

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

NMD/C/

Minutes of Council Meeting held on Wednesday 7 April 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 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 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	

(Officials)

Mrs D Carville, Director of Corporate Services
Mr C Mallon, Director of Enterprise, Regeneration & Tourism (Acting)
Mr J McBride, Director of Neighbourhood Services (Acting)
Mr F O'Connor, Head of Legal & Administration (Acting)
Mr A Patterson, Assistant Director, Culture, Tourism & Events
Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)
Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer
Mrs C McAteer, Democratic Services Officer

C/065/2021

APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Doran, Gallagher, McEvoy, Trainor and Walker.

Apologies were also received from Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive and Mr M Lipsett, Director of Active & Healthy Communities.

The Chairperson paid tribute to James Savage, former SDLP Councillor in the legacy Newry and Mourne District Council who sadly passed away. James had represented the Fewes DEA from 1977-1997 and been Chair of the previous Council, a farmer and had a strong background in the GAA and campaigned strongly for improved sports facilities in the District. Thoughts of Council were with his family and friends following his passing. Councillor Ó Muirí also paid tribute to James Savage who would be missed by the Gaels.

The Chairperson praised the continued success of the roll out of the Covid 19 vaccination programme and encouraged those citizens within the District who were offered the vaccine to take it.

The Chairperson welcomed the recent announcement of the £2.69million funding boost to Castlewellan Forest Park. The significant cash injection had been secured in recent weeks from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and would create a destination which would protect the heritage of Castlewellan Forest Park for future generations, whilst also providing opportunities for local people and visitors to learn more about the landscape. She expressed sincere thanks to the members of the Task and Finish Board that had supported the development of this project since 2015, along with Aveen McVeigh, Project Development Officer and every other Council employee involved in the pitch to Heritage Lottery.

The Chairperson passed on her sympathy and that of Council to Colum Jackson, Assistant Director and his family following his father's passing.

Members were advised the Chairperson had received a request for an emergency Notice of Motion which would require the suspension of Standing Orders and the vote of 80% of those present and voting to allow this motion to be heard. If successful, the motion would be dealt with after all other matter of business and copies of the wording of the motion had been circulated.

C/066/2021 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Andrews declared an interest in item 6, Minutes of the Enterprise Regeneration and Tourism Committee Minutes held on 8 March 2021, ERT/053/2021 Service Level Agreements 2021-22 as a member of East Border Region.

Mrs D Carville, Director of Corporate Services declared an interest in items 24, Notice of Motion Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy and item 25, Gender Based Violence.

The Chairperson and Councillor Clarke declared an interest in item 6 Minutes of the Enterprise Regeneration and Tourism Committee Minutes held on 8 March 2021, ERT/052/2021 Licence Agreement as Board Members of the Mourne Heritage Trust.

In response to a query from Councillor Hanna regarding declarations of interest in relation to the emergency motion, the Chairperson advised it was for Members themselves to declare any interests.

C/067/2021 ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 1 MARCH 2021

Read: Action sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 1 March 2021 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Action Sheet from Council Meeting held on 1 March 2021 was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Owen, seconded by Councillor Andrews.**

COUNCIL MINUTES FOR ADOPTION AND SIGNING

C/068/2021 MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 1 MARCH 2021

Read: Minutes of Council Meeting held on 1 March 2021 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 1 March 2021 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Stokes, seconded by Councillor Ó Muirí.**

C/069/2021 MINUTES OF SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 22 MARCH 2021

Read: Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 22 March 2021 with representatives of the South Eastern Trust; Southern Trust and NIAS (copy circulated).

In response to a query from Councillor Sharvin, Miss Taggart confirmed the planned date for the next Special Council Meeting with representatives of the South Eastern; Southern Trust and NIAS was scheduled for October 2021. Councillor Sharvin spoke of the importance of keeping pressure on the Trusts to redeliver services that were there before Covid and therefore there was a need to meet sooner.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Owen to bring forward the date of the next Special Council Meeting with the South Eastern Trust, Southern Trust and NIAS to June or August 2021.**

Agreed: **The Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on 22 March 2021 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Savage, seconded by Councillor Andrews.**

COMMITTEE MINUTES FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION

C/070/2021 MINUTES OF ENTERPRISE, REGENERATION AND TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8 MARCH 2021

Read: Minutes of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 8 March 2021 (copy circulated).

ERT/051/2021: Warrenpoint Baths

Councillor Ruane pointed out the proposal was providing the opportunity for Council to progress Warrenpoint Baths for the first time in 25 years and allow Council officials to seek potential funders and proceed with a business case and economic appraisal. He appealed to Members not to oppose the proposal.

Councillor Reilly and Gibbons spoke in support of Councillor Ruane's proposal.

A lengthy discussion ensued during which Councillor McAteer reiterated commitment to Warrenpoint Baths. Councillor McAteer proposed the inclusion of a bathing facility within the current building for the business case and economic appraisal in future options. Councillor McKevitt seconded the proposal.

Councillor Ruane stated he would not deviate from the planning permission proposal as contained within the minute.

