

**Minutes of Meeting of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 22 September 2022 in the Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon and by virtual means**

**Chair** Councillor Corry

**Members Present** Councillors Bell, Black, Brown\*, Buchanan, Burton, Clarke, Cuddy, Cuthbertson, Doris\*, Gildernew\*, Glasgow, Graham, Kearney, Kerr, Martin\*, N McAleer 7.15pm, S McAleer\*, McFlynn, B McGuigan, S McGuigan\*, McKinney\*, McLean, McNamee\*, D McPeake\*, S McPeake\*, Milne\*, Molloy, Mullen, Oneill\*, Quinn, Robinson, Totten\*, and Wilson

**Officers in Attendance** Mr McCreesh, Chief Executive  
Ms Campbell, Strategic Director of Environment  
Ms Canavan, Strategic Director of Organisational Development Strategy and Performance (SD:ODSP)\*\*  
Mr Gordon, Assistant Director of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing\*\* (AD: HLW)  
Mr Kelso, Director of Public Health and Infrastructure (DPHI)  
Ms Linney, Assistant Director of Development (AD:Dev)  
Mr McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement (HoSS&E)  
Ms McKeown, Assistant Director of Economic, Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes\*\*(AD: EDT&SP)  
Ms Mezza, Head of Marketing and Communications\*\*  
Mr Moffett, Assistant Director of Organisational Development, Strategy & Performance (AD:ODSP)  
Mr Tohill, Strategic Director of Corporate Service and Finance (SD:CSF)\*\*  
Ms Totten, Community Planning Coordinator  
Mrs Forde, Member Support Officer

**Agenda Item 5: Deputation Northern Ireland Housing Executive**

Grainia Long**	Chief Executive
John McCartan	South Region Manager
Sharon Crooks	Mid Ulster Manager
Leanne Vincent**	
Andy Kennedy**	
Sinead Collins**	
Marie Foy**	
Roisin O'Neill**	

\* Denotes Members present in remote attendance

\*\* Denotes Officers present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7 pm.

*The Chair, Councillor Corry 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.*

#### **C164/22 Notice of Recording**

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

#### **C165/22 Apologies**

Councillors Ashton, Colvin, Elattar, Forde, Mallaghan, Monteith and Mullen

#### **C166/22 Declarations of Interest**

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

#### **C167/22 Chair's Business**

The Chair, Councillor Corry stated, Members, this is the first meeting of the Council since the death of Queen Elizabeth and so it is fitting that I once again offer my condolences and express my sympathies to the many people across our council area, particularly those from a unionist tradition, who are feeling this loss deeply.

Queen Elizabeth made a huge contribution to reconciliation and building peace on this island, and it is important that we acknowledge that important role.

The Chair, Councillor Corry invited comments.

Councillor McLean said, "Thank you Chair for allowing me to speak, I'm sure I don't really need to remind Council of the events which have taken place within our nation since our last Council meeting in the passing of our monarch Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and it's in relation to that event that I want to make my following remarks.

First and foremost I would like to offer my deepest sympathy and that of this Council to the Royal family on the death of our late majesty Queen Elizabeth and assure them of our thoughts and prayers on their great loss, that of a mother, a grandmother and a great grandmother remembering that death is a very sombre and sobering occasion no matter whose home or family it visits. I further propose that this Council passes on our deepest condolences by way of letter to the Royal Family on her Majesty's passing. In conclusion I believe it would be remiss of me if I didn't state the part this Council played during the relaxation of the current "no flags policy position" in allowing the union flag to be flown at half-mast on the main council building here in Dungannon on this very sombre but special occasion. I firmly believe it was the right thing to do but more importantly it demonstrated maturity within all the main political parties."

Councillor Glasgow commented, "Madam Chair on behalf of the Ulster Unionist Group I pass on our sincere condolences to the Royal Family on the sad passing of Her Majesty the Queen.

