

A

Minutes of Meeting of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 19 November 2015 in the Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon

Members Present: Councillor Dillon, Chair

Councillors Ashton, Bell, Buchanan, Burton (7.08pm),
Clarke, Cuddy (7.07pm), Cuthbertson, Elattar, Gildernew,
Gillespie, Kearney, Mallaghan, McAleer, McFlynn, B
McGuigan, S McGuigan, McKinney, McLean, McNamee,
Molloy, Monteith, Mullen, Mulligan, C O'Neill, J O'Neill, M
Quinn, T Quinn, Reid and Robinson,

**Officers in
Attendance:**

Mr A Tohill, Chief Executive
Mr Kelso, Director of Public Health and Infrastructure
Mr McCreesh, Director of Business and Communities
Mr Philip Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
Ms S McIntyre, Senior Project Officer
Mrs C O'Neil, PCSP Manager
Mrs Forde, Member Support Officer

In Attendance:

Representatives of Northern Health & Social Care Trust

Mr Tony Stevens, Chief Executive
Ms Pamela McCreedy, Deputy Chief Executive and Director
of Operations
Mr Patrick Graham, Assistant Director in Community Care
Directorate
Ms Margaret Mulholland, Head of Communications

Representatives of Southern Health & Social Care Trust

Mrs Paula Clarke, Chief Executive (Interim)
Mrs Angela McVeigh, Director of Older People & Primary
Care Services
Mrs Esther Gishkori, Director of Acute Services
Mrs Aldrina Magwood, Acting Director of Performance &
Reform

The meeting commenced at 7 pm.

SC16/15 Apologies

Councillors Bateson, Forde, Glasgow and McEldowney, McGinley, McPeake, G
Shiels, J Shiels, Totten and Wilson

SC17/15 Declarations of Interest

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

Councillor Mallaghan declared an interest in the Health and Social Care Board Northern Commissioning Group.

Councillor S McGuigan declared an interest in the Health and Social Care Board Southern Commissioning Group.

Councillor Elattar declared an interest as an employee of the Northern Health and Social Services Trust.

Councillor Burton declared an interest in Agewell.

Matters for Decision

SC18/15 Health and Social Care Trusts

The Chair, Councillor Linda Dillon welcomed representatives from Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT) and Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) to the meeting.

Councillor Cuddy entered the meeting at 7.07pm
Councillor Burton entered the meeting at 7.08 pm

Mrs Clarke, Chief Executive (Interim) of the SHSCT introduced the representatives and a presentation (appendix one) was made regarding the SHSCT Strategic Plan 2015-2018 entitled 'Improving through Change.'

Mr Stevens, Chief Executive of the NHSCT introduced representatives and made a presentation entitled 'Shaping the Future Together' (appendix two).

The Chair, Councillor Dillon thanked the SHSCT and the NHSCT for their presentations and invited Members questions.

The Chair, Councillor Dillon made reference to public consultations in both areas stating that people had responded to recent consultations as had political parties, yet there was no evidence that responses are taken into consideration. She continued stating that both Trusts should be honest for example if there is a public consultation in relation to a hospital closure, if it cannot be kept open, people should be made aware of that from the outset. Referring to Antrim Area Hospital she stated that she felt the location of the hospital was in the wrong place and thus she would not wish to see it extended.

Councillor Cuthbertson left the meeting at 7.50pm.

The Chair, Councillor Dillon continued by stating that a new build should be considered which was more central emphasising that in the Dungannon area people were in a better position being 20 minutes travel time from Craigavon Area Hospital but this was not the same throughout the district. Speaking about 'care in the home' the Councillor Dillon welcomed the strategy but stated that often especially for dementia services people are sent home without the appropriate care arrangements in place thus they end up back in hospital where care is more expensive.

Councillor Buchanan left the meeting at 7.52pm.

Mr Stevens responding stated that consultations are a formal process on offering options and said there were many challenges and choices which required conversations to establish how best issues could be addressed. Mr Stevens continued stating that the pressure was on the Trusts as they endeavour to do more with current resources. Making reference to Antrim Area Hospital Mr Stevens gave a synopsis of its history and stated that the Northern Trust had to work with what it had as a new build would not be happening and it was essential that everyone appreciated and lobbied for investment in Antrim Area Hospital. Referring to domiciliary care Mr Stevens stated that 50% was provided 'in house' and it was hoped to increase this which would, in turn, put pressure on budgets.

Councillor McAleer thanked the Trusts for their presentations and sought clarity regarding investment in community services moving the emphasis from acute to primary care especially in rural areas. Stating that a real commitment in changing how resources are prioritised is required, Councillor McAleer stated people now prefer home care and in referring to the increased usage of ambulance services mentioned in the presentation, she said this could be avoided if special care and support to families was delivered within the community.

Councillor M Quinn left the meeting at 8.00pm

Mrs Clarke concurred with Councillor McAleer stating that often people are not aware of domiciliary care available until they need it.

Councillors Mulligan and J O'Neill left the meeting at 8.00pm and 8.01pm respectively

Mrs Clarke continued stating that a single point of access was required and that the Trusts were endeavouring to see how best to direct resources when care is needed in the home making reference to the work of general practitioners, community pharmacists, consultant geriatricians and senior doctors' delivery of home care. Mrs Clarke further stated that work was required with staff to promote the message of home care.

Councillor M Quinn returned to the meeting at 8.03pm

Councillor S McGuigan asked the Trusts to quantify what was happening in relation to the Transforming your Care agenda and asked if there were links between neighbouring Trusts and a mechanism to cross reference service provision.

Mrs McCreedy stated that £45 million had been invested in Transforming your Care with approximately £7m of this allocated in the Northern Trust area and gave the examples where nursing homes were provided with oxygen services to prevent residents being admitted to hospital, increased investment in rapid response units and the pharmacist role to meet demand.

