

**NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

RTS/M

---

**Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on Wednesday 10 February 2016 at 6.00 pm in the Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick.**

---

**Chairperson:** Councillor M Ruane

**In Attendance:** Councillor T Andrews  
Councillor P Brown  
Councillor R Burgess  
Councillor S Burns  
Councillor C Casey  
Councillor P Clarke  
Councillor W Clarke  
Councillor G Craig  
Councillor D Curran  
Councillor C Enright  
Councillor G Fitzpatrick  
Councillor G Hanna  
Councillor V Harte  
Councillor H Harvey  
Councillor T Hearty  
Councillor D Hyland  
Councillor L Kimmins  
Councillor M Larkin  
Councillor K Loughran  
Councillor D McAteer  
Councillor C McGrath  
Councillor R Mulgrew  
Councillor M Murnin  
Councillor P Ó Gribin  
Councillor B Ó Muirí  
Councillor B Quinn  
Councillor H Reilly  
Councillor G Stokes  
Councillor D Taylor  
Councillor J Tinnelly  
Councillor W Walker

**Officials in Attendance** Mr L Hannaway, Chief Executive  
Mr E Curtis, Director of Strategy, Planning and Performance  
Mr M Lipsett, Director of Active and Healthy Communities

Mr C O'Rourke, Director of Regulatory and Technical Services  
Ms M Ward, Director of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism  
Mr J McGilly Assistant Director Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism  
Ms R Mackin Assistant Director Corporate Planning & Policy  
Mr R Dowey, Head of Finance  
Mr K Montgomery, Finance Manager  
Ms Morgan, Management Accountant  
Ms E McParland, Democratic Services Manager  
Ms L Dillon, Democratic Services Manager  
Mrs C McAteer, Democratic Services Officer

**SC/22/2016: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from:

Councillor L Devlin  
Councillor H McKee  
Councillor G Sharvin  
Councillor M Carr  
Councillor S Ennis  
Councillor S Doran  
Councillor P Byrne

**SC/23/2016: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

It was noted there were no declarations of interest.

**SC/24/2016: REPORTS OF MEMBERS' WORKSHOPS**

**Read:** Report of Members' Workshop held on Thursday 26 November 2015.  
(Copy circulated).

**Read:** Report of Members' Workshop held on Friday 15 January 2016.  
(Copy circulated).

**Read:** Report of Members' Workshop held on Wednesday 3 February 2016.  
(Copy circulated).

**Read:** List of Actions and Recommendations for approval arising from the 3 No.  
Member Rates Workshops.  
(Copy circulated).

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Hearty seconded by Councillor Mulgrew it  
was agreed to note the Reports and approve the recommendations

**contained therein, of the Member Workshops regarding the Budget 2016/2017, held on Thursday 26 November 2015, Friday 15 January 2016 and Wednesday 3 February 2016.**

**SC/25/2016: CAPITAL BUDGET FOR 2016/2017**

**Read:** Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Capital Program Draft 8.  
(Ref: NMDDC Capital Prog 2016\_2017 draft8 date09/02/2016)  
(Copy circulated).

**Noted:** The report detailed the Capital Spend budget for 2016/2017 in the sum of £27,561,904.00.

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Enright seconded by Councillor Hyland it was agreed to set the Newry, Mourne and Down Capital Spend Budget for 2016/2017 in the sum of £27,561,904.00.**

**SC/26/2016: TO SET A DISTRICT RATE FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2016/2017 AS REQUIRED UNDER SECTION 3 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2011**

**Read:** Department of the Environment - General Estimates of Rates 2016/2017 (No DSD Funding) Schedule.  
(Copy circulated).

Councillor Hearty proposed the adoption of a 1.94% increase in the District Rate for 2016/2017 and said a lot of work had been undertaken to reach agreement for this level of District Rate for 2016/2017. He referred to the strong Capital Budget which had been set which would support a number of major projects being undertaken by the Council during this financial year and provide a substantial events budget to promote tourism in the District which was one of the Council's main priorities.

Councillor Stokes said on behalf of the SDLP Party Grouping on the Council, that they were happy to support the proposed 1.94% increase in the District Domestic and Non Domestic Rate for 2016/2017, bearing in mind the Council were embarking on major capital projects including the completion of the second phase of Newry Leisure Centre, a new Leisure Centre for Downpatrick and a new Civic Centre for Newry.

Councillor Stokes referred to the current situation of the Council's finances 2015/2016 which he said he had raised several times previously and stressed the need for Management to examine this in detail.

(6.10pm - Councillor Burgess joined the meeting at this point)

Councillor Stokes said the Council were sitting at an adverse variance for current Revenue spend but Councillors should have been provided with this information sooner. He asked that Management provide Councillors with Management Accounts in a more timely manner to enable Council to make correct decisions concerning budgets.

Councillor Enright said the Independent and Alliance grouping on the Council supported the proposed increase in the District Rate 2016/2017 as it would support the level of spending required for the coming financial year. He concurred with comments made by Councillor Stokes regarding the timely provision of Management Accounts to Councillors.

