

**Minutes of Meeting of the Development Committee of Mid Ulster District Council  
held on Thursday 11 June 2020 in the Council Offices, Circular Road,  
Dungannon and by Virtual Means**

**Members Present**

Councillor McNamee

Councillors Ashton, Black, Burton, Clarke (7.03 pm),  
Corry\*, Cuddy, Doris, Elattar, Kerr, Hughes, Kearney,  
Milne\*, Molloy, Monteith, Wilson

**Officers in  
Attendance**

Mrs Campbell, Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation  
Mr McCreesh, Director of Business and Communities  
Mr Browne\*\*, Head of Tourism  
Mr Gordon\*\*, Head of Leisure  
Mr Hill\*\*, Head of Parks  
Ms Linney\*\*, Head of Community Development  
Mr McCance\*\*, Head of Culture and Arts  
Ms McKeown\*\*, Head of Economic Development  
Mr Moffett\*\*, Head of Democratic Services  
Mr O'Hagan\*\*, Head of ICT  
Ms Grogan, Democratic Services Officer

**Others in  
Attendance**

Councillors Brown\*, S McGuigan\*, McLean\*, S McPeake\*

\* Denotes Members present in remote attendance

\*\* Denotes Officers present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm.

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

**D069/20      Apologies**

None.

**D070/20      Declarations of Interest**

The Chair reminded members of their responsibility with regard to declarations of interest and drew members' attention to Capital Discretionary Grant Award - item 3.1 and Community Development Report – Peace IV additional funding expenditure.

*The Chair, Councillor McNamee declared an interest in Community Development –*

- *Arts Culture & Heritage Community Development Small Grants – 2020-2021 – Item 36 - Cookstown District Orange Lodge No. 3 – Encouraging Community Participation*

*Item 131 - Stewartstown Amateur Dramatic Society*

- *Sports Capital Development – item 9 – Cookstown Boxing Club*
- *Small Grants – item 9 – Cookstown Fr Rock's GFC*

*Councillor Hughes declared an interest in:*

- *Economic Development – LAG*

*Councillor Monteith declared an interest in:*

- *Capital Discretionary Grant Awards – item 3.1 – Eoghan Ruadh Hurling Club Dungannon*
- *Community Development – Sports Capital Development – item 11 – Eoghan Ruadh Hurling Club*
- *Community Development – Small Sports Grant Awards – item 17 – Dungannon Thomas Clarke's GFC*
- *Community Development – Strategic Grants – item 8 - Dungannon Gaelic Forum*
- *Culture & Arts – item 3.3 – An Chraobh Rua de Chonradh na Gaeilge and Conradh na Gaeilge Charn Tóchair*

*Councillor Kerr declared an interest in:*

- *Community Development – Sports Capital Development – item 8 – Coalisland Na Fianna GFC*
- *Community Development – Small Sports Grants – item 7 – Coalisland Na Fianna*
- *Coalisland Community Response*

*Councillor Wilson declared an interest in:*

- *Community Development – Arts, Culture and Heritage Community Development Small Grants – 2020-21 – item 36 – Cookstown District Orange Lodge No. 3 – Encouraging Community Participation*

*Councillor Kearney declared an interest in:*

- *Economic Development - ICBAN and LAG.*

*Councillor Clarke declared an interest in:*

- *Economic Development - LAG and Village Renewal Scheme – Broughderg.*

*Councillor Burton declared an interest in:*

- *Economic Development – LAG*
- *Capital Discretionary Grant - Caledon Regeneration Partnership*
- *Fivemiletown Corona Virus Group*
- *Community Development – Arts, Culture & Heritage Community Development Small Grants 2020-21 – Bawn Silver Band*

*Councillor Milne declared an interest in:*

- *Bellaghy Village Regeneration Group*

## **D071/20      Chair's Business**

The Chair, Councillor McNamee thanked Councillors Wilson and Monteith, past Chair and Deputy Chair of the Development Committee for their tremendous work carried

out last year and stated that he looked forward to working with the Deputy Chair, Councillor Black.

