

**NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**NMD/C/**

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**Minutes of Council Meeting held on Monday 02 November 2020 at 6.00pm via  
Hybrid in Downshire Chamber and Microsoft Teams**

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**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 S Doran
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 M Savage
Councillor G Sharvin	Councillor G Stokes
Councillor D Taylor	Councillor J Tinnelly
Councillor J Trainor	Councillor W Walker

**(Officials)**

Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive  
Mrs D Carville, Director of Corporate Services  
Mr M Lipsett, Director of Active & Healthy Communities  
Mr C Mallon, Director of Enterprise, Regeneration & Tourism  
Mr R Moore, Director of Neighbourhood Services  
Mr J McBride, Director of Neighbourhood Services (Acting)  
Mr F O'Connor, Head of Legal & Administration (Acting)  
Mrs C Miskelly, Assistant Director, Corporate Service, Human Resources & Safeguarding  
Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)  
Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer  
Mrs C McAteer, Democratic Services Officer

**Also in attendance:** Mrs L McCloone, Worthington Solicitors

**C/138/2020**

**APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

There were no apologies received.

The Chairperson commented that we were more than half way through the Executive's circuit breaker and fortunately there had been a downward trend in case numbers in Newry Mourne and Down. She appealed to everyone not to become complacent and spoke of the importance to continue doing all we could in adhering to the messaging from Public Health to ensure that the number was reduced further.

The Chairperson passed on condolences to the family of a female who died in a car collision in Downpatrick at the weekend.

The Chairperson informed everyone that Councillors John Trainor, Patrick Brown and Alan Lewis taken on the Movember challenge in aid of Men's Mental Health and anyone wishing to donate could do so through a link on the Councillor's social media channels.

The Chairperson paid tribute to Mr Roland Moore, former Director of Neighbourhood Services. She stated across Council, all members held Roland in the highest of regards as a superb officer and a total gentleman too. On behalf of Council she wished Roland the best of luck in his new role and for his future, commenting that he would be missed by all.

Congratulations were passed to Mr Johnny McBride on taking up the position of Interim Director of Neighbourhood Services.

**C/139/2020**

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Mrs Ward declared an interest on behalf of officers for item 10: Minutes of Special Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee: SPR/165/2020 – Severance Scheme

**C/140/2020**

**ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 5 OCTOBER 2020**

Read: Action sheet arising from Council Meeting held on 05 October 2020 (copy circulated).

**Agreed: The Action Sheet from Council Meeting held on 5 October 2020 was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Savage.**

**COUNCIL MINUTES FOR ADOPTION AND SIGNING**

**C/141/2020**

**MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 5 OCTOBER 2020**

Read: Minutes of Council Meeting held on 5 October 2020 (copy circulated).

**Agreed: The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 5 October 2020 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Stokes, seconded by Councillor Murphy.**

**C/142/2020**

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 22 OCTOBER 2020**

Read: Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 22 October 2020 (copy circulated).

Councillor Andrews paid tribute to everyone affected by Covid-19 and the difficult times faced by many and thanked the doctors, nurses and all in the Frontline who were working hard, despite being under so much pressure at this time. He highlighted there were many suffering from cancer and other health conditions whose treatment and operations had been delayed and cancelled, with important and vital treatment having given way to the demand of Covid-19.

Councillor Andrews referred to additional funding of £560 million allocated to the Department of Health in the last week which had to be welcomed however he believed this did not go far enough.

Councillor Andrews proposed Newry Mourne and Down District Council write to the Department of Health, Health & Social Care Trusts and relevant bodies to call upon them to immediately address and implement procedures to provide treatments to deal with Cancer and other health conditions that have been delayed due to the current pandemic as a matter of utmost priority to save lives. This was seconded by Councillor Lewis.