Mrs Clarke stated that the Trusts do work closely together but emphasised that whilst the care of the individual was the ultimate aim it was a challenge as each Trust was funded for the people within their boundary. Mrs Clarke continued by stating that

Trusts look at adapting services and increasingly share learning stating that although far from perfect the will was there for improvement.

Mr Stevens referred to the networks developing between both hospitals and the Trusts advising if there is a shortage of example cots in Antrim they can be borrowed from Belfast. Mr Stevens further spoke of sites within the Trust areas developing areas of expertise highlighting the development of neurology networks and the larger hospitals supporting the smaller.

Councillor Clarke stated that the problems with health provision were historical and until addressed people would suffer. Stating that he resided within the Northern Trust he was situated one mile from the boundary of the Western Trust, eight miles from the Southern Trust boundary and that in the past, hospitals were 20 miles from his home but now they were at least one hour away with the nearest being Enniskillen and Craigavon. He continued by stating that due to bad planning in the past, acute services were drawn away from the region and that he had realised the full significance of the situation when he recently had to bring a family member to Whiteabbey Hospital. Emphasising that he had to drive 25 miles before reaching a motorway Councillor Clarke stated that Mid Ulster District Council area had approximately 140,000 residents and the level of investment in either Craigavon or Antrim Area hospitals would not improve the geography. Councillor Clarke continued, stating that the area had the worst roads and infrastructure, ambulance response times were out of expectation in rural areas and that the historical bad planning should be rectified.

Mr Stevens stated that neither he nor Mrs Clarke had made the decisions regarding the hospitals locality but their remit was to make what was available work and attract investment to improve services in current hospitals. Mr Stevens further stated that in the future there would be fewer hospital sites but the question remained as to where closures would be. It was also noted that the Minister for Health was considering an air ambulance.

Mrs Clarke concurred with Mr Stevens comments and stated that as elected representatives Councillors could influence spend on health. Mrs Clarke further stated that hard choices had to be made and that if new hospitals were provided there would be no money for care. Mrs Clarke emphasised that the bulk of health care was provided outside of hospitals and the question was how best to support people in order that they remained healthier for longer.

Councillors Bell and Mallaghan left the meeting at 8.19pm

Councillor McLean thanked the Trusts for their presentations together with the opportunity for conversation and acknowledged the pressures regarding funding which in reality was being faced across the public sector. Councillor McLean expressed thanks for the 'coal face workers' who deliver the service on a daily basis across the spectrum. Relating personal experiences Councillor McLean stated that no one is aware of the level of service available until it is required. Stating that the Minister for Health was like himself a member of the Democratic Unionist Party he stated that the system was not a perfect one and although he was constructively critical about aspects of it, he accepted that the situation of the Trusts were inherited and whilst he

concurred with Councillor Clarke's comments Northern Ireland was not that big and if he himself was ill he would be prepared to travel to where the best treatment could be offered.

Councillor Bell returned to the meeting at 8.21pm

Councillor McLean also emphasised that resources needed to be available within the community together with a stronger paramedic process and the best people to consult were those delivering front line services. In conclusion, he referred to the bureaucracy which now existed within the health service which needed to be addressed and commended the Trusts on their delivery of services.

Councillor Mallaghan returned to the meeting at 8.24pm

In response to Councillor McLean, Mrs Clarke stated that major areas of change were required and gave an assurance that the Trusts listened to every member of staff to bring about improvements. With regard to 'first responders' Mrs Clarke stressed the importance of the Councillors view points as the community engaged with them and also stated that provision of defibrillators in the community was a prime example how community, councils and the Trusts could work collaboratively.

Councillor McLean sought an update on future development plans for Mid Ulster Hospital site. In response, Mr Stevens referred to the changing role of the paramedic and the increased services offered within communities such as bespoke vaccination and pharmacy services. Mr Stevens stated that he would like real investment in the next five to ten years within the Magherafelt site to develop a community hub and well-being centre.

The Chair, Councillor Dillon referring to 'first responders' advised that Council had met with the Cormac McAnallen Trust with regard to defibrillator training and that it would be beneficial for the Health Trusts to have a conversation with them with a view to expanding the service in the community.

Councillor Burton thanked the Trusts for their presentations and made reference to the priority focus on early intervention and assistance to allow people to live independently at home. Advising that she was the Chairperson of Agewell whose funding was coming to an end Councillor Burton urged the Trust to make contact with them as the services they were providing throughout Mid Ulster was invaluable, highlighting examples of instances when stroke victims had been detected in the initial stages through the early morning call service. Councillor Burton advised that Agewell had delivered a presentation to the Northern Local Commissioning Group and further advised that they provided a 'handyman service', assisted people who had been victims to bogus callers and burglaries.

Councillor Cuddy left the meeting at 8.32pm

In response, Mr Graham advised that he was very aware of Agewell together with their work and stated that they had a range of funders who had both different caveats and closure dates.

Councillor B McGuigan left the meeting at 8.35pm

Mr Graham further advised that the Northern Trust made referrals to Agewell and stated that they were currently consulting with the community and voluntary sector as to how services should be funded in the future. Acknowledging the strength of the Community and Voluntary sector across Mid Ulster, Mr Graham stated that he could not give commitments regarding funding at this time. Councillor Burton stated that the Trusts should acknowledge what is working and invest in same as if voluntary organisations, such as Agewell, cease to be the Trusts will have to pick up the pieces.

Councillor B McGuigan returned to the meeting at 8.37pm

Relating personal experiences Councillor Reid made reference to the pressure health staff work under, waiting times for cancer patients and the limited resources for people with special needs when they reach the age of 19. In relation to building and heating costs Councillor Reid asked if the heating could be monitored as times the heat within hospitals was of a very high temperature. Councillor Reid made reference to his voluntary work with the Niamh Louise Foundation and expressed concern regarding mental health services within the Southern Trust. Acknowledging the building works carried out at the South Tyrone Hospital site Councillor Reid stated that within the community there was a fear that the site had been refurbished to be sold.

