



September 26th, 2023

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the Council meeting to be held on **Monday, 2nd October 2023** at **6:00 pm** in **Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre & MS Teams.**

Agenda

1.0 Apologies and Chairperson's Remarks

2.0 Declarations of Interest

3.0 Action Sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 4 September 2023

 [Action Sheet Council Meeting 04.09.2023.pdf](#)

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Council Minutes For Adoption and Signing

4.0 Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 29 August 2023

For Approval

Copy to follow.

5.0 Minutes of Council Meeting held on 4 September 2023

For Approval

 [Council Minutes 04.09.2023.pdf](#)

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Committee Minutes for Consideration and Adoption

6.0 Minutes of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 11 September 2023

For Approval

 [Minutes Enterprise Regeneration Tourism Committee 11-09-2023.pdf](#)

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7.0 Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 14 September 2023

For Approval

 [Strategy Policy Resources Meeting Minutes 2023 09 14.pdf](#)

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8.0 Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 18 September 2023

For Approval

 [Active and Healthy Communities Committee Minutes 2023 09 18.pdf](#)

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9.0 Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting

held on 19 September 2023

For Approval

📎 *Sustainability and Environment Minutes 2023.09.19.pdf*

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10.0 Minutes of Audit Committee Meeting held on 21 September 2023

For Approval

Copy to follow.

11.0 Planning Section

There were no issues arising.

Correspondence

12.0 Response from Department of Health re: Notice of Motion C/157/2023 Back to School Costs

For Information

Correspondence dated 11 September 2023 attached.

📎 *C.157.2023 Response from Dept of Education NOM - Back to school costs.pdf*

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Notices of Motion

13.0 Notice of Motion - Menopause

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Hanlon:

"This Council commends the efforts of World Menopause Day on 18th October for raising awareness of the challenges faced by menopausal women;

Notes the limited provision of NHS menopause services, and the difficulty facing women accessing them across the north;

Further notes that women from rural or border communities often face greater challenges in accessing GP services or reliable public transport due to geographical isolation and therefore their experience of menopause can be particularly acute;

Understands that perimenopausal and menopausal women are the fastest growing demographic in the workforce;

Commends the introduction last year of the Civil Service Menopause Policy which aims to ensure those experiencing menopause in the civil service workforce are supported to cope with its challenges and impacts Further commends the education campaign by Newry Mourne & Down District Council to educate

and inform staff of these issues;

Welcomes the Let's Talk Menopause initiative which has been rolled out by this Council Health and Well-being group;

And calls on Council to continue its good work in relation to menopause awareness and to continue to identify new initiatives in line with best practice elsewhere in order to support perimenopausal and menopausal women."

14.0 Notice of Motion - Annual Financial Assistance Call for Provision of Life Saving Equipment

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Sharvin:

"Newry, Mourne and Down Council is fully committed to supporting our sports clubs and community groups in providing life saving equipment such as defibrillators and access to CPR training courses.

This Council will establish an annual financial assistance call which can be used for purchasing a defibrillator, securing CPR training or replacing AED pads".

15.0 Notice of Motion - Education Authority, transport and availability of places for children with additional needs

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Galbraith:

"This Council is fully supportive of children and young people having access to an education they are entitled to.

This Council will seek answers from the Education Authority in relation to the yearly confusion, distress and upset caused as a result of the failure to provide transport on time to those who are entitled to it. Furthermore the Council notes with concern and seeks assurance from the Education Authority in relation to the lack of places available to those children with additional needs".

16.0 Notice of Motion - Clean Indoor Air

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Truesdale:

"Having learned the importance of ventilation and clean indoor air for health and productivity during Covid; and seeking to take all reasonable steps to enable use of all Council facilities by all citizens, including the most vulnerable and so further enable inclusion.

By seeking to care for the health and wellbeing of Council employees, this Council will commit to signing and implementing 'The COVID Safety Pledge': to report on steps already taken to prioritise clean indoor air in all council premises within the district starting with Downshire and Monaghan Row sites.

To report on what further or additional steps could be taken to improve indoor air quality and information about indoor air quality for employees and service users, and to develop and promote advice that can be followed to provide clean indoor air at events supported by NMDDC ".

17.0 Notice of Motion - Foul Smell from Warrenpoint Port

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Gibbons:

"This Council is concerned about the ongoing foul smell emanating from Warrenpoint Port, the impact this is having on resident's quality of life and the potential risk it poses to public health.

Whilst we accept that steps are being taken to address the smell, many questions and concerns still remain about how it came about and how much longer it will last. Council will write formally to Warrenpoint Port expressing these concerns and seeking clarity on what will be done to ensure this issue is swiftly resolved and will not happen again. We also call on Council's Environmental Health Department to work with Warrenpoint Port and other relevant stakeholders including the NIEA to compile a comprehensive public report that will be brought back to Council-on how this happened and how it will be resolved so it does not happen again".

18.0 Notice of Motion - Leid Week

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Lewis:

"This Council recognises and supports the Ulster Scots Community of Newry Mourne and Down. The Ulster-Scots Language is widely used by everyone from all sections of the community in the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area. For a number of years now, as part of the celebration and promotion of the Ulster-Scots Leid or Language, a special week has been set aside in the calendar where events and activities take place to bring the Language to the people. With events taking place between 20 – 24 November.

Leid Week also aims to help dispel some of the myths about the Ulster-Scots language - that it is not the preserve of one community or another but is spoken by people from all diverse backgrounds and rather than being a 'recently made up' language, it has been around for centuries. For many years, the language has suffered from neglect by public services and Leid Week is an opportunity for councils across NI, community organisations and corporate body/statutory agencies, schools, and youth organisations etc to help improve better understanding of the language and its shared history and heritage. Across NI, many councils are now directly organising events or activities to celebrate Leid Week and are working with organisations to deliver activities/events as part of the Leid Week celebrations. Indeed, Derry City and Strabane District Council this year has opened a funding call for community groups to apply to facilitate Leid Week events.

Newry Mourne and Down Council will recognise and commit resources to Leid week for the benefit and support of Ulster Scots Groups across our district. Council commit to lead on a community themed event for this year's celebrations."

19.0 Notice of Motion - Review of Waste Collection Service

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Jackson:

"This Council commits to undertake a full cost benefit analysis of the waste collection service for the entire District, including benchmarking total cost of service delivery against private sector providers. This review should include analysis of the volume of missed bins and broken bins reported both across the entire District and by DEA. This Council is committed to delivering basic Council services efficiently and cost effectively. Every ratepayer should be delivered a quality service."

20.0 Notice of Motion - Cost of Living

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Kate Murphy:

"That this Council notes with concern that the ongoing cost of living crisis and British Government imposed cuts is exacerbating poverty and financial pain on people in the community; believes that targeting objective need is fundamental to tackling poverty and inequality; Further believes what is required is a living wage economy and a fair social security system that targets resources where they are most needed and ensures people have a minimum essential standard of living; Recognises that the current social security system, particularly Universal Credit, is not fit for purpose, not properly funded and is failing people; Further recognises that those who rely on Universal Credit are incredibly vulnerable to changing circumstances often beyond their control, such as loss of employment, illness, increased caring responsibilities; and family breakdown; Endorses the Guarantee our Essentials campaign which seeks to ensure everyone can afford the essentials in hard times; And calls on the British Government to introduce an Essentials Guarantee which would ensure, at a minimum, Universal Credit/legacy benefits, would protect people from going without essentials."

21.0 Notice of Motion - Sexual Discrimination

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Howell:

"We proposed that Newry, Mourne & Down District Council:

- strongly condemns all forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression, advocating for policies that safeguard LGBTQ+ rights in housing, education, employment and healthcare;
- commits to enhancing awareness and understanding of LGBTQ+ issues among Council members, staff and the wider community through education and sensitivity training;
- supports initiatives that provide safe spaces, counselling, and support services for LGBTQ+ youth to combat bullying, harassment and mental health challenges;
- actively participates in local Pride events to demonstrate the Council's visible support for the LGBTQ+ community and identifies areas to display LGBTQ+ pride symbols in appropriate public spaces;
- seeks collaboration with local LGBTQ+ organisations and community groups to better comprehend their needs and explore joint projects that celebrate diversity and inclusivity.

By adopting this motion, we reaffirm our Council's dedication to promoting equality and inclusivity, with the aim of nurturing a more cohesive community that values its diverse members."

22.0 Notice of Motion - Animal Welfare

Notice of Motion received from Councillor Kelly:

"This Council notes with great concern the announcement by DAERA to cut the £1.25m budget for Animal Welfare in Northern Ireland to zero. This has the potential to adversely impact work being done by local government to meet its statutory requirements for non-farmed animals, and risks causing avoidable harm and suffering to animals. This Council will urgently write to DAERA Permanent Secretary Katrina Godfrey expressing its total opposition to this decision, and urging her department to reconsider this retrograde move.

Furthermore, recognising the Council's statutory responsibility, and the importance of inter-agency and partnership to support animal welfare, council will establish an Animal Welfare Forum. This Forum will meet regularly and provide strategic direction to and oversight of officers involved in animal welfare, and reporting back to the relevant committee. As well as animal welfare officers, it will seek representation from elected members, dog wardens, local kennelling providers, DAERA, local animal shelters, charities and the PSNI.

This Council also commits to ensuring that, should this cut go ahead, it will commit the necessary budget to ensure its statutory responsibilities for animal welfare are met, and no services are cut or curtailed".

Invitees

- Cllr Terry Andrews
- Cllr Callum Bowsie
- Cllr Jim Brennan
- Cllr Pete Byrne
- Mr Gerard Byrne
- Cllr Philip Campbell
- Mr Andrew Cassells
- Cllr William Clarke
- Mrs Linda Cummins
- Cllr Laura Devlin
- Ms Louise Dillon
- Cllr Cadogan Enright
- Cllr Doire Finn
- Cllr Aoife Finnegan
- Ms Joanne Fleming
- Cllr Conor Galbraith
- Cllr Mark Gibbons
- Cllr Oonagh Hanlon
- Cllr Glyn Hanna
- Cllr Valerie Harte
- Cllr Roisin Howell
- Ms Catherine Hughes
- Cllr Jonathan Jackson
- Cllr Geraldine Kearns
- Miss Veronica Keegan
- Mrs Josephine Kelly
- Cllr Tierna Kelly
- Mrs Sheila Kieran
- Cllr Cathal King
- Cllr Mickey Larkin
- Cllr David Lee-Surginor
- Cllr Alan Lewis
- Cllr Oonagh Magennis
- Mr Conor Mallon
- Cllr Aidan Mathers
- Cllr Declan McAteer
- Cllr Leeanne McEvoy
- Jonathan McGilly
- Cllr Andrew McMurray
- Catrina Miskelly
- Maureen/Joanne Morgan/Johnston
- Cllr Declan Murphy

Cllr Kate Murphy
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Cllr Selina Murphy
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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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Cllr Michael Ruane
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Cllr Michael Savage
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Cllr Gareth Sharvin
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Donna Starkey
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Sarah Taggart
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Paul Tamati
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Cllr David Taylor
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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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ACTIONS OUTSTANDING FROM PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETINGS

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
<i>C/178/2019</i>	<i>Notice of Motion – C/131/2019: Live Animals in Circuses</i>	<i>At the request of Councillor McAteer it was agreed the motion remain on the action sheet.</i>	<i>Democratic Services</i>		<i>N</i>
<i>C/084/2022</i>	<i>Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 28.03.22 – with NIAS & SHSCT</i>	<i>It was agreed to bring forth problem solving solutions to the NIAS in all facets of their work and for this action to be retained on the Action Sheet to keep track of progress</i>	<i>Democratic Services</i>		<i>N</i>

ACTION SHEET – COUNCIL MEETING – MONDAY 4 SEPTEMBER 2023

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
<i>C/162/2023</i>	<i>Action sheet from meeting held on 07.08.2023</i>	The action sheet was noted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	
<i>C/163/2023</i>	<i>Minutes of Council Meeting held on 07.08.23</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
<i>C/164/2023</i>	<i>Minutes of Special Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 14.08.2023</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	
<i>C/165/2023</i>	<i>Minutes of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 14.08.2023</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	
<i>C/166/2023</i>	<i>Minutes of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on 17.08.23</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	
<i>C/167/2023</i>	<i>Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting 21.08.23</i>	<p>The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.</p> <p><i>AHC/200/2022: Newry Leisure Centre Swimming Pool</i></p> <p>Councillors Reilly and Hanna voiced their concern at the unreliability of the opening hours at Kilkeel Swimming Pool and sought assurance that Senior Management Team were working to resolve the issues.</p> <p>The Chief Executive advised she would ask that a report be tabled at the Active and Healthy Communities Committee in relation to Kilkeel Swimming Pool.</p>	<p><i>Democratic Services</i></p> <p><i>P Tamati</i></p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Report table at September AHC Committee.</p>	

