



Comhairle Ceantair  
**an Iúir, Mhúrn  
agus an Dúin**  
**Newry, Mourne  
and Down**  
District Council

April 3rd, 2026

**Notice Of Meeting**

You are requested to attend the Council meeting to be held on **Monday, 13th April 2026** at **6:30 pm** in **Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre.**

# Agenda

## 1.0 Apologies and Chairperson's Remarks

## 2.0 Declarations of Interest

## 3.0 Action Sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 2 March 2026

[Action Sheet 2026 03 02.pdf](#)

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### *Council Minutes For Adoption and Signing*

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## 4.0 Minutes of Council Meeting held on 2 March 2026

[Council Minutes 2026-03-02.pdf](#)

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### *Committee Minutes for Consideration and Adoption*

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## 5.0 Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 9 March 2026

[Economy Regeneration and Tourism Minutes 2026-03-09.pdf](#)

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## 6.0 Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 12 March 2026

[Strategy Policy & Resources Committee Meeting Minutes 2026-03-12.pdf](#)

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## 7.0 Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 16 March 2026

[Active and Healthy Communities Minutes 2026 03 16.pdf](#)

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## 8.0 Minutes of Sustainability & Environment Committee Meeting held on 18 March 2026

[Sustainability\\_and\\_Environment\\_Committee\\_Minutes\\_2026\\_03-18.pdf](#)

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## 9.0 Planning Section

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### *Correspondence*

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## 10.0 Correspondence Report

📄 [Correspondence Report Council 2026-04-13.pdf](#)

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- 10.1 Correspondence from Health Minister re NOM Physician Associates C/186/2025**  
📄 [Correspondence from Health Minister re NOM Physician Associates C.186.2025.pdf](#) Page 54
- 10.2 Correspondence regarding Isle of Man Legislation**  
📄 [Correspondence from British-Irish Secretariat re NOM Isle of Man Legislation.pdf](#) Page 56
- 📄 [Correspondence from Minister Muir re NOM Isle of Man Legislation.pdf](#) Page 58
- 10.3 Correspondence from Health Minister re NOM CAR T Cell Therapy C/034/2026**  
📄 [Correspondence from Health Minister re NOM CAR T Cell Therapy C.034.2026.pdf](#) Page 60
- 10.4 Correspondence from Health Minister re NOM Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood (SUDC) C/035/2026**  
📄 [Correspondence from Health Minister re NOM SUDC C.035.2026.pdf](#) Page 62

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### ***Notices of Motion***

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## 11.0 Notice of Motion - Independent Environmental Protection Agency

The following Motion was received from Councillor Truesdale:

*"That this Council strongly condemns the blocking of the establishment of an Independent Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) by the DUP in the Assembly and Executive; further condemns the hypocrisy of those who express concern over the Lough Neagh crisis, the illegal dump at Mobuoy and wider environmental degradation, but refuse to support plans to enhance environmental accountability and safeguards; notes that a commitment to an IEPA was contained within the New Decade, New Approach Deal; agrees to write to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to ask him to urgently convene a process of institutional reform, in consultation with the Irish Government and local parties, to remove blockages and vetoes from Stormont's system of government; and to ask the Secretary of State to take meaningful steps to ensure that commitments in New Decade, New Approach are implemented."*

## 12.0 Notice of Motion - St. Patrick Centre

The following Motion was received from Councillor Hanlon:

*"This Council recognises the significant contribution St Patrick Centre Downpatrick has made to Tourism and Heritage. As Ireland's only exhibition centre dedicated to the life & legacy of our patron Saint we must recognise the significant role it plays in promoting our patron Saint.*

*This Council will pledge cross party support for the centre and a review is initiated based on the Tim Husband report presented to Council in Oct 2019.*

*We will write to DFC and DFE seeking support for the centre"*

## 13.0 Notice of Motion - Basic Income for Artists

The following Motion was received from Councillor Finn:

*"This Council notes that the arts, culture and creative sectors are central to our social fabric, wellbeing, identity, and local economy. Many artists, performers and creative workers in the district and across the North continue to experience insecure, low and irregular incomes, worsened by the long-term impacts of COVID-19 and the ongoing cost of living crisis.*

*The Irish Government introduced a Basic Income for Artists pilot in 2022, providing an unconditional weekly payment to artists and creative workers, which has been independently evaluated as improving financial stability, wellbeing, and time spent on creative practice. The Irish Government has now committed to making this scheme permanent, recognising the structural precarity faced by those working in the creative industries.*

*This Council believes that Artists and creative workers should not be forced out of their professions due to financial insecurity. Newry Mourne and Down's creative sector is a vital public good, contributing to community cohesion, regeneration, tourism, mental health, youth engagement and cultural life. A Basic Income for Artists scheme in the north would help protect creative livelihoods, retain local talent, and strengthen the districts cultural ecosystem.*

*This Council resolves to call on the Executive to introduce and fund a Basic Income for Artists scheme, modelled on the Irish Government's programme, providing regular, unconditional income support to eligible artists and creative workers.*

*Request that the Minister for Communities lead on the development of this scheme, in partnership with the Department for the Economy and the Department of Finance, engaging directly with the arts and creative sectors in its design.*

*Write to the First Minister and deputy First Minister urging that this proposal be treated as a priority within the Executive's Programme for Government and budget-setting process."*

## 14.0 Notice of Motion - Strangford - Portaferry Bridge

The following Motion was received from Councillor Bowsie:

*"Newry, Mourne & Down District Council recognises the importance of improving connectivity in East Down and the huge benefits this can bring to the wider district; in terms of boosting the local economy, enhancing tourism and tackling isolation. This council is also committed to supporting more reliable, affordable and*

*sustainable forms of travel for residents and visitors within our district.*

*Furthermore, this Council is concerned about the increase in traffic along roads on both sides of Strangford Lough which could be better served by a fixed crossing between Strangford village and Portaferry. This may also alleviate increasing congestion in parts of Rowallane and Downpatrick DEAs, as well as in the Ards district, thus shortening journey times and improving road safety.*

*NMD Council, therefore, agrees to write to the Infrastructure Minister to request that she secure funding for a feasibility study into a bridge across Strangford Lough from Strangford to Portaferry."*

## **15.0 Notice of Motion - Areas with Natural Constraints (Payments) Bill**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Rice:

*"This Council notes the introduction of the Areas with Natural Constraints (Payments) Bill in the Assembly.*

*This Council Recognises the importance of Areas with Natural Constraints (ANC) payments in sustaining family farms, supporting rural communities, and maintaining agricultural activity in marginal and upland areas.*

*This Council Welcomes the Bill's requirement that the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs make regulations under the Agriculture Act 2020 to ensure continued and inflation-linked payments to eligible farmers.*

*This Council calls on all parties in the Assembly, and the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, to support and progress this legislation without delay."*

## **16.0 Notice of Motion - Wastewater Infrastructure**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Feehan:

*"This Council notes the growing social, economic and environmental crisis caused by lack of capacity within the district's wastewater infrastructure which is impeding housing and commercial development; recognises that NI Water has identified nine wastewater treatment works locally which do not have any available capacity, and a further nine with capacity issues, also identifying its networks in Newry, Saintfield and Kilkeel as "high polluting".*

*Council notes the contents of the recent report, Newry Next: Building a Regional Powerhouse by 2035, which indicates that wastewater constraints are blocking 1,300 housing units in planning locally and that 29 major commercial schemes have been delayed; recognises the extraordinary pressures on housing supply in the Newry Mourne and Down District Council area and the consequent increase in local house purchase and rent prices.*

*Council registers its concern at further evidence of the housing crisis in the Newry Mourne and Down District Council area:*

- 3,922 applicants on the social housing waiting list of which 3,207 are in housing stress, the third highest level in the North.*
- 1,197 housing units recommended for refusal by NI Water, and a further 122 units that will not get a connection to the public foul network due to closed catchments.*

- Only 385 new housing starts locally Q1-Q3 2025, the third lowest in the North.
- The highest annual rent increases in Northern Ireland at 7.2% and the highest annual house price increases in Northern Ireland at 12.4%.

Council therefore agrees to take the following actions:

Write to the Minister for Infrastructure requesting that she:

- confirms that the long-term funding required by NI Water to upgrade its wastewater infrastructure locally will be provided
  - commission an independent review of NI Waters funding and governance arrangements as recommended by the Northern Ireland Audit Office
- Invite the authors of the Newry Next report to attend a Special Council Meeting to interrogate the recommendations of the report and ascertain the necessary action required to realise its ambition."

## **17.0 Notice of Motion - Cold Water Swimming Facilities at Tyrella Beach**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Lewis:

*"This Council notes the growing popularity of cold water swimming across the district, including at Tyrella Beach, which provides a picturesque and accessible natural setting for such activity.*

*Council further notes the recognised physical and mental health benefits associated with cold water swimming, including improved circulation, reduced stress levels, enhanced mood, and its increasing use as a complementary activity promoted through health initiatives.*

*This Council acknowledges that a number of organised groups and individuals make regular use of Tyrella Beach throughout the year, including during the winter months, often without access to appropriate facilities.*

*Accordingly, this Council agrees to:*

- *Engage with local cold water swimming groups to assess current usage and demand*
- *Engage with the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust to explore any existing or potential health-led initiatives involving cold water swimming*
- *Assess the feasibility of opening existing shower and changing facilities at Tyrella Beach during the winter period*
- *Consider the introduction of a pilot scheme to provide such facilities, with a view to gauging demand, usage, and overall benefit*

*This Council further agrees that any such pilot should be reviewed following its implementation to inform*

*future provision."*

## **18.0 Notice of Motion - Inadequacy of £17m fund for Northern Ireland Households**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Kearns:

*"This Council recognises the immense pressure being placed on workers, families and businesses as a result of huge price hikes on energy costs, especially home heating oil as a result of the US-Israeli war on Iran; notes that homes across Newry, Mourne and Down, like the rest of the North, are predominantly heated by home heating oil, making us much more vulnerable to price shocks; acknowledges that we are already in the midst of a cost of living crisis and workers, families and businesses here need real support; calls on the Communities Minister who has the responsibility for tackling fuel poverty to set up a scheme to get this money into the pockets of those who are struggling with heating costs."*

## **19.0 Notice of Motion - Lislea Men's Shed proposed Wildfowl & Wildlife Preserve at Camlough Lake**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Magennis:

*"That this Council; Recognises the huge environmental, educational, and recreational potential of the Camlough Lake Wildfowl and Wetland Centre, as promoted by Lislea Men's Shed; Commends the Lislea Men's Shed group for their efforts so far, including the excellent Wildfowl and Wetlands Family Festival; acknowledges the Council's commitment to, "embedding sustainability across all its operations and providing leadership for the wider community"; recognises that Council's support for the project is both welcome and necessary, and innkeeping with its own sustainability goals; commits to working with Lislea Men's Shed and their partners, to deliver this project as a key environmental initiative, with educational, recreational and tourist potential and further commits to engaging with relevant funders, both internal and external, to see this project through to completion."*

