

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

NMD/C/

Minutes of Council Meeting held on Monday 2 October 2023 at 6.00pm in Downshire Chamber

In the Chair: Councillor V Harte

In attendance in Chamber:

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor C Bowsie
Councillor J Brennan	Councillor P Campbell
Councillor W Clarke	Councillor L Devlin
Councillor C Enright	Councillor D Finn
Councillor A Finnegan	Councillor C Galbraith
Councillor O Hanlon	Councillor G Hanna
Councillor J Jackson	Councillor G Kearns
Councillor T Kelly	Councillor C King
Councillor M Larkin	Councillor D Lee-Surginor
Councillor A Lewis	Councillor O Magennis
Councillor A Mathers	Councillor D McAteer
Councillor A McMurray	Councillor S O'Hare
Councillor D Murphy	Councillor K Murphy
Councillor S Murphy	Councillor A Quinn
Councillor H Reilly	Councillor M Rice
Councillor M Ruane	Councillor M Savage
Councillor G Sharvin	Councillor D Taylor
Councillor J Truesdale	

In attendance via Teams:

Councillor P Byrne	Councillor M Gibbons
Councillor R Howell	Councillor L McEvoy
Councillor J Tinnelly	

**Officials in attendance
in Chamber:**

Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive
Mr A Cassells, Director of Sustainability and
Environment
Mr C Mallon, Director of Economy, Regeneration and
Tourism
Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)
Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer

C/181/2023 APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Mrs J Kelly, Director of Corporate Services.

The Chairperson congratulated all recipients of the Chairperson's Civic Awards, a fantastic night that celebrated ordinary people who did extraordinary things across the District. She spoke of a brilliant night which would not have been made possible without the fantastic work done by Sheila Kieran, Sarah Taggart, Patricia Murtagh and others and thanked all involved.

C/182/2023 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Brennan and Hanna declared an interest in item 17 on the agenda: Notice of Motion, Foul Smell from Warrenpoint Port.

C/183/2023 ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 4 SEPTEMBER 2023

Read: Action sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 4 September 2023 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Action Sheet from Council Meeting held on 4 September 2023 was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Andrews.

C/184/2023 COUNCIL MINUTES FOR ADOPTION AND SIGNING OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 4 SEPTEMBER 2023

Read: Minutes of Council Meeting held on 4 September 2023 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 4 September 2023 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor Andrews.

C/185/2023 **SPECIAL COUNCIL MINUTES FOR ADOPTION AND SIGNING OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 29 AUGUST 2023**

Read: Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 29 August 2023 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on 29 August 2023 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Magennis.**

COMMITTEE MINUTES FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION

C/186/2023 **MINUTES OF ENTERPRISE, REGENERATION AND TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 SEPTEMBER 2023**

Read: Minutes of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 11 September 2023 (copy circulated).

Agreed: **The Minutes of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 11 September 2023 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Galbraith.**

C/187/2023 **MINUTES OF STRATEGY POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2023**

Read: Minutes of Strategy Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 14 September 2023 (copy circulated).

SPR/137/2023: Mournes Gateway Project

In response to Councillor McMurray, Mr Mallon confirmed an agenda item, alternative proposals and a draft Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy would be presented to the Project Board at a meeting to be held on Friday 6 October 2023.

Agreed: **The Minutes of Strategy Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 14 September 2023 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor McEvoy, seconded by Councillor Hanlon.**

C/188/2023

**MINUTES OF ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 SEPTEMBER 2023**

Read: Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 18 September 2023 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 18 September 2023 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Galbraith, seconded by Councillor Magennis.

C/189/2023

**MINUTES OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2023**

Read: Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 19 September 2023 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of Sustainability and Environment Committee Meeting held on 19 September 2023 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Kearns, seconded by Councillor McEvoy.

C/190/2023

**MINUTES OF AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21
SEPTEMBER 2023**

Read: Minutes of Audit Committee Meeting held on 21 September 2023 (copy circulated).

Agreed: The Minutes of Audit Committee Meeting held on 21 September 2023 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Bowsie.

C/191/2023

PLANNING SECTION

There were no issues arising.

