

From the office of the Minister for Infrastructure
JOHN O'DOWD MLA

Councillor Dominic Molloy
Mid Ulster District Council
Dungannon Office
Circular Road
Dungannon
BT71 6DT

James House
Gasworks Business Park
2-4 Cromac Avenue
BELFAST
BT7 2JA
Telephone: (028) 9054 0105
Email: Private.office@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Your reference: C052/24
Our reference: COR-1258-2024
20th May 2024

Dominic, a chara,

A5WTC

Thank you for your letter dated 5 April 2024, expressing your Council's proactive support for the A5 dual carriageway project and requesting I ensure it's prioritisation.

I can assure you that I am committed to progressing the delivery of the A5 flagship project, in line with my statutory duties, which will not only improve road safety and save lives but is also of significant strategic importance to the region, helping to tackle regional imbalance, improving the economy, job prospects and prosperity, and connecting communities.

My Department received the final advisory Report from the Planning Appeals Commission on 31 October 2023 in relation to the latest public inquiry on the project. Careful consideration is being given to the points raised and detailed recommendations made within this report, some of which are complex and wide ranging, and legal advice has been sought by officials on key issues.

Once my officials have completed this work and presented all information relevant to the project for my consideration, I will make an announcement in line with my statutory duties.

Is mise le meas,



JOHN O'DOWD MLA
Minister for Infrastructure

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTER



Councillor Dominic Molloy

Eileen.Forde@midulstercouncil.org

Rathgael House
43 Balloo Road
Rathgill
BANGOR
BT19 7PR

private.office@education-ni.gov.uk

4 June 2024
Your ref: C096/24

CORR-1557-2024

Dear Councillor Molloy

Thank you for your email of 3 June regarding my Written Ministerial Statement on 23 May 2024 setting out my plans for early learning and childcare support measures during 2024/25. The statement is available for you to read on the DE website at [Written Ministerial Statement - Early Learning and Childcare Measures 2024/25 | Department of Education \(education-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/written-ministerial-statement-early-learning-and-childcare-measures-2024-25)

As you may be aware, the development of an Executive Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Strategy, including the standardisation of pre-school education programme (PSEP) sessions, remains one of my top priorities. The package of measures I have set out in my Statement will be implemented in 2024/25 within the £25m budget set aside by the Executive and will inform longer-term strategy development. Work to confirm the operational detail is ongoing and this will be communicated in due course.

In terms of PSEP provision, this marks the beginning of a period of transition from the current mix of approximately 40% full-time (minimum of 22.5 hours per week) and 60% part-time (minimum of 12.5 hours per week) to a universal offer of at least 22.5 hours for all pupils. The evidence for providing at least 22.5 hours pre-school education per week is strong in terms of its impact on supporting social and emotional development and preparing children for school. I am committed to maximising this long-term positive impact on children's development as well as ensuring that their families can benefit from the difference that a longer pre-school day can have in terms of the costs of childcare.

It is my intention that the funding made available will enable the Education Authority to bring forward proposals for approximately 100 pre-school settings to transition from a part-time to full-time pattern of delivery, commencing September 2025. It is my intention that the current position, where sufficient funded pre-school education places are made available in all areas to accommodate every target aged child whose parents want a place for them, will be retained at every stage of the implementation of the standardised session length. This will require careful planning

over a period of time, with implementation dependent on the necessary resources being made available to my Department at each stage.

I trust you find this information useful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Paul Givan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "P" and a horizontal line underlining the name.

**PAUL GIVAN MLA
MINISTER OF EDUCATION**



Police Service of Northern Ireland

Mid Ulster District
Magherafelt PSNI Station
45-49 Meeting Street
Magherafelt
BT45 6BW

Email: Michael.O'Loan@psni.police.uk
Tel: 028 90 650222

3 June 2024

Councillor Molloy

Thank you for your correspondence.

The decision to close enquiry offices has not been taken lightly however, given the dire financial situation the Police Service continues to face, these closures were unavoidable. The unrealistic and unsustainable funding arrangements for policing in Northern Ireland mean that as a Police Service we must ensure prudence in financial planning in order to maximise our ability to keep communities safe, this includes protecting the function of Neighbourhood Policing.

Please be assured that my priority remains keeping the communities of Mid Ulster safe through Neighbourhood Policing.

Yours sincerely

Michael O'Loan

Michael O'Loan
District Commander

From: [McCartan, John](#)
To: [Eileen Forde](#)
Cc: _____
Subject: FW: Correspondence Mid Ulster Council - Meeting Request
Date: 06 June 2024 18:10:35
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[C100.24 NIHE Grass Cutting Call log system.pdf](#)

Hi Eileen

With reference to your correspondence in regards to Grass Cutting in the Mid Ulster area, which the Chief Executive has asked me to respond in regards to.