## **20.0 Notice of Motion - Opposing Aspirational Climate Targets**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Jackson:

*"That this Council expresses deep concern that aspirational climate targets are impeding the delivery of high-quality public services and infrastructure that ratepayers deserve; notes that the provisions of the Climate Change Act 2022 have been found by the courts to obstruct the progression of A5 Road Upgrade, with far-reaching consequences for other major projects such as the A4 Enniskillen Southern Bypass; is alarmed, furthermore, that the current legal requirement for minimum spend on active travel perversely acts as a barrier to vital investment in roads maintenance and repairs; believes Council should conduct a cost-benefit analysis of all climate-related policies and funding streams; calls on the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to withdraw the current draft Climate Action Plan, which contains a range of proposals that are not quantified and would place additional burdens on farmers and households during a cost-of-living crisis; and further calls on the Minister to urgently bring proposals to the Executive to amend the net zero by 2050 emissions target in Northern Ireland."*

## **21.0 Notice of Motion - Tollymore Mountain Centre**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Lawlor:

*"This Council notes the ongoing review and current status of Tollymore National Outdoor Centre in Bryansford and recognises the significant concern within the local community and the wider outdoor recreation sector regarding its future. This Council recognises that Tollymore National Outdoor Centre is a world class facility in the heart of the Mourne, providing an essential public service in safety training and the development of mountain leadership. This service must be protected in the context of increasing visitor numbers to the Mourne, ensuring the safety of those using our natural environment. This Council resolves to write to the Chief Executive of Sport NI to reiterate its support for the reopening of Tollymore National Outdoor Centre at the earliest possible opportunity, alongside the development of a long-term, financially sustainable operating model which protects core education and training services while improving access for the local community. The Council will also request that the findings of the ongoing review, and any proposed operating models, are shared with the Council to ensure alignment with local development and tourism strategies."*

## **22.0 Notice of Motion - St Patricks Day**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Campbell:

*"This Council recognises the local, national and international significance of St Patrick's Day, and commits to establishing a dedicated working group comprising representatives from the community, voluntary and business sectors. The purpose of this group will be to enhance and develop existing St Patrick's Day events in Downpatrick and Newry, with a view to increasing economic opportunities and strengthening the district's tourism offering"*

## **23.0 Notice of Motion - Unauthorised use of off-road vehicles on Council-owned land**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Mathers:

*"That this Council notes the ongoing and widespread community concern regarding the dangerous and unauthorised use of scramblers, quad bikes and other off road vehicles on Council owned land, open spaces, parks and public pathways; that our parks and public spaces are vital resources for the people of Newry, Mourne and Down, and should be protected, enhanced and kept safe for people; the increased risk these vehicles pose to members of the public, including children, older people, dog walkers and other users of shared public spaces; the sometimes considerable damage caused to green spaces and sports pitches by repeated off road vehicle activity and the negative effect this has on biodiversity and our local environment; that existing legislation which restricts the use of mechanically propelled vehicles on land without the landowner's permission.*

*This Council will proactively engage with police and the community to enforce this policy; audit all parks that are currently being used by these vehicles to ensure that entrance and exit points are properly secured*

*and access to these sites are safe and pedestrian friendly.*

*Calls on the Council to develop and enforce an implementation plan in collaboration with the PSNI and local stakeholders, including:*

- *Regular joint operations and patrols in hotspot areas.*
- *Clear reporting pathways for the public.*
- *Use of signage and all other appropriate deterrent measures."*

# Invitees

Cllr Terry Andrews  
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Mr Alan Beggs  
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Cllr Callum Bowsie  
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Fionnuala Branagh  
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Cllr Jim Brennan  
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Cllr Pete Byrne  
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Cllr Philip Campbell  
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Cllr William Clarke  
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Cllr Laura Devlin  
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Ms Louise Dillon  
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Cllr Cadogan Enright  
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Cllr Killian Feehan  
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Cllr Doire Finn  
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Ms Lynne Fitzsimons  
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Ms Joanne Fleming  
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Cllr Conor Galbraith  
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Cllr Mark Gibbons  
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Cllr Oonagh Hanlon  
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Cllr Glyn Hanna  
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Mrs Catherine Hanvey  
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Cllr Valerie Harte  
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Mr Conor Haughey  
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Cllr Martin Hearty  
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Cllr Roisin Howell  
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Cllr Tierna Howie  
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Ms Catherine Hughes  
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Cllr Jonathan Jackson  
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Joanne Johnston  
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Cllr Geraldine Kearns  
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Miss Veronica Keegan  
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Mrs Sheila Kieran  
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Cllr Aurla King  
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Cllr Cathal King  
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Ms Elaine Kirk  
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Cllr Mickey Larkin  
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Cllr Niall Lawlor  
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Cllr David Lee-Surginor  
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Cllr Alan Lewis  
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Cllr Oonagh Magennis  
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Mr Conor Mallon  
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Cllr Aidan Mathers  
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Cllr Declan McAteer  
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Mr Martin McKibbin  
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Cllr Kate Murphy  
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Cllr Selina Murphy  
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Sinead Murphy  
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Cllr Declan 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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Ms Maria Rogan  
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Ruth Rooney  
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Cllr Michael Ruane  
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Donna Starkey  
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Sarah Taggart  
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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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Cllr Helena Young  
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**ACTION SHEET – COUNCIL MEETING – MONDAY 1 JULY 2024**

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

**ACTION SHEET – COUNCIL MEETING – MONDAY 1 DECEMBER 2025**

<b>Minute Ref</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Actions taken/ Progress to date</b>	<b>Remove from Action Sheet Y/N</b>
<i>C/189/2025</i>	<i>Notice of Motion – Water Courses</i>	The Motion was referred to the Sustainability and Environment Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6	<i>S Murphy</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>N</i>

**ACTION SHEET – COUNCIL MEETING – MONDAY 12 JANUARY 2026**

<b>Minute Ref</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Actions taken/ Progress to date</b>	<b>Remove from Action Sheet Y/N</b>
<i>C/010/2026</i>	<i>Planning Section</i>	It was agreed that a report would be requested providing details on Judicial Reviews and presented at a future Planning Committee Meeting.	<i>C Mallon</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>N</i>

**ACTION SHEET – COUNCIL MEETING – MONDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2026**

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

**ACTION SHEET – COUNCIL MEETING – MONDAY 2 MARCH 2026**

<b>Minute Ref</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Actions taken/ Progress to date</b>	<b>Remove from Action Sheet Y/N</b>
<i>C/026/2026</i>	<i>Action Sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 02/02/26</i>	It was agreed to note the action sheet	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Noted</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>C/027/2026</i>	<i>Minutes of Council Meeting held on 02/02/2026</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Noted</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>C/028/2026</i>	<i>Minutes of Audit Committee meeting held 29/01/2026</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Noted</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>C/029/2026</i>	<i>Minutes of Economy, Regeneration &amp; Tourism Committee Meeting held 09/02/2026</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Noted</i>	<i>Y</i>

<i>C/030/2026</i>	<i>Minutes of Strategy, Policy &amp; Resources Committee Meeting held 12/02/2026</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Noted</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>C/031/2026</i>	<i>Minutes of Active &amp; Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held 16/02/2026</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Noted</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>C/032/2026</i>	<i>Minutes of Sustainability &amp; Environment Committee Meeting held 18/02/2026</i>	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and adopted	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Noted</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>C/033/2026</i>	<i>Planning Section</i>	It was agreed to note the extract from Planning Committee held on 14 January 2026 in relation to the Local Development Plan.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Noted</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>C/034/2026</i>	<i>Correspondence Report</i>	It was agreed to note the correspondence report  <i>Correspondence from Health Minister Mike Nesbitt MLA re NOM CAR-T Cell Therapy (C/123/2025)</i> It was agreed to write to the Health Minister requesting a meeting with a delegation from Council to discuss the progressing of a Belfast based treatment centre.	<i>Democratic Services</i>  <i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Noted</i>  <i>Correspondence sent</i>	<i>Y</i>  <i>Y</i>
<i>C/035/2026</i>	<i>Notice of Motion - Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood (SUDC)</i>	It was agreed that this Council notes that Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood (SUDC) is the sudden and unexpected death of a child aged between 1 and 18 years where no cause of death is identified following thorough investigation, including postmortem examination, and that approximately 40 children are affected each year across the United Kingdom. Council recognises the profound and lasting impact these unexplained deaths have on families, friends, and communities and expresses its sympathy for all those affected by such tragic loss.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Correspondence Sent</i>	<i>Y</i>

		<p>Council acknowledges that SUDC is significantly under researched when compared to related conditions such as sudden infant death syndrome and that there remains limited awareness, data collection, professional understanding, and coordinated research into causes, prevention strategies, and bereavement support for families.</p> <p>Council supports the work of charities and organisations seeking to raise awareness of SUDC, provide support to affected families, and improve research and understanding of this issue.</p> <p>Accordingly, Council agrees to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Request that the Chief Executive writes to the Health Minister asking him to engage with his UK counterparts to support the development of a coordinated national response and research strategy on SUDC, ensuring there is a clear local dimension to this issue.</li> <li>- Encourage appropriate awareness of SUDC through Council communications and engagement with relevant community and health partners where appropriate</li> </ul>			
<i>C/036/2026</i>	<i>Notice of Motion – Independent Environmental Protection Agency</i>	The motion was deferred to April Council Meeting.	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Tabled at April Meeting</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>C/037/2026</i>	<i>Notice of Motion – Isle of Man Legislation</i>	It was agreed that council is deeply concerned that the changes by the Isle of Man government to legislation where fishing vessels from NI operating with crews using a transit visa, or a UK Skilled Worker Visa cannot fish commercially in Manx waters. The new legislation requires that an Isle of Man work visa is obtained and to use these visas the business must be an Isle of Man business. This will be difficult. This legislation will damage a large number of Northern Irish fishing vessels who fish within the Isle of Man 12-mile limit. NI fish processors will also suffer, along with the fishing industry throughout County Down. This council should write to the Manx government highlighting the damage to the NI Fishing industry and asking the Isle of Man government to reverse the legislation or delay it for more consultation	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Correspondence Sent</i>	<i>Y</i>