CORRESPONDENCE

C/192/2023 RESPONSE FROM DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RE: NOTICE OF MOTION C/157/2023 – BACK TO SCHOOL COSTS

Read: Correspondence from the Department of Education regarding Back to School Costs dated 11 September 2023. (Copy circulated)

Councillor McEvoy welcomed the response received from the Department of Education and that principals and Chairs of Board of Governors of all schools had been written to urging them to consider cost mitigations for parents. She made reference to consideration being given to primary legislation to enable statutory guidance with emphasis on affordability, however it was disappointing that it would not be progressed without an Executive.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor McEvoy, seconded by Councillor Truesdale to note response from the Department of Education regarding Notice of Motion C/157/2023, Back to School Costs.

C/193/2023 NOTICE OF MOTION – MENOPAUSE

The following motion was received from Councillor Hanlon:

***"This Council commends the efforts of World Menopause Day on 18th October for raising awareness of the challenges faced by menopausal women;
Notes the limited provision of NHS menopause services, and the difficulty facing women accessing them across the north;
Further notes that women from rural or border communities often face greater challenges in accessing GP services or reliable public transport due to geographical isolation and therefore their experience of menopause can be particularly acute;
Understands that perimenopausal and menopausal women are the fastest growing demographic in the workforce;
Commends the introduction last year of the Civil Service Menopause Policy which aims to ensure those experiencing menopause in the civil service workforce are supported to cope with its challenges and impacts Further commends the education campaign by Newry Mourne & Down District Council to educate and inform staff of these issues;
Welcomes the Let's Talk Menopause initiative which has been rolled out by this Council Health and Well-being group;
And calls on Council to continue its good work in relation to menopause awareness and to continue to identify new initiatives in line with best practice elsewhere in order to support perimenopausal and menopausal women."***

The motion was seconded by Councillor K Murphy.

In presenting the motion, Councillor Hanlon stated there needed to be greater awareness of the challenges facing women experiencing menopause, particularly in the workplace, to ensure they were supported and that the stigma and lack of awareness of the challenges faced by women ended.

She spoke of how menopause affected all women at some point in their lives and how they should get the support they were entitled to and that men needed to be brought into the conversation and raise awareness of what female colleagues may be going through.

Councillor Hanlon spoke of how women during menopause could find themselves physically, psychologically and emotionally drained making it harder for them to meet the demands of the workplace. She added for too long, women and young girls had experienced barriers to receiving the level of healthcare they deserved, particularly in rural areas like South Down where services were being stripped away.

Members were advised a dedicated health strategy for women and girls was needed to improve access to health care and ensure a system that listened and boosted health outcomes. There needed to be a focus on understanding the changing healthcare needs of women throughout their lifetime.

Councillor Hanlon requested that Council write to the Permanent Secretary for Department of Health asking if there were plans for a dedicated women's health strategy and hope to see it as a priority for the Department.

Councillors Devlin, Truesdale, Taylor, Hanna and Reilly each took in turn to speak in support of the motion.

The motion was unanimously agreed.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, that this Council commends the efforts of World Menopause Day on 18th October for raising awareness of the challenges faced by menopausal women;**
Notes the limited provision of NHS menopause services, and the difficulty facing women accessing them across the north;
Further notes that women from rural or border communities often face greater challenges in accessing GP services or reliable public transport due to geographical isolation and therefore their experience of menopause can be particularly acute;
Understands that perimenopausal and menopausal women are the fastest growing demographic in the workforce;
Commends the introduction last year of the Civil Service Menopause Policy which aims to ensure those experiencing menopause in the civil service workforce are supported to

cope with its challenges and impacts Further commends the education campaign by Newry Mourne & Down District Council to educate and inform staff of these issues; Welcomes the Let's Talk Menopause initiative which has been rolled out by this Council Health and Well-being group; And calls on Council to continue its good work in relation to menopause awareness and to continue to identify new initiatives in line with best practice elsewhere in order to support perimenopausal and menopausal women. It was agreed Council write to the Permanent Secretary for Department of Health asking if there were plans for a dedicated women's health strategy and hope to see it as a priority for the Department.

Due to technical difficulties it was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Andrews to have a recess at this point of the meeting, 18.33pm – 18.47pm.

C/194/2023 NOTICE OF MOTION – ANNUAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE CALL FOR PROVISION OF LIFE SAVING EQUIPMENT

The following motion was received from Councillor Sharvin:

"Newry, Mourne and Down Council is fully committed to supporting our sports clubs and community groups in providing lifesaving equipment such as defibrillators and access to CPR training courses. This Council will establish an annual financial assistance call which can be used for purchasing a defibrillator, securing CPR training or replacing AED pads".

The motion was seconded by Councillor Taylor.

