

**Minutes of Meeting of the Development Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 5 March 2015 in Magherafelt District Council Offices**

**Members Present**

In the Chair, Councillor Burton (Chair)

Councillors Elattar, Forde (7.04), McAleer, McEldowney, McNamee, Mallaghan, Molloy, C O'Neill, T Quinn, Reid (7.19) G Shiels, J Shiels and Wilson

**Officers in Attendance**

Mr Tohill, Chief Executive  
Mr McCreesh, Chief Executive (CDC)  
Ms Campbell, Director of Policy and Development  
Mrs Forde, Mayor's PA/Member Support Officer (DSTBC)  
Ms Linney, Head of Strategy, Policy & Rural Development (DSTBC)

**Agenda Item 1 Deputation on Draft Solidarity Charter**

Ms Ruth Taillon

**Agenda Item 19 Briefing Venturei on Community Planning**

Mr Mark Conway, Venturei

The meeting commenced at 7pm

**D32/15 Apologies**

Councillors Dillon and Monteith.

**D33/15 Declaration of Interests**

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

*Councillor T Quinn declared an interest in Citizens Advice Bureau in Cookstown.  
Councillor Elattar declared an interest in Magherafelt Advice Services.*

**D34/15 Deputation on Draft Solidarity Charter**

The Chair welcomed Ms Taillon to the meeting.

*Councillor Forde entered the meeting at 7.04pm*

Ms Taillon made a presentation on the draft Solidarity Charter for the Economic Revitalisation of the Irish Border Development Corridor. Speaking on the need for action Ms Tallion highlighted the history of under-investment, the troubled past and the weak regional development policies. The region had also been hit hard by the economic crisis and high unemployment noting that unemployment in Strabane and

Derry Council areas were the highest in Northern Ireland and the areas were amongst the most deprived. It was also noted that the border regional economy was dependent on agriculture, manufacturing and construction whilst less on services and public sector increasing the urban rural divide.

Outlining the EU Policy and Regional Policy Context such as the action plan for jobs and framework for co-operation Ms Taillon drew attention to the Draft Solidarity Charter which high level themes included key infrastructure, foreign direct investment, SME's with export potential, agriculture, food and fish processing, tourism and recreation, low carbon energy saving and renewables and diaspora.

Ms Taillon drew particular attention to:

- Critical infrastructure – including strategic road projects N2/A5, N16/A4 and the East/West Link. Also broadband to include increased capacity and speed.
- Foreign Direct Investment – currently concentrated in Belfast and Dublin the need for enhanced regional commitments from IDA Ireland and Invest NI.
- SME's with Export Potential – capitalise on clusters of industries and sectors and foster high potential start-ups in the border region.
- Agriculture Food and Fish Processing – encourage greater public and private sector purchasing of local produce and high local producers develop brand and export potential.
- Tourism and Recreation – encourage greater connectivity between tourism assets and imaginatively assist the border region to capitalise in existing 'honey pot' attractions.
- Low Carbon, Energy Saving Renewable for local government to assist in progressing the region as a champion of the green economy and develop an action pack on renewable energy for local community and business.
- Diaspora – capitalise on successful initiatives and engage with National Diasopoa centre.

In conclusion, Ms Taillon advised that the next steps for the draft charter were:

- Seeking approval of County and District Councils together with the cross border networks (NWRCBG, ICBAN & EBR);
- Consultation had been aimed to close on 31 March but this had been extended due to the amalgamation of Councils;
- Formal support would be sought in the future; and
- Champions would be needed to help disseminate and promote the charter and future associated initiatives.

Councillor G Shiels stated that you do not get much more territorial than the border and that he was conscious that south of the border people feel Dublin region gets all

and in relation to hospitals and health service he was conscious that the health service was under strain due to those along the border using the services. In response Ms Taillon stated that some work had already been done in sharing of resources giving Altnagalvin radiography unit as a working example and that with co-operation of both governments and European assistance this could improve.

*Councillor Reid entered meeting at 7.19 pm*

Councillor Molloy thanked Ms Taillon for the presentation and stated that a co-ordinated approach was needed to draw down funding, for example broadband was a major issue for border region businesses finding it difficult to expand and everyone really needed to prioritise broadband and asked if ICBAN would continue.

Ms Taillon advised that ICBAN had endorsed the charter but local authorities needed to do likewise as it would then carry more influence.

In response to Councillor Wilson's question as to what would happen the charter if local authorities did not sign up Ms Taillon advised that it would sit on the shelf like many other reports. In relation to steering group Ms Taillon advised that ICBAN EDR, CBI, Intertrade Ireland and a few others had been members of the steering group.

Councillor Wilson queried as to why the charter was coming as a fait accompli and why Councils were not approached beforehand.

Ms Taillon advised that some Councils had participated in a conference in January past but it was a framework document which needed to be adopted and built upon to become a reality as for example Mid Ulster actions would be different to those in Donegal.

The Chair Councillor Burton thanked Ms Taillon for the presentation following which she withdrew from the meeting at 7.30pm.