**Agreed:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Lewis that Newry, Mourne and Down District Council write to the Department of Health, Health and Social Care Trusts and relevant bodies to call upon them to immediately address and implement procedures to provide treatments to deal cancer and other health conditions that have been delayed due to the current pandemic as a matter of utmost priority to save lives.**

**Agreed:** **The Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on 22 October 2020 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Gallagher.**

**COMMITTEE MINUTES FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION**

**C/143/2020**

**MINUTES OF ENTERPRISE, REGENERATION AND TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2020**

Read: Minutes of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 12 October 2020 (copy circulated).

*ERT/138/2020: COVID 19 Revitalisation Funding*

In response to Councillor Gallagher, Mr Mallon provided an update regarding Covid-19 Business Support initiatives confirming that following the expression of interest exercise, application forms would be issued from 3 November 2020, and that once applications were verified, payment could be issued from 9 November 2020.

Councillor Sharvin highlighted the disappointment of businesses at the limitations of the £1,000 grant provided to them given the challenges being faced in these challenging times

and proposed Council seek further funding for grants to small businesses.

Councillor Hanlon highlighted the need to ensure there was equality across the District in that some businesses may be better geared up to filling in forms and applying for grants.

Mr Mallon advised Council had already written and received additional funding from the Departments including £157,000 from DAERA, £527,000 from DFI and an additional £52,000 from DFC revenue but that he was happy to reach out again.

**AGREED:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Stokes that Council write to all three departments DAERA, DFI and DFC urging for more funding to be made available to the grants for businesses and that Council officers work internally to see if a similar programme as a Council could be run to support small businesses.**

*ERT/141/2020: Restocking Quoile River*

At the request of Councillor Brown, Mr Mallon confirmed he would write to the other 10 Councils to seek information on what strategies they had in place for restocking coarse fisheries and report back to the Enterprise, Regeneration & Tourism Committee.

**Agreed:** **It was agreed to write to the 10 other Councils in relation to restocking of coarse fisheries and report back to the Enterprise, Regeneration & Tourism Committee.**

**Agreed:** **The Minutes of the Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee Meeting held on 12 October 2020 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Stokes, seconded by Councillor McAteer.**

**C/144/2020** **MINUTES OF STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15 OCTOBER 2020**

Read: Minutes of Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 15 October 2020 (copy circulated).

*SPR/145/2020: Newry City Regeneration – Business Case*

Councillor Savage highlighted a minor amendment on page 4 to read 'Councillor Savage asked if Councillor Ó Muirí would accept an amendment to his proposal to include an **extensive** public consultation.....'.

Councillor Brown asked that the minute be amended to reflect the following on page 4: To remove 'Councillor Brown proposed that Council hold off submitting the outline business case until a full public consultation took place'.

And replace with 'Councillor Brown proposed Council go back and rework the business case to include the Albert Basin Park Project as an option in the Business Case and hold off until the outline business case could be reviewed by Councillors'

In expressing his thanks to fellow Councillors, Council officers and consultants Councillor Savage proposed an amendment to Option 7d to read as follows:

*'That the Programme Board develop and implement the next stage of the stakeholder engagement and communication strategy and shapes extensive District-wide public consultation on all aspects of Newry City Regeneration scheme in parallel with an independent economic appraisal'.*

The proposed amendment was seconded by Councillor Clarke.

Councillor Savage said he wanted it made clear that this was a movement to outline business case only and that there was no plan to proceed beyond it at this stage. Councillor Savage stated he was proposing the amendment as there was strong desire for public consultation particularly around the sighting and design of the proposed civic centre element and there was a clear need to take into account what a post COVID world looked like.

Councillor Savage pointed out the amendment would not hinder the progress made in securing commitment from Council to the develop the park at Albert Basin. The amendment provided Council the opportunity to engage with key stakeholders in parallel with economic appraisal. He highlighted Council was committed to the delivery of all three strands including Newry City Regeneration, the Gateway to Mournes Project and the Regeneration of Downpatrick Town Centre.