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

FOR: 11
AGAINST: 18
ABSTAIN: 6

The proposal was LOST and the Chair advised they would revert back to the actual Minutes as they stood in the papers for tonight's meeting.

ERT/049/2021: Brexit Forum

In response to concerns raised by Councillor Reilly regarding an alleged incident of abuse towards a member of Council staff at Warrenpoint Docks and his request to write to the Joint Committee regarding that matter, it was agreed Mrs Carville would look into the allegation further.

ERT/052/2021: Licence Agreement Donard Forest

Councillor Clarke spoke of the ongoing issues regarding the management of Donard Park and enquired about a report that was to be tabled on the management of the park until the Gateway Project was in place. He also referred to a motion he had brought forward regarding the Donard Demense and requested an update.

Mr Mallon confirmed work was ongoing in relation to Visitor Management Plans for the Mourne linked and aligned with the Gateway Project, and that he would include the management of Donard Park as an element of that. Mr Mallon also confirmed he would report back to Councillor Clarke regarding the motion and the direction given from Council to ensure it was included in the work being issued over next few weeks. The Chairperson requested that she be included in the update.

Agreed: The Minutes of the Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 8 March 2021 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Burgess, seconded by Councillor Stokes.

C/071/2021 MINUTES OF STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 MARCH 2021

Read: Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 11 March 2021 (copy circulated).

SPR/44/2021: Terms and Conditions Staff Working at Warrenpoint Port

Mrs Carville asked that this minute be deferred for a further report to be presented at the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting to be held on 15 April 2021.

SPR/41/2021: Minutes of Newry City Regeneration Project Board Meeting held on 2 March 2021

Councillor Stokes voiced concern at Newry Cathedral Parish stating opposition to proposals regarding the gardens and new Council offices behind the Cathedral. Councillor Stokes commented that it was understood Officers were in positive discussions with the Parish and given that it seemed not to be the case he asked that parish representatives be invited to meet with the Programme Board and that the minutes of that meeting be circulated. Councillor Taylor seconded the proposal.

Members debated this issue at length with Councillor Mulgrew pointing out there were governance issues regarding inviting individual stakeholders into a Programme Board Meeting.

Councillor Savage advised that he had made a proposal at the Strategy Policy and Resources Committee Meeting that Council prepare for whatever came out of the consultation and that there was a need look at other options.

Councillor McKee left the meeting at this stage – 6.49pm

Councillor Malone proposed that a full Council Meeting be arranged to meet with Parish representatives. Councillor Brown seconded the proposal.

The Chairperson pointed out this was a matter for the Project Board Meeting scheduled to take place on 13 April 2021.

Councillor Malone asked that it be put on record that he was very concerned that Members had been told everything was going smoothly when it was blatantly obvious that that was not the case.

Mrs Carville advised she did not have the Terms of Reference at hand and pointed out officers were unable to advise Members of the governance implications of inviting one stakeholder to meet without due consideration. Mrs Carville also advised there had been an accusation from Councillor Malone that he had been misled and that matter would need to be picked up on outside the meeting once Councillor Malone provided the evidence to support his claims.

A lengthy discussion continued during which Councillors Byrne, Mulgrew, Clarke and Taylor spoke of the need for clarity on governance arrangements.

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Savage, seconded by Councillor Andrews to adjourn the meeting.

The Chairperson reminded Members there was an agenda item at the Project Board Meeting to be held on 13 April 2021 that would deal with the Parish in terms of consultation and communication.

The meeting was adjourned – 7.12pm

The meeting resumed – 7.18 pm

Mrs Carville advised it was important to address the point ahead of any evidence from Councillor Malone and confirmed officers had had a number of meetings with the Parish and at those meetings there had been an agreed position to be reported back to the Programme Board. She further confirmed at the last meeting with the Parish, it had been agreed to report back to the Project Board that officials continued to have positive meetings with Newry Parish representatives.

Following recess, Mr Mallon was able to provide an overview of Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Strategy as previously agreed by Council and which formed part of the governance arrangements for the Programme Board for the Newry City Regeneration Project.

Members were advised that on the assumption a Parish was in the category community organisation, the agreed method of engagement for individual stakeholder meetings was to be led by Council and focus groups on specific schemes, and therefore did not include Programme Boards or Council Committees.

At the request of Councillor Malone, the Chairperson put his proposal to a recorded vote, the results of which were as follows (copy appended to these minutes):

FOR: 8
AGAINST: 21
ABSTAIN: 6

The proposal was LOST.

Agreed: The Minutes of the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 11 March 2021, with the exception of SPR/44/2021, were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Hanlon.

Item SPR/44/2021 was deferred for a further report to be presented to the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting to be held on 15 April 2021.

C/072/2021

**MINUTES OF ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15 MARCH 2021**

Read: Minutes of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 15 March 2021 (copy circulated).

AHC/206/2019: Suicide Down to Zero

Councillor Gibbons commended officers Eoin Devlin and Sinead Trainor for organising the recent Suicide Prevention Training.