**D35/15      Receive and confirm minutes of the Development Committee meeting held on Thursday 5 February 2015**

Proposed by Councillor McNamee  
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and

**Resolved**      That the minutes of the meeting of the Development Committee held on Thursday 5 February 2015 (items D17/15 to D25/15 & D31/15), were considered and signed as accurate and correct.

**Matters for Decision**

**Declaration of Interest**

*Councillor Wilson declared an interest in Cookstown Enterprise Centre*

## **D36/15      Service Level Agreement with DETI/ Invest NI**

Mr McCreesh advised the purpose of the report was to provide members with an update on the transfer of functions process in relation to the Regional Start Initiative and Social Entrepreneurship Programme.

Outlining the background Mr McCreesh advised that the Northern Ireland Executive had agreed, as part of Local Government Reform, to transfer the undernoted Economic Development functions to Councils;

- Enterprise Awareness
- Start-up provision
- Social Entrepreneurship Programme

Drawing attention to key issues Mr McCreesh reminded Members that:

- (i) all 11 Councils had agreed to the rolling forward of the Regional Start Initiative and Social Entrepreneurship Contracts (Mid Ulster District Council agreed this on 25 September 2014) and as such there was the requirement for Councils to repay from the transferring budgets Invest NI costs relating to each of these Programmes for the periods outlined.
- (ii) Invest NI /DETI had now issued Councils with a Service Level Agreement for the following:
  - Social Entrepreneurship Programme (to July 2015)
  - Regional Start Initiative (to October 2015)
- (iii) Start-up Provision After October 2015 - that officers from the 11 Councils had met in February 2015 to discuss the future delivery process and structure of the Provision (post October 2015). It was agreed that, in order to supplement each Council's transfer of functions budget to deliver this Programme, work should begin on preparing an application to be ready to submit to the new Growth and Jobs Programme when it opens. To assist with this it was proposed that an independent Economic Appraisal should be commissioned on behalf of the 11 Councils (led by Belfast City Council) to scope the business start and enterprise provision and enable Councils to define future delivery and the support offer to be made by them post October 2015. It is anticipated this work should be completed by early April 2015.

Mr McCreesh advised that council was required to commit up to £2,730 plus vat towards the appointment of a service provider to conduct the aforementioned economic appraisal for the 11 Councils and that Belfast would lead the process.

Mr McCreesh also advised that the transferring budget was £300k and MUDC would be required to pay back seven months running costs of approximately £80k. As Omagh and Fermanagh were almost mirror images of Mid Ulster it may be worthwhile to work with them on defining suitable approach for programmes as business needs in the West were somewhat different to other areas.

Concluding Mr McCreesh sought approval for the undernoted recommendations:

- (1) To approve the Service Level Agreement with DETI / Invest NI on behalf of Mid Ulster District Council
- (2) To approve the contribution of up to £2,730 (plus vat) from Mid Ulster Council towards the costs of the Economic Appraisal (being led by Belfast City Council on behalf of the 11 Councils)

Councillor Wilson stated that the last programme had not addressed the issues of small businesses in Mid Ulster region and that the amount of money was greatly reduced and thus Council needed to review to determine best approach for Mid Ulster as 'one size' did not fit all.

Councillor Mallaghan asked if all Councils paid equal. Mr McCreesh advised that each paid the same amount.

Councillor Mallaghan then spoke of the previous programme which revealed that businesses were reluctant to apply due to the 'red tape' and that moving forward this 'red tape' needed to be reduced.

Responding Mr McCreesh advised that Council would be making an application to augment the existing programme through European funding and that the economic development programme would both support and validate through strategy. He also stated that comments in the chamber reflected feelings of the community and that Council needed to attract more funding and offer effective support.

In response to Councillor G Shields' query Mr McCreesh advised that the entrepreneurship programme would continue until July 2015.

Councillor Molloy stated that he welcomed the comments of Mr McCreesh on moving forward and stated that to date both Cookstown and Dungannon Enterprise Centres had done great work in getting businesses on board.

Stating that it was good that it was recognised that Mid Ulster businesses faced different challenges Councillor J Sheils sought clarity to the cost of £2,730 asking if it was the maximum charge. Mr McCreesh stated that Officers were working to ensure it was the maximum but advised that the SLA had not included marketing costs and that a recommendation would be brought to Council in April for approval of same which again would be shared by 11 Councils.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson  
Seconded by Councillor Mallaghan and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that approval be granted to:

- (i) To approve the Service Level Agreement with DETI / Invest NI on behalf of Mid Ulster District Council ;

- (ii) To approve the contribution of up to £2,730 (plus vat) from Mid Ulster Council towards the costs of the Economic Appraisal (being led by Belfast City Council on behalf of the 11 Councils)

### **D37/15      Submission to Corporation Tax Inquiry**

Mr McCreesh advised that the purpose of the report was to present to Members a draft submission to the NI Assembly Inquiry on Corporation Tax outlining the key issues for input and further commentary.

