

Minutes of Meeting of the Development Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Wednesday 8 July 2015 in the Council Offices, Ballyronan Road, Magherafelt

Members Present

Councillor Monteith, In the Chair

Councillors Clarke, Elattar, McAleer, McEldowney, McNamee, Molloy, T Quinn, J Shiels and Wilson

Officers in Attendance

Ms Campbell, Director of Culture and Leisure
Mr McCreesh, Director of Business and Communities
Mr Browne, Head of Tourism
Mr Glavin, Head of Leisure
Mr Hill, Head of Parks
Ms Linney, Head of Community Services
Mr McCance, Head of Culture and Arts
Ms McKeown, Head of Economic Development
Mrs Forde, Member Support Officer

Other in Attendance

Agenda Item 3: SGN on Gas to the West

Mr McFarlane, Project Engineer, Mutual Energy
Mr O'Malley, Director, SGN Natural Gas
Mr Potter, Special Projects Manager, SGN

Agenda Item 4: Superstars Club, Cookstown

Mrs McAvoy

The meeting commenced at 7pm

D122/15 Apologies

Chair of Development Committee, Councillor Burton, Councillors Forde, G Shiels and C O'Neill

D123/15 Declaration of Interests

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

Councillor McEldowney declared an interest in Lough Neagh Partnership

Councillor McAleer declared an interest in the Local Action Group

Councillor Clarke declared an interest in Broughderg Development Association

Councillor Wilson declared an interest in Superstars Club and Economic Development business item

Director of Business and Communities declared an interest in Superstars

D124/15 SGN on Gas to the West

The Chair, Councillor Monteith welcomed Messrs McFarlane, O'Malley and Potter to the meeting.

Mr McFarlane gave an overview of the Gas to the West project making reference to the regulated 40 year licence application process for transmission, the connected bid between SGN and Mutual Energy, the proposal to supply gas to eight towns namely Dungannon, Coalisland, Cookstown, Magherafelt, Omagh, Enniskillen, Derrylin and Strabane and the project investment cost of £250m.

Councillor Wilson left the meeting at 7.09pm and returned at 7.11pm.

Mr McFarlane drew attention to the regulatory timeline together with the operational timeline which would see Gas to the West in Strabane by 2016 and in other aforementioned towns by 2017. Making reference to planning implications it was noted that the planning application would be regionally significant, there would be environmental impact assessments, best route options considered and the pre application process would be in two stages with consultation events in each Council area. Attention was drawn to the preferred route.

Councillor Wilson left the meeting at 7.15pm.

Mr O'Malley outlined the economic benefits of the project highlighting that some 40,000 customers would benefit from natural gas, 17,500 of whom would be in Mid Ulster Council area. It was noted that the implementation of the project would support existing and new businesses, create some 200 construction jobs and 20 permanent jobs on its conclusion.

In response to a question from Councillor J Shiels Mr O'Malley advised that all towns contained in the project should have gas by 2017. Mr Potter advised that it may take a decade to have full infrastructure in place to provide gas to towns outside of the project.

Councillor Clarke asked if major industries could be linked into the project to which Mr O'Malley advised that companies would have to make the approach.

Councillor Monteith stated that the three main towns within Mid Ulster would be undergoing public realm schemes and asked if work could be co-ordinated so that schemes were not being completed for roads to be dug up again. Mr McFarlane advised that they had sought such information as they did not want to disrupt communities. Mr Potter advised that although the exact route had not been defined it may be possible to do some work in advance.

The Chair, Councillor Monteith thanked the representatives for the presentation and they withdrew from the meeting.

D125/15 Superstars Club, Cookstown

The Chair, Councillor Monteith welcomed Ms May McEvoy, Superstars Club. Mrs McEvoy made a presentation making reference to the undernoted:

- Founded in 2005 Superstars was a dynamic, caring, innovative organisation

which is purely and simply, committed to the enhancement and advancement of the lives of people with learning difficulties.

