



21 March 2024

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Council to be held in The Chamber, Dungannon and by virtual means at Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon, BT71 6DT on Thursday, 23 November 2023 at 19:00 to transact the business noted below.

A link to join the meeting through the Council's remote meeting platform will follow.

Yours faithfully

Adrian McCreesh  
Chief Executive

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## AGENDA

### OPEN BUSINESS

1. Notice of Recording  
This meeting will be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast on the Council's You Tube site [Live Broadcast Link](#)
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest  
Members should declare any financial and non-financial interests they have in the items of business for consideration, identifying the relevant agenda item and the nature of their interest.
4. Chair's Business
5. Deputation: Northern Ireland Water

### Matters for Decision

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| 6. Council minutes of meeting held on 26 October 2023                      | 5 - 32  |
| 7. Planning Committee minutes of meeting held on 7 November 2023           | 33 - 58 |
| 8. Policy & Resources Committee minutes of meeting held on 9 November 2023 | 59 - 70 |
| 9. Environment Committee minutes of meeting held on 14 November 2023       | 71 - 86 |

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| 10. | Development Committee minutes of meeting held on 16 November 2023 | 87 - 128  |
| 11. | Conference Report   | 129 - 144 |

Matters for Information

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| 12. | Consultations         | 145 - 152 |
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Notice of Motions

14. Councillor Quinn to move  
That this Council,
- Is alarmed at proposed 5% cut in funding to arts organisations funded by the Department for Communities through the Arts Council NI;
  - Commends Equity NI, the arts community, its supporters, and the community at large for resisting these proposed cuts, including over 12,500 individuals signing Equity’s petition which asked for more investment in the arts, not less;
  - Notes that Arts Council NI funding has decreased, in real terms, by 30% over the last decade, despite evidence that investment in the arts has a real terms economic benefit for the city and the North as a whole;
  - Further notes that the Department for Communities has indicated that it may implement further cuts in arts funding in FY ‘24-’25;
  - Recognises that Stormont Permanent Secretaries are being forced to take, without mandate, difficult decisions that should be taken by locally elected Ministers and a devolved Executive and Assembly;
  - Further recognises that too often the Council is forced to step in and financially support arts and cultural organisations who have lost funding from Stormont Departments, putting pressure on our ability to deliver existing arts and cultural schemes;
  - Calls for a reversal in cuts to the arts and agrees to join as a signatory to Equity NI’s latest open letter to the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Communities;
  - Further calls for the restoration of a reformed Executive and Assembly to take decisions which can future-proof the arts sector and protect funding in the future.
15. Councillor Kerr to move  
That this council resolves to contact the 26 County government and request they refer Israel to the International Criminal Court due to its recent genocidal violence against the people of Gaza and Palestine as we

note the growing concerns domestically and internationally.

We also request the council contacts the UN office of Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect and request they open an investigation immediately.

16. Councillor Carney to move

This Council recognises that

- the costs of childcare in the North of Ireland are unaffordable for many and hard working families are struggling every month to meet these costs;
- access to childcare in this district is an issue, with providers struggling to meet demands whilst remaining sustainable and maintaining high standards of care;
- parents, particularly women are being forced out of the workforce leading to a negative impact on the labour market, skills and wider economic output;
- an Executive must be re-established urgently so that parties can work together to make childcare a priority;

And that this Council will:

1. write to the Education Department urging them to progress a comprehensive childcare strategy without delay; and
2. commit to delivering new fully registered childminders in the area through their labour market partnership scheme.

**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.**

Matters for Decision

17. Council Confidential minutes of meeting held on 26 October 2023
18. Planning Committee confidential minutes of meeting held on 7 November 2023
19. Policy & Resources Committee confidential minutes of meeting held on 9 November 2023
20. Environment Committee confidential minutes of meeting held on 14 November 2023
21. Development Committee Confidential minutes of meeting held on 16 November 2023

Matters for Information



**Minutes of Meeting of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 26 October 2023 in the Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon and by virtual means**

<b>Chair</b>	Councillor Molloy
<b>Members Present</b>	Councillors Bell, Black, Brown, J Buchanan, W Buchanan, F Burton*, J Burton, Cahoon, Carney, Clarke, Corry, Cuthbertson, Forde, Gildernew, Graham*, Groogan, Johnston, Kelly, Kerr, Mallaghan, Martin*, McAleer*, McConnell, McElvogue, McFlynn, McGuigan, McLean*, McLernon, McNamee, D McPeake*, S McPeake*, Milne*, Monteith, Quinn, Robinson, Totten*, Varsani and Wilson
<b>Officers in Attendance</b>	Mr McCreesh, Chief Executive Mr Black, Strategic Director Communities and Place (SD:CP) Ms Campbell, Strategic Director of Environment (SD: Env) Ms Canavan, Strategic Director of Organisational Development Strategy and Performance (SD: ODSP) Mr McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement (HoSSE) Mr McKeown, ICT Mr Moffett, Assistant Director of Organisational Development Strategy and Performance (AD: ODSP) Mrs Forde, Committee and Member Services Manager
<b>Others in Attendance</b>	<b>Representatives from NIHE</b>  Ms Grainia Long - Chief Executive - Mr John McCartan - South Region Manager - Ms Sinead Collins - Head of Place Shaping South - Ms Sharon Crooks – Mid Ulster Area Manager – Mr Andy Kennedy*** Mr David Palmer*** Ms Roisin O’Neill*** Ms Mona Conway*** Ms Paula Aiken***

\* Denotes Members present in remote attendance

\*\* Denotes Officers present by remote means

\*\*\* \*\* Denotes Others present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7 pm.

*The Chair, Councillor Molloy 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.*

### **C186/23 Notice of Recording**

Members noted that the meeting would be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast on the Council's You Tube site.

### **C187/23 Apologies**

Councillor McQuade  
Mr Tohill, Strategic Director of Corporate Service and Finance (SD: CS&F)

### **C188/23 Declarations of Interest**

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

### **C189/23 Chair's Business**

The Chair, Councillor Molloy said, "Just a few things for this evening's Chair's business, as we have a busy agenda this evening. Closing off September, I was honored to join in with Mid Ulster Loneliness Network as it held its first annual celebration ahead of Positive Ageing Month in October. The group has grown from strength to strength in this past year with the support of our Age Friendly Coordinator, and its members are creating awareness and taking coordinated action to deal with a key issue affecting our urban and rural communities.

The event in the Burnavon Cookstown was also used to launch the Mid Ulster Age-friendly Alliances' Strategy and Action Plan for the next three years. The strategy will work to ensure all residents in the district can live in security, enjoy good health, continue to participate fully in society, and feel valued and respected – regardless of age. I look forward to seeing its outputs and the difference it will make to our residents.

Attending two other recent events also promoting inclusiveness, firstly myself and Cllr Graham attended a groundbreaking workshop of events help by Tourette's Support to learn more not just on Tourette's Syndrome but also cross aligned conditions and how we can support them. Separately but very much linked to neurodiversity last week, I was pleased to welcome a wide range of representatives from Government Departments, Health Trusts, neighbouring Councils, education sector and community groups to our Best Practice Accessibility and Inclusion event in Cookstown Leisure Centre. As members will know, a focus of a motion passed by Council in 2021 was to meet the sensory accessibility requirements of our neurodivergent resident of all ages and stages. It's within that context that I am delighted that the Council was able to purchase a Cubbie via The Department for Communities' Access and Inclusion funding. While we recognise that one size may not fit all, it is clear that inclusive practice should be common practice.

Yet another Mid Ulster arts and culture facility has secured a prestigious Sandford Award in recognition for excellence within heritage education, as Seamus Heaney HomePlace joins the Hill of The O'Neill and Ranfurly House as winners of this highly

prized award. It's fantastic news for everyone at HomePlace and its education team. HomePlace offers inspiration for our next generation of writers, across all levels from pre-school to third level students. The Education Officer and Creative Learning Officers are to be commended for their passion, creativity, and attention to detail which this prestigious award recognises.

Our Council's Planning Team has been named as a finalist in the category for In House Planning Team of the Year at the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) Awards for Planning Excellence 2023, for the launch of Mid Ulster's Planning Portal.

With an ethos to put customer needs at the heart of the planning system, the in-house team has delivered a streamlined and efficient digital online planning system. To even be considered again as a finalist in these awards for the fourth time in the past six years is a remarkable achievement for all concerned. It's testament to the team's continuing professionalism and hard work. I am hopeful that the past success achieved by our planning team will be repeated in November.

Two great events took place last week showcasing what Mid Ulster has to offer; Great Days Out, was an opportunity for tour operators and the public to engage with some fantastic local offerings. Then at Meadowbank almost 50 local engineering and manufacturing firms came together with MEGA to demonstrate a flavour of the multitude of employment opportunities within the sector. Over 1500 pupils attended.

To finish, just a reminder that our Halloween activities and firework displays will be taking place from this Friday night, starting in Dungannon and then Cookstown, followed by Coalisland and Maghera on Halloween night itself. It promises to be a truly hair-raising weekend of Halloween fun so don't miss it."

The Chair, Councillor Molloy invited those Members who raised issues in Chair's Business to speak.

Councillor Varsani made reference to the unsightly mast on the Hill of The O'Neill stating that the mast was utterly unacceptable and whilst investigations into options may be ongoing that it had been some months since Members had received an update.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy concurred and the Chief Executive advised that a report would be presented to future committee.

**Resolved** That an update report be brought to Development Committee regarding the mast on Hill of The O'Neill.

Councillor Kerr requested that the Chair send a letter to Coalisland Fianna ladies team who won the County Championship and League. He further made reference to Erin Duffy senior team member who shared her skills throughout the teams. He further requested that Council extend best wishes to the team in their forthcoming Ulster final with Donegal.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy concurred.

**Resolved** That the Chair, Councillor Molloy send a letter of congratulations to Coalisland Fianna Ladies Team winners of the County Championship and League. Also extend best wishes in forthcoming Ulster Final.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy extended best wishes to the ladies' team at his own club Clonmore GAC who are scheduled to play in a final against Lavey GAC at the weekend.

Councillor D McPeake extended best wishes to Ballymaguigan GAC in their Championship successes and to Newbridge GAC in their county wins and wished both clubs good luck in the forthcoming Ulster campaigns.

Councillor Quinn requested that Council write to Aughamullan Primary School to congratulate them on reaching their 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary. He spoke of various challenges the cross community school had overcome and of his enjoyment at the 200<sup>th</sup> celebrations.

**Resolved** That the Chair, Councillor Molloy send a letter of congratulations to Aughamullan Primary School on celebrating its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Councillor McFlynn referred to the refurbishment project at Manor Park and highlighted several issues with the ongoing works. She said that the refurbishment is to include lighting which was hoped to assist with antisocial behaviours in the area and an issue in relation to flooding. She stated that in the legacy Council there had been engagement with the Rivers Agency in relation to the creation of the pond. She highlighted that there was to be £230k spend on the park and together with the local community she would like the job completed properly to include the eradication of flooding and expressed her disappointment that the stream was not to be cleared. Councillor McFlynn requested that a report be brought to committee.

**Resolved** That an update report to include details of flood eradication be presented to Development Committee regarding ongoing works at Manor Park.

Councillor Cahoon extended condolences to the family of Maud Kells a remarkable lady who had dedicated her life to God and served in Congo for many years had passed away.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy thanked Councillor Cahoon for bringing to the attention of the meeting.

Councillor Cuthbertson spoke of the recent death of Bertie McMinn who had been a long serving staff member of staff in legacy Council Dungannon and spoke of his dedication to local government.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy concurred stating he was a man of great innovation.

**C190/23 Deputation: Northern Ireland Housing Executive (Housing Investment Plan)**



The Chair welcomed Ms Grainne Long and representatives of Northern Ireland Housing Executive who were in attendance to speak on the Housing Investment Plan. Ms Long delivered presentation (Appendix b)

The Chair, thanked Ms Long for her presentation and invited Members questions.

Councillor McConnell queried the figure of people on waiting lists saying that he had been contacted by constituents who had been on the list for alternative housing for a long time.

In response Ms Long said the tenant when making application makes the choice of where they would like to be housed and much depended on that choice. Mr McCartan said that the allocation of housing was determined on a point-based system and sometimes a newer applicant with more housing points supersedes those with less points. He stated that fundamentally there needs to be a review of housing allocation methods but currently it had to be on via the point system.

Councillor Corry said that she was aware of people having to avail of temporary accommodation as landlords were giving notice to people who simply had nowhere to go and ended up living with family. She stated it was a worrying trend and asked what provision the NIHE could offer in such instances.

Ms Long in response stated that more and more people and families were sharing accommodation and unfortunately it was not unique to Mid Ulster. She said the NIHE were identifying temporary accommodation and at times were having to avail of the private rental market as they did not like to base families in hotels or bed and breakfast establishments. She stated apart from the human element of it this method was not cost effective, and the situation was still feeling the impacts of the pandemic.

Councillor Cuthbertson thanked NIHE representatives for the report and extended thanks to local staff. He referred to the boiler replacement scheme and asked what provision was made for what now is classed the 'working poor' especially those who do not meet the criteria for affordable warmth. Councillor Cuthbertson said he was glad to hear the tendering issues had been sorted out and asked if there were potential dates for works commencing. He also sought clarity about investment into grounds maintenance as some areas grass was becoming a nightmare and thus it was important to have contracts ready to go early in the season.

In response Ms Long said that the NIHE would be resubmitting a bid regarding the boiler replacement scheme. With regards to planned maintenance she said the NIHE had allowed contractors to walk away as many could simply not deliver due to the high increases of cost and for this reason the NIHE had not pursued the matter in court. She stated they had retendered and those whose planned maintenance had been delayed would be commencing and the NIHE would be giving times, dates but sometimes goalposts had to shift but they endeavoured to keep all on programme.

With regards to comments in relation to grounds maintenance Mr McCartan advised that the wet spring followed by a warm spell had brought on a growth spurt and at times grounds had not looked good, but contractors had issues getting machinery

onto wet grounds. He also spoke of contractors finding it difficult to recruit skilled workers and concluded by advising that the contracts are not awarded on the number of cuts but the height the grass must be maintained at but acknowledged giving the weather throughout the summer if had been difficult.

Councillor Brown stated he had recently purchased his NIHE home and the process had been seamless and thanked staff for this. He then asked what they were doing to prevent mail drop homes and what they were doing about the non-payment of rents.

Ms Long said they had many homes and for this reason had resourced an investigation team if they suspect fraud and are themselves subject to audit by the NI Audit Office. She stated they had a robust system with high levels of public scrutiny but if tenants have concerns about eg 'mail drop' homes they can raise this. She advised that 75% of rent is protected by housing benefits thus it reduces rent arrears and that a balance must be struck as their income collection pays for investment. It was noted that many tenants are on low incomes and are greatly impacted by cost of living. She said that the NIHE are there to serve and if people find themselves in arrears, they should contact them. She said that often when they assist people in arrears, they discover they are eligible for other benefits and thus they encourage people to get in touch. Ms Long concluded that they do not evict unless it is a last resort.

Councillor Bell asked if the absence of the NI Executive was damaging operations.

In response Ms Long said they work with the Department for Communities and much business is ongoing but the most impact has been felt across the public sector by the budget. She said the NIHE has had significant reform and it is hoped to be able to borrow against income by 2025 but down the line it will be needed to have Ministers in place.

Councillor Mallaghan asked what was happening about home repair grants as he had made enquiry on behalf of a constituent to be told they are not available.

Ms Long stated they are not currently available, and this would be detrimental in the long run as if you under invest other issues occur. She encouraged reporting of all issues as they build statistics from which to seek solutions and in response to Councillor Mallaghan said she would check if his query had been logged.

Councillor McAleer referred to the boiler replacement scheme and the £610k spent 2022-23 yet only £13k in Mid Ulster and said was this the case as it would only be 2%.

In response Ms Long said this would be correct and emphasised that the boiler replacement scheme was demand led and people needed to apply and meet the criteria. She said if there was more could be done to promote it within Mid Ulster the NIHE would be happy to engage.

Councillor F Burton raised the issue of pruning of trees and asked if there was a better way to monitor these works. She also spoke of a particular case were a lady

needed to move accommodation due to a family tragedy in the home and sought clarity as to whether there was a policy in such situations.

Ms Long advised she would speak Councillor F Burton directly about the latter instance. With regards to grounds maintenance Mr McCartan said that maintenance inspections were carried out on a regular basis but giving the size of the district it is more often reactive and, in such circumstances, issues are addressed quickly.

Councillor Wilson asked if the NIHE had many properties that could be brought back into stock and also in relation to grounds maintenance he said Council encourages areas to take a pride and enter best kept competitions but at times grass is cut and left lying and subsequently blows all over the place.

Ms Long said that as a landlord NIHE had very few void properties and when approached regarding resettlement schemes such as Afghanistan and Ukraine refugees they could offer no housing. She further stated that if they hold land that could be used for social housing, they release it. Mr McCartan advised that under 1% of NIHE stock is void at any one time. With regard to grass, he stated collection was not feasible but they do remind contractors repeatedly that areas should be left tidy.

Councillor McFlynn expressed concern about the increase in temporary accommodation and stated that often people are giving notice and then the property is let at a higher rate. She also welcomed figures in relation to housing benefit and expressed concern about the working poor and those in housing stress.

Ms Long advised it was not the remit of NIHE to regulate rents that that would be the department for Communities. She said there was a growth in homelessness and the NIHE give evidence of all to the Department. She stated that local housing levels remain static and said that due to the cost of living many households do get into rental difficulties and in such instances, they make an appeal for Housing benefit.

Councillor Monteith expressed concern regarding the evidence of danger regarding black mould and its impact on mental health and physical health of those in particular with breathing difficulties. He said the standard response tenants were receiving was it was their own fault, and they should open windows yet if there is mould the damp levels are generally twice as high as that permitted.

Ms Long said she would speak to Councillor Monteith directly and spoke of the recent Coroners report linked to the tragic death of a child in England due to mould. She said on the day of the report was issued NIHE embarked on a review and stated it was their first principle to keep tenants safe, warm and dry. She said it was also emphasised to staff if they see a problem even if it was not within their remit they should report and that if a child is living in a home with damp and mould, they took it very seriously. She said in some instances the NIHE do need to advise with regard to ventilation, but tests need to be carried out and the housing stock was aging.

Mr Kennedy advised that there was a damp and mould action plan, staff had been trained and they were identifying hotspots as if there is a cluster of homes in an area with similar experiences plans be put in place to eradicate. He said most damp and

mould issues were dealt with by response maintenance. Mr Kennedy advised that there was a specialist team used for in-depth investigations and whilst there were several eradication programmes there was none in Mid Ulster. He said if Members became aware of issues to report through the local office and he would send teams down.

Councillor Monteith said he accepted what was being stated but spoke of one tenant a single mother and a child who had been told for four years the damp was her fault. He further spoke of a fine fur on top of clothing and people blamed for not opening windows. He said that people were now going to hospital consultants and nurses to endeavour to get the NIHE to take it seriously.

Ms Long said she would follow up directly with the member.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy thanked the Ms Long and the team for their participation.

The Chief Executive thanked the team for the presentation and said Council had lobbied and supported the review of the NIHE and looked forward to new build schemes in the district. He said Council was up for pilot schemes and would endeavour to do all it could to help alleviate the chronic need for housing in Dungannon and across Mid Ulster.

*Representatives of Northern Ireland Housing Executive left the meeting at 8.12 pm.*

## **Matters for Decision**

### **C191/23      Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Special Council Meeting held on 25 September 2023**

Proposed by Councillor Kerr  
Seconded by Councillor Brown and

**Resolved**      That the Minutes of the Council held on Monday 25 September 2023 (SC011/23 – SC014/23 and SC016/23 transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated were considered and adopted.

### **C192/23      Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Council Meeting held on 28 September 2023**

Proposed by Councillor Groogan  
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

In response to Councillor Kerr’s query regarding the letter sent to Electric Ireland, the Chief Executive advised that the letters were emailed on 6 October 2023 and to date no response had been received.

**Resolved** That the Minutes of the Council held on Thursday 28 September 2023 (C158/23 – C172/23 and C0185/23 transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated were considered and adopted.

**C193/23 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Planning Committee Meeting held on 3 October 2023**

Proposed by Councillor Clarke  
Seconded by Councillor Varsani and

**Resolved** That the Minutes of the Planning Committee held on Tuesday 3 October 2023 (P101/23 – P108/23 and P114/23) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated, subject to the foregoing were considered and adopted.

**C194/23 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on 5 October 2023**

Proposed by Councillor McLernon  
Seconded by Councillor Brown and

**Resolved:** That the Minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee held on Thursday 5 October (PR161/23 – PR169/23 and PR178/23) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated were considered and adopted.

**C195/23 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Environment Committee Meeting held on 10 October 2023**

Councillor Burton sought an update on the query regarding parking at Granville Industrial estate.

In response the Chief Executive advised that a synopsis regarding the parking situation at Granville would be provided to Members and if necessary, a DEA meeting held.

Proposed by Councillor Groogan  
Seconded by Councillor McNamee and

**Resolved** That the Minutes of the Environment Committee held on Tuesday 10 October 2023 (E208/23 – E226/23 and E235/23) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated were considered and adopted.

**C196/23 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Development Committee Meeting held on 12 October 2023**

Proposed by Councillor McNamee  
Seconded by Councillor McLernon and

**Resolved** That the Minutes of the Development Committee held on Thursday 12 October 2023 (D144/23 – D155/23 and D163/23) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated were considered and adopted.

**C197/23 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Special Development Committee Meeting held on 16 October 2023**

Proposed by Councillor Quinn  
Seconded by Councillor Corry and

**Resolved** That the Minutes of the Development Committee held on Monday 16 October 2023 (D144/23 – D171/23 transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated were considered and adopted.

**C198/23 Conferences, Seminars and Training**

The HoSS&E sought approval for the previously circulated report on conferences, seminars and training as outlined in Appendix A and B of the report.

**Resolved** That approval be given to submitted requests for conferences, seminars and training as outlined at Appendix A and B to the report.

**Matters for Information**

**C199/23 Consultations**

Members noted consultations received for attention of Council.

Councillor Gildernew drew attention to Department for the Economy: Consultation on Approach to 10X Technologies and Clusters and proposed that Council make a response which should highlight the wealth of manufacturing, innovation, knowledge and expertise within the district and request that Mid Ulster is kept central in regional economic plans. Note the closing date for the submission is 24 November 2023 as outlined in report should extension not be granted response be brought to Policy and Resources with delegated authority.

**Resolved** That Council make a response to Department for the Economy Consultation on Approach to 10X Technologies and Clusters. Note the closing date for the submission is 24 November 2023 as outlined in

report should extension not be granted response be brought to Policy and Resources with delegated authority.

## **C200/23      Correspondence**

Members noted update on correspondence received for attention of Council.

In response to Councillor McLernon's query regarding letter sent following July Council meeting to Southern Health Trust regarding respite provision for adults with complex needs the Chief Executive confirmed no response had been received to date.

Councillor McLernon requested that a follow up letter be sent seeking a response.

**Resolved**      That Council send a follow up letter seeking a response to letter forwarded to the Southern Health Trust to

(i) ascertain the issues around the service of Respite Provision for Adults with complex needs, not returning to a 7-day week as it was before Covid, and to see what Council can do to help resolve this, and return the much-needed service to full capacity; and

(ii) establish what the hindrances are and what is being done to overcome delays when care packages are being put in place for people ready to be discharged from hospital.

Councillor McConnell drew attention to correspondence from Department for Infrastructure in relation to the A5 Western Transport Corridor (A5WTC) scheme update. He said council should continue to do all in its power to ensure all is completed to allow the progression of the A5.

Councillor Mallaghan drew attention to correspondence from Department for Infrastructure in relation to 'Handling Correspondence related to Roads Maintenance Defects' and said it was deeply disappointing to ask elected Members not to contact them. He said if a broken streetlight was being reported then the online portal was fine but if you were reporting a major pothole, a fallen tree which is more important the portal was not fine. Speaking of local staff, he highlighted that they work hard and would report back but for the department to stop this line of communication was not acceptable. Councillor Mallaghan proposed to respond to the letter expressing Council's dismay express dismay and lack of regard for the role of elected members. He said that DfI were constantly reneging and whilst it was bad enough closing not dealing with calls from the public it was unacceptable to do this with elected members.

Councillor McConnell concurred and said that he had formerly worked in civil service dealing with freedom of information and to do this was a disgrace. He strongly voiced objection to it and said that online portal mainly issued a generic response. He seconded Councillor Mallaghan's proposal.

Councillor Wilson concurred with the comments and said that the comments were directed to elected members. He emphasised that members are the conduit to help constituents and he supported the proposal. He said DfI had pulled out of interagency meetings and whilst Council encourages housing estates and community groups to take pride and indeed better their area the non-attendance of DfI is a disgrace.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy concurred.

Councillor Cuthbertson said it is frustrating and it was regarding maintenance issues that Members can't gain a response. He said he had experience of the online portal being monitored out of hours,

Councillor McAleer concurred that the letter was dismissive of elected Members who were the first point of contact and often when you use the online portal you do not receive a response.

**Resolved** That Council send a response to Department for Infrastructure: handling correspondence related to roads maintenance letter dated 4 October to express dismay and lack of regard for the role carried out by elected members.

Councillor McAleer drew attention to the Northern Ireland Office response following letter sent regarding Lough Neagh. He said that absence of the NI Executive does not help and it was imperative that it was up and running again as nothing was being done to support the fishing industry on the Lough and whilst the NIO response was not surprising action was needed.

Councillor Quinn concurred with Councillor Mallaghan and said that the DfI did not appear to be too interested and referred to a recent site meeting at Ferry Road, Coalisland as well as a request submitted via the portal two weeks ago and to date there was no response. He said that the reduction of money being spent on maintenance was leaving roads in a dangerous condition. With regard to Lough Neagh he said that whilst even a functioning Executive could not fix the Lough the UK government could step in and do more but it appeared the Lough was a hostage.

Councillor Gildernew referred to the letter from DfI regarding the A5 (WTC) and said it was good to see an indicative date and await the report on the public enquiry. Ultimately as a resident she was only too aware of the lives lost and looked forward to completion of the road which would save lives.

Councillor Carney concurred with Councillor McAleer's comments.

## **C201/23 Notice of Motion**

Councillor Kerr moved the motion -



Councillor Kerr speaking on the motion stated that he had decided to submit the motion following the recent escalation of violence by Israel and its forces which had resulted in the deaths of Palestinians in their 1000s with the huge majority of them being women and children. He outlined that the nature of the violence is indiscriminate and not since 1948 had there been such a single shift of Palestinian people at which time over 750 k Palestinians had been forced from their homes. He referred to what all had witnessed in recent days and weeks where millions of people from Gaza city had been told to evacuate from the North to the South and how many families followed the advice but had still been bombed in south Gaza as a result of Zionist activities, he spoke of entire neighbourhoods being wiped out with little or no warning, continuing crimes against humanity on a daily basis with electric and water switch being off and the denial until recent days of aid by the Egyptian Government and United Nations which is but a drop in the ocean of what people of Gaza needs. He spoke of the United Nations announcement earlier in the day and said they needed 400 trucks per day and yet only a trickle had been allowed in. He referred to the Israeli bomb on the hospital which resulted in the deaths of 100s of people in one foul swoop. He stated that the American and British governments are presenting the Zionist version of events with little to no scrutiny. The version of events was default by Zionists and other evidence had come forward since the bombing. Councillor Kerr said this was but one of the many war crimes committed by the Zionist in recent weeks. The continued occupation of Gaza and West Bank has gone on for years. Councillor Kerr concluded that as a local authority Council should not give legitimacy to a rogue state which feels it can discriminate, murder, maim and steal off a different race and highlighted that over the last number of weeks Israel has bombed Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and West Bank.

Councillor Kerr then moved the motion:

That this Council resolves to contact the 26 County Foreign Affairs Office and request the immediate expulsion of the Israeli Ambassador due to the recent escalation of violence by the Zionist forces to the people of Gaza and Palestine.

Councillor Monteith seconded the motion.

Councillor Mallaghan said, "In 2021 as chair of this council I sent a letter to Simon Coveney Requesting the expulsion of the Israeli ambassador to Ireland. This was on the back of another violent barrage on the people of Gaza. As a party we have no difficulty in doing so when the circumstances are right and when it is in line with the wishes of the Palestinian people. Yesterday the Palestinian Ambassador to Dublin released the following statement."

"The Gaza Strip is facing a humanitarian catastrophe of unparalleled proportions. As of noon October 24, 2023, the Palestinian Ministry of Health officially declared the collapse of the healthcare system in the Gaza Strip. This catastrophic event leaves us with no choice but to demand an immediate international intervention."

"The statement is crystal clear in terms of what is the priority for people are, the priorities are in the next motion which will be moved by Nuala.

We as a party have been in constant contact with the Palestinian Authority as well as Palestinian political parties and NGOs in the West Bank and Gaza ensuring our response is in line with the needs of the people.

At no Point thus far has a request come to the international community for this action. But it may come as the Palestinian people step through the different tactics they will deploy over the coming weeks and months. But when it happens it should be coordinated with the entire international community who are supportive of the Palestinian cause. Right now, those who seek the expulsion are in 2 groups: (i) In earnest they feel it is the right thing to do and that they don't feel Ireland should host the ambassador under these circumstances; and (ii) Some people are chasing the headlines which detracts away from the urgent priorities of the people in Palestine and that was clear from what we seen in Dublin this week.

Sinn Fein have been a constant ally of the Palestinians with our representatives visiting on a regular basis, often harangued by the Israeli Gov who decides who gets to visit. At our Ard Fheis next month, we will once again as we do each year host our Palestinian Comrades and work with them to further their cause for the freedom of their people. However, tonight I request that the mover of the motion consider postponing or deferring the motion until a time when in conjunction with the Palestinians and the international community we do this in unison to create the maximum effect.

This struggle belongs to the Palestinians', and we must support them in it. But they must lead that struggle and determine their own priorities. As things sit tonight, Chair, we will abstain from this motion. We will continue to work as we have done in the Dail this week to pass resolutions that gain support from other parties which has resulted in Ireland becoming one of the first countries in the world to call for a ceasefire."

Councillor Cuthbertson said "Chairman, we have had similar motions tabled to Council before and previous Chairs agreed that motions should be strictly focused on the district, so it is disappointing that you as Chair accepted the motions before us tonight. On the 7th October, As the news of the terrorist attack by Hamas unfolded and the worlds press were establishing what was happening, the reports over the following 24hours brought some very graphic, disturbing and horrific images. Children were butchered, and babies decapitated. One news reel reported on a young lady forced from her vehicle, taken captive, raped and murdered and then her naked body was paraded through the streets with people spitting on it. Hundreds of young people attending an outdoor peace concert, came under heavy gun fire and murdered as they tried to escape. Hundreds of Israeli women and children and others from a range of international countries were taken hostage. One young lady, Kim Damti, 22 years of age, with dual Irish and Israeli citizenship was murdered. Regrettably, we have seen, little to no acknowledgement by elected representatives and the Government of the Republic of Ireland of this poor lady on any news reports. Chair as this horrific terrorist attack was taking place it was sickening to see so many elected representatives, here in NI, immediately jumping on to social media, declaring support for such actions, those people should be totally ashamed of themselves. Many of these people did likewise over the sectarian, ethnic cleansing murder campaign by republicans here in Northern Ireland over the years, so perhaps we shouldn't be shocked or surprised. The true horror of what happened on the 7th October is still only being discovered, in recent days in a village close to the Gaza

border the burnt remains of 20 young children bound hand and feet with wire and burnt to death have been found. WhatsApp messages from the terrorists have been intercepted boasting about how many Jewish children and babies they murdered.