Mrs Ward confirmed the amounts contained within the business case were public information and were as follows:

£9 m - Civic Centre

£12 m – Theatre and Conference

£5 m – Public Realm

£3 m – The injection of Grade A Office Space across Newry area

Councillors Brown and Enright spoke at length and voiced concern that the plans for regeneration of Downpatrick Town Centre did not reflect the Downpatrick Masterplan and that there was a need to see actions on a capital budget that included a fair deal for the northern end of the District. Councillor Brown referred to value for money for ratepayers in terms of the Civic Centre and stated it was shocking example of public sector profligacy as it was duplicating services when Council already had first class civic centre in Downpatrick.

Councillor Brown stated an independent economic appraisal was vital as was a full District-wide consultation on the project.

During a lengthy discussion Members voiced support for Councillor Savage's amendment with Councillor Clarke advising he was happy to second the amendment as it would strengthen the proposal to have a full public consultation. He said some Councillors were talking about not agreeing to have a 2-site merger, but this had always been the rationale from the Down side and the Newry side, trying to keep jobs in both areas.

Councillor Clarke said it was always his understanding to develop a civic centre in Newry. He added facilities at present were not fit for purpose and there was a real need for alternative accommodation. Also the Trust were keen to obtain the Monaghan Row site to improve health provision in Newry and the general Newry area.

With regard to office space Councillor Clarke said the outline business case had been scoped out and he believed this project was coming at a really good time for the city of Newry with investment needed right across the District. He believed it would be a great stimulus and would improve the Council's rates base. Councillor Clarke appealed for Members not to be continually negative about the Belfast City Regional Deal.

Councillor Sharvin asked that it be noted that he wished to abstain.

**Agreed:** It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Savage, seconded by Councillor Clarke to amend option 7d to read:  
*'That the Programme Board develop and implement the next stage of the stakeholder engagement and communication strategy and shapes extensive District-wide public consultation on all aspects of Newry City Regeneration scheme in parallel with an independent economic appraisal'.*

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

**Agreed:** On the proposal of Councillor Burgess, seconded by Councillor Walker, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on the next matter which related to exempt information by virtue of para. 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) 2014 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

*SPR/155/2020: Lands at Windmill Business Park, Saintfield*

**Agreed:** On the proposal of Councillor Brown, seconded by Councillor Andrews, it was agreed the Council come out of closed session.

Whilst in closed session Councillor Burgess proposed deferring item SPR/155/2020 until a meeting was facilitated between Saintfield Development Association and Saintfield Residents. This was seconded by Councillor McKee.

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

<b>FOR:</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>AGAINST:</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>ABSTENTIONS</b>	<b>3</b>

The proposal was LOST, and the Minute as tabled relating to SPR/155/2020: Lands at Windmill Business Park, Saintfield would remain the same.

**Agreed:** The Minutes of the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 15 September 2020 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Savage, seconded by Councillor Gallagher subject to the following amendments:

*SPR/145/2020: Newry City Regeneration, Business Case*

**Page 4 to read 'Councillor Savage asked if Councillor Ó Muirí would accept an amendment to his proposal to include an *extensive* public consultation.....'.**

**Page 4 to read: Councillor Brown proposed Council go back and rework the business case to include the Albert Basin Park Project as an option in the Business Case and hold off until the outline business case could be reviewed by Councillors'.**

**C/145/2020**

**MINUTES OF ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES  
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19 OCTOBER 2020**

Read: Minutes of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 19 October 2020 (copy circulated).

*AHC/129/2020: Leasing of Land, The Links Playing Fields, Strangford*

Councillor Sharvin enquired if Council had similar arrangements for ground rent payments with other charities and Playgroups across the District, and if there was, was it the same value.

Mr Lipsett confirmed there were other groups within the District who paid rent/fees and that each one was individual. He further advised officers were regularising this playgroup in fairness to other groups within the District.

