

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF MID ULSTER DISTRICT COUNCIL HELD ON
THURSDAY 23 OCTOBER 2014 IN THE COUNCIL OFFICES, CIRCULAR ROAD,
DUNGANNON**

Members Present: Councillor Mallaghan, Chair (Presiding Councillor)

Councillors Ashton, Bateson, Buchanan, Burton, Clarke, Cuddy, Cuthbertson, Dillon, Elattar, Forde, Gildernew, Gillespie, Glasgow, Kearney, McAleer, McEldowney, McFlynn, McGinley, B McGuigan, S McGuigan, McKinney, McLean, McNamee, McPeake, Molloy, Monteith, Mullen, Mulligan, C O'Neill, J O'Neill, T Quinn, M Quinn, Reid, Robinson, J Shiels, Totten and Wilson

Officers in Attendance: Mr A Tohill, Chief Executive
Mr Cassells, Director of Technical Services and Leisure Services (MDC)
Mrs Cavanan, Lead HR Officer
Mrs Mezza, Marketing Communications Manager
Mr Moffett, Change Management Officer
Mr O'Hagan, ICT Manager
Mr JJ Tohill, Lead Finance Officer
Mrs Smith, Council Business Manager (D&STBC)

In Attendance: Mr McCallum (Chief Executive NILGA)

The meeting commenced at 7 pm

C74/14 Chair's Remarks

Best Kept Awards

The Chair acknowledged the achievements of a number of areas across Mid Ulster which had been mentioned at the Best Kept Awards presentation event.

Congratulations

The Chair stated that a number of Gaelic teams in the Mid Ulster Area had excelled in their category which no doubt was due in some part by the investment by the legacy councils.

Co Tyrone
Dungannon – Intermediate Champions
Rock – Junior Champions
Coalisland Ladies – Junior Champions
Eglis Ladies Camogie – Champions

Co Derry
Slaughneil – Senior Champions in both football and hurling
Castledawson – Intermediate Champions
Moneymore – Junior Champions

Glen Ladies – Senior Champions
Ballinascreen Ladies – Intermediate Champions
Magherafelt Ladies – Junior Champions
Newbridge Camogie – Intermediate Champions
Glenullin Camogie – Junior Champions

Councillor Mulligan also asked that the Chair acknowledge the achievements of Murley Silver Band from Fivemiletown who won the Championship in the Northern Ireland Bands Association competition last Saturday. This follows their success in the spring at the Brass in Valley Competition when they won the Championship in the entertainment section.

The Chair said that he would be sending letters of congratulations to all concerned.

C75/14 Apologies

Councillor G Shiels

C76/14 Declarations of Interest

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

C77/14 NOTICE OF MOTION

The Chair invited Councillor M Quinn to present the motion.

Councillor M Quinn stated that he was proud to bring the first motion which the Council would have the power to act on and which would make the Council a living wage employer. The new Council would be one of the biggest employers in the Mid Ulster Area, between the three councils there are 952 employees 13% of which earn below the living wage, this would be a massive statement and would send out the message that the Council cares about its workers and people and that we are leading the way in terms of being a responsible employer. It may even encourage other employers to do the same. It would ensure that all the staff would have the benefit of living not just earning a minimum wage. Councillor M Quinn appealed for members to support the motion which would help demonstrate commitment to tackling poverty and improving the economy, provide leadership and improve the lives of 13 per cent of the Council's workforce.

This Council:

- *Notes that many households in the Mid-Ulster area, including a high portion of those in work, are currently experiencing poverty;*
- *Contends that people working full-time should be able to afford housing costs, essential utilities and food bills;*
- *Agrees that the introduction of the minimum wage has been a step forward in the attempt to eradicate poverty but that at its current level it is inadequate for many with financial responsibilities;*

- *Acknowledges that it is our responsibility as a major employer as well as to our ratepayers to seek to reduce poverty and inequality; and*
- *Notes that approximately 13% of council employees across the 3 council areas are paid below a 'Living Wage', currently set at £7.65 per hour, a sum independently set as the level above which an earner can live adequately and with dignity in today's society.*

The Council therefore agrees:

1. *To become a Living Wage employer, in consultation with staff and their representatives, and to revise upwards payment to those employees currently receiving below the living wage level;*
2. *To include a commitment to include the living wage in all new employment contracts; and*
3. *To ensure that the appropriate Council Committee receives reports on progress towards the above at least annually and initially by April 2015.*

Councillor McAleer seconded the motion, concurred with the remarks made, spoke how this would improve people's lives, there would be better staff morale and a lower staff turnover.