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
<i>C/168/2023</i>	<i>Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting 22.08.23</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	
<i>C/169/2023</i>	<i>Planning Section</i>	There were no issues arising.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted	
<i>C/170/2023</i>	<i>Response from Department of Education – Notice of Motion, C/133/2023 Study of Languages</i>	The letter was noted. It was agreed that Council write back to the Permanent Secretary for Education and request to know what action was being taken to improve the provision of languages.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted Letter issued	
<i>C/171/2023</i>	<i>Response from Department of Health – Notice of Motion, C/158/2023 Young Carers</i>	The letter was noted. It was agreed to request what the exact amount of funding from the Department was provided to young carers within Northern Ireland.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted Letter issued	
<i>C/172/2023</i>	<i>Response from Home Office – Notice of Motion, C/137/2023 Seasonal Workers</i>	The letter was noted. It was agreed to write to the Mr Steve Baker, the under-secretary of state and request that mushroom workers be put on the Shortage Occupational List.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted Letter issued	
<i>C/173/2023</i>	<i>Notice of Motion – Ballynahinch Bypass</i>	It was agreed to note that former Minister for Infrastructure, Nichola Mallon had progressed the Ballynahinch By Pass project to the Direction Order that was made in April 2021 with only funding and a contractor now required; expressing deep concern that due to the lack of an Executive and budget, the	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Noted Letter issued	

<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>
		<p>Department has paused preliminary works on a number of major road schemes, including the much needed Ballynahinch By Pass and expressing our solidarity with local ratepayers and residents for decades over stop start politics that have had a major impact on projects such as this by pass. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council reaffirms our total support for the Ballynahinch By Pass also agreeing to write to the Department for Infrastructure to determine firstly why the Ballynahinch By Pass has been halted when it is so advanced? Secondly what is the criteria for Road Schemes that will be prioritised?</p> <p>Also acknowledging the need for political reform to restore the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive and calls on the DUP to end its policy of abstentionism and return to Stormont to deliver the best outcomes for ALL the people of Northern Ireland.</p>			
<i>C/174/2023</i>	<i>Notice of Motion – Warrenpoint Baths</i>	The Motion was referred to the Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.	<i>Democratic Services</i> <i>C Mallon</i>	Noted	
<i>C/175/2023</i>	<i>Notice of Motion – Disabled Users Forum</i>	The Motion was referred to the Sustainability and Environment Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.	<i>Democratic Services</i> <i>A Cassells</i>	Noted	
<i>C/176/2023</i>	<i>Notice of Motion – Restocking of Quoile River</i>	It was agreed that Council recognises the importance of Coarse Fishing at the Quoile River and its positive impact on tourism, local economy, health, wellbeing and sports. Council recognises	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Letter issued	

<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>
		<p>concerns of local angling and conservation groups over the diversity and quantity of the fish stock in the Quoile and the decline of native species. Council will request DAERA to restock the Quoile, prioritising a population increase for Pike, Roach, Rudd and Bream to a sustainable level.</p> <p>It was also agreed that Council call for a plan for the restocking of the Quoile and request additional facilities for the angler.</p>			
<i>C/177/2023</i>	<i>Notice of Motion – Establishment of Independent Environmental Protection Agency</i>	<p>It was agreed that this Council is concerned by the recent blooms of blue-green algae in our waters; notes the detrimental impact these blooms have had on local businesses; asks the Department of Agricultural, Environment and Rural Affairs to swiftly convene a cross party meeting between affected Council areas to discuss the issue & to develop an action plan to address it; and calls for the establishment of an independent Environmental Protection Agency in line with New Decade, New Approach commitments.</p>	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Letter issued	
<i>C/178/2023</i>	<i>Notice of Motion – Scheme for Medical Hair Loss</i>	<p>It was agreed that Council calls on the Department of Health to Investigate the possibility of replicating the PRSI scheme in the South for those suffering from medical hair loss here in the north.</p> <p>While the Council does acknowledge the immense financial pressure facing public services, including our health service, brought about by a decade of savage tory austerity, it also recognises the devastating impact that medical hair loss can have on a persons confidence, mental health and overall quality of life and believes that people living in the north should have access to the same dignity and quality of care that is offered to those in the South</p>	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Letter issued	

<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>
		so that they can live their lives comfortably and confidently. Therefore, this Council will write to the Department of Health and urge them to look into the possibility of introducing this scheme for people in the north and also calls on the DUP to end their boycott of the Assembly and Executive which is exacerbating the current pressure on our public services, including our vital Health service.			
<i>C/179/2023</i>	<i>Notice of Motion – Funding Sub Committee</i>	The Motion was referred to the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.	<i>Democratic Services J Kelly</i>	Report considered at Sept SPR Committee Meeting	
<i>C/180/2023</i>	<i>Emergency Motion - Recent closure of Imaginarium in Sticky Fingers</i>	It was agreed that Newry, Mourne and Down District Council notes with sadness the recent closure of Imaginarium in Sticky Fingers, which provided a facility for countless families and young people across the District. The Council commits to working with the Department of Communities, the Executive office and the relevant Council officers to protect arts provision across the District. It was also agreed the Arts Council NI meet with Sticky Fingers to outline the reasons why funding application had not been successful and Council write to the Department for Communities Permanent Secretary to request officials meet with the group to discuss funding options.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	Letter issued	
<i>END</i>					

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**NMD/C/**

Minutes of Council Meeting held on Monday 4 September 2023 at 6.00pm in Downshire Chamber

In the Chair:

Councillor V Harte

In attendance in Chamber:

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor C Bowsie
Councillor J Brennan	Councillor P Byrne
Councillor P Campbell	Councillor W Clarke
Councillor L Devlin	Councillor D Finn
Councillor A Finnegan	Councillor C Galbraith
Councillor O Hanlon	Councillor G Hanna
Councillor R Howell	Councillor J Jackson
Councillor G Kearns	Councillor T Kelly
Councillor C King	Councillor M Larkin
Councillor D Lee-Surginor	Councillor A Lewis
Councillor O Magennis	Councillor A Mathers
Councillor A McMurray	Councillor S O'Hare
Councillor D Murphy	Councillor K Murphy
Councillor A Quinn	Councillor H Reilly
Councillor M Savage	Councillor D Taylor
Councillor J Truesdale	

In attendance via Teams:

Councillor C Enright	Councillor D McAteer
Councillor L McEvoy	Councillor M Rice
Councillor M Ruane	Councillor G Sharvin
Councillor J Tinnelly	

Officials in attendance in Chamber:

Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
 Mr A Cassells, Director of Sustainability and Environment
 Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism
 Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer
 Mrs L Dillon, Democratic Services Officer

Officials in attendance via Teams:

Mr A Patterson, Assistant Director, Tourism, Culture and Events

C/160/2023 APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Gibbons, S Murphy and Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services.

The Chairperson spoke of her pleasure at being at Wake The Giant and Eats and Beats Festivals over the past few weeks and congratulated everyone involved with these events for the excellent work in bringing them to the District. She added both events had attracted a large footfall to the area and it was great to see the crowds of people out and about once again after Covid.

The Chairperson congratulated all local Community Groups and Irish Summer Schools on the wonderful summer schemes and family fundays held over the Summer. She spoke of how these were hugely beneficial to Communities especially with the Cost of Living Crisis.

The Chairperson condemned the act carried out by a criminal gang in the Slieve Gullion area that day and sent best wishes on a speedy recovery to the victim.

The Chairperson referred to recent report in the press and social media regarding Newry City Park and asked the Chief Executive for an update.

Mrs Ward advised she had been working with officers and she would communicate with all Councillors the following day outlining Councils position with regards to Newry City Park prior to the closing date. She added the notice of motion (C/156/2023) was a matter for Council and had been deferred to the Strategy Resources Committee meeting on 14 September 2023.

Councillor Devlin commended everyone involved in the Eats and Beats Festival in Newcastle including the cleansing and events team from Council, Shin Dig Events, Mourne Larder and all the acts and vendors and congratulated them all on what was a phenomenal event.

Councillors Clarke, Reilly and Truesdale echoed the sentiments of Councillor Devlin in thanking all those involved in organising the Eats and Beats Festival and spoke of the importance of an event review taking place for evaluation and feedback. Mrs Ward confirmed reviews of Council events were carried out.

C/161/2023 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

C/162/2023 ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 7 AUGUST 2023

Read: Action sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 7 August 2023 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Action Sheet from Council Meeting held on 7 August 2023 was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Devlin.

C/163/2023 COUNCIL MINUTES FOR ADOPTION AND SIGNING OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 7 AUGUST 2023

Read: Minutes of Council Meeting held on 7 August 2023 (copy circulated).

C/156/2023: Notice of Motion, Newry City Park Funding Application

In welcoming the Chief Executive's assurance that clarification would be provided on the Council's position regarding the Peace Plus application for funding for Newry City Park, Councillor Savage stated it was important to clarify what criteria Council did not meet.

The Chief Executive confirmed the correspondence to be issued to Councillors would address the matter.

C/148/2023 -C/075/2023: Notice of Motion, Reduction in Minimum Voting Age

Councillor Andrews enquired if a response had been received from the political parties regarding the correspondence sent.

The Chief Executive confirmed she would check and come back to Councillor Andrews directly in relation to his query.

Agreed: The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 7 August 2023 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Bowsie, seconded by Councillor Kearns.

COMMITTEE MINUTES FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION

C/164/2023 MINUTES OF SPECIAL ENTERPRISE, REGENERATION AND TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14 AUGUST 2023

Read: Minutes of Special Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 14 August 2023 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of Special Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 14 August 2023 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on

the proposal of Councillor Campbell, seconded by Councillor Galbraith.

C/165/2023 MINUTES OF ENTERPRISE, REGENERATION AND TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14 AUGUST 2023

Read: Minutes of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 14 August 2023 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 14 August 2023 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Campbell, seconded by Councillor Galbraith.

C/166/2023 MINUTES OF STRATEGY POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 AUGUST 2023

Read: Minutes of Strategy Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 17 August 2023 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of Strategy Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 17 August 2023 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Hanlon.

C/167/2023 MINUTES OF ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21 AUGUST 2023

Read: Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 21 August 2023 (copy circulated).

AHC/200/2022: Newry Leisure Centre Swimming Pool

Councillors Reilly and Hanna voiced their concern at the unreliability of the opening hours at Kilkeel Swimming Pool and sought assurance that Senior Management Team were working to resolve the issues.

The Chief Executive advised she would ask that a report be tabled at the Active and Healthy Communities Committee in relation to Kilkeel Swimming Pool.

Agreed: The Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 21 August 2023 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Galbraith, seconded by Councillor Howell.

C/168/2023 **MINUTES OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 22 AUGUST 2023**

Read: Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 22 August 2023 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 22 August 2023 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Andrews.**

C/169/2023 **PLANNING SECTION**

There were no issues arising.

CORRESPONDENCE

C/170/2023 **RESPONSE FROM DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RE: NOTICE OF MOTION C/133/2023 – STUDY OF LANGUAGES (Copy circulated)**

Read: Correspondence from the Department of Education regarding Study of languages dated 14 August 2023. (Copy circulated)

Councillor O'Hare voiced disappointment at the response received from the Permanent Secretary for Education, Dr Mark Browne, in relation to her motion on the study of languages.

Councillor O'Hare stated it was known in education systems worldwide that the study of languages should begin at primary level, and the fact that the study of languages was not compulsory at primary level was a matter of policy and the implications of that. She spoke of how school budgets were over stretched and funding was not being provided for the delivery of languages.

Councillor O'Hare referred to Dr Browne stating languages were compulsory at Key Stage 3 and said that in reality the amount of time allocated at Key Stage 3 for the study of languages was not stipulated in the curriculum and this meant languages might be offered for only one year and not all three. This policy decision had reduced the uptake of languages and at GCSE level, the study of languages was no longer compulsory. As a Council, Members had a responsibility to bring attention to education policy that contradicts acquired wisdom and common sense.

Councillor Byrne agreed with Councillor O'Hare and spoke at length about the importance of languages and how Primary School level was when to get people to fall in love with languages and how languages not being compulsory at GCSE level was also leading to a down turn.

Councillor Byrne voiced his disappointment at the response received and proposed Council write back to the Permanent Secretary for Education and request to know what action is being taken to improve the provision of languages. Councillor O'Hare seconded the proposal.

Councillors Reilly and Lee-Surginor supported Councillor O'Hare and Byrne in relation to the need for languages in education.

Councillor Reilly took the opportunity to voice concern at seeing first-hand the deterioration in the state of Kilkeel High School.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor Finn to note response from the Department of Education regarding Notice of Motion C/133/2023, Study of Languages.**

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor O'Hare that Council write back to the Permanent Secretary for Education and request to know what action was being taken to improve the provision of languages.