Councillors Burton, Gildernew, McKinney and Robinson left the meeting at 8.45pm

In response, Mrs Clarke advised that the hospitals were very busy and emphasised that consultants were available until midnight, there was a bank system for staff who worked additional hours, staffing levels were different for different types of wards and that the Trust had to work within budget but already emergency wards were overspent. With reference to targets Mrs Clarke advised that the aim was that patients be seen by triage within 15 minutes at which time pain relief would be administered, 85% of people are seen within four hours and acknowledged that unfortunately eight people had to wait over 12 hours. With regard to cancer patients Mrs Clarke stated that it was difficult to sustain targets but emphasised that the 14 day target for breast cancer referrals was being met. With regard to special needs post the age of 19, Mrs Clarke advised that a transition scheme had been introduced and stated that the Trust endeavoured to have day services locally. Mrs Clarke stated that she would not make comment at this time regarding the concern expressed with regard to mental health services and concluded by acknowledging the refurbishment spend on the South Tyrone site and stated that it was not for sale.

With regard to mental health services Councillor Reid suggested the Trust contact the Niamh Louise Foundation.

Councillor Monteith thanked the Trusts for their contributions and stated that the area had not been well served for many years, consultation made no difference and referring to Oakridge Social Education Centre and the legacy Councils request for capital investment sought an update stating that it was not mentioned in the Trusts strategic plan and the building was no longer fit for purpose.

Councillor Reid left the meeting at 8.52pm.

In response, Mrs Clarke stated that the business case was prepared for Oakridge and they were awaiting capital investment emphasising that it was in the top ten priority list for improvement.

Councillors McLean and Monteith left the meeting at 8.55pm

Councillor Mallaghan thanked the Trust representatives and acknowledged the health service staff and advised that he had had a tour of Antrim Area Hospital to view new innovations and processes but emphasised that he had to travel through three counties to reach it. Stating that he knew there was a belief that people in the Northern Trust would be served better moving forward, Councillor Mallaghan expressed concern that Cookstown had not appeared on the maps highlighted and that there was a fear that services would be run down in the area to only an ambulance response service. Referring to new innovations for patient contact Councillor Mallaghan stated that not all locations had fibre optic broadband to enable them to avail of the services. Highlighting an example of border issues between Trusts Councillor Mallaghan stated that opportunities should be sought to resolve such issues between the Trusts.

Councillors McLean and Reid returned to the meeting at 9.00pm

Mr Stevens acknowledged Councillor Mallaghan's concerns and expressed understanding regarding the location of Antrim Area Hospital to some of the constituents within Mid Ulster. Speaking with regard to the reform of the health service Mr Stevens stated that there may be greater opportunities to deliver services across Trust areas. Speaking of investment in hospitals he stated that both Antrim and Craigavon had not received the same level of investment as other acute hospitals and were in competition for any investment available and neither received the level of investment they deserved. Referring to the Mid Ulster Hospital, Mr Stevens stated that it had a vibrant future as a community hospital. Referring to the Westlands site in Cookstown Mr Stevens stated that in relation to residential care it would be hoped to permit the current residents to remain at Westlands with the long term aim of developing a community hub at the site but emphasised many conversations were required around this. Advising that choices had to be made Mr Stevens stated that it was essential to campaign and lobby for what can be achieved and not for services which could not be sustained.

Councillor McAleer emphasised the need to invest in community services which would relieve acute services. Referring to health prevention she stated that investing in this area would reap dividends in the future. Mr Stevens concurred with these comments stating that one of the greatest challenges faced by the Northern Trust was supporting primary care in rural communities.

Councillor Gillespie left the meeting at 9.10pm

Mrs McVeigh emphasised the Southern Trusts commitment to health and wellbeing and the role of community planning and advised that partnership working was key to provision of care in the community especially with an aging population with complex

issues. Mrs McVeigh stated that the Trust had a range of support services especially for those older people living in isolation but acknowledged the essential input provided by the community and voluntary sector through groups such as Agewell.

Councillor Clarke spoke of his voluntary work with a 'first responder' group and made reference to the defibrillators available through sports clubs but stated that Trusts had to assist with training users and maintenance of batteries. Acknowledging that all shared a vision for a health service, Councillor Clarke stated that the Council represents in excess of 140,000 people, whom are tax payers and they were entitled to the same health provision as everyone else.

Councillor T Quinn requested an update regarding Westlands in Cookstown and expressed concerns for both patients and staff at Holywell Hospital which was a Victorian building and asked if there was any plans to update facilities.

Councillor Clarke left the meeting at 9.18pm

Councillor T Quinn made reference to the compassion, openness, respect, qualities and values which had underpinned the core values of the health service from recruitment to delivery of services. Acknowledging that there were opportunities for people to be heard Councillor T Quinn emphasised the importance of listening mentioning in particular the public care user involvement forum. Responding Mr Stevens advised that a business case had been submitted to the Department of Health for a single mental health facility on the Antrim Area Hospital site but even with approval it was several years away.

Councillor Clarke returned to the meeting at 9.21pm

Mr Stevens further advised that a rapid access liaison service to get people immediate help had been introduced and was having a huge impact on mental health services such as dementia, drug and alcohol abuse and staff could not now envisage delivering mental health services without it.

With reference to Westlands Residential Care Home Mr Graham advised that many submissions had been made during the consultation process but as yet he could not comment on the outcome. Responding to Councillor T Quinn's query regarding the timeline of the consultation Mr Graham advised that the outcome should be released early in 2016.

