

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

NMD/C/

Minutes of Council Meeting held on Monday 3 April 2023 at 6.00pm in Downshire Chamber

In the Chair:	Councillor M Savage	
In attendance in Chamber:	Councillor T Andrews Councillor J Brennan Councillor D Curran Councillor A Finnegan Councillor G Hanna Councillor R Howell Councillor G Kearns Councillor A Lewis Councillor D McAteer Councillor K McKeivitt Councillor D Murphy Councillor H Reilly Councillor D Taylor	Councillor C Bowsie Councillor R Burgess Councillor L Devlin Councillor H Gallagher Councillor V Harte Councillor J Jackson Councillor D Lee-Surginor Councillor O Magennis Councillor L McEvoy Councillor A McMurray Councillor B Ó Muirí Councillor G Sharvin
In attendance via Teams:	Councillor P Byrne Councillor M Gibbons Councillor M Larkin Councillor H McKee Councillor M Rice Councillor J Tinnelly	Councillor W Clarke Councillor O Hanlon Councillor G Malone Councillor G O'Hare Councillor M Ruane Councillor J Trainor
Officials in attendance in Chamber:	Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive Mr A Cassells, Director of Sustainability and Environment Mr C Mallon, Director of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting) Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer	
Officials in attendance via Teams:	Mrs P McKeever, Democratic Services Officer	

C/085/2023

APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Enright, King and Stokes and Mr Lipsett, Director of Active and Healthy Communities.

The Chairperson offered condolences on behalf of Council to Mrs Kelly, Director of Corporate Services and her family on the sad passing of her mother Joyce.

The Chairperson offered condolences to the family and friends of former SDLP and Mournes Councillor Brian Quinn who recently passed away.

The Chairperson advised Members Mr M Lipsett was retiring from his role of Director of Active and Healthy Communities from 14 April 2023. He paid tribute to Michael and his work and wished him and his family health and happiness in his retirement.

Members were informed the recent Newry Mourne and District Council Sports Awards had been very successful with thanks and congratulations given to all those involved in organising the event. The Chairperson congratulated all nominees and those who received awards on the night as the talent and level of achievement had been outstanding.

At the request of Councillor Reilly, the Chairperson sent congratulations to members of the SOKOL gymnastics team on their successes at winning medals at the Northern Ireland Aspire Championship competition.

Given this was the last full Council meeting the Chairperson thanked everyone for the respect and graciousness shown to him throughout his year as Chair.

The Chairperson pointed out it was the last meeting for some Councillors who would not be standing again and wished each and every one of them all the best for the future.

The Chairperson then went on to speak at length in paying tribute to Councillor Dermot Curran who in this year and month of April, celebrated 50 years as a local Councillor. Dermot had given a lifetime to public service, the people of Down District, South Down and his beloved Ardglass and was a huge advocate for all things local including the fishing industry.

The Chairperson spoke of how respected Councillor Curran was across the chamber and would be missed by many including the SDLP team, colleagues and friends in Council. He wished Dermot, his wife Karen and all the family well on his retirement.

Councillor Curran thanked everyone for their well wishes and spoke of his time served over the last 50 years.

Party leaders and members across the Chamber took the opportunity to pay tribute to Dermot and his service to Council and joined the Chairperson in wishing him and all the family well.

The Chief Executive on behalf of herself and the management team wished Dermot well in his retirement paying tribute to his 50 years' service when his dedication and commitment was renowned.

C/086/2023 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mrs Ward declared an interest in item 7: Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Minutes from meeting on 16 March 2023, SPR/058/2023: Chief Executive Appraisal.

C/087/2023 ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 6 MARCH 2023

Read: Action sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 6 March 2023 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Action Sheet from Council Meeting held on 6 March 2023 was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Gallagher, seconded by Councillor Burgess.

COUNCIL MINUTES FOR ADOPTION AND SIGNING

C/088/2023 MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 6 MARCH 2023

Read: Minutes of Council Meeting held on 6 March 2023 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 6 March 2023 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Gallagher, seconded by Councillor Andrews.

C/089/2023 MINUTES OF SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 27 FEBRUARY 2023

Read: Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 27 February 2023 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on

27 February 2023 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Finnegan.

COMMITTEE MINUTES FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION

C/090/2023 MINUTES OF ENTERPRISE, REGENERATION AND TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 13 MARCH 2023

Read: Minutes of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 13 March 2023 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 13 March 2023 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Burgess, seconded by Councillor Hanna.