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

C/195/2023

**NOTICE OF MOTION – EDUCATION AUTHORITY,
TRANSPORT AND AVAILABILITY OF PLACES FOR
CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS**

The following motion was received from Councillor Galbraith:

"This Council is fully supportive of children and young people having access to an education they are entitled to.

This Council will seek answers from the Education Authority in relation to the yearly confusion, distress and upset caused as a result of the failure to provide transport on time to those who are entitled to it. Furthermore the Council notes with concern and seeks assurance from the Education Authority in relation to the lack of places available to those children with additional needs".

The motion was seconded by Councillor Andrews.

In presenting the motion, Councillor Galbraith voiced concern at how again this year, the Education Authority had warned about a significant shortfall in places for pupils in special schools across Northern Ireland and this had come after an Education Authority Committee had been told there was a need for more than 850 additional places in special schools last year.

Councillor Galbraith said it was appalling that very significant and life-defining decisions for vulnerable children were being made on the criteria of cost rather than in accordance with need. He spoke of how capacity meetings between the Education Authority and special schools were completed for the September 2023 intake and showed there would be a significant shortfall in placements available in our special schools.

Members were advised that last year almost 300 pupils were left without school transport after taxis that had been tendered by the Education Authority did not show up. Over 3500 pupils, most of which have special needs, were brought to and from school by Education Authority provided taxis. The Education Authority claimed last year that securing taxis for school transport had become increasingly difficult. Councillor Galbraith questioned that with the Education Authority knowing this information from this time last year, and previous years, why appropriate plans were not in place before September 2023.

Members were asked to fully support children and young people having access to transport and an education they were entitled to.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Andrews spoke of concerns around the stress and worry that goes along with what was happening on a yearly basis and assurances needed to be sought from the Education Authority to address the lack of places available to those that needed it the most.

In speaking in support of the motion, Councillor Truesdale said none of this was a surprise to her and spoke of her experience as a teacher and Education Authority officer for over 20 years in what she referred to as 'fringe education, special needs,

children with additional needs, children who came to NI from other countries and travellers. The mess parents and children were faced with year in, year out and the reason for it was very simple, these fringe areas were the first to be cut and were always the collateral damage.

Councillor Truesdale said the numbers of pupils without a school place and or suitable transport was a failure of area planning on the part of the Department of Education and the Education Authority as well as a lack of Minister at the helm.

Councillor Taylor spoke in support of the motion and the importance of getting it addressed in an appropriate and swift way as this was happening year on year, and that hopefully an Executive would be up and running again with a Minister in place take leadership on an issue such as this.

In supporting the motion, Councillor Hanlon said it was important to note some of the problems were caused by a lot of children not getting stated on time and that the Education Authority were dealing with a backlog of requests for transport and commended Education Authority staff who were dealing with extreme pressures.

Councillor Hanlon asked that an addition to the motion be accepted so that Council ask how the Education Authority were going to address the backlog of educational statements after the yearly annual review.

Councillor Galbraith agreed to accept Councillor Hanlon's amendment.

Councillor Bowsie voiced support for the motion and referred to supply issues with transport and how the Education Authority had a lot of complexities to face.

Councillor Galbraith thanked Members for their support of the motion.

The motion was unanimously agreed.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Galbraith, seconded by Councillor Andrews that Council fully supportive of children and young people having access to an education they are entitled to. This Council will seek answers from the Education Authority in relation to the yearly confusion, distress and upset caused as a result of the failure to provide transport on time to those who are entitled to it. Furthermore the Council notes with concern and seeks assurance from the Education Authority in relation to the lack of places available to those children with additional needs.**

It was also agreed that Council ask how the Education Authority were going to address the backlog of educational statements after the yearly annual review.

C/196/2023

NOTICE OF MOTION – CLEAN INDOOR AIR

The following motion was received from Councillor Trusdale:

"Having learned the importance of ventilation and clean indoor air for health and productivity during Covid; and seeking to take all reasonable steps to enable use of all Council facilities by all citizens, including the most vulnerable and so further enable inclusion.

By seeking to care for the health and wellbeing of Council employees, this Council will commit to signing and implementing 'The COVID Safety Pledge': to report on steps already taken to prioritise clean indoor air in all council premises within the district starting with Downshire and Monaghan Row sites.

To report on what further or additional steps could be taken to improve indoor air quality and information about indoor air quality for employees and service users, and to develop and promote advice that can be followed to provide clean indoor air at events supported by NMDDC "

The motion was seconded by Councillor McMurray.