C/171/2023 **RESPONSE FROM DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RE: NOTICE OF MOTION C/158/2023 – YOUNG CARERS**

Read: Correspondence from the Department of Health regarding young carers dated 24 August 2023. (Copy circulated)

In referring to the response received from the Department of Health, Councillor Devlin stated it confirmed what she had suspected in that there was a continuing shift of state responsibility to the charitable sector. The Department funded in part Action for Children and Barnardos and expected these groups to plug the hole and fund the shortfall.

Councillor Devlin referred to NI Census figures showing there were around 8,000 carers in Northern Ireland.

Councillor Devlin proposed Council write back to the Department of Health and request what the exact amount of funding from the Department was provided to young carers within Northern Ireland. Councillor McEvoy seconded the proposal.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor Finn to note the correspondence received from the Department of Health regarding Notice of Motion C/158/2023, Young Carers.**

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor McEvoy to request what the

exact amount of funding from the Department was provided to young carers within Northern Ireland.

C/172/2023 RESPONSE FROM HOME OFFICE RE: NOTICE OF MOTION C/137/2023 – SEASONAL WORKERS

Read: Correspondence from the Home Office regarding seasonal workers dated 7 August 2023. (Copy circulated)

Councillor Hanlon highlighted the reasoning for the motion was to address the impact on mushroom farmers in the north of Ireland and voiced her disappointment that the response received from the Home Office had not addressed that.

Councillor Byrne spoke in support of comments made by Councillor Hanlon and agreed that Council asked to be added to the Shortage Occupational list because of the issue of the 6 month visas. He added this needed to be addressed given that companies bordered the Republic of Ireland which operated under EU rules in terms of visas, and without it, the mushroom industry was being pushed to the brink of collapse.

Councillor Hanlon proposed Council write to the Mr Steve Baker, the under-secretary of state and request that mushroom workers be put on the Shortage Occupational List. Councillor Byrne seconded the proposal.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor Finn to note the correspondence received from the Home Office regarding Notice of Motion C/137/2023, Seasonal Workers.

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Byrne to write to the Mr Steve Baker, the under-secretary of state and request that mushroom workers be put on the Shortage Occupational List.

C/173/2023

NOTICE OF MOTION – BALLYNAHINCH BY-PASS

14

The following motion was received from Councillor Andrews:

"Noting that former Minister for Infrastructure, Nichola Mallon had progressed the Ballynahinch By Pass project to the Direction Order that was made in April 2021 with only funding and a contractor now required; expressing deep concern that due to the lack of an Executive and budget, the Department has paused preliminary works on a number of major road schemes, including the much needed Ballynahinch By Pass and expressing our solidarity with local ratepayers and residents for decades over stop start politics that have had a major impact on projects such as this by pass.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council reaffirms our total support for the Ballynahinch By Pass also agreeing to write to the Department for Infrastructure to determine firstly why the Ballynahinch By Pass has been halted when it is so advanced? Secondly what is the criteria for Road Schemes that will be prioritised?

Also acknowledging the need for political reform to restore the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive and calls on the DUP to end its policy of abstentionism and return to Stormont to deliver the best outcomes for ALL the people of Northern Ireland."

The motion was seconded by Councillor Brennan.

In presenting the motion Councillor Andrews spoke at length about the history of the Ballynahinch By Pass as far back as 1960 when the scheme was very much on the agenda. He spoke of how elsewhere in Northern Ireland there had been roads opened, existing roads duelled and improved vastly, including the Dungiven bypass and others that had opened.

Councillor Andrews spoke of how the SDLP and other parties were totally committed to the A5 upgrade and other schemes and would endeavour to get from planning to full implementation and delivery. He added that Ballynahinch was crying out for the bypass as the existing infrastructure could not cope with the ever increasing traffic and that it was long overdue.

Councillor Andrews referred to the success of the bypass at Comber and how Ballynahinch would benefit from the bypass and called upon the Department to make it happen.

In moving the motion Councillor Andrews urged Members to back the call for the Ballynahinch bypass to be progressed for the benefit of the town and surrounding areas that constitute the gateway to the Mournes.

Councillor Brennan confirmed that Sinn Féin as a party recognised the urgent need for the Ballynahinch bypass and asked for clarity as to what was meant by the wording of stop start politics within the motion and what was meant by reforming the institutions.

Councillor Andrews replied that since the 1960s when the bypass was muted, there had been periods of stop and go, which was frustrating and the motion was to move the project forward. He added that reforming the institutions meant there was a need to look at a way to get the Assembly working for the benefit of everyone.

Councillor Brennan stated the recent announcement from the Department for Infrastructure, which put the Ballynahinch bypass under threat was a hammer blow to communities, campaigners and ratepayers. It was another stark reminder of the impact that Tory cuts were having on infrastructure and public services and the continued boycott of the DUP only facilitated this.

Councillor Brennan added the long standing campaign and the collective efforts to get the Ballynahinch bypass to shovel ready position must not be squandered and elected representatives must work together and send a message from Newry Mourne & Down District Council that any more delay on this vital project was unacceptable.

Councillor Jackson stated DUP was disgusted the Ballynahinch bypass had been put to the bottom of the pile and not to be progressed at any level as it was a lifeline for local people and visitors to boost tourism potential and the local economy. He added the lack of strategic vision for the project within the Department had been evident for decades and it was disappointing that it was as far away as ever before.

Councillor Taylor said it was very clear there was a lot of disappointment with the announcement and that Ballynahinch had failed to meet the criteria. As a party the UUP recognised the importance of the project from an economical and environmental perspective and the need for it to take place was a matter of urgency. In terms of the motion itself however the call for a wholesale political reform meant he would have to abstain.

Councillor Lee-Surginor on behalf of the Alliance party voiced support for the motion and his disappointment that it was not going ahead and that there needed to be political reform and restoration of the Executive as soon as possible.

Councillor Bowsie echoed Councillor Jackson in expressing his party's disappointment that the Ballynahinch bypass was being paused. He added the announcement was a bit of a red herring, because procurement for the bypass had stalled when there had been infrastructure ministers and spoke at length outlining the sequences of events to date.

Councillor Bowsie stated to blame DUP because there had not been an Infrastructure Minister in post for the last 10 months was ridiculous. Councillor Bowsie stated that whilst DUP supported the frustration expressed in the motion towards the 'pausing' of the Ballynahinch bypass it was not going to support a motion that contradicted the position on restoring the Executive and voiced his disappointment for including that.

Councillor Clarke stated the Ballynahinch Bypass was too serious an issue and a Council wide issue which all party's had continually campaigned. He spoke of how it was not only for the people of Ballynahinch but for commuters and investors who needed quality road infrastructure and that funding for this strategic project and this Council area needed to be put in place.

Councillor Kelly voiced support for the motion and spoke of how there should be a Minister in place to make the decision, and not put on a Permanent Secretary, for the benefit of the people of Ballynahinch and the wider District.

Councillor Andrews thanked everyone for their input and those who supported the motion.

The Chairperson then put the Motion to a vote by way of a show of hands, the results of which were as follows:

FOR:	32
AGAINST:	0
ABSTENTIONS:	5

The Motion was carried.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Brennan to note that former Minister for Infrastructure, Nichola Mallon had progressed the Ballynahinch By Pass project to the Direction Order that was made in April 2021 with only funding and a contractor now required; expressing deep concern that due to the lack of an Executive and budget, the Department has paused preliminary works on a number of major road schemes, including the much needed Ballynahinch By Pass and expressing our solidarity with local ratepayers and residents for decades over stop start politics that have had a major impact on projects such as this by pass. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council reaffirms our total support for the Ballynahinch By Pass also agreeing to write to the Department for Infrastructure to determine firstly why the Ballynahinch By Pass has been halted when it is so advanced? Secondly what is the criteria for Road Schemes that will be prioritised? Also acknowledging the need for political reform to restore the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive and calls on the DUP to end its policy of abstentionism and return to Stormont to deliver the best outcomes for ALL the people of Northern Ireland.**

Councillor Reilly left the meeting at this stage – 7.02pm

C/174/2023 NOTICE OF MOTION – WARRENPOINT BATHS

The following motion was received from Councillor Ruane:

"That this Council regrets that Warrenpoint Baths continues to fall into a state of disrepair and has now become an eyesore on what is one of the most scenic views in Ireland. Welcomes the effort made by Council and local Councillors, who worked hard to ensure planning permission for the redevelopment of Warrenpoint Baths was retained in 2022. Expresses its disappointment that a recent funding application to the British Government's Levelling Up Fund to redevelop the Baths site was unsuccessful. Recognises the construction of Narrow Water Bridge is due to commence in early Summer 2024, and with it will come increased tourism and economic opportunities for the wider Warrenpoint and South Down region.

Further agrees that a viable and innovative project like Warrenpoint Baths will complement the much-anticipated Narrow Water Bridge. This will help to increase tourist numbers to Warrenpoint and drive the local economy.

Agrees that Newry Mourne and Down Council should make the redevelopment of Warrenpoint Baths a flagship Council project in the new term. Commits to actively seeking alternative funding for the project through avenues such as the Irish Government's Shared Island Fund."

The motion was seconded by Councillor Murphy.

Agreed: The Motion was referred to the Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.

The Chairperson explained that due to an oversight the following motion would be referred to the Sustainability and Environment Committee and invited Councillor Clarke to read the motion.

C/175/2023 NOTICE OF MOTION – DISABLED USERS FORUM

The following motion was received from Councillor Clarke:

"That this Council recognises the importance of ensuring that the district's tourist attractions, services and products are fully accessible for all. Will establish a disabled users forum to proactively engage with local residents & organisations who experience accessibility issues in the district to hear first hand how they experience council facilities and local attractions. All Council facilities and promotional material will clearly display a list of local changing places and accessible facilities in the district. All Council employees will be made aware of changing places, units and accessible features within council facilities. Furthermore when an event is applied for that it includes the use of portable toilet facilities a mobile changing places unit must be provided also"

The motion was seconded by Councillor Hanlon.

Agreed: The Motion was referred to the Sustainability and Environment Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.

C/176/2023 NOTICE OF MOTION – RESTOCKING OF QUOILE RIVER

The following motion was received from Councillor Enright:

"Council recognises the importance of Coarse Fishing at the Quoile River and its positive impact on tourism, local economy, health, wellbeing and sports. Council recognises concerns of local angling and conservation groups over the diversity and quantity of the fish stock in the Quoile and the decline of native species. Council will request DAERA to restock the Quoile, prioritising a population increase for Pike, Roach, Rudd and Bream to a sustainable level".

The motion was seconded by Councillor Campbell.

In presenting the motion Councillor Enright spoke of how in past decades the Quoile Estuary was a key attraction for East Down with international coarse fishing had been being held on the river. The river was famous for rudd, pike, perch, eels and bream and on the NI Direct website the Quoile Basin was the only coarse fishery advertised in County Down.

Councillor Enright explained that repeated mismanagement over decades had damaged the fishery to the point that re-stocking was needed to bring the fishery back. Prior to sewerage works being upgraded in the Quoile Catchment area, repeated spills by NI Water over 15 years had turned the river floor at the lower end of the estuary into what the Departments of Environments Rivers website describes as a toxic sludge.

Councillor Enright advised in recent years the Quoile barrier had not been repaired properly and seals entering from Strangford Lough and over a period of years had devoured all large pike, perch, eels and bream and severely diminished the shoals of rudd. It took 9 years of canvassing DAERA by elected representatives to have the barrier fixed in 2021/2.

Councillor Enright pointed out the fishery on the Quoile was one of the key components in the Quoile River Park that was envisaged by old Down Council. A project that seemed to have been shelved. Other aspects of this project included;

- Having NI River and DAERA upgrade the barrier on the Quoile in the same manner as the Lagan to restore navigation and create workable fish-passes to allow salmon up the river again.
- To extend the Quoile River Walk from Downpatrick to the Barrier and link Delamont Park and Killyleagh to Strangford and Castle Ward.

- To create boardwalks around the Cathedral linking Inch Abbey and the Grove at the Cathedral.

Members were informed the restocking of the river did not need to await any long-term plan for the Quoile before restoring the fishery as there were dozens of Council and DAERA supported fishing platforms along the river.

Councillor Enright stated that whilst he understood the Departments usual policy that fisheries should be allowed to recover naturally, too much damage has been done to the Quoile fishery over too many years and a managed restocking of the river was needed over a 3 to 5 year period until it returned to its former glory.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Campbell spoke of the importance of the Quoile to local anglers and its positive impact on health and well-being, the local economy and tourism. He added it was important to work together to ensure it was top destination in Downpatrick.

Councillor Campbell stated Sinn Féin were committed to the responsible and sustainable enhancement of facilities at the Quoile and would continue to work to see concerns of local groups addressed and delivered for local residents and visitors alike.

