

Minutes of Meeting of Policy and Resources Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 6 April 2023 in the Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon and by Virtual Means

Members Present

Councillor S McAleer, Chair

Councillors Ashton, Buchanan, Cuddy, Doris*, Kearney*, S McGuigan*, McKinney, S McPeake*, Molloy*, Quinn*, Totten*

Officers in Attendance

Mr McCreesh, Chief Executive**

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

Mrs Canavan, Strategic Director of Organisation Development, Strategy and Performance (SD: ODSP)

Mrs Dyson, Head of Human Resources (HoHR)**

Mr McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement (HoSS&E)

Ms McNally, Assistant Director of Corporate Service and Finance (AD: CS&F)**

Mr Moffett, Assistant Director of Organisation Development, Strategy and Performance (AD: ODSP)

Mr O'Hagan, Head of ICT (HoICT)

Miss Thompson, 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 S McAleer welcomed everyone to the meeting and those watching the meeting through the Live Broadcast. Councillor S McAleer 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.

PR067/23 Notice of Recording

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

PR068/23 Apologies

Councillors Elattar, Forde and McLean.

PR069/23 Declarations of Interest

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

PR070/23 Chairs Business

None.

Matters for Decision

PR071/23 Amendment to Council Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officers – Appendix C Delegated Authority on Planning Matters

The Assistant Director of Corporate Service and Finance (AD: CS&F) presented previously circulated report which sought approval on amendments to the Council's Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officers in relation to planning matters only.

Councillor S McPeake proposed the recommendation. The Councillor stated that the matter was discussed thoroughly some months ago at the Planning Committee and the appendix to the report provides the amendments that were agreed.

Councillor Buchanan seconded Councillor S McPeake's proposal.

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve the Amended Appendix C to the Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officers included at Appendix A to the report and that it takes effect on 28 April 2023.

PR072/23 Review of Learning & Development Policy

The Strategic Director of Organisation Development, Strategy and Performance (SD: ODSP) presented previously circulated report which sought approval to the revisions to Mid Ulster District Council's Learning and Development Policy.

The Chair, Councillor S McAleer felt it was good to include in the policy that an employee has to stay two years after obtaining a qualification through Council.

Proposed by Councillor Buchanan
Seconded by Councillor Cuddy and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve the revised Learning and Development Policy as set out at appendix to report.

PR073/23 Revision of CCTV, Internet acceptable use and ICT Security Policies

The Head of ICT (HoICT) presented previously circulated report which sought approval for the Council CCTV Policy, Internet Use Policy and ICT Security Policy.

Councillor Cuddy referred to recent dog attack in Dungannon town centre and the difficulties experienced by staff in obtaining Council CCTV. The Councillor stated that he hoped the amendments to the CCTV policy will make it quicker to get issues like that dealt with. Councillor Cuddy proposed that the policies as outlined be adopted.

The HoICT advised that the aims and objectives of the CCTV policy have been amended to reflect the wider needs of the organisation for people that are looking at public safety and to provide an easier means of access to those systems maintained by the PCSP in respect of the public spaces. It was advised that internal systems are maintained and managed by Facilities Managers and ICT.

Councillor S McGuigan seconded Councillor Cuddy's proposal.

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve the revised Council CCTV Policy, Internet Use Policy and ICT Security Policy as set out at appendix to report.

PR074/23 Response to Consultations

The Head of Strategic Services and Engagement (HoSS&E) presented previously circulated report which sought approval for the draft consultation responses developed on behalf of Mid Ulster District Council in response to the consultations on:

- Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy 2023-2030
- SHSCT Provision of Emergency General Surgery

Councillor Doris referred to Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy consultation response and asked that a further point be included within the response that when a perpetrator is released from prison that they are located a reasonable distance from the area where the victim lives.

The HoSS&E stated he would add the point raised to the consultation response.

