

**Minutes of Meeting of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 25 November 2021 in the Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon and by virtual means**

**Chair** Councillor McLean

**Members Present** Councillors Ashton\*, Black\*, Brown\*, Buchanan, Burton\*, Clarke, Colvin, Corry\*, Cuthbertson\*, Doris\*, Elattar\*, Forde, Gildernew\*, Glasgow\*, Graham\*, Hughes\*, Kearney\*, Kerr, Mallaghan, N McAleer\*, B McGuigan\*, S McGuigan, McKinney, McNamee\*, D McPeake\*, S McPeake\*, Milne\*, Molloy\*, Monteith\*, Mullen, Oneill\*, Quinn\*, Robinson\*, Totten\* and Wilson

**Officers in Attendance** Mr McCreesh, Chief Executive  
Ms Canavan, Strategic Director of Organisational Development Strategy & Performance (SDODSP)\*\*  
Ms Campbell, Strategic Director of Environment (SDE)\*\*  
Mr Kelso, Director of Public Health & Infrastructure (DPHI)\*\*  
Mr Moffett, Assistant Director of Organisational Development, Strategy & Performance (ADODSP)  
Mr Tohill, Strategic Director of Corporate Service/Finance (SDCSF)  
Ms Ursula Mezza, Head of Marketing & Communications\*\*  
Mrs Forde, Member Support Officer

**Mid Ulster Youth** Matthew McCracken  
Goda Jukuelyte

\* Denotes Members present in remote attendance

\*\* Denotes Officers present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7 pm.

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

**C225/21 Apologies**

Councillor Bell, Cuddy, S McAleer, McFlynn and Mullen

**C226/21 Declarations of Interest**

## **C227/21      Chair's Business**

The Chair, Councillor McLean invited Councillor Quinn to speak.

Councillor Quinn referred to the recent death of Austin Currie who had been born and raised in Edendork and had formerly served as an SDLP Councillor. He reflected on his role in the 'Caledon Sit In' which had led to the formation of the Civil Rights Movement in which he played a pivotal role. Councillor Quinn spoke of his time as a Minister in both the Dáil and at Stormont and how his contribution to politics had impacted the island of Ireland. In closing Councillor Quinn extended deepest sympathy to the Currie family circle.

The Chair, Councillor McLean spoke of recent events he had attended and highlighted the launch of the first ever Mid Ulster Gift Card and encouraged fellow Members to promote it throughout the district. He shared that over 600 people participated online in Mid Ulster's third Enterprise Week which had included events focusing on economic recovery from the challenges of Covid.

The Chair, highlighted that Council had secured close to £200k funding from the Department for Communities Access & Inclusion Capital Programme to improve arts and culture and leisure facilities, helping to create more equitable and inclusive access to the Council's facilities across Mid Ulster. He also encouraged Members to promote and attend the new outdoor film experience and solar walk at OM Dark Sky Park and Observatory.

The Chair also extended congratulations to the Coulter Family in Cookstown on being recognised as a Winner in the Ulster Heritage Angel Awards 2021 in winning the Best Maintenance of a Historic Building Category regarding their work at Killymoon Castle, Cookstown.

Members noted that the Director of Finance had been granted permission to raise a legal matter in Confidential Business.

## **C228/21      Deputation: Mid Ulster Youth Voice**

The Chair, Councillor McLean welcomed representatives from Mid Ulster Youth Voice to the meeting and invited them to make their presentation.

Matthew and Goda from the group delivered a presentation following which the Chair Councillor McLean commended the young people on the presentation and led a round of applause of appreciation following which he invited questions.

Councillor Buchanan commended the young people on the presentation and asked how the representatives were chosen for Mid Ulster Youth Voice.

In response Matthew advised that the current participants had volunteered for a two year programme and due to Covid they've had to operate online but they were now working towards an elected leadership structure.

Councillor Mallaghan commended the group on how far they had come from their initial event he had attended in the Glenavon Hotel, Cookstown. He highlighted that their strategy should be reconsidered so that MLAs, MPS and Councillors could increase their contact and understanding with young people. He acknowledged Council was the best at present with recycling but that their idea for recycle bins in town centres was a 'no brainer' and highlighting the data regarding UCAS forms said that Council could explore how they could assist with this as at times they do facilitate various issues and perhaps a piece of work could be carried out to signpost young to education partners. Councillor Mallaghan spoke of previous work carried out with local schools and that Council should develop this further. He said he was delighted to receive the update and learn of the progress made in challenging times and wished the group continued success and urged all to keep the links strong.

