

**NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**NMC/SC**

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**Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 27 January 2020 at 6.00pm in the Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick**

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**In the Chair:** Councillor T Andrews

**In attendance:**

**(Councillors)**

Councillor R Burgess	Councillor W Clarke
Councillor D Curran	Councillor C Enright
Councillor H Gallagher	Councillor O Hanlon
Councillor V Harte	Councillor R Howell
Councillor M Larkin	Councillor A Lewis
Councillor O Magennis	Councillor C Mason
Councillor D McAteer	Councillor H McKee
Councillor R Mulgrew	Councillor K Owen
Councillor G O'Hare	Councillor B Ó Muirí
Councillor H Reilly	Councillor M Ruane
Councillor G Sharvin	Councillor D Taylor
Councillor J Tinnelly	Councillor B Walker

**(Officials)**

Mrs M Ward, Chief Executive  
Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager  
Ms L O'Hare, Democratic Services Officer

**Also in attendance:**

Mr I Bailie, Customer Services Manager  
Ms E Creery, Head of Communications & Stakeholder Engagement  
Mr R Larkin, Director of Finance & Regulation  
Mr G Millar, Head of Wastewater Infrastructure Delivery, NI Water

**SC/01/2020**

**APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Byrne, Devlin, Hanna, McKeivitt, McMurray, Savage and Stokes

The Chairperson paid tribute to Seamus Mallon former SDLP leader who recently died and passed on sincere sympathy and heartfelt condolences to the Mallon family and the SDLP party. He stated books of condolences had been open throughout the district and invited members to sign and leave a tribute if they so wished.

A moments silence then took place.

Councillor, Curran, Walker, McAteer, Taylor and Clarke all paid tribute on behalf of their parties offering sympathy and condolences to the family and SDLP colleagues of Mr Mallon. Councillor McAteer proposed a letter of condolence be sent to the Mallon family, this was seconded by the Chairperson.

The Chairperson congratulated former Councillor Liz Kimmins on her new role as MLA and thanked her for her kindness and courtesy over the years.

The Chairperson offered belated congratulations to Kilcoo on reaching the All Ireland final.

**SC/02/2020**

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

**SC/03/2020**

**PRESENTATION FROM NORTHERN IRELAND  
ELECTRICITY NETWORKS**

The Chairperson welcomed Mr Ian Bailie and Ms Edel Creery from Northern Ireland Electricity Networks.

Ms Creery thanked Council for the opportunity to meet, explaining that their role was to maintain the Network and were responsible for the lines and cables around the countryside.

Ms Creery then delivered a presentation on 'The Future of Energy and NIE Networks role (copy appended to these minutes).

Following the presentation, the Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members as follows:

- Welcomed that the pre-planning stage was being looked at in respect of the issue of bird fouling on the lines and affecting properties. Had there been any progress on the World Innovation Forum trial of the Sonic Boom and what was the first approach for existing developments that had this problem.
- Development of residential sites being stalled due to NIE and byway lease of landowner.

- Issues in the Ballynoe area where 5 properties were affected by the slightest storm, could these be connected to same line as neighbours that were not affected.
- Concerns that the grid capacity was insufficient for current needs and was going to get worse as demand in reducing carbon footprint increased and electricity was transferred over to renewables.
- How close did NIE work with DFI in the changeover with LED street lighting and energy saving as result.
- NIE staff were commended for keeping customer updated when there were outages and investment
- Clarification was sought if smart meters were being introduced and if so were they powered by 5G.
- All Ireland Energy market - would there be an increase in tax on energy as a result of the carbon tax EU rule? How would that affect prices?
- Had the Moyle Interconnector works been completed.
- The planned upgrade work for Annsborough, Castlewellan, Silverbridge, Newtownhamilton and Bishopscourt area was welcomed. Was there a timescale for this work?

The delegation responded to queries as follows:

- First step with regard to bird fouling on lines was to try and ensure at pre-planning stage this did not become an issue in the future. NIE were currently working with a local plastics organisation and the RSPB to trial different options to create something to put on the lines to deter birds.
- If job numbers and details could be passed on in relation to the stalling of building developments this could be looked at in more detail.
- Need to identify what was causing the outages such as failure on lines or trees needing cut back etc. The network was designed for the optimum supply to those customers and it was better that the problem be rectified rather than transferring to another circuit.
- Grid capacity was a big issue for NI as a whole and required Government, Council and citizens coming together. The North South Interconnector was a crucial piece of infrastructure that was required to enable future development to happen.
- The level of generation target through renewables being selected had been met, next target was being investigated.
- 1.5 million was being spent on a new circuit through Ballynahinch/Seaforde area which would reinforce the area, meet the local load and allow future generation and capacity for future uptake of heating and transport.
- NIE supply the electricity to the street lighting and the changeover was freeing up capacity.
- Smart meters would be determined by the Utility Regulator. They could benefit both customers and the Network by quickly showing where problems were on the network.
- Taxation would be for the Government to decide.
- The Moyle Interconnector was currently operating at capacity.
- Projects happening in Annsborough/Castlewellan area in the next few months, funding was already in place for upgrading and creating more capacity. Recent

issue was an LB problem which had been identified and NIE were monitoring the circuits in Castlewellan.

Mrs Creery thanked Members for the opportunity to meet with Council and appealed to all Members to contact NIE Networks using the Councillor hotline contained within their pack about any issues they come across within their respective areas.

**SC/04/2020**

**PRESENTAION FROM NORTHERN IRELAND WATER**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Ronan Larkin and Mr Graham Millar and invited them to deliver a presentation (copy appended to these minutes).

Mr Larkin presented an in-depth view of plans and strategy going forward and funding Newry Mourne and Down will need in the future.

Following the presentation, the Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members on the strategic issues as follows:

- Had steps been taken to meet with Ministers following the reestablishment of the Executive.
- Could regulators take on board the level of cash injection needed.
- What was the current situation with regards reservoirs and safety issues.
- Why was there such a delay with regard timeline reports from NIW as this was affecting the progression and development of Social Housing.
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The delegation responded to the strategic queries as follows:

- Councillors play a key role and urged Parties to back their areas for investment to ensure funding could be accessed from the UK Treasury.

It had previously been agreed that NIW would respond to local issues in writing to the Council and they took note of the additional areas raised at the meeting with responses to follow.

**There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 8.00pm.**

For adoption at Meeting of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council to be held on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020.

**Signed:**

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**Chairperson**

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**Chief Executive**

