

Minutes of Meeting of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 22 February 2024 in the Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon and by virtual means

Chair Councillor Molloy

Members Present Councillors Bell, Black, Brown, J Buchanan, W Buchanan, F Burton, J Burton (7.04pm), Cahoon, Carney, Clarke*, Corry, Cuthbertson, Forde*, Gildernew, Graham, Groogan, Johnston, Kelly, Kerr, Mallaghan, McAleer, McConnell, McElvogue, McGuigan, McLean*, McLernon, McNamee, D McPeake*, S McPeake, McQuade, Milne*, Monteith, Quinn, Robinson, Totten*, Varsani and Wilson

Officers in Attendance Mr McCreesh, Chief Executive
Mr Black, Strategic Director Communities and Place (SD:CP)
Ms Campbell, Strategic Director Environment (SD:Env)
Ms Canavan, Strategic Director of Organisational Development Strategy and Performance (SD: ODSP)
Mr Tohill Strategic Director of Corporate Services & Finance(SD: CSF)
Ms Keys Marketing and Communications Manager
Mr McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement (HoSSE)
Mr Moffett, Assistant Director of Organisational Development Strategy and Performance (AD: ODSP)
Mr McKeown, ICT
Mrs Forde, Committee and Member Services Manager

* 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.

C026/24 Notice of Recording

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

C027/24 Apologies

Councillors Martin and McFlynn

C028/24 Declarations of Interest

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

C029/24 Chair's Business

The Chair, Councillor Molloy in his opening remarks said, "Firstly welcome the new local democracy reporter, Francois Vincent who will be reporting on the various debates and decisions of the Council. I have to say that I have noticed a marked upturn in the detail and volume of articles that have appeared in local newspapers since Francois took up his post. Spring is on its way, and I'm delighted to see our events calendar is back up and running and we have a few great initiatives happening in the next month. First up will be a series of events marking Seachtain na Gaelige starting from 1st March right through until 22nd. All supported through Mid Ulster Council but in the main driven and delivered by our very many community, sporting and cultural groups throughout the district and testimony to the growth of language development in Mid Ulster. Tá fáilte riomh gach duine. Next, we have two fantastic events happening on 6th and 13th March to mark International Women's Day. The theme of this year's campaign is 'inspire inclusion', which encourages us all to push for a world free of bias, inequality and discrimination. As well as enjoying the chance to celebrate the achievements of the inspirational women appearing at the events, buying a ticket to attend will help raise much-needed funds for Causeway and Mid Ulster Women's Aid, a charity that provides essential help and advice for the most vulnerable women and families in our community.

Members are also aware of the first Taste Mid Ulster Market happening on 9th and 10th March, and again I ask for your support by dropping in to the village over the weekend. By supporting the local market, you will not only ensure the freshest and finest produce for your family's wellbeing, but also contribute to the 'wellbeing' of our local businesses and producers. I'd also like to encourage eligible businesses to avail themselves of the Town Centre Spruce Up Scheme drop-in clinics in Cookstown, Magherafelt, Dungannon and Coalisland, taking place this coming Monday 26th and Tuesday 27th – you'll find all the details on our website. Rural spruce up may come soon! Lastly, I would like to wish all within our local Chinese community a very happy Lunar New Year as we enter the Year of the Dragon. Xinian Kuoi Le!"

Councillor Robinson requested that the Chair send letter of congratulations to Country Club Tug of War team who had defended their world title in Sweden at 600kg and had been runners up in the 500kg. He said he had visited the team at their humble base and was very proud of their championship status.

Councillor Robinson also asked if the Chair would send a letter to Murley Silver Band who were celebrating their centenary. He told how they had started out at the Orange Lodge and after the first world war had changed from a flute band to a silver

band. Councillor Robinson shared how their first instruments had been paid by the owners of the Clogher Valley Hotel and had arrived by the Clogher Valley Railway.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy agreed.

Resolved That Chair send a letter to

- (i) congratulate Murley Silver Band on their centenary;
- (ii) (ii) congratulate Country Club Tug of War Team on World Championship

Councillor Cuthbertson spoke of the lane closures in Dungannon and said whilst it was not a criticism of the Department for Infrastructure as great work had been carried out on the Killyman Road, Blacks Lane and Quarry Lane but these types of works must take precedence over ancillary works. He advised that there had been gas works on the A29 which had already been a diversion route for Killyman; that the Quarry Lane had been closed and NI Water were laying pipes at Old Eglish Road. He said that all needed to work together but that the DfI should prioritise their own work over others. Councillor Cuthbertson said the work in Dungannon was long overdue, but resurfacing should take priority and should not be programmed with non-emergency work. He concluded that people were contacting him to say it was easier to travel to Portadown or Armagh than to try to get into Dungannon town and that businesses simply could not put up with this situation.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy concurred and said you wondered what diversion you were on sometimes and he dreaded to think what it was like for visitors. He welcomed road improvements and said whilst ancillary works are also important better planning was needed.