Since the sad news was announced on the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II we have seen at World, National and local level the millions of people who have paid their respects to Her Majesty. Over the period of State Mourning people from right across Mid Ulster have paid their respects to the Queen by signing books of condolences, laying floral tributes, attending services of reflection, private moments of prayer and reflection and standing in line waiting to see Her Majesty lying in State. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was devoted to carrying out her duty and had previously made her devotion to service known, in 1952 on her 21st Birthday Queen Elizabeth outlined in her radio broadcast said

*"I declare before you all that my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong."*

In 2011 when Her Majesty visited the Republic of Ireland she made comment in her speech in Dublin

"What were once only hopes for the future have now come to pass; it is almost exactly 13 years since the overwhelming majority of people in Ireland and Northern Ireland voted in favour of the agreement signed on Good Friday 1998, paving the way for Northern Ireland to become the exciting and inspirational place that it is today."

In her Coronation address Her Majesty made promises to the people and held her promises, "Throughout all my life and with all my heart I shall strive to be worthy of your trust. Therefore I am sure that this, my Coronation, is not the symbol of a power and a splendour that are gone but a declaration of our hopes for the future, and for the years I may, by God's Grace and Mercy, be given to reign and serve you as your Queen. Parliamentary institutions, with their free speech and respect for the rights of minorities, and the inspiration of a broad tolerance in thought and expression - all this we conceive to be a precious part of our way of life and outlook. I ask you now to cherish them - and practise them too; then we can go forward together in peace, seeking justice and freedom for all."

We all have much to learn from the words and actions of Her Majesty the Queen and what she has said and done in her 70 years dedicated service to the people. She was a Queen for all, a lady who understood what was occurring around her, she showed true and genuine leadership taking on the most difficult of situations and working towards calm & fair solution. Tonight we must not forget that Her Majesty was also a wife, a mother, a grandmother and a great grandmother and tonight there is a family bereaved from their loss and we must remember this.

We mourn for our Queen, a Queen who has shown us and the entire world the true spirit of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth. Her actions throughout her service says it all, Her Majesty will be missed greatly by us all, but we will always remember her. Her legacy will live on through her son in his service to the people His Majesty King Charles III who is no stranger to Mid Ulster and is welcome back anytime.

Madam Chair, the past two weeks have seen us, as a Local Government Authority, doing what was required for the people of our District! They have turned out in their thousands to pay their respects following the death of Queen Elizabeth II. Unfortunately, they have been hurt and angered by the actions of the Nationalist Councillors of this Council, preventing the Union Flag from being flown on the Council Offices in Cookstown and Magherafelt. The perceived lack of respect is extremely disappointing, especially in light of the fact that Sinn Féin's Michelle O'Neill and Alex Maskey actually attended the Queen's funeral. Also, the Council's lack of acknowledgement that the facilities would be closed that day because it was a Bank Holiday granted due to the death of the Queen, smacks of a deliberate intention not to recognise the Queen and the Royal Family in any way. It is something that the Council has been and will continue to be judged on by the people of our District. Hopefully going forward as our great Queen taught us we can learn from our mistakes."

Councillor Quinn in behalf of the SDLP shared condolences with unionist neighbours and those who respected the Queen. He said for himself he was not a big fan of the monarchy family but many across the district had been affected by her death and had felt a great loss. He reflected that she represented many people and although having suffered personal loss during the troubles had played a key role in reconciliation. He spoke of her visit to Ireland in 2011 when she went out of her way and spoke in Irish and had gained much respect. Councillor Quinn also acknowledged her visit to the Garden of Remembrance which was a massive step for her personally.

He also reminded Members that the great poet Seamus Heaney had in a poem said no toast would be raised to the Queen but yet here he was during her visit raising a toast. This in itself, he concluded spoke of the impact she had.

*Councillor N McAleer entered the meeting at 7.15 pm*

Councillor Kerr spoke of how the Queen had been born to a life of wealth and privilege which during the current cost of living crisis was hard to stomach. He asked that it be put on record that he did not support the union flag being flown and noted that neither he nor the other independent Councillors had been included in discussions which resulted in this action. He posed the question that should for example, an Irish President pass away would the Council in tune with the nationalist community show respect in flying the tri colour?