Advising that the response had to be submitted by 10 March 2015 Mr McCreesh advised that the inquiry was to consider how the two-year period leading up to the devolution of Corporation Tax varying powers in April 2017 can be used to maximise NI's potential and determine the key economic drivers that the NI Executive can influence to achieve these outcomes.

Mr McCreesh read the draft letter response as undernoted:

- "Council acknowledges the potential of these new powers to stimulate economic growth. However, it also recognises that a cut in the corporate tax rate from 21% to potentially 12.5% will reduce Northern Ireland's corporate tax receipts by 40%; this reduction in income will be in addition to further planned cuts in public expenditure – as yet unspecified – yet to be announced.
- Furthermore, the impact of the deduction from the annual budget of potentially £300m on public services and, more specifically, frontline services (which are already experiencing severe pressures in advance of further austerity measures) remains a key concern.
- In addition, NI's recovery has been at a much slower rate than the UK average; while economic activity increased by 1.2% relative living standards still remain well below UK average.
- However, the opportunity to create jobs, attract investment and stimulate growth is to be strongly welcomed. Council believes that, if appropriate and targeted measures are deployed, this is a key opportunity for the NI Executive to deliver balanced regional economic growth and address some of the long standing inequalities.

### **Context**

The report indicated that a number of key disparities exist across the Mid Ulster and wider Western region which have long acted as a barrier to sustainable economic growth, including:

- a) Its peripheral and dispersed rural location
- b) High level of micro and small businesses
- c) Need for infrastructure investment in both roads and telecommunications
- d) Little or no foreign direct investment
- e) A number of multiple deprivation and new TSN areas

- f) Higher than average long term unemployment levels
- g) Below average employment in the public sector
- h) Average weekly earnings below the Northern Ireland average
- i) A strong dependency on the agricultural sector which is contracting rapidly.

### ***Growth Drivers***

The report further indicated that it would be critical that the income from the devolving of corporate tax setting powers is targeted at delivering real and meaningful change to transform our economy to stimulate investment, job creation as well as broader societal benefits, and Council advises the following as priorities to be addressed:

- The Mid Ulster District Council area has the highest number of businesses (7915) of any Council area outside Belfast; the sub-region is dominated by the small business sector, in that 99% of the area's businesses employ fewer than 50 people.
- The additional income generated from this tax is required to address long term economic imbalances and deliver measures to accelerate business growth in our indigenous businesses which could include e.g. the creation of a Small Business Innovation Fund to provide specialist support this sector to exploit new opportunities in R&D and drive competitiveness and productivity.
- Competing in a global market, NI's smaller businesses face a greater challenge than most of the UK in competing in a global market – need to increase capacity of private sector to export
- Improving skills, employability and job creation are essential to build sustainable economic growth– research estimates that a reduction in NI's Corporation Tax rate is expected to create 58k jobs above the baseline employment levels by 2030. Given the region's problems with long term unemployment it is critical that Mid Ulster is identified as a priority area to address this issue.
- Large scale investment is also required to improve infrastructure in the sub-region (both connectivity and roads); for far too long businesses in Mid Ulster/ West have been prevented from competing on an equal basis with their counterparts in other areas due to poor provision.
- Creation of an Enterprise Zone for the sub-region to create conditions for sustainable balanced growth, support entrepreneurship and facilitate business expansion
- Research has estimated that of the 58k new jobs which could be created, 25k of these may be as a result of new Foreign Direct Investment. To date, the Western sub-region has seen virtually no FDI. If there is to be balanced regional economic development the policy for locating new investment needs to be reviewed.
- Facilitate increased access to finance for our local business sector to support growth and R&D.

## **Summary**

The report in summary that the new Council led Community Planning powers means that Councils are pivotal to the future development of their distinct micro economies and communities; local government is now the 'key driver' to make things happen at local level.

The two tiers of NI government (NI Councils and NI Executive) share the same key economic and social challenges, and a partnership approach should be considered to drive future economic development (in its broadest sense) and address long standing regional economic disparities to achieve greater prosperity for all throughout our society."

Having read the response Mr McCreesh sought approval for it to be submitted to the NI Assembly Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment.

Proposed by Councillor Mallaghan  
Seconded by Councillor T Quinn and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that the response be submitted to the NI Assembly Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment.

## **D38/15 Mid Ulster Good Relations Strategy and Action Plan**

Mr McCreesh advised that the report was to provide Members with the draft Mid Ulster Good Relations Strategy & Action Plan in line with OFM/DFM policy framework and guidelines. He drew attention to the background and advised that the proposed Mid Ulster Good Relations Strategy and Action Plan presented sets out the Together Building United Communities (TBUC) thematic approach with 5 priority areas undernoted, focusing predominately on external actions as the Community Relations Unit within OFM/DFM will lead in the implementation of GR actions for members and senior management within Mid Ulster Council. Central to the GR programme delivery will be the establishment of a Mid Ulster All Party member Good Relations Member Forum which will scrutinise and approve all operational activities and initiatives as outlined within the Action Plan. It is proposed that this forum will meet on a quarterly basis. The Action Plan will be a working document and have the inbuilt flexibility to adapt and respond to issues as they arise across Mid Ulster. Mr McCreesh advised that the action plan had been equality screened internally and focus on:

- **Our Children And Young People** – To continue to improve attitudes amongst our young people and to build a community where they can play a full role and active role in building Good Relations.
- **Our Shared Community** – To create a community where division does not restrict the life opportunities of individuals and where all areas are open and accessible to everyone.
- **Our Safe Community** – To create a community where everyone feels safe in moving around and where life choices are not inhibited by fears around safety.



