

Minutes of Meeting of Policy and Resources Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 8 April 2021 in the Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon and by Virtual Means

Members Present

Councillor Quinn, Chair

Councillors, Buchanan*, Cuddy*, Doris*, Elattar*, Forde*, Gildernew*, McFlynn*, S McGuigan*, McKinney, McLean*, S McPeake*, Molloy*, Totten*

Officers in Attendance

Mr McCreesh, Chief Executive
Mr Cassells, Director of Environment & Property Services
Ms Donnelly**, Council Solicitor
Mrs Dyson**, Head of Human Resources
Mr Kelso**, Director of Public Health & Infrastructure
Mr Moffett**, Head of Democratic Services
Mr O'Hagan, Head of ICT
Mr Tohill, Director of Finance
Miss Thompson, Democratic Services Officer

Others in Attendance

Councillor Burton***

* Denotes members present in remote attendance

** Denotes Officers present by remote means

*** Denotes others present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7.04 pm.

The Chair, Councillor Quinn welcomed everyone to the meeting and those watching the meeting through the Live Broadcast. Councillor Quinn in introducing the meeting detailed the operational arrangements for transacting the business of the committee in the chamber and by virtual means, by referring to Annex A to this minute.

PR068/21 Apologies

Councillors Ashton and Hughes and Director of Organisational Development.

PR069/21 Declarations of Interest

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

PR070/21 Chair's Business

None.

Matters for Decision

PR071/21 Ballysaggart Lough Retaining Wall Remedial Works

The Director of Environment and Property presented previously circulated report which sought approval for initial capital funding to carry out the necessary replacement and reinstatement works of the retaining wall structure at Ballysaggart Lough following its collapse mid-February 2021.

Councillor Gildernew commented that he felt almost £10k for a short structural engineer's report was ridiculous.

The Director of Environment and Property advised that the £9,600 was not for the structural engineer's report but for the works identified at 3.2 of the report and further to this the actual cost of repairs.

Councillor Cuddy stated that Ballysaggart Lough was a popular attraction and asked that officers look at the option of increasing parking at this site as now would be an opportune time to add such works to the quotation.

The Director of Environment and Property agreed to look at the option of providing additional parking at Ballysaggart Lough.

Proposed by Councillor Molloy
Seconded by Councillor McKinney and

- Resolved** That it be recommended to Council –
- To approve an initial release of £50,000 of capital funding for the unforeseen works required at Ballysaggart Lough, subject to the outcome of the Tender Exercise.
 - To consider options to provide additional parking at the Ballysaggart Lough site.

PR072/21 Revised Equality Scheme, Disability Action Plan and Equality Action Plan (2021-2026)

The Head of Democratic Services presented previously circulated report which provided the updated final Equality Scheme (2021-2026), Disability Action Plan (2021-2026) and Equality Action Plan (2021-2026) completed following a period of public consultation and commentary/feedback incorporated in the final documentation.

Proposed by Councillor Gildernew
Seconded by Councillor Doris and

- Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to approve the final versions of the Equality Scheme, Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan as set out at Appendix A to C of report.

PR073/21 Council & Committee Meeting Schedule: 2021-2022

The Head of Democratic Services presented previously circulated report which sought approval for the June 2021- June 2022 Committee and Council Meeting Schedule.

Councillor McKinney proposed the meeting schedule as tabled to include adding a Council meeting for August. Councillor McKinney asked when meetings would return to being conducted fully around the table.

The Chief Executive advised that meetings are conducted in line with the directives provided by the Executive and that as directives are lifted Council will move towards having more people back in a room for a meeting.

The Director of Finance asked for some flexibility in relation to the date proposed for the September Audit Committee as this meeting will more likely have to move to October in line with the Audit Office presenting their Report to Those Charged with Governance.

Councillor McLean proposed the meeting schedule as circulated with the following two caveats –

- To add a date for a Council meeting in August, subject to need
- To confirm date for Autumn Audit meeting (possibility of meeting moving from September to October)

Councillor S McGuigan seconded Councillor McLean's proposal.

- Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to approve the Council and Committee Meeting Schedule for the period June 2021- June 2022 subject to -
- Date for Council meeting in August to be reserved with the proviso that the Council may, prior to the reserved date, decide to not convene a meeting in August
 - Date for Autumn Audit meeting to be confirmed in due course (initial proposed date of 21st September to be retained on the proviso that the Council may, having regard to advice from the officers, seek to either substitute or supplement that meeting with a meeting in October in order to satisfy local government audit requirements)

PR074/21 Requests to Illuminate Council Property: April 2021

The Head of Democratic Services presented previously circulated report which considered requests received to illuminate/light up the Council's three designated properties to raise awareness of and mark;

- Centenary of Northern Ireland - May 2021 (as referred from March Council)
- Action for Brain Injury Week - May 2021
- Organ Donation Week - September 2021
- Baby Loss Awareness Day - October 2021

Councillor McKinney proposed all four requests to illuminate designated Council buildings.

Councillor Cuddy seconded Councillor McKinney's proposal.

Councillor Molloy stated that the request to mark the Centenary of Northern Ireland does not fall within Council policy. Councillor Molloy stated it was a dark day for Ireland when it was partitioned against the wishes of the majority of people. The Councillor stated that lighting up the buildings to mark the Centenary goes against what he would aspire to in a reunited Ireland and he would be voting against such a proposal. Councillor Molloy proposed lighting up the buildings to mark Action for Brain Injury Week, Organ Donation Week and Baby Loss Awareness Day and not to illuminate buildings to mark the Centenary of Northern Ireland as it does not fall within Council policy.

Councillor Elattar seconded Councillor Molloy's proposal.

Councillor McLean stated that history cannot be rewritten and whether we agree or disagree is irrelevant the fact is that it happened and the request asks that the day be marked. Councillor McLean stated he agreed with Councillor McKinney's proposal to agree to all the requests set out in the report and asked those within Council who were not in agreement with the proposal to allow the Unionist section of the community to have this acknowledgement.

Councillor Doris stated that she agreed with Councillor Molloy's proposal and whilst she understood the Centenary was important for Unionists she stated it was a step too far to think that she could celebrate the beginning of a Protestant state for Protestant people that saw people discriminated against for years. Councillor Doris stated that partition has failed everyone no matter what side they are on, has caused economic devastation and many social issues which are still prevalent today.

Councillor McLean stated that neither himself or Councillors Cuddy and McKinney had mentioned celebrations and that the report refers to marking the Centenary of Northern Ireland and to acknowledge history. Councillor McLean stated that the comments from the Nationalist/Republican side of Council tonight were in contradiction to a previous willingness to share history and challenged those people to allow the people of Mid Ulster to mark the Centenary of Northern Ireland.

Councillor Cuddy stated he understood the point of view taken by Sinn Féin however he thought the world had moved forward. Councillor Cuddy stated that Northern Ireland is not a failed state and has been good to everyone. The Councillor stated that this request was to mark an anniversary in the middle of a decade of anniversaries. Councillor Cuddy asked if Council buildings were lit to mark St Patrick's day.

Councillor Doris stated that she was not saying the Centenary could not be marked by the Unionist community but that the lighting of buildings for the people she represents is a step too far. Councillor Doris stated there were many anniversaries for which Sinn Féin don't ask for buildings to be lit up. The Councillor also felt that to

say Northern Ireland has been good to people was incorrect and referred to people's wages here compared to the Republic of Ireland and UK.

Councillor S McPeake stated he brought a lengthy motion to Council on this issue in December and that Unionists did not give it the time of day at that time. Councillor S McPeake stated that proposals were being considered on how to mark centenaries, that a workshop had taken place at which sensitive issues were discussed and that he would suggest that Members await the outworkings of these discussions and proposals to be brought forward. The Councillor stated that the proposal tonight falls outside Council policy and that he would be voting against lighting up buildings to mark the Centenary of Northern Ireland given its history.

Councillor Cuddy asked if Council buildings were lit for St Patrick's day as this would also fall outside policy if they were.