Resolved That Council write to Department for Infrastructure to request that they prioritise resurfacing and other road works over utilities works. That DfI endeavour to initiate better planning going forward to minimise traffic disruption in relation to approach roads and Dungannon town centre.

Councillor Quinn expressed sympathy to Councillor McFlynn on the recent death of her mother and expressed appreciation on behalf of Councillor McFlynn for those who had sympathised and attended her mother's wake and funeral.

Councillor Quinn spoke of the Ardboe Aerodrome site which had massive potential was simply going to wreck and ruin. He recalled that council had written to the NI Executive a few years ago regarding the site and now that it was up and running again Council should write again and get all relevant stakeholders around the table. He said he had been approached by groups in relation to the site and whilst the letter did not go far in the past it was time to try again. Councillor Quinn proposed that Council write to the NI Executive and seek a multi departmental approach in relation to redevelopment of Ardboe Aerodrome.

Councillor McAleer advised that a community meeting was arranged for Tuesday 5 March and Department officials would be present and said it may be best to wait on the outcome of the community meeting.

Councillor Quinn said he was content to wait.

Councillor Carney extended congratulations to the University of Ulster on winning the Sigerson cup. She said that there are quite a few of the panel from the Mid-Ulster area as well as Barry Dillon, Paul Rouse and Benny Hurl who are part of the management.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy concurred.

Councillor Cahoon extended best wishes to Cookstown High School 1st X1 Girls who play in semi-final of Intermediate Cup on Friday and who had also won the premier league. She also commended two past pupils of Donaghy Primary School who have been called up to represent Ireland U16 Hockey team and requested that the Chair send letters of congratulations.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy agreed.

Resolved That the Chair send a letter to congratulate:

- (i) Cookstown High School 1st XI girls winning premier league;
- (ii) two past pupils of Donaghy Primary School on being called to represent Ireland U16 Hockey Club.

Councillor F Burton spoke of her delight for Fivemiletown Football Club who had secured £400k funding through Irish Football Association grass roots investment fund. She reminded Members that they had also got monies through discretionary grants and this would all go to creating the Valley Stadium. Councillor Burton said like everything else costs were on the rise and as Fivemiletown area is one of the top three in the pitch strategy assessment and that there is ringfenced money for year 2 and 5 she would request that officers meet with the club as soon as possible. She said the club greatly appreciate Council's assistance to date but in her opinion Council was 'getting away handy' as the Club has secured so much funding. She concluded that a 4g pitch with floodlighting was required.

Resolved That Council arrange a meeting with Fivemiletown Football Club to discuss proposed pitch.

Matters for Decision

C030/24 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in "Open Business" at the Council Meeting held on 25 January 2024

Proposed by Councillor Mallaghan
Seconded by Councillor Corry and

Resolved That the minute at page 12 be amended to read "The Chief Executive said his direction on the item is that it be referred back to appropriate committee to be reconsidered."

Councillor Kerr drew attention to C014/24 Notice of Motion and said that he welcomed news of Ireland's contribution to the International Court and said they could go further and expel the Israeli Ambassador. He spoke of the current death toll in Palestine and the disgrace that when Algeria brought a motion to the United

Nations for an immediate ceasefire that the United States had voted against and the United Kingdom had abstained.

Councillor Monteith drew attention to the minute regarding a meeting with the SHSCT in relation to Sperrinview and Oakridge. He said that Council should initiate the meeting and that representatives of Sperrinview and Oakridge should be invited.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy advised that Council had already approached the SHSCT with regard to a date for the meeting. He concurred with Councillor Monteith's comments that representatives of Sperrinview and Oakridge should be invited.

Councillor Monteith proposed that representatives from Sperrinview and Oakridge are invited to the proposed meeting with SHSCT; and in the interim prior to meeting with the SHSCT that a meeting is convened and Councillors visit both sites.

Councillor Kerr seconded the proposal.

