

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

NMD/C/

Minutes of Council Meeting held on Monday 7 November 2022 at 6.00pm in Downshire Chamber

In the Chair:

Councillor M Savage

In attendance in Chamber:

Councillor P Byrne	Councillor C Casey
Councillor D Curran	Councillor C Enright
Councillor H Gallagher	Councillor O Hanlon
Councillor G Hanna	Councillor V Harte
Councillor R Howell	Councillor A Lewis
Councillor D McAteer	Councillor L McEvoy
Councillor A McMurray	Councillor Y Moore
Councillor R Mulgrew	Councillor K Owen
Councillor H Reilly	Councillor G Sharvin

In attendance via Teams

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor J Brennan
Councillor W Clarke	Councillor L Devlin
Councillor A Finnegan	Councillor M Gibbons
Councillor M Larkin	Councillor D Lee-Surginor
Councillor O Magennis	Councillor G Malone
Councillor H McKee	Councillor K McKevitt
Councillor D Murphy	Councillor G O'Hare
Councillor B Ó Muirí	Councillor M Rice
Councillor M Ruane	Councillor G Stokes
Councillor D Taylor	Councillor J Tinnelly
Councillor J Trainor	

Officials in attendance in Chamber:

Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
Mr A Cassells, Director of Sustainability and Environment
Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services
Mr M Lipsett, Director of Active and Healthy Communities
Mr C Mallon, Director of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism
Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)
Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer

Officials in attendance via Teams:

Mrs P McKeever, Democratic Services Officer

There were no apologies received.

On behalf of Council, the Chairperson passed on sincere condolences to Councillor Hanna on the recent passing of his father Kenneth.

The Chairperson congratulated Sophie Lennon from Mayobridge on winning the Irish Junior Eurovision Song Contest and wished her well in representing Ireland in Armenia in December. He also congratulated Niamh Noade and Claire Keeley who also made the final, with all three finalists coming from the Newry based Flynn Performing Arts.

Congratulations were also passed onto the Council team involved in the third Giant Adventures at Halloween with the hugely successful Footsteps in The Forest at Slieve Gullion Forest Park. Thanks were also given to the team involved with the Sticky Fingers at the Newry Halloween Parade.

The Downpatrick Community Collective was mentioned for organising a fantastic Halloween Event that attracted huge crowds to Downpatrick on Halloween Night and Newcastle Community Cinema for delivering a fantastic weekend of events at the hugely successful Hallowtides Festival in Newcastle.

The Chairperson praised those involved in organising Halloween events in Ballynahinch, Killough, Warrenpoint, Newtownhamilton and Ardglass and other areas across the district to make Halloween extra special.

The Chairperson congratulated Sean Gordon from Downpatrick who had been awarded 2nd place in the Ulster Irish Dance Championship.

Congratulations were given to Kilcoo on winning the Down Senior Football Championship, Crossmaglen on winning the Armagh Senior Football Championship, Saval GAC on ending a 27 year wait to win the Down Intermediate Championship and Teconnaught GAC on winning the Down Junior Football Championship.

The Chairperson congratulated Jack Turley from Saval on winning the Ulster Junior B Handball Title and Zak Hanna from the Slieve Croob area who was placed in the World Mountain Running Championships in Thailand.

The Chairperson said well done to all local teams and individuals at underage level who had achieved sporting success in the last month.

Councillor Reilly spoke of the success of Adam McKibben from Ballymartin who was runner-up in the Northern Ireland Boxing Championship.

Councillor Casey asked that Council acknowledge Cormac Duffy who had recently climbed Kilimanjaro and raised funds for PIPS in Newry and Conor Wallace who now lived in Australia on winning a World boxing title.

Councillor Murphy referred to and congratulated Shane O'Neill's on winning the Armagh Intermediate Final.

