

**NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**NMD/C/**

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**Minutes of Council Meeting held on Monday 24 April 2017 at 6pm in the  
Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick**

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**In the Chair:** Councillor G Craig

**In attendance: (Councillors)**

Councillor R Burgess	Councillor W Clarke
Councillor D Curran	Councillor C Enright
Councillor H Harvey	Councillor K Loughran
Councillor A McMurray	Councillor J Trainor

**(Officials)**

Mr L Hannaway, Chief Executive  
Mrs E McParland, Democratic Services Manager  
Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Officer  
Mrs C Taylor, Democratic Services Officer

Also in attendance: Mr C Feeney, Network Performance & Safety Director,  
Northern Ireland Electricity Networks  
Mr R Ballentine, Network Operations Manager, Northern  
Ireland Electricity Networks

**SC/8/2017 APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Andrews, Bailie, Brown, Burns, Byrne, Carr, Casey, Devlin, Doran, Fitzpatrick, Harte, Hearty, Hyland, Kimmins, Larkin, Macauley, D McAteer, McMahon, Mulgrew, Murnin, O'Gribin, O'Múiri, Quinn, Ruane, Sharvin, Stokes, Taylor, Tinnelly and Walker.

**SC/9/2017 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**C/10/2017 PRESENTATION BY NORTHERN IRELAND ELECTRICITY NETWORKS**

The Chairperson welcomed the representatives from NIE Networks to the meeting and explained that many Councillors were attending the public meeting regarding Daisy Hill Hospital.

The Chief Executive then advised that the meeting was inquorate as 9 Members were present and the quorum for Council Meetings was 11 Members. However, he explained that as the meeting had been convened to facilitate a presentation by NIE

Networks, and was not required to take decisions, it could proceed informally to facilitate discussion between Councillors present and the representatives from NIE Networks.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives from NIE Networks for their presentation and invited questions from Members:

Members asked the following questions:

- Did wind turbines cause any grid overloading problems?
- What preparations did NIE Networks have in place for the 2018 Zero Energy Building Code?
- How were NIE Networks going to relieve congestion on the 'heat map' on 33kv stations in the District?
- What plans did NIE Networks have in place to ensure future businesses operating along the south Down coastline did not have to continue to run diesel engines?
- Why did the new Newry Leisure Centre phase 2 and the new Downpatrick Leisure Centre have no connectivity available for photovoltaics?
- There were severe difficulties with connection between Bishopscourt and Ardglass – due to the station being over-subscribed. Would a 33kv line be replacing the 11kv line? Could a 110kv line be installed?
- Was NIE Networks aware of the planning application in the Bishopscourt area for energy storage and how were they facilitating it?
- Would it be possible to store renewable energy in the Camlough tunnel?
- With the Ballykinler base being decommissioned, would farmers in the local area have more access to renewable energy?
- Was there a programme of wooden pole replacement?
- What was the current condition of the infrastructure in the District?
- What percentage of infrastructure was at the end of its life in the District?
- What measures were in place to prevent bird fouling from the overhead lines onto footpaths? Would overhead power lines be put underground to alleviate this problem?
- Did applicants require planning permission to connect to the grid?
- Was 2% investment adequate?

Representatives from NIE Networks responded to Members queries as follows:

- Wind turbines caused challenges for the network, especially the smaller turbines, which caused significant grid congestion when being connected.
- During summer nights, customers in Northern Ireland only required 500 mw. The wind turbines produced 1800mw, meaning approximately 1300mw was wasted, unless it could be sold off.
- The challenge for NIE Networks was determining how tariffs would work. Customers wanted an assurance that they could always connect to the grid and for NIE Networks to maintain a network that was always on standby, was a challenge.
- Investment went up and down in certain counties dependent upon the asset cycle.

- NIE Networks did not make the connection policy, it was decided on by the regulator. The connecting party paid for the voltage they connected at.
- There was investment in NIE Network's business plan to alleviate congestion on the 30kv grid, which was a specific request put to the regulator. To move from 30kv to 110kv would be dictated by underlying low growth, but there was significant opposition to building 110kv overhead power lines. These challenges were local. There were no plans to upgrade Bishops court to 110kv.
- NIE Networks had provided a replacement 11kv connection between Bishops court and Ardglass which would help some customers.
- The view in the UK and in Europe was that a network business should not own storage as it could stifle the market.
- Ballykinler was one of 300 major sub-stations in NI.
- NIE Networks operated a 15 year refurbishment programme and a 45 year rebuild programme across Northern Ireland. Over the past 20 years interruptions had decreased by 66%.
- Underground cabling in scenic areas had been considered as part of the stakeholder engagement programme, but there had been no support for it and it was therefore not in the business plan.
- Bird fouling from overhead lines was a prevalent issue, which could be fed into the consultation which closed on 19 May 2017.
- Planning permission was not now required to connect to the grid.
- NIE Networks considered that a 2% investment was enough and £10m would be spent on innovation investments if approved by the utilities regulator.

Mr Hannaway clarified that the Council was in the process of vesting Camlough Lake, but did not own it.

Councillor Enright asked the representatives of NI Electricity Networks to provide responses to the following questions:

- How NIE Networks would be preparing for the 2018 Zero Energy Building Code.
- Specific examples of where NIE Network customers felt that the connection policy had not been adhered to.
- With Ballykinler base being decommissioned, would it mean that farmers could now avail of additional connectivity to renewable energy projects?

Councillor Enright undertook to provide the representatives of NI Electricity Networks with the following:

- A list of businesses using diesel generators along the south Down coastline between Strangford Lough and Carlingford Lough (to be provided to Mr Hannaway for onward transmission to NIE Networks).
- Specific customers in the Bishops court area which would be helped by the replacement 11kv connection (to be provided to Mr Hannaway for onward transmission to NIE Networks).

- Any correspondence Councillor Enright had previously sent to NIE Networks and not received a response to, including the date sent and the person written to.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 7.05pm

**Signed:**

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**Chairperson**

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**Chief Executive**