Proposed by Councillor Doris
Seconded by Councillor Molloy

Councillor McKinney referred to the Bengoa Report of 2015 and stated things have moved on since then and that he felt that report is now outdated and does not go far enough in today's world and that this should be highlighted within the response including taking into consideration the needs within Mid Ulster Council area.

The HoSS&E agreed to incorporate the Councillor's comments within the response.

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve –

- The draft response as outlined in appendix for submission to Department of Health (Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy 2023-2030) by 21 April 2023 to include added comment in relation to the

relocation of domestic and sexual abuse perpetrators being relocated a reasonable distance from where a victim lives.

- The draft response as outlined in appendix for submission to Southern Health and Social Care Trust (Provision of Emergency General Surgery) by 2 May 2023 to include added comment in relation to the Bengoa Report of 2015 being outdated and not meeting the needs of today's community.

PR075/23 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:

- Make A Wish Foundation Anniversary
- Hope 4 ME & Fibro Northern Ireland
- Shine a Light on Neurofibromatosis
- Foster Care Fortnight

The HoSS&E also highlighted that as Council is now entering the pre-election period there will be no further committees until June 2023 and that requests will be considered in the interim by officers and recommended to the Chief Executive charged with delegated authority.

Proposed by Councillor Cuddy
Seconded by Councillor S McPeake and

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

- Make A Wish Foundation Anniversary, 29 April 2023 - Blue
- Hope 4 ME & Fibro Northern Ireland, International ME Awareness Day, 12 May 2023 - Blue
- Nerve Tumours UK, Shine a Light on Neurofibromatosis 17 May 2023 - Blue
- Foster Care Fortnight, 19 May 2023 - Turquoise & Yellow

Members also noted that during the pre-election period requests will be considered in the interim by officers and recommended to the Chief Executive charged with delegated authority.

PR076/23 Arrangements for Annual Meeting of Council – June 2023

The Head of Strategic Services and Engagement (HoSS&E) presented previously circulated report which outlined arrangements for the annual meeting of Mid Ulster District Council following the Local Election scheduled for Thursday 18 May 2023.

Councillor S McPeake referred to local grants and asked that between now and the AGM that the Chief Executive be given delegated authority to move funding streams if required.

The HoSS&E advised that a report will be brought to April Council meeting in relation to delegated authority.

Proposed by Councillor S McPeake
Seconded by Councillor Cuddy and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to note the arrangements for the 2023 Annual meeting of Council set to be held on Monday 5 June 2023 as set out in report and report appendix.

PR077/23 Council and Committee Governance Arrangements 2023-2027

The Assistant Director of Organisation Development, Strategy and Performance (AD: ODSP) presented previously circulated report which provided update on the existing Council and Committee governance arrangements and those to be applied during the new Council term 2023-2027.

The Chair, Councillor S McAleer stated that when the timing of meetings was previously decided the option of hybrid was not in place. Councillor S McAleer also referred to the Planning Committee which is often an intense meeting which can go on late.

Councillor Ashton proposed that the arrangements regarding committees and the make up of those committees remains the same. The Councillor stated that the timing of the meetings will be for the new mandate to decide on but felt that to bring meetings into the working day does not suit Councillors who have day jobs. Councillor Ashton also felt that to move the Development Committee to bi-monthly may not be the best way forward.

Councillor Cuddy seconded Councillor Ashton's proposal. The Councillor referred to the D'Hondt process at the start of the four year term and felt that if there are new committees identified throughout the four years going forward that the D'Hondt process continue on and that this will then give smaller parties and Independents a chance. Councillor Cuddy also referred to the hybrid option for meetings and felt whilst it is good to have, there needs to be some guidance in relation to the number of meetings Councillors physically attend. The Councillor stated that there were a number of Councillors who he had not actually seen in the Chamber for a long time and felt that there should be a cap on the number of meetings attended remotely and that the majority of Members need to be around the table at meetings as it can help the decision making process.