The DUP does not support any call for the expulsion of the Israeli Ambassador in any country including the Republic of Ireland. It is shameful that at a time when many Israeli men, women and children were murdered in their homes, some seek to ignore their plight and indeed it is disturbing that there is no mention of calling for hostages, again men, women, children and babies, to be released by the terrorist group Hamas. This is beyond belief but perhaps is an insight into the mindset of both those who carry out and support these actions.”

Councillor Wilson said once again there was a motion to split the Council. He said that “This motion is so far removed from reality that it is almost impossible to respond to it. The member purposely ignores the atrocities carried out by Terrorist Hamas. Many of the horrific examples of what took place on October 7<sup>th</sup> inside Israel are among some of the most barbaric acts ever recorded. I place on record I, my colleagues and my party’s support for Israel to defend its’ borders and understand their undertaking to remove the blight of Hamas from Gaza entirely.

My party leader, a man with some experience of the horrors of war, has been very clear that there is an expectation that Israel will act within the recognised conventions in ensuring that innocent Palestinians are protected as much as is possible. However, the actions of Hamas in launching attacks from residential areas, schools and even hospitals, creates circumstances where it is they who are placing their own people in harm’s way – but that is what is to be expected from terrorists.

I think it comes as no surprise to everybody in this chamber that I and my colleague will not be supporting this motion.”

Councillor Quinn said that like others he had received telephone calls regarding the motion and the ongoing situation. He said that the expulsion of the Israeli Ambassador could be the chink that is needed to waken people up to the ongoing situation. He stated he was uncomfortable with the wording of the motion but felt it could be supported if it was amended to:

That this council resolve to contact the Irish Government and request the immediate expulsion of the Israeli ambassador due to the recent escalation of violence in Gaza and Palestine.

Councillor Wilson on a point of order said it was his understanding if there is an amendment it must be presented in writing and circulated.

The Chief Executive said that the standing orders state that, but Council has taken amendments from the floor since 2014.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy stated that had been the practise and he would accept the amendment.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy asked Councillor Kerr if he accepted the amendment.

Councillor Kerr accepted the amendment.

Councillor Monteith said it is important to send this message and that he had attended many campaigns calling on the Israeli Ambassador to be expelled. He said in no other country would the behaviour displayed by the Ambassador in recent days be tolerated. He said it was also important to note that the date line for this war did not start on 7<sup>th</sup> October but commenced many years ago through colonialism which started the real problem and has left a trail of destruction that cannot be ignored. Councillor Monteith stated that the reality is that the Palestinian people had been forgotten, he reflected on unrest and the movement of people in 1948, 1967 and the current onslaught of Gaza when people were told to move to the South of the area and then it was subsequently bombed by Israel anyway. He said people were moved from their homes with no guarantee of return and should they seek refuge in Egypt they may never be allowed to return. He said that Israel is using Hamas as an excuse to collectively punish Palestinian people and remove them from their homeland and reflected that on the West Bank which is removed from this conflict area over 100 Palestinians had been killed in the past three weeks.

Councillor Johnston seconded Councillor Quinn's amendment.

The Chief Executive clarified the amendment,

That this council resolve to contact the Irish Government and request the immediate expulsion of the Israeli ambassador due to the recent escalation of violence in Gaza and Palestine.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy called for a vote on the motion.

For	7
Against	13
Abstained	19

The Chair, Councillor Molloy stated that the motion had fallen.

In response Councillor Kerr said he could appreciate it was a divisive subject that there were many groups and organisation involved, many different angles on reporting and whilst he was disappointed the motion had failed hopefully all would agree what was happening was genocide.

## **C202/23 Notice of Motion**

Councillor McLernon moved the motion –

That this Council calls for an immediate ceasefire in Palestine and Israel; and calls for the provision of safe humanitarian corridors; and further calls on the international community to work towards a true and lasting peace settlement for the people in the Middle East.

Councillor McLernon speaking on the motion said, "The people of the world have witnessed a humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza – and have seen Israel unleash the weight of its military might upon the Palestinian people. What Hamas did on the 7 October was a war crime – it targeted innocent civilians in the most callous and inhumane manner.

But let's be clear - Israel has been committing war crimes not just in the past 2 weeks but virtually every single day for decades!

This indiscriminate mass slaughter of innocent men, women and children is carried out in full sight of the world and in full sight of international leaders who have failed and refused to shout, "Stop". But I am asking members here tonight to send a clear word to the Israeli government tonight, and the word is STOP!!

- STOP the Rockets
- STOP the bombing of Gaza
- STOP the blockade of Gaza
- STOP the war against the Palestine people
- STOP the occupation and the illegal settlements and end the apartheid!

We know all too well the pain and tragedy of colonisation, occupation and dispossession. Here on this island, we have known conflict and suffering, and we have known war. But we also know peace! And every day we still work to reconcile, to heal divisions and bring people together. Our own history now speaks powerfully to us. It calls on us to speak out, to act in defence of Palestine - it also tells us that we can, and must be a leading voice for dialogue, a just settlement, cease fires and peace.

As we debate this motion here tonight, the people of Gaza face annihilation. Entire families are being wiped out, hundreds of thousands are being displaced from their homes, and their schools, hospitals and vital infrastructure are being destroyed. They are now running out of food. They are drinking un-sanitised water in a desperate attempt to stay alive. They are blockaded on all sides and cut off from medical supplies, fuel and energy – and we need to see safe humanitarian corridors! Israel is now acting with impunity, discarding international law and flouting UN resolution after resolution.

As the people of Gaza cling to their very existence, I ask this Council in a unified voice, to call for an immediate and lasting ceasefire – and together call on Israel to end its bombardment of the Gaza and to stop the indiscriminating massacre. Collectively, we need to proclaim the importance of international law and the importance of dialogue as the foundation for lasting peace.

Councillor Gildernew seconded the motion and said, "The words "Israel has the right to defend itself" mean in practice, that Israel takes that right as a licence to bombard civilians and to bomb schools, hospitals and other civilian infrastructure. It has now been taken as a licence to enforce the displacement of 1 million people from one end of an open-air prison to another, to deny food, energy and medical supplies to a besieged civilian population and to deny them water and to ensure that children, the sick, disabled and elderly will literally die of thirst.

The Israeli regime has been facilitated and emboldened by the failure of the international community to act, over decades now, in defence of international law, and the most basic of human rights. That silence cannot continue – the inaction cannot continue! We must make the world listen and act now to bring the bombing to an end. As Councillor McLernon has pointed out, we know peace, and this year

marks the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement. Our peace settlement has created a new future for our future generations, but in Palestine, there is no peace process. Since the 7<sup>th</sup> of October, 1 Palestinian child has been killed by Israel every 15 minutes! Gaza is facing human, social and environmental annihilation.

And yes, we mourn the terrible loss of Israeli lives on 7 October, but as stated here tonight, Israeli aggression against Palestine long pre-dates that awful day. Our children and grandchildren will speak of these days in the future - let's make sure we can look them in the eye when asked and say we did not stand by and fail to act!

Councillor Quinn stated, "Over the past few weeks we have all watched on with Horror as thousands of people have been killed in Gaza and Israel. The sheer number is quite hard to comprehend but to put it into context, the last two weeks has seen double the number of deaths that we experienced in nearly 40 years of conflict here. Those living in Gaza and Southern Israel must be living as close to hell as one can. On October 7<sup>th</sup> Hamas murdered hundreds of innocent civilians at a music festival, their only crime was that they were Israeli. This was a reprehensible action by Hamas, one that cannot be defended by any right-thinking person and was a War Crime by any stretch of definition. It echoes a similar attack in Croke Park over a century ago. They have taken hostages, murdered some and use others as human currency and continued to rain rockets down on innocent people in Israel.

The international community was rightly outraged at these attacks and got behind Israel and their right to defend themselves. This however is where the world took an even darker turn. For the past two weeks we have seen Gaza, described at best, as an open prison, bombed out of existence by Israel. We have seen men, women and children slaughtered in their thousands. Out of one side of their mouth the Israeli Government told all civilians in Gaza to flee to the south and on the other they ordered bombs to be dropped on those routes. They have talked about how evil Hamas are to take hostages, while they have held 2.2 million people hostage by cutting off their electricity and water supply. They have asked to the UN and EU to back them in their war against Hamas but have refused even the basic aid from getting into Gaza. They have threatened to block UN officials entering the country because they have dared speak the truth about the years of vile treatment the Israeli Government has shown the people of Palestine. We have seen the bombing of hospitals, the targeting of civilians and denial of basic human rights. The Israeli Government are committing new war crimes each day but getting away with because they are backed by the US and UK government.

The sight of Joe Biden hugging the Israeli Prime Minister while Palestinian mothers where hugging their dead children was disgusting, so too was the refusal of Sunak to call for a ceasefire to this conflict when asked this week in Parliament. The same US and UK governments that lecture us about proper government and society as they wilfully turn a blind eye to War Crimes in the middle east is nothing short of staggering. With no end in sight for this conflict, and yet more escalation on the horizon the international community must stand up and make their voice heard. I credit Leo Varadkar for taking the lead on this and calling out possible war crimes committed by the Israeli State.

Let's be clear, being pro-Palestine does not mean support Hamas and believing in an Israeli State it does not mean you support the Israeli government. The motion in

front of us tonight Chair is a good starting point, however I believe we need to strengthen its message and as a byproduct strengthen the voice of this council. We first need a ceasefire, that's the is number one. We need an end to the slaughter. That is in the gift of both the UK and US government to give. They need to put all their weight behind this message and Israel will listen. We need all those hostages released, there is no justification for holding innocent people, the fact that Hamas have done so show they are not fit to lead the Palestinian people. We need immediate talks to secure a two-state solution. This was agreed as the way forwarded but once again the international community has let the people of both Gaza and Israel down. And finally, we need an investigation into war crimes committed by both Hamas and Israel. The actions of the Israeli government and IDF have shocked the world, their actions must be laid bare to the world and punished for it so no state will follow suit. Hamas equally have committed a heinous crime and they too need held accountable and their leaders as well."

Councillor Quinn proposed the undernoted amendment,

'That this Council calls for an immediate ceasefire in Palestine and Israel;  
and

Calls for the provision of safe humanitarian corridors; and further calls on the international community to begin a fulsome diplomatic effort toward reaching a two-state solution to provide peace and security for the people of Palestine and Israel.

Further calls for the immediate and safe release of all hostages held by Hamas.

Supports a full International Criminal Court investigation of potential war crimes committed against people in Gaza and southern Israel.'

Councillor Johnston seconded the amendment.

Councillor McLernon said she would accept the amendment if two state was removed and instead read 'reaching a solution'.

The amendment now reads,

'That this Council calls for an immediate ceasefire in Palestine and Israel;  
and

Calls for the provision of safe humanitarian corridors; and further calls on the international community to begin a fulsome diplomatic effort toward reaching a solution to provide peace and security for the people of Palestine and Israel.

Further calls for the immediate and safe release of all hostages held by Hamas.

Supports a full International Criminal Court investigation of potential war crimes committed against people in Gaza and southern Israel.'

Councillor Black stated that he had an amendment and proposed the undernoted,

‘That this Council calls for an immediate ceasefire in Palestine and Israel; supported by the immediate release of all hostages held by Hamas; and calls for the provision of safe humanitarian corridors. Further, this Council calls on the international community to work towards a true and lasting peace settlement for the people in the Middle East.’

Councillor Robinson seconded the amendment.

Councillor Black said that they broadly agreed with the spirit of motion but felt that the amendment was important. He said, “everyone can agree the events on 7/10 were truly devastating and all are familiar with the news coverage and what has unfolded since has already been spoken on quite extensively. Hamas terrorists invaded several towns and attacked those attending a music festival all of which resulted in 1400 civilians being brutally murdered and many more injured and 200 people being taken hostage. This was the catalyst of what has unfolded since therefore the responsibility of recent escalation of violence in the Middle East sits squarely at the door of Hamas. As a result of these terrorist attacks, we believe that Israel has the right to defend itself and act against those who committed these terrible crimes against its people they have a responsibility to defend their citizens against barbarity. That being said, and what has been spoken of this evening we recognise thousands of innocent people are caught up in this situation. We urge the Israel government to ensure military action is targeted against Hamas and those responsible for this situation as Hamas are still holding Israeli hostages against their will these are not the actions of an organisation that desires a peaceful outcome. Therefore, we believe to have any de-escalation of military action Hamas must release hostages. Therefore, we feel we must table amendment. In the long term we wish to see a settlement that will be acceptable to all and allow peace to be restored to this most beautiful part of the world.

Councillor Black stated his motion remained.

Councillor Wilson said that he agreed with the sentiments of the original motion but found it more difficult to support the amendment. He said, “A true and lasting peace settlement for the Middle East is something that I and my party believe every right-minded person would hope may, one day, be achieved. Israel has a duty to protect its citizens and the right to go after those that carried out the mass murder of its citizens.

Israel, with the support of America, Egypt and others, has indeed allowed the creation of humanitarian corridors to get aid to those who have been displaced due to the horrific actions of Hamas in Israel on October 7<sup>th</sup>. As I said in my previous comments on Cllrs Kerr’s motion my party Leader, a man with some experience of the horrors of war, has been very clear that there is an expectation that Israel will act within the recognised conventions in ensuring that innocent Palestinians are



protected as much as is possible. A statement both Councillor Graham and myself fully endorsed.

The unfortunate truth is that there are those across the Middle East who do not want a true and lasting peace, they wish only for the eradication of Israel and of every person living in Israel.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023 the European Union reconfirmed their statement of the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2023 calling for an immediate ceasefire and the release of all the hostages. Our PM also supports this stance and has called for Humanitarian corridors to be created to allow more aid to flow into Gaza. On a personal level, I find it very emotional to watch the suffering and the deaths, in particular of, young children on both sides Terrorist Organisations such as Hamas are committed to causing death and destruction, with no consideration of the repercussions for those they claim to represent. Any lasting peace in the Middle East starts with every country recognising and calling out those terrorist organisations who think nothing of raping, murdering and dismembering women and children. Any motion that calls for a true and lasting peace in the Middle East must start by calling out terrorists and their apologists.”

*Councillor Mallaghan proposed a short recess.*

*Council went to recess at 9.07 pm*

*The Meeting recommenced at 9.17pm*

Councillor Quinn said that following discussion and for the sake of unity in the chamber he would withdraw his amendment. He stated that he was disappointed and dismayed that all parties could not support a full criminal war crimes investigation and people would really need to ‘look at themselves’ in light of this.

Councillor Quinn’s amendment was withdrawn.

Councillor McLernon accepted Councillor Black’s amendment.

Councillor Mallaghan said, “When a country displaces an entire people, locks them up and seals the wall. When a country denies these people water and rations the food to 800 calories per day. When a country issues special permits for these people to come and go or if they are lucky, they can be given some meal mouthed work. On average 7 people share a room. The suppressor allows them to organise and have a fake authority and even have their own leader, but it is meaningless unless they succumb to their oppressor’s regime. The outcome of these disgraceful, disgusting conditions leads to revolt. The oppressed people organise and eventually plan and rise and overthrow their captor. And the result of that action is the brave men and women who take part in the revolt are removed from their families and executed.

Members this is how the poor Jewish People of Warsaw were treated during the Nazi occupation of Poland in World War 2. And today we see these same conditions imposed upon the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West bank. And the Context

Israel uses as a defence for using their iron fist is how their Ancestors were treated in Europe during the holocaust. However, I am sure any of those poor people who went through the worst genocide in living memory would be absolutely revolted by what is deemed the only democracy in the middle east. In fact, we hear exactly that on the media from Jews who want nothing to do with Zionism.

I think we have gotten used to outbreaks of violence in Palestine and Israel for all our lives. This council has discussed and taken action on numerous occasions, but on Saturday the 7<sup>th</sup> of October, when we learned of the violence imposed upon Israeli Citizens in their homes and at the music festival, I think we all were deeply shocked and saddened and realised that this was now on a new scale. I want to add my voice to the call for the release of the hostages and for the release of prisoners and children held by Israel without trial. Currently 1200 detained without charge. But members the backlash from Israel has been horrendous, egged on by unwavering support from world leaders including the EU, The US and the UK. The right to defend yourself does not extend to over 5000 men women and children killed in indiscriminate bombs fired from war planes.

If the war, as Israel calls it, is designed to destroy Hamas. Then why has over 100 civilians been killed in the west bank which is controlled by a more moderate Palestine.

If Israel is a democracy, then why does it hold captive 2.2million people who can't leave, who can't use their seaports, they can't fish their own water and their airport opened by Bill Clinton hasn't had a flight since 2001.

If it is a democracy, why does it continue to annex lands and allow Israeli citizens settle and forcibly remove its inhabitants. When this happened in Ukraine Joe Biden and Boris Johnston sent Ukraine weapons to defend itself, but in Israel Joe Biden and Rishi Sunak send Military support to assist this land grab. Israel is an Apartheid State. And the international community are beginning to turn. Those who sponsored the early onslaught are back tracking. The United Nations Antonio Guterres called them out and as this Genocide continues, we will see more support for Palestine from around the globe. Israel will not destroy Hamas all political observers acknowledge this reality. Israel is recruiting for Hamas. 50% of Gaza are under 18 and they will hold with them for their entire life the actions they will witness during this time. This is fertile ground for recruiting new fighters and the ingredients are there for another generation of violence and hate and destruction.

That is why now is the time for a ceasefire, humanitarian corridors and a real effort at achieving peace. It seems impossible, unrealistic and unachievable, and I'm sure international observers said that about this place. But with the right will of the international community, the right players leading the charge, perhaps once in a lifetime, The Longed-for Tidal Wave of Justice can Rise Up."

Councillor Johnston stated, "I am sorry our unionist colleagues did not agree with investigations into war crimes. There are no words that could be said in this chamber that would adequately express the horror of what is going on in Israel and Gaza. It seems quite surreal to witness such savagery against innocent people who have no meaningful influence on either the Israeli government or Ha mas.

As onlookers, unable to help in any meaningful way supporting this motion is confirmation of, I hope, our united horror at the senseless waste of life, and

frustration at the inability of the international community to bring about an immediate cease fire and our desires to for an end to this conflict with its long history of land grabs, displacement of peoples and brutal repression. Violence to counteract violence is never the answer. Those who are reckless with the lives of others deserve the strongest possible condemnation and later when this ends as it must, they must be tried for the war crimes that they have clearly committed.

There must be consequences for the deliberate bombing of residential areas, the abduction and the brutal execution of unarmed civilians, and the deliberate attempt to starve a people into oblivion. There must be a safe corridor established so that civilians can seek safety. The hostages must be released. These innocent people are not responsible for the actions of Hamas, any more than peace loving nationalists were responsible for the actions of the IRA, peace loving unionists for the actions of the UVF or peace-loving British people for the actions of their security forces. I urge the Israel government to cease fire and talk to its enemies.

I was struck by the elderly Israeli hostage who when released on Monday reached out to her captor and gripping his hand gently said 'shalom'. When we can unclench our hands and reach out to our enemy, peace can be the prize. We are proof of that. John Hume had a very simple view; you must talk to your enemy, even if they have killed many. Even if they have tried to kill you. On that point there is no alternative. Here we have often seen our communities divided over the Israeli/Palestinian crisis, where we seem to cling to that old ancient proverb 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend' I hope tonight we will unite on the side of humanity. We should also take a moment to reflect on how far we have come and how far human depravity can sink. It may not feel like it at times, but we are the lucky ones. No more will our children be pulled out of collapsed buildings. No more will we have our loved ones shot because of 'an accident of birth'. No more will militants decide what innocents will be sacrificed in their quest for revenge. We have come far and we must continue on that difficult but rewarding journey."

Councillor Varsani said it was an emotive topic and asked that for the following facts to be considered from a human approach. She advised that 50% of people in Gaza under 18 and that anyone over 75 will have lived through first Nakba/Catastrophe of forced clearances and plantation in 1948. She also stated that 31, 000 Palestinians killed/injured in 2018 versus 138 Israelis and that figures for past 20 years present similar ratios. Councillor Varsani said how would you feel considering the vast loss of life, the fact that there is little or no humanitarian corridors, that the equivalent of the Hiroshima bomb had been dropped on densely populated areas of Palestine. In Ireland there is 80 people per square kilometre but 8000 per square kilometre in Gaza. Councillor Varsani said if the Chamber could look merely from a humanity approach all would agree a cease fire is required as is food and water. She concluded that all should understand the horror on both sides.

Councillor Black said it was a very emotive topic and not all come from the same perspective, but he thanked members for supporting the amendment and concluded by saying what all did agree on was that a true and lasting peace settlement was needed.

Councillor Monteith stated that in his opinion the amendment is too one sided and said that both Hamas and Israel held hostages and proposed that the amendment to reflect this.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy stated that Councillor Black's motion was now the substantive motion and asked if he would accept the proposed amendment.

Councillor Black stated he would not accept the amendment.

Councillor Mallaghan asked if the motion read it supported the release of all hostages would it be acceptable.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy said across the district there was residents of every nationality and it was important that all had a voice.

Councillor Cuthbertson sought clarification as to what the motion would read.

The Chief Executive stated it would call for immediate release of all hostages held by Hamas and Israel.

*A further recess was called at 9.24 pm*

*The meeting reconvened at 9.41 pm*

Councillor Black thanked the Chair for granting the recess and said whilst everyone did not agree with all the sentiments made, morally all hostages should be released and if the motion read, 'all hostages should be released' hopefully all could agree. He proposed the motion read as follows:

'That this Council calls for an immediate ceasefire in Palestine and Israel; supported by the immediate release of all hostages; and calls for the provision of safe humanitarian corridors. Further, this Council calls on the international community to work towards a true and lasting peace settlement for the people in the Middle East.'

Councillor Monteith withdrew his amendment.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy asked if all Members would agree the motion or did they wish to vote.

All Members agreed the motion.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy declared the motion carried and thanked all Members for their contributions.

'That this Council calls for an immediate ceasefire in Palestine and Israel; supported by the immediate release of all hostages; and calls for the provision of safe humanitarian corridors.'

Further, this Council calls on the international community to work towards a true and lasting peace settlement for the people in the Middle East.'

Councillor McLernon concluded by stating, "I welcome the debate here tonight, and the contributions made by members. We all know what our history has taught us, and our call must be clear - an immediate, full, ceasefire and a decisive international intervention that leads to negotiations for a lasting peace settlement. Gaza must NOT become a graveyard for international law – we know which side we are on! We stand on the side of humanity, decency, universal democracy, and international law. And I hope here tonight, we will stand for peace, and support the motion.

*The live broadcast concluded at 9.42 pm.*

**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.**

Proposed by Councillor Kerr  
Seconded by Councillor Black and

**Resolved** That items C203/23 to C209/23 taken as confidential business.

**Matters for Decision**

- (i) Council Confidential minutes of meeting held on 28 September 2023
- (ii) Planning Confidential minutes of meeting held on 3 October 2023
- (iii) Policy & Resources Confidential minutes of meeting held on 5 October 2023
- (iv) Environment Confidential minutes of meeting held on 10 October 2023
- (v) Development Confidential minutes of meeting held on 12 October 2023
- (vi) Document for Sealing – Boundary Rectification of Lands adjacent to Maghera Leisure Centre, Coleraine Road, Maghera (Ref: ENV001-0052)
- (vii) Document for Sealing – Sale of 24 Northland Row, Dungannon (Ref: ENV001-0084)

**C211/23 Duration of Meeting**

The meeting was called for 7.00 pm and ended at 9.50 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.





**Minutes of Meeting of Planning Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Tuesday 7 November 2023 in Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon and by virtual means**

**Members Present**

Councillor S McPeake, Chair

Councillors Black (5.09 pm), J Buchanan, Carney, Clarke, Cuthbertson\*, Graham, Mallaghan, Martin\*, McConnell\* (5.27 pm), McElvogue, McFlynn\*, D McPeake, Robinson, Varsani\*

**Officers in Attendance**

Dr Boomer, Service Director of Planning (SD: PI)  
Mr Bowman, Head of Strategic Planning (HSP)\*\*  
Ms Donnelly, Council Solicitor  
Ms Doyle, Head of Local Planning (HLP)  
Mr Marrion, Senior Planning Officer (SPO)  
Ms McAllister, Senior Planning Officer (SPO)\*\*  
Ms McCullagh, Senior Planning Officer (SPO)\*\*  
Mr McClean, Senior Planning Officer (SPO)  
Miss Thompson, Committee and Member Services Officer

**Others in Attendance**

Councillor Bell\*\*\*

LA09/2022/1336/O	Mr McLean
LA09/2023/0411/O	Mr Cassidy***
LA09/2020/0729/F	Ms Trainor***
LA09/2021/1672/F	Mr Cassidy***
LA09/2022/1504/O	Mr Cassidy***

\* Denotes members and members of the public present in remote attendance

\*\* Denotes Officers present by remote means

\*\*\* Denotes others present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm

**P114/23 Notice of Recording**

Members noted that the meeting would be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast on the Council's You Tube site.

**P115/23 Apologies**

Councillor Kerr.

## **P116/23      Declarations of Interest**

The Chair, Councillor S McPeake reminded members of their responsibility with regard to declarations of interest.

Councillor McElvogue declared an interest in agenda item 6.8 – LA09/2022/0437/F.

## **P117/23      Chair's Business**

The Service Director of Planning (SD: PI) advised that the Head of Local Planning and Head of Strategic Planning would lead the Planning Committee in December as he would be on leave.

The SD: PI referred to the below applications which were on the agenda for determination and sought approval to have the following applications deferred from tonight's meeting schedule for further information to be submitted / an office meeting –

Agenda Item 5.1 – LA09/2022/0112/O - Dwelling and garage at 60m S of 29 Lisnagowan Road, Feroy, Dungannon for Mr Derek Montgomery.

Agenda Item 5.4 – LA09/2022/1118/F - Single storey dwelling at 120 Killymeal Road, Killymeal House, Dungannon for J and V Construction.

Agenda Item 5.11 – LA09/2023/0402/F - 3 detached dwellings adjacent to 7 Desertmartin Road, Moneymore for Mr Marie and Sean Corr.

Agenda Item 5.13 – LA09/2023/0422/O - Site for a 2 storey dwelling and domestic garage on a farm at lands approx. 215m E of 5 Rarogan Road, Augher for Pat McAleer.

Agenda Item 5.14 – LA09/2023/0467/O - Dwelling and domestic garage in a gap site at land adjacent and NE of 70 Glenhoy Road, Ballygawley for Mr Sean O'Neill.

Agenda Item 5.20 – LA09/2023/0703/O - Replacement dwelling and garage at 65m NW of 115 Auhrim Road, Magherafelt for Seamus O'Kane.

Agenda Item 5.23 - LA09/2023/0752/F - LA09/2020/0318/RM Proposed domestic bungalow with domestic garage. Condition No. 2. Proposed to be changed to: 'The vehicular access shall be improved and maintained in accordance with drawing 2318/A01. The area within the visibility splays and any forward sight line shall be cleared to provide a level surface no higher than 250mm above the level of the adjoining carriageway and such splays shall be retained and kept clear thereafter'. Background and justification set out by transport consultants letter attached with application. at 63B Anneeter Road, Coagh, Cookstown for Mr Oliver Conlon.

Proposed by Councillor Clarke  
Seconded by Councillor Mallaghan and

**Resolved** That the planning applications listed above be deferred for an office meeting / further consideration.

### **Matters for Decision**

#### **P118/23 Planning Applications for Determination**

The Chair drew Members attention to the undernoted planning applications for determination.

**LA09/2022/0112/O Dwelling & garage at 60m S of 29 Lisnagowan Road, Feroy, Dungannon for Mr Derek Montgomery**

Agreed that application be deferred for further information to be submitted earlier in meeting.

**LA09/2022/0499/RM 2 No. 1.5 storey detached dwellings to the rear of 11 Adair Gardens, Cookstown for R and F Developments**

Members considered previously circulated report on planning application LA09/2022/0499/RM which had a recommendation for approval.

Proposed by Councillor Clarke  
Seconded by Councillor Mallaghan and

**Resolved** That planning application LA09/2022/0499/RM be approved subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

**LA09/2022/0606/F Housing development of 6 detached houses, 18 semi detached houses, associated site works and foul water pumping station adjacent/E of 88 Roughan Road and 48 Drumreagh Road, Newmills, Dungannon for Firtree Developments (Ni) Ltd**

Members considered previously circulated report on planning application LA09/2022/0606/F which had a recommendation for approval.

Proposed by Councillor Mallaghan  
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

**Resolved** That planning application LA09/2022/0606/F be approved subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

**LA09/2022/1118/F Single storey dwelling at 120 Killymeal Road, Killymeal House, Dungannon for J and V Construction**

Agreed that application be deferred for an office meeting earlier in meeting.

**LA09/2022/1336/O**

**Replacement dwelling and garage at land approx.  
100m W of 12 Foygh Road, Dungannon, (access off  
Drumreany Road) for Mr Roger McLean**

Mr Marrion (SPO) presented a report on planning application LA09/2022/1336/O advising that it was recommended for approval.

The Chair advised the committee that a request to speak on the application had been received and invited Mr McLean to address the committee.

Mr McLean stated he objected to the proposed application as he was a second generation farmer of this complex site. Mr McLean stated he had an extensive poultry unit which he had built up over the last 21 years. Mr McLean referred to the officer report and highlighted that NIEA and Environmental Health have both indicated that the proposed site is unsuitable for a dwelling however he did accept that the report recommends approval based on the criteria for a replacement dwelling but questioned at what cost to his lifelong business. Mr McLean stated that if the application were to be approved and residents move in, complaints would likely follow to the Environmental Health department regarding odour, this is the same department who have stated the site is unsuitable for a dwelling. Mr McLean stated that these complaints could have the potential to finish his business and questioned who would compensate him for his loss of earnings. Mr McLean stated that intensive poultry farming requires a permit from NIEA and that potential residents making complaints about odour will be contacting NIEA who also state the site is unsuitable for a dwelling. Mr McLean stated that NIEA have the power to withdraw a permit and close his chicken houses. Mr McLean stated that if a farmer wants to build a new chicken farm it has to be built 150m plus away from a dwelling and felt it is only fair that a dwelling should be built 150m plus away from a chicken farm and at the very least outside the boundaries of an odour management plan. Mr McLean stated that the proposal is 15m away from the back of one of his chicken houses. Mr McLean stated that an alternative site has been suggested and that a slight movement would eliminate flood risk. Mr McLean stated that a site visit would highlight all the points he had raised and that he would also welcome an office meeting. Mr McLean stated he did not want to prevent a site being approved but that he had to protect his own livelihood. Mr McLean stated that whilst he was representing his own case tonight he felt this issue is something that needs to be addressed at a legislative level going forward.

*Councillor Black entered that meeting at 5.09 pm during the above presentation.*

The Service Director of Planning (SD: PI) stated it did not go amiss that the applicant's surname is McLean and that his surname is McLean and asked what the background is.

Mr McLean stated that the site is complex, that his grandfather bought the farm in 1960 and that his father farmed it until 2002. At that time the farm was signed over, mapped out and split in two between himself and his brother. Mr McLean stated that the chicken houses were built by himself.

The SD: PI asked when the house was last lived in.

Mr McLean stated he was not aware if it was ever lived in.

The SD: PI asked what it was last used for and Mr McLean replied a pig house.

