



28 May 2020

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Council to be held in Burnavon Arts & Cultural Centre, Cookstown and by virtual means Burn Road, Cookstown, Co Tyrone, BT80 8DN on Thursday, 28 May 2020 at 19:00 to transact the business noted below.

A link to join the meeting through the Council's remote meeting platform will follow.

Yours faithfully

Anthony Tohill  
Chief Executive

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## AGENDA

### OPEN BUSINESS

1. Suspension of Standing Order 30.2 - Amendment to Standing Orders
2. Adoption of Interim Standing Orders on Remote Access to Meetings
3. Apologies
4. Declarations of Interest
5. Chair's Business

### Matters for Decision

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| 6. | Council minutes of meeting held on 23 April 2020   | 49 - 62  |
| 7. | Mid Ulster Covid-19 Business Recovery Plan   | 63 - 86  |
| 8. | Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2020 - Authorised Officers | 87 - 90  |
| 9. | Covid-19 Recovery of Buildings   | 91 - 120 |

### Matters for Information

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| 10 | Update on Mid Ulster District Council Community Support Hub | 121 - 124 |
| 11 | Covid -19 Community Support                                 | 125 - 128 |
| 12 | Consultations notified to Mid Ulster District Council       | 129 - 132 |
| 13 | Correspondence  | 133 - 140 |

**Items restricted in accordance with Section 42, Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014. The public will be asked to withdraw from the meeting at this point.**

Matters for Decision

14. Council Confidential minutes of meeting held on 23 April 2020
15. Planning System Replacement

Matters for Information

16. Update on Furlough Scheme
17. Covid 19 Financial Update



Comhairle Ceantair  
**Lár Uladh**  
**Mid Ulster**  
District Council

## Standing Orders

<b>First Approved</b>	Thursday 28 May 2015
<b>Revised and Approved</b>	Thursday 26 May 2016
<b>Revised and Approved</b>	Thursday 26 April 2018
<b>Revised and Approved</b>	<i>subject to Council Meeting of May 2020</i>

## **MODEL STANDING ORDERS FOR COUNCILS**

### Definitions

“2014 Act” means the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014

“2014 Executive Arrangements Regulations” means the Local Government (Executive Arrangements) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014

“2014 Standing Orders Regulations” means the Local Government (Standing Orders) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014

“call-in” means a requisition for the reconsideration of a decision as provided for in section 41(1) of the 2014 Act.

### In Standing Order 21

“budget” means the expenditure authorised by a council under section 3 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011;

“clerk” means the clerk to the council appointed under section 41 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972;

“committee” means a committee appointed under section 7 of the 2014 Act;

“delegated authority” means the discharge of a function under authority fixed by a council under section 7 of the 2014 Act;

“decision maker” means the body or person making an executive decision, a decision under delegated authority or a key decision;

“executive” means a cabinet-style executive or a streamlined committee executive as provided for in section 21(2) of the 2014 Act;

“executive decision” means a decision taken by a decision maker in connection with the discharge of a function which is the responsibility of the executive of a council;

“key decision” means a decision under executive arrangements which is likely –

(a) to result in the council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the council’s annual budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or

(b) to be significant in terms of the effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral areas in the local government district of the council;

“member” means a member of the council; and

“policy framework” means the policies and procedures agreed by the council in relation to the delivery of a function or functions of the council.

### In Standing Order 23

“2000 Act” means the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000;

“member” means councillor;

“nominating officer” in relation to a party, means

- (a) the person registered under the 2000 Act as the party’s nominating officers; or
- (b) a member of the council nominated under the 2000 Act for the purposes of Schedule 1 to the 2014 Act; and

“party” means a party registered under the 2000 Act in the Northern Ireland register (within the meaning of that Act).

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## **1. Annual and Monthly Meetings**

(1) In every year that is not a local election year the Council shall hold an Annual meeting in the month of June.

(2) In any year which is a local government election year, the Annual Meeting shall be held within twenty-one days immediately following the election, at such time as the Council may fix at the offices of the Council or at such other place as the Department may direct.

(3) A meeting of the Council for the transaction of general business of the Council shall, subject to any deviation which special circumstances may render desirable, be held on the fourth Thursday of every month. Other meetings of the Council for the transaction of general business shall be held as the Council considers necessary.

(4) Meetings of the Council shall not take place on a Public or Bank Holiday, a Saturday or a Sunday. When the day of a meeting falls on one of these days, the meeting shall be held on the next following weekday instead.

## **2. Time and place of meetings**

The Annual Meeting and other meetings of the Council shall be held at 7pm in the Council Chamber, except where otherwise fixed by statute or by special summons.

## **3. Convening Special Meetings**

(1) The Chair of the Council may call a meeting of the Council at any time.

(2) The Chair of the Council must call a meeting of the Council if a requisition for such a meeting, signed by not less than 5 members, is presented to him/her (Local Government Act 2014, Sch. 5, Sec. 4); and, if he/she refuses to call a meeting on such a requisition or if, without so refusing, he/she does not call such a meeting within the period of seven days from the date of service of the requisition on him/her, any five members, may on that refusal or on the expiration of those seven days call a meeting of the Council.

## **4. Notice and Summons of Meetings**

Three days at least before a meeting or special meeting of the Council, a Committee or Sub-Committee:

(1) notice of the time and place of the intended Meeting shall be published at the offices of the Council. Where the Meeting is called by members, the notice shall be signed by them and shall specify the business proposed to be transacted thereat;

(2) a summons to attend the Meeting, specifying the business proposed to be transacted thereat and signed by the Clerk shall be served on every member at least three days before the meeting. Want of service of this summons shall not affect the validity of a Meeting;

(3) except in the case of business required by statute, or where in the opinion of the Chair of the Meeting the business should be considered by the Meeting as a matter of urgency, no business shall be transacted at a meeting of the Council, a Committee or Sub-Committee other than that specified in the summons relating thereto.

## **5. Chair to be taken**

At each meeting of the Council, the Chair shall be taken at the time for which the meeting is convened, and business immediately proceeded with.

## **6. Chair of Meeting**

(1) At a Meeting of the Council, the Chair of the Council, if present, shall preside.

(2) If the Chair of the Council is absent from a Meeting of the Council, the Deputy Chair of the Council, if present, shall preside.

(3) If neither the Chairperson nor Deputy Chairperson are present at a Meeting of the Council, a member of the Council chosen by the members who are present must preside

(4) If discussion arises on the allocation of the position of Chair, the Clerk shall exercise the powers of the Chair to assist in the regulation of that discussion.

(5) Any power of the Chair of the Council in relation to the conduct of a meeting may be exercised by the person presiding at the meeting.

## **7. Quorum**

(1) Subject to sub-paragraph 7.4, no business shall be transacted at a Meeting of the Council unless at least one-quarter of the whole number of members are present.

(2) If during a meeting, the person presiding, after the number of members present is counted, declares that a meeting is inquorate and it is unlikely that there will be a quorum present within a reasonable time, he shall declare the meeting adjourned.

(3) Any uncompleted business on the agenda of a meeting adjourned under Standing Order 7(2) above, shall be tabled for discussion at the reconvened meeting. No business, other than the uncompleted business on the agenda of the meeting adjourned, may be discussed at the reconvened meeting.

(4) Where more than one-quarter of the members become disqualified at the same time then, until the number of members in office is increased to not less than three-quarters of the whole number of members, the quorum of the Council shall be determined by reference to the number of members remaining qualified instead of by reference to the whole number of members.



## **8. Admission to meetings**

(1) Subject to the provisions of this Standing Order, every Meeting of the Council shall be open to the public.

(2) The public and press may attend only in those parts of the Council Chamber provided for their accommodation at meetings of the Council, unless specifically excluded in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 10; or as required by the Council to comply with provisions in relation to Fire Safety and Health & Safety.

(3) The admission of the public is upon the understanding that they must continue at all times to be seated, and that no expression of opinion or noise of any kind be allowed from them.

(4) At all times during which a Meeting of the Council is open to the public, the Council shall, so far as is practicable, cause to be made available to duly accredited representatives of newspapers, attending for the purpose of reporting proceedings at the meeting, reasonable facilities for taking reports of these proceedings and, on payment by those representatives or their newspapers of any expenses which may be incurred, for transmitting such reports to their newspapers.

(5) Taking photographs of proceedings or the use of any other means by members of the public to enable persons not present to see or hear any proceedings (whether at that time or later) or making of any oral report of any proceedings as they take place shall be prohibited unless expressly permitted by the Council.

(6) The use of social media by member of the council, members of the public or journalists shall be permitted, during those proceedings that are open to the public, to the extent that its use does not disrupt proceedings.

## **9. Record of attendances at meetings**

The names of the members present at a meeting of the Council shall be recorded by the clerk.

## **10. Exclusion of the public**

(1) The public shall be excluded from a Meeting of the Council whenever it is likely that, during the transaction of an item of business, confidential information would be disclosed to them in breach of an obligation of confidence.

(2) The Council may by resolution exclude the public from a Meeting of the Council (whether during the whole or part of the proceedings at the meeting) for such special reasons as may be specified in the resolution being reasons arising from the nature of the business to be transacted or of the proceedings at the Meeting.

(3) The Presiding Chair may at any time during the proceedings, if he/she thinks it necessary to secure order, direct the removal of any individual or group of individuals

from the Council Chamber, or order the Council Chamber to be wholly cleared of members of the public.

(4) The Council, having excluded the public, shall only consider the matter referred to it by the resolution. If it should be deemed necessary to consider any matter not included in the resolution, the public shall be re-admitted and the Chair may ask leave of the Council to take up the consideration of such additional matters as may be deemed desirable.

(5) The Council, having excluded the public, shall not have the power to adjourn its own sittings or to adjourn a debate to a future sitting. If the business referred to in the resolution is not transacted, the Council may be resumed and a member of the Council may move that the Council again exclude the public on a future day to deal with the business specified in the resolution which was not transacted.

(6) If the Council, with the public excluded, has transacted part of the business referred to it, without being able to reach a decision on all the business so referred, a member of the Council may, with leave of the Council, report on the progress to that point and ask the Council's permission to sit again.

(7) When the Council, having transacted business with the public excluded, submits its report to the Council, a motion for its adoption shall then be moved and put. No questions or discussion shall be permitted on the report or the motion for its adoption.

## **11. Deputations**

(1) Deputations, from any source, shall only be admitted to address the Council provided the Clerk has received seven day's notice of the intended deputation and a statement of its objective.

(2) The deputation shall be confined to the presentation of a statement, or copy of resolutions, and shall not make more than two short addresses by any two members of the deputation. The totality of the address shall not exceed 10 minutes.

(3) Deputations should not be repetitive and, where possible, issues of a similar or linked nature should be contained in one deputation. Where a single deputation with a presentation has been made, the Council may decline to accept another deputation on the same issue from the same individual or group for a period of six months.

## **12. Order of Business**

Subject to any statutory requirements to the contrary, the order of business at every meeting of the Council shall be as follows:

- a) confirmation of the Minutes of the last stated Meeting and of all adjourned meetings and special meetings held since the last stated Meeting;
- b) declaration of members interests;
- c) matters arising;
- d) deputations;
- e) business required by statute to be transacted at the Meeting;
- f) adoption of the minutes of the proceedings of any committees and

consideration of reports, if any, from such committees;  
g) reports of officers, public bodies, agencies etc, if any, may be considered and such orders given thereon as may be deemed necessary;  
h) reports on decisions/recommendations subject to the reconsideration procedure;  
i) other Reports;  
j) correspondence and matters not already dealt with;  
k) sealing of documents; and  
l) consideration of motions of which due notice has been given, in the order in which they have been received.

### **13. Minutes of the Council**

#### **13.1 Keeping of; as evidence; etc**

- (1) Minutes of the proceedings of a Meeting of the Council, or of a committee or sub-committee, shall be drawn up and entered in a bound book kept for that purpose.
- (2) No discussion shall take place upon the Minutes except upon their accuracy.
- (3) Any minute purporting to be signed as mentioned in sub-paragraph (1) shall be received in evidence without further proof.
- (4) Until the contrary is proved, a Meeting of the Council or of a committee or sub-committee thereof in respect of the proceedings of which a minute has been so made and signed shall be deemed to have been duly convened and held, and all the members present at the meeting shall be deemed to have been duly qualified, and where the proceedings are proceedings of a committee or sub-committee, the committee or sub-committee shall be deemed to have been duly constituted and to have had power to deal with the matters referred to in the minutes.

#### **13.2 Signing of**

The Minutes of a Meeting of the Council shall be signed at the next ensuing Meeting of the Council by the Chair presiding, if approved by the meeting at which they fall to be signed.

### **14. Submission of Minutes**

- (1) In order to give sufficient time for the printing of the minutes and for their perusal by the members of the Council, minutes of meetings of a committee held later than seven clear days before the meeting of the Council shall not be submitted to that meeting for approval. This may be disapplied where a committee considers the matter to be of extreme urgency and records such a decision in its minutes.
- (2) It shall be the duty of a committee, through the Chair or his/her representative, when its minutes are submitted for approval, to call the attention of the Council to any resolution or matter of an unusual or special character contained therein.

### **15. Minutes of Committees**

(1) A motion or amendment shall not be made or proposed, or any discussion allowed on the proceedings of committees with reference to any matter within the remit of a committee which does not appear on the minutes submitted to the Meeting of the Council.

(2) Any member wishing to raise an issue regarding any matters appearing in the minutes submitted to the Council for approval and who states his/her request in writing to the Chair of the committee forty-eight hours before the commencement of the Meeting of the Council shall be entitled to a reply when the proceedings of the particular committee are submitted for approval.

(3) A reply to an issue raised at the meeting regarding any matter in the minutes, without written notice, shall be at the discretion of the Chair of the committee.

(4) Any matter in the minutes of a committee on which a request for reconsideration, under section 41 of the 2014 Act, has been lodged with the clerk of the Council shall be identified, and may not be the subject of discussion at that meeting.

## **16. Motions**

(1) Every motion shall be relevant to some matter:

i) in relation to which the Council:

a) has power or duties;

b) is not prevented from taking action on by other legislation;

ii) which directly affects the local government district or its residents; and

iii) for which the Council is legally competent.

### **16.1 On notice**

(1) Notice of every motion, other than a motion which under Standing Order 16.2 may be moved without notice, shall be given to the Clerk not later than at least seven clear days before the next Meeting of the Council. The motion must be clear in meaning otherwise it shall be rejected until such time as it is resubmitted in clear language, and not later than seven clear days before the meeting.

(2) A motion shall be rejected if the wording or nature of the motion is considered unlawful or improper.

(3) All notices shall be dated and numbered as received, and entered in a register to be kept for that purpose. This register shall be open to inspection by every Member of the Council.

(4) Notices of motion shall be entered by the Clerk in their proper place upon the Summons Paper in the order in which they are received.

(5) If a motion set out in the Summons is not moved either by a member who gave notice, or by some other member on his behalf, it shall, unless postponed by consent of the Council, be treated as withdrawn and shall not be moved without fresh notice.

(6) If the subject matter of any motion of which notice has been properly given comes within the remit of any committee it shall, upon being moved and seconded, stand

referred without discussion to that committee, or to such other committee as the Council may determine, for consideration and report. The Chair presiding may, if he/she considers it urgent and necessary to the dispatch of business, allow the motion to be dealt with at the meeting at which it is brought forward.

(7) If a notice of motion fails to be considered at a Meeting of the Council, such notice of motion will only be included on the Summons Paper for the following meeting if submitted in writing to the Clerk by the member concerned not later than seven clear days, at least, before the Council meeting.

(8) Any notice of motion which fails to be considered at two consecutive meetings will not be accepted for inclusion on the Summons Paper for a period of six months from the date of the second meeting at which the matter has failed to be considered.

#### **16.2 Without notice**

The following motions may be moved without notice:

- a) to appoint a Chair of the meeting at which the motion is moved;
- b) in relation to the accuracy of the minutes;
- c) to change the order of business in the agenda;
- d) to refer something to an appropriate body or individual;
- e) to appoint a committee or members thereof arising from an item on the summons for the meeting;
- f) to receive reports or adoption of recommendations of committees or officers and any resolutions flowing from them;
- g) to withdraw a motion;
- h) to amend a motion;
- i) to proceed to the next business;
- j) that the question be now put;
- k) to adjourn a debate;
- l) to adjourn a meeting;
- m) to suspend Standing Orders, in accordance with Standing Order 30.1;
- n) to exclude the public and press in accordance with section 42 of the 2014 Act;
- o) to not hear further a member named under Standing Order 25.3 or to exclude them from the meeting under Standing Order 25.4.

#### **17. Amendments**

(1) When a motion is under debate at any meeting of the Council, an amendment or further motion shall not be received, with the exception of the following:

- a) to amend the proposal; or
- b) that the Council do now adjourn; or
- c) that the debate be adjourned; or
- d) that the question be now put; or
- e) that the Council do proceed to the next business.

### **17.1 To amend the Proposal**

(1) An amendment must be legitimate and within the scope of the notice convening the meeting. It must not be a direct negative; must be relevant to the proposal which it seeks to amend, and not inconsistent with anything already agreed upon at the same meeting. An amendment must relate solely to the proposal which it seeks to amend, and not be, in effect, a new proposition on a different matter, and must not place a greater responsibility on the meeting than the original proposal.

(2) An amendment to a motion shall be either:

- a) to refer a subject of debate to a committee or to an officer for consideration or re-consideration;
  - b) to leave out words;
  - c) to leave out words and insert or add others; or
  - d) to insert or add words
- but such omission, insertion or addition of words shall not have the effect of directly negating the Motion before the Council.

(3) When an amendment upon an original proposal has been moved, the question to be put shall be "That the amendment be made". Where any amendment is agreed, the question to be put shall be "That the proposal, as amended, be agreed". Where any amendment is rejected the question of the substantive proposal shall be put.

### **17.2 That the Council Do Now Adjourn**

(1) Any member of the Council who has not already spoken to the proposal or amendment then under debate may move "that the Council do now adjourn". Such a proposal must be seconded, but it need not be reduced to writing. The mover and seconder shall not speak beyond formally moving and seconding the proposal, which shall be put to the vote without debate.

(2) In the event of the proposal for the adjournment being carried, the Chair shall (unless stated in the proposal) fix the date for the adjourned meeting for the continuation of the debate on the proposal or amendment under discussion at the time of the adjournment, and for the transaction of the remaining business (if any) on the Agenda for the meeting so adjourned.

(3) A second proposal "that the Council do now adjourn" shall not be made within half-an-hour unless, in the opinion of the Chair, the circumstances are materially altered.

### **17.3 That the Debate be Adjourned**

(1) Any member of the Council who has not already spoken to the proposal or amendment then under debate may move "that the debate be adjourned". Such a proposal must be seconded, but it need not be reduced to writing. The mover and seconder shall not speak beyond formally moving and seconding it.

(2) Before putting to the meeting a proposal "that the debate be adjourned", the Chair presiding shall call on the mover of the proposal or amendment under discussion to reply on the question of adjournment and, after such reply, which will not prejudice the right of the mover of a proposal to reply on the original question, shall put the proposal for adjournment of the debate to the vote without further debate.

(3) If the proposal be carried, the Council shall proceed to the next business on the agenda, and the discussion of the adjourned debate shall be resumed at the next meeting of the Council unless a special meeting of the Council shall be called for the purpose.

(4) On resuming an adjourned debate, the member who moved its adjournment shall be entitled to speak first. A second proposal "that the debate be adjourned" shall not be made within half-an-hour. A member shall not move or second more than one proposal for the adjournment of the same debate.

#### **17.4 That the Question Be Now Put**

(1) Any member who has not already spoken to the proposal or amendment then under debate may move "that the question be now put". Such a proposal must be seconded, but it need not be reduced to writing. The mover and seconder shall not speak beyond formally moving and seconding it.

(2) If the Chair is of the opinion that the subject before the Council has been sufficiently discussed, he shall put the proposal "that the question be now put" to the vote without debate and if same is carried, the proposal or amendment under discussion shall be put to the Council.

(3) A second proposal "that the question be now put" shall not be made on the discussion of the same question within half-an-hour.

(4) A member shall not move or second more than one proposal "that the question be now put" on the discussion of the same question.

#### **17.5 That the Council Do Now Proceed to the Next Business**

(1) Any member of the Council who has not already spoken to any proposal or amendment then under debate may move, "that the Council do proceed to the next business". Such a proposal must be seconded, but it need not be reduced to writing. The mover and seconder shall not speak beyond formally moving and seconding the proposal which shall be put to the vote without debate.

(2) If the Chair is of the opinion that the subject before the Council has been sufficiently discussed, he shall put the proposal "that the Council do proceed to the next business" to the vote without debate and if same is carried the proposal or amendment under discussion shall be put to the Council.

(3) When a proposal is carried "that the Council do proceed to the next business", the question under discussion shall be considered as dropped.

(4) A second proposal "that the Council do proceed to the next business" shall not be made on the same question within half-an-hour.

(5) A member shall not move or second more than one proposal "that the Council do proceed to the next business" on the discussion of the same question.

## **18. Amendments to Regulatory Decisions**

- (1) No amendment may be moved to a minute which is a Regulatory Decision.
- (2) For the purposes of these Standing Orders, a Regulatory Decision is a determination of an application for planning permission or any decision, determination, action, direction, order, approval, refusal, or enforcement action in exercise of powers of the Council as the local planning authority [or those powers specified in Executive Arrangements Regulations]; or any application for which the Council is the licensing authority.

## **19. Rules of Debate**

### **19.1 Motions and amendments to be reduced to writing and seconded**

- (1) A Motion or Amendment shall not be discussed unless it has been proposed and seconded and, unless notice has already been given in accordance with Standing Order 16.1, it shall, if required by the Chair presiding, be put into writing and handed to the Chair presiding before it is further discussed or put to the meeting.
- (2) A Member when seconding a motion or amendment may, if he/she then declares his/her intention to do so, reserve his/her speech until a later period of the debate.

### **19.2 Alteration of motion**

- (1) A Member may alter a motion of which he/she has given notice as proposed with the consent of the meeting. The meeting's consent will be signified without discussion.
- (2) A Member may alter a motion which he/she has moved without notice with the consent of both the meeting and the seconder. The meeting's consent will be signified without discussion.
- (3) Only alterations which could be made as an amendment may be made.

### **19.3 Withdrawal of motion**

- (1) A Member may withdraw a motion of which he/she has given notice under Standing Order 16.1 at any time after the meeting has commenced provided that he/she has not moved the motion or spoken on it and has the consent of the meeting. The meeting's consent will be signified without discussion.
- (2) A Member may withdraw any other motions which he/she has moved with the consent of both the meeting and seconder. The meeting's consent will be signified without discussion.
- (3) No Member may speak on the motion after the mover has asked permission to withdraw it unless permission is refused.

### **19.4 Mode of address**

Members may address the Council's Chair by standing or remaining seated. While a Member is speaking, the other members shall remain seated unless rising to a point of order or in personal explanation.



A member shall direct his/her speech to the question under discussion or to a personal explanation or to a point of order.

#### **19.5 Precedence in speaking**

Whenever two or more members rise together to speak, the Chair shall decide who has precedence.

#### **19.6 Place of member speaking**

A member when addressing the Chair shall remain in the place allocated to him/her in the Council Chamber.

#### **19.7 Member called to order**

If any member, while speaking, be called to order, he/she shall resume his/her seat and shall not again address the Council until the Chair has disposed of the question of order.

#### **19.8 Definition of point of order**

A point of order shall relate only to an alleged breach of a Standing Order or statutory provision and the member shall specify the Standing Order or provision and the way in which he/she considers it has been broken.

#### **19.9 Member may raise a point of order**

A member may raise a point of order and shall be entitled to be heard immediately.

#### **19.10 Ruling of Chair on point of order**

The ruling of the Chair on a point of order shall not be open to discussion.

#### **19.11 Member to speak to motion**

A member who speaks shall direct his/her speech strictly to the Motion under discussion, or an amendment thereof.

#### **19.12 Member shall not speak more than once**

A member who has spoken on any Motion shall not speak again whilst it is the subject of debate, except:

- a) to speak once on an amendment moved by another member;
- b) if the Motion has been amended since he/she last spoke, to move a further amendment;
- c) if his/her first speech was on an amendment moved by another Member to speak on the main issue whether or not the amendment on which he/she spoke was carried;
- d) in the exercise of a right to reply given by Standing Order 19.9;
- e) on a point of order.

### **19.13 Duration of speeches**

Except with the permission of the Council, a member, in introducing a Motion, shall not speak for more than ten minutes and in replying, for more than five minutes.

### **19.14 Addressing the Council**

The Council during its sitting, shall not, unless with the consent of the Council, be addressed by any person who is not a member of the Council.

### **19.15 Only one motion / amendment may be moved and discussed at a time**

(1) Only one amendment may be moved and discussed at any one time. No further amendment may be moved until the amendment under discussion has been disposed of.

(2) If an amendment is not carried, other amendments to the original motion may be moved.

(3) If an amendment is carried, the motion as amended takes the place of the original motion. This becomes the substantive motion to which any further amendments are moved.

### **19.16 When a motion is under debate no other motion shall be moved**

When a Motion is under debate no other Motion shall be moved except the following:

- a) to amend the motion;
- b) to adjourn the meeting;
- c) to adjourn the debate;
- d) to proceed to the next business;
- e) that the question be now put;
- f) that a Member be not further heard;
- g) by the Chair under Standing Order 25.4, that a Member do leave the meeting.

### **19.17 Chair rising during debate**

Whenever the Chair rises or otherwise calls the meeting to order during a debate, a Member then speaking shall cease and the Council shall be silent.

### **19.18 Chair not to receive motion for direct negative**

The Chair shall not receive a Motion for a direct negative to a question but, on the conclusion of the debate, the question shall be put and resolved in the affirmative or negative.

### **19.19 Mover's right of reply**

The mover of a motion has a right to reply at the close of the debate on the motion, immediately before it is put to the vote. If an amendment is moved, the mover of the original motion shall also have a right of reply at the close of the debate on the amendment and shall not otherwise speak on the amendment. The mover of the amendment shall have no right of reply to the debate on his amendment.

## **20. Voting**

### **20.1 Majority**

Subject to any statutory provisions to the contrary, any matter will be decided by a simple majority of those members present and voting.

### **20.2 Chair's casting vote**

If there are equal numbers of votes for and against, the Chair will have a second or casting vote.

