

**Minutes of Meeting of the Development Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 13 June 2024 in the Council Offices, Burn Road, Cookstown**

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| <b>Members Present</b>        | Councillor Black, Chair<br><br>Councillors Bell, F Burton, Clarke, Corry, Forde, Gildernew, McLernon, McNamee, McQuade, Molloy, Monteith, Quinn, Wilson   |
| <b>Officers in Attendance</b> | Mr Black, Strategic Director of Communities & Place (SD: C&P)<br>Mr Gordon, Assistant Director of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing (AD: HL&W)<br>Ms Linney, Assistant Director of Development (AD: Dev)<br>Mr McCreedy, Strategic Programmes Service Manager (SPSM)<br>Ms Spence, Economic Regeneration Service Manager (ERSM)<br>Ms M McKeown, Tourism Service Manager (TSM)<br>Mr O McGuckin, ICT<br>Mrs Grogan, Committee and Member Services Officer |

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm.

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

**D102/24 Notice of Recording**

This meeting will be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast on the Council's You Tube site.

**D103/24 Apologies**

Councillors W Buchanan and Milne.

**D104/24 Declaration of Interests**

The Chair, Councillor Black reminded Members of their responsibility with regard to declaration of interest.

**D105/24 Chair's Business**

None.

## **D106/24      Deputation – Arts Council**

The Chair, Councillor Black advised the deputation from Arts Council was postponed as they were unable to be in attendance tonight but would be rescheduled and brought back to a future committee meeting.

Councillor Wilson enquired if there was a reason why the Arts Council cancelled their meeting tonight and when did they advise Council.

The Chair advised that the group advised Council of the postponement within the last few days due to unforeseen circumstances.

## **Matters for Decision**

### **D107/24      Development Report - Brantry Area Rural Development Association**

The Assistant Director of Development (AD: Dev) presented previously circulated report which sought approval for the following:

- To consider and agree to act as a Sponsor Body for the Community Asset Transfer the development of a community space at 74 Rehaghey Road, Aughnacloy by Brantry Area Rural Development Association.
- Council officers to seek to use the approach taken for this scheme as a test pilot in the development of a policy position for further CAT Sponsorships.

*Councillor Gildernew declared a conflict of interest in Brantry Area Rural Development Association.*

Councillor Gildernew advised that BARD was a great group and had been assisting them with the Community Asset Transfer and were delighted that Council were going to provide support regarding that. Unfortunately, the way the process works, LPS do not do a valuation until down the line with the group not being able to determine whether it was within their remit to proceed due to affordability, but really appreciate Council support.

Councillor F Burton sought clarification on whether someone who declares an interest is allowed to speak on an actual proposal. The Councillor stated that AD: Dev had taken an outline request and had rightly pointed out, it was the first of its kind brought to Council. The Councillor said that it had come as a shock to her as it was quite down the line and had got no sight of the proposal until the report was received by members and whilst she was not against any group working hard within their community sought clarify on whether Officers could provide information as there were other community groups that could carry Rehaghey in their group and wondered if they got an opportunity to declare or express an interest. The Councillor enquired if any other group wished to declare an interest would they still be considered as we were always mindful when groups expand or create new services, other services can also be displaced within that locality which could be a concern. The Councillor sought clarity on whether another group within the locality who wished to express an interest would have an equal opportunity going forward for Council to sponsor them also or would it be better to defer the recommendation for full Council until the decision was actually taken

as she would like to find out if there were other groups interested to have a fair playing field.

The AD: Dev advised that these opportunities and promoted to the community/voluntary sector by Development Trust NI and Council have a good working partnership and could pass on their details to the Councillor F Burton to pass on to any other interested group to go through the same process. DTNI work with the group in terms of understanding what it is to take on an asset such as this. The AD: Dev said that a previous group did come forward for another public asset being disposed off, but did not get to Council as there wasn't the same awareness that whilst you take on the asset in terms of the delivery, they have to take on the liabilities also which would be the responsibility of the group. The group got to the stage with DTNI that they pulled out as they weren't aware of the LPS valuation which had to come forward. As referenced earlier, this was the start of the process as it was unknown until the outcome of the LPS valuation on whether the group could take it on but would be going through the development up until that. The AD: Dev advised that she could share DTNI contact details with the Councillor to allow any other interested groups to engage and if they get to the stage, their requests would be brought through also.

Councillor F Burton said that there still seemed to be an opportunity for other groups but felt if this proposal was agreed tonight and not deferred to Council, other groups which declare an interest, would this mean that they would be put on the backfoot or would Council sponsor the same.

The AD: Dev advised that Council could put it through indicating that there may be other groups forthcoming which could be presented to DTNI based on what was discussed here tonight.

The Chair enquired if he was right in saying that Council acting as a sponsor body, there was nothing to prevent Council from acting as a sponsor body for another organisation if they should show an interest in the future as an option if the opportunity arose.

The AD: Dev said that properties identified under the D1 process would have to be put through to DTNI. The AD: Dev advised that Officers would share with DTNI that there may be another forthcoming.