Councillor Mulgrew queried if the Sticky Fingers Event held in Newry had received financial contribution from Council and that the lack of reporting on financial support from Council had been an injustice to Council and Newry. Mr Mallon confirmed Council had contributed financially towards the event in Newry over Halloween.

C/170/2022

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

C/171/2022

ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 3 OCTOBER 2022

Read: Action sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 3 October 2022 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Action Sheet from Council Meeting held on 3 October 2022 was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Hanlon.

COUNCIL MINUTES FOR ADOPTION AND SIGNING

C/172/2022

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 3 OCTOBER 2022

Read: Minutes of Council Meeting held on 5 October 2022 (copy circulated).

C/161/2022: Minutes of the Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 20 September 2022

In response to a request from Councillor Reilly regarding the lifting of barriers at recycling centres while awaiting the launch of the app, Mr Cassells confirmed the app would be operational from Mid-November.

Agreed: The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 3 October 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Stokes, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor.

C/173/2022

MINUTES OF SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2022

Read: Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 26 September 2022 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on 26 September 2022 were agreed as an accurate

record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor McEvoy, seconded by Councillor Lewis.

C/174/2022 **MINUTES OF SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 24 OCTOBER 2022**

Read: Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 24 October 2022 (copy circulated).

SC/26/2021: Presentation from DFI Roads – Annual Report 2022/23

Councillor McMurray enquired whether a response to questions raised at DFI Road Clinics had been received to date. Mrs Ward advised she would follow up on the matter with DFI Roads.

Agreed: **The Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on 24 October 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Lewis, seconded by Councillor Hanlon.**

COMMITTEE MINUTES FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION

C/175/2022 **MINUTES OF ENTERPRISE, REGENERATION AND TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 10 OCTOBER 2022**

Read: Minutes of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 10 October 2022 (copy circulated).

ERT/165/2022: Planning Performance Figures

Councillor Owen queried the number of outstanding enforcement cases for over 5 years (for the period April-August 2022 there was an average of 96) and the percentage of planning cases taking over 18 months (14%) and the cost this had to Council.

Mr Mallon advised planning performance improvement measures were in place across all service areas of planning including enforcement and development management to improve timescale and performance against statutory targets. That was ongoing and improving year on year.

Agreed: **The Minutes of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 10 October 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Stokes, seconded by Councillor Hanna.**

C/176/2022

**MINUTES OF STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 13 OCTOBER 2022**

Read: Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 13 October 2022 (copy circulated).

SPR/155/2022: Timings of Meetings and Working Groups

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Casey, seconded by Councillor Clarke, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on items 9-17 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 Casey, seconded by Councillor Gallagher, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

Agreed: The Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 13 October 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Trainor.

C/177/2022

**MINUTES OF ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 OCTOBER 2022**

Read: Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 17 October 2022 (copy circulated).

AHC/174/2022: Kilkeel Leisure Centre

When requesting an update regarding the swimming pool and closures at Newry Leisure Centre, Councillor McKeivitt voiced her dismay at a detailed report appearing in local newspapers and Members including those on the Active and Healthy Communities Committee having not been informed. Councillor Casey supported Councillor McKeivitt's comments and voiced his disappointment and concerns.

Mr Lipsett confirmed there was a detailed report on the potential closure of Newry Swimming Pool being presented to the November Active and Healthy Communities Committee with investigatory works to be carried out in December. He added it was unfortunate a report could not have been brought to the Committee earlier, but an emergency situation had arisen regarding tiles at the bottom of the swimming pool and

following an investigation by the consultant team it was recommended works be carried out.

AHC/164/2022: Financial Assistance Report, Calls 3 2022 and Call 1 2023

In response to a query from Councillor Finnegan, Mr Lipsett advised once the calls were completed for the year the budget would be reviewed and any moneys left over could be reallocated. He confirmed the review was ongoing and a report would be brought to the Active and Healthy Communities Committee.

AHC/169/2022: Financial Assistance

Councillor Sharvin advised he had been unable to attend the Committee Meeting and voiced concern at the proposed new approach regarding Sports Capital Grants and urged consideration be given for a review of the decision.