		<p>It was also agreed that Council write to Minister Muir to ask his Department to engage with the Isle of Man government to find a constructive solution.</p> <p>It was also agreed that Council also write to the Secretary of the British-Irish Council in Edinburgh to raise the matter at the next meeting.</p>			
<i>C/038/2026</i>	<i>Notice of Motion – Coastal Protection</i>	<p>It was agreed that this Council requests the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to extend the £10.5billion pounds Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) investment programme to Northern Ireland with a pro-rata financial contribution ring fenced for Local Government use in protecting and refurbishing existing coastal infrastructure and implementing new coastal protection schemes.</p> <p>It was also agreed that Council write to the NI Executive and ask them to show some clear leadership on addressing coastal erosion.</p>	<i>Democratic Services</i>	<i>Correspondence Sent</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>C/039/2026</i>	<i>Notice of Motion – Nighttime Economy in Downpatrick</i>	<p>The Motion was referred to the Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6</p>	<i>C Mallon</i>		

**NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL****NMD/C/****Minutes of Council Meeting held on Monday 2 March 2026 at 6.00pm in  
Council Chamber, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick****In the Chair:** Councillor G Kearns**In attendance in  
Chamber:**

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor C Bowsie
Councillor J Brennan	Councillor P Byrne
Councillor W Clarke	Councillor L Devlin
Councillor D Finn	Councillor C Galbraith
Councillor O Hanlon	Councillor G Hanna
Councillor V Harte	Councillor M Hearty
Councillor T Howie	Councillor J Jackson
Councillor A King	Councillor C King
Councillor M Larkin	Councillor N Lawlor
Councillor D Lee-Surginor	Councillor A Lewis
Councillor A Mathers	Councillor D McAteer
Councillor D Murphy	Councillor K Murphy
Councillor S Murphy	Councillor H Reilly
Councillor M Rice	Councillor J Tinnelly

**In attendance  
via Teams:**

Councillor C Enright	Councillor K Feehan
Councillor M Gibbons	Councillor R Howell
Councillor O Magennis	Councillor S O'Hare
Councillor A Quinn	Councillor D Taylor
Councillor H Young	

**Officials in attendance:** Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive  
 Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism  
 Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability and Environment  
 Mr A Patterson, Director of Active and Health Communities  
 Ms E Kirk, Assistant Director of People & Legal  
 Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager  
 Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer

**C/024/2026****APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Campbell, Ruane and Truesdale.

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

On behalf of Councillor Campbell, Councillor Kearns noted his delight at having had the opportunity to host the recent Chairperson's awards and expressed his thanks to the Democratic Services team and to the judging panels for their time and effort.

The Chairperson advised that an emergency notice of motion had been received and would be dealt with at the appropriate time during the meeting.

**C/025/2026      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**C/026/2026      ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 2 FEBRUARY 2026**

Read:                      Action sheet from Council Meeting held on 2 February 2026. **(Copy circulated)**

*C/010/2026: Planning Section*

Councillor Howie asked whether the report to be tabled would be available to all Councillors, or just the Planning Committee.

Mr Mallon confirmed that Councillors had access to all reports at every committee and would have sight of the report.

**Agreed:                      On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Hanna, the Action Sheet from Council Meeting held on 2 February 2026 was agreed.**

**COUNCIL MINUTES FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION**

**C/027/2026      MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 2 FEBRUARY 2026**

Read:                      Minutes of Council Meeting held on 2 February 2026 **(copy circulated)**.

**Agreed:                      On the proposal of Councillor Bowsie, seconded by Councillor Brennan, the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 2 February 2026 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.**

**COMMITTEE MINUTES FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION**

**C/028/2026      MINUTES OF AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 29 JANUARY 2026**

Read:                      Minutes of Audit Committee Meeting held 29 January 2026 **(copy circulated)**.

**Agreed:                      On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, the Minutes of Audit Committee**

Meeting held on 29 January 2026 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.

**C/029/2026**

**MINUTES OF ECONOMY, REGENERATION AND TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9 FEBRUARY 2026**

Read: Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 9 February 2026 (**copy circulated**).

**Agreed:** **On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Harte, the Minutes of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 9 February 2026 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.**

**C/030/2026**

**MINUTES OF STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 FEBRUARY 2026**

Read: Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 12 February 2026 (**copy circulated**).

**Agreed:** **On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor C King, the Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 12 February 2026 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.**

**C/031/2026**

**MINUTES OF ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16 FEBRUARY 2026**

Read: Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 16 February 2026 (**copy circulated**).

**Agreed:** **On the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Jackson, the Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 16 February 2026 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.**

**C/032/2026**

**MINUTES OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 FEBRUARY 2026**

Read: Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 18 February 2026 (**copy circulated**).

*SE/017/2026: Health Working Groups*

Councillor Reilly welcomed the reinstatement of the working groups and queried if they could be made open to any interested Councillor to attend, noting that it could help increase potential stakeholder attendance.

Ms Taggart advised that anyone who was unable to attend a meeting could nominate a substitute Member to attend on their behalf.

Councillor Reilly noted that it was not the same as being open to every interested Councillor.

**Agreed:** **On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Andrews, the Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 18 February 2026 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted.**

**It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Jackson that the Health Working Groups membership be opened to any Member that would like to attend.**

### **C/033/2026** **PLANNING SECTION**

Read: Extract from Minutes of Planning Committee Meeting held on 14 January 2026 in relation to the Local Development Plan **(Copy circulated)**

*C/010/2026: Planning Section*

Councillor Hanna stated that he had not received any information relating to judicial reviews as he had previously requested.

Mr Mallon advised that as noted from the action sheet and advised to Councillor Howie, a report was being drafted and would be tabled at the Planning Committee when complete.

**Agreed:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Larkin to note the extract from Minutes of Planning Committee held on 14 January 2026 in relation to the Local Development Plan.**

### **C/034/2026** **CORRESPONDENCE REPORT**

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

*Correspondence from Health Minister Mike Nesbitt MLA re NOM CAR-T Cell Therapy (C/123/2025)*

Councillor Byrne noted the correspondence, advised that an SDLP delegation had recently met with haematologists and other experts in the field and proposed that Council write to the Minister requesting a meeting with a delegation from Council to discuss the progression of a Belfast based treatment centre. This was seconded by Councillor Devlin.

**Agreed:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Devlin, that Council write to the Health Minister requesting a meeting with a delegation**

**from Council to discuss the progressing of a Belfast based treatment centre.**

*Correspondence from Health Minister Kimmins re NOM Resurface and Long-Term Repair (C/110/2025)*

Councillor Devlin expressed her disappointment at the Minister's lack of engagement regarding the issue. She advised that her concern was regarding policy directive and did not want to add pressure at local level but acknowledged that there was ongoing dialogue with local officials. She requested that the invite remain open should the Minister's diary find some availability for a meeting.

Councillor Clarke stressed that it was important for the Minister to see the items that were of the utmost importance at local level, noting that the roads were dangerous and needed addressed, with recent weather compounding the problems. He also requested that the invite remain open for the Minister and advised that work with local officials would remain ongoing.

Councillor Hanna echoed the sentiments already expressed, noting a number of issues along the stretch of road. He also stated that with upcoming road closures over the mountains for 16 weeks, and the Newry to Killeel road also partially closing, this would increase traffic on that A1 stretch of road and cause further erosion to the dangerous road. He asked whether there was any date for a meeting with local officials.

Mrs Ward advised that there was nothing confirmed yet but advised that it would be picked up with the Department following the meeting.

*Correspondence from Minister of State for Justice (C/011/2026)*

Councillor Hearty noted a disappointing response but spoke of his delight that the hunger strike had ended with no loss of life. He noted the recent High Court ruling regarding the proscription of Palestine Action and welcomed the closure of the issue.

*Correspondence from Minister Muir MLA re NOM ReGen Waste Warrenpoint (C/183/2025)*

Councillor S Murphy welcomed the correspondence and noted that her Party was glad that a meeting would be arranged regarding ReGen Waste storage at Warrenpoint.

**Agreed:**

**It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Harte, seconded by Councillor Mathers, to note the correspondence report and the following correspondence:**

- **Correspondence from Minister for Health Jennifer Carroll MacNeill TD (C/123/2025)**
- **Correspondence from Health Minister Mike Nesbitt MLA (C/123/2025)**
- **Correspondence from Clare County Council**
- **Correspondence from Minister of State for Justice (C/011/2026)**
- **Correspondence from Minister Muir MLA re NOM ReGen Waste Warrenpoint (C/183/2025)**
- **Correspondence from Minister Kimmins MLA re NOM Resurfacing and Long Term Repair (C/110/2025)**

**C/035/2026                      NOTICE OF MOTION – SUDDEN UNEXPLAINED DEATH IN CHILDHOOD (SUDC)**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Lewis:

*"This Council notes that Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood (SUDC) is the sudden and unexpected death of a child aged between 1 and 18 years where no cause of death is identified following thorough investigation, including postmortem examination, and that approximately 40 children are affected each year across the United Kingdom. Council recognises the profound and lasting impact these unexplained deaths have on families, friends, and communities and expresses its sympathy for all those affected by such tragic loss.*

*Council acknowledges that SUDC is significantly under researched when compared to related conditions such as sudden infant death syndrome and that there remains limited awareness, data collection, professional understanding, and coordinated research into causes, prevention strategies, and bereavement support for families.*

*Council supports the work of charities and organisations seeking to raise awareness of SUDC, provide support to affected families, and improve research and understanding of this issue.*

*Accordingly, Council agrees to:*

- Request that the Chief Executive writes to the Health Minister asking him to engage with his UK counterparts to support the development of a coordinated national response and research strategy on SUDC, ensuring there is a clear local dimension to this issue.*
- Encourage appropriate awareness of SUDC through Council communications and engagement with relevant community and health partners where appropriate."*

This was seconded by Councillor Bowsie.

Councillor Lewis spoke of the shared trauma and pain experienced by affected families and clarified that the request was not for significant funding or major commitments, but simply for appropriate research to be carried out with proper due regard given to the matter.

Councillor Bowsie stated that the death of a child was especially traumatic for families when it was sudden and unexplained, stressed the need for more research so that grieving families could receive answers, and so that rare health issues could be identified earlier, helping to prevent future tragedies.

Councillor Hanlon welcomed the work of SUDC and the National Child Mortality Database in raising awareness and advocating for improved research, data collection, and support for bereaved families. She confirmed her Party's support for the motion and for efforts to secure greater recognition of sudden unexplained death in childhood, as well as the development of a coordinated, government-backed plan to improve understanding, research, and prevention.

Councillor Lee-Surginor described SUDC as a profound tragedy that affected many families and expressed full support for the motion and emphasised the need to raise awareness among both professionals and parents. Citing findings from the University of Central

Lancashire, he highlighted that families deserved swift, proactive, and informed communication during and after investigations and advised that poor communication not only frustrated families but intensified their grief. He stressed the importance of greater consistency, clarity, and effectiveness in the investigation process to ensure families were never left in the dark.