AHC/059/2021: Leisure Services and Sports Scale of Charges

Councillor Sharvin asked that following the announcement from the NI Executive regarding the reduction on restrictions whether Council could temporarily suspend the current policy around the use of council grass pitches used for training. Councillor Sharvin highlighted many sports clubs did not have access to their own facility and relied on Council pitches to be able to train.

Councillor Ó Muirí also spoke of the need to bring Council policy into line with guidance of the NI Executive in terms of return to play so that Council facilities, of which many sporting clubs were reliant upon, were made available quickly.

Mrs Carville confirmed officers would look into the matter and report back.

In response to a query from Councillor McKeivitt regarding an opening date for Warrenpoint Tennis Club, Mrs Carville confirmed officers were examining tennis clubs and that Mr Tamati, Assistant Director, Leisure and Sport would contact Warrenpoint Tennis Club directly.

Councillor McAteer also asked for clarification regarding the tennis court in Warrenpoint Park and the two person rule.

Agreed: The Minutes of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 15 March 2021 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Ó Muirí.

Agreed: It was agreed to review the current policy around the use of Council grass pitches for training in light of recent announcement from NI Executive.

C/073/2021

**MINUTES OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON 16 MARCH 2021**

Read: Minutes of Neighbourhood Services Committee Meeting held on 16 March 2021 (copy circulated).

NS/037/2021: Council's Tree Strategy

In welcoming this initiative, Councillor Casey asked that trees damaged on Castle Street, Newry be replaced, and that consideration be given to planting trees along the whole of the tow path at Canal Bank, Newry.

Councillor Clarke also welcomed the Council's Tree Strategy further to a motion he brought forward some time ago, and thanked officers involved. Councillor Clarke referred to land released on conacre and asked if land in those areas could be put out for tree planting and the Council should examine land it owns and that of statutory partners also.

NS/040/2021: Refuse Collection Holiday Arrangements 2021/22

In response to a query from the Chairperson, Mr McBride confirmed the refuse collection calendars would be issued to all households and the timetable to do so would be presented to the Neighbourhood Services Committee Meeting on 21 April 2021. Mr McBride also confirmed there would be no changes to the refuse collection schedules.

NS/038/2021: Enforcement Improvement Plan Update

Councillor McAteer referred to the recruitment of staff to deal with dog fouling and asked that consideration be given to target most fouled areas in Warrenpoint in the early mornings and late evenings.

The Chairperson suggested Mr McBride examine the timings of targeted dog fouling in areas throughout the District and Mr McBride confirmed he would do so.

Agreed: The Minutes of the Neighbourhood Services Committee Meeting held on 16 March 2021 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor McKeivitt, seconded by Councillor Magennis.

C/074/2021

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 MARCH 2021**

Read: Minutes of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 18 March 2021 re: application for the renewal of licence to operate a house of multiple occupation for 31 and 19 Kilmorey Street, Newry (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of the Special Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 18 March 2021 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Mason.

PLANNING

C/075/2020

PLANNING MINUTES 10 MARCH 2021

Noted: There were no issues referred from the Planning Committee Meeting held on 10 March 2021.

FOR NOTING

C/076/2021 **NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING COUNCIL BULLETIN – MARCH 2021**

Read: Bulletin dated March 2021 from Northern Ireland Housing Council. (Copy circulated)

Agreed: **The Northern Ireland Housing Council Bulletin was noted.**

C/077/2020 **NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING COUNCIL MINUTES FEBRUARY 2021**

Read: Northern Ireland Housing Council Minutes dated 11 February 2021. (Copy circulated)

Agreed: **The Northern Ireland Housing Council Minutes dated 11 February 2021 were noted.**

CORRESPONDENCE

C/078/2021 **MINISTER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE RE: PEDESTRIAN ROAD SAFETY MEASURES**

Read: Correspondence dated 4 March 2021 from the Minister for Infrastructure re: Pedestrian road safety measures. (Copy circulated)

Agreed: **The correspondence was noted.**

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Murphy, it was agreed to write again to the Minister for Infrastructure advising that the Council welcomed continuing bids being made for finance for roads infrastructure and asking the Minister to detail what resources have been specifically allocated for pedestrian road safety measures across the Newry, Mourne and Down District.**

C/079/2021 **HM TREASURY RE: BUDGET 2021**

Read: Correspondence dated 11 March 2021 from HM Treasury re: Representations in advance of Budget 2021. (Copy circulated)

Agreed: **The correspondence was noted.**

C/080/2021 **MINISTER FOR FINANCE RE: PROPOSED CUTS TO ADVICE SERVICES**

Read: Correspondence dated 8 March 2021 from the Minister for Finance re: Proposed cuts to independent advice sector. (Copy circulated)

Agreed: **The correspondence was noted.**

C/081/2021

**MINISTER FOR THE ECONOMY RE: COVID DISRUPTION
PAYMENTS FOR STUDENTS**

Read: Correspondence dated 18 March 2021 from the Minister for the Economy re: Covid disruption payments for students. (Copy circulated)

Agreed: The correspondence was noted.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Mason, it was agreed to write again to the Minister for the Economy asking that whatever needed to be done should be done, to ensure all students were treated equally in receiving the Covid disruption payment, even if it meant a change in legislation.