Mr Lipsett advised he was happy to bring a report back to the Active and Health Communities Committee for further consideration if Council so wished.

Councillor Ó Muirí advised whilst he was content for the matter to be considered by Committee again, there had been a lengthy debate in which Members had enquired about the pros and cons and the potential impact for groups and on the rates process.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Ó Muirí for a review paper on AHC/169/2022: Financial Assistance be brought to the next Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting.

AHC/181/2022: Drinking Water Inspectorate Annual Report

In response for an update from Councillor McAteer regarding Drumaroad Treatment Plant, Mr Lipsett confirmed an update report would be presented at the November Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting.

Agreed: The Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 17 October 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Gallagher.

C/178/2022 MINUTES OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 OCTOBER 2022

Read: Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 18 October 2022 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 18 October 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Stokes, seconded by Councillor Andrews.

C/179/2022 **PLANNING SECTION – LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

Read: Extract from Minutes of Planning Committee Meeting held on 19 October 2022 Re: LDP Planning Policy Review. (Copy circulated)

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Hanna to note the extract from the Minutes of Planning Committee held on 19 October 2022 regarding the LDP Planning Policy Review.**

CORRESPONDANCE AND CONFERENCES

C/180/2022 **LETTER FROM DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE – APPOINTMENT COUNCILLOR MEMBER TO WARRENPOINT HARBOUR AUTHORITY (WHA)**

Read: Correspondence dated 3 October 2022 from the Department for Infrastructure regarding Appointment Councillor Member to Warrenpoint Harbour Authority. (Copy circulated)

The Chief Executive advised the correspondence was in relation to a public appointment process, seeking nominations for public appointment process for the position previously held by Cathy Mason as a Member of Sinn Féin and that other positions remain unchanged.

Agreed: **The correspondence from the Department for Infrastructure regarding Appointment Councillor Member to WHA was noted and names of nominees for the public appointment process to the Warrenpoint Harbour Authority to be forwarded to the Democratic Services Department.**

It was agreed an extract from the minute relating to appointments as agreed by Council to the Warrenpoint Harbour Authority be forwarded to Members for their information.

NOTICES OF MOTION

C/181/2022 **NOTICE OF MOTION – SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY**

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Taylor:

"This Council recognises that; many forms of disability, including for example impairments of mobility, vision, hearing, communication, neurological issues, mental health issues, neurodiversity, learning disability and chronic illness can impact people's ability to access our services. It has a duty to ensure that every service and facility is fully accessible, providing access to resources and services that remove barriers. This council, therefore, agrees to promote a Social Model of Disability, which says that

people with impairments are 'disabled' by the barriers operating in society which excludes and discriminate against them. Further, commits to working with local businesses, community and service providers to ensure facilities and services are accessible for everyone and will ensure that any new service or facility is developed using a co-design approach with disability organisations and local groups".

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Burgess.

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

C/182/2022

NOTICE OF MOTION – KING'S CORONATION

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Lewis:

"This Council recognises that many residents across Newry Mourne and Down will welcome and celebrate the coronation of His Majesty the King. We note that the coronation has been announced for Saturday 6th May 2023. To mark this momentous occasion we would ask that funding be made available for communities and organisations who wish to join together in Recognition and celebration".

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Hanna.

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

C/183/2022

NOTICE OF MOTION – GOVERNMENT HELP WITH COST OF LIVING CRISIS

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Andrews:

"Over the past few months and due to a variety of reasons and circumstances we have seen price hikes and increases on a wide scale that have impacted severely on so many in our district resulting in hardship and unable to make ends meet. Newry Mourne and Down District Council demands that the Government put in place much needed measures to provide much necessary help and support to residents of the District who have been affected by the Cost of Living Crisis. If this motion is adopted Council writes to the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer, also the other 10 Councils in Northern Ireland enlisting their support for this motion".