Councillor Andrews acknowledged the work of various organisations in raising awareness and providing support in relation to SUDC and expressed his Party's full support for the motion.

Councillor Taylor described the issue as extremely traumatic for families and stressed the need to implement better practices that provide comfort, support, and clearer understanding of the causes of such deaths. He highlighted that thorough reviews could also inform prevention efforts and expressed his hope that the Health Minister would respond positively to the initiatives.

Councillor Lewis thanked Members for their support.

**Agreed:**

**On the proposal of Councillor Lewis, seconded by Councillor Bowsie, it was agreed that this Council notes that Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood (SUDC) is the sudden and unexpected death of a child aged between 1 and 18 years where no cause of death is identified following thorough investigation, including postmortem examination, and that approximately 40 children are affected each year across the United Kingdom.**

**Council recognises the profound and lasting impact these unexplained deaths have on families, friends, and communities and expresses its sympathy for all those affected by such tragic loss.**

**Council acknowledges that SUDC is significantly under researched when compared to related conditions such as sudden infant death syndrome and that there remains limited awareness, data collection, professional understanding, and coordinated research into causes, prevention strategies, and bereavement support for families.**

**Council supports the work of charities and organisations seeking to raise awareness of SUDC, provide support to affected families, and improve research and understanding of this issue.**

**Accordingly, Council agrees to:**

- Request that the Chief Executive writes to the Health Minister asking him to engage with his UK counterparts to support the development of a coordinated national response and research strategy on SUDC, ensuring there is a clear local dimension to this issue.**
- Encourage appropriate awareness of SUDC through Council communications and engagement with**



action, the changes could devastate the local fleet, processors, and coastal communities along the Down coast, threatening a centuries-old fishing tradition.

Councillor Reilly highlighted that the Isle of Man's new regulations had created significant anxiety within the fishing communities of Kilkeel, Portavogie, and Ardglass, affecting traditional fishing grounds used for generations. He noted that the impact extended beyond fishermen to thousands of workers in processing, packaging, transport, and related industries, putting many jobs at risk. He recalled that reciprocal arrangements with the Irish government had previously been lost and now access to Isle of Man waters was also at risk, threatening to devastate the local fishing industry. Councillor Reilly stressed the need for careful consideration by the Isle of Man and emphasised that while encouraging more local people into the industry was important, it remained a long-term goal.

Councillor Rice voiced Sinn Féin support of the motion, emphasising the serious socio-economic consequences of the Isle of Man's legislative changes on Northern Ireland's fishing operators. He explained that many vessels from Portavogie, Kilkeel, and Ardglass relied on access to Manx waters within the 12-mile limit, and the new requirement for crews to hold an Isle of Man work visa, along with the need for businesses to operate as Manx entities, created a major barrier for local operators. He highlighted that this worsened existing labour shortages, already strained by Brexit and the end of free movement, threatening recruitment, retention, and the sustainability of family-run fisheries and coastal communities.

Councillor Rice noted that similar disadvantages had affected the agri-food sector and warned that without intervention, young people would leave the fishing sector and rural communities would weaken. He proposed an amendment to write to Minister Muir to ask his Department to engage with the Isle of Man government to find a constructive solution. This was seconded by Councillor Brennan.

Councillor Hanna advised that he was content to accept the amendment.

Councillor McAteer confirmed his Party's support for the motion, noting that it highlighted the ongoing challenges Northern Irish fishermen faced due to Brexit and increasing regulations, which had placed additional pressure on a significant local industry providing substantial employment. He proposed that Council also write to the Secretary of the British-Irish Council in Edinburgh to raise the matter at the next meeting. This was seconded by Councillor Andrews.

Councillor Hanna accepted the amendment.

Councillor Howie expressed her support for the motion while noting the proactive steps already taken by the Minister and his department, noting that he shared the concerns expressed regarding the Isle of Man immigration policy changes affecting the local fishing industry, highlighting his disappointment over the lack of prior consultation given the significant potential impact on Northern Ireland's fishing fleet. She advised that officials had already met with industry representatives and made representations to the Isle of Man government and stated that Minister Muir had requested meetings with Isle of Man ministers responsible for fisheries and immigration to understand the rationale for the changes and to explore practical solutions to avoid disproportionate effects on Northern Irish vessels.

Councillor Taylor emphasised that the Isle of Man's policy changes had potentially devastating consequences for the local fishing industry, which was a key part of the economy in Newry, Mourne, and Down. He noted that Minister Muir had already raised the

issue with the Isle of Man government and expressed hope that additional representations at both local and executive levels would lead to a review and changes. Councillor Taylor stressed the importance of protecting the local fishing industry and hoped the Isle of Man government would reconsider its proposals.

Councillor Hanna reminded colleagues that the Isle of Man legislation affected thousands of jobs and involved significant economic value, expressing his disbelief that the legislation had progressed without proper awareness or intervention from the relevant Minister.

**Agreed:** **On the proposal of Councillor Hanna, seconded by Councillor Reilly, it was agreed that council is deeply concerned that the changes by the Isle of Man government to legislation where fishing vessels from NI operating with crews using a transit visa, or a UK Skilled Worker Visa cannot fish commercially in Manx waters. The new legislation requires that an Isle of Man work visa is obtained and to use these visas the business must be an Isle of Man business. This will be difficult. This legislation will damage a large number of Northern Irish fishing vessels who fish within the Isle of Man 12-mile limit. NI fish processors will also suffer, along with the fishing industry throughout County Down. This council should write to the Manx government highlighting the damage to the NI Fishing industry and asking the Isle of Man government to reverse the legislation or delay it for more consultation**

**It was also agreed that Council write to Minister Muir to ask his Department to engage with the Isle of Man government to find a constructive solution.**

**It was also agreed that Council also write to the Secretary of the British-Irish Council in Edinburgh to raise the matter at the next meeting.**

## **C/038/2026      NOTICE OF MOTION – COASTAL PROTECTION**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Reilly:

*"That this Council requests the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to extend the £10.5billion pounds Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) investment programme to Northern Ireland with a pro-rata financial contribution ring fenced for Local Government use in protecting and refurbishing existing coastal infrastructure and implementing new coastal protection schemes."*

This was seconded by Councillor Jackson

Councillor Reilly highlighted that Northern Ireland lacked a coastal protection strategy, dedicated fund, or department to manage coastal infrastructure and while the Northern Ireland Coastal Forum existed, its work was largely academic and not decision-making. He contrasted this with England, which had a dedicated coastal protection fund managed by

local authorities and accessible to community groups, citing examples like Torbay, Dorset, and the Isle of Wight. He advised that Wales also had a dedicated policy and had allocated £85 million for coastal protection that year, supporting both small and large-scale projects. Councillor Reilly stressed that Northern Ireland's coastal infrastructure, including beaches, promenades, and harbours, required refurbishment or replacement. He proposed that Council write to the Northern Ireland Executive Assembly requesting a similar scheme to those in England and Wales to ensure proper maintenance and improvement of coastal and maritime infrastructure.

Councillor Jackson highlighted the geographical extent of the District's Council area, noting the impact that coastal erosion could have on the area.

Councillor Devlin noted her Party's support for the motion, addressing the well-known damage caused by coastal erosion and flooding to towns, communities, and rural areas, and observed that planning decisions were often affected by these issues. She highlighted that there was no dedicated central government resource or funding to address the problem, which would only worsen due to climate change. She concluded that any support or funding from central or local government to help communities would be welcomed and the SDLP would support such measures.

Councillor Lawlor stated that harbours and coastal areas in Newcastle, Kilkeel, and Annalong had suffered significant damage from extreme weather and coastal erosion. He noted that such events were becoming more frequent and severe, with climate change increasing pressure on these communities. He emphasised that investment in defences and adaptation needed to be central to the response and expressed Sinn Féin's support for the sensible and practical proposal.

Councillor Clarke noted a significant increase in storms and tidal energy, which he attributed to climate change, causing damage through coastal erosion and flood risk. He highlighted that while funds were available in Scotland, Wales, and England, Northern Ireland faced challenges in securing resources. He emphasised the need for a dedicated budget and a strategic coastal framework, rather than ad hoc interventions, as past hard-engineered projects, like rock armour at Royal County Down, had unintentionally worsened damage to sand dunes. He also referenced the National Trust's support for soft-engineered solutions, such as allowing sand dunes to recede to replenish beaches. Councillor Clarke recalled past workshops and consultations on coastal erosion, noting little progress had been made, and concluded that a comprehensive coastal strategy, combining both soft and hard engineering solutions, was essential moving forward.

Councillor Howie highlighted that the Alliance Party had a strong focus on environmental and marine protection and emphasised the importance of strategic long-term planning due to rising sea levels. She noted that destructive waves from storms, which had become more frequent in recent years, were the primary cause of coastal erosion, worsened by the climate crisis. Councillor Howie stressed that the coastline needed protection, ideally overseen by an independent environmental agency, and called for all parties to work together to ensure stronger coastal protection, noting that progress had previously been blocked by the DUP at the executive level.

Councillor Hanna also recalled past workshops held in Newcastle and emphasised the need for a comprehensive coastal strategy, describing significant storm damage along the coast, particularly around Cranfield and the south coast, which had almost undermined a road and caused ongoing erosion. Councillor Hanna noted the uncertainty over who held overall

responsibility for the issue, questioning whether it lay with the Department of Environment or another relevant minister. He proposed that Council also write to the NI Executive and ask them to show some clear leadership on addressing coastal erosion. This was seconded by Councillor Jackson.

Councillor Reilly accepted the amendment.

Councillor Taylor expressed strong support for the proposal, noting that while Northern Ireland's current approach was integrated into broader environmental and climate strategies, the motion offered a more specific focus. He highlighted that it guaranteed targeted funding for projects designed to protect homes, businesses, and infrastructure. Councillor Taylor emphasised that the issue would not improve without dedicated attention and that creating such a focused body could deliver more positive results for affected communities. He expressed his hope that the Executive would consider the proposal seriously and work toward a more specific strategy to address the issue.

Councillor Reilly thanked Members for their support, and highlighted Councillor Clarke's point that coastal protection was not solely about hard infrastructure like concrete and stone. He noted that much of the work in England involved soft engineering, such as planting indigenous vegetation along shorelines to prevent erosion. He emphasised that with the right coordinating body and modest funding, significant progress could be made.