- **Our Cultural Expression** – To create a community which promotes mutual respect and understanding is strengthened by Diversity, and where cultural expression is celebrated and embraced.
- **Program Actions** – To develop support programs, at both Council and Community level, to increase and improve leadership, capacity, organisation and capital building skills in order to support Good Relations outcomes.

Mr McCreesh stated that the Good Relations Strategy and Action Plan had been developed for the new Mid Ulster Council by converging best practice initiatives from the three legacy Councils. Although the plan has been submitted to the Community Relations Unit at OFM/DFM to meet its deadline of the 20<sup>th</sup> February it carried the caveat of still requiring Mid Ulster Council approval. Mr McCreesh reminded Members that OFM/DFM provide 75% funding for the staff and programme cost with Mid Ulster Council supporting the matching 25%. The amount applied from OFM/DFM will be £406,500 requiring match funding from Mid Ulster District Council of £135,500 which has been agreed within the Mid-Ulster budget setting process.

Advising Members that the policy was aligned with recommendation at the Policy and Resources Committee to establish a Good Relations Working Group which would meet quarterly to update Members on progress.

The Chief Executive advised Members that the paper presented to the Policy and Resources Committee had outlined that whilst the NI Act 1998 provided a framework for equality, good relations had been decoupled and thus Council had proposed this mechanism. The Chief Executive further advised that the terms of reference had been presented, there would be up to ten Members on the Working Group and the recommendation was to be ratified by Council at its next meeting.

In response to question from the Chair, Councillor Burton the Chief Executive clarified that Members would be from all parties and that the working group was not a sub committee of Policy and Resources.

Councillor Reid emphasised that the working group must be a shared group and that the recommendation still had to be ratified at Council especially as to how the membership would be made up.

Councillor T Quinn stated that he believed good relations to be a major topic with many difficulties such as racism, sectarianism etc and that existing officers dealt with some very sensitive issues. Councillor T Quinn stated that it was essential to get the working group formation right and sought clarity on how Members would be put in place and how long it would meet for.

The Chief Executive advised that the terms of reference indicated that the working group would meet every two months and be established for the full term of Council with arrangements reviewed on an annual basis. He further stated that the crux of what the working group had to look at was policies on dealing with flags, emblems, street naming etc.

In response Councillor T Quinn stated he did not agree with ten Members for a four year period as people need to want to be there and be fully engaged. He further

stated that ten Members was very limited and asked if it was expected to ratify the recommendation at the next Mid Ulster Council meeting.

The Chief Executive clarified that all recommendations are presented to Council for ratification and then the Council decides.

*Councillor T Quinn left the meeting at 7.53pm returning at 7.55pm*

Councillor J Shiels sought clarity regarding the clergy forum asking if for example Free Presbyterians or Reformed Presbyterians who did not wish to participate in Clergy Forums were excluded. Mr McCreesh advised that from experience in Cookstown Council that the policy was all inclusive and Good Relations Officers had endeavoured to both include and work with all.

In response to a question from Councillor J Shiels, Mr McCreesh advised that within the report examples had been used and behind each there were multiple projects. Mr McCreesh also clarified Councillor Ellatar's query advising that the groups and organisations listed again were only a sample. He further stated that within the strategy was a grant element. In response to Councillor Molloy's query Mr McCreesh confirmed that the budget included a funding element.

Mr McCreesh reminded Members that the draft presented had been submitted to OFM/DFM subject to Council approval.

Proposed by Councillor T Quinn  
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to the Council that the Mid Ulster Good Relations Transitional Programme Action Plan be approved.

### **D39/15 Mid Ulster Community Plan**

Mr McCreesh advised that the purpose of the report was to provide an update on progress in the development of a Mid Ulster Community Plan.

*Councillor Forde left the meeting at 7.58pm*

Mr McCreesh emphasised that it was essential to re-engage with the community, to have statutory agency roles determined and drew attention to key issues as undernoted:

*Councillor McAleer left the meeting at 7.59pm returning at 8.01pm*

- Mid Ulster wide Community Planning Engagement - Compilation of all the engagement sessions has been completed;
- Mid Ulster Data Analysis Study - The statistical data analysis is finalised and a report would be issued to all members;
  - Mark Conway (Venturei) who supported with the engagement analysis will present the findings of the report later in the meeting and key outcomes for going forward. Following the presentation of the reports to members a

- further meeting will be scheduled with the key Government stakeholders to support discussion on the future planning.
  - A summary version of the Engagement Report will be issued to all the community representatives who attended the engagement events.
  - The reports will be important for Mid Ulster in commencing the development of a Community Plan in partnership with the local community and government departments/agencies.
- Community Planning Capacity Building Programme, general community planning capacity building sessions for Mid Ulster have been scheduled

With regard to Local Government Community Planning Guidance Mr McCreesh advised that the legislation remains outstanding and the guidance was currently out to formal consultation. He drew attention to the proposed Mid Ulster Council response a copy of which was provided to Members and sought approval for same.

