

**Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee Meeting of Mid Ulster District Council held on Wednesday 9 July 2014 at 8pm, in the Council Offices, Burn Road, Cookstown**

**Present:** Councillor McPeake, Chair  
Councillor Ford, Vice Chair

**Councillors:** Ashton, Bateson, Buchanan, Elattar, Glasgow, McFlynn, McGinley, Sean McGuigan, McLean, Mallaghan, Molloy, Malachy Quinn, Reid, Totten

**Officers:** Chief Executive  
Clerical Officer  
Lead Finance Officer  
Lead Human Resource Officer  
Head of Development Services, MDC  
Head of Arts & Culture Services, CDC

**PR1/14 Apologies**

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors McLean and Molloy.

**PR2/14 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**PR3/14 Policy & Resources Committee Terms of Reference for Transitional Period**

The Chief Executive advised members that the Mid Ulster District Council at its meeting on 26 June 2014 established four committees to take forward the work of the Council during the transitional period and that the Terms of Reference for these committees had been set by the Council.

The main areas for the Policy & Resources Committee were Finance, Human Resources, ICT, Governance, and Marketing & Communications. In addition any areas that were not covered by the other committees would come into the Policy & Resources Committee.

## **PR4/14      Transition Working Groups**

### **Finance & Procurement Transition Working Group**

The Lead Finance Officer presented the Finance & Procurement Transition Working Group Update Paper a copy of which had been previously circulated.

The Committee NOTED the report.

### **Human Resources Transition Working Group**

The Human Resources Officer presented the Human Resources Transition Working Group Update Paper a copy of which had been previously circulated.

The Committee NOTED the report.

### **ICT Transition Working Group**

The Head of Development Services, Magherafelt District Council, presented the ICT Transition Working Group Update Paper a copy of which had been previously circulated.

The Committee NOTED the report.

### **Communications Transition Working Group**

The Head of Arts & Culture Services, Cookstown District Council, presented the Communications Transition Working Group Update Paper a copy of which had been previously circulated.

The Committee NOTED the report.

## **PR5/14      Mid Ulster Council Corporate Plan for Transitional Period**

The Chief Executive presented the Corporate Plan for the Transitional Period, a copy of which had been previously circulated. The Chief Executive advised that the plan was essentially a Work Plan to achieve the aims of the Shadow Council by 1 April 2015.

The Committee ADOPTED the report.

## **PR6/14      DoE Consultation on Model Standing Orders**

The Chief Executive presented the Draft Local Government (Standing Orders) Regulations (NI) 2014 and Model Standing Orders, a copy of which had been previously circulated.

Members AGREED that this matter be discussed at the next Party Reps meeting, that parties provide their views to the Chief Executive prior to this meeting and that a workshop session be arranged to which all Members of Council be invited.

#### **PR7/14      Environmental Health & Building Control Group Structures**

The Chief Executive presented a paper on the future direction for group structures in Environmental Health and Building Control a copy of which had been previously circulated.

The Chief Executive advised that this matter had been discussed at officer level and consensus reached on the way forward, a copy of the report prepared on the proposed direction for the future of group structures within councils and transferring functions had been circulated with the agenda papers.

Members AGREED with the suggested approach for the future of group structures for Environmental Health and Building Control.

Members also AGREED with the suggested approach for Property Certificates and Houses in Multiple Occupation on the basis that these functions will be dispersed across councils as soon as possible and until then costs of these functions be apportioned based on usage of the service not population.

A further paper is to be brought to Council on arrangements for the delivery of Animal Welfare and Emergency Planning within an 11 council model.

On the proposal of Councillor McGuigan, seconded by Councillor Reid the Committee RECOMMENDED the adoption the report.

#### **PR8/14      Local Government Reform Joint Forum Scheme of Transfer of Staff**

The Human Resources Officer presented the Local Government Reform Joint Forum Scheme of Transfer of Staff a copy of which had been previously circulated.

This Scheme of Transfer for Local Government Staff is made under Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 and sets in place the arrangements for the transfer of staff to the 11 new council structures. It confirms that existing contractual terms and conditions will be protected in accordance with current employment legislation such as TUPE.

On the proposal of Councillor McFlynn, seconded by Councillor Reid the Committee RECOMMENDED the adoption the report.

## **PR9/14      Procurement of Content Management Solution for Council Intranet And Website**

The Head of Development Services, Magherafelt District Council, presented the Procurement of Content Management Solution for Council Intranet and Website a copy of which had been previously circulated.