**Agreed:** **On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Jackson, it was agreed that this Council requests the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to extend the £10.5 billion pounds Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) investment programme to Northern Ireland with a pro-rata financial contribution ring fenced for Local Government use in protecting and refurbishing existing coastal infrastructure and implementing new coastal protection schemes.**

**It was also agreed that Council write to the NI Executive and ask them to show some clear leadership on addressing coastal erosion.**

**C/039/2026**      **NOTICE OF MOTION – NIGHT TIME ECONOMY IN DOWNPATRICK**

The following Motion was received from Councillor Galbraith:

*"Noting with concern the ongoing challenges facing the development and sustainability of the night-time economy within Downpatrick town centre, and the impact this has on town centre vibrancy, employment, and perceptions of safety; and recognising Downpatrick's important role as the County Town of Down, this Council commits to the appointment of a Night Time Economy Champion with a specific initial focus on the regeneration and sustainability of the night-time economy in Downpatrick; will host an engagement event with local businesses and the Downpatrick Regeneration Working Group; will seek a meeting with a delegation from Belfast City Council to learn from their experience of this process; and will*



**NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**RECORDED VOTE**

DATE: 02/03/2026 VENUE: Downpatrick MEETING: Council

SUBJECT OF VOTE: Suspension of Standing Orders to hear an Emergency Notice of Motion

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

**NEWRY MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting  
held on Monday 9 March 2026 at 6.00pm in Boardroom, Warrenpoint Town Hall**

**Chairperson:** Councillor D Lee-Surginor

**Committee Members**

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor W Clarke
Councillor O Hanlon	Councillor G Hanna
Councillor V Harte	Councillor G Kearns
Councillor A Lewis	Councillor S Murphy
Councillor J Tinnelly	Councillor H Young

**Committee Members in attendance via Teams:** Councillor K Feehan Councillor A Quinn

**Non-Committee Members In attendance via Teams:** Councillor J Jackson

**Officials in attendance:** Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism  
Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth and Tourism  
Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Regeneration  
Mr C Smyth, Democratic Services Officer

**Officials in attendance via Teams:** Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer

**ERT/022/2026 APOLOGIES / CHAIRPERSON’S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Galbraith and Ruane.

The Chairperson advised that in an effort to be more transparent, many of the reports were tabled in open session while the appendices were in closed session. He asked that should Members have any questions regarding an appendix that they wait until the meeting was in closed session to raise any queries.

**ERT/023/2026 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**ERT/024/2026 ACTION SHEET ECONOMY, REGENERATION & TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 9 FEBRUARY 2026**

Read: Action Sheet arising out of the Minutes of the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on 9 February 2026. **(Copy circulated)**

*ERT/ 020/2026 - International Friendship Relations Agreement*

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Hanlon, Councillor Lee-Surginor advised that the matter required discussion in closed session, as it had been considered in closed session at the previous meeting. He confirmed that Councillor Hanlon was content to wait until the meeting entered closed session.

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Young, it was agreed to note the Action Sheet arising from the Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting held on 9 February 2026.**

## **FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION**

**ERT/025/2026**

**NMD LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP 2026/27**

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism regarding NMD Labour Market Partnership 2026/27.  
**(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Smyth outlined the report, noting that section 2.1 presented the 2026–27 Labour Market Partnership (LMP) action plan, agreed following strategic assessment and engagement, and continuing activity delivered since 2021/22 under full Department for Communities (DfC) funding. She advised that the Council was awaiting the 2026–27 letter of offer, reported ongoing engagement with DfC and confirmed that further information was expected in the coming days. She confirmed that the action plan and business case were presented for approval and sought Members' agreement to accept the letter of offer, once received, and proceed with implementation.

Councillor Andrews welcomed the report, expressed full support for the LMP and proposed to accept the officers' recommendations.

In response to a query from Councillor Young on the plans in place regarding the conclusions of the Ulster University analysis report and the type of job training available, Mrs Smyth confirmed that a suite of initiatives had been delivered through the LMP to promote the district as a place to work. She highlighted major jobs fairs in Newry and Downpatrick, delivered in partnership with DfC, and attracting over 300 jobseekers per event, as well as careers fairs with schools showcasing local employers, job opportunities and career pathways.

In response to a question from Councillor Hanna on assessing LMP performance, Mrs Smyth confirmed that, under the letter of offer, stringent monitoring arrangements were in place. She advised that the action plan included engagement targets, with follow-up evaluations, quarterly reporting to DfC and an annual overall evaluation. She confirmed that the 2025/26 report could be shared with Members at a future ERT Committee.

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Hanna, it was agreed to approve the following, subject to funding,**

- **The business case for implementation of NMD Action Plan for 2026/2027 as outlined in appendix 1 of the officers' report.**
- **Acceptance of a DfC letter of Offer for NMD LMP activities, including administration and operational budget.**

- **Progression of all required procurement and commissioning activity to secure delivery agents for the initiatives detailed in appendix 2 of the officers' report.**

**ERT/026/2026****PEACEPLUS THEME 1.1**

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism regarding PEACEPLUS Theme 1.1. **(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Smyth presented the report, noting that it set out two business cases: Strand 2.3, Sustaining Cross-community Relationships, and Strand 2.6, Intergenerational Programmes and Activities. She advised that both business cases were submitted for approval to enable progression of the associated actions and commencement of procurement.

**AGREED:**

**On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Kearns, it was agreed to approve the business cases and commencement of procurement for;**

- **2.3 Collaborative Interaction Programme – Sustaining Cross Community Relations.**
- **2.6 Social and Emotional Support Programme – Intergenerational programmes and activities “The Shared Bench; Men’s Sheds Across Generations”**

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

**AGREED:**

**On the proposal of Councillor Harte, seconded by Councillor Hanna, 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 Lewis, seconded by Councillor Young, it was agreed to come out of Closed Session.**

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

**ERT/027/2026****FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE CALL 1/TRANCHE 1 REVENUE THEMES**

Read: Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding Financial Assistance Call 1 – Tranche 1 –

Revenue Themes. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

**It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Young, to issue Letters of Offer to projects as per Council Policy to the groups recommended for the award of funding within the budget allocation for each theme. It was also agreed that Pre-Letter of Offer conditions are met prior to issue of full Letter of Offer and where conditions are not satisfied, the budget will be reallocated to score and rank list, if applicable.**

**ERT/028/2026****TOURISM EVENTS PROGRAMME 2026/27**

Read:

Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism regarding Tourism Events Programme 26/27. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

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

- **The proposed Schedule of Giant Adventure Events for 2026-2027 as outlined in section 2.1 of the officers' report.**
- **The financial assistance awards associated with the delivery of Tourism events, Christmas events and Halloween events to named groups as outlined in section 2.2 of the officers' report.**
- **The necessary procurements and appointment of suppliers for the delivery of events and festivals in the annual tourism events programme.**

**ERT/029/2026****PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS FOR 2026/27**

Read:

Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding Partnership Agreements for 2026/27. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

**It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Hanna, to approve the list of Service Level Agreements, MOUs, Letters of Offer and Partnership Agreements for 2026/27 as detailed in the officers' report.**

**ERT/030/2026****THA HAIRTLAN FESTIVAL 2026**

Read:

Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism, presented by Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy,

Regeneration & Tourism regarding Tha Hairtlan Festival 2026.  
(Copy circulated)

**AGREED:**

**It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hanna, seconded by Councillor Lewis to support the new outreach and programmes proposed for Tha Hairtlan Festival in 2026 as set out in Section 2.1 of the officers' report.**

**It was also agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hanna, seconded by Councillor Clarke, to defer the item to April ERT Committee, pending the outcome of the financial assistance call and further engagement with the organisation named in the officers' report.**

The Chairperson confirmed that item ERT/020/2026 – International Friendship Relations Agreement was discussed in closed session, and the following was agreed

**ERT/ 020/2026 -**

**INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP RELATIONS AGREEMENT**

**It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hanna, seconded by Councillor Harte, to acknowledge the invitation from the Chinese consulate and recognise the importance of our sister city relationship with the city of Changchun. The Council respectfully decline their invite to visit this year but will engage with our partners such as Invest NI and The Executive Office on a visit to our sister city in the future.**

**FOR NOTING**

**ERT/031/2026**

**DTFF NI UPDATE**

Read:

Report from Mrs A Smyth, Assistant Director of Economy, Growth & Tourism, regarding Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF).  
(Copy circulated)

**AGREED:**

**On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Young, it was agreed to note the DTFF Steering Group's consensus position allowing call 7 to proceed without delay and the potential contingency revenue costs should the programme extend beyond March 2027.**

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 7.03pm.

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

**Signed:**      **Councillor D Lee-Surginor**  
                    **Chairperson**  
                    **Economy, Regeneration & Tourism Committee**

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**Signed:**      **Conor Mallon**  
                    **Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism**

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**NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**Minutes of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on  
Thursday 12 March 2026 at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Downshire Civic  
Centre**

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**In the Chair:** Councillor O Hanlon

**In Attendance in  
Chamber:**

Councillor P Byrne	Councillor M Hearty
Councillor T Howie	Councillor A King
Councillor A Lewis	Councillor A Mathers
Councillor S O'Hare	Councillor H Reilly
Councillor M Rice	

**Committee Members in  
Attendance via Teams:**

Councillor R Howell	Councillor C King
Councillor D Taylor	

**Non-Committee Members**

**In Attendance via Teams:** Councillor C Bowsie

**Officials in Attendance  
in Chamber:**

Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive  
Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism  
Ms S Murphy, Director of Sustainability & Environment  
Mr A Patterson, Director of Active & Healthy Communities  
Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director of Capital Projects & Procurement  
Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance and Performance  
Ms E Kirk, Assistant Director of People & Legal  
Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director: Regeneration  
Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer  
Mr C Smyth, Democratic Services Officer

**SPR/031/2026:**

**APOLOGIES & CHAIRPERSONS REMARKS**

An apology was received from Councillor McAteer

**SPR/032/2026:**

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**SPR/033/2026:**

**ACTION SHEET OF STRATEGY, POLICY & RESOURCES  
MEETING HELD ON 12 FEBRUARY 2026**

**Read:**

Action Sheet of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee meeting held 12 February 2026. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:**

**On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to note the action sheet of Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee meeting of 12 February 2026.**

**FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION**

Councillor Byrne stated that he had repeatedly raised concerns about the number of items being taken into closed session, emphasising the importance of transparency for the public regarding matters discussed by the committee, requesting that officers review the papers to determine whether the main body of papers could be in open session and any financial information be placed in appendices. He acknowledged that some of the tabled papers contained significant financial information and therefore understood why certain items were considered in closed session and further requested that any agreed recommendations read out at the end of closed sessions were as detailed as possible so the public could understand what had been discussed.

Mrs Ward advised that she could not provide the exact recommendations as they first needed to be considered and agreed by the committee, and highlighted that, in some cases, the nature of the papers meant they had to remain confidential and welcomed this recognition by Councillor Byrne. She confirmed that the proposed agreed recommendations had been reviewed and would continue to be reviewed following the committee's decisions, with the intention of providing the public with as much clarity as possible about what had been discussed. She added, however, that Council also had a responsibility to protect financial interests and those of other bodies when determining what information could be disclosed.

