

Minutes of Meeting of the Development Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 5 February 2015 in Cookstown District Council Offices

Members Present: In the Chair, Councillor Burton (Chair)

Councillors Dillon, Elattar, Forde, McAleer, McEldowney, McNamee, Mallaghan, Monteith, C O'Neill, T Quinn, G Shiels, J Shiels and Wilson

Officers in Attendance: Mr Tohill, Chief Executive
Mr McCreesh, Acting Chief Executive (CDC)
Ms Campbell, Director of Policy & Development (MDC)
Mrs Forde, Mayor's PA/Member Support Officer (DSTBC)

The meeting commenced at 7pm

D17/15 Apologies

Apology received for Councillor Reid.

D18/15 Declaration of Interests

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

Councillor Wilson declared an interest in agenda item 14 'Briefing from RSM McClure Watters on the development of Mid Ulster Council's Local Economic Development Plan (2015-2018).

D19/15 Briefing from the Orange Community Network

The Chair welcomed Mr Drew Nelson, Chair of Orange Community Network to the meeting.

Councillor Monteith entered the meeting at 7.07pm

Mr Nelson made a presentation on the background of Orange Community Network a group formed in 2005 as a community support organisation for groups operating from approximately 800 Orange Halls throughout Northern Ireland. Working with community, loyal orders, bands and rural development organisations the aim of the network is to encourage confidence building, build capacity through training, networking, information sharing and direct support to groups. Mr Nelson advised to date the network had been funded by International Fund for Ireland, Big Lottery Fund and the EU Peace Programme 2007-2013. Mr Nelson drew attention to the STRIPE project (Stepping Towards Reconciliation in Positive Engagement) which the Orange Community Network partnered with Grand Orange Lodge Ireland to deliver. The project was awarded £884k to help a confident Orange family to engage on an equal basis with the wider community. Highlighting the significant key outputs which included 1200 people participating in training, 300+ groups receiving support, 150

young people completing a leadership focused qualification through Queen's University, three overseas study tours and 50+ conference workshops exploring diverse cultural identities.

Mr Nelson drew attention to a quote from the Community Relations Council in relation to community development in protestant areas of Northern Ireland which stated,

"The backcloth to all Community Development within the Protestant Community in Northern Ireland is the apparent absence of a culture of community organisation. With notable exceptions, Community Development has been severely restricted. This restriction disempowers the Protestant community, and prevents it developing a confidence in itself and playing a positive role in wider civic society in Northern Ireland."

Advising that the Orange Community Network was not connected to the Orange Order Mr Nelson advised that they wanted to work in partnership with Mid Ulster District Council and sought approval to work in partnership to employ a development officer to target users of Orange Halls together with service level agreements.

The Chair thanked Mr Nelson for the presentation and sought questions.

Councillor Dillon asked if the proposed development officer would be funded by Council or the Orange Community Network. In response Mr Nelson advised that the request would be that Council would fund the post.

Councillor Elattar asked if the Orange Community Network was not connected to the Orange Order in a formal way what was the connection and how many community groups were linked to the network from within the Mid Ulster catchment area.

Mr Nelson advised that the board was made up of 70% Orange Order Members and 30% others and within the area there were between 70-80 orange halls.

Councillor Forde asked if the Orange Community Network was successful in obtaining an officer what type of classes would be established. Responding Mr Nelson drew attention to the training, development and positive outcomes of the STRIPE project and advised that similar targets and specific criteria would be for example, on good relations and leadership training.

Thanking Mr Nelson for keeping the presentation to specified time Councillor Mallaghan stated that Mid Ulster Council had work to do in figuring out community services delivery and stated as a Councillor for Cookstown District Council he was aware that all groups were assisted through Community Relations irrespective of background and thus what would the rationale be for Orange Community Network to receive a dedicated Development Officer.

Mr Nelson stated that his analysis was there was a lack of confidence and willingness within his community to fully engage with all of society and this was for historical reasons. This was particularly prevalent in some areas as opposed to others. He further stated that the Orange Community Network could overcome this

as they can engage with the orange community and groups using their premises and get people engaged in cultural diversity. Adding that he appreciated the biggest barrier to the proposal would come internally from Councils as they wanted to protect existing jobs he stated that the Orange Community Network could engage more people in community relations training, their reputation was established and trust was already established with the community in question.