Councillor Cuthbertson felt that these issues should be dealt with in the House of Commons and brought to members' attention question put in relation to the combination of raising the minimum wage and raising the tax threshold and the reply that a Labour Government would introduce a starting rate tax of 10% which would help all workers. The Member suggested that the Council should defer any decision on this issue and wait for further announcements by the Westminster Government.

Councillor Ashton stated that the motion presented was premature, was not opposed to employees getting paid for a job well done, spoke of the financial implications for ratepayers and felt that the issue would be best dealt with through the relevant committee where full figures could be presented.

Amendment

Proposed by Councillor Ashton
Seconded by Councillor Burton

The Council therefore agrees:

1. *To review the salaries and wages budget as part of the wider budget setting process in consultation with staff and their representatives.*
2. *To analyse/scrutinize the living wage through the Policy and Resources Committee and the implications it would have on current resources.*

The Chair asked Councillor Quinn if he was prepared to accept the amendment and following his rejection the amendment was put to the meeting 14 (fourteen) members voting in favour and 23 (twenty three) against.

The Chair declared the amendment defeated.

Councillor McNamee whilst concurring with the comments made by the proposer of the motion and agreeing with all the sentiments in the notice of motion proposed the following amendment.

Amendment

Proposed by Councillor McNamee
Seconded by Councillor McGinley

Delete from the Notice of Motion section number 3 and replace with

“On completion of the consultation process Mid Ulster Council will receive a full report on the recommendations, a draft policy and agrees clear timetabled steps to implement the living wage policy with the final agreed policy to come into effect from April 2015.”

Councillor Cuddy stated that personally not against the principle of trying to pay employees as much as we can afford. A lot of students are employed as casual staff in our leisure centres and given previous reports on the annual cost of running these centres there may have to be tough decision taken in relation to opening hours and possibly closures.

Councillor Monteith accused Councillor Cuddy of scaremongering, that this was an excellent motion, important that employees paid a proper days pay for a proper days work, if the Council serious about dealing with poverty this motion would clearly target those on minimum wage within the three councils, would be good for the economy, the Council would be leading the way which would hopefully encourage others to follow and concern expressed when minimum wage introduced but all the doom and gloom did not happen.

Councillor Wilson stated that wording in amendment pre-empting outcome of any consultation process therefore could not support.

Councillor Ashton stated that if amendment accepted points 1 and 2 would come into effect immediately.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan, stated that wording was merely setting out strategy, consultation would take place and any conclusions will be reflected in any contracts given to staff.

Councillor Mulligan while not in support of the motion stated that the preamble to the motion is laudible but the core message to set wages is not within the council's remit. While there is some low paid members of the community, which the government has acknowledge by putting in place mechanisms to alleviate hardship, many of those affected would benefit from some education in budgeting and living within ones means. We are a body of elected people, elected to deliver government policy as formulated at Westminster and devolved to Stormont. The member spoke in relation to funding the exercise and doubted if it would be popular to put our hand in the beleaguered rate-payers pocket.

Councillor Buchanan stated that if wages for the average family go up, tax credits may come down and households will have increased rates bill.

Councillor Dillon stated that Councillors elected to do a job and not just to do what central government says.

Councillor Burton left at 7.38 pm.

Following the non acceptance of the amendment by the proposer the amendment was put to the meeting 17 (seventeen) members voted in favour and 20 (twenty) against.

The Chair declared the amendment defeated.

The original notice of motion was put to the meeting, 24 (twenty four) members voted in favour, 7 (seven) against and 6 (six) abstained.

The Chair declared the notice of motion adopted.

Delegation

C78/14 NILGA

The Chair welcomed Mr Derek McCallum, Chief Executive of NILGA who was in attendance to brief the Members on NILGA's work programme and reconstitution.

Mr McCallum with the use of a powerpoint presentation advised of NILGA today and the NILGA of tomorrow. He stated that a strong local government association should form part of the outcome of any reform of councils in Northern Ireland. The presentation listed the work streams beyond April 2015 and the timetable for NILGA's reconstitution.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan, thanked Mr McCallum for his presentation and opened the floor for comments.