In response, the Chief Executive said the uniqueness of the situation spoke for itself and his engagement had been direct and immediate with the party leaders. The response and decision was taken given the feeling of many in Mid Ulster at the time. He said the direction he took was with agreement of the majority of the membership of Council. He concluded by stating that each mandate was equal but should such a unique instance occur in the future he would act likewise.

The Chair, Councillor Corry said should a situation arise in the future such as the example mentioned she would trust the same respect would be displayed.

The Chair, Councillor Corry said that whilst the last number of weeks have naturally been quieter than normal and more reflective, there were a few things of note which

had occurred since July Council. She spoke of the amazing evening of fireworks and lights at Ballyronan Marina at the end of August at which thousands of people turned out and the feedback had been overwhelming positive. The Chair expressed delight at the opportunity to attend Mid Ulster Pride last month where again large crowds celebrated the diversity of the community in a very positive way. She said that wherever she goes be it a large-scale event like Lumarina, or small gardening workshops like the one in Maghera Walled Garden there is a very real sense that people are enjoying the opportunity to gather again and share experiences. She said that in October she hoped to be seeing similar crowds at the Halloween events. The Chair congratulated Council staff teams from parks, leisure, environment and property who all contributed to the award of the latest green flags for the walled garden, Dungannon Park, The Hill of The O'Neill and, for the first time, Davagh Forest. Special mention was also given to 50 staff members from across the Council who completed their 'Just a Minute' training. This means that anyone who may face communication barriers and who shows a JAM card has the confidence that they can discreetly say that they need a little more time to engage with or access one of Council services.

The Chair, Councillor Corry highlighted the opportunity to embrace diversity Cookstown cultural parade and international breakfast at Hill of The O'Neill in the coming weekend which would provide a good opportunity to welcome people to the district. In conclusion the Chair made special mention that this would be the last Council meeting for Mark Kelso, Director of Public Health & Infrastructure and Ursula Mezza, Head of Marketing & Communications who will be leaving the Council at the end of September.

Councillor Kerr stated that on the 9 August, two unionist councillors had made embarrassing remarks about his local GAA Club Coalisland Na Fianna. He said that Councillor Cuthbertson's obsession with attacking anything remotely Irish led him to make a fool of himself and a further unionist councillor who had not checked that the claims he was making were correct released a statement to outdo him. He said that Councillor Cuthbertson must spend his days scrolling social media to find something to be angry about. Councillor Kerr said that the obsession with demonising the Irish culture had led to Councillor Cuthbertson attacking Coalisland on a few occasions and called him to explain how the embarrassing incident had happened, asked both Councillors involved to apologise to Coalisland Na Fianna and the Hughes family. He concluded by requesting Councillor Cuthbertson to stop attacking his culture.

Councillor Quinn said that the comments and lack of apology for same had caused much anger in the community of Coalisland. He said that the comments attacked the event, those attending it together with the participating teams and in his view the incident had brought the Council into disrepute as it was a member attacking a local GAA event which simple research would have highlighted that the assumptions made were wrong. Councillor Quinn concluded that it would be appropriate for the Councillor to make an apology.

The Chair, Councillor Corry provided opportunity for Councillor Cuthbertson to comment.

Councillor Cuthbertson expressed sympathy to King Charles III on the death of his mother Queen Elizabeth II and reflected on the many who had been saddened by

her death. He paid tribute to the people of Dungannon area who had expressed their sorrow, travelled to Hillsborough, left floral tributes and paid tribute to members of the Royal British Legion who had represented the area in London.

Councillor Cuthbertson reflected on Members referring to his use of social media and said they seem to have a great knowledge of it. He stated he would not be apologising to the GAA who continue to idolise terrorists, should it be recent or 100 years ago. He said speaking of social media a memory had appeared earlier in the day of Thomas Clarke's GAC fans and members of the public wearing Thomas Clarke's shirts singing a sectarian and misogynistic song for which there had never been an apology.

