

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

NMC/SC

**Minutes of Emergency Council Meeting held on 16 March 2020 at 4.00pm in the
Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick**

In the Chair: Councillor C Casey

In attendance:

(Councillors)

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor R Burgess
Councillor P Byrne	Councillor W Clarke
Councillor D Curran	Councillor L Devlin
Councillor S Doran	Councillor C Enright
Councillor H Gallagher	Councillor M Gibbons
Councillor O Hanlon	Councillor G Hanna
Councillor R Howell	Councillor A Lewis
Councillor O Magennis	Councillor G Malone
Councillor C Mason	Councillor D McAteer
Councillor H McKee	Councillor K McKeivitt
Councillor A McMurray	Councillor R Mulgrew
Councillor K Owen	Councillor G O'Hare
Councillor B Ó Muirí	Councillor H Reilly
Councillor M Ruane	Councillor M Savage
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
Mrs C Miskelly, Assistant Director of HR & Safeguarding
Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager
Ms J Fleming, Communications & Marketing Officer
Ms L O'Hare, Democratic Services Officer

SC/05/2020

APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Brown, Harte, Hearty, McEvoy and Sharvin and Mr C Mallon, Director of Enterprise, Regeneration & Tourism and Mr R Moore, Director of Neighbourhood Services.

SC/06/2020

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

SC/07/2020

EMERGENCY RESPONSE COVID-19

The Chairperson advised the Emergency Council Meeting had been called by himself in order that Council could discuss its emergency response to COVID-19 and Sinn Féin's request to close Council's leisure centres.

Councillor Clarke set out his request regarding the closure of Council's leisure centres advising these were high risk locations for members of the public and staff.

Councillor Taylor proposed that Council write to NI Executive, the First and Deputy First Minister regarding rates relief for business organisations. This was seconded by Councillor McKee.

Councillor Tinnelly proposed that Council write to the Public Health Authority asking that they forward a leaflet to all households with written information on COVID-19. This was seconded by Councillor Malone.

Councillor Mulgrew proposed that Council write to the Education Minister regarding the need to close schools with immediate effect. This was seconded by Councillor Clarke.

Councillor Savage proposed that Council write to the Finance Minister to ask for additional funding in the short term to help affected members of the community pay their bills and feed their families.

The meeting was adjourned at this point – 5.12pm.

The meeting recommenced at 5.35pm.

Councillor Burgess and Councillor Enright did not return into the Chamber.

Councillor Clarke proposed that, in light of the breaking news, the closure of all public buildings, with the exception where statutory services were to be delivered, this includes access to Newry Town Hall, Downshire Civic Centre and Monaghan Row for submission of planning and building control applications; registration of births, deaths and marriages; and operation of the Household Recycling Centres. Access for the public to these buildings and sites will be managed in line with PHA guidance. Statutory Council scheduled meetings would continue but would be under review with social distancing applied. Statutory waste service would continue. This decision would be revisited on March 30th 2020. Councillor Byrne seconded the proposal.

Agreed:

On the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Byrne, the following was agreed:

- **Closure of all public buildings, with the exception where statutory services were to be delivered, this includes access to Newry Town Hall, Downshire Civic Centre and Monaghan Row for submission of planning and building control applications; registration of births, deaths and marriages; and operation of the Household Recycling Centres.**

- Access for the public to these buildings and sites will be managed in line with PHA guidance.
- Statutory Council scheduled meetings would continue but would be under review with social distancing applied.
- Statutory waste service would continue.
- This decision would be revisited on March 30th 2020.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor McKee to write to NI Executive, the First & Deputy First Minister regarding rates relief for business organisations.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Tinnelly, seconded by Councillor Malone to write to the Public Health Authority asking that they forward a leaflet to all households with written information on COVID-19.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Mulgrew, seconded by Councillor Clarke to write to the Education Minister regarding the need to close schools with immediate effect.

Agreed: It was agreed to write to the Finance Minister to ask for additional funding in the short term to help affected members of the community pay their bills and feed their families.

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Mulgrew, seconded by Councillor Byrne, 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 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/07/2020 UPDATE ON COVID 19 – INTERNAL RESPONSE

Read: Report dated 16 March 2020 from Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive, regarding Update on COVID 19 – Internal Response **(Copy circulated)**

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

Agreed:

On the proposal of Councillor Clarke, seconded by Councillor Byrne, it was agreed to note the emergency planning arrangements of Council in relation to COVID – 19 to approve the amendment to Standing Orders as follows:

- In the event of any civil emergency or any situation which urgent actions are required and it is either not reasonably practical to convene a meeting of Committee or Council or of any such meetings called is in court the Chief Executive or Chief Officer nominated by her or him may exercise all or any of the functions of the Council excepting those which are reserved to the Council, pursuing section 7 of the local Government Act NI 2014. Any decisions taken pursuing to this Standing Order will be reported to the relevant Committee or Council at the next available meeting. The Standing Order is to be read in conjunction with paragraph 2.3 of Scheme of delegation and would happen following consultation with political parties.**

Agreed:

It was also agreed on the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor Stokes, that officers give consideration to any contract arrangements within Council buildings to limit any potential impact.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 6.00pm.

For adoption at Meeting of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council to be held on Monday 6th April 2020.

Signed:

Chairperson

Chief Executive