The comments with regards to the lack of a grass cutting schedule and the impact on the appearance of locations which lie within the responsibility of the NIHE we accept. There are a number of mitigating factors, which I have summarised below, which I trust will be taken into consideration:

- The end of an 8 year grounds maintenance contract on 21st April 2024, involved the stand down of existing operations in conjunction with the mobilisation of the new contractual arrangements from 1st May. This involved the acquisition of new plant, machinery and personnel and thus delayed the grass cutting regime.
- The situation was exacerbated by adverse ground conditions from March to April which prevented the deployment of the large grass cutting machinery and with the warm May there was significant grass growth
- The first cutting cycle though delayed has now been completed and the second cutting cycle is currently in progress with a return to our normal specification thereafter.

In relation to the concerns around the 'new call log system for Members which has removed the opportunity to speak directly with officers to resolve issues' I would like to assure Members that there has been no change to the existing arrangements. I appreciate that communication went out to members informing them of a change, this message was miscommunicated and applied to our internal reporting and monitoring arrangements, members can continue to contact our grounds staff in the normal manner and we can also provide them with a contact address for our Customer Service Unit which they can report issues to directly should they wish to do so. I apologise for any confusion caused and again assure that our staff are available to be contacted by Members in the normal fashion.

I am happy to meet in regards to these issues and can do so either in person or Teams, whichever is most convenient for you, if there are dates and times that are suitable.

Regards

John McCartan
Assistant Director
South Region

Northern Ireland Water
PO Box 1026
Belfast
BT1 9DJ
www.niwater.com
Tel: 0345 7440088



Eileen.Forde@midulstercouncil.org

14th June 2024

Dear Dominic

Re: Your ref: C084/24 – NI Water discharges

Thank you for your letter, which we received on 17 May 2024, reference the query above from the Council, regarding recent coverage in the press, of spills from NI Water assets.

I apologise for the delay in responding. Given the general nature of your query, the Stakeholder Management Team with our Engineering & Sustainability Directorate have been liaising with Democratic Services in the Council, to try and identify in more detail the specific issues which you wish to address.

Regarding the issues raised at the Council meeting on 25 April 2024, NI Water would respond as follows:

1. 20 million tonnes of sewage being dumped into rivers and waterway

NI Water do not deliberately release raw sewage into rivers and waterways. Final treated wastewater from our Wastewater Treatment Works is discharged to watercourses through the works' outfall pipes. All discharges are regulated by NIEA.

During periods of heavy rainfall highly diluted wastewater may also be discharged from Sewer Overflows (SO), which are essential design features on a wastewater system, acting as emergency relief points. The SOs prevent the flooding of homes, businesses, and schools with wastewater which would present a significant public health hazard.

2. Major environmental issues at Lough Neagh

The lead agency in relation to the Lough Neagh issues is DAERA. NI Water's Head of Environmental Regulation and Head of Drinking Water Regulation attended a Council meeting on 11 September 2023 along with DAERA staff in relation to the Lough Neagh issues. Our Head of Investment Management Dr Steve Blockwell also attended a Council meeting on 23 November 2023 at which the Lough Neagh issues were discussed. A subsequent written



response from NI Water outlined that all discharges are regulated by NIEA. The main contribution to the nutrient issues affecting Lough Neagh is from agricultural run-off. NI Water has NIEA consent standards which set the specific the level of Phosphorous (P) reduction required in its discharges.

3. Discharges at Washing Bay

We believe this relates to the discharge from the Wastewater Treatment Works located at Coalisland (referred to as Clonoe in your meeting). During the last year NI Water has undertaken a number of operational interventions to improve the day-to-day performance of the works. In addition to the work already completed we have plans to install further equipment to improve the reliability of the plant. It is hoped that this work will be completed during the next financial year. However that is dependent on the availability of funding, which at this time has not been confirmed.

In relation to the further issues raised by the Council, in an email received 7 June 2024, please refer to the responses below:

4. Request for a record of which waterways were affected by their network; their current status and what they are doing to improve the situation

In August 2023 we published a map on our website detailing the locations of all our Storm Overflows throughout Northern Ireland along with their receiving watercourses. This map also provides the locations of the outfall pipes from all of our Wastewater Treatment Works that return final treated water to the environment.

Following this, in March of this year we published the '**predicted**' spill information from all our Drainage Area Plan (DAP) models, which detail the predicted spills for each of our assets in areas where DAPs have been completed. For the avoidance of doubt these are predicted spills as part of a modelling exercise and not '**actual**' spills. Within the last week NI Water has added information to the discharge map on Event Duration Monitors (EDMs) for ca. 82 assets. This provides information on the number of times these assets have spilled over a 12-month period. The installation of EDMs on discharging assets and sharing of information is part of an ongoing programme that will continue in the coming years. As more EDMs are installed and verified these will be added to the map.