Councillors Mallaghan and McAleer left the meeting at 9.30pm

Councillor McKinney stated that the previously referenced Ballycastle Trust facility should not be compared with the Mid Ulster site as geographically there was no comparison and stating that bed provision at Mid Ulster Hospital was now at 25%, he sought clarification on the Northern Trusts future plans. In response, Mr Stevens advised that strategically Mid Ulster Hospital is an important facility currently providing a wide range of services he stressed the importance of out-patients and advised that it was the intention to retain beds at the site. Once again, Mr Stevens advised that it was the vision of the future to develop a community health, treatment and wellbeing hub at the site.

The Chair, Councillor Dillon sought an update on Roxborough House and in response Mrs Clarke advised that the consultation had closed and the Trust had taken the decision of permanent closure over a period of time permitting current residents to remain whilst their care needs was still being met. Mrs Clarke further clarified that the decision was being considered by the Health and Social Care Board prior to consideration by the Minister for Health and that she would provide further information with regard to timelines.

The Chair, Councillor Dillon thanked the Trusts for their input and stated that she welcomed the progress regarding 'transforming your care' and the fact that much of it would be returning 'in-house'. In conclusion, the Chair stated that if the health service had to operate on less it needed to be right with each service utilised to its full potential. Acknowledging that some services were not working effectively she stated it was not any one person's fault but everyone needed to work together.

The meeting ended at 9.40pm

CHAIR _____

DATE _____

B

Minutes of Meeting of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 26 November 2015 in the Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon

Members Present: Councillor Dillon, Chair

Councillors Ashton (7.10pm), Bateson, Bell, Buchanan, Clarke, Cuddy, Cuthbertson, Glasgow, Gildernew, Gillespie, Kearney, Mallaghan, McAleer, McEldowney, McFlynn, McGinley, B McGuigan, S McGuigan, McKinney, McLean, McNamee, McPeake, Molloy, Mulligan, J O'Neill, M Quinn, T Quinn, Reid, Robinson, Totten (7.20pm) and Wilson

Officers in Attendance: Mr A Tohill, Chief Executive
Ms Campbell, Director of Culture & Leisure
Ms Canavan, Lead HR Officer
Mr Cassells, Director of Environment and Property
Mr Kelso, Director of Public Health and Infrastructure
Ms Linney, Head of Community Development
Mrs Mezza, Head of Marketing Communications
Mr Moffett Head of Democratic Services
Mr Tohill, Director of Finance
Mrs Forde, Member Support Officer

The meeting commenced at 7 pm

C209/15 Apologies

Councillors Burton, Elattar, Forde, Monteith, Mullen, C O'Neill, G Shiels, J Shiels and it was noted that Councillors Ashton and Totten would arrive late.

C210/15 Declarations of Interest

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

C211/15 Chair's Business

Councillor Glasgow advised that Killycurragh Women's Institute were celebrating their 40th anniversary advising that the organisation consisted of approximately 30 ladies who met on the third Monday of each month and had many different events. Councillor Glasgow requested that the Chair send a letter of congratulations to them commending them on reaching their 40th anniversary. The Chair, Councillor Dillon agreed.

Councillor Wilson requested that Jonathan Anderson be considered for a civic reception advising that he had won a major fashion award for 'Best Designer' of men's and ladies fashions at London fashion week 2015. The Chair, Councillor Dillon stated that the request would be included for consideration.

The Chair Councillor Dillon, advised Members of the passing of the mother of Mr Adrian McCreesh, Director of Business and Communities and extended sympathies to both Adrian and his family.

Matters for Decision

C212/15 Receive and consider minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at Council meeting held on Thursday 22 October 2015

Proposed by Councillor McNamee
Seconded by Councillor S McGuigan and

Resolved That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday 24 September 2015 (C184/15 – C198/15 and C208/15), transacted in “Open Business” having been printed and circulated were considered and signed as accurate and correct.

Councillor Mallaghan made reference to the notice of motion moved at the Council meeting in October on the Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland soccer teams and stated that an article which had appeared in the paper concerning the discussion had been incorrect and as a result it had been disappointing how Council had been portrayed. Stating that the motion had been supported, Councillor Mallaghan commented that local government was scrutinised through the press which played a major role in delivering what was happening in Councils and as such it needed to be done correctly. In conclusion, Councillor Mallaghan stated that the Council should reflect on this when using newspapers and suggested that the Head of Marketing and Communications follow the matter up with the press to have the article corrected.

C213/15 Receive and consider the minutes and recommendations of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Planning Committee held on Tuesday 3 November 2015.

Proposed by Councillor McPeake
Seconded by Councillor Kearney and

Resolved That the Minutes and recommendations of the Planning Committee meeting held on Tuesday 3 November 2015 (P121/15 – P129/15 and P136/15) transacted in “Open Business”, having been printed and circulated, subject to the foregoing, were considered and adopted.

C214/15 Receive and consider the minutes and recommendations of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Policy and Resources Committee held on Thursday 5 November 2015

Proposed by Councillor S McGuigan
Seconded by Councillor T Quinn and

Resolved That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on Thursday 5 November 2015 (PR151/15 –

PR159/15 and PR166/15), transacted in “Open Business” having been printed and circulated were considered and signed as accurate and correct.

C215/15 Receive and consider the minutes and recommendations of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Environment Committee meeting held on Tuesday 10 November 2015

Proposed by Councillor Buchanan
Seconded by Councillor B McGuigan and

Resolved That the Minutes and recommendations of the Environment Committee meeting held on Thursday 10 November 2015, (E199/15 – E214/15 and E226/15), transacted in “Open Business”, having been printed and circulated, were considered and adopted.

C216/15 Receive and consider the minutes and recommendations of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Development Committee meeting held on Thursday 12 November 2015.