Councillor Wilson stated he supported the draft but felt that it should be more robust and state clearly how Council felt that statutory agencies have no clear role detailed and it should be clearly detailed to ensure the onus is on them to fill it 100%. Councillor Mallaghan concurred with the comments and further stated that there was an expectation to re-engage with the community and this is something that should continue as the community engagement had been very positive. Mr McCreesh advised that legislatively Council had 12 months to prepare, it should not be rushed and that the engagement with community was essential and Council should use the plan to engage with statutory agencies to determine how they are going to commit noting that there would always be contention between meeting Stormont remit or community plan.

*Councillor G Shields left the meeting at 8.03pm*

Proposed by Councillor Wilson  
Seconded by Councillor T Quinn and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to the Council

- (i) To note the update on the Mid Ulster Community Planning process as outlined and presentation by Mark Conway; and
- (ii) Subject to foregoing comments approve the proposed Mid Ulster Council response to the DoE Community Planning Operational Guidance.

### **Declaration of Interest**

Councillor Burton and Reid declared an interest being members of Dungannon PCSP.

### **D40/15 Mid Ulster PCSP Draft Action Plan 2015/2016**

Mr McCreesh advised that the purpose of the report was to seek approval for the draft Transitional Mid Ulster Policing and Community Safety (PCSP) Action Plan 2015-2016. Advising that the plan reflected the successful outcomes of the existing

PCSPs and the latest statistical research and consultation he advised that it is a requirement by the Dept of Justice and the NI Policing Board to have an action plan to cover the transition period until the new Mid Ulster PCSP is in place. Mr McCreesh emphasised that once established the new Mid Ulster PCSP can amend the plan or develop a new one.

*Councillor G Shields returned at 8.09pm*

Mr McCreesh drew attention to the key issues as undernoted:

- The draft Mid Ulster Action Plan 2015/2016 has been developed in line with the following Joint Committee Strategic Objectives –
  - To successfully deliver the functions of the PCSP,
  - To improve community safety by tackling crime and anti-social behaviour and
  - To improve community confidence in policingWithin each of above objectives are measures for delivery.

- The Plan details the major policing and community safety issues across the Mid Ulster area (PSNI Statistics). The findings of the Mid Ulster wide Community Planning consultation have been used to identify priority community concerns about policing and community safety.

Utilising this information, the draft Action Plan sets out a programme for operational delivery during the first year of the PCSP that addresses priorities and local needs, reflects good practice, and is evidentially robust.

- The Joint Committee's 20% cap on administration costs has been adhered to, with the remainder of staff salaries (80%) allocated to project delivery.

Councillor T Quinn stated that he proposed the recommendation but had difficulty with the financial restraints especially with forthcoming PSNI personnel cuts. He stated it was a massive challenge and there was a case to re-establish Community Police Liaison Committees (CPLCs).

Proposed by Councillor T Quinn  
Seconded by Councillor McNamee and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to the Council to approve the draft Transitional Mid Ulster PCSP Action Plan 2015/2016 for submission to the Joint Committee

Councillor Reid agreed with what was presented but stated that it was a pity that cuts could not be addressed as the PCSPs had been working effectively.

The Chair, Councillor Burton stated that with regard to the community safety warden within Dungannon PCSP the employee had done a marvellous work, that the PSNI should recognise the work and suggested that Council should meet with the PSNI to establish if they could identify funding. Mr McCreesh stated that in Cookstown there

was a similar post but it was not a direct PCSP post, acknowledging that it was difficult to establish a common approach he stated that he would discuss the matter with officers of Dungannon PCSP. However, erring caution Mr McCreesh advised that Council should not make exception for any particular individuals as many groups/organisations had to lay people off and were experiencing difficulty with the forthcoming cuts. He reminded Members that many staff members were at risk and as an employer Council had responsibility to its own staff.

Councillor Reid advised he had made mention of the situation whilst attending a launch in Belfast at which representative of Department of Justice had stated they would look at this. Mr McCreesh reiterated that he would follow up with officers from Dungannon PCSP.

*Councillor C O'Neill left the meeting at 8.10pm returning at 8.11pm*

Councillor T Quinn whilst stating it was good to look into the matter, emphasised that Council needed to look at volunteers and CPLCs to support PCSP work.