Councillor McLernon said that she would be happy to propose the recommendation brought forward tonight.

Councillor Molloy seconded the recommendation.

Councillor Molloy said that this was a good initiative which was similar to sporting bodies including engagement with sporting bodies and schools and felt that this could be upping those services within communities and looked forward to seeing it progressing.

The Chair said that Councillor F Burton had made a proposal to defer the proposal and enquired whether she was happy with what she had heard by way of an update and wished to withdraw her proposal.

Councillor F Burton advised said that she would be happy to withdraw her proposal as long as everyone gets a fair playing field and other groups seeking sponsorship get the same opportunity.

Councillor F Burton sought clarity regarding someone declaring an interest and being allowed to speak on the matter as she would be curious to know as Agewell was involved in different projects being brought back later on.

The Chair said that it was his understanding that there was nothing to prevent a member speaking on a matter so long as a declaration of interest was made and don't propose or second what was on the floor.

The Strategic Director of Communities & Place (SD: C&P) advised that his understanding was that conflicts of interest are for individual members to consider whether it was a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest on whether comments made contributed to that conflict or not. The SD: C&P stated that the member did declare an interest up front, and it is up to the member to decide whether their comments were appropriate in the context of their particular conflict.

Councillor F Burton stated that members were told at previous meetings that if a person declared an interest, they would leave the room and asked when this actually happened as she did not remember this ever-taking place.

The SD: C&P said that it was his understanding, that it depends on the reason of the interest and if the reason was pecuniary or non-pecuniary but re-iterated that it was up to each individual member to satisfy themselves that they not breaching their Code of Conduct.

Councillor Corry said that she wished to come in on the back of the conversation and advised that she was on the Community Wealth Building group and referred to some of the issues raised by Councillor F Burton. The Councillor stated that the group was only developing and were involved with some particular community groups, schools, businesses or whoever the group may be, and it was the case of everyone having an equal opportunity in the collaboration of whatever community benefits that there might be.

Proposed by Councillor McLernon  
Seconded by Councillor Molloy

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council –

- To agree for Council to be a Sponsor Body to the Community Asset Transfer and development of a community space at 74 Rehaghey Road, Aughnacloy by Brantry Area Rural Development Association.
- To use the approach taken for this scheme as a test pilot in the development of a policy position for further CAT Sponsorships.

## **D108/24      Development Report**

The Assistant Director of Development (AD: Dev) presented previously circulated report which sought approval for the following:

- Rolling Community Grant Awards
- PCSP Plan 2024 - 24
- Development Department - Update

Councillor Quinn proposed the report.

Councillor Quinn referred to item 2.3 – Development Update – Gortgonis and Coalisland Canal and stated that excellent news had been received over the last number of weeks regarding the school moving forward and funding being granted along with two other local schools which was great to see. The Councillor said that discussions had been ongoing regarding the Gortgonis Centre from he first became a Councillor in 2014, 10 years later soil has not been broken yet, but plenty ideas and a lot of discussion around the town on what actually happened and hoped that we were on the final stretch getting here. The Councillor referred to the concept of designs and talk about scaling it back and enquired if Council had decided the final outcome going forward or still in two minds about the design.

The SD: C&P advised that following the last engagement with members a number of months ago when news emerged around the Education Authority, Officers had been doing work in the background around revisions to the scheme to build in some of the conversation points raised which has now got to the stage where Officers were content that it reflects what members had alluded to the last time. The SD: C&P hoped that over the summer that engagement would take place with DEA members to take them through the concepts before coming back to Development Committee for consideration.

Councillor Quinn referred to Coalisland Canal project and noted that design options and discussions had taken place previously and enquired if there had been any word back from the Department regarding any extra funding that could be spent towards it.

The SD: C&P advised that there was a lot of work going on in the background in relation to Coalisland Canal with a DEA meeting scheduled to take place on Monday evening for members. The SD: C&P said members would be updated at that meeting and hoped that a direction of travel on how this could be moved forward, with a report being brought back to Development Committee for consideration. He advised that Council were under significant time pressures given that the funding was still time sensitive and spent by 31 March 2025 and hoped that after the DEA meeting that a direction of travel could be sought.

The Chair referred to item 2.3 – PCSP Plan 2024-25 which was very detailed and some good work ongoing. The Chair said that one thing that did jump out at him which was quite concerning was the lack of awareness amongst young people in terms of what PSCP do as 69% of young people not aware of the group. He was aware that some work did take place regarding raising awareness within that demographic but felt that there should be a concerted effort to really try increase this as over two-thirds of people

within that category not being aware was not a particularly good statistic. The Chair felt a further effort to raise awareness of PCSP with young people should be explored.

Councillor F Burton said that each year this last number of years domestic violence has been exceptionally high within Mid Ulster, with members being aware of a woman very recently being murdered in her own home. The Councillor stated that although the murder did not take place within our area, statistics show that this could be something that may come to our area sooner rather than later. The Councillor said that she went through the report and did not see much about domestic violence and felt that this would be important as it was something that usually happens around Christmas time whenever everyone is off and would like to see more clarity around that. The Councillor said that in recent weeks, the Clogher Valley area has had a significant rise in rural farm crime with tractors, trailers and quads being stolen and would like this raised with the PCSP team regarding help that it out there and that farmers are made aware of it.