The SD: PI stated that this case concerned him and that whilst it is not the role of the Planning Committee to arbitrate over family disputes there were some issues which did not fit right. The SD: PI stated that it is reasonable for the Committee to accept that the building has the characteristics of a dwelling and could grant approval to the application. The SD: PI stated that there is a lot of land belonging to the applicant and that it is possible to get a suitable distance away from the neighbouring farm and outside the flood plain which would allow someone to build a dwelling. The SD: PI stated it did not seem logical to build a house so close to chicken houses. The SD: PI stated that the applicant would be entitled to a replacement dwelling but that they would not be entitled to put it in situ of the existing building. The SD: PI stated that if the building is used for agricultural use then someone could not move into it as it is at the moment and if they did want to move in as is they would have to apply for planning permission for change of use. The SD: PI stated he understood the objector's arguments and did not need to meet with them further and suggested that the application be deferred to meet with the applicant.

The Chair, Councillor S McPeake stated that the proposal is very close to the chicken houses and that if there were other sites available he felt there should be some barrier between the two.

Councillor Mallaghan proposed that the application be deferred.

Councillor Clarke seconded Councillor Mallaghan's proposal.

Councillor Cuthbertson stated it did seem a strange place for a dwelling and was happy with the approach being proposed.

**Resolved** That planning application LA09/2022/1336/O be deferred for an office meeting with the applicant.

**LA09/2022/1370/O**                      **Dwelling at lands to the rear of 42, 44 and 46 Killyman Street, Moy adjacent to and immediately S of 50 Killyman Street for Mr Dermot MacNeice**

Members considered previously circulated report on planning application LA09/2022/1370/O which had a recommendation for approval.

Proposed by Councillor Carney  
Seconded by Councillor McElvogue and

**Resolved** That planning application LA09/2022/1370/O be approved subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

**LA09/2022/1670/F**                    **Residential development of 44 units; (8 detached and 36 semidetached dwelling units) with associated landscaping / open space; waste water pumping station; parking; and roads and access onto Annaghmore Road and associated works at lands immediately N of St Patrick's Primary School, 10 Annaghmore Road, Coalisland for Mr Declan McCloskey**

Members considered previously circulated report on planning application LA09/2022/1670/F which had a recommendation for approval.

Proposed by Councillor Carney  
Seconded by Councillor McElvogue and

**Resolved**    That planning application LA09/2022/1670/F be approved subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

**LA09/2023/0163/O**                    **Replacement dwelling with retention of the existing dwelling for agricultural storage at 50m S of 5 Beaghbeg Road, Cookstown for Benny McAleer**

Members considered previously circulated report on planning application LA09/2023/0163/O which had a recommendation for approval.

Proposed by Councillor Clarke  
Seconded by Councillor D McPeake and

**Resolved**    That planning application LA09/2023/0163/O be approved subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

**LA09/2023/0369/F**                    **Amendment of access location and visibility splay requirement adjacent to 4 Whitebridge Road, Ballygawley for Mr Eamon Cassidy**

Members considered previously circulated report on planning application LA09/2023/0369/F which had a recommendation for approval.

Proposed by Councillor McElvogue  
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

**Resolved**    That planning application LA09/2023/0369/F be approved subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

**LA09/2023/0397/O**                    **Site for a dwelling and domestic garage approx. 35m N of 2 Motalee Lane, Desertmartin at approx. 35m N of 2 Motalee Lane, Desertmartin for Mr Michael Gribbin**

Members considered previously circulated report on planning application LA09/2023/0397/O which had a recommendation for approval.

Proposed by Councillor Clarke  
Seconded by Councillor McFlynn and

**Resolved** That planning application LA09/2023/0397/O be approved subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

**LA09/2023/0402/F**                    **3 detached dwellings adjacent to 7 Desertmartin Road, Moneymore for Mr Marie and Sean Corr**

Agreed that application be deferred for an office meeting earlier in meeting.

**LA09/2023/0411/O**                    **Site for a dwelling and domestic garage approx. 40m N of 19a Ballyronan Road, Toome for Mr Matt Murphy**

Mr McKinless (SPO) presented a report on planning application LA09/2023/0411/O advising that it was recommended for refusal.

The Chair advised the committee that a request to speak on the application had been received and invited Mr Cassidy to address the committee.

Mr Cassidy stated that the proposal has been applied for under cluster and that the case officer is content there is cluster development, a suitable degree of integration, that there is development on two sides and it is located outside of a farm. Mr Cassidy stated that the one area of contention relates to a focal point and that he felt that the cluster in question has three focal points. Mr Cassidy stated the site is located at Hurls Corner which he stated is a well known landmark and has been described as such in recent press coverage. Mr Cassidy stated that there are also a number of old airfield buildings which exist at this location that were used by the US Air Force during World War 2. The second focal point is the Parochial House and community hall to the North of the site which adjoins the cluster. The third focal point is Newbridge picnic area to the East of the site which is a Council facility regularly frequented by fishermen and families. Mr Cassidy stated that the Planning Appeals Commission and Mid Ulster Council have adopted an approach in that if the application meets 5 of the 6 points and there is no demonstrable harm then it should be approved. Mr Cassidy stated that consultees have no concerns with the application and asked the Committee to reconsider the recommendation.

The Service Director of Planning (SD: PI) stated that policy does not say an application should meet 5 of 6 requirements and that in cases where the Planning Appeals Commission have accepted 5 of 6 requirements they could have been judicially reviewed. The SD: PI stated that an exception can be made to policy if there is good reason and asked Members with local knowledge if Hurls Corner is something people could identify.

The Chair, Councillor S McPeake stated he lived about 4 miles away from the site and did know the area as Hurls Corner and highlighted the addendum which included the press clipping.

Councillor D McPeake stated that there was not a person in Newbridge or Ballymaguigan who did not know the area as Hurls Corner.

The SD: PI stated that policy states that a focal point should be a crossroads or community facility but that in his view a focal point should be something which gives an area an identity and makes it different. The SD: PI stated that if the area is known as Hurls Corner there is a ribbon of development to be seen and that he felt the proposal will read as a single development associated with the focal point based on the arguments put forward tonight.

Councillor D McPeake reiterated that the area is known as Hurls Corner and that the community centre is also used for funeral teas and birthday parties. Councillor D McPeake proposed that the recommendation to refuse the application be overturned and that the application be approved.

The SD: PI stated that rather than overturn he would be prepared to change the recommendation for the application to an approval.

Councillor D McPeake proposed the recommendation.

Councillor Clarke seconded Councillor D McPeake's proposal.

The SD: PI suggested that the proposal be conditioned to 6m ridge height to keep it in character with existing development.

**Resolved** That planning application LA09/2023/0411/O be approved with 6m ridge height.

**LA09/2023/0422/O**            **Site for a 2 storey dwelling and domestic garage on a farm at lands approx. 215m E of 5 Rarogan Road, Augher for Pat McAleer**

Agreed that application be deferred for an office meeting earlier in meeting.

**LA09/2023/0467/O**            **Dwelling and domestic garage in a gap site at land adjacent and NE of 70 Glenhoy Road, Ballygawley for Mr Sean O'Neill**

Agreed that application be deferred for an office meeting earlier in meeting.

**LA09/2023/0552/F**            **Residential development comprising 2 semi detached dwellings and 2 detached dwellings (4 units in total) with private access road and car parking (amended plans) adjacent to and immediately NW of 48 Main Street, Coagh, Cookstown for Nigel Hagan**

Members considered previously circulated report on planning application LA09/2023/0552/F which had a recommendation for approval.

Proposed by Councillor McFlynn  
Seconded by Councillor Black and

**Resolved** That planning application LA09/2023/0552/F be approved subject to conditions as per the officer's report.



**LA09/2023/0612/F**                    **1 no. two storey detached dwelling with garage at land adjacent and E of 146C Drumagarner Road, Kilrea for Mr Niall Dallatt**

Members considered previously circulated report on planning application LA09/2023/0612/F which had a recommendation for approval.

Proposed by Councillor McFlynn  
Seconded by Councillor S McPeake and

**Resolved**    That planning application LA09/2023/0612/F be approved subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

**LA09/2023/0650/RM**                    **Dwelling and detached garage at lands 85m SW of 16 Megargy Road, Magherafelt for Declan Donnelly**

Members considered previously circulated report on planning application LA09/2023/0650/RM which had a recommendation for approval.

Proposed by Councillor D McPeake  
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

**Resolved**    That planning application LA09/2023/0650/RM be approved subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

**LA09/2023/0690/O**                    **Site for new dwelling in infill site between 42 and 42A Tamnaskeeney Road, Cookstown for Richard McAllister**

Members considered previously circulated report on planning application LA09/2023/0690/O which had a recommendation for approval.

Proposed by Councillor J Buchanan  
Seconded by Councillor Robinson and

**Resolved**    That planning application LA09/2023/0690/O be approved subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

**LA09/2023/0694/F**                    **Farm machinery/feed store with handling facilities (no animal housing) at 140m SE of 49 Slate Quarry Road, Pomeroy for Mr John and Brian Lagan**

Members considered previously circulated report on planning application LA09/2023/0694/F which had a recommendation for approval.

Proposed by Councillor Mallaghan  
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

**Resolved**    That planning application LA09/2023/0694/F be approved subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

**LA09/2023/0703/O**                      **Replacement dwelling and garage at 65m NW of 115 Aughrim Road, Magherafelt for Seamus O'Kane**

Agreed that application be deferred for an office meeting earlier in meeting.

**LA09/2023/0704/O**                      **Dwelling & garage at 40m NE of 74 Moneyhaw Road, Drummullan, Moneymore for Mr Keith Bell**

Members considered previously circulated report on planning application LA09/2023/0704/O which had a recommendation for approval.

Proposed by Councillor McFlynn  
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

**Resolved**     That planning application LA09/2023/0704/O be approved subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

**LA09/2023/0735/RM**                      **Site for dwelling on a farm at 250m NE of 19 Derrylattinee Road, Dungannon for Mr Caolan Gildernew**

Members considered previously circulated report on planning application LA09/2023/0735/RM which had a recommendation for approval.

Proposed by Councillor Carney  
Seconded by Councillor Varsani and

**Resolved**     That planning application LA09/2023/0735/RM be approved subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

**LA09/2023/0752/F**                      **LA09/2020/0318/RM Proposed domestic bungalow with domestic garage. Condition No. 2. Proposed to be changed to: 'The vehicular access shall be improved and maintained in accordance with drawing 2318/A01. The area within the visibility splays and any forward sight line shall be cleared to provide a level surface no higher than 250mm above the level of the adjoining carriageway and such splays shall be retained and kept clear thereafter'. Background and justification set out by transport consultants letter attached with application. at 63B Anneeter Road, Coagh, Cookstown for Mr Oliver Conlon**

Agreed that application be deferred for an office meeting earlier in meeting.

**LA09/2023/0857/RM**                      **Replacement dwelling & garage at approx. 80m SE of 19 Shivey Road, Cookstown for Mr John Causey**

Members considered previously circulated report on planning application LA09/2023/0857/RM which had a recommendation for approval.

Proposed by Councillor S McPeake  
Seconded by Councillor Buchanan and

**Resolved** That planning application LA09/2023/0857/RM be approved subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

**LA09/2023/0878/F**                    **Alterations and extension to existing dwelling and new shed for hobby room and garden store purposes at 5 Page's Lane, Draperstown for Mr Bosco Tohill**

Members considered previously circulated report on planning application LA09/2023/0878/F which had a recommendation for approval.

Proposed by Councillor Clarke  
Seconded by Councillor D McPeake and

**Resolved** That planning application LA09/2023/0878/F be approved subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

**LA09/2018/1056/F**                    **Additional 5.5m wide vehicular access, 2no 2m wide footpaths interlinked into existing footpath network including associated right turning lane to The Olde Fairways Residential Development adjacent to 90 Colebrooke Road, Fivemiletown, (in substitution to approved under M/2008/0501/F) for Rahoran Limited**

Members considered previously circulated report on planning application LA09/2018/1056/F which had a recommendation for approval.

Proposed by Councillor Robinson  
Seconded by Councillor McConnell and

**Resolved** That planning application LA09/2018/1056/F be approved subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

**LA09/2020/0729/F**                    **Site for 5 detached dwellings and garages (inclusion of footpath along public road) (additional plans received re footpath provision) at 40m W of 16 Annaghmore Road, Coalisland for Mr Conor Tennyson**

Mr Marrion (SPO) presented a report on planning application LA09/2020/0729/F advising that it was recommended for approval.

The Chair advised the committee that a request to speak on the application had been received and invited Ms Trainor to address the committee.

Ms Trainor stated she wanted to express the anxiety, stress and frustration that this application had cost over the past 3 years. Ms Trainor stated that as a homeowner who has invested life savings into a property it is felt necessary to defend the integrity of their home and potential impacts on their lands. Ms Trainor stated that

guidance has been sought from solicitors, architects and those familiar with planning in order to protect their property and that the time associated with this has been a significant and unwanted stress. Ms Trainor stated that they have been inconvenienced by time and costs by something initiated by a developer rather than something chosen by them. Ms Trainor stated that the planning process should be transparent, accessible and supportive of homeowners who are not benefitting from a proposal and not be an additional source of stress and financial strain. Ms Trainor spoke of concerns regarding lack of communication and consultation from the developer and felt it is unprofessional and inconsiderate of a developer not to meet with the homeowner given the significant impact the proposal has on their property and land. Ms Trainor referred to the report which states there is no statutory requirement for public consultation prior to submitting an application and felt that this highlights limitations. Ms Trainor stated that whilst the developer may not be legally obliged to engage with a homeowner it was felt it is a matter of common courtesy and responsible development practice to do so. Ms Trainor stated that the developers absence from the meeting in September 2022 further highlights a lack of respect for their concerns. Ms Trainor stated that the developer seemed to be confident that he has control of adequate lands to put the footpath in place as per the plans and to carry out road widening and to construct the footpath and kerbing without damaging any property. Ms Trainor stated that the developer does not have any control of the verge or hedge line in front of no.109 as the land registry map shows that they own it. Ms Trainor outlined that DfI do not state that any private land is required for the footpath but neither do they say it is required and that proposed plans are going by the word of the developer only. Ms Trainor stated that they have been advised by a solicitor that should a developer encroach on a boundary line it will require permission from them and that removal of any hedge will require consent and that should a developer attempt to do this they have the right to apply for an injunction. Ms Trainor asked for a site meeting with all parties in order to provide clarity on details and measurements.

The Service Director of Planning (SD: PI) asked what certificate of ownership had been submitted.

Mr Marrion advised that Certificate A has been completed.

The SD: PI referred to the site plan and the blue line which is the proposed footpath. The SD: PI stated that the blue line goes across the frontage of the objectors property and that they have provided a portfolio map of no.109 and that this would suggest the Certificate is not right.

Mr Marrion stated that he had checked with DfI and that they have stated they do not require a private streets determination for this as they are of the view that they own and control the verge.

The SD: PI stated that case law would have established that where a fence has been erected and there is a verge between that and road then it is presumed that the verge belongs to the Roads Service. In this instance it is clear that the verge has been given over to Roads Service and a certificate would not be required however in order to construct the footpath it is likely to have some implications for the hedgerow. The SD: PI suggested that the application be deferred in order to take measurements of proposed footpath on site, in relation to the ownership question the

SD: PI stated that there is a dispute between the parties and that the objector has had the opportunity to object to the application and that a valid point had been raised in that a developer cannot take down a hedgerow which does not belong to them.

Councillor Clarke asked when the footpath would be constructed if there is a minimum width the road should be.

Mr Marrion advised that officers have consulted with Roads Service on the application and that they have raised no concerns. Mr Marrion also highlighted that the report notes measurements taken on site.

The SD: PI stated that if measurements have been taken on site and that Roads Service have raised no concern then anything else is a civil dispute.

Ms Trainor referred to point 1 and the measurement of 1.4m to the middle of the hedge and asked why the middle of the hedge was being taken into consideration as that would be their property.

Discussion ensued regarding various measurements.

Councillor Carney proposed a site visit in order to give the residents a better idea of what is being proposed.

The SD: PI stated this would be a reasonable approach.

Councillor D McPeake seconded Councillor Carney's proposal.

**Resolved** That planning application LA09/2020/0729/F be deferred for a site visit.

**LA09/2021/1149/F Access at 11A Strawmore Lane, Doon, Draperstown for E Kelly Esq**

Members considered previously circulated report on planning application LA09/2021/1149/F which had a recommendation for approval.

Proposed by Councillor D McPeake  
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

**Resolved** That planning application LA09/2021/1149/F be approved subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

**LA09/2021/1672/F Change of house type and relocation of dwelling and domestic garage from that approved M/2013/0414/F and domestic garage at approx. 100m N of 34 Ferry Road, Coalisland, Dungannon for R Patrick and Mrs Lisa Trainor**

Mr Marrion (SPO) presented a report on planning application LA09/2021/1672/F advising that it was recommended for refusal.

The Chair advised the committee that a request to speak on the application had been received and invited Mr Cassidy to address the committee.

Mr Cassidy stated that the site is set 500m back from the Ferry Road and that there is only one view of the site, from a 50m stretch of the Ferry Road from its junction with the Reenaderry Road and is only seen from there as some hedging has recently been removed. Mr Cassidy stated that the proposal will have minimal impact and highlighted that much larger houses have been approved and constructed adjacent to the site. Mr Cassidy stated that the applicant has offered to provide a landscaping scheme which can be conditioned to be provided before any development starts on site. Mr Cassidy suggested that a site visit would be a good opportunity for Members to see how far the site is from the road and how little it can be viewed.

Councillor Carney proposed a site visit as she regularly travels that road and would agree with the comments that there are a number of new, larger houses in the locality.

Councillor D McPeake seconded Councillor Carney's proposal.

**Resolved** That planning application LA09/2021/1672/F be deferred for a site visit.

**LA09/2022/0063/O Replacement dwelling and domestic garage adjacent to 16 Roshure Road, Desertmartin, Magherafelt for Mr Rodney McKnight**

The Head of Local Planning (HLP) presented a report on planning application LA09/2022/0063/O advising that it was recommended for refusal.

Councillor Black stated he was unable to go to the site visit but that he was familiar with the site and that he felt there were characteristics that were in keeping with what would be a dwelling particularly around the windows and toilet. The Councillor referred to the report that there was inconclusive evidence but that he would be of the opinion that the building was a dwelling at one point in time and that he would be uncomfortable with refusing the application as he would argue there are characteristics resembling a dwelling.

The Service Director of Planning (SD: PI) referred to the report which stated that the photographs did not show what originally was there and asked what that meant.

The HLP advised that the Griffiths Valuation Map of 1859 shows a house, offices and land. The HLP advised that the site is located up a lane and that there is a two storey dwelling there along with a number of outbuildings and sheds along with a yard and off this yard is the building in question. The HLP stated that there is already a dwelling on the site with no planning history to say if that was a replacement at any time but that she was not convinced that the house that was there in 1859 is the same as what is pertaining to be the house now. The HLP stated that the building has windows and doors but no chimney.

The SD: PI stated that the photos are inconclusive and that the test is not that you have to prove it was a dwelling but rather it has the characteristics of a dwelling. The SD: PI stated that there is no chimney in situ but that this could have fallen down and

that this poses the question that if a dwelling was to be put on site would there be any concerns.

The HLP advised there would be no concerns in relation to integration or prominence as it would not be seen from the road.

The SD: PI stated that it is reasonable for Members to take their own position on the application.

Councillor Mallaghan stated that he attended the site visit and stated that it looked clear to him that the building in question could have been a labourers cottage. Councillor Mallaghan proposed that the application be approved.

The Chair, Councillor S McPeake stated he had also been to the site visit and whilst he took the point that you could not definitively say that it was a dwelling he felt there were enough characteristics to say it was a dwelling at some point. Councillor S McPeake stated he did not feel the proposal would cause any harm.

Councillor McFlynn stated she had been to the site visit and whilst it may be inconclusive she felt the structure was solid with window and door lintels and that a chimney could have been situated in the part of building that has collapsed. The Councillor stated she was content to approve that application.

Councillor Black seconded Councillor Mallaghan's proposal.

In terms of conditions, it was felt a two storey dwelling would not be visible.

**Resolved** That planning application LA09/2022/0063/O be approved.

**LA09/2022/0121/F**                      **Retention of farm machinery and animal feed store at 55m N of 199 Glen Road, Maghera for Mr John O'Kane**

Members considered previously circulated report on planning application LA09/2022/0121/F which had a recommendation for approval.

Proposed by Councillor D McPeake  
Seconded by Councillor McFlynn and

**Resolved** That planning application LA09/2022/0121/F be approved subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

**LA09/2022/0249/O**                      **Dwelling & domestic garage on a farm at land adjacent to & immediately S of 14 Tychaney Road, Ballygawley for Jenna Robinson**

Members considered previously circulated report on planning application LA09/2022/0249/O which had a recommendation for approval.

Proposed by Councillor Buchanan  
Seconded by Councillor Black and

**Resolved** That planning application LA09/2022/0249/O be approved subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

**LA09/2022/0437/F Farm dwelling at 59 Derryvaren Road, Coalisland for Mr James Campbell**

Mr Marrion (SPO) referred to addendum and that additional information had been submitted which requires further consideration. Mr Marrion stated that the applicant is now making a better case in terms of the flooding issue which will require further consultation with DfI and that receipts have also been submitted to support an active farming case.

Councillor Mallaghan proposed that the application be deferred.

Councillor D McPeake seconded Councillor Mallaghan's proposal.

**Resolved** That planning application LA09/2022/0437/F be deferred to consider additional information submitted.

**LA09/2022/1065/O Dwelling and Garage at 50m S of 37 Moor Road, Coalisland for Niall and Mary Kilpatrick**

Members considered previously circulated report on planning application LA09/2022/1065/O which had a recommendation for approval.

Proposed by Councillor Carney  
Seconded by Councillor McElvogue and

**Resolved** That planning application LA09/2022/1065/O be approved subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

**LA09/2022/1277/F Infill dwelling and detached double garage at lands approx. 7m E off 20 Ballymacpeake Road, Portglenone for Mr Feargus Quinn**

Application withdrawn.

**LA09/2022/1408/O Infill dwelling and domestic garage at 70m NE of 107 Drummerr Lane, Coalisland for Mr John Mc Cabe**

Members considered previously circulated report on planning application LA09/2022/1408/O which had a recommendation for approval.

Proposed by Councillor Carney  
Seconded by Councillor McElvogue and

**Resolved** That planning application LA09/2022/1408/O be approved subject to conditions as per the officer's report.



**LA09/2022/1419/O**

**Single detached bungalow with associated external private amenity space and garage at lands to the W of 4,5, 6 & 7 Riverdale Drive, Cookstown for Mr Sammy Lyle**

Ms McKinless (SPO) presented a report on planning application LA09/2022/1419/O advising that it was recommended for refusal.

The Service Director of Planning (SD: PI) stated that the site appeared to be urban and if it was urban it could fail policy in terms of protection of open space.

Councillor S McPeake stated he had been on the site visit and that the strip of land was very narrow and that the proposal was not typical of what you would get in this part of the countryside.

Councillor Black referred to consultations with Environmental Health and that it was disappointing that there has been no response. The Councillor felt that Environmental Health would be best placed to advise on the impact of the proposal and that he would feel uncomfortable moving to a decision on the application before comments from Environmental Health were received.

The SD: PI stated that the proposal is out of character with existing dwellings and that the reason officers were consulting with Environmental Health was not because of impact on neighbours but because it may be an unsuitable site for occupiers due to noise from road. The SD: PI stated that he felt the site was unsuitable for a house but that the developer wants to capitalise on what was left over in the original development. The SD: PI stated that the applicant will have right of a planning appeal and suggested that Members follow the officer recommendation.

Councillor Black stated he appreciated the comments in relation to consultation with Environmental Health and he was not disagreeing with what had been said but felt that if it was considered necessary to consult with them in the first place it would be appropriate to wait on their response.

The SD: PI stated that he felt the argument on the application related to the impact on the character of the area and the impact on existing residents.

Councillor McFlynn stated she had been to the site visit and that the site in question is a very narrow strip of land and that she did not know how a house would fit on it. Councillor McFlynn proposed the officer recommendation.

The Chair, Councillor S McPeake stated he had been to the site visit and took the same view and would second Councillor McFlynn's proposal.

Ms McKinless referred to earlier comment in relation to open space policy and asked if this should be added to the reasons for refusal.

The SD: PI asked that the meeting return to this item as he would like time to consider PPS8.

Mr Marrion (SPO) presented a report on planning application LA09/2022/1504/O advising that it was recommended for refusal.

The Chair advised the committee that a request to speak on the application had been received and invited Mr Cassidy to address the committee.

Mr Cassidy stated he would address each of the points of concern in turn, firstly that the site is not associated with a focal point. Mr Cassidy advised that the site sits at a crossroads and is adjacent to a Church and garage and felt that there are three focal points in the vicinity. The second concern related to the site not being bounded on two sides by development. Mr Cassidy advised that the site is bounded to the South by a number of agricultural buildings, a garage, a Church and a house and that to the North it is bounded by agricultural buildings. All buildings are long term features and have been in the locality a number of years. The third concern related to there not being a suitable degree of integration. Mr Cassidy advised that the boundary to the South is a mature hedge which will remain intact and that the northern boundary is defined by trees planted 3-4 years ago and that none of these trees will be removed by development. Mr Cassidy stated that the site is below the road and fairly flat and that the land behind and in front of it rises steeply in both directions and provides a backdrop where any development will not break the skyline. Mr Cassidy referred to the report which states there is no visual linkage with the Church from the site and would disagree with this and advised that he had supplied photographs to show the linkage. Mr Cassidy felt that a site visit would give Members the opportunity to see for themselves the visual linkage and also see the crossroads and development on two sides.

Councillor Mallaghan stated that he lived not far from the site and felt there is strong evidence in terms of a focal point given the proximity of the Church, garages and crossroads. The Councillor stated that where the application seems to fail is in relation to development on both sides but given that the site is triangular with a road on two sides he felt this will be hard to meet but could appreciate the officers concern in terms of integration however he did feel that if there was an appropriate planting plan for the application it would help. Councillor Mallaghan stated that the site reads well with the Church and did not feel that a dwelling at the location would have any detrimental impact on character. The Councillor stated he had no issue with a site visit and whilst the proposal was not meeting policy entirely he felt there were grounds for an exception to be made. Councillor Mallaghan stated that there are no objections to the proposal and that he would be minded to propose the approval of the application.

The Service Director of Planning (SD: PI) felt that it would be better to hold a site visit in the first instance.

Councillor Mallaghan stated he would change his proposal to defer the application for a site visit.

Councillor McElvogue seconded Councillor Mallaghan's proposal.

**Resolved** That planning application LA09/2022/1504/O be deferred for a site visit.

**LA09/2022/1561/O Site for dwelling & domestic garage at approx. 30m S of 26 Grillagh Hill, Maghera for Mr Malachy Scullin**

Ms McKinless (SPO) presented a report on planning application LA09/2022/1561/O advising that it was recommended for refusal.

Councillor Robinson asked what the basis of the objection was.

Ms McKinless advised that an objection was submitted which related to surface water flooding and the impact this would have on their property. Ms McKinless stated that the applicant was asked to submit a drainage assessment but that none was put forward.

The Chair, Councillor S McPeake asked for any further comments or proposals.

No further comments were made.

The Service Director of Planning (SD: PI) stated that it may be useful that when Standing Orders and Planning Protocol are next being considered that an additional point be included that when there are no objections to a proposal that it is just accepted as problems can arise when no one wants to go down on record as proposing to refuse an application.

The Chair, Councillor S McPeake stated there had been no site visit in relation to this application.

The SD: PI stated that the key issue for this application relates to flooding and drainage and that it was his view to protect the people that are already there.

The Chair, Councillor S McPeake asked for a proposal on how to move forward.

In the absence of any proposals the SD: PI suggested that the application be referred back to him and he would make a delegated decision.

Agreed.

**Resolved** That planning application LA09/2022/1561/O be referred to the Service Director of Planning to make a delegated decision.

**LA09/2022/1686/O Dwelling and garage at 61 Ballynakilly Road, Coalisland for Mr Terry McCann**

Members considered previously circulated report on planning application LA09/2022/1686/O which had a recommendation for approval.

Proposed by Councillor Carney  
Seconded by Councillor McFlynn and

**Resolved** That planning application LA09/2022/1686/O be approved subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

**Continuation of  
LA09/2022/1419/O**

**Single detached bungalow with associated external private amenity space and garage at lands to the W of 4,5, 6 & 7 Riverdale Drive, Cookstown for Mr Sammy Lyle**

The Service Director of Planning (SD: PI) stated that there is a presumption that the Protection of Open Space Policy is in urban areas but that on reading the policy it does not preclude that it can be open space in the countryside. The SD: PI stated that it would appear the land in question was left over for a reason and has been left as an open space and whilst the site is in the countryside it has very urban characteristics and that he felt policy PSOS1 – Protection of Open Space could be applied and added to the reasons for refusal.

Proposed by Councillor McFlynn  
Seconded by Councillor S McPeake and

**Resolved** That planning application LA09/2022/1419/O be refused on the grounds stated in the officer's report to include PSOS1 – Protection of Open Space.

**Continuation of  
LA09/2022/1561/O**

**Site for dwelling & domestic garage at approx. 30m S of 26 Grillagh Hill, Maghera for Mr Malachy Scullin**

Councillor Clarke referred to the agreement to refer this item back to Service Director of Planning to take a delegated decision. The Councillor stated that there was no reason not to follow the recommendation and in that case he would propose to accept the officer recommendation.

Councillor D McPeake seconded Councillor Clarke's proposal.

**Resolved** That planning application LA09/2022/1561/O be refused on the grounds stated in the officer's report.

The Service Director of Planning (SD: PI) thanked for the Members for taking a decision on the application as the provision to defer for delegated decision is not stated within Standing Orders. The SD: PI reflected that if an application is put before Committee it is important that the Committee take a decision even though this may sometimes be difficult. The SD: PI stated that if someone does not like a decision they have right of planning appeal.

**P119/23 Receive Dfl Consultation on Review of LDP Regulations**

Ms McAllister (SPO) presented previously circulated report which sought approval to make a submission with respect to a Dfl review of Local Development Plan Regulations, including experiences, recommendations, and supporting evidence for any proposed changes.

Proposed by Councillor S McPeake  
Seconded by Councillor Mallaghan and

**Resolved** To agree the response as summarised in the report and detailed within Annex 1 of the report and that this be submitted to Sandra Adams, Local Government Lead, as requested by Dfl.

**P120/23 Receive Report on Planning Customer Survey**

Ms McAllister (SPO) presented previously circulated report which sought agreement that a survey by questionnaire distributed to agents would be an appropriate method to obtain qualitative and quantitative feedback regarding the operations of the Planning Department with emphasis on Development Management and the new planning IT system.

The Chair, Councillor S McPeake asked if all agents will get the survey.

Ms McAllister advised that contact details are held for agents who have submitted a planning application since June 2022 when the new system was introduced and that approximately 140 agents have been identified and will be sent the survey. In addition, the link to the survey will be put onto the Council website so that any other agents who wish to participate in the survey can do so.

The Chair, Councillor S McPeake stated he looked forward to the feedback. Councillor S McPeake stated that he had received a number of positive comments on the new system but that one issue raised by an agent related to the paying mechanism and that they felt the applicant should pay for an application rather than the agent.

Ms McKinless stated that there is mandatory online payment when a form is completed on the Council website but that there is a procedure in place if an agent is submitting a major application or an application which has a fee of £5000 or more. In such cases it was advised there is an offline link to a P1 form which is emailed to the agent so there is a mechanism to submit applications via alternative payment. Ms McKinless stated that when the forms were being developed it was decided to make online payment mandatory for the majority of applications but that there is another process which could be reviewed.

**P121/23 Receive Planning Performance Report**

The Service Director of Planning (SD: PI) presented previously circulated report which outlined progress being made in achieving the Planning Service Business Plan Objectives for 2023/4.

The Chair, Councillor S McPeake wished those representing Council well at the forthcoming National Planning Awards Ceremony.