C/091/2023 MINUTES OF STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16 MARCH 2023

Read: Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 16 March 2023 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 16 March 2023 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Ó Muirí, seconded by Councillor Magennis.

C/092/2023 MINUTES OF ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 20 MARCH 2023

Read: Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 20 March 2023 (copy circulated).

AHC/038/2023: Rural Dial a Lift Transport Issue tabled at the request of Councillor Sharvin

Councillor Sharvin stated it was vitally important that in the new Council term to continue to apply pressure on the Department for Infrastructure for funding for community transport organisations across the District.

Agreed: The Minutes of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 20 February 2023 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the

proposal of Councillor Lee-Surginor, seconded by Councillor McAteer.

Councillor Tinnelly left the meeting at this point – 6.36pm.

C/093/2023 MINUTES OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21 MARCH 2023

Read: Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 21 March 2023 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 21 March 2023 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Bowsie.

C/094/2023 PLANNING SECTION

There were no planning issues.

CORRESPONDANCE AND CONFERENCES

C/095/2023 NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING COUNCIL MINUTES – 9 FEBRAURY 2023 AND NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING COUNCIL BULLETIN – 9 MARCH 2023

Read: Northern Ireland Housing Council Minutes, 9 February 2023 and Northern Ireland Housing Council Bulletin, 9 March 2023 (Copy circulated)

Agreed: The Northern Ireland Housing Council Minutes dated 9 February 2023 and the bulletin dated 9 March 2023 were noted on the proposal of Councillor Gallagher, seconded by Councillor McAteer.

C/096/2023 LETTER FROM FERMANAGH & OMAGH DISTRICT COUNCIL RE: SOUTH WEST ACUTE HOSPITAL

Read: Correspondence from Fermanagh & Omagh District Council regarding South West Acute Hospital dated 28 February 2023. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Gallagher, seconded by Councillor McAteer to note

the correspondence from Fermanagh & Omagh District Council.

C/097/2023 **LETTER FROM ARMAGH CITY BANBRIDGE AND CRAIGAVON BOROUGH COUNCIL RE: ENERGY COMPANY PROFITS**

Read: Correspondence from Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council dated 13 March 2023 regarding energy company profits. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Gallagher, seconded by Councillor McAteer to note the letter from Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council.**

C/098/2023 **RESPONSE FROM NIE RE: NOTICE OF MOTION C/051/2023 NI ELECTRICITY SUPPLIERS**

Read: Correspondence from NIE dated 3 February 2023 regarding Notice of Motion C/051/2023 NI Electricity Suppliers. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Gallagher, seconded by Councillor McAteer to note the correspondence from NIE.**

C/099/2023 **RESPONSE FROM SOUTH EASTERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE TRUST RE: NOTICE OF MOTION C/079/2023 DOMICILIARY CARE**

Read: Correspondence from South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust regarding Notice of Motion C/079/2023 Domiciliary Care dated 21 March 2023. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Trainor spoke at length about the need for those Councillors returned in May 2023 to continue to put pressure on the Department for Health and the Health Trusts for adequate and good quality health service provision.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Gallagher, seconded by Councillor McAteer to note the correspondence from the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust.**

Councillor Ruane left the meeting at this point – 6.39pm.

C/100/2023 **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNCILLORS CONSTITUTION (REVISED)**

Read: Revised National Association of Councillors Constitution. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Gallagher, seconded by Councillor McAteer to note the revised National Association of Councillors Constitution.

C/101/2023 LETTER FROM DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES RE: COUNCIL REMOTE/HYBRID MEETINGS

Read: Correspondence from the Department for Communities regarding remote/hybrid meetings dated 24 March 2023. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Devlin enquired if Council had made a corporate response on the matter of hybrid meetings or if it was up to individuals parties and spoke of the importance of having such meetings moving forward particularly for Members on maternity leave and those with caring responsibilities.

The Chief Executive advised she believed the Council had made a corporate response as well as individual Parties but she agreed to revert to Councillor Devlin on the matter.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Gallagher, seconded by Councillor McAteer to note the correspondence from the Department for Communities.