- Members come from Castlecaulfield, Dungannon, Coalisland, Cookstown, Ardboe, Stewartstown, Ballyronan, Magherafelt and Tobermore.
- Ever growing population of special people, evidenced by the growth of enrolment in two special schools, Kilronan and Sperrinview. Both these schools have seen almost a 300% increase in registration over the past 20 years. The demand transfers into the community when these young people leave school and begs the question “How can the needs of these special people be met in our local areas.”
- Bamford Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability, advocates the collaboration of statutory bodies and social partners:
 - “To identify and tackle factors which can contribute to social exclusion.”
 - “To undertake positive initiatives to improve and enhance the life and circumstances of the most deprived and marginalised people in the community.”
- Superstars aims to address the lack of post school social and leisure provision for people with learning difficulties and in the past decade has grown from strength to strength, offers a wide range of clubs and activities together with a Social Enterprise in centre of Cookstown.
- Its café operates as a social enterprise with up to 20 young people with learning difficulties training each week assisted by volunteers. A case study of the Scheme has been circulated as an example of success throughout the country and assists in providing income for other activities.
- Wages in the past have been part funded by the Office for Disability Issues, UK Government as avid supporters of the project.

Mrs McEvoy stressed the importance of equal opportunities for people with learning difficulties and sought Council support to provide same for training and employment for people with learning difficulties throughout the Mid Ulster area and in assisting Superstars in developing further social enterprise opportunities. Mrs McEvoy showed a short film promoting the social enterprise and highlighting how other businesses pledged support.

The Chair, Councillor Monteith commended Mrs McAvoy on the work of Superstars and stated that they were doing a fantastic job, that the project was very worthwhile and that Council should be leading by example in their support.

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council that a meeting be scheduled with Superstars to explore opportunities of support

D126/15 Receive and confirm minutes of the Development Committee meeting held on Thursday 11 June 2015

Proposed by Councillor Clarke
Seconded by Councillor J Shiels and

Resolved That the minutes of the meeting of the Development Committee held on Thursday 11 June 2015 (items D99/15 to D114/15 & D121/15), were considered and signed as accurate and correct

Matters for Decision

D127/15 Good Relations Plan

The Chair, Councillor Monteith drew attention to the previously circulated report to seek approval for the Good Relations Plan 2015-2016 and sought Members comments.

The Head of Community Development advised that the Good Relations Plan 2015-2016 had been presented to the Good Relations Working Group, that Council was awaiting a letter of confirmation on funding from OFMDFM and in the interim spend was being monitored.

In response to query from Councillor J Shiels regarding 'shared space accessible to all' the Head of Community Development advised that the remit is to ensure that there is a building within communities that everyone feels comfortable using for example, the concept such as Gortalowry House, Cookstown.

Proposed by Councillor McNamee
Seconded by Councillor T Quinn and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council that the Good Relations Plan 2015-2016 detailed in the report is approved

D128/15 Picnic in the Park

The Chair, Councillor Monteith drew attention to the previously circulated report to provide an update on 'Picnic in the Park', an event planned to celebrate the re-opening of Dungannon Park on 31 August 2015.

The Head of Tourism advised that the event, which has a budget of £25k, was being organised to celebrate recent park renovations together with the new Mid Ulster District Council and it was hoped to attract 5000 people to the one day event. It was noted that together with live music, workshops and family entertainment, professional kite teams would be the unique selling point.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council that approval is granted for the delivery of the proposed Picnic in the Park event on 31 August 2015 with delivery cost at £25k

Declaration of Interest

Councillors Clarke, McEldowney and Wilson declared an interest in the Local Action Group (LAG)

D129/15 Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2014-2020

The Chair, Councillor Monteith drew attention to the previously circulated report to provide an update on the LAG formation process and status of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020. The Director of Business and Communities drew attention to the name of the LAG advising that it would be known as Mid Ulster Rural Development Partnership. He also highlighted that approval was being sought to engage independent facilitation to assist the LAG with the consultation engagement and identification of priorities for its rural strategy costs of which would be reimbursed.

Proposed by Councillor Elattar
Seconded by Councillor J Shiels and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council that in relation to LAG strategy development, the use of independent facilitation to assist the LAG with consultation engagement and identification of priorities for its local rural strategy be sought. Facilitator costs to be reimbursed from the animation SLA budget from DARD although it was noted that appointment would be subject to DARD acceptance of the use of facilitators as an eligible cost within the scope of the animation SLA.