Councillor Reilly said he could not concur with some of the comments made supporting the proposed rates increase, as it was his view there was not enough democratic participation in the rates process. He welcomed the work on the new Leisure Centre for Downpatrick but expressed his disappointment that Newcastle would not be benefiting from the 2016/2017 budget and he would therefore be voting against accepting the proposed increase.

Councillor Craig stated provision had been made for Newcastle within the Capital Programme and he was happy with the proposed 2016/2017 budget. He said the DUP grouping on the Council supported the proposed rate increase for 2016/2017 which was an investment in the future, and he highlighted the fact there would be no decrease in the level of services provided to citizens and in the events programme. He said the increase accounted for substantial capital leisure projects in Newry and Downpatrick.

Councillor Craig extended his thanks and appreciation to the Chief Executive, senior Management and staff for their work in preparing the budget, and to the Councillors who attended the Member Workshops, and added it was incumbent on both officers and Councillors to work together to achieve efficiencies for the Council moving forward.

Councillor Taylor, on behalf of the Ulster Unionist Party grouping expressed sincere thanks and his own personal thanks, to Officials for the work carried out over the past number of weeks regarding the 2016/2017 budget and for assisting Councillors during this process. He said whilst an increase in the rates was not a desirable situation given the financial difficulties faced by many household across the District, the Council had however embarked on this process and ensured the rates were kept at the lowest possible level but protecting the current level of services and progressing other strategic priorities including the completion of the two Leisure Centres.

Councillor Taylor referred to the Review of Public Administration which had brought great Financial challenges to local government and called on the administration at Stormont to provide local government with the necessary resources to support the additional powers that been transferred to Councils.

Mr Dowey advised that approval was sought for Newry, Mourne and Down District Council to agree a District Domestic Rate of 0.3596 pence and a District Non-Domestic Rate of 22.3951 pence, ie, a 1.94% increase in the District Rate.

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Hearty seconded by Councillor Stokes it was agreed to set a District Rate for the Financial Year 2016/2017 as required under Section 3 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 as follows:-

1. The capital spend budget for 2016/2017 will be £27,561,904.00.
2. The District Domestic rate to be 0.3596 pence.
3. The Non Domestic District Rate to be 22.3951 pence

A vote was taken on the above proposal by way of a show of hands and voting was as follows:

For: 31  
Against: 1  
Abstentions: 0

The proposal was declared carried.

**SC/27/2016: TO AGREE THE PRUDENTIAL BORROWING LIMIT FOR 2016/2017**

**Read:** Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Prudential Indicators and MRP Statement 2016/2017 (i.e. the authorised borrowing limit) as per page 1-4 of the report. (Copy circulated).

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Hearty seconded by Councillor Curran it was agreed to approve an authorised borrowing limit per the Prudential Indicators document circulated, of £81.2 million for 2016/2017.

**Noted:** Mr Dowey explained the Council were agreeing to give Officers authority to borrow up to a limit of £81.2million, however the approval of the borrowing limit, as per the Prudential Indicators, would be dependent upon Capital Programme expenditure.

**SC/28/2016: TO AGREE THE (MRP) MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION FOR 2016/2017**

**Read:** Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Prudential Indicators and MRP Statement 2016/2017 as per page 5 of the report. (Copy circulated).

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Clarke seconded by Councillor Taylor it was agreed to approve a Minimum Revenue Provision per the Prudential Indicators document circulated, of £5.7 million for 2016/2017.

**SC/29/2016: TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2016/2017**

**Read:** Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2016/2017.  
(Copy circulated)

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Stokes seconded by Councillor Enright it was agreed to note and adopt the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2016/2017.**

**SC/30/2016: MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS FOR 9 MONTHS TO 31 DECEMBER 2015**

**Read:** Net Revenue Expenditure Report year to date 31 December 2015.  
(Copy circulated)

**Read:** Newry Mourne & Down District Council Expense & Income totals to 31 December 2015.  
(Copy circulated)

**Noted:** Mr Dowey explained the reasons for some of the variances showing in the Net Revenue Expenditure Report, some of which were mainly due to the difference in accounting/coding practices in some areas within the two legacy Councils. He pointed out that the figures included adjustments for planning pre-payments, loans, Famine Commemoration and Irish Open events.

Councillor Stokes paid tribute to the Council's Finance team. He also paid tribute to Mr Dowey for his contribution to the Council over the years.

Councillor Ruane acknowledged the work carried out by everyone involved in the rates process.

Mr Dowey extended his thanks to Mr Ken Montgomery and to Ms Maureen Morgan for their contribution in preparing the rate estimates. He also thanked the Councillors, in particular those from the legacy Newry & Mourne District Council and the Newry Mourne & Down District Shadow Council and wished them all the best for the future.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 6.30pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 7 March 2016.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Chairperson of Council**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Chief Executive**

/LD