

Minutes of Meeting of Policy and Resources Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 5 October 2017 in the Council Offices, Ballyronan Road, Magherafelt

Members Present

Councillor Molloy, Chair

Councillors Ashton, Bateson, Buchanan, Cuddy, Doris, Elattar, Forde, Gildernew, Kearney, S McGuigan, McKinney, McLean, McPeake, Milne, M Quinn (7.38 pm), Totten

Officers in Attendance

Mr A Tohill, Chief Executive
Mrs Canavan, Director of Organisational Development
Mr Cassells, Director of Environment and Property
Mr Kelso, Director of Public Health and Infrastructure
Mrs Kerr, Head of Finance
Ms Mezza, Head of Communications
Mr Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
Mr O'Hagan, Head of ICT
Mrs Grogan, Committee Services Officer

The meeting commenced at 7 pm.

PR174/17 Apologies

Director of Finance.

PR175/17 Declaration of Interest

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

PR176/17 Chair's Business

The Chair, Councillor Molloy advised that he had received a request from Councillor Cuddy asking to address the committee.

Councillor Cuddy advised the committee that previously a charity in Edendork, which ran very successful car-boot sales, asked the Council for the use of one of their carparks to host events as they wished to move into Dungannon town. He said that this never materialised as there seemed to be obstacles in their way and they found an alternative site at Tesco's. He said that if another charity sought the use of another Council carpark to host such events in the future that this should be encouraged and taken on board as he was disappointed that this wasn't the case for Edendork as it generated huge crowds to the area. He said that this was an opportunity for a process to be put in place by the Council for such eventualities in the future.

Matters for Decision

PR177/17 Staff Engagement Survey

The Head of Communications drew attention to the previously circulated report to detail the proposals to undertake a staff engagement survey.

Proposed by Councillor Ashton
Seconded by Councillor S McGuigan

Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council to approve the Staff Engagement Survey.

Councillor Cuddy enquired if the Staff Engagement Survey would remain confidential.

The Head of Communications advised that the survey would only require the employee to name the Department in which the member of staff was located.

Councillor McLean advised that the outcome of the survey would be very important and wanted to know what Officers were doing to encourage staff participation as there was usually a very poor response rate in all these surveys. He said that if the council were serious about addressing issues then staff participation in the survey must be encouraged. He enquired if there was any incentive offered for staff who participate in the survey i.e. a prize or draw.

The Head of Communications stated that Heads of Service and Line Managers would be asked to encourage all staff within their departments to participate in the survey in an effort to maximise results.

The Chief Executive said that consideration was given to holding a raffle for staff participants i.e. iphone or ipad etc, but this would require the member of staff leaving their name and this could deter some from participating in the survey. He said that Officers had explored the possibility of departments with the highest number of responses per ratio receiving a good will gesture like breakfast or lunch being bought for them.

Councillor McLean felt that it was important to encourage staff participation in the survey.

PR178/17 Corporate Health Indicators

The Chief Executive drew attention to the previously circulated report to ask for consideration to be given to the introduction of Corporate Health Indicators for the Council.

Councillor McLean stated that it looked very impressive but like anything at the start people begin to analysis things. He referred to item 4 of the Corporate Health Indicators and stated that it would be beneficial to include an actual figure so that

some relevance can be accustomed to it. He said that this should be left to an Officer's discretion and wouldn't want this to be in any way misconstrued.

Councillor Cuddy agreed that it was important to keep it up to date and a very good idea.

Proposed by Councillor McLean
Seconded by Councillor S McGuigan and

Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council to approve the draft Corporate Health Indicators.

PR179/17 External Signage: Boundary Gateway & Leisure Facilities

The Head of Communications drew attention to the previously circulated report which showed draft designs for Mid Ulster boundary or 'Gateway' signs and for the Council's main leisure facilities, as part of the Council's brand implementation process.

Councillor Cuddy said that he was still disappointed that there were still some minority languages not taken on board and looking through the minutes that this had not been subject to equality and good relations assessment. He said that he had no issue with the Irish language being put on signage but that ratepayers in the district may have an issue. He said that he didn't see anything that he aligns himself to and that the people that he represents felt pushed out and that their views should also be taken on board.

Councillor McPeake advised that the policy had already been through an equality impact assessment and that each element of the policy's implementation did not therefore need to be individually assessed.

Councillor Cuddy felt that the onus was on the Council to try and find a better way as all ratepayers should be classed as equal.

The Chair advised that the Policy had already been adopted.

Councillor Cuddy stated that he understood that it was and asked if it was possible to receive a copy of the equality impact assessment.

Councillor Gildernew said that the gateway signs were a good idea as long as it didn't impact on town and signage.

The Head of Communications confirmed that only boundary signage was being considered and town and village signage would be considered separately.

Councillor McKinney stated that some villages doesn't want these signs erected and in some areas would not be accepted and that this issue needed sorted.

Proposed by Councillor S McGuigan
Seconded by Councillor Gildernew

To accept the recommendation to approve the recommendation.

Proposed by Councillor McKinney
Seconded by Councillor McLean

To refuse the recommendation for approval.

The recommendation being put to the vote:

8 FOR
6 AGAINST

Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council to approve the draft designs and in the base of the boundary signage that the design with the Council's logo at the bottom of the sign be approved.

PR180/17 Maintenance of Unadopted Roads Policy

The Director of Environment & Property drew attention to the previously circulated report to consider the adoption of a Policy in relation to the Maintenance of Unadopted Roads.

Councillor Cuddy referred to the issue of Curran's Terrace and advised that he had been approached by residents as this issue had been ongoing for a long period of time and enquired if the matter of Curran's Terrace had come forward at this stage would it now be passed.

The Director of Environment & Property advised that the matter of Curran's Terrace would fall under the criteria of category D and stated that extension discussions had taken place for maintenance liabilities and roads in disrepair. He said that the Council had already made their decision.

Councillor McPeake enquired if the new Policy would take into consideration pathways.

The Director of Environment & Property advised that anything to do with the carriageway would be taken on board and this would include pathways.

Councillor Bateson enquired if the residents were in a position to make funding towards works would this be considered within the Policy.

The Director of Environment & Property advised that the Policy itself wouldn't take into consideration financial implications and that financial matters would come into the stage when the Policy & Resources Committee considers exercising its General Power of Competence in relation to a successful application.

Councillor Cuddy enquired if an application was received for a footpath could this be considered.

The Director of Environment & Property advised that the application would have to be made for the whole road which includes both the carriageway and the footway.

Councillor McPeake advised that a small development should have a bond attached as a guarantee in case a developer goes to the wall. He said in this instance, the developer hadn't a bond in place and now there is an unfortunate mess left behind.

The Director of Environment & Property said that each application should be considered on their own merits and wasn't convinced that the Council should be picking up the obligations for other statutory agencies.

In response to Councillor McGuigan's query, the Director of Environment & Property stated that if land was privately owned then this wouldn't comply with the criteria of the Policy and that each case has to be measured on its own merits and each development having a bond attached in the case of such eventualities.

In response to Councillor Bateson's query, the Director of Environment & Property advised that the Council would be bringing the issue forward to try and reach a favourable outcome.

Councillor McLean said that it would be good if used properly and that he listened to all comments tonight and felt if there were any issues that this would be passed anyway by Sinn Féin.

Councillor McKinney enquired if the applications already made were processed yet.

The Director of Environment & Property advised that the applications would be processed once the Policy was approved by Council.

In response to concerns by Councillor Cuddy, the Director of Environment & Property advised that a lot of applications had already been accessed and once the Policy was approved that they would be reassessed.

Proposed by Councillor Bateson
Seconded by Councillor S McGuigan and

Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council to approve the Maintenance of Unadopted Roads Policy.

Matters for Information

PR181/17 Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on Thursday 7 September 2017

Members noted minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on Thursday 7 September 2017.

PR182/17 Planning System Replacement

Members noted previously circulated report to inform Council on the progress to date regarding the replacement of the Planning Portal system.

PR183/17 Annual Progress Report on 2016/17 Corporate Improvement Plan

Members noted previously circulated report to inform members on progress made towards delivery of the 2016/17 Corporate Improvement Plan.

PR184/17 Members Services

No Issues.

Local Government (NI) Act 2014 – Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor Gildernew
Seconded by Councillor S McGuigan

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 PR185/17 to PR193/17.

Matters for Decision

PR185/17 Leisure Services Information Management Systems
PR186/17 Rate Support Grant Judicial Review Update
PR187/17 Staffing Matters for Decision
PR188/17 Award of Occupational Health Service

Matters for Information

PR189/17 Confidential Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on Thursday 7 September 2017
PR190/17 Staffing Matters for Information
PR191/17 Managing Attendance Report – 1 April to 31 August 2017
PR192/17 Contracts and DAC
PR193/17 Financial Report for 5 months ended 31 August 2017

PR194/17 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7 pm and ended at 7.55 pm.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____