Resolved That representatives from Sperrinview and Oakridge are invited to the proposed meeting with SHSCT; and in the interim prior to meeting with the SHSCT that a meeting is convened, and Councillors visit both sites.

Proposed by Councillor Mallaghan
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

Resolved That the Minutes of the Council held on Thursday 25 January 2024 (C001/24 – C015/24 and C025/24) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated were considered and adopted.

C031/24 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Planning Committee Meeting held on 6 February 2024

Proposed by Councillor Kerr
Seconded by Councillor S McPeake and

Resolved That the Minutes of the Planning Committee held on Tuesday 6 February 2024 (P014/24 – P021/24 and P025/24) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated, subject to the foregoing were considered and adopted.

C032/24 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on 8 February 2024

Proposed by Councillor McAleer
Seconded by Councillor McLernon and

Resolved That the Minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee held on Thursday 8 February 2024 (PR024/24 – PR036/24 and PR051/24) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated were considered and adopted.

C033/24 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Special Council Meeting held on 12 February 2024

Councillor Wilson requested an amendment to the minute to read “He said that Council could look at cutting back in some areas but he welcomed the increase in community grants and said Council should look at bidding for funding for other major events.”

Proposed by Councillor Mallaghan
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

Resolved That the Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on Monday 12 February 2024 (SC001/24 – SC010/24) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated were considered and adopted.

C034/24 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Environment Committee Meeting held on 13 February 2024

Councillor Kerr said that residents had been in contact with him in relation to Welcome Signage in the district. He said that much of the welcome signage was from legacy councils and requested that an update be brought to the Environment Committee.

Councillor Kerr referenced a letter that all councillors had received from students of Primate Dixon Primary School in relation to a pedestrian crossing outside the school. He proposed that the school be invited to the council chamber for a visit.

Councillor McElvogue seconded the proposal.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy concurred and said he had also arranged a visit to the school.

Proposed by Councillor Kerr
Seconded by Councillor McElvogue and

Resolved That the class from Primate Dixon be invited to the Council Chamber for a visit.

Proposed by Councillor B McGuigan
Seconded by Councillor McAleer and

Resolved That the Minutes of the Environment Committee held on Tuesday 13 February 2024 (E025/24 – E039/24 and E049/24) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated were considered and adopted.

C035/24 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Development Committee Meeting held on 15 February 2024

Councillor Kerr drew attention to issues regarding Gortgonis track and said that officers had come back to him to say an expert would be visiting the track in order to ascertain a long-term solution for the surface. He stated that whilst Members await the report it might be beneficial to consider as a solution that the terrain is changed to some form of rubber material that would be better than the existing surface.

Councillor Monteith drew attention to C023/24 Development report and the update in relation to the telecommunications mast on the Hill of The O’Neill. He said that now that NI Water had reneged on their commitments that Council should start to build a case for the removal of the mast. He said it would be a useful exercise to draw up a lobbying document on the site of the mast at the Hill of The O’Neill and this should be done over the next six weeks. He said that a meeting should be held with officers and members to collate the data in relation to the historical significance, evidence from archaeological digs and potential heritage of the site. He concluded that if the mast was at the Titanic Quarter it would have been gone long ago.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith
Seconded by Councillor McElvogue and

Resolved That officers prepare a lobbying document on the site of the mast at Hill of The O’Neill. A meeting to be held with officers and councillors to compile data in relation to historical significance, evidence from archaeological digs and potential of heritage site.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy concurred.

Councillor Varsani said that at the last Dungannon DEA meeting it had been stated that if the mast was placed at Stone Henge it would not be accepted and Council should look at equality and parity issues. The Councillor said that the Development Committee had suggested that the Department be invited to view the site and at the meeting Council should make it clear that it should be removed in the short term and use every possible resource available to get it over the line.

Councillor Mallaghan said that previously he had made the suggestion that Council write to the Board of NI Water and make representation to them.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy advised that there had been a meeting with Senior Officials and they had given the undertaking that Council and NI Water would jointly fund the feasibility study to remove the telecommunications mast but now they have advised they do not have the budget.

Councillor Gildernew drew attention to D21/24 Chairs business and the comments in relation to Aughnacloy play group and appealed that Council would do what it could to ensure that children could still attend the playgroup.

