

Minutes of Meeting of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 26 January 2017 in the Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon

Chair: Councillor Wilson, Chair

Members Present: Councillors Ashton, Bateson, Bell, Buchanan, Burton, Clarke, Cuddy, Cuthbertson, Doris, Elattar, Forde, Gildernew, Gillespie, Kearney, Mallaghan, McAleer, McFlynn, McGinley, B McGuigan, S McGuigan, McKinney, McLean, McNamee, McPeake, Molloy, Monteith, Mulligan, J O'Neill, M Quinn, T Quinn, Reid, Robinson, G Shiels and Totten

Officers in Attendance: Mr Tohill, Chief Executive
Ms Campbell, Director of Culture and Leisure
Ms Canavan, Director of Organisational Development
Mr Cassells, Director of Environment and Property
Mrs Forde, Member Support Officer
Mr Kelso, Director of Public Health and Infrastructure
Mr McCreesh, Director of Business and Communities
Ms Mezza, Head of Marketing and Communications
Mr JJ Tohill, Director of Finance

The meeting commenced at 7pm

C1/17 Apologies

Councillors Glasgow, McEldowney, Mullen, C O'Neill and J Shiels

C2/17 Declarations of Interest

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

C3/17 Chair's Business

None

Matters for Decision

C4/17 Receive and consider minutes of matters transacted in "Open Business" at the Council meeting held on Thursday 15 December 2016

Proposed by Councillor Reid
Seconded by Councillor S McGuigan

Resolved That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday 15 December 2016 (C259/16 – C283/16), transacted in "Open Business"

having been printed and circulated, were considered and signed as accurate and correct.

C5/17 Receive and consider the minutes and recommendations of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Planning meeting held on Monday 9 January 2017

Councillor Mallaghan requested that the closing date for the consultation responses in relation to the Community Consultation Exercise for Mid Ulster Local Development Plan 2015-2030 be extended for a further 10 days if possible. Members concurred.

Proposed by Councillor Mallaghan
Seconded by Councillor Reid

Resolved That the Minutes and recommendations of the Planning Committee meeting held on Monday 9 January 2017 (P001/17 – P009/17 and P0113/17) transacted in “Open Business”, having been printed and circulated, subject to the foregoing, were considered and signed as accurate and correct.

C6/17 Receive and consider the minutes and recommendations of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Environment Committee held on Tuesday 10 January 2017

Proposed by Councillor McNamee
Seconded by Councillor McLean

Resolved That the Minutes and recommendations of the Environment Committee meeting held on Tuesday 10 January 2017 (E001/17 – E017/17 and E025/17) transacted in “Open Business”, having been printed and circulated, were considered and adopted.

C7/17 Receive and consider the minutes and recommendations of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on Wednesday 11 January 2017

Proposed by Councillor Gildernew
Seconded by Councillor Bateson

Resolved That the Minutes and recommendations of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on Wednesday 11 January 2017 (PR001/17 – PR007/17 and PR018/17) transacted in “Open Business”, having been printed and circulated, were considered and adopted.

C8/17 Receive and consider the minutes and recommendations of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Development Committee held on Thursday 12 January 2017

The Chair, Councillor Wilson referred to item 'D008/17 Sperrins Conference Proposal: Managing and Developing Outdoor Recreation in Protected Landscapes' and requested that the Proposal be withdrawn and Council to await report to the Development Committee with regard to an event planned for September 2017 to be supported by all Councils and relevant Government departments

Proposed by Councillor Molloy
Seconded by Councillor T Quinn

Resolved: That the Minutes and recommendations of the Development Committee meeting held on Thursday 12 January 2017 (D001/17 – D018/17 and D020/17) transacted in "Open Business", having been printed and circulated, subject to the foregoing, were considered and adopted.

C9/17 Conferences and Seminars

The Head of Democratic Services referred to details of the undernoted conferences and sought approval for the attendance of Members and Council officers outlined in the report, the payment of attendance fees and associated costs as incurred.

- (i) Social Enterprises NI: Social Value Conference 'Shaping the Future-Making your Mark'
- Thursday 26 January 2017, 8.30 am – 1.30 pm Girdwood Community Hub, Belfast

Volunteer Now: Viewing Supporting Delivery of Public Service Conference

- Wednesday 8 February 2017, 9.30 am – 3.3 pm Crumlin Road Gaol, Belfast

28th Colmcille Winter School

- Friday 24 and Saturday 25 February 2017, Colmcille Heritage Centre, Gartan, Church Hill, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal

Northern Ireland Housing Conference 2017 – Delivering Effective Housing Solutions

- Wednesday 22 March 2017, 8.30 am – 1 pm Titanic Centre, Belfast

Northern Ireland's Futures – Scenarios for Leaving the EU

- Thursday 30 March 2017, Baby Grand, Grand Opera House, Belfast

PFNI – Economic Development in NI: Key Challenges and Future Opportunities Post Brexit

- Tuesday 25 April 2017, 8.30 am – 1 pm, Belfast

The Head of Democratic Services tabled an additional conference as undernoted and sought approval for one member of staff to attend and any Member should they wish to do so.