D130/15 Town Centre Update Report

The Chair, Councillor Monteith drew attention to the previously circulated report which

- (i) Provided an update on progress on the Mid Ulster Town Centre Action Plan 2015/16;
- (ii) Requested permission from members to tender for a digital marketing/ecommerce programme for town centre businesses as included in the Mid Ulster Town Centre Action Plan 2015/16;
- (iii) Provided an update on the annual summer event to be held in Dungannon town centre on Saturday 15th August 2015; and
- (iv) An evaluation report on Cookstown Continental market held in May,

The Head of Economic Development drew attention to the need for the Digital Marketing/E-commerce programme advising that in every £5 spent £1 was spent online thus awareness for traders was essential and approval to procure for a consultant was sought.

Councillor Wilson stated that the ecommerce event was a great idea, that the proposed town centre shop improvement scheme should be promoted as it had been very successful in Cookstown in the past and that the 'Battle of the Buskers' was a

superb idea for Dungannon town centre event and commended the Dungannon Traders Association for contributing towards costs.

Councillor McNamee sought clarity on how the town centre shop improvement scheme would be distributed across the main towns. The Head of Economic Development stated that criteria would have to be established and grants awarded on merit of application as thresholds could not be set for towns. The Officer further advised that the scheme applied to both internal and external works and it was anticipated that there would be high demand but in the event that the scheme was oversubscribed it may be programmed in for future years.

Councillor McNamee asked if those who had not availed of the shop improvement scheme in the past would have preference over those who had. The Head of Economic Development advised that criteria would have to be established but shops who had availed before may well apply for an internal improvement as the prior scheme was just external works.

Councillor Wilson commended staff on the Continental Market which had improved year on year.

Councillor Molloy welcomed the 'Battle of the Buskers' event for Dungannon town centre stating that the duration of the public realm works had been a miserable time for traders.

Proposed by Councillor McNamee
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council that

- (i) Members note progress is being made on the Mid Ulster Town Centre Action Plan 2015-2016;
- (ii) Approval be granted to place a public tender advertisement in the press to recruit a suitably qualified organisation to deliver a digital/ecommerce programme to town centre businesses in the five towns in Mid Ulster;
- (iii) Members note details of the 'Battle of the Buskers' Summer event in Dungannon town centre in August; and
- (iv) Members note the final evaluation report on Cookstown Continental Market held in May.

D131/15 Economic Development Report

The Chair, Councillor Monteith drew attention to the previously circulated report which provided an update on

- (i) Regional Start Up Initiative;
- (ii) Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) Telecoms Strategy Consultation 2015-2017; and
- (iii) Cessation of Department of Education Funding for Business Education Partnerships.

The Head of Economic Development advised that the DETI Telecoms Strategy Consultation response was scheduled to close on 31 July and thus officers would prepare a draft response which would be circulated to Members for comment, the comments would then be incorporated into the response prior to submission. The Officer also drew attention to the letter received from the Minister of Education regarding the cessation of funding to Business Education.

Proposed by Councillor J Shiels
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council that

- (i) Progress be noted on the Regional Start Initiative;
- (ii) Approval be granted for officers to prepare draft response to DETI Telecoms Strategy 2015-2017 and issue to Members to review/comment in advance of submitting the final response to DETI by 31 July 2015.
- (iii) Response received from Minister of Education regarding the cessation of funding to Business Education Partnerships be noted.

D132/15 Lough Neagh Partnership – Core Funding

The Chair, Councillor Monteith drew attention to the previously circulated report concerning a request from Lough Neagh Partnership for core funding for 2015/16 and to review the operational plan for delivery of the destination management plan and a work plan for the Lough Neagh Partnership.

The Head of Tourism drew members attention to the request for funding of £25k advising that in previous years the former councils collectively would have contributed £34,500 thus there was a significant saving. It was further noted that the group were currently applying for Heritage Lottery funding.

In response to Councillor Clarke's queries regarding the Tyrone & Sperrins Destination Joint Working Group the Director of Business and Communities advised that a verbal report would be provided as soon as officers had ascertained the current position.

Proposed by Councillor Clarke
Seconded by Councillor J Shiels and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council that

- (i) Lough Neagh Partnership be granted £25k as requested subject to funding being secured from all five Councils surrounding the Lough; and
- (ii) Lough Neagh Partnership submit a quarterly update to Council.

