

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

NMD/C/

Minutes of Council Meeting held on Monday 7 June 2021 at 6.00pm via Hybrid in Downshire Chamber and Microsoft Teams

In the Chair: Councillor C Mason

In attendance:

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

(Officials)

Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
Mrs D Carville, Director of Corporate Services
Mr C Mallon, Director of Enterprise, Regeneration & Tourism
Mr J McBride, Director of Neighbourhood Services (Acting)
Mr F O'Connor, Head of Legal & Administration (Acting)
Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)
Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer
Mrs P McKeever, Democratic Services Officer

C/113/2021

APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

An apology was received from Councillor Savage.

The Chairperson referred to the recent identification of a small number of probable cases of the Delta variant of Covid 19 in Kilkeel. She said the Public Health Agency were currently in the area and testing centres and an operational base had been set up in Kilkeel over the weekend. She asked that it be put on record, her huge thanks to the volunteers who worked tirelessly to encourage residents to get tested which resulted in more than 1000 people being tested between Saturday and Sunday.

The Chairperson said she had been to the site and witnessed first-hand the professional operation the Council had facilitated, and she paid tribute to Mrs Ward for her leadership which had resulted in Council responding swiftly to the situation.

The Chairperson extended her best wishes to Mrs Sheila Keenan from Warrenpoint Road, Newry who would celebrate her 100th birthday tomorrow.

In acknowledging her new role as Chair of Council, Councillor Mason said one of her main themes would be mental health and well-being. She said that for the duration of her term each Council meeting would begin with a key theme relating to mental health and well-being. She said she would give a short overview of the theme of the month and then set the chamber a task relating to it. She said she hoped, given the importance of the topic, that Councillors would get on board and take part, using social media to post about carrying out their tasks to help raise awareness.

The Chairperson said the topic for this month would be for Members to focus on their own mental health and well-being. She said their role as Councillors carried a lot of stress, which had only been exacerbated during the past year.

The Chairperson asked Members that they each focused on their own thoughts and feelings and they take some time out each week to do one thing to look after their own mental health and well-being, whether it was spending time in nature, connecting with friends, getting active or even something as simple as reading their favourite book. She asked that they post it on social media, post why they were doing it, tag Newry Mourne & Down page and use the hashtag 'NMDMentalHealthMatters'.

The Chairperson reiterated that her door was always open if anyone wished to speak to her about any concerns they may have.

The Chairperson advised Members that as per the schedule of Committees, there would be no Committees in July, but there would be a Council Meeting.

Councillor Reilly said there was a lot of confusion around how to book a test in Kilkeel at the various sites and asked for clarification on the booking process. Mrs Ward advised that the mobile test unit located at Kilkeel Leisure Centre was available for booking on the online platform, however people who had been directly contacted by the PHA did not need an appointment and could go directly to the other sites in Kilkeel.

C/114/2021 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Owen declared an interest in Item No. 19 – Notice of Motion – Recognition of NHS Staff.

C/115/2021 ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 4 MAY 2021

Read: Action sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 4 May 2021 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Action Sheet from Council Meeting held on 4 May 2021 was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Magennis.

Councillor Reilly asked if a response had been received from DfI Roads regarding the underspend in the District on roads maintenance.

Mrs Ward advised that all responses were tabled at Council Meetings, however a review of the responses would be undertaken and an update would be provided to Councillor Reilly.

COUNCIL MINUTES FOR ADOPTION AND SIGNING

C/116/2021 MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 4 MAY 2021

Read: Minutes of Council Meeting held on 4 May 2021 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 4 May 2021 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Stokes, seconded by Councillor Andrews.**

C/117/2021 MINUTES OF SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 24 MAY 2021

Read: Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 24 May 2021 (copy circulated).

Councillor McMurray asked how the setting up of the conference as agreed at the meeting would be progressed.

Mrs Ward advised him that discussions had already taken place regarding this and it would be tabled at a future SPR Committee Meeting, possibly in August.

Agreed: **The Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on 24 May 2021 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor McMurray, seconded by Councillor O'Hare.**

COMMITTEE MINUTES FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION

C/118/2021 MINUTES OF AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 22 APRIL 2021

Read: Minutes of Audit Committee Meeting held on 22 April 2021 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting held on 22 April 2021 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Casey.**

C/119/2021 MINUTES OF ENTERPRISE, REGENERATION AND TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 10 MAY 2021

Read: Minutes of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 10 May 2021 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of the Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 10 May 2021 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Curran.**

C/120/2021

**MINUTES OF STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 13 MAY 2021**

Read: Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 13 May 2021 (copy circulated).

SPR/068/2021 *Action Sheet arising from Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 15 April 2021*

Councillor Stokes said that Councillor Savage, in his absence, had asked him to clarify what he had requested at the Committee Meeting; he was eager to protect the various projects within the Newry City Regeneration particularly in relation to Newry Civic Centre and that if Plan A was not feasible, a Plan B should be developed.

Councillor Stokes stated that Newry Councillors had met with the parish last week and they were not supportive, and it was important to see these projects through to fruition and protect them, therefore a plan B would need to be developed.