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

Councillors Brennan and Hanna left the meeting at this point having declared an interest – 7.02pm.

C/197/2023

NOTICE OF MOTION – FOUL SMELL FROM WARRENPOINT PORT

The following motion was received from Councillor Gibbons:

"This Council is concerned about the ongoing foul smell emanating from Warrenpoint Port, the impact this is having on resident's quality of life and the potential risk it poses to public health.

Whilst we accept that steps are being taken to address the smell, many questions and concerns still remain about how it came about and how much longer it will last. Council will write formally to Warrenpoint Port expressing these concerns and seeking clarity on what will be done to ensure this issue is swiftly resolved and will not happen again. We also call on Council's Environmental Health Department to work with Warrenpoint Port and other relevant stakeholders including the NIEA to compile a comprehensive public report that will be brought back to Council-on how this happened and how it will be resolved so it does not happen again".

The motion was seconded by Councillor Tinnelly.

Councillor Tinnelly commented that the motion had followed a very well attended public meeting in Warrenpoint and that residents did not feel they were getting full transparency from the Warrenpoint Harbour Authority as a corporate body and that they did not feel listened to and their concerns were not being addressed.

Councillors Kelly, McAteer, Ruane and Taylor each spoke at length in support of the motion on behalf of their parties.

Councillor Ruane put forward an amendment to Councillor Gibbon's Motion for consideration as follows:

"That, furthermore, Council will also invite senior officials from Warrenpoint Harbour Authority, Re-Gen Council's Environmental Health Department and the NIEA to present to a Special Council meeting on this ongoing situation. We also call on NIEA, as the licencing authority to compile a comprehensive public report that will be brought back to Council on this matter".

Councillor Gibbons agreed to accept Councillor Ruane's amendment.

The motion was unanimously agreed.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Gibbons, seconded by Councillor Tinnelly that this Council is concerned about the ongoing foul smell emanating from Warrenpoint Port, the impact this is having on resident's quality of life and the potential risk it poses to public health.**

Whilst we accept that steps are being taken to address the smell, many questions and concerns still remain about how it came about and how much longer it will last. Council will write formally to Warrenpoint Port expressing these concerns and seeking clarity on what will be done to ensure this issue is swiftly resolved and will not happen again. We also call on Council's Environmental Health Department to work with Warrenpoint Port and other relevant stakeholders including the NIEA to compile a comprehensive public report that will be brought back to Council-on how this happened and how it will be resolved so it does not happen again.

That, furthermore, Council will also invite senior officials from Warrenpoint Harbour Authority, Re-Gen Council's Environmental Health Department and the NIEA to present to a Special Council meeting on this ongoing situation. We also call on NIEA, as the licencing authority to compile a comprehensive public report that will be brought back to Council on this matter".

Councillors Brennan and Hanna rejoined the meeting at this point – 7.13pm.

C/198/2023

NOTICE OF MOTION – LEID WEEK

The following motion was received from Councillor Lewis:

"This Council recognises and supports the Ulster Scots Community of Newry Mourne and Down. The Ulster-Scots Language is widely used by everyone from all sections of the community in the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area. For a number of years now, as part of the celebration and promotion of the Ulster-Scots Leid or Language, a special week has been set aside in the calendar where events and activities take place to bring the Language to the people. With events taking place between 20 – 24 November.

Leid Week also aims to help dispel some of the myths about the Ulster-Scots language - that it is not the preserve of one community or another but is spoken by people from all diverse backgrounds and rather than being a 'recently made up' language, it has been around for centuries. For many years, the language has suffered from neglect by public services and Leid Week is an opportunity for councils across NI, community organisations and corporate body/statutory agencies, schools, and youth organisations etc to help improve better understanding of the language and its shared history and heritage. Across NI, many councils are now directly organising events or activities to celebrate Leid Week and are working with organisations to deliver activities/events as part of the Leid Week celebrations. Indeed, Derry City and Strabane District Council this year has opened a funding call for community groups to apply to facilitate Leid Week events.

Newry Mourne and Down Council will recognise and commit resources to Leid week for the benefit and support of Ulster Scots Groups across our district. Council commit to lead on a community themed event for this year's celebrations."

The motion was seconded by Councillor Bowsie.

Agreed: The Motion was referred to Equality and Good Relations in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.