Councillor Quinn drew attention to D028/24 minutes of Development Committee and discussion regarding the Blackwater River. He advised the meeting that trees had been cut down on Tuesday past and instead of the trunks being removed they had been left and were now in the river and had caused a blockage at the Maghera Canal. He said if someone was drowning rescue boats could not access the Blackwater River. Councillor Quinn said that the Rivers Agency said it is not their remit to clear the area and are unable to advise whose responsibility it was. He said that the Department did not know who had responsibility of the barmouth and now the Blackwater itself was blocked. He concluded that Departments need to speak to each other.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy said he had viewed photographs of the river and it appeared to be a mystery as to how it had happened but there was also a danger of submerged trees and debris. He concluded that Inland Waterways take no responsibility either.

Councillor Cuthbertson said that he had wrote to the Rivers Agency when he had been contacted about a tree toppling after stormy weather and falling into the waterway, and he posed the question did the landowner have to remove the tree? He advised that he had received a holding response for approximately 35 days. Councillor Cuthbertson said by this stage the tree would have floated on down the river and concluded that you cannot get a response from government departments.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy advised that officers had been working with other councils to endeavour to solve issues regarding the barmouth.

Proposed by Councillor Quinn
Seconded by Councillor Corry and

Resolved That the Minutes of the Development Committee held on Thursday 15 February 2024 (D018/24 – D029/24 and D035/24) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated were considered and adopted.

C036/24 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.

Councillor Mallaghan sought approval to attend the NI Housing Conference subject to his availability to attend.

Proposed by Councillor Mallaghan
Seconded by Councillor N McLernon and

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

C037/24 Consultations

Members noted consultations received for attention of Council.

Councillor Gildernew drew attention to the NIHE Consultation approved by the Policy & Resources committee. She supported the response submitted on investigating future provision for victims of violence and domestic abuse within the Housing Executive's housing selection scheme. She said there is a need to protect those facing serious and immediate threat to themselves and their families. It was also noted that 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. Councillor Gildernew said that 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. In conclusion she stated it is her belief 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.

In relation to the response submitted to Financial Conduct Authority – Access to Cash Consultation, Councillor Gildernew concurred with call for consideration to be given to selecting Clogher Valley Ward as a pilot project to illustrate how a community banking hub could work in this rural setting. She concluded that the current criteria is too prescriptive and does not take into consideration the unique nature of Mid Ulster Council as a rural Council or Clogher Valley which has seen a downward spiral of banking services which is having a major detrimental impact on residents and businesses within the Clogher Valley area.

Councillor Burton concurred with Councillor Gildernew, she also drew attention to situations where a family has lost someone to suicide and finds themselves unable to remain in the family home. She called for a common-sense approach in such circumstances. Councillor Burton in relation to housing said that she had contacted the PCSP manager in relation to domestic violence and had learned that the increase had been some 78% which tells its own story. She concluded that people living in such situations are afraid and Council should do all it can to assist in the eradication of such circumstances.

Councillor Corry said that both rural and urban accommodation was needed urgently as often people have to leave their local areas as they have nowhere safe to go. She said often children have to be taken away from schools and reflected that council had worked alongside Women's Aid, but the project seemed to be delayed and requested that Council write to emphasise the urgency of the project.

C038/24 Correspondence

Members noted update on correspondence received for attention of Council.

Councillor Varsani drew attention to correspondence from the Department of Health regarding the treatment of cystic fibrosis and said whilst it does not answer all of the questions she would propose Council respond to the Department and ask to be kept informed. Councillor Varsani also expressed the thanks of local families for Council lighting up buildings in support of Cystic Fibrosis Awareness day.

Resolved That Council respond to DoH letter regarding cystic fibrosis medication seeking more information as it becomes available.

Councillor Kerr drew attention to the response from NI Water and said there still appears to be confusion. He said he had contacted NI Water in December 2023 and requested that Council write back and request that the dates are checked.

Resolved That Council write to NI Water providing dates and times they were contacted by Councillor Kerr to ask them to follow up on same.

Councillor Burton reflected on discussion at the January meeting regarding the birthing pool at the Midwifery Led unit in Craigavon Hospital. She said that there had been no response back and the re-installation of the pool had already been postponed. She said Council needed to push for the date as she was contacted by ladies who want to have their babies at the facility but are told there is another birthing pool at the hospital which can be used. Councillor Burton asked that Council write again to seek clarity.

Resolved That Council seek a definitive date for the reinstallation of the birthing pool at Craigavon Area Hospital Midwifery Led Unit.

