

Minutes of Meeting of the Development Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 4 September 2014 in Magherafelt District Council Offices

- Members Present:** In the Chair, Councillor Burton (Chair)
- Councillors Dillon, Elattar, Mallaghan, McAleer, McEldowney, McNamee, Molloy, C O'Neill, T Quinn, Reid, G Shiels, J Shiels (7.06pm) and Wilson
- Officers in Attendance:** Mr Tohill, Chief Executive
Mr Cassells, Director of Technical Services and Leisure Services (MDC)
Ms Campbell Director of Policy & Development (MDC)
Mr Glavin, Head of Leisure Services (CDC)
Mrs Forde, Member Support Officer (DSTBC)
Mr Iain Frazer, Director of Development (DSTBC)
Mr Hill, Tourism & Parks Manager (DSTBC)
Mr McCreesh, Acting Chief Executive (CDC)
Mr McShane Head of Sport Services (CDS)

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm.

D7/14 Apologies

Councillor Monteith.

D8/14 Declaration of Interest

The Chair reminded members of their responsibility with regard to declaration of interest.

D9/14 Receive and confirm minutes of the Development Committee meeting held on Thursday 10 July 2014

An UUP Member requested that the second paragraph of item D4/14 on page two of the minute should read UUP not DUP.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor McNamee and

Resolved That the minutes of the meeting of the Development Committee held on Thursday 10 July 2014 (D1/14 – D6/14), were considered and signed as accurate and correct, subject to the foregoing amendment.

Councillor J Shiels entered the meeting at 7.06pm

D10/14 Order of Business

The Chair advised that following a request she had agreed to change the order of business to allow item six of the agenda to be considered at this point.

Matters for Decision

D11/14 Receive and Consider Paper on NI Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 within Mid Ulster District Council Area

Mr McCreesh presented a report on Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2014-2022 providing a background and briefing on proposed delivery structure and consideration of the transfer of the current programme (2007-2014) contract from SWARD JCC to Mid Ulster District Council. Mr McCreesh outlined the background, highlighted key issues, resource implications and drew attention to the recommendations undernoted:

- (i) Mid Ulster District Council agree to take responsibility for current SWARD JCC contract with DARD for programme closure and administrative expenditure incurred post 31st March 2015, following agreement on a suitable arrangement with Omagh/Fermanagh Council and DARD in relation to any potential clawback within the current programme.
- (ii) Council is asked to adopt the delivery proposal outlined in Appendix 1 as the mechanism for the roll out of rural development funding within the Mid Ulster District Council area for the period 2014-2020.
- (iii) Mid Ulster District Council use the proposed model as a basis for on-going discussions with DARD with a view to having the new programme in place and across Mid Ulster as soon as possible.

Declaration of Interests

Councillors Burton, Reid, G Shiels and Wilson declared an interest as representatives of SWARD and remained in the room.

A UUP Councillor complimented Mr McCreesh and colleagues on the document stating that SWARD was renowned for its excellence out of all the clusters. He then drew attention to the undernoted:

- that in the future LAG's would be comprised of 49% elected representatives and 51% Social Partners drawing attention to the proposed robust SLA;
- that when the new programme rolls out initial staffing costs would be high as they are based on project spend but as the programme progressed the costs would even out;
- Council don't pay out as it is DARD remit to pay the grants thus Council have a safeguard;
- Council should be stressing a seamless transition between programmes but as this was not possible should be endeavouring to ensure the time lapse between the two is as narrow as possible.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor Forde and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council that the recommendations outlined at (i), (ii) and (iii) be approved.

The Chief Executive commended officers on the report and the success of SWARD stating that in order to make preparations for post April 2015 the matter would have to be brought to party groupings for consideration.

The Chair made reference to the need for broadband to be upgraded and affordable in rural areas especially for young people attending university and ~~also the needs of women's groups taking applications forward be addressed.~~ that the thematic working groups be encouraged to work with women in rural areas.