#### **D41/15      Transfer of Water Recreational Facilities**

Ms Campbell advised that the purpose of the report was to update the Development Committee in relation to the forthcoming inspection and maintenance arrangements associated to the transfer of DCAL Water Recreation Facilities to Mid Ulster District Council as from 1 April 2015.

Members were reminded that the four sites included:

- Ardtrea Bridge (Cookstown District Council)
- Ballysaggart Lough (Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council)
- Glenmore (Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council)
- Coalisland Canal & Towpath (Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council)

Drawing attention to key issues Ms Campbell highlighted the undernoted:

- Site inspections attended by DCAL /Rivers Agency and Council officials to all four locations in January 2015 agreed that no significant maintenance issues existed that would impede transfer.
- DCAL is to complete renewal of the Lease Agreement for Ardtrea Bridge prior to transfer (expiry date 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014).DCAL have agreement on a new lease for a period of 20 years dating from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015.
- DCAL is resolving a lessor's outstanding issue in relation to a Ballysaggart Lough landowner prior to transfer. It remains an outstanding issue however a resolution remains the responsibility of DCAL post transfer of assets.
- Negotiations with River's Agency on an amended Service Level Agreement for the continuation of routine maintenance works at all transferred sites was not successful. The River's Agency has declined to enter into any extended arrangements with Mid Ulster District Council. Council will be required to undertake the routine maintenance work associated with transferred sites.

Outlining cost resource implications Ms Campbell advised that DCAL has confirmed a transfer of £20,424 p.a., factored into the council grant from DoE, which represents the average annual cost of maintenance across all four sites (taking into account imposed cuts of 11.2%) and that transferring annual lease payments, equalling £1,335.00 (subject to periodic review).

Ms Campbell advised that Council would undertake all routine maintenance on all four sites as from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015. Estimated annual labour cost £28,845, based on a four person squad/ fifteen week per annum maintenance programme and that there may be requirement to hire or procure specific grounds maintenance/ grass cutting equipment to facilitate the increased number of sites and frequency of maintenance.

In response to Councillor Wilson's comments Ms Campbell advised that Council had no alternative but to accept the sites and that maintenance costs had been set and Council would have to cope with work load. Councillor Wilson voiced concerns that work had not been completed before transfer and proposed writing to DCAL to express dissatisfaction.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson  
Seconded by Councillor J Shiels and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to the Council to write to DCAL and express dissatisfaction with regard to transfer of sites without works complete.

Councillor Mallaghan stated that in moving forward there was good examples of community groups and local people agreeing service level agreements to maintain sites on behalf of Council. Stating that this promoted civic pride and gave ownership to sites that it provided a more valuable service than Council could provide.

Proposed by Councillor Reid  
Seconded by Councillor Mallaghan and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to the Council that Mid Ulster District Council undertake maintenance of the four transferred sites as from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015.

#### **D42/15 Harmonisation of Operational Arrangements for Leisure Facilities**

Ms Campbell advised that the purpose of the report was to seek approval for the introduction of harmonized Opening hours, Public Holiday Closures, Commercial Hire Fees and Charges and discounted rates for Member and Staff use of Leisure and Parks Facilities.

Ms Campbell drew attention to background noting that:

- Opening hours - All Facilities across the three existing Councils have varied opening hours and thus it is believed prudent to consider these Opening Hours across Mid Ulster District Council.

- Public Holiday Closures - All Facilities across the three existing Councils have varied Public Holiday Closures. It is believed prudent to harmonize these Public Holiday Closures across Council.
- Commercial Hire Fees and Charges - All Facilities across the three existing Councils have varied Commercial Fees and Charges. It is believed prudent to harmonize these Commercial Fees and Charges across Council.
- Discounted Rates for Member and Staff Use of Leisure and Parks Facilities - There are various approaches to discounted rates for Member and Staff use of Leisure and Parks facilities across the three existing Councils. It is believed prudent to harmonize these and to propose a new approach.

Ms Campbell presented the undernoted areas and recommendations to on harmonization:

### Opening Hours

- Indoor and Outdoor Recreation Facilities
  - It is proposed that Cookstown Leisure Centre and Maghera Recreation Centre have the following general Opening Hours:

Day	Times	
Monday	6.30am – 10.00pm	*
Tuesday	6.30am – 10.00pm	*
Wednesday	6.30am – 10.00pm	*
Thursday	6.30am – 10.00pm	*
Friday	6.30am – 10.00pm	*
Saturday	9.00am – 5.30pm	
Sunday	2.00pm – 6.00pm	**

\*Dungannon Leisure Centre will open at 07:00 as there is no public demand to open earlier but be kept under review.

