

Minutes of Meeting of Policy and Resources Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 4 February 2021 in the Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon and by Virtual Means

Members Present

Councillor Quinn, Chair

Councillors Ashton*, Buchanan*, Cuddy*, Doris*, Elattar*, Forde*, Hughes*, McFlynn*, S McGuigan*, McKinney, McLean*, S McPeake*, Molloy*, Totten*

Officers in Attendance

Mr McCreesh, Chief Executive
Mrs Canavan, Director of Organisational Development
Mr Kelso**, Director of Public Health & Infrastructure
Ms Mezza**, Head of Marketing
Mr Browne**, Head of Tourism
Mr Moffett**, Head of Democratic Services
Mr O'Hagan, Head of ICT
Mr JJ Tohill**, Director of Finance
Mrs Grogan, Democratic Services Officer

* Denotes members present in remote attendance

** Denotes Officers present by remote means

*** Denotes Others present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7 pm.

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

PR025/21 Apologies

Councillor Gildernew.

PR026/21 Declarations of Interest

None.

PR027/21 Chair's Business

The Chair advised that report on Tender report for Microsoft Licensing Tender Award Revision would be raised in Confidential Business.

Matters for Decision

PR028/21 Localised Introduction Procedures & Probationary Policy for Mid Ulster District Council

The Head of Organisational Development presented previously circulated report and sought Members approval of new standardised procedures re: Localised Induction & new Probationary Policy developed for Mid Ulster District Council. This Policy is to provide a standardised approach across Council for inducting new employees and carrying out reviews during their initial six month probationary period.

Proposed by Councillor S McGuigan
Seconded by Councillor McFlynn and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve the Localised Induction Procedures & Probationary Policy for Mid Ulster District Council.

Councillor McLean welcomed the agreement and said that it was a very good set up for either people who were off for a longer term period or for new staff to be made welcome and was au fait with the workings of the system and should be something for businesses to embrace.

PR029/21 Request(s) to Illuminate Council Property – February 2021

The Head of Democratic Services presented previously circulated report which sought permission to illuminate/light up the Council's three designated properties to raise awareness and mark:

- National Heart Month (NI Chest Heart & Stroke) - the week commencing Monday 15th February to Sunday 21st February for National Heart Month – the colour red.

Councillor McLean said that he would be happy to propose the recommendation as it was for a good cause and extremely important to a lot of people and good to see the Council being supportive of it.

Councillor McKinney stated that he would be happy to support the recommendation as it was a very worthwhile charity. He said that charities were under much need at present and hoped that the Council could highlight what was taking place within the district.

Proposed by Councillor McLean
Seconded by Councillor McKinney and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that approval be given to illuminate/light up the Council's three designated properties to raise awareness of National Heart Month (NI Chest Heart & Stroke) - week commencing Monday 15th February to Sunday 21st February for National Heart Month – the colour red.

PR030/21 Sperrins Sculpture Trail Update

Head of Tourism presented previously circulated report to provide Members with an update on progress in relation to the Sperrins Sculpture Trail project. Approval was sought to accept a Letter of Offer from DAERA through its Rural Tourism Scheme for funding towards Phase 2 of the Sculpture Trail project, i.e. capital delivery, together with approval of the Council's financial contribution.

Councillor Doris said that she would be happy to propose the recommendation as a lot of work had been put into it.

Councillor McFlynn said that it was important to support the initiative and would be happy to second the proposal.

Councillor McLean stated that as it had already been clarified previously that the funding was already ring-fenced within our Capital budget and set aside, he would be happy to support the officer recommendation.

Councillor Cuddy said that it was good to see external funding coming through for such projects and enquired if this was just for one sculpture at Davagh Forest or were there any other sculptures being considered for other areas.

The Head of Tourism advised that there was one sculpture being installed at Davagh Forest and as the report detailed there were two other sculptures in two other district Council areas all of which will make a collective sculpture trail within the Sperrins.

Councillor Cuddy felt that it would be a significant sculpture for the amount of funding and would be looking forward to seeing it as art does cost.

The Chair advised that art may cost but it always gave money back.