Proposed by Councillor Quinn  
Seconded by Councillor F Burton and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to –

- Approve the Community Grant Awards for Sports Representative Grant
- Note the PCSP Annual Plan 2024-25
- Note the Development update.

**D109/24 Tender to Supply Willow Cookstown Leisure Centre**

The Assistant Director of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing (AD: HL&W) presented previously circulated report which sought approval to approve the awarding of delegated powers to the July 2024 Development Committee (and/or Chief Executive if required depending on dates/timelines) for the award of contract to supply Willow Tender for Cookstown Leisure Centre.

Councillor Wilson enquired if the AD: HL&W envisaged that more and better tenders would be received otherwise another source would need to be investigated.

The AD: HL&W said as the tender was currently live, he didn't wish to comment to much on it but advised that it was a market with a limited number of suppliers operating. The AD: HL&W said that it was regrettable the submission received previously did not meet all the criteria as there were a few gaps within their submission but this did not necessarily mean that they couldn't provide the full service requested, but that all their responses were not full and complete so this was the reason the tender had to be readvertised.

Proposed by Councillor McNamee  
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to note the contents of this report and in the event it is not possible to bring a tender report for the contract appointment to the Council meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2024, approval granted that pursuant to Section 7(1)(b) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014,

that authority is delegated to the July 2024 Development Committee (and/or Chief Executive if required depending on dates/timelines) for the award of contract to supply Willow Tender for Cookstown Leisure Centre subject to normal satisfactory due diligence processes for an initial contract award of 12 months with option to extend for a further 2 x 12 month periods subject to satisfactory performance and at discretion of Council.

#### **D110/24 Choose to Live Better Funding**

The Assistant Director of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing (AD: HL&W) presented previously circulated report to update Council on successful application to the Choose to Live Better Fund and to seek Members approval of the acceptance of the letter of offer from The Northern Healthy Lifestyle Partnership (NHLP).

The Chair referred to 3 projects which were submitted, 2 were successful and one unsuccessful. He stated that the one that was unsuccessful was “Mid Ulster Active and Healthy” and his understanding was that the reason given was that it was seen as a duplication of service and enquired what duplication of service was that seen to be a duplication of. The Chair also referred to the two schemes which had been successful and enquired if these would be delivered by Council Officer resource.

The AD: HL&W referred to unsuccessful application for “Mid Ulster Active and Healthy” and stated that it was linked into the Agewell initiative and because it was a multi-partnership funded initiative through a number of partners; Northern Trust, Southern Trust, PHA and NIHE and funding coming in from other means. The AD: HL&W said that the submitted application was to try and top funding up as an extra contribution, but unfortunately the request was unsuccessful.

The AD: HL&W in referring to delivery of the two successful schemes confirmed that the initiatives would be led by the Council team, through Health & Wellbeing team and Coaches within our leisure centres for summer camps.

Proposed by Councillor McNamee  
Seconded by Councillor Corry and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to note the contents of the report and due to the deadline for return, that retrospective approval be granted for the signing of the letter of offer from The Northern Healthy Lifestyle Partnership (NHLP).

#### **D111/24 Sperrins Partnership - Annual Update for 2023/24 and New Three-Year Partnership Agreement (April 2024 to March 2027)**

The Tourism Service Manager (TSM) presented previously circulated report to provide Members with an update on key activities carried out by Sperrins Partnership for 2023/24 and seek agreement to enter into a new three-year Sperrins Partnership Agreement for 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27.

*Councillor Clarke declared an interest in Sperrins Partnership on behalf of Council.*

Councillor Clarke said that after all the years of effort from 2018, great progress has been made and key to the success was that all four Councils have been involved and taking an active part and working really well. The Councillor stated that Council had a very strong team of Officers which were delivering for us and if anyone wished to read the circulated appendix, they will clearly see what it going on and also referred to comment made regarding AONB Management Board being concluded which was great progress and a major way forward.

The Chair concurred with Councillor Clarke regarding a lot of good work ongoing and said that he was aware of this being a topic close to the Councillor's heart and appreciated his comments.

Councillor McNamee proposed the recommendation.

Councillor Corry said she wished to reiterate Councillor Clarke's comments and was aware of the work which has been done by the member and also TSM and her team which has taken many years to get to this stage. The Councillor said that she looked forward to the management plan coming into place and seeing fruition of all the years of hard work and promoting Sperrins as an asset within our local area.

Councillor F Burton enquired about other areas having input into the consultation in the next round, as previously it was Broughderg and asked if it would be widened out into other areas.

The TSM advised that consultations have taken place across all of the Sperrins and that was why there was two additional further dates due to the high influx of people who wished to attend when originally dates didn't suit. It was agreed at the end of July there would be two further dates to accommodate people who live in the Sperrins to give their views and consult on the draft, with dates and venues to be confirmed. It is hoped that after this an update would be brought back to Development Committee in September for members to see what the first final draft of the Management Plan would look like.