Councillor Gildernew drew attention to the correspondence received from Fermanagh & Omagh District Council. She stated that Mid Ulster Council are taking up the Chair and Secretariat of the A5-N2 Cross Border Group for the incoming year and she would agree with Fermanagh and Omagh's position on the renaming and that the priority is not the name of the group but the projects the group lobbies for. Councillor Gildernew stated that due to the sheer number of lives lost on the A5 and the fact that it has been deemed the most dangerous road in Ireland, she would suggest that Mid Ulster Council support this position taken by Fermanagh and Omagh Council to ensure that the focus on the A5 is not lost. She concluded that she would take the debate back to the A5-N2 group for further consideration.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy concurred and said that the improvement on the A4 had made a significant difference and lives had been saved.

Resolved That council write to support Fermanagh & Omagh District Council in relation to the A5-N2 Cross Border Committee proposed Name Change.

Councillor Cuthbertson drew attention to the correspondence received from NI Water and whilst he was listed as a caller, he had no complaints with regards to how his calls had been handled.

Councillor McLean said he had eventually had a meeting with NI Water representatives which had been positive, but they had explained they were in a transition period but since then feedback had been good. He said he was aware that Councillor Clarke also had issues but whilst NI Water were improving, they were not on top of their game.

Councillor McLean also drew attention to correspondence from the Honourable The Irish Society and said Council should make response, the two representatives Councillors McGuigan and Black should feedback to officers. He concluded that the organisation makes monies available for community groups and Council should avail of them.

Resolved That Council provide Feedback to the Honourable the Irish Society and endeavour to avail of available fundings for community groups.

Councillor Burton raised the issue on travel and requested an update on rail travel return to Mid Ulster. She said Council needed to do all it could to progress.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy said the matter would be referred to development committee.

Councillor McConnell sought an update on the Fibrus meeting.

The Chair Councillor Molloy said that a date had been set.

Councillor Mallaghan requested that opportunity to attend is expanded to all Members.

Councillor Cuthbertson said it should be incorporated into the broadband working group.

Councillor McGuigan said the there had been a meeting of the Broadband working group and that the meeting with Fibrus should be progressed through that and other Members should be permitted to attend should they wish to do so.

Councillor Gildernew supported the approach and said she had raised the issue and would appreciate being included.

Resolved That proposed meeting with Fibrus be convened via Broadband Working Group and all interested Members permitted to attend.

C039/24 Notice of Motion: Councillor Johnston to move –

Councillor Johnston read the motion,

“That this Council welcomes that between January and June 2023 there were no cases reported of measles in the North.

We note with concern a death in the Republic due to measles and the increase in England and Wales of the disease, and we emphasise the importance of having children up to date with MMR vaccinations.

This Council affirms its support to maintain Northern Ireland as measles-free, and will undertake a public information and education campaign via print and social media to highlight to parents and guardians the importance of MMR vaccinations.”

Councillor Johnston speaking on the motion said, “Since putting this motion together there has unfortunately been a confirmed case in NI and thus a slight amendment is needed. Europe is experiencing an "alarming rise 'Jn measles cases - in the last year, 42,200 cases - up from 941 in 2022. This could be attributed to the decrease in vaccination coverage during the Covid-19 pandemic 2020-2022.

There is also startling news coming out of England in terms of the spread of measles as the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) have declared a 'national incident' last month. This national incident is in the aftermath of a surge in cases and low vaccine uptake. That declaration is an internal mechanism signalling the growing public health risk and to enable the Agency to focus on limiting further spread of the outbreak.

Three quarters of the cases reports in the UK are in the West Midlands.

Closer to home there is now, unfortunately, a confirmed case in the north, our first case of measles in 7 years. Unfortunately, there has also been a death in the South. I don't need to tell you that measles is highly infectious, even more so than covid and the flu. It has an infection rate of 1: 15. Just to remind people of the symptoms of Measles - a high fever, a blotchy red or brown rash, coughing and sneezing. It can also leave eyes sore, red and watery. The illness normally clears within 7-10 days. In worst cases once infected It can result in swelling on the brain, meningitis, seizures, blindness, pneumonia and as we have just highlighted, death. It spreads very easily among those who are unvaccinated.

During the Covid pandemic I think that we, as a society felt some relief in the fact that covid didn't have the same devastating impact on children, this is not the case with measles. Children are more susceptible in fact the biggest risk is to children and there are serious concerns of the potential for an outbreak in a school or nursery setting.