NOTICES OF MOTION

C/102/2023 NOTICE OF MOTION – REDEEMABLE SURCHARGE ON BOTTLES, TINS AND PLASTIC

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Reilly:

"That this Council requests that DEARA investigates the possibility of applying a redeemable surcharge on bottles, tins and plastic containers in order to reduce the amount of littering and to assist with reaching recycling targets as set by central Government".

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Hanna.

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

C/103/2023 NOTICE OF MOTION – RURAL REGENERATION FOR DOWNPATRICK TOWN CENTRE

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Enright and presented by Councillor Lee-Surginor:

"This Council recognises the disparity of Council investment between our County Town of Downpatrick when compared to large public-sector led investment proposals for Newry City or the Gateway Project in Newcastle.

The recent flawed private sector-led project in our County Town failed to attract any private sector interest in redeveloping Downpatrick's Town Centre. This project aimed to sell off the land-bank built up by Down Council over 30 years including the old Police Station, the main town car-park and derelict properties in Irish Street under the 2011 Downpatrick Masterplan.

Council notes NM&D's fresh opportunity to deliver a meaningful, large-scale public investment-led regeneration of Downpatrick's old retail centre in line with the 2011 Council-led Downpatrick Masterplan.

This Council directs Management to reinstate the original public-sector led project for the town centre aspect of the Downpatrick Masterplan. Including the in-town 2-lane one-way system, additional on-street parking, enhanced pedestrian areas from ASDA to Irish Street and improved access to the old retail centre of the town to make it competitive with out-of-town shopping, LIDL or ASDA.

Council notes that original estimates suggest that this could be achieved with 10% of the estimated cost of the proposed major Newry development or less than half the budget for the so-called Mournes Gateway project in Newcastle."

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor.

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

C/104/2023 NOTICE OF MOTION – MEMORIAL TO CROSSGAR'S TITANIC VICTIM, JAMES MCGRADY

The following motion was received from Councillor Bowsie:

"This Council recognises the significance of the Titanic's legacy, the public interest in the tragedy and the importance of remembering the local lives that were lost on it; Tasks the Council to prepare a report with the view to installing a memorial to Crossgar's Titanic victim, James McGrady, in a public space in Crossgar and recommends liaising with a maritime historian and the council's heritage officer to ensure this memorial is accurate and befitting to this Titanic worker."

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Jackson.

Agreed: The Motion was referred to the Equality & Good Relations Working Group in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.

C/105/2023 NOTICE OF MOTION – MOURNE GATEWAY PROJECT

The following motion was received from Councillor McMurray:

"This Council notes with concern the continued lack of clarity, as well as increasing public opposition, regarding the Visitor Centre located at Thomas' Mountain and 'Gondola' elements of the Mourne Gateway Project. Stakeholder events and information sessions fall short of a full public consultation for a project of this financial, environmental and economic magnitude. Council will; pause the progression of this project until explicit consent from the landowner is acquired, commission a full public consultation on the project open to all residents within the district including open and transparent stakeholder engagement, actively investigate and develop alternatives to the Gondola and Thomas' Mountain Visitor Centre elements – alternatives which will both meet the funding criteria while enhancing this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty."

The motion was seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor.

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

C/106/2023 NOTICE OF MOTION – REDUCTION IN VAT RATE FOR THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR

The following motion was received from Councillor Devlin:

"This Council unequivocally supports our hospitality and tourism sector and its vital contribution to the District's economy.

This Council puts on record our frustration that the recently announced Spring Budget failed to provide a lifeline to the Hospitality Sector by reducing the VAT rate.

This Council writes to the Chancellor calling for the issue to be reconsidered given the ever increasing rate of inflation and the fact that the Republic of Ireland's VAT rate for Hospitality and Tourism is 9% compared to our rate of 20%

This Council writes to all 18 MP's calling on each to lobby for this much needed reduction in VAT."

The motion was seconded by Councillor Sharvin.

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

16.1.6.

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Curran, seconded by Councillor McKeivitt it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion which related to exempt information by virtue of para. four of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local /Government (Northern Ireland) 2014 – 4.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.

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

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

C/107/2023: UPDATE ON STAFFING MATTERS

Noted: An update on staffing matters from the Chief Executive was provided.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 7.04pm.

For confirmation at the Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday 6 June 2023.

Signed: _____
Chairperson

Chief Executive