He welcomed Mr Kieran Gordon, Head of Leisure to his first meeting of the Development Committee and said that he would look forward to working with him.

He advised that Community Development report would now be presented in open business for decision following agenda item 7.

In response to a query regarding Cookstown bypass, the Director of Business and Communities advised that Officers have been in touch with the Department for Infrastructure in relation to arrange and confirm a meeting to progress the matter and when dates and times are made known, this would be reverted back to members.

Councillor Doris raised an issue of concern, which was affecting her area within Derrylaughan and Derrytresk. She referred to the burning of moss and the detrimental effects that this was having on wildlife and the environment. She stated that she had met with a number of locals who advised that in years gone by the burning of moss was carried out in a controlled way.

She proposed that Officers meet with stakeholders and locals to investigate a way that these moss fires can be carried out in a controlled way so protection of wildlife and environment are sustained.

Councillor Clarke said that moss fires were a huge issue within his area also, but were fortunate this year as there were very few outbreaks. He referred back to an evening in May 2010 within his area when a moss fire was started, it created large flumes of smoke throughout the whole countryside and resembled the eruption of the volcano in Iceland.

He said years ago his father would burn a little moss every year to keep it under control and not let it get out of hand, but felt that some of the burning could be related to arson. He suggested that DAERA be consulted on how to proceed in a controlled way as to protect wildlife and the environment.

Proposed by Councillor Doris  
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council the Officers meet with stakeholders and locals of Derrylaughan and Derrytresk area to investigate a way that these moss fires can be carried out in a controlled way so as to protect wildlife and the environment.

Councillor Kerr proposed that the undernoted group be invited to make a presentation to the committee.

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that Lough Neagh Partnership be invited to a future meeting to provide a presentation on School Lands project in the Kingisland area.

The Chair advised that Lough Neagh Partnership's name would be put on the list to make their presentation to a future meeting.

The Director of Businesses and Communities referred to the moss fires and advised that Officers would investigate NIEA's Policy on Controlled fires and take it forward.

He advised that the Heads of Culture & Arts and Tourism were having a joint meeting with Lough Neagh Partnership and they would progress this forward.

Councillor Wilson raised concern regarding anti-social behaviour on the pathway leading to the Westland Road and Council Offices and stated that something needs to be done to try and discourage this. He said that the PSNI were out all weekend in relation to young people congregating, drinking, and leaving the place a mess with alcohol bottles being left behind.

He stated that residents of the area had been phoning him this evening with concerns as they were aware of him attending tonight's meeting and they want something done to try and prevent this kind of behaviour.

The Chair, Councillor McNamee said he knew the area well as it backed onto St Jeans Cottages and that during the summer months there was a history of gatherings in the area and when there was good weather the larger the crowd would be.

The Director of Business and Communities said that he would investigate the matter.

Councillor McNamee advised that if any member wished to raise any issue in Chair's Business, could this done 48 hours in advance as to give him the opportunity make himself known with the topic in case of issues around sensitivity.

## **Matters for Decision**

### **D072/20      Capital Discretionary Grant**

The Head of Community Development presented previously circulated report and sought approval for Council Capital Discretionary Grant Awards.

Councillor Doris commended the Officers on their work, stating that this was a positive news story, and congratulated Derrylaughan GFC on their wonderful facility within the community.

Councillor Elattar concurred with previous member's comments and said that Ballinascreen were hoping to secure a community hub and was hopeful that this would help towards it.

Councillor Clarke stated that this was substantial support allocated to different areas and said that reading previously through the documents, that a 25 year lease for the Caledon Project was quite a short period of time and the group may not have use for the property after this and felt that a 99 year lease may be more appropriate.

The Head of Community Development advised that the funders criteria was met and also Council criteria and were content re the lease period.

Councillor Ashton said that the Council had only allocated funding of £50,000 to the overall project and that it was a major benefit for a rural village.