Councillor Mallaghan stated that there is a great dynamic within the planning team and that there are good relationships between Members and officers. The Councillor stated that the planning portal is a good example of how the planning team had the freedom to do new things because they had the support of Members. The Councillor

highlighted that this is the 5<sup>th</sup> award the planning team have put themselves forward to and that this shows confidence that the team are prepared to enter even if they do not win. The Councillor also commented that restructuring can be difficult but that it is worth doing. Councillor Mallaghan referred to the customer survey previously discussed and felt that 32 questions may be a bit long, the Councillor stated he appreciated the survey is simple in that the responses are options but felt that it may be worth reviewing to see if some questions could be combined. Councillor Mallaghan proposed the recommendation in relation to the previous report on the planning customer survey and also the recommendation for this report that Council is represented at the forthcoming National Planning Awards Ceremony.

Councillor Carney seconded Councillor Mallaghan's proposals.

**Resolved** That the Planning Department issue a customer survey to agents to aid service improvement and that the Service Director of Planning be delegated authority to make final changes to the draft Customer Survey Questionnaire as attached at appendix to report.

**Resolved** That Council send the Deputy Chair of Council and the IT project team leader to represent Council at the forthcoming National Planning Awards Ceremony in London. The Planning Committee also commends the hard work and diligence of the Human Resource partners in delivering the restructuring and further integration of the Planning Department within Council.

## **Matters for Information**

### **P122/23 Minutes of Planning Committee held on 3 October 2023**

Members noted previously circulated minutes of Planning Committee held on 3 October 2023.

*Live broadcast ended at 7.14 pm.*

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

Proposed by Councillor Clarke  
Seconded by Councillor Carney and

**Resolved** In accordance with Section 42, Part 1 of 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 P123/23 to P126/23.

### **Matters for Decision**

P123/23 Receive Report on Dfl Letter in relation to LDP

**Matters for Information**

P124/23 Confidential Minutes of Planning Committee held on 3  
October 2023

P125/23 Enforcement Cases Opened

P126/23 Enforcement Cases Closed

**P127/23 Duration of Meeting**

The meeting was called for 5 pm and concluded at 7.43 pm.

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Annex A – Introductory Remarks from the Chairperson

Good evening and welcome to the meeting of Mid Ulster District Council's Planning Committee in the Chamber, Magherafelt and virtually.

I specifically welcome the public watching us through the Live Broadcast feed. The Live Broadcast 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.

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 you are for or against the proposal or abstaining from voting
- For members attending remotely, note that by voting on any application, you are confirming that you were in attendance for the duration of, and that you heard and saw all relevant information in connection with the application you vote on
- When invited to speak please introduce yourself by name to the meeting. When finished please put your audio to mute
- 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
- An Addendum was emailed to all Committee Members at 5pm today. There is also a hard copy on each desk in the Chamber. Can all members attending remotely please confirm that they received the Addendum and that have had sufficient time to review it?
- If referring to a specific report please reference the report, page or slide being referred to so everyone has a clear understanding
- For members of the public that are exercising a right to speak by remote means, please ensure that you are able to hear and be heard by councillors, officers and any others requesting speaking rights on the particular application. If this isn't the case you must advise the Chair immediately. Please note that once your application has been decided, you will be removed from the meeting. If you wish to view the rest of the meeting, please join the live link.
- Can I remind the public and press that taking photographs of proceedings or the use of any other means to enable persons not present to see or hear any



proceedings (whether now or later), or making a contemporaneous oral report of any of the proceedings are all prohibited acts.

Thank you and we will now move to the first item on the agenda - apologies and then roll call of all other Members in attendance.

## ADDENDUM TO PLANNING COMMITTEE AGENDA

**FOR PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING ON: 7 November 2023**

**Additional information has been received on the following items since the agenda was issued.**

**Chairs Business –**

ITEM	INFORMATION RECEIVED	ACTION REQUIRED
5.5	Late objection	Issues already addressed in the report
5.12	Newspaper Clippings Refusal reason amended	Members to note
6.4	Submission	Members to note already taken into account
6.8	Receipts and levels provided	Members to note
6.12	Additional information for consideration	Members to note
6.13	Additional information to address issues	Members to note

**Minutes of Meeting of Policy and Resources Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 9 November in the Council Offices, Burn Road, Cookstown and by Virtual Means**

<b>Members Present</b>	Councillor Corry, Chair  Councillors Bell*, Brown*, J Burton, Cahoon, Gildernew*, Johnston, McAleer, McFlynn, McLernon, S McPeake*, Molloy*, Totten*, Wilson
<b>Officers in Attendance</b>	Mrs Campbell, Strategic Director of Environment (SD: Env) Mrs Canavan, Strategic Director of Organisation Development, Strategy and Performance (SD: ODSP) Mrs Dyson, Head of Human Resources (HoHR)** Mr Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing (AD: HLW)** Mr Lowry, Head of Technical Services (HoTS) Mr McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement (HoSS&E) Mr Moffett, Assistant Director of Organisation Development, Strategy and Performance (AD: ODSP)** Mr O'Hagan, Head of IT (HoIT) Ms McNally, Assistant Director of Corporate Service and Finance (AD: CS&F)** Mrs Grogan, Committee and Member Services Officer
<b>Others in Attendance</b>	<b>Deputation: Carers NI &amp; Carers Policy Forum</b> Mr Craig Harrison & Ms Angela Philips

\* Denotes members present in remote attendance

\*\* Denotes Officers present by remote means

\*\*\* Denotes others present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm.

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

**PR179/23 Notice of Recording**

Members noted that the meeting would be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast on the Council's You Tube site.

## **PR180/23 Apologies**

Councillors F Burton and McLean.

## **PR181/23 Declarations of Interest**

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

## **PR182/23 Chairs Business**

None.

## **PR183/23 Deputation: Carers NI & Carers Policy Forum**

The Chair welcomed Mr Craig Harrison, Carers NI & Carers Policy Forum to the meeting and invited him to address the committee.

Mr Harrison provided members with a brief update on the organisation and the matter of Access to Leisure Facilities for Unpaid Carers in Northern Ireland (appendix).

He advised that there were a total 222,213 unpaid Carers across Northern Ireland with 15,729 relating to Mid Ulster. The contribution of unpaid Carers in Mid Ulster is worth £520m per year.

Impact on unpaid caring on health and wellbeing:

- 1 in 4 – unpaid carers in Northern Ireland describe their mental health as ‘bad’ or ‘very bad’
- 52% - say their health has suffered due to caring
- 48% - don't have the opportunity to exercise

Barriers to using leisure facilities:

- 6 in 10 unpaid carers in Northern Ireland say being more physically active would help improve their health; however:
  - Just 7% use local leisure services often
  - When asked why they don't use them more frequently, more than 1 in 3 said they are too expensive

The Chair thanked Mr Harrison for his impressive presentation and said that we all know the importance of our unpaid carers within Mid Ulster and throughout the whole North. She advised that there would be a huge impact on society if carers were not there to assist and also the vast amount of savings, they contribute towards the Health Service. The Chair advised that before the end of the last Council term, Carers were in attendance where some discussions had taken place and one of the things that was raised was the possibility of concessionary fees. She stated that at that time she was aware of a Carer's Card being available for our residents in the Northern Trust area, but it was no longer available in the Southern Trust area and enquired if this had changed.

Mr Harrison advised that like the Northern Trust, Southern Trust had started issuing ID cards during the pandemic but had stopped issuing them, Northern Trust continues to do so as the carers in that area were reporting to them that they were getting a lot of use and value out of them. He said that this could be the biggest downfall and would like to see another means to indicate that there were legitimate carers, i.e. paperwork that's associated with Carer's Allowance where people have to verify and prove the information to be in receipt of the benefit which would mean that there would be confidence that these were legitimate carers.

Councillor Brown thanked Mr Harrison for his presentation and referred to comment regarding Carers Allowance and enquired if there was any indication how many Carers there could be within the Mid Ulster constituency.

Mr Harrison said that he was fairly certain the data that the Department of Communities publishes on the recipients of Carer's Allowance is fairly limited and not sure whether it would be broken down by local government level but could certainly investigate and report back findings to the committee. He stated that just because it wasn't published it didn't mean that it wasn't collected.

The Chair advised that members complete a lot of benefit forms and come across issues relating to some carers being employed or being outside the criteria for Carer's Allowance but were still full-time carers and asked if this could also be investigated regarding concessionary rates.

Mr Harrison stated that in an ideal world, anyone that has a caring role should qualify, but there needs to be a way for Council to verify people coming forward requesting this. He advised that Antrim and Newtownabbey Council took a version of their own definition to approve those people who were in receipt of an ID Card as they had to verify with the Health Trust to avail of the card which was certainly a starting point. To put this in perspective the last update from Northern Trust indicated that less than 1,000 ID Cards had been issued which was a very small percentage of the unpaid carer population in the Northern Trust area never mind the ones living in the Southern Trust area as Mid Ulster cuts across both. Mr Harrison said that the ID Cards would certainly be a starting point but would only be capturing a very small proportion and felt if there were other methods of verification like being in receipt of Carer's Allowance, there could be a much bigger catchment, but agreed that there was no great solution which would meet the sort of verification criteria that the Council would have to impose.

The Chair thanked Mr Harrison and Ms Philips for attending the meeting tonight and said that the Council would try and do whatever they could to assist if required.

*Mr Harrison and Ms Philips withdrew from the meeting at 7.13 pm.*

## **Matters for Decision**

### **PR184/23 Request to Illuminate Council Property**

The Assistant Director of Organisational Development, Strategy and Performance (AD: ODSP) presented previously circulated report to seek members approval to

illuminate and light up the Council's three designated properties to raise awareness for the following:

- Brake, Road Safety Charity: World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims, and to mark the first day of Road Safety Week 2023
- Positive Life: World Aids Day
- NSPCC NI: Walk for Children
- Ehlers Danlos Support UK: Ehlers Danlos Syndrome Day
- The UK Foundation for Kawasaki Disease Society

Proposed by Councillor McAleer  
Seconded by Councillor McLernon and

- Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to illuminate the three designated Council properties as follows –
- Brake: World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims, and to mark the first day of Road Safety Week 2023: 19 November 2023: Colour - Yellow
  - Positive Life: World Aids Day: 1 December 2023: Colour: Red
  - NSPCC NI: Walk for Children: Friday 22 December 2023: Colour – Green
  - The UK Foundation for Kawasaki Disease Society: International Kawasaki Disease Awareness Day: 26 January 2024: Colour – Red
  - Ehlers Danlos Support UK: Ehlers Danlos Syndrome Day: 4 May 2024: Colour – Black and White

**PR185/23 Member Services**

No issues.

**Matters for Information**

**PR186/23 Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 5 October 2023**

Members noted Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee held on 5 October 2023.

**PR187/23 Update Elected Member Development Working Group**

Members noted update regarding meeting of the Elected Member Development Working Group held on 19 October 2023.

**PR188/23 Local Government Partnership on Travellers Issues: Subscription 2023-24**

Members noted update on requests received from the Northern Ireland Local Government Partnership on Travellers Issues for annual membership subscription for period 2023-2024.

Councillor McFlynn advised that she had no issue with the subscription being made but would be interested to see when this group had met within the past year. She asked that a letter be sent to the group asking when the committee had last met.

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that a letter be sent to the Local Government Partnership on Travellers Issues to seek confirmation on when the group had last met.

*Live broadcast ended at 7.16 pm.*

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

Proposed by Councillor McLernon  
Seconded by Councillor McFlynn and

**Resolved** In accordance with Section 42, Part 1 of 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 PR189/23 to PR.

#### **Matters for Decision**

PR189/23 Animal Welfare  
PR190/23 Connecting Pomeroy Project  
PR191/23 Staffing Matters for Decision  
PR192/23 Bellaghy Village Wi-fi Service Review

#### **Matters for Information**

PR193/23 Confidential Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee held on 5 October 2023  
PR194/23 Contracts and DAC Registers – Update  
PR195/23 Financial Report for 6 months to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023  
PR196/23 Treasury Management  
PR197/23 Staffing Matters for Information  
PR198/23 Managing Employee Attendance  
PR199/23 Staff Updates – Organisational Restructure and Other

### **PR200/23 Duration of Meeting**

The meeting was called for 7.00 pm and ended at 7.53 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, [Dungannon/Magherafelt] and virtually.

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 roll call of all other Members in attendance.



# Access to leisure facilities for unpaid carers in Mid Ulster

**Craig Harrison**

Public Affairs Manager

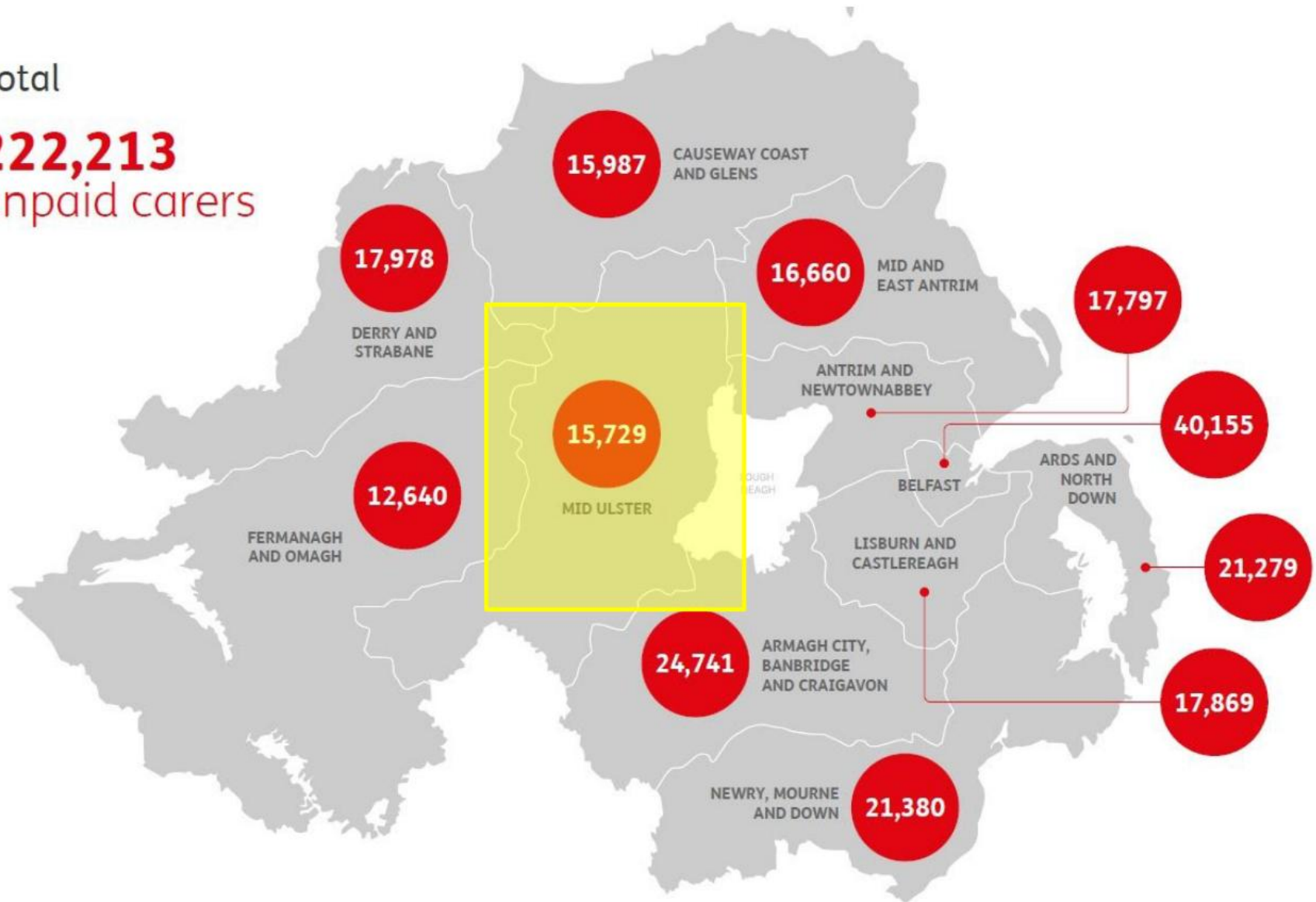
Carers NI

[craig.Harrison@carersni.org](mailto:craig.Harrison@carersni.org)



Total

**222,213**  
unpaid carers



Source: NI Statistics and Research Agency (2023). Census 2021: Unpaid caring.

The contribution of unpaid carers in  
Mid Ulster is worth...

£530m  
per year



# Impact of unpaid caring on health and wellbeing

- **1 in 4** unpaid carers in Northern Ireland describe their mental health as ‘bad’ or ‘very bad’
- **52%** say their health has suffered due to caring
- **48%** don’t have the opportunity to exercise



# Barriers to using leisure facilities

- **6 in 10** unpaid carers in Northern Ireland say being more physically active would help improve their health; however:
  - Just **7%** use local leisure services often
  - When asked why they don't use them more frequently, **more than 1 in 3** said **they are too expensive**

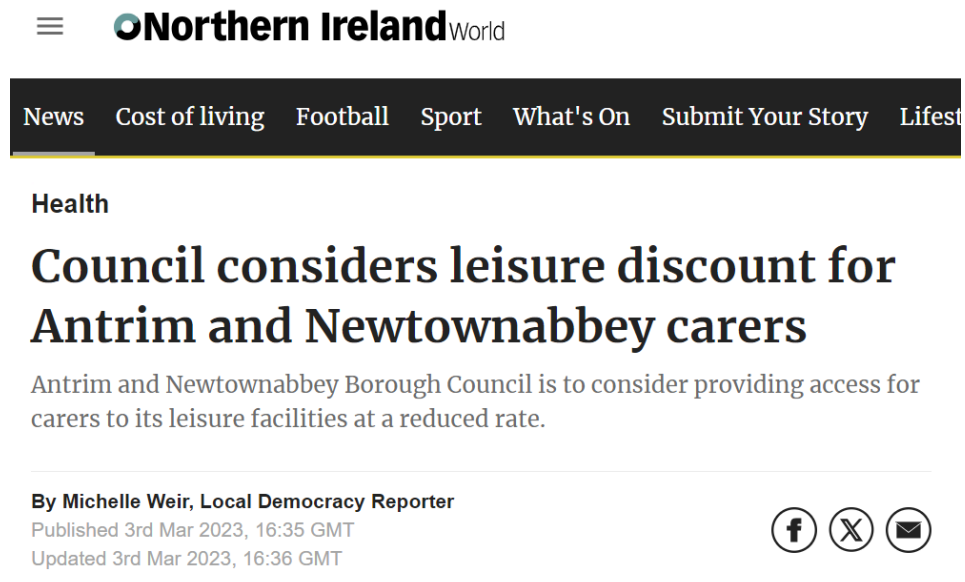
*“ I was a [gym] member for six months, but it was too expensive.”*

*“ I can't afford the entry fee.”*

*“ Going to the gym and doing the exercise classes was so important to me. It was an opportunity to forget about caring for a while and have some 'me' time. But with the cost of living now, I just can't afford it. It's just too expensive.”*

# Wider context

- New unpaid carer leisure centre concessionary rate in Antrim and Newtownabbey
- £16 p/m – **nearly half the price** of a single adult membership in Mid Ulster (£29.95)



The screenshot shows a news article from Northern Ireland World. At the top left is a hamburger menu icon. The site name 'Northern Ireland World' is displayed. Below is a navigation bar with links for News, Cost of living, Football, Sport, What's On, Submit Your Story, and Lifestyle. The article is categorized under 'Health'. The main headline reads 'Council considers leisure discount for Antrim and Newtownabbey carers'. The sub-headline states 'Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council is to consider providing access for carers to its leisure facilities at a reduced rate.' The author is 'Michelle Weir, Local Democracy Reporter'. The article was published on 3rd Mar 2023 at 16:35 GMT and updated at 16:36 GMT. Social media sharing icons for Facebook, X, and Email are visible at the bottom right of the article content.

☰ **Northern Ireland**World

News Cost of living Football Sport What's On Submit Your Story Lifestyle

Health

## Council considers leisure discount for Antrim and Newtownabbey carers

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council is to consider providing access for carers to its leisure facilities at a reduced rate.

By Michelle Weir, Local Democracy Reporter

Published 3rd Mar 2023, 16:35 GMT

Updated 3rd Mar 2023, 16:36 GMT

f X ✉

**Minutes of Meeting of Environment Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Tuesday 14 November 2023 in Council Offices, Burn Road, Cookstown and by virtual means**

**Members Present**

Councillor Cuthbertson, Chair

Councillors J Burton, J Buchanan, Cahoon, Kelly, Groogan, Mallaghan, McAleer, McElvogue, McGuigan, McNamee, Milne\*, Quinn\*, Robinson, Varsani

**Officers in Attendance**

Mr McCreesh (Chief Executive)\*\*  
Mrs Campbell, Strategic Director of Environment (SD: Env)  
Mr Lowry, Head of Technical Services (HoTS)  
Mr McAdoo, Assistant Director of Environmental Services (AD: ES)  
Mr Scullion, Assistant Director of Property Services (AD: PS)  
Miss Thompson, Committee and Member Services Officer

**Others in Attendance**

Councillor F Burton\*\*\*

**Agenda Item 4 – Deputation – Safe Electricity Armagh and Tyrone (SEAT)**

Messrs Lennon and Woods

\* Denotes members and members of the public present in remote attendance

\*\* Denotes Officers present by remote means

\*\*\* Denotes others present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm

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

**E236/23 Notice of Recording**

Members noted that the meeting would be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast on the Council's You Tube site.

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## **E237/23 Apologies**

Councillor Martin.

## **E238/23 Declarations of Interest**

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

## **E239/23 Deputation - Safe Electricity Armagh and Tyrone (SEAT)**

The Chair, Councillor Cuthbertson welcomed the representatives from SEAT to the meeting and invited them to make their presentation (appendix 1).

Mr Lennon thanked the Committee for the opportunity to raise concerns regarding the planned North-South Interconnector and the impact it will have on the residents of Mid Ulster District Council. Mr Lennon clarified that SEAT are not against interconnection but that the purpose of their attendance tonight was to highlight the main points of concern regarding the proposed infrastructure these being, the case of need, overhead versus underground cabling, cost and compensation and technology. Mr Lennon highlighted that there has never been a full accurate costing of the proposed interconnector and that since 2004 technology has changed massively along with the energy market and that the European approach to building sustainable networks has also changed. Mr Lennon stated that SEAT are asking the Department for Energy for a review to ascertain if the interconnector is still needed and how it meets Northern Ireland's energy strategy.

Mr Woods encouraged Members to seek a review for the need for this interconnector particularly as there are so many unanswered questions.

The Chair, Councillor Cuthbertson commended Messrs Lennon and Woods for their work since 2004 and that he was mindful that a number of Members have not been elected that length of time. Councillor Cuthbertson referred to the information sent to Members prior to the meeting tonight and stated that if there was any further information which could be circulated it would be useful for Members.

Councillor Varsani asked if the concerns regarding the interconnector were to be ranked what the top two concerns would be.

Mr Woods stated that Northern Ireland consumers have come through a number of energy price rises recently and asked why Northern Ireland consumers and industry should continue to have to pay costs which he believed would rocket if the interconnector was put in place. Mr Woods also highlighted concerns of landowners in Northern Ireland receiving such a meagre payment for lands compared to the South whilst destroying the environment and causing risk to health in the process. Mr Woods stated that there was nothing wrong with cross border activity but questioned why people should be allowed to be sucked in to a system which has been so badly managed in the South.



Councillor Robinson referred to costs and poor compensation and asked if there are any health hazards with the overhead cables as opposed to underground cabling.

Mr Lennon stated that the British Medical Journal identified the potential for higher risks of childhood leukaemia for those associated with close proximity to power lines. In addition the World Health Organisation indicate that there are a number of concerns with powerlines that have not been scientifically disproven and that they use the precautionary principle in that if something is uncertain it should not be done and that this is the approach taken to risk in the UK and EU. Mr Lennon stated there was a similar proposal linking Belgium and Germany and when they considered issues similar to those for the proposed North-South interconnector they decided to cable underground. Mr Lennon stated that the biggest factor associated with overhead cabling is overhead emissions and that scientific evidence shows that significant and prolonged exposure to these emissions will cause potential damage.

Councillor Mallaghan referred to the various interconnectors and stated that there is the potential for cheaper electricity coming from nuclear in France and asked if this has been considered.

Mr Lennon advised that the Republic of Ireland have revised their energy strategy in the last five years and this is in reaction to an EU change in technology in networks. It was advised that the EU are now putting in multi purpose interconnectors which use a DC line as opposed to an AC line which is what the North-South interconnector proposes to use. Mr Lennon stated that the EU want to increase the generating capacity and that further transfer of renewable power has been agreed between Ireland and France. Mr Lennon referred to the Moyle interconnector and that there was no reason why it could not be upgraded but that the main constriction relates to contractual terms.

Mr Woods also referred to the Kilmarnock to Kilroot interconnector and that as much renewable energy as is required can be provided from Scotland. Mr Woods also referred to lack of investment in power to the West of Northern Ireland. Mr Woods stated that SEAT have raised approximately £1 million for their work to date from donations and that upcoming tribunals will also require to be funded and questioned why this should have to be the case.

Councillor Robinson referred to the compensation being paid to farmers in the North at £13k per acre as opposed to £100k per acre in the South.

Mr Lennon stated it was his understanding that SONI were in contact with Land and Property Services to work out the average price of agricultural land and that is the figure given. Mr Lennon stated that £13-20k per acre for agricultural land is probably not that inaccurate at the moment but emphasised that landowners are being asked to give up a site which has planning permission and in addition they are being asked to stymie future development if it is within the safe zone of the overhead line. Existing businesses may also be devalued. Mr Lennon stated that SONI do not have the same statutory basis to make compensation payments and that SEAT are lobbying the Department for the Economy and Department for Infrastructure to

replicate the payments being made in the South but that this has not happened due to lack of Assembly.

The Chair, Councillor Cuthbertson thanked the representatives again for their attendance and asked them to keep in touch with Council with further updates.

Mr Woods stated that there are continual developments and that he had put together additional information. The information was circulated to Members (appendix 2).

*Messrs Lennon and Woods left the meeting at 7.38 pm.*

## **E240/23 Chair's Business**

Councillor McGuigan referred to proposal being brought forward by Workspace to replace a number of trees that were damaged/removed during a NI Water sewerage project a number of years ago. Councillor McGuigan stated that he is a Council representative on Workspace. The Councillor stated that whilst NI Water replaced the trees after the works these trees have not grown and that the contractor has now moved from the site with no follow up. Councillor McGuigan stated that the issue that Workspace have come across is that there are utilities in the area and the question is whether these could be impacted by bringing their project forward. The Councillor stated that Workspace are asking for some assistance from Council as DfI will not provide the information required to them. Councillor McGuigan highlighted that Workspace are putting money to this project and proposed that officers from Council work with Workspace to assist them in getting the information they require to move forward with their project.

The Chair, Councillor Cuthbertson stated he was surprised that DfI would not be forthcoming in providing the information required and that he would leave the matter with the Director and officers to make contact with the group.

Councillor Groogan seconded Councillor McGuigan's proposal.

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that officers make contact with Workspace to assist them in getting the information they require from DfI to move forward with their project.

## **Matters for Decision**

### **E241/23 DfI Roads Proposal to Mid Ulster District Council – No Waiting At Any Time Restriction at Charlemont Street, Moy**

Members considered previously circulated report which sought agreement in relation to proposal to introduce no waiting at any time, loading and unloading at Charlemont Street, Moy.

Proposed by Councillor McNamee  
Seconded by Councillor McElvogue and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to endorse the proposal submitted by Department for Infrastructure Roads in relation to proposal to introduce no waiting at any time, loading and unloading at Charlemont Street, Moy.

**E242/23 Dfl Roads Proposal to Mid Ulster District Council – Disabled Person’s Parking Bay Amendment, Station Road, Clogher**

Members considered previously circulated report which sought agreement in relation to proposal to amend Disabled Person’s Parking Bay provision at Station Road, Clogher.

Proposed by Councillor McNamee  
Seconded by Councillor McElvogue and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to endorse the proposal submitted by Department for Infrastructure Roads in relation to proposal to amend Disabled Person’s Parking Bay provision at Station Road, Clogher.

**E243/23 Dfl Roads Proposal to Mid Ulster District Council – Derestriction, Ballygawley Roundabouts**

Members considered previously circulated report which sought agreement in relation to proposal to introduce a derestriction of current speed limits at Ballygawley Roundabouts, and main link roads.

Proposed by Councillor McNamee  
Seconded by Councillor McElvogue and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to endorse the proposal submitted by Department for Infrastructure Roads in relation to proposal to introduce a derestriction of current speed limits at Ballygawley Roundabouts, and main link roads.

**E244/23 Bus Shelters Update**

The Head of Technical Services (HoTS) presented previously circulated report which provided update on current bus shelter status.

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

- That the following applications move from stage 5 of the process -
  - Mourne Crescent, Coalisland – 6nr passengers
  - Annagher Road, Coalisland – 15nr passengers
  - Main Road, Moygashel – 6nr passengers

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- Findermore Road, Clogher – 12nr passengers
- That the following applications are approved for installation -
  - Dungannon Road, Cabragh
  - Ballyronan Road, Magherafelt

The Chair, Councillor Cuthbertson referred to item 21 on the agenda – Rationalisation of Recycling Centres and Grass Cutting Working Group Update and proposed that this item be moved to open business as he felt there was nothing within the report which was sensitive and that in the interests of openness and transparency the item should move to open business.

Councillor McGuigan stated he was not sure the item should be moved into open business as the matter is still at working group stage and that previously the outworkings of working groups have been brought back to Committee under confidential business. The Councillor stated that the job of work of the working group is not complete and that the issue of grass cutting still has to be dealt with and that final costings still have to be provided. Councillor McGuigan proposed that the item be kept in confidential business tonight and that when all information is available it could be brought to Committee in open business.

The Chair, Councillor Cuthbertson stated that the report before Members tonight deals with Recycling Centres and that the other issues such as grass cutting and toilets are still being worked on.

Councillor Robinson seconded Councillor Cuthbertson’s proposal as he felt the matter of recycling centres had been worked through as far as possible by the working group.

Councillor McNamee seconded Councillor McGuigan’s proposal.

Members voted on Councillor Cuthbertson’s proposal –

For – 6  
Against - 9

The Chair, Councillor Cuthbertson stated he felt it was a shame the Committee could not be open and transparent.

## **Matters for Information**

**E245/23      Environment Committee minutes of meeting held on 10 October 2023**

Members noted minutes of Environment Committee held on 10 October 2023.

### **E246/23 Best Kept Awards 2023**

Members noted previously circulated report which advised of the results of the NI Amenity Council Best Kept Awards 2023.

### **E247/23 Recycle Week 2023**

Members noted previously circulated report which advised of the activities carried out for Recycle Week 2023.

### **E248/23 Town Centre Footpath Snow/Ice Clearance Agreement**

Members noted previously circulated report which outlined the rolling annual winter maintenance agreement with DfI in relation to the treatment of footpaths in the main town centres within Mid Ulster.

The Chair, Councillor Cuthbertson stated that amendments were made to the Dungannon map some years ago to include Church Lane which runs from Market Square down a steep hill to a Council car park. The Councillor stated that Church Lane is not included in the map provided within the report and asked that it be included again going forward. Councillor Cuthbertson referred to recent meeting in relation to adoption of public realm works in Dungannon and that footpaths in Dungannon Town Centre are Council's responsibility and asked if this has caused any issues for Council ie. does Council still have to wait on a request from DfI to enact the agreement or because the footpaths are still under Council control that Council can move ahead with clearance without waiting on a request from DfI.

