provide information on these issues, including some

examples to help applicants evaluate whether they have a real, perceived or potential conflict.

41. The Department must take account of any actual or perceived conflict of interest. Therefore, applicants, in their application form, must disclose information or personal connections which, if they were to be appointed, could lead to a conflict of interest or be perceived as such. Failure to do so could lead to the appointment being terminated.
42. It is very important that all applicants provide appropriate details on their application form of any interests which might be construed as conflicting with the appointment for which they have applied. If it appears, from the information provided on the form, that a possible conflict might exist, or arise in the future, this will be fully explored with the applicant with a view to establishing whether it is sufficiently significant to prevent the individual from carrying out the duties of the post. The Panel will do this at interview stage.

Other Public Appointments

43. Departments have a duty to satisfy themselves, as far as practicable, that those they appoint to the Boards of public bodies will carry out their duties in an efficient and effective manner. The Department for Infrastructure will, therefore, be checking with other Departments if there are any probity or performance issues associated with applicants who hold other public appointments. Similar information will be provided by the Department on request about all associated board members.

The Two Terms Rule

44. According to the CPANI Code, those who have served two terms in the same position on the same board cannot apply through open competition for a third term. If any applicant has served two terms in this position, their application will be discounted.

Double Paying

45. Applicants who already work in the public sector need to be aware that:

- they may be ineligible for consideration for this appointment if in the Department's view there is a conflict of interest, the perception of a conflict or a potential conflict, between the appointment and their existing commitments;
- where applicable, they will be asked to confirm that they have permission from their employer to take up an appointment if one is offered; and
- no one can be paid twice from the public purse for the same period of time. As a result, applicants who already work in the public sector may not be entitled to claim remuneration for this position if the duties are undertaken during a period of time for which they are already paid by the public sector.

46. In the interests of minimising the potential for double paying, the Department reserves the right to contact your employer regarding your candidature.
47. Former Civil Servants are subject to rules on the Acceptance of Outside Business Appointments, Employment or Self-Employment for a period of up to two years after leaving the NI Civil Service. Individuals in this category, who wish to apply, should check their eligibility to do so with their former Department.

Publicising Appointments

48. A Press Release will be published to announce the appointment. The Commissioner for Public Appointments also requires that announcements about successful candidates should contain details of any recent political activity. Consequently, should you be appointed, you will be required to complete a political activity form. Details of any political activity, together with some of the information that you have provided in your application form, will be made public in the press announcement. This applies particularly to any other public appointments you may hold and to any significant political activity recently undertaken by you. The Press Release will include:
- Your name;
 - A short description of the body to which you have been appointed;
 - A brief summary of the skills and knowledge you bring to the role;
 - The period of appointment;
 - Any remuneration associated with the appointment;

- Details of all other public appointments held and any related remuneration received; and
- Details of any political activity declared in the last 5 years

Section 4 - Equal Opportunities Monitoring and Complaints Procedure

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

49. The Department is committed to providing equality of opportunity. The Department monitors applications to ensure that equal opportunities measures are effective in its appointments processes. Applicants are therefore asked to complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form attached to the application form. The information is purely for monitoring purposes. It is **not** made available to the selection panel and does **not** play a role in the decision-making process. The information will be analysed independently by staff in the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and will be treated in strict confidence.

Diversity in Public Appointments

50. The Department is committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified people irrespective of religious belief, gender, disability, ethnic origin, political opinion, age, marital status, sexual orientation or whether or not they have dependants.
51. Women, younger people, people with a disability and ethnic minority communities are currently underrepresented on the Board and applications from these groups would be particularly welcome.