The Chair, Councillor Corry reminded Councillor Cuthbertson that he had been asked to respond to the comments made about the hurt caused to the Hughes family.

Councillor Cuthbertson said he was trying to do that but his microphone had been cut.

Again Councillor Cuthbertson spoke of the songs, tournaments named after IRA terrorists and said the list was continual.

The Chair, Councillor Corry again reminded Councillor Cuthbertson to respond to the matter in hand and not go over matters previously discussed.

Councillor Cuthbertson asked did the Chair, not wish to hear about the past.

The Chief Executive, reminded Members that the Chair's word was final.

The Chair, Councillor Corry said it was evident Councillor Cuthbertson did not wish to respond on the matter being discussed and moved on.

Councillor S McPeake highlighted the recent success enjoyed by Lavey GAC ladies team who in the first year of participating in the tournament had won the Ladies Junior Championship for County Derry.

## **C168/22      Deputation form Housing Executive**

The Chair, Councillor Corry welcomed NIHE Chief Executive Ms Grainne Long and her colleagues to the meeting. Ms Long delivered presentation providing an overview of the annual update of the Housing Investment Plan for Mid Ulster.

The Chair, Councillor Corry thanked Ms Long for the presentation and said she had been born and reared in a NIHE house and it was close to her heart and she looked forward to long term investment. The Chair also spoke of the homeless figures and the plight of victims of domestic abuse trying to find temporary accommodation. She said very often people were placed miles away from their family, friends, support network and schools. She also highlighted that many people did not understand the method of making application for social housing. She concluded that it was very difficult at times for people to attain points to meet the criteria for housing and again this impacts temporary accommodation.

In response Ms Long said that prior to covid there was an upward curve in relation to homelessness but this had been accentuated with covid as many who 'sofa surfed' no longer had the option of staying amongst friends and this had drove the statistics up. She further acknowledged that the voluntary and community sector had to reduce the number of places due to capacity permitted and thus this had led to a rapid increase in lack of places. Ms Long acknowledged the homeless figures had risen sharply and said as she made presentations to each council the need for increased availability of temporary accommodation was prevalent. She further stated that the private sector rental market was losing landlords and that the NIHE were endeavouring to bring forward additional housing stock. She concluded that her team meet with landlords to seek accommodation and even lease from them and requested that if Members were aware of any opportunities that they make contact with NIHE as they were very keen to talk.

Councillor S McPeake thanked the team for the presentation and acknowledged the difficult task the NIHE had. He thanked the local teams who were always accommodating to Members and thanked Council staff for their endeavours with the Housing Forum. He spoke of rural housing needs test and referred to a test carried out in Gulladuff when there had been a tremendous response of 45 applications, of which 14 were deemed eligible but only two had deemed to be in housing stress but opportunities had remained at zero. He said local people had made much effort to participate in the housing test process and the outcome had been very disappointing. He said that there was little point raising expectations when there is nothing to deliver.

Ms Long said she understood and said it was difficult to reflect need correctly and not raise expectations. She said some councils are seeking these tests and that she had noted a number of points but would welcome a conversation in the future as to how the procedure could be improved. She said the numbers drive the ability to assess and determine need, it in turns helps planners to determine planning, gives social housing associations the opportunity to seek land in places but all of this raises the expectations and it is a difficult process.

Ms Collins said she too understood the frustration expressed by Councillor S McPeake and acknowledged whilst the rural housing needs process is not always successful it is vital that people come forward. She said that with place shaping in mind the figures can be reviewed should a proposal come forward for the village. Ms Collins concluded that without land availability it is very difficult to deliver.

Councillor Kerr asked if NIHE would be introducing extra measures to assist tenants in coping with the cost of living crisis. He also said he appreciated the fact that NIHE had not been able to invest in housing stock for over twenty years but drew attention to the difference in NIHE rents and social housing rents. He also proposed that NIHE host DEA meetings with Members as they did previously. Councillor Kerr highlighted the fact that there is no mechanism to control rents and no legislation for private landlords. He concluded by highlighting that many European countries were freezing rents in response to the cost of living crisis.