The AD: ODSP referred to the application of D'Hondt and the rolling D'Hondt principle and that a working group was set up to look at this in relation to outside bodies. From this it was agreed through the P&R Committee that in the new Council term Council would move from D'Hondt being used on a body by body basis but instead would be looking at all outside bodies on a rolling basis and that this matter will be dealt with at the forthcoming AGM.

Councillor Quinn stated that he had sat on the working group referred to and confirmed that it had been agreed that rolling D'Hondt for outside bodies will apply going forward. The Councillor stated he felt the structure of committees and membership works well for this Council, he reflected that being a Councillor is not a full time job and that for those Members who have a day time job it would be difficult to attend meetings if they were held during the day. Councillor Quinn stated that the hybrid option is good for Members who are working and hoped that it is made permanent in the future.

Councillor McKinney stated he would be opposed to changing the times of Committee meetings and also referred to the hybrid option for meetings. The Councillor stated that taking tonight as an example there were as many officers as Councillors around the table and that elected representatives have a duty to serve and attend meetings. Councillor McKinney stated that sometimes the hybrid option is not taken seriously and felt that Members should be encouraged to attend meetings in person. The Councillor spoke in relation to the Planning Committee and that if the time of this meeting was changed to daytime then applicants, who have paid a fee to Council, would also have to take time off work to attend. Councillor McKinney stated that whilst the Planning Committee can last late into the evening on some occasions he felt that the 7pm start for meetings allows Members who do work the time to get to a meeting and that timings should stay as they are. In relation to bi-monthly meetings for Development Committee the Councillor felt that the business needs to be kept moving and that there was no need to slow the process down as he stated the public think Council does not move fast enough.

The AD: ODSP referred to bi-monthly option for Development Committee and clarified that in the month where there would be no committee meeting there would be time for Members to engage in DEA meetings.

The Chief Executive confirmed the comments made by AD: ODSP in relation to Development Committee meetings and stated that when Members request for a project to be done a month does not give a lot of time to make progress so the bi-monthly option is to allow time for officers to progress issues and projects and have something to report back on. The Chief Executive also referred to Members requests for DEA meetings and that the month between Development Committee meetings could be used for these meetings to take place. The Chief Executive stated that the Members comments tonight were appropriate and that the report gives Members something to think about going into the new mandate.

Councillor Quinn commented if there is an option to split the Planning Committee into two meetings if there is a large agenda. The Councillor also stated that the Development Committee is the only Committee Independent Members sit on and that if meetings are held bi-monthly would this be seen as less of a contribution by the Independent Members.

- Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to approve -
- The operation of a traditional committee system of governance.
 - The committee structure and membership as outlined at 3.1 of report with timings of meetings to be agreed in the new mandate.

PR078/23 Member Services

None.

Matters for Information

PR079/23 Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee held on 9 March 2023

Members noted Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee held on 9 March 2023.

PR080/23 Rural Needs Annual Progress Return to DEARA (2022/23)

Members noted previously circulated report which set out Council's Annual Progress Report to DAERA in relation to the Rural Needs Act NI (2016/) for the period 2022-23.

PR081/23 Mid Ulster Community Planning: Progress Update

Members noted previously circulated report which provided an update on activity in relation to Mid Ulster Community Planning from November 2022 to March 2023.

Live broadcast ended at 7.42 pm.

Local Government (NI) Act 2014 - Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor Buchanan
Seconded by Councillor McKinney and

Resolved In accordance with Section 42, Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 that Members of the public be asked to withdraw from the meeting whilst Members consider items PR082/23 to PR087/23

Matters for Decision

PR082/23 Staffing Matters for Decision

Matters for Information

PR083/23 Confidential Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 9 March 2023

PR084/23 Summary briefing on employee relations relating to NJC pay negotiations in 2023/2024 year for local government staff within the scope of NJCLGS

PR085/23 Staff Matters for Information

PR086/23 Treasury Management

PR087/23 Financial Report for 11 Months ended 28 February 2023

PR088/23 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7.00 pm and ended at 7.46 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.