Councillor Doris said she was impressed with the presentation and the talent and passion displayed by the group. She requested that Members be forwarded a copy of the presentation and she would look forward to a proposal paper being brought to Environment Committee regarding recycle bins in town centres.

Councillor Kerr concurred with previous comments and said that he had attended the event in the Glenavon Hotel, Cookstown and encouraged the youth to keep up the good activism they were displaying.

Councillor Colvin stated that the presentation was highly professional and said he was particularly interested in the marketing section and Instagram being the main mode of communication but asked what was in 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> place. He said that the presentation had covered a lot of ground and he was delighted to see industry as an option for further education as university was not the only way and there was much opportunity in Mid Ulster.

In response Matthew said he did not have the relevant statistics to hand but Instagram was top and personally speaking Twitter was particularly useful and Facebook may be third on the list.

Councillor Kearney said he had attended the launch, enjoyed the crash course in speed dating and wished the group all the best. He spoke of the many pathways to education and spoke of a recent meeting of the Labour Market partnership. He reflected also on their comments in relation to Irish language and mental health.

The Chair, Councillor McLean thanked Matthew and Goda for the presentation and said that interaction was a two way process and council looked forward to continuing to work with the group in the future.

## **Matters for Decision**

### **C229/21      Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in "Open Business" at the Council Meeting held on Thursday 28 October 2021**

Proposed by Councillor Kerr  
Seconded by Councillor S McGuigan and

**Resolved** That the Minutes of the Council held on Thursday 28 October 2021 (C201 – C216/21 and C224/21) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated, were considered and adopted.

**C230/21 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Special Development Committee Meeting held on 21 October 2021**

Proposed by Councillor Kerr  
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

**Resolved** That the Minutes of the Special Development Committee held on 21 October 2021 (D190/21 – D197/21) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated, were considered and adopted.

**C231/21 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Planning Committee Meeting held on 2 November 2021**

Proposed by Councillor Black  
Seconded by Councillor Mallaghan and

**Resolved** That the Minutes of the Planning Committee held on 2 November 2021 (P149/21 – P154/21 and P160/21) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated, were considered and adopted.

**C232/21 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 4 November 2021**

Proposed by Councillor McKinney  
Seconded by Councillor S McGuigan and

**Resolved** That the Minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 4 November 2021 (PR200/21 – PR209/21 and P224/21) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated, were considered and adopted.

**C233/21 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Environment Committee Meeting held on 9 November 2021**

Proposed by Councillor McNamee  
Seconded by Councillor B McGuigan and

**Resolved** That the Minutes of the Environment Committee held on 9 November 2021 (E252/21 – E272/21 and E280/21) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated, were considered and adopted.

**C234/21      Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Development Committee Meeting held on 11 November 2021**

Proposed by Councillor Kerr  
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

**Resolved**      That the Minutes of the Development Committee held on 11 November 2021 (D191/21 – D208/21 and D210/21) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated, were considered and adopted.

**C235/21      Conferences, Seminars & Training**

The AD: ODSP sought approval for the previously circulated report on conferences, training and seminars.

Proposed by Councillor S McGuigan  
Seconded by Councillor McKinney and

**Resolved**      That approval be given to submitted requests for conferences, seminars and training as outlined in the appendix to the report.

**C236/21      Civic Recognition Nominations**

The AD: ODSP sought approval for the previously circulated report on civic recognition requests from Members, in line with the stated Council Policy, and as detailed within the report at appendix A.

Proposed by Councillor Kerr  
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

**Resolved**      That approval be given to submitted requests for civic recognition as outlined in the report.

**C237/21      Standing Order Amendments**

The Chief Executive presented the previously circulated report to consider an amendment to the Standing Orders on the regulation of meetings in light of Council being made aware of a judgement made following a Judicial Review formally published on 2nd November 2021. The purpose of this report was to bring to member’s attention the proposed amendments to be made to the Standing Orders for Council, in line with the judgement.