Councillor Sharvin proposed delaying recommencement of ground rent payments for Strangford and District Playgroup Association and After Schools Club for the remainder of the year and that officers bring back a policy that examines all of these facilities to have a consistent view for fairness and balance so one group does not get charged more or less than another.

Councillor Trainor seconded the proposal.

Mr Lipsett confirmed he would bring a report back to the Active and Healthy Communities Committee.

**Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Trainor to delay the recommencement of ground rent payments for Strangford and District Playgroup Association and After Schools Club for the remainder of the year and that officers bring back a policy that examines all of these facilities to have a consistent view for fairness and balance so one group does not get charged more or less than another.**

**A report to be brought back to the Active and Healthy Communities Committee.**

*AHC/122/2020: Sustainability and Climate Change Forum Action for meeting held on 17 September 2020*

Councillor Trainor expressed concern at an action coming from the meeting held on 17

September 2020 to invite the Strangford Sustainable Living Project to a future meeting of the Downpatrick DEA as opposed to the Sustainability and Climate Change Forum.

Councillor Trainor proposed Strangford Sustainable Living Project be invited to attend the next Sustainability and Climate Change Forum. This was seconded by Councillor Enright.

Councillor Clarke advised this was discussed in detail at the forum and it was the understanding of the group that it was established to deal with strategic issues with regards adaptation plan and that it wasn't the right forum for meeting individual groups and that it was better placed with the DEAs with localised knowledge.

Councillor Byrne suggested that the terms of reference for the Sustainability and Climate Change Forum be reviewed and Councillor Trainor was happy to accept this amendment to his proposal.

**Agreed:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Trainor, seconded by Councillor Enright to review the terms of reference for the Sustainability and Climate Change Forum.**

**Agreed:** **The Minutes of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 19 October 2020 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor McKevitt, seconded by Councillor McEvoy.**

**C/146/2020** **MINUTES OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 20 OCTOBER 2020**

Read: Minutes of Neighbourhood Services Committee Meeting held on 20 October 2020 (copy circulated).

Councillor Gibbons welcomed the review of the bus shelter policy.

**Agreed:** **The Minutes of the Neighbourhood Services Committee Meeting held on 20 October 2020 were agreed as an accurate record and adopted, on the proposal of Councillor Stokes, seconded by Councillor Magennis.**

**C/147/2020** **MINUTES OF SPECIAL STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 23 OCTOBER 2020**

Read: Minutes of Special Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 23 October 2020 re: Severance Scheme. (copy circulated).

**Agreed:** **The Minutes of the Special Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 23 October 2020 were agreed as an accurate record, on the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Magennis.**

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

**Agreed:** **On the proposal of Councillor Hanlon, seconded by Councillor Gallagher, it was agreed to exclude the**

**public and press from the meeting during discussion on the next matters which related to exempt information by virtue of paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Council or a government department and employees of, or office holders under, the Council.**

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Byrne, seconded by Councillor Trainor to have a 15-minute adjournment at 9.08pm with the meeting resuming at 9.28pm.

**Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Stokes, seconded by Councillor Andrews, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.**

### **SPR/165/2020: Severance Scheme**

The Chairperson advised that whilst in-committee the Minute was discussed at length and following a vote by way of a show of hands

FOR:	24
AGAINST:	15
ABSTENTIONS:	1

it was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Walker to approve the Minute with a minor amendment as follows:

Members agreed the cap at bullet point 4 of the minute with the additional wording of, this will apply on a voluntary basis, in the event that the necessary reduction in headcount/costs savings cannot be achieved through an entirely voluntary redundancy scheme or in the event that further reductions are required as a result of the ongoing pandemic, the Council recognises its duty to consult with its TUs in relation to any compulsory redundancy proposals. Consultation will take place in good time and will be undertaken in a meaningful way, with a view to reaching agreement on ways and means of avoiding the dismissals, reducing the number of dismissals and mitigating their consequences.

**Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Walker to approve SPR/165/2020 with a minor amendment as follows:**

**The cap at bullet point 4 of the minute was approved with the additional wording of ' this will apply on a voluntary basis, in the event that the necessary reduction in headcount/costs savings cannot be achieved through an entirely voluntary redundancy scheme or in the event that further reductions are required as a result of the ongoing pandemic, the Council recognises its duty to consult with its TUs in relation to any compulsory redundancy proposals. Consultation will take place in good time and will be undertaken in a meaningful way, with a view to reaching agreement on ways and means of avoiding**

the dismissals, reducing the number of dismissals and mitigating their consequences”.

**C/148/2020**

**EXTRACT FROM DRAFT MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21 OCTOBER 2020**

**Noted:**

**There were no issues referred from the Planning Committee Meeting held on 21 October 2020.**

**FOR NOTING**

**C/149/2020**

**NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING COUNCIL BULLETIN – OCTOBER 2020**

**Read:**

Bulletin dated September 2020 from Northern Ireland Housing Council. (Copy circulated)

**Agreed:**

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

**C/150/2020**

**NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING COUNCIL MINUTES DATED 10 SEPTEMBER 2020**

**Read:**

Northern Ireland Housing Council Minutes dated 10 September 2020. (Copy circulated)

**Agreed:**

**The Northern Ireland Housing Council Minutes dated 11 September 2020 were noted.**

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**C/151/2020**

**CORRESPONDENCE FROM DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES RE: DESIGN GUIDE FOR TRAVELLER SITES IN NI**

**Read:**

Correspondence dated 15 October 2020 from Department for Communities regarding Design Guide for Travellers’ sites in Northern Ireland. (Copy circulated)

**Agreed:**

**The correspondence was noted.**

**C/152/2020**

**CORRESPONDENCE FROM ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL - LOCALISED OUTBREAKS OF COVID 19**

**Read:**

Correspondence dated 26 October 2020 from Ards and North Down Borough Council regarding C/098/2020 – information on localised outbreaks of Covid 19 cases. (Copy circulated)

**Agreed:**

**The correspondence was noted.**

**C/153/2020**

**CORRESPONDENCE FROM ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL RE: THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION**

**Read:**

Correspondence from Ards and North Down Borough Council regarding

plans to close Bennett House in Portrush, the only British Legion break centre in Northern Ireland. (Copy circulated).

Noted: Councillors Taylor, Owen and Andrews expressed their concerns regarding the closure of this much needed facility and asked that their concerns be noted.

**Agreed: The correspondence was noted.**

## **CONFERENCES / EVENTS**

### **C/154/2020 NORTHERN IRELAND ENVIRONMENT FORUM CONFERENCE - WEDNESDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2020**

Read: Correspondence regarding the Northern Ireland Environment Forum 2020 Online Conference: The Environment – New Deal New Decade, to be held on Wednesday 25 November 2020 at a fee of £210 inc Vat per delegate. (Copy circulated).

Noted: Councillor Stokes said given the current financial climate, in his view attendance at Conferences should be justified. He said he could not see why Conference organisers were charging fees given that they had no real organisational costs.

**Agreed: It was unanimously agreed to appoint Councillor Clarke and Councillor Mason to attend the above Conference and if any other Member was interested in attending they should advise Democratic Services.**

## **NOTICES OF MOTION**

### **C/155/2020 NOTICE OF MOTION – NEGATIVE IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS ON EDUCATION SYSTEM AND POST PRIMARY TRANSFER TESTS**

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

**“That Council notes the negative impact of coronavirus on our education system and in particular the preparation of primary 7 pupils for post primary transfer tests. In this difficult context and to better support pupils and reduce the anxiety associated with the transfer test process, that Council writes to the Minister of Education calling on him to recommend test organiser, AQE Ltd and PPTC engage with primary school principals so that P7 children can take the test in the safe and familiar environment of their own primary school”.**

In proposing the motion, Councillor Taylor said he was aware there were differing views amongst the Political Parties in relation to the status of the post primary transfer tests. However, he wanted to focus on the issue that there was likely to be post primary transfer tests in 2021 for those pupils who wished to avail of it and this will put both pupils and parents in a very difficult position. Pupils would be taking the test in the middle of a pandemic, having missed out on valuable school hours and with no clarity or guidance in place. He said the welfare of P7 pupils came first and they should not have to take the test in centres they were not familiar with and where 1000s of children were coming together.