Councillor Clarke said that he had met a visitor in Davagh this morning from Dingle in Kerry. This was an outdoor person who had travelled all around Ireland and ended up in the Sperrins for a fortnight and to them it was one of the most wonderful landscapes they have ever come across.

Proposed by Councillor McNamee  
Seconded by Councillor Corry

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to –

- a) **Note** update on Sperrins Partnership Project activities for 2023/2024.
- b) **Approve** the new Sperrins Partnership Agreement (Appendix 1) between the four partner Councils for the next three financial years (2024/2025, 2025/2026 and 2026/2027) and authorise Council's Chief Executive to sign and return the Agreement on behalf of Mid Ulster District Council.

- c) **Agree in principle** that Council fund Sperrins Partnership for a three-year term, as highlighted at 5.1 (b) above. **Approve** a Council funding contribution of £22,000 to Sperrins Partnership Project for the 2024/2025 financial year and **note** that Mid Ulster District Council's financial contributions in years 2025/2026 and 2026/2027, will be determined annually, when budgets are finalised.
- d) **Note** that Sperrins AONB Management Plan consultations will be delivered by external consultants, S3 Solutions, on behalf of the Sperrins Partnership. Members attention is drawn to two dates when public consultations will be held in Mid Ulster:
- Broughderg Community Centre - Tuesday 11 June 2024 (12noon - 2pm)
  - An Carn, Maghera - Thursday 13 June 2024 (6.30pm – 8.30pm).

## Matters for Information

### D112/24 Development Committee Minutes of Meeting held on 16 May 2024

Members noted Minutes of Development Committee held on 16 May 2024.

Councillor Quinn referred to meeting with Minister regarding Blackwater. The Councillor said that he had checked Environment Committee minutes and there was nothing on it regarding meeting between Minister, MUDC and ABC Councils and asked if there was any update and if not could one be sought.

Councillor Monteith referred to and sought update on the following:

- 1) D088/24 and enquired if there was any date arranged yet for workshop in relation to Housing Fitness Standards.
- 2) D090/24 and enquired if any date was arranged yet in relation to Ballysaggart Lough
- 3) D090/24 – pitch provision at Benburb where people have been invited in to see what Council can do for them

The Councillor also raised the ongoing issue of the lack of GAA pitches where four clubs operate of three pitches in Dungannon town. The Councillor said that he had spoken informally to the AD: HL&W already regarding the significant downturn in usage of two soccer pitches at Drumcoo especially since the 4g pitch has been installed and proposed to move forward to looking at the feasibility of utilising the back two pitches for GAA purposes as well as soccer if needed.

Councillor Monteith said that whilst he was on the subject of Drumcoo, which was an issue that had done the rounds of previous Council also, proposed that a DEA meeting be arranged again due to the initial talk about a proposal, expansion, development of land currently owned by Council at Drumcoo which has not been developed, working with Sperrinview and Oakridge about creating an urban park. The Councillor said that these ideas were initially explored and had not been progressed and proposed that a DEA meeting be arranged to merge all this stuff together otherwise it will never be done.

The AD: HL&W in response to Member's query regarding Housing Fitness Standards workshop advised that Environmental Health team were currently working on this with a number of different partners and agencies which needed to be engaged with. The AD: HL&W said there was a need to make sure when doing the workshop that it was going to hit the brief in terms of what Members and other stakeholders expect to get out of it. He said that the workshop was more likely to take place by the end of the summer, during September time. It was also anticipated time is needed to bring forward an analysis and assessment on the recent introduction of the Private Tendencies Act to make sure that there was a sufficient enough update as much as possible but would be linking in with AD: DEV's team and other agencies. He said that the aim was to get a date for Members Diaries within the next few weeks with a workshop taking place before the end of summer or during September.

The AD: HL&W in response to Member's query regarding Black Lough advised that he was due to attend a Board meeting in relation to Reservoirs and what needed to be done at the site. The AD: HL&W said that he would go back and raise the issue again to try and get a DEA meeting arranged as soon as possible.

The AD: HL&W in response to Member's query regarding Benburb advised that Council were engaging with the Club, the Pitches Strategy allows Officers the mechanism to work up proposals for the site. The progress between the last committee and this committee meeting was that Council had appointed a Consultant to draw up the designs and plans for what the future Benburb pitch could look like should Council be in a position to leverage in funding and make funding applications, which was a strategic recommendation within the Pitches Strategy. This is currently on the radar and hope to go back into the community to engage once the design are worked up.

The AD: HL&W in response to Member's query regarding Drumcoo advised that one of the strategic recommendations within the Pitches Strategy recommends Council officers to continue to keep an ongoing eye and review all of Council's assets, how they were being used and where emerging future demand is coming in as well. He concurred with Member's comments regarding a number of pitches at Drumcoo, some well used and some not so well used and with an emerging need in that area. The AD: HL&W confirmed that Officers were looking at the work involved to convert one of the pitches for additional sporting use in terms of the line marking and also the provision of the equipment. He stated that there was a ringfenced pot of money within the approved Pitches Strategy and hoped that this could be brought to fruition over the summer months.