C/199/2023

NOTICE OF MOTION – REVIEW OF WASTE COLLETION SERVICE

The following motion was received from Councillor Jackson:

"This Council commits to undertake a full cost benefit analysis of the waste collection service for the entire District, including benchmarking total cost of service delivery against private sector providers. This review should include analysis of the volume of missed bins and broken bins reported both across the entire District and by DEA. This Council is committed to delivering basic Council services efficiently and cost effectively. Every ratepayer should be delivered a quality service".

The motion was seconded by Councillor Hanna.

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

C/200/2023 NOTICE OF MOTION – COST OF LIVING

The following motion was received from Councillor K Murphy:

"That this Council notes with concern that the ongoing cost of living crisis and British Government imposed cuts is exacerbating poverty and financial pain on people in the community; believes that targeting objective need is fundamental to tackling poverty and inequality; Further believes what is required is a living wage economy and a fair social security system that targets resources where they are most needed and ensures people have a minimum essential standard of living; Recognises that the current social security system, particularly Universal Credit, is not fit for purpose, not properly funded and is failing people; Further recognises that those who rely on Universal Credit are incredibly vulnerable to changing circumstances often beyond their control, such as loss of employment, illness, increased caring responsibilities; and family breakdown; Endorses the Guarantee our Essentials campaign which seeks to ensure everyone can afford the essentials in hard times; And calls on the British Government to introduce an Essentials Guarantee which would ensure, at a minimum, Universal Credit/legacy benefits, would protect people from going without essentials."

The motion was seconded by Councillor Mathers.

In presenting the motion Councillor K Murphy commended the work of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Trussell Trust in leading the Guarantee our Essentials Campaign.

Members were advised the Campaign aimed to embed within the social security system the principle that as a minimum the standard allowance of universal credit/ personal allowance of legacy benefits, should protect people from going without essentials.

Councillor K Murphy stated that whilst the Social Security System was supposed to act as a safety net for when people lost their jobs, found themselves unable to work or when their income was too low, the reality was that years of Tory austerity, cuts and freezes to benefits, wages were not keeping pace with inflation and along with the soaring price of food, fuel, energy and housing costs many people were left unable to meet their most basic needs. She added that whilst the cost of living crisis had stretched most people's household finances there could be no doubt that those who had the least had been disproportionately impacted.

Councillor K Murphy spoke at length about the impact this had on people's lives and how a fair social security system that ensured, as a minimum, that essential needs were met.

Members were advised that by endorsing the Guarantee our Essentials Campaign Council would be sending a very positive message to those who were struggling in our communities.

Councillors Lee-Surginor, Hanna and Taylor voiced support for the motion behalf of their party's.

In supporting the motion, Councillor Finn spoke of how as winter approached issues had the potential to be exacerbated given the increased pressures on families to ensure that their homes were heated and that it was worrying to note the latest Consumer Council figures showed that Newry Mourne and Down had the highest costing for home heating oil across the North.

Councillor Finn asked that an amendment to the motion be considered to note this and therefore to strengthen the motion and Councils support to all of our residents during the cost of living crisis.

Councillor K Murphy agreed accept Councillor Finn's amendment.

The motion was unanimously agreed.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Mathers that this Council notes with concern that the ongoing cost of living crisis and British Government imposed cuts is exacerbating poverty and financial pain on people in the community; believes that targeting objective need is fundamental to tackling poverty and inequality; Further believes what is required is a living wage economy and a fair social security system that targets resources where they are most needed and ensures people have a minimum essential standard of living; Recognises that the current social security system, particularly Universal Credit, is not fit for purpose, not properly funded and is failing people; Further recognises that those who rely on Universal Credit are incredibly vulnerable to changing circumstances often beyond their control, such as loss of employment, illness, increased caring responsibilities; and family breakdown; Endorses the Guarantee our Essentials campaign which seeks to ensure everyone can afford the essentials in hard times; And calls on the British Government to introduce an Essentials Guarantee which would ensure, at a minimum, Universal Credit/legacy benefits, would protect people from going without essentials.

It was agreed it was worrying to note the latest Consumer Council figures showed that Newry Mourne and Down had the highest costing for home heating oil across the North.