C/082/2021

**DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND DEPARTMENT FOR
EDUCATION RE: CHILD POVERTY TASK FORCE**

Read: Correspondence dated 10 March 2021 from the Department for Communities and 09 March 2021 from the Department for Education re: Child Poverty Task Force. (copy circulated).

Agreed: The correspondence was noted.

C/083/2021

**MINISTER FOR FINANCE RE: NEARLY ZERO ENERGY
BUILDINGS (NZEB)**

Read: Correspondence dated 4 March 2021 from the Minister for Finance re: Nearly zero energy building standards. (Copy circulated)

Agreed: The correspondence was noted.

C/084/2021

**MID AND EAST ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL RE: HOLIDAY
HUNGER**

Read: Correspondence dated 29 March 2021 from the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council to the Minister for Education re: Holiday Hunger. (Copy circulated)

Agreed: The correspondence was noted.

CONFERENCES/EVENTS

C/085/2021

IRISH CLIMATE SUMMIT 2021

Read: Invitation to the Irish Climate on line Summit 2021 to be held on Thursday 29 April 2021 at a cost of €195 plus VAT at 23%.

Agreed: It was agreed any Councillor who was interested in attending the Irish Climate Summit virtual meeting on Thursday 29 April 2021 should advise Democratic Services.

orientation or gender identity. That could include attempting to change someone's sexual orientation from lesbian, gay or bisexual to straight, or gender identity from transgender or non binary to cisgender. It was also known as 'gender critical therapy' and 'ex-gay ministry' among other terms intended to mask its purpose and intent. Evidence from the Trevor Project in the US suggests up to 10% of LGBT individuals have been subjected to conversion therapy at some point in their lives, mostly when they were children under 18.

Councillor Brown said the majority of conversion therapy was administered through 'talk therapy', often invoking biblical texts, spiritual teachings and prayer, which has been colloquially known as 'pray the gay away'. However, even more harmful forms of therapy existed, such as physical aversion therapy or, in some parts of the world, electric shock treatment. Adverse childhood experiences or trauma were often wrongly given as the reason for a person's orientation or identity, with conversion therapy suggested as 'treatment' for this. He said conversion therapy was often performed by unlicensed counsellors, life coaches and ministries, although whilst much contemporary conversion therapy had been associated with faith communities, it's important to note the role many faith leaders have played in attempting to ban the practice.

In conclusion, Councillor Brown said it was therefore integral that Newry, Mourne and Down Council sent a strong message out to the people of the district and Stormont that they will not accept this disgraceful practice and want to see it permanently banned from being carried out in Northern Ireland. He said he hoped all Councillors would support this Motion.

During the discussion that followed, Councillor Byrne spoke in support of the Motion and said that to have to speak on this issue in 2021 was beyond distressing and he hoped everyone in the Chamber would give it their support. He said it was long past time that the NI Executive stood up together and banned these abusive practices.

Councillor Byrne provided a personal account of his own difficult experiences stating it was the shaming and the attitudes on how people spoke and engaged with the LGBT community that needed full attention and the voice of everyone in the Chamber was needed to support the LGBT community who should not be sign posted to change. He said the SDLP fully supported the Motion and asked Councillor Brown to include an amendment that the Council also write to the UK Prime Minister since it was 9 months from he had said that changes would be announced, and they were still waiting, as well as to the NI Executive.

Councillor Brown said he would be happy to include this in the Motion.

Councillor Enright left the Meeting at this stage – 8.10pm

Councillors Clarke, Sharvin, Hanlon and McMurray spoke in support of the Motion.

Councillor Taylor spoke on the need for education on this issue and referred to the increased level of debate, both locally and nationally. He said he was aware the issues around conversion therapy would be discussed within the Assembly next week and he hoped concerns would be addressed.

Councillor Hanna advised the DUP would be abstaining on this Motion as he believed it would suppress the views of those who do not agree with the position of those who were supporting it.

Councillor Reilly said he did not know enough about the issue but to ban things because you did not like someone's ideology or philosophy was the start of a dark path and he did not like the concept of outright bans.

The Motion was put to a vote and voting was as follows:-

FOR: 28
AGAINST: 1
ABSTENTIONS: 2

The Motion was declared carried.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Brown, seconded by Councillor Mason, that 'This Council opposes the harm caused to our LGBT+ community in the past through the denial of rights and equal treatment and further recognises that discrimination still occurs today. This Council acknowledges and stands against the ongoing harm the practice of conversion therapy brings to LGBT+ people. This Council calls on the Minister of Communities to continue to work with the Minister of Health and Minister of Justice to introduce an effective ban on conversion therapy within Northern Ireland, supported by a programme of work to help tackle these practices in all their forms. Furthermore, this Council will highlight and promote the continued support, counselling and advocacy our local groups provide to members of the LGBT+ Community.

This Council to also write to the UK Prime Minister on this issue”.

Councillor Tinnelly left the meeting at this stage – 8.17pm.