This information can be accessed on NI Water's website and via the links below:

[Storm Overflows \(niwater.com\)](https://www.niwater.com/storm-overflows)

[NIWaterModelledSpillsMay2024.xlsx \(live.com\)](https://www.niwater.com/NIWaterModelledSpillsMay2024.xlsx)

[Lough Neagh Blue-Green Algae \(niwater.com\)](https://www.niwater.com/lough-neagh-blue-green-algae)

[Event Duration Monitors \(niwater.com\)](https://www.niwater.com/event-duration-monitors)



NI Water has a programme to upgrade ca. 100 Storm Overflows during the PC21 Price Control period (2021/22 – 2026/27). However, due to historical underinvestment in wastewater services it will take 2 – 3 Price Controls, or 12 – 18 years, to begin to address these issues.

5. Regarding the issue raised of raw sewage flowing into the Lough near Ballyronan Marina

The Ballyronan Wastewater Treatment Works is near the marina and returns final treated final water to Lough Neagh. A capital upgrade of the works is currently underway and is due to complete in late summer 2024. NI Water are not aware of any instances of spills of untreated wastewater in this area.

NI Water has a programme of engagement with all Councils in Northern Ireland and commits to visiting each Council once a year. As stated above NI Water staff have visited Mid Ulster District twice within the current Council calendar year. Given timings it would not be possible to arrange attendance at another meeting ahead of the summer break.

We will be writing again to all Councils in late summer to agree calendar dates for the next Council calendar year. We will be happy to agree an early meeting date with Mid Ulster District Councillors and to discuss any issues you may have.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely

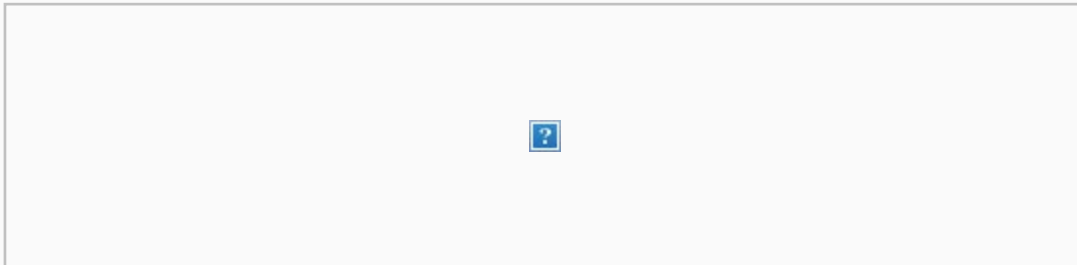


Sara Venning
Chief Executive



To: Mid Ulster Info <info@midulstercouncil.org>

Subject: Srebrenica Memorial Week 2024



Dear Councillor,

I am writing to you as Chair of Remembering Srebrenica UK which is a cross-party genocide education charity funded by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities and supported by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. Our aim is to commemorate the 1995 Bosnian genocide in which just under 100,000 Muslims were killed, two million people were displaced, and the genocidal rape of up to 50,000 women took place simply because of their Muslim identity. This was, according to the UN, “the worst atrocity on European soil since the Second World War.”

Since its creation in 2013, Remembering Srebrenica has educated over 200,000 young people on the lessons from Srebrenica, promotes 1,000 annual memorial activities in schools, local authorities, places of worship, community centres and police forces right across the UK and has created 1,500 Community Champions who pledge to stand up to hatred and intolerance in their communities.

I am writing to invite Mid Ulster District Council Council to join local authorities across the country in commemorating Srebrenica. The number of local authorities commemorating the Srebrenica genocide is growing, with many local authorities having incorporated the charity’s educational resources into their community safety and resilience strategy.

Remembering Srebrenica has developed resources, event templates and speeches which can be found [here](#). Further resources and ideas can be found [here](#).

Tackling hatred and intolerance in our communities has never been more important. With current world events in Gaza and other conflicts flaring hate crime and violence here in the UK, tolerance, societal cohesion are at risk. As alarming Home Office reports show, race hate crime has risen year by year

from 2013 to 2022. In this period 50% of religious hate crime offences were targeted against Muslims, with the next most targeted group being Jewish people. These worrying trends remind us of the challenges our communities face.

I very much hope that we can count on your support in commemorating Srebrenica Memorial Day to help raise awareness and reject hatred and extremism, and build more cohesive communities. If you are organising a memorial activity then please don't forget to let us know so that we can record and publicise your contributions by emailing us at: events@srebrenica.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Waqar Azmi OBE,
Chair of Remembering Srebrenica



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You are receiving this email to make you aware of Srebrenica Memorial Week 2024.