Councillor G Shiels referred to David Cameron's proposal of 'Big Society' and stated that this would be a significant idea as the Orange Community Network involvement in Orange Halls promotes this idea in actively working with the community encouraging social recovery.

Mr Nelson advised that he had witnessed many changes in the last two decades, in the past orange halls were closed to everyone but within the orange community the doors were now opening and in excess of 70 halls for community use was a great asset.

Councillor J Shiels stated that he was aware of the Orange Community Network work in Carntogher acknowledging that groups had stayed away from politics and excellent work had been carried out such as promotion of Ulster Scots together with people attaining qualifications in for example community relations and First Aid.

Councillor J Shiels enquired what the costs would be for a development officer. Mr Nelson advised that the Orange Community Network would absorb the administration costs and thus it would be fees and salary at approximately £30-£35k. He further stated that experience demonstrated that commitment of between three and five years would be required as if funding was for one year only the officer would only be commencing projects at the end of an initial year, whereas three to five years would produce greater results.

The Chair, Councillor Burton thanked Mr Nelson for his presentation and emphasised the importance of both working in partnership and the great asset orange halls were especially in rural areas.

Mr Nelson withdrew from the meeting at 7.25pm.

D20/15 Receive and confirm minutes of the Development Committee meeting held on Thursday 15 January 2015

Proposed by Councillor J Shiels
Seconded by Councillor McNamee and

Resolved That the minutes of the meeting of the Development Committee held on Thursday 15 January 2015 (items D1/15 – D11/15 and D16/15), were considered and signed as accurate and correct.

The Chair expressed her thanks to Vice Chair Councillor McEldowney for chairing the January meeting stating that it had clashed with a PCSP meeting.

Declaration of Interest

Councillors Burton and Wilson declared an interest in the item on NI Rural Development being a member of the JCC.

D21/15 Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2014-2020

Mr McCreesh advised that the purpose of the report was to provide an update to members on the new Local Action Group (LAG) formation process in Mid Ulster relating to the 2014-2020 NI Rural Development Programme and to inform members on programme closure arrangements for the closure of the current RDP Programme 2007-13.

Mr McCreesh reminded Members that a new LAG for Mid Ulster would be established with the responsibility for the delivery of funding within Mid Ulster through the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme and that it would form as a limited company with directors comprised of elected members and social partners. Updating members on the background Mr McCreesh drew attention to:

- social partner membership registration was now complete with 295 members signing up and from the membership base, 33 eligible board member nominations were received by the closing date of 7th January with 1 subsequently withdrawing. From this, 13 will be selected as LAG board members. This will result in a LAG board of 25 directors – 13 social partners and 12 elected members.
- The LAG membership met on 13th January 2015, facilitated by the Rural Network for Northern Ireland to agree a selection framework for the 13 social partner board members based on geographical spread, priority sector (business, community and farming), gender, age and Section 75 representation.
- An election process would now be used by the wider LAG membership base to appoint social partners to the board from the 33 nominations received. It is envisaged the process would be complete and results confirmed by 30th January 2015.
- 2007-2013 Rural Development Programme – current status and closure process
 - SWARD (South West Action for Rural Development) received an allocation of £20.5m under the current RDP (2007-2013), which included administration funding. Of the £17.1m allocated against project funding, £16.9m has been spent to date with over 300 projects funded. Remaining spend is expected to be achieved by March 2015.
 - An exit strategy is currently being prepared following DARD's guidance, which will detail the requirements for completion of administrative checks on all applications received. While the majority of closure activities will be complete by September 2015 it is envisaged

that there will be queries to address beyond that and into the new programme period. Such queries will be addressed by council staff working on the service level agreement to the new LAG board.

- The exit strategy also requires a measure level analysis on the achievement of both financial and non-financial outcomes of the SWARD Local Rural Strategy. A first draft of this report is now complete.
- An interim staffing structure has been identified to reflect the volume and nature of work associated with closure activities which in the main will consist of file closure and completion of project monitoring and evaluation activities. This interim arrangement will remain in place until September 2015 funded through the current administration budget. A new staffing structure moving into the new programme period will be agreed as soon as it is practical to do so.
- The SWARD Joint Council Committee will cease to exist on the 1st April 2015 with Mid Ulster Council assuming responsibility for the current contract between the JCC and DARD. An alternative committee arrangement will be needed to oversee programme closure activities and make decisions on project related matters.