In response to query regarding DEA meeting around Drumcoo Masterplan, the SD: C&P stated that members may be aware that Council has a very ambitious Capital programme including Gortgonis, Coalisland Canal, MUSA and many others members would be aware of. There was a need to look at how resources were being assigned in relation to delivery against that ambition and as a result there's going to be a review of the Capital programme which the Strategic Director of Environment (SD: Env) was going to lead over the next number of months, so additional requests coming to the table which have not already been captured within the Capital plan need to be considered through that process to ensure that Council has the resources to be able to fulfil those ambitions. The SD: C&P said that there was a need to make sure what was

agreed within the Capital plan, there needs to be the internal resources to deliver that, so Drumcoo which is not currently on the Capital programme is something that if the Council wished to take forward, then this was the process in terms of raising that and including as part of the plan so resources can be assigned appropriately.

The Chair sought clarification on comment raised around the two particular pitches and additional sporting uses etc and asked if this was something that needed to come back to committee for approval or has it already been approved through the Pitches Strategy.

The AD: HL&W advised that this was one of the recommendations that has already been considered and approved through the Pitches Strategy but would always aim to give it due consideration which includes looking at the booking analysis in last period of time, engaging with local known groups that also use those facilities and any emerging needs also. The AD: HL&W said that before anything can be done there was a need to make sure that due consideration was given, and with this approach being approved through the Pitches Strategy, Officers can review these matters and keep them under review, but there was also the need to engage with local groups to make sure it's the right thing to do as well.

Councillor F Burton referred to page 242 and enquired if there was any more information in relation to lobbying taking place with DAERA in particular to rural villages and smaller towns as some of them were in critical need of help and support. The Councillor said that there was a need to provide help with the painting of these shops to make sure they look open and would appreciate an update. The Councillor referred to circulation of Gift Cards during our Ladies' Events and said that she had been contacted by a number of women stating that there were unable to use the cards.

The Economic Regeneration Service Manager (ERSM) said that following the dereliction meeting with DAERA in attendance, they indicated to Council that at the moment they were very much waiting on approval from Ministers. The ERSM stated that there may be potential money coming down the line but there were no guarantees at this stage.

In response to query regarding the Gift Cards, the ERSM advised that she was aware of concerns being received regarding several people being unable to use their cards. She advised the Member that Officers had went out to those businesses again and got the cards re-swiped, what was found was that some of the gift cards needed re-swiping again whenever a business terminal changed. The ERSM stated that sometimes businesses forget to inform Council of a change and was more of a technical issue.

Councillor F Burton enquired if there was anywhere else Council could seek funding from other than DAERA, as there was a fantastic Chamber of Commerce in the Clogher Valley area and Fivemiletown. Every time a business closes and moves out of a property, they are really on the ground trying to get someone back in but the like of Aghnacloy and Caledon with smaller businesses like other areas are struggling to try and maintain properties over the time, every winter properties take a real hit and more so this year when we didn't have a good spring. The Councillor enquired if there was any other avenue that financial support could be sought as members hear about it every day when they are out amongst the traders and something really good for this Council to do in trying to help these businesses.

The ERSM in response to funding streams for businesses said that there was a need to be mindful as these were issues for both urban and rural businesses across the district and advised the Member if an opportunity came along it would most certainly be grabbed with both hands and moved forward, but unfortunately at the moment there were no opportunities but would certainly keep it on the radar if something develops.

Councillor Wilson advised that he had previously raised concerns regarding the Pitches Strategy and numerous concerns for the provision of Hockey within both Cookstown and Dungannon. He said that this sport was classed within the report as a minority sport yet 1,000 people play it each week but a sport like bowling had quite little participants including a closed season. The Councillor felt that this was something that needed to be looked at whilst the AD: HL&W indicated that there was a mechanism which was passed within the Pitches Strategy for officers to be able to do A,B and C, the Councillor said that he would like to see things coming back to this Committee to make sure it was properly scrutinised to make sure fairness and equality is adhered to.

Councillor Molloy said that he would be happy to second Councillor Monteith's proposal regarding Benburb's pitch proposal and facilities as he was aware of Council's footprint being already there. The Councillor said that it would be beneficial to assist the community organisations in particular Dúiche Neill Hurling Club and Riverdale Football Club as the development of these sites would have the potential to help the whole community across different sports.

Councillor Molloy said that he accepted what the SD: C&P alluded to regarding the Capital Projects around Drumcoo, but there had been a piece of work done which came to Council three years ago with a plan, working with the school next door and better access into Drumcoo Park which would start that whole opening up. The Councillor said if Members stop talking about it and taken off the agenda, it will disappear completely and important to keep it on the radar.

The SD: C&P said that he was not suggesting that Drumcoo should not be on the list as it was not his role and all he was saying was that Council had a very ambitious Capital Programme and Council resources were assigned to enable us to deliver that programme. There was going to be a process in relation to prioritisation and up to members to decide and agree what needs to be included going forward.