The Assistant Director of Environmental Services (AD: ES) stated on the first issue he was happy to go back and amend the map. In relation to the second point it was advised that Council still has to wait on DfI to trigger the agreement and request Council assistance with snow/ice clearance.

The Chair, Councillor Cuthbertson asked if someone slipped on icy footpath was this the responsibility of Council or DfI.

The AD: ES stated it is a matter for DfI to trigger the agreement and advised that there were some slips last year which Council forwarded to DfI for investigation.

### **E249/23 Tullyvar Joint Committee Update**

Members noted previously circulated report which provided an update on the business of the Tullyvar Joint Committee.

Councillor Mallaghan asked if Members would get a presentation or workshop in the future regarding negotiations with the firm who want to acquire three of Council's landfill sites.

The Assistant Director of Environmental Services (AD: ES) advised that the proposal is at a very early stage and will be brought back to Committee in due course for consideration.

Councillor Mallaghan stated he was aware that Tullyvar Joint Committee have been asked for permission to proceed with conversations and given there are two other landfill sites under Council control it would be important that they are given the same consideration.

### **E250/23      Ulster in Bloom Competition 2023**

Members noted previously circulated report which outlined the Translink Ulster in Bloom competition results for 2023.

### **E251/23      Building Control Workload**

Members noted previously circulated report which provided update on the workload analysis for Building Control.

### **E252/23      Entertainment Licensing Applications**

Members noted previously circulated report which provided update on Entertainment Licensing Applications across the Mid Ulster District.

### **E253/23      Dual Language Signage Surveys**

Members noted previously circulated report which advised of the result of surveys undertaken on all applicable residents on the streets/roads in response to Dual Language Signage Nameplate requests.

### **E254/23      Dual Language Signage Requests**

Members noted previously circulated report which advised of requests for Dual Language Signage from residents on the streets/roads in question.

### **E255/23      Emergency Planning Update**

Members noted previously circulated report which provided update with respect to Emergency Planning Mutual Aid Protocols to assist District Councils make arrangements to reduce, control and mitigate the effects on any emergency.

*Live broadcast ended at 8.00 pm.*

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

Proposed by Councillor Varsani  
Seconded by Councillor McNamee and

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**Resolved** In accordance with Section 42, Part 1 of 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 E256/23 to E264/23.

**Matters for Decision**

- E256/23 Rationalisation of Recycling Centres and Grass Cutting Working Group Update
- E257/23 Councils Fleet Safety Policy Update
- E258/23 Lough Neagh/River Blackwater Update

**Matters for Information**

- E259/23 Environment Committee Confidential Minutes of meeting held on 10 October 2023
- E260/23 Capital Framework – ICT Contracts Update
- E261/23 Capital Framework – IST Contracts Update
- E262/23 Capital Projects – Scoping Contracts Update
- E263/23 Capital Programme 2023-2027: Quarter 2 2023/24 Update
- E264/23 Off Street Car Parking: Quarter 2 2023/2024

**E265/23 Duration of Meeting**

The meeting was called for 7.00 pm and ended at 8.33 pm.

CHAIR \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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Thank you and we will now move to the first item on the agenda



## Safe Electricity Armagh Tyrone presentation to Environment Committee 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023

Thank you for giving us this opportunity to raise our grave concerns regarding the planned North-South Interconnector and the impact it will have on residents of Mid Ulster District Council. In addition to our discussion, we want to leave you with our main points of concern regarding this infrastructure.

### Overhead vs Underground

Safe Electricity Armagh Tyrone was formed in 2006 to represent residents and landowners concerned with the proposed North-South Interconnector. To date we have the support of c. 6,500 residents backing a campaign to have the proposed interconnector undergrounded. 95% of residents and landowners who would be expected to facilitate one or more pylons for an overhead line have refused and will continue to refuse to sign any easement permission to allow development of the proposed overhead North-South Interconnector to commence.

In 2007 the Systems Operator for Northern Ireland (SONI) said, “*we believe an underground cable would not be suitable,*” yet undergrounding is used throughout Ireland, the UK and the EU.

SEAT is not against the idea of interconnection, but we believe that if interconnection is to happen, the people of Armagh and Tyrone should not be treated as second class citizens being subjected to an overhead interconnector when undergrounded interconnection technology is used elsewhere.

We refer you to Eirgrid’s commitment to underground a similar transmission between Kildare and Meath in 2021, stating that it was the best of four options. This Kildare-Meath underground cable is the same distance and voltage as the proposed NI section of the North/South interconnector.

### Case of need

We believe that the reasons presented by SONI to highlight the supposed vital need for the proposed overhead cross border high voltage interconnector do not align with the priorities for Northern Ireland in 2023, and furthermore we believe the consumers of Northern Ireland have been misled on the need for the North-South Interconnector.

In 2016 SONI said, “*As the system operator, unless action is taken we won’t be confident we can keep the lights on in 2021.*” Every *Security of Supply* study issued by SONI / Eirgrid over the last number of years has confirmed that Northern Ireland has a surplus of electricity until 2031 and no forecasts exist beyond 2031, the position of the Republic of Ireland is quite the opposite. Every *Security of Supply* study issued over the past number of years clearly states that the Republic of Ireland will suffer from a severe electricity deficit for at least the next 7-10 years, with a major risk to supply being caused by energy commitments to data centres in the Republic.

Eirgrid’s forecast is a major miscalculation of the generating needs in the Republic of Ireland. They also do not seem to understand the current and future needs of the approximately one hundred Dublin based data centres which they had committed to

supply energy to between 2020 & 2030. This resulted in a major increase in the amount of fossil fuel generated electricity (coal, gas and oil).

SEAT believes that the case of need for the North-South Interconnector has radically changed since it was first proposed, and that this has not been fully considered by SONI or by Northern Ireland's decision makers.

### **Cost**

In these times of a high cost of living, every effort should be made to ensure that Northern Irish consumers are getting the best value possible when it comes to energy costs. The proposed North-South Interconnector has never been fully costed. With no guaranteed costs for this project, SEAT believes that consumers in Northern Ireland should not be expected to foot the bill for expensive infrastructure that will pose no benefit to the people of Northern Ireland.

Even if we were to be assured by Eirgrid that they would fund the proposed interconnector, it is very clear that Eirgrid resources are inadequate to meet the massive transmission requirements of the Republic of Ireland over the next seven to ten years. Recently Eirgrid/SONI stated 2012 costs of €220m, yet the Irish Institute of Engineers estimated the current cost at €830m.

Renewable energy generation in ROI today is 37% below 2019 output. There have been numerous forecasts mentioning a likelihood of energy shortages and volatile pricing for energy consumers over the next seven to ten years. Eirgrid will have no opportunity to transmit any energy to NI for many years to come. Why, going forward, would we agree to increase our interconnection with the ROI, when we would be exposed to volatile fossil fuel generated electricity at much higher prices.

### **Technology**

The proposed Interconnector is a 400 kV overhead line that will connect the Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland electricity grids. The planning application for this interconnector was submitted in 2009, in the sixteen years since, technology has radically changed and improved across the world. Currently National Grid (Great Britain) and Energinet (Denmark) are constructing the Viking Link, an interconnector between the United Kingdom and Denmark. The Viking Link will be the world's longest electricity interconnector, measuring 765km, and will be an undersea cable. When technology exists that allows interconnectors of this calibre to exist in Lincolnshire, why are the residents of Armagh and Tyrone being treated as second class citizens and being subjected to an unwanted overhead interconnector? The proposed Interconnector as it stands cannot be considered as innovative when it is clear that less obtrusive and much more environmentally friendly technology exists and is used elsewhere.

### **Conclusion**

As you may be aware, the NI regulator concluded that SONI's ownership by Eirgrid since 2009 was contrary to the good operation of SONI going forward. As a result of the push back of Eirgrid's self-serving policy, which was detrimental to the future of renewable growth, Eirgrid have announced that they will demerge their management of SONI. A task force is currently drawing up plans for the eventual outcome. Meanwhile the first members of a new team of directors to run SONI as a standalone transmission operator have been appointed.

The criteria for re-election to the board are-

1. Each member must be approved by Northern Ireland regulator
2. Applicants employed by Eirgrid or SONI during the last five years or who had professional involvement with Eirgrid or SONI are ineligible.

A 21 day notice was issued to the landowner who refused to sign easement or right of way through their property. SONI subsequently threatened to have them appear before a tribunal with the intention to make ..... Purchase of the required property. This threat failed to change the opinion of the vast majority of landowners. One affected landowner is challenging the legality of the tribunal notice on three different legal grounds. No clear response has yet been issued by SONI/Eirgrid.

Safe Electricity Armagh Tyrone believes:

- This project will offer no benefit to Northern Ireland electricity consumers over the next seven to ten years, and;
- No forecasts have ever been provided to indicate that the project will ever benefit Northern Irish consumers, also:
- The proposed Interconnector as it stands will greatly inconvenience and disadvantage those who live along the route.

SEAT will continue to represent the wishes of our members for as long as it takes to convince decision makers in Northern Ireland that the North-South Interconnector in its present form is not appropriate or necessary. We continue to represent these landowners whilst they have been in receipt of threatening letters from SONI regarding access to lands on the proposed North-South Interconnector route.

As elected representatives representing the people of Tyrone who will be impacted if this infrastructure goes ahead, we urge you to seek a review of the planning approval and of the need for the North-South Interconnector. With the current cost-of-living crisis, we believe a review into the need for this infrastructure is more important than ever.

All of the recent data available states that currently in excess of 50% of electricity generated in Northern Ireland is from renewable sources. The most serious blockage to renewable energy growth in NI is Eirgrid/SONI's failure to invest in adequate transmission infrastructure over the last ten years.

We are happy to provide any further information you may require.

John Woods, Jim Lennon

Safe Electricity Armagh & Tyrone (SEAT)

## Mid Ulster District Council Environment Committee meeting

Tuesday 14/11/23

1. Eirgrid offers ROI landowners €100,000 for each pylon

2.

A) Head of the Department for the Economy, Richard Rodgers, states that it is crucial that we in NI are self-sufficient in affordable renewable energy.

B) If we don't convert all the excess renewable energy produced in NI into green hydrogen the lights will go out when we reach 80% renewable generation.

C) Ballylumford 'Power to x' project- will use renewable electricity and invest in energy storage, both battery and green hydrogen.

3. Plans are progressing for a €500m green hydrogen storage facility at Kinsale Head gas field, County Cork.

4. The NI Electricity Order 1992. All new distribution investment must be efficient and commercial. The N/S interconnector is neither efficient nor a viable commercial project.

5. NI Climate change act 2022 prohibits trading energy with any country which does not have equivalent greenhouse gas emissions targets matching Northern Ireland. ROI is on a diverging path from NI and is currently increasing fossil fuel generation capacity.

### 6. The NI Utility Regulator

**Mission statement:** to protect the short and long term interests of consumers of electricity, water and gas.

**Vision:** to ensure value and sustainability of energy and water

**Values:** to be transparent, consistent, proportionate, accountable and targeted. To be professional, listening, explaining and acting with integrity.

The N/S interconnector meets none of these criteria.

## **7. SEM (Single Electricity Market)**

The memorandum of understanding between the NI regulator and ROI regulator.

A) Quote “We seek to achieve even better value for money for consumers in all we do and all we regulate.”

B) We will set realistic and achievable outcomes which are mutually beneficial to consumers both North and South.

C) We will facilitate effective and mutually beneficial cooperation.

The N/S interconnector fails to meet any of these above values.

The Single Electricity Market has failed and must be suspended.

**8.** A new £700m electricity link (two 320v undersea cables) from Kilmarnock to Kilroot is planned, also the Moyle interconnector can provide 400MW capacity if needed.

**9.** The stinging criticism by the NI Utility Regulator that SONI must be completely separate from Eirgrid, both managerially and operationally. This is because of Eirgrid’s self-serving management and governance which conflicted with NI transmission and consumer needs.

**10.** The ESRI (Economic and Social research institute) report released in DEC 22 titled ***All-island coordination of energy infrastructure and renewable energy supports*** states “we have found that by sharing policy targets on the island of Ireland that the impact would be relatively modest, changing total costs by less than 1%” ..... “The magnitude of the effort would be negligible”

**11.** Quoting from The Anglo Celt newspaper 12/5/22, Mark Foley, Chief Executive of Eirgrid stated that “his belief was that the lights would go out in as little as two years in Ireland, if we have not completed the construction of the N/S interconnector” (Quote from meeting of Cavan County Council monthly meeting).

**12.** “Heads must roll”, “industry experts in Ireland argue the energy crisis was of their own making.” Concerns were flagged as early as 2014 over the need to bring new power generation online to meet energy demands. Eirgrid in 2015 forecast that there was sufficient generation capacity to meet peak energy demand for the next decade. Just one illustration of Eirgrid’s lack of credibility in energy forecasting for both Ireland and Northern Ireland.

**13.** A SONI publication which featured in *Ambition* magazine (issue 55 Nov-Dec 22) (Article included next to photo of Alan Campbell, Managing Director of SONI) states that “The NI grid will need huge change through to 2030” but also confirming that “SONI is forecasting that a surplus of energy generation in NI will exist until 2031.”

Only 30MW of additional renewable capacity was added in NI in 2022 compared to 400MW annually in the period leading to peak development in 2016 (Carson McDowell in Recyclable energy magazine).

**14.** Security of Supply scenarios Northern Ireland 20/21 to 29/30 surplus availability.

**Minutes of Meeting of the Development Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 16 November 2023 in the Council Offices, Burn Road, Cookstown and by Virtual Means**

**Members Present**

Councillor Clarke, Chair

Councillors Bell, Black, W Buchanan, F Burton\*, Corry, Forde, Gildernew, McLernon, McQuade\*, Milne\*, Molloy\*, Monteith\*, Quinn\*, Wilson

**Officers in Attendance**

Mr Black, Strategic Director of Communities & Place (SD: C&P)

Mr Gordon, Assistant Director of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing (AD: HL&W)\*\*

Ms McKeown, Assistant Director of Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes (AD: EDT&SP)\*\*

Ms Fox, Arts & Facilities Development Manager (A&FDM)\*\*

Mr Curran, ICT Support

Mrs Grogan, Committee and Member Services Officer

**Others in Attendance**

**Deputation:**

Outdoor Recreation NI - Sliabh Beagh Feasibility Study

Ms Diane Crookes

\* Denotes Members present in remote attendance

\*\* Denotes Officers present by remote means

\*\*\* Denotes Others present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm.

In the absence of the Chair, Councillor McNamee, the Vice-Chair, Councillor Clarke took the Chair.

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

**D164/23 Notice of Recording**

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

**D165/23 Apologies**

Councillor McNamee.

Ms Linney, Assistant Director of Development (AD: Dev).

#### **D166/23 Declaration of Interests**

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

*Councillor Clarke declared an interest in Sperrin's Partnership.*

#### **D167/23 Chair's Business**

The Chair advised that Councillor Wilson wished to raise a matter under Chair's Business.

Councillor Wilson advised that he was a regular visitor to Mid Ulster Sports Arena (MUSA) and for anyone which had visited the venue this week, they would have seen the serious flooding, but would have to say that this was the first time he had witnessed this type of flooding since it as built. The member said that he appreciated that this was being looked into at this moment but believed the MUSA wasn't the Centre of Excellence that we all think it is now. He said that he noticed a number of things whilst spectating on a Friday night when his Granddaughter is playing with Mid Ulster Ladies, the GAA 3G/4G pitch on utilised by Cookstown Youth, the whole pitches on a Friday night and Saturday morning are all youth which was absolutely brilliant. The member raised concern regarding no pathway around the pitch and with such a crowd, there is only one side for viewing and if watching children playing at the far side, the grass is really long and posts needing painted. The member suggested that it may be beneficial to arrange a meeting on site or would Officers be happy to look at the path, goals and state of the pitch themselves and bring back a report.

The Strategic Director of Communities and Place (SD: C&P) said that Officers would be happy to look at both issues. The SD: C&P concurred with Councillor Wilson in relation to the flooding at MUSA which was certainly unusual and agreed that Officers would look at concerns raised by member. The SD: C&P advised that a DEA meeting in relation to MUSA was going to take place over the next number of weeks and members will be updated at that point on how things progressed.

#### **D168/23 Deputation - Outdoor Recreation NI - Sliabh Beagh Feasibility Study**

The Chair advised that deputation from Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI) was in attendance tonight to present to committee.

The Strategic Director of Communities and Place (SD: C&P) advised that Ms Diane Crookes was in attendance to join virtually to take members through the presentation. The SD: C&P said that just to make members aware that the presentation would be on Sliabh Beagh Ecotourism Feasibility Study, but there is also an item on the agenda tonight which is going to be specifically deal with this which the Assistant Director of Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes (AD: EDT&SP) is going to raise later in the meeting. He said that if



members had any questions specifically relating to the project raised in the presentation, then comments can be raised with Ms Crookes then and deal with the formal report when committee comes to that item on the agenda.

The Chair invited Ms Crookes to make her presentation on Sliabh Beagh Feasibility Study to the committee.

Ms Crookes advised that ORNI and partners were appointed by Monaghan County Council on behalf of the Sliabh Beagh Partnership Committee (comprising Mid Ulster District Council, Monaghan County Council and Fermanagh and Omagh District Council). She advised the aim of the project was to develop a package of projects to collectively enhance rural tourism and outdoor recreation provision. A feasibility study was undertaken to investigate options to develop Sliabh Beagh as an eco-tourism destination through delivery of an exciting range of outdoor experiences that supports both the understanding and conservation of this special landscape. A number of inter-connected work packages were considered to build on the existing services and facilities in Sliabh Beagh area, one of which was identifying opportunities for a new 'hero' attractor.

Ms Crookes stated that Eco-tourism is defined as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education".

Principles of Eco-tourism:

- Minimise impacts
- Build awareness and respect
- Financial benefits of conservation
- Financial benefits of communities
- Visitor experiences that help raise awareness/sensitivity
- Low-impact facilities and services

Ms Crookes updated members on "The Hero Attractor: Sliabh Beagh as a Multi Activity Destination" which included a variety of outdoor activities scattered across different locations e.g. swimming, kayaking, walking, cycling, outdoor challenges, horse riding. Some of these activities will be free to access and other would be paid for. The proposal is to work with existing operators, infrastructure and towns/villages in the first instance before adding any additional activities and accommodation. Shared focus will be based on a shared brand and vision for the area that towns/villages and operators can participate in. There will be opportunities to develop small scale eco and unique off-grid accommodation.

### **Existing Initiatives;**

- Clogher Valley Cluster
- Knockatallon
- Cooneen/Coonian
- Donagh – the community is activity looking at developing Airbnb & RV site
- Knocks – development of lakeside glamping and hub for walkers/cyclists

- Rosslea – revamping the heritage centre and providing simple facilities for walkers/cyclists would enhance the wider area
- Derrygannon – building on existing initiatives for walkers and the community

### **New Opportunities;**

- Horse riding experiences in partnership with Clogher Valley Horses Welcome
- Infrastructure to support water access at key locations for kayaking and wild swimming e.g. Lough More
- New conservation and wellness experiences
- Building on existing recreational trails
- Weather-proofing/phased development of Cooneen/Coonian Murphy Ghost House

Recreational Trail Development provides the infrastructure to allow access to outdoor activities scattered across different locations:

- Walking, Cycling (Gravel Cycling), Equestrian
- Sustainable Trails include: Land use, Landscape, Habitats, People and Communities, Management and Maintenance

Ms Crookes updated members on:

- Some recreational trails within the feasibility study had been taken to RIBA Stage 2 (concept stage) whilst a number of others were progressed to RIBA Stage 3 (shovel ready)
- Concept Public Artwork
- Exploring Sliabh Beagh

*Councillor Gildernew left the meeting at 19.19 pm and returned at 19.20 pm.*

Sliabh Beagh Multi-Activity Destination – Next Steps includes:

- Progress recreational trails through planning
- Signage procurement
- Development of concept public artwork
- Five-year plan that addresses:
  - Vision and objectives
  - Coordinated development and marketing under the umbrella of Sliabh Beagh
  - Identification of key priorities for development of the visitor experience, required infrastructure, marketing and management
  - Detailed action plan for delivery
  - Potential to seek 3-year Project Officer to lead momentum, secure funding and coordinate
  - eProspectus to encourage operators and funders to participate

The Chair thanked Ms Crookes for her very comprehensive presentation and for one who lives quite a bit from that area, it has been very informative.

The Chair invited any questions members may wish to raise with Ms Crookes.

Councillor Gildernew thanked Ms Crookes for her presentation and stated that it was great to see the Shared Island Funding coming into Mid Ulster and Clogher Valley. The member said that it would be interesting to see the project develop and the opportunities that it would bring to the area.

Councillor F Burton thanked Ms Crookes for her presentation and as one who sits on the Sliabh Beagh Partnership, it is fantastic to see this 5-year plan and some of the projects which were shovel ready at this stage. The member said that one of the things that she would like some reassurance on was in relation to Lumford's Glen as this was a project on the Council's books for a very long time, it sits very well with Knockmany Forest and the work that we along with the community have been involved in. Over the period of covid, people were walking these open glens and our previous Head of Parks, Mr Nigel Hill took members up and around Lumford's Glen which was one of the most beautiful places within Clogher Valley. The member said that this was something that she dearly wanted to push for in relation to the close proximity of Knockmany Forest and how it would just tie in with the whole package up there. The member said that it was great to see Favour Royal, Fardross and other outdoor places getting this opportunity, even with equestrian it brings a whole new element of people being able to go out on horseback which would also link into other equestrian areas within Fivemiletown including Blessingbourne. The member sought reassurance that whilst these other projects were shovel ready and were at RIBA Stage 3, Lumford's Glen currently sits at RIBA Stage 2 and would be keen to know within the 5-year plan going forward, how Lumford's Glen can be progressed so that it was shovel ready and hoped that there was some good news on that score as people in that locality were really pushing for this and really want this to happen. The member felt that this was the only time that we were going to get progressed for the local area if we work through this partnership.

The Assistant Director of Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes (AD: EDT&SP) in response to Councillor Burton advised that this matter would be raised under point 12 of tonight's agenda and would be picked at that point.

*The Chair thanked Ms Crookes for her attendance tonight at which she withdrew from the committee at 7.28 pm.*

## **Matters for Decision**

### **D169/23      Update on Department for Communities Access and Inclusion Programme 2023/24**

The Assistant Director of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing (AD: HL&W) presented previously circulated report to:

- Provide Members with an update on the 2023/24 Department for Communities (DfC) Access and Inclusion Funding Programme
- Provide Members with the list of projects approved for funding by DfC

- Seek approval to set up specific finance codes to incur expenditure for each project where required
- Seek approval to utilise the approved Council framework contractors, where required

Councillor Molloy said that it was a good project but sought a brief update on what a pool pod actually does.

The AD: HL&W said that traditionally for people with mobility issues or disabled customers to get into the pool, this normally required a manually operated pool hoist to get into the water, which may be seen as an undignified way of getting into the pool. The AD: HL&W advised that there were 2 pool pods in Greenvale and one in Cookstown Leisure Centre which gives the user the independence. There is also accessible wheelchairs which are fit for purpose for the water, so the customer can use the pool pod themselves with a click of a few buttons, the pool pod will lower the customer down into the water and when ready to get out of the pool again, the pool pod provides the assistance to get out again independently. The AD: HL&W stated that Dungannon Leisure Centre was a different makeup of pool in the way it was constructed, so up until this year, the type of equipment that could be used in Dungannon didn't exist on the market. The AD: HL&W advised that equipment required for Dungannon has now been made available and Council were happy to receive this funding opportunity from DfC to bring this project forward.

Councillor Molloy said that Council were lobbying for inclusive access into Dungannon pool for a long time, but was difficult to get that accessibility as it as a deeper pool. The member said that it was an excellent project and would be happy to propose the recommendation.

Councillor Corry said that she would be happy to second the report as it was a great project and had seen some great work last year with our accessible benches, tables etc and was lucky to see for herself the pool pod in Magherafelt with Minister Hargey at the time. The member advised that this was very welcome news regarding the enhancement at Cahore Pavillion and she was aware that this something that was needed to bring the area up to date and make it fully accessible for users.

Councillor Burton in referring to this new addition at Dungannon Leisure Centre, advised that in the past Council had worked with the Trust in relation to patients who had taken strokes. The member said that this rehabilitation was beneficial through pool work as this was something that could change people's lives as they are able to travel easier in water and asked if this was something that could be looked at.

The AD: HL&W advised that the GP referral programme is still in operation across all of our Leisure Centres and specific eligibility criteria that people can get referred to over that. The AD: HL&W confirmed that link in with various Trusts can be done again just to remind them that this service is still available. He was aware that there were still some capacity issues and return to some of those key critical services as emerging from the Covid pandemic and it was his understanding that not all the programmes from the Trust has come back yet but could certainly reach out and engage with them again.

Councillor Burton said that this would be really welcome news.

Proposed by Councillor Molloy  
Seconded by Councillor Corry and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to agree to -

- Accept the Letter of Offer from DfC for £55,591.05.
- Approval to set up specific finance codes to incur expenditure for each project identified in section 3.3, where required.
- Approval to utilise the approved Council framework contractors, where required, to deliver the projects identified in section 3.3 of this report
- Approval to allocate the 10% Match funding for projects approved for funding by the Department for Communities through its 2023/24 Access and Inclusion Programme with funding to be met from within existing resources that will be responsible for the management and delivery of each project.

### **D170/23 Sperrins Outdoor Partnership**

The Assistant Director of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing (AD: HL&W) presented previously circulated report to and sought Council approval to contribute £4,000 per year for 2-year period commencing April 2024 up to September 2026 to support continuation of The Outdoor Partnership Project in the Sperrins.

Councillor Corry said that this was a brilliant project and a long time in the making.

Proposed by Councillor Corry  
Seconded by Councillor McLernon and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to note the contents of the reports, permit the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding and give approval for Mid Ulster District Council to make a contribution of £4,000.00 per year for 2-year period (April 2024 up to September 2026) to support continuation of The Outdoor Partnership Project in the Sperrins as outlined within this report and subject to confirmation of the reciprocal financial contribution of all partner Councils.

### **D171/23 Partnership Proposal**

The Assistant Director of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing (AD: HL&W) presented previously circulated report to update Members on a proposal received from St Patrick's College Maghera for a partnership to be developed.

Councillor Corry said that she would be happy to propose the recommendation as it was an exciting opportunity going forward for other schools, leisure centres and other facilities as well i.e. football pitch at Maghera Leisure Centre which may not be fully subscribed or used Monday to Friday during the day and the school can make use of that and likewise for the school in the evening time or weekend where our leisure needs some of their facilities then it would be mutually beneficial. The member said

that this would be very useful as there was no wastage of community buildings and felt that this was a good pilot project and hoped that everything would go well.

Councillor Wilson said that he was all for partnership working however this one give him concern. He said that Council could end up with the dearest carparking charges anywhere and didn't even think that school carpark at Maghera was even used for the fireworks display at Halloween and felt that the school was getting away fairly lightly. The member referred to what AD: HL&W alluded to where other groups cannot access facilities within the Maghera area and would have to tie in with this and felt he would really need to see what the school use, if they were booking a pitch from 9am to 5pm with a concession, that is £600 per week and now all of a sudden it's £1,000 for a year. The member felt that there were a lot of other schools that use our facilities and asked if we were setting a precedent here as he knows for a fact that Holy Trinity and Cookstown High School uses Cookstown Leisure Centre and Council also avail of the High School carpark. The member said that he was unsure about this proposal and although this was a pilot scheme, he felt that other schools would be screaming, but would like to see figures on how often the school uses it and how often we use their grounds and work it out that way.

The AD: HL&W agreed that the member made a number of valid points which has been given due consideration with conversations back and forth with the school. In terms of historical usage at different times, Officers estimate that this was in the region of £1,800 per year therefore this proposal for a fixed fee of £1,000 per annum represents a a net reduction of around £800 per annum. If members look back towards the strategic recommendations within the recently approved Pitches Strategy, we do talk about a greater desire to collaborate with the education sector and also vice-versa in terms of how we are able to maximise our shared facilities and how we are able to allow each other to make those facilities more accessible to also include the wider community as well. The AD: HL&W said that this was the first school that he was aware of in recent times which has approached Council in regard to this and took on board what the member had alluded to in regards to precedent, but this proposal could be used as an opportunity to see if this has mutual benefits and to have those discussions with other schools and make those cases that they are relevant also as there would be those reciprocal benefits not only for ourselves but for the education sector also. The AD: HL&W said that from an Officer team, that they would be happy to engage with other schools and areas and certainly open to having a conversation to explore other opportunities.

Councillor Buchanan said that this was all well and good but looking at the figures, we were losing £800 as the Council were taking in £1,800 and now deal done to get £1,000 and asked if Council were really able to afford losing that money. He said that it was good to see the Council and school-working together but really sought clarification if it was really good value for the ratepayer as he was aware of Leisure Centres losing a lot of money and asked if we could afford to lose another £800.

Councillor Gildernew said that by listening to the conversation and update from the AD: HL&W, she would be happy to second the proposal, the fact that the partnership working between the school and leisure centre can be rolled out, and although this is a trial this year, this could be rolled out to other schools and leisure centres in the area.

Councillor Wilson agreed that this was all about partnership working in which this Council is very good at, but by what the AD: HL&W was saying, it was his understanding that if any other groups want to use the school facilities, then there will be a charge. The fact that Council is giving discount on it for £1,000 and getting use of all the school facilities i.e school hall etc, then someone will have to pay us as there would be a charge to us. It is Council that is striking up the partnership agreement and taking over the school rather than someone else.

The AD: HL&W said that the intention of this proposal was particularly to provide further space for the youth service sector in Maghera area which was raised through our Community Development team whereby they have been advising that additional facilities were being sought to run their youth service programmes and that available accessible space in Maghera area was limited. The intention behind this proposal would be to open up the school premises so that those rooms and halls could be made available for the wider community use as this could potentially free up some capacity in the leisure centre so that some of these concessionary bookings could go potentially across to the school and avail of their premises resulting in the leisure centre having additional slots to sell at the full rate. The AD: HL&W advised that the purpose of it would be kept under review for both parties, particularly for us as a Council and keep a close eye on it should members be minded proceeding with this and if it doesn't have the anticipated benefits for Council and the wider community, then it would be brought back to committee for reconsideration. The AD: HL&W believed that there was an identified need within the community and an opportunity to make use of each other's facilities in a more efficient way.

Councillor Molloy felt that this was an excellent opportunity as he had been raising this for years. When we look at the freetime or downtime at our leisure centre, he was sure that the pitches were ideal during the day for numerous hours and other facilities and when you look at the school estate after school and how long this sits idle, it's a perfect working relationship if we can get both of those working together. Out of hours for school, usage within the community and school to avail of leisure facilities during the day resulting in being freed up at night for other users and felt that this was an excellent idea to work in partnership.

Councillor Wilson on a point of clarification, enquired if there was over capacity at the leisure centre, those booked on a concessionary rate would be moved across to Maghera High School so would be paying Council anyway. He felt that overcapacity in the leisure centre was another point to this and the other issue was if some of the schools wished to use the Sports Arena, there is a concessionary rate on it but they could be linked in to some of our schools that offer other facilities like afterschool's etc.

The AD: HL&W said he wished to clarify the comment regarding overcapacity. What he had meant wasn't necessarily overcapacity at the leisure centre, but we do know from discussions with Community Development team that there was the intention from the youth sector and youth service within that area to run additional programmes and would require additional space to do that. He advised that our concessionary rates are a bit prohibitive for them to be able to do that and would like to explore the use of the school premises for them to run their programmes as part of this opportunity and where they could potentially benefit from partnership working.