### **20.3 Qualified majority [MANDATORY]**

A qualified majority shall be required in relation to a council's decision on:

- (a) the adoption of executive arrangements or prescribed arrangements as the council's form of governance (section 19 of the 2014 Act);
- (b) the method to be adopted for filling positions of responsibility (Schedule 1 of the 2014 Act);
- (c) the method to be adopted for appointing councillors to committees (Schedule 2 of the 2014 Act);
- (d) a call-in made in accordance with section 41(1)(b) of the 2014 Act; and
- (e) the suspension of standing orders, other than Standing Orders 20.3, 21, 22 and 23, which cannot be suspended.

### **20.4 Show of hands**

Unless a ballot or recorded vote is demanded under Standing Order 20.5, the Chair will take the vote by show of hands, or if there is no dissent, by the affirmation of the meeting.

### **20.5 Recorded vote**

If, before a vote is called, any member present at the meeting demands it, the names for and against the motion or amendment or abstaining from voting will be taken down in writing and entered into the minutes. A demand for a recorded vote will override a demand for a ballot.

## **21 'Call-in' Process [MANDATORY]**

### **21.1 Decisions subject to call-in**

- (1) The following decisions may be subject to call-in in such manner as is specified in these standing orders:
- (a) a decision of the Council
  - (b) a decision of the executive;
  - (c) an executive decision taken under joint arrangements in accordance with section 26 of the 2014 Act;
  - (d) a key decision taken by an officer or officers of the council;
  - (e) a decision taken by a committee under delegated authority in accordance with section 7 of the 2014 Act; and
  - (f) a decision taken by a committee to make a recommendation for ratification by the council.

- (2) The following decisions shall not be subject to call-in:
- (a) a decision on a regulatory or quasi-judicial function which is subject to a separate appeal mechanism;
  - (b) a decision which is deemed to be a case of special urgency in accordance with regulation 26 of the 2014 Executive Arrangements Regulations;
  - (c) a decision where an unreasonable delay could be prejudicial to the council's or the public's interests;
  - (d) a decision taken by an officer or officers which is not a key decision;
  - (e) a decision by the executive which serves only to note a report from or the actions of an officer or officers.

(3) No decision shall be subject to call-in more than once for each of the reasons specified in section 41(1) of the 2014 Act.

## 21.2 Call-in procedure

- (1) A call-in must be submitted in writing to the clerk by 10am on the fifth working day following:
- (a) in the case of a decision of the council, the date of the Council meeting at which the decision was taken; and
  - (b) in the case of a decision of a committee, the date on which the decision to which the call-in relates was published

(2) If a call-in received after the relevant period specified in paragraph (1), it must be deemed inadmissible.

- (3) A call-in shall:
- (a) specify the reasons why a decision should be reconsidered; and
  - (b) subject to sub-paragraph (5) of this standing order, be deemed to be inadmissible if the reasons are not specified.

(4) In the case of a call-in submitted under section 41(1)(b) of the 2014 Act, members must state in the reasons specified under sub-paragraph (2) of this standing order:

- (a) the community that would be affected by the decision; and
- (b) the nature and extent of the disproportionate adverse impact.

(5) Within one working day of receipt of a call-in, the clerk must confirm that:

- (a) it has the support of 15 per cent of the members of the council; and
- (b) the reasons for the call-in have been specified.

(6) Where the reasons have not been specified on the requisition the clerk must notify the members making the requisition that it must be considered inadmissible if reasons are not specified in writing within the specified deadline.

(7) Where an admissible call in of a council decision has been received under section 41(1)(a) of the 2014 Act, the clerk must include the decision on the agenda for reconsideration at the next available meeting of the council, at which it will be taken by a simple majority.

(8) Within two working day of receipt of an admissible call-in submitted under section 41(1)(b) of the 2014 Act, the clerk must seek the opinion of a practicing solicitor or barrister in accordance with section 41(2) of the 2014 Act.

(9) Where the legal opinion obtained in accordance with section 41(2) of the 2014 Act confirms that the call-in has merit, the clerk must:

- (a) furnish the opinion to members; and
- (b) include the decision on the agenda for the next available meeting of the council, at which it will be taken by a qualified majority.

(10) Where the legal opinion obtained in accordance with section 41(2) of the 2014 Act indicates that the call-in does not have merit, the clerk must:

- (a) furnish the opinion to members; and
- (b) include the decision on the agenda for the next available meeting of the council, at which it will be taken by a simple majority.

### 21.3 The call-in process: committee arrangements

(1) For the purposes of reconsideration of a decision pursuant to a call-in the minutes of a committee which record a decision:

- (a) taken under delegated authority; or
- (b) for ratification by the council

must be published within five working days of the conclusion of the meetings. That date of publication must be regarded as the date of publication for the purposes of a call-in.

(2) If a call-in is not received by the deadline specified in paragraph 4(1) of this standing order, the decision specified in:

- (a) paragraph 5(1)(a) of this standing order must be implemented; or
- (b) paragraph 5(1)(b) of this standing order must be tabled for ratification by the council.

(3) The tabling for ratification of a decision specified in paragraph 5(1)(b) of this standing order, or the implementation of a decision specified in paragraph 5(1)(a) of this standing order, must be postponed (unless the total level of support for the call-in falls below 15 per cent of the members) until the call-in has been resolved. The decision maker may rescind the decision at any time prior to the call-in being resolved.

(4) If an admissible call-in is made in accordance with paragraph 4(2) of this standing order and section 41(1)(a) of the 2014 Act, the council must appoint an ad hoc committee of the council, the membership of which will be:

- (a) the Chairs of all committees of the council; and
- (b) the deputy Chairs of all committees of the council to consider the process adopted by the decision-making committee.

(5) The Chair and deputy Chair of the committee which was responsible for the decision which is the subject of the call-in must not have voting rights at a meeting of the committee appointed in accordance with sub-paragraph (4) of this standing order.

(6) The members who submitted the call-in, or a member on their behalf, must be invited to attend the meeting at which the decision subject to the call-in is considered and may, upon the request of the Chair, address the meeting, but must not have voting rights.

(7) A committee appointed in accordance with sub-paragraph (4) of this standing order may:

- (a) refer the decision back to the decision maker;
- (b) in the case of a decision taken under delegated authority, support the decision; or
- (c) in the case of a decision for ratification by the council, refer the decision to the council.

- (8) Where a decision has been supported in accordance with sub-paragraph (7) of this standing order, that decision must:
- (a) be approved;
  - (b) be inserted in the Register of Decisions; and
  - (c) become operative from the date of the meeting at which the committee appointed in accordance with sub-paragraph (4) of this standing order confirmed support for the decision.

#### **21.4 The call-in process: executive arrangements**

- (1) The proper officer must, within two working days of the production of a statement in accordance with regulations 28 and 29 of the 2014 Regulations, submit to the council a notice detailing the decision(s) recorded in the statement.
- (2) The notice prepared in accordance with sub-paragraph (1) of this standing order must specify:
- (a) those decisions that are not subject to call-in;
  - (b) the deadline for receipt of a call-in; and
  - (c) the overview and scrutiny committee, as determined by the proper officer, that will consider a call-in in accordance with section 41(1)(a) of the 2014 Act.
- (3) If a call-in is not received in respect of a decision, that decision may be implemented after the deadline expires.
- (4) If a call-in is received which specifies that the decision was not taken in accordance with the budget or policy framework agreed by the council the call-in must be referred to the council for decision.
- (5) The implementation of a decision must be postponed (unless the total level of support for the call-in falls below 15 per cent of the members) until the call-in has been resolved. The decision-maker may rescind the decision at any time prior to the call-in being resolved.
- (6) The clerk must place a call-in on the agenda of the overview and scrutiny committee specified in the notice prepared in accordance with subparagraph (2) of this standing order. The overview and scrutiny committee must meet within 5 working days of receipt of the call-in. More than one call-in may be considered at a meeting of an overview and scrutiny committee.
- (7) Subject to sub-paragraph (7) of this standing order, the consideration of a matter under sub-paragraph (5) of this standing order by an overview and scrutiny committee may be adjourned, provided that:
- (a) the Chair presiding at the meeting; and
  - (b) the Chair of the executive agree a date for the continuation of the meeting.
- (8) A meeting convened in accordance with sub-paragraph (5) of this standing order may only be adjourned under sub-paragraph (6) in order to:
- (a) allow for additional information to be obtained; or
  - (b) permit additional witnesses to attend.
- (9) The members who submitted the call-in, or a member on their behalf, must be invited to attend the meeting at which the decision subject to the call-in is considered and may, upon the request of the Chair, address the meeting, but must not have voting rights.

(10) In response to a call-in made in accordance with section 41(1)(a) of the 2014 Act, an overview and scrutiny committee may:

- (a) support the decision; or
- (b) refer the decision, along with the recommendation of the overview and scrutiny committee, back to the decision maker.

(11) Where a decision has been supported in accordance with sub-paragraph (9) of this standing order, that decision must:

- (a) be approved;
- (b) be inserted in the Register of Decisions; and
- (c) become operative from the date of the meeting at which the overview and scrutiny committee confirmed support for the decision.

(12) Where a decision has been referred back to a decision maker in accordance with sub-paragraph (9)(b) of this standing order, the decision maker must:

- (a) consider the recommendation of the overview and scrutiny committee; and
- (b) reconsider the original decision.

## **22 Positions of responsibility, etc. – Time Limits [mandatory]**

(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2) of this standing order, in relation to positions of responsibility selected in accordance with paragraphs 2(1) and 2(2) of Schedule 1 to the 2014 Act, the period specified for:

- (a) the nominating officer to select a position of responsibility and the term for which it must be held; and
- (b) the person nominated to accept the selected position is 15 minutes.

(2) An extension to the period specified in sub-paragraph (1) of this standing order may be granted subject to the approval of the council. Such an extension may be requested by:

- (a) the nominating officer;
- (b) the person nominated to hold the selected position; or
- (c) another member.

## **23 Appointment of more than one committee [MANDATORY]**

(1) Where the Council appoints more than one committee at the same meeting in accordance with paragraph 5 of Schedule 2 to the 2014 Act, for the purposes of determining the number of places that must be allocated across the parties and independent members of the Council, it must agree:

- (a) the number of committees to be appointed; and
- (b) the number of councillors that shall constitute the membership of each committee.

(2) The total number of places to which a nominating officer of a party may nominate members who stood in the name of that party when elected must be calculated in accordance with paragraphs 2 to 4 of Schedule 2 to the 2014 Act and any resolution of the Council made thereunder.

(3) A nominating officer's function under paragraph 2(1)(b) of Schedule 2 to the 2014 Act shall be exercised in such manner as to ensure that:

- (a) all members of a committee are not nominated by the same nominating officer;

(b) a nominating officer of a party may nominate members who stood in the name of that party to fill the majority of places on a committee, if the majority of members stood in the name of that party; and

(c) subject to (a) and (b), the number of members nominated by each nominating officer of a party, in so far as far as is reasonably practicable, bear the same proportion to the number of places on that committee as is borne by the number of members who stood in the name of that party.

(4) Nominations made in accordance with sub-paragraph (3) of this standing order shall take into account any positions of responsibility on a committee held by a member who stood in the name of a party.

## **24 Rescission of a preceding resolution**

(1) No motion to rescind any resolution passed within the preceding six months, and no motion or amendment to the same effect as one which has been rejected within the preceding six months, shall be proposed by a member unless the notice thereof given in pursuance of Standing Order 16.1 bears the names of at least 15% of the members of the Council.

(2) When any such motion or amendment has been disposed of by the Council, it shall not be open to any member to propose a similar motion within a further period of six months.

(3) This Standing Order shall not apply to motions moved in pursuance of a recommendation of a committee [or a Call-in]

## **25 Members conduct**

### **25.1 Addressing the Meeting**

When a member speaks at the Council they may remain seated or stand to address the meeting through the Chair. If more than one member stands, the Chair will ask one to speak and the others must sit, should they be standing when addressing the meeting.

### **25.2 Chair standing**

When the Chair stands during a debate, any member speaking at the time must stop and sit down. The meeting must be silent.

### **25.3 Member not to be heard further**

If at a meeting any Member of the Council, misconducts himself/herself by persistently disregarding the ruling of the chair, or by behaving irregularly, improperly or offensively or by willfully obstructing the business of the Council, the Chair or any other Member may move "that the Member named be not further heard". The Motion, if seconded, shall be put and determined without discussion.

### **25.4 Member to leave the meeting**

If the Member named continues to behave improperly after such a motion is carried, the Chair or any other Member may move that either the member leaves the meeting or that



the meeting is adjourned for a specified period. If seconded, the motion will be voted on without discussion.

### **25.5 General disturbance**

When the Chair is of the opinion that the due and orderly dispatch of business is impossible, he/she in addition to any other powers vested in him/her may, without question put, adjourn the meeting of the Council for such period as he/she in his/her discretion shall consider expedient.

## **26 Disturbance by public**

### **26.1 Removal of member of the public**

If a member of the public interrupts proceedings, the Chair will warn the person concerned. If they continue to interrupt, the Chair will order their removal from the meeting room.

### **26.2 Clearance of part of meeting room**

If there is a general disturbance in any part of the meeting room open to the public, the Chair may call for that part to be cleared.

## **27 Committees**

### **27.1 Appointment of Committees**

The Council shall at the annual meeting appoint such Committees as it is required to appoint under any statute or any Standing Order and may appoint at any time such other Committees as are necessary to carry out the work of the Council.

Subject to any statutory provision in that behalf the Council shall not appoint any member to a Committee so as to hold office later than the next annual meeting of the Council.

### **27.2 Committees**

The following Committees shall be appointed:

- (a) Audit Committee - up to eight elected members
- (b) Policy and Resource Committee – up to 16 elected members
- (c) Environment Committee – up to 16 elected members
- (d) Development Committee – up to 16 elected members
- (e) Planning Committee – up to 16 elected members.

### **27.3 Duties of Committees**

The Committees shall have charge of and be responsible to the Council for the undertakings and matters outlined within the constitution.

#### **27.4 Standing Orders of Committees**

All Standing Orders of the Council shall, where appropriate and with necessary modification, apply to Committee and Sub-Committee meetings.

#### **27.5 Quorum at Committees and Sub Committees**

Except where authorised by a statute or ordered by the Council, business shall not be transacted at a meeting of any Committee or Sub Committee unless at least one third of the whole number of the Committee is present.

#### **27.6 Day and Hour of Committee Meetings**

Each Committee may from time to time fix its own day and hour of meeting and shall notify the Council accordingly.

#### **27.7 Special Meetings of Committees**

The Chair of the Council or of a Committee may call a special meeting of a Committee at any time. Subject to any statutory provision in that behalf a special meeting shall also be called on the requisition of not less than three members of the Committee, delivered in writing to the Clerk, provided always that no two Committees shall sit at the same time.

#### **27.8 Sub-Committees**

Each Committee may appoint Sub-Committees for specific purposes. A Sub-Committee shall meet as often as necessary for the transaction of the business for which it was appointed. The minute of the Sub-Committee shall, whether appointed under this Standing Order or otherwise, be submitted to the parent Committee for confirmation previous to being brought before the Council.

#### **27.9 Attendance at Committees and Sub-Committees**

Every member of the Council may attend meetings of any Committee or Sub-Committee and shall be heard on any matter but shall not, unless they are a member of the Committee or Sub-Committee vote on any matter or propose any resolution or amendment.

#### **27.10 Inspection of Documents**

A member of the Council may, for purposes of their duty but not otherwise, on application to the Clerk, inspect any document which has been submitted to a Committee or to the Council and shall, on request, be supplied for the like purposes with a copy of such a document. Provided that a member shall not knowingly inspect and shall not call for a copy of any such document which relates to a matter in which they are professionally interested or in which they have directly or indirectly any pecuniary interest as defined in the Councillors Code of Conduct and that this Standing Order shall not preclude the Clerk from declining to allow inspection of any document which is, or in the event of legal proceedings, would be protected by privilege.

Subject to any statutory provision in that behalf, no member of the Council shall, without the consent of the Council, be entitled to inspect any document in the custody of any

officer of the Council if, in the opinion of that officer and of the Clerk, the document is of a confidential nature.

## **28 Planning Committee Protocol**

Members shall make reference to and observe the protocol resolved by Council for the regulation and transaction of Planning Committee business. The protocol is detailed in Annex A.

## **29 Council Seal**

### **29.1 Sealing of Documents**

The Common Seal of the Council shall not be affixed to any document unless the sealing has been authorised by a resolution of the Council or of a Committee having lawful powers or to which the Council have delegated their powers in this behalf.

### **29.2 Record of Documents Sealed to be Kept**

Where the Common Seal shall have been affixed at any meeting of the Council and entry of the sealing of every deed and other document shall be made in the minutes of the Meeting of the Council at which the affixing of the Seal took place.

A record of all documents sealed shall be kept in a book containing particulars of such documents and signed by the Chair and Clerk who attested the sealing.

## **30 Suspension and amendment of Standing Orders**

### **30.1 Suspension**

A member may move a motion for the suspension of one or more of these Council Standing Orders. A motion under this Standing Order shall require the support of a qualified majority vote within the meaning of section 40 of the 2014 Act. Suspension can only be for the duration of the meeting. The Minutes of the meeting must record the reason for the suspension. Mandatory standing orders may not be suspended by a council.

### **30.2 Amendment**

Any motion to, add to, vary or revoke these Standing Orders will, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council. The mandatory standing orders may not be added to, varied or revoked by the Council.

## **31 Interpretation of Standing Orders**

The ruling of the Chair as to the interpretation, construction or application of any of these Standing Orders or as to any proceedings of the Council, shall not be challenged at any meeting of the Council.

PROTOCOL FOR  
THE OPERATION  
MID ULSTER  
DISTRICT COUNCIL  
PLANNING  
COMMITTEE

**Last updated by Mid Ulster District Council on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2018**

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## **PURPOSE OF THE PROTOCOL**

1. A protocol for the operation of Planning Committees was drafted by the Department of Environment in January 2015. Mid Ulster District Council (MUDC) has reviewed this document and has amended it to suit the needs of MUDC in the following way.
2. The purpose of the protocol for MUDC Planning Committee is to ensure that planning decisions are consistently taken, and are seen to be taken, in a fair and equitable manner. The protocol offers guidance for Councillors', applicants, agents and the general public
3. The protocol is not intended to change or alter the Standing Orders which apply to all Committee's or the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

## **REMIT OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE**

### ***Development management***

4. One of the main functions of the planning committee is to consider applications made to the Council which are either major in scale, complex or controversial as set out in the adopted Scheme of Delegation, and decide whether or not they should be approved. In order to ensure that decisions are taken at the appropriate level, the decisions of the planning committee are taken under full delegated authority and the decisions of the committee will therefore not normally go to the full council for ratification.

### ***Development Plan***

5. The local development plans for the Mid Ulster district currently comprise the Cookstown Area Plan, the Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan and the Magherafelt Area Plan. These will remain the statutory development plans until replaced by the Mid Ulster Local Development Plan (LPD). The Department of Environment planning policies will also be retained as set out in the Planning Policy Statements and Strategic Planning Policy Statement, until such times as new policies are brought forward and adopted in the LDP.
6. Section 8 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 requires MUDC to prepare a LDP which will comprise a plan strategy and a local policies plan. The strategy will set out

the objectives of MUDC in relation to the development land in the district, and the strategic policies for the implementation of those objectives. After the plan strategy has been adopted, a local policies plan will be prepared. This will set out the policy agreed by MUDC in relation to what type and scale of development is appropriate and where it should be located.

7. The local development will form the basis for public and private investment decisions, providing a degree of certainty as to how land will be developed. In law, planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. Therefore, where land is zoned for a particular use, the MUDC Planning Committee should ensure it is reserved for that use: for example, an application for housing in an area zoned for housing should be approved unless the design and layout fails in terms of the environmental, open space and access standards, or its design and layout has a detrimental impact on the character of the area or neighbouring amenity.
8. The MUDC Planning Committee will approve the local development plan before it is passed by resolution of the full council. The Planning Committee will also ensure that the local development plan is monitored annually, particularly in terms of the availability of housing and economic development land, and that it is reviewed every five years, giving consideration to whether there is a need to change the plan strategy or the zonings, designations and policies as contained in the local policies plan.

## **SIZE OF COMMITTEE**

9. The MUDC Planning Committee consists of 16 elected members.

The Planning Manager and/or the Head of Development Management or Head of Development Plan and Enforcement will attend planning committee meetings as appropriate.

## **FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS**

10. The Planning Committee will meet at least once every calendar month. Additional meetings will be at the discretion of the Chair of the Committee with the consent

of the Committee members. Dates for Planning Committee meetings are published on the Council's website.

## **SCHEMES OF DELEGATION**

11. There are two Schemes of Delegation. One relating to planning applications which is prepared under Section 31 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. The other scheme deals with planning consents, certificates, tree preservation orders, enforcement of planning control and other determinations and is prepared under Section 7 (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 2014. The purpose of the Schemes of Delegation is to set out those decisions which shall be made by the Planning Committee and those which are the responsibility of the Planning Manager. The Planning Manager is responsible for determining the vast majority of applications, however these tend to be applications that are smaller in scale, local in character and uncontroversial. Whereas the Planning Committee resolves those applications which are either major in scale, subject to dispute or could give rise to a conflict of interest. The MUDC Schemes of Delegation for the Planning function are available to view at [www.midulstercouncil.org](http://www.midulstercouncil.org) . The Scheme of Delegation will be reviewed on a regular basis, normally annually.

## **ENFORCEMENT**

12. The planning Committee will determine when an enforcement notice should be served and other enforcement decisions as laid down in the Scheme of Delegation. In addition to those cases presented to the Planning Committee for decision, a monthly report from officers on the enforcement performance (number of cases opened, cases closed, notices issued and convictions obtained) will be provided to members.
13. Enforcement matters will be discussed in the closed section of the Planning Committee meeting (i.e. In Committee) to ensure MUDC complies with the provisions of the Data Protection Act and to ensure that future legal proceedings are not prejudiced.
14. An enforcement strategy, detailing how enforcement action will be dealt with,



was agreed by the Planning Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2016. This is available on the Council website.

## **REFERRAL OF DELEGATED APPLICATIONS TO THE PLANNING COMMITTEE**

15. The Scheme of Delegation agreed by MUDC includes the provision for members (including those not on the Planning Committee) to request, where they consider it appropriate, that an application which would normally fall within the Scheme of Delegation, to be referred to the Planning Committee for determination. In addition, the Planning Manager can also refer any matter which he considers suitable for determination by the Planning Committee. Members of the public cannot directly request that an application be referred to the Planning Committee. Any referral request **must** be made in writing.

## **FORMAT OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

16. MUDC will operate its Planning Committee in line with its approved standing orders. In doing so, the following procedural arrangements will apply:
- the planning office will prepare a weekly list, which will be circulated to all members, of all valid applications that have been received;
  - all planning committee members will be sent the agenda at least 5 days in advance of the meeting with a report on each application to be decided;
  - if necessary, officers will prepare an addendum on the day of the meeting to report any updates since the agenda was issued; and
  - the Chair of the Planning Committee will hold a briefing session with planning officers on each application to be considered in advance of the planning committee meeting.
  - all committee items will be bookmarked and reports presented with visual aids to show the site and the proposal.
17. The meeting will be presided over by the Chair of the Planning Committee. Following the approval of the minutes of the previous meeting and apologies, Councillors' will be given the opportunity to declare any interests they have on

the agenda items, which should be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. Where a member has declared an interest in an application they cannot vote on that item and must either leave the meeting or sit in the public gallery for that item. However, they may make representations as per the normal speaking rights applicable to all councilors.

### **Consideration of Planning Applications**

18. The planning officer's report, which makes a recommendation on whether the application should be approved, approved with conditions or refused will be considered. Plans and photographs may be shown as appropriate.
19. In considering the report, members also have the opportunity to listen to speakers, ask questions of the officer and speakers, discuss and debate the case before taking a vote on whether or not to agree with the officer's recommendation. Members however should not engage in open conversation with speakers. They should normally only speak once on any application in order to ensure committee business is dealt with in a speedy manner. The Chair retains the discretion to curtail members where points are being made repeatedly. The Chair has a casting vote. Where the majority of members vote against an opinion to approve and in the absence of any other proposals, such as the deferral of the application, the application will be deemed to have been refused. The Planning Manager, based on the Committee's decision, will furnish the detailed reasons for refusal.
20. Members can add conditions to a permission but they cannot amend the application itself (for example, by allowing a one-bedroom flat if the application is for a two-bedroom flat). Any additional conditions should be proposed and seconded before being voted on by members. As conditions can be tested at appeal and they should, therefore, be (i) necessary, (ii) relevant to planning and the development under consideration, (iii) enforceable, (iv) precise, and (v) reasonable in all other respects. Therefore, where alterations to conditions are proposed, the Committee will seek the advice of the Planning Manager. Where new conditions are proposed by the Committee, the precise wording of the conditions can be left to the discretion of the Planning Manager.
21. Members cannot take part in a debate or vote on an item unless they have been present for the entire item, including the officer's introduction and update.

22. Separate arrangement will be used to discuss special domestic or personal circumstances. Normally this will be held In Committee with members of the public and press excluded. An opportunity will be given for the applicant and objectors to present their case, but each separately. Once this has been done each party will be asked to leave in order for the Committee to discuss and determine the application.

## **PUBLIC SPEAKING AT PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

23. The following procedures will apply to MUDC Planning Committee meetings:

- planning committee meetings will be open to the public;
- Requests to speak must be received by the council (in writing or by email) no later than 12.00pm two working days prior to the meeting. The request should state whether they wish to speak in support or in opposition to a planning application. Any written information that the speaker wishes to circulate to members of the committee **must** also be provided at this time. Any written information received after this time **will not** be circulated;
- Where a speaker wishes to request that an application be deferred for consideration of additional information, then, at the time of the request they should set out their reasons for making such a request. The Planning Manager should review these requests prior to the meeting and, where the case warrants a deferral, the Planning Manager should ask the Committee to defer the item, noting any action to be taken.
- Where a speaker has availed of the opportunity to speak to the Committee, they will not normally be given the opportunity to speak for a second time if the application is deferred and returned to Committee for final decision.
- The order of speakers is a matter for the Chair, however, this will normally require objectors speaking before the applicant or their agent in order to allow the applicant the opportunity to respond to any issues raised. Thus, if members wish to speak, they should do so before the applicant/agent;
- All parties speaking at Planning Committee may be asked questions by

members or the Planning Manager;

- The Planning Committee will be provided with copies of the information supplied by those who will be speaking at the Committee;
- other elected members may attend and speak about an application but only planning committee members can vote;
- elected members and members of the public (including agents / representatives etc.) may speak for up to 3 minutes;
- Where more than one person wishes to speak on behalf of or against a development, they will be encouraged to elect a spokesperson and, in any event, required to share the 3 minutes speaking time.
- documentation not received in advance of the meeting will not be permitted to be circulated to members by speakers;
- Planning officers can address any issues raised and the planning committee can question officers;
- Any exception to normal speaking rights and procedures will be a matter for the Chair.