In response to Chair's query regarding clarity, Councillor Monteith said that although the SD: C&P indicated that Drumcoo was being looked at, he confirmed that he would be proposing that a DEA meeting be held to make sure that things are not held up as Drumcoo was in dire need of upgrading, if not a major investment, then some mechanism needs to be in place to fix up the area very quickly as assurances had been given to the community that upgrade works would be part of a bigger plan for Drumcoo. The Councillor stated that some of the apparatus at Drumcoo was unacceptable and has been for quite a period of time and felt that a DEA meeting would provide an update on where the situation currently was at and how to progress going forward to make Drumcoo fit for purpose.

The Chair stated that it may be beneficial to arrange DEA meetings to discuss current operational issues at the site and for the wider regeneration to be considered as part of the capital programme review.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith  
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council –

- 1) That a DEA meeting be arranged to look at options for pitch provision and community facilities at Benburb.
- 2) That a DEA meeting be arranged to discuss current operational issues relating to Drumcoo.

#### **D113/24 Communities & Place Departmental Service Plan 2024-25**

Members noted Communities & Place Departmental Service Plan 24/25.

#### **D114/24 Lough Fea Footbridge**

Members noted update on progress on replacement of footbridge at Lough Fea.

The Chair said that he was aware of the damage done at the site a few months ago and his concern would be the timeframe being suggested to get this sorted which was in the region of 3 to 4 months. The Chair said that it was far from ideal in terms of coming into the summer months as Lough Fea was used by a lot of people in the locality and also the concern regarding not being able to walk around the area in a circular way. The Chair asked that pressure be kept on to get this resolved as soon as possible. He said that it was his understanding that an Engineer's report was awaited in regards to next steps and potential costings and asked that an update be brought to the next committee meeting to see how things have progressed to make sure that it was resolved as soon as possible.

The AD: HL&W wished to assure members that this was being treated as a priority and trying to move at pace. He advised that the report members had in front of them had been written approximately two weeks ago in order to meet committee papers deadline but would be happy to provide members with a further verbal update tonight. The AD: HL&W advised that today work had taken place around dismantling and completely removing the existing bridge with the Contractor due to attend site tomorrow morning to finish the site clean-up. It was anticipated that a Structural Engineer would also be in attendance tomorrow to inspect the headwall as it was until the existing bridge is removed that we can understand the full condition and to also make sure that the headwall can support the new bridge. All being well, the design could be completed out next week which will allow Officers to move forward to the procurement for a contractor for the manufacturing of the bridge. The AD: HL&W advised that his team were working closely with the Property Services and Capital Planning teams within Council, working at pace but there were a number of processes which had to be followed e.g. procurement process but could assure members that Council officers also wish to have this bridge opened as quickly as possible.

Councillor Wilson said that he was aware the Council was working at pace at Lough Fea as he was down at the site today. The Councillor asked if it was possible in the short term to erect a pontoon bridge further down to allow pedestrian access across.

The AD: HL&W advised that focus had been on removing the existing bridge and making it fit for purpose, with a fit for purpose replacement. Discussions with Structural Engineers were ongoing, but the time and effort to implement a temporary measure and costs associated could outweigh the benefit. He said that he appreciated that current visitor and experience wasn't where it needs to be in terms of the circular loop but it would be more beneficial to allow for the period of time to get the proper solution in place. The AD: HL&W advised that Officers were focused and keen to get a solution as swiftly as possible for the long term, rather than the short term. He said that although he understood members frustration, it was about getting best value for money and the use of public funds to progress this forward as swiftly as possible.

Councillor Wilson said that his thinking was that when the bridge was removed and if the walls are intact, that a structure could be made that would go on top of the two pillars and then removed when the permanent structure was ready to be put in place.

The AD: HL&W said that this would appear to be a perfectly common-sense approach but there was a need to give due consideration to health & safety issues and insurance concerns although he agreed that on the surface it did seem a simple enough approach. However, he said that all being well a design can be submitted next week from the Structural Engineer to allow officers to navigate a way through procurement which will be moved forward as quickly as possible.

Councillor McNamee concurred with the Chair's comments as it was a prolonged period of time to mid-October. The Councillor said that it would be important to get the complete full circle dealt with first as people were walking halfway around, turning back and this caused congestion. He was delighted to hear that Council was moving at speed to try and get it completed as quickly as possible.

The Chair said that it would be beneficial and appreciated if an update and associated costings could be brought to the next committee meeting.

#### **D115/24 Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes Report – OBF**

Members noted previously circulated report which provided update on the following key activities –

- All-Island Strategic Rail Review
- A5/N2 Cross Border Committee Minutes 19.3.24 and Updated Terms of Reference
- Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) – Multiply Programme
- Taste Mid Ulster Food Heritage Events
- Maghera Regeneration Programme – Town Centre Public Realm
- Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Achievements 2023/2024

The Chair referred to Maghera Public Realm scheme and said that it was great to see progress being made in respect of the project and recent appointment of the Contractor. The Chair advised that a great piece of work was ongoing in Maghera which would be greatly welcomed by the local residents and local businesses, although there may be a little bit of disturbance during the construction period, he anticipated that it would be all worth it in the end to reach a good outcome for all.