NILGA – Investing in your Community, Local Council Finance and Investment Event

- Friday 24th February 2017 at Tullyglass House Hotel, Ballymena

Conference & Seminar	Date	No. of Attendees	Location	Attendance Fee (Yes/ No)
Freight Transport Association Conference	15 th March	2	Culloden Hotel Cultra	£265 + vat + £225 + vat + mileage
CIPD NI Employment Law Conference	30 th	4	Hilton Hotel Templepatrick	£75 + vat each (early bird rate) X4 = £300+ mileage
Cleaner Neighbourhoods Conference	7 th March	1	QUB Belfast	£85 + travel
Scottish Food Enforcement Partnership Event - (Implementation of Mandatory FHRS)	26 TH	1	Cumbernauld Scotland	No cost Travel only
Implementing the Strategic Planning Policy Statement	1 st February	4	Belfast	£40 each + travel
Fire Safety Conference	9 & 10 Feb	2	Enniskillen	£250 + vat per delegate
Health & Safety Conference	22 nd February 17	Up to 5	Belfast	No cost Travel only

Proposed by Councillor Bateson
Seconded by Councillor Mallaghan

Resolved: That the attendance of Members and officers, the payment of attendance fees and associated costs as incurred be approved, as required for attending Members and officers.

C10/17 Consideration of Requests for Civic Recognition

The Head of Democratic Services drew attention to the previously circulated report and sought approval for civic recognition for those groups and individuals listed in line with council Receptions Policy.

The Chair, Councillor Wilson also requested that Members accept a request for civic recognition for Rainey Ladies Hockey team who won the senior cup.

Proposed by Councillor McKinney
Seconded by Councillor Cuddy

Resolved That approval be given to submitted requests for civic recognition.

C11/17 LAMA Community and Council Awards

The Director of Culture and Leisure drew attention to the previously circulated report to seek Members' approval to attend the award ceremony of the LAMA Community and Council Awards to be held on the Saturday 4 February 2017.

Councillor Ashton stated that although it was great that the Seamus Heaney Homeplace had been nominated for the award, there was no guarantee that the centre would win.

Proposed by Councillor Ashton
Seconded by Councillor McLean

That the Chair and Deputy Chair would be suffice to represent Council at the event.

In response, the Chief Executive stated that due to the uniqueness of the award ceremony, the fact that the Seamus Heaney HomePlace was the only project from Northern Ireland to be nominated and that Council was endeavouring to raise the profile of the Centre especially in the Dublin area he had agreed to the proposed party in the report. He also stated that the centre would not be in line for the award if it had not been for the nominating Councillors and it was on this basis that the proposal was put forward. He emphasised that in normal circumstances he would agree the Chair and Deputy Chair would be suffice.

Proposed by Councillor McGinley
Seconded by Councillor T Quinn

That attendance at the award ceremony for the LAMA Community and Council Awards 2017 be attended to by the Council Chair, Vice Chair two nominating Councillors and one Officer.

The Chair, Councillor Wilson called for a vote on Councillor Ashton's.

FOR 9
AGAINST 22

The Chair, Councillor Wilson called for a vote on Councillor McGinley's proposal

FOR 22
AGAINST 6
ABSTAINED 3

The Chair, Councillor Wilson declared that Councillor McGinley's vote be carried.

Resolved: That approval be given for the Council Chair, Vice Chair and two nominating Councillor and one officer to attend the award ceremony for the LAMA Community and Council Awards 2017.

Matters for Information

C12/17 Consultations notified to Mid Ulster District Council

The previously circulated paper on consultations notified to Mid Ulster District Council was noted.

In response to Councillor Monteith's query as to the mechanism for deciding if a corporate consultation response should be made the Chief Executive stated that many consultations are notified and Officers sift through these to select which ones require a corporate response. He further stated that should a Member wish a corporate response to be prepared for any other consultation these would be done so request. Councillor Monteith stated that since Council was re-establishing the anti-poverty network a corporate response should be prepared for the 'Private Rent Consultation'.

Councillor Clarke stated that it was important for Council to submit a response regarding the Department of Infrastructure consultation paper on proposals to amend permitted development right in respect of mineral exploration. In response the Chief Executive stated that he would follow up with Planning Manager and advised that a copy of the response would be forwarded to Members for comment and subsequently submitted as the closing date would be prior to next meeting.

Councillor Monteith stated that it would be helpful if a column was added indicating if Council was preparing a response.

Resolved: That the consultations contained within the previously circulated report be noted and

- (i) Consultation paper on proposals to amend permitted development rights in respect of mineral exploration – Council to make a response and circulate to Members as closing date is prior to next meeting;

- (ii) A response be prepared regarding consultation on proposals for a change in the Private Rented Sector in Northern Ireland;
- (iii) A column to be added in report to indicate if corporate response is being prepared.