Councillor Clarke advised that he had no issue but felt that a longer lease may have been more appropriate.

Councillor Burton stated that Caledon Regeneration Partnership had done a massive amount of work in the past and that the much-needed childcare facility in the area was very welcome. She said that over the last 5 years there were housing developments emerging in the village and surrounding areas and looked forward to the delivery of the project.

Councillor Cuddy stated that a 25-year lease was always a minimum and felt that a 99-year lease was not really needed and said that the three major projects was a good news story and welcomed it.

Proposed by Councillor Doris  
Seconded by Councillor Elattar and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to approve the Council Capital Discretionary Grant – to agree the three projects for funding up to £150,000 based on approval of budget by the Policy and Resources Committee.

#### **D073/20 Economic Development - OBFD**

The Head of Economic Development presented previously circulated report, which provided an update on key activities as detailed below:

- **TRPSI Micro Business Development Scheme 2020**

Councillor Black referred to Village Renewal Scheme – Group 7 and enquired why Innishrush and Tamlaght were not being included when Culnady was.

The Director of Business and Communities said that this would be investigated.

Proposed by Councillor Clarke  
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to approve the participation of Mid Ulster District Council in the second call for applications in the TRPSI Micro Business Development Scheme 2020, funded by DAERA

- **ICBAN Funding Request (2020/21)**

Proposed by Councillor Molloy  
Seconded by Councillor Hughes and

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

- (I) Funding request from ICBAN for up to £15,000 from Council's Economic Development Budget (2020/21), to be paid in two equal instalments, subject to Council being provided with the requisite documentation (application form, confirmation of match funding, copies of accounts, insurances final report and Progress Updates).
- (II) Release of funding to ICBAN twice yearly in two equal instalments, once Council is in receipt of all documentation requested for each stage (as previously outlined). ICBAN Progress updates to be furnished to future Development Committee meetings.

- **Covid-19 Grant Scheme to Assist Town Centre Businesses**

Councillor Molloy said that he welcomed the opportunity to kick-start the villages and larger towns again and would like to see a central fund set up to support more rural villages. He stated that they are crying out for help in relation to the introduction of social distancing measures and would like to see this being progressed and

Proposed by Councillor Molloy

To accept the proposal with the same project for the urban areas being worked up by Economic Development and presented to DAERA for funding to roll out across the villages. This is to be done at the same time as the DFC proposal.

Councillor Kerr said that he would have concerns once again regarding the five main towns being chosen for the grant scheme and stated that all businesses were facing the same hardships as those in the larger towns. He said that Coalisland was in a fortunate position but felt sorry for those businesses that fell outside the remit and

Proposed by Councillor Kerr

That the Covid-19 recovery grant be made available to all businesses across the Mid Ulster Council area in every town, village and rural area as to protect workers and their jobs.

Councillor Ashton welcomed the development, said it was an opportunity to make good progress, and would support the recommendation in front of members tonight. She said that she would second Councillor Molloy's proposal that the same project for the urban areas is to be worked up by Economic Development and presented to DAERA for funding to roll out across the villages. This is to be done at the same time as the DFC proposal.

She said that this was not the time to object as there were 10 other Councils waiting to get our share, felt that we take this opportunity, and make a bid to DAERA for the rest afterwards.

Councillor Molloy said he was happy to agree to Councillor Ashton's proposal.

Councillor Monteith said that he would have a major issue with this Council making a difference between urban and rural businesses as Covid19 does not discriminate against a business park, rural or urban business and felt that it was not good for this Council to have a grant to exclude certain businesses simply because they fall outside the remit. He said that a considerable number of businesses have already put a substantial amount of expenditure into doing this on their own.

He said that he would second Councillor Kerr's proposal on the grounds that all businesses are included in the scheme so equality is shown.

Councillor Burton said that she concurred with the previous two speakers, that this pandemic has hit all the businesses really hard. She said that small businesses were feeling the threat as much as the larger ones and have put a considerable amount of money into installing Perspex screens and sanitising stations etc.