C/201/2023

NOTICE OF MOTION – SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION

The following motion was received from Councillor Howell:

"We proposed that Newry, Mourne & Down District Council:

- strongly condemns all forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression, advocating for policies that safeguard LGBTQ+ rights in housing, education, employment and healthcare;***
- commits to enhancing awareness and understanding of LGBTQ+ issues among Council members, staff and the wider community through education and sensitivity training;***
- supports initiatives that provide safe spaces, counselling, and support services for LGBTQ+ youth to combat bullying, harassment and mental health challenges;***
- actively participates in local Pride events to demonstrate the Council's visible support for the LGBTQ+ community and identifies areas to display LGBTQ+ pride symbols in appropriate public spaces;***
- seeks collaboration with local LGBTQ+ organisations and community groups to better comprehend their needs and explore joint projects that celebrate diversity and inclusivity.***

By adopting this motion, we reaffirm our Council's dedication to promoting equality and inclusivity, with the aim of nurturing a more cohesive community that values its diverse members."

The motion was seconded by Councillor Kearns.

Agreed: The Motion was referred to Equality and Good Relations in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.

The following motion was received from Councillor Kelly:

"This Council notes with great concern the announcement by DAERA to cut the £1.25m budget for Animal Welfare in Northern Ireland to zero. This has the potential to adversely impact work being done by local government to meet its statutory requirements for non-farmed animals, and risks causing avoidable harm and suffering to animals. This Council will urgently write to DAERA Permanent Secretary Katrina Godfrey expressing its total opposition to this decision and urging her department to reconsider this retrograde move.

Furthermore, recognising the Council's statutory responsibility, and the importance of inter-agency and partnership to support animal welfare, council will establish an Animal Welfare Forum. This Forum will meet regularly and provide strategic direction to and oversight of officers involved in animal welfare and reporting back to the relevant committee. As well as animal welfare officers, it will seek representation from elected members, dog wardens, local kennelling providers, DAERA, local animal shelters, charities and the PSNI.

This Council also commits to ensuring that, should this cut go ahead, it will commit the necessary budget to ensure its statutory responsibilities for animal welfare are met, and no services are cut or curtailed".

The motion was seconded by Councillor Truesdale.

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

The Chairperson advised an emergency Notice of Motion had been received, the wording of which had been emailed to all Councillors and to enable it to be heard, it would be necessary to suspend Standing Order 16.1.1 for which a qualified majority vote was required. (80% of Members present and voting).

The Chairperson put the matter to a recorded vote, the results of which were as follows:

FOR: 39
AGAINST: 0
ABSTENTIONS: 0

AGREED: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Galbraith and by a qualified majority vote to suspend Standing Orders 16.1.1 at this point in the meeting to allow for the tabling of the emergency motion. (copy attached)**

**C/203/2023 EMERGENCY NOTICE OF MOTION: REMOVAL OF
EMERGENCY GENERAL SURGERY FROM DAISY HILL
HOSPITAL**

The following Emergency Motion was received from Councillor Savage:

"Council rebukes the Southern Trust for its decision to permanently remove Emergency General Surgery from Daisy Hill Hospital and for disregarding the overwhelming opposition contained within the Trust's consultation in which 94% of 11,000 plus respondents opposed such a decision.

Council reaffirms its opposition to the withdrawal of Emergency General Surgery from Daisy Hill Hospital in accordance with the expressed views of the people and agrees to write to Permanent Secretary at the Department of Health requesting that he intervenes to pause any decision on the permanent removal of Emergency General Surgery from Daisy Hill Hospital until the Trust's plans for the future of the Hospital are presented and brought to public consultation.

Council requests that the Permanent Secretary at the Department of Health carries out a review of the consultation process that has led to the removal of Emergency General Surgery - a vital service from Daisy Hill - an acute hospital - without the consent of the public.

Council praises and offers its full support to the frontline staff at Daisy Hill Hospital who have demonstrated unparalleled professionalism and resilience in safeguarding the welfare of local people and patients of the district in the most difficult circumstances which resulted from the mismanagement of the Daisy Hill site by the Southern Trust.

Council recognises and supports the need for the transformation of our health service to deliver better health outcomes for our patients but agrees that any permanent decision on the future of Emergency General Surgery at Daisy Hill must not be finalised until after a long-term plan for the future of our acute Hospital has been produced and consulted on as part of that transformation process”.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Finn.

In presenting the motion, Councillor Savage stated the decision by the Southern Trust at a Board Meeting (Thursday 28 October 2023) to permanently remove Emergency General Surgery from the acute Daisy Hill Hospital had been taken against the backdrop of a democratic deficit on two fronts.