Outlining the key issues as undernoted Mr McCreesh advised that the process was similar to the previous LAG minus the competitiveness.

- The new LAG is to be established as a limited company holding its own professional indemnity and public liability insurance cover. With the appointment of both elected representatives (on an interim basis) and social partners as board members to the new LAG, company formation and registration can now commence. DARD would issue a competitive call for applications to select the new LAGs before appointing successful LAGs to initially develop an interim local rural development strategy. The draft RDP Programme submission provides for preparatory support/animation to assist in the development of local rural development strategies, which includes consultancy costs, costs associated with stakeholders consultation in preparing the strategy and administration costs (operating and personnel) associated with making the application for preparatory support. We understand that DARD may expect Council to work with the LAG in creating the strategy. More detail on this will be available by the end of February. No information is available on the level of funding for strategy development at this time.
- An indicative draft service level agreement (SLA) between the new LAG and Mid Ulster Council was presented to the members within the August 14 Development Committee papers. The draft SLA included the provision of assistance to the LAG for the preparation of the local rural development strategy. This function would include making application to DARD on behalf of the LAG for preparatory support. This SLA will be reviewed and brought back to Mid Ulster Council for comment.

- The draft service level agreement will also be provided to the new LAG board for review. Thereafter it is envisaged both the new LAG, once registered as a legal entity and Mid Ulster Council will sign up to an agreed SLA for the duration of the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme.

Mr McCreesh advised that the process would be similar to the former without the competitiveness. Referring to the recommendations Mr McCreesh advised that the registration of the 12 nominated elected representatives as directors of the LAG for Mid Ulster had taken place. Mr McCreesh sought approval as undernoted:

- That Mid Ulster Council approves the setting up of the new LAG as a company limited by guarantee, with professional indemnity insurance;
- That Mid Ulster Council enters into an agreed service level agreement with the LAG for Mid Ulster once established as a legal entity;
- As a replacement to the SWARD Joint Council Committee, Mid Ulster Council appoints an interim sub group to oversee programme closure activities. This sub group could be comprised of all 12 elected representatives nominated for the new Mid Ulster LAG or a smaller number if desired.

Councillor McNamee suggested that the 12 elected representatives make up the interim sub group. Councillor Wilson suggested that a fewer number would be suffice as the elected representatives would have to attend meetings at both committees and proposed that four from the 12 should oversee the closure of the programme. Mr McCreesh advised that the group would be in place for approximately six months and it would comprise of both SWARD and JCC issues.

Proposed by Councillor Mallaghan
Seconded by Councillor McNamee and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council that approval for undernoted be granted

- Mid Ulster Council approves the setting up of the new LAG as a company limited by guarantee, with professional indemnity insurance;
- That Mid Ulster Council enters into an agreed service level agreement with the LAG for Mid Ulster once established as a legal entity;
- As a replacement to the SWARD Joint Council Committee, Mid Ulster Council appoints an interim sub group to oversee programme closure activities. This sub group to be comprised of all 12 elected representatives nominated for the new Mid Ulster LAG and they can determine representation unto the interim subgroup.

The Chair, Councillor Burton in relation to a SWARD approved scheme expressed her disappointment that it was to be launched on the Sabbath day when she and many in her community would want to attend their place of worship. As a member of SWARD the Chair, Councillor Burton stated that she endeavoured to support as many launches as she could said that the opportunity had been taken from her to do

so on this occasion and that there were six days in the week when schemes could be launched.

Councillor Wilson concurred with the comments. The Chair, Councillor Burton asked if the situation could be addressed.

In response Mr McCreesh stated that the group in question had set the date and not SWARD and as far as he was aware there was no pre condition that Council could state that schemes would not be launched on the Sabbath.

Councillor Dillon stated that whilst she understood the difficulties and people of many faiths worshipped on a Sunday morning it was inappropriate for Council to tell any group when they could or could not launch a scheme.