Councillor Burton enquired if Officers had been in contact with Fivemiletown Chamber of Commerce and asked for an update on small retailers availing of the £10k grant, as they have not received any funding yet. She said that the residents and business owners of Fivemiletown felt that they are some way being excluded compared to other areas within Mid Ulster

The Chair, Councillor McNamee said that this has been the criteria set out by the Department for specifically targeted towns and said that he understood that villages should also be included but for now we have to follow the criteria set out.

The Director of Business and Communities said that it was important for members to note that the Council is not launching any programme, only asking for permission to work up towards the programme. He said that a recovery programme was agreed and that discussions would be taking place with Ministers and Departments, with Department of Communities coming forward to support a Town Centre Investment programme. He stated that Department for Communities have been asked to look at the boundaries and if we were successful, it would mean that there would be substantive funding being made available. He said that the additional proposals put before committee tonight made sense and that villages were supported through other means, but would try and devise an approach with DAERA tomorrow as Officers will do their utmost to continue to seek funding to try and help all effected within our community.

Councillor Wilson said that he welcomed the project, but felt that it may be a little too late, as a number of shops had already been revamped. He commended the Officers within Economic Development on their excellent work with groups and businesses, and said that the idea of liaising with DAERA was a first class idea which should be welcomed.

Councillor Doris said that it was good to see £10m being awarded from Department for Communities and asked if there was an opportunity of lobbying the Department for Economy for villages.

The Director of Business and Communities advised that the Department for Communities do not have a remit for an area with 5,000 people or less, this falls into the remit of DAERA.

Councillor Molloy enquired about Dungannon Public Realm.

Councillor Cuddy enquired about the earliest date that the call can be made, as there was a need to proceed and not waste time.

The Director of Business and Communities said that there were early discussions with the Department over this last few days and there was a need to treat this in a similar manner to the food parcels.

He said that this was a problem in the town centre, which we had to work through.

Councillor Kearney said that there was a need to get towns and villages moving again as a matter of urgency as Maghera was dying on its feet.

Councillor Monteith stated that the proposal still stands, that this Council was sending a clear proposal and what was said tonight was not on the paper. He said that if a guarantee was given that no business was going to be excluded he would be content.

The Head of Economic Development in reply to Councillor Burton's query regarding Fivemiletown Chamber of Commerce advised that contact was made with 100s of businesses throughout Mid Ulster since this pandemic started but couldn't confirm whether Fivemiletown Chamber of Commerce was specifically spoken to or not, but reassured the member that if they weren't contacted already, staff would follow up.

The Chair, Councillor McNamee stated that the spruce-up scheme was a disaster with all the paperwork and hoped that this would be a lot smoother.

Councillor Kerr's proposal to include all businesses within Mid Ulster in the grant scheme not just the five major ones was put to the vote:

For                      2

Councillor Molloy's proposed to accept the recommendation, plus write to DAERA asking them to consider funding opportunities for other villages and towns not covered by this scheme.

Councillor Monteith referred to licensed premises and advised that at least two-thirds of these fall outside the boundary for the Covid-19 recovery grant.

The Chair, Councillor McNamee said that members give Officers the direction and agreed with Councillor Monteith's comments that they should be all included, but we have to work with what is set out in front of us at present.

Councillor Molloy said that it was important that members all work together and felt that the 2 proposals presented should not fly in the face of each other and suggested that the town proposal be worked up with the rest of the businesses falling outside the remit being lobbied for.



Councillor Ashton said that it was important to take what we were being offered now and give Officers the chance of going away and working on a way forward with Officials to try and get secured funding for towns and villages.

The Director of Business and Communities said that it was important to take what was offered to us presently as Officers couldn't dictate to Department on the criteria they have set. He said that Officers would continue to lobby for those businesses, which fall through the loop.