## **DECISIONS CONTRARY TO OFFICER RECOMMENDATION**

24. The Planning Committee will reach its own decision on applications put before it. Officers offer advice and make a recommendation. Planning officers' views, opinions and recommendations may, on occasion, be at odds with the views, opinions or decisions of the Planning Committee or its members. This is acceptable where planning issues are finely balanced as there should always be scope for members to express a different view from officers. The Planning Committee can accept or place a different interpretation on, or give different weight to, the various arguments and material planning considerations.

### **Overturning recommendation to approve**

25. If a member does not agree with the officer recommendation to approve an application, they can propose reasons for refusal, which must be seconded by another member and then voted on. Any decision by the Planning Committee **must be based on proper planning reasons**. The Planning Manager (or their deputy) will be given the opportunity to explain the implications of the Planning Committee's decision. The reasons for any decisions which are made contrary to

the planning officer's recommendation will be formally recorded in the minutes and a copy placed on the planning application file / electronic record.

26. As the refusal of a planning application that officers have recommended for approval may be overturned on appeal (to the Planning Appeals Commission), with the potential for costs awarded against MUDC, the Chair will seek the views of officers (including the council's solicitor) before going to the vote in terms of reasons for refusal that are contrary to officer recommendation. Officers will summarise what are considered to be the main reasons for refusal referred to by members during the debate and advise on what would be reasonable and what would not be reasonable reasons for refusal. Where appropriate the Planning Manager may also comment on whether a refusal on the proposed grounds is defensible, particularly at planning appeal.
27. The Planning Manager, in liaison with the Council Solicitor, will present the Committee's decision at planning appeal or in the courts or in any other forum.

#### **Overturning recommendation to refuse**

28. MUDC Planning Committee may decide to approve an application against the officer's recommendation to refuse, aware that while there is no right of third party appeal, there is the possibility that the decision could be subject to judicial review. However, before making such a decision, the advice of the Planning Manager should be sought. Where an approval is granted contrary to officer advice, the Planning Manager and Council Solicitor will present the Council's decision is defended in the courts or any other forum.
29. The minutes should, in so far as is possible, accurately reflect the discussions and decisions taken during the meeting(s) as these could be used as evidence should any complaints be made about how decisions are taken. Members can take their own notes on controversial applications.

#### **DECISIONS CONTRARY TO LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

30. In general, planning decisions will be taken in accordance with the local development plan (in so far as it is material to the application) unless material considerations indicate otherwise. If a Planning Committee member proposes, seconds or supports a decision contrary to the local development plan they will

have to clearly identify and understand the planning reasons for doing so, and demonstrate how these reasons justify overruling the development plan. The reasons for any decisions which are made contrary to the development plan will be formally recorded in the minutes and a copy placed on the planning application file / electronic record. Before making such decisions the advice of the Planning Manager shall be sought.

## **DEFERRALS**

31. The Planning Committee can decide to defer consideration of an application to the next meeting for further information, further negotiations, or for a site visit. Before deferring an application the advice of the Planning Manager shall be sought and the purpose of the deferral clearly set out. Deferrals will inevitably have an adverse effect on processing times and therefore will be restricted to one deferral only. The Planning Manager may also ask the Committee to defer an application where it has been brought to his attention that there are errors or omissions in the case officer's report or where there is a matter worthy of further consideration.
32. Where an office meeting is to be held all councillors' will normally be informed and may make representations on behalf of objectors or applicants. However, where a member of the planning committee chooses to make representations then they will be required to declare a conflict of interest and will not be able to vote on the application at the next planning committee meeting at which the application is to be determined.

## **SITE VISITS**

33. On occasions, members of the Planning Committee may need to visit a site to help them make a decision on a planning application (e.g. where the impact or effect of the proposed development is difficult to visualise from the plans or photographs, or the application is particularly contentious). These visits will be undertaken on an exceptional basis where appropriate. Where required, they may be identified by officers in consultation with the Chair or they may be asked for by Planning Committee members.
34. The Planning Committee clerk will contact the applicant / agent to arrange

access to the site. Invitations will then be sent to members of the Planning Committee. Site visits will not be used as an opportunity to lobby Councillors' or to seek to influence the outcome of a proposal prior to the Planning Committee meeting. Members will not carry out their own unaccompanied site visits as there may be issues relating to permission for access to land, or they may not have the information provided by the planning officer and, in some circumstances (e.g. where a Councillor is seen with applicant or objector) it might lead to allegations of bias. Only Planning Committee members, officers, and local Councillors' should be permitted to attend the site visit. Where possible, the full planning committee should attend site visits, unless there are good reasons (e.g. a member is already very familiar with the site). The clerk to the planning committee will record the date of the visit, attendees and any other relevant information.

35. Planning officers will prepare a written report on the site visit which will then be considered at the next Planning Committee meeting at which the application is to be determined.

## **PRE-DETERMINATION HEARINGS**

36. Regulation 7 of the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (NI) 2015 sets out a mandatory requirement for pre-determination hearings for those major developments which have been subject to notification (i.e. referred to the Department of Environment for call-in consideration, but that have been returned to a council for determination). In such cases MUDC Planning Committee will hold a hearing prior to the application being determined.

In addition, the Planning Committee may also hold pre-determination hearings, at its discretion, when considered necessary, to take on board local community views, as well as those in support of the development.

37. In the main MUDC will only hold pre-determination hearings where there is a mandatory requirement as the speaking rights at planning committee are adequate to deal with nearly all cases. An exception may be made for major developments having taken into account:

- the relevance of the objections in planning terms;

- the extent to which relevant objections are representative of the community, particularly in the context of pre-application community consultation; and
- the number of representations against the proposal in relation to where the proposal is and the number of people likely to be affected by the proposal.

38. The hearing will take place after the expiry of the period for making representations on the application but before the council decides the application. The Planning Committee will decide whether to have a hearing on the same day as the related planning application is determined by the Planning Committee or to hold a separate hearing.

In holding a hearing the Planning Committee procedures will be the same as for the normal planning committee meetings (e.g. number of individuals to speak on either side, time available to speakers etc.). The planning officer will produce a report detailing the processing of the application to date and the planning issues to be considered. If the hearing is to be held on the same day as the application is to be determined, the report to members will also contain a recommendation.

## **TRAINING**

39. Councillors' sitting on planning committees are required to attend relevant training on planning matters before they can sit on the Planning Committee.

## **LEGAL ADVISER**

40. The MUDC Planning Committee has access to its own in-house legal advice on planning matters.



## **ANNEX B**

### **INTERIM STANDING ORDERS REMOTE MEETINGS PROTOCOL AND PROCEDURE RULES**

These Interim Standing Orders have been produced for the purpose of proper administration, good order and clarity in relation to the conduct of any meeting that is held, either wholly or partly, by remote means.

This is as a consequence of the COVID19 pandemic and the coming in to operation of legislation on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020 that allows for; remote meetings; remote attendance by members and members of the public, where applicable; and remote access by members of the public and press.

#### **1. Definitions**

“The 2020 Regulations” means The Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 No.74;

“The 2020 Act” means the Coronavirus Act 2020;

“remote access” means the ability to attend or participate in a meeting by electronic means, including but not limited to, by telephone conference, video conference, live webcasts and live interactive streaming;

“remote attendance” means fulfilling conditions (i)-(iii) inclusive in Interim Standing Order 7 or 8 below, as appropriate;

“open to the public” includes remote access to the meeting and where a meeting is accessible to the public through such remote means the meeting is open to the public whether or not members of the public are able to attend the meeting in person.

#### **2. Introduction and Application of these Interim Standing Orders**

These Interim Standing Orders provide for the good administration and proper order of any remote meeting, either wholly or partially, of the Council and its various Committees.

These Interim Standing Orders should be read in conjunction with the Council’s Standing Orders and Procedure Rules within the Constitution. The 2020 Regulations, made under section 78 of the 2020 Act, apply notwithstanding any other legislation or current or pre-existing standing orders or any other rules of the Council governing meetings.

These Interim Standing Orders do not negate the validity of the Council's Standing Orders. Wherever there is a conflict, these Interim Standing Orders take precedence only in relation to any aspect of the meeting, attendance or access that is by remote means.

### **3. Commencement and Duration**

These Interim Standing Orders exist only on a temporary basis, taking effect immediately from and including their adoption on [28 May] 2020. They remain valid and in existence until 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021, or earlier if revoked by the Council.

### **4. References to “place” and “present”**

Any references to a council meeting in the Standing Orders, is not limited to a meeting of members, all or any of whom, are present in the same place. Any reference to “place” where a meeting is held, or to be held, includes reference to more than one place, including electronic, digital or virtual locations, e.g., internet locations, web addresses or conference call addresses.

The Annual Meeting and meetings of the Council shall be held at 7pm in the place or places specified on the summons.

The ‘place’ at which the meeting is held may be at a Council building or may be where the organiser of the meeting is located or may be an electronic or a digital or virtual location, a web address or a conference call telephone number; or could be a number of these combined. The meeting may also be held in a Council building with a proportion of the membership and any participating public additionally attending remotely. The place of the meeting will be specified on the notice.

Any references to being “present” in the Constitution and Standing Orders, includes being present through remote attendance.

### **5. Notice and Summons of Meetings**

The requisite notice shall be given to the public of the time and place of the meeting, and the agenda, together with a link to view the meeting. The notice will be available on the Council's website.

### **6. Public access**

Subject to below, meetings will be open to the public and members of the press and public will be encouraged to use remote access facilities provided by the Council to access a meeting remotely.

If the Chair is made aware that the meeting is not accessible to the public through remote means, due to any technological or other failure of provision by the Council, then the Chair shall adjourn the meeting immediately. If the provision of access through remote means cannot be restored within a reasonable period, then the remaining business will be considered at a time and date fixed by the Chair. If the Chair does not fix a date, the remaining business will be considered at the next ordinary meeting.

#### *Exclusion of Public and Press*

When council meetings are not open to the public, i.e., when confidential, or “exempt” issues are under consideration, the meeting facilitator will ensure that there are no members of the public in remote attendance or remotely accessing the meeting are able to hear or see the proceedings once the exclusion has been agreed by the meeting.

Where there is disturbance by the public, the Chair will warn the person concerned and can order that their remote access is severed, if the interruption continues.

### **7. Remote Attendance by Members**

A Member in remote attendance is present and attends the meeting, including for the purposes of the meeting’s quorum, if at any time all three of the following conditions are satisfied, those conditions being that the Member in remote attendance is able at that time:

- (i) to hear and be so heard by and, where practicable, to see and be seen by, the other Members in attendance.
- (ii) to hear and be so heard by and, where practicable, to see and be seen by, any members of the public entitled to attend the meeting in order to exercise a right to speak at the meeting; and
- (iii) to be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by any other members of the public attending the meeting.

Where a member who is in remote attendance is muted or has forgotten to unmute themselves when they are speaking, this does not mean that they are unable to be heard for the purposes of 7(i)-(iii) above.

If a Member in remote attendance is leaving the meeting, they must indicate to the Chair when they are doing so. A member will be deemed to have left the meeting where, at any point in time during the meeting, any one of the conditions for remote attendance contained in 7(i)-(iii) above are not met. In such circumstance the Chair may, as they deem appropriate and subject to any indication given by the Member to the Chair;

- adjourn the meeting for a short period to permit the conditions for remote attendance of a Member contained in (i)-(iii) above to be reestablished;
- count the number of Members in attendance for the purposes of the quorum; or
- continue to transact the remaining business of the meeting in the absence of the Member that is no longer in remote attendance.

A member who disconnects and re-connects to the meeting due to technological issues is still “present throughout” as long as any matters discussed during their absence are repeated.

## **8. Remote Attendance by the Public**

A member of the public entitled to attend the meeting in order to exercise a right to speak, or make a deputation, at the meeting is in remote attendance at any time if all three of the following conditions are satisfied, those conditions being that the member of the public in remote attendance is able at that time:

- (i) to hear and be so heard by and, where practicable, to see and be seen by, Members in attendance;
- (ii) to hear and be so heard by and, where practicable, to see and be seen by, any other members of the public entitled to attend the meeting in order to exercise a right to speak at the meeting; and
- (iii) to be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by any other members of the public attending the meeting.

A member of the public in remote attendance and entitled to exercise a right to speak or make a deputation, will be deemed to have left the meeting where, at any point in time during the meeting, any one of the conditions for remote attendance contained in 8(i)-(iii) above are not met. In such circumstance the Chair may, as they deem appropriate:

- (a) adjourn the meeting for a short period to permit the conditions for remote attendance contained in 8(i)-(iii) above to be re-established;
- (b) suspend consideration of the item of business in relation to the member of public’s attendance until such time as a following item of business on the agenda has been transacted and the conditions for the member of the public’s remote attendance have been reestablished or, on confirmation that this cannot be done, before the end of the meeting, whichever is the earliest; or
- (c) continue to transact the remaining business of the meeting in the absence of the member of the public in remote attendance.

Refer to Planning section for difference in proceeding in these circumstances.

## **9. Remote Voting**

In relation to the Chair taking the vote by a show of hands, this will involve those members in remote attendance ensuring their video is turned on and raising their hands.

If the Chair is unable to see a Member in remote attendance, the Chair will ask that member to verbally indicate how they wish to cast their vote.

The Chair may, in their absolute discretion, decide to call a vote by remote means using an electronic voting system for remote voting.

## **10. Access to Information**

Members of the public may access minutes, decision and other relevant documents through the Council's website.

## **11. Postponing a meeting**

The Chair can postpone a meeting by giving 24 hours' notice to members, or such shorter period as the Chair may determine in cases of urgency. The same notice will be published on the Council's notice.

## **12. Planning**

The Protocol for the operation of the Planning Committee is amended as follows:-

### *Addendum*

Any additional papers tabled at a Planning Committee meeting by way of the Addendum must be emailed to each Committee member by 5pm on the evening of the Committee.

At the start of each meeting, the Chair will ask members to confirm that; (i) they've received the Addendum; and (ii) they've had sufficient time to review same. If any member indicates in the negative to 12(i) and/or (ii), the Chair will allow, by a short adjournment if necessary, for these to be delivered to and read by said member.

### *Visual Aids*

To ensure that a member in remote attendance can clearly follow any officer presentation, copies of the presentation should be shown simultaneously and be able to be seen by the member in remote attendance.

### *Speaking Rights*

Any reference to speaking rights and the exercise of same (with the exception of Pre Determination Hearings below) will be treated as follows:-

- a. In the first instance, the requester will be offered an opportunity to attend the meeting by remote access.
- b. If the requester is unable to attend remotely, and subject to the Council being able to facilitate attendance in person, the requester will be offered the opportunity to attend the meeting in person. Please note only one person per speaking time will be able to attend in person and so speaking time cannot be shared (e.g., one person for applicant; one person against development); and
- c. If the requester is unable or unwilling to exercise speaking rights by virtue of 12a. or b. above, they will be able to provide Written Submissions no later than 12pm two working days prior to the meeting, which will be circulated to members the Committee.

The deadline for receipt of requests to speak including the submission of any written information remains as per paragraph 23 of the Protocol on the Operation of the Planning Committee, i.e., no later than 12pm two working days prior to the meeting.

### *Pre Determination Hearings*

Any reference to speaking rights and the exercise of same in relation to Pre Determination Hearings will be treated as follows:-

1. In the first instance, the requester will be offered an opportunity to attend the meeting by remote access and the conditions in Interim Standing Order 8(i)-(iii) must be met;
2. If the requester is unable to attend remotely, and subject to the Council being able to facilitate attendance in person, the requester will be offered the opportunity to attend the meeting in person. Please note only one person per speaking time will be able to attend in person and so speaking time cannot be shared (e.g., one person for applicant; one person against development).

### *Remote attendance by the public*

Where a member of the public in remote attendance and entitled to exercise a right to speak has been deemed to have left the meeting when their particular application is under consideration, the Chair may, as they deem appropriate:

- (a) adjourn the meeting for a short period to permit the conditions for remote attendance contained in (i)-(iii) of Interim Standing Order 8 above to be re-established;

- (b) suspend consideration of the item of business in relation to the member of public's attendance until such time as a following item of business on the agenda has been transacted and the conditions for the member of the public's remote attendance have been re-established. If the conditions for the member of the public's remote attendance cannot be satisfied prior to the conclusion of the meeting and before the committee resolves to go in to closed business, the application under consideration will be deferred until the next available Planning Committee meeting.

#### *Declaration of Interests*

Where a Member in remote attendance has declared an interest in an application and would ordinarily be required to leave the meeting or sit in the public gallery, that member will be required to turn their video off and have their microphone muted whilst any discussion or vote takes place in respect of the item or items of business which the member may not participate.

### **13. Licensing**

When considering any application relating to the licensing function of the council and there exists a statutory requirement that the Council gives an opportunity of appearing before and of being heard by the council to any person, or words to that effect, then the Committee can satisfy this requirement by:-

1. In the first instance, the Speaker will be offered an opportunity to attend the meeting by remote access and the conditions in Interim Standing Order 8(i)-(iii) must be met;
2. If the Speaker is unable to attend remotely, and subject to the Council being able to facilitate attendance in person, the Speaker will be offered the opportunity to attend the meeting in person. Please note only one person per speaking time will be able to attend in person and so speaking time cannot be shared.





**Minutes of Meeting of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 23 April 2020 in the Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon**

**Chair** Councillor Kearney

**Members Present** Councillors Ashton, Bell, Brown, Burton, Doris, Graham, Kerr, Mallaghan, B McGuigan, S McGuigan, McNamee, Monteith, Mullen, Quinn and Wilson

**Officers in Attendance** Mr A Tohill, Chief Executive  
Mr McCreesh, Director of Business & Communities  
Mr Moffett, Head of Democratic Services  
Mrs Forde, Member Support Officer

**Remote Attendance** Ms Campbell, Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation  
Ms Canavan, Director of Organisational Development  
Mr Cassells, Director of Environment & Property  
Mr Kelso, Director of Public Health & Infrastructure  
Ms Mezza, Head of Marketing & Communications  
Mr JJ Tohill, Director of Finance

The meeting commenced at 7 pm

**C082/20 Apologies - due to COVID 19 Social Distancing Requirements**

Councillors Black, Buchanan, Clarke, Colvin, Corey, Cuddy, Cuthbertson, Elattar, Forde, Gildernew, Glasgow, Hughes, N McAleer, S McAleer, McFlynn, McKinney, McLean, D McPeake, S McPeake, Milne, Molloy, O'Neill, Robinson and Totten

**C083/20 Declarations of Interest**

The Chair Councillor Kearney reminded Members of their responsibility with regard to declarations of interest.

*Councillor Kerr declared an interest in Coalisland Na Fianna GFC*

*Councillor Wilson declared an interest in The Hub, Cookstown*

*Chair, Councillor Kearney declared an interest in Bann Valley Community Group*

*Councillor Monteith declared an interest in assisting with procurement in Me, You and Them*

**C084/020 Chair's Business**

The Chair, Councillor Kearney thanked everyone for attending and stated had he hoped them and their families were keeping well in the trying times. The Chair said that society continues to face unprecedented and fundamental challenges as to how we live daily lives, work, shop, exercise and ensure personal safety. He reflected on the sobering COVID 19 bereavement figures of 263 across the North, 14 of which

were in the Mid Ulster area and extended thoughts and prayers to all the families and communities affected.

The Chair stated that it was often in the worst of circumstances that the greatest kindnesses were seen and spoke of the generosity of people helping the most vulnerable in their communities from food deliveries to collecting prescriptions. He also commended fellow Members for the invaluable work they were doing within their own communities and the wider Mid Ulster area. From giving advice in relation to grant aid to struggling businesses and employers to standing up for workers' rights, organising litter picks, PPE provision each one was a great credit to the position of councillor.

The Chair, Councillor Kearney extended his thanks to Council staff who under the direction of senior management were keeping services running, especially the essential ones. He further commended staff who had redeployed to support other key council services and initiatives at this difficult and challenging time. The Chair also spoke of the dedicated staff team receiving the referrals from the COVID 19 help line and stated it could not be underestimated. He highlighted that Minister Harghey for Department of Communities had visited the 'hub' at Cookstown to see first-hand the distribution service in operation. He also extended thanks to the St Vincent de Paul for the supply of thousands of items of PPE including gloves and sanitiser for staff.

The Chair, Councillor Kearney spoke of the accolade for Mid Ulster District Council for having the highest percentage of innovative businesses according to a new table released but highlighted that the predicted drop in the economy would hit hard and thus a bespoke intervention by the Department of the Economy and Invest NI was being sought if the Mid Ulster economy was not to be shredded following the impact of the pandemic. He stated that Council was engaging with local businesses from manufacturing to retail to assist with council demonstrating its need.

In conclusion the Chair stated that the forthcoming weekend was to be the gala fundraising event for the Air Ambulance and that the event had been postponed. He advised that the Air Ambulance itself had had to suspend services for a short time but he was glad that it was now up and running again.

The Chair Councillor Kearney shared some wise words of the acclaimed poet Seamus Heaney

"if we winter this one out, we can summer anywhere."

#### **C085/020 Council Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 26 March 2020**

Proposed by Councillor Kerr  
Seconded by Councillor Mallaghan and

**Resolved** That the Minutes of the Council held on Thursday 26 March 2020 (C054/20 – C065/20 and C081/20) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated, were considered and adopted.

## **C086/20 Council's Governance Arrangements during COVID 19**

The Chief Executive presented previously circulated report and sought approval to

- (i) Recommence committee meetings in June 2020 as per original dates.
- (ii) The Chief Executive, guided by input from Party Leaders and Independents, informed by the latest advice and guidance on the coronavirus, is delegated authority to determine the format in which June committees, the AGM and the monthly council meeting will be held.

Councillor Monteith stated that whilst he had great faith in Council staff one only needed to watch international news channels to know that virtual/remote connections cause issue on a regular basis. He stated he thought it would be more practical to use a larger room for example Dungannon Leisure Centre which would permit full attendance by Members and thus some would not have to attend virtually to permit social distancing requirements. Councillor Monteith stated that the Chamber in Dungannon would permit full committee attendance.

The Chair, Councillor Kearney stated that it was hoped that from June onwards Council would be back to full capacity.

Councillor Ashton thanked political party leaders and officers for their leadership at this time and drew attention to 3.6 of the report which stated "*remoted access for some members may need to be facilitated in another council building should their home broadband be insufficient for remote access*", and stated that it would be more practical to use a different room in the building the main meeting was taking place.

Councillor Mallaghan stated whilst he understood previous comments some Members are shielding and could not attend a meeting thus there needs to be an opportunity to attend remotely.

Councillor Wilson stated that there are pros and cons to both methods of meeting and sought clarity as to when the legislation would come in.

The Chief Executive advised that the Department had not released a date as other matters were deemed to be a higher priority but stated it could be early May. He stated that rather than wait he had brought the paper to allow some additional options and clarified that regionally the matter was being pushed and that the legislation could be made by negative resolution which would make it simpler for the NI Assembly to implement.

Councillor Monteith stated for clarification that he was not opposed to virtual attendance but felt a bigger room would allow both virtual and maximum physical attendance.

In response to points raised the Chair, Councillor Kearney stated that all opinions and concerns would be noted.

In response to Councillor Burton's query it was confirmed that if home broadband was insufficient for remote access Members would be facilitated in another room or Council building.

Proposed by Councillor Mallaghan  
Seconded by Councillor Brian McGuigan and

**Resolved** That approval be granted to

- (i) Recommence committee meetings in June 2020 as per original dates.
- (ii) The Chief Executive, guided by input from Party Leaders and Independents, informed by the latest advice and guidance on the coronavirus, is delegated authority to determine the format in which June committees, the AGM and the monthly council meeting will be held.

## **Matters for Information**

### **C087/20 Council Services Update Report**

The Chief Executive advised that Members had been kept informed of service provision and drew attention to the undernoted:

- **Environment & Property Services**
  - Refuse Collection fully operational and three bin system continues to operate
  - Street cleansing has continued to operate but at a reduced level but in recent days more mechanical sweepers have been operational;
  - Levels of attendance by front line staff is fantastic;
  - Community litter picks have been supported;
  - Fly-tipping is slightly higher than normal but being managed but to date not a major problem;
  - Bulk waste household suspended and recycling centres closed.
  - Cemeteries closed due to NI Assembly regulations which has presented difficulties for some people;
  - Additional works carried out at Forthill cemetery in preparation of an expected surge in deaths which thankfully had not been realised;
  - Vehicle maintenance continuing with some overtime to keep fleet overtime to keep fleet on the road although deliveries on parts was slow but not proving detrimental to services;
  - Grounds maintenance some works being carried out;
  - Building maintenance works being carried out when buildings are closed;
  - Charges on car parks suspended;
- **Public Health & Infrastructure**
  - Building control services continuing to receive applications, site inspections suspended but the construction industry is minimal at present;

- Licensing functions continuing.
- Environmental Health - Advisory work on going concerning practises in some businesses but many was now resolved; Restricted dog control responding as and when required;
- Inspections suspended but planning consultations continuing;
- Capital Projects – the construction industry closed and working ongoing to deal with risk reduction with professional teams.
- Bus shelter work suspended;
- Bio diversity work limited.
- Leisure & Outdoor Recreation
  - Heavily affected by COVID 19 as all indoor centres, outdoor pitches, tennis courts etc closed;
  - Meadowbank still engaged as centre is being used for PPE production;
  - Mid Ulster Sports Arena being used as food distribution centre;
  - Parks majority remain open to pedestrians but closed to vehicles, caravan parks closed.
  - All 102 play areas closed;
- Planning Department
  - Development plan was out to consultations and closing date has had to be extended until public can come in and view the plan;
  - Staff engaged on guidance procedures and some redeployed to development management;
  - Planning applications still being received; it is hoped that delegated planning list will be issued in the near future.
- Corporate Functions
  - Finance functioning as normal beginning to prepare for annual accounts;
  - Procurement limited activity;
  - Marketing and communications services continuing and a lot of work due to COVID 19, some marketing postponed as venues are closed;
  - ICT very busy ensuring people have the ability to work from home;
  - Human Resources team dealing with queries and keeping all on track;
  - Council solicitor working as normal;
  - Democratic Services work as normal together with Freedom of Information, Performance Improvement reduced activity

The Chief Executive concluded paying tribute to all staff for maintaining services at this time.

Councillor Wilson paid tribute to staff especially those engaged on the front line. He stated Council got off to a shaky start with the erection of street signs deemed as essential business. He stated that the issue with cemeteries was out of Council control but hopefully could be rectified in the near future by the NI Assembly and asked how quickly Council could initiate opening.