\*Gym, Pool (CLC and DLC) and Classes only rest of facilities do not open until 7.30am

\*\*Maghera Recreation Centre will open at 11.30am

It is proposed that Meadowbank Sports Arena, Mid Ulster Sports Arena and Moneymore Recreation Centre have the following general Opening Hours:

Day	Times	
Monday	9.00am – 10.00pm	*
Tuesday	9.00am – 10.00pm	*
Wednesday	9.00am – 10.00pm	*
Thursday	9.00am – 10.00pm	*
Friday	9.00am – 10.00pm	*
Saturday	9.00am – 5.00pm	*
Sunday	Subject to bookings	**

\*Moneymore Recreation Centre may close at other times subject to bookings. (Moneymore Recreation Centre will close during 2015/16 for refurbishment work)

\*\*Meadowbank Sports Arena will open on Sundays

- Caravan Parks/Bowling Greens
  - It is proposed that Ballyronan, Dungannon , Fivemiletown Caravan Parks open on 1<sup>st</sup> March and close on 31<sup>st</sup> October annually.
  - It is proposed that Drumcoo, Fairhill, Fivemiletown and Magherafelt Bowling Greens open on 1<sup>st</sup> April and close on 30<sup>th</sup> September annually.
- Public Holiday Closures
  - Indoor and Outdoor Recreation Facilities  
It is proposed that Cookstown Leisure Centre, Dungannon Leisure Centre, Greenvale Leisure Centre, Maghera Recreation Centre, Meadowbank Sports Arena, Mid Ulster Sports Arena and Moneymore Recreation Centre are closed on Public Holidays as follows:

Bank/Public Holiday	Facility
New Year's Day	All facilities closed
Easter Sunday	All facilities closed (not PH/BH)
Easter Monday	All facilities closed
12 <sup>th</sup> July	All facilities closed
13 <sup>th</sup> July	All facilities closed
25 <sup>th</sup> December	All facilities closed
26 <sup>th</sup> December	All facilities closed

All Facilities may be required to open on any Public Holiday due to specific one-off bookings. When Greenvale Leisure Centre is open on a Bank/Public holiday it is not envisaged that Maghera Recreation is also required to be open.

- Commercial Hire Fees and Charges
  - It is proposed that organisations who are charging a fee for their service should themselves be charged 50% on top of the normal hire charge for the facility. Examples of such organisations are: Slimming Clubs, External Pilates and Yoga. Other external Group Class provision may need to be considered e.g. Martial Arts. There may be an element of Sports Development in a particular activity, the provision of which could be seen as beneficial to the locality. The delivery of such an activity may attract a favourable tariff.
  - Large event promotions e.g. Concerts are negotiated with the promoters on an individual basis. Consideration given to type of event, duration of, staff involved and any special requirements.
- Discounted Member and Staff Use of Leisure and Parks Facilities
  - By providing employees with discounted access to sport and leisure facilities, MUDC may improve staff wellbeing and job satisfaction, as well as raise retention rates. The welfare of members and employees



has a direct impact on the success of the council. Because of these MUDC benefits from lower absenteeism levels, happier, more productive members and staff, in particular Leisure and Parks staff, it is proposed that members and staff are offered a 50% discount on the full Facility Membership card. This will cost members and staff who wish to take up the offer £15.00 per month for full membership of all following facilities: Cookstown Leisure Centre, Dungannon Leisure Centre, Greenvale Leisure Centre, Maghera Recreation Centre, Mid Ulster Sports Arena, Meadowbank Sports Arena and Moneymore Recreation Centre. Use of the Greenvale Leisure Centre by staff and members forms part of the Leisure Services Management Service Agreement. The cost to individual members and staff is £12.50 per month. It is proposed that due to the contractual arrangements, Mid Ulster Staff can take up this offer for £12.50 per month to use the Greenvale Leisure Centre only. MUDC Finance Department will take the necessary fee per month from the salaries of staff who wish to take up the offer. Members will pay the Finance Department the necessary fee per month on invoice. Members and staff will be informed that Inland Revenue may view this as a benefit in kind and at some point may wish to tax the benefit as such. This discount will be offered to MUDC Members, Full time, Part time and Casual staff who have worked more than 20 hours in the previous month.

Ms Campbell sought approval for the harmonization as outlined in the foregoing.

Councillor Mallaghan stated that consideration needed to be given to those services facing 50% increase as it may put groups off from renting the facilities. In response Ms Campbell said it was hoped that although some costs would rise others would be reduced and it was hoped it would balance out and each group would have to consider their own position.

Councillor Mallaghan stated that he would be happy to propose the recommendation but in terms of Members the matter needed to be brought to the party leaders for consideration.

In response to a question from the Chair Councillor Burton, Ms Campbell advised that the proposed changes had not yet been communicated to service users. The Chair said that Council did not want a negative start.

Councillor J Shiels sought clarity as to how the charges related to charity events to which Ms Campbell advised the proposals were for commercial business operations.

Councillor Wilson stated that he felt more work needed to be done on the proposals as Council could price themselves out of the market and requested a report on facts and figures for example money brought in in previous year.

Councillor T Quinn sought clarity as to whether staff who used bowling greens would receive discounted rates. In response Ms Campbell advised they would.

In endeavouring to move forward Councillor Mallaghan stated he would propose that managers are given discretion that providers are given a transition period. In response to Councillor Wilson's request for a report Ms Campbell advised it would be presented at the next Council meeting.