Councillor Quinn referred to item 2.1 – All-Island Strategic Rail Review and felt that there wasn't much on the report and basically pointed out what we all know already, that if it came to fruition the amount of things that it would unlock, particularly for Mid Ulster and something we need to push forward on. The Councillor said that there were a number of projects people want to do around the country and the amount of money it would take to implement this would be colossal, but we are always looking at ways to Green our future and there would be no better project than an All-Island Strategic Rail Network. He hoped to see this happening in the future and felt that it would be important for our constitutions to push this forward.

Councillor Molloy also welcomed the All-Island Strategic Rail Review and said that now it was the final report published, did that mean it was out in the public domain.

The Strategic Programmes Service Manager (SPSM) advised that the final review and recommendations was due early Spring but with the forthcoming elections, he would anticipate if not coming forward next month, that it would be delayed until the Autumn. The SPSM stated that the review document and recommendations still had to be agreed by both jurisdictions.

*Councillor Quinn left the meeting at 7.57 pm.*

Councillor Monteith referred to item 3.3 – Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) – Multiply Programme. The Councillor said that although he had no issue with what was in front of members tonight, he wished to raise the issue of employability and no-one being able to get a grasp of it. The Councillor stated that for a number of years there has been masses of young people learning trades i.e. joinery, electric, plumbing, bricklaying etc and cannot access placements, with the situation being that a young person can only go so far and if they don't get a placement then their education or carrying forward a trade will end. The Councillor said that this was a major issue and the difficulty in trying to get a tradesperson to do work at someone's home was a major stumbling and strategic fundamental problem within our local labour force. The Councillor advised that he had been contacted by a parent today regarding needing a joinery placement for her son with a local firm, that local firm is doing work in Dublin as a sub-contractor, the young person cannot be used because he was not qualified, which was ridiculous that in a border area, there were these restrictions. He said that it was hard enough for young people to get these placements without this kind of bureaucracy and requested that this be investigated. The Councillor said he was unsure if this was an LMP matter but this needed to be tackled and taken forward as a priority as we were talking to these businesses all the time and they need to be told that they need to be willing to be taking on young people and not always the responsibility of the public sector to train young people all of the time and just not good enough. He said that there were young people out there that want to better and make a good life for themselves but were hindered because they cannot get placements.

*Councillor Quinn returned to the meeting at 7.59 pm.*

Councillor Monteith proposed that Officers liaise with local colleges and businesses to try and encourage them, whether it be an incentive scheme or whatever to say that they will take on placements. He said that it was unfair as young people has made the decision to go down a certain route and being hindered and proposed that this be taken forward.

The Strategic Programmes Service Manager (SPSM) said that he would take on Councillor Monteith's comments and raise same through Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership. The SPSM updated members on future position of LMP following Communities Minister's announcement on budget priorities and continued departmental funding for Labour Market Partnerships which was very welcome news.

The Chair concurred with Councillor Monteith's comments regarding placements and stated that it did not meet supply and demand as there was more demand for tradespeople and less supply and anything that Council could do to try and remedy the matter would be greatly welcomed.

Councillor Monteith asked if it would be possible for SPSM to liaise with local colleges to see how many people were struggling and for Council to contact any databases which they have in relation to construction firms and contractors to try and encourage people to come forward. The Councillor said that many young people were very much left to their own devices to find the local firm themselves which can be quite overwhelming as some are 17, 18, 19 years old having no contacts within their trade industry. The Councillor felt it would be beneficial for Council to intervene in the interim as a lot of these young people need placements for September and asked Officers to contact businesses on their databases and consult with local colleges. He suggested a publicity campaign through social media to encourage businesses to get involved should be explored as this would be to the benefit of everyone in the long run.

The Chair enquired if there was a possibility or scope to arrange an event to bring businesses and young people together to try and further conversations. He said that this was only a suggestion and beneficial for the SPSM to raise through the appropriate channels.

The SPSM stated that the local colleges participate on the Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership, and he would raise the elected members concerns.

Councillor Corry seconded Councillor Monteith proposal.

Councillor Corry referred to her old school St Colm's High School, Draperstown and said that the school were doing a scheme along with Workspace and local businesses within the town. This scheme worked with young people doing apprenticeships aged 16, 17, 18 years old including, joinery, construction, accountancy, hairdressing and right across the board for all different types of placements. The Councillor felt that it would be useful for Officers to investigate this initiative and possibly speak to Workspace as it has been a really successful programme in giving young people other choices apart from going to university.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith  
Seconded by Councillor Corry and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that Officers bring to attention of Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership difficulties for young people trying to access work placements.

Councillor Corry referred to Chair's comments regarding Maghera Public Realm scheme and said that she recently attended the CivCo Ltd public engagement event which give the local community an opportunity to come and see what was going on and speak to the Contractors and discuss any concerns they may have about parts of the town being closed etc. The Councillor said that this was a very welcome scheme and would be delighted to see the first works beginning in the summertime.