Councillor Wilson sought clarity on number of staff off shielding and those who were off as it was impossible to carry out their duties suggesting that since Council may not be permitted to furlough staff could they perhaps be used to assist with cemetery openings.

In response the Chief Executive stated that staffing matters are confidential business.

The Chief Executive requested that the Director of Environment and Property who was in attendance virtually respond.

The Director of Environment and Property stated that cemeteries could be opened within 24 hours.

In response to Councillor McNamee's concerns regarding implementing social distancing in cemeteries the Director of Environment and Property stated that he did not think there would be any difficulty.

Councillor McNamee sought an update on opening of recycling centres highlighting news reports earlier in the week on some Councils opening of same.

In response the Chief Executive stated there had been some discussion at the Regional Strategic Waste group.

The Director of Environment and Property stated that the matter had been discussed and the outcome was awaiting Ministerial approval but this had been delayed due to a bereavement.

The Chair, Councillor Kearney expressed condolences to the Minister on the death of his father.

Councillor Kerr stated that he was being contacted by constituents regarding re-opening of recycling centres and highlighted an instance whereby black bags were left at the gate of the recycling centre in Coalisland. He also put on record his thanks to Council staff risking their lives delivering services and for their active work in the community. He sought an update regarding PPE for staff.

In response the Chief Executive stated that staffing matters would be addressed in confidential business.

Councillor Monteith concurred with comments regarding the opening of cemeteries stating that their closure had had a profound impact on mental health. He also stated that the position on recycling centres could be managed through an appointment system as to close them for 6 – 9 months was not feasible.

Councillor Monteith mentioned the social distancing issues in some of the agri food sector and stated whilst most had been sorted there was still some ongoing issues with staff who to adhere to social distancing had been put on a two day week, refused furlough and had their income reduced. Councillor Monteith spoke disparagingly of the Health and Safety Executive for refusing to do inspections, for

companies not permitting trade unions entry to carry out inspections and all the while the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for carrying out inspections in the veterinary sector of the factories. Councillor Monteith stated that things must change Council should be calling on the Health and Safety Executive to commence inspections, time and motions studies should be carried out together with trade union admission for inspections. He concluded that things must now change for the better for the worker!

The Chair, Councillor Kearney thanked Councillor Monteith for his points and stated they would be raised.

Councillor Burton asked in the instance of companies not collecting recycling waste how long would it take to reach full capacity if recycling centres opened. She highlighted that Council was doing its best and people should comprehend it is not the time to clear out the garage.

Councillor Burton highlighted that smaller shops had social distancing measures and had erected screens, she spoke of the volunteers sewing scrubs and stated as a whole people were trying to do their bit but stressed that it was outrageous that a few were fly tipping speaking of an instance when dead animals had been dumped with no thought for those who had to come behind them and clean up. She stated it was regrettable that one Council had opened a centre raising expectations across the board but stated that if the lockdown continues the situation would need to be managed in relation to capacity.

The Chief Executive stated that if recycling centres were to re-open it would be phased for example those in the main towns first with only waste which can be collected from the kerbside accepted highlighting that the disposal of paints, oil and rubble may be postponed for longer. With regard to, for example, white goods the Chief Executive stated they were large and capacity restrictions may not permit.

Councillor Quinn stated that fly tipping was increasing in the countryside and stressed the need to have recycling centres open as soon as practicable. He spoke of some local businesses not having correct or any PPE and behaving shamefully towards employees who objected to working without it being put on notice or told not to come back and emphasised that Council needed to highlight this behaviour and stressed that profit should not come before health. He concluded praising the local community groups for their outstanding work which included community litter picks and the Council staff for their work.

Councillor Doris referred to earlier comments regarding fly tipping and thanked Council staff for responding to issues but emphasised that the responsibility and blame was that of the flytipper highlighting that it took two men two hours to clear bags dumped at Kettle Lane. She concluded thanking Council staff for their ongoing efforts highlighting that they too had families to think of.

Councillor S McGuigan welcomed the update from the Chief Executive and Members comments. He spoke of the challenging role Members themselves were facing in trying to assist local businesses struggling with application processes for the various grants available. He highlighted that one civil servant had been most supportive in

making his email address available to get verification for applications in relation to the £10k grant. Referencing the £25k grant he stated that many companies appeared to be 'falling through the cracks' and not meeting criteria for the grant. He spoke of the Council's economic reports stating that whilst entrepreneurship had been the success of the area it had now become the 'Achilles heel.' He highlighted whilst the grant process was not Council's responsibility it had a lobbying role and should do all it could to assist. Councillor S McGuigan stated that as soon as permissible capital projects should be progressed to endeavour to inject money into the district. Concluding Councillor S McGuigan concurred with previous remarks made about the Health and Safety Executive and others and advised that it had been stated that "unless there was a fatality in the area they would not inspect at this time."

The Chair, Councillor Kearney spoke of the strength of local economic development and emphasised that resilience now was key.

Councillor Ashton emphasised that there must now be a bespoke economic recovery plan as the area would be hard hit.

Councillor Mallaghan put on record his sincere thanks to all the frontline staff. In relation to workplaces and social distancing issues he stated that this should not be happening six weeks into lockdown and stated it was totally unacceptable that people were being 'sent up the road' for putting their health first.

Councillor Mallaghan sought an update in relation to the Chief Executive's thoughts on how the planning committee would work emphasising that getting planning up and running would play a vital part in rebuilding the economy. He also expressed deep concern that in reopening cemeteries, recycling centres, forest parks etc people may interpret this as getting 'back to normal' and said that deaths had been greatly reduced as people had stayed at home and saved each other. He emphasised that people needed to continue staying at home, handwashing and social distancing for maybe another six weeks stating that health must come first and the economy second.

The Chief Executive addressing comments in relation to recommencing the planning committee stated that it would require additional thought and various processes such as webex conferencing to facilitate objectors and applicant speaking rights would be considered.

*The Chair, Councillor Kearney stated it was 8pm and requested that the meeting rise and show its appreciation to the NHS and care staff.*

*All applauded*

*Following the display of appreciation the meeting resumed.*

Councillor Wilson concurred with Councillor Mallaghan's comments regarding sending out the wrong signals as corona virus had not gone away and stated medical evidence must be adhered to and on behalf of the Ulster Unionist Party appealed to people to do what they are instructed.



Councillor Wilson stated he had received calls from members of the public requesting bin caddy liners as all the shops had sold out. He also asked if the grass cutting bags could be made available. In relation to flytipping he spoke of a man who looked out the window to find someone had thrown five bin bags over his garden wall.

In response to Councillor Wilson's queries regarding the availability of bin caddy liners and grass bags the Director of Environment and Property stated he would investigate implications of making these available to the public.

**Resolved** That the Director of Environment & Property investigate implications of making small bin caddy liners and grass bags available to the public

### **C088/20 Business and Communities COVID 19 Update**

The Director of Business and Communities drew Members attention to the previous circulated report which outlined the support and ongoing engagement with businesses at this time and outlined the severe pressure businesses were experiencing due to the current crisis. He drew particular attention to the fact that approximately 85% of businesses were not functioning highlighting that in hospitality sector across Northern Ireland out of 9000, 6500 were furloughed and 472 made redundant, construction was halted, retailers other than food outlets was closed. He highlighted that during an intensive engagement process across some businesses to ascertain what recovery would look like retailers in particular spoke of their horror with liquidity and cashflow issues especially if the furlough scheme did not continue beyond June. He further highlighted that within the manufacturing sector international markets were now closed highlighting that some 80-90% of the client base was in America or India. The Director concluded that the Economic Development team were capturing data of a sample base of businesses in order that they can appeal to Invest NI and government departments of the situation and possible recovery plans for Mid Ulster.

The Chair, Councillor Kearney commented that the statistics were sobering.

Councillor Monteith highlighted that local businesses so call support mechanisms had been an unmitigated disaster, the furlough scheme a disaster with no reassurances for businesses and staff. He stated that businesses were being asked to borrow money to pay workers and the government was offering guarantees for the lenders but not the local businesses who were being told to maybe put up their houses as collateral and if they didn't qualify so be it. He also stated that many people had not been paid, they had been furloughed but told by business owners they simply did not have the money to pay them thus many were left on the breadline. He stated it was an absolute disgrace the experiences some people were having and they needed to not only be heard and remembered but things must change. He said that the £10k grant had went to small industrial companies, the £25k was nonsense as companies such as crèches and childcare facilities were not entitled to apply thus again businesses in jeopardy and people on the breadline. He spoke of the self-employed many of whom were not entitled to anything as they had

not been in business long enough. Councillor Monteith stated that the measures implemented had been 'half- baked and badly thought out' and whilst he welcomed bespoke packages for businesses what was there for the worker. He stated that workers' rights must be included in the bespoke packages, zero hour contracts eliminated, sick pay scheme in line with public sector and trade union recognition they should not be supported. He stated that no longer should people be forced to make the decisions 'can I afford to take two weeks off at £95 per week?' Councillor Monteith was emphatic that any business that gets support should have to sign up for trade union recognition and that changes should be change for all.

Councillor Wilson stated he could not disagree with many of Councillor Monteith's comments but said that furlough has worked for many and for some it is an evolving situation. He referred to the £50million set aside by the Treasury for local authorities and asked what Mid Ulster Council share would be especially given the current fall in Council income with business rates frozen for three months.

Councillor Wilson proposed that Council write to the Minister for Finance to ask that rate relief in Northern Ireland be in line with the rest of the United Kingdom.

Councillor Brown supported this proposal.

Councillor Ashton sought clarity regarding the three months rates relief stating that in England the relief was just for some sectors.

Councillor Wilson stated his proposal would be rate relief extended to 12 months for all businesses.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson  
Seconded by Councillor Brown and

**Resolved** That Council write to the Minister for Finance to request that Northern Ireland rate relief is extended to all businesses for a 12 month period

Councillor Kerr concurred with Councillor Monteith comments in relation to workers' rights and stated that what is normal no longer exists and whilst Council could talk the talk they needed to deliver for workers.

Councillor Ashton in relation to comments about business grants and furloughing acknowledged that whilst more needed to be done the schemes should not be rejected completed.

Councillor Ashton drew attention to item 2.1.6 in the report *Update on Mid Ulster Town & Village Business Spruce Up Scheme* and sought clarity on the rationale for not issuing letters as for example a decorator could continue to work if social distancing was adhered to.

In response the Director of Business and Communities stated that the thinking was in line with the construction industry 'essential works only' but stated that hopefully in the coming weeks schemes would pick up again.

Councillor Mallaghan concurred with most points stating that times were grim for businesses, families and workers and stated he had grave concerns regarding the furlough scheme as Tory governments had told lies, the Prime Minister had missed Cobra meetings and whilst he hoped he was wrong he had deep concerns regarding the construction and manufacturing businesses and he could not trust a Tory government to do the right thing.

Councillor Doris concurred with Councillor Mallaghan's comments and drew attention to corporate events highlighting the civic awards and suggested it would be appropriate to write out to all those nominated to advise Council would not hold receptions and pass their awards on. She also referred to the planned review of the civic award process.

The Chair, Councillor Kearney acknowledged that a lot had to be placed on hold and concurred with the idea of forwarding the award with an accompanying letter.

Councillor Monteith concurred and requested that the letter include the name of the nominating councillor.

Proposed by Councillor Doris  
Seconded by Councillor Monteith and

**Resolved** That the Chair forward a letter to include the name of the nominating Councillor(s) together with the award to outstanding civic nominations already agreed by Council

**Resolved** That Council note the Business and Communities COVID 19 Update report.

#### *Declarations of Interest*

*Councillor Quinn declared an interest in St Vincent de Paul*

*Councillor Kearney declared an interest in Bann Valley Community Group*

#### **C089/20 Business and Communities COVID 19 Community Support Response**

The Director of Business and Communities drew attention to the previously circulated report which provided an update on community support response as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic.

Councillor Kerr spoke of the need for PPE in care homes and the possibility of Council procuring Gore Tex material for community groups to avail of when sewing scrubs rather than them having to pay additional money because they couldn't bulk buy.

Proposed by Councillor Kerr  
Seconded by Councillor Monteith and

**Resolved** That Council investigate the most appropriate option of procuring and procure either

- (i) Gore-Tex material in bulk to make available to those in the community making PPE scrubs; or alternatively
- (ii) The procurement of PPE scrubs if more cost effective

Councillor Mallaghan stated whilst there was a lot of fair criticism with regard to handling of many aspects of the current pandemic and issues surrounding it the Department for Communities had reacted quickly and effectively especially in relation to the food parcel scheme highlighting that currently 1000 food parcels had been distributed throughout the district. He highlighted that the local community groups had been exceptional in their response from cooking dinners to sewing scrubs. He stated that it is vitally important that Council funding arrives where it can be flexible should it be small grants for delivering sports coaching on line and also stressed how important it was to have funding in place to reactivate society. He spoke highly of the pure quality of people in Mid Ulster.

#### *Declaration of Interest*

*Councillor Burton declared an interest in Bawn Development Association.*

Councillor Burton spoke highly of community activity and the volunteers who were carrying out great work but advised that some people in the Clogher Valley had not received letters yet and many older people didn't want to accept food parcels as they thought perhaps others were worse off.

The Chair, Councillor Kearney highlighted that the Heaney HomePlace was endeavouring to set up home schooling events.

The Director of Business and Communities advised that issues in relation to GP letters and referrals would be addressed in the next report.

Councillor Ashton stated that it would be useful to have committees running again to discuss how projects could go forward and review community response. She also proposed that Council send a letter of appreciation to all community groups who had stepped up to provide services at this time.

**Resolved** That Council send a letter of appreciation to Community Groups for their work in response to and during the coronavirus outbreak

**Resolved** That Council note the Business and Communities COVID 19 Community Response report.

#### **C090/20 Update on Mid Ulster District Council Community Support Hub**

The Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation drew attention to the previously circulated report which provided an update on the establishment and operation of Council's community support hub to provide support to vulnerable people in the district during the COVID 19 pandemic.

The Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation stated that Councils own staff and the network of community groups were delivering food parcels and the demand currently was at approximately 90 per day and was increasing and it was possible that in the near future demand would outstrip supply. The Director drew attention to the flow chart of distribution and highlighted that anyone requiring assisting should telephone the number listed in the report.

Councillor Wilson stated that staff was doing an excellent job but there was an issue with the Advice NI Helpline number and spoke of a couple aged 86 and 88 who were shielding and had been told they did not qualify. He said he was aware of others with serious health issues who had not received a letter.

In response the Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation stated that she was aware some letters came from the Health and Social Care Trusts whilst others were direct from GPs but stated she was in daily contact with the helpline and the Trusts and would follow up on any issues.

Councillor Kerr concurred with Councillor Wilson that too many people were 'slipping through the cracks' but he praised the local community speaking of his own area where there was a progressive programme in place to support people and the work of volunteers was tremendous.

Councillor Mallaghan sought clarity in relation to the issue of letters by General Practitioners stating that there appeared to be a lot of inconsistency.

The Chair, Councillor Kearney reflected that the Southern Trust had issued twice as many as the Northern Trust.

In response the Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation stated she would seek clarification.

**Resolved**

That Council seek clarification

- (i) From the Northern Health and Social Care Trust and Southern Health and Social Care Trust regarding the GP letters required to qualify for food parcels issued via the Community Support Hub; and
- (ii) From Advice NI regarding people in need who are not meeting specified criteria for food parcels

Councillor Mallaghan referred back to the resolve regarding Gore Tex material and posed the question would it be better to source the actual supplies.

The Director of Business and Communities stated they would identify the best option.

Councillor Monteith stated that some of the volunteers were making pyjamas also as patients on high risk wards had no access to same and the 'scrub teams' were making these also and emphasised it was all about co-ordinating help.

**Resolved** That Council note the Update on Mid Ulster District Council Community Support Hub report.

**Items restricted in accordance with Section 42, Part 1 of Local Government (NI) Act 2014 – Confidential Business**

The press and public withdrew from the meeting at 8.52pm

Proposed by Councillor Mallaghan  
Seconded by Councillor Burton and

**Resolved** That items (C091/20-C094/20) be taken as confidential business.

**Matters for Decision**

- (i) Council Confidential Minutes of Meeting held on 26 March 2020
- (ii) COVID 19 Financial Update (Verbal) report
- (iii) Document for sealing: '20 Year Lease for lands situated at Pomeroy Forest between DAERA/Forestry Service NI and Mid Ulster District Council'.
- (iv) Document for sealing: 'Grant of Easement in respect of lands situated at Gortgonis Road, Coalisland between Mid Ulster District Council and Northern Ireland Electricity Networks Limited'.

**C093/20 Duration of Meeting**

The meeting was called for 7 pm and ended at 9.25 pm

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Report on</b>	Mid Ulster Covid-19 Business Recovery Plan
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	28 May 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Adrian McCreesh, Director of Business & Communities

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
	<p><b>Mid Ulster Covid-19 Business Recovery Plan</b></p> <p>To seek approval from Members for the Mid Ulster Covid-19 Business Recovery Plan on Appendix 1.</p>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	<p><b>Mid Ulster Covid-19 Business Recovery Plan</b></p> <p>Following engagement with a cross section of over 100 businesses in Mid Ulster across all sectors and sizes, the Economic Development Section have developed a Covid-19 Business Recovery Plan to inform government of the unique challenges and issues facing local businesses in Mid Ulster and lobby for a number of interventions and support mechanisms required immediately to help our industry survive and recover from the ongoing pandemic.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b>Mid Ulster Covid-19 Business Recovery Plan</b></p> <p>In response to the economic shock caused by the Covid-19 crisis, the economic development team has engaged with a cross section of over 100 local businesses (from micro to small and medium sized enterprises) from the top four sectors identified by the Ulster University to be most affected by the ongoing crisis;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Retail</li> <li>2) Manufacturing / Engineering</li> <li>3) Construction</li> <li>4) Hospitality</li> </ol> <p>The Council's engagement across industry has identified unprecedented challenges and issues facing local businesses in Mid Ulster. This evidence has identified the need for a robust economic response aimed at shoring up our economy in Mid Ulster and protecting our business and employment base. The purpose of the Business Recovery Plan is to inform government and key stakeholders of the precarious situation facing Mid Ulster and lobby for immediate interventions and support mechanisms to help our industry survive and recover from the ongoing pandemic.</p>

<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: N/A
	Human: Officer Time
	Risk Management: N/A
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
	It is recommended that Members: -
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Approve</b> the Mid Ulster Covid-19 Business Recovery Plan (on Appendix 1).
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	<b>Appendix 1</b> - Mid Ulster Covid-19 Business Recovery Plan

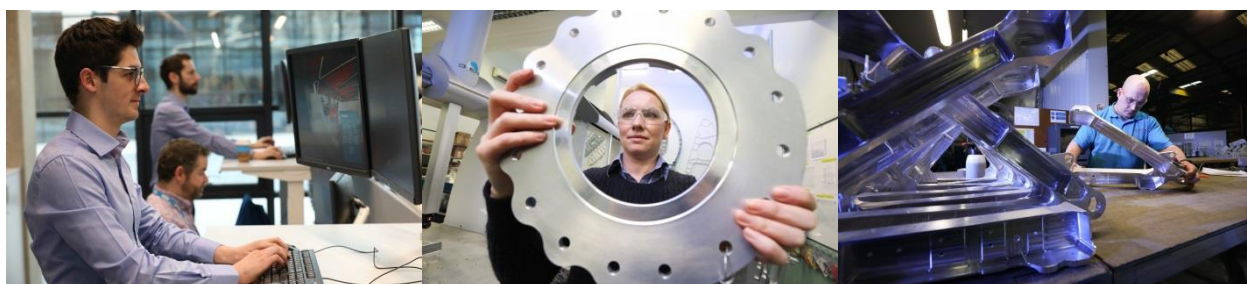




Comhairle Ceantair  
**Lár Uladh**  
**Mid Ulster**  
District Council

## **Mid Ulster Covid-19 Business Recovery Plan**

***May 2020***



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## 1.0 Background and Introduction

In addition to its impact on public health, the Covid-19 global pandemic will undoubtedly have a devastating impact on the local economy. Northern Ireland is facing its sharpest recession in history as a result of the ongoing crisis. Ulster University<sup>1</sup> have suggested that economic output could fall by almost 10% in 2020 and approximately 235k workers either temporarily laid-off or have their salaries funded through the government's Job Retention Scheme (see Appendix 1). Recent information from Invest NI on client companies indicate the highly critical and precarious situation facing Mid Ulster, as highlighted in Figure 1 below.

### Furloughed Workers

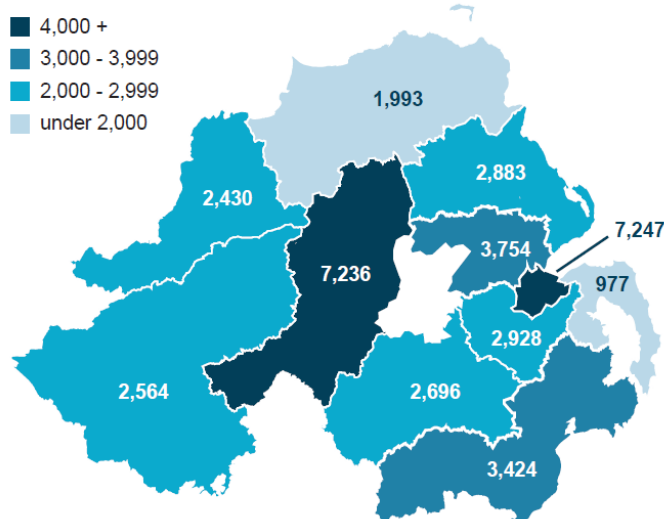


Figure 1: Workers Furloughed by Council Area: period 2<sup>nd</sup> March to 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020<sup>2</sup>

A study by the Centre for Progressive Policy (CPP)<sup>3</sup> reported that Mid Ulster will endure the greatest economic impact of Covid-19 in Northern Ireland. Indeed, the report highlighted Mid Ulster as the only area locally to feature in the top 10 worst-impacted places within the UK's 382 local authority regions (see Appendix 2). The think tank estimates that GVA could temporarily fall by a staggering 45% in the short term, which presents an immense challenge for local companies and jobs. The extent of the anticipated decline is largely as a result of Mid Ulster's position as the centre of manufacturing and engineering, where it accounts for 21% of the local economy, compared to 9% in the rest of Northern Ireland.

The scale of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on our businesses, residents and community calls for collective local leadership to provide strong strategic direction to support our businesses during this global crisis and lead our post Covid-19 recovery. Mid Ulster District Council is committed to listening to business and are already working with our partner organisations such as MEGA (Manufacturing & Engineering Growth and Advancement) Network, Mid Ulster Skills Forum, Mid Ulster Tourism Development Group and local Town Centre Forums to understand the significant and singular challenges our business community is facing.

<sup>1</sup> Gareth Hetherington et al, 'Economic consequences of COVID-19 in Northern Ireland', *UUEPC Publications*, April 2020

<sup>2</sup> Invest NI 'Bulletin' Invest NI Supported Businesses Weekly Redundancies & Furloughed Workers Bulletin', *Invest NI*, May 2020

<sup>3</sup> Andy Norman, 'Which local authorities face the biggest immediate economic hit?', *Progressive-policy.net*, April 2020

Council officers engaged with a cross section of over 100 businesses (from micro to small and medium sized enterprises) from the top four sectors identified by the Ulster University to be most affected by the Coronavirus lockdown; Retail, Manufacturing / Engineering, Construction and Tourism/Hospitality. The purpose of this paper is to inform government of the unique challenges and issues facing local businesses and the interventions and support needed to help industry recover from the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

## 2.0 Findings

### 2.1 Retail Sector

The following feedback is from two indigenous retailers with multiple premises in Northern Ireland:-

#### Return

- Expects zero sales across multiple premises for 3/4 months
- All staff are furloughed
- Suppliers or Landlords have not been paid since February (most are understanding)
- Applied for Business Interruption Loan, awaiting decision
- Seriously concerned about ability to restart multiple stores

#### Recovery

- Rates Holiday - the current 3-month window saves one business £217k whereas a 12 month window (in line with England) saves £870k, that is over £650k less borrowing. In contrast, retailers with multiple premises elsewhere in the UK who are getting a 12-month rates window will be able to “wipe the floor with NI based multiples” as part of any recovery process.
- Grant Support announced for NI i.e. businesses with a NAV £15,001-£51,000 get assistance of £25k, but applies only to one store and excludes businesses with multiple premises across NI therefore increasing debt considerably.
- Grant Support - the support scheme as referenced above in England and Wales applies to all Stores, thereby it is not capped to one store, giving them a further massive advantage.
- Need for clear guidance on social distancing measures for businesses to operate and financial support to implement same.
- The importance of the banks in supporting business at this time was stressed.
- Many NI based indigenous multiples will never survive a recovery process with these issues stacked against them.

*The collective views of thirteen small retail businesses represented on five Town Centre Forums in Mid Ulster:-*

#### Return

- Majority of retailers are closed and staff furloughed.
- Some (hopefully all) staff will come back on a phased approach as part of the recovery.
- All retailers are considering viability of opening due to cash flow pressures and concerns over market demand and customer spending on non-essential items.
- Some retailers have focused upon on-line sales growth during closure.

#### Recovery

- Rates is a significant burden and critical to survival will be an extension to 12 months of the current 3-month rates holiday (similar to England).
- Businesses will face restrictions and perhaps closure from time to time so a rates holiday and other financial support measures should be reviewed on a rolling basis.
- Need for targeted mentoring support for businesses as they restart their business.
- Need for investment in town centres built upon planned and sustained marketing as attractive places to shop and visit.

- Need for the Furlough period to be extended to allow for a phased return.
- Need for clear guidance on social distancing measures and financial assistance to implement.

### **Sector Synopsis:-**

The high street was one of the most impacted areas of the economy during the 2007/08 recession and the expectations is that the likely recession which will follow the Covid-19 crisis will be much deeper, albeit perhaps for a shorter time period. The scale of the crisis facing the retail sector is grave and creative policy thinking and future planning of town centres will be an essential part of the recovery. Many local retailers feel that even when restrictions are relaxed they will struggle to get customers through the door due to consumer anxiety, changed consumer behaviour leading to increased online sales, many other complementary businesses within the tourism/hospitality sector remaining closed as well as social distancing implications.

In addition, a number of businesses have fallen through the gaps of the COVID-19 Small Business Grants, for two reasons – firstly, larger premises with a NAV greater than £51,000, and secondly, businesses who pay rent and rates as a single payment directly to their landlords e.g. tenants in shared space who do not receive a separate rates bill. Both categories are currently ineligible to apply for essential funding support.