D133/15 The Clans Awaken 2016

The Chair, Councillor Monteith drew attention to the previously circulated report regarding the delivery of a festival of activity to take place between 17 June and 25 June 2016 under the working title of 'The Clans Awaken 2016'. It was noted that the cross departmental event would coincide with the official opening of Tullyhoge Fort development and the 400th anniversary of the death of Hugh O'Neill, the last chieftain to be inaugurated at Tullaghoge Fort, 3rd Baron of Dungannon and 2nd Earl of Tyrone.

The Head of Culture and Arts advised that the project had been worked up over a number of years since the 2007 commemorations of the Flight of the Earls and that funding was identified across good relations £20k, arts and culture £15k, events and tourism £15k and it was hoped to attain external funding to offset some costs.

Councillor T Quinn stated that the incoming year would mark a number of important anniversaries and that he welcomed the early programme preparation.

Councillor Wilson stating that he was very supportive of the programme asked if there would be a living history and educational tour incorporated into it. The Head of Culture and Arts stated there would be. In relation to a point queried by Councillor McNamee on clan games, the Head of Culture and Arts advised that the final programme had not been decided but rugby and football and a 'knock out event' had been discussed.

Proposed by Councillor T Quinn
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council that approval is granted to progress the delivery of the 'Clans Awaken Event' in 2016 with allocated budget from Good Relations £20k, Arts and Culture £15k and Events and Tourism £15k.

Declaration of Interest

Councillor Monteith declared an interest in Ballysaggart Area Community Association

D134/15 Ballysaggart Lough, Dungannon

The Chair, Councillor Monteith drew attention to the previously circulated report on the development proposals for Ballysaggart Lough. The Head of Parks outlined the recommendations and advised that prior to any significant work being done on the lake that an Environmental Impact Assessment would have to be completed.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council that approval is granted to

- (i) Complete initial improvements to visitor facilities and signage at a cost of £5k;
- (ii) Establish a Ballysaggart Project Steering Group; and
- (iii) Create a Ballysaggart Lough Management Plan.

D135/15 Brocagh & District Regeneration Group

The Chair, Councillor Monteith drew attention to the previously circulated report regarding Brocagh & District Regeneration Group's request that Council pay the legal costs associated to their lease agreement with Council. The Head of Parks advised that the lease was in relation to a transfer of lands to the former Dungannon Council for development of play facilities that had now been completed on site.

The Head of Parks sought approval for Council to pay the legal fees to the value of £750 plus VAT and outlay, if any, occurred to Brocagh & District Regeneration Group.

Councillor Wilson expressed concern that a precedent could be set if Council agreed to incur these fees and stated that the group had not requested this at the outset of the agreement.

Councillor Molloy sought clarity as to whether this had been the practice in the former Dungannon Council in the past. Responding the Head of Parks advised that much of the ground in the past for play areas had come from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and these costs would have been covered by them and that he had no knowledge of such circumstances with community groups.

Councillor J Shiels posed the question as to what would happen if Council went back and said no, would the agreement be revoked. The Head of Parks said the lease agreement was in place. Councillor J Shiels proposed that Council refuse to pay the legal fees.

Councillor McNamee suggested that Officers investigate the situation and establish if there is a reason why Council should pay the legal costs, remarking that paying of insurance for schemes in the past also had to be stopped due to precedents being set. Councillor Wilson stated that he would be in agreement to this as Council must be careful.

The Chair, Councillor Monteith stated that a report should be brought to Committee regarding the request of Brocagh & District Regeneration Group.

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council that a report be brought to September Committee regarding the request from Brocagh & District Regeneration Group

D136/15 Ballyronan Marina and Battery Harbour

The Chair, Councillor Monteith drew attention to the previously circulated report seeking approval to invite public tenders for the necessary works to comply with

Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulation (NI) 2009 at Ballyronan Marina and Battery Harbour.

The Head of Parks advised that the survey referred to in 2.1 of the report should read 2013. He further advised that as outlined in the report, initial work had been carried out but it did not meet the approval of NI Water. He stated that it was recommended that tenders be sought to appoint a suitably qualified company/contractor to carry out the prescribed works as per the specification in accordance with the requirements of Water Supply (Fittings) Regulation (NI) 2009 for works to be completed at both Ballyronan marina and Battery Harbour. It was noted that the estimated value of the contract would be £30k.

Councillor Clarke stated that the facility was important to the Council area and that he would propose for the works to be completed.