Ms Long outlined a number of measures that NIHE were implementing in response to the cost of living crisis to include energy efficiency advice, warm home schemes

noting that some schemes were mean tested. She highlighted much of the advice was available to the general public also and stated that if people did not qualify for grants the NIHE advisors endeavoured to direct people to other agencies. Ms Long also made reference to oil buying clubs which provided savings due to bulk buying. She advised that the NIHE had met with the Consumer Council and in order to help tenants were running a financial inclusion programme that had debt managers providing monetary and budget advice to up to 200 tenants per month. Some of those tenants were now seeking housing benefits and some 5700 claimants who had a short fall in rent between April and June had received help. Ms Long spoke of the shortfall in budget as the rents charged did not provide sufficient income for improvement programmes. She said that year on year the shortfall was increasing and thus there was no long term financial plan for maintenance but stressed that the tenants deserve the best and the NIHE needed to be in a position to borrow and a sustainable rent introduced over a period of time was required.

Mr McCartan in response to the call for DEA meetings said the NIHE were willing to participate in same. He outlined support for tenants and detailed a grant being funded by the Department for Communities and encouraged Members to make contact and refer people to the NIHE as it was imperative all the money was utilised.

Councillor Molloy thanked the NIHE for the presentation and said that all would have heard the announcement regarding the rise in interest rates which would be no doubt passed onto tenants of private landlords. He said that in Dungannon the rents were particularly high and thus there was even more pressure on people making the decision to heat or eat. He reflected that homelessness was on the rise and it was his hope that measures in place would assist those experiencing particular pressures.

Councillor Cuthbertson paid tribute to the NIHE representatives working in the Dungannon office and said they always provided an answer even though it may not be the one wanted!

Councillor Cuthbertson drew attention to three things, (i) the number of calls received from constituents regarding poor workmanship thus there was a need to have work checked; (ii) time involved in processing land transfers for example a recent transfer at Tamnamore took a particularly long time, he also referred to a number of private issues which perhaps took years; and (iii) in relation to the heating and energy cost crisis he asked was there a target to have all NIHE homes fitted with PVC windows and doors and if there was a target date what was it? He concluded that he understood that the response was may not be immediately available.

Ms Long in response to Members queries said that homelessness was rising and the NIHE was still facing housing challenges and were in emergency response mode. She reiterated that the NIHE were struggling to both allocate and find permanent housing and the fact was that next year the situation may not have improved but that every spare penny is allocated to homelessness.

With regard to the quality of workmanship she said that when contractors are in place there is a team of inspectors together with programme managers and as such she would like to follow up on individual cases as she would also do with land transfers.

Mr Kennedy referred to the NIHE funding shortfall and said that year on year the backlog is increasing. He said that life cycle for windows is replacement after 30 years but there was a backlog across every element of work and until sufficient funding was acquired it would be difficult to determine time frames.

Councillor Burton thanked the NIHE team and said that the interagency meetings and walks of the areas provide good insight. She highlighted some houses for example in Castlecaulfield where the pavements at the rear of the houses were in disrepair, the hedges were overgrown and trees were blocking light from windows. She said complaints had also been received about leaves falling from trees and causing major issues on paths and gardens. Councillor Burton also highlighted steps at Castle Place, Castlecaulfield and spoke of people with mobility issues experiencing difficulty in getting bins up and down same. She requested that perhaps a slope would be beneficial.

Ms Long said that any immediate health and safety concerns should be reported as soon as possible at local offices. She said that in general as people age their original home may not be fit for purpose and it is not always easy to provide solutions and reiterated that a longer term investment plan was needed to make homes fit for purpose.

Mr Kennedy said that there was an environment budget for grounds maintenance and said that there are many schemes but sometimes issues arose as areas external to estates had been adopted by DfI. He said he would follow up with local offices and again reiterated that investment situation was not good and thus the focus tended to be on the home not the environment.