Proposed by Councillor Molloy
Seconded by Councillor T Quinn and

Resolved That the Minutes and recommendations of the Development Committee meeting held on Thursday 12 November 2015, (D209/15 – D223/15 and D229/15) transacted in “Open Business”, having been printed and circulated, were considered and adopted.

Councillor Ashton entered the meeting 7.10pm

C217/15 Conferences and Seminars

The Head of Democratic Services referred to details of the undernoted conferences and sought both approval and retrospective approval for the attendance of Members and Council officers, the payment of attendance fees and associated costs as incurred.

- (i) Fuel Poverty Coalition Conference 2015
Tuesday 1 December in Dunadry Hotel, Templepatrick
One employee to attend
- (ii) Role of Councils on economic development, local economy, job creation and sustainable communities: APSE
Thursday 10 December, Derry
- (iii) Review of Business Rates Consultation Event (NILGA)
Friday 11 December in Lough Neagh Discovery Centre (10.15am -1pm)
- (iv) Northern Ireland Business & Human Rights Forum: Reception
Friday 11 December in Belfast Harbour Commissioner (3pm-5pm)

- (v) Business Rates in N Ireland - the Case for Change: Chambré Public Affairs
Tuesday 12 January 2016, Queen's University Belfast (8.50am - 1.15pm)
- (vi) Retrospective Approval Sought for

Conference & Seminar	Date	No. of Attendees	Location	Attendance Fee (Y/N)
Dangerous Dogs Seminar	6-8.10.15	2 employees	Antrim	Yes
Dangerous Dog Refresher Seminar	9.10.15	2 employees	Antrim	Yes
NILGOSC Employer Seminar	22.10.15	7 employees	Dungannon	No
Atlantic Area Programme Seminar	28.10.15	2 employees	Belfast	No
Reserve Forces & Cadet Association Annual Dinner	29.10.15	Cllr Reid (as Council Position of Responsibility rep)	Belfast	Yes
Town & Country Planning Association (TCPA) Garden Cities and Suburbs Seminar	5.11.15	2 employees	Belfast	No
SOLACE NI/County & City Managers' Association CMA Seminar	25.11.15	Chie Executive	Maynooth	No
Planning Reform in NI	1 December	1 employee	Belfast	Yes

Proposed by Councillor Bell
Seconded by Councillor McNamee

Resolved That the attendance of Members and officers, the payment of attendance fees and associated costs as incurred be approved, as required

Matters for Information

C218/15 Consultations notified to Mid Ulster Council

The previously circulated paper on consultations notified to Mid Ulster District Council was noted.

C219/15 Consideration of Motions

C219.1/15 Councillor Molloy to move

Councillor Molloy proposed the undernoted motion

'That Mid Ulster District Council recognises the recent achievement of Dungannon broadcaster, Lynette Fay, on winning at the Irish Film & Television Academy awards in the category of Best Live Event and that given this is a National Award, due recognition should be the form of a Civic reception.

In support of the motion Councillor Molloy highlighted the fact that local presenter, Lynette Faye, had scooped the award against a high level of competition such as live coverage of the recent marriage referendum. Councillor Molloy commended the presenter's skills stating that she presented for Radio Ulster, was a bilingual speaker and an advocate of the Irish community. Referring to the approval of the civic reception policy Councillor Molloy stated that the presenter should be recognised in this way.

Councillor McGuigan seconded the motion.

The Chair, Councillor Dillon declared the motion carried.

C219.2/15 Councillor Cuthbertson to move

Councillor Cuthbertson proposed the undernoted motion.

That this Council notes the destructive nature of Japanese Knotweed and the problems home and landowners are facing as a result of it. Carries out a survey of all Council owned lands to establish the extent of this problem in Mid Ulster. Acknowledges the current relevant legislation under the Wildlife Order (NI) 1985, but calls on the Minister for Environment to introduce more stringent legislation to enable the Department or Councils to enforce that landowners take action on affected areas.

Councillor Cuthbertson advised that Japanese Knotweed is an invasive perennial plant that was first introduced into the United Kingdom in the 1820's as an ornamental garden plant and had been used to support steep banks and to provide screening before its negative impacts became known. He advised that the natural enemies of Japanese Knotweed were not present in Northern Ireland thus the weed thrived and was spread by movement of plant material as well as contaminated soil containing fragments of its extensive root system.

Councillor Cuthbertson highlighted the characteristics of Japanese Knotweed drawing attention to its red/purple shoots, the bamboo like canes which grow three metres in height, its creamy coloured flowers, in late summer and autumn, the orange/brown woody stems in winter and its roots which can extend up to seven metres from the parent plant and penetrate three meters in depth.

Councillor Cuthbertson continued, advising that Japanese Knotweed had many direct and indirect impacts on both the environment and the economy explaining that the weed out-competed native species, could cause structural damage to buildings and bridges and was very difficult to control. Stating that he was aware of a number of locations throughout South Tyrone where home owners and developers are unable to sell properties due to the fact that Japanese Knotweed is on neighbouring lands Councillor Cuthbertson advised that mortgage providers would not lend money if the weed was identified close by and that it could be costly to remove as it required deep excavation or glyphosate based herbicide treatment over several years. In conclusion, Councillor Cuthbertson stated that control of the weed was dealt with under The Wildlife Order NI 985 and was mentioned under waste management regulations NI2006 but neither the NIEA nor Council had powers to enforce landowners to take action.

Councillor McNamee stated that all would agree with the destructive nature of Japanese Knotweed but stated that to only carry out a survey of Council lands it was but a small part of Mid Ulster.

Councillor McNamee proposed an amendment to the motion to read:

“That Council seek a meeting with the Minister to discuss the Department’s strategy on how to eradicate Japanese Knotweed.”