Pregnant women, and people with weakened immunity, are also at increased risk of complications from measles. I do not want to be alarmist here in Mid Ulster but I do feel it is incumbent upon local government to play their part in highlighting the issue, we must make people aware of the dangers, the symptoms, the preventative measures and how to access them.

The WHO (World Health Organisation) are encouraging those in authority to consider risk communication and awareness raising initiatives. The PHA (Public

Health Agency) are running a MMR Catch Up Campaign, targeting people from 12 months to 25 years old. I believe it is essential that our council promote and encourage uptake of the vaccines. Historically we had a high rate of uptake but sadly that has fallen to 85%, and while that might seem high to prevent outbreaks it needs to be at 95%.

Raising awareness and the importance of vaccination in this regard is important. We need a long-term concerted effort to protect individuals and to prevent large measles outbreaks and I hope that all members in this chamber can support my call which would see Council playing a further role in raising awareness and in ensuring that factual information is published via social media in particular.

In closing - The message is clear: The best way for parents to protect their children from measles is the MMR vaccine. Two doses of the MMR vaccine give lifelong protection and it's never too late to catch up!"

Councillor Quinn seconded the motion and said that over 20 years ago people had all taken the MMR vaccine, but some had missed out during covid period and some were just anti-vaccine. He said that it was not just peoples own children who would be impacted that the disease would spread and thus he was happy to support the motion.

Councillor Monteith clarified that there had now been a case in the six counties a few days ago and another today. He suggested that the words 'affirms its support to maintain Northern Ireland as measles-free, and' be dropped.

Councillor Johnston agreed.

Councillor Brown said it was a worthwhile motion and everyone had families and should do all they can to prevent the spread. He said Council should use social media to promote the vaccine campaign and that the DUP fully support the motion. He thanked the Councillor for bringing the motion to the floor.

Councillor Wilson thanked Councillor Johnston for tabling the motion. He said that measles is very infectious and could cause hearing loss and blindness noting that it spreads through coughing and sneezing and was ultimately very severe especially for those imuno suppressed and young children under the age of 5.

He said that cases have been rare but the impact could be life changing. It was noted that across the UK there had been an increase in cases especially since October. Whilst numbers have stabilised in some parts they are increasing elsewhere.

He said whilst to date Northern Irland had no reported cases, but this has changed this week. Most effective way to rule out measles is a high uptake. He said the vaccine is routinely offered at the age of 4 months to three years but over the last 10 years the uptake has steadily fallen and due to the fall, the uptake over several years the risk is now moderate to high.

Councillor Wilson said it was important to ensure that the population is vaccinated, and that MMR Vaccine catch up clinics was being run for those aged between 12 months to 25 years who have had either one or both doses and Council should play

its part in promoting this. He said there are those that raise concerns, but the fact is that the MMR is the only safe way to avoid measles and that the UUP was happy to support.

Councillor Varsani concurred with the point made and said that when she had been teaching there had been a beautiful little girl in her class who was deaf as her mother had been in contact with measles whilst pregnant. She said there was a large population in Mid Ulster thus it was important to promote the vaccine and spoke too of the danger of shingles. Councillor Varsani commended the motion.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy thanked Councillor Johnston for bringing the motion to the floor and said sometimes people just get complacent, but some have concerns in relation to MMR. As there was consensus on the floor, he declared the motion carried.

That this Council welcomes that between January and June 2023 there were no cases reported of measles in the North.

We note with concern a death in the Republic due to measles and the increase in England and Wales of the disease, and we emphasise the importance of having children up to date with MMR vaccinations.

This Council will undertake a public information and education campaign via print and social media to highlight to parents and guardians the importance of MMR vaccinations.

Councillor Johnston said that the matter was something that all should consider and thanked Members for their support.

The live broadcast concluded at 8.03 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 McLernon and

Resolved That items C040/24 to C046/24 be taken as confidential business.

Matters for Decision

- (i) Council Confidential minutes of meeting held on 25 January 2024
- (ii) Planning Confidential minutes of meeting held on 6 February 2024
- (iii) Policy & Resources Confidential minutes of meeting held on 8 February 2024

- (iv) Environment Confidential minutes of meeting held on 13 February 2024
- (v) Development Confidential minutes of meeting held on 15 February 2024
- (vi) Small Settlements – ICT appointment – Castlecaulfield Recreation Area
- (vii) Enterprise Licensing Agreement Tender
- (viii) Tender for Ageing Well Project

C048/24 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7.00 pm and ended at 8.42 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.