

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

NMD/C/

**Minutes of Council Meeting held on Monday 4 January 2021 at 6.00pm via
Hybrid in Downshire Chamber and Microsoft Teams**

In the Chair: Councillor L Devlin

In attendance:

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor P Brown
Councillor R Burgess	Councillor P Byrne
Councillor C Casey	Councillor W Clarke
Councillor D Curran	Councillor C Enright
Councillor A Finnegan	Councillor H Gallagher
Councillor M Gibbons	Councillor O Hanlon
Councillor G Hanna	Councillor V Harte
Councillor R Howell	Councillor M Larkin
Councillor A Lewis	Councillor O Magennis
Councillor G Malone	Councillor C Mason
Councillor D McAteer	Councillor L McEvoy
Councillor H McKee	Councillor K McKeivitt
Councillor A McMurray	Councillor R Mulgrew
Councillor D Murphy	Councillor K Owen
Councillor G O'Hare	Councillor B Ó Muirí
Councillor H Reilly	Councillor M Ruane
Councillor M Savage	Councillor G Sharvin
Councillor G Stokes	Councillor D Taylor
Councillor J Tinnelly	Councillor W Walker

(Officials)

Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
Mrs D Carville, Director of Corporate Services
Mr M Lipsett, Director of Active & Healthy Communities
Mr C Mallon, Director of Enterprise, Regeneration & Tourism
Mr J McBride, Director of Neighbourhood Services (Acting)
Mr F O'Connor, Head of Legal & Administration (Acting)
Mrs C Miskelly, Assistant Director, Corporate Service, Human Resources & Safeguarding
Mr A Patterson, Assistant Director, Culture, Tourism & Events
Mr P Preen, HR Policy & Projects Manager
Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)
Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer
Mrs C McAteer, Democratic Services Officer

C/001/2021

APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Doran, Owen and Trainor.

The Chairperson wished everyone a Happy New Year and thanked Council staff who continued working over the festive break.

The Chairperson raised Covid-19 and the dangerous place which we continued to be in with case numbers on the rise. She re-emphasised the need to limit social interactions and to follow the public health guidance.

The Chairperson appealed to people that, although she encouraged tourism, now was not the time to be flocking to the Mourne nor any of the prominent beauty hot spots across the District. The Executive had warned against any “non-essential” travel and she advised she had engaged with the PSNI and Mr Mallon, Director of Enterprise, Regeneration & Tourism and an urgent meeting of the Mourne Multi Agency group would be called. She appealed to everyone to stick to the Public Health messaging and take exercise close to where they live. The Chairperson thanked volunteers across the District involved in the mammoth tasks of collecting and distributing food and gifts to those in need before Christmas and on an ongoing basis. She praised those within the community who still managed to add some festive cheer with Community groups thinking outside the box and being innovative in terms of how to make their area more festive in line with current restrictions.

The Chairperson spoke of the 5k a day challenge, a charitable initiative in memory of Ellen Finnegan who died tragically at the age of 18 in a fire in Castlewellan. This had proven very popular locally, with a challenge of covering 5kms a day, whether it was a walk, a run, cycle or even a row with its organisers wanting to raise awareness of dealing with grief and youth mental health.

C/002/2021 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

C/003/2021 ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 7 DECEMBER 2020

Read: Action sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 07 December 2020 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Action Sheet from Council Meeting held on 7 December 2020 was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Burgess, seconded by Councillor Savage.

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Savage, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on the next matter which related to exempt information by virtue of para. 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) 2014 – Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Council or a government department and employees of, or office holders under, the Council.

Page 2, Action Sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 7 December 2020- C/170/2020

Councillor McAteer requested an update regarding the ongoing situation with Trade Unions and the implementation of work to rule as there were conflicting messages being given to Councillors regarding recent missed bin collections. He spoke of the importance of the correct information being provided to the public.

The Chief Executive provided an update to Members on all recent conciliation meetings that had taken place involving the Labour Relations Agency and Trade Unions surrounding current negotiations. An overview of legal advice provided to the Chief Executive was also shared with Members, both verbally and on screen.

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

The Chairperson advised that, whilst in closed session, the Minute ref C/170/2020 on page 2 of the action sheet was discussed at length.

Members received an overview of the issues surrounding the current negotiations with the Trade Unions and it is anticipated that a Special Council Meeting would be arranged later in the week.

It was proposed by Councillor Malone, seconded by Councillor Brown to invite the Trade Unions to address a Special Meeting of the Strategy Policy and Resources Committee.

The Chairperson put Councillor Malone's proposal to a recorded vote, (copy of which is appended to these minutes), the results of which were as follows:

FOR:	19
AGAINST:	17
ABSTENTIONS	0

The proposal was CARRIED.