Councillor McNamee stated that he was aware that the motion was seeking more stringent legislation but stated that he knew of homeowners and community organisations in other areas who were trying to eradicate the weed and only some received funding. Councillor McNamee also made reference to the Minister for Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs who had carried out research and in realising that it would cost £1.5billion to eradicate Japanese Knotweed the project was suspended. It was also noted that it had taken £70m to clear the Olympic site in London.

In response, Councillor Cuthbertson stated that in relation to the request that a survey be carried out Mid Ulster District Council owned a vast amount of land and it would be good to see if there was Japanese Knotweed on any of the properties.

Councillor Totten entered the meeting at 7.20pm

With regard to the proposed amendment, Councillor Cuthbertson stated that if the motion moved, was passed, it is up to the Chief Executive and designated officers how best to progress. Councillor Cuthbertson further emphasised if a landowner next to Council property had Japanese Knotweed Council had no authority to make the landowner take action and stated that he would not accept the amendment. In response Councillor McNamee stated that if Councillor Cuthbertson was not prepared to accept the amendment he failed to see how Council would propose more stringent action in regard to Japanese Knotweed and emphasising it could be anyone’s problem tomorrow as a simple delivery of topsoil could bring it to your garden Councillor McNamee stated Council needed to have a discussion with the Department and once again proposed the amendment.

Councillor Cuthbertson stated that it would not be Mid Ulster District Council who would bring in stringent legislation but stated that the motion was to seek the Department to take action to ensure there was legislation in place in order that people are forced to tackle the problem of Japanese Knotweed.

Councillor Kearney stated that there were quite a few concerns in south Derry regarding Japanese Knotweed and stated that although it was an offence to grow it there was no legal power to make people deal with it and many farmers faced difficulties with it as it was on neighbouring land.

Councillor Cuddy sought clarification from the Director of Environment and Property as to whether it was an issue for Mid Ulster District Council stating that a neighbour of his had difficulties with it on adjoining land.

The Chair, Council Dillon stated that she did not know a great deal about Japanese Knotweed but likening it to people with overgrown trees stated that they did not allow them to grow simply to annoy neighbours but merely could not afford to have them pruned.

Councillor McNamee stated that the motion did request more stringent legislation and stressed that people would love to get the matter sorted but Council did not need more powers to enforce it.

Councillor Mallaghan stated that he welcomed the opportunity to discuss the difficulties of Japanese Knotweed as it was damaging and people needed to know more about it. He further advised that he had discussed the subject with DARD as constituents had brought it to his attention and emphasised that Council needed to learn more about it before going to Ministers.

Councillor Mallaghan proposed that the motion be withdrawn and a working group is established to investigate the problem.

Councillor Cuthbertson stated that he had spoken to two landowners one of whom couldn't sell his property as Japanese Knotweed was located on a neighbouring property and another who couldn't get a house sold as the next door neighbour would not deal with the Japanese knotweed and it was a no comfort to him if the reason the neighbour would not act was down to cost. Councillor Cuthbertson also made reference to a housing developer who could not build on lands due to the problem and highlighted that DARD often highlighted the necessity to deal with problem weeds. Councillor Cuthbertson then stated he would amend the motion to state *that Council meet with the Minister for the Environment* but stated that if the motion was carried it would be the decision of the lead officer how best to implement as Mid Ulster District Council would not decide on legislation.

The Director of Environment and Property stated that whilst he was aware of some instances of Japanese Knotweed, Council did not, at this time have a comprehensive survey of all land but it would not be difficult to complete a survey and that the weed would not be able to 'get hold' on a sports pitch which was regularly treated.

Councillor McNamee referred to the amendment suggested by Councillor Cuthbertson and stated that he would like 'more stringent legislation' removed from

the motion as it implied that Council wanted to bully people and it would be better to sit down and establish what the issues were through discussion.

In response, Councillor Cuthbertson stated that it was unlikely that the Minister for the Environment would change the legislation overnight. Once again, Councillor McNamee requested that Councillor Cuthbertson remove the wording from the motion.

The Chair, Councillor Dillon stated that for some the motion was difficult to accept.

Councillor McKinney stated that he did not think the cost of the weed killer was the issue but there was a law against growing weeds, the Department had a brochure on it that there was laws but it was not Council's remit to enforce them.

Councillor McGinley seconded Councillor McNamee's amendment.

Councillor McLean seconded Councillor Cuthbertson's motion

The Chair, Councillor Dillon confirmed the amendment altered the last sentence of the motion as undernoted:

‘Acknowledged the current relevant legislation under the Wildlife Order (NI) 1985 and takes a delegation to meet with the Minister.’

The Chair, Councillor Dillon called for a vote on the amendment.

For 21

Against 11

The Chair, Councillor Dillon called for a vote on the amendment proposed by Councillor Cuthbertson. Councillor McLean stated that there was now no requirement as it would not alter the outcome.

The Chair, Councillor Dillon declared the amendment and as such the amended motion carried.

C219.3/15 Councillor M Quinn to move

Councillor M Quinn proposed the undernoted motion

That this Council:

- (i) *Expresses its sympathy with those who lost their lives in the recent terror attacks in Paris, Egypt and Beirut, and*
- (ii) *Stands in solidarity with those across the World in condemnation of these horrific attacks and urges all countries to work together to find a lasting and peaceful solution to the conflict in the Middle-East.*

In support of the motion Councillor M Quinn stated that he wished Council to express its sympathy to all people killed highlighting the events in Paris, the bombing of a

Beirut marketplace and the downing of a plane in Egypt. Councillor M Quinn stated that these incidents were an attack on all who stand for peace emphasising that it was known what it was like to face the threat of terrorism and Council should stand with the French and peoples of all colour and creed who were committed to peace. In conclusion Councillor M Quinn stated that the spirit of unity should be the message from Council.