Councillor McPeake declared an interest as party officer within NILGA, he did not leave the room.

Councillor McPeake concurred with what stated within the presentation, stated that there was strength in unity and he gave credit to NILGA for the co-ordination of issues and concern during this time of reform of local government and for their continued support.

Councillor T Quinn, the Council's representative on the Partnership Panel stated that the help of NILGA in preparing for meetings was useful and helped the members move forward in unity.

Councillor McLean concurred with the other speakers, stated that there was strength in unity and felt that this is the way forward.

Councillor Wilson thanked Mr McCallum and NILGA for preparing and bringing forward papers although do not always agree with them.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan, thanked Mr McCallum for his attendance following which he left the meeting.

Matters for Decision

C79/14 Receive and consider minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at Council meeting held on Thursday 25 September 2014

Notice of Motion C55/14

Councillor Dillon asked for correction to the first sentence in the second paragraph under this item; remove the words “all cutbacks” and insert the words “proper welfare reform”.

Proposed by Councillor S McGuigan
Seconded by Councillor McLean and

Resolved That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday 25 September 2014 (C53/14 to C67/14 and C73/14), transacted in “Open Business” having been printed and circulated were considered and subject to the foregoing correction signed as accurate and correct.

C80/14 Receive and consider the minutes and recommendations of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday 6 October 2014

Proposed by Councillor Glasgow
Seconded by Councillor J Shiels and

Resolved That the Minutes and recommendations of the Planning Committee meeting held on Monday 6 October 2014 (P12/14 – P18/14) transacted in “Open Business”, having been printed and circulated were considered and adopted.

C81/14 Receive and consider the minutes and recommendations of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on Tuesday 7 October 2014

Proposed by Councillor Molloy
Seconded by Councillor and McPeake and

Resolved That the Minutes and recommendations of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on Tuesday 7 October 2014 (PR32/14 – PR46/14 and PR49/14), transacted in “Open Business”, having been printed and circulated were considered and adopted.

C82/14 Receive and consider the minutes and recommendations of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Environment Committee meeting held on Wednesday 8 October 2014

Proposed by Councillor J O'Neill
Seconded by Councillor Cuthbertson and

Resolved That the Minutes and recommendations of the Environment Committee meeting held on Wednesday 8 October 2014, (E18/14 – E24/14 and E27/14) transacted in “Open Business”, having been printed and circulated were considered and adopted.

C83/14 Receive and consider the minutes and recommendations of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Development Committee meeting held on Thursday 9 October 2014

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor and McNamee and

Resolved That the Minutes and recommendation of the Development Committee meeting held on Thursday 9 October 2014, (D20/14 – 26/14 and D32/14) transacted in “Open Business”, having been printed and circulated were considered and adopted.

C84/14 Seminars and Conferences

The Change Management Officer presented details of the undernoted conferences and sought approval for the attendance of members and officers, the payment of attendance fees and associated costs as incurred.

Building Control Convention - Building Communities beyond 2015: How the new Councils will shape the future (North Eastern Building Control), Thursday 13 and Friday 14 November 2014 (1.5 days), Full Conference Attendance: £270, Day 1 Attendance: £138 and Day 2 Attendance: £96 per delegate.

Councillors Gildernew and Kearney expressed an interest in attending.

Applying Principles of Planning: Making Better Decisions for Places (RTPI NI), Tuesday 11 November 2014, Guildhall, Derry/ Londonderry (0.5 days), £25 per delegate.

Proposed by Councillor McNamee
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

Resolved That the attendance of members and officers, the payment of attendance fees and associated costs as incurred be approved and that if anyone else wishes to be considered to contact officers.

C85/14 Banking Services

The Lead Finance Officer presented a report seeking members' authorization to initiate a tender for the provision of banking services to the Mid Ulster District Council commencing 1 April 2015.

Proposed by Councillor McLean
Seconded by Councillor Reid and

Resolved That the Council authorizes the officers to seek tenders for the provision of banking services.

IN COMMITTEE

Proposed by Councillor S McGuigan
Seconded by Councillor McNamee and

Resolved That items C86/14 to C89/14 be taken in committee.

The press left the meeting at 8.02 pm.

C90/14 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7 pm and ended at 8.05 pm.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____