The AD: HL&W stated that this was not taking away from any income that was being received in the leisure centre but just adding another mean for accessibility of space which we couldn't provide within the rates and budgets we are working to.

The Chair said that this idea and suggestions has been mentioned at different times regarding additional provisions and better access. He felt that it was worthwhile

The AD: HL&W said that the intention of this was particularly for the youth sector in Maghera area which was raised through our Community Development team advising that additional facilities were being sought to run their programmes. The intention behind this would be open up the school premises so that those rooms and halls could be made available as this could potentially free up some capacity in the leisure centre so that some of these concessionary bookings could go potentially across to the school and avail of their premises resulting in the leisure centre having additional slots to sell at the full rate. The AD: HL&W advised that the purpose of it would be kept under review for both parties, particularly for us as a Council and keep a close eye on it should members be minded proceeding with this and if it doesn't have the anticipated benefits for Council and the wider community, then it would be brought back to committee for reconsideration. The AD: HL&W believed that there was an identified need within the community and an opportunity to make use of each other's facilities in a more efficient way.

Councillor Molloy felt that this was an excellent opportunity as he had been raising this for years. When we look at the freetime or downtime at our leisure centre, he was sure that the pitches were ideal during the day for numerous hours and other facilities and when you look at the school estate after school and how long this sits idle, it's a perfect working relationship if we can get both of those working together. Out of hours for school, usage within the community and school to avail of leisure facilities during the day resulting in being freed up at night for other users and felt that this was an excellent idea to work in partnership.

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The AD: HL&W said he wished to clarify the comment regarding overcapacity. What he had meant wasn't necessarily overcapacity at the leisure centre, but we do know discussions with Community Development team that there was the intention from the youth sector and youth service within that area to run additional programmes and would require additional space to do that. He advised that our concessionary rates are a bit prohibitive for them to be able to do that and would like to explore as part of this opportunity as well where those intervention programmes particularly the youth service where they could potentially benefit from partnership working. The AD: HL&W stated that this was not taking away from any income that was being received



in the leisure centre but just adding another mean for accessibility of space which we couldn't provide within the rates and budgets we are working to.

The Chair said that this idea and suggestions has been mentioned at different times regarding additional provisions and better access. He felt that it was worthwhile progressing with the pilot scheme and was hypothetical until it was actioned, but when it was worked out it may set a template for other places.

Proposed by Councillor Corry  
Seconded by Councillor Gildernew and

- Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to note the contents of this report and agree to:
- A partnership agreement between the School and Council with an annual fee of £1,000 payable to Council
  - Partnership to be trialled for a period of 12 months initially and reviewed for effectiveness should it be beneficial to continue on beyond the initial trial period with annual reviews thereafter.

#### **D172/23 Consultation on Creating a Smoke Free Generation and Tackling Youth Vaping**

The Assistant Director of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing (AD: HL&W) presented previously circulated report to agree the draft response to the Department of Health and Social Care Open Consultation: Creating a smokefree generation and tackling youth vaping: your views.

Councillor McLernon wished to take the opportunity to address the disposal of vapes as it was evident in our towns and villages the littering caused by disposable vapes. She said that obviously there was an environmental health and health and safety issue with this and asked if there was anything the Council could do or possibly include in the consultation to explore an initiative regarding the recycling and safe disposal of vapes e.g. safe collection points outside shops and stores that are selling vapes within our towns and villages.

Councillor Monteith said that he would be fairly supportive of what was within the report but had one concern. The member referred to where it was stated within the report about the difference in expert opinion in relation to the flavouring where there does seem to be an argument for restricting tobacco flavouring and for another argument being put forward by some of the experts to expand the flavouring to help people who wish to stop smoking. He said that he was aware of people and as a former smoker himself who used vapes to stop smoking, some had found the tobacco flavour nauseating so did get a lot of benefit out of the different flavours that were available. The member said that he was a bit concerned that opportunities were being closed down for people who wish to stop smoking. He also felt the issue of restricting marketing, making bland packaging, not using brand names, reduced colours, increasing the price would go a lot more to discouraging use by youth than particular flavours but did not feel massively on it but felt that there was a section of

people out there that may feel unable to use this as a valuable asset to stop smoking if they are restricted to the one flavour.

Councillor Wilson said that he was happy with the proposal, but it was a legal requirement for retailer premises to display the following statement of being illegal to sell tobacco produce. The member said that we are looking at a rise and trying to tackle youth vaping and suggested that it be included that all schools display signage in relation to the dangers of vaping within in schools.

The AD: HL&W confirmed that all three members comments were noted and could be fed into responses.

Proposed by Councillor W Buchanan  
Seconded by Councillor McLernon and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to agree the content of Mid Ulster District Council's draft response to the DHSC's open consultation on 'Creating a smokefree generation and tackling youth vaping: your views'. Members comments to be fed into response.

**D173/23 Consultation on Private Tenancies Act 2022: Section 8 and Section 10**

The Assistant Director of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing (AD: HL&W) presented previously circulated report to agree a response to the Department for Communities' consultation on the Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Act 2022, 'Section 8 - Smoke, Heat and Carbon Monoxide Alarms' and 'Section 10 - Electrical Safety Standards'

Councillor Gildernew said that she would be happy to propose the recommendation as this would make houses and private tenancies safer which would be good for everyone.

Proposed by Councillor Gildernew  
Seconded by Councillor McLernon and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to agree the content of Mid Ulster District Council's draft response to the technical matters of the Department for Communities' consultations on Sections 8 and 10 of the Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Act 2022 as set out in Appendices 5 and 6.

**D174/23 Regional and Minority Languages**

The Strategic Director of Communities & Place (SD: C&P) presented previously circulated report to update Members on the following –

- Irish Language Policy Review
- Irish Language Plan 2023 – 27
- Irish Language Signage Plan

- Irish Language Working Group
- Ulster Scots Language and Culture

Councillor Corry was happy to propose the recommendation and stated that the last Working Group meeting was really good and was great to see the figures coming back from the census that Mid Ulster was one of the highest growth areas and highest number of people fluent in Irish language which was great to see the increasing use of the language.

Councillor Corry wished to propose as well as that of the exciting opportunity in the papers for the language hubs and her own area Carrnaghy is very strong there also. She referred to possible new ones wanting to come on board like Cairde Uí Néill and may be useful for them to come in and do a presentation on their future plans.

Councillor Monteith said that similarly to what Councillor Corry had alluded to, he and a few others had talked about trying to put together a proposal for an urban Gaeltacht initiative and hoped that this would fit in to what was being talked about moving forward over the next number of year.

Councillor Monteith referred to issue that needs to be tackled around settlement signage which is being continuously raised to him by people and seems to be an understandable stand off over the last number of years with moving forward on it, but this now needs tackled. The member stated that there was signage within his own DEA which were the old Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council signage at settlements which are falling down and not in a position to restore them and felt that a call was needed on this. The member said that there was quite a number of settlements who wanted bi-lingual signage in relation to settlement entrances and was aware that this was not going to be an easy process but this cannot be kept being put off forever. The member said that he had no difficulty with what was in the programme but would state his usual objection to the use of the working group for moving forward with the project as it politically discriminates against himself and other councillors.

Councillor W Buchanan enquired what was the annual budget for Regional and Minority Languages.

Councillor Wilson said that when he read the report and headline under Regional Minority Languages and Ulster Scots got all of three sentences which said enough. The member said that he had an issue in that there is an Ulster Scots Week from 20-25 November, the Ulster Scots Agency in which is a member off wrote to this Council on the 6<sup>th</sup> June asking if they wished to get involved, a letter was issued to members from the Communities and Place directorate in October stating that a few events would be taking place at The Hill of The O'Neill and Grant Homestead, nothing to do with language, just two talks which he was not happy about. Last Monday a member of Community Network received a phone call enquiring if she could do something for Ulster Scots Language Week in two weeks' time which was brought to Council on 6<sup>th</sup> June. The member felt that this was unacceptable and was very disappointed.

The SD: C&P in referring to comments made from members advised that in terms of Councillor Monteith's concern around settlement signage, as per the report Officers

were investigating one overall programme to look at rollout of signage across the district which would include the main towns, settlements and the remainder of our assets which need to be completed. The SD: C&P said that there was work continuing in the background to pull this together with a one overall programme which will come in front of the members at the right time.

In relation to Councillor Buchanan query regarding budget, the SD: C&P advised that he didn't have that information tonight but would certainly try and get it after this meeting.

In response to Councillor Wilson's query, the SD: C&P advised that the report in relation to Ulster Scots was only a pre-empt to let members know that a further detailed report in relation to the work we are doing will come back in front of committee. The SD: C&P said that engagement has been taking place with Ulster Scots Agency with a number of conversations taking place. He advised that Catherine Fox, Arts & Facilities Development Manager (A&FDM) was in attendance tonight and would be happy to provide an update to members on the engagement which is taking place.

Ms Fox, Arts & Facilities Development Manager (A&FDM) advised that Council had been liaising with Ulster Scots but did find it quite difficult to get speakers and had also been liaising back and forth with Jane Barr of the Ulster Scots and our own Education Officers from Ranfurly House & The Hill of The O'Neill. The A&FDM said that she also had been liaising with David Gilliland from Ulster Scots Agency and were due to meet last week but had to be rescheduled at short notice due to a family bereavement.

Councillor Wilson said that he accepted what has been said, but in regard to Ulster Scots Language Week he was disappointed as contact has only been made with facilitator two weeks before the event asking that something be put on.

The A&FDM said that there had been a real difficulty in trying to secure a facilitator, one of the talks which was in Ranfurly House was based on Alister McReynolds and tried to focus on US Grants Homestead, which was going back and forward for a few weeks which was difficult. A speaker could not be located and even contact had been made with Queen's University, our Education Officer has a list of people who were contacted to get that speaker. She advised that they couldn't advertise before that was confirmed.

Proposed by Councillor Corry  
Seconded by Councillor Gildernew and

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

- Note the update report.
- Approve the Irish Language Plan 2023-2027.
- Agree that Cairde Uí Néill be invited to a future meeting to provide a presentation on Irish Language Hubs.

## **D175/23 Economic Development Report - OBFD**

The Assistant Director of Economic Development, Tourism & Strategic Programmes (AD: EDT&SP) presented previously circulated report update on key activities as detailed below –

- Tullaghoge Fort Access and Interpretation Feasibility Study
- Sliabh Beagh Eco Tourism Feasibility Study
- Draft Consultation Response on the Department for the Economy's Approach to 10x Technologies and Clusters

The AD: EDT & SP said that in relation to Labour Market Partnerships (LMPs): NI Multiply Programme Bid, that Council Officers received notification this week that the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities has paused funding for this initiative and therefore, she would be withdrawing this agenda item until Council receives a further update. The AD: ED&SP advised that the Committee would be updated if funding becomes available again to progress the project.

Councillor Gildernew said that she was happy to propose the recommendation as Sliabh Beagh was a great project. She said that she was disappointed regarding the funding being put on hold for LMP's Multiply Programme Bid and hoped in time that this would come to fruition. The member referred to the LMP celebration event held yesterday in Cookstown and said that it was a great success for businesses and residents in the area and hoped that this was something that would come through.

Councillor Burton seconded the proposal and referred to 5.2.2 Lumford's Glen and said that she was happy to see this going forward as she would hate to see it fall at this stage as Officers had fought very hard for it.

Councillor Monteith referred to LMP and said that it was a brilliant scheme, but felt that this would be amenable to South West College in regards to adult education. The member said that although it states that it was of no cost to Council, felt this was not the case as it does cost us i.e. line management costs, staff accommodation costs etc and not as simple to say that it was of no cost to Council. The member felt that Council may not be best suited to deliver this programme and more amenable to South West College to deliver.

The AD: EDT & SP advised that LMPs were selected to deliver part of the Multiply Programme and she understood that colleges and universities were selected to deliver the remainder of it. The AD: EDT & SP said that the Council team is building capacity through the work of the Labour Market Partnerships, forging strong links with businesses and communities etc. and the LMP celebration event held last night was testament to that and evidences the work Council has achieved in progressing the employability and skills agenda across Mid Ulster. The AD: EDT & SP advised that a separate report would be taken to P&R Committee to fund a dedicated Officer to progress the Multiply Programme, provided funding is made available in the future from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. She furthermore agreed that there would be line management responsibilities to manage the staff member if they came on board, but indicated she believed this was a worthwhile project.

*Councillor McLernon left the meeting at 8.14pm and returned at 8.15 pm.*

Councillor Monteith advised that he was only making a point and would not be arguing against it, but felt that Council was not best placed to deliver this programme.

Proposed by Councillor Gildernew

Seconded by Councillor Burton

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

- Tullaghoge Fort Access and Interpretation Feasibility Study
  - (i) **Approve** the Tullaghoge Fort Access and Interpretation Feasibility Report.
  - (ii) **Approve** this scheme is added to Council's Capital Planning Framework as an emerging project; and pursue external funding opportunities to help develop a funding package to deliver the scheme.
- Sliabh Beagh Eco Tourism Feasibility Study
  - (i) **Approve** the content of the draft final version of the Sliabh Beagh Eco Tourism Feasibility Report. A final version will be brought to Committee at a later date for noting.
  - (ii) **Approve** the additional studies and drawings required to bring Lumfords Glen up to RIBA Stage 3, to maximise the potential for Shared Island Capital Funding at this site. If agreed, the Committee will be required to make a recommendation to the Policy & Resources Committee seeking a reserve release of £24,875 +Vat.
- Draft Consultation Response on the Department for the Economy's Approach to 10x Technologies and Clusters  
**Approve** Council's draft response for submission to the Department for the Economy regarding 10X Technologies and Clusters on Appendix 4B.

#### **D175/23 Economic Development Report - OBFD**

The Assistant Director of Economic Development, Tourism & Strategic Programmes (AD: EDT&SP) presented previously circulated report update on key activities as detailed below –

- Tullaghoge Fort Access and Interpretation Feasibility Study
- Sliabh Beagh Eco Tourism Feasibility Study
- Draft Consultation Response on the Department for the Economy's Approach to 10x Technologies and Clusters

The AD: EDT & SP said that in relation to Labour Market Partnerships (LMPs): NI Multiply Programme Bid that Officers received notification earlier this week that the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities had advised that they had pressed pause on this project and that she would be advising members tonight that this item is being withdrawn as there was point in discussing it until Council gets the green light again to move it on. The AD: ED&SP advised that this would be brought

forward again if reassurance was received that funding is available to continue the project.

Councillor Gildernew said that she was happy to propose the recommendation as Sliabh Beagh was a great project. She said that she was disappointed regarding the funding being put on hold for LMP and hoped in time that this would come to fruition. The member referred to celebration event held yesterday in Cookstown and said that it was a great success for businesses and residents in the area and hoped that this was something that would come through.

Councillor Burton seconded the proposal and referred to 5.2.2 Lumford's Glen and said that she was happy to see this going forward as she would hate to see it fall at this stage as Officers had fought very hard for it.

Councillor Monteith referred to LMP and said that it was a brilliant scheme, but felt that this would be amenable to South West College in regards to adult education. The member said that although it states that it was of no cost to Council, felt this was not the case as it does cost us i.e. line management costs, staff accommodation costs etc and not as simple to say that it was of no cost to Council. The member felt that Council may not be best suited to deliver this programme and more amenable to South West College to deliver.

The AD: EDT & SP advised that it had been considered in the round the best placement for delivery and there has been a variety of strands within that programme and was her understanding that colleges would be delivering part of it. The AD: EDT & SP said that they were trying to build to capacity the Labour Market Partnerships in that there's links with businesses and communities etc. and the celebration event held last night was sentiment to that and the work which is being done in employability, skills and expertise in the area moving forward. The AD: EDT & SP advised that a separate report would be brought if funding is made available to fund an officer to work on the project and did agree that there would have to be line management responsibilities to manage the person if they come on board, but does believe that it was a worthwhile project.

*Councillor McLernon left the meeting at 8.14pm and returned at 8.15 pm.*

Councillor Monteith advised that he was only making a point and would not be arguing against it, but felt that Council was not best placed to deliver this programme.

Proposed by Councillor Gildernew  
Seconded by Councillor Burton

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

- Tullaghoge Fort Access and Interpretation Feasibility Study
  - (iii) **Approve** the Tullaghoge Fort Access and Interpretation Feasibility Report.
  - (iv) **Approve** this scheme is added to Council's Capital Planning Framework as an emerging project; and pursue external funding opportunities to help develop a funding package to deliver the scheme.

- Sliabh Beagh Eco Tourism Feasibility Study
  - (iii) **Approve** the content of the draft final version of the Sliabh Beagh Eco Tourism Feasibility Report. A final version will be brought to Committee at a later date for noting.
  - (iv) **Approve** the additional studies and drawings required to bring Lumfords Glen up to RIBA Stage 3, to maximise the potential for Shared Island Capital Funding at this site. If agreed, the Committee will be required to make a recommendation to the Policy & Resources Committee seeking a reserve release of £24,875 +Vat.
- Draft Consultation Response on the Department for the Economy's Approach to 10x Technologies and Clusters  
**Approve** Council's draft response for submission to the Department for the Economy regarding 10X Technologies and Clusters on Appendix 4B.

## **Matters for Information**

### **D176/23 Minutes of Development Committee held on 12 October 2023**

Members noted Minutes of Development Committee held on 12 October 2023.

Councillor McLernon referred to D152/23 and asked if there was any update in relation to Blackwater barmouth.

The Strategic Director of Communities & Place (SD: C&P) advised that he would seek an update and update the member.

### **D177/23 Environmental Health Service Update**

Members noted previously circulated report which advised that at the meeting of the Development Committee in September 2023, Members resolved that a regular update on the work of Mid Ulster District Council's Environmental Health Service should be provided to committee. This report is the first in a series of reports to provide Members with an update on the work of the Environmental Health Service in October 2023.

Councillor Gildernew referred to item 3.1 – Air Quality Diffusion Tubes over 28 sites and said with the ongoing odours and continual complaints living in the Cabragh and Killeeshil area, enquired where the 28 sites were located and what were they actually checking for in terms of odour and air quality. The member said if there is none in the Killeeshil/Cabragh area with that whole complaint going on asked if it would be beneficial to have them there and asked if this could be investigated.

The Strategic Director of Communities & Place (SD: C&P) the Diffusion Tubes locations are detailed in our Air Quality Report which we are required to publish and that information is available online and can certainly provide members with a link. He advised that a report is brought periodically through this committee on this matter. He also advised that it was his understanding that tubes measure nitrogen dioxide pollutants which is mainly come from idling vehicles and at those areas where there



is a lot of traffic build up at various points of time during the day and where cars are sitting idling and mainly measuring that level of pollutant.

Councillor Monteith referred to Air Quality Report which is produced every year and nothing any different or changes. He said that there was a meeting in relation to proposals in what we may or may not do at the two sites which are always top of the list for the worst air pollution in the Council area – Newell Road, Dungannon and Charlemont Street, Moy.

Councillor Monteith proposed that there be another meeting as there were a number of ideas which were put forward and was unsure what had happened to them and presumed nothing happened but did not want to be too presumptuous. He felt that reports were just continually being produced and the people who live in the area, the air quality gets no better and felt that it was counterproductive to continually keep doing this without taking any action on it. The member said that there were things that can be done which we have talked about before and wasn't done and proposed that a meeting be held in relation to air pollution and to include any other area which needs talked about also, but raising the two areas within his own DEA as they were constantly above safe limit recommended by Public Health Authority.

Councillor Monteith referred to report on inspections and would be helpful and good to see housing standard, inspections on behalf of the Housing Executive as it would be good to get an idea from our own Environmental Health Department on whether they are detecting any trends and issues which keep coming up all the time. The member said that he had raised at full Council the issue of black mould and would be interesting to see if our Officers are seeing anything regarding this issue and may be useful exercise for some of our consultation responses when we are trying to lobby for changes in legislation in housing fitness and housing standards.

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that a meeting be held in relation to air pollution at Newell Road, Dungannon and Charlemont Street, Moy.

#### **D178/23 Drinking Water Quality Report for Northern Ireland 2022**

Members noted previously circulated report which provided information on the recently published Drinking Water Quality Report for Northern Ireland 2023.

#### **D179/23 Mid Ulster Council Area Community Resuscitation Group Action Plan 2019 – 2023**

Members noted previously circulated report which provided an update on the "Creating a Community of Lifesavers in Mid Ulster Council Area, Community Resuscitation Group, Action Plan 2019 – 2023".

#### **D180/23 Economic Development Report - OBF1**

Members noted previously circulated report which provided an update on key activities as detailed below:

- Coalisland Town Centre Forum Minutes – 20 March 2023
- Maghera Town Centre Forum Minutes – 29 March 2023

Councillor Monteith referred to town centres and advised that some work needed to be done due to the high level of vacant properties in our towns and high streets. He said that it was disheartening to see Dungannon town centre losing one of our leading chemists and felt that these issues needed to be addressed. The member said that he was aware that this was no quick fix but asked that this be given real consideration as people were really concerned.

Councillor Monteith proposed that a workshop for Councillor be arranged in relation to vacancies in High Streets and Town Centres as there was an onus on Council to look at this as people were very concerned and suggested that this workshop be arranged for early in the new year.

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that a workshop be arranged for members early in the New Year in relation to vacancies in High Streets and Town Centres.

### **D181/23 Development Report**

It was agreed in Confidential Business that the below items within the Development Report be returned to Open Business for Decision.

The Strategic Director of Communities & Place (SD: C&P) presented previously circulated report to seek approval for the following:

- Community Grants Rolling Programme
- Letter of Support Request from Tyrone GAA
- Development Update

*Councillor Monteith declared an interest in Mid Ulster Advice Service.*

Councillor Monteith referred to item 2.3 – Request for Letter of Support from Tyrone GAA and said that it was important that the group are made aware of the importance of making their facility at Garvaghey being made available to other groups like Camogs, Hurling etc and not just for Gaelic football.

Councillor Monteith referred to item 2.5 – The Hill of The O’Neill and Ranfurly House and said that it was not catering for guests who attend plays or other events as there was no means of acquiring refreshments. The member suggested that in the interim some sort of method be put in place like vending machines to allow users to avail of refreshments.

Councillor Monteith said at the last two meetings he had raised the issue of Railway Park and still there has been no meetings arranged. The member also raised the issue of the mast on the Hill of The O’Neill emphasising that this must go as a matter of urgency. He said if The Hill of The O’Neill is to achieve its full potential, then this eyesore must be removed now.

The Strategic Director of Communities & Place (SD: C&P) in response to query regarding refreshments advised that hopefully that this can be done shortly as a catering contract was due to be put out to procurement.

The SD: C&P in referring to Railway Park and the mast at Hill of The O'Neill advised that a Dungannon DEA meeting is in members diaries for Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> November which were specifically focussing on these two issues.

In response to Councillor Forde's query regarding festival grants, the SD: C&P advised that any grants which were recommended would be processed but stated that festival grants were fully exhausted and would remain closed unless money was made available that could be availed off. The SD: C&P advised the Department for Communities had been approach about additional funding.

Proposed by Councillor Gildernew  
Seconded by Councillor McLernon and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council

- (i) Agree the Community Grants Rolling Programme awards and retention of £10,000 budget for Good Relations Small Grants
- (ii) Agree to provide a Letter of Support to Tyrone GAA for their application to Heritage Lottery Fund
- (iii) Note the Development Update

*The live broadcast ended at 8.30 pm.*

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

Proposed by Councillor Wilson  
Seconded by Councillor McLernon 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 D182/23 to D189/23.

### **Matters for Decision**

- D182/23 Tender for Play Park Facilities
- D183/23 Tender for Active Travel Project
- D184/23 SHHP Bellaghy Bawn Writers Residency Project
- D185/23 Connecting Pomeroy - Forest Building and Magical Forest Interim Governance Mode
- D186/23 Development Report
- D187/23 Seamus Heaney HomePlace – Catering Contract
- D188/23 Economic Development Report – Cbfd

### **Matters for Information**

- D189/23 Confidential Minutes of Development Committee held on 12 October 2023

**D190/23      Duration of Meeting**

The meeting commenced at 7pm and concluded at 9.15 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, [Dungannon/Magherafelt] and virtually.

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

# Sliabh Beagh Ecotourism Feasibility Study

Mid Ulster District Council  
Development Committee

16<sup>th</sup> November 2023

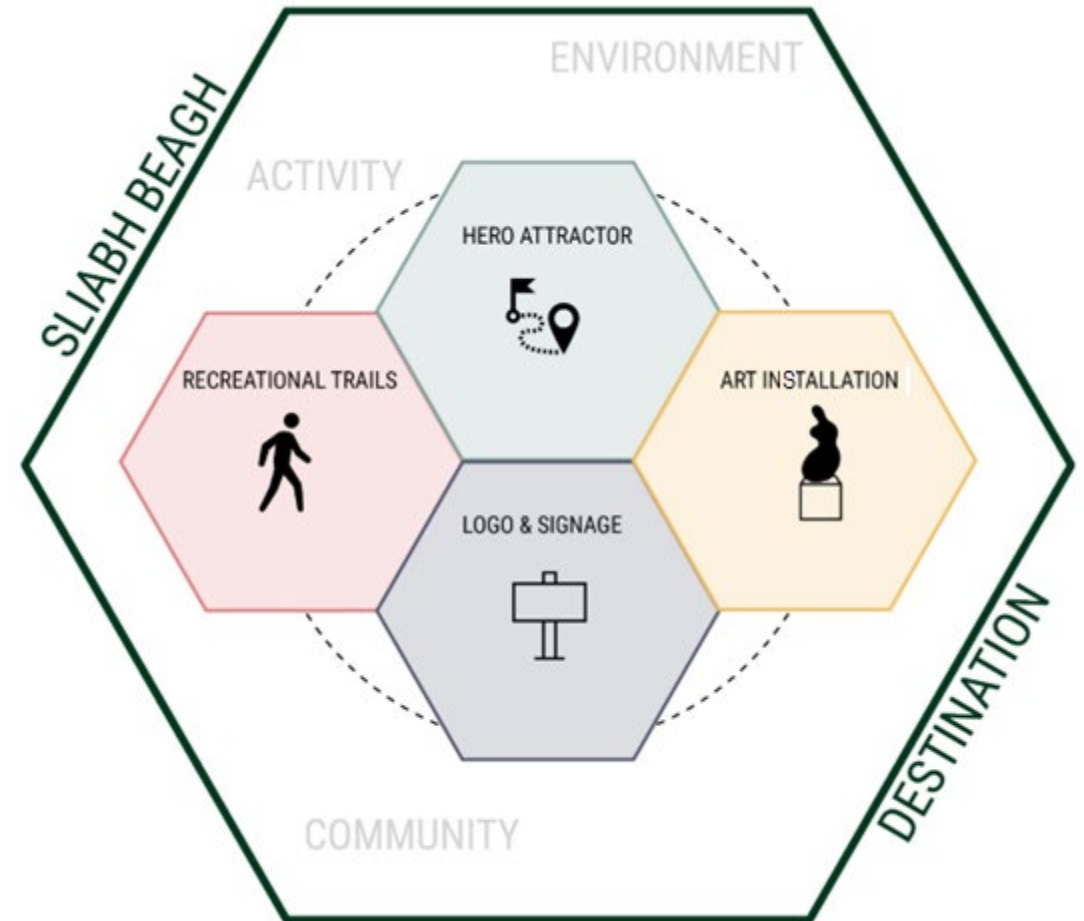
# Project Aim

Carried out on behalf of Sliabh Beagh Partnership Committee (comprising Mid Ulster District Council, Monaghan County Council and Fermanagh and Omagh District Council)

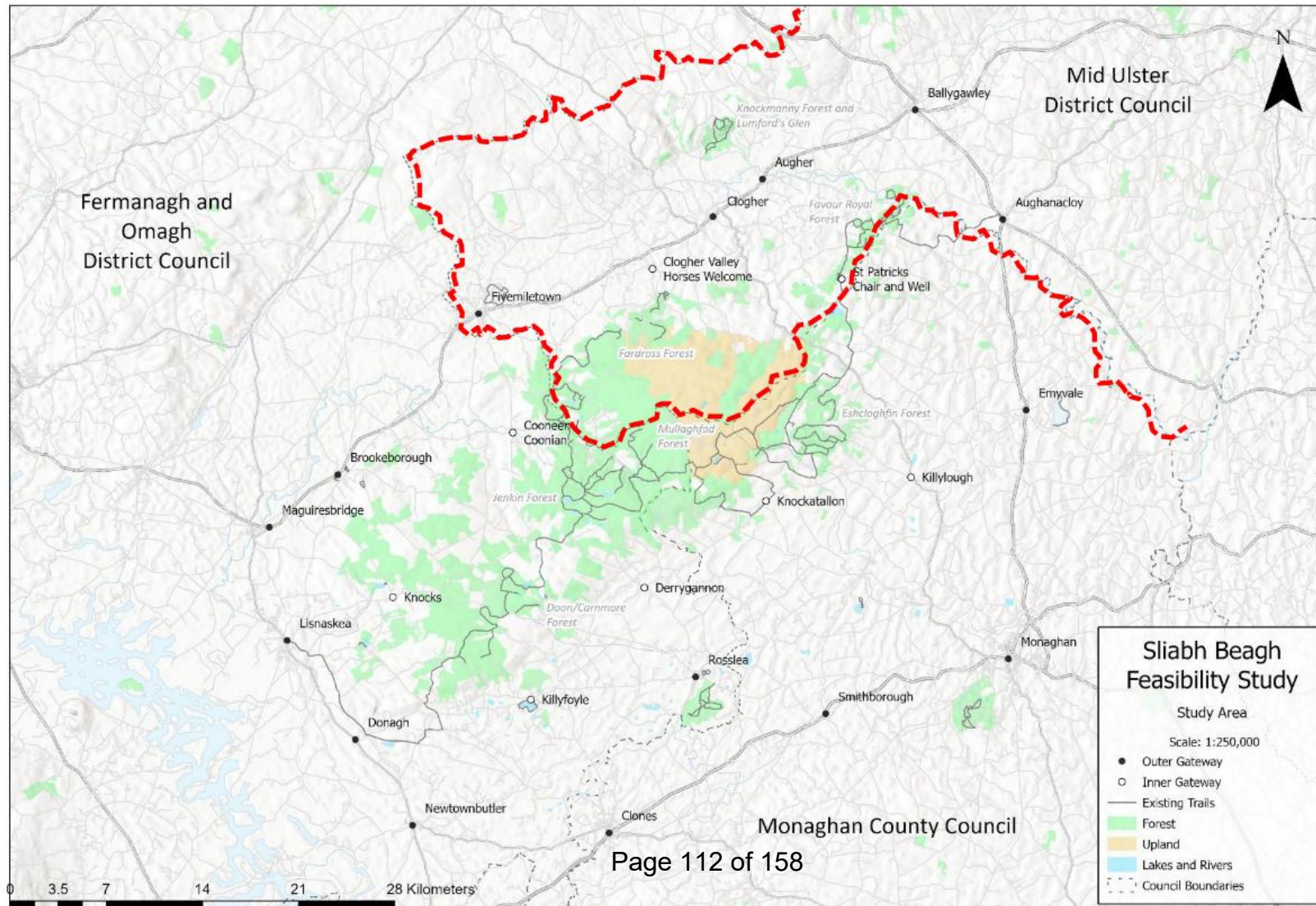
Undertake a feasibility study which investigates options to develop Sliabh Beagh as an ecotourism destination

Sliabh Beagh is recognised and celebrated as an ecotourism destination, delivering an exciting range of outdoor experiences that supports both the understanding and conservation of this special landscape

Inter-connected work packages which build on the existing services and facilities in Sliabh Beagh and identify opportunities for new 'hero' products

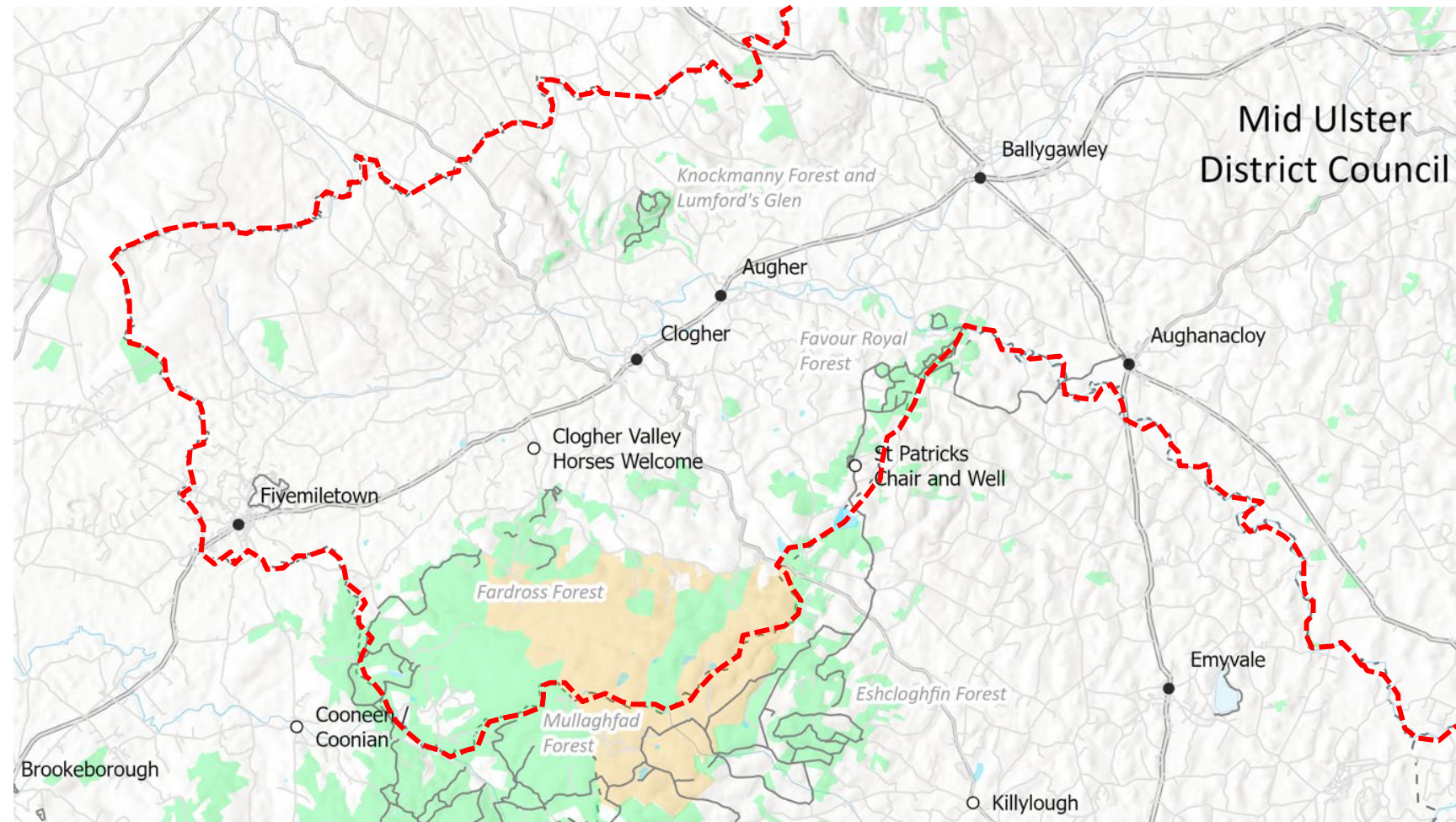


# The Study Area





# The Study Area



Mid Ulster District Council area:

- Favour Royal Forest – including St Patricks Chair and Well
- Fardross Forest
- Part of Crocknagrally Forest
- Knockmany Forest and Lumfords Glen
- Sections of the Sliabh Beagh Way

# About Ecotourism

Ecotourism is defined as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education.”