Councillor Taylor said children should feel safe and the Minister for Education should recommend to test organisers that they engage with Primary School Principals so that P7 children could take the test in the safe and familiar environment of their own primary school, thereby minimising additional stress. He advised a campaign was currently underway to support this and to date had over 7000 signatures of support.

Councillor Lewis formally seconded the Motion.

Councillor O'Muirí spoke strongly in opposition and said to talk about putting children at the centre of the Motion was in his view ridiculous. In these unprecedented times in education many children were even afraid to come to school. Throughout their school year children did a variety of bench mark tests which creates a picture and a graph of children's attainment and ability where they are not compared to one another. It was not about selection but about creating a culture in primary schools where every child was equal and precious and given the opportunity to be the best that they can be and there was no fear in them to do a test to be selected for any secondary school. He said those in the primary school sector were hopeful that the absence of a test in 2020/2021 was a good thing.

Councillor McMurray proposed an amendment to the Motion:-

*"To investigate ways by which the Transfer test, as scheduled for Jan 2021, can be cancelled through engagement with both Primary and Post-Primary Schools while ensuring a means of admission to post-primary schools in Sept 2021. If this cannot be achieved, then transfer tests should be carried out in the safe and familiar environment of their own primary school".*

Councillor Owen said the Minister and DUP Councillors on this Council would be happy that every child did the test in their own school. However, this would require Executive agreement which seemed unlikely. She added there was no bar on tests taking place in primaries but there were several practical barriers which Councillor Owen outlined to the Meeting. She said the DUP were willing to support Councillor Taylor's Motion if these points were noted.

Councillor Stokes said the position of the SDLP was to end selection for 10/11 year olds but nearly a decade later the test was still in place. He said his Party would support anything which would alleviate stress on pupils until the test was done away with.

Councillor Enright and Councillor Reilly also spoke on the Motion.

Councillor Taylor advised he did not wish to accept Councillor McMurray's amendment to his proposal.

Councillor Taylor's Motion, seconded by Councillor Lewis, was put to a vote by way of a show of hands and voting was as follows:-

FOR:	23
AGAINST:	14
ABSTENTIONS:	1

**Agreed:** **The Motion was declared carried and it was agreed that Council notes the negative impact of coronavirus on our education system and, in particular, the preparation of primary 7 pupils for post primary transfer tests. In this difficult context and to better support pupils and reduce the anxiety associated with the transfer test**

process, that Council writes to the Minister of Education calling on him to recommend test organiser, AQE Ltd and PPTC engage with primary school principals so that P7 children can take the test in the safe and familiar environment of their own primary school.

C/156/2020

**NOTICE OF MOTION – GREEN NEW DEAL STRATEGY DOCUMENT**

The following Notice of Motion came forward for consideration in the name of Councillor Brown, seconded by Councillor Enright:

**'The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly demonstrated the importance of our green spaces and a sustainable environment in supporting the health and wellbeing of everyone in society. Council also recognises the role a green economy can have in the post-COVID recovery and building a better economy. Therefore, Council commits to producing a 'Green New Deal' strategy document, outlining how it will transform and protect the local environment including through:**