Councillor McFlynn expressed her thanks to the representatives of NIHE who throughout the covid period had always been available to respond. She said that daily everyone was hearing about the cost of living crisis and thus she was delighted that schemes such as affordable warmth were being extended. She stressed that homes needed to be energy efficient and called for new building schemes to include single person homes and one or two bedroom apartments. Councillor McFlynn also requested an updated list of contacts.

Ms Long stated that her job is made easier by regional managers and their teams and welcomed the positive comments. She reiterated that they were keen to work with council on affordable warmth schemes, that many NIHE homes still had oil heating and that would prove challenging as would the huge rise in the cost of gas. She said that in respect of new builds and single person dwellings again this goes back to needs testing and highlighted that many council areas did not want single person dwellings but preferred family housing.

Ms Crooks said she would issue an updated contact list and thanked Members for their support.

The Chair, Councillor Corry thanked the NIHE team for their presentation and the team withdrew from the meeting at 8.52pm

## **Matters for Decision**

### **C169/22 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Council Meeting held on 28 July 2022**

Councillor Cuthbertson drew attention to C141/22 Chair’s business, he advised he had not attended the Environment Committee in September as it took place during the period of national mourning for HM Queen Elizabeth II but that as far as he was aware no report had been presented in relation to the updating of Darren Clarke signage. He requested that update be provided.

Councillor S McPeake drew attention to C141/22 Chair’s Business in relation to his remarks about the late Colm McGurk and requested that the entire transcript be recorded in the minutes.

Proposed by Councillor Kerr  
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

**Resolved** That the Minutes of the Council held on Thursday 28 July 2022 (C138/22-C152/22 and C163/22) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated were considered and adopted.

### **C170/22 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Planning Committee Meeting held on 2 August 2022**

Councillor Wilson drew attention to the impact on planning applications caused by DfI Roads and other statutory agencies delayed responses that were impacting sizeable investments coming to the district. He said at a prior meeting it had been suggested that DfI appoint a specific officer to liaise with planning section to drive these projects forward. He requested that the matter be raised at the scheduled Council meeting with DfI and extended his apologies that he would not be in attendance.

In response to Councillor Cuthbertson’s query the Chief Executive confirmed that the Planning Committee had delegated authority with regard to planning applications and that the accuracy of the minutes are ratified by Council.

Councillor Cuddy concurred with Councillor Wilson’s comments and raised the matter of Old Eglisk Road former Manse Road, Dungannon for which there was possibility of investment of 150 homes. He said there was a road traffic issue at the site and requested that it be raised at the Council meeting with DfI scheduled for next week.

The Chair, Councillor Corry confirmed that the matters would be raised.

Proposed by Councillor S McPeake  
Seconded by Councillor McFlynn and

**Resolved** That the Minutes of the Planning Committee held on Tuesday 2 August 2022 (P097/22-P104/22 and P109/22) transacted in Open Business

having been printed and circulated, subject to the foregoing were considered and adopted.

**C171/22 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Planning Committee Meeting held on 6 September 2022**

Proposed by Councillor McFlynn  
Seconded by Councillor S McPeake and

**Resolved** That the Minutes of the Planning Committee held on Tuesday 6 September 2022 (P110/22-P115/22 and P120/22) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated, subject to the foregoing were considered and adopted.

**C172/22 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on 8 September 2022**

Proposed by Councillor Gildernew  
Seconded by Councillor McLean and

**Resolved** That the Minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee held on Thursday 8 September (PR154/22 –PR158/22) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated, were considered and adopted.

**C173/22 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Environment Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 13 September 2022**

Councillor Kerr drew attention to E197/22 Renaming and Renumbering Existing Streets Survey Results and welcomed the change of name on recommended that is Stewartstown Road to Moss Road, Coalisland. He commended the residents who had led the campaign for the change.