AGREED: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Malone, seconded by Councillor Brown to invite the Trade Unions to address the Special Meeting of the Strategy Policy and Resources Committee.**

At the request of Councillor McKeivitt it was agreed a copy of the Discretionary Policy 2015 be circulated to Members.

COUNCIL MINUTES FOR ADOPTION AND SIGNING

C/004/2021 MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 7 DECEMBER 2020

Read: Minutes of Council Meeting held on 7 December 2020 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 7 December 2020 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Stokes, seconded by Councillor Burgess subject to the following amendment:**
Page 5, C/171/2020: Extract of Draft Planning Minutes of 18 November 2020, Update one Local Development Plan
'Councillor McAteer wished for it to be put on record his strong objection to the revised timetable. He advised the new proposed date for the publication of the Local Development Plan was the second quarter of 2026/27 and that it was hoped it would be delivered ahead of this date'.

C/005/2021 **MINUTES OF SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 30 NOVEMBER 2020 WITH DFI**

Read: Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 30 November 2020 with Dfl. (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on 30 November 2020 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Burgess, seconded by Councillor Andrews.**

COMMITTEE MINUTES FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION

C/006/2021 **MINUTES OF ENTERPRISE, REGENERATION AND TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14 DECEMBER 2020**

Read: Minutes of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 14 December 2020 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of the Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 14 December 2020 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Curran, seconded by Councillor O'Hare.**

Read: Correspondence dated 22 December 2020 from Newry Bid re: Business Proposal for Newry Business Improvement District. – Revote Strategy. (copy circulated).

Agreed: **It was agreed to note the correspondence.**

C/007/2021 **MINUTES OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15 DECEMBER 2020**

Read: Minutes of Neighbourhood Services Committee Meeting held on 15 December 2020 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of the Neighbourhood Services Committee Meeting held on 15 December 2020 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Gallagher.**

C/008/2021 **MINUTES OF STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 DECEMBER 2020**

Read: Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 17 December 2020 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 17 December 2020 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Sharvin.**

SPR/199/2020 – PHA Report

Councillor Savage voiced concern at how the provision of a walk-in Covid Testing site at the Albert Basin, Newry had been operating over the last number of weeks. He advised that some of his constituents were deeply concerned relatives of people who had to use the walk-in facility and the challenges the location posed, particularly for the frail and elderly.

Councillor Savage also highlighted the need for a drive-in testing facility within the Newry area as Craigavon was the nearest site with a drive of 1 ½ hours or more for some people and with the amount of cases spreading at a rapid rate, the amount testing required would also be rising.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Savage, seconded by Councillor McAteer, to contact the Public Health Agency as a matter of urgency outlining the concerns regarding accessibility issues at the walk-in testing facility at Albert Basin site and request that it revert back to a drive-in test centre or provide an alternative facility for the frail and elderly as soon as possible.**

C/009/2021 **MINUTES OF ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21 DECEMBER 2020**

Read: Minutes of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 21 December 2020 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 21 December 2020 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor McKeivitt, seconded by Councillor O’Hare.**

C/010/2021 **MINUTES OF SPECIAL AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 7 DECEMBER 2020**

Read: Minutes of Special Audit Committee Meeting held on 07 December 2020. (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of the Special Audit Committee Meeting held on 7 December 2020 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Sharvin.**

PLANNING

C/011/2020 **EXTRACT OF DRAFT PLANNING MINUTES 16 DECEMBER 2020**

Noted: There were no issues referred from the Planning Committee Meeting held on 16 December 2020.

FOR NOTING

C/012/2020 NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING COUNCIL MINUTES NOVEMBER 2020

Read: Northern Ireland Housing Council Minutes dated 12 November 2020.
(Copy circulated)

Agreed: The Northern Ireland Housing Council Minutes dated 12 November 2020 were noted.

C/013/2021 NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING COUNCIL BULLETIN – DECEMBER 2020

Read: Bulletin dated December 2020 from Northern Ireland Housing Council.
(Copy circulated)

Agreed: The Northern Ireland Housing Council Bulletin was noted.

CONFERENCES/EVENTS

C/014/2020 NORTHERN IRELAND PLANNING CONFERENCE 2021

Read: Correspondence re: Northern Ireland Planning Conference to be held on Thursday 11th February 2021 online – fee £145 plus VAT. (Copy circulated)

Agreed: It was agreed by all that Councillors Murphy and McAteer attend the above conference. Any other Councillor wishing to attend should contact Democratic Services Department.

It was also agreed that the Chief Planning Officer or Principal Planning Officer attend if available.

NOTICES OF MOTION

Councillor Devlin advised a further Notice of Motion had been received from Councillor Walker before Christmas and on time. However she advised, for expediency the Motion was referred to the Good Relations Committee Meeting to be held on Friday 8 January 2021.