Our mailing address is:

639-641 Stratford Road
Birmingham
B11 4AE

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FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTER



CLlr Dominic Molloy
Chair of Mid Ulster District Council

Celene.ONeill@midulstercouncil.org

Rathgael House
43 Balloo Road
Rathgill
BANGOR
BT19 7PR

private.office@education-ni.gov.uk

17 June 2024

CORR-1483-2024

Dear Dominic,

Thank you for your letter of 30 April 2024 in relation to the pre-school childcare provision for children with special education needs/disability (SEND) and additional needs.

You raise several issues within your letter which I wish to respond to.

Early Years and Childcare Accessibility and Costs

The development of an Executive Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Strategy remains one of my top priorities. In response to the financial strain many families are experiencing with the costs of their childcare, I have agreed a package of measures with my Executive colleagues which will be introduced this financial year. These are designed to stabilise and support expansion of the early learning and childcare sector, over time, offer all children 22.5 hours per week pre-school provision, reduce the costs of childcare for working parents and build the evidence base necessary to inform development of the longer-term strategy. They include a range of initiatives specifically targeted at supporting children with special educational and additional needs.

The operational detail of these is currently being developed with support from a cross-departmental Task and Finish Group and stakeholders. Updates will be provided as the work progresses. A 'Frequently Asked Questions' (FAQs) section on the DE website is being developed and should be available within the next few weeks.

Statutory Duty

The statutory duty to ensure sufficiency of childcare for children with disabilities/additional needs, rests with the Department of Health (DoH). DoH officials have provided the following detail regarding this:

Under Article 18 of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 ('the Order'), Health and Social Care Trusts have a duty to provide a range and level of personal social care services to children who are considered to be children "in need" and their families. A child is considered to be "in need" if:

- they are unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for them of services by a Trust;
- their health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for them of such services; or
- they are disabled.

"Families" of children in need means any person who has parental responsibility for the child and any other person with whom the child has been living.

It is expected that an assessment of need will be undertaken in an open way and involve those caring for the child, the child and any other significant individuals. Families with a child in need, regardless of whether the need results from family difficulties or the child's circumstances, have the right to receive sympathetic support and sensitive intervention in their family's life. Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts are required to ensure that a range of services is available to meet the extent and nature of need identified within their respective areas.

Childcare provision is an example of the type of supportive services which are offered under Article 18, along with advice on such matters as local facilities, welfare support, housing or education, domiciliary support in the form of family aides, befriending schemes, play facilities and specialist services such as counselling, parent-craft training, family centres, respite care and provision of accommodation for longer periods. The Order also makes provision for support from Trusts to include the offer of cash in exceptional circumstances.

Under Article 20 of the Order, HSC Trusts are required to publish information about the services they provide themselves and, where appropriate, those provided by other organisations. All five HSC Trusts are also required under the Order to maintain a register of childcare providers in their respective areas and inspect those providers at least once every 12 months. Details of registered providers can be accessed through the www.FamilySupportNI.gov.uk website.

The 2012 Minimum Standards for Childminding and Day Care for Children Under Age 12 were developed by DoH to promote the delivery of a consistent level of service quality and safety, to facilitate a consistent regional approach to registration and inspection and also to support the legal requirements set out in The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 and associated Guidance and Regulations (Volume 2). Standard 9 stipulates that the inclusion, welfare, and development of children who have additional needs should actively be promoted, based on appropriate assessment.

Notification of school placements for children with special educational needs (SEN)

60% (n.41K) of children on the SEN register do not have a statement of SEN and apply for a school placement through the general admissions process and will

therefore receive notification of their school placement at key transition years at the same time as their peers with no SEN.

40% (n. 27K) of children with SEN have a statement of SEN. These children follow a different process for confirming their school placement whereby their school placement is named in their final statement of SEN. This process is highly individualised and the placement is based on the assessed needs of the child, in consultation with schools and parents. There are no opening and closing dates or set dates for notification of placement as with the schools admissions process, meaning that comparison with the general admission process is inaccurate and inappropriate.

The education system has struggled to keep pace with the increasing demand for specialist education placements in recent years which has led to some delays in the confirmation of school placements for children, particularly for primary one and pre-school places. There is a significant programme of work ongoing by the Education Authority (EA), supported by my Department, to ensure sufficient and timely school placements for all children with SEN which meets their needs, whilst at the same time implementing system change and ensuring appropriate future planning in line with the projected need for specialist education places.

I hope you find this information useful.

Your sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Givan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "P" and a horizontal line underneath the name.

Paul Givan MLA
Minister of Education