

Minutes of Meeting of Policy and Resources Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 4 July 2019 in the Council Offices, Ballyronan Road, Magherafelt

Members Present

Councillor Molloy, Chair

Councillors Buchanan, Colvin, Doris, Elattar (7.04 pm), Forde, Gildernew, Hughes, McFlynn, S McGuigan, McKinney, McLean (7.25 pm), S McPeake, Totten

Officers in Attendance

Mr A Tohill, Chief Executive
Mrs Campbell, Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation
Mrs Canavan, Director of Organisational Development
Mr Cassells, Director of Environment and Property
Mr Kelso, Director of Public Health and Infrastructure
Ms McNally, Council Solicitor
Mr Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
Mr O'Hagan, Head of IT
Mr JJ Tohill, Director of Finance
Miss Thompson, Democratic Services Officer

Others in Attendance

Agenda Item 4 – Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

Les Allamby, Chief Commissioner
Eddie Rooney, Commissioner

The meeting commenced at 7.01 pm.

PR116/19 Apologies

Councillors Ashton and Quinn.

PR117/19 Declaration of Interest

The Chair reminded members of their responsibility with regard to declarations of interest.

Councillors Buchanan, Forde and Gildernew declared an interest in Agenda Item 6 – RDP Co-Operation Projects.

PR118/19 Chair's Business

None.

PR119/19 Deputation – Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

The Chair welcomed representatives from Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and invited them to make their presentation.

Mr Allamby stated that the Human Rights Commission are involved in community engagement days several times a year and prior to tonight's meeting they had met with Neighbourhood Police officers, had visited the Superstars Café in Cookstown and had met with STEP.

Councillor Elattar entered the meeting at 7.04 pm.

Mr Allamby continued with his presentation which focused on how the Commission was formed, its powers and functions, their strategic priorities and the current research, investigations and legal cases being undertaken by the Commission.

Councillor McLean entered the meeting at 7.25 pm.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy commented on the worthwhile engagements the Commission had been involved with today and opened the floor to Members questions.

Councillor S McPeake stated that the Human Rights Commission had an important remit but he was not sure how effective they were and it was good to hear an outline of their work. Councillor McPeake referred to minority language rights and asked what the Human Rights Commission does in terms of this, he stated that this Council does have a Language policy but that not all Councils have this.

Councillor S McGuigan referred to the range of issues being faced by ex-prisoners and stated that some of these issues have been brought to the attention of the Human Rights Commission but that they were not progressed.

Mr Allamby stated there was a framework convention and treaty bodies on minority languages and that there should be recognition of cultures. Mr Allamby stated there should be statutory protection that deals with Irish Language and Ulster Scots and that the Human Rights Commission have made a number of public statements in this regard. Mr Allamby stated that the Human Rights Commission have also done work on parades and flags and emblems.

Mr Allamby stated that if there had been instances in which someone felt the Human Rights Commission had not responded satisfactorily to issues brought to them they were happy to look at the matter again.

Councillor McKinney referred to this Council's logo which had Irish first and then English and no Ulster Scots. The Councillor also referred to road signage which part of the community felt was being imposed on them and asked what the position was on this.

Mr Allamby stated that the minority have rights and protections and still have the right to express their objection and that democratically signage should be inclusive of all. Mr Allamby highlighted that the Mid Ulster District has a minority ethnic population which goes beyond English, Irish and Ulster Scots.

Councillor McFlynn asked if the Human Rights Commission had any remit in relation to zero hours contracts or minimum hours contracts.

Mr Allamby stated that there are potentially some human rights issues at play with zero/minimum hours contracts but is more likely to be an employment legislation issue.

In response to Councillor Colvin's question Mr Allamby stated that the Commission has worked and engaged with all political parties in the past and will continue to do so in the future.

Councillor Colvin welcomed the opportunity to meet with the Human Rights Commission to discuss Irish Language and Ulster Scots, the Councillor stated he also welcomed that the Commission was addressing religious prosecution. Councillor Colvin referred to Abortion and stated he was proud that there was still some control on this issue in Northern Ireland.

Councillor Molloy thanked the Human Rights Commission for their attendance at tonight's meeting following which they withdrew from the meeting at 7.48 pm.

Matters for Decision

PR120/19 Request to Illuminate Council Property - July 2019

The Head of Democratic Services presented previously circulated report which considered requests to light up/illuminate Council's designated properties.

Proposed by Councillor McKinney
Seconded by Councillor McFlynn and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve the requests to light up Ranfurly House & Visitor Centre, Dungannon and Burnavon Arts & Cultural Centre, Cookstown from 2-8 September 2019 for Organ Donation Week and all designated properties on 21 November 2019 for World Pancreatic Cancer Day.