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Trainor.

In proposing the motion Councillor Andrews, said the wording of the motion echoed the sentiments and concerns that were at the forefront of residents in the district. He said everyone was affected and impacted by price rises on a daily basis with many people were being forced to make the stark choice of heating or eating. Councillor Andrews said foodbanks were under increasing pressure to deal with the upsurge in demand with people coming to them for the first time in their lives. He said the absence of the Assembly was only exacerbating the already dire situation.

Councillor Andrews said it was extremely difficult to reconcile how the multinational energy companies were making huge profits whilst so many people were struggling. He said drastic action and immediate mobilisation of resources and financial help needed to be put in place to ensure this much needed help and support was made available to those who needed it most.

Councillor Trainor seconded the proposal saying whilst he acknowledged some support packages had been put in place it had not been enough, and the promised packages of support had not been forthcoming. He said not enough was being done and the situation was further compounded by the lack of devolved leadership. He said hardship was being felt by a great number of people as evidenced by the increase in the demand for supplies from foodbanks. Councillor Trainor said the Tory government had not fulfilled their promises and immediate action was needed to deal with the crisis.

Councillor Owen expressed support for the motion and said it was the UK government and not the Northern Ireland Assembly who had the financial power to help support those in need.

Councillor Taylor expressed support for the motion saying the lack of support was very frustrating and the government needed to find a way to get money to people as a matter of urgency. He said the Chancellor's Autumn statement was due to be released on 17 November which would probably see further government cuts and he said as elected representatives it was their duty to ensure all representations that could be made should be made although he had concerns they may fall on deaf ears.

Councillor Murphy expressed support for the motion and said it was unfortunate it was necessary to approach the British government for the support needed and he said Council should follow the lead outlined recently by ABC Council and utilise our own ideas and resources in an effort to mitigate against the worst effects of the cost of living crisis.

Councillor McMurray expressed support for the motion and said various mitigation measures could have been put in place but due to the absence of the Assembly this had not been possible.

In summing up, Councillor Andrews thanked Members for their support and said it was necessary to short circuit the process in order to get much needed help to struggling families as a matter of urgency.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Trainor that Newry Mourne and Down District Council demands that the Government put in place much needed measures to provide much necessary help and support to residents of the District who have been affected by the Cost of Living Crisis. It was also agreed that Council writes to the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer, as well as the other 10 Councils in Northern Ireland enlisting their support for this motion".

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor McAteer:

"That this Council strongly rejects the intentions of the United Kingdom Government to introduce Electronic Travel Authorisation for International & Non-Irish EU citizens entering Northern Ireland from the Republic. That this Council write to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland informing him of the serious damage this course of action would inflict upon our business, tourism and healthcare sectors. That this Council also write to the Minister for Justice in the Republic urging her not to facilitate or cooperate with the imposition of such travel requirements at points of entry or exit into or out of the Republic, if enacted by a U.K. Government. Furthermore, this Council believes the imposition of an application process and accompanying charges would be tantamount to an act of legislative sabotage, potentially destroying the post-conflict gains in attracting tourists and business travellers alike to Northern Ireland over recent years."

The motion was seconded by Councillor Stokes.

In proposing the motion, Councillor McAteer said the UK Government were proposing to amend the Nationality and Borders Bill, which, if passed would result in all non-Irish, non-British and non-EU citizens having to submit an Electronic Travel Authorisation application prior to entering N. Ireland from the Republic of Ireland.

He said if the Bill was passed without amendment it would affect many sectors and cause severe damage to the N. Ireland economy. Councillor McAteer said it would have dire consequences for the tourism sector and Tourism NI had said it would result in many visitors choosing not to visit the area and the potential loss to the economy could be £10m per annum.

Councillor McAteer said residents from the ROI, 9% of whom were non-EU and crossed the border regularly for various reasons would also be affected. He said the UK and Irish Governments had existing bi-lateral agreements in place to fully protect the common travel area between the two countries and the Bill served no purpose.