Councillor Wilson left the meeting at 7.23 pm

Mr McCreesh thanked the Councillors and Officers for their positive remarks and referred to broadband provision advising that individual Councils had gathered evidence and communicated same to Department of Enterprise Trade and Industry in the past. He advised that DETI had allocated a contract and that the reality had been that rural communities had not been adequately considered stating that any future contract should be state of the art fibre optic broadband. He added that it was positive that the Minister of DARD had incorporated this into the Rural Development Plan.

D12/14 Receive and Consider Paper on Mid Ulster District Council Sport & Leisure Membership Card Scheme

Mr Cassells presented a paper on the Mid Ulster District Council Sport & Leisure Membership Card Scheme proposals outlining the background, considerations and drew attention to the summary of options on a way forward to achieve the objectives of increasing participation at sport and leisure facilities within the District without increasing the current budgets of the services.

A summary of the options were:

1. Implementation of a harmonised pricing structure across the Mid Ulster District Council area (with the exception of the Greenvale Leisure Centre).
2. A Mid Ulster District Council Sport & Leisure Membership Card to include the Greenvale Leisure Centre, Magherafelt
3. A Mid Ulster District Council Sport & Leisure Membership Card to exclude the Greenvale Leisure Centre, Magherafelt
4. A 'Single Site Package' Mid Ulster District Council Sport & Leisure Membership Card based on the main leisure centres of Cookstown and Dungannon with an option to develop this approach further to include more centres.

Mr Cassells drew attention to the recommendation outlined in the report;

That the Development Committee endorses the recommendation to Council with regard to the introduction of a Mid Ulster Council Sport & Leisure Membership scheme based on the implementation of Options 1 and 4 outlined above.

A SF Member thanked Mr Cassells for the presentation commenting that the current deal with Pulse permitted a review in September 2017, that a financial report should have been presented stressing that this is one of the first opportunities for people to see the benefit of three Councils coming together. The Member stated option one has to happen regardless with the same pricing structure across Mid Ulster but the process did not seem to be moving forward.

Other SF Members concurred with this making reference to;

- stating that option 2 was the desired position and the sooner it is achieved the better with every rate payer throughout the new district being treated the same.
- Reference was made to the five year review 'get out' clause with Pulse.
- Issues had been brought to Members attention regarding the operation and staffing of Greenvale Leisure Centre;
- As a Party it would not endorse privatisation; and
- Trade Union Membership at Greenvale Leisure Centre.

In concluding, a SF Member stated they would like to see a more detailed proposal together with cost implications.

In response Mr Cassells advised that arrangements had been made with Magherafelt District Council Solicitor to review the implications if Council wanted to opt out of the contract which commenced in 2012 for a period of initially five years noting that the concept had been that if either party were unhappy there was a 'get out clause' after five years. With regard to fees and charges the reporting officers had indicated that they would bring a report to committee but it should be appreciated that it required detailed analysis of every service offered, the process of which was ongoing. The same analysis would also incorporate Pulse and that if there was no detriment to them they would go with the scheme. The overall consensus on option 2 would be that it was preferred and should be accelerated.

A SF Member stated that with regard to the Trade Union issue it had been agreed to have a leisure centre consultative group with Council Officers and operational representatives from Pulse and that although there had been initial difficulties in the early stages it was now working more smoothly.

A SF Member stated that more detail regarding the membership scheme was required together with cost implications.

Mr Cassells further advised Option 2 was deliverable, it would be the preference of the Officers but the real question is the ability to deliver within the timescale. A major stumbling block would be consistent pricing and agreed access control as currently three leisure centres were using one software system but three different versions with the fourth using a different system entirely. Procurement issues would also pose an issue although ultimately option 2 was achievable the timescale of April 2015 could prove difficult.

Councillor G Shiels left the meeting at 7.50pm

A SF Member stated that he was opposed to option 4 and that the recommendation should be amended.

Proposed by Councillor Mallaghan

That it be recommended to the Council that option one be progressed and officers work towards option two and report back to committee with update.

A UUP Member stated that more clarification re Greenvale would be required before the matter could be progressed, that it was imperative that the committee had all costs as the ratepayer must not be affected.

Seconded by Councillor Reid and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council that option one be progressed and officers work towards option two and report back to committee with update to include cost implications.

A SF Member stated that any sub or contracted work should adhere to same policies as Council especially with regard to Trade Union. The need for cost implications to be brought to committee was emphasised.

Councillor Mallaghan left the meeting at 7.55pm

**D13/14 Receive and Consider Paper on Water Recreation Sites
transferring to Mid Ulster District Council**

Mr Hill presented paper on Water Recreation Sites as undernoted that would be transferring to Mid Ulster District Council with an effective date of 1 April 2015.

Councillors G Shiel and Mallaghan returned to the meeting at 7.57pm

- Ardrea Bridge (Cookstown District Council)
- Ballysaggart Lough (Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council)
- Glenmore (Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council)
- Coalisland Canal & Towpath (Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council)

Mr Hill in drawing attention to key issues advised that DCAL is to complete the renewal of Lease Agreement for Ardrea Bridge prior to transfer and that the figures detailed at section 3.1.3 provided by DCAL indicated an expenditure of £28,400 for the period 2006-2013 equating to an average cost of £4057 per annum appeared low.

The Chair made reference to 3.3 of the report in that the legal issue in relation to Ballysaggart Lough had been ongoing for a number of years.

Mr Hill drew attention to the recommendation that the Development Committee endorses the recommendation to Council with regard to initial proceedings to establish a new Service Level Agreement with Rivers Agency for the maintenance of the aforementioned sites.

Proposed by Councillor McNamee
Seconded by Councillor Quinn, and

Resolved That it be recommended that the Council endorses the recommendation with regard to initial proceedings to establish a new Service Level Agreement with Rivers Agency for the maintenance of the four transferred sites aforementioned.

D14/14 Receive and Consider Paper on Mid Ulster District Council Community Planning Progress

Mr McCreesh presented paper on the Mid Ulster District Council community planning progress drawing particular attention to engagement exercises with statutory agencies, staff and Members scheduled to take place in October 2014, February 2015 and May 2015. He made reference to the planned community engagement events in the new Mid Ulster area scheduled to take place in November/December 2014 in 12 locations with an aim of reporting back to community with a draft plan in May/June 2015.

Mr McCreesh advised that many statutory agencies were not included in the list of those compelled to participate for example DARD, branches of DOE were not specified. Currently being considered for inclusion was the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Education & Library Boards, Health & Social Care Trusts, Public Health Agency, Invest NI, Northern Ireland Tourist Board and the PSNI.

Approval was sought for the report recommendation to approve the plans detailed in appendices one and Stakeholder Capacity Support and Community Planning Engagement Events.

Mr Tohill advised that NI Local Government Association was meeting with DoE to discuss community planning statutory partners.

A UUP Members asked if it was anticipated that Council would work with two health trusts and if there would be a dedicated officer for both trust areas. Mr McCreesh advised that it is the hope that legislation will dictate that all statutory agencies would be duty bound to participate.

A SDLP Member queried the areas outlined for community planning engagement events expressing the desire to include all small towns and groupings. Mr McCreesh advised that towns that miss out in community planning engagement events would be captured through Rural Development events.

A UUP Member asked how it was planned to capture the views of community and voluntary sectors as their ideas and opinions would be of value.

Mr Tohill advised that it was hoped to do something through the schools and social media as the net needed to be cast as wide as possible and that with regard to community planning partners it is expected that statutory agencies will be required to actively participate not just have regard for Councils community planning.

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council to approve the plans detailed in appendices one and two of report on Stakeholder Capacity Support and Community Planning Engagement Events.

Councillor C O'Neill left the meeting at 8.25pm returning at 8.27pm

D15/14 Receive and Consider Paper on Review of NI Tourist Board and Wider Tourism Structures

Ms Campbell presented the paper on review of NI Tourist Board and wider tourism structures outlining the proposed response on behalf of Council to DETI and stressing that tourism should be linked in with community planning. Ms Campbell also drew attention to the engagement event planned by NILGA scheduled to take place on 16 September.

Ms Campbell recommended that

- (i) Council approve the response to the Consultation to the Review of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Wider Tourism Structure detailed at appendix 1 of the report; and
- (ii) Approval for Member attendance at the Tourism Consultation: Key Engagement Event detailed at appendix 2 of the report.

In response to SF Member's request for a breakdown of the figures regarding expenditure of all visitors detailed on page 2 of the report Ms Campbell advised that they were taken directly from NISRA Local Government District Tourism Statistics in Northern Ireland 2011-2012 and that she would contact the NITB to determine how they were arrived at.

Proposed by Councillor Molloy
Seconded by Councillor C O'Neill and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council that

- (i) Council approve the response to the Consultation to the Review of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Wider Tourism Structure detailed at appendix 1 of the report; and
- (ii) Approval for Member attendance at the Tourism Consultation: Key Engagement Event detailed at appendix 2 of the report.

For Information

D16/14 Receive Paper on Development and Regeneration Activity

Ms Campbell drew attention to the report updating Members on progress on the Development and Regeneration Forward Work Plan previously presented advising progress was on target.

A UUP Member stated that the Councils had done excellent work over the years and that the working group progressing the Development and Regeneration Forward Work Plan should consist of Members from each party representing each Council area.

Mr Tohill advised that each party had been asked to nominate Members to the existing Local Economic Development Working Group which would exist throughout the life of the shadow council which would report through the Development Committee.

A SF Member requested the rationale for appointing consultants asking why work could not be undertaken by officers. Ms Campbell advised approval had been sought to appoint consultants as skills were not available within the councils to undertake an economic development strategy and grants and support services in the voluntary sector. It was also important to attain an independent view. A SF Member requested that rationale be included in the future on occasions when consultants were being recommended for use.

D17/14 Receive Paper on Active Communities Programme

Mr Cassells presented paper updating Members on the Active Communities Programme.

A SF Member stated that the facts speak for themselves of the success of the programme and a SDLP Member concurred with this referring of its value to individual lives. A UUP Member spoke of its excellent contribution to over 50's and those rehabilitating following chest, heart and stroke issues.

Proposed by Councillor Mallaghan
Seconded by Councillor Quinn and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council that a letter is sent to the Minister of Department of Culture Arts & Leisure to seek a continuation of funding and to ascertain the cost implications to Council.

Mr Tohill emphasised that it was vital that any cost implications be considered in setting budgets.

Councillor Mallaghan left the meeting at 8.49pm returning at 8.50pm

D18/14 Receive Paper on Transferring Urban Regeneration and Community Development Functions

Mr McCreesh presented paper on transferring Urban Regeneration and Community Development Functions highlighting;

- Tackling Disadvantage (Neighbourhood Renewal);
- Community Development;
- Physical Regeneration;
- Budget Considerations;
- Resource implications both financial and human; and
- Governance structures and timing.

Mr McCreesh advised that groups needed to know what the future held and it was the duty of the Council to manage the issues and communicate decisions when available.

Mr Tohill stated that the issues would not be resolved overnight but the purpose of the paper was to bring matters to the attention of Members. He recommended that Member workshops would be required to discuss matters further.

A SF Member concurred with the workshop suggestion and expressed concern over Neighbourhood Renewal and areas of deprivation, when health pressures and antisocial behaviour were additional consequences of deprivation.

The Chair concurred with this recommending that workshops be progressed.

A UUP Member further concurred stating that the Council was under the spotlight especially in relation to the public realm schemes.

A SF Member stated that the reality of the budget restrictions needed to be fed back to the three Councils communicate realistic expectations.

In response to the Chair's comments on existing funding of women's groups by DSD, back to work schemes and neighbourhood renewal Mr McCreesh stated that contributions to statutory agencies would have to be identified, following which a better understanding of resources would be available.

D19/14 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7pm and ended at 9.15pm

CHAIR _____

DATE _____