Councillor Cuthbertson stated that all had been touched in recent days especially with the events in Paris and made reference to the comments of a Fermanagh and South Tyrone MLA who had stated that ISIS was not a terrorist organisation. Noting that the MLA had since retracted the statement Councillor Cuthbertson stated that it was unthinkable given the events in Paris to make such a statement yet it was not surprising given the history of the political party.

Councillor McGinley advised that Sinn Féin would support the motion but stated that in discussing conflict people in the Middle East should not be forgotten about naming Palestine which was now known as one of the largest concentration camps, the Syrian bombings which followed the unthinkable events in Paris, Nigeria, the media portrayal of refugees as following the events in Paris they were portrayed as terrorists. In conclusion, Councillor McGinley emphasised the need for discussion in the Middle East as the problems would not be solved by the Western world deciding what should be done.

Councillor McLean stated the DUP would support the motion but as a Council the remit was matters which linked back to Local Government and a conversation was needed as to ascertain what Council should be discussing.

Councillor McFlynn seconded the motion.

The Chair, Councillor Dillon declared the motion carried.

C219.4/15 Councillor Wilson to move

Councillor Wilson proposed the undernoted motion stating that he wished to include "...and to train as part of the Northern Ireland Football team at the Mid Ulster Sports Arena".

That this council, recognizing the tremendous achievement of the N. Ireland football team in qualifying for the Euros invite Stuart Dallas ,Aaron Hughes, Roy Carroll and Niall McGinn to a civic reception at the earliest opportunity.

Councillor Cuddy seconded the motion stating that he knew Niall McGinn, he had played for Dungannon Swifts and his father worked in Dungannon. Councillor Wilson stated that there was an available opportunity in March 2016 for the team to train.

The Chair, Councillor Dillon declared the motion carried.

Councillor Reid left the meeting at 7.45pm

C219.5/15 Councillor Mallaghan to move

Councillor Mallaghan read the undernoted motion and stated that he had known Cara McLaughlin for a long time and that she was a person who gives a lot back to the community through sport. Councillor Mallaghan further advised that Cara had participated in the world championships earlier in the week and although she had not been successful on this occasion further success would come her way.

That this council acknowledges the tremendous success of Cara McLaughlin in winning the All Ireland Title for Intermediate Featherweight boxing champion. Cara is a fantastic ambassador for Mid Ulster and an excellent role model for young women. That this council offers a civic reception/award in recognition and wishes her every success in the future.

Councillor McNamee seconded the proposal stating that he too knew Cara and remembered her winning the All Ireland competition. Councillor McNamee also advised that two Cookstown boxers whom previously had been nominated for recognition had attained bronze and silver awards on the national stage.

The Chair, Councillor Dillon declared the motion carried.

Councillor Mallaghan advised that Cookstown Rugby Club who had been previously mentioned for recognition would soon have to return their silverware and it would be good to have them honoured prior to that.

The Chair, Councillor Dillon stated that the Civic Reception policy was now ratified and there was six months left of her term as Chair and it would be her hope to progress receptions as soon as possible.

Councillor Mulligan left the meeting at 7.50pm

Councillor McLean remarked that some reception requests had come via 'motions' whilst others had been requested at the Council meeting and thus sought clarification as to how requests should be made. The Chief Executive advised that the requests were a Council decision irrespective of how they were presented at the meeting.

Councillor McLean then asked if the Chair could rule receptions. The Chief Executive advised that the Chair could do this. Councillor McLean suggested that the matter should be discussed at the next available party representatives group. The Chair, Councillor Dillon stated she would not be hosting individual receptions but rather grouping requests as appropriate. In response to Councillor McLean's request to bring suggested groupings to Party Representatives Group the Chair stated that she proposed to do so.

Councillor Mulligan returned to the meeting at 7.52pm

Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

Resolved That items C220/15 – C229/15 be taken as confidential business.

The press left the meeting at 7.50pm

C230/15 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7pm and ended 8.10pm

CHAIR _____

DATE _____

C

Minutes of Meeting of Planning Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Tuesday 1 December 2015 in Council Offices, Ballyronan Road, Magherafelt

Members Present

Councillor Kearney, Chair

Councillors Bateson, Bell, Clarke, Cuthbertson, Glasgow, Mallaghan, McAleer, McEldowney, McKinney, McPeake, Reid, Robinson

Officers in Attendance

Dr Boomer, Planning Manager
Mr Bowman, Head of Development Management
Ms Doyle, Senior Planning Officer
Mr Marrion, Senior Planning Officer
Ms McCullagh, Senior Planning Officer
Ms McEvoy, Head of Development Plan and Enforcement
Ms McKearney, Senior Planning Officer
Ms McNally, Solicitor
Miss Thompson, Committee Services/ Senior Admin Officer

Others in Attendance

Councillor G Shiels

Applicant Speakers

I/2012/0423/F	Mr Mulgrew T4 Architects
I/2012/0398/F	Mr O'Gara
I/2014/0296/F	Mr Larkin
I/2014/0375/F	Mr Larkin
LA09/2015/0525/O	Mr Marshall
LA09/2015/0696/F	Ms Jackson

The meeting commenced at 7.02 pm.

P137/15 Apologies

Councillors Gildernew, Mullen and J Shiels.

P138/15 Declarations of Interest

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

Councillor McAleer declared an interest in planning application I/2014/0296/F.

P139/15 Confirm Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 3 November 2015

Proposed by Councillor Bell
Seconded by Councillor Mallaghan and

Resolved That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on Tuesday 3 November 2015, (P121/15 – P129/15 & P136/15), were considered and signed as accurate and correct.

Matters for Decision

P140/15 Planning Applications for Determination

The Chair drew Members attention to the undernoted planning applications for determination.