C13/17 Correspondence

The previously circulated paper on correspondence to Council was noted.

Resolved: That the correspondence contained within the previously circulated report was noted.

Councillor Mulligan left the meeting at 7.15pm

C14/17 Consideration of Motions

C14.1/17 Councillor Molloy to move

Councillor Molloy stated that every week, he like many fellow councillors, witness dozens of applications for Irish passports and passport renewals. He stated that the last 10 years had seen the population of Mid Ulster and particularly South and East Tyrone rise significantly with the migrant labour that came into the area, bringing a young dynamic workforce who have settled and married to raise families and now see themselves as Irish citizens in their own right.

The Councillor continued stating that emergency appointments for those in need of a passport or a renewal at short notice are limited and at peak times can be extremely difficult to obtain and often requires travel to Dublin city centre at an early hour yet if the facility was available in Mid Ulster region it would also be convenient for people from further afield such as Gweedore or Ballycastle. Councillor Molloy highlighted Mid Ulster's geographical advantage of being best placed to be accessed not only from the nine counties of the province of Ulster but the whole north west of the country highlighting areas such as Sligo, Leitrim and Longford having a viable option to travel to Mid Ulster rather than to Dublin City Centre.

In conclusion Councillor Molloy reflected on the surge in Irish passport applications due to the Brexit vote which awakened many to take advantage of the option open to those eligible to avail of Irish citizenship, a birth right constitutionally guaranteed under the Good Friday agreement. Councillor Molloy called on the Council to support the undernoted motion and establish what could be a progressive ground breaking initiative for Mid Ulster which would bring to the people of the district and beyond a service which is in huge demand support

“Given the recent growth in applications to the Irish passport office and given the strategic geographical location of Mid Ulster that this Council write to Charlie Flanagan TD as the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade requesting he consider the possibility of locating a Passport Office within the Mid Ulster region”.

Councillor Mallaghan seconded the motion stating that it would be a good initiative and would increase the connections between north and south and further add to the initiatives achieved through the Joint North/South Ministerial Council and other organisations such as Waterways Ireland and Tourism Ireland. He further stated that since the Brexit vote the connections are more important than ever.

Councillor M Quinn concurred with Councillor Molloy's comments and stated that the SDLP party would support the motion as there was a clear need for a passport service in the North of Ireland especially now to meet the surge of demand as people seek to protect their European citizenship. He referred to a meeting which Council requested last year with the Irish Foreign Minister and stated that although the meeting request had not been met Officers should yet again seek a meeting with a proposed passport office included on the agenda, especially with Brexit and the threat of a hard border looming.

Councillor McLean stated that as far as he was aware people could apply for an Irish passport online and welcomed the earlier comments of both the Sinn Féin and SDLP parties that they now accepted the Brexit vote and concluded stating that the Irish Foreign Minister had not granted Mid Ulster Council a meeting as the Irish Government had no interest in the region.

Councillor Monteith stated he would support the motion and emphasised that there was serious lobbying in the Dáil by a number of TD's to get services out around the regions and thus the Notice of Motion is quite timely. He stated that Council should request it as soon as possible as other Towns may wish to lobby for the service.

Councillor Cuthbertson stated this was yet another silly grandstand motion and that he would vote against it.

Councillor Cuddy stated that any Member has a right to bring a notice of motion but that the Council needed to assess the possibility as technology advanced there would be less people involved in the passport process. He emphasised the need to explore costs as the Irish Passport Office may bring their own staff and infrastructure and thus there would be no great benefit to Mid Ulster and there was no logic as to why they should select the region to host an office and indeed it was naïve to think passports would be produced on site.

Councillor McPeake expressed surprise at the reluctance of the Unionists as Sinn Féin local constituency offices were inundated with requests for Irish passport forms to be signed and suggested that Unionist think how accommodating it would be if there was an office in Mid Ulster.

Councillor McNamee stated as a point of clarity that you could not apply for an Irish passport online and emphasised that in the past the closest availability to passport express had been Monaghan but this service had now come to the North.

Councillor Bell stated that it was fortunate that Sinn Féin had TDs in the Dáil who were well placed to drive forward the passport campaign.

Councillor Molloy in closing thanked all Members for their contributions to the debate. He stated that the motion was not about grandstanding nor was the issue silly or trivial but was an issue which concerns many of the citizens of the district. He stated that the motion was submitted in order and, in line with Standing Orders on motions, and was an issue which directly affects the citizens of Mid Ulster district and as such he looked forward to seeing progression on the matter.

FOR 22
AGAINST 11

The Chair, Councillor Wilson declared the motion carried.

Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor Monteith
Seconded by Councillor Mallaghan

Resolved: That items C15/17 – C23/17 be taken as confidential business.

C24/17 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7pm and ended at 8.20pm

CHAIR _____

DATE _____