In line with standing order 30.2 concerning amendments to Standing Orders discussion on this shall stand adjourned until the next ordinary meeting of Council, once proposed and seconded.

Proposed by Councillor S McGuigan  
Seconded by Councillor Forde and

**Resolved** That any discussion on these amendment(s) shall stand adjourned without discussion until the next ordinary meeting of the Council, in line with standing order 30.2 concerning amendments. Thereafter they will be recommended for approval.

## **Matters for Information**

### **C238/21 Correspondence to Council**

Members noted previously circulated report providing correspondence received for the attention of Council.

In response to Councillor Colvin's query the AD: ODS&P clarified that the letter received from NI Assembly Committee for infrastructure had been received immediately prior to the October Council meeting thus Members had previously noted the decision regarding the planning advice note.

Councillor S McPeake referred to the letter received from NILGA highlighting that the Chief Executive of NILGA was stepping down from his role. He spoke highly of Mr Derek McCallan and the enthusiasm he brought to the role especially the strong voice he provided for councils at the time of the review of public administration. He spoke of the good relations he had built and how local government was richer for the role he played. He proposed that Council forward a letter thanking him for his sterling work and wishing him well for his retirement.

Councillor Glasgow seconded the proposal and concurred with previous comments. He said he thought Derek would not know how to retire and spoke of the great assistance he was to Members and how he always had time for a conversation to further understanding. He concluded he had led great work in NILGA and it had been a privilege to work alongside him.

Councillor Kearney acknowledged the time he had served on NILGA and how Derek had very much been the centre of the organisation. He spoke of the great leadership skills he demonstrated and wished him a happy retirement.

Councillor Burton concurred with previous speakers and spoke of the huge loss Derek would be to local government. She said he had been available 24/7 especially in the early days of the pandemic, how he had established the partnership panel and the hard act he would be to follow. She said it was a sad day to lose someone of Derek's calibre and wished him well in the future.

Proposed by Councillor S McPeake  
Seconded by Councillor Glasgow and

**Resolved** Council send a letter to NILGA Chief Executive Mr Derek McCallan acknowledging his forthcoming retirement.

Councillor S McPeake drew attention to correspondence from Department for Communities in relation to the dissolution of the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC). He said that the winding up of the LGSC as part of local government reform

had not been progressed but now with the size and capability of councils themselves he would propose that the council relay the message that it be wound up as previously agreed.

Councillor Kearney seconded the proposal and said it was now 10 years on from the review and monies could be better utilised.

Proposed by Councillor S McPeake  
Seconded by Councillor Kearney and

**Resolved** That Council send a letter to the Minister for Communities regarding Council's agreement with the dissolution of the Local Government Staff Commission

### **C239/21 Consultations Notified to Mid Ulster District Council**

Members considered previously circulated report on consultations notified to Mid Ulster District Council for comment.

Councillor Kerr reflected on changes to the environment the impacts of fossil fuels and fracking together with heatwaves, floods, unique weather patterns and said it was imperative that Council prepare a response to Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DEARA): Draft Environment Strategy Consultation.

The Chair, Councillor McLean said the consultation could be referred to Environment Committee.

**Resolved** That the DEARA: Draft Environment Strategy Consultation be referred to Environment Committee for response

#### *Declaration of Interest*

*Councillor Burton declared an interest, being a representative of Agewell*

### **C240/21 Notice of Motion**

The Chair, Councillor McLean referred to the notice of motion and the recent announcement of the Minister for Health Robin Swann that £23 million had been allocated to domiciliary care and said that he had received an amendment to the motion by the proposer, Councillor Buchanan to that previously distributed.

A copy of the amendment was distributed to Members and displayed for those attending virtually. The meeting signified its agreement to accept the change to be considered as part of the motion.

