

Minutes of Meeting of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 30 March in the Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon

Members Present: Councillor Wilson, Chair

Councillors Ashton, Buchanan, Burton (7.04pm), Cuddy (7.08pm), Cuthbertson, Elattar, Glasgow, Kearney, McEldowney, McGinley, B McGuigan, McLean, Mullen, Mulligan, J O'Neill (7.02pm), T Quinn, Reid, Robinson, J Shiels

Officers in Attendance: Mr Cassells, Director of Environment and Property
Mrs Forde, Member Support Officer

In Attendance: **Northern Ireland Water**

Dr Steve Blockwell – Head of Investment Management
Mr Grahame Millar – Head of Wastewater Networks Capital Delivery

Northern Ireland Electricity Networks

Mr Nicholas Tarrant, Managing Director, NIE Networks
Mr Rodney Ballentine, Network Operations Manager, NIE Networks

The meeting commenced at 7 pm.

SC16/17 Apologies

Councillors McFlynn, S McGuigan, McKinney, Molloy, C O'Neill and G Shiels

SC17/17 Declarations of Interest

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

SC18/17 Chair's Business

The Chair Councillor Wilson advised that he had been made aware that fellow Councillor Sean McGuigan was in hospital and extended the best wishes of the Council wishing him a speedy recovery.

The Chair, Councillor Wilson reminded Members that both presentations would deal with strategic issues and if Members had questions in relation to local issues the representatives of both organisations would receive questions following the meeting.

Councillor J O'Neill entered the meeting at 7.02 pm

Councillor Burton entered the meeting at 7.04 pm
Councillor Cuddy entered the meeting at 7.08pm

SC19/17 NI Water

The Chair, Councillor Wilson welcomed representatives from Northern Ireland Water to the meeting. Dr Steve Blockwell delivered a presentation (appendix 1) giving an overview of NI Water, scale of capital investments and constraints, capital investments within the district and current public initiatives.

The Chair, Councillor Wilson thanked the representatives for the presentation and advised that he had used the elected member hotline in the last few months and it had been both effective and efficient.

In response to Councillor Reid's questions concerning the Torrent River the Chair, Councillor Wilson requested that as they were none strategic issues they be brought directly to the representatives following the meeting.

Councillor Cuddy asked if NI Water still had an interest in the holding tank on Castlehill and if there was a future for it now with the Curran Reservoir in operation. In response Dr Blockwell advised he would have to report back.

Councillor McGinley made reference to the NI Water App for reporting faults and welcoming its introduction asked if Council could assist its promotion in anyway and asked what public uptake had been. In response Dr Blockwell advised that the App had been operational for a year and had been promoted through their website, the Waterbus and Council presentations. Councillor McGinley stated he would be downloading, using and promoting it and asked if Council could assist with promotion.

The Chair, Councillor Wilson stated that to date he was not aware but we could perhaps put a link from the website.

Councillor McLean asked what level of input NI Water had in relation to large scale development as the existing infrastructure was struggling to cope in places and new development would add additional pressures.

The Chair, Councillor Wilson concurred with the question stating that inadequate infrastructure was prohibiting growth in Cookstown.

Dr Blockwell stated that the applications are considered by the Development Services and National Planning teams who not only check on water vicinities in the nearby area but also carry out capacity checks on the network to ensure difficulties would not occur downstream. He further advised that NI Water were currently seeking solutions for Cookstown although highlighted that budget constraints hindered growth but within the timeframe of 2021-2027 growth should take place. He stated that 78 areas presently have a cap and NI Water were endeavouring to reduce this and had plans for additional water treatment.

Councillor McLean stated that there were areas that had been approved where there was existing problems. Councillor Burton stated that Castlecaulfield Social Housing Development should be added to the category aforementioned. The Councillor also referred to the plans for works at Fivemiletown highlighted in the presentation and sought more information on same. The Chair, Councillor Wilson reminded Members that there would be an opportunity to discuss individual issues following the meeting.

The Chair, Councillor Wilson announced there would be a short recess to permit Members to discuss local issues with representatives of NI Water.

The meeting adjourned at 7.25pm

Councillors Glasgow, Reid and Burton left the meeting at 7.26pm

The meeting reconvened at 7.35pm

SC20/17 NI Electricity Network

The Chair, Councillor Wilson welcomed representatives from Northern Ireland Electricity to the meeting. The representatives delivered a presentation (appendix 2) giving an overview of work within the district capital expenditure by category and proposed programmes.

Councillor B McGuigan returned to the meeting at 7.37pm

Councillor McLean left the meeting at 7.37pm

The Chair, Councillor Wilson thanked Messrs Tarrant and Ballantine for the presentation and sought Members questions in relation to strategic issues.

Councillor McGinley asked if the £20m spend in Mid Ulster was investment or just reacting to faults. He also asked if NIE had an input into how the planned interconnector would look. In response Mr Ballantine advised that the £20m spent in Mid Ulster was mostly asset replacement and upgrading of equipment at existing capacity. Mr Tarrant stated that some of the spend had been in relation to renewables advising that when developers wanted to pursue this route they had to pay for the connection highlighting the example of Rasharkin Cluster Substation for which costs would be shared between developers.

Mr Tarrant also referred to a proposed spend of £26m for a line leading into Magherafelt which would be important to the Northwest. With regard to the Interconnector Mr Tarrant advised that NIE had split three years ago due to European legislation and planning staff had went to Sony thus they were leading the Interconnector project. With regard to the project he advised there was a strong rationale as to why it is needed and emphasised that it would be a cost saving for customers. In relation to the technical aspects he advised that there was arguments

as to why it is not feasible to have underground cables but emphasised the Members would need to speak to Sony.

Councillor B McGuigan asked if the Northwest Line to Derry would be upgraded to a higher voltage. In response Mr Tarrant advised that current work was in relation to maintenance of pylons but advised that in the next six years asset replacement project this would be looked at.

The Chair, Councillor Wilson thanked the representatives for the presentation.

SC21/17 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7.00pm and ended at 8pm

Chair _____

Date: _____