Councillor Monteith said that members should be aware that they were elected representatives, representing their community, and stated that they would be the ones getting it in the neck, not DAERA or Department for Communities. He said that members should not be prepared to leave anyone behind and reminded them of the flack which they received regarding the Public Realm Scheme.

He said that it was paramount that town centre boundaries and villages are looked after also.

Councillor Molloy's proposal was put to the vote again to accept the recommendation with a project for the urban areas being worked up by Economic Development and presented to DAERA for funding to roll out across the villages. This is to be done at the same time as the DFC proposal.

For	12
Against	0

Councillor Molloy's proposal was carried.

Councillor Monteith disputed the resolution and stated that Councillor Kerr's vote was carried as 2 members voted in favour and none against.

The Chair, McNamee advised in his view he did not complete the vote as it was interrupted.

Councillor Molloy confirmed that he did not get the opportunity to finish what he was saying before being interrupted.

The Chair, Councillor McNamee stated that proceedings were carried out accordingly but put Councillor Kerr's proposal to the vote again.

For	2
Against	6

Councillor Molloy's proposal was carried.

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to approve that:

- (I) Council funding be made available from existing Business & Communities budgets for a Covid-19 Grant Scheme to assist Town

- Centre businesses, make internal/external adaptations to their premises to comply with Government's two metre social distancing procedures. Agreement to work up to the scheme, make any necessary funding applications and procure any required goods/services. Furthermore, when the scheme is ready, open the scheme to applications from eligible applicant businesses in Mid Ulster's 5 main towns (ie, Dungannon, Cookstown, Magherafelt, Coalisland and Maghera). If further funding becomes available, the scheme could be extended to include rural towns and villages.
- (II) A project for the rural areas be worked up by Economic Development and presented to DAERA for funding to roll out across the villages. This is to be done at the same time as the DFC proposal for town centre funding.

- **Economic Development Support to Businesses During Covid-19**

Councillor Kerr said he wanted to reflect what Councillor Burton said earlier regarding Fivemiletown and asked if Economic Development had been in contact with traders from Clonoe and Donaghmore.

Councillor Elattar advised if Economic Development had liaised with 100s of business owners both urban and rural and if anyone was left out this can be followed up.

In response to Councillor Molloy, the Director of Business and Communities advised that the relevant Director would clarify the snagging list for Dungannon in the morning.

In response to Councillor Doris' query, the Director of Business and Communities advised that a meeting with Coalisland Town Forum was being arranged for Monday where an update on Coalisland Public Realm would be provided.

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to approve to note progress.

#### **D074/20 Cot Lane Carpark Lease Agreement**

The Head of Parks presented previously circulated report to formalise a lease agreement between Mid Ulster District and the landowner in respect of the carpark at Cot Lane. Previous agreement dates back to December 2001 between the landowner and Cookstown District Council.

Proposed by Councillor Clarke  
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and

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

- (I) Council Officers liaising with the landowner and necessary bodies to formalise a lease agreement for the carpark area on Cot Lane.
- (II) Presenting Legal Agreements and associated LPS valuations, once received for Policy & Resources Committee approval.

## **D075/20      GOGA 2 Project Plan (2021 -2024)**

The Head of Leisure presented previously circulated report to update on the GOGA (Get Out Get Active) 2 Project Plan (2020 – 2024) and sought approval to formalise the partnership between MUDC and Live Active NI to host a funded full time GOGA staff member. This partnership is anticipated to commence on the approval to sign a Memorandum of Understanding that will permit Live Active NI to fund and commence employment of the GOGA Officer.

Councillor Doris congratulated Mr Kieran Gordon on his appointment of Head of Leisure and said that she looked forward to working with him in the future. She said that this was a good news story especially for the elderly and people with disabilities.

Councillor Corry concurred with Councillor Doris and said it was encouraging to see this progressing as it showed a representation for the disabled and elderly.

Proposed by Councillor Doris  
Seconded by Councillor Corry and

**Resolved**      That it be recommended to Council that approval be given to formalise the partnership between MUDC and Live Active NI via the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding that will permit Live Active NI to fund and recruit a full time GOGA Officer.