PR121/19 RDP Co-operation projects: International Appalachian Trail and Infrastructure Developments on Lough Neagh and its Waterways

The Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation presented previously circulated report which sought approval to take forward applications for Rural Development Programme funding under the Local Action Groups Co-Operation Scheme in which Council will act as lead partner with Mid Ulster Rural Development Partnership (the LAG) as co-applicant. The applications will relate to –

- The International Appalachian Trail – Ulster Section and,
- Infrastructure Developments on Lough Neagh and its Waterways.

Proposed by Councillor S McPeake
Seconded by Councillor S McGuigan and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to progress RDP Co-Operation Scheme funding applications on the International Appalachian Trail and Infrastructure Developments on Lough Neagh and its Waterways with Council acting as lead partner with Mid Ulster Rural Development Partnership as co-applicant. Council to provide match funding for the projects as detailed in the report and below –
International Appalachian Trail – £12,875
Infrastructure Developments on Lough Neagh and its Waterways - £38,500

The Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation left the meeting at 7.52 pm.

PR122/19 Full Fibre Northern Ireland Consortium (FFNI) Programme – Consortium Agreement

The Council Solicitor presented previously circulated report which sought approval for the Council to enter into a Consortium Agreement in respect of the Full Fibre Northern Ireland Consortium (FFNI) Programme with other Councils within the Consortium as listed within the report.

Councillor McKinney asked how the grant would be spent and what areas would benefit from the fund.

The Council Solicitor advised that the funding would improve fibre connectivity through the Council area.

Councillor S McPeake stated he was aware there were routes identified through Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt and asked how far off these routes improved connectivity could be achieved.

The Head of IT advised that the primary design of the scheme is to connect public sector buildings and that surrounding buildings will potentially be able to gain from this through their own supplier. The officer advised that the scheme will bring added speed to the NI network and help to reduce operating costs. Members were further advised that there were draft maps of routes which are subject to review and finalisation.

Proposed by Councillor Colvin
Seconded by Councillor S McGuigan and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to enter into a Consortium Agreement in respect of the Full Fibre Northern Ireland Consortium (FFNI) Programme with the other Councils identified at section 2.2 of report along with the terms set out in Appendix A of report.

PR123/19 Release of Burden on Non-Council owned Land

The Council Solicitor presented previously circulated report which sought approval to release a burden registered against non-Council owned lands situated at 5 Sixtowns Road, Draperstown and registered in Land Registry under Folio 16991, County Londonderry.

Proposed by Councillor McLean
Seconded by Councillor S McPeake and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to agree to release the burden registered against the lands registered in Land Registry under Folio 16991, County Londonderry and that the Council enters into any agreement or deed as appropriate to effect said release.

Matters for Information

PR124/19 Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on Thursday 6 June 2019

Members noted Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on Thursday 6 June 2019.

PR125/19 Corporate Plan 2020-2023: Timetable

Members noted previously circulated report which detailed the draft timetable for the development of the Council's new Corporate Plan 2020-2023.

P126/19 Organisational Development Service Improvement Plan 2019-2020

Members noted previously circulated report which detailed Organisational Development Service Improvement Plan for 2019-2020.

P127/19 Democratic Services Service Improvement Plan 2019-2020

Members noted previously circulated report which detailed Democratic Services Service Improvement Plan for 2019-2020.

P128/19 IT Service Improvement Plan 2019-2020

Members noted previously circulated report which detailed IT Service Improvement Plan for 2019-2020.

Local Government (NI) Act 2014 – Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor Buchanan
Seconded by Councillor S McGuigan and

Resolved In accordance with Section 42, Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 that Members of the public be asked to withdraw from the meeting whilst Members consider items PR129/19 to PR139/19.

Matters for Decision

PR129/19 Staffing Matters for Decision
PR130/19 Weekend Street Cleansing Review Project
PR131/19 Environmental Services – Supervision of Weekend Work
PR132/19 Estates Strategy
PR133/19 Tender Award: Appointment of Newspaper/Newspaper Group to carry weekly planning advertisements
PR134/19 Seamus Heaney HomePlace Trails Projects: Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 – Lease and Purchase of various Lands
PR135/19 Development Opportunity
PR136/19 Development Site – Dungannon

Matters for Information

PR137/19 Confidential Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on Thursday 6 June 2019
PR138/19 Staffing Matters for Information
PR139/19 Contracts and DAC

PR140/19 Duration of Meeting

The commenced at 7pm and concluded at 9.25 pm.

Chair _____

Date _____