The Chair concurred with previous comments and said that key to Maghera's success was the ongoing dialogue and communication between all parties involved which was very important in the delivery of the scheme in the smoothest transition as we possibly can.

Councillor F Burton concurred with Councillor Monteith's comments regarding young people's career paths. The Councillor advised that she had been in contact with a mother who was having difficulty in trying to get her child into work experience from a secondary school and agreed with comment about having difficulty in trying to contact businesses. The Councillor said that it would be important for Council to use their links to the schools as they are invited and attend their school career events and felt that this could link in very well.

Councillor F Burton referred to All-Ireland Strategic Rail Review which has been on the cards for some time and going to take a massive amount of work to ever get it to Mid Ulster. She felt as a Council we really need to push for this for the West of the Bann at every opportunity and referred to one local MLA who had raised the issue at Stormont and would really encourage all the parties sitting around this table to do the same. The Councillor advised that there had been an effort made by Fermanagh, which sought to be included in the Rail Review, but was passed over, which was a real negative and certainly would not help us within this area but hoped that going forward this can be rectified.

Councillor F Burton referred to A5 Cross Border Committee and enquired if there was an opportunity within that role for potential rail funding if the project was successful. The Councillor said that it would be beneficial to have some feasibility study so that it would be future proof if there was some money at some point to be given to the rail review that it could be built into the plan at that time. She said that there were continuous discussions about climate change and taking cars off the roads, but if we continue to build more roads, then more cars are going to be accommodated and looked forward to the day that rail infrastructure comes to this area as it has been a letdown for this area and a real down service. The Councillor stated that the Chief Executive indicated that he had it built into every possible avenue he possibly could going forward and felt that Council really needed to give it another push as it just

seemed to be talked about and concurred with Councillor Quinn's comments about it being on the agenda but not really telling us much.

*Councillor Wilson left the meeting at 8.08 pm.*

*Councillor Monteith left the meeting at 8.10 pm.*

The Chair agreed with previous comments regarding the connection to the West, although it was positive that it was being looked at, but members were correct in what it would look like around the huge hole for the West of the Bann and in and around Fermanagh.

The Chair said that he was unsure of what stage this was at and asked the Strategic Programmes Service Manager (SPSM) whether there was an opportunity to provide that feedback into the process again with regards to disappointment with there not being more extensive network into the West. The Chair appreciated that this was all down to money and a feasibility study at this stage and would be curious if there could possibly be an opportunity to reiterate this point again with the ongoing dialogue that there continues to be.

The SPSM said that he would take on board elected members comments. In terms of investment within Mid Ulster, the most recent paper recommended the reopening of the Portadown, Dungannon, Omagh, Strabane, Derry, Letterkenny as one potential rail route. He said that he would be happy to raise the issue as we would like more extensive Railway Infrastructure investment towards the West. The SPSM advised members that Into the West Group had also been actively lobbying in terms of investment for the Northwest and had provided a presentation to the Development committee.

Councillor McNamee said that in the past discussions had taken place regarding setting up a Working Group across the Councils to deal with all these issues, representation from each Council, then it was agreed that Council Officers would meet at this level. The Councillor felt that it may be a possible way forward in setting up a Working Group.

The Chair said that this could be something that could be raised within that forum in regard to any merit or benefit in doing so to see if there was any appetite for that. He said that without making a commitment asked if this was a question worth raising to see if there was any desire to move forward on that or not.

Councillor Quinn concurred with comments from Councillors Monteith and Corry regarding apprenticeships as he was aware of issues around construction and quarrying within Mid Ulster, unfortunately there was a lot of concerns at present.

Councillor Quinn referred to item 3.3 - LMP and said that he had noticed within the last few years issues with people not having the adequacy literacy or numeracy skills for the workplace. The Councillor advised that people were willing and able to work in big companies but were held back because of the fear of not being able to pass exams again after failing initially. The Councillor stated that a message needed to be sent out to people advising that schools and colleges were willing to help anyone to gain the qualifications required to have a career of their choice.

*The live broadcast ended at 8.15 pm.*

## **Local Government (NI) Act 2014 – Confidential Business**

Proposed by Councillor F Burton  
Seconded by Councillor Quinn and

**Resolved** In accordance with Section 42, Part 1 Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 that Members of the public in accordance with Section 42, Part 1 Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 that Members of the public be asked to withdraw from the meeting whilst members consider items D116/24 to D118/24.

### **Matters for Decision**

D116/24 Cookstown Saturday Market Scoping Study

### **Matters for Information**

D117/24 Confidential Minutes of Development Committee held on 16 May 2024

D118/24 Macmillan Move More Programme

### **D119/24 Duration of Meeting**

The meeting was called for 7pm and ended at 8.30 pm.

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Annex A – Introductory Remarks from the Chairperson**

Good evening and welcome to the Council's [Policy & Resources/Environment/Development] Committee in the Chamber, [Cookstown/Dungannon/Magherafelt].

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

I would 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 agenda.