Councillor Buchanan speaking on the motion said that due to the reduction of services and its peripheral location much of Mid Ulster has the poorest access to acute hospital and care provision. He said that two thirds of Mid Ulster population of 145,000 are rural and from 2016 to 2026 the population aged 65 plus is projected to

grow by 32% while a growth of 48% is projected for those aged 85 and over. Councillor Buchanan said from submitting the motion a week ago he welcomed the £23 million pounds now being made available to support domiciliary care. He said with announcements of this sort of money it is difficult to measure what impact it would have but it would be hoped it would ease the situation. He highlighted that these essential workers are underpaid and have rightly felt undervalued with poor terms and conditions it is difficult to recruit and retain staff. Councillor Buchanan said that 500 people in the Southern Health & Social Services Trust are either in hospital or in a step down facility waiting on a care package whilst 402 people were currently waiting in hospital in the Northern Trust area. On average 300 beds per day are occupied by people medically fit to be discharged but have no care packages available. He said that last year 45% of visits to homes lasted less than 15 minutes and call out times for care assistants in the homes should be increased.

Councillor Buchanan moved the amended motion as undernoted:

“This Council notes the importance of Domiciliary Care as a vitally important service which supports people in their own home. Following the Minister’s announcement we call on him to ensure that this £23m support package for domiciliary carers is spent across the service for maximum impact on staff pay and length of time for calls to service users. We want to ensure staff feel valued and patients get a timely service.”

Councillor Forde seconded the motion and said that domiciliary care was very important when people needed it and also to free up hospital spaces. She welcomed the £23m and hoped it would contribute to help staff feeling more valued.

Councillor Corry said she was pleased to support the motion and welcomed the announcement of £23m to the sector. She spoke of the consultation by the Northern Trust and stressed that domiciliary care was on its knees and in turn people were blocking hospital beds because care packages could not be secured. Councillor Corry reflected on a meeting she had attended with Emma Sheerin MLA when patients, families and carers had shared their despair, she said it was heart breaking to hear stories of people having to go to care homes because they could not secure a care package. With regard to the direct payment route Councillor Corry shared that her own family experiences had proved it was impossible to get people to cover the need and stated that there was also poor guidance for families embarking on this route. Reflecting on the carers themselves Councillor Corry spoke of the pressure they faced each day running from pillar to post how they had shared that they were rethinking their careers as to continue status quo was not sustainable. In conclusion, the Councillor Corry referred to the 716 families in the Northern Trust area awaiting a care package and thus it was imperative that the promised funding was allocated to pay proper pay rates, proper care provision and that the £500 awarded to workers during the initial days of the pandemic were paid. Councillor Corry applauded care workers and thanked them for their contribution to society.

Councillor Wilson reflected that he had raised the issue last month and said it had been somewhat disappointing earlier in the day when Council had met with the Northern Trust to discuss domiciliary care consultation documents only two political parties had been represented. He welcomed the £23m announcement from the



Minister and it was hoped that this would enable the hourly rate of pay to be increased and care workers to be recognised. He spoke of the fragility of the care system and research which revealed that many companies are handing care packages back as they cannot meet them, which in turn impacted hospital discharges and whilst the £23m would have immediate effect in stabilising the workforce. Councillor Wilson highlighted that a long term solution was needed and that Minister Swann would be launching a consultation regarding adult social care and that consideration should be given to 15 minute call times as they were not acceptable.

The Chair, Councillor McLean said the points were challenging and the money needed to be rolled out to the people who needed it.

Councillor Quinn applauded domiciliary care teams but said it was evident that demand outstripped supply. He welcomed the £23m which would help alleviate the current crisis but stressed that the Minister for Health needed to work with Executive colleagues to find solutions which would bring transformation. He spoke of workforce planning, increased step down facilities but said that whilst he supported the motion the real problem needed to be tackled instead of passed from Executive to Executive. In conclusion Councillor Quinn said society could not do without care workers and it was his hope they would receive their £500 before Christmas.

Councillor Hughes referred to Councillor Wilson's remarks and emphasised that the SDLP had worked and continued to work tirelessly with regard to domiciliary care. He spoke of the numbers of people they had been in contact with regarding cuts to their care packages and that they may not have been at the Council meeting today but it was because they were simultaneously at a meeting with the Director of Community Care at the Northern Health & Social Care Trust.

Councillor Mallaghan said valid points had been raised and spoke of the sense of relief felt by providers that the £23m was being rolled out which meant they could recruit new staff. He thanked officers for their work in preparing for the meeting with the Northern Trust. Councillor Mallaghan spoke of the valuable work carers provide and said the quality and quantity of time would be of tremendous benefit especially in alleviating hospital pressures. He also spoke of the families who were dealing with personal health issues who then also had to deal with other family members where care packages weren't available.