Complaints Procedure

52. The Department is committed to getting this appointment process right first time. However, if you are not entirely satisfied with any aspect of our service, please tell us and we will do our best to resolve the matter. Our aim is to resolve any complaint quickly and you are invited initially to bring any concerns you may have to the official named below. However, if you still feel dissatisfied after this approach, you may initiate a formal complaint in writing. Please direct your concerns in the first instance to:

Angela Starkey
Public Appointments Unit,
Corporate Strategy and Performance Directorate,
Department for Infrastructure,
James House, Gasworks Site, 2-4 Cromac Avenue,
Belfast, BT7 2JA
Email: Angela.Starkey@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

If you remain dissatisfied you may then write to:

Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPA NI)
Dundonald House
Annexe B
Stormont Estate
Upper Newtownards Road
Belfast BT4 3SB
Email: info@publicappointmentsni.org

PROBITY & CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

GUIDANCE FOR CANDIDATES

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the information contained in the leaflet "CPA NI Guidance on Conflicts of Interest, Integrity and how to raise a complaint" which provides examples of the types of issues that may give rise to conflicts of interests.

Standards of behaviour

Ministers expect that the conduct of those they appoint to serve on the Boards of public bodies will be above reproach. Everyone who puts themselves forward for a public appointment must be able to demonstrate their commitment to the maintenance of high standards in public life.

The Seven Principles Underpinning Public Life

In 1995, the Committee on Standards in Public Life defined seven principles, which should underpin the actions of all who serve the public in any way. These are:

Selflessness - Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or other friends.

Integrity - Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity - In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability - Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness - Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty - Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership - Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

As part of the selection process you will be tested on your commitment to maintaining high standards in public life with particular emphasis on probity issues and conflicts of interest.

What is a conflict of interest?

Public Appointments require the highest standards of propriety, involving impartiality, integrity and objectivity, in relation to the stewardship of public funds and the oversight and management of all related activities. This means that any private, voluntary, charitable or political interest which might be material and relevant to the work of the body concerned should be declared.

There is always the possibility for real or perceived conflicts of interest to arise. Both are a problem, as the perceived inference of a conflict may, on occasions, be as damaging as the existence of a real conflict.

No-one should use, or give the appearance of using, their public position to further their private interests. This is an area of particular importance, as it is of considerable concern to the public and receives a lot of media attention. It is important, therefore, that you consider your circumstances when applying for a public appointment and identify any potential conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived.

Surely a perceived conflict is not a problem, as long as I act impartially at all times?

The integrity of the individual is not in question here. However, it is necessary for the standing of the individual and the board that members of the public have confidence in their independence and impartiality. Even a perceived conflict of interest on the part of a board member can be extremely damaging to the body's reputation and it is therefore essential that these are declared and explored, in the same way as an actual conflict would be. The fact that a member acted impartially may be no defence against accusations of potential bias.

What should I do if I think I have a conflict of interest?

You will find a section on conflicts of interest in the application form for you to complete. This asks you to consider and declare whether or not you have a real, or perceived, conflict. If you are unsure if your circumstances constitute a possible conflict, you should still complete this section, in order to give the Selection Panel as much information as possible.

If I declare a conflict, does this mean I will not be considered for appointment?

No - each case is considered individually. If you are short-listed for interview, the Panel will explore with you how far the conflict might affect your ability to contribute effectively and impartially on the Board and how this might be handled, if you were to be appointed. For example, it may be possible to arrange for you to step out of meetings where an issue is discussed, in which you have an interest. However, if, following the discussion with you, the Panel believes that the conflict is too great and would call into question the probity of the Board or the appointment they can withdraw your application from the competition. The summary of the outcome of the interview process, which is put to the Ministers, will include clear written reference to any probity issues or perceived or actual conflicts of interest

connected to any candidate put forward as suitable for appointment. It will include sufficient information to ensure that the Ministers are fully aware of any of these matters and can make an informed decision.

What happens if I do not declare a known conflict, which is then discovered by the Department after my appointment?

Again, each case would be considered on its merits, but the Department may take the view that by concealing a conflict of interest, you would be deemed to have breached the seven principles of conduct underpinning public life and may terminate your appointment.

What happens if I do not realise a potential conflict exists?