The Chair advised that 3 Motions on the agenda, items 24, 25 and 29 were quite similar and said it would be ideal for the elements from the further Motions be included in the first Motion.

C/088/2021 NOTICE OF MOTION – VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (VAWG) STRATEGY

The following Notice of Motion came forward from Councillor Owen:-

“This Council recognises women's concerns across the UK and ROI after the disappearance and subsequent murder of Sarah Everard. It has placed a spotlight on the safety of women and girls. This Council is to

- **Request the Northern Ireland Assembly initiate a Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) strategy.**
- **Endorse and promote the Women's Aid petition calling for a VAWG strategy to be implemented.**
- **To form a task force to develop a publicity campaign promoting safety apps and engaging with the PSNI, Women's Aid and Soroptimists Great Britain and Ireland**
- **Ask other Councils to do the same.**

Councillor Hanna seconded the Motion.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Owen started by giving some startling statistics and stated there was not a woman around that had not been touched by the murder of Sarah Everard who was only walking home.

Councillor Owen said she spoke on this topic from personal experience and went on to outline the challenges she faced in getting people to believe her and this was the first time she felt strong enough to speak out about it, as she felt those on a public platform must help others.

Councillor Owen said sadly in 2021, many female victims still felt like this, and with only 39.2% of suspects getting charged, who could blame them. She said they put their neck on the line, swallow the shame and report it, for more often than not, it to be ignored. Women and girls must feel empowered to come forward.

Councillor Owen said for these reasons, a Violence Against Women and Girls strategy was needed and it was needed now to protect the next generation.

Councillor Hanlon said it was unacceptable that the North was the only place on these Islands that did not have a strategy to tackle gender-based violence. She said it was crucial to look at education including educating sons that they treat women with respect and that they understood consent.

Councillor Hanlon said given the seriousness of the issue, combining the 3 Motions together would send a really strong message from Newry, Mourne and Down Council and said after the Motions had been submitted to Council, the Assembly had passed a Motion to back a Gender Based Violence Strategy. She asked that the Motion be amended to include the Council write to the Minister for Justice and the Joint First Ministers and Executive Team and ask that they really press ahead with this Strategy and that it just did not become a Motion that got a few headlines and fell by the wayside again and that the Council wanted to see it being progressed as quickly as possible.

Councillor Owen confirmed she was happy to accept this amendment.

Councillor McKeivitt paid tribute to Councillor Owen and stated the SDLP would be fully supporting the Motion. She then asked Councillor Owen if she would accept the inclusion of the last line of their Motion that in addition, this Council agrees to consider developing a financial support fund for women's groups across our district and declares its commitment to making our area a safe place for everyone and acknowledges that women should feel safe in in public places everywhere.

Councillor Owen confirmed she was happy to accept this additional amendment.

Councillors Lewis, Andrews, Brown and Clarke spoke in support of the combined Motion.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Owen, seconded by Councillor Hanna, it was unanimously agreed:-

“This Council recognises women's concerns across the UK and ROI after the disappearance and subsequent murder of Sarah Everard. It has placed a spotlight on the safety of women and girls. This Council is to:-

- **Request the Northern Ireland Assembly initiate a Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) strategy.**
- **Endorse and promote the Women's Aid petition calling for a VAWG strategy to be implemented.**
- **To form a task force to develop a publicity campaign promoting safety apps and engaging with the PSNI, Women's Aid and Soroptimists Great Britain and Ireland.**
- **Ask other Councils to do the same.**

- We will write to the Minister for Justice begins work on developing a Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, as a matter of urgency.
- In addition, this Council agrees to consider developing a financial support fund for women's groups across our district and declares its commitment to making our area a safe place for everyone and acknowledges that women should feel safe in in public places everywhere.

C/089/2021

NOTICE OF MOTION – CONDEMNATION OF THE GENOCIDE AGAINST UIGHUR AND KAZAKH MUSLIMS IN CHINA

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

“This Council condemns the genocide against Uighur and Kazakh Muslims in China, up to one million of whom have been detained in re-education camps in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region; expresses solidarity with the Uighur and Kazakh people and the many others living in China who face the violation of their basic human rights every day; abhors the decision by the Member of Parliament for South Down to express solidarity with the regime responsible for these crimes; and resolves to write formally to the Chinese Consul General to express our horror and disgust at the treatment of these minorities”.

Councillor Savage seconded the Motion.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor McAteer said the Motion evolved from recent incidents and news coming out of China regarding the situation around the Uighur and Kazakh ethnic minorities in the Xinjian Region. He said these people were being subjected to human rights abuse which had extended to the internment of at least 1m people who were being held in over 380 camps where they were supposedly being re-educated. He said this re-education was aimed at eradicating the religion, language and culture and there was also physical and psychological abuse of detainees, including torture and forced labour. He referred to the abuses of children and women.

Councillor McAteer said the growing relationship with China was valued and welcomed as was the move to a more open society there but this behaviour was a retrograde step which could not be ignored or compromised on.

Councillor Hanna spoke of the DUP's support for the Motion.
Councillors Taylor, McMurray and Lewis also spoke on the Motion.