Councillor Lewis on behalf of DUP voiced support for the motion and spoke of the tourism potential and benefit it would bring. He spoke of how the Departments position was that the Quoile should be self-sustained, however the damage to the seal gate that was left unrepaired for years could not be overlooked, and that it was necessary that the Department take every possible step to move forward and restock the Quoile.

In supporting the motion, Councillor Galbraith proposed an addition in that Council call for a plan for the restocking of the Quoile and request additional facilities for anglers.

Councillor Enright agreed to the addition to the motion.

Councillors Hanlon welcomed the motion and the call for improving facilities at the Quoile and spoke of the importance of Council supporting local fishermen and making improvements to transform the Quoile.

Councillor Taylor said the lack of action from the Department was concerning and voiced support for the motion.

Councillor Lewis reiterated this was an ongoing issue for a long period of time and urged Council to request an urgent reply to this matter.

In summing up Councillor Enright thanked Members for their support.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Enright, seconded by Councillor Campbell that Council recognises the importance of Coarse Fishing at the Quoile River and its positive impact on tourism, local economy, health, wellbeing and sports. Council recognises concerns of local angling and conservation groups over the diversity and

quantity of the fish stock in the Quoile and the decline of native species. Council will request DAERA to restock the Quoile, prioritising a population increase for Pike, Roach, Rudd and Bream to a sustainable level.

It was also agreed that Council call for a plan for the restocking of the Quoile and request additional facilities for the angler.

Councillor Taylor left the meeting at this stage -7.23pm.

C/177/2023 NOTICE OF MOTION – RECENT BLOOMS OF ALGAE, ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

The following motion was received from Councillor McMurray:

"This Council is concerned by the recent blooms of blue-green algae in our waters; notes the detrimental impact these blooms have had on local businesses; asks the Department of Agricultural, Environment and Rural Affairs to swiftly convene a cross party meeting between affected Council areas to discuss the issue & to develop an action plan to address it; and calls for the establishment of an independent Environmental Protection Agency in line with New Decade, New Approach commitments".

The motion was seconded by Councillor Truesdale.

In presenting the motion, Councillor McMurray advised whilst reference was made to recent algal blooms, they had been affecting areas within Slieve Croob for a number of years and affecting Northern Ireland, and the whole of the island.

He spoke at length of his own experiences at Castlewellan lake as an instructor of water based activities, as well as an individual taking part in recreation where for years and that he had not been aware of blue/green algae as being an issue. However, from at least 2019 there had been yearly outbreaks. Members were advised providers had contacted him regarding the lake and the implications it had for their operations with having to relocate to alternative sites and turn people away from their business and with an associated loss of earnings.

Councillor McMurray advised the issue of blue/green algae went beyond the restriction of recreation as it could have serious health implications for both humans and animals, as well as being an indicator of the poor and deteriorating state of waters.

Councillor McMurray took the opportunity to thank Council for the work undertaken in testing the waters along with other agencies.

Reference was made to the Bloomin' Algae App which could be found on the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology to record its prevalence and Members were asked to do so

and that Council Officers also, on learning of an instance of Blue/Green Algae, share this site via its social media.

Councillor McMurray pointed out the matter went beyond the boundaries of the district and given the nature of the environmental and climate emergencies being faced, it was something to be expected and required a unity of effort in order to address.

Councillor McMurray asked that Council send a clear message that an independent Environmental Protection Agency must be set up as a matter of urgency with preventative measures introduced, as well as legislative powers to ensure that the water quality in the district was enhanced. He added it went beyond the issue of blue/green algae with the closing of some areas of water to the public due to pollution this summer.

Council should be doing all it could to ensure that there was safe and clean water for citizens and visitors in which to enjoy recreation as well as ensuring a habitat fit the natural world and ensure that the message of environmental concern is passed on from this Council.

Councillors Devlin supported and thanked Councillor McMurray for bringing the motion and articulating the impact it had on water based activities and the potential toxic nature of what it was. She added it was a sensible approach to be taken across Northern Ireland to deal with it. Reference was also made to the issues which arose at the Newcastle Harbour in June/ July and the impact of that had on business and the tourism product.

Councillor Howell voiced support for the motion on behalf of Sinn Féin and the importance of Council taking action and reporting on it via social media.

The motion was unanimously supported.

Agreed:

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor McMurray, seconded by Councillor Truesdale that this Council is concerned by the recent blooms of blue-green algae in our waters; notes the detrimental impact these blooms have had on local businesses; asks the Department of Agricultural, Environment and Rural Affairs to swiftly convene a cross party meeting between affected Council areas to discuss the issue & to develop an action plan to address it; and calls for the establishment of an independent Environmental Protection Agency in line with New Decade, New Approach commitments.

C/178/2023 NOTICE OF MOTION – SCHEME FOR MEDICAL HAIR LOSS

22

The following motion was received from Councillor Finnegan:

"This Council calls on the Department of Health to investigate the possibility of replicating the PRSI scheme in the South for those suffering from medical hair loss here in the north.

While the Council does acknowledge the immense financial pressure facing public services, including our health service, brought about by a decade of savage tory austerity, it also recognises the devastating impact that medical hair loss can have on a person's confidence, mental health and overall quality of life and believes that people living in the north should have access to the same dignity and quality of care that is offered to those in the South so that they can live their lives comfortably and confidently.

Therefore, this council will write to the Department of Health and urge them to look into the possibility of introducing this scheme for people in the north and also calls on the DUP to end their boycott of the Assembly and Executive which is exacerbating the current pressure on our public services, including our vital Health service".

The motion was seconded by Councillor Howell.

Councillor Finnegan advised she had brought forward the motion after hearing of work done by one of her constituents in helping those dealing with the challenges of medical hair loss, and the inequality that existed between patients North and South.

Members were advised that in the South, a person suffering from medical conditions such as alopecia or hair loss brought about by chemotherapy for example would have their GP sign off on a PRSI health certificate, allowing them to claim up to €500 towards the cost of a high quality wig, hair piece or scalp treatment with their chosen specialist.

Councillor Finnegan stated the motion called on the Council to write to the Department of Health, asking them to investigate the possibility of replicating the PRSI scheme on offer in the South, and whilst we are all aware of the financial challenges facing public services here, it was important to do all we could to support those suffering from the devastating impact that medical hair loss had on a person's confidence, mental health and overall quality of life.

Councillor Finnegan stated an Executive needed to be formed now, with all parties working together to invest in the health service and urged the DUP to end its blockade of the Executive, which was exacerbating the current pressure on our public services, including our vital health service.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Howell spoke of how people known to her had suffered from alopecia and the huge impact it had on their daily lives and how they had to financially support themselves and a scheme like this being made available to everyone would be most welcome.

Councillor Truesdale voiced support for the motion and spoke of a personal experience through a friend and family member who had to fund their hair piece and she was astounded at the prices being quoted.

Councillor Byrne welcomed the motion on behalf of SDLP and spoke at length at the differences in the schemes and support provided between the north and south and how there was a need for a unified approach. He spoke of the difficulty putting forward an excellent motion like this, with the non-functioning Executive and the Department of Health's issues with budget, and that there needed to be collaboration across the island on support schemes such as this one.

Councillor Hanna stated it was an excellent motion, however for DUP to support the motion he proposed an amendment that the last paragraph be removed.

Councillor Jackson seconded the proposed amendment.

The proposed amended motion read as follows:

"This Council calls on the Department of Health to investigate the possibility of replicating the PRSI scheme in the South for those suffering from medical hair loss here in the north.

While the Council does acknowledge the immense financial pressure facing public services, including our health service, brought about by a decade of savage tory austerity, it also recognises the devastating impact that medical hair loss can have on a person's confidence, mental health and overall quality of life and believes that people living in the north should have access to the same dignity and quality of care that is offered to those in the South so that they can live their lives comfortably and confidently.

Therefore, this Council will write to the Department of Health and urge them to look into the possibility of introducing this scheme for people in the north."

Councillor Finnegan did not accept Councillor Hanna's proposed amendment.

The Chairperson put the amended motion to a vote by way of a show of hands and voting was as follows:

FOR:	4
AGAINST:	31
ABSTENTIONS:	0

The proposal was lost.

The Chairperson then put Councillor Finnegan's Motion to a vote by way of a show of hands, the results of which were as follows:

FOR:	31
AGAINST:	0
ABSTENTIONS:	4

The Motion was carried.

Councillor Finnegan thanked Members for their support and said as someone who lived and worked in a border community, it further highlighted those patients living minutes away from each other could not access the same quality of healthcare. She added it was important that men and women in the north had same access and quality of care that is offered to those in the South so that they could still live their lives comfortably and confidently.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Finnegan, seconded by Councillor Howell that Council calls on the Department of Health to Investigate the possibility of replicating the PRSI scheme in the South for those suffering from medical hair loss here in the north.**

While the Council does acknowledge the immense financial pressure facing public services, including our health service, brought about by a decade of savage tory austerity, it also recognises the devastating impact that medical hair loss can have on a person's confidence, mental health and overall quality of life and believes that people living in the north should have access to the same dignity and quality of care that is offered to those in the South so that they can live their lives comfortably and confidently.

Therefore, this Council will write to the Department of Health and urge them to look into the possibility of introducing this scheme for people in the north and also calls on the DUP to end their boycott of the Assembly and Executive which is exacerbating the current pressure on our public services, including our vital Health service.

C/179/2023 NOTICE OF MOTION – FUNDING SUB COMMITTEE

The following motion was received from Councillor Savage:

"Council recognises the challenges in securing funding for landmark capital and community projects across the district and agrees to establish a Standing Sub-Committee of Council Officers and nominated Councillors tasked with overseeing the identification of funding streams relevant to Council capital and community projects and the timely delivery of funding applications.

The Sub-Committee will meet monthly and report to the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee which will agree the Terms of Reference of the Standing Sub-Committee in October 2023 for approval at the November 2023 Full Council Meeting".

Councillor Savage voiced his disappointment that the motion was not being heard by Council.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Finn.

Agreed: The Motion was referred to the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.

The Chief Executive advised an emergency Notice of Motion had been received, the wording of which had been emailed to all Councillors and to enable it to be heard, it would be necessary to suspend Standing Orders 16.1.1 for which a qualified majority vote was required. (80% of Members present and voting).

The Chairperson put the matter to a recorded vote, the results of which were as follows:

FOR:	30
AGAINST:	0
ABSTENTIONS:	4

It was agreed by a qualified majority vote to suspend Standing Orders 16.1.1 (copy attached)

C/180/2023 EMERGENCY NOTICE OF MOTION – RECENT CLOSURE OF IMAGINARIUM IN STICKY FINGERS

The following Emergency Motion was received from Councillor Finn:

"Newry, Mourne and Down District Council notes with sadness the recent closure of Imaginarium in Sticky Fingers, which provided a facility for countless families and young people across the District. The Council commits to working with the Department of Communities, the Executive office and the relevant Council officers to protect arts provision across the District"

The motion was seconded by Councillor Savage.

Councillor Finn thanked Members for enabling the motion to be heard and voiced concern for the loss of facilities provided at the Imaginarium. She spoke of Newry having a rich and vibrant arts offering and the loss of the Imaginarium would be felt by numerous households across the entire district and that it was incredibly important for Council to recognise the contribution that all arts organisations made.

Councillor Finn took the opportunity to welcome the appointment of a new arts officer within the Council, who would work with herself and other councillors with the spirit of the motion to ensure that that arts and cultural offerings and services were enhanced and decimated no further.

In welcoming the motion on behalf of Sinn Féin Councillor Kearns proposed an amendment to include the following:

"That the Arts Council NI meet with Sticky Fingers to outline the reasons why funding application had not been successful and Council write to the Department for Communities Permanent Secretary to request officials meet with the group to discuss funding options".

Councillor Finn agreed to Councillor Kearns's amendment.

Councillor McMurray voiced support for the motion.

The motion was unanimously agreed.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Finn, seconded by Councillor Savage that Newry, Mourne and Down District Council notes with sadness the recent closure of Imaginarium in Sticky Fingers, which provided a facility for countless families and young people across the District. The Council commits to working with the Department of Communities, the Executive office and the relevant Council officers to protect arts provision across the District. It was also agreed the the Arts Council NI meet with Sticky Fingers to outline the reasons why funding application had not been successful and Council write to the Department**

for Communities Permanent Secretary to request officials meet with the group to discuss funding options.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 7.52pm.

For confirmation at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 2 October 2023.

