

Minutes of Meeting of Policy and Resources Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 8 February 2024 in the Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon and by Virtual Means

Members Present

Councillor Corry, Chair

Councillors Bell*, Brown*, F Burton*, J Burton*, Cahoon, Gildernew, Johnston*, McAleer, McLean*, McLernon, S McPeake*, Molloy*, Totten*, Wilson*

Officers in Attendance

Mr McCreesh, Chief Executive**
Mrs Canavan, Strategic Director of Organisation Development, Strategy and Performance (SD: ODSP)
Ms Dyson, Head of Human Resources (HoHR)**
Ms Keys, Marketing and Communications Manager (MCM)
Mr McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement (HoSS&E)
Mrs McNally, Assistant Director of Corporate Services and Finance (AD: CS&F)**
Mr Moffett, Assistant Director of Organisational Development, Strategy & Performance (AD: ODSP)
Mr O'Hagan, Head of IT (HoIT)
Ms Porter, Capital Planning Manager (CPM)
Mr Scullion, Assistant Director of Property Services (AD: PS)
Mr Tohill, Strategic Director of Corporate Services & Finance (SD: CS&F)
Mrs Grogan, Committee and Member Services Officer

* 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.

PR024/24 Notice of Recording

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

PR025/24 Apologies

None.

PR026/24 Declarations of Interest

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

PR027/24 Chairs Business

None.

Matters for Decision

PR028/24 Good Employment Charter for Mid Ulster District Council

The Assistant Director: Org Development, Strategy and Performance (AD: ODSP) presented previously circulated report which sought approval for draft Mid Ulster District Council Good Employment Charter. The draft charter has been developed as part of Council's arrangements for a Community Wealth Building Framework and Plan.

The AD: ODSP advised members as part of the research undertaken, Council liaised with the Living Wage Foundation in the development of the Good Employment Charter and also worked with Belfast City Council in the development of the Charter. The actual Charter itself is composed of five broad themes: fair pay, employee engagement and voice, learning and development, health & wellbeing and inclusive workplaces which is a broad Charter of principles in which this organisation will abide by subject to comment this evening. The AD: ODSP advised members that this item had went to the Community Wealth Building Working Group last week and comments made have been taken on board and reflected in the final Charter for agreement tonight.

The Chair advised that she had attended the meeting of the Community Wealth Building Working Group and felt that it was an exciting opportunity to lead the way and be good employers.

Councillor Gildernew said that she would be happy to propose the Council's Good Employment Charter as it was good to see Council prioritising employee's wellbeing. The member enquired if trade unions have been involved in the development of the Charter.

The AD: ODSP advised trade unions were involved at a certain level but would need to get clarification on this matter. He said that Council did involve directly the Living Wage Foundation which included membership and development of the Charter would not diminish any relationship Council would have with unions as an employer.

Proposed by Councillor Gildernew
Seconded by Councillor Brown and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve the draft Good Employment Charter for Mid Ulster District Council.

Councillor F Burton said that in the past Council had established a forum working group where Council would engage with colleges, universities and employers and enquired if this was still up and running. The member advised that a lot of employers had indicated to her that they struggle sometimes to get young people involved in some of the courses that they would like to get them engaged in. The member said that she sought clarification on this when talking about Good Employment Charter.

The Strategic Director of Organisation Development, Strategy and Performance (SD: ODSP) advised that Officers engage with colleges and universities on a regular basis especially when doing work placements with a number of those out at the moment. When doing apprenticeship schemes engagement directly takes place with universities and colleges and were also involved heavily with career fairs and go directly into schools to provide information about jobs and career opportunities for Council also. The SD: ODSP said that this was an ongoing process to try and increase engagement which was important especially with young people coming along as there was a need to attract students at that early stage into the organisation to give them an awareness of what Council actually does and what career opportunities there is within Council.

PR029/24 Requests to Illuminate Council Properties

The Head of Strategic Services and Engagement (HoSS&E) presented previously circulated report which sought approval to illuminate and light up the Council's three designated properties to raise awareness for the following:

- VOYPIC – Voice of Young People in Care: Care Day: 16 February 2024: Colour: Yellow
- Cystic Fibrosis Trust – Cystic Fibrosis Trust's 60th Anniversary: 20 February 2024: Colour: Yellow
- Marie Curie: Memory Stones of Love – Day of Reflection for those lost in the Covid Pandemic: 3 March 2024: Colour: Yellow
- RNLI: 200th Anniversary: 4 March 2024: Colour: Yellow
- Nerve Tumours UK – Shine a Light on NF: 17 May 2024: Colour: Blue
- Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS) Association UK: Go Orange Day: 31 May 2024: Colour: Orange
- NHS Organ Donor Register: Organ Donation Week: 23 September 2024: Colour: Pink

Proposed by Councillor McAleer

Seconded by Councillor Cahoon

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to illuminate the three designated Council properties as follows –

- VOYPIC – Voice of Young People in Care: Care Day: 16 February 2024: Colour: Yellow
- Cystic Fibrosis Trust – Cystic Fibrosis Trust's 60th Anniversary: 20 February 2024: Colour: Yellow
- Marie Curie: Memory Stones of Love – Day of Reflection for those lost in the Covid Pandemic: 3 March 2024: Colour: Yellow
- RNLI: 200th Anniversary: 4 March 2024: Colour: Yellow
- Nerve Tumours UK – Shine a Light on NF: 17 May 2024: Colour: Blue

- Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS) Association UK: Go Orange Day: 31 May 2024: Colour: Orange
- NHS Organ Donor Register: Organ Donation Week: 23 September 2024: Colour: Pink

Councillor J Burton said that he would like to note that this was the first committee meeting since the cancer diagnosis of King Charles and said that on behalf of himself and his colleagues he would like to send on his best wishes to King Charles and the wider Royal family and that they were in our thoughts and prayers at this time.

PR030/24 Improvement Objectives: 2024-2025 (Proposed) and Timeline for Public Consultation

The Head of Strategic Services and Engagement (HoSS&E) presented previously circulated report which sought approval to agree the proposed improvement objectives for 2024/25, as set in compliance with the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 (the Act) and subsequent guidance as issued by the Department for Communities (LG21/2016 onwards) and establish timelines for a public consultation exercise relating to the proposed improvement objectives.

Proposed by Councillor Brown
Seconded by Councillor F Burton and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve the four draft improvement objectives for 2024-2025 and the initiation of consultation together with associated timeline.

PR031/24 Draft Consultation Response on Research on Investigating Future Provision for Victims of Violence and Domestic Abuse within the Northern Ireland Housing Selection Scheme

The Head of Strategic Services and Engagement (HoSS&E) presented previously circulated report which advised of the consultation response developed on behalf of Mid Ulster District Council in response to the Research on Investigating future provision for victims of violence and those at risk/under threat of violence including victims of domestic abuse within the Northern Ireland Housing Selection Scheme.

The HoSS&E advised that a few additional relevant statistics had been added and attached which had been received in relation to Mid Ulster's response. These were received from the Community Development team since the papers were circulated and a final response will be circulated tomorrow if agreeable.

Councillor Gildernew said that she would be happy to propose the consultation response on Investigating the Future Provision for Victims of Violence and Domestic Abuse within the Northern Ireland Housing Selection Scheme.

Councillor Gildernew felt that the intimidation points should not have been removed from the scheme and that these points should be retained, and the scheme broadened to include those at risk from domestic violence. There is a need to protect those facing serious and immediate threat to themselves and their families and there should be robust verification of intimidation points to ensure they are allocated appropriately, to those at genuine risk and to prevent others on the housing list, including those with

homeless points, from being unfairly disadvantaged. SafeLives commissioned a report in 2018, which found that approximately one-third of homeless women stated that domestic abuse contributed to their homelessness. There is a need to ensure adequate provision of emergency/refuge accommodation as well as adequate access to safe housing in the Mid Ulster area. No survivor should be prevented from leaving their abuser due to fears of facing homelessness and often the assurance of safe housing can help break this cycle.

Councillor F Burton said that she was happy to second the proposal and to concur with comments made by previous speaker as a former PCSP member. The statistics we have in Mid Ulster for domestic violence against women and sometimes against men was absolutely horrific and anything that we can do to try and lessen that is much needed. The member felt that this could be an ideal opportunity to add in the fact that the Crime Prevention Officer regularly provides locks, bolts and safety items to families and felt it was ironic that it was the Handyvan Scheme of Agewell that usually goes out to fit those. Members may be aware that there was now a struggle to ensure that the Handyvan scheme was future-proof and felt that this could be an ideal opportunity to flag this to housing, police or whoever was responsible due to the real fear come 31st March that this service may no longer be available. The member advised that this service provides incredible work not only for this type of work but also for the elderly and real vulnerable of our society and those who suffer really badly with mental health.

Councillor Corry concurred with previous speakers and said that this was something that Agewell may not be aware of that they do fit safety equipment for people who have suffered domestic abuse. She felt that what was included in the consultation response was very good and when looking at urban and rural difference that this was something she came across in regards to temporary accommodation being only available in Belfast or Derry area. The member said that for anyone coming from a rural area, this is not feasible as they are being lifted from any support network that they may have there and for their children going to school. The member referred to Councillor Gildernew's comment in regards to taking away the whole intimidation points and the need to have this being investigated more robustly and why a person is reporting this and not being taken away. She said that she looked forward to seeing the response going forward and hoped that they would listen.

Proposed by Councillor Gildernew
Seconded by Councillor F Burton and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve the draft response for submission.

PR032/24 Member Services

No issues.

Matters for Information

PR033/24 Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 11 January 2024

Members noted Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee held on 11 January 2024.

PR034/24 Revised Photographic Policy

Members noted update on minor changes to the Council's Photographic Policy to reflect the required policy review undertaken.

PR035/24 Performance Improvement Nine Month Assessment

Members noted update in relation to monitoring information on the review of Council's performance against our seven statutory and three corporate performance improvement indicators and standards, along with an overview of the Corporate Health Indicators for the first nine months of 2023/24. The report also provides a performance progress summary against the Council's four corporate improvement objectives and their associated project plans (known as CIP plans). The indicators and standards, the 4 improvement projects and corporate health indicators are contained within our Two-Year Performance Improvement Plan (PIP plan) for 2023/24 to 2024/25.

PR036/24 Update from CRWG Meeting and Mid Ulster Sports Awards

Members noted update in relation to the outworking's of the most recent Civic Recognition Working Group meeting held on 16th January 2024.

Councillor Wilson advised that he had nothing against the Sports Awards as he had nominated people for it but was not happy about the process that has been undertaken. The member said that he had looked and reviewed the minutes of the previous meetings and did not see anywhere that the running of this event or indeed the process of this event is actually in the hands of a working group and as an elected rep himself, had no input whatsoever on how that evening would be run or given any chance to have his tuppence worth in there. He said that he had been informed previously that this had been agreed by Council but had to come back to this committee and was only coming back now as a fait accompli and would have to say that he was not happy about the process. The member sought clarification on who's decision it was to put nominations back another week.

The Head of Strategic Services and Engagement (HoSS&E) advised that the matter was discussed at the last Council meeting and the Chief Executive had updated members in relation to the required approvals that were sought at Council and basically the working group put the meat on the bones of what was agreed as such in terms of the approval and the resolution basically of what come out of that meeting. In terms of nominations the HoSS&E advised that a lot of nominations has been received in relation to Mid Ulster Sports Awards across all the sporting bodies and organisations, both groups and individuals and Council is very happy with the response received to date. It was always the intention to extend the nominations by a further week which was always the plan, to go out for two weeks with the opportunity to extend for a further third week if required and would encourage all to participate to get involved if you haven't done so already as it was a great opportunity.

Councillor Wilson thanked the HoSS&E for the update and said he looked forward to him coming back with the relevant details.

Councillor Corry said that she would like to thank the working group on their work and on a personal note she was very excited and was looking forward to it as there has

been a real buzz this last couple of weeks around the nominees and competition associated with it.

Live broadcast ended at 7.20 pm.

Local Government (NI) Act 2014 - Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor McLernon
Seconded by Councillor Gildernew

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 PR037/24 to PR050/24.

Matters for Decision

PR037/24 Land and Property Matters
PR038/24 Maghera Regeneration Project: Public Realm ICT Fees
PR039/24 Department of Finance - Finance Rating Revenue Raising Consultation
PR040/24 SOC & SIEM Tender Report
PR041/24 Website Governance Update and Contract Extension
PR042/24 Staffing Matters for Decision

Matters for Information

PR043/24 Confidential Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee held on 11 January 2024
PR044/24 Staffing Matters for Information
PR045/24 Managing Attendance Update Report Q3
PR046/24 Update Report on Industrial Action January 2024 – Leisure Services
PR047/24 Home Office Cyber Security Update
PR048/24 Financial Report for 9 Months ended 31 December 2023
PR049/24 Contracts and DAC Registers
PR050/24 2024/25 Rate Estimates Update

P051/24 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7.00 pm and ended at 7.40 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.