Councillors Mason, O'Muirí and Clarke spoke on Sinn Fein's stance against human rights abuses and said there was no doubt that this was also the referred to MP's stance. They said the Motion simply did not reflect the tweet that the proposer of the Motion was making reference to and said the reference to solidarity was in line with the ending of absolute poverty and the MPs views on tackling health inequalities.

Councillor Mason said she felt the Motion was very disingenuous and the scoring of political points was not what the Chamber should be used for and therefore Sinn Fein could not support the Motion as it currently stood.

Councillor O'Muirí proposed an amendment to the Motion, seconded by Councillor Clarke, as follows:-

“This Council condemns the genocide against Uighur and Kazakh Muslims in China, up to one million of whom have been detained in re-education camps in the Xinjiang

Uighur Autonomous Region; expresses solidarity with the Uighur and Kazakh people and the many others living in China who face the violation of their basic human rights every day and resolves to write formally to the Chinese Consul General to express our horror and disgust at the treatment of these minorities”.

Councillor McAteer said he would not be happy to accept the amendment and as he said the MP for South Down had every opportunity to correct his tweet and he did not do so.

The Chair said that as the proposer of the Motion was not accepting the amendment, under Standing Orders, she would put the original Motion to a vote.

The Motion was put to a vote and voting was as follows:-

FOR: 13
AGAINST: 14
ABSTENTIONS: 2

The Motion was declared LOST.

The amendment was then put to a vote and voting was as follows:-

FOR: 27
AGAINST: 0
ABSTENTIONS: 2

The amendment was declared CARRIED.

Agreed: It was agreed “This Council condemns the genocide against Uighur and Kazakh Muslims in China, up to one million of whom have been detained in re-education camps in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region; expresses solidarity with the Uighur and Kazakh people and the many others living in China who face the violation of their basic human rights every day and resolves to write formally to the Chinese Consul General to express our horror and disgust at the treatment of these minorities”.

C/090/2021 NOTICE OF MOTION – GP COUNSELLING SERVICES

The following Notice of Motion came forward from Councillor Mason:-

“This Council recognises that the demand for Mental Health services has been rising considerably, even prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. It notes that there is currently a postcode lottery in operation for GP counselling services and that residents in this district are severely disadvantaged when accessing counselling services, compared to other areas.

This Council commits to:

- **Writing to the Minister for Health to ensure that the Mental Health Strategy commits to end the postcode lottery for access to in house GP counselling services.**
- **Lobbying the South Eastern and Southern health trust to ensure adequate resources are in place for GP surgeries to provide in house GP counselling services.**

- **Actively supporting the GP surgeries across our district to become fully operational providers of counselling services, providing quick and accessible support.**
- **Actively promote in house GP counselling services across our district.**

Councillor Finnegan seconded the Motion.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Mason said it was inspired by a recent meeting with a fantastic group of Campaigners from the PPR project running. The #123GP campaign was made up of people with direct experience of seeking mental health support, their families and carers, and those who had lost loved ones to suicide. They were campaigning for changes within and beyond mental health services, to ensure that anyone who was experiencing emotional distress, pain or trauma could access timely and appropriate support and help.

Councillor Mason said that having engaged with the #123GP Campaign in recent months, she was now working with Newry, Mourne & Down Council to actively pursue the Health Trusts to commission these urgent services for the local community. She said the Health and Social Care Board and the regional Health Trusts could be allowed to pass the buck when it came to the District's health and well-being.

Councillor Mason said there was little doubt that Covid-19 had exacerbated the existing mental health crisis in our society; however it could also present an opportunity to open up access via digital methods such as video calls especially in those surgeries where physical space was an obstacle. As we begin to ease out of the restrictions it was critical that the appropriate support is in place for both providers and those seeking help and it was essential to see dedicated regional and all-island plans as a matter of urgency.

In concluding Councillor Mason said this Council must play its part in ending this postcode lottery for counselling services currently operating here in South Down.

Councillors Andrews, Taylor, Owen and Gibbons spoke in support of the Motion.

At the request of Councillor Andrews, Councillor Mason agreed to include an amendment to also write to the NI Executive to put in place additional funding and resources to support these essential services for all who will need and avail of them.

Agreed:

It was unanimously agreed on the proposal of Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Finnegan, "This Council recognises that the demand for Mental Health services has been rising considerably, even prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. It notes that there is currently a postcode lottery in operation for GP counselling services and that residents in this district are severely disadvantaged when accessing counselling services, compared to other areas.

This Council commits to:

- **Writing to the Minister for Health and to the NI Executive to put in place additional funding and resources to support these essential services for all who will need and avail of them and to ensure that the Mental Health Strategy commits to end the postcode lottery for access to in house GP counselling services.**
- **Lobbying the South Eastern and Southern health trust to ensure adequate resources**

are in place for GP surgeries to provide in house GP counselling services.

- Actively supporting the GP surgeries across our district to become fully operational providers of counselling services, providing quick and accessible support.
- Actively promote in house GP counselling services across our district.