Principles of ecotourism:

1. Minimise impacts
2. Build awareness and respect
3. Financial benefits for conservation
4. Financial benefits for communities
5. Visitor experiences that help raise awareness/sensitivity
6. Low-impact facilities and services



# The Hero Attractor: Sliabh Beagh as a Multi Activity Destination

A detailed screening process identified this proposition as the one with the best potential to generate tourism growth for Sliabh Beagh.

## **What is a Multi Activity Destination?**

- A destination that offers a wide variety of outdoor activities scattered across different locations, e.g. swimming, kayaking, walking, cycling, outdoor challenges, horse riding. Some of these activities will be free to access and others would be paid for.
- It works with existing operators, infrastructure and towns/villages in the first instance before adding any additional activities and accommodation.
- The focus is on a shared brand and vision for the area that towns/villages and operators participate in.
- There will be opportunities to develop small scale eco and unique off-grid accommodation.

# Building on what is there

## Existing Initiatives

- ***Clogher Valley Cluster***
- Knockatallon
- Cooneen/Coonian
- Donagh - the community is actively looking at developing Airbnb & RV site
- Knocks - development of lakeside glamping and hub for walkers/cyclists
- Rosslea - revamping the heritage centre and providing simple facilities for walkers/cyclists would enhance the wider area
- Derrygannon - building on existing initiatives for walkers and the community

## New Opportunities

- ***Horse riding experiences in partnership with Clogher Valley Horses Welcome***
- ***Infrastructure to support water access at key locations for kayaking and wild swimming e.g. Lough More***
- New conservation and wellness experiences
- Building on existing recreational trails
- Weather-proofing / phased development of Cooneen/Coonian Murphy Ghost House



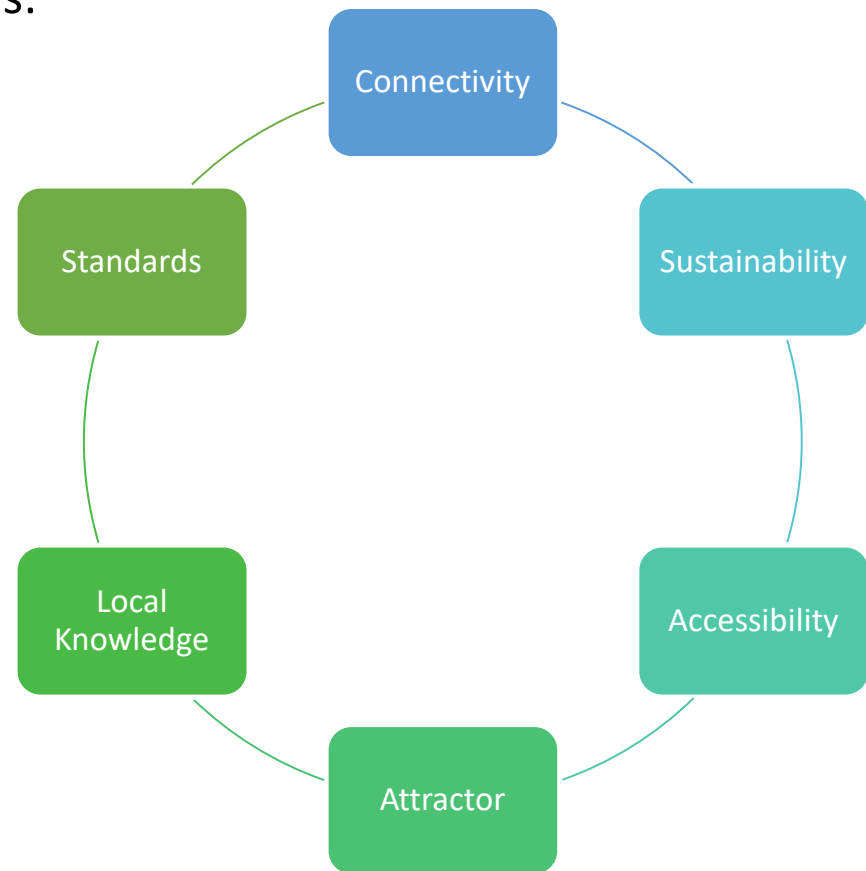
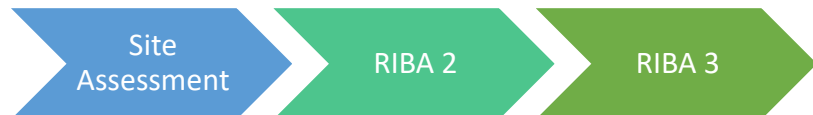
# Recreational Trails

Recreational Trail Development provides the infrastructure to allow access to outdoor activities scattered across different locations:

- Walking
- Cycling (Gravel Cycling)
- Equestrian

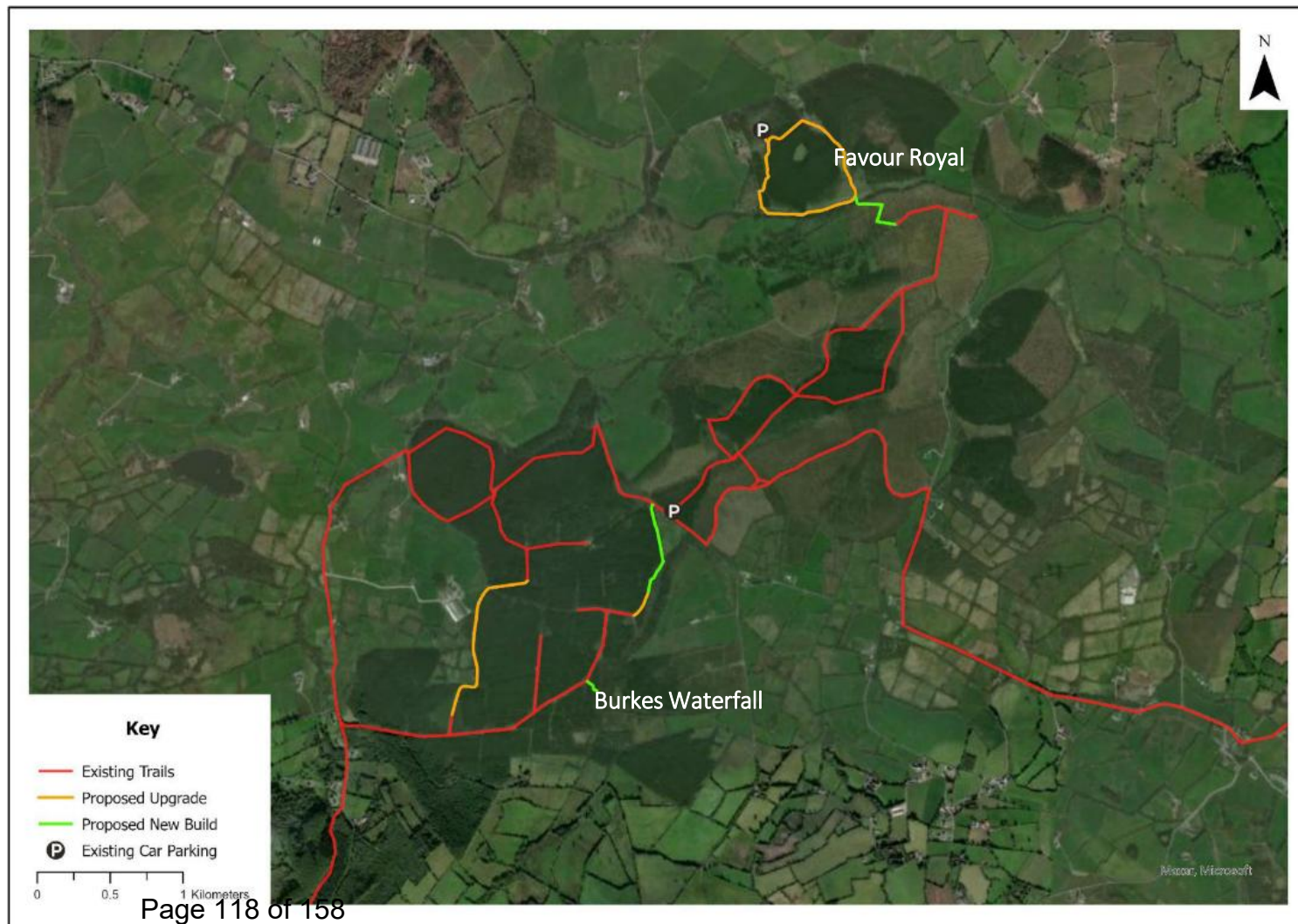
## Sustainable Trails

- Land use
- Landscape
- Habitats
- People and Communities
- Management and maintenance

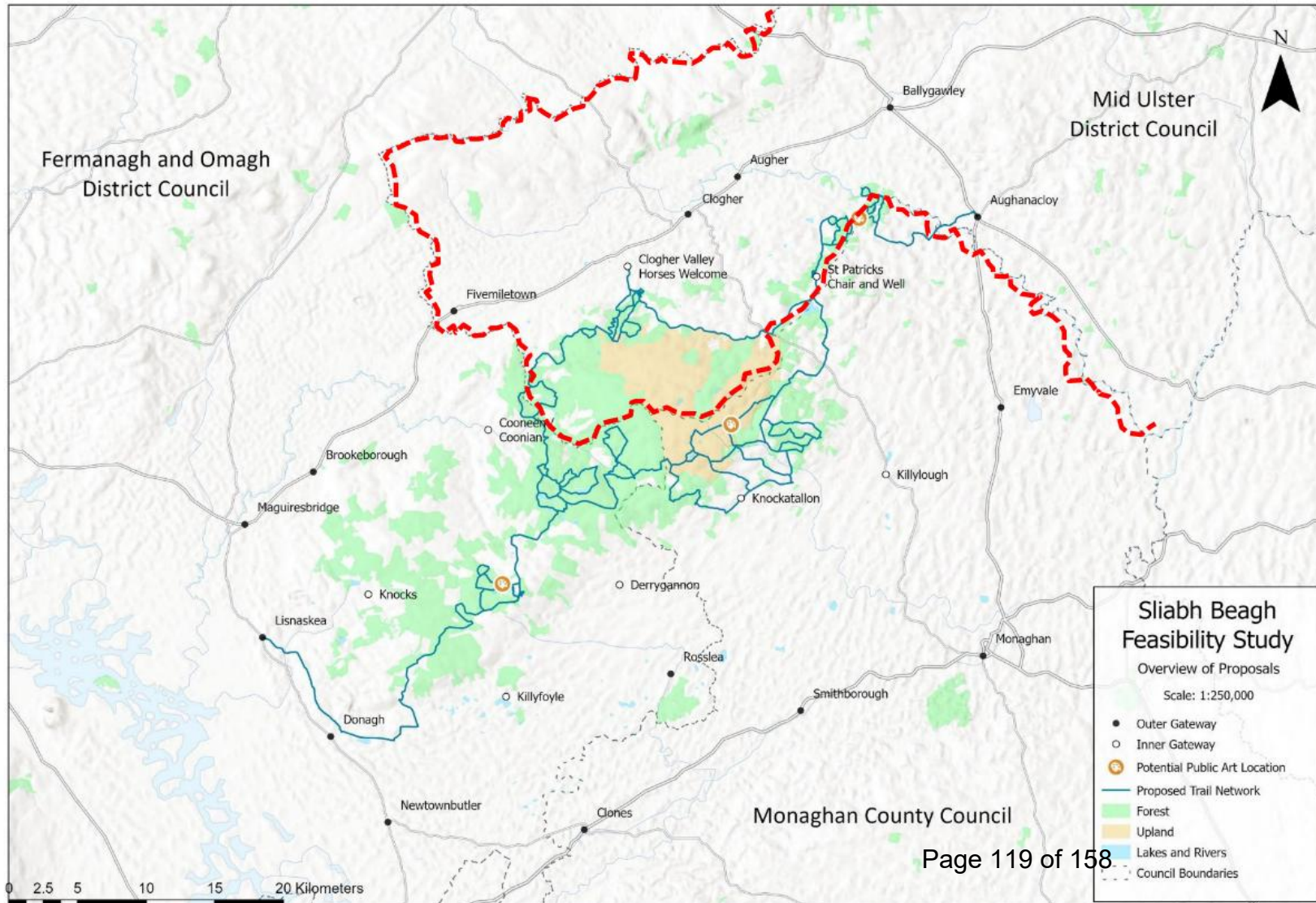


# Recreational Trails – RIBA Stage 2 Proposals (MUDC)

Council	Route Name	Requirements
MUDC	Favour Royal Link	New build and upgrade Large footbridge required
	Burkes Waterfall	New build and upgrade
	Fardross Equestrian Loop	New build
	Fardross Arc	New build and upgrade
	Browns Hill	New build and upgrade
	Knockmany Forest / Lumfords Glen	New build Earthworks and infrastructure required
	Crockaclevan Lough	New build
FODC/MUDC	Mullynavale Loop	Replacement stiles and waymarking only



# Recreational Trails Overview – RIBA Stage 3 (MUDC)



Marketable loops:

- Gravel Cycling – 74km
- Walking - 73km
- Equestrian – 12km

Combines existing, new build and upgrade trails across the study area.

Opportunities within MUDC:

- Equestrian trails in Fardross Forest
- Upgrade to trails in Favour Royal (including to St Patrick Chair and Well)
- Gravel trails within Crocknagrally Forest

# Recreational Trails Overview – RIBA Stage 3 (MUDC)

Council / County	Trail Name Forest Name	Section ID
Mid Ulster District Council	Burkes Waterfall Favour Royal Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 1 – 410m 1.5m wide gravel trail with steps</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 3 – 85m 1.5m wide gravel trail with steps</li> </ul>
Mid Ulster District Council	Fardross Arc Fardross Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 2 – 425m 1.5m wide gravel trail</li> </ul>
Mid Ulster District Council	Fardross Equestrian Fardross Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 1 – 1475m 2.5m wide gravel trail</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 2 – 300m 3.0m wide gravel trail</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 3 – 270m 2.5m wide gravel trail</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 4 – 445m 2.5m wide gravel trail</li> </ul>





# Concept Public Artwork

## ARTWORK PRINCIPALS

- Based on sustainable and circular economy principles.
- Linked to the natural and cultural heritage of the Sliabh Beagh area.
- Spread across the 3 Council areas.
- Become a Target and a Reward for visitor exertion.
- Deliver on the Bith Story in 3 collectable instalments.
- Visually connect to / interact with the landscape.
- Be photogenic and 'shareable' via social media.
- Be robust and easily maintained.



# Concept Public Artwork

Public Art - Location Overview



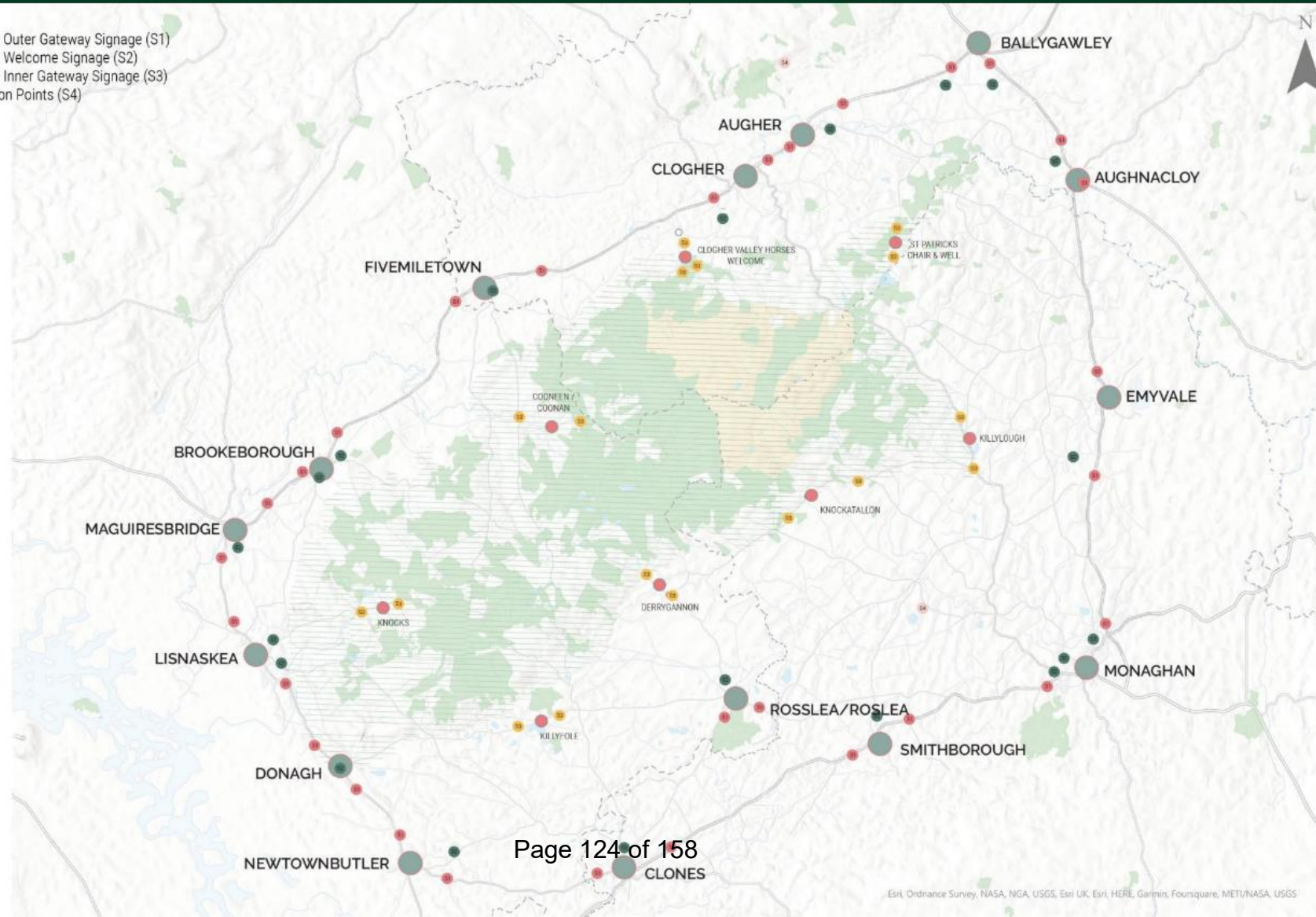
# Concept Public Artwork



# Exploring Slabh Beagh

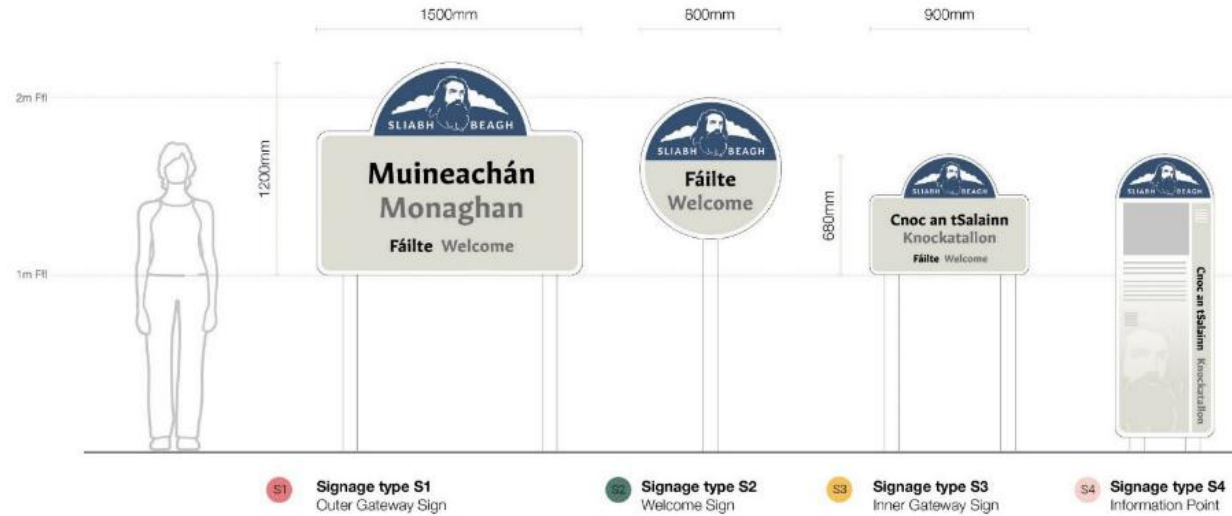
KEY

- Proposed Outer Gateway Signage (S1)
- Proposed Welcome Signage (S2)
- Proposed Inner Gateway Signage (S3)
- Information Points (S4)



# Exploring Sliabh Beagh

Signage Types

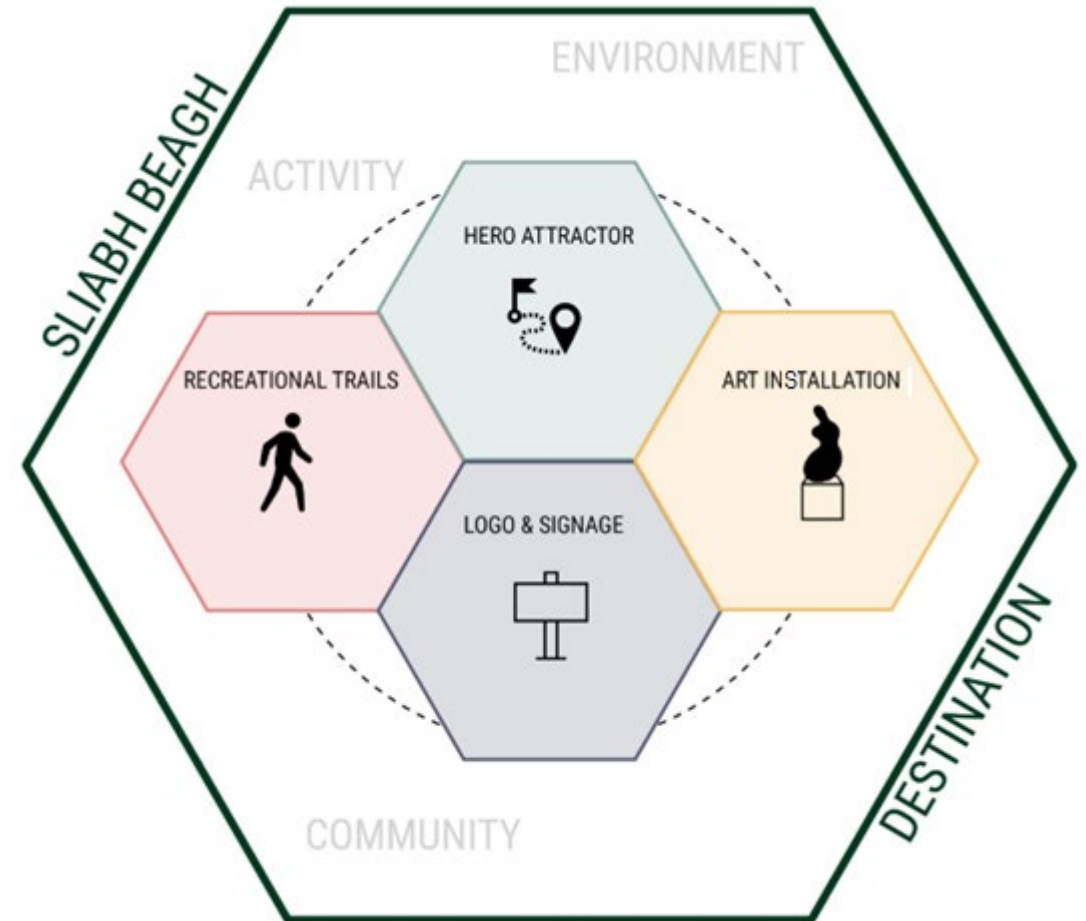


Signage Colour Options



# Sliabh Beagh Multi-Activity Destination – Next Steps

- Progress recreational trails through planning
- Signage procurement
- Development of concept public artwork
- Five-year plan that addresses:
  - Vision and objectives
  - Coordinated development and marketing under the umbrella of Sliabh Beagh
  - Identification of key priorities for development of the visitor experience, required infrastructure, marketing and management
  - Detailed action plan for delivery
  - Potential to seek 3-year Project Officer to lead momentum, secure funding and coordinate
  - eProspectus to encourage operators and funders to participate



Thank you







<b>Report on</b>	Conferences, Seminars & Training
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	23 November 2023
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Joseph McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services & Engagement
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Eileen Forde, Member Support Officer

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	x

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	Provide an update on seminars and conferences received. To seek approval for (i) elected member attendance and the payment of registration/ attendance fees and associated costs, as incurred and, (ii) council officer approvals.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	Costs associated will be set against 2023-2024 member Conference, Seminar and Training allocations.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<b>Approval for Consideration of Attendance by Elected Members</b>  There are occasions when it is beneficial to the council for Officers to attend conferences and seminars. Members are asked to consider engaging in training opportunities as outlined in Appendix A.
3.2	<b>Officer Approvals</b>  There are occasions when it is beneficial to the council for Officers to attend conferences and seminars. Approval for attendance as detailed in Appendix B to this report is sought.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
4.1	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>  Financial: Costs to be set against Members 2023/2024 conference/seminar/training allocation. Any costs incurred above annual allocation to be incurred by Member

	Human: not applicable
	Risk Management: not applicable
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: not applicable
	Rural Needs Implications: not applicable
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	Approval for attendance at the conferences, seminars and training by members and council officers as required.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	Appendix A Member Conferences, Seminars & Training Appendix B Staff Conferences, Seminars & Training

**Member Training**

<b>Provider/Course</b>	<b>Date &amp; Time</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>Attendee Requests</b>
Agenda NI: Economic Development Conference	Wednesday 6th December	Hilton Hotel Templepatrick	£165+VAT Travel & subsistence	
NAC N. Ireland Leadership Series 2023/24, Events II and III	(II) Friday 19 January 2024 – 12.00pm – 4.45pm,	Ulster University, York Street Campus, Belfast	No attendance Fee Travel & Subsistence	
Local Enterprise Training Solutions (LETS): “Developing A New Economy”	III. Friday 26 January 2024 – 12.00pm – 4.45pm,	Ulster University, Magee Campus, Derry / Londonderry		



# Annual Northern Ireland Economic Conference 2023

Wednesday 6th December

Hilton Hotel Templepatrick

Host local authority



An agendaNi event

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# Northern Ireland's economic summit

The Northern Ireland Economic Conference, now in its 28th year, is Northern Ireland's premier economic analysis event and is unique in being the only forum that takes a high level look at the performance of, and prospects for the local economy. It is firmly established as the annual summit for Northern Ireland's economic community, including policy makers and business leaders.

## Conference overview

This year's conference takes place against a difficult economic and political backdrop. With no devolved administration the local economy faces economic headwinds on several fronts. High inflation still persists and the energy crisis is expected to continue well into the winter months, which has put a squeeze on living standards. Budgetary pressures mean that spending is constrained, at a time when Northern Ireland's economy aims to address long-standing issues such as being a laggard in terms of productivity, and having the highest rates of working age economic inactivity of any UK region. The response to these economic headwinds has been the 10X Economy strategy, targeting future high growth sectors of the economy. Expert speakers will discuss all the key issues and share their thoughts on the economic prospects for Northern Ireland.