As part of developing and implementing a communication plan the development of a new website and intranet were recognised as key solutions in developing good communication practices across the organisation. Procurement of a system is required to enable the council to achieve that goal through a competitive process. Provision of a CMS accessible via a browser interface for min 50 users is required. Implementation of an Intranet to facilitate internal collaboration, news, events and internal applications, documents, policies and communications. Implementation and design of a fully responsive website presence for Mid Ulster Council. Training and on-going support.

On the proposal of Councillor Mallaghan, seconded by Councillor Bateson the Committee RECOMMENDED the adoption the report.

## **PR10/14      Procurement of a Unified Communications System**

The Lead Finance Officer, presented the Procurement of a Unified Communications System for Council report a copy of which had been previously circulated.

The Lead Finance Officer advised that cost could be in the region of £100,000 plus VAT. The original ICT convergence budget approved by the Statutory Transition Committee (STC) included a specific budget allocation of £30,000 plus VAT which was based on the anticipated costs of replacing a telephone PABX on a like for like basis. However, further analysis of business needs has identified that a simple replacement PABX will not deliver on the operational requirements and, in particular, will not address the issues associated with transferring (in) staff, who will require access to central government unified communications infrastructure. At the time of budget approval the STC recognised the need for potential virement between budget headings and there may also be potential for Cookstown and Dungannon District Councils to contribute some funds from legacy Council budgets which had been previously earmarked for their own telephony upgrades.

On the proposal of Councillor Mallaghan, seconded by Councillor McGuigan the Committee RECOMMENDED the adoption the report.

## **PR11/14      Procurement of Mid Ulster Council Insurances**

The Lead Finance Officer, presented the Procurement of Mid Ulster Council Insurances report a copy of which had been previously circulated.

The Mid Ulster Council, although only legally obliged to maintain Employers Liability insurance (minimum limit of indemnity £10million), will seek to mitigate its exposure to insurable risks by maintaining appropriate insurances with reputable insurers of sound financial standing.

On the proposal of Councillor McGuigan, seconded by Councillor Mallaghan the Committee RECOMMENDED the adoption the report.

## **PR12/14      Managing Convergence of District Rates Consultation**

The Lead Finance Officer presented the Response to DFP Rating Policy Division's consultation on Managing Convergence of District Rates report a copy of which had been previously circulated.

The Lead Finance Officer advised that The NI Executive has agreed to allocate up to £30million to fund transitional arrangements to manage rates convergence and has developed an outline scheme which will adjust the district rate bills of those ratepayers facing increases as a result of RPA. Land & Property Services will implement the (final) scheme by applying a reduction to the domestic and non-domestic District Rates which will be used to calculate rates bills. It will not involve grants being made to Councils nor will it require Councils to strike more than one rate for their respective areas.

The final scheme will have regard to the proposed eligibility for Transitional Relief (TR) for rates convergence, including the need for thresholds and any other conditions to ensure that the scheme works effectively and stays within budget.

The final scheme will also have regard to the period over which relief will be given, e.g. 4 years, and the level of relief to be given in each year, e.g. Year 1 - 80%, Year 2 - 60%, Year 3 - 40% and Year 4 - 20%

Members AGREED that a further paper is issued on this matter with options on the implications to ratepayers clearly identified.

Members also AGREED that to expedite this matter that this topic is discussed at the next Party Reps meeting.

**PR13/14      Designation of Local Government Auditor**

Members NOTED receipt of a letter dated 18 June 2014 from the Department of the Environment regarding the Designation of Local Government Auditor.

**PR14/14      Department Funding for Change Managers/Change Management Teams**

Members NOTED receipt of a report from the Lead Finance Officer advising members that the Department of the Environment has offered Mid Ulster District Council funding for Change Managers/Change Management Teams for the period 2014/2015.

**PR15/14      Risk Register for the Transitional Period**

Members NOTED receipt of a report from the Lead Finance Officer advising members of the Risk Register for the Transitional Period.

**PR16/14      Business Cases for Redundancy Linked to Local Government Reform**

Members NOTED receipt of a letter dated 3 June 2014 from the Department of the Environment regarding the Local Government Act (NI) 2014: Application of Clause 123(4) – Severance.

*The meeting ended at 10.25 p.m.*

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Chair

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Date