Councillor McAteer said he appealed to the Secretary of State to listen to what was being said across the political spectrum both in N. Ireland and G. Britain and he said if the UK government insisted on imposing this Bill, he considered it was the duty of the Department of Justice in the ROI not to cooperate in any way with its implementation or information sharing regarding visitors to these shores.

Councillor Stokes seconded the motion saying from a tourism perspective it was important to get as many people to travel to the district from the ROI and he said if such travel requirements were to be implemented it would greatly affect the numbers of people choosing to visit the North and would not be beneficial to what the Council strived to do in terms of promoting Newry Mourne and Down as a tourism destination.

Councillor Owen said the DUP would not be supporting the motion. She said the UK government had released a policy paper that included Electronic Travel Authorisation in

February this year that went through the House of Commons and it would have been better to make representation in opposition to the Bill at that stage rather than now. She said the Electronic Travel Authorisation did not affect British or Irish residents and did not breach the Common Travel Area or the Belfast Good Friday Agreement.

Councillor Owen said border security needed to be rigorously protected and the system was successfully in place in the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. She said she had used it in the past and it was a very simple and quick procedure and if it helped to increase border integrity then the DUP were fully behind it.

Councillor Reilly said he would not be supporting the motion. He said there was a big growth in tourism from England, Scotland and Wales and the implementation of the Electronic Travel Authorisation was a simple process and he had used it himself in the USA.

Councillor Taylor said he would not be supporting the motion. He said he did not consider the implementation of the Electronic Travel Authorisation would pose a threat, it would be no different than other countries and assurances had been given by the UK government there would be no checks at borders or people asked for papers.

Councillors O'Muirí, McMurray, Enright and Tinnelly all expressed support for the motion saying tourism was vital to our economy and it was important to ensure everything was done to promote it and not put obstacles in the way of it.

In summing up Councillor McAteer thanked members for their support and said an amendment to the Bill tabled by Alliance and Liberal Democrats had not accepted for debate. He said Lord Brookeborough and Baroness Ritchie were both vehemently opposed to it as was the N. Ireland Tourism Alliance.

The motion was put to a vote by way of roll call and voting was as follows:

FOR:	32
AGAINST:	6
ABSTENTIONS:	0

The motion was carried.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor McAteer seconded by Councillor Stokes that Council write to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland informing him of the serious damage this course of action would inflict upon our business, tourism and healthcare sectors.**

It was also agreed to write to the Minister for Justice in the Republic of Ireland urging her not to facilitate or cooperate with the imposition of such travel requirements at points of entry or exit into or out of the Republic, if enacted by a UK Government.

**NOTICE OF MOTION – INCLUSION OF COUNTIES
ARMAGH AND DOWN IN THE IRELAND'S ANCIENT
EAST DESTINATION MARKETING BRAND**

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Byrne:

This Council recognises the four key pillars of Ireland's Ancient East: Ancient Ireland, Early Christian Ireland, Medieval Ireland, and Anglo Ireland; align with and strengthen our districts tourism offering.

This Council supports the inclusion of Counties Armagh and Down in the Ireland's Ancient East destination marketing brand".

Councillor Devlin seconded the proposal.

In proposing the motion, Councillor Byrne said the purpose of the motion was not just about the Council's Tourism Strategy or even about the district but about harnessing the potential of the entire region and making a bid for Counties Armagh and Down to enter the Ireland's Ancient East destination marketing brand.

Councillor Byrne said the motion represented an ambitious aspiration for our District and the broader region and it recognised the synchronicity between the tourism offering of Armagh and Down and the four pillars of Ireland's Ancient East: Ancient Ireland, Anglo Ireland, Medieval Ireland and Early Christian Ireland.

Councillor Byrne said the tourism offering within Armagh and Down was as rich as it was diverse, and presented a unique opportunity for the history and heritage of Ulster to secure a more prominent placement within Ireland's Ancient East.