He said firstly it was a decision that flew in the face of the views of over 11,000 service users and patients across the District who voiced their opposition to the removal of Emergency General Surgery from Daisy Hill. 94% of respondents voiced their opposition to this move yet their views and that of upwards of 10,000 people taking to the streets of Newry had been ignored.

Secondly it was a decision that had been taken at a time when there was no Northern Ireland Executive and no local Health Minister in place to make such seismic and impactful decisions. He added such a decision taken in this manner made a mockery of the consultation process which left citizens of the District feeling that there appeared to be no such thing as a temporary removal of a service from Daisy Hill.

Councillor Savage spoke of how again the Trust were making a permanent major cut to services at Daisy Hill before a full picture of the future plans for the hospital had been developed and that the public would find it easier to accept this decision if it was part of a plan for the long-term future of the hospital, a plan that consolidated existing and new services at Daisy Hill long-term and provided clarity for patients and staff.

Councillor Savage continued Councillors recognised the need to transform services for better health outcomes but that he believed decisions like this one needed to be made as part of the process which clearly stated Daisy Hill’s valued role in that service delivery and transformation. It was for this reason he believed this decision needed to be paused by the Permanent Secretary until a long term plan was developed for Daisy Hill.

Councillor Savage stated he believed a plan could be delivered as early as January 2024 and that it made sense to hold off on this decision until the public saw how it fits in to the overall picture of transformation of the health service and the envisaged role Daisy Hill Hospital played in that transformation.

Councillors Murphy, Taylor, McMurray and Lewis voiced support for the motion on behalf of their respective parties.

Councillor Savage thanked Members for their support of the motion.

The motion was unanimously agreed.

Agreed:

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Savage, seconded by Councillor Finn that Council rebukes the Southern Trust for its decision to permanently remove Emergency General Surgery from Daisy Hill Hospital and for disregarding the overwhelming opposition contained within the Trust's consultation in which 94% of 11,000 plus respondents opposed such a decision. Council reaffirms its opposition to the withdrawal of Emergency General Surgery from Daisy Hill Hospital in accordance with the expressed views of the people and agrees to write to Permanent Secretary at the Department of Health requesting that he intervenes to pause any decision on the permanent removal of Emergency General Surgery from Daisy Hill Hospital until the Trust's plans for the future of the Hospital are presented and brought to public consultation. Council requests that the Permanent Secretary at the Department of Health carries out a review of the consultation process that has led to the removal of Emergency General Surgery - a vital service from Daisy Hill - an acute hospital - without the consent of the public. Council praises and offers its full support to the frontline staff at Daisy Hill Hospital who have demonstrated unparalleled professionalism and resilience in safeguarding the welfare of local people and patients of the district in the most difficult circumstances which resulted from the mismanagement of the Daisy Hill site by the Southern Trust. Council recognises and supports the need for the transformation of our health service to deliver better health outcomes for our patients but agrees that any permanent decision on the future of Emergency General Surgery at Daisy Hill must not be finalised until after a long-term plan for the future of our acute Hospital has been produced and consulted on as part of that transformation process.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 7.45pm.

For confirmation at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 6 November 2023.

Signed:

Chairperson

Chief Executive

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL
RECORDED VOTE

DATE: 02/10/23

VENUE: Downshire/ MS Teams

MEETING: Council

SUBJECT OF VOTE: Suspend Standing Orders – Emergency Notice of Motion: Removal of Emergency General Surgery from Daisy Hill Hospital

COUNCILLOR	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
T Andrews	1			
C Bowsie	2			
J Brennan	3			
P Byrne	4			
P Campbell	5			
W Clarke				1
L Devlin	6			
C Enright	7			
D Finn	8			
A Finnegan	9			
C Galbraith	10			
M Gibbons	11			
O Hanlon	12			
G Hanna	13			
V Harte	14			
R Howell	15			
J Jackson	16			
G Kearns	17			
T Kelly	18			
C King	19			
M Larkin	20			
D Lee-Surginor	21			
A Lewis	22			
O Magennis	23			
A Mathers	24			
D McAteer	25			
L McEvoy	26			
A McMurray	27			
S O'Hare	28			
D Murphy	29			
K Murphy	30			
S Murphy	31			
A Quinn	32			
H Reilly				2
M Rice	33			
M Ruane	34			
M Savage	35			
G Sharvin	36			
D Taylor	37			
J Tinnelly	38			
J Truesdale	39			
TOTALS	39	-	-	2