Councillor Kerr also drew attention to E209/22 Biodiversity – 6 month update April – September 2022 and proposed that DEA meetings be held with DfI to adopt the diversity plan regarding roundabouts as he felt it would be useful for elected Members to contribute to discussion. He requested that the matter be raised at the scheduled meeting with DfI Roads on 29 September.

The Chair, Councillor Corry agreed to have it raised at the meeting.

Councillor Quinn drew attention to E202/22 Dual Language signage and asked that officers follow up on the sign placed Gort Manor estate instead of Gort Manor Drive.

Proposed by Councillor S McGuigan  
Seconded by Councillor B McGuigan and

**Resolved** That the Minutes of the Environment Committee held on Tuesday 13 September 2022 (E192/22-E209/22 and E226/22) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated, were considered and adopted.

**C174/22 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Development Committee Meeting held on Thursday 15 September 2022**

Councillor Wilson drew attention to D141/22 Economic Development Report Brown Signage Audit and welcomed same. He said there was a number of places that do not have brown signs at all which were major tourist attractions and whilst Council was highlighting what they had they should also take cognisance of businesses who feel the need for additional signs. He concluded that whilst there was criteria to be met to attain brown signage it would be useful to collect all relevant data.

Councillor Cuthbertson said that a few years ago Ranfurly House had been removed and as an example said that signage at St Anne’s just detailed The Hill of The O’Neill. He said when the attraction had been opened it was named Ranfurly House and The Hill of The O’Neill and requested that this was reinstated.

The Chief Executive said that all comments would be taken on board with regard to the Brown Signage Audit.

Councillor Molloy drew attention to D130/22 Chair’s Business regarding Railway Park DEA meeting and said that officers had endeavoured to schedule a meeting which had to be cancelled but said he would like this rescheduled as soon as possible.

Councillor Burton asked if tourism officers had the opportunity to feed into the audit as they are often lobbied regarding brown signage. She said a commitment had been given to have a periodic review of brown signage but this had not happened to date.

In response the Chief Executive advised Tourism Officers would take a lead on the project and that all issues would be addressed including ongoing discussion regarding criteria.

Councillor Kearney concurred with Councillor Burton and said that there was also some instances when signage should be removed. He also stressed the importance of maintenance of brown signs in order that they were in good condition.

Proposed by Councillor Molloy  
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

**Resolved** That the Minutes of the Development Committee held on Thursday 15 September 2022 (D127/22 – D144/22 and D149/22) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated, were considered and adopted.

**C175/22 Receive and Consider Decisions Recommended in “Open Business” at the Reconvened Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on 20 September 2022**

Councillor Wilson drew attention to the request to illuminate Council buildings for Hear Our Voices and stated the colours should be purple and yellow.

In response the AD: ODPS said he would have the colours updated.

Proposed by Councillor Molloy  
Seconded by Councillor Gildernew and

**Resolved** That the Decisions Recommended at the reconvened Policy & Resources Committee held on Thursday 20 September 2022 transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated, were considered and adopted.

### **C176/22 Conferences, Seminars & Training**

The AD: ODPS sought approval for the previously circulated report on conferences, training and seminars.

Proposed by Councillor Kerr  
Seconded by Councillor N McAleer and

**Resolved** That approval be given to submitted requests for conferences, seminars and training as outlined in the appendix A and B to the report.

### **C177/22 Civic Recognition Requests**

The AD: ODSP sought approval for the previously circulated report on civic recognition requests from Members, in line with the stated Council Policy, and as detailed within the report at appendix A.

Proposed by Councillor Kerr  
Seconded by Councillor N McAleer and

**Resolved** That approval be given to submitted requests for civic recognition detailed at appendix A as outlined in the report.

### **Matters for Information**

#### **C178/22 Consultations**

Proposed by Councillor Kerr  
Seconded by Councillor Burton and

**Resolved** That Members note the previously circulated report on consultations notified to Mid Ulster District Council for comment.

