

Minutes of Meeting of Mid Ulster District Council held on Monday 10 February 2020 in the Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon

Members Present: Councillor Kearny (Chair)

Councillors Ashton, Bell, Black, Brown, Buchanan, Burton, Clarke, Colvin, Corey, Cuddy, Cuthbertson, Doris (7.11pm), Elattar, Forde, Gildernew, Glasgow, Graham, Hughes, Kerr, Mallaghan, N McAleer, S McAleer, McFlynn, B McGuigan, S McGuigan, McKinney, McLean, McNamee, D McPeake, S McPeake, Milne, Molloy, Monteith, Quinn, Robinson, Totten and Wilson

Officers in Attendance: Mr A Tohill, Chief Executive
Ms Campbell, Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation
Ms Canavan, Director of Organisational Development
Mr Cassells, Director of Environment and Property
Mr Kelso, Director of Public Health and Infrastructure
Mr McCreesh, Director of Business and Communities
Ms Mezza, Head of Communications
Mr Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
Mr JJ Tohill, Director of Finance
Mrs Forde, Member Support Officer

The meeting commenced at 7 pm.

SC001/20 Apologies

Councillors Mullen and O'Neill

SC002/20 Declarations of Interest

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

SC003/20 Chair's Business

Councillor Mallaghan advised that following notification from the Chief Electoral Officer on Friday 7 February 2020 that Councillor Niall McAleer had replaced former councillor, Ronan McGinley and welcomed him to the meeting. Councillor Mallaghan nominated Councillor N McAleer to the Environment Committee and the Audit Committee. Councillor Mallaghan nominated Councillor B McGuigan to the Chair of Audit Committee for the remainder of the year.

The Chair, Councillor Kearney welcomed Councillor N McAleer.

Councillor S McGuigan advised that both he and Councillor Gildernew had attended a recent meeting of the A5/N2 Cross Border Group at which it had been recommended that each Council send a letter regarding the A5 Dual Carriageway

Scheme Public Inquiry 2020 to advise that they are unanimous in their support for progressing the development of the A5 Western Transport Corridor.

Proposed by Councillor S McGuigan
Seconded by Councillor Gildernew and

Resolved That the Council send a letter of support for progressing the development of the A5 Western Transport Corridor to the Planning Appeals Commission as aforementioned.

Matters for Decision

SC004/20 Minimum Revenue Provision Policy

The Director of Finance drew attention to the previously circulated report regarding the 2020/2021 Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and sought approval that the policy as detailed for year 2019/20 be retained for the incoming year.

Proposed by Councillor Mallaghan
Seconded by Councillor S McGuigan and

Resolved That the 2019/19 Minimum Revenue Provision Policy be amended as described in the previously circulated report and adopted as Council's Minimum Revenue Provision Policy for year 2020/21.

SC005/20 Robustness of the Estimates

The Director of Finance, on behalf of the Chief Executive, referred to the previously circulated report on the robustness of the Rate Estimates for 2020/21 and drew attention to key issues outlined within the report.

Proposed by Councillor McLean
Seconded by Councillor B McGuigan and

Resolved That the report and associated comments of the Director of Finance in relation to the robustness of the Rate estimates be noted

SC006/20 Adequacy of Council's Reserves for 2020-21

The Director of Finance, on behalf of the Chief Executive, referred to the previously circulated report on the adequacy of Council's reserves drawing attention to the key issues outlined in the report.

Proposed by Councillor M Quinn
Seconded by Councillor Gildernew

Resolved That Members note the report Adequacy of Council's Reserves for 2020/2021.

SC007/20 Estimates of Income and Expenditure for financial year 1 April 2020

The Director of Finance drew attention to the previously circulated report regarding the Estimate of Income and Expenditure for financial year 2020/2021. He referred to previous Committee and party group meetings held in recent weeks to explain the Rate estimates' process and to discuss financial pressures, etc facing Council in 2020/21. The Director highlighted that the officers had been challenged at the recent meeting of Policy and Resources Committee to endeavour to explore the potential for further savings with a view to reducing the (then) officer recommendation that Council strike a district domestic Rate, which would represent a 3.95% increase from the previous year. He further advised that, having done this, the officers had identified an additional £290k of savings, which could be applied to reduce the officers' recommended 3.95% Rate increase. If Council accepted the officers' recommendation to recognise these additional savings, the officers would now recommend that Council confirm the revised Rate estimates and strike a district domestic Rate of 0.3373, which would reflect a 3.24% increase in the district domestic Rate from the previous year.

Councillor Mallaghan thanked the senior management team for their diligence through the various meetings in which Members had challenged them to ensure there was enough money to deliver Council services and provide sufficient resources to enable Council to deliver upon its ambitious plans.

Proposed by Councillor Mallaghan
Seconded by Councillor S McPeake and

That Council accept the officers' recommendation to recognise the additional £290,000 savings, and approve the revised expenditure, which would result in Council's district domestic Rate being 0.3373 thereby reflecting a 3.24% increase in the district domestic Rate.

Councillor McLean said that it was his understanding that, between the legacy Magherafelt District Council and the new Council, he was the longest serving Member. He further stated that this year's process was the most robust process he had been through when striking a Rate. He put on record the hard work and diligence the senior management team had applied to the process and their openness in making practically everything possible available to the Members to give them every opportunity to arrive at a robust figure for Council's 2020/21 projected expenditure and associated district domestic and non-domestic Rates. Councillor McLean concluded by complimenting the robustness of the Rate estimates process.

Councillor Wilson concurred with previous comments and stated that striking an affordable Rate was not an easy decision for Council because, as well as needing to provide services, Council must not stand still and need to invest accordingly. He concurred with the recommended Rate increase and also complimented the robustness of the process.

Councillor Quinn concurred with previous speakers also and thanked the senior officers for both their availability and engagement in working through the process.

The Chair, Councillor Kearney called for a vote on the proposal

For	34
Against	0
Abstained	3

Resolved That Council strike a district domestic Rate of 0.3373 reflecting a 3.24% increase in the district domestic Rate and, in particular, in accordance with the relevant legislation:

- (1) Strike non-domestic and domestic Rates of 23.4749 and 0.3373 respectively, which will reflect a 4.57% decrease and 3.24% increase respectively from the 2019/20 district Rates;
- (2) Authorise the associated expenditure of £45,999,245
- (3) Authorise the Chief Executive to vire such amounts between budget headings as he deems necessary to secure Council's objectives in 2020/21.

Councillor Doris entered the meeting at 7.11pm

The press and public withdrew from the meeting at 7.11 pm

Items restricted in accordance with Section 42, Part 1 of Local Government (NI) Act 2014 - Confidential Business

Resolved That the meeting move into confidential business

SC009/20 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7.00 pm and ended at 7.15pm

Chair _____

Date _____