He said the district was very definitely a part of Ireland's Ancient East, and it was time it was made official so that we could reap the very clear dividend for the communities we all served.

Councillor Devlin seconded the motion saying the tourism industry was the biggest economic driver and it was vital all was done to expand it to make it truly sustainable.

She said over the last number of years both tourism and hospitality had been hit particularly hard between Brexit, recovering from covid, staff shortages and huge increases in the cost of doing business and she said investing in tourism was money well spent.

Councillor Devlin said new and innovative ways needed to be explored to look at how the extensive tourism offering we currently had could be further enhanced.

Councillor Devlin said by supporting our tourism offering, local families, local businesses and local producers were being supported and by investing in our local tourism offering was investing in these local people.

Councillor O Muirí expressed full support for the motion and asked that a slight amendment be made to include that Council write to the Irish Government also asking that they implement the inclusion of Armagh and Down in the Ancient East Marketing Brand.

Councillor Byrne accepted the amendment.

There was unanimous support from Members for the motion.

In summing up, Councillor Byrne thanked Members for their support for the motion saying it was a shared tourism product.

Councillor Hanna asked a further amendment be made to write to Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon Council to get them engaged in the process.

Councillor Byrne accepted the amendment saying it was in the interests of everyone to push this forward.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Byrne seconded by Councillor Devlin that this Council writes to the Irish Tourism Minister requesting assurance that the Counties of Armagh and Down are included in Ireland's Ancient East Destination Marketing Brand. It was also agreed to write to Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council to ask them to engage in the process.**

C/186/2022

NOTICE OF MOTION – INVITATION TO AN TAOISEACH

The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Stokes:

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council write to An Taoiseach, Micheál Martin, to cordially invite him to visit our district.

Councillor McAteer seconded the motion.

In proposing the motion, Councillor Stokes said the Council had enjoyed a long and very proud history of cross border cooperation with numerous current cross border projects on-going. He said a visit from An Taoiseach would allow for a celebration of our cross border work to date and plan for future cooperation.

Councillor McAteer seconded the motion saying the Council had benefitted greatly from Shared Island funding and it was totally appropriate to extend the invitation to An Taoiseach.

Councillor Hanna said the DUP would neither support, vote against or abstain from voting for the motion and said their objection was the inconsistencies in how the motions had been dealt with at the meeting this evening. He said the motion regarding the King's Coronation had been referred to Good Relations and he considered this motion should also have been sent to Good Relations and not heard at Council and in protest, he along with Councillors Moore, Owen and Reilly left the chamber.

The Chairperson said the two motions referred to were entirely different in that the motion re. King's Coronation was a resource issue, whilst this current motion was a straightforward invitation.

Councillor Taylor said he would not be supporting the motion, he said the motion lacked detail and he said he considered there were inconsistencies in how the motions had been dealt with at the meeting.

Councillor McMurray asked if the invitation was specifically for Micheál Martin or An Taoiseach's office, Councillor McAteer clarified it would be sent An Taoiseach's office. Councillor McMurray said the late decision to hear the previous motion at Council did not give much time, in particular for the smaller parties, to prepare.

Councillor Murphy said Sinn Féin would be supporting the motion and it was an opportunity to reinforce the need for investment in the area and showcase what the district had to offer.

Councillor Stokes thanked members for their broad support and said it was chance to celebrate the cross-border work that had been on-going for many years and to plan for the future.

The motion was put to a vote by way of a roll call, the results of which were:

FOR:	29
AGAINST:	1
ABSTENTIONS:	0

The motion was carried.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Stokes seconded by Councillor McAteer that Newry, Mourne and Down District Council write to An Taoiseach, Micheál Martin, to cordially invite him to visit our district.**

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 8.14pm.

For confirmation at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 5 December 2022.

Signed:

Chairperson

Chief Executive