The Head of Democratic Services advised that buildings were not illuminated for St Patrick's Day this year or any other year under the term of Mid Ulster Council.

Members voted on Councillor McKinney's proposal –

For – 5

Against – 9

Members voted on Councillor Molloy's proposal –

For – 9

Against – 3

Abstained – 2

The Chair, Councillor Quinn declared Councillor Molloy's proposal carried.

Councillor McKinney stated he had no issue with the other three requests to light up buildings but that he did have difficulty with one being left out. The Councillor stated he was also disappointed that history has not moved on and that Nationalist and Republican Councillors are going to keep dragging Mid Ulster Council into the gutter. Councillor McKinney referred to comments on how the country is deprived and stated that in Northern Ireland there was a healthcare system which was free of charge and that Covid vaccinations were progressing well and that similar could not be said of the Republic of Ireland. Councillor McKinney stated that it saddened him that leadership cannot be shown and that Council has to keep dragging itself back.

The Chair, Councillor Quinn stated he objected to Councillor McKinney's comments in relation to dragging the Council into the gutter and that Mid Ulster Council has led the way. The Chair stated that the proposal is not about one country versus the other and there was not a Councillor within Council who was not trying to improve the lives of everyone in the Council area.

Councillor McKinney stated he did not refer to one country against the other.

- Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to light up designated Council properties to mark -
- Action for Brain Injury Week from 17-23 May 2021;
 - Organ Donation Week from 20-24 September 2021; and
 - Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day on 15 October 2021.

PR075/21 Member Services

No issues.

Matters for Information

PR076/21 Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 4 March 2021

Members noted Policy and Resources Committee Minutes of Meeting held on 4 March 2021.

PR077/21 Local Government Staff Commission and National Association of Councillors: 2020-2021 Annual Subscriptions

Members noted previously circulated report which provided update on correspondence received from the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC) and the National Association for Councillors (NAC) on annual contributions payable for 2021-22.

Live broadcast ended at 7.48 pm.

Local Government (NI) Act 2014 – Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor McKinney
Seconded by Councillor Elattar 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 Member consider items PR078/21 to PR087/21.

Matters for Decision

- PR078/21 Staff Matter for Decision
PR079/21 Lands at Drumcoo
PR080/21 Gortgonis Leisure & Community Health & Well Being Hub

Matters for Information

- PR081/21 Confidential Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on 4 March 2021
PR082/21 Staff Matters for Information
PR083/21 Organisational Review

PR084/21 Financial Update
PR085/21 Contracts and DAC
PR086/21 Letting of Agricultural Lands at Cabin Wood, Tullywiggan
Road, Cookstown
PR087/21 Relocation of Staff

PR088/21 Duration of Meeting

The meeting commenced at 7 pm and concluded at 8.31 pm.

Chair _____

Date _____

Annex A – Introductory Remarks from the Chairperson

Good evening and welcome to the Council's [Policy & Resources/Environment/Development] Committee in the Chamber, [Dungannon/Magherafelt] and virtually.

I specifically welcome the public watching us through the Live Broadcast. The Live Broadcast will run for the period of our Open Business but will end just before we move into Confidential Business. I let you know before this happens.

Just some housekeeping before we commence. Can I remind you:-

- If you have joined the meeting remotely please keep your audio on mute unless invited to speak and then turn it off when finished speaking
- Keep your video on at all times, unless you have bandwidth or internet connection issues, where you are advised to try turning your video off
- If you wish to speak please raise your hand in the meeting or on screen and keep raised until observed by an Officer or myself
- Should we need to take a vote this evening I will ask each member to confirm whether they are for or against the proposal or abstaining
- When invited to speak please introduce yourself by name to the meeting
- For any member attending remotely, if you declare an interest in an item, please turn off your video and keep your audio on mute for the duration of the item
- If referring to a specific report please reference the report, page or slide being referred to
- Lastly, I remind the public and press that taking photographs of proceedings or using any means to enable anyone not present to see or hear proceedings, or making a simultaneous oral report of the proceedings are not permitted

Thank you and we will now move to the first item on the agenda - apologies and then roll call of all other Members in attendance.