Feedback would also suggest there is an absence of a body representing the broad range of small local retailers on our high streets and highlighting key issues and providing guidance.

## **2.2 Manufacturing & Engineering Sector**

The following key points are from over thirty manufacturing and engineering companies that form the MEGA Network:-

### **Return**

- Several of the larger material handling companies have extended their return date to May. Some companies have a small number of staff currently putting plans in place for safe returning.
- Suppliers are dependent on their customers re-opening.
- Most are considering a phased return. One company said they will 'drip feed back to work starting with the younger guys as we are nervous taking some of the older guys back due to the risk of them getting sick', also people with vulnerable ones living with them are also reluctant to come back.
- Some companies are taking a small team back earlier to meet industry needs e.g. agriculture customer base
- Some are anticipating that this might have to be extended again but too early to call yet and if reliant on international sales (as most in Mid Ulster are), then return will be shaped by the COVID-19 reaction in those respective countries.
- There is a concern that procedures need to be in place to protect existing apprenticeships and new apprenticeships in September 2020. (On average SWC have 350 engineering apprentices on their books every year with an intake of around 100 new apprentices). It also threatens any recovery effort by removing skilled workers from industries trying to rebuild after the pandemic.

### **Recovery**

- This will largely be dictated by the state the markets will be in.

- Much will also be dependent on whether the Furloughing scheme is extended - it might be an option to reduce the 80% if it allows the scheme to be extended.
- It would help companies if the furloughing scheme covered wages up to a capped amount for employees returning to work who were only required for instance 20 hours a week (instead of their normal full-time hours)
- For some companies it highlights the need to focus on industry that generates jobs and revenue so that we can support our health service etc.
- The government needs to focus on encouraging some local companies to manufacture PPE in the long term and to strengthen supply chain resilience.
- Extend rates holiday as there will be huge disruption after the lockdown.
- One of the first things to do is to loosen up the shipping routes, need to get haulage up and running as there is a massive backlog of containers.
- Opportunity for government to pay apprenticeship wages for a few months.
- Need to put plans in place with Colleges and Departments to protect and retain apprentices in the sector.
- Need for a Manufacturing Taskforce to protect the economic and employment base in Mid Ulster.

### **Sector Synopsis:-**

The Manufacturing sector has responded to the call to action to work collaboratively and repurpose to produce essential PPE for frontline workers where possible to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic. These companies will require support to sustain local supply chain resilience in order to continue to manufacture vital products and equipment for our frontline whilst being able to return to producing their core products. The government as a major buyer must have a stronger commitment to sourcing products here in Northern Ireland to help develop and sustain the manufacturing sector as we rebuild the economy.

There is a real and significant threat of local redundancies in this critical sector and it is estimated that GVA in Mid Ulster could temporarily fall by a staggering 45% in the short term, which presents an immense challenge to the area. Mid Ulster is the recognised “manufacturing hub” of Northern Ireland and government support for a Taskforce will be required to protect the economic and employment base within Mid Ulster.

### **2.3 Construction Sector**

Following engagement with a number of construction companies, the following key points are of note:-

#### **Return**

- All businesses are closed bar some minor work.
- Majority of staff have been furloughed.
- Government support to business has been welcomed, however, there are concerns about the potential for delay in receiving the financial support, prompt payment is essential.

#### **Recovery**

- Rates relief period needs extended to 12 months.
- Should restrictions remain for longer than the initial period, the Furlough scheme needs extended accordingly.
- The importance of the banks in supporting business at this time was stressed

- All four recognise the significant challenges that lie ahead but are confident for recovery in the longer term.
- Concerns about the economic impact of the outbreak on public capital expenditure after the lockdown.
- All are keen to see the government begin releasing restrictions (at the right time) and allow them to get back to business.

### **Sector Synopsis:-**

The effects of the coronavirus lockdown have been felt by every industry and construction is no exception, with work now halted on the majority of sites across the UK and Ireland. To help the construction sector to bounce back, the Government's Capital Investment programme should be continued and expanded to boost both the employment within this industry and the economy.

Given the difficulties within this sector, clear guidance on how to protect construction workers is vital – those who need to work side by side, and how to transport workers from site to site whilst still socially distancing are two key questions which need addressed. With so many self-employed individuals within this sector, it is critical that the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme is paid in a timely manner and extended to allow for newly business start-ups.

### **2.4 Tourism/Hospitality Sector**

The following key points are taken from a survey of over forty tourism and hospitality business in Mid Ulster:-

- 50% of businesses stated that there is a risk they may not reopen.
- Need for quicker release of £25k grant scheme.
- 73% of respondents stated that without the job retention scheme they cannot continue to pay staff wages due to cash flow issues.
- B&B's paying domestic rates are ruled out for support including farm activities paying farm rates.
- Businesses with a NAV over £51k have no grant support and must rely on loans and do not want to incur debt.
- New business starts are currently ruled out of the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

*The Perspective of local Hotel owner:-*

#### **Return**

- Planning is currently geared towards maximizing a summer season.
- Has furloughed all possible staff to assist with £25k monthly wages.
- All Weddings for March, April, May and June either cancelled or postponed (average 3 per week).
- Huge amount of corporate events and accommodation bookings cancelled for the foreseeable future.

#### **Recovery**

- Recovery will focus upon easing into action for Summer season.
- Staff brought back in stages over weeks and months.
- Will aim to build for the Christmas period.



- Needs a 12-month holiday from rates bill.
- Need the Furlough period extended if necessary.
- Leisure, tourism, hospitality and retail premises with a NAV over £51,000 need a cash grant.

*The Perspective of a Pub, restaurant and nightclub owner:-*

#### Return

- All businesses temporarily closed.
- Loss of revenue substantial in main revenue generating part of the year.
- All staff furloughed.
- Up to possibly 30% staff redundancies.
- Stockpile of soft drinks and bottled beers which suppliers will not take back.

#### Recovery

- Planning for phased reopening following government guidance.
- Rates relief period needs extended to 12 months.
- Extension of the Furlough period is critical for survival of sector
- Grants to support social distancing measures e.g. refitting interiors, sanitization - these are going to be very important for the tourism/hospitality industry.
- Need to drive footfall into town centres with “safe measures” in place to build consumer confidence.
- Promotion and development of night-time economy to encourage footfall and spend.

*The perspective of an activity-based tourism business:-*

#### Return

- Business is temporarily closed.
- Loss of revenue.
- Ongoing costs such as insurance, utility bills.
- All staff furloughed.
- Staff highly skilled and trained and fears they may not return.
- Cost of training and retraining specialist staff on outdoor activities is substantial as customer safety is vital.

#### Recovery

- Reopen as a new entity perhaps for weekends initially.
- Planning for phased reopening commencing in October.
- Cost implications of training/retraining specialist staff huge disincentive needing an 8 week window to complete.
- Need guidelines on social distancing to plan ahead.
- Government support on interest and security on loans needs to be forthcoming.
- VAT currently at 20% needs to be abolished.

*The perspective of two private bus/coach hire businesses:-*

#### Return

- Currently fall through the gaps in current government supports
- All coach hire trips cancelled
- Business is temporarily closed.
- Loss of revenue

- Ongoing overheads such as insurance, utility bills, bank charges.
- Depreciation of vehicles
- All staff have been furloughed.
- The current suite of government supports do not help private bus/coach hire operators.

#### Recovery

- Phased opening – will be dependent on how quickly the tourism sector bounces back and how/when social distancing is eased.
- Need Job Retention Scheme to continue until such times as businesses can get up and running again.
- Government and bank support on the payback of loans because operators will suffer a loss of income in the foreseeable future.

#### **Sector Synopsis:-**

The tourism/hospitality industry faces the longest lockdown period as by its nature it involves bringing people together in close proximity. There is now an expectation that many pubs will not be able to implement the necessary social distancing restrictions and so may not open at all during 2020. Restaurants and cafes will need continued support if they are to open at 50% capacity, as many require around 75% covers to break even, or like pubs, do not have adequate space to implement the required social distancing restrictions (see Appendix 3).

Whilst Tourism NI has been very proactive in supporting the sector, and domestic tourism/hospitality will present an opportunity in the medium term, survival for many establishments is an immediate concern. Difficult decisions will need to be made by some to fully close their business due to significant challenges facing businesses relating to cash flow and working capital. There is a threat that businesses who find difficulty meeting public demand may find themselves being replaced by other services that can meet the public need for socialising. Many businesses have recognised that there will be a growing problem in recruiting suitably qualified staff at the point of reopening. Evidence would suggest that casual workers in this sector are moving to other industries to survive, and will exacerbate an already considerable problem of a skills shortage.

Furthermore, whilst there has been significant financial resources allocated by the NI Executive to aid Translink's funding shortfall during the crisis, there has been a lack of support for the plight facing small and large private bus/coach operators, where a large part of their trade is derived from the tourism/hospitality sector.

### **3.0 Common Issues**

A number of common issues were highlighted across the four sectors:-

#### **3.1 Rates Holiday**

There is an urgent requirement for the three-month business rate relief to be extended to a minimum of twelve months for all businesses in line with elsewhere in the UK. This would help cash flow and business confidence in what are uncertain times.

#### **3.2 Job Retention Scheme**

The government have extended the Job Retention Scheme to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020. However, many businesses will not have the cashflow to pay employees' full salaries when the lockdown measures are eased and workers are able to return to work, and may instead opt for redundancy. A flexible scheme needs to be introduced where businesses can re-employ staff on a part time basis and still receive a top up payment under the Job Retention Scheme instead of furloughing some staff and expecting others to work full time. There will be a need for further support to businesses within the tourism/hospitality sector over a prolonged period, given that they will be the last to reopen when restrictions are gradually lifted.

#### **3.3 Self-Employment Income Support Scheme**

There is a recognition that this scheme needs to be widened to provide support for new business start-ups in the last twelve months.

#### **3.4 Rental Support Scheme**

A large number of businesses operate from commercial rented premises who cannot pay their rent because their premises are closed or at reduced capacity due to the virus. This situation is also putting pressure on landlords who have mortgages, loans and overdrafts to service.

#### **3.5 Rising Fixed Costs**

Whilst businesses are closed or operating at reduced capacity, fixed costs such as insurance and utilities e.g. broadband, electric. This is draining cash resources within businesses.

#### **3.6 Stock and supply chains**

Many businesses are struggling to meet supplier payments for current stock with little or no income. Most of this stock is now obsolete as it is time sensitive and seasonal. There are concerns about supply chains given that many manufacturing companies have been closed due to the COVID 19 outbreak.

#### **3.7 Sustainability beyond the short term**

The issue of sustainability beyond the short term will be key; so support will need to be focused on helping businesses to implement inevitable social distancing to protect both employees and customers. There are currently no clear guidelines on how businesses should implement social distancing. It is imperative that this comes from central government as various bodies are starting to produce their own which may not be in line with government medical advice. Grants should be available to allow businesses to make the various adjustments/modifications to their premises such as providing hand washing/hand sanitising stations, perspex screens, awnings where outside queuing may be necessary etc.

It is obvious that many employers will re-evaluate how they do things, homeworking for instance. One academic has suggested that - is it possible to organise businesses remotely with technology and proper training? It is obvious that there will be a number of repercussions once the dust has settled and the question is how do we help businesses to reach these decisions?

### **3.8 Apprenticeships**

One of the common concerns across industry is the need to protect existing apprenticeships and new apprenticeships in September 2020. It will be important to ensure they all still have a job so young people do not lose connections with employers and fail to finish their apprenticeship. It also threatens any recovery effort by removing skilled workers from industries trying to rebuild after the pandemic. Government needs to put plans in place to make sure apprentices stay working while offering opportunities for new apprentices.

### **3.9 Retraining the unemployed**

Re-training for redundant workers will be essential and a comprehensive piece of research is required on this issue to identify what types of jobs are needed as the economy rebuilds post Covid-19.

## **4.0 Other key considerations**

To mitigate against the damage done by COVID-19 and to further support the economic recovery the Council would request consideration of the following policy support measures:-

### **4.1 Rates Reform**

To help bolster the economic recovery from lockdown, Northern Ireland needs immediate and fundamental rates reform to redress the seriously damaging imbalances in the current rating system. There is an acknowledgment that the rates system is dysfunctional and places a disproportional burden upon the retail sector and a new fairer system is required, particularly if town and city centres are to bounce back from the Covid-19 pandemic. As part of the rates reform, the small business rate relief scheme should become permanent and a start-up relief for new businesses introduced.

### **4.2 Campaign to ban zero-hours contracts**

The government should consider supporting unions to negotiate agreements with employers that prevent the use of zero-hours contracts, making sure that workers have greater financial and job security.

### **4.3 Occupational Sick Pay Scheme**

Consideration should be given to regulating the private sector to provide an occupational sick pay scheme that is on a similar same level as the public sector.

### **4.4 Minimum Wage**

The crisis has exposed an army of low-paid but essential workers. There needs to be a major rethink when we move out of the current crisis. It is envisaged that Trade Unions will demand changes which will likely have public support.

### **4.5 Trade Unions**

Trade Unions should have access to and recognition by all workplaces receiving financial support from government in order to protect employees.

### **4.6 Brexit related uncertainty**

The impact of the Covid-19 crisis is against a backdrop of Brexit-related uncertainty for firms following the UK's formal exit from the European Union. There are a number of ongoing concerns for businesses in relation to potential customs processes, trade barriers, additional administration costs and access to skills and migrant labour. Mid Ulster has over 9,000 VAT registered businesses across a range of sectors which are heavily reliant on migrant labour – manufacturing, engineering, agri-food, construction, tourism/hospitality, social care, retail and farming. The success of the economic recovery post Covid-19 will be dependent upon the private sector's ability to access international workers which is a strong foundation of any robust Industrial Strategy.

### **4.7 Public Purse**

The Covid-19 virus has had a hugely damaging impact on public finances within local and central government resulting in a substantial loss of income and increased debt. Budgets assigned for other services and key projects have been reallocated to deliver 'core public services'. The longer the lockdown measures are in place, the harder the impact will be on the public purse. There will be a need for a re-prioritisation of budgets to enable the delivery of Capital investment projects to help rejuvenate and re-energise the flagging economy once the virus recedes.

## 5.0 Conclusion

The Covid-19 pandemic is delivering an unprecedented economic shock, the full extent of which will not be clear for some time. These are extraordinary times. It is expected that the restrictions will be in place for at least several more months, before gradually being lifted, with some social distancing measures expected to remain for a longer period. The recovery is not going to be easy and different parts of the economy will recover at different speeds.

Supporting local businesses is a key priority of Council and the predicted drop in GVA for Mid Ulster is stark and cannot be ignored. While the Council recognises the importance and value of the Government's package of financial supports for businesses – much more will be needed! The Council's engagement across industry has identified unprecedented challenges and issues facing local businesses in Mid Ulster. This evidence has identified the need for a robust economic response aimed at shoring up our economy in Mid Ulster and protecting our business and employment base.

Both central and local government have a role to play in pump-priming major capital infrastructure projects to stimulate local economies as part of the recovery phase.

A number of recommendations are set out in the next section of this paper, which includes immediate, sustained and targeted support to help businesses who, through no fault of their own are facing economic obliteration. In such a fast-moving environment, time is of the essence for a number of key sectors.

## 6.0 Recommendations

Mid Ulster District Council would make the following key high-level recommendations to aid the economic restart and recovery within Mid Ulster:-

Cross-Sectoral
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend the current business rates holiday to a minimum of 12 months in line with elsewhere in the UK (and to be kept under review for key sectors e.g. retail).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend and amend the Job Retention Scheme (furloughing initiative) as needed to allow businesses to claim 80% wages where reduced or part-time hours for staff are needed initially as they reopen under a phased return.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-Employment Income Support Scheme - widen the scheme to provide for new business start-ups during the last 12 months.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce a Rental Support Scheme for commercial rent premises by which government funds a percentage of the rental costs incurred, similar to a scheme France called the 60/20/20, whereby government subsidises rent bills by 60%, the landlord reduces rent by 20% and the commercial tenant pays 20% for 12 months of the crisis.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide short-term financial support to businesses to assist with ongoing fixed costs during closure such as insurance and utility bills e.g. internet, electric, phones.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issue clear guidance and support to all sectors to help businesses plan ahead for implementing social distancing measures to ensure the safety of staff and customers.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide support for businesses as they recover from the pandemic and navigate into “a new normal”, to include assistance with developing new business plans, new ways of working and implementing social distancing measures within premises.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government should undertake research to identify skills needs and ‘what will the jobs of the future be’ in the “new normal” as a result of the virus.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a retraining and reskilling programme for employees made redundant as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce a system / financial intervention to protect existing apprenticeships and new apprenticeships (in September 2020) to ensure there is no loss of opportunities for apprentices in the identified sectors due to this period of enforced inactivity.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure Insurance companies fulfil their obligations making payments due under business interruption cover in a timely manner.</li> </ul>

Retail Sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>£25k Business Grant for Retail, hospitality and leisure sectors – amend the scheme to be based on the number of properties (not per business) in line with elsewhere in the UK.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide support under a ‘Hardship Fund’ to businesses falling through the ‘gaps’ of current support to include:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercial premises with a Total NAV &gt; £51,000</li> <li>Commercial tenants in a shared space who pay rent and rates directly to a landlord and therefore do not receive an annual rates bill from LPS.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide capital funding support to address the issue of obsolete and time sensitive stock to enable payment to suppliers.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide funding support to Councils to plan for and accommodate a “changed town centre”.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide funding assistance to support businesses with repurposing and modifying their premises post-crisis in order to adhere to social distancing guidelines.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide financial support for the development of new websites and e-commerce to include training in digital marketing, social media and business planning.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of a Retail Resilience Steering Group to plan for the future recovery and sustainability of the sector including creative policy measures.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a Town Centres Recovery Investment Plan. Council’s Economic Development staff are preparing a Marketing Recovery Plan aimed at reclaiming our Town Centres after the pandemic. Government support will be required to successfully implement the Plan.</li> </ul>

<b>Manufacturing &amp; Engineering Sector</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The establishment of a Mid Ulster Manufacturing Taskforce comprising key public and private stakeholders aimed at protecting the sector’s economic and employment base.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NI Executive to take the necessary steps to buying PPE locally in Northern Ireland to meet future demand.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide assistance to manufacturing businesses to limit the damage and explore growth opportunities and new markets especially in the health sectors and environment.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support with supply chain resilience to ensure products can be easily sourced locally and provided to key sectors.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relax shipping restrictions to allow haulage flow of materials both in and out of the region.</li> </ul>

<b>Construction Sector</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NI Executive should prioritise an ambitious Capital Investment Programme in major infrastructural projects to drive economic rejuvenation and boost the local Construction industry. This should include supporting City and Growth Deal infrastructural projects.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support with supply chain resilience to ensure materials can continue to be easily sourced locally.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relax shipping restrictions to allow haulage flow of materials both in and out of the region</li> </ul>

<b>Tourism/Hospitality Sector</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide short-term financial support to businesses to assist with ongoing fixed costs during closure such as rent, insurance and utility bills e.g. internet, electric, phone.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £25k Business Grant for Retail, hospitality and leisure sectors – amend the scheme to be based on the number of properties (not per business) in line with elsewhere in the UK.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support under a ‘Hardship Fund’ to businesses falling through the gaps of current support e.g. those businesses not paying rates such as B&amp;Bs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a package of targeted and ongoing support to the private coach and bus industry.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide funding assistance to support businesses with repurposing and modifying their premises post-crisis in order to adhere to social distancing guidelines.</li> </ul>



- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide financial support for the development of new websites and e-commerce to include training in digital marketing, social media and business planning.</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Development of a Destination/Communication strategy to encourage footfall back into tourism/hospitality venues, which needs to allay consumer anxiety, change consumer behaviour and address the anticipated recession. The strategy needs to focus initially at a local and rural level before expanding regionally and then nationally.</li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a training and mentoring programme to encourage innovation within the sector to secure its long-term future.</li></ul>  |

## **Appendices**

## Appendix 1:

Extracts from Ulster University Economic Policy Centre report: 'Economic consequences of COVID-19 in Northern Ireland',

Table 1: Potential economic impact caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is set out below

Country	Equivalent annual % decline in GDP	Peak unemployment	Source
UK	6%	-	Deutsche Bank
	5%	-	Morgan Stanley
	4% - 8%	-	PwC
US	8.25%	20%	Goldman Sachs
Germany	2% - 5%		IfO Institut
RoI	7.1%	18%	ESRI
	7.3%	-	EY
	8.3%	-	Central Bank of Ireland
NI	6.7%	78k job losses	EY

Table 2: Initial estimate of staff nos. temporarily laid-off or furloughed

Sector	
Production & Manufacturing	33k
Construction	15k
Private sector services	187k
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>235k</b>

Source: UUEPC

## Appendix 2:

Extracts from Centre for Progressive Policy Report: 'Which local authorities face the biggest immediate economic hit?'

# Mid Ulster ranked 7<sup>th</sup> most affected area by Covid-19 out of UK's 382 regions)

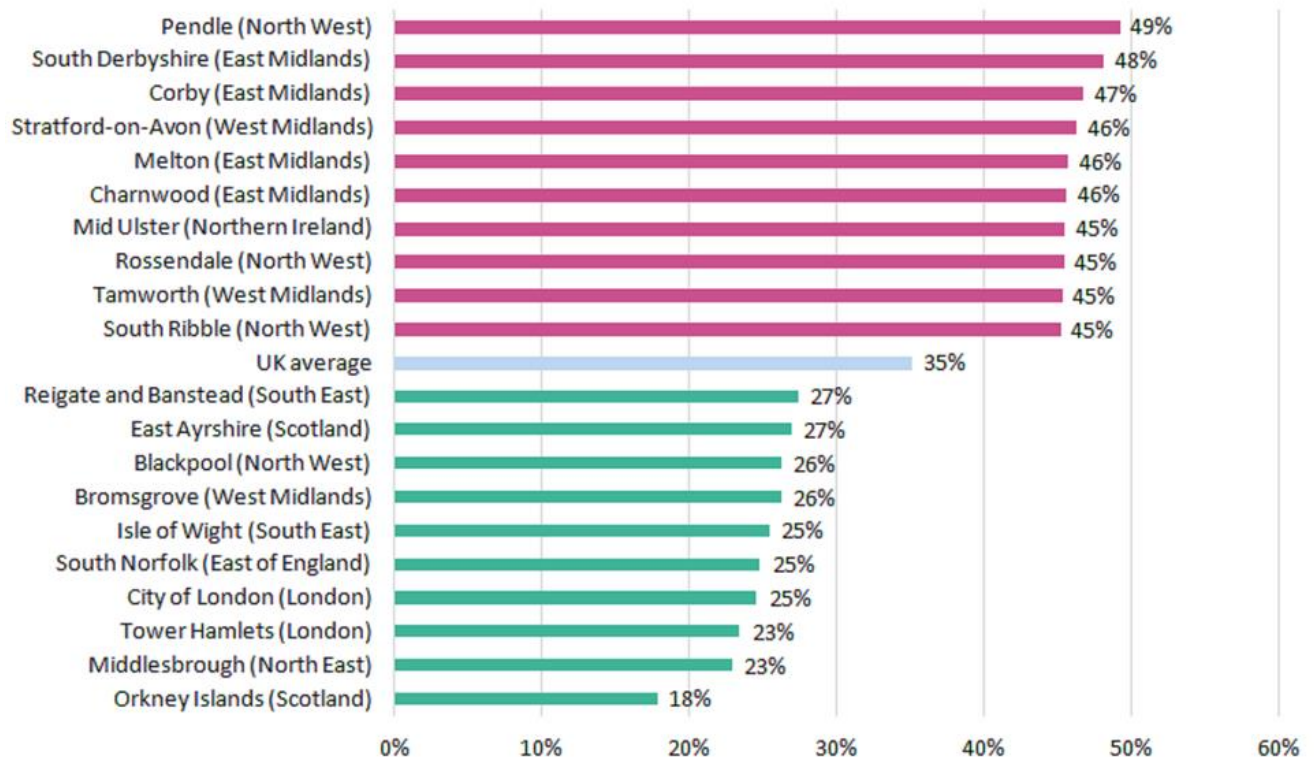


Chart 1: Estimated decline in GVA for the top 10, bottom 10 and median performing local authority districts in the UK

Table 1 from the OBR coronavirus commentary: Output losses by sector in the second quarter of 2020

Sector	Per cent	
	Weight in whole economy value added	Effect on output relative to baseline
Agriculture	0.7	0
Mining, energy and water supply	3.4	-20
Manufacturing	10.2	-55
Construction	6.1	-70
Wholesale, retail and motor trades	10.5	-50
Transport and storage	4.2	-35
Accommodation and food services	2.8	-85
Information and communication	6.6	-45
Financial and insurance services	7.2	-5
Real estate	14.0	-20
Professional, scientific and technical activities	7.6	-40
Administrative and support activities	5.1	-40
Public administration and defence	4.9	-20
Education	5.8	-90
Human health and social activities	7.5	50
Other services	3.5	-60
<b>Whole economy</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>-35</b>

### Appendix 3:

#### Extracts from Scenario planning paper for Mid Ulster District Council Tourism Development Group

Table 1: Potential Scenarios for Mid Ulster Hospitality Sector - Outdoor Activity Providers

	End April 20	May 20	June 20	July 20
Best Case Scenario	Preparations to reopen	Reopen mid May		
Good Case Scenario	Preparations	Preparations to reopen Reopen end May		
Likely Case Scenario	Preparations	Preparations to reopen	Reopen mid / end June	
Worst Case Scenario	Preparations	Preparations	Preparations to reopen	Reopen mid July

Table 2: Potential Scenarios for Mid Ulster Tourism/Hospitality Sector - Businesses that can implement social distancing.