## **D076/20      Community Development Report**

The Head of Community Development presented previously circulated report and provided an update on the following:

- **Council Grants Recommendations for Award and process**

Proposed by Councillor Elattar  
Seconded by Councillor Kearney and

**Resolved**      That it be recommended to Council to approve the Council Community Grants – funding awards as outlined in appendix 1 of the report.

Councillor Elattar commended all the staff involved in the grants and wanted to pass on her congratulations.

Councillor Monteith said that these last 3 months has been really hard on local people, with a considerable number of people coming out and helping who didn't belong to any group or voluntary organisations and these people needed to be championed for putting themselves at risk, with most of them holding down full time employment. He stated that substantive funding had been made available in some areas, but there was little evidence where the money had manifested

He stated that before Covid-19 that an Anti-Poverty Strategy document was going forward and said that it was now vitally important that this be at the forefront of the

community. He said that the document was near completion and asked that this be progressed as people in the community had good ideas and asked that this be an item on the Agenda going forward.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith  
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to the Council that Officers progress the Anti-Poverty Strategy and this be an item on the Agenda going forward.

Councillor Molloy referring to Strategic Events enquired if cancelled or deferred events would still have secured funding to run their events later in the year.

The Head of Community Development advised that some groups have pulled their events completely and some have deferred until a later date.

The Chair, Councillor McNamee concurred with comments regarding voluntary workers and people on the ground and stated that they should be commended and championed as they were outstanding within their communities.

- **Mid Ulster Advice STEP DFC Funding Uplift Approval**

Proposed by Councillor Kerr  
Seconded by Councillor Hughes and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to approve the issue of funding provided by DFC for specific advice provision, to be monitored direct by DFC.

- **Peace IV Shared Space Capital Project – Approval for Additional Expenditure**

Councillor Elattar said that this would be welcomed by the community within Draperstown is these were delivered.

Proposed by Councillor Elattar  
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to approve the additional funding to the shared space capital projects based on agreed design.

- **Community Development**

Members noted update report.

## **Matters for Information**

**D077/20 Minutes of Development Committee held on 12 March 2020**

Councillor Doris raised the issue funding towards flowers for Stewartstown as they were previously awarded Ulster in Bloom's Most Improved Village last year. She said that this fantastic for good relations as it was a community project. She asked if Officers could investigate this and let her know of the outcome.

Councillor Monteith referred to agreement to sponsor the Mid Ulster Business Awards and stated that it was important if they went ahead that Council's name wasn't linked to this as previously happened with Dalradian.

Councillor Kerr sought an update on the following:

- Progress on Cappagh/Altmore and Drumcairne
- Coalisland Leisure Centre
- Gortgonis Running Track and soccer pitch anticipated re-opening

In response to Councillor Kerr's proposal it was

**Resolved** That it be recommended to the Council that an onsite meeting with Council Officers be arranged for Washingbay Walkway entrance to discuss road safety issues.

The Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation updated Councillor Kerr's queries as follows:

- Progress regarding Cappagh/Altmore had been delayed due to Covid19, but Council would re-engage with Forestry Service.
- Coalisland Leisure Centre – this is still being progressed.
- Gortgonis Running Track – due to re-open again from next Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June.

In response to the query regarding Washingbay Walkway, the Director stated that she would come back to members with a date for a meeting to progress this.

Councillor Doris said that she wanted reassurance that Altmore/Cappagh and Drumcairne projects would be given priority and couldn't understand why the Forestry Service Licences weren't being progressed.

Councillor Doris said she was disappointed that no response was received from Officers regarding Washingbay Walkway concerns.

She said that she welcomed the news of Gortgonis Running Track being re-opened again.

## **D078/20      Culture & Arts Update Report**

Members noted previously circulated report which provided an update on activity delivered across Culture and Arts Services during the Covid-19 lock down period and to highlight key issues during this period. The report also highlighted specific events and activities within Culture & Arts Services that is currently being explored by the officer team in maintaining the contact between staff and officer team and customers, visitors, audiences and service users.

Councillor Corry commended Irish Language Officers within Culture and Arts for their magnificent work and online activity in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. She said that she hoped that it would encourage more activity online and considered for the future as to keep people up with the classes.

Councillor Ashton sought clarity in relation to item 3.5 of the report about the relaunch of the Facebook page, Development of Irish Language Site and also the page 55 – Irish in Schools – and enquired if this was mandatory for all schools to be included as some may not want to participate.

Councillor Black referred item 3.3 and said that he was not comfortable with the project name being in Irish as it was hard for him to understand what the project was. He said that in future it would be beneficial to have the project name translated into English. He reiterated that he didn't have an issue with the name being in Irish but would like it translated so that everyone was aware of what the project was.

Councillor Kearney said that it was disappointing for all the children intending to get to the Gaeltacht this year as it was something they were looking forward to.

The Head of Culture & Arts in response to Councillor Ashton's query advised that the development of the "site" referred to in the report was the existing Irish language Facebook page which was the only dedicated channel for the Language. He said that similar facebook pages were operated for the Burnavon and Ranfurly for a number of years now.

Councillor Ashton said that when you looked at it, it seemed like the Irish Language Facebook page and the Council website were like two different proposals coming together and that it was mandatory for all schools to participate in the Irish Language programme.

The Head of Culture & Arts stated that it wasn't a new website and the schools programme was open to those schools wishing to avail of the programme and was not a mandatory requirement.

The Director of Business and Communities advised that involvement in Irish Language activity was voluntary and not forced upon anyone.

The Head of Culture & Arts in response to Councillor Black's query regarding item 3.3 advised that he would take on board his suggestion to translate the project titles in English in addition to Irish.

## **D079/20      Tourism Department Update**

Members noted previously circulated report which provided an update on Tourism department's current work streams.

Councillor Molloy enquired if there was any update on the anticipated opening of the Dark Skies project.

The Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation advised that discussions were to take place next week. She said that the internal works were complete and at the snagging stage, but was on the radar to open as soon as possible.

Councillor Burton said that it would be remissive of her not to mention the magnificent work which was being carried out by Tourism staff within our community. She said that there was ongoing concern regarding businesses within the border areas like small cafes etc as they were keen to reopen and wanted to commend staff on their expertise

In response to Councillor Cuddy's query regarding five furloughed staff, the Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation advised that a lot depended on when facilities reopened and direction from the Executive.

#### **D080/20      Leisure and Outdoor Recreation – Covid-19 Update**

Members noted previously circulated report which provided an update on response from the Leisure and Outdoor Recreation Team to the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing engagement and contact with customers and users of Council Leisure and Outdoor Recreation Services.

#### **D081/20      EBA 2020 End of Year Report**

Members noted previously circulated report which provided an update on the 19/20 EBA 2020 programme, in the form of an End of Year Report required by Sport NI so as to authorise the final payment to MUDC.

#### **D082/20      Council Community Support – COVID-19**

Members noted previously circulated report which provided an update on the Council's Community Support – Covid-19 response.

The Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation advised members that the 12 week food box scheme was coming to an end and other options were being looked at. She said that 1075 food boxes were delivered each week and that the Department for Communities would be looking at the continuation of these for people who would have been provided a letter from their GP for another 3 to 4 weeks.

She stated that there was concern around food poverty and this would be supported through Advice NI with benefits and supporting mechanisms being put in place by Department for Communities for the issuing of financial support towards food banks and distributors. Currently work is also being done on funding towards the implementation of a social supermarket.

She advised that the process for moving forward was that the Department for Communities would be issuing letters to those receiving a food box advising them of the end of the food box programme. Council would continue the 'befriending' service.

Councillor Ashton felt Day-care providers were facing huge problems regarding PPE. She said that it would be beneficial if Council could support these providers sourcing or purchasing PPE on their behalf.

The Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation said that she would take the suggestion on board.

In response to Councillor Black's query regarding reopening of public toilets, the Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation advised that to date no public toilets had reopened and that the Council were taking their guidance from DAERA and would be kept under review.

The Chair, Councillor McNamee stated that when shops reopen on Friday, issues could arise regarding public toilets being closed.

Councillor Burton raised concern about people receiving shielding letters from GPs and said that some patients were not aware that they were classed as 'at risk'. She stated that a lady from Fivemiletown rang the Advice line and was referred to Fermanagh & Omagh District area and by the time it was her turn all the food boxes were already allocated. She commended the Vineyard and the people who supply them for supplying food to vulnerable people and families. She felt that these kind of issues needed addressing as this has arisen through no fault of their own and should get what they were entitled to.

The Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation said there was a lack of clarity at this stage but once the end of June emerges, it may become a lot clearer. She said that she could not provide a definitive answer at this stage as it was the Department for Communities which ran the scheme and the Council carry out their instructions.

Councillor Burton said it was important that this committee realises that these people didn't do anything wrong, but fell through the loop and that the responsibility lays with the Department.

Proposed by Councillor Burton

That going forward it would be paramount that this committee agrees that a robust measure is in place as to protect our vulnerable citizens and receive all the support they are entitled to.

Councillor Monteith concurred with member's comments and said that while we accept that this scheme was worthwhile at the beginning of the Corona Virus pandemic, there were flaws in the system and not acceptable going forward.

He said it was like a postcode lottery as some GPs did not issue shielding letters, some only issued texts and some did nothing at all and once people started to question this, all the food boxes were allocated elsewhere. He said this time around no flaws would be accepted as we are 10 weeks in and 2 weeks from the end and we still are not aware of the situation going forward and clarity was needed. He stressed that there was an onus on elected members to make sure there were no loopholes for vulnerable people who were eligible for support going forward.

He said that it was unacceptable that this system allowed for people to go hungry and if a person can't get a food box there were entitled to, there was a need for Council to



financially bolster groups like the Vineyard to generate the support where it was needed most.

Councillor Monteith said that he would second Councillor Burton's proposal.

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that going forward it would be paramount that this committee agrees that a robust measure is in place to protect our vulnerable citizens and receive all the support they are entitled to.

Councillor Wilson declared an interest in this item as he was a member responsible for the delivery of food boxes.

Councillor Wilson concurred with previous comments and said that he was also aware of vulnerable people with shielding letters not receiving food boxes. He said that the Department for Communities done very well getting the food distributed but felt that more could have been done so that all eligible people received what they were entitled to.

He commended all the volunteers and the staff at MUSA on their hard work to date in making sure all the food boxes were prepared delivered.

Councillor Molloy agreed with previous comments and felt that those which have children were most hard done by. He said that the Department of Education have stated that they would not be responsible for the payment of school meals over the summer and that he was aware of local food banks supplying young families with food and felt that there was a real fear that there would be a huge increase in similar circumstances.

Councillor Kerr agreed with previous comments made and said that this Council needed to grab this by the bullhorns and really the real people who needed it most.

The Chair, Councillor McNamee said that there was a need to put pressure on the Department to make sure the vulnerable were supported this time around.

In response to Councillor Molloy's proposal it was

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council the importance of a cross over between GPs and the Department so the message gets across and that people were made aware of what they were entitled to.

## **Local Government (NI) Act 2014 – Confidential Business**

Proposed by Councillor Black  
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

**Resolved** In accordance with Section 42, Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 that Members of the public be asked to

withdraw from the meeting whilst Members consider items D083/20 to D084/20.

**Matters for Decision**

D083/20      Tender Report for the Appointment of a Contractor to deliver the Mid Ulster Gearing for Growth Programme

**Matters for Information**

D084/20      Confidential Minutes of Development Committee held on 12 March 2020

**D085/20      Duration of Meeting**

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm and concluded at 9 pm.

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_