Councillor Byrne referred to Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act, noting that while items could be taken into closed session due to their financial or personal nature relating to individuals or the Council, the legislation also stated that matters could remain in open session where the public interest outweighed the reasons for confidentiality and asked that this principle be kept in mind in future, emphasising the need to avoid a perception that decisions were being made behind closed doors.

Councillor Hanlon noted that the Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Committee had been effective in handling items between public and closed sessions and acknowledged that the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee dealt with many financially sensitive matters, which made it more difficult to strike the right balance. However, she stated that she recognised and accepted the points raised by Councillor Byrne.

Councillor Bowsie stated that he had previously raised the matter during the last Audit Committee meeting where he recalled that the Chief Executive had stated that legal advice would be provided to councillors at a future Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee meeting regarding the relevant clause in the Local Government Act relating to confidential business, highlighting this as his reason for attending the Committee meeting, and requested an update on the matter.

Councillor Hanlon advised that she did not recall that agreement following the Audit Committee but advised that officers would take it on board for a subsequent meeting.

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

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Lewis, seconded by Councillor O'Hare, 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 O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Lewis, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

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

**SPR/034/2026: GO SUCCEED NI UPDATE**

**Read:** Report from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, regarding Go Succeed NI Update. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Hearty, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to approve an increased Council contribution to match DFE funding for delivery of the Go Succeed subject to agreement of all Councils as detailed at section 4 of the officer's report. It was further proposed to write to the UK Government reminding them of their promises that EU funding would be matched and request that the council be reimbursed for the funds it is putting towards the Go Succeed programme.

**SPR/035/2026: NCCR THEATRE AND CONFERENCE FACILITY UPDATE**

**Read:** Report from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, regarding NCCR Theatre and Conference Facility Update. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Reilly seconded by Councillor Lewis, the following was agreed:

- To note the BRCD and DfC approval of the revised timetable for delivery of the NCCR programme of works with the Theatre/Conference associated public realm and the flood alleviation work to be completed in early 2028.
- To approve the additional Integrated Consultancy Team fees as part of the

capital budget incurred on the project since the Full Business Case approval

- To approve the introduction of the contractual X1 inflation clause on the ICT fees as part of the capital budget schedule from January 2026.
- To approve the additional contractual X1 inflation costs incurred on the construction project since the FBC approval.
- To note the proposed change of NEC4 Project Manager for RIBA stages 5 – 7 of the project.

**SPR/036/2026: NCCR THEATRE AND CONFERENCE FACILITY – OPERATING MODEL**

**Read:** Report from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, regarding NCCR Theatre and Conference Facility Operating Model. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Reilly, it was agreed to defer the paper to enable further details to be provided regarding the proposed model and engagement with the local Trade Unions**

**SPR/037/2026: DELAMONT COUNTRY PARK CARAVAN SITE**

**Read:** Report from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, regarding Delamont Country Park Caravan Site. **(Copy circulated)**

**Clr Rice left the meeting at this stage – 7.21pm**

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Lewis, seconded by Councillor O’Hare, it was agreed to approve Council operation of the Delamont Country Park caravan site from June to September 2026 and for the site to be marketed and booked through the camp manager system, the same as Castlewellan and Kilbroney caravan site. A report to be tabled in October regarding the operation outcomes and to consider most appropriate management from 2027.**

**SPR/038/2026: MONAGHAN ROW LEASE**

**Read:** Report from Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, regarding Monaghan Row Lease. **(Copy circulated)**

- AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Mathers, the following was agreed:
- To note the extended lease with the SHSCT until 30 June 2026
  - Subject to meeting the IT and security requirements for the temporary site, Council progress the works to facilitate the lease of the building at a cost detailed at section 4.1 of the officer's report.
  - That Council enter into a lease for the temporary building at the estimated annual rental cost as detailed at section 4.2 and 4.3 of the officer's report.

**SPR/039/2026: CAPITAL PROGRAMME – CLIENT-SIDE PROJECT MANAGERS**

**Read:** Report from Mr C Boyd, Assistant Director: Capital Projects & Procurement, regarding Capital Programme – Client-Side Project Managers. **(Copy circulated)**

- AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Byrne, the following was agreed:
- To approve the appointment of Client-Side Project Managers to support the delivery of Newry City Park and Warrenpoint Health and Wellbeing Hub and allocate the capital budget as detailed at section 4.1 of the officer's report.
  - To approve the business cases as attached at Appendix 1.

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

**SPR/040/2026: WASTE CONTRACT PROCUREMENT UPDATE**

**Read:** Report from Mrs S Murphy, Director of Sustainability & Environment, regarding Waste Contract Procurement Update. **(Copy circulated)**

- AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Hearty, it was agreed to note the contents of the report.

**SPR/041/2026: 2025/2026 QUARTER 3 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS UPDATE**

**Read:** Report from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Performance, regarding 2025/26 Quarter 3 Management Accounts. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Hearty, it was agreed to note the quarter three 2025/2026 Management Accounts.**

**SPR/042/2026:** **TREASURY MANAGEMENT**

**Read:** Report from Mr G Byrne, Assistant Director of Finance & Performance, regarding Treasury Management. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Reilly, seconded by Councillor Hearty, it was agreed to note that Council will lead the group procurement process on behalf of all 11 Councils for the Treasury Management and Technical Accounting and Support Service contracts.**

**SPR/043/2026:** **MINUTES OF NEWRY CITY CENTRE REGENERATION PROGRAMME BOARD MEETING HELD 8 DEEMBER 2025**

**Read:** Minutes of Newry City Centre Regeneration Programme Board Meeting held 8 December 2025. **(Copy circulated)**

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

Cllr Reilly left the meeting at this stage – 7.44pm

#### **FOR NOTING**

**SPR/044/2026:** **ACTION SHEET OF WOMEN'S WORKING GROUP MEETING HELD 11 FEBRUARY 2026**

**Read:** Action Sheet of Women's Working Group Meeting held 11 February 2026. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Lewis, seconded by Councillor Howie, it was agreed to note the action sheet.**

There being no further business, the Meeting concluded at 7.47pm

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

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Councillor Oonagh Hanlon**  
**Chairperson**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Marie Ward**  
**Chief Executive**

**NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**Ref: **AHC/2026**


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**Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on  
Monday 16 March 2026 at 6.00pm in the Council Chambers,  
Downshire Civic Centre**

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**Chairperson:** Councillor C Bowsie**In attendance in  
Chamber:**

Councillor C Galbraith	Councillor J Jackson
Councillor A King	Councillor N Lawlor
Councillor Lee-Surginor	Councillor A Mathers
Councillor K Murphy	

**Committee Members in  
attendance via Teams:**

Councillor J Brennan	Councillor D Finn
Councillor M Gibbons	Councillor D Murphy
Councillor J Truesdale	

**Officials in Chamber:**

Mr A Patterson, Director, Active and Healthy Communities  
Mr C Haughey, Assistant Director, Healthy Living  
Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development  
Ms M Flynn, Head of Community Engagement & Relations  
Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer  
Mr C Smyth, Democratic Services Officer

**AHC/016/2026: APOLOGIES & CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Howell and Magennis.

**AHC/017/2026: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**AHC/018/2026: ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM ACTIVE & HEALTHY  
COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16 FEBRUARY  
2026**Read: Action sheet of the Active & Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 16 February 2026. **(Copy circulated).****AGREED:**

**On the proposal of Councillor Jackson, seconded by  
Councillor K Murphy, it was agreed to note the Action  
Sheet of the Active and Healthy Communities  
Committee Meeting held on Monday 16 February 2026.**

**AHC/019/2026: PRESENTATION ON ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS**

Read: Presentation from Mrs M Flynn, Head of Community Engagement, regarding Presentation on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls. **(Copy attached)**

Ms Flynn explained that the Executive Office had launched a Strategic Framework in September 2024, which included a commitment to support Councils in developing initiatives to prevent and challenge behaviours and cultures that contributed to violence against women and girls.

Ms Flynn stated that a number of Council staff had been trained through a train-the-trainer model in Bystander Intervention training, alongside 30 youth work staff from the Education Authority & Women's Aid Armagh Down, which had created a pool of trained personnel capable of delivering bystander intervention training on behalf of the Council.

Ms Flynn reported that a successful social media campaign had also been delivered, supported by video content, and a theatre production commissioned from Spanner in the Works, which had recently been performed across the District, reaching around 2,000 post-primary students, including a performance in Newry Town Hall to 400 pupils.

Ms Flynn outlined that the EVAWG Change Fund had distributed over £142,000 to 16 community-based projects across the District, and these projects included arts, sports, youth development, and communication initiatives, engaging approximately 4,000 participants, around half of whom were under 18, with many initiatives being delivered directly in schools. She noted that feedback had been very positive, with all participants reporting increased knowledge of violence against women and girls, and over 90% indicating increased confidence to challenge inappropriate behaviour. She further advised that project videos had also been shared on social media and adopted by the Executive Office for internal staff training to demonstrate local impact.

Looking ahead, Ms Flynn said that the 2026–2028 EVAWG action plan had been submitted to the Executive Office for consideration, and a new round of Change Fund applications had been assessed, with funding awards expected to be issued in May, with a showcase event planned for 25 March 2026 in the Canal Court Hotel, Newry to highlight progress and reaffirm the Council's public commitment to addressing the issue.

She added that future plans included a youth conference in partnership with the Education Authority, a new marketing and advertising campaign, and continued collaboration with Women's Aid, which included a "one-stop shop" pilot providing support services for women at risk, involving multiple partner organisations, with plans to expand to other areas.

Ms Flynn also indicated that further bystander intervention training would be delivered, and subject to funding, the Council hoped to recruit a dedicated project officer to support and advance this work.

Councillor Truesdale welcomed the work and commended the speed from concept to delivery within the community. She queried whether emphasis on Artificial Intelligence (AI) would be rolled out across the District to be incorporated into training relating to EVAWAG.

Ms Flynn confirmed that Council was working with the Education Authority (EA), Women's Aid and PSNI and were considering future events to be rolled out and delivered within schools and youth group settings. She noted the challenges involved in addressing AI, given

the speed of development and trying to stay in front of challenges but confirmed that further training would be rolled out across the District.

Councillor Galbraith queried whether the Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) would help provide input into rolling out the training, to which Ms Flynn confirmed that Council was supporting groups within the CVS through the Change Fund as detailed within the presentation, but asked that should Members be aware of other groups that could benefit from funding to pass on the details.