	June 20	July 20	August 20	Sept 20	October 20
Best Case Scenario	Reopen end May / June				
Good Case Scenario	Preparations to reopen	Reopen late July / early Aug	Reopen late July / early Aug		
Likely Case Scenario		Preparations to reopen	Preparations to reopen	Reopen Sept	
Worst Case Scenario			Preparations to reopen	Preparations to reopen	Reopen October

Table 3: Summary of Future Support Required

Stage	Sector Reaction	Govt Support	Proposed Council Support
Initial Lockdown Phase (late Mar – mid Apr)	Panic Mode	Not announced	Direct Sectoral Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reactive support to sectoral needs – WhatsApp group 100+ members, ongoing series of webinars &amp; signposting.</li> </ul>
Lockdown – (Current Position)	Panic / Survival Mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grants</li> <li>Employment Grants</li> <li>Loans</li> <li>TED Programme</li> </ul>	Engagements & Support – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development &amp; launch of destination communications campaign to communicate to local market focus on digital – safe location / open spaces / reconnection. Appeal to community spirit – Me ~ We. Develop family of hashtags, eg #TravelTomorrow #KeepDreaming #ReconnectAndDisconnect #OnYourDoorstep</li> <li>Development of structured support mechanism – Central portal of support &amp; signposting. Bespoke support programme - product &amp; service innovation support &amp; signposting.</li> <li>Investment &amp; development of digital content / virtual tours &amp; programmes</li> <li>Exploration of expanded collaboration and product development.</li> </ul>
Sector Preparing to Re-open	Survival Mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grants</li> <li>Employment Grants</li> <li>Loans</li> <li>TED Programme</li> </ul>	Brand Development Engagements & Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement with tour operators &amp; external buyers for 2021 and beyond, eg, Digital meet the buyer</li> <li>Ongoing destination campaign to communicate to local &amp; regional market</li> <li>Ongoing digital content / virtual tours &amp; programmes campaign</li> <li>Structured support – product development / marketing / planning</li> <li>Development of programme of marketing campaigns that can be launched at appropriate time, eg, focus on outdoors and activities or Eating “Out”, development of small immersive experiences that can be developed.</li> </ul>
Sector Re-opening	Moving Forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TED Programme</li> <li>Remaining support package not announced</li> </ul>	Brand Development & Awareness Campaigns Sectoral Development Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement with the Marketplace</li> <li>Ongoing digital content / virtual tours &amp; programmes.</li> </ul>



<b>Report on</b>	Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2020 - Authorised Officers
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> May 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Mark Kelso, Director of Public Health and Infrastructure

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To inform Members of designation of Mid Ulster District Council as a relevant person under Regulation 7 and as an authorised person under Regulation 9 of the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2020 ("the 2020 Regulations").
1.2	To seek authority of the Council, under Section 7(1) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, to delegate the discharge of its functions, as a designated person under the 2020 Regulations, to the Council's Environmental Health Officers.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	Council is in receipt of correspondence from the Minister of Health to the Chair of Solace NI regarding a decision of the Executive taken at its meeting on 14 <sup>th</sup> May 2020 agreeing that Councils should be designated as an enforcement body for the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2020 (see Appendix 1).
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	On 14 <sup>th</sup> May 2020 the Executive agreed that Councils should be designated as an enforcement body for the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2020.
3.2	The formal designation by the Department of Health was made on 15 <sup>th</sup> May 2020 (see Appendix 2).
3.3	The regulations provide for Council to enforce any requirement or restriction imposed by regulation 3 of the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2020 (requirement to close businesses or premises during the emergency) or regulation 4 (further restrictions and closures during the emergency period).
3.4	The enforcement protocols within the regulations allow for fixed penalty notices to be issued to anyone aged 18 or over, who the authorised officer reasonably believes has committed an offence of contravening a requirement or restriction on

	regulation 3 or 4 of the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2020.
3.5	The relevant regulations will be enforced through the Environmental Health regulatory service working alongside PSNI.
3.6	The Department of Health are currently working with Councils to develop guidance to assist with the enforcement of the regulations.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: None
	Human: None
	Risk Management: None
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: None
	Rural Needs Implications: None
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	That Members note the appointment of Mid Ulster District Council as an enforcement authority for Regulation 3) and 4) the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2020.
5.2	That, pursuant to Section 7(1) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, Members delegate the discharge of the Council's functions, as a designated person under the 2020 Regulations, to the Council's Environmental Health Officers.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Appendix 1 – Correspondence from the Minister of Health
6.2	Appendix 2 – Designations under the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2020



**FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH**



Mr David Jackson  
Chief Executive  
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council  
Cloonavin  
66 Portstewart Road  
Coleraine  
BT52 1EY

Castle Buildings  
Stormont Estate  
BELFAST, BT4 3SQ  
Tel: 028 9052 2556

Email: [private.office@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:private.office@health-ni.gov.uk)

Our ref: SUB-1407-2020

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear *David,*

I am writing to you, in your capacity as Chair of SOLACE NI, to advise you and Council Chief Executive colleagues of a decision of the Executive taken at its meeting on 14 May, to agree that I should designate Councils as an enforcement body for the purposes of the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 ('the Regulations').

My formal Declaration (copy attached), seeks to designate District Councils for the purposes of regulations 3 (requirement to close premises) and regulation 4 (further restrictions and closures).

In addition to the case made in the Department of Justice proposal to designate Councils, my paper to the Executive reflected the points previously made by SOLACE in the correspondence with the Department in respect of the ongoing resource pressures being experienced by Councils and the 5 requests that SOLACE had set out at that time.

I am advised that my officials have been working with yours to develop guidance for Council officers to assist with the enforcement of the Regulations. I trust this information will be helpful and am happy for my officials to continue to work with you on that. I recognise that Councils will need time to prepare for implementation.

Despite the extraordinary circumstances in which we all find ourselves, it is extremely encouraging that District Councils are taking cognisance of their officers' knowledge of local businesses and their expertise and enforcement capabilities, and have been prepared to step forward and respond constructively to this request to support the public health response to the COVID-19 outbreak. I am very appreciative of that support at this difficult time.

Yours sincerely

**Robin Swann MLA**  
**Minister of Health**

**Designations under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2020**

The Department of Health makes the following designations, with immediate effect, in exercise of the powers conferred by regulations 7(12)(b)(ii) and 9(10)(ii) of the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 ("the Restrictions Regulations"):

**1. Enforcement: general**

For the purposes of regulation 7 (enforcement of requirement) of the Restrictions Regulations, a district council is hereby designated by the Department of Health as a relevant person who may take such action as is necessary to enforce any requirement or restriction imposed by regulation 3 (requirement to close premises and businesses during the emergency) or regulation 4 (further restrictions and closures during the emergency period) of the Regulations, including giving a prohibition notice under regulation 7(2) of the Regulations in relation to any contravention of regulation 3 or regulation 4.

**2. Enforcement: fixed penalty notices**

For the purposes of regulation 9 (fixed penalty notices) of the Restrictions Regulations, a district council is hereby designated by the Department of Health as an authorised person who may issue a fixed penalty notice to anyone, aged 18 or over, who the authorised person reasonably believes has committed an offence of contravening a requirement or restriction in regulation 3 or 4 of the Regulations.



**Robin Swann MLA  
Minister of Health**

At 17:30 on 15 May 2020

<b>Report on</b>	Council Facilities and Services - Recovery Plan
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> May 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Mark Kelso, Director of Public Health and Infrastructure

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To advise members of the arrangements which are being made to reconfigure Council buildings so as to take account of 'Social Distancing ' and associated NI Executive guidance in this regard.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	Members will be aware that Council has maintained it's front line key 'essential services' of bin collection , cleansing , cemeteries and maintenance throughout this period of National Emergency with the great commitment and support of our front line staff and their families. A range of other Business , Community and Regulatory services have been delivered by respective officer teams through a combination of home and office working and provision of support through the Community Hub based at MUSA , Cookstown .
2.2	Council implemented its Emergency Planning arrangements at the commencement of the Pandemic and closed all Leisure Centres , Arts Theatres , Sports Facilities on Monday 16 <sup>th</sup> March and all Amenity Sites , Play Parks , Forest Parks and open spaces by Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup> March in accordance with Government guidance . The three Civic Offices and Depot's were closed to the public , but remained open to facilitate and support 'essential services' staff and the telephone switchboard in accordance with Council's Emergency and Business Continuity arrangements , with Social Distancing controls put in place. .
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	The NI Executive has recently issued guidance - 'Coronavirus – Our Approach to Decision Making' on Tuesday 12 <sup>th</sup> May which sets out a Five Step - Road Map on how each of the six individual sectors of Work , Retail , Education , Travel , Family & Community and Sport , Culture & Leisure may chart a path back to what could be described as the ' New Normal ' on how we do and go about our everyday business .
3.2	This overarching NI Executive guidance is supplemented with a range of supplementary guidance provided from Government Departments and supporting Agencies on the necessary measures for ensuring 'Social Distancing' and

	supporting controls to ensure the safety of staff and general public when moving to resumption of business activity .
3.3	It is widely recognised that until such time as the risk posed by Coronavirus is mitigated by the use of suitable vaccines and /or other medical treatments that Public Health Agency advice and guidance and Social Distancing measures will continue to apply.
3.4	In seeking to address these issues and to provide assurance to both staff and members of the public the Corporate Health & Safety team in conjunction with Senior Management and Union representation have developed a ' Recovery of Council Buildings Procedural Guide – see Appendix 1 ' .
3.5	The guide outlines the Principles of Recovery and the steps that are taken to ensure that each facility or building has a Recovery Plan in place before re-opening. The individual facility Recovery Plan developed by the relevant Service Manager will outline the physical 'Social Distancing ' and public health measures that have been put in place to assure the safety of staff and any member of the public who may be in attendance on the premises . The facility Recovery Plan when completed will be reviewed by Corporate Health & Safety and include the necessary Risk Assessment documentation for this purpose before the facility re - opens.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: Within financial limits
	Human: Social Distancing requirements may limit the maximum number of staff that can be accommodated in any office setting , alternative arrangements are being made where required .
	Risk Management: As referenced in the procedural guide .
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/a
	Rural Needs Implications: N/a
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	Members to note report and approve the adoption of the Business Continuity - Recovery of Council Premises Procedural Guide for Council facilities and services.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Appendix 1 – Business Continuity - Recovery of Council Buildings Procedural Guide .



Comhairle Ceantair  
**Lár Uladh**  
**Mid Ulster**  
District Council

**BUSINESS CONTINUITY**  
**RECOVERY OF COUNCIL BUILDINGS**

Procedure Owner	Senior Management Team		
Procedure Author	Corporate Health & Safety		
Version	V1.0		
Review Date	November 2020	By Whom	PH&I
Circulation	All Senior Management Team All Heads of Service		
Document Linkages	Emergency Management Plan Business Continuity Documents		
VERSION CONTROL			
Version Number	Review Date	By Whom	Amendments
Version 1.0	--	Corporate Health & Safety	New Document

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## 1.0 Introduction

The safety, health and wellbeing of Council employees is of paramount importance, especially at these unprecedented times. This document sets out principles and practical steps for Service Managers to consider, to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable the continuity of Council services in a way to ensure employees health.

It is recognised that during the Covid-19 (Coronavirus) emergency, employees of Mid Ulster District Council may be unable to work from home and will return to Council premises to fulfil their duties. In doing so they be cognisant of the need to adhere to the guidance and practical steps outlined within this document.

## 2.0 Recovery of Council Facilities

The following principals are reflective of the Department of Economy Northern Ireland Guidance on COVID -19 *“Working through this together”*, HM Government *“Working Safely during COVID-19 in offices and contact centres, Guidance for employers, employees and the self-employed 11<sup>th</sup> May 2020”*, NI Executive, *“Coronavirus – Executive Approach to Decision Making 12<sup>th</sup> May 2020”* and guidance issued on the websites of Public Health England ([PHE](#)), The Health and Safety Executive NI ([HSENI](#)) and The Health and Safety Executive ([HSE](#)) which are monitored daily for new or amended advices and controls to ensure safety.

There are a number of suggested controls that should be considered and explored. These can be defined in respect to the “safe six” principles of recovery;

## 2.1 Prepare the Building

- Suitable and sufficient hand washing and hand drying facilities will be readily available and will form part of the 'enhanced' scheduled cleaning and disinfection regime for the premises
- Hand Sanitiser stations will be made available at accessible locations in each of the office facilities for employees and at reception areas where members of the public may have access
- Cleaning regimes will be enhanced across the entire facility, with specific focus on all touch points, staff will utilise the appropriate PPE for this purpose utilising appropriate cleansing methodology to reduce potential for onward transfer of surface contamination.
- Disposal paper towel and Antibacterial wipes will be provided in offices to regularly clean, touch points for example telephones, keyboards etc. all staff will be encouraged to use them
- Barriers and installations such as screens will be considered and where reasonably practicable will be introduced at locations where social distancing cannot be achieved for example at reception desks, registrar offices etc. where there is interaction with the general public.
- To prevent potential congestion in corridors and common traffic routes consideration will be given to the introduction of 'one way' systems when entrancing or exiting Council premises, using corridors, lifts, staircases etc.
- Use of lifts will be strictly controlled to one person (and their carer where necessary) with the necessary provision of hand sanitiser for hand contact disinfection after use, staff will be encouraged to use the stairs wherever possible.
- Clear Signage and floor markings will be used wherever practicable to direct movement in to and around Council buildings while maintaining 2 metres distance for all members of staff and the public when they are permitted to access reception areas.
- Consideration will be given to measures for example 'automation' of regularly touched surfaces for example at premises entrances and exits and at taps, (elbow controlled devices will be considered) toilet flush handles etc. to reduce the frequency of the necessity to touch such surfaces



- Specific consideration will be given to these requirements for each Council facility and the production of a site specific Recovery Plan, when they are being considered for reopening

## 2.2 Prepare the Workforce

- All staff will be made aware of the measures being taken to address social distancing requirements and ensure a safe place of work for all employees in accordance with Government Guidance. Managers can find a useful checklist in Appendix 2.
- Council will undertake the necessary Risk Assessment and review of all work practices to ensure that appropriate controls are in place to protect staff health and safety in accordance with the relevant Government Guidance. (The Councils Corporate Risk Assessment for COVID-19 is provided at Appendix 6. This Corporate Risk Assessment can then be extrapolated by a Head of Service (Appendix 5: Building Control) to allow him/her to produce an individual Risk Assessment for their service area and where necessary a safe working procedure for employees in that Section).
- Council will ensure all staff are advised and informed on the Public Health Agency guidance to help reduce risks of exposure to coronavirus (COVID-19) in the workplace in particular the need for regular hand washing.
- Council will seek to ensure any employees who are in a designated vulnerable group and requiring shielding will be supported as required.
- Line Managers will continue to liaise with their respective staff on a regular basis in associated normal business and to address any specific query or concern in regards to these arrangements.
- Officer teams will be encouraged to enhance the use of digital and remote transfers of material where possible rather than paper format, such as using e-forms, emails and e-banking to reduce hard copy transactions.

## 2.3 Control Access

- Access to buildings by Members of the public remain restricted except for specific functions e.g. Registration by appointment only.
- When restrictions are lifted access to Council buildings by members of the public will be scheduled on an appointment basis, to manage and reduce congestion in lobbies and reception areas.
- All Members of public will be advised of PHA Guidance and requested to not attend or access any Council facility if they or any member of their family are unwell.
- Civil Marriage / Civil Partnership ceremonies at present remain suspended in Civic Buildings whilst legislation and social distancing restrictions remain in place
- Access will continue to be permitted however for hand delivered applications e.g. Planning, Grant Support and Building Control applications, no receipts will be provided

## 2.4 Social Distancing Plan

- An assessment of all office areas will be undertaken to ensure a 2m separation distance is in place for all staff occupying workstations. An example of an agreed layout within Councils Planning Section located in the Magherafelt Civic Offices is provided in Appendix 3.
- Consideration will be given to the use of other Council premises for temporary relocation of staff if this is required
- Some Meeting rooms within existing facilities may be repurposed if required
- If it is not possible to physically separate some workstations, alternative arrangements will be considered including, additional screening, arranging people to work side by side or facing away from each other rather than face-to-face.
- Work scheduling and extended work rotas may be considered to reduce the number of staff in the office at any one time and promote team working where practicable.
- Controls may be placed on the number of persons in staff kitchens at any one time ( proposed max 2 persons )
- Number of staff permitted in staff canteens at any one time will be restricted in accordance with Social Distancing requirements. Staff will be encouraged to bring

pack lunches and operate staggered start/finish, lunch and tea break times, to reduce the number of staff who may need to use the canteen facility at any given time.

- Only 1 person may use a lift or a staff WC at any time wherever practicable ( subject to control system in place )
- Consideration will be given to providing regular advices to remind staff and/or customers to follow Social Distancing guidelines, PHA Advice and to wash their hands regularly
- For those activities where face-to-face contact is deemed essential, such interactions will be encouraged to be kept to 15 minutes or less , wherever possible
- Staff facilitating office meetings internally and externally will defer to the use of video conferencing via Microsoft teams or similar where ever practicable.

## 2.5 Reduce Touchpoints

- Regular handwashing by all staff will be encouraged
- Regular and frequent cleaning of touch points throughout buildings is maintained and enhanced for example door handles, handrails
- It is recommended that whilst occupied windows and doors in offices are maintained in an open position so far as is practicable to encourage air movement and a regular provision of fresh air. It is considered that the fire risk is low during occupation of buildings however at the end of the working day the building caretaker should ensure all internal fire doors are closed.

## 2.6 Communicate with Confidence

Just as we have sought to communicate effectively, both internally and externally, as our services contracted through the pandemic, so we will continue to ensure timely, clear and trusted communications as our services resume, facilities re-open and we reconnect with our customers.

We recognise that we are in, and will remain in, a period of uncertainty and our communications must seek to reassure staff, to have a stabilising effect and to recreate a sense of normality as we re-engage.

Our communications internally will support our recovery objectives and our broader marketing and communications activity externally will seek to re-engage our customers as services expand and facilities re-open and to support communities to reclaim their towns, villages and civic spaces.



### **We're getting ready to make our (gradual!) COVID-19 Comeback**



As we begin to see some easing of restrictions as a result of the pandemic, we're turning our attention to how we make our 'COVID-19 Comeback' as an organisation.

Some of our services have, of course, continued without interruption – bin collections, cleansing, cemeteries, property and vehicle maintenance, customer services and administration, finance and the management of planning and building control applications. Still more have been delivered by staff working effectively from home.

Some services will re-start more quickly than others and some facilities will re-open more quickly than others. Our recycling centres are re-opening, registration services are expanding, building control inspections and planning site visits are increasing.

In every case and each time we resume a service or make plans to do so, our priority remains the health and safety of our staff, our customers and our residents.

---

### **We're tailoring our comeback to meet guidance and service needs**

- We will tailor our comeback in line with up-to-date government guidance and our own risk assessments, and to meet the specific needs of each service area.
- When you do come back to your normal place of work, you'll do so safely.

---

### **We're supporting you during the pandemic**

We're continuing to support home working where the needs of your service can be met, while recognising that it won't always be possible to work from home effectively and still meet those needs.

- We're introducing greater flexibility in working hours, from opening buildings in the evenings and on Saturdays, to offering reduced working hours for those who need them.
- We've introduced a new carer's leave policy, and continue to offer parental leave and generous annual leave allowance.

## **We're preparing our buildings**

- We're enhancing the cleaning of our buildings, with a focus on regular disinfecting of 'touch points' (such as door handles, door push plates).
  - We're putting public access controls in place and adding barriers or screens to reception and office areas where you interact with the public.
  - We're adding new hand-sanitising points in our buildings, in addition to existing hand-washing facilities, and also providing anti-bacterial wipes for you to clean items like phones and keyboards regularly.
  - We're putting up new signage and floor markings to remind us all about regular hand washing and the need to continue social distancing.
- 

## **We're planning for social distance**

- With no change to the need to maintain social distance, we're re-configuring office space to help you stay 2 metres apart at your work-stations and we may use other rooms and other buildings to accommodate staff.
  - We'll continue to use a mix of rotas and remote working to help minimise staff numbers in our buildings as we work towards full recovery of our services.
  - We're introducing occupancy restrictions in communal areas, like kitchens, toilets, lifts and meeting rooms.
  - We'll continue to use technology as the default method for internal and external meetings.
- 

## **We're asking for your help**

- Wash your hands regularly and make use of the hand sanitisers provided.
- Respect the social distancing rules and restrictions on access to communal areas.
- Think about bringing food for lunch that doesn't need to be heated, bring your own cutlery and a flask for tea and coffee to reduce the need to use kitchen areas and to ensure our cleaning staff can concentrate on important disinfecting work.
- Co-operate with, and support, your colleagues and managers in their efforts to make our COVID-19 Comeback.

What will be common to all, regardless of when your service resumes, is the warm welcome back you will receive as we look forward to resuming our work, as well as reconnecting with our colleagues and customers.



## Appendix 2- Managers Checklist

### 1. Physical distancing

- ☐ Put up posters around the workplace on keeping at least 2 meters distance between everyone at the workplace.
- ☐ Erect signs at the entrances to lifts and meeting rooms to ensure the maximum safe capacity is not exceeded.
- ☐ Move work stations, desks and tables in canteens further apart to comply with social distancing.
- ☐ If possible, bring in shift arrangements so less staff are in the workplace at once.
- ☐ Instruct workers to have meetings by phone or online instead of in person. If not possible, require they meet in a large space and keep meetings short.

### 2. Handwashing & hygiene

- ☐ Have hand sanitiser stations available throughout the site, especially where water and soap are not available
- ☐ Ensure bathrooms are well stocked with hand wash and paper towels
- ☐ Display posters with instructions on how to thoroughly wash hands
- ☐ Instruct workers on other ways to limit the spread of germs, including by not touching their face, sneezing into elbow, and staying home if feeling sick
- ☐ Have automatic alerts set up on computer systems to remind workers about washing hands and not touching eyes, nose and face
- ☐ Instruct your workers to limit contact with others—no shaking hands or touching objects unless necessary.
- ☐ If possible, accept only cashless transactions.

### 3. Cleaning

- ☐ Ensure any areas frequented by workers or others (e.g. visitors to your premises) are cleaned at least daily with disinfectant.
- ☐ Instruct workers to wear gloves when cleaning and wash their hands thoroughly or with alcohol-based hand sanitiser before and after wearing gloves.
- ☐ Clean frequently touched areas and surfaces several times a day with a disinfectant solution or wipe. This includes lift buttons, handrails, tables, counter tops, door handles, sinks and keyboards.
- ☐ Instruct workers to clean personal property that comes to work, such as, mobile phones with disinfectant, such as disinfectant wipes.

### 4. Working from home

- ☐ Assess who can do their jobs from home. Give those workers the option to do so.
- ☐ Provide guidance to your workers on how to set up a safe home office environment.
- ☐ Require workers to complete a self-assessment checklist to ensure they comply with good ergonomic practices.
- ☐ Set up ways to communicate with workers online (e.g. through Skype or Microsoft teams) and communicate with them daily.
- ☐ Provide information to workers about the supports available to them

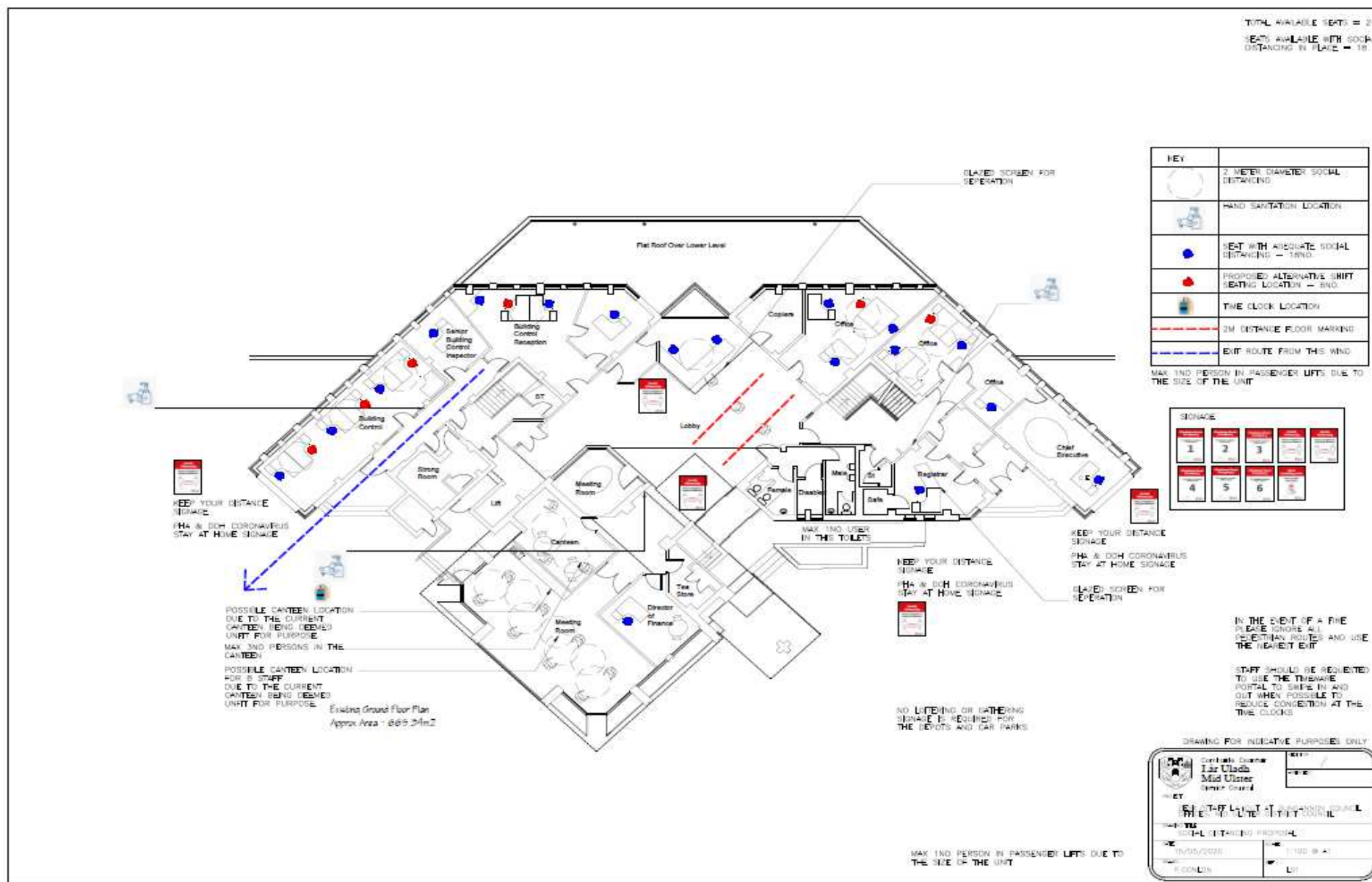
### 5. Monitor symptoms

- ☐ Display signs about the symptoms of COVID-19 in the workplace.
- ☐ Direct workers to stay home if they are sick, and if they are displaying symptoms of COVID-19 ask them to call the NHS (111).
- ☐ Instruct workers to tell you if they are displaying symptoms of COVID-19, have been in close contact with a person who has COVID-19 or have been tested for COVID-19.
- ☐ Remind staff of their leave entitlements if they are sick or required to self-quarantine.
- ☐ Treat personal information about individual workers' health carefully, in line with privacy laws.