C/091/2021 NOTICE OF MOTION – DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH – COMMITMENT TO THE RETENTION AND EXPANSION OF DAISY HILL HOSPITAL, NEWRY AND TO DOWNE HOSPITAL, DOWNPATRICK

The following Notice of Motion came forward from Councillor Savage:-

“This Council calls on the Health Minister Robin Swann to reaffirm the Department of Health’s commitment to the retention and expansion of Daisy Hill Hospital in Newry and the retention and expansion of the Downe Hospital in Downpatrick. Council notes with concern media reports that there are plans to close half of the hospitals across the North within the next 10 years and calls for clarity from the Minister to allay the fears of residents of this district who have had to fight to retain vital services at our two cherished local hospitals. Council requests that the Council Chief Executive writes to the Health Minister seeking assurances from him that there are no plans to close or downgrade the Downe Hospital or Daisy Hill Hospital within the next 10 years or beyond and requests an urgent meeting with the Minister to discuss the future plans for our two local hospitals to seek guarantees that neither of our two local hospitals will be downgraded or closed as part of any future plans for the delivery of healthcare across the North.

Council also requests the Chief Executive to invite the Down Community Health Committee and Daisy Hill Pathfinder Group to meet full Council to discuss the challenges and threats to our local hospitals in a post pandemic environment.”

Councillor Curran seconded the Motion.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Savage said the Motion was self-explanatory and was seeking clarification from the Health Minister on rumours of his Department potentially hatching plans post-Covid to halve the number of hospitals across the North over the next decade. He said if the rumours were to be believed we could be looking at the scenario of having the 5 so called “Golden Hospitals” with the remaining hospitals including Daisy Hill and the Downe being potentially relegated to phone ahead urgent care centres.

Councillor Savage said there had been a review headed up by a Consultant at the Royal entitled “Review of Urgent and Emergency Care” and said it was imperative this report was published and consulted on.

Councillor Savage said if there were proposals to downgrade Daisy Hill and Downe hospitals then everyone needed to stand in solidarity and not allow this to happen.

Councillors Hanlon, Murphy and Hanna spoke in support of the Motion.

Councillor Taylor said the UUP would also support the Motion but said the necessary finance needed to be provided to the Department of Health and he asked if Councillor Savage would include this amendment in the Motion.

Councillor Savage advised he would be happy to include this amendment.

Agreed:

It was unanimously agreed on the proposal of Councillor Savage, seconded by Councillor Curran that “this Council calls on the Health Minister Robin Swann to reaffirm the Department of Health’s commitment to the retention and expansion of Daisy Hill Hospital in Newry and the retention and expansion of the Downe Hospital in Downpatrick. Council notes with concern media reports that there are plans to close half of the hospitals across the North within the next 10 years and calls for clarity from the Minister to allay the fears of residents of this district who have had to fight to retain vital services at our two cherished local hospitals.

Council requests that the Council Chief Executive writes to the Health Minister seeking assurances from him that there are no plans to close or downgrade the Downe Hospital or Daisy Hill Hospital within the next 10 years or beyond and requests an urgent meeting with the Minister to discuss the future plans for our two local hospitals to seek guarantees that neither of our two local hospitals will be downgraded or closed as part of any future plans for the delivery of healthcare across the North.

The Chief Executive also writes to the Executive requesting that the necessary funding is made available to the Health Minister to retain and enhance services at our local hospitals.

Council also requests the Chief Executive to invite the Down Community Health Committee and Daisy Hill Pathfinder Group to meet full Council to discuss the challenges and threats to our local hospitals in a post pandemic environment.

C/092/2021 NOTICE OF MOTION- MOTHER AND BABY HOMES

The following Notice of Motion came forward from Councillor Howell:-

"That this Council recognises the upset and distress that the destruction of records by the Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby homes has caused to women, their families and their representative groups; That this Council recognises that this issue is an all-island one and will affect survivors in the north who were sent to these homes; That this Council recognises that survivors have already waited far too long to access their records and calls on the Dublin Government's Minister for Children, Roderic O'Gorman, to publish without delay access to records legislation; That this Council calls on the Minister of Children to fully support Deputy Kathleen Funchion's Civil Registration (Amendment) Bill 2021 to ensure that all adopted people are given unconditional access to their birth certificates; That this Council also calls on the Executive's Minister for Health, Robin Swann, to do everything in his power, including legislate if necessary, to preserve and protect the records from the

institutions in the north and to make this documentation easily accessible for victims and survivors".

Councillor Magennis seconded the Motion.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Howell said that the Mother and Baby Homes & Magdalene Laundries Report was a sad and troubling insight into the suffering of thousands of women and their children.

She said the report was a difficult read, but an important step towards addressing the harm caused to survivors and the pain they have endured. It gave a sad and troubling insight into the lived experiences of the thousands of women and girls, and their now adult children. She said the harsh treatment of these women was cruel, unjust and inhumane. As a woman who was a young unmarried first-time mother, she said her heart broke for the women and girls who did no wrong, whose rights were ignored and whose children were so cruelly taken from their arms. For those children who never knew their mothers, who for too long had been kept in the dark. They were failed on every level and we could not allow them to be failed any longer.