Councillor McKinney said that when he read the report he was wondering why it was only for one sculpture under this capital spend at Davagh Forest and being at the location within the last few weeks it would be hard to see how this amount of money could be drawn back as getting to Davagh Forest was an expedition on its own. He said that he would like to see other areas being investigated for future projects as there was quite a lot of things happening in the Sperrins, but the network of getting to Davagh was still a major problem and felt that it was a lot of money for just one sculpture and may be hard to see the financial benefit at this stage.

The Chief Executive agreed that it was a lot of money and as the Head of Tourism outlined it was a three Council programme that was funded and developed principally through DAERA for a one sculpture in each area but in this instance because of the work that occurred in Davagh, it was the logical place in that part of the Sperrins, Omagh would be focussing on the Gortin Glens and Derry City would be looking at another located site.

Councillor Cuddy agreed that the Sperrins was a great asset and with Councillor McKinney's comments regarding access which may be a challenge in the future especially the more popular the site gets. He raised concern regarding other areas

within Mid Ulster district especially the Clogher Valley from the Ballygawley roundabout to Fivemiletown, a valley which has so much history and disappointing to see that this area hadn't availed from any investment from this Council apart from Blessingbourne Estate. In said that in the former Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council members were embarrassed of it being overlooked time and time again which was a shame due to the natural beauty of the area and agreed that the Sperrins had easy access and a good road through it, but Clogher Valley carries a lot of tourists coming from airports and ferries heading down to areas like Donegal and it was a shame that this new Council never tapped into it either.

Councillor Elattar advised that Davagh was close to where she lived and was very happy to see the whole project going ahead including the new sculpture and took on board what other members had said about the difficulty around access at Davagh, but felt that projects cannot be turned down in a specular area because of inadequate infrastructure and it may be worthwhile lobbying to get better infrastructure in the Sperrins areas. She felt that it was a very exciting project as there were lots of people going up to Davagh, especially when the weather gets a lot better people will be going up to use the facilities and would welcome it.

Councillor McFlynn felt that the whole beauty of the Sperrins were the narrow and backward roads and wouldn't want to see large roads being enhanced too much as it would take away its natural beauty.

The Chair advised that Mid Ulster District Council were fortunate that it had a huge rural area and would be exciting to see the forthcoming development over the next few years and commended Officers for sourcing and bringing forward investment to develop certain areas.

Proposed by Councillor Doris
Seconded by Councillor McFlynn and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to note the report and, subject to the Development Committee adopting the recommendations at its next meet on 11/2/2021, recommends that the Council:

- (1) Authorise the release of the match funding required, being £142,234.34 (25% of the tender cost of the Mid Ulster District Council element of the project) to be expended between the 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years in accordance with the progression of the project works, the funds having been previously included within the Council's Capital Programme.
- (2) Authorise the officers to fund the relevant professional fees amounting to £13,050 from the Tourism & Culture and Arts 2020/21 budgets.

- (3) Instructs its officers to review the current capital budget and implement such steps as are necessary to ensure that all capital costs associated with capital projects, including legal and other associated costs, are properly incurred and funded from the relevant capital project budget.

PR031/21 Member Services

No issues.

Matters for Information

PR032/20 Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 13 January 2021

Members noted Policy and Resources Committee Minutes of Meeting held on 13 January 2021.

PR033/20 Performance Improvement: Nine Month Update (Q1-Q3) 2020-2021

Members noted update which provided Members with monitoring information on the review of performance against our seven statutory and three corporate performance improvement indicators and standards, along with an overview of the Corporate Health Indicators for the first nine months of 2020/21.

Live broadcast ended at 7.16 pm.

Local Government (NI) Act 2014 – Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor Doris
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

Resolved In accordance with Section 42, Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 that Members of the public be asked to withdraw from the meeting whilst Member consider items PR034/21 to PR042/21.

Matters for Decision

PR034/21 Rate Estimates 2021/22
PR035/21 Staff Matters for Decision

Matters for Information

PR027/21 Chair's Business (Continued)
PR036/21 Confidential Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on 13 January 2021
PR037/21 Managing Attendance
PR038/21 Staff Matters for Information
PR039/21 Staff Issues – Furlough

PR040/21 Contracts and DAC
PR041/21 Financial Report for 9 months ended 31 December 2020
PR042/21 Miscellaneous Matters

PR042/21 Duration of Meeting

The meeting commenced at 7 pm and concluded at 8.40 pm.

Chair _____

Date _____