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Jackson, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, it was agreed to note the presentation.**

**AHC/020/2026: DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREA (DEA) FORUM UPDATE**

Read: Report from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director: Community Development, regarding District Electoral Area (DEA) Forums Update. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Jackson, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, it was agreed to note the report and approve the actions in the action sheets attached for:**

- **Crotlieve DEA Forum Meeting held 10 February 2026**
- **Newry DEA Forum Meeting held on 17 February 2026**
- **Rowallane DEA Forum Meeting held 17 February 2026**
- **Slieve Croob DEA Forum Meeting held on 24 February 2026**

**AHC/021/2026: GRANT FUNDING APPLICATION**

Read: Report from Mr C Haughey, Assistant Director of Healthy Living, regarding Grant Funding Application. **(Copy circulated)**

Mr Haughey stated that the report sought committee approval as outlined in section 2.1, noting that the Northern Ireland Football Fund had launched a Grassroots Facilities Programme Fund, and officers had reviewed the criteria and identified Jennings Park as a suitable project under the multi-hub criteria within Stream 2.

Councillor Mathers welcomed the paper, stating that the plans were exciting and well overdue and requested that any updates be shared in a timely manner for those affected by any potential works.

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, it was agreed to progress the submission of an application for grant funding for Multi-Sports Hub provision in Newry as detailed within the officer's report.**

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

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on the following items, which related to exempt information by virtue of para. 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (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 Lawlor, seconded by Councillor A King, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

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

**AHC/022/2026: DIGI-HUB PROJECT UPDATE**

Read: Report from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director of Community Development, regarding Digi-Hub Project Update. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor D Murphy, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, it was agreed to note the contents of the report.

**FOR NOTING**

**AHC/023/2026: ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (EVAWG) UPDATE**

Read: Report from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director Community Development, regarding Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) Update. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Lawlor, it was agreed to note the contents of the report.

**AHC/024/2026: NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL PARTNERSHIP REPORT**

Read: Report from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director Community Development, regarding Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Report. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Lawlor, it was agreed to note the following:

- Minutes of the Newry Renewal Partnership (NRP) Meeting held 26 November 2025 and

**approved at the Newry NRP Meeting held 18 February 2026.**

- **Minutes of the Downpatrick Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership (NRP) Meeting held 15 October 2025 and approved at the Downpatrick NRP Meeting held 2 February 2026.**

There being no further business the meeting ended at 6.21pm

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

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Councillor C Bowsie**  
**Chairperson**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Andrew Patterson**  
**Director Active and Healthy Communities**

# EVAWG (Ending Violence Against Women & Girls) Update

AHC Committee – 16 March 2026

Ag freastal ar an Dúin agus Ard Mhacha Theas  
Serving Down and South Armagh



Comhairle Ceantair  
an Iúir, Mhúrn  
agus an Dúin  
Newry, Mourne  
and Down  
District Council

1

Comhairle Ceantair an Iúir, Mhúrn agus an Dúin  
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

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## Context & Recent Progress

- ❑ The EVAWG Strategic Framework 2024-31 was launched by The Executive Office (TEO) in September 2024 – included a Delivery Plan for 2024-26 which supports Councils to develop initiatives to prevent and challenge the attitudes, behaviours and culture that can lead to violence against women and girls. Funding to NMDDC was confirmed in early 2025 (£65,000 2024/25 & £200,000 2025/26)
- ❑ Activities since then have included an EVAWG Stakeholder Conference, Domestic Abuse awareness training for Members & partners, EVAWG Bystander Intervention training, International Women's Day events and a social media campaign - [Open Your Eyes to End Violence Against Women and Girls](#)
- ❑ 2,000 Post Primary students recently attended performances of *The Voice Within* – a specially commissioned play examining themes of control and violence in relationships

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## NMDDC EAWG Local Change Fund 2025 / 26

- ❑ £142,920 funding approved to 16 local community-based projects across the District - these projects span areas including sports, youth development, community engagement with special interest groups, arts and education
- ❑ To date over 4,000 participants have engaged with these projects (including 2,150 participants aged 18 and under)
- ❑ 100% of participants report an increased knowledge of what violence against women and girls is, 92% report increased confidence in challenging inappropriate behaviour
- ❑ Series of short videos produced to profile the impact of these projects – currently being used by The Executive Office to demonstrate examples of good practice

[Women's Aid EAWG](#) [Crisis Cafe EAWG](#)

[Threeways community - MAIN.mov](#)

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## Future Plans

- ❑ NMDDC EAWG Action Plan for 2026-28 currently with TEO for consideration
- ❑ NMDDC EAWG Local Change Fund 2026/27 closed to applications in January 2026 – applications currently being assessed. LoOs to be issued late May 2026.
- ❑ EAWG Showcase event planned for 25 March in Newry, youth conference(s) planned for Autumn 2026 – including a focus on EAWG and AI / Cyberspace
- ❑ Marketing campaign planned, including outdoor advertising and further short videos
- ❑ Further development of local initiatives with Women's Aid & other partners – including the expansion of the One Stop Shop (Crossmaglen – 26 March)
- ❑ Delivery of further Bystander Intervention training to groups across the District
- ❑ Recruitment of an EAWG Project Officer for Council (subject to funding)

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Connect, Challenge, Change

# Ending Violence Against Women & Girls

**#SafeHerNMD**

 Comhairle Ceantair  
an Iúir, Mhúrn agus an Dúin  
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**END** VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS

**NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**Ref: **AHC/2026**


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**Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on  
Monday 16 March 2026 at 6.00pm in the Council Chambers,  
Downshire Civic Centre**

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**Chairperson:** Councillor C Bowsie**In attendance in  
Chamber:**

Councillor C Galbraith	Councillor J Jackson
Councillor A King	Councillor N Lawlor
Councillor Lee-Surginor	Councillor A Mathers
Councillor K Murphy	

**Committee Members in  
attendance via Teams:**

Councillor J Brennan	Councillor D Finn
Councillor M Gibbons	Councillor D Murphy
Councillor J Truesdale	

**Officials in Chamber:**

Mr A Patterson, Director, Active and Healthy Communities  
Mr C Haughey, Assistant Director, Healthy Living  
Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development  
Ms M Flynn, Head of Community Engagement & Relations  
Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer  
Mr C Smyth, Democratic Services Officer

**AHC/016/2026: APOLOGIES & CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Howell and Magennis.

**AHC/017/2026: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**AHC/018/2026: ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM ACTIVE & HEALTHY  
COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16 FEBRUARY  
2026****Read:** Action sheet of the Active & Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 16 February 2026. **(Copy circulated).****AGREED:****On the proposal of Councillor Jackson, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, it was agreed to note the Action Sheet of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 16 February 2026.**

**NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Ref: SE/2025

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

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**Chair:** Councillor O Magennis**In attendance in  
Chamber:**

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

**Committee Members in  
Attendance via Teams:**

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

**Officials in Chamber:**

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

**Officials in Attendance  
via teams:**

Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer

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

An apology was received from Councillor Finn.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

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

Read:

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

**AGREED:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## FOR CONSIDERATION AND/OR DECISION

**SE/028/2025: DRAFT NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY NI-CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Hearty, seconded by Councillor Magennis, it was agreed to approve the response to DAERA's Draft Nature Recovery Strategy Consultation as detailed at Appendix 1 of the officers' report, subject to the additional**

**recommendation relating to items 6, 8, 11, 14, 17 and 20 in the consultation response, an additional recommendation be included stating that any biodiversity strategy should involve working with counterparts across the rest of Ireland to deliver all-Ireland biodiversity approaches.**

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

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

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

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

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

Councillor Magennis confirmed that all Members were in agreement.

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

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

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

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

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

Councillor Andrews commended the work of Home to Hospital and noted that Down Community Transport provided similar support in the Rowallane and Downpatrick areas and relied on their own fundraising and queried whether Council could assist with financial support to ensure the

continuation of that service. Mrs Trainor advised that she would clarify the funding arrangements and report back to him outside the meeting.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Councillor Andrews proposed to accept the officers' recommendation, highlighting the ongoing housing shortage in the district, referred to the restoration of building powers to the Housing Executive, and queried whether any funding or potential sites had been identified to help replenish housing stock. Mrs Trainor advised that she would respond to him outside the meeting.

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

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

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

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

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

**SE/032/2025:** **REFUSE COLLECTION/HRC ARRANGEMENTS FOR PUBLIC HOLIDAYS 2026/27**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**SE/033/2025:** **ENVIRONMENT CHARGES FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2026/2027**

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

Mrs Trainor outlined the report, noting that it presented the annual review of facility charges for

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

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

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

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

FOR:	7
AGAINST:	6
ABSTENTIONS:	0

The proposal was declared fallen.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Councillor Reilly confirmed he was content to withdraw his proposal

**AGREED:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Larkin, seconded by Councillor Ruane, to approve the Proposed Waste Management Services Scale of**

**Charges 2026/27 as set out in Appendix 1 of the officers' report.**

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

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

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

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

**RESTRICTED – FOR DECISION**

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

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

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

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

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

**AGREED:** It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Larkin, to approve the Contract / Direct Award contract extensions as

**detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 of the officers' report.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**FOR NOTING**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<b>Report to:</b>	Council
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	13 April 2026
<b>Subject:</b>	Correspondence to Council
<b>Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):</b>	Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
<b>Contact Officer (Including Job Title):</b>	Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager

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

For decision	x	For noting only	
<b>1.0</b>			<b>Purpose and Background</b>
1.1			To provide an update on correspondence received for attention of Council.
<b>2.0</b>			<b>Key issues</b>
2.1			This paper refers to correspondence to be brought to the attention of Council. Items are referred to in 3.0 below.
<b>3.0</b>			<b>Recommendations</b>
			That Council considers and notes the following correspondence:
3.1			<b>Correspondence from Health Minister Mike Nesbitt MLA</b> Council received correspondence from Health Minister Mike Nesbitt MLA re NOM Physician Associates (C/186/2025)
3.2			<b>Correspondence regarding Isle of Man Legislation</b> Council received correspondence from British Irish Council Secretariat re NOM Isle of Man Legislation (C/037/2026). Council received correspondence from Minister Muir MLA NOM Isle of Man Legislation (C/037/2026).
3.3			<b>Correspondence from Health Minister Mike Nesbitt MLA</b> Council received correspondence from Health Minister Mike Nesbitt MLA re NOM CAR T Cell Therapy (C/034/2026).
3.4			<b>Correspondence from Health Minister Mike Nesbitt MLA</b> Council received correspondence from Health Minister Mike Nesbitt MLA re NOM Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood (SUDC), (C/035/2026).
<b>4.0</b>			<b>Resource implications</b>
4.1			Not applicable.

5.0	<b>Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)</b>
5.1	<p><b><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></b></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p><b><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></b></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.3	<p><b><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></b></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>
6.0	<b>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</b>
6.1	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If no, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy / strategy / plan / public service is not influenced by rural needs <input type="checkbox"/></p>

<b>7.0</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Background Documents</b>
	<b>None</b>

## FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH



54

Ms Marie Ward  
Chief Executive  
[democratic.services@nmandd.org](mailto:democratic.services@nmandd.org)

Castle Buildings  
Stormont Estate  
BELFAST, BT4 3SQ  
Tel: 028 9052 2556  
Email: [private.office@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:private.office@health-ni.gov.uk)

Our Ref: COR-0346-2026

Date: 4 March 2026

Dear Marie

Thank you for your correspondence of 24 February 2026, regarding the Notice of Motion passed by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council on 1 December 2025 in relation to the Physician Assistant (PA) course funded by the Department.

My Department has been very supportive of the PA programme at Ulster University (UU) since its inception; recognising the potential of this new profession to contribute to the delivery of care to the people of Northern Ireland (NI). We fully acknowledge the commitment and capability demonstrated by those completing the PA programme.

I understand the Council's frustration at the lack of jobs across the Health and Social Care (HSC) for PA graduates. Departmental officials have been engaging with the employing Trusts to try to address this challenge. The key issue is the identification of the recurrent funding to create jobs for all the PAs graduating from the UU programme each year.

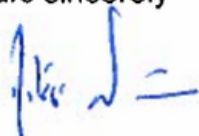
Unfortunately, the well-documented shortfall in my Department's budget allocation over recent years has presented a very significant impediment to this happening. I acknowledge that this is a deeply frustrating and unsatisfactory situation.

This challenge is not unique to NI, similar recruitment difficulties being reported across the UK, leading to uncertainty amongst potential students about long-term career pathways. This has resulted in a number of university programmes being temporarily suspended due to low applicant numbers. Our local provider, UU, has recently advised my officials that they have also suspended their next intake until September 2027.

My Department's work to develop a clear workforce approach for integrating PAs into the health service is supported by the Regional PA Forum, which has been in place for a number of years and is composed of individuals from the HSC Trusts, UU, DoH representatives and other champions of the PA profession in NI including PAs currently working in the HSC. The role of the Forum includes considering issues relating to the PA profession such as employment opportunities, promoting a collaborative approach to interprofessional learning and development, sharing best practice and making a positive contribution to professional development. The Forum is also responsible for leading on the regional recruitment to fill PA vacancies across the HSC. My officials will be utilising the time between now and February 2027, to attempt to re-invigorate and re-focus the work of this group, to provide clear recruitment opportunities.

In relation to the Leng Review, officials are considering this alongside our own local review of the PA role to ensure that the HSC workforce achieves the best and safest skills mix across all clinical settings enabling us to strengthen patient safety, improve service resilience, and support staff working at the top of their competence.

Yours sincerely



**Mike Nesbitt MLA**  
**Minister of Health**

**From:**

**Sent:** 12 March 2026 15:53  
**To:** democratic.services@nmandd.org  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** RE: Correspondence from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council  
**Attachments:** C.037.2026 Letter to British - Irish Council Secretariat re Isle of Man Legislation.pdf; ATT00001.txt

**CAUTION: This email originated outside of Council. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.**

Good Afternoon

Thank you for your correspondence.

We have reviewed your letter and feel this issue sits out with the remit of the British-Irish Council Secretariat.

You may be best to make contact with the Northern Ireland Executive and the Isle of Man Government.

Regards

**David Bowman**  
Stakeholder Engagement & Corporate Manager | British-Irish Council Secretariat  
BIC Socials: [LinkedIn](#) | [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#) | [BIC Website](#)



**Sent:** 11 March 2026 16:37  
**To:**  
**Cc:** democratic.services@nmandd.org  
**Subject:** Correspondence from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Good afternoon,

Please find attached correspondence for your consideration.

Please include a reply to [democratic.services@nmandd.org](mailto:democratic.services@nmandd.org)

Kind regards

Fionnuala

Fionnuala Branagh  
Democratic Services Officer

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council  
Oifig Dhún Pádraig  
Downpatrick Office  
Downshire Civic Centre  
Downshire Estate, Ardglass Road  
Downpatrick BT30 6GQ

Council: 0330 137 4000  
Democratic Services: 0330 137 4011  
Direct Line: 0330 137 4487  
Ext: 4487

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**From the Office of the  
Minister of Agriculture,  
Environment and Rural Affairs**

Marie Ward  
Chief Executive, Newry, Mourne and  
Down District Council  
Downshire Civic Centre  
Downshire Estate, Ardglass Road  
Downpatrick  
BT30 6GQ  
[democratic.services@nmandd.org](mailto:democratic.services@nmandd.org)



Department of  
**Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs**

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil  
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department of

**Fairmin, Environment  
an' Kintra Matthers**

[www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)

DAERA Private Office  
First Floor, Clare House  
303 Airport Road West  
Sydenham Intake  
Belfast, BT3 9ED  
Telephone: 028 9052 4140  
Email: [private.office@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:private.office@daera-ni.gov.uk)

Our Ref: COR-0177-2026  
Date: 23 March 2026

Dear Marie

**NOTICE OF MOTION – ISLE OF MAN LEGISLATION & ACCESS TO IOM WATERS FOR  
NI FISHERMEN**

Thank you for your correspondence of 11<sup>th</sup> March 2026 regarding the concerns raised by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council about the Isle of Man's legislative changes, which prevent Northern Ireland vessels with crew on transit or Skilled Worker visas from fishing in Manx waters.

My department and I fully recognise the seriousness of the situation currently affecting NI fishing vessels, particularly the implications arising from skilled migrant crew being unable to operate in Manx waters. I understand the significant operational and economic pressures that the Isle of Man legislation places on the sector, which is already facing notable difficulties, and my officials and I are committed to working towards a resolution.

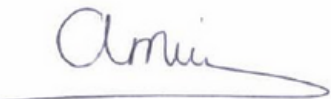
I have already engaged with the relevant contacts in the Isle of Man to discuss these issues. A meeting with the Isle of Man Minister for the Treasury is in the process of being arranged to explore the issues and potential solutions.

I will provide further updates as soon as more information becomes available.

If you are deaf or have a hearing difficulty you can contact the Department via the Next Generation Text Relay Service by dialling 18001 + telephone number.

**INVESTORS IN PEOPLE**  
We invest in people Standard

Yours sincerely



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A Muir', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**ANDREW MUIR MLA**  
**Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs**

## FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH



Ms Marie Ward  
Chief Executive  
[fionnuala.branagh@nmandd.org](mailto:fionnuala.branagh@nmandd.org)

Castle Buildings  
Stormont Estate  
BELFAST, BT4 3SQ  
Tel: 028 9052 2556  
Email: [private.office@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:private.office@health-ni.gov.uk)

Our Ref: COR-0461-2026

Date: 31 March 2026

Dear Marie

Many thanks for your correspondence of 11 March 2026 regarding progress of the Regional Haematology Ward in Belfast City Hospital.

My officials have spoken to colleagues in the Belfast Trust and can confirm that the Outline Business Case (OBC) was approved on 10 December 2025. The project has now moved to the planning design and procurement stage which will run until to Quarter 1 2028 with expectation that the handover of the new facility will be in Quarter 2 2030.

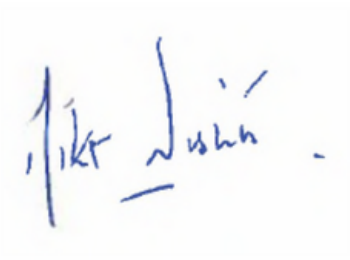
Any NHS centre delivering CAR-T requires additional accreditation and the lead in time to ensure the Belfast Trust meet these requirements with HTA and MHRA, and to ensure staff are trained, is approximately 12 -15 months. The service is working with the DoH to scope what could potentially be delivered in a phased approach, subject to funding being available, in advance of handover of the new haematology ward to expediate the accreditation process.

While this progresses patients in Northern Ireland will continue to have access to CAR-T treatments as per circular "HSC(SQSD) 12-22 – NICE Technology Appraisals – Process for Endorsement, Implementation, Monitoring and Assurance in NI" which supports the timely introduction of effective new medicines.

If CAR-T treatments are approved by NICE then patients in NI will be granted access to them on an equitable basis with other nations through the arrangements in place for referral to trusted centres in the wider NHS.

Unfortunately, due to ongoing diary commitments I have to decline the invitation to meet but I hope the update above assures council members on the progress of the Regional Haematology Ward and that my Department remain determined that people in Northern Ireland continue to have equitable and timely access to the best services that the NHS has to offer.

Yours sincerely



**Mike Nesbitt MLA**  
**Minister of Health**

**FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH**

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Our Ref: COR-0458-2026

Date: 2 April 2026

Dear Marie

Thank you for your correspondence of 11 March 2026 following Newry, Mourne and Down District Council meeting on 2 March 2026. Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the overwhelming and lasting impact unexplained deaths of infants and children have on families, friends, and communities and I want to express my sincere sympathy for all those affected by such tragic loss.

The Public Health Agency (PHA) has been leading the development of a regionally agreed multi-agency protocol to support the investigation of sudden and unexpected deaths in infants and children. Oversight is provided through the PHA-led SUDIC Steering Group, which brings together key clinical, emergency and investigative partners, and with Parent, Patient and Public Involvement.

The protocol has been written to reflect best practice and learning from across the UK and has been endorsed and approved by the SUDIC Steering Group.

Implementation of the protocol will allow for the systematic collection of information across all organisations involved in the response to SUDIC. This will help provide the level of detail needed to support more robust research and understanding of these tragic events. Officials from my Department continue to engage with the PHA and others in relation to child death monitoring in Northern Ireland.

While this work progresses, the PHA remains actively connected to UK-wide strategic groups to ensure Northern Ireland benefits from emerging evidence and shared learning.

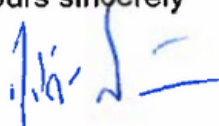
Learning from these groups is cascaded to all key stakeholders via the SUDIC Steering Group. The PHA also remains engaged with the community and voluntary sector and are currently supporting SANDS with the development of five bereavement care pathways for NI, one of which includes SUDIC.

You will also wish to note that in April 2021, my Department established the NI Bereavement Network comprising members from key statutory, community and voluntary organisations including SANDS; Cruse Bereavement Support; Marie Curie; Age NI; Palliative Care in Partnership; and the NI Hospice. In March 2024, the Network launched a dedicated website - <https://bereaved.hscni.net/>

The website signposts users to a range of resources to assist them as they step through their bereavement journey including palliative care; information for those who have suffered pregnancy and baby loss; resources for children and young people; information for those who have been bereaved by suicide; those who have suffered a sudden or traumatic loss; and practical support for users including financial and legal advice.

I trust this response and information is helpful.

Yours sincerely



**Mike Nesbitt MLA**  
**Minister of Health**