### 6. Plan ahead

- ☐ Review business continuity plan on what to do if there is a suspected or confirmed outbreak of COVID-19 in your workplace.
- ☐ Consider what you will do if one of your workers is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, including how you will support that worker and what you need to do to ensure the workplace remains safe for other workers.
- ☐ Consider if you have appropriate cleaning products and personal protective equipment available to disinfect your workplace following an outbreak. If you do not, consider options for hiring a cleaning company to do this work.
- ☐ Put a protocol in place for reopening your workplace after an outbreak or quarantine period

## Appendix 3 - Draft Layout of Dungannon Office showing social distancing requirements





## Appendix 4- Example Layout of Office

Figure 2 illustrates an agreed layout of one of offices within Magherafelt Civic Building (Planning Department office located on the first floor). Following consideration of the preparatory work undertaken, the Service Manager working in conjunction with Councils Corporate Health and Safety Section considered the existing office environment and has worked to provide a layout for employees who may return to that office to accommodate social distancing.

This layout allows 21 people to be in the two offices at any one time, whilst maintaining the correct social distance. Please note that there were minor physical changes made to one of the offices to allow such distancing to be achieved.

The Planning Team are required to undertake a piece of work to establish which staff are required in the office on which days. This requirement will be dictated by the service and its operational needs.

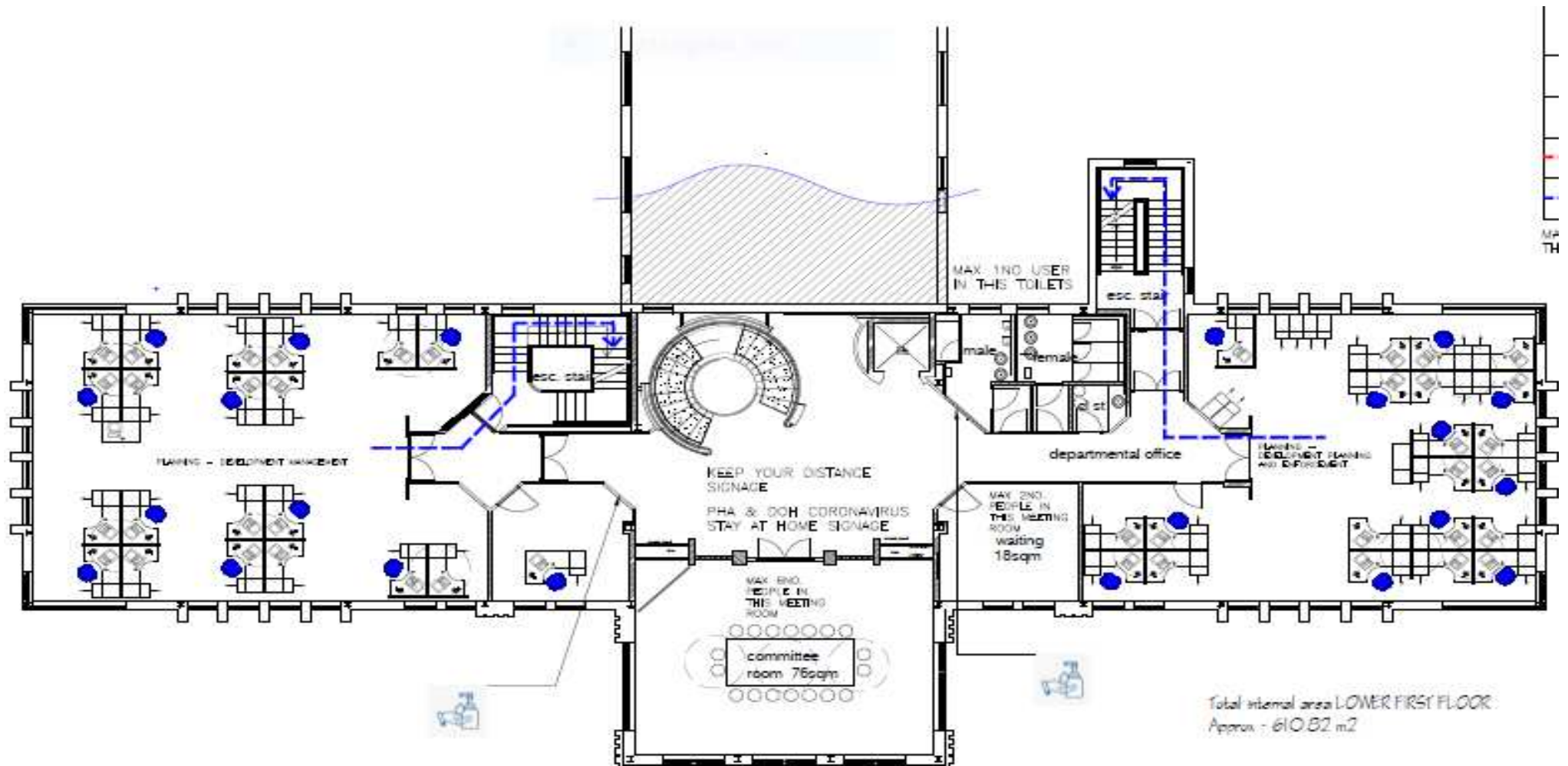


Figure 2 First Floor Planning Office

### Mid Ulster District Council – Safe Work Procedure



#### **Covid-19**

#### **BUILDING CONTROL OFFICER SITE INSPECTIONS**

##### **INTRODUCTION**

**Site visits may be required to Construction sites to undertake Regulatory inspection and/or to provide advice and guidance**

**This guidance document provides additional guidance to BCO's to safely conduct their duties with respect to COVID 19 and should be read in conjunction with existing Building Control Officer risk assessments and safety procedures.**

##### **Pre inspection**

- ✓ Familiarise yourself with the site and the number of persons required for the visit (both council and customer). Ensure 2m social distancing can always be maintained on the site.
- ✓ PPE – All Building Control Officers should carry additional PPE i.e. Disposable Gloves, Hand sanitiser, Hand cleaning wipes, Waste Disposal Bag – Disposable gloves should be worn for the duration of the inspection.
- ✓ Face masks/shields may be used in situations where employees would prefer additional protection should others be present and the 2 mtr social distance recommendation cannot be achieved
- ✓ Site to be fully compliant with The Construction Leadership Council or Construction Industry Federation's Covid-19 Site Operating Procedures.
- ✓ Prearrange date and time of visit with the site manager.

##### **Open air inspections**

- ✓ Inspection should be carried out when no site operatives are within the vicinity.
- ✓ Ensure social distancing where site operatives are within the vicinity of the inspection.
- ✓ Carry out inspection ensuring social distancing and where possible avoiding touching of surfaces unless unavoidable.

##### **Final Inspections of Unoccupied premises**

- ✓ No other personnel to be in the house while inspection is taking place
- ✓ Ensure social distancing (2 Mtr) where site operatives are within the vicinity of the inspection.

- ✓ All doors to be wedged open during inspection.

##### **General**

- ✓ Report all concerns / issues to your manager immediately
- ✓ Ensure you have an adequate stock of PPE & hand sanitiser, replenish when required
- ✓ Wash and properly dry their hands on a regular basis for 20 seconds with soap and water and paper towels/hand dryers
- ✓ Follow existing safety procedures for building control tasks
- ✓ Place used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards
- ✓ Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.

##### **Exiting the premises**

- ✓ Remove gloves with care (see diagram below on how to remove safely)
- ✓ Place gloves in a sealed bag and place in general waste 72 hours later
- ✓ Clean hands with hand sanitizer immediately after removing the gloves
- ✓ On returning to the office wash hands thoroughly with soap & water for at least 20 seconds



## Appendix 6 - Example Risk Assessment and Safe Procedure Building Control

Building Control Services	Staff have been provided with information & guidance in relation to infection control and control measures, including a safe operating procedure	> Ensure all staff receive the guidance documents	3	2	6
	Only open air and unoccupied premises will receive inspections at present				
	Occupied Building inspections have been risk assessed as High Risk by building control and will not be carried out until further notice				
	Staff have been informed on the steps to follow should they present symptoms of COVID-19				
	Staff have been provided with gloves and have been reminded of regular hand washing				

## Appendix 7 – COVID-19 RISK ASSESSMENT

COVID - 19 RISK ASSESSMENT					
Developed by: Corporate H&S					
06/05/2020 08:15:00					
Hazard	Control Measure Description	Additional Controls Required	Probability	Severity	Risk Rating
Spread of disease / infection	Leisure(16.03.20), Cultural sites(16.03.20) & play parks (20.03.20) are currently closed to members of the public Communicated through social media	> Line managers to review and remind staff on social distancing	3	3	9
	Forest parks reopened for local members of the public for access on 21.04.20. Carparks at council owned parks currently remain closed	> Display guidance on hand washing at all sites			
	3 sites (Cookstown, Drumcoo, Magherafelt) to reopen on DATE TBC - Refer to CAS Covid-19 risk assessment Opening times from 8.30am to 4.30pm Additional CAS remain closed - under constant review	> Sites to Identify a room in accordance with PHA guidance to isolate staff if they present themselves as unwell and can receive medical support.			
	Staggered start & finish times have been introduced in environmental services to reduce number of persons onsite at any one time	> Identify steps to take if employee presents themselves as unwell and believes its COVID-19			
	Home working has been introduced for staff that are able to fulfil their duty at home	> Caretakers to be reminded to close all doors at the end of the day			
	Managers reviewing staffing numbers of essential staff in the office at any one time.	> Consider maximum numbers at funerals - 10			
	Managers / supervisors advising staff not to gather in groups e.g. start/finishing times, breaks	> Consideration given to implementation of staggered breaks at council facilities and monitoring			
	High standard of cleaning regime is carried out at all sites e.g. disinfecting all areas which people would come into contact with	> Consideration to be given to social distancing at any smoking areas at depots /yards as per WISH guidance (Version 3 - Published on 23.04.20)			
	Provision of hand washing facilities to promote positive hygiene practices e.g. water, soap & hand towels/dryers. Where water and soap are not available hand sanitizer / wipes are provided				

	<p>Practice good personal hygiene – wash hands for 20 seconds and dry well (wrists and arms if necessary) before eating, drinking, smoking, using the telephone, handling rubbish (not an exhaustive list)</p> <p>Staff and members of the public educated with signage posted throughout sites and on social media e.g. cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze - catch it, bin it, kill it.</p> <p>Used tissues to be disposed of immediately after use</p> <p>Marketing &amp; communications department issued Posters &amp; Media advise not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean</p> <p>Staff advised on social distance and not to gather in large groups as per guidance provided by Public Health Agency (2-metre (6.5 foot) gap recommended by the Public Health Agency)</p> <p>Conference calls arranged instead of face to face meetings</p> <p>PPE provided to front line staff. Refuse collection - normal high vis clothing, gloves, safety footwear Burial staff - Face shields, gloves, hi-vis</p> <p>Refuse collection are using consistent crew rotas, where this is possible</p> <p>Following government guidance as to infection control. <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-covid-19">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-covid-19</a></p>				
Staff member or member of household displays symptoms of Covid-19	<p>If Staff member becomes unwell with a new continuous cough or a high temperature in the workplace they will be sent home and advised to follow the stay at home guidance.</p> <p>Staff members advised to self-isolate if they or someone in their household displays symptoms. Posters &amp; social media advised of symptoms to be aware of. Staff member to contact line manager/supervisor to inform them PHA advice if symptomatic absent from work for at least 7 days. If self-isolating because of someone in the household - self-isolate for 14 days</p>	> Sites to Identify a room in accordance with PHA guidance to isolate staff if they present themselves unwell and can receive medical support.	3	3	9

	<p>Line managers will maintain regular contact with staff members during this time.</p> <p>If a staff member is confirmed positive for Covid-19 and has used a vehicle in the day previously a council vehicle e.g. RCV, van. The vehicle will be parked up for 72 hours and deep cleaned. (as per WISH guidance (Version 3 Published on 23.04.20) Management to liaise with HR as to were colleagues who have shared the cab / vehicle with confirmed case.</p> <p>If advised that a member of staff or public has developed Covid-19 and were recently on our premises (including where a member of staff has visited other work place premises such as domestic premises), the management team of the workplace will contact the Public Health Authority to discuss the case, identify people who have been in contact with them and will take advice on any actions or precautions that should be taken</p>				
Disinfection of Work areas within council	<p>HoS have informed sites / services to increase their cleaning regime, including the disinfection of areas people are in contact with e.g. door handles, railings, lifts etc.</p> <p>Rest areas regularly cleaned throughout shifts</p> <p>Site managers and property services continuously replenishing cleaning products e.g. disinfectant and hand sanitisers</p> <p>PPE made available to all staff carrying out cleaning duties e.g. rubber gloves</p> <p>External contractors will be hired to carry out deep cleaning of sites, if required - this will be arranged by property services</p>	<p>&gt; Additional companies to be sourced for cleaning products and PPE</p> <p>&gt; PPE to be strictly managed for front line services</p> <p>&gt; Recall of PPE from sites which are closed to ensure availability to front line critical services</p> <p>&gt; Rigorous checks to be carried out by line managers to ensure that the necessary procedures are being followed.</p>	3	3	9
Interaction with other staff members & members of the public	<p>Leisure (16.03.20), Cultural sites (16.03.20) &amp; numerous parks are currently closed to members of the public</p> <p>Forest parks reopened for local members of the public for access on 21.04.20. Carparks at council owned parks currently remain closed (Davagh, Pomeroy, Knockmany, Moydamlaght, Derrynoid and Iniscarn)</p>	<p>&gt; Line managers to review and remind staff on social distancing &amp; what to do if staff or members of the household display any symptoms</p>	3	3	9

	Play parks (20.03.20) are currently closed to members of the public			
	3 sites (Cookstown, Drumcoo, Magherafelt) to reopen on Date TBC - Refer to CAS Covid-19 risk assessment Opening times from 8.30am to 4.30pm Additional CAS remain closed - under constant review			
	Cemeteries reopened on 25.04.20 - members of the public advised to follow social distancing guidelines via social media & signage at sites			
	Public access to open spaces such as Dungannon park are under constant review by SMT			
	Staggered start & finish times have been introduced in environmental services to reduce number of persons onsite at one time			
	In line with advice from the General Registrar Office (GRO), the registration of births and marriages has now been suspended Death registrations can be completed online			
	Civic offices closed to public except for essential services (19.03.20) An appointment system for anyone wishing to access essential services in Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt now operates			
	Bowling greens, public toilets and Council caravan parks are closed (19.03.20)			
	Home working has been introduced for staff that are able to fulfil their duty at home			
	Managers reviewing staffing numbers of essential staff in the office at any one time.			
	Conference calls arranged instead of face to face meetings			
	Site managers & supervisors to review activities on the open sites and put adequate measures in place to ensure social distancing is in place			



	Educate staff and members of the public with signage display throughout all sites and on social media e.g. cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze - catch it, bin it, kill it.				
	Staff have been advised to social distance and not to gather in large groups With the 2-metre (6.5 foot) gap recommended by the Public Health Agency				
Lack of staff awareness / understanding & communication of the risks	Staff provided with information and guidance based on information from the Public Health Agency. Regular updates from marketing & communications department is emailed to all staff. Supervisors / managers to inform staff who do not have email access Promotion of hand washing and hygiene practices through the use of posters from the Public Health Agency website Regular meetings taking place to provide updates to all councils e.g. Emergency Planning Group. H&S manager included in these meetings	> Consider generic tool box talk on the COVID-19 symptoms and control methods for avoidance of infection for staff that do not have access to emails and perhaps have reading difficulties	3	3	9
Lack of site washing facilities	Managers to review all sites to ensure running water, soap and method to drying hands is available, where possible Sites with no running water should provide adequate amounts of antibacterial hand sanitiser / wipes Site managers to ensure soap and hand towels are regularly restocked A number of RCV's have built in washing basins - drivers informed to empty at the end of each shift and refill the following day from a tap Vehicles that do not have washing facilities must be provided with antibacterial hand sanitiser / wipes	> Line managers to ensure hand washing stock is replenished and staff to be reminded of hand hygiene > Line managers / supervisors to ensure staff have adequate breaks to wash hands	2	3	6
Movement of staff between sites - increasing staff interaction	Numerous council sites have closed (stated above) Focus on critical services delivery Use of emails, phone calls and teleconference rather than site visits Staff advised on social distance and not to gather in large groups as per guidance provided by Public Health Agency	> Line managers to review and remind staff on social distancing > Display guidance on hand washing at all sites	3	3	9

	Practice good personal hygiene – wash hands for 20 seconds and dry well (wrists and arms if necessary) before eating, drinking, smoking, using the telephone, and handling rubbish (not an exhaustive list).				
	Educate staff and members of the public with signage posted throughout sites and on social media e.g. cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze - catch it, bin it, kill it.				
Reduction of Staffing Levels / Lack of training & knowledge	All departments / services requested to assess their critical staff roles as part of the service business continuity plan	<p>&gt; Training packages to be developed for the training of redeployed staff (Sign off required)</p> <p>&gt; Review of training requirement for burial staff</p> <p>&gt; Measures to be considered to keep everyone updated on actions being taken to reduce risk of exposure to Covid-19 in the workplace</p> <p>&gt; Redeployed staff to work shadow an experienced / competent staff member</p>	3	3	9
	All departments / services to consider training other staff members where applicable. Redeployment maybe required.				
	All departments / services have an updated contact directory of all staff				
	Department / services have reviewed services to make arrangements to ensure that critical services continue e.g. burials, bin collection, CAS, building control officers & community hubs for vulnerable and isolated persons				
	Expression of interested offered to all staff to redeploy to an essential service				
	For all redeployment roles information. Instruction & training is provided e.g. loaders of RCV's -sign off by trainer and loader Refuse: practical Zoeller training, Safety awareness TBT, COVID-19 TBT, waste bin collection & containers TBT Burial: dumper/digger truck training being arranged, COVID-19 TBT CAS: CAS TBT, Covid-19 TBT, CAS risk assessments & CAS Covid-19 RA				
	Staff to make themselves aware of the new site, in particular the emergency exits, fire fighting equipment, first aider & first aid supplies				
Events	All forthcoming events have been postponed as per new executive powers on 28.03.20		2	4	8
	Cultural sites & Leisure centres are closed to the public as of Monday 16th March 2020				

Home working	Regular contact with manager / supervisor is required throughout the working day which is reported to HR by the supervisor/manager	<p>&gt; Workstation assessment form to be completed and returned to manager / supervisor</p> <p>&gt; All council electrical property used to carry out work duties should be electrically safe, PAT tested</p>	3	3	9
	Sick days to be reported as per absence procedures				
	Regular breaks to be taken				
	All incidents / accident that occur as a result from work duties at home should be reported to your manager / supervisor				
	All work targets are set out in consultation with line managers to ensure that they are realistic				
	Occ. health and counselling service available to support staff re home or work issues.				
	Lone working policy in place - Maintain regular contact with supervisor / manager and other staff members				
Lack of PPE / RPE resources	Provision of gloves, wipes and hand sanitizer will be made available to members of staff (job specific)	<p>&gt; Additional companies to be sourced for PPE stock due to availability</p> <p>&gt; Staff to be instructed on how to remove gloves carefully to reduce contamination and how to dispose of them safely.</p> <p>&gt; Staff to be reminded that wearing of gloves is not a substitute for good hand washing.</p> <p>&gt; Where facemasks are provided by council - staff to be reminded on how to fit and use correctly</p>	3	3	9
	In accordance with PHA Guidance, Face masks are not recommended for those displaying no symptoms				
	Face shields supplied to those highlighted in risk assessments e.g. persons directing members of the public at CAS				
	Washing facilities will have water, soap and a method for drying hands e.g. paper towels - washing hands with soap and water is best practice.				
	Stock of PPE to be controlled by store staff and/ or site manager and replenished when levels reduce				
Sharing of Vehicles	Reduced number of persons in each vehicle, ideally one person per vehicle. Where this is not possible, other measures are required to protect staff e.g.. length of time in the vehicle, number of people in the vehicle, screening barrier inside vehicle or additional vehicle following behind	<p>&gt; Ensure daily vehicle check sheet records that disinfection of internal cab of vehicle took place</p>	3	3	9
	Daily disinfecting of the vehicles by the driver				
	Manager / supervisor to keep a daily record of who was in each vehicle				

	Regular breaks to ensure staff have opportunity to wash their hands				
Staff meetings	Conference calls arranged instead of face to face meetings		3	3	9
	Limit numbers to attend meetings - essential people only				
	Only essential meetings to be carried out.				
	Practice adequate social distancing during the meeting (2-metre (6.5 foot) gap recommended by the Public Health Agency)				
	Advised not to shake hands				
Vulnerable persons	Communication of advice given by the public health agency to all staff		3	3	9
	Marketing & communications department issued Posters & Media advise not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean				
	Managers to communicate with staff members as to whether they have any underlying health issues and contact HR				
	Leave is an option as communicated by HR through marketing and communications department. Managers to manage arrangements				
	All known vulnerable persons homeworking				
Burial services	Death registrations can be completed online	<p>&gt; Training packages to be developed for the training of redeployed staff (Sign off required)</p> <p>&gt; Review of training requirement for burial staff</p> <p>&gt; Regular review of any advices issued by public health agency</p>	3	3	9
	Purchase of double plot has been suspended. Purchase of single plots only				
	Current advises to funeral directors limits attendance to 10 people - excluding staff, FD & ministers				
	Cemeteries reopened to members of the public from 25.04.20 Communicated through social media.				
	Burial services are limited to 15 minutes				
	Staff & funeral directors to wear PPE during the burial - facemask, gloves				
	Installation of headstones & memorials have been suspended				
	Environmental Health issued guidance from DoJ to all local funeral directors				
	Project Dignity group (DoJ) has been established to provide guidance on committals.				

	Staff to place signage to direct those attending the funeral to the plot				
	Social distancing to be observed & 5 Metre cordon will be placed around the grave				
Environmental Services (Refuse)	Staggered start & finish times have been introduced in environmental services to reduce number of persons onsite at any one time	<p>&gt; Cleaning of vehicle cabs periodically throughout the day, as per WISH guidance</p> <p>&gt; Redeployed staff to work shadow an experienced / competent staff member</p> <p>&gt; Staff to be instructed on how to remove gloves carefully to reduce contamination and how to dispose of them safely.</p> <p>&gt; Ensure daily vehicle check sheet records that disinfection of internal cab of vehicle took place</p>	3	3	9
	Managers / supervisors advising staff not to gather in groups e.g. start/finishing times, breaks				
	PPE provided to front line staff. Refuse collection - normal high vis clothing, gloves, safety footwear				
	Refuse collection are using consistent crew rotas, where this is possible				
	If a staff member is confirmed positive for Covid-19 and has used a vehicle in the day previously a council vehicle e.g. RCV, van. The vehicle will be parked up for 72 hours and deep cleaned. (as per WISH guidance (Version 3 Published on 23.04.20) Management to liaise with HR as to were colleagues who have shared the cab / vehicle with confirmed case.				
	Vehicle cabs being cleaned down at the end of each shift, particularly frequently touched areas such as Door-handles, hand holds/rails, dashboards, steering wheels, hand-brake levers, gearbox controls and indicator stalks etc.				
	A number of RCV's have built in washing basins - drivers informed to empty at the end of each shift and refill the following day from a tap				
	Vehicles that do not have washing facilities must be provided with antibacterial hand sanitiser / wipes				
	For all redeployment roles information. Instruction & training is provided e.g. loaders of RCV's -sign off by trainer and loader Refuse: practical Zoeller training, Safety awareness TBT, COVID-19 TBT, waste bin collection & containers TBT				
	Provision of gloves, wipes and hand sanitizer will be made available to members of staff (job specific)				

	<p>In accordance with PHA Guidance, Face masks are not recommended for those displaying no symptoms</p> <p>Reduced number of persons in each vehicle, ideally one person per vehicle. Where this is not possible, other measures are required to protect staff e.g.. length of time in the vehicle, number of people in the vehicle, screening barrier inside vehicle or additional vehicle following behind</p> <p>Daily disinfecting of the vehicles</p>				
Community hub for vulnerable and isolated persons	<p>Identification of those who are vulnerable and in need by the trust</p> <p>Council to act as the borough focal point from which to co-ordinate, record and report the response (virtual call centre)</p> <p>Frontline service to be delivered by community voluntary groups</p> <p>Staff have been provided with information &amp; guidance in relation to infection control and control measures</p> <p>Staff have been informed on the steps to follow should they present symptoms of COVID-19</p> <p>Staff have been provided with gloves for handling food boxes and have been reminded of regular hand washing</p> <p>Staff have been instructed to frequently clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces</p> <p>A one way system has been implemented within the carpark at MUSA (to reduce pedestrian / vehicle collision)</p> <p>Staff using vehicles to transport the food boxes from the storage area to community groups</p>	<p>&gt; Key contact list for co-ordinators to be developed</p> <p>&gt; Investigate grant funding opportunities</p> <p>&gt; Identify facilities throughout the borough which can be used as community hubs for the purpose of distribution of resources if required (1 per DEA)</p>	3	3	9
Building Control Services	<p>Staff have been provided with information &amp; guidance in relation to infection control and control measures, including a safe operating procedure</p> <p>Only open air and unoccupied premises will receive inspections at present</p> <p>Occupied Building inspections have been risk assessed as High Risk by building control and will not be carried out until further notice</p> <p>Staff have been informed on the steps to follow should they present symptoms of COVID-19</p>	<p>&gt; Ensure all staff receive the guidance documents</p>	3	2	6

	Staff have been provided with gloves and have been reminded of regular hand washing				
Opening of Civic Amenity Sites	3 sites (Cookstown, Drumcoo, Magherafelt) to reopen on DATE TBC Opening times from 8.30am to 4.30pm	<p>&gt; Training packages to be developed for the training of redeployed staff (Sign off required)</p> <p>&gt; Rigorous checks &amp; recording to be carried out by line managers/supervisor to ensure that the necessary cleaning procedures are being followed and maintained.</p> <p>&gt; Display guidance on hand washing at all sites</p> <p>&gt; Identify steps to take if employee presents themselves as unwell and believes its COVID-19</p> <p>&gt; Consideration to be given to social distancing at any smoking areas as per WISH guidance (Version 3 - Published on 23.04.20)</p>	3	3	9
	Signage will be erected throughout all the CAS instructing members of the public of the social distancing rules when onsite				
	Signage erected to inform members of the public that only one person is permitted to exit vehicles, unless more than one is required to remove larger waste items e.g. fridge freezer				
	Queuing system will be implemented at each site allowing limited numbers of vehicles onsite at any one time Cookstown - 5 vehicles Magherafelt - 5 vehicles Drumcoo - 5 vehicles				
	One vehicle in and out approach will be in place at each site				
	Additional PPE will be provided to all staff that are directing traffic e.g. face shields				
	Staff roles onsite are to direct members of the public. Staff will be informed that they are not to assist in the handling of members of the public waste whilst they are disposing of it onsite to comply with social distancing guidance				
	1 supervisor to be present at the 3 sites on Date TBC to ensure all controls and safe working practices are being carried out so far as reasonably practicable				
	Staff will have radio communication where available				
	Wall mounted hand sanitiser erected throughout the sites to ensure & encourage good personal hygiene practices and staff informed where they are situated. Staff advised to regularly wash hands / use hand sanitisers.				
	Posters displayed at all site entrances with general guidance for safe use and operation to be displayed				
	Barriers and/or cones will be erected throughout the sites to ensure social distancing				

	Sites to close between 1pm & 3pm daily to allow access and safe vehicle movement on the removal of skips. Should skips fill before 1pm, the area will be cordoned off to members of the public				
	Site managers & supervisors to constantly review activities on the open sites and put adequate measures in place to ensure social distancing is in place				
	Wall mounted hand sanitiser erected throughout the sites to ensure & encourage good personal hygiene practices and staff informed where they are situated. Staff advised to regularly wash hands / use hand sanitisers.				
Mental Health of staff members	Regular contact with manager / supervisor is required throughout the working day		3	2	6
	Occ. health and counselling service available to support staff				
	Westfield services available for staff members				



<b>Report on</b>	Update on Mid Ulster District Council Community Support Hub.
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup> May 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Anne - Marie Campbell, Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Anne - Marie Campbell, Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To update members on the operation of Mid Ulster District Councils Community Support Hub to provide support to vulnerable people in Mid Ulster during the COVID-19 pandemic.
	<b>Background</b>
2.1	The Department for Communities (DfC) established a helpline through Advice NI - <b>0808 802 0020</b> to provide advice and support to those in need during the COVID-19 pandemic. Letters were also sent out by GPs to notify vulnerable individuals to shield and stay in their homes for 12 weeks.
2.2	Council established a Community Support Support which takes referrals from both Health Trusts and Advice NI. In addition, the Department for Communities (DfC) launched a weekly service to deliver food boxes to the most vulnerable in society during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council is also supporting the distribution of the food boxes.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<b>Shielding Letters</b>
3.2	<p>In Northern Ireland over 80,000 shielding letters have been sent out. In Mid Ulster 6,012 shield letters were issued. The list of criteria set out below is based on guidance provided by Public Health England. All GPs were written to by the Health and Social Care Board at the end of March to commence issuing letters to patients who are in these categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)</li> <li>• under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (ie anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis</li> <li>○ chronic heart disease, such as heart failure</li> <li>○ chronic kidney disease</li> <li>○ chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis</li> <li>○ chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), a learning disability or cerebral palsy</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- diabetes
- problems with your spleen – for example, sickle cell disease or if you have had your spleen removed
- a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV and AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy
- being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
- Solid organ transplant recipients
- People with specific cancers
  - People with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
  - People with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
  - People having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
  - People having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors.
  - People who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs.
- People with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell disease)
- People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection
- those who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired

### 3.3 Advice NI Helpline

Calls to Advice NI are triaged to assess need and individuals will be asked a number of questions regarding their ability to obtain food. The food box programme is targeted at anyone who cannot get out of their home to access food due to Covid 19 restrictions (e.g. have a shielding letter) and does not have support through family or friends or through access to food deliveries from local suppliers, and those facing food insecurity.