This situation may arise where the applicant is not familiar with the broad range of work which a body covers and therefore does not realise that a conflict might exist. In some cases, the Panel, with their wider knowledge of the body, might deduce that there is a potential conflict issue, based on the information on employment and experience provided by the candidate in the application form. They will then explore this at interview with the candidate.

What happens if a conflict of interest arises after an appointment is made?

This could arise for two main reasons. The first is that the member's circumstances may change, for example, they may change jobs and in doing so, a conflict with their work on the board becomes apparent. The second is where a member is unfamiliar with the range of the work of the body, but after appointment, it becomes clear that a conflict exists where none had been envisaged during the appointment process.

In both cases, the issue should be discussed with the Chair of the board and the Chief Executive of the body concerned, in consultation with the Sponsoring Department, to decide whether or not the member can continue to carry out their role in an appropriate manner and each case is considered individually.

It may be that the conflict is such that it would be impractical for the member to continue on the board, if they would have to withdraw from a considerable amount of the body's routine business. In such cases, the member may be asked to stand down from the body.

You may be asked to sign a declaration of commitment to the above principles as a condition of your appointment.

PART C- EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES MONITORING

(Return with your application form)

Please ensure that you read the notes for guidance in the Candidate Information Pack before you complete this part of your application form.

The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) is committed to ensuring that all eligible persons have equal opportunity for public appointments on the basis of their ability and aptitude for the role. Monitoring is carried out to help us ensure that our processes and procedures promote equality of opportunity as far as possible and therefore your help in completing and returning this monitoring form as part of your application would be appreciated. Please note the information you provide in this monitoring form will be detached from the information on the application form, held separately and will not be available to selection panels or to anyone else involved in the selection process. The information will be used for statistical purposes only and analysed independently by staff in the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) in the strictest confidence. Thank you for your cooperation.

National Insurance Number

Please enter your National Insurance Number below:

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Gender

Please tick one box:

☐	Male
☐	Female

Age

Please give your date of birth:

Day		Month		Year			

Community Background

Please indicate your community background by ticking the appropriate box below:

☐	I have a Roman Catholic community background
☐	I have a Protestant community background
☐	I have neither a Protestant or Roman Catholic community background

Disability

The Disability and Discrimination Act (DDA) defines a disability as a “physical or mental impairment which has substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities”. Do you consider yourself to have a disability (Please tick one box below)

☐	Yes
☐	No

Race

Please tick one box to indicate your race:

☐	White	☐	Black African
☐	Black Caribbean	☐	Bangladeshi
☐	Chinese	☐	Black Other
☐	Pakistani	☐	Indian

Are you a member of a Mixed Ethnic Group?

☐	Yes
☐	No

Are you a member of the Irish Travelling Community?

☐	Yes
☐	No

If you are of other ethnic origin, please specify

Language

Is English your first language? (Please tick one box below):

☐	Yes
☐	No

Sexual Orientation

Please consider the statement below and tick one box:

My sexual orientation is towards someone:

☐	Of the same sex (this covers gay men and lesbians)
☐	Of a different sex (this covers heterosexual men and women)
☐	Of the same sex and of the opposite sex (this covers bisexual men and women)

Marital status

Please indicate your marital status by ticking one box below:

☐	Single, that is never married or in a civil partnership
☐	Married
☐	Separated, but still legally married

☐	Divorced
☐	Widowed
☐	In a civil partnership
☐	Separated, but still legally in a civil partnership
☐	Formerly in a civil partnership which is now legally dissolved
☐	Surviving partner from a civil partnership

Dependants

Do you have personal responsibility for the care of a child, or children, a person with a disability or a dependent older person?

☐	Yes
☐	No

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Which sector would you consider best reflects your employment history over the course of your career?

☐	Private Sector
☐	Civil Service
☐	Other Public Sector
☐	Voluntary Sector

Other, Please Specify:

--

What is your highest level of educational attainment?