C/015/2021 NOTICE OF MOTION – NORTHERN MUTUAL BANK

The following Notice of Motion came forward for consideration in the name of Councillor Brown:

‘That this Council recognises the need for greater resilience and community wealth building in the council region in light of the coronavirus pandemic and future crises that will inevitably arise due to global warming; and looks to solutions beyond business-as-usual which can help build this necessary resilience and community wealth. In seeking such solutions, this council agrees to assess the financial and practical viability of the Northern Mutual bank—a bank that will be regional, ethical, complementary to our Credit Unions, and not driven by profit but by the needs of the

region. This should be done as part of a wider commitment to developing a District-wide Community Wealth Building strategy.

A business case will be provided to council to help carry out this assessment and if it can be demonstrated that the Northern Mutual is indeed financially and practically viable, this council will commit to some or all of the following:

- To join the Advisory Group of the Northern Mutual.
- To publicly support the campaign for the Northern Mutual.
- To lobby government departments and anchor institutions as a way to garner further support for the campaign.
- To invest money to help raise the bank's £20m start-up capital on the understanding that council will receive a return on this investment; the business case will give an indication of the rate of return.'

The motion was seconded by Councillor McMurray.

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

C/016/2021 **NOTICE OF MOTION – CONTRIBUTION TO HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE AND CARE HOME WORKERS**

The following Notice of Motion came forward for consideration in the name of Councillors Hanna and Walker. Councillor Hanna proposed the Motion.

“This Council recognises the importance of our National Health Service and the heroic contribution of our health and social care workers, and care home workers, throughout the pandemic, express our thanks for their commitment to the care for community and will write to the Health Minister Robin Swann MLA asking him to administer a thank you” payment of at least £500 as a practical demonstration of our gratitude.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Walker.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Hanna said he hoped everyone within Council would support the writing of a letter to Stormont. He said he was also thinking of those hospital workers, the Doctors and Nurses and staff in Old Peoples' Homes and other areas of social care who had lost their lives through COVID 19 along with those in hospitals who were currently in the middle of the second wave of the pandemic. He said these medical carers had given their all for us and should not be forgotten.

Councillor Hanna stated if the Motion was passed by Council, he would like a letter sent to the other 10 Councils to seek their support also.

Councillor Walker formally seconded the Motion and stated over the last 10 months everyone owed a lot to the health and care workers who were working in very difficult circumstances, including his own colleague, Councillor Owen who had returned to front line duties in the National Health Service. He said this would be a fitting thank you to them all.

Councillor Andrews, on behalf of the SDLP Grouping, welcomed the Motion and proposed an amendment to add the following wording “also calling for nursing registration and social care fees for 2021 be waived in line with the sentiments expressed in this Motion and for this Council to write to and circulate this Motion to the other 10 Local Authorities seeking their support and writing also to the Minister and relevant Bodies calling for fee waivers to be implemented for this year”.

Councillor Hanna confirmed he was willing to accept this amendment from Councillor Andrews.

Councillor Taylor said he was conscious that there was a budget that had to be worked within and asked if Councillor Hanna would consider a further amendment to the Motion to write to the Executive collectively rather than specifically the Minister because it would ultimately be a decision for the Executive to find the necessary finance to ensure this payment could be made.

Councillor Hanna confirmed he was willing to accept this further amendment from Councillor Taylor.

Councillor Mulgrew stated Sinn Féin were happy to support the Motion and the amendments. She said frontline health service staff had endured many years of pay freezes and then very low percentage pay rises and what they needed was proper and appropriate payment for the job they did. She also paid tribute to the community shops that stayed open without any PPE in the beginning and also to workers in care homes and the community sector; postmen; binmen and community associations. Councillor Mulgrew said she would like to think that when the pandemic was over the Council should come back and review this as a collective, to acknowledge the work of all front-line staff.

Councillors McMurray, McKeivitt and Reilly spoke of his support for the Motion emphasising that the pandemic was a long way from being contained and being over and also the importance and contribution made by Student Nurses and those who provided health care in the private sector.

The Motion and amendments were unanimously agreed.

Agreed: **It was agreed that this Council recognises the importance of our National Health Service and the heroic contribution of our health and social care workers, and care home workers, throughout the pandemic; express our thanks for their commitment to the care for community and will write to the Executive asking them to administer a “thank you” payment of at least £500 as a practical demonstration of our gratitude.**

The Council also calls for nursing registration and social care fees for 2021 to be waived in line with the sentiments expressed in this Motion and for this Council to write to and circulate this Motion to the other 10 Local Authorities seeking their support and writing also to the Executive calling for fee waivers to be implemented for this year”.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 8.20 pm.

For confirmation at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 1 February 2021.

Signed:

Chairperson

Chief Executive