### 3.4 Community Support Hub

As of the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2020, the total number of referrals dealt with by the Council Community Support Hub is as follows:

Source	Number of referrals (from 6 <sup>th</sup> April)
Northern Trust	308
Southern Trust	492
Advice NI	464
Other	261
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,525</b>

3.4 A key element of the service provided is the distribution of food boxes. We receive food boxes organised through the Department for Communities and distribute them from the Mid Ulster Sports Arena in Cookstown.

3.5

	The boxes are distributed to a range of community and voluntary organisations who deliver them to the vulnerable individuals in need across the Mid Ulster. Over 40 community and voluntary groups are involved in the weekly distribution of 1,075 boxes. A total of 5,272 boxes have been delivered to date.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial:  Staff have been redeployed from within Council. Costs associated with the delivery of boxes.
	Human:  None
	Risk Management:  None
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications:  None
	Rural Needs Implications:  None
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	Members are requested to note the content of this report.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>



<b>Report on</b>	Covid -19 Community Support
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	28 May 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Adrian McCreesh, Director of Business and Communities Annemarie Campbell, Director of Public Health

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	Council Food Parcel Support for Trust Shielded Patients – update on progress.
1.2	Food bank support for those in financial crisis – update on progress.
1.3	Council Existing Grants – update on progress.
1.4	Older People Befriending support – update on progress.
1.5	Council Emergency Support Fund– update on progress.
1.6	Council support to the community and care sector – update on progress.
2.0	Background
2.1	Council Food Parcel Support – DFC has provided food parcels for the Trust shielded clients, who are in need, to be distributed by Council.
2.2	Food bank support for those in financial crisis – Foodbanks are responding to people in financial crisis during this crisis.
2.3	Council Existing Grants – Support continues to be required for groups who have ongoing overhead and administration costs. These grants are strategic arts, strategic community development, strategic sports and venues.
2.4	Older People Befriending support – Additional older and vulnerable people are requiring befriending engagement at this time, due to social isolation.
2.5	Council Emergency Community Support Fund – Support to local community groups mobilizing to support communities through the covid -19 crisis with some funding for transport, essential PPE items, promotion etc.
2.6	Council support to the community and care sector – a number of requests have come to Council seeking some support for PPE items. Council is using its supplier sources to support PPE.

3.0	Main Report
3.1	Council Food Parcel Support – 1075 food parcels are issued out weekly. This will continue to the end of June. Support is also ongoing to people regarding access to food if they are isolating or shielding by the support hub.
3.2	Food bank support for those in financial crisis – Financial and ongoing support has been provided to the existing food banks. £100,000 has been allocated to support to the end of June 2020. This is through direct food parcel crisis delivery or a food voucher system.
3.3	Council Existing Grants – The strategic grants and venues have all been issued out to groups. Groups are being contacted to seek an update on the proposed expenditure. All other grants will be brought to the June Committee for agreement.
3.4	Older People Befriending support – Officers are supporting Ageing Well with calls and taking on new calls of people that require befriending support during this period. Over 80 people are being supported currently.
3.5	<p>Council Emergency Community Support Fund –Delivery of an Emergency Support fund for local groups actively supporting communities and volunteering.</p> <p>A total of 32 groups have applied for and received funding support. Please see groups supported to date at Appendix 1. Non emergency items such as toys etc. where not funded at eligible and food deferred based on an identified emergency need and criteria re Covid-19.</p>
3.6	<p>Council support to the community and care sector – over 50% of the allocation of PPE purchased by Council (£25,000) has been allocated to care homes and groups supporting with the delivery of the food parcels. All 33 care homes were engaged re need and also linked to schools that re providing PPE shielding masks. Engagement is also continuing with groups volunteering.</p> <p>Support is also being provided up to £3000 for the making of scrubs by volunteers across Mid Ulster. This is used to support in the sourcing of material to allow the scrubs to be made. This will provide for minimum of 300 scrubs to those in need. Scrubs are distributed based on request with up to 2 per individual group. The supply of material is provided as demand requires for Mid Ulster.</p>
4.0	<b>Other Considerations</b>
4.1	<p><b><u>Financial &amp; Human Resources Implications</u></b></p> <p>Spend to date 2020 – 2021 is £154,000  Income sources total £66,300 DFC, surplus events – Economic Development £45,000, Tourism £20,000, &amp; Community Development £35,000</p> <p><b><u>Professional Support</u></b>  None</p>

<b>4.3</b>	<b><u>Risk Management Implications</u></b> None
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	Council Food Parcel for Trust Shielded Patients – to note an update on progress.
5.2	Food bank support for those in financial crisis – to note update on progress.
5.3	Council Existing Grants – to note update on progress.
5.4	Older People Befriending support – to note an update on progress.
5.5	Council Emergency Community Support Fund – to note update on progress.
5.6	Council PPE Support – to note update on progress.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Appendix 1 Emergency Support Grant Allocations.

	<b>Covid-19 Emergency Fund</b>		
<b>No.</b>	<b>Organisation Name</b>	<b>Request</b>	<b>Award</b>
1	O4O Cookstown Ltd	£462	£250
2	Bann Valley Community Group	£520	£500
3	Bawn Dev Assoc	£2,000	£1,500
4	Bellaghy Village Reg (BVR)	£700	£700
5	Clonoe Rural Development Agency Ltd	£500	£500
6	Coalisland Na Fianna GFC	£550	£550
7	Cookstown RBL	2500	£1000
8	Desertmartin GAC	£280	£250
9	Galbally Pearses GFC	2650	£1,000
10	Killowen Drive Residents Association	£1,300	£1,300
11	Kildress GAC	£600	£600
12	Me, You and Them	£1,135	£750
13	Mid Ulster Com Support Network	£3,000	£500
14	Moneymore GAC	£250	£250
15	Moneymore Heritage Trust	£800	£800
16	Moortown St Malachys GAC	£700	£700
17	Moygashel Reg Group	£600	£600
18	SVP Group for Covid-19 PPE	5,000	£3,000
19	Tamnamore CC	£1,990	£500
20	Tobermore District No 11	£380	£380
21	TRAAD	£2,900	£1,500
22	Upperlands Com Dev Ltd	£970	£970
23	Watty Grahams Glen	£807	£800
24	Ardboe GAC & Lough Shore Groups	£1,500	£1,500
25	Termoneey Comm Ass	£1,400	£750
26	Clogher GAA	£150	£150
27	Donaghmore Parent Support Group	£2,236	£1,000
28	Killeeshill Community Centre	£800	£500
29	Knockloughrim CDA	£1,350	£500
30	Fivemiletown Cultural & Sports Group	£2,200	£750
31	Coalisland Covid 19 Support Group	£1,500	£1,500
32	Aghaloo O`Neills GAA	£350	£350
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£39,340</b>	<b>£25,900</b>



<b>Report on</b>	Consultations notified to Mid Ulster District Council
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	28 May 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Philip Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Corporate Policy and Equality Officer

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	x

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To update members on the consultations notified to Mid Ulster DC for comment.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	Council is a consultee for many government departments, statutory agencies and other bodies, and as such receives consultation documentation inviting commentary on a wide range of issues that may be pertinent to council services and/or the District.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	Documentation relating to the aforementioned consultations can be accessed via the links provided in the table provided in Appendix A.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: N/A
	Human: N/A
	Risk Management: N/A
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: None
	Rural Needs Implications: None
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	Members review and note consultations notified to Mid Ulster District Council.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	Appendix A: Details of Current Consultations

## Appendix A: Details of Current Consultations

Organisation	Consultation Title	Issue	Closing Date	Response Currently Being Developed
Department of Justice	Consultation on Proposals on the use of Live Links for Police Detention/Interviews'	Purpose is to seek the views of key stakeholders and other interested parties regarding proposals to amend the Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 (PACE). The proposed amendments will enable video-conferencing technology referred to as 'live links' to be used by police for a number of custody functions. These functions include the extension of detention by both police and the courts, and police interviews with a suspect. The Department is also proposing to use this legislative opportunity to make some minor amendments within PACE to replace any references to 'video-conferencing' with 'live link'.	1 June 2020	No
	Link to Consultation	<a href="https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/doj-policing-community-safety-partnerships/3c1c45ac/">https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/doj-policing-community-safety-partnerships/3c1c45ac/</a>		
	Delegated Authority required to be granted to a Committee if Council agrees that a response should be made (where an extension is not given)?	Yes		
Organisation	Consultation Title	Issue	Closing Date	Response Currently Being Developed
Northern Ireland Assembly	Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill	The Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill was introduced into the Assembly on 31 March 2020. The Bill passed	5 June 2020	No

## Appendix A: Details of Current Consultations

		<p>Second Stage on 28 April and the Committee Stage commenced on 29 April 2020.</p> <p>Committee for Justice would welcome Council's views/comments on the content of the Bill.</p> <p>Submissions to address specific clauses of the Bill. If appropriate, should include any amendments you wish to propose to the text of the Bill.</p>		
	<b>Link to Consultation</b>	<a href="http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/committees/2017-2022/justice/primary-legislation/domestic-abuse-and-family-proceedings-bill/call-for-evidence">http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/committees/2017-2022/justice/primary-legislation/domestic-abuse-and-family-proceedings-bill/call-for-evidence</a>		
	<b>Delegated Authority</b> required to be granted to a Committee if Council agrees that a response should be made (where an extension is not given)?		Yes	



<b>Report on</b>	Correspondence to Council – May 2020
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thurs 28 <sup>th</sup> May 2020
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	P Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
<b>Contact Officer</b>	P Moffett, Head of Democratic Services

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	x

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	Provide an update on correspondence received for attention of Council.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	This paper refers to correspondence to be brought to the attention of Council. Items are referred to in 3.0 below.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b>Correspondence from the Minister of Finance, Northern Ireland Executive</b></p> <p>It was resolved by Council at its April meeting that it correspond with the Minister of Finance to request that consideration be given to Rate Relief being extended to businesses for a 12 month period, commensurate with that introduced for the retail, tourism and hospitality sectors in England. Appendix A refers to response received from the Minister.</p>
3.2	<p><b>Correspondence from NILGA</b></p> <p>The NILGA President, Cllr Frances Burton has written to all Councils with an update on its activity and focus in supporting local government throughout Coronavirus outbreak. Appendix B refers to the update.</p>
3.3	<p><b>Correspondence from Michael Creed TD, Minister for Agriculture, Food &amp; the Marine, Government of Ireland</b></p> <p>The council at its February meeting carried the motion as detailed. Appendix C refers to response received from the Government of Ireland.</p> <p><i>That this Council recognises the vital contribution that farming makes to our rural economy and that our local agriculture industry is in a state of crisis due to unprecedented low farmgate prices. Mid Ulster Council therefore calls on the devolved Government and the British and Irish Governments to invest in Local Farmers by making additional funding available to help them deal with the current financial crisis and the uncertainties created by Brexit. We appreciate the high nutritional value and traceability of our local farm produce and support the calls for</i></p>

	<i>an intense and co-ordinated period of product protection and promotion by processors, retailers and the food service industry. That this Council will take a lead by pro-actively promoting and sourcing local farm produce where possible</i>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: not applicable
	Human: not applicable
	Risk Management: not applicable
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: not applicable
	Rural Needs Implications: not applicable
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	That Council notes and considers, as necessary, the correspondence received.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	Appendix A: C Murphy, MLA, Minister of Finance, Northern Ireland Executive Appendix B: Councillor Burton, President, NILGA Appendix C: M Creed TD, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Govt. of Ireland

**From the Minister of Finance**

Councillor Martin Kearney  
[Philip.Moffett@midulstercouncil.org](mailto:Philip.Moffett@midulstercouncil.org)

Private Office  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Clare House  
303 Airport Road West  
BELFAST  
BT3 9ED  
Tel: 028 9081 6216  
Email: [private.office@finance-ni.gov.uk](mailto:private.office@finance-ni.gov.uk)

Your reference: C080-20  
Our reference: CORR-1613-2020

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Martin

**EXTENSION OF THE BUSINESS RATE RELIEF SCHEME**

Thank you for your letter of 24 April regarding your request for my Department to bring forward a rate relief scheme commensurate with that being introduced for businesses in the retail, tourism and hospitality sectors in England, as a means of relieving financial pressures being faced by many local businesses.

I acknowledge the current financial stresses being faced by our local businesses as a result of the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic. In relation to my current policy, the 3 months business rates holiday which I introduced represents an immediate response to the issues being faced, one which enabled the Executive to get support out on the ground as quickly as possible and provide immediate reassurance to all businesses at this uncertain time.

This scheme provides support to all business ratepayers as opposed to the English scheme that assists only retail, hospitality, and leisure sectors. If the English scheme had been introduced here, 60% of businesses would have missed out on much needed support. Given your Council's position as home to a significant range of manufacturing, engineering, construction and agri-food industries, a large proportion of your businesses would have received no support should this scheme have been adopted. Under my scheme, however, businesses in the commercial, manufacturing and service sectors, which have all been impacted by the pandemic, have also benefited. Overall this support will save businesses over £100 million. Although the relief covers both the district and regional element of the rate bill, council revenues will not be reduced as the cost is being funded entirely by the Executive.

My Executive colleagues and I have, however, acknowledged that further support by way of rate relief will be necessary to help and promote sustainable businesses in all sectors which have been hardest hit by Covid-19 and also to encourage new businesses to establish as we recover from the pandemic. Recognising the urgency of the need for additional support my Department is currently working with the Ulster University Economic Policy Centre with a view to developing a targeted rates relief scheme for the months ahead so that limited public resources can be targeted at the businesses and sectors hardest hit by the pandemic.

Ministerial colleagues and I met with Mr Hetherington, Director of the Ulster University Economic Policy Centre, on 5 May to discuss his draft findings. I have asked for his final report to be provided as soon as possible as this work will inform proposals which I will bring to the Executive in the coming weeks to allow the most appropriate response to our local circumstances to be implemented. If we were to extend the existing rates holiday for a full year this would cost an additional £300m, resources that are not available to the Executive.

I would also like to highlight that in addition to the 3 months holiday, I also introduced a range of other measures to assist businesses at this time, including the deferral of the issuing of all rate bills from April until June to help businesses with short-term cash flow; a reduction in the Regional Rate for all businesses equating to a significant 18% reduction on the 2019/20 rate; and the extension of the Small Business Rate Relief scheme for the current financial year, thereby providing valuable assistance to almost 27,000 ratepayers. These measures are in addition to £237 million in reliefs and exemptions from rates that the Executive already provides each year.

Going forward, both my Executive colleagues and I are continually working to identify what interventions can be brought forward on an Executive wide basis, to protect our economy and restore confidence to businesses. I expect further measures to be considered in the context of the Covid-19 recovery plan, which the Executive is currently considering. If there are measures that your Council consider should be explored, then I would be happy to discuss these with you.

Is mise le meas

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Conor Murphy." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**CONOR MURPHY MLA**  
**MINISTER OF FINANCE**



# SAVING OUR COUNCILS. SUSTAINING OUR COMMUNITY.

## NILGA PRESIDENT CRISIS ACTION UPDATE FOR FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS.

As President of the 11 councils' Local Government Association, I am sending this short, urgent message to elected members and senior officers across our region to inform and be informed by you as we deal with Covid-19 and plan for social and economic recovery. Since mid-March, NILGA has - like all of you - completely refocused our work.

**1. FINANCIAL SURVIVAL:** NILGA and partners have collated and sent financial impact evidence and is lobbying national government and Stormont to get cash into councils. With collective local authority losses per calendar month of just under £11 million, we have targeted key Departments including Communities, Finance and DAERA, plus the NIO, Secretary of State and Treasury to seek a substantial proportion of these first phase losses (using a 16 week model running to end of June 2020). The work of SOLACE, ALGFO and NILGA, together with wider lobbying by e.g. APSE and the Local Government Associations in England, Scotland and Wales continues relentlessly, in an integrated, dynamic way, including a collective push for Treasury / NIO to offer a Crisis Fund to each council and to underwrite the forecast hundreds of millions of pounds of lost rates income this financial year.

**2. FINANCIAL FLEXIBILITY:** I have personally written and engaged further with the Economy Minister, Diane Dodds MLA, to seek radical change in EU economic development funding criteria set by this department and its agencies, so that unspent monies can be diverted to council staff and projects dealing with recovery, rather than projects suspended or cancelled due to the pandemic. This criteria change, based on council information, would release several million pounds into local economies and local government's hard-pressed business support staffing. Tweaking criteria is NOT ENOUGH. Additionally, local councils now have places on both the NI wide Economic Forum and the recently formed NI Tourism Support Group.

**3. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY:** NILGA's Chief Executive has a weekly engagement with the UK Local Government Forum's financial survival group, which directly challenges Treasury at national level to support BOTH the NI Assembly and our 11 councils. We must collectively increase the contingency funding in NI, which currently sits at under £100 million, with financial asks, totalling over £1 billion. We as a region and a community deserve and must seek more.

**4. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE & POLITICAL SCRUTINY:** NILGA's policy guidance, partner co-ordination and cross council, cross departmental participation, communicating very closely with SOLACE and senior officer groups, ensured legislation effective from 1<sup>st</sup> May agreed by the NI Executive to enable councils to take decisions via virtual meetings, offering you much needed flexibility around decision taking, the scheduling of AGMs, whilst we also are seeking investment for new technology required in councils to ensure compliance.

**5. STRONG PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES:** The co-ordination by NILGA of the NI Strategic Waste Partnership, working closely with the all-council and departmental officer teams on this plus the Civil Contingencies Group, has achieved the very best, collegiate, public health response possible, with work and communications on Recycling, Kerbside Collections and Fly Tipping relayed daily to individual councils in order for planning and delivery to be refined at local level, with staff safety, the public's health, service delivery & risk / resource management remaining the paramount issues.

**6. VULNERABLE PEOPLE SUPPORTED:** Colleagues in the Department of Communities have welcomed suggested improvements by NILGA Executive members to the hugely valuable Food Parcel distribution process and will continue to work with councils at local level, to maintain and enhance this extraordinary service for those in greatest need.

**7. PLANNING ECONOMIC RECOVERY:** NILGA's Regional Economy Group, covering all councils and with a member and officer team, have completely refocused policy and practical work to deliver on local economic recovery and rebuilding, with support now offered by bodies including Enterprise NI and the Construction Employers' Federation. It is now scheduling virtual meetings and will provide important information to the Tourism and Business Groups established through Stormont per 2. above.

**8. WORKFORCE PLANNING & SUPPORT:** Strong lobbying by NILGA and councils has produced more definition on the potential of furloughing within our 10,500 workforce. Prior to the recently received departmental guidance, NILGA's "four tests" to determine a furloughing framework was distributed to all councils with excellent feedback. I have written to all council Mayors / Chairs / Chiefs to personally thank the entire local government team of workers, regardless of their specific titles and roles, thanking each and every one of them, as I know you have within each council, since without them none of the many heroic responses would have been achieved.

**9. COMMUNICATING WHAT MATTERS:** Every day NILGA issues essential ministerial, policy, financial, legislative and community information drawn from strategic partners on both social media and website, as required by government departments. Best practice and key information from each council is also communicated widely to partners. See / follow @NI\_LGA (Twitter) and [www.nilga.org](http://www.nilga.org) scrolling news / front page.

**10. PAY NEGOTIATION & EVIDENCE:** Despite the pandemic, this vital national pay bargaining role continues by NILGA members, for our 11 councils, with regular, co-ordinated input from and feedback to councils on Employers Pay Negotiations for 2020/21. In what is undoubtedly a year like no other, fair and affordable pay remains a vital must do on councils' behalf. NILGA this year is leading the National Association of Regional Employers (NARE) 11 region group, which will ensure key, free, essential advice on member development and resilience, change management and the formulation of post Covid-19 training – NILGA planning for and designing this NOW will save all councils both time and money.

**11. POLICY & LEARNING NETWORKS - PLAN AHEAD, DELIVER FASTER & BETTER:** In addition to the economy group, per 7. above, the 5, all-council, member-officer groups will schedule engagements to be informed by YOUR council, & inform the NILGA Executive, on matters to include post Covid-19 business continuity, post crisis corporate planning and strategy, new financial models, service transformation and public service reform. If we fail to plan, we plan to fail.

**12. COUNCILS CO-LEADING THE PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT:** I have called for the Political Partnership Panel to be re-instated as soon as possible, even during this pandemic, in order to position all councils, NILGA, senior elected members and officers within this statutory body, alongside Ministers, so that we can JOINTLY, with the Legislative Assembly, regenerate through integrated work and investment, agreeing a Programme for Government that is driven by citizens. The re-establishment of this by NILGA and the Department for Communities will be informed by your council and your 10 counterparts. We are stronger together.

Colleagues, the above is just a short summary of the Association's work. I thank you and your council for joining together, as a local government family, in such a positive and professional manner. We remain as councils united in cause, and NILGA is unwavering in our support to you, your corporate councils and the community we jointly serve. Please work / communicate with your NILGA members in helping us to help you.



Councillor Frances Burton, NILGA President



**Northern Ireland Local Government Association**  
**Bradford Court, Upper Galwally, Castlereagh, BT8 6RB**  
**web: [www.nilga.org](http://www.nilga.org) twitter: [@NI\\_LGA](https://twitter.com/NI_LGA) #teamlocgovni**

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Office of the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Dublin 2.

Oifig an Aire Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara, Baile Átha Cliath 2.

17<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Councillor Martin Kearney,  
Mid Ulster District Council,  
Burn Road,  
Cookstown,  
Co. Tyrone

Received  
21 APR 2020  
Chief Executive

Our Ref: 2020/63346R/AS

Dear Martin

Thank you for your representation of 23 February 2020 in relation to uncertainties created by Brexit.

The agri-food sector is of critical importance to the Irish economy, and its regional spread means it underpins the socio-economic development of rural areas in particular. As such, Brexit has the potential to have a very significant impact on farmers and on the agri-food sector throughout Ireland, including farmers in the border counties.

The Department has introduced a number of supports to assist the agriculture sector in preparing to address the challenges posed by Brexit. These include:

- the €150 million Low-Cost Loan Scheme;
- the €300 million Brexit Loan Scheme;
- the €300 million Future Growth Loan Scheme; and
- the €100 million Beef Exceptional Aid Measure.

In addition to the above supports, The Department has introduced a range of other measures in recent budgets to assist the agri-food sector in preparing to address the challenges posed by Brexit. These include:

- Direct aid to farmers;
- Capital funding for the food industry;
- Supports for Bord Bia and Teagasc to assist food companies prepare for Brexit including through market diversification and innovation.

In Budget 2020, the Government announced that it would provide a 'no-deal' contingency fund to support our most vulnerable sectors, with up to €650 million available overall, to be activated in tranches as the full impacts of Brexit emerge. €110 million was made available for the agri-food sector in the first tranche, to be supplemented by any exceptional aid provided by the EU.

Since 31 January, the EU's relationship with the UK has moved to a new phase. Both sides have published guidelines for the negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement. The Department has contributed to developing a national position on the EU guidelines, through the Departments of the Taoiseach and Foreign Affairs and Trade. Negotiations between the EU and UK started last month but are proving challenging due to the Covid-19 crisis. However, both sides have agreed to keep in close contact and explore alternative ways to continue discussions over the period ahead. Finally, I would suggest that you monitor our Brexit page on the Department's website [www.agriculture.gov.ie/brexit](http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/brexit) as its regularly updated and you will find the latest information there.

Yours sincerely,



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Michael Creed T.D.  
Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine