

Minutes of Meeting of Environment Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Tuesday 16 April 2024 in Council Offices, Burn Road, Cookstown

Members Present	Councillor Cuthbertson, Chair Councillors J Burton, Cahoon, Kelly, Groogan, Mallaghan, Martin, McAleer, McElvogue, McGuigan, McNamee, Quinn, Robinson
Officers in Attendance	Mrs Campbell, Strategic Director of Environment (SD: Env) Mr McAdoo, Assistant Director of Environmental Services (AD: ES) Mr McNeill – Capital Development Manager (CDM) Mr Scullion, Assistant Director of Property Services (AD: PS) Mr Kennedy, ICT Support Mrs Grogan, Committee and Member Services Officer

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 by referring to Annex A to this minute.

E077/24 Notice of Recording

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

E078/24 Apologies

Councillors J Buchanan, Milne, Varsani.

E079/24 Declarations of Interest

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

E080/24 Chair's Business

Councillor Quinn stated that in the past he had raised the issue of a wildflower policy across Council and was aware that last year or year previous, we had 12 to 13 sites nominated to be wildflower areas. The member sought an update on whether we were successful in getting all 12 sites planted and whether a scheme was in place to roll this initiative out to other areas. The original area the member felt was ideal even though it was not his area was Cookstown/Moneymore dual carriageway and the

image of having all these wildflowers would be fabulous. The member stated that his friend was in Amsterdam at the weekend and forwarded on pictures of wildflowers which had sparked his memory.

Mr McAdoe, Assistant Director of Environmental Services (AD: ES) advised that the 12 sites identified for wildflowers had been implemented, which had now been increased to 17. Currently we were in the process of rebranding them from “Don’t Mow Let it Grow” to biodiversity sites due to having the areas cut once or twice a year, but the approach would still be open to other sites. The AD: ES in response to comment regarding the central reservation on the Cookstown/Moneymore dual carriageway advised that currently the area was planted with daffodils, which could potentially be planted in wildflowers, but due to the stretch of distance this could result in a considerable cost but would be happy to look at other sites.

The Chair said that it would be beneficial if a list could be brought back to the next meeting on what sites were identified.

Matters for Decision

E081/24 DfI Roads Proposal to Mid Ulster District Council – Disabled Persons Parking Bay at Castledawson Road, Magherafelt

Mr Scullion, Assistant Director of Property Services (AD: PS) presented previously circulated report to seek the agreement of Members in relation to a proposal from DfI Roads to introduce a Disabled Persons Parking Bay at Castledawson Road, Magherafelt.

Proposed by Councillor McNamee
Seconded by Councillor Mallaghan 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 Disabled Parking Bay at Castledawson Road, Magherafelt.

E082/24 Bus Shelters Update

Mr McNeill, Capital Development Manager (CDM) presented previously circulated report to update Members on the current bus shelter status.

Councillor Quinn said that he would be happy to propose the recommendation. The member advised that he had attended Kingsisland Primary School and the images always remained with him from that long time ago of pupils attending secondary schools in Donaghmore and Dungannon standing out and getting absolutely drenched in the rain. He said that this had been ongoing for many years and was great to see a safe and decent bus shelter finally being implemented at the site.

Proposed by Councillor Quinn
Seconded by Councillor McElvogue and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to –

- i) Note the contents of the report on the progress made on bus shelters within the District
- ii) Approve bus shelter application as listed under 3.4 and to move from stage 5:
 - 1Nr – 3.4.1 (Lavey Chapel Carpark, Gulladuff)
- iii) Approve bus shelter application as listed under 3.7 to installation this month:
 - 1Nr – 3.7.1 (St. John's Kingsisland Primary School)
- iv) Withdraw bus shelter application as listed under 3.9 this month:
 - 1Nr – 3.9.1 (Annaghmore Road, Cookstown)

E083/24 Sustainability Strategy and Climate Action Plan

Mr McAdoo, Assistant Director of Environmental Services (AD: ES) presented previously circulated report to seek approval for a Sustainability Strategy and Climate Action Plan for the period 2024 to 2028.

The Chair referred to the recommendation before committee tonight and enquired if members were being asked to approve this as an action plan or in draft form until the consultation takes place.

The AD: ES agreed that this would be a fair comment to include the consultation in draft form.

Councillor Robinson referred to electric vehicles and said that there was a need to be careful not to change over to electric vehicles just for the sake of it. The member said that he had the experience of a staff member being called out onsite and could not attend because the electric vehicle could not travel from Magherafelt to his part of constituency. The member stated that it would be very important that this is thought through carefully and not change to electric vehicles just for the sake of it.

The Chair agreed that the member had raised a fair point and worth noting when going through the tendering exercise to purchase new vehicles. He stated that there would be improvements and advancements in technology as the years progress.

Councillor McGuigan said that he would be happy to propose the recommendation.

Councillor McGuigan said that as far as he was aware the Climate Working Group hasn't met in recent times but could not be sure. The member stated that it would be worthwhile letting the consultation proceed but after that a focus on the working group be implemented in terms of actions going forward. He was aware that funding wasn't secured in the budget for this initiative but was something that the working group should be putting forward so that the Officer team had a direction of travel in terms of what we need to be doing as we were talking about a plan for 4 to 5 years down the line. The member advised that it would be important to focus on this as climate is a huge thing and this Council did get a backlash from the media due to other Councils having their plan out and we hadn't.

The Strategic Director of Environment (SD: Env) advised members that the Climate Change Working Group had met in December 2023 and it had taken that time to fine tune it internally with the Departments and would be something that Officers would want members to be heavily involved in to drive it forward. The SD: Env said that there was another established group called the Transformation Working Group which hadn't met in a while but some of the actions within the Climate Change Action Plan in her view would be part of transformation in terms of how things can be done also. She said that options were being considered in terms of going forward, rather than having two working groups and combining it as one but this would be something for members to decide. The SD: Env advised that this Climate Change was very important, with a focus needing to be kept on it.

Councillor McGuigan referred to working groups and linking in with work on transformation, advised that there was also the Community Wealth Building which were also doing good work and could be fed into this also.

Proposed by Councillor McGuigan
Seconded by Councillor McNamee and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve the draft Sustainability Strategy & Climate Action Plan and agree to undertake a twelve-week consultation exercise on the document.

E084/24 Marine Litter Capital Grant Scheme

Mr McAdoo, Assistant Director of Environmental Services (AD: ES) presented previously circulated report to inform members of a successful funding application to the Marine Litter Capital Grant Scheme.

Councillor Robinson said that he would be happy to propose the report. The member said that whilst reading down the list of names had recently had the experience in Clogher where Carron's Lane was recently opened. He had been contacted by a local resident complaining about the Lane already being destroyed with dog fouling and litter and asked if a bin could be added onto the list.

The AD: ES advised that Officers could certainly look at implementing a bin at this location, but it would not be covered by these bins as these were only implemented where there were areas of water.

Councillor Quinn referred to litter especially around the Loughshore and said that he was delighted to see bids being made for Canal Walkway, Ferry Bridge and Washingbay Centre which were badly needed and hoped that this would make a huge difference. The member said that it may be beneficial to carry out a media campaign highlighting the fact of more bins being implemented to encourage people to use them.

Councillor Quinn enquired if this only related to litter as a lot of dogs are walked along the Canal Walkway and Washingbay Centre and whether this could also be used for dog fouling.

The AD: ES advised that all the bins provided could be used for both litter and dog fouling.

The Chair referred to previous grants, the first year to secure a machine to remove chewing gum and second year for a member of staff and enquired if this was being utilised well and whether this was successful.

The AD: ES advised that the machine to remove chewing gum was being well utilised, with funding secured through Phase 1 Chewing Gum Taskforce Team, and a member of staff being secured through Phase 2. The AD: ES stated an application had been recently submitted for Phase 3 which he hoped would be successful also.

The Chair said that it was good to hear that funding was available for these types of things.

Proposed by Councillor Robinson
Seconded by Councillor McGuigan and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to note the content this report and approve the acceptance of the grant award to install bins as listed.

Matters for Information

E085/24 Environment Committee minutes of meeting held on 12 March 2024

Members noted minutes of Environment Committee held on 12 March 2024.

Councillor McNamee referred to new app for carparking and enquired if many issues were being received in relation to communication. The member also referred to town cleansing carried out last year in Cookstown and enquired if there was a possibility that this would be done again this year.

The AD: PS in response to query regarding new carparking app, advised that there has been a small number of complaints received in terms of the changeover from Just Park to Ringgo, but was quite confident that most of these have now been resolved. Updated information was uploaded onto the Council website yesterday to inform users, with further updates being made if required.

The AD: ES in response to member's query regarding street cleansing in Cookstown advised that this would be scheduled in again for this year during the summer months using the previously referred to machine.

The Chair referred to previous member's query regarding new app and said that with the old system people made their appeals to DfI and was his understanding that appeals for tickets would be going to the company responsible. He enquired if there was any influence with the company to provide some leeway at this particular time until people have the opportunity to adjust to the new system. He also enquired would the company liaise with Council in relation to appeals for PCN's.

The AD: PS advised that that there was regular engagement with the company and the wider Council consortium, with Officers taking a fairly lenient approach at this stage as part of the bedding in process and transition. He stated that the company were engaging with Council around PCN's and associated appeals which would continue for a short period of time until it beds in.

E086/24 Building Control Workload

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

E087/24 Entertainment Licensing Applications

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

E088/24 Dual Language Signage Requests

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

E089/24 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.

E090/24 Collection of Abandoned Vehicles and Dead Animals

Members noted previously circulated report which provided an update on the collection of abandoned vehicles and dead animals.

E091/24 Live Here Love Here Community Awards 2024

Members noted previously circulated report which provided an update on the Live Here Love Here (LHLH) Community Awards 2024.

Live broadcast ended at 7.24 pm.

Local Government (NI) Act 2014 - Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor Quinn
Seconded by Councillor Groogan

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 E092/24 to E094/24.

Matters for Decision

Matters for Information

E092/24 Environment Committee Confidential Minutes of meeting held on 12 March 2024

E093/24 Capital Framework – ICT Contracts Update

E094/24 Capital Framework – IST Contracts Update

E095/24 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7.00 pm and ended at 7.27 pm.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____

Annex A – Introductory Remarks from the Chairperson

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

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

I would remind the public and press that taking photographs of proceedings or using any means to enable anyone not present to see or hear proceedings, or making a simultaneous oral report of the proceedings are not permitted.

Thank you and we will now move to the agenda.