

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

NMD/SC/

Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on Monday 27 November 2017 at 6pm in the Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick

In the Chair: Councillor R Mulgrew

In attendance:

(Councillors)

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor R Burgess
Councillor C Casey	Councillor W Clarke
Councillor G Craig	Councillor C Enright
Councillor H Harvey	Councillor T Hearty
Councillor D Hyland	Councillor M Larkin
Councillor K Loughran	Councillor J Macauley
Councillor D McAteer	Councillor O McMahan
Councillor A McMurray	Councillor B Ó Muirí
Councillor B Quinn	Councillor H Reilly
Councillor M Ruane	Councillor G Sharvin
Councillor D Taylor	Councillor J Tinnelly
Councillor J Trainor	Councillor B Walker

(Officials)

Mr L Hannaway, Chief Executive
Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Officer
Mrs C Taylor, Democratic Services Officer

Also in attendance:

Mr R Larkin, Northern Ireland Water
Mr K Henderson, Northern Ireland Water
Ms L Hughes, Northern Ireland Water
Mr D Mathers, Northern Ireland Water

SC/32/2017 APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Bailie, Brown, Burns, Byrne, Carr, Curran, Devlin, Fitzpatrick, Hanna, Harte, Kimmins, Murnin, Savage and Stokes.

SC/33/2017 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of Interest

SC/34/2017 NORTHERN IRELAND WATER

The Chairperson welcomed the delegation from Northern Ireland Water and invited them to make their presentation.

Mr Larkin, Director of Finance and Regulation, Northern Ireland Water, thanked the Chairperson and Council for inviting them to make their presentation. He highlighted the water and waste water services that exist within the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area along with the fact that £31.4m had been invested in capital project spend within the Council area since 2015. A copy of the presentation is appended to these minutes.

The Members asked the following questions:

- Derryboye outside Killyleagh had issues with spillages due to septic tanks being unable to get into main system. Would it be possible to arrange a meeting to investigate this issue?
- Smell on Downpatrick Road outside BT30 9RR, there seemed to be something wrong with the filters, could this be investigated?
- There was sometimes very bad odours around the Greenbank area and Warrenpoint Road in Newry – could this be investigated?
- Would it be possible for Council's facebook page to be alerted when there was a breakdown in systems and for DEA Councillors to be notified also?
- The smell around Greenbank area seemed to be worse at night, would there be any reason for this?
- Could an update be provided on Dundrum pumping station?
- Was the works at Crossgar capable of managing the capacity?
- An additional number of homes had been built at Darragh Cross, were the existing facilities up to scratch?
- Was the new Ardtole project in Ardglass working to capacity as there were still reports of raw sewage around the Sheepland Bay area?
- Would NIW be working with Phoenix Gas to ensure as little disruption as possible in Downpatrick?
- Would it be possible to get more signage at Silent Valley to discourage dog owners to let their dogs off the lead?
- Was there any potential for additional tourist developments at Spelga Dam?
- The Carrigenagh Road in Kilkeel had not been reinstated properly following the last sewage works.
- There were issues regarding the cost of connecting water to developments, previously people were able to request a road opening permit however now it costs £2700 in-house for this service. Can this be investigated as it seemed quite costly?
- Corrosion of household pipes seemed to have stopped, was there a change in the way that water was being processed?
- Odour issues at Ardmeen Green in Downpatrick continue and with the ongoing development at Ballyalton were only likely to get worse. What steps were being taken to address this issue?
- Odour issues at the back of houses in Bishopsbrae – can this be investigated?
- The Links at Strangford had an issue with a manhole overflowing regularly and with sewage spilling out – would investigations be carried out in this area?
- A lot of people were unaware of the free septic tank emptying and perhaps this was something that could be highlighted more?
- Was Derryogue Park in Kilkeel part of the phase 1 drainage area plan?
- As part of the plan, could the Kilkeel River from the bridge going down to the

harbour be included with a maintenance plan?

- At the Head Road where new pipes had to be laid, the roads had not been reinstated correctly and were broken up due to frost etc.
- Was there any maintenance programme in place to ensure that fire hydrants lids were able to be opened?
- Would NIW support charities to run 10k races around Silent Valley?
- Had Phoenix Gas caused any difficulties with their excavations so far?
- Would it be wise to have a plan in place to introduce a new plant at Newry treatment plant due to the over-usage of the current plant?
- Were there any statistics in relation to burst pipes over the winter period?
- Dromintee upgrade was carried out 3 years ago with a planned 50 additional houses being erected. The developers had been told there would be infrastructure to access the sewage works however this was never put in place. Would it be possible to get an update on this?
- Was there capacity to supply water over the next 25 years due to expansion highlighted within the Council's area plan?
- Carrick Primary School in Burren had issues with a water bill that was incorrect and the issue was still not rectified, could this be investigated?

The delegation responded to the queries as follows:

- The issue regarding odour on the Downpatrick Road outside Grove Park could be due to the carbon filters requiring to be updated and this would be investigated.
- Complaints regarding spillages in the Derryboye area related to infrastructure issues and it was important that funding was obtained to carry out investment upgrades. Representatives from NI Water would investigate this issue and revert back to Councillors Andrews and Walker.
- Odour problems at the Newry treatment centre would be investigated.
- There were odour problems specifically in the Greenbank area due to a mechanical/electrical fault with the air blowers, which had now been solved and there had been no further complaints during the past week. NI Water officials had liaised with the Environmental Office and residents regarding the problem.
- The Newry waste treatment works was built 10 years ago to serve a population of 70,000, but the population had now doubled and also industrial usage meant the works was overloaded at times.
- The reason for the odour being worse at night was due to the fact that odours lingered at low levels in colder temperatures and as the temperature rose during the day, the odour dissipated.
- Upgrade works had been undertaken at Newry pumping station and Newry treatment works and NI Water were continuing to make processes at the stations as efficient as possible.
- A substantial upgrade had been undertaken at Crossgar waste water station one year ago - new pumps had been replaced and improvements undertaken to the line. Representatives from NI Water would investigate the odour complaints.
- The waste water treatment works at Dundrum was fully loaded, although a new scheme starting in January 2018 to upgrade the system would assist with the increase in incoming flows. NI Water officials were in negotiations with the NIEA to provide an overall holistic solution for the whole catchment area of Dundrum.

- There was always disruption relating to investment programmes although NI Water officials worked to find the best ways to minimise any disruption.
- The waste water treatment works at Ardtole was a new facility with considerable investment of £6m and had been fully operational for the past year. The works had been designed to deal with a population of 7,000, although there were only 2,700 people living in the Ardglass area. Trade effluent discharge ie. fish processors, was significant particularly at certain times of the year. At these times it was not uncommon to see loading up to the equivalent of 15,000 people, which put pressure on the facility.
- There was ample capacity at Ardtole during normal situations, but during periods of sustained heavy rainfall, the extra flow travelled through a storm tank, had 6 hours of retention and was discharged into the Irish Sea.
- NI Water officials would investigate the dog attack in the Silent Valley and look to provide preventative measures ie. signage.
- Car parking and picnic benches had been improved at Spelga Dam, but NI Water officials would liaise with the Mourne Trust and the NI Tourist Board to investigate what other improvements could be made in order to attract more visitors.
- NI Water officials would revert to Councillor Reilly regarding the poor re-instatement of the Carrigenagh Road, Kilkeel.
- It was only NI Water who could dig up the road to allow new connections, which had increased costs.
- Chemicals better suited to less pipe corrosion were now being used.
- Complaints had been received in February regarding odour at Bishops Brae, Downpatrick. Works had been undertaken including the replacement of carbon filters, sealing of manhole covers, de-silting and dosing. NI Water officials were keeping an eye on the situation as silt did build up and required regular cleaning.
- An overflow from the manhole cover by the turn in to the playing fields in Strangford would be investigated.
- NI Water officials were aware of odour issues at Ardmeen Green, Downpatrick. The odour was controlled with a chemical which was dosed at the waste water pumping station.
- Water bills for businesses were charged retrospectively and NI Water officials worked with businesses to accommodate them. It was NI Water's policy to request immediate payment.
- The NI Utility Regulator ensured the standing charges for water were authorised. Standing charges were to make the network available for everyone using it and NI Water were keen to issue cost reflective bills and had worked successfully over the past 10 years to ensure that bills did not rise higher than inflation.
- NI Water officials would investigate the bills Councillors Craig and Harvey highlighted and would speak to the customers on their behalf.
- The whole catchment of Kilkeel plus the pumping in from Ballymartin was included in the Drainage Area Plan Study which would produce an overall plan.
- NI Water officials would liaise with Rivers Agency regarding the maintenance programme required on the Kilkeel River from the bridge in the middle of Kilkeel to the harbour.
- NI Water's maintenance period of 2 years had passed for the Old Town Road.
- NI Fire & Rescue Service carried out yearly checks on water hydrants and the NIFRS sent NI Water a list of the checks on a regular basis.

- A number of 10k runs had been successfully staged in the Silent Valley. Officials were required to work with the charity to ensure event insurance was in place.
- NI Water had a protocol in place where by utilities worked together regarding excavations and re-instatements of roads.
- The Newry waste water treatment plant was future proofed through the capital planning process.
- A strong media campaign had been launched after the harsh winter of 2010/11 and then this had been tested by polling. Further work had been undertaken on the website and a direct link had been seen between the adverts on the media campaign and sales of pipe insulating materials. This campaign would be run again next year and would link into the NIHE and the Education Service to continue to raise awareness.
- The Newry Treatment Plant was not 2x over capacity although it was fully loaded. Extra loading was from increased housing developments and industrial waste. At some point in the future the works would be required to be extended, although this would require massive capital investment and land required was not available on the existing site.
- Housing developers were required to make the shortfall contribution for infrastructure to NI Water depending on the number of units being built. In the Drumintee area 60% of new units were waiting for developer contributions.
- NI Water officials would investigate the cost of the connections in the Drumintee area and revert to Councillor Larkin.
- NI Water officials would investigate the billing issue at Carrick Primary School, Burren and would work with the school to ensure all allowances were made to minimise the bill.
- There was a management plan which looked at supply and demand of water for future years. The Ballydugan Scheme which was a new water main from Portadown to Newry was a big step forward.

The Chairperson thanked the delegation for their attendance and extended the thanks of the Council to the Elected Member telephone number handlers.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 8pm.

For adoption at Meeting of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council to be held on Monday 8 January 2017.

Signed:

Chairperson

Chief Executive