Signed:

Chairperson

Chief Executive

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL
RECORDED VOTE

DATE: 04/09/23VENUE: Downshire/ MS TeamsMEETING: Council

SUBJECT OF VOTE: Suspend Standing Order – Emergency Notice of Motion: Recent Closure of recent closure of Imaginarium in Sticky Fingers

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	6			1
C Enright				
D Finn	7			
A Finnegan	8			
C Galbraith	9			
M Gibbons				2
O Hanlon	10			
G Hanna			2	
V Harte	11			
R Howell	12			
J Jackson			3	
G Kearns	13			
T Kelly	14			
C King	15			
M Larkin	16			
D Lee-Surginor	17			
A Lewis			4	
O Magennis	18			
A Mathers	19			
D McAteer	20			
L McEvoy	21			
A McMurray	22			
S O'Hare	23			
D Murphy	24			
K Murphy	25			
S Murphy				3
A Quinn				4
H Reilly				5
M Rice	26			
M Ruane	27			
M Savage	28			
G Sharvin				6
D Taylor				7
J Tinnelly	29			
J Truesdale	30			
TOTALS	30	-	4	7

NEWRY MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**Minutes of the Enterprise, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting
held on Monday 11 September 2023 at 6.00pm in the Boardroom, Monaghan Row,
and remotely via Microsoft Teams****Chairperson:** Councillor M Ruane (Chamber)**Deputy Chairperson:** Councillor G Kearns (Chamber)**In attendance:** **(Committee Members)**
Councillor T Andrews (Chamber)
Councillor C Bowsie (Teams)
Councillor P Campbell (Teams)
Councillor W Clarke (Chamber)
Councillor C Galbraith (Teams)
Councillor C King (Chamber)
Councillor D Lee-Surginor (Teams)
Councillor A Quinn (Teams)
Councillor M Savage (Chamber)
Councillor J Tinnelly (Teams)
Councillor J Truesdale (Teams)**(Non Committee Members)**
Councillor J Brennan**Officials in attendance:** Mr C Mallon, Director Economy, Regeneration & Tourism
Mr J McGilly Assistant Director Regeneration
Mr A Patterson, Assistant Director: Economy, Growth & Tourism
Ms L Dillon, Democratic Services Officer
Ms L Cummins, Democratic Services Officer**Also in attendance:** Mr Eoin Magennis University of Ulster**ERT/115/2023: APOLOGIES / CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

The following apology was received:

Councillor S Murphy

ERT/116/2023: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest.

ERT/117/2023: ACTION SHEET ENTERPRISE, REGENERATION & TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING MONDAY 14 AUGUST 2023

Read: Action Sheet arising out of the Minutes of the Enterprise, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday 14 August 2023.
(Copy circulated)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews seconded by Councillor Savage it was agreed to note the Action Sheet arising from the Enterprise, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday 14 August 2023.

PRESENTATIONS

**ERT/118/2023 – PRESENTATION – EOIN MAGENNIS
UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER UUEPC LOCAL GOVERNMENT OUTLOOK**

Mr Magennis explained by way of introduction, that the economic forecast for Newry Mourne and Down is based on the most recent UUEPC Northern Ireland Outlook, which forecasts that the local economy will narrowly avoid a recession in 2023, both in employment and GVA terms, followed by a few years of low or little growth.

He said the Spring 2023 Outlook forecasts the rate of inflation will start to decrease in 2023, however prices will still rise but at a lower rate than last year, but it will be at least 2025 before the target rate of 2% is reached meaning costs of living pressure will continue accompanied by higher interest rates and costs of borrowing.

He said two scenarios are offered in each forecast, with the following assumptions based on the current information:

Baseline – a policy neutral position where higher interest rates and inflation and pressures on public spending led to sluggish rates of growth for much of the 2020s. Employment continues to grow (to a rate of 78%) and the tight labour market remains.

Upper – higher growth rates improve through a series of public investments and productivity improvements and the employment rate catches up with the UK average.

Mr Magennis then delivered a presentation on the Newry Mourne & Down Economic Outlook, September 2023.

Discussion followed during which Mr Magennis responded to Members on issues relating to attracting jobs within local government sector; sustaining jobs within the health sector; the role of SRC and LSRC in developing the future workforce and up-skilling the workforce; impact of a non-functioning Assembly on the construction industry and the need for social housing; green new deal; digital jobs and AI opportunities.

AGREED: It was unanimously agreed to note the presentation by Eoin Magennis University of Ulster regarding UUEPC Local Government Outlook.

ECONOMY, GROWTH & TOURISM**ERT/119/2023: CAFÉ AT DOWN COUNTY MUSEUM**

Read: Report dated 11 September 2023 from Mr A Patterson, Assistant Director: Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding Café at Down County Museum.
(Copy circulated)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Clarke seconded by Councillor Savage it was agreed officer's seek Expressions of Interest for re-opening of the café at Down County Museum in October 2023.

It was also agreed Officers report back on the operation of the Down Arts Centre on Saturdays.

EXEMPT INFORMATION

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews seconded by Councillor King it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on the following matters which related to exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Savage seconded by Councillor Kearns it was agreed to come out of Closed Session.

The Chairperson advised the following had been agreed while in closed session.

ERT/120/2023: CAMPSITE SECURITY

Read: Report dated 11 September 2023 from Mr A Patterson, Assistant Director: Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding Security Provision at Council campsites.
(Copy circulated)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Tinnelly seconded by Councillor Savage it was agreed to approve to procure and appoint a suitably qualified and experienced contractor to supply and manage certified security personnel at Council-managed campsites for a period of 3 years (2024 to 2026), subject to annual budget approvals.

ERT/121/2023: STREET TRADING POLICIES

Read: Report dated 11 September 2023 from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director Enterprise, Employment & Regeneration regarding Street Trading Policies.
(Copy circulated)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Campbell seconded by Councillor Andrews it was agreed to approve Street Trading Policies as set out in section 2.1 of the report and to improve the amendment to item 6.13 of the Stationary Licence Policy as set out in section 2.2 of the report.

ERT/122/2023: TRADING PITCHES AT COUNCIL TOURISM FACILITIES

Read: Report dated 11 September 2023 from Mr A Patterson, Assistant Director: Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding Trading Pitches at Council Tourism Facilities. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews seconded by Councillor Kearns it was agreed to approve to issue a competitive tender process for the purpose of appointing suitably qualified and experienced operators to the tourism facility trading pitches.

ERT/123/2023: WARRENPOINT PUBLIC REALM SCHEME

Read: Report dated 11 September 2023 from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director: Regeneration, regarding Warrenpoint Public Realm Scheme. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Ruane seconded by Councillor Clarke it was agreed to approve the Outline Business Case to deliver the Warrenpoint Front Shore Car Parks Public Realm Scheme and accept the Dept for Communities Letter of Offer to follow, it was also agreed to approve all Consultant and Contractor Procurements required to progress the Warrenpoint Front Shore Car Parks Public Realm Scheme.

FOR NOTING

ERT/124/2023: BUILDING CONTROL 6 MONTHLY REPORT

Read: Building Control 6 Monthly Report 01 March 2023 – 31 August 2023. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Savage seconded by Councillor Kearns it was agreed to note the Building Control 6 Monthly Report 01 March 2023 – 31 August 2023.

ERT/125/2023: ERT HISTORIC ACTION TRACKER

Read: Action Tracker Report for Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism Committee. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Savage seconded by Councillor Kearns it was agreed to note the Historic Action Tracker Report for Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism Committee.

ERT/126/2023: LICENCING 6 MONTHLY REPORT

Read: Licencing 6 Monthly Report dated 01 March 2023 – 31 August 2023.
(Copy circulated)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Savage seconded by Councillor Kearns it was agreed to note the Licencing 6 Monthly Report dated 01 March 2023 – 31 August 2023.

ERT/127/2023: DOWN ARTS PROGRAMME

Read: Report dated 11 September 2023 from Mr A Patterson, Assistant Director: Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding Down Arts Programme.
(Copy circulated)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Savage seconded by Councillor Kearns it was agreed to note the programme and other activities at Down Arts Centre.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 7.55pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 02 October 2023.

Signed: Councillor M Ruane
Chairperson
Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism Committee

Signed: Mr C Mallon
Director Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**Minutes of Strategy Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on
Thursday 14 September 2023 at 6.00pm via Microsoft Teams &
Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre**

In the Chair:	Councillor L McEvoy (Chamber)
In Attendance in Chamber:	Councillor J Brennan Councillor C Enright Councillor R Howell Councillor A Mathers
	Councillor P Byrne Councillor O Hanlon Councillor A Lewis Councillor G Sharvin
In Attendance via Teams:	Councillor T Kelly Councillor A Quinn
	Councillor S O'Hare Councillor D Taylor
Non-Members:	Councillor G Hanna (via Teams) Councillor D Lee-Surginor (Chamber) Councillor M Rice (via Teams) Councillor J Truesdale (via Teams)
Officials in Attendance:	Mrs J Kelly, Director: Corporate Services Mr A Cassells, Director: Sustainability & Environment Mr C Mallon, Director: Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director: Capital Projects and Procurement Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director: Finance & Performance Mr C Moffett, Assistant Director: Corporate Planning and Policy (Acting) Mr P Rooney, Legal Advisor Ms C Hughes, Data Analyst Mrs L Cummins, Democratic Services Officer
Officials in Attendance via Teams:	Mr P Tamati, Assistant Director: Leisure & Sports Mr A Patterson, Assistant Director: Tourism Culture & Events Ms C Hughes, Data Analyst Mr G Scott, Safeguarding Coordinator

SPR/118/2023: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillor McAteer, Reilly and M Ward, Chief Executive.

Councillor Enright expressed concerns regarding Governance and transparency around the Mournes and Gateway Project, stating Members were being asked to approve recommendations by noting the document which was at odds with the Motion put forward by the Alliance Party and amended by Sein Féin in June.

The Chair clarified that the item was not for decision it was for noting and once the Committee reached the said item on the agenda a full discussion would be had.

SPR/119/2023: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Taylor declared an interest in item 4 - Newry City Park – Peace Plus Funding.

SPR/120/2023: ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON THURSDAY 17 AUGUST 2023

Read: Action Sheet of the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on Thursday 17 August 2023. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Mathers, to approve the action sheet from the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 17 August 2023.**

NOTICES OF MOTION**SPR/121/2023 NEWRY CITY PARK – PEACE PLUS FUNDING**

Read: Report dated 14 September 2023 from Mr C Mallon, Director Enterprise Regeneration and Tourism, regarding Newry City Park – Peace Plus Funding **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Lee-Surginor presented the motion stating that he was disappointed that the motion had not been heard at August Strategy Policy and Resources Committee or Council meeting as the deadline had now passed regardless of criteria. Pointing out there were clear benefits of the project and its close alignment with the aims of the Peace Programme. Stating further clarity should have been sought if there was any flexibility regarding timelines around planning permission etc. suggesting it would be helpful if going forward Peace Plus could engage with Council regarding flexibility of criteria.

Councillor Enright proposed the following amendment to motion:

'That Council writes formally to Peace Plus, apologising for their self-inflicted delays in enquiring, presenting the Park Project as a funding possibility for the programme, and asking whether Peace Plus would be willing to engage with the Council to allow a post-deadline application for the Park'.

This was seconded by Councillor Kelly.

On a point of information Councillor Sharvin asked could Council still go back to Peace Plus at this stage when the Member who moved the motion clearly stated that the application did not meet the criteria of the grant, to further ask, 'we didn't submit before the deadline can we submit post deadline where the application still will not meet the criteria'?

Councillor Hanlon queried would all projects be given the same treatment and attention going forward as focus seemed to be on one project more than others, even though Peace Plus would be able to fund many projects across the District. She added that Elected Members all had had the opportunity to raise issues through the relevant Forums and

Committees.

Mr Mallon advised that it would be a matter for the Members to determine whether to write back to Peace Plus as proposed in the amendment by Councillor Enright.

Councillor Enright's amendment was then put to a vote, the results of which were as follows:

FOR: 2
AGAINST: 10
ABSTENTIONS: 0

The proposal was lost.

Councillor Byrne stated that it was clear that the criteria for Peace Plus funding was not met for a number of reasons and the SDLP party was not interested in grabbing headlines, only interested in progressing the project. It was the determination of Council to deliver the project in phases and there was buy in from all stakeholders and parties. If it was the will of Council to develop other phases in conjunction with phase one then the work needed to be done through Newry City Centre Regeneration Group and bring the recommendations through Strategy Policy and Resources Committee. Time and effort should be spent on ensuring Council does meet future criteria and pre-requisites for future funding bids.

Councillor Byrne proposed the following amendment:

'To ask that NCCR investigate submitting a full planning application for the Newry City Plan masterplan so that we satisfy all pre-requisites for future funding bids to develop further phases in parallel with Council delivering phase 1'

This was seconded by Councillor Sharvin.

Councillor Byrne's amendment was then put to a vote, the results of which were as follows:

FOR: 12
AGAINST: 0
ABSTENTIONS: 0

The proposal was carried.