*The live broadcast concluded at 8.40 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 Molloy  
Seconded by Councillor B McGuigan and

**Resolved:** That items C179/22 to C188/22 be taken as confidential business.

**Matters for Decision**

- (i) Council Confidential minutes of meeting held on 28 July 2022
- (ii) Planning Committee confidential minutes of meeting held on 2 August 2022
- (iii) Planning Committee confidential minutes of meeting held on 6 September 2022
- (iv) Environment Committee confidential minutes of meeting held on 13 September 2022
- (v) Development Committee confidential minutes of meeting held on 15 September 2022
- (vi) Policy & Resources Committee confidential decisions recommended at meeting held on 20 September 2022
- (vii) Audit Committee Confidential minutes of meeting held on 20 September 2022
- (viii) Document for Sealing - Deed of variation in relation to the lease to lands situated at Tobermore Playing Fields
- (ix) Document for Sealing - Project Agreement between MUDC and Thomas Clarkes GAC
- (x) Document for Sealing - Deed of Variation: Cahore Playing Fields

The Meeting returned to open business.

**C189/22 Presentation to Council Officers on Departure from Council**

The Chair, Councillor Corry said that as stated at the start of the meeting Mark Kelso, Director of Public Health & Infrastructure and Ursula Mezza, Head of Marketing & Communications will be leaving Council at the end of the month. She said that both have contributed greatly to the success of Council and extended best wishes to Mark as he retires and Ursula as she takes up a new post outside Council in October. She concluded, wishing them both success in the future.

Councillor McLean said he had not known either officer until the formation of Mid Ulster District Council but the courtesy and professionalism of both had been evident from day one. He said people don't usually say good things unless you are leaving but both had done a great job and their style and mannerism of delivery would be missed across the council team and indeed wider Mid Ulster.

Councillor Glasgow said he too had come to know Mark and Ursula at the commencement of Mid Ulster District Council and had always found them to be professional and helpful. He said Ursula's professionalism had been demonstrated at the royal visit to Cookstown when she had kept all Members in check but had

delivered a good job and a well-remembered visit was enjoyed by all. He concluded that both would be missed.

Councillor Kearney on behalf of the SDLP acknowledged their service and said all could agree that both were approachable and resilient. He said that Mark had got all the big ticket jobs at Council and said he had also been a lifelong friend of his late brother. He said that Ursula had provided a valuable service to all who had served as Chair or vice Chair and had kept them all up to date in the fast moving world of communications!

Councillor Kerr thanked both officers for their professionalism and wished them all the best for the future.

Councillor Molloy on behalf of the Sinn Féin party said that both in their professional approach had taken Mid Ulster to a new level.

The Chief Executive advised that staff would pay tribute to both officers in their final week with Council but said that Ursula had come to Mid Ulster and put her stamp on how things should and could be done and drove forward the new corporate identity. He concluded that she left the legacy of driving forward the digital strategy but had always been destined to better things and commended her on attaining a national job which was closer to home

The Chief Executive said that he had worked with Mark for some 30 years and would miss his professionalism and friendship. He said he had always been extremely diligent and the team had great faith in him. He said that the Coalisland Environmental Improvement Scheme had been a huge success due to his diligence and hard work as had many other schemes. He concluded that Mark now deserved the time with his family and indeed farming.

The Chair, Councillor Corry presented gifts.

In response Mark thanked everyone for their kind words and said he had found it a great joy to work in Cookstown then Mid Ulster over a career which had spanned almost four decades. He said that if you enjoy doing something it is not a chore and he had enjoyed his work and met many interesting people. He said he was leaving a great team and his work had been a blessing to him. He said you should always hope to leave a place better than you found it and he had achieved this and hoped all would be blessed moving forward.

In response Ursula said that her career in Local Government had spanned 27 years of which the last eight had been in Mid Ulster. She said it had been challenging and rewarding but the opportunity which had presented itself was too good to turn down. She concluded saying it had been a pleasure working with Members and the various Chairs and deputies over the years and extended her thanks to all.

## **C190/22    Duration of Meeting**

The meeting was called for 7.00 pm and ended at 9.00 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.