Councillor Howell said the upset and distress caused to these women, their families and their representative groups on learning of this along with previous media leaks, disrespectful language and poor consultation had only compounded their grief and in many ways added further insult to the enormity of their pain and suffering

In conclusion Councillor Howell asked that this Council recognise that this issue was an all-island one and would affect survivors in the north who were sent to these homes and that this Council carry out the actions as outlined in the Motion.

Councillors McKeivitt, McMurray, Owen and Taylor spoke in support of the Motion.

Agreed:

It was unanimously agreed on the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Magennis, "that this Council recognises the upset and distress that the destruction of records by the Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby homes has caused to women, their families and their representative groups; That this Council recognises that this issue is an all-island one and will affect survivors in the north who were sent to these homes; That this Council recognises that survivors have already waited far too long to access their records and calls on the Dublin Government's Minister for Children, Roderic O'Gorman, to publish without delay access to records legislation; That this Council calls on the Minister of Children to fully support Deputy Kathleen Funchion's Civil Registration (Amendment) Bill 2021 to ensure that all adopted people are given unconditional access to their birth certificates; That this Council also calls on the Executive's Minister for Health, Robin Swann, to do everything in his power, including legislate if necessary, to preserve and protect the records from the institutions in the north and to make this documentation easily accessible for victims and survivors".

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL
RECORDED VOTE

DATE: 7 April 2021 VENUE: Hybrid MEETING: Council
SUBJECT OF VOTE: Councillor McAteer proposed the inclusion of a bathing facility within the current building for the business case and economic appraisal in future options. Councillor McKeivitt seconded the proposal.

COUNCILLOR	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
T Andrews	1			
P Brown			1	
R Burgess			2	
P Byrne	2			
C Casey		1		
W Clarke		2		
D Curran	3			
L Devlin	4			
S Doran				1
C Enright				2
A Finnegan		3		
H Gallagher				3
M Gibbons		4		
O Hanlon		5		
G Hanna	5			
V Harte		6		
R Howell		7		
M Larkin		8		
A Lewis			3	
O Magennis		9		
G Malone		10		
C Mason		11		
D McAteer	6			
L McEvoy				4
H McKee			4	
K McKeivitt	7			
A McMurray			5	
R Mulgrew		12		
D Murphy		13		
G O'Hare		14		
B Ó Muirí		15		
K Owen	8			
H Reilly		16		
M Ruane		17		
M Savage	9			
G Sharvin	10			
G Stokes	11			
D Taylor			6	
J Tinnelly		18		
J Trainor				5
B Walker				6
TOTALS	11	18	6	6

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL
RECORDED VOTE

DATE: 7 April 2021

VENUE: Hybrid

MEETING: Council

SUBJECT OF VOTE: Councillor Malone proposed the Newry Cathedral Parish representatives be invited to attend full Council Meeting. This was seconded by Councillor Brown

COUNCILLOR	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
T Andrews		1		
P Brown	1			
R Burgess			1	
P Byrne		2		
C Casey		3		
W Clarke		4		
D Curran		5		
L Devlin		6		
S Doran				1
C Enright	2			2
A Finnegan		7		
H Gallagher				3
M Gibbons	3			
O Hanlon		8		
G Hanna			2	
V Harte		9		
R Howell		10		
M Larkin		11		
A Lewis			3	
O Magennis		12		
G Malone	4			
C Mason		13		
D McAteer		14		4
L McEvoy				
H McKee				
K McKeivitt		15		
A McMurray	5			
R Mulgrew		16		
D Murphy		17		
G O'Hare		18		
B Ó Muirí		19		
K Owen			4	
H Reilly	6			
M Ruane		20		
M Savage		21		
G Sharvin			5	
G Stokes	7			
D Taylor			6	
J Tinnelly	8			
J Trainor				5
B Walker				6
TOTALS	8	21	6	6

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL
RECORDED VOTE

DATE: 7 April 2021 VENUE: Hybrid MEETING: Council

SUBJECT OF VOTE: To suspend Standing Order 16.1.1 for which a qualified majority vote was required. (80% of Members present and voting) to enable an emergency Notice of Motion to be heard

COUNCILLOR	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
T Andrews	1			
P Brown	2			
R Burgess				1
P Byrne	3			
C Casey				2
W Clarke		1		
D Curran	4			
L Devlin	5			
S Doran				3
C Enright				4
A Finnegan		2		
H Gallagher				5
M Gibbons		3		
O Hanlon		4		
G Hanna	6			
V Harte		5		
R Howell		6		
M Larkin		7		
A Lewis	7			
O Magennis		8		
G Malone				6
C Mason		9		
D McAteer	8			
L McEvoy				7
H McKee				8
K McKeivitt	9			
A McMurray	10			
R Mulgrew		10		
D Murphy		11		
G O'Hare		12		
B O Muirí		13		
K Owen	11			
H Reilly				9
M Ruane		14		
M Savage	12			
G Sharvin				10
G Stokes	13			
D Taylor	14			
J Tinnelly				11
J Trainor				12
B Walker				13
TOTALS	14	14	0	13