Proposed by Councillor Mallaghan  
Seconded by Councillor T Quinn and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to the Council that the proposal is approved subject to

- (i) Members discounts being discussed at party leaders meeting;
- (ii) Report detailing facts and figures presented to Council meeting.

### **For Information**

#### **D43/15 Sport and Leisure Transition Working Group Update**

Ms Campbell advised that the report related to priority areas identified by the Sport and Leisure Transition Working Group.

Members noted progress as undernoted:

- Health and Safety - After a recent Health and Safety report to Committee, a Sub Group has been established within Sport and Leisure in order to address a number of highlighted issues. Risk assessments and action lists are being reviewed and an accident reporting system, in liaison with IT, is being established. A separate report to Committee is being presented on this.
- Sports Development Baseline - Information has been compiled to provide indication of the scope of the Sports Development programme that is currently being delivered across the Mid Ulster area. It includes an analysis of Sports Development activities across Mid Ulster and possibilities for future development. A further paper will be presented to Council with recommendations for integrating existing programmes.
- Audit of Outdoor and Indoor Recreation Facilities - An exercise is currently being completed to identify and categorise all provision within the existing Council areas, including parks, play areas, trails, walks, water recreation etc. It is planned that a GPS mapping exercise can be produced providing an overall picture of the facilities within Council and the operational management arrangement associated with each facility.
- Harmonisation - A separate paper has been submitted with recommendations in the following areas: opening times, bank/public holidays; commercial hire and discounted fees for Members and staff.

- Service Level Agreements and Maintenance Contracts - Information on same is currently being collated. It is anticipated that, eventually many of these will be streamlined which may provide greater efficiencies within the new Council.
- DCAL Water Recreation Sites - Further to previous information, the Rivers Agency has indicated that service support should be provided by Council. A separate report has been presented to Committee.

*Councillor Mallaghan left the meeting at 8.32pm*

#### **D44/15      Development and Regeneration Update**

Mr McCreesh advised that the report was to provide an update regarding progress on the Development and Regeneration Forward Work Plan.

Mr McCreesh drew attention to the progress report highlighting that the Local Economic Development Plan (2015-2018) in draft form had been formulated and presented by RSM McClure Watters Consultants to the Mid Ulster Council Local Economic Development Plan Working Group on Thursday 29 January in Cookstown Council Offices, and Mid Ulster Council Development Committee on 5 February in Cookstown District Council Offices. Members provided feedback and comments at each meeting with an updated presentation subsequently circulated via email to Development Committee Members for review. Further consultation can be facilitated if requested by Members. Following Members' review, it is proposed that the Draft Plan is then presented back to the public, including those key stakeholders and businesses who contributed to the economic development consultations in Autumn 2014, for their input. Work is ongoing on a range of economic development initiatives as outlined within the progress report.

Members noted that progress was being made.

#### **D45/15      Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2014-2020**

Mr McCreesh advised that the purpose of the report was to provide an update to members on the new Local Action Group formation process in Mid Ulster relating to the 2014-2020 NI Rural Development Programme and also to inform members on programme closure arrangements for the closure of the current RDP Programme 2007-13.

Mr McCreesh advised that in relation to the Local Action Group Formation that Members would be aware from previous reports that a new Local Action Group (LAG) for Mid Ulster would be established responsible for the delivery of funding within Mid Ulster through the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme. The new LAG will form as a limited company with directors comprised of elected members and social partners.

The 2007-2013 Rural Development Programme current status and closure process Mr McCreesh advised that SWARD (South West Action for Rural Development) received an allocation of £20.5m under the current RDP (2007-2013) that included administration funding. Of the £17.1m allocated against project funding, almost

£17m had been spent to date across over 300 projects funded with the remaining spend expected to be achieved by March 2015. An exit strategy has now been drafted which will be implemented for programme closure activities.

Mr McCreesh further reported that social partner and elected member (on an interim basis) representation to the new Local Action Group for Mid Ulster was now complete. He reminded Members that as per January report DARD would now issue a competitive call for applications to select the new LAGs. Mr McCreesh advised that it was envisaged this process would be completed by early March. Appointed LAG's will then be instructed to develop draft interim Local Development Strategies. DARD has indicated that Councils will assist the LAG's in the preparation of their Local Development Strategy and with applicant animation through a Service Level Agreement between DARD and Councils. A draft of the Service Level Agreement has been forwarded to Council officers. DARD has also issued for review a draft Contract between the LAG and Council for administrative and financial services for the duration of the 2014-2020 programme period. Mr McCreesh stated that both of these documents are being reviewed as clarification will be needed from DARD on a number of issues.

Mr McCreesh stated that a workshop with the 11 Councils would be helpful to agree an approach for all between DARD, Councils and Action Groups.

Members noted progress.

## **CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

Proposed by Councillor J Shiels  
Seconded by Councillor T Quinn and

**Resolved** That items D46/15 – D50/15 be taken as confidential business.

### **D51/15 Duration of Meeting**

The meeting was called for 7pm and ended at 9.38pm

**CHAIR** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_