Councillor Doris said she had attended the meeting with the Northern Trust and that the situation was dire. She said everyone was on the same page and wanted the challenges resolved. Councillor Doris said those who work in the care sector deliver a vital role and it is a vocation as many don't even receive basic mileage. In conclusion she commended all who work in the sector.

Councillor Burton concurred with previous speakers and advised that she had learned of some families who had been told that from a particular date their care package would be ceasing. She said this was highly concerning as some were going from 4 calls per day to none. Councillor Burton said that for many carers it was a vocation as they were maybe working in rural areas and in winter months having to get out to shovel grit on the roads to access people's homes. She said she had

zoomed onto the meeting today for a short time but said it was important to keep domiciliary care on the agenda.

Councillor Colvin referred to the amendment Councillor Buchanan had introduced and suggested that the wording be changed to read *‘following the Ministers welcome announcement’*. He said that Minister Swann was a standing star at Stormont for the role he carried out and said that both he and his advisors done a great job.

Councillor Buchanan agreed the change.

The Chair, Councillor McLean said the discussion had been positive and thanked Councillor Buchanan for the amendment based on the announcement earlier in the day. He said that each Member who had contributed to the debate had made a welcome contribution.

The Chair Councillor McLean declared the motion as unopposed carried.

*This Council notes the importance of Domiciliary Care as a vitally important service which supports people in their own home. Following the Minister’s welcome announcement we call on him to ensure that this £23m support package for domiciliary carers is spent across the service for maximum impact on staff pay and length of time for calls to service users. We want to ensure staff feel valued and patients get a timely service.*

Councillor Buchanan said that there were big challenges in health and social care sector and he thanked carers for the role they delivered and Members for supporting the motion.

**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.**

The live broadcast concluded at 8.10 pm

Proposed by Councillor Kerr  
Seconded by Councillor S McGuigan

**Resolved** That items C241/21 to C250/21 be taken as confidential business.

#### **Matters for Decision**

- (i) Council Confidential minutes of meeting held on 28 October 2021
- (ii) Planning Committee confidential minutes of meeting held on 2 November 2021
- (iii) Policy and Resources Committee confidential minutes of meeting held on 4 November 2021
- (iv) Environment Committee confidential minutes of meeting held on 9 November 2021

- (v) Development Committee confidential minutes of meeting held on 11 November 2021
- (vi) Environment Committee confidential minutes of Special meeting held on 16 November 2021
- (vii) Pomeroy Overflow Car Park - Contract
- (viii) Ballyronan Wood – Contract
- (ix) Active Travel – Clonoe/Coalisland & ICT Award Bellaghy/Clogher

#### **Document for Sealing**

- (x) Document for Sealing: Wayleave agreement with the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) Roads, relocation of street lighting column onto Council owned land in Swatragh Play Park.

#### **C251/21 Duration of Meeting**

The meeting was called for 7.00 pm and ended at 8.28 pm

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Annex A - Introductory Remarks from Chairperson**

Good evening and welcome to our meeting of Mid Ulster District Council in the Chamber, Dungannon whether you have joined us remotely or in the Chamber.

I specifically welcome the public watching us through the Live Broadcast. The Live Broadcast will run for the period of our Open Business but will end just before we move into Confidential Business. I let you know before this happens.

Just some housekeeping before we commence. Can I remind you:-

- If you have joined the meeting remotely please keep your audio on mute unless invited to speak and then turn it off when finished speaking
- Keep your video on at all times, unless you have bandwidth or internet connection issues, where you are advised to try turning your video off
- If you wish to speak please raise your hand in the meeting or on screen and keep raised until observed by an Officer or myself
- Should we need to take a vote this evening I will ask each member to confirm whether they are for or against the proposal or abstaining
- When invited to speak please introduce yourself by name to the meeting
- For any member attending remotely, if you declare an interest in an item, please turn off your video and keep your audio on mute for the duration of the item
- If referring to a specific report please reference the report, page or slide being referred to
- Lastly, I remind the public and press that taking photographs of proceedings or using any means to enable anyone not present to see or hear proceedings, or making a simultaneous oral report of the proceedings are not permitted

Thank you and we will now move to the first item on the agenda – apologies and then a roll call of members in attendance.