Mrs Ward advised that the public consultation had just concluded, and this issue could be raised via the Programme Board.

Agreed: The Minutes of the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 13 May 2021, were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Magennis.

C/121/2021

**MINUTES OF ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 MAY 2021**

Read: Minutes of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 17 May 2021 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 17 May 2021 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor McKeivitt, seconded by Councillor Andrews.

C/122/2021

**MINUTES OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON 19 MAY 2021**

Read: Minutes of Neighbourhood Services Committee Meeting held on 19 May 2021 (copy circulated).

NS/083/2021: *Request to Lease Units attached to Public Toilets*

Councillor Andrews asked if officers could look at the points raised in relation to Downs Road and consider a short terms lease if the timescale wasn't realistic in delivery of Changing Places for those buildings for the remaining term of Council.

In response, Mr McBride said he would be happy to look at this, however, he pointed out the recommendation had been that no action

be taken.

NS/084/2021: *Enforcement Improvement Plan*

Councillor O'Hanlon referred to the bird proof litter bins for coastal areas and asked that she be included in any updates relating to this.

Agreed: **The Minutes of the Neighbourhood Services Committee Meeting held on 19 May 2021 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Curran, seconded by Councillor Finnegan.**

PLANNING

C/123/2021

PLANNING MINUTES

Read: Extract from Minutes of Planning Committee Meetings held on 5 May 2021.

Noted: **The extracts from the Planning Committee Minutes of Meetings held on 5 May 2021 were noted on the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Murphy.**

FOR NOTING

C/124/2020

NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING COUNCIL MINUTES APRIL 2021

Read: Northern Ireland Housing Council Minutes dated 15 April 2021. (Copy circulated)

Agreed: **The Northern Ireland Housing Council Minutes dated 15 April 2021 were noted on the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Hanlon.**

C/125/2021

NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING COUNCIL BULLETIN – MAY 2021

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

Agreed: **The Northern Ireland Housing Council Bulletin was noted on the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Hanlon.**

C/126/2020

RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM ARDS & NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL RE: NOM C/088/2021 - VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Read: Correspondence dated 10 May 2021 received from Ards & North Down Borough Council re NOM C/088/2021 – Violence against Women and Girls (Copy circulated)

Agreed: **The correspondence was noted on the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Hanlon.**

C/127/2021

**RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM MINISTER OF HEALTH RE:
PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL COVID TESTING FACILITIES**

Read: Correspondence dated 11 May 2021 from the Minister of Health re: Provision of Additional Covid Testing Facilities. (Copy circulated)

Agreed: **The correspondence was noted on the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Hanlon.**

C/128/2021

**RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES
RE: LGBT COMMUNITY**

Read: Correspondence dated 17 May 2021 from the Department of Communities re: LGBT Community.

Councillor Byrne asked that once the consultation had opened, discussions could take place within the Good Relations Forum, so they could feed into the initial response before it came back to Committee.

Agreed: **Once the consultation opened, discussions to take place at Good Relations Forum to allow an opportunity for Members to feedback to the initial response.**

The correspondence was noted on the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Hanlon.

C/129/2021

**CORRESPONDENCE FROM ARDS & NORTH DOWN BOROUGH
COUNCIL RE: N. IRELAND CENTENARY**

Read: Correspondence dated 24 May 2020 from Ards & North Down Borough Council re: N. Ireland Centenary.

Councillor Taylor asked that this correspondence be discussed at the Good Relations Forum. Mrs Ward said this item would go forward for discussion at the Good Relations Forum in July.

Agreed: **This correspondence to go forward for discussion at the Good Relations Forum in July 2021.**

The correspondence was noted on the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Hanlon.

C/130/2021

**RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM MINISTER OF JUSTICE RE. NOM
C/112/2021**

Read: Correspondence dated 27 May 2021 from the Minister of Justice re: NOM C/112/2021 re: Accessing Healthcare Services.

Agreed: The correspondence was noted on the proposal of Councillor O'Hare, seconded by Councillor Hanlon.

NOTICES OF MOTION

C/131/2021

NOTICE OF MOTION – RECOGNITION OF NHS STAFF

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

“This Council should recognise NHS staff for their service during the Covid-19 pandemic, with a gesture of discounted use of council facilities such as gyms, swimming pools, tennis courts and leisure centres for a period of one year. I would suggest a minimum of at least a 50% discount on charges, possibly free of charge completely.”

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Walker.

Agreed: The Motion was referred to the Active and Healthy Communities Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6

C/132/2021

NOTICE OF MOTION – HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY, ISRAEL/PALESTINE CONFLICT

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

“I am calling on Newry Mourne and District Council to request the United Nations to immediately implement a humanitarian strategy to alleviate the Human Right abuses in the Israel/ Palestine conflict. The large numbers of children and youth seriously impacted by this sad situation is unacceptable. There is an urgent need for a unified International agreement to offer senior arbitration to resolve this situation before it gets out of control and leads to another full-scale war and prevent further atrocities”.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Brown.