Councillor Wilson expressed concern regarding the appointment of the consultants and sought clarity as to whether they had been appointed following a procurement exercise or on the recommendation of NI Water. He urged caution regarding the matter.

The Chair, Councillor Monteith stated that Officers should clarify with the Procurement Section of Council as to whether the consultancy work had been subject to tender. The Head of Parks advised that the work was overdue and Council needed to be proactive in having it completed as formal notice for contraventions had been received and that the information he held would indicate that a procurement process had taken place but that he would seek clarity.

Proposed by Councillor Clarke
Seconded by Councillor McNamee and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council that subject to a report detailing procurement procedures had been previously adhered to regarding consultancy work that approval be granted to seek tenders to appoint a suitably qualified company/contractor to carry out the prescribed works as per the specification in accordance with the requirements of Water Supply (Fittings) Regulation (NI) 2009 for works to be completed at both Ballyronan marina and Battery Harbour at a cost of £30k.

Declaration of Interest

Councillor Clarke declared an interest in Broughderg Community Centre and left the room.

Councillor Wilson declared an interest in Project 2 Upgrading Works to Orange Halls.

D137/15 Social Investment Fund Capital Build Programme for Moneymore Recreation Centre

The Chair, Councillor Monteith drew attention to the previously circulated report to provide an update on the progress of the Social Investment Fund Capital Build

Programme (SIF) for Moneymore Recreation Centre and to seek approval for CWSAN to procure the same design team for both sets of works included in project one upgrading works to Moneymore Recreation Centre and Broughderg Community Centre.

The Head of Leisure advised that CWSAN had received a letter of offer and sought approval for the Broughderg project to be included in the Terms of Reference to be issued by CWSAN for procurement of the design team for Project one subject to Central Procurement Directorate approval.

Proposed by Councillor McNamee
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council that approval for the Broughderg project be included in the Terms of Reference to be issued by CWSAN for procurement of the design team for Project one, subject to Central Procurement Directorate approval.

Matters for Information

D138/15 Tourism Activities – Mid Ulster Hidden Heritage

The Chair, Councillor Monteith requested that Members note the previously circulated Tourism Activities, Mid Ulster Hidden Heritage report.

Councillor Wilson stated that he had previously requested that walking tours of Cookstown be reconvened as in the past they had been excellent but they did not appear to be included. The Head of Tourism advised he would investigate same.

Proposed by Councillor McAleer
Seconded by Councillor McNamee and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that Members note the report on Tourism Activities, Mid Ulster Hidden Heritage

D139/15 Tourism Activities – Sperrintrek

The Chair, Councillor Monteith requested that Members note the previously circulated Tourism Activities, Sperrintrek report.

Proposed by Councillor Clarke
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that Members note the Tourism Activities, Sperrintrek report

D140/15 Culture and Arts Progress Reports

The Chair, Councillor Monteith requested that Members note the previously circulated Culture and Arts Progress report.

Councillor Wilson commended officers on the great variety of events taking place across the district.

The Head of Culture and Arts updated Members on an event being held on the 1st August in Bellaghy to raise awareness of the Seamus Heaney Project.

Proposed by Councillor McAleer
Seconded by Councillor J Shiels and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that Members note the Culture and Arts Progress report

D141/15 Community Development Report

The Chair, Councillor Monteith requested that Members note the previously circulated Community Development report.

Proposed by Councillor T Quinn
Seconded by Councillor McNamee and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that Members note the Community Development report

D142/15 The EARLS Project

The Chair, Councillor Monteith requested that Members note the previously circulated EARLS Project report.

Proposed by Councillor Molloy
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that Members note the EARLS project report

D143/15 Leisure Services Progress Report

The Chair, Councillor Monteith requested that Members note the previously circulated Leisure Services Progress report.

Proposed by Councillor McNamee
Seconded by Councillor McAleer and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that Members note the Leisure Services Progress Report

D144/15 Parks Service Progress Report

The Chair, Councillor Monteith requested that Members note the previously circulated Parks Service Progress report.

Proposed by Councillor McAleer
Seconded by Councillor McNamee and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that Members note the Parks
Service Progress report

CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

Proposed by Councillor Molloy
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

Resolved That items D145/15 – D147/15 be taken as confidential business.

D148/15 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7pm and ended at 8.20pm

CHAIR _____

DATE _____