D22/15 Sport and Leisure Transition Working Group Update

A report providing Members with progress on priority areas identified by the Sport and Leisure Transition Working Group was presented by Ms Campbell. The report highlighted activities being undertaken by the group. Activities included:

- MUDC – Leisure Services Membership Scheme – deferred in September 2014 with potential to revisit;
- MUDC -Revised Fees, Charges, Policies and Concessions for sport and leisure approved in January 2015;
- Revenue budgets submitted from each current Council and currently being collated to represent one overarching service provision for MUDC;
- Draft proposal – staff terms and conditions – information being collated and paper to be presented to Council in due course;
- Draft Capital Programme provided by current Councils for consideration going into MUDC;
- Harmonised IT – Cookstown Leisure Centre currently purchasing Dimension from Xn Leisure and will trial same for six month period as pilot to assess suitability following which consideration will be given to all facilities for use of same;
- Sports Development Baseline – Review and Options – paper to be presented in due course;
- Transferring Services DCAL Water Recreation Sites - Discussions being progressed in relation to transferring four water recreation sites; three within Dungannon i.e. Ballysaggart, Glenmore and Coalisland Canal and Ardtrea in Cookstown to MUDC. Site visits with representatives from Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and Rivers Agency have taken place to ascertain level of future commitment and potential of SLA for continued maintenance.

Members noted progress.

D23/15 Progress of the Mid Ulster Community Planning Process

A report providing Members with progress relating to the Mid Ulster Community Planning Process was presented by Mr McCreesh for information. The report highlighted key activities as undernoted:

Community Planning Engagement Exercise

- Data analysis ongoing with final report expected mid-February;
- Date to be confirmed for presentation of same to Members;
- Summary of report to be issued to all community representatives who participated in the exercise;
- Report will be used to assist Mid Ulster Council lead on the development of a community plan in partnership with the community and government department/agencies.

Community Planning Capacity Building Programme

- Community planning capacity building sessions for staff have been scheduled;
- Local Government (Community Planning Partners) Order 9NI) 2015 and supplementary guidance is still outstanding and Council continues to lobby along with NILGA and other Councils for a stronger responsibility and commitment from the statutory partners and government departments.

Members noted progress regarding community planning process being delivered within the budget parameters and current staff of the three Councils.

D24/15 Development and Regeneration Update

A report providing Members with progress relating to the Mid Ulster Planning Process was presented for information. The report highlighted key activities as undernoted:

- Local Economic Development Plan (2015-2018) presented to LED Plan Working Group and Development committee, in draft form with opportunity for feedback. Final draft to be presented to the Development Committee in April 2015.
- Review of Financial Assistance Policy and Process for the Community and Voluntary Sector – work ongoing with draft proposals to be presented to Mid Ulster Council by end of February 2015.
- Good Relations Strategy and Plan for Mid Ulster, being prepared.

Members noted progress.

D25/15 Update of the Policing and Community Safety Partnership for Mid Ulster

A report providing Members with an update on the re-constitution of the Policing & Community Safety partnership (PCSP) for Mid Ulster Council area was presented by Mr McCreesh for information. The report highlighted key activities as:

- Action Planning 2015/2016 – Plans to be submitted by 28 February 2015;

- Policing Plans – 11 local policing plans for 201/2016 – currently liaising with Local Commander to agree priorities for the District and awaiting release of NI Policing Plan which will impact on Mid Ulster Policing Plan.
- Joint Committee Funding 2015-2016 – a new funding model is being used and it has been indicated that PCSP's should plan for a minimum 15% budget cut. Indication given that there will be restrictions on salary expenditure with the maximum spend of budget aimed for operational delivery.
- Appointment of Independent Members – Initial review of applications has been carried out by NI Policing Board it is anticipated that shortlisting will take place late February, interviews in March, candidates advised of outcome in April with appointments to be made by June 2015.

Mr McCreesh drew particular attention to the cut in budget which would be in excess of over £100k across Mid Ulster and advised that the proposed 20% cap on administration costs would have to be addressed. Mr McCreesh added that the Chief Executive was seeking a meeting with the Department of Justice and options were being explored which would see Mid Ulster Council through the coming year.

The Chief Executive stated that the indication was that they would be paid but he was seeking to attain written clarification.

CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

Proposed by Councillor Monteith
Seconded by Councillor Mallaghan and

Resolved That items D26/15 – D30/15 be taken as confidential business.

D31/15 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7pm and ended at 8.44pm.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____