Agreed:

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, to approve the following recommendations:

- **Council officers continue to work with the Department to secure the Department of Finance funding approval and work with all stakeholders and partners to deliver the project under the direction of the NCCR Programme board.**
- **Council officers will continue to investigate potential funding sources for all projects within the Council Capital Plan and progress the development of projects to a stage where they are eligible for submission to the relevant fund.**

- **Council to ask that NCCR to investigate submitting a full planning application for the Newry City Plan masterplan so that we satisfy all pre-requisites for future funding bids to develop further phases in parallel with council delivering phase 1'.**

SPR/122/2023**NOTICE OF MOTION – FUNDING OF PROJECTS**

Read: Report dated 14 September 2023 from Mrs J Kelly, Director Corporate Services, regarding Notice of Motion – Funding of Projects **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Byrne stated the members knew the good work being done by officer's and the Strategic Finance Working Group was the right forum for these discussions to be taking place and giving regular updates on certain Capital Projects was key going forward.

In response to query raised by Councillor Enright, Mrs Kelly noted to consider any projects that didn't currently have funding to be considered if funding opportunities arose.

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, that SPR Committee consider and agree the proposal to add identification of funding streams to SFWG agendas.**

FOR CONSIDERATION/DECISION**SPR/123/2023:****EQUALITY ACTION PLAN 2023-2027 AND DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2023-2027**

Read: Report dated 14 September 2023 from Mr C Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy, regarding Equality Action Plan 2023-2027 and Disability Action Plan 2023 – 2027 **(Copy circulated)**

In response to queries from Councillor Kelly and Byrne, Mr Moffett advised that the consultation was undertaken through the 'Living well together Engagement Platform' and Council continue to engage with the Cedar Group on an ongoing basis. Within the Equality Action Plan they were looking to review and refresh the Councils consultation and engagement framework.

A meeting had taken place on 5 September 2023 with Equality and Diversity section of Local Government and Staff Commission regarding the Diversity Ambassadors and their role. It was noted there was a real difference across all the 11 Council's, further work was planned to try to promote the programme.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Byrne, to consider the consultation analyses and approve the Disability Action Plan 2023-2027 and the Equality Action Plan 2023-2027.**

SPR/124/2023: PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED DRAFT STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS AND FOUNDATIONAL ACTION PLAN

Read: Report dated 14 September 2023 from Mr G Scott, Safeguarding Coordinator, regarding Public Consultation on the proposed draft Strategic Framework to end violence against Women and Girls and Foundational Action Plan. **(Copy circulated)**

Mr Scott highlighted that it was important to note that within the actual themes the key emphasis for the strategic framework sat on the theme of 'Prevention'.

Members spoke in support of the framework highlighting some of the statistics where shocking. There was a duty as Councillors to help drive responses before the deadline in October and it would be good idea to engage with the 'Women's Working Group'.

Mr Scott advised he would be happy to meet with any members of the 'Women's Working Group' should they wish to do so.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Quinn, seconded by Councillor Howell, to approve the consultation response on the draft Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls and Foundational Action Plan (Appendix 1).**

SPR/125/2023: ASSESSMENT PERFORMANCE 2022-23

Read: Report dated 14 September 2023 from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director: Finance and Performance, regarding Assessment of Performance 2022-23 **(Copy circulated)**

Members raised the following points:

- 187 new jobs created was down in terms of previous report and disappointing giving the economic situation at present.
- Cleanliness was one of the biggest issues Councillors receive complaints on, how was this going to improve going forward?
- Planning System – It was hoped this would improve going forward with the restructuring of the Department and no longer be the worst in the North. Was there a timeline when we could expect to see an improvement?
- When measures were put in place to try and turn a trend, Members needed to ensure that they were having an effect.
- Need to do better as a Council going forward in all departments.
- Seasonal staff recruitment seemed to be a problem. What was Council's plan in terms of advertising seasonal jobs to make them more attractive going forward?
- Why was blue bins mixed recycling and yet if brought to recycling centre it had to be separated?

- Statistics showed Leisure Centres were not returned to a level they were at pre-covid, was there something that could be done on a promotional side to increase that figure in the future?
- Was there a timeline for the new Play Park Strategy 2023 – 2028?
- Had Free Play initiatives been replaced by something else?
- Was there an update on the Circular Economy Plan?
- Could a mobile app for reporting waste be rolled out to Councillors?
- Councillor Byrne highlighted that keeping as much information in open session kept people informed and felt that were able to have their say on matters.

Officer's responded as follows:

- Mr Byrne clarified that the target had been met on jobs this year. A lot of jobs had previously been created through funded programmes and the downward trend could be attributed to less funding received than previous years.
- Mr Cassells advised the blue bin was a kerbside service, materials were shipped to Regen and separated through their material reclamation facility. At the recycling centres there was more opportunity to get the public to separate the material resulting in a better quality of material achieving a better price. Both approaches were applicable and suitable.
- Significant difficulties had been had in recruiting Seasonal staff which may have been a function of the employment market at present. Looking to see if there was a way to amalgamate some of those posts and make them permanent posts, which would be more attractive to apply for, work was ongoing and would be brought back to the Sustainability and Environment Committee.
- Mr Mallon advised that the challenges faced by Planning was across all Councils. Newry Mourne and Down received the most Planning applications, made the most decisions on applications and the second highest in issuing approvals of all 11 Councils. Some of the challenges had been around the introduction of the new planning portal and recruitment.
- Planning targets were statutory targets set by the Department.
- A recruitment campaign had commenced and 2 new Senior Planners had been recently appointed with another vacancy out for recruitment to fill the third, as well as a current campaign for vacancies for 4 Planning Assistants. Within the Planning Department looking to prioritise the areas where the pressures exist and introducing efficiency measures and processes across the management team. There would be monitoring going forward to highlight any areas and to encourage performance improvement.
- Leisure Centres - Mr Tamati advised there was a lag time in results and the statistics of the first 5 months of this year were back to pre-covid membership levels and in some places exceeding those levels.
- Play Strategy – Consultation dates expected to be rolled out shortly and will bring back a report in the coming months.
- Mr Cassells advised NI Environment Agency were currently reviewing their Waste Management Strategy which would hopefully be out by the end of the year, this would allow Council to align local actions with what was proposed Regionally.
- Mr Cassells to come back outside of the meeting to Councillor Byrne regarding establishing an app for Newry Mourne and Down waste collection services.
- Mr Tamati agreed to go back Councillor Byrne on an update on Free Play initiatives.

Agreed:

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, to approve the following recommendations:

- **The Assessment of Performance 2022-23, including the summary document 'Our Performance Looking Back Going Forward'**
- **That the Assessment of Performance 2022-23 is published by 30 September 2023, before full Council ratification, in order to meet the statutory deadline.**

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor O'Hare, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on items 9-18 which related to exempt information by virtue of para. 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local /Government (Northern Ireland) 2014 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Brennan, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

The Chairperson advised the following had been agreed while in closed session.

SPR/126/2023: MOBILE DEVICE, VOICE AND DATA SERVICES CONTRACTS

Read: Report dated 14 September 2023 from Mrs J Kelly, Director: Corporate Services, regarding Mobile Device, Voice and Data Services Contracts (**Copy circulated**).

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed to consider the contents of the report and approve the procurement of mobile device, voice and data services through Lot 1 of the CCS RM6261 Framework Agreement.

SPR/127/2023: LEASE OF LANDS AT BARCROFT COMMUNITY CENTRE, NEWRY

Read: Report dated 14 September 2023 from Mr P Rooney, Head of Legal Administration, regarding lease of lands at Barcroft Community Centre, Newry (**Copy circulated**).

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed that Elected Members approve to lease the lands shaded purple on the map attached in the officer's report to the Tenants for the

residue of the term of the 2018 Lease (15 years from 1st January 2017) at a peppercorn rent subject to Departmental consent.

SPR/128/2023:

LEASE OF THE OLD GASWORKS SITE, NEWRY

Read:

Report dated 17 August 2023 from Mr P Rooney, Head of Legal Administration, regarding Lease of The Old Gasworks Site, Newry **(Copy circulated)**.

Agreed:

On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed that Elected Members approve to enter into a new lease in respect of the Unit to the party noted in the report for a term of 5 years from the 1st of December 2022 subject to market value rent as determined by Council's valuer.

SPR/129/2023:

KILKEEL LEISURE CENTRE – CAPITAL BUILD PROJECT

Read:

Report dated 14 September 2023 from Mr P Tamati, Assistant Director: Leisure and Sport, regarding Kilkeel Leisure Centre – Capital Build Project **(Copy circulated)**.

Agreed:

On the proposal of Councillor McEvoy, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed Elected Members approve the following recommendations:

- **'Essential and Enhancement Works' for the Kilkeel Leisure Centre Capital project at a revised cost as outlined in section 4.1 of the report.**
- **Commence the procurement process to appoint a contractor and commence construction delivery in accordance with Northern Ireland Public Procurement Policy (NIPPP) via the central government consultant's framework agreement.**

SPR/130/2023:**IFA/DCMS – FUNDING – KILKEEL TRAINING PITCH****Read:**

Report dated 14 September 2023 from Mr P Tamati, Assistant Director: Leisure and Sport, regarding IFA/DCMS – Funding – Kilkeel Training Pitch (**Copy circulated**).

Agreed:

On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor McEvoy, it was agreed Elected Members approve for 50% match funding to develop a Multi-Use Games Area at Kilkeel Leisure Centre at a cost outlined in section 4.1 of this report.

SPR/131/2023:**SURPLUS ASSETS UPDATE****Read:**

Report dated 14 September 2023 from Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director Estates and Capital Projects, regarding Surplus Assets Update. (**Copy circulated**)

Agreed:

On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed Elected Members approve the following recommendations:

- **To remove the Former Kearns and Murtagh site from disposal process and retain site.**
- **To withdraw the D1 Application made by Sir Hans Sloane Centre at this stage as the timescales within the process have not been met and there are still outstanding issues that need to be addressed prior to disposal. This will allow the issues that have arisen to be explored further before next steps are considered. A report will be brought back in due course to the Committee.**
- **To note the current lack of interest in the site at Patrick Street and that Officers will look at the options available and report back to the Committee in due course.**

SPR/132/2023:**TYRELLA BEACH AMENITY BUILDING****Read:**

Report dated 14 September 2023 from Mr A Patterson, Assistant Director Tourism Culture and Events, regarding Tyrella Beach Amenity Building. (**Copy circulated**)

Agreed:

On the proposal of Councillor Lewis, seconded by Councillor Sharvin, it was agreed Elected Members approve to appoint an Integrated Consultancy Team and contractor to deliver the Tyrella Beach Amenity Building project as detailed in the project business case and to

approve inclusion of funding within section 4 of the Capital Plan.

SPR/133/2023:

DOWNPATRICK REGENERATION PROJECTS

Read:

Report dated 14 September 2023 from Mr A Patterson, Assistant Director Tourism Culture and Events, regarding Downpatrick Regeneration Projects. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed:

On the proposal of Councillor Enright, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed Elected Members approve to procure and appoint a consultancy team to progress regeneration projects for DeCourcy Place & Church Street in Downpatrick as aligned with the new Living High Streets Masterplan for the town and detailed in the project business case and approve inclusion of funding within section 4 of the of the Capital Plan.

SPR/134/2023:

ANIMAL WELFARE FUNDING

Read:

Report dated 14 September 2023 from Mr A Cassells, Director Sustainability and Environment, regarding Animal Welfare Funding. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed:

On the proposal of Councillor Kelly, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed Elected Members approve the instructing of Belfast City Council Legal Service to draft a Pre Action-Protocol letter on behalf of the 11 District Councils with a view to same being issued by the Chief Executive of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council on behalf of the 11 Councils and to receive further reports on the matter as the developments take place.

FOR NOTING – The following items are deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the October 2022 Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014

SPR/135/2023:

STRATEGIC FINANCE WORKING GROUPS ACTION SHEET – 7 SEPTEMBER 2023

Read:

Strategic Finance Working Group Action Sheet – 7 September 2023. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed:

On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Hanlon, it was agreed to note the Strategic Finance Working Group Action Sheet – 7 September 2023.

FOR NOTING**SPR/136/2023:****SUSTAINABILITY SECTION UPDATE**

Read: Report dated 17 August 2023 from Mr A Cassells, Director: Sustainability and Environment regarding Sustainability Section Update (**Copy circulated**)

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed to note the update on areas of work being carried out by the Sustainability Section.**

SPR/137/2023:**MOURNES GATEWAY PROJECT**

Read: Report dated 14 September 2023 from Mr A Patterson, Assistant Director: Tourism Culture and Events, regarding Mournes Gateway Project (**Copy circulated**)

Councillor Enright commented that actions had not been taken forward from the Motion in June. The key actions in the Motion were a full Public Consultation on the Mournes Gateway Project and secondly consideration of alternative projects.

He further added that at 2.2 of the officer's report it suggested a consultation had taken place, no Public Consultation had occurred, a stakeholder analysis and information day had been held. Council previously advised that a consultation took place in 2017, this was in fact cancelled last minute and never rescheduled. Questions put forward at the information day had never been replied to and there was no formal meaningful way for the public to feed into those plans by way of consultation. He suggested the report should be amended to correctly reflect the June amended motion to include the 2 key actions as stated.

Mr Mallon responded that the intent of the amendment of the previous motion was as follows – that Council would revisit the stakeholder engagement process and undertake a robust consultation on the project with residents, workers and businesses within the district via the project board for approval.

Councillor Kelly stated she concurred with Councillor Enright's comments that no full Public Consultation had taken place with residents, workers and businesses and agreed that the two key actions should be included within the report with a timeframe of delivery.

Councillor Hanlon, Byrne and Sharvin spoke at length stating that the report was rightly before the committee for noting, this was a significant investment in the District, any concerns should be addressed via the Project Board as had been done with similar projects i.e. Castlewellan Forest Park and Newry City Centre Regeneration and then reported back to Council. If an element of the project was not the right thing to do for the area then that money was gone and could not be used to fund another project.

Mr Mallon advised the report provided at tonight's meeting was an update on the status of the project so far as previously agreed. The project that was in front of BRCD was the project in its current form which was the basis for its approval. Any significant change of scope or scale of that project would subject to further consideration by the department through the

relevant processes.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed to note the contents of the report and associated background documents that can be made available on request.

SPR/138/2023: **MINUTES OF NEWRY CITY CENTRE REGENERATION PROJECT BOARD MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 30TH JUNE 2023**

Read: Minutes of Newry City Centre Regeneration Project Board Meeting held on Friday 30th June 2023. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Howell, it was agreed to note the minutes of Newry City Centre Regeneration Project Board Meeting held on Friday 30th June 2023.

There being no further business, the Meeting concluded at 8.05pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 2 October 2023.

Signed: **Councillor Leeanne McEvoy**
Chairperson

Signed: **Josephine Kelly**
Director of Corporate Services

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Ref: AHC/2023

**Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on
Monday 18 September 2023 at 6.00pm in the Mourne Room, Downshire Civic
Centre and via Microsoft Teams**

Chairperson: Councillor R Howell (Chamber)

In attendance in Chamber: Councillor C Galbraith
Councillor J Jackson
Councillor A Mathers
Councillor A McMurray
Councillor K Murphy

In attendance via Teams: Councillor D Finn
Councillor A Finnegan
Councillor M Gibbons
Councillor D Lee-Surginor
Councillor O Magennis
Councillor D Murphy
Councillor S O'Hare

Non-Members Councillor J Brennan

**Officials in attendance
in Chamber:**

Mr P Tamati, Assistant Director, Leisure and Sport
Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development
Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager
Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer

AHC/101/2023: APOLOGIES & CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Devlin and Lewis.

The Chairperson advised the Mournes and Slieve Croob DEAS, as members of the Newcastle Suicide Prevention Task Group, were supporting a number of initiatives to be implemented throughout September as part of the Newcastle Festival of Light programme 2023 to mark World Suicide Prevention Day. These included Walk for Life, Senior Afternoon Tea, Online Mental health First Aid, Chi by the Sea, Good Food Moods, Cold Water Therapy and Sunrise Swim. She congratulated everyone involved for highlighting a very worthwhile issue.

AHC/102/2023: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

AHC/103/2023: ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM ACTIVE & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21 AUGUST 2023

Read: Action sheet of the Active & Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 21 August 2023. **(Copy circulated)**.

AHC/100/2023 – Letter of Offer, Area of Risk 2023/24

Councillor Finnegan advised she understood the rationale for the charges for courses and programmes however she felt the communities of Crossmaglen and Bessbrook should be consulted on how the funds were spent.

It was agreed that Mrs Robb would provide detail regarding programmes within Bessbrook and Crossmaglen and would meet with Councillor Finnegan to discuss the matter of consultation with the communities.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Finnegan, to note the Action Sheet of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 21 August 2023.

AHC/104/2023: DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREA (DEA) FORUMS UPDATE

Read: Report dated 18 September 2023 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development regarding an update on the District Electoral Area Forums. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Jackson, seconded by Councillor Galbraith, to note the update report on the District Electoral Area Forums.

AHC/105/2023 COMMUNITY COORDINATION HUB (CCH) UPDATE REPORT

Read: Report dated 18 September 2023 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development regarding an update on the Community Coordination Hub. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Finn, seconded by Councillor Galbraith, note the report and approve the actions in the action sheet for Community Coordination Hub (CCH) Meeting held on 16 August 2023.**

AHC/106/2023 PEACE IV LOCAL ACTION PLAN

Read: Report dated 18 September 2023 from Andy Patterson, Assistant Director Economy, Growth & Tourism and presented by Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development regarding an update on the Peace IV Local Action Pan. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor, to note the report and the Minutes of Peace IV Partnership Meeting 23 March 2023.**

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

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Lee-Surginor, seconded by Councillor Mathers, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on items 19 and 20 which related to exempt information by virtue of para. Three of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local /Government (Northern Ireland) 2014 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Finn, seconded by Councillor Galbraith, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.**

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

AHC/107/2023 KILKEEL LEISURE CENTRE

Read: Report dated 18 September 2023 from Mrs P Tamati, Assistant Director, Leisure and Sport regarding Kilkeel Leisure Centre. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor D Murphy, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, to note the officer's report and that management were continuing to address service continuity issues at Kilkeel Leisure Centre.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 6.30pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 2 October 2023.

Signed: Councillor R Howell
Chairperson

Signed: Paul Tamati
Assistant Director Leisure and Sport

NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 19 September 2023 at 6.00pm in the Boardroom, District Council Offices, Monaghan Row, Newry and via MS Teams.****Chair:** Councillor T Andrews (Chamber)**In Attendance in Chamber:**
Councillor W Clarke
Councillor J Jackson
Councillor M Larkin
Councillor K Murphy
Councillor M Savage
Councillor D Finn
Councillor G Kearns
Councillor O Magennis
Councillor H Reilly**In Attendance via Teams:**
Councillor T Kelly
Councillor M Rice
Councillor J Truesdale
Councillor L McEvoy
Councillor D TaylorNon-Members in Attendance
Via Teams: Councillor C Enright Councillor O Hanlon**Officials in Attendance:**
Mr A Cassells, Director Sustainability and Environment
Ms S Murphy, Assistant Director Waste Management
Ms G Kane, Acting Assistant Director: Facilities and Maintenance
Mrs L Cummins, Democratic Services Officer
Mrs L Dillon, Democratic Services Officer**SE/083/2023: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies received from Mr A Mallon, Acting Assistant Director, Facilities and Maintenance.

The Chairperson extended sincere sympathy to the family, friends and colleagues of Councillor Damien O'Reilly from Meath County Council, who passed away suddenly.

SE/084/2023: DECLARATIONS OF "CONFLICTS OF INTEREST"

Councillor Reilly and Andrews declared an interest in item 17 - 'FASTER' EV Project Update.

SE/085/2023: ACTION SHEET OF THE SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 22 AUGUST 2023Read: Action Sheet of the Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 22 August 2023. *(Circulated)*.*SE/071/2023: Report re: Upgrade to Public Space CCTV Systems*

In response to a query from Councillor Truesdale in relation to toilets at Newcastle Centre and Central Promenade toilets, Mrs Kane advised that they were not included within the Business Plan however she would continue to liaise with officers. She stated the current toilet blocks were modular units and would be most likely be taken away and replaced however, the type of

structure for replacement units would depend upon the specification and the contractor. She advised that standardised opening times were part of the Public Convenience Strategy Document.

Councillor Reilly advised he had been working closely with officers regarding standardised opening times of toilets and was confident a satisfactory outcome would be achieved. He requested if there was any further update on the monitoring of vegetables for pesticide residue.

Mrs Murphy advised there would be an upcoming presentation at a future committee meeting regarding food sampling which would incorporate pesticide sampling.

Mr Cassells agreed to contact Councillor Clarke outside of the meeting with an update on the Island Park toilets Newcastle, which had been out of action for some time.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Savage, it was agreed the Action Sheet of the Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 22 August 2023 be noted and actions removed as marked.**

FOR CONSIDERATION AND/OR DECISION

SE/086/2023: **REPORT ON NOTICE OF MOTION IN RELATION TO ESTABLISHMENT OF A DISABLED USERS FORUM AND OTHER MATTERS**

Read: Report dated 19 September 2023 from Mr A Cassells, Director of Sustainability & Environment regarding a Notice of Motion on Recycling. *(Circulated).*

Councillor Clarke presented the following Notice of Motion which was referred to the Sustainability and Environment Committee from the Council Meeting held on Monday 4 September 2023:

***"That this Council recognises the importance of ensuring that the district's tourist attractions, services and products are fully accessible for all.
Will establish a disabled users forum to proactively engage with local residents & organisations who experience accessibility issues in the district to hear first-hand how they experience council facilities and local attractions.
All Council facilities and promotional material will clearly display a list of local changing places and accessible facilities in the district.
All Council employees will be made aware of changing places, units and accessible features within council facilities.
Furthermore, when an event is applied for that it includes the use of portable toilet facilities a mobile changing places unit must be provided also."***

In presenting the Motion, Councillor Clarke stated the purpose of the Motion was to make changes for people with disabilities in the community and across the District and ensuring that facilities, local attractions and events throughout the district were made accessible for all.

He stated that individuals with disabilities had faced unnecessary obstacles that prevented them from fully participating and enjoying what the district had to offer and this should be changed by working towards the creation of a more accessible and inclusive environment with the prioritisation of addressing inequalities and breaking down barriers. He stated that ways of achieving this would mean more 'changing places' facilities, improvement of local transport services, ensuring infrastructure is fit for purpose and looking at innovative ways to make towns and villages more inclusive.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Kearns commended Councillor Clarke for highlighting the importance of fully accessible tourist attractions for all throughout the district regardless of ability. It was crucial that Council officials set up a disabled user forum in which residents and community groups could express their views as to how this issue could be improved.

Councillor Truesdale stated that she agreed with sentiments of the motion but did not want it being a tokenistic populous gesture. She stated that the title and wording of the motion seemed to only apply to disabled people with accessibility issues and discriminated against those disabled people who did not have the same issues. She proposed the following amendment to the title and wording of the Motion:

'Inclusion and Accessibility Forum - That this Council recognises the importance of ensuring that the districts tourist attractions, services and products are fully accessible and inclusive for all and to establish an accessibility and inclusion forum to pro-actively engage with local residents and organisations who experience accessibility and inclusion.'

Councillor Kelly seconded the proposed amendment.

Councillor Clarke did not accept Councillor Truesdale's proposed amendment.

The Chairperson put the amended motion to a vote, the results of which was as follows:

FOR:	2
AGAINST:	13
ABSTENTIONS:	0

The proposal was lost.

Councillors Savage, Taylor, Finn and Reilly all spoke in support of Councillor Clarke's motion, stating that the terminology used was adequate and addressed all the core issues. Members needed to work together on the matter to achieve the desired results and see positive outcomes if a forum was established.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Kearns , it was agreed that Members consider the Motion and approve the following recommendations:**

- **To establish a disabled users forum to proactively engage with local residents & organisations who experience accessibility issues in the district to hear first-hand how they experience council facilities and local attractions.**
- **All Council facilities and promotional material will clearly display a list of local changing places and accessible facilities in the district.**

- **All Council employees will be made aware of changing places, units and accessible features within council facilities.**
- **When an event is applied for that it includes the use of portable toilet facilities and a mobile changing places unit.**

SE/087/2023: NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN ACTIVE TRAVEL MASTERPLAN UPDATES TO COUNCIL AND SHARED FOOTWAY/CYCLEWAY ROUTE DEVELOPMENT AT DUNDRUM/MURLOUGH

Read: Report dated 19 September 2023 from Mr A Cassells, Director of Sustainability & Environment regarding Newry Mourne and Down Active Travel Masterplan updates to Council and Shared Footway/Cycleway Route Development at Dundrum/Murlough **(Circulated)**.

Councillor Savage stated on behalf of the SDLP party he welcomed any such funding for the District and supported the project, in principle. He stated however, that preference would be to retain the cyclists on the shore side with the cycle lane running along the same side from Clough, mitigating the need to cross a very busy road. He proposed that Council write to the Department for Infrastructure requesting a crossing at the junction of the Dundrum Road with the Old Road in order to progress the project.

Councillor Finn seconded the proposal.

Councillor Clarke concurred with Councillor Savage's comments stating safety measures needed to be installed, it was a fast stretch of road, which all parties had previously lobbied on to improve crossing safely. He added he hoped to see the cycle lane on the Castlewellan route extended into Newcastle.

Councillor Truesdale welcomed the report and Councillor Savage's comments, raising concerns about the lane that adjacently exists to the A2 carriageway referred to as a hard shoulder. She stated the hard shoulder was not enforced with cars regularly parking along without any consequences. She asked whether the question could be put to the Department that parking should be discouraged within the design of the travel way.