Councillor Murphy thanked Councillor Malone for bringing the motion to Council and spoke at length about the issue and his experience following a visit to the West Bank as part of a humanitarian group in 2004 where he witnessed firsthand the human impact of Israeli aggression on the Palestinian people living occupied territories. He added the indiscriminate targeting of civilians and infrastructure and continued acquiring of territory by force undermined peace and was a violation of international law and a breach of UN Security Council Resolutions. Councillor Murphy stated the international community and Irish Government had a duty to help end the crisis, address poverty, inequality and injustice. He referred to a motion tabled and passed in the Oireachtas on 26 May 2021 condemning the de facto annexation of the Palestinian land by Israeli authorities.

Councillor Murphy highlighted the need for more action by Governments and various groups and the next stage was to make the purchasing of goods and services from Israeli settlements illegal.

Councillor Murphy proposed the following amendment to the motion to read as follows:

“I am calling on Newry Mourne and District Council to request the United Nations to immediately implement a humanitarian strategy to alleviate the Human Right abuses in the Israel/ Palestine conflict. The large numbers of children and youth seriously impacted by this sad situation is unacceptable. Call on the Taoiseach, Micheál *Martin* and the Tánaiste, Leo Varadkar to progress the Occupied Territories Bill through its stages in the Oireachtas and make it law”.

Councillor Enright seconded Councillor Murphy’s amendment.

Councillor Malone agreed to accept Councillor Murphy’s amendment.

Councillor Reilly spoke against the motion commenting it was absurd that Newry, Mourne and Down District should concern itself with peace in the Middle East when there were matters unresolved in the District and made comments on hypocrisy of Sinn Fein.

Councillor McMurray stated whilst he welcomed the original motion, he would be unable to support the amendment to the motion without knowledge of the Bill and that the Alliance Party supported the two-state solution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

Councillor Taylor commented the amendment took away from the impartiality of the motion and therefore could not support the amended motion.

Councillor Walker also stated he would not be supporting the amended motion.

Councillor Byrne stated he felt the wording of the original motion went far enough and that Newry, Mourne and Down District Council should be condemning and putting out its position on the matter.

Councillor Ó Muirí advised he was fully supportive of the amendment to the motion and was proud to represent a party that stood up to Human Rights abuses, internationally and at home. He stated the amended motion called on Council to put out a statement on where it stood on the issue.

Councillor Enright spoke at length on the amendment and the need to focus on international law and how he would like to see Council have discussions on similar action to apartheid and boycott on Israeli products produced on annexed land.

Councillor Tinnelly spoke at length about the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement which works to end international support for Israel's oppression of Palestinians and pressure Israel to comply with international law. Councillor Tinnelly wished to put forward a further amendment.

Councillor Byrne proposed a recess to consider Councillor Murphy’s amended motion. This was seconded by Councillor Gallagher.

The meeting did then recess at 18.55pm.
The meeting did then resume at 19.06pm.

Councillor Byrne asked that Councillor Murphy retract the wording of his amendment relating to the Occupied Territories Bill.

Councillor Murphy's amended motion, seconded by Councillor Enright was put to a vote and voting was as follows:-

FOR: 19
AGAINST: 7
ABSTENTIONS: 10

The Motion was declared CARRIED.

Councillor Tinnelly proposed a further amendment, seconded by Councillor Enright to read as follows:

"I am calling on Newry Mourne and District Council to request the United Nations to immediately implement a humanitarian strategy to alleviate the Human Right abuses in the Israel/ Palestine conflict. The large numbers of children and youth seriously impacted by this sad situation is unacceptable. Newry Mourne & Down District Council fully supports the Boycotts, Divestment & Sanctions movement which continues to put pressure on the Israeli Government to cease their unacceptable treatment of the people of Palestine. Call on the Taoiseach, Micheál Martin and the Tánaiste, Leo Varadkar to progress the Occupied Territories Bill through its stages in the Oireachtas and make it law".

Councillor Tinnelly's amendment was accepted by Councillor Malone and was put to a vote and the voting was as follows:

FOR: 27
AGAINST: 7
ABSTENTIONS: 2

The Motion was declared CARRIED.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Tinnelly, seconded by Councillor Enright, that Newry Mourne and District Council request the United Nations to immediately implement a humanitarian strategy to alleviate the Human Right abuses in the Israel/ Palestine conflict. The large numbers of children and youth seriously impacted by this sad situation is unacceptable. Newry Mourne & Down District Council fully supports the Boycotts, Divestment & Sanctions movement which continues to put pressure on the Israeli Government to cease their unacceptable treatment of the people of Palestine. Call on the Taoiseach, Micheál Martin and the Tánaiste, Leo Varadkar to progress the Occupied Territories Bill through its stages in the Oireachtas and make it law.

Due to the current legislative uncertainty around remote meetings and the restrictions on indoor gatherings, the Chief Executive also agrees to exercise her delegated authority under Standing Orders to implement the resolution of the Committee as ratified by Council, subject to any conflict of interest or legal advice that the decision is unlawful.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 7.18pm

For confirmation at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 5 July 2021.

Signed:

Chairperson

Chief Executive