## Why attend?

- ✓ Expert local and visiting speakers
- ✓ Major economic summit
- ✓ Economic outlook and forecast
- ✓ Unique information presented
- ✓ Not-to-be-missed annual conference
- ✓ All sectors represented — government, business, third sector

## Key issues to be addressed at the conference

- 01 **UK and global** economic outlook
- 02 Medium term economic outlook **for Northern Ireland**
- 03 **Addressing the** productivity gap
- 04 Impact of inflation **on growing the economy**
- 05 **Implementing the** 10X Economy strategy
- 06 Closing skills gaps **in the local economy**
- 07 The cost of living crisis: **Addressing the challenge**
- 08 Promoting innovation **in the economy**
- 09 **The economic opportunity** of net zero carbon technologies
- 10 **Tackling** economic inactivity



## Sponsorship opportunities

There are still a small number of available sponsorship opportunities at this year's conference. Sponsorship of the annual Northern Ireland Economic Conference is an excellent way for organisations to raise their profile with a key audience of economic decision-makers and senior business leaders. For further details or to discuss how your organisation can benefit from close association with Northern Ireland's premier economic analysis event, **contact Lynda Millar on 028 9261 9933 or email [lynda.millar@agendani.com](mailto:lynda.millar@agendani.com).**



# Programme

## 09:00 THE NORTHERN IRELAND ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Chair's welcome and introduction: **John Campbell**, Economics and Business Editor  
**BBC Northern Ireland**

### WELCOME

**Mark Cooper**, Mayor, **Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council**

### OPENING ADDRESS

*Delivering the 10X Economic Strategy for Northern Ireland*

**Paul Grocott**, Deputy Secretary, Economic Strategy Group, **Department for the Economy**

### UK ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

*UK economic prospects*

**Chris Giles**, Economics Editor, **FT**

### ECONOMIC FORECAST

*The Northern Ireland medium term economic outlook*

**Gareth Hetherington**, Director, **Ulster University Economic Policy Centre**

### PUBLIC FINANCES

*Sustainable public finances and fiscal devolution*

**Lisa Wilson**, Senior Economist, **Nevin Economic Research Institute**

Questions & answers / Panel discussion

## 10:45 NETWORKING BREAK

### 11:15 THE LOCAL ECONOMY

*Driving growth in the local economy*

Presented by **Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council**

### SKILLS

*The evolution of apprenticeships*

**Sandra McNally**, Professor of Economics, **University of Surrey** and Director, Centre for Economic Performance, **London School of Economics**

### PRODUCTIVITY

*Productivity: A long-standing challenge*

**David Jordan**, Lecturer in Economics, **Queen's Business School** and Research Associate  
**The Productivity Institute**

### GOODS TRADE

*The structure of international goods trade for Ireland and Northern Ireland*

**Janez Kren**, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, **The Economic and Social Research Institute**

Questions & answers / Panel discussion

## 13:00 LUNCH BREAK

# Programme

14:00

NET ZERO

*The economic opportunity of Net Zero Tech*

**Richard Rodgers**, Deputy Secretary, Head of Energy, **Department for the Economy**

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

*Social Enterprise on the island of Ireland*

**Helen Johnston**, Senior Social Policy Analyst, **National Economic & Social Council**

DIGITAL ECONOMY

*Enabling the Digital Economy for economic growth*

**Anne Sheehan**, Chief Executive, **Microsoft Ireland** (invited)

## PANEL DISCUSSION: THE COST OF LIVING: ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES

**Noyona Chundur**, Chief Executive, **Consumer Council for Northern Ireland**

**Kevin Higgins**, Head of Policy, **Advice NI**

**Paul Mac Flynn**, Co-Director, **Nevin Economic Research Institute**

**Kirsty McManus**, Director, **IoD Northern Ireland**

**Neil Johnston**, Director, **Northern Ireland Retail Consortium** (invited)

16:15

## CHAIRMAN'S SUMMARY AND CONFERENCE CLOSE







**John Campbell** is Economics and Business Editor for **BBC Northern Ireland**, a position he has held since September 2013. Prior to that he was a senior BBC producer working across TV, radio and online with special responsibility for business coverage. He began his career on the Liverpool Daily Post and Echo.



**Noyona Chundur** was appointed Chief Executive of **The Consumer Council** in January 2021. She has extensive experience of consumer protection, economic development and arts and culture having successfully developed strategies at regional, national and international levels that deliver customer-centric business transformation. Noyona joined The Consumer Council from Invest Northern Ireland where she was Head of Campaigns and Digital Solutions since 2006, joining the organisation in 2004. She led their communications strategy for Northern Ireland, winning multiple internationally recognised awards for marketing and digital innovation, and is also Chair of the Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival.



**Chris Giles** is a columnist at the **Financial Times** and has been its Economics Editor since 2004. Based in London he has a particular focus on trends in the world economy and in the UK. Previously at the Financial Times, he was the economics editorial writer. Before joining the FT in 2000, Chris was an economics correspondent at the BBC. He started his career in research, spending seven years as an economist for the Institute for Fiscal Studies.



**Paul Grocott** is the Deputy Secretary for Economic Strategy Group in the **Department for the Economy**. Paul's team led the development of the Department's 10X Economic Vision and is now working on developing the transformational policies that can achieve these outcomes and the organisational changes that are necessary to make it all happen. He is currently responsible for coordinating the programme of engagements for the Special Envoy to Northern Ireland on Economic Affairs. Paul led the teams providing support to businesses during Covid and was responsible for Northern Ireland's 'High Street Scheme' that provided adults with £100 to spend in their local high streets. Paul is also the Department's Policy Champion which includes promoting and leading new policy development approaches.



**Gareth Hetherington** is the Director of the **Ulster University Economic Policy Centre**. The Centre is self-financing and carries out a broad range of economic policy focused research to inform Central and Local Government on key policy and strategy decisions. Typical areas of research cover skills, competitiveness, tax, community planning, economic forecasting and more recently COVID recovery. Gareth works closely with senior stakeholders in the public and private sector, providing briefings to NI Executive Ministers, evidence to Assembly Committees and engages with senior business leaders. He also provides regular economic commentary in the media. Separately Gareth is the non-executive chair of the South Eastern Regional College (SERC) and is a member of both the High Streets Task Force and the newly established Northern Ireland Skills Council.



**Kevin Higgins** is Head of Policy and Research at **Advice NI**. He has worked in the advice sector in Northern Ireland for over 30 years, both as an advice worker with an independent advice centre (Advice Officer, Ballynaveigh Community Development Association), with a CAB (Manager, Falls Road Bureau), with Law Centre NI (Legal Adviser) and latterly in a support capacity in his role within Advice NI. Advice NI is the umbrella organisation for the independent advice network in Northern Ireland – annually dealing with over 250,000 enquiries mainly on social security benefits, housing, consumer, employment and debt issues. A large part of his work revolves around addressing social policy issues raised by Advice NI members and responding to consultations. Welfare reform has taken up much of his time since the Coalition Government came to power in 2010, raising awareness of the impacts of the social security benefit cuts and the social security benefit reforms. He was part of the Welfare Reform Mitigations Working Group chaired by Professor Eileen Evason and he is currently an independent member of the DfC NI Joint Standards Committee.



**Helen Johnston** is a Senior Social Policy Analyst at the **Irish National Economic and Social Council (NESC)**. She was previously Director of the Irish Combat Poverty Agency. A native of Northern Ireland, Helen has previous experience working in the Northern Ireland civil service. She was chair of the Centre for Cross Border Studies from 2011 to 2021. Helen has qualifications in Environmental Science and Town and Country Planning, a Master's in Business Administration, and a Doctorate in Governance.



**David Jordan** is a Lecturer in Economics at **Queen's Business School**, and a Research Associate at **The Productivity Institute**. He is currently examining the reasons behind low levels of productivity in Northern Ireland, as part of the work of the Northern Ireland Productivity Forum. His wider research focuses on regional and public economics, alongside economic and financial history. He is particularly interested in the economics of devolution, including how institutions and policy have shaped the long-run performance of Northern Ireland's economy.



**Janez Kren** is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the **Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI)** in Dublin and a Fellow at Trinity College Dublin. His research primarily focuses on international trade and applied econometrics. Prior to his current positions he was a doctoral researcher at KU Leuven in Belgium, worked as a consultant for the World Bank and was a visiting researcher at Loughborough University. He has published peer-reviewed research on topics related to Ireland, the UK, and European economy.



**Paul Mac Flynn** is co-director of the **Nevin Economic Research Institute** and is based in the Belfast office. In addition to managing the Belfast office he has co-responsibility for the NERI's research programme and for its strategic direction. He leads on the NERI's analysis of the Northern Ireland economy along with all research into the impact of the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union. Other research areas include regional productivity, the all-island economy and the future of work. He is a graduate of University College Dublin with a BA in Economics and Politics and the University of Bristol with an MSc in Economics and Public Policy, specialising in the economic impacts of political devolution in the UK.



**Sandra McNally** is a Professor of Economics at the **University of Surrey**. She is Director of the Education and Skills Programme at the Centre for Economic Performance, **London School of Economics**. She also directs the Centre for Vocational Education Research (funded by DfE from 2015 to 2020). Her research interests include economic evaluation of government policies in schools and further education and labour market returns to education and training. She is a co-editor of the *Economics of Education Review*.



**Richard Rodgers** is Head of Energy at the **Department for the Economy** where he led the development of the recently published Northern Ireland Executive's Energy Strategy – The Path to Net Zero Energy. He has almost 35 years' experience in the energy industry, including British Gas for eight years, Phoenix Natural Gas for 12, as MD (International) at Eaga for five years (responsible for the delivery of fuel poverty programmes for Governments across the world), five years as Strategic Advisor (Energy) at the Strategic Investment Board and for the past three years as Head of Energy in the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland. Richard was also a non-executive director on the Board of the Utility Regulator for nine years (ending in March 2019).



**Lisa Wilson** is a Senior Economist at the **Nevin Economic Research Institute** and is based in the Belfast office. Her main research interests lie in the areas of labour markets, income distribution, poverty, public expenditure, living standards and well-being. Since taking up her position in the NERI Lisa has been among other things carrying out work concerned with job quality and its economic and social importance, the future of work, the gendered nature of employment, and housing and its impact for living standards in Northern Ireland. Lisa is a native of Donegal, and a graduate of Ulster University and Queen's University, Belfast. Lisa completed her PhD in Queen's University, Belfast focusing on income inequality and well-being.

# conference registration form

## I wish to

- Reserve \_\_\_\_\_ delegate places at the conference  
Conference delegate rate **£255** + VAT @ 20% = £306
- Discounted rate for voluntary/community/councils  
Conference delegate rate **£165** + VAT @ 20% = £198
- Receive details of **sponsorship & exhibition opportunities** at the conference

## Personal details

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Job title: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Acknowledgement of registration

Confirmation of registration will be emailed to all delegates following receipt of registration details. If you have not received your acknowledgement within 48 hours of registering, please contact [registration@agendaNi.com](mailto:registration@agendaNi.com) to confirm your booking.

## Terms and conditions

For those unable to attend, a substitute participant may be sent at any time for no additional charge. Please note once purchased delegate places cannot be cancelled.

## How to register...

 **By telephone**  
+44 (0)28 9261 9933

 **By email**  
[registration@agendaNi.com](mailto:registration@agendaNi.com)

 **By post**  
bmf Business Services  
19a Maghaberry Road  
Maghaberry, Co. Antrim  
BT67 0JE

 **Online**  
[www.nieconomic.agendani.com](http://www.nieconomic.agendani.com)

You can unsubscribe from receiving information at any time, please let us know by emailing [info@agendani.com](mailto:info@agendani.com) or phoning 028 9261 9933.

## Who should attend?

The Annual Northern Ireland Economic Conference is aimed at key decision-makers and those across business and government/the public sector with an interest in tackling the challenges to ensure Northern Ireland's economy is fit for the future. It will also appeal to those interacting with the public sector, both in policy advisory and service delivery or advocacy roles. Those interested in attending will include:

- Chief Executives / Directors / senior managers
- Finance directors / managers
- Central government / department officials
- Agencies, advisory bodies and NDPBs
- Frontline service delivery professionals
- Auditors / value-for-money specialists
- Local government officers and elected representatives
- Budget-holders
- Corporate planners
- Voluntary / community sector leaders / NGOs
- Services organisations – IT / telecoms
- Financial and legal advisors

## Payment options

- I enclose a cheque for £ \_\_\_\_\_  
Payable to 'bmf Business Services'.
- Please debit my Visa / Mastercard

Card No.

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Name of card holder \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry date \_\_\_\_\_

Security code \_\_\_\_\_

Please invoice me PO Number: \_\_\_\_\_

(Please provide card billing address if different from company address)



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Maghaberry Co. Antrim BT67 0JE

**Email:** [info@agendani.com](mailto:info@agendani.com)

#NIEconomic



13 November 2023

Dear Adrian

On behalf of both the National Association of Councillors, (NAC NI Region) and Ulster University, we are writing to personally invite your attendance – and input – into one of our two workshops this coming January 2024, entitled “Developing a New Economy”.

These highly interactive workshops – hosted by Ulster University on 19<sup>th</sup> January in Belfast and on 26<sup>th</sup> January in Derry / Londonderry (*see attached Working Agenda*) have gathered a range of powerful and dynamic speakers, including your own Chair of SOLACE, Mr. David Burns.

As part of the NAC’s *Leadership Series* which commenced in March 2023, the principal aim of these interactive sessions is to highlight the massive potential of local communities and local government, in this case, in transforming our very fragile economy.

Participants will impart and gather enterprise knowledge and skills, outline and forecast how we might invest differently in local people and places, will encourage councillors and officers in local authorities to take stock of our current strengths and weaknesses, and plan new and existing ways to grow and sustain local economies - in partnership. As the title of the NAC series states, we aim to foster innovative **leadership** and actions with and for elected members, which in turn will embed greater social, economic and environmental governance with and for the entire community.

Speakers are being challenged to succinctly explain how they and their organisation assists or could assist councils to develop sustainable enterprise driven by local people and – candidly – to outline what you believe to be barriers to developing sustainable, locally driven enterprise and employment for all and what you and others might do differently, looking ahead.

The audience will be interactive throughout, so that participants from councils and partner bodies can share new enterprise ideas and strategies with each other, this being the essence of co-designing new policies and practices, as you well know.

The Leadership Series and additional corporate planning advice is being facilitated by your colleague Derek McCallan, no stranger to anyone here in councils and who unsurprisingly



National Association of Councillors  
Northern Ireland Region

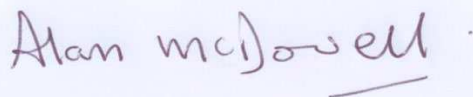
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remains a fervent and committed advocate of local government and the massive potential referred to above.

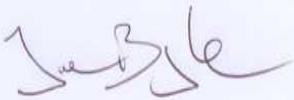
We encourage you to email, via Linda Williamson, at [office@nac-ni.org](mailto:office@nac-ni.org) to register your attendance, and respectfully request that you table this information on your earliest full Council agenda, noting that both cross-party attendance as well as participation from yourself and Senior Officers from your Council will be most welcomed.

Thank you very much for actively considering the above and the attached.

Yours sincerely



Alderman Alan McDowell  
Chair, NAC NI



Cllr Joe Boyle  
Secretary, NAC NI



**NAC N. Ireland Leadership Series 2023/24, Events II and III.**

**Local Enterprise Training Solutions (LETS):**

“Developing A New Economy”

II. Friday 19 January 2024 – 12.00pm – 4.45pm, Ulster University, York Street Campus, Belfast &

III. Friday 26 January 2024 – 12.00pm – 4.45pm, Ulster University, Magee Campus, Derry / Londonderry

12.00pm	12.45pm	Registration & Light Lunch	Delegates, speakers, panellists & guests
12.45pm	12.55pm	Welcome and Introduction	Professor Duncan Morrow, Ulster University Cllr. Joe Boyle, Secretary, NAC (NI)
12.55pm	1.20pm	<b>Session 1 We Must, We Can (Interactive)</b>  Can Councils, Councillors & Partners lead our future local economies? Embracing the Challenges: Why, What and How do we do it?	SOLACE Chief, Mr. David Burns  Alderman Alan McDowell, Chair, NAC  Steve Pollard – University of Ulster
1.20pm	2.00pm	Our Economy: Participative Workshop	First Round Table Session - Derek McCallan (Facilitator) & Steve Pollard
2.00pm	2.15pm	Tea / Coffee Break	Delegates, speakers, panellists & guests
2.15pm	3.25pm	<b>Session 2 – Power Panel &amp; Attendees ( Interactive)</b> Small Business & New Enterprise Perspectives – Future Economic Thinking & Delivery Support for Local Business Finance Community Wealth Building Local Enterprise Agencies Encouraging Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Enterprise NI  Neil Hutcheson – FSB (Federation of Small Businesses)  Harbinson-Mulholland  Bridget Meehan - Northern Mutual Bank DTNI (Development Trusts NI) Further and Higher Education Colleges Michael Holden – Disability NI EMEEN (Ethnic Minority Employment and Entrepreneurship Network)

3.25pm	4.15pm	Co-designing Future Local Economies - Interactive Discussion	Round Table Session - Derek McCallan and Steve Pollard
4.15pm	4.25pm	Outcomes & Offers	Derek McCallan Ald Alan McDowell
4.25pm	4.30pm	Thanks & Close	Cllr Beth Adger, President, NAC UK

## Who Should Attend?

Councillors, senior officers and partner bodies who have a passion to improve their understanding and delivery of new, transformative local enterprise, jobs and sustainable growth. The workshop will gather, present and report on insights from speakers, panellists and attendees, which will enable new enterprise policies and actions at a time when Northern Ireland's economy desperately needs the innovation, impetus and inclusion of local entrepreneurs, local communities and embed local investment in people and place.

## Who Is Key to these Events and their Outcomes?

### **YOU ARE.**

Whilst panellists and specialists will be in situ, local councillors and council officers are the closest part of government to the community and as such should attend, be heard, and collaboratively create new, needed, co-designed approaches to enterprise, with local people themselves, locking in knowledge, skills, opportunities and sustainable investment in our local places - cities, towns and villages right across N. Ireland.

---

*NB: places on each event are strictly limited & will be subject to capacity & related terms. To register free of charge please contact Linda Williamson, NAC NI, via email [office@nac-ni.org](mailto:office@nac-ni.org) stating your name, council / organisation, location preference (Magee, Derry – Londonderry OR Belfast) and any dietary requirements.*

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## Conferences – November 2023

### Retrospective Approval:-

<b>Details of Conferences</b>	<b>Service/ Directorate</b>	<b>No. Attending</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>
Conveyancing Conference 23	Corporate Services – Legal	1	£150+vat	17/10/23	Belfast
World Travel Market	Economic Devlpt	2	£2,330 (Tourism budget)	6-8tn November	London
Sandford Award Presentation	Communities & Place	1	Flight only	6 <sup>th</sup> November	Hampton Court Palace
The Future is no – responding to disrupted world	Chief Executive's	1	Free	15 <sup>th</sup> & 16 <sup>th</sup> November	Belfast



<b>Report on</b>	Consultations Information notified to Mid Ulster District Council
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	26 November 2023
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Joe McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services & Engagement
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Ann McAleer, Policy Engagement and Equality Officer

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	x

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To update members on the consultations notified to Mid Ulster District Council and to provide details of a submitted consultation.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	Council is a consultee for many government departments, statutory agencies and other bodies, and as such receives consultation documentation inviting commentary on a wide range of issues that may be pertinent to council services and/or the District.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	Documentation relating to the aforementioned consultations can be accessed via the links provided in the table provided in Appendix A.
3.2.	Members were notified of the DE's consultation on Statutory Guidance on the Reduction and Management of Restrictive Practices in Educational Settings in Northern Ireland at September's Full Council Meeting. This response was developed and submitted as a result of the Council Chair's requested approval. Appendix B contains the submitted response.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: N/A
	Human: N/A
	Risk Management: N/A
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: To be considered as part of any Council consultation response submission.
	Rural Needs Implications: To be considered as part of any Council consultation response submission.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	

	Members review and note active consultations and further associated consultation information notified to Mid Ulster District Council.
<b>6.0</b>	<p><b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b></p> <p>Appendix A: Details of Current Consultations</p> <p>Appendix B: Submitted Consultation Response- DE Statutory Guidance on the Reduction and Management of Restrictive Practices in Educational Settings in Northern Ireland</p>

## Appendix A: Details of Current Consultations

Organisation	Consultation Title	Issue	Closing Date	Response Currently Being Developed
SONI (System Operator for Northern Ireland)	<b>Transmission Development Plan 2023-2032</b>	The Transmission Development Plan will play a key role in ensuring that Northern Ireland has the right infrastructure in place to meet the electricity demands of the future.	22 December 2023	No
	<b>Link to Consultation</b>	<a href="https://consult.soni.ltd.uk/">https://consult.soni.ltd.uk/</a>		
	<b>Delegated Authority</b> required to be granted to a Committee if Council agrees that a response should be made (where an extension is not given)?	No		
Organisation	Consultation Title	Issue	Closing Date	Response Currently Being Developed
Department of Finance	<b>Consultation on Non-domestic and Domestic Rating Measures to Support Budget Sustainability by Raising Additional Revenue</b>	This consultation focuses on the revenue raising potential associated with the removal of rating measures. The Department is seeking views from those who may be directly affected. There were seven proposals for changes to rating measures identified by the Secretary of State.	13 February 2024	Yes (Lead Officer: JJ Tohill)
	<b>Link to Consultation</b>	<a href="https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/rating-revenue-raising-consultation">https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/rating-revenue-raising-consultation</a>		
	<b>Delegated Authority</b> required to be granted to a Committee if Council agrees that a response should be made (where an extension is not given)?	Yes- this response would be delegated to the February meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee.		
Organisation	Consultation Title	Issue	Closing Date	Response Currently Being Developed
NI Commissioner	<b>NICCY's Corporate Plan 2023-2027</b>	NICCY is developing a Corporate Plan for 2023-27	8 January 2024	No

for Children and Young People		and is carrying out a consultation to facilitate feedback on their draft document.		
	<b>Link to Consultation</b>	<a href="https://www.niccy.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/NICCY-Corporate-Plan-2.pdf">https://www.niccy.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/NICCY-Corporate-Plan-2.pdf</a>		
	<b>Delegated Authority</b> required to be granted to a Committee if Council agrees that a response should be made (where an extension is not given)?	Yes- this response would be delegated to the February meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee.		
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Consultation Title</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Closing Date</b>	<b>Response Currently Being Developed</b>
DFC	<b>Community and Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Support - future plans</b>	The Department is carrying work aimed at refreshing the policy frameworks for their voluntary and community sector support. This includes agreeing outcomes that should be prioritised in future years. Consultation events are being held in person and online, including an in person session on 28/11/23 in The Junction, Dungannon (11am-12.30pm). Other sessions are available via the consultation link below.	9 February 2024	No
	<b>Link to Consultation</b>	<a href="https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/community-and-voluntary-sector-infrastructure-support-future-plans">https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/community-and-voluntary-sector-infrastructure-support-future-plans</a>		
	<b>Delegated Authority</b> required to be granted to a Committee if Council agrees that a response should be made (where an extension is not given)?	No- any developed response can be considered at January's Development Committee.		

30 October 2023



Additional Educational Needs Team

Department of Education

Rathgael House

43 Balloo Road

Rathgill

BANGOR

BT19 7PR

To whom it may concern:

Mid Ulster District Council welcomes the opportunity to provide its views and opinion on the Department of Education's Statutory Guidance on the Reduction and Management of Restrictive Practices in Educational Settings in Northern Ireland.

The Council is aware that this review is being undertaken within the context of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission 2021 review of the previous guidance which identified, "inconsistency and uncertainty about what should be included in school policies governing the use of restraint" and that schools' recording practices were "not consistent and they need a better understanding of what constitutes restraint, and what they should record".

As such, while the Department's goal is to update the current statutory guidance in order to provide clarity on the use of restrictive practices, with a view to reducing and hopefully minimising the use of restrictive practices wherever possible, the Council is aware that the updated guidance had received strong criticism from parents. A Mid Ulster based parent who was previously impacted upon by restrictive practices claims that the proposed practices fail to not only protect children and adults from avoidable trauma, but also provided no accountability because of the associated information governance practices. In their case, because of the lack of information provided, no specific support could be availed off in the aftermath to ensure that those involved would be provided correct medical care and/or therapy to aid recovery from such misused practices. The updated guidance does not seem to thoroughly address this issue.

The Council would also have concerns regarding the impact on students who are aged 18 years and above who are pupils in secondary mainstream/special education. Any restrictive practices undertaken in relation to these students seems to currently require no documentation meaning students could spend the majority of a school day in a sensory room and they may not be able to communicate this inability to access the tailored education (which is their right when they are at school) to their parents/carers. The updated guidance also provides no banning of the use of any dangerous restraint holds (such as basket or prone restraint). There are also no minimum standards for what a "safe space" should look like. This means that while some schools may have large open areas, other schools may simply have an empty storeroom or something equally as basic. The update guidance also fails to mention

of how internal suspension and /or reduced timetables are used a form of restrictive practice.

Therefore, the Council would recommend that additional guidance and clarity on the use of restrictive practices in education settings is added this current updated guidance. It is also imperative that the overall message of the guidance is that restrictive practices themselves are heavily restricted. As such, this guidance needs to be more prescriptive in order to ensure that absolutely everyone who has the authority to use restrictive practices only does so safely, lawfully and only when absolutely necessary, as stated within the document, *only when it is a measure of absolute last resort*. The relevant members of staff also need to ensure that when force is used, that it is used safely and effectively and that the schools record incidents in a detailed, clear and transparent and timely and accurate fashion.

The Council is also supportive of the recommendations to improve school policy, legislation, training communication, reporting and monitoring of restrictive practices, that were made by the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People in the 2021 report, 'Neither Seen Nor Heard'. The overarching theme of these recommendations is that restrictive practices should only ever be used when it is necessary and proportionate to do so, in order to keep children, young people, and others from coming to harm. In order to ensure that this is the case within our schools and other educational settings, the Council would seek reassurance that lessons will be learned from previous failures. This could be taken forward by initiatives such as additional support and training being provided to the schools who

have previously struggled to implement the guidance in a way in which ensured their compliance with their duties to safeguard, support and promote the wellbeing of children and young people, including children and young people physical or neurological disabilities or neurodivergent conditions.

The Council welcome that this consultation is accompanied by an EQIA, Rural Needs Impact Assessment and a Child Rights Impact Assessment. However, it is disappointing that no Easy Read version of the consultation has been developed. This would have been helpful given the length and detailed nature of the consultation documentation.

Finally, the Council would encourage the Department, EA, school leadership teams and all other staff, to prioritise practices and initiatives that will minimise the need to use restrictive force while ensuring a safe environment is maintained. It is clear that the misuse of restrictive practices can have a significant and long-lasting effect on pupils, staff members and parents, thus creating the opposite of the calm, safe and supportive school environment the educational settings should be aiming for.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dominic Molloy', written in a cursive style.

Cllr Dominic Molloy

Chairperson, Mid Ulster District Council



<b>Report on</b>	Correspondence to Council
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 23 November 2023
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	J McGuckin Head of Strategic Services & Engagement
<b>Contact Officer</b>	E Forde, Committee & Member Services Manager

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	x

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	Provide an update on correspondence received for attention of Council.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	This paper refers to correspondence to be brought to the attention of Council. Items are referred to in 3.0 below.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b>Correspondence from Department Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs</b></p> <p>The Chair has received a response from DAERA in relation to the call to establish an interdepartmental group to manage Lough Neagh. Refer to Appendix A</p>
3.2	<p><b>Correspondence from Derry &amp; Strabane District Council</b></p> <p>The Chief Executive has received correspondence from Derry &amp; Strabane District Council extending an invitation to attend a meeting in relation to exploring the potential of legally recognised Rights of Nature for Lough Neagh and/or if there are any other existing forums that are dealing with Lough Neagh at which this matter could be explored. Refer to Appendix B.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: not applicable
	Human: not applicable
	Risk Management: not applicable

<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: not applicable
	Rural Needs Implications: not applicable
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	That Council notes and considers, as necessary, the correspondence received.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	Appendix A – Department of Agricultural, Environment and Rural Affairs Appendix B – Derry & Strabane District Council

**From the Permanent Secretary**  
Katrina Godfrey



**Our reference: SCORR-0455-2023**  
**Your ref: ref: C172/23)**

Email:  
[Eileen.Forde@midulstercouncil.org](mailto:Eileen.Forde@midulstercouncil.org)

Office of the Permanent Secretary  
First Floor, Clare House  
303 Airport Road West  
Belfast BT3 9ED  
Telephone: 028 9052 4608  
Email: [perm.sec@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:perm.sec@daera-ni.gov.uk)

30 October 2023

Dear Dominic

## **MUDC MOTION TO ESTABLISH AN INTERDEPARTMENTAL GROUP TO MANAGE LOUGH NEAGH**

Thank you for your letter dated 2 October 2023 which I received by email on 6 October 2023 and thank you also for taking the time to let me know about the motion on Lough Neagh which was passed by your council in September.

I note the Council's view on ownership and management of the Lough and have also noted and share the Council's concern about the impact of blue green algae. I do want to assure you that DAERA has a significant programme of work underway, working in collaboration with other government departments (including DfI) and agencies, to address that impact. That work is underpinned and informed by science.

DAERA has also established a Water Quality Steering Group (WQSG) comprising senior officials from DAERA, NIEA and Department for Infrastructure (DFI) who have been tasked with producing a set of evidence-informed recommendations on the actions required to secure longer term improvements in water quality.

The WQSG is supported by a Review Team to review scientific and other evidence to identify further action that might be needed in addition to the work we already have in train, such as the development of River Basin Management Plan, the Soil Nutrient Health Programme, the Nutrient Action Plan, Environmental Farming Scheme and Environmental Challenge Fund.

The work of the Review Team will be assisted by an Independent Expert Science Working Group (ESWG) which will provide advice and guidance to the review process.

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I also want to assure you that officials will continue to engage with their officer counterparts from the relevant councils as part of the work programme I have outlined above.

Finally, you mentioned that you would be inviting the Environmental Protection Agency to present to Council on the situation at Lough Neagh. If it is the Northern Ireland Environment Agency from which the Council wishes to hear, I understand that the Agency is content to rerun the briefing it previously provided to the Council on 11 September 2023 if that would be helpful. This can be arranged directly with the NIEA.

Yours sincerely



**KATRINA GODFREY**

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15<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Adrian McCreesh  
Chief Executive  
Mid Ulster District Council

[Adrian.McCreesh@midulstercouncil.org](mailto:Adrian.McCreesh@midulstercouncil.org)

Dear Chief Executive

I am writing to advise you of a Notice of Motion that was passed by Derry City and Strabane District Council at it's meeting in September 2023.

*This Council agrees that the current management of Lough Neagh is unsustainable and has led to significant damage to this culturally, socially, environmentally and economically significant resource. The Lough itself and the surrounding communities are now suffering the consequences of this failed management system.*

*This Council agrees that the environmental disaster happening in Lough Neagh is unprecedented and calls for unprecedented action. This Council understands that a rights of nature approach may be used to inform the design of governance frameworks that are capable of producing better outcomes for the environment and communities of Lough Neagh.*

*This Council will call an urgent meeting of all Councils in the North with QUB School of Law and FOE NI to explore the potential of legally recognised Rights of Nature for Lough Neagh.*

*"That this Council calls on NILGA to immediately establish a working group made up of DAERA and its respective agencies, representatives from Councils that border Lough Neagh, NI Water and the Public Health Agency and the Food Standards Agency in order to establish a time bound targeted strategy to address the ecological issues ongoing at Lough Neagh and calls for the Lough to be brought into public ownership."*

Our Chief Executive has asked that I write to you in order to establish if you would be willing to attend a meeting in relation to exploring the potential of legally recognised Rights of Nature for Lough Neagh and/or if there are any other existing forums that are dealing with Lough Neagh at which this matter could be explored.

I would be grateful if you could respond with your views in relation to this matter.

Yours sincerely

**Karen Phillips**  
**Director of Environment & Regeneration**

Cc Karen Smyth, NILGA