Mr Cassells confirmed he was happy to write to the Department for Infrastructure regarding the points raised and update Members accordingly.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Reilly, it was agreed to approve the proposed project to construct the Shared Footway/Cycleway route on the Council owned old railway route between Murlough and Dundrum and to approve the approach moving forward to provide 2 updates per year to Council on DfI and other Active Travel projects in the district.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Finn, it was also agreed to write to the Department for Infrastructure raising the following points:

- **To request a crossing at the junction of the Dundrum Road with the Old Road in order to progress the project.**
- **Whether parking would be discouraged within the design of the travel way?**

SE/088/2023: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING PARTNERING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE REMOVAL OF SNOW AND ICE FROM TOWN CENTRE FOOTWAYS AND PEDESTRIAN AREAS

Read: Report dated 19 September 2023 from Aidan Mallon, Acting Assistant Director, Facility Management & Maintenance regarding memorandum of understanding partnering arrangements for the removal of snow and ice from town centre footways and pedestrian areas. ***(Circulated)***.

In presenting the report Mr Cassells clarified that the start date would be the 1st November 2023 and not 1st October 2023 as stated in the report. He advised that Council had no statutory obligation to clear snow and ice from footpaths, it was a partnering agreement, and salt would be provided by Department for Infrastructure, free of charge, but would rely on Council redeploying staff to assist DfI.

Councillor Clarke welcomed the report stating he had previously brought a Notice of Motion with on this particular item. He stated it was a crucial piece of work by Council to ensure that members of public were able to safely navigate footpaths and roads. He said that regular replenishing of grit bins was a problem in particular, King Street, Newcastle and School Hill, Dundrum, where there was only one grit bin provided that was not being regularly stocked. He stated that clear communication was required between Council and DfI Roads on what grit was available and whether they would be replenishing priority grit bins in dangerous situations. He further requested clarification on when and who would trigger the activation point.

Councillor Taylor requested that Bessbrook and Newtownhamilton be included in the partnership arrangement going forward.

Councillor Finn also requested Canal Street, Canal Bank onto New Street, Newry along with St Josephs, Our Lady's and potentially students walking on footpaths from St Colman's schools be included.

Councillor Enright complimented Councillor Clarke for following up on the original Motion. He stated the key point of the original Motion he brought in 2012 referred to the practise of sending street sweepers home instead of reassigning them to salt pavements. He also suggested consideration be given to purchasing a small number of gritters to enable street sweepers to cover large amounts easily and that consideration be given to reviewing the small number of streets highlighted and include shopping streets or particularly dangerous streets.

Councillor Reilly stated one of the biggest concerns would be the issue of 'Public Liability' which would require clarity on.

Councillor Clarke suggested that if agreement could be reached on what was contained within the report now to be actioned for this Winter and other areas be looked at in the future and the possibility of being added to the list.

Councillor Taylor advised he did not want to hold back what was proposed in the report however would like it noted that other areas be expanded on and included on in the near future and not forgot about.

Councillor Savage agreed with Councillor Clarke's comments, stating it was vital that Kildare Street area encompassing Canal Bank and the front of the Town Hall and access to the

Sean Holywood centre in Newry be included as it was heavily pedestrianised. He suggested Members engage with DfI to ensure this was an evolving document, while ensuring the work commenced between now and this winter to test its effectiveness and measures for improvement.

The Chairperson acknowledged Members had raised concerns about towns and villages, highlighting there were areas in Crossgar and Saintfield which would benefit from being added to the list.

Councillor Kelly echoed the sentiments of the Chairperson including Rowallane on the list and also proposed the following:

'Council Management to follow up and look into using Council street sweepers to grit streets during icy weather instead of sending employees home.'

Councillor Kearns seconded the proposal.

All Members were in agreement.

Mr Cassells advised he was happy to evaluate all efficient methods for clearing snow of footways and report back to Committee.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Reilly, it was agreed to approve the proposal and extend for a further three years, in accordance with the 'Scope of the Agreement' Clause 3 and Appendix 1 of the officers report as amended, and to sign the updated MOU with additional locations.**

AGREED: **It was also agreed on the proposal of Councillor Kelly, Seconded by Councillor Kearns that Council Management follow up and look into using council street sweepers to grit streets during icy weather instead of sending employees home.**

EXEMPT INFORMATION ITEMS

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

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor McEvoy, seconded by Councillor Truesdale, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on items 6-12 which related to exempt information by virtue of para. 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local /Government (Northern Ireland) 2014 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.**

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Reilly, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.**

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

SE/089/2023: UPDATE FROM PSNI ON UPGRADE TO PUBLIC SPACE CCTV IN NEWRY, WARRENPOINT AND KILKEEL

Read: Report dated 19 September 2023 from Aidan Mallon, Acting Assistant Director, Head of Maintenance, regarding upgrade to public space CCTV systems in Newry, Warrenpoint and Kilkeel. *(Circulated)*

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Reilly, it was agreed to note the report and agree the following:

- 1. To approve the extension of the current Agency Agreement with The Department for Infrastructure until 31st March 2024 and permit additional extensions as required, up to 31st October 2024.**
- 2. To provide authorisation that NMDDC as a member of the 8 Council Consortium, will equally share the burden of additional legal costs associated with Belfast City Council's defence of the Writ.**

SE/090/2023: PURCHASE OF A NEW COUNCIL BOAT FOR AQUATIC GROUNDS MAINTENANCE AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS DISTRICT WIDE

Read: Report dated 19 September 2023 from Aidan Mallon, Acting Assistant Director, Facilities Management & Maintenance regarding the purchase of a new Council boat for aquatic grounds maintenance at various locations District wide. *(Circulated)*

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Savage, seconded by Councillor Truesdale, it was agreed to note the content of the report and associated Business Case and accept the conclusion of the Business Cases that Option 3 be chosen as the preferred option. This would see the procurement of a suitable aquatic boat/clearance unit.

SE/091/2023: PURCHASE OF NEW TRACTORS & CUTTING MACHINERY FOR GROUNDS MAINTENANCE AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS DISTRICT WIDE

Read: Report dated 19 September 2023 from Aidan Mallon, Acting Assistant Director, Facilities Management & Maintenance regarding the purchase of new tractors and cutting machinery for grounds maintenance at various locations District wide. *(Circulated)*

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Savage seconded by Councillor Truesdale, it was agreed to note the content of the report and associated Business Case and accept the conclusion of the Business Cases that Option 3 be chosen as the preferred option.

This would see the procurement of effective replacement machinery.

SE/092/2023: BUSINESS CASE FOR THE USE OF A SUITABLE SUPPLY FRAMEWORK TO FACILITATE THE USE OF FUEL CARDS

Read: Report dated 19 September 2023 from Ms S Murphy, Assistant Director, Waste Management (Acting) regarding a business case for the use of a suitable supply framework to facilitate the use of fuel cards.
(Circulated).

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor McEvoy, it was agreed to approve the business case within appendix 1 of the officer's report for the continuing use of a supply framework to support the use of fuel cards across the District.

FOR NOTING – The following items are deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014

SE/093/2023: ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE MEMBERS' MONTHLY BULLETIN – 31 AUGUST 2023

Read: Arc21 Joint Committee Members' Monthly Bulletin held on 31 August 2023. *(Circulated).*

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Reilly, it was agreed to note the Bulletin.

SE/094/2023: ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING IN COMMITTEE MINUTES OF THURSDAY 29 JUNE 2023

Read: Arc21 Joint Committee Meeting In Committee Minutes held on 29 June 2023. *(Circulated).*

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Reilly, it was agreed to note the minutes.

FOR NOTING**SE/095/2023: REVIEW OF 2023 SUMMER SEASON CLEANSING**

Read: Report dated 19 September 2023 from Ms S Murphy, Assistant Director, Waste Management (Acting) regarding a review of 2023 Summer season cleansing. *(Circulated)*.

Councillor Truesdale commended the pavement clean and pressure washes carried out with the district, particularly in Newcastle where there was a high footfall, however stated there was a real need for a much more regular clean at a sustainable level. She also highlighted that there were no additional enforcement officers seasonal or otherwise employed and jobs were advertised on a UK Wide Recruitment Agency site when they really need to be advertised on the GETGOT portal as this is where the Council's own website directed people who searching for jobs.

Councillor Savage requested if Monaghan Street and Hill Street could undergo a deep clean as soon as possible as it had not been done in sometime.

Mrs Murphy advised deep cleansing was an external contract that was currently under review and due for re-procurement. She stated some equipment had been acquired to be used in-house and pending the re-tendering process, officers would investigate the allocation of resources at the areas highlighted.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Savage, seconded by Councillor Clarke, it was agreed to note the contents of the review of 2023 Summer season cleansing.

SE/096/2023: REVIEW OF BUS SHELTER REQUESTS BEING ACTIONED BY COUNCIL

Read: Report dated 19 September 2023 from Mrs G Kane, Acting Assistant Director of Facilities Management & Maintenance regarding review of bus shelter requests being actioned by Council. *(Circulated)*.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Savage, seconded by Councillor Clarke, it was agreed to note the report.

SE/097/2023: UPDATE ON MUNICIPAL CEMETERY DEVELOPMENT

Read: Report dated 19 September 2023 from Mrs G Kane, Acting Assistant Director of Facilities Management & Maintenance regarding an update of Municipal Cemetery Development. *(Circulated)*.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Savage, seconded by Councillor Clarke, it was agreed to note the contents of the officer's report.

SE/098/2023: SUSTAINABLE FOODS UPDATE

Read: Report dated 19 September 2023 from Mr A Cassells, Director of Sustainability & Environment regarding an update on sustainable foods. *(Circulated)*.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Savage, seconded by Councillor Clarke, it was agreed to note the update in relation to sustainable foods.

SE/099/2023: 'FASTER' EV PROJECT UPDATE

Read: Report dated 19 September 2023 from Mr A Cassells, Director of Sustainability & Environment regarding an update on the 'FASTER' EV Project. *(Circulated)*.

In response to a query from Councillor Finn, Mr Cassells advised that the 'EV Chargers' would not be installed until the month of December due to funding constraints. He stated the scheme was to be welcomed and an opportunity had arisen that allowed additional funding for the installation of more chargers than originally envisaged. Mr Cassells advised he would update Councillor Finn further once more information was available.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Savage, seconded by Councillor Clarke, it was agreed to note the update in relation to the 'FASTER' EV Project.

SE/100/2023: UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENT OF A SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY & ANNUAL ACTION PLANS

Read: Report dated 19 September 2023 from Mr A Cassells, Director of Sustainability & Environment regarding an update in relation to the development of a Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy & Annual Action Plans. *(Circulated)*.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Savage, seconded by Councillor Clarke, it was agreed to note the update on the development of a Council Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy and Annual Action Plans. Elected representatives were also invited to provide any initial feedback, prior to public consultation, using the information provided.

SE/101/2023: ARC21 JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF THURSDAY 29 JUNE 2023

Read: Minutes of ARC21 Joint Committee Meeting held on Thursday 29 June 2023. *(Circulated)*.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Savage, seconded by Councillor Clarke, it was agreed to note the Minutes of the ARC21 Committee Meeting held on 29 June 2023.**

There being no further business the meeting ended at 19.29 pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 2 October 2023.

Signed: **Councillor T Andrews**
Chairperson of Sustainability & Environment Committee

Signed: **Mr A Cassells**
Director of Sustainability & Environment

**From the Permanent Secretary
Mark Browne**

Maria Ward
Chief Executive
Newry and Mourne District Council



Rathgael House
43 Balloo Road
Rathgill
BANGOR
BT19 7PR

Tel: 028 9127 9309

Email: mark.browne@education-ni.gov.uk

Our Ref: SCORR-0466-2023

Your Ref: C/157/2023

11 September 2023

Dear Ms Ward,

I refer to your letter of 21 August 2023 to Denis McMahon, the Permanent Secretary of The Executive Office regarding Back to School Costs. Your letter has been passed to me for response, as my Department has overall policy responsibility for this matter.

I share your Members' concern regarding the high cost of purchasing school uniform for parents of pupils attending some schools. I therefore wrote to the Principal and Chair of the Board of Governors of all schools on 13 June 2023 urging them to consider cost mitigations for parents. I also reminded them that the Department expects Boards of Governors to give a high priority to cost considerations when designing their uniform and that families should not feel excluded from being able to select a particular school due to the cost of a uniform. I have attached a copy of the letter for your information.

As you will also see from the letter the last Minister of Education suggested to the Department that we should consider primary legislation to enable statutory guidance with a particular emphasis on affordability. Whilst this decision would require ratification by any future Minister, I have asked my officials to work on proposals on how this policy may be changed. A number of meetings with key stakeholders have been held and the proposals are at an advanced stage. When a new Minister is appointed these proposals will be put to them for consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Browne', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

MARK BROWNE (Dr)