- **Committing to delivering a new Council funded green space/park project in every DEA, and identifying these for inclusion in capital plan by the end of 2021/22 financial year**
- **Installing recycling bins in Council-owned public places where they do not already exist**
- **Develop an allotment strategy for the district, allowing local communities to draw down support to establish allotments in their communities, with the aim of having at least 1 Council supported allotment in each DEA by 2024**
- **Working with local businesses, especially large chains, to trial a campaign of printing customer's licence plates on takeaway bags to discourage littering**
- **Producing a detailed report for how each Council-owned or operated building can become carbon neutral by 2035 and setting a budget to facilitate this starting from 21/22**
- **Stop buying any fossil fueled vehicles immediately, and start replacing current vehicle inventory with electric and/or hydrogen powered vehicles**
- **Setting a goal of 10% of Council's rates coming from renewable energy developments by 2025, and developing a Taskforce to attract inward investment to meet this target**
- **Setting a goal for each Council owned car park to have at least 5% of their parking bays as charging points for exclusive use by electric/hybrid vehicles. And larger Council-owned car parks to install PV panels providing power for 10 or more spaces**
- **Draw up a detailed Climate Change Emergency Plan, taking into account all these points, reflecting the recommendations of the Nuclear Free Local Authorities Group, and embedding these throughout the Council's new Local Development Plan**
- **A commitment to reflect throughout the new Local Development Plan the importance and impact of the circular/electrified economy, and how the Plan will facilitate Council to take advantage of opportunities in this area.'**

**Agreed:**

**The Motion was referred to the Neighbourhood Services Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.6.**

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

**“That this Council recognises the detrimental impact that classroom time lost to covid-related issues will have on learning for pupils across the education sector. This council also acknowledges the academic attainment imbalance affecting pupils, predominantly from areas of lower socioeconomic status and the risk that this inequity may be further compounded by covid-related lost learning. Further that this Council calls on the Minister for Education to review his department’s published strategy for curriculum and assessment for GCSE and A-Level during 2020/21 to offer equity across all subjects in regard to unit omission”.**

In proposing the Motion Councillor Lewis said he had been contacted by a number of parents and teachers who had concerns that the talking and listening assignment of the English, French and other language-based GCSEs had been removed. He said this would detrimentally impact those pupils that may have dyslexia as they sometimes thrived better in doing these type of oral assessments rather than written. He said teachers did not yet know what aspects they had to omit from the subjects that they were teaching and parents felt their concerns not been taken on board.

Councillor Taylor formally seconded the Motion.

Councillor Hanlon welcomed the Motion and said the stress and anxiety being faced by GCSE and A level pupils was indescribable. She asked if Councillor Lewis would accept an amendment to the Motion that PE was a valuable part of the curriculum and this should be included in the letter to the Minister that this needed to be taken as part of the Strategy.

Councillor Byrne advised the SDLP would be supporting the Motion and the amendment. He said education was not all classroom based and it was unacceptable to remove PE at this time of stress in a Covid environment, when it was physical activity that helped get people through. He added that clarity and communication from the Minister going forward was key as students were extremely confused on what they were being assessed on.

Councillor McMurray and Councillor Howell also spoke in support of the Motion and the amendment.

Councillor Owen raised several points in terms of lost learning and said there had been £12m invested additionally in academic catch up mainly through the Engage Programme. She said this was for obtaining extra resources for schools to spend on additional catch up measures and these resources were for all schools with a particular emphasis on schools with higher numbers of socio economic deprived areas. She said the issue of GCSEs and A levels were more problematic and firstly the position was that exams go ahead with mitigations. These mitigations were numerous some of which were ongoing. She said the Minister’s and the DUPs position on exams was that they represent the fairest and best way that students perform.

Councillor Owen said that pupils could not go in a different direction on their own as this would disadvantage pupils in Northern Ireland and therefore the DUP would be opposing the Motion on these grounds.

Councillor Reilly said he would support the Motion tonight as it was well meaning. He would have concerns if there were barriers put between children but did not see this within the Motion.

Councillor Lewis advised he would be happy to accept Councillor Hanlon's amendment to his Motion as there was concern in schools about restricting any outdoor activity or PE.