☐	No Qualifications
☐	GCSE/ O-level or equivalent
☐	A-level or equivalent
☐	Degree or higher

Report to:	Council
Date of Meeting:	3 August 2026
Subject:	Correspondence to Council
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

For decision	x	For noting only
1.0		Purpose and Background
1.1		To provide an update on correspondence received for attention of Council.
2.0		Key issues
2.1		This paper refers to correspondence to be brought to the attention of Council. Items are referred to in 3.0 below.
3.0		Recommendations
		That Council considers and notes the following correspondence:
3.1		Correspondence from Minister Kimmins MLA Council received correspondence from Minister Kimmins MLA re NOM – Portaferry Bridge
3.2		Correspondence from the Rt Hon Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Council received correspondence from the Rt Hon Hilary Benn regarding NOM – Independent Environment Protection Agency
4.0		Resource implications
4.1		Not applicable.
5.0		Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1		<i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i> It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations ☒
5.2		<i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i> Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following:

	The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened ☐ The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation ☐
5.3	<i>Proposal initiating consultation</i> Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves ☐ Consultation period will be 12 weeks ☐ Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) ☐ <i>Rationale:</i>
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)
6.1	Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following: Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed ☐ If no, please complete the following: The policy / strategy / plan / public service is not influenced by rural needs ☐
7.0	Appendices
8.0	Background Documents
	None



From the office of the Minister for Infrastructure
LIZ KIMMINS MLA

Marie Ward
Chief Executive

Donna.Starkey@nmandd.org

Private Office, 3rd Floor,
James House, Gasworks Site,
2 - 4 Cromac Avenue,
Belfast, BT7 2JA
Telephone: (028) 9054 0540
Email: Private.office@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Your reference:
Our reference: COR-0371-2026
06 July 2026

Marie, a chara,

RE: NOTICE OF MOTION – PORTAFERRY BRIDGE

Thank you for your letter dated 21 April 2026 requesting funding for a feasibility study into a bridge across Strangford Lough from Strangford to Portaferry.

I recognise the Council's view that a fixed crossing could bring benefits in terms of improving connectivity, boosting the local economy, enhancing tourism and tackling isolation in East Down, and I note the level of support expressed by elected members. The Department welcomes continued engagement with councils on matters of local and regional importance.

My Department's transport plans are the primary mechanism through which future transport needs and investment priorities are identified. The connection between Strangford and Portaferry does not form part of the Regional Strategic Transport Network and would instead be considered within the Eastern Transport Plan (ETP), covering Ards and North Down and the Newry, Mourne and Down Local Transport Plan 2035.

However, I recently visited the area and met with elected representatives to hear about the case for a bridge crossing. I am now giving consideration to this issue.

Thank you again for setting out the Council's position on this matter.

Is mise le meas,

LIZ KIMMINS MLA
Minister for Infrastructure



The Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP

**Secretary of State for
Northern Ireland**

1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

Erskine House
20-32 Chichester St
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BT1 4GF

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Follow us on X: @NIOgov

**Marie Ward
Chief Executive
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council**

By email: democratic.services@nmandd.org

15 July 2026

Our reference: MC/26/254
Your reference: C/050/2026

Dear Marie,

Thank you for your recent letter and for sharing the council's motion on the issue of an Independent Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) and reform of the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive. I apologise for the delay in responding.

It is disappointing that the Northern Ireland Executive has not yet established an IEPA. As you know, this is a devolved matter and the responsibility of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

The UK Government takes seriously our commitment to upholding the Good Friday Agreement in letter and spirit, including the cross-community protections that require power to be shared between designations in the institutions.

I acknowledge that power-sharing sometimes requires difficult compromises. However, it remains the means of governing which commands the greatest support in Northern Ireland. The Government will always be happy to discuss any proposals for change which could lead to the widest-possible consensus, and indeed I have been discussing these issues with party leaders in recent weeks.

However, these discussions cannot be a substitute for improving public services today. The Executive can make these improvements now, including creating an IEPA, and they do not have to wait for conversations about reform. The Government continues to work with the Executive to improve public services, while in parallel discussing proposals for reform that can command the widest-possible consensus.

Yours sincerely,



THE RT HON HILARY BENN MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND