

Minutes of Environment Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 10 July 2014, in the Council Offices, Burn Road, Cookstown

Members Present: Councillor Cuddy, Chair
Councillor B McGuigan, Vice Chair

Councillors: Buchanan, Burton, Cuthbertson, Gillespie, McAleer, McFlynn, McGinley, S McGuigan, McNamee, Mallaghan, Mullen, Mulligan, Joe O'Neill, Reid

Officers In Attendance: Mr Tohill, Chief Executive
Mr Cassells, Magherafelt DC (Item 4.2)
Mr Kelso, Cookstown DC (Items 4.1 & 5)
Mrs McClements, Dungannon & Sth Tyrone BC
Mr Young, Magherafelt DC

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm.

Chair's Business

The Chair called the meeting to order, welcomed all to the first Environment Committee Meeting of Mid Ulster District Council and outlined the Agenda Items for consideration.

E1/14 Apologies

There were no apologies to the meeting.

E2/14 Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

E3/14 Environment Committee Terms of Reference for the Transitional Period (A)

The Chief Executive advised Members that the Mid Ulster District Council at its meeting on 26 June 2014 had established four Committees to take forward the work of the Council during the transitional period and that the Terms of Reference for each Committee had been set by Council.

The Chief Executive advised that as per the agreed Terms of Reference the Mid Ulster District Council has not delegated any authority to the Environment Committee during the transitional period.

Meetings of the Environment Committee would take place on the Wednesday following the first Monday in each month at 7 pm.

E4/14 To receive updates from Transition Working Groups (B)

Environmental Health & Building Control

The Director of Environmental Health & Building Control (Cookstown DC), gave a comprehensive overview on the remit and scope of the Group and on the scoping and baseline activities that have and will be taken forward on a cross-council basis for the shadow period. He indicated that specific work plans and timelines are in place to assist with this transition and was confident that come 1 April 2015, Council would be able to provide an efficient, effective and 'fit for purpose' service, built on uniformity across the Mid Ulster District Council area.

A DUP Member sought clarity on how best service delivery in conjunction with the Public Health Agency will be provided across the Mid Ulster Council area.

The Officer assured the Member that PHA were currently reviewing the area of contracts within Partnership Programmes and discussions would be ongoing.

The Chair suggested that the Officer corresponds with the PHA at the earliest opportunity and reports back to the Environment Committee.

Resolved Officer to correspond with PHA in regards to Partnership Programmes / Contracts and report back to Environment Committee.

A SF Member queried if costing of 'fleet fuel' was included within the area of Utility / Energy Management Contracts.

The Officer provided a breakdown of current utility costs across the three Council areas.

The Chair indicated that Dungannon & Sth Tyrone BC had examined the possibility of purchasing a wood chip burner, but technicalities had prevented this from going ahead.

A UUP Member raised the issue of PHA Contracts and the possibility of developing arrangements within Councils.

The Officer advised that the overall aim is to have one contract for each Council in each respective service delivery area.

The Chief Executive advised the Committee that a composite list of all contracts, including scale of costs, will be brought before the Environment Committee as soon as practicable.

The Chair agreed that this summary report would be extremely useful as soon as possible.

Resolved Summary report on composite list of Contracts and scale of costs to be provided for Environment Committee as soon as possible.

A UUP Member asked if figures of savings in respect of Group Services will be available to Committee.

The Officer advised that discussions are ongoing in respect of Group Service provision for the Mid Ulster District Council and when all issues had been addressed a report would be presented to the Environment Committee for their subsequent consideration and recommendation.

A DUP Member raised the issue of animal Welfare legislation and the arrangements for picking up of dead animals which are a blight in the area of Tourism within the District.

The Officer advised that the Animal Welfare legislation had been introduced some two years ago, on the understanding that in light of changes within the Group Structure, further revisions would take place before April 2015, on service delivery and a report would be brought to the Committee at a later date outlining the proposed way forward.

Resolved A report be brought to the Committee at a later date outlining the proposed future service delivery arrangements under Animal Welfare legislation.

Waste and Technical Services Transition Working Group

The Director of Operational Services (Magherafelt DC), gave a comprehensive overview on the remit and scope of the Group and on the scoping and baseline activities that have and will be taken forward on a cross-council basis for the shadow period. He indicated that specific work plans and timelines are in place to assist with the smooth transition to uniformity moving forwards to April 2015.

A SF Member stated that in his opinion the recycling systems in place were becoming more complicated and would Mid Ulster District Council be in a position to maintain our targets.

The Officer advised that in conjunction with NILAS, consultation was ongoing across the three Council areas to assist Councils with their statutory roles and responsibilities in respect of their individual Waste Management Plans. Consideration will also be given to meeting targets, reducing landfill waste, staff resources and budgets across the service delivery for the Mid Ulster District Council area.

A SF Member asked if the proposed changes to the Waste and Technical Services function could prove more costly.

The Officer advised that in the area of the provision of suitable waste vehicles, there may be an additional cost implication. However, these are all issues currently under discussion.

Matters for Consideration

E5/14 Paper on DSD Affordable Warmth Programme – Mid Ulster Cluster (C)

The Director of EH & Building Control (Cookstown DC), advised that the new Affordable Warmth Programme will replace the current Warm Homes Scheme which has operated across NI since 2009. The Warm Homes Scheme was scheduled to finish at the end of June 2014, however the Department have now extended the current contract, to complete in March 2015. This decision was taken to enable all Councils to put appropriate arrangements in place for programme delivery.

He advised Members on some of the key issues that will be critical to delivery of the Programme across the Mid Ulster District Council area. Consideration will be given to financial, staff resource and IT platform arrangements, utilising both the services of the Environmental Health and Building Control Teams.

An official launch of the scheme will take place in September 2015.

A SF Member welcomed the introduction of the Scheme but asked if more funding would be provided for double glazing in current single-glazed dwellings.

The Officer advised he had already written to the DSD in respect of this matter but would flag it up again.

Resolved It was resolved that the Director of EH & BC (Cookstown DC) continues to liaise with DSD in respect of finances for the provision of double glazing in currently single-glazed dwellings.

Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7 pm and ended at 8.04 pm.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____