The amended Motion proposed by Councillor Lewis and seconded by Councillor Taylor was put to a vote by way of a show of hands and voting was as follows:-

FOR:	32
AGAINST:	3
ABSTENTIONS:	0

**Agreed:** **The amended Motion was declared carried and it was agreed that this Council recognises the detrimental impact that classroom time lost to covid-related issues will have on learning for pupils across the education sector. This Council also acknowledges the academic attainment imbalance affecting pupils, predominantly from areas of lower socioeconomic status and the risk that this inequity may be further compounded by covid-related lost learning. Further that this Council calls on the Minister for Education to review his department's published strategy for curriculum and assessment for GCSE and A-Level during 2020/21 to offer equity across all subjects in regard to unit omission. The Council further calls on the Minister not to limit outdoor activity and physical education for pupils within the education sector.**

#### **C/158/2020                    NOTICE OF MOTION – WOMEN'S SUB COMMITTEE**

The following Notice of Motion came forward for consideration in the name of Councillor C Mason and Councillor O Magennis:

**"That this Council establishes a stand-alone 'Women's sub-committee' made up of female representatives of this council to discuss and promote women's issues, to build the skills and confidence of female representatives and to promote women getting involved in local politics to aim to achieve proportionality."**

Councillor Mason expressed her disappointment that this Motion had not been debated at full Council.

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

#### **C/159/2020                    NOTICE OF MOTION – IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS ON THOSE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA**

The following Notice of Motion came forward for consideration in the name of Councillor McEvoy, seconded by Councillor O'Hare:

**“This Council notes with concern figures showing that over a quarter (27.5%) of those who died from covid-19 were people living with dementia and this is the most common underlying health condition associated with deaths from the virus.**

**This Council welcomes the Minister for Health’s stated commitment to reforming Adult Social Care and urges his Department to heed Alzheimer’s Society’s “The Fog of Support: An inquiry into the provision of respite care and carers assessments for people affected by dementia” to ensure those living with dementia are better protected now and into the future, specifically allowing loved ones of care home residents to be given key worker status.**

**This Council will commit to build on the work of Alzheimer’s Society of creating Dementia Friendly Communities by hosting a virtual ‘Dementia Friendly Workshop’ which will increase the awareness and confidence of our staff to better relate to, support and communicate with people with dementia to help tackle stigma, establish best practice and reduce barriers for our ageing population within our Council area.”**

Councillor McEvoy expressed her disappointment that this Motion had not been debated at full Council and said 3 other Councils had already debated the Motion at their full Council meetings.

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

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 10.45 pm.

For confirmation at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 7 December 2020.

**Signed:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Chairperson**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Chief Executive**

**NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**RECORDED VOTE**

DATE: \_02/11/2020      VENUE: Teams Meeting      MEETING: Council

SUBJECT OF VOTE: SPR 155/2020 Councillor Burgess proposed to defer until meeting was facilitated, seconded by Councillor McKee

COUNCILLOR	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
T Andrews		1		
P Brown		2		
R Burgess	1			
P Byrne		3		
C Casey		4		
W Clarke		5		
D Curran			1	
L Devlin		6		
S Doran		7		
C Enright		8		
A Finnegan		9		
H Gallagher		10		
M Gibbons		11		
O Hanlon		12		
G Hanna		13		
V Harte		14		
R Howell		15		
M Larkin		16		
A Lewis	2			
O Magennis		17		
G Malone		18		
C Mason		19		
D McAteer		20		
L McEvoy		21		
H McKee	3			
K McKeivitt		22		
A McMurray		23		
R Mulgrew		24		
D Murphy		25		
G O'Hare		26		
B Ó Muirí		27		
K Owen		28		
H Reilly	4			
M Ruane		29		
M Savage			2	
G Sharvin			3	
G Stokes		30		
D Taylor	5			
J Tinnelly		31		
J Trainor		32		
B Walker		33		
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>3</b>	