I/2012/0423/F 55kw wind turbine at site 250m SE of 40 Killucan Road, Cookstown for Mr Pat Mulgrew

Ms McCullagh (SPO) presented a report on planning application I/2012/0423/F advising that it is recommended for approval.

The Chair advised the committee that a request to speak on the application had been received and invited Mr Mulgrew to address the committee.

Mr Mulgrew expressed concern in relation to distance measurements taken for an acoustic report, he felt the measurements needed to be checked and a further noise assessment carried out for this application.

The Planning Manager stated that the key issues relating to this application appeared to be the reference points used for taking measurements and whether the acoustic report then stands. The Planning Manager advised that further measurements could be taken by officers in order to satisfy the concerns of Mr Mulgrew.

Councillor Reid suggested that this application be deferred for one month to allow for further measurements to be taken.

Councillor Clarke declared an interest in this application.

Councillor Clarke stated there appeared to be some confusion with regard to falling distances related to this application.

The Planning Manager advised that falling distances are not related to the turbine falling on land but rather the safety of people.

The Chair advised that the agent for this application was also in attendance and invited the representative to address the committee.

The representative from T4 Architects advised that the distances used for the acoustic report were taken from Ordnance Survey co-ordinates.

The Planning Manager felt that the Committee was being asked to arbitrate in a family dispute and invited both parties to attend an office meeting to discuss the

issues relating to the application. The Planning Manager confirmed that further measurements would be taken and confirmed at this meeting.

Councillor Bell asked if the land surrounding the wind turbine would be rendered ineffective for further development.

The Planning Manager advised that this would depend on the level of noise an applicant would be prepared to put up with.

In response to Councillor Cuthbertson's request the Planning Manager asked officers to take additional measurements from maps and report back to committee tonight.

Councillor Mallaghan proposed that a decision regarding this application should be delegated to the Planning Manager instead of being brought back to committee.

Councillor McKinney seconded Councillor Mallaghan's proposal.

The Planning Manager advised Members that they can only delegate an application to him with an instruction from the committee.

Councillor Clarke felt that erection of a wind turbine is different from other types of construction.

Officers advised that based on their measurements taken tonight from maps that the distance from the turbine to nos. 38 and 40 Killucan Road, Cookstown were as follows –

No.38 – 240m from curtilage
250m at furthest point

No.40 – 230m from curtilage
250m at furthest point

It was advised that the acoustic report was based on a closer distance to the turbine.

The Planning Manager advised that he would facilitate a joint office meeting between parties to discuss issues of concern.

Councillor Robinson felt the application should be approved as per officers report.

Proposed by Councillor Reid
Seconded by Councillor Glasgow

That planning application I/2012/0423/F be deferred for a joint office meeting with applicant and objector. If no agreement is reached at this meeting then authority is delegated to the Planning Manager to approve the application.

Members voted on Councillor's Reid proposal –

For – 9

Resolved That planning application I/2012/0423/F be deferred for a joint office meeting with applicant and objector. If no agreement is reached at this meeting then authority is delegated to the Planning Manager to approve the application.

Councillor Bateson commented that there appeared to be little incentive for the applicant to attend the office meeting.

In response to Councillor McPeake's comments the Planning Manager advised that noise assessments are based on very line levels of noise which are calculated mathematically. The Planning Manager advised that he would have every faith in those taking the assessments that they do so in the interest of the amenity of neighbouring properties.

I/2012/0398/F Retention of as constructed 11kw wind turbine with a 18.4m hub height (to replace previously approved 20kw wind turbine) at site approximately 103m SW of 29 Crancussy Road, Cookstown for P McNally

Councillors Clarke and Mallaghan declared an interest in this application.

Ms McCullagh (SPO) presented a report on planning application I/2012/0398/F advising that it is recommended for approval.

The Chair advised the committee that a request to speak on the application had been received and invited Mr O'Gara to address the committee.

Mr O'Gara stated that this wind turbine was erected three years ago without planning permission, he felt that the application does not meet standards and that should the turbine fall it would fall 18m into a field in his ownership.

Mr O'Gara referred to the shadow flicker inside dwelling located at 31 Crancussy Road which causes the curtains at the front of the property to be closed permanently.

Mr O'Gara also stated that the turbine exceeds recommended ETSU levels and that the noise assessment taken in 2010 was inaccurate.

Mr O'Gara concluded by saying that the wind turbine is ruining the amenity of his property and that it is up to the planning department to look after his interests.

The Planning Manager referred to the history surrounding this application and stated that the application before Members is essentially a substitution to a past approval which is for a taller turbine to be located closer to no.31 Crancussy Road. The Planning Manager highlighted objections were also received from Mr O'Gara in

relation to the approval granted in 2010, these were subsequently withdrawn as Mr O’Gara had come to an agreement with the applicant.

Mr O’Gara confirmed that he currently resides with his daughter at no.33 Crancussy Road, that No.31 is rented but is in his ownership. Mr O’Gara also confirmed that an agreement was reached between himself and the applicant with regards an access way. An agreement was also reached between Mr O’Gara and the applicant regarding resiting of the turbine however the location where the turbine is built is not the position agreed by Mr O’Gara.

Proposed by Councillor McAleer
Seconded by Councillor McKinney and

Resolved That Members discuss the issues relating to this application in confidential business.

As committee had taken the decision to go into committee, the Chair, Councillor Kearney asked Members of the public to withdraw from the meeting at 8.05pm.

Public were invited back into meeting at 8.25 pm.

The Chair, Councillor Kearney thanked the public for their co-operation and advised that the committee had been discussing procedures and seeking legal advice from Council Solicitor.

The Planning Manager advised that the key issue before committee relates to amenity – noise, shadow flicker, visual amenity and falling distance/safety.

The Planning Manager stated that if this was a new application then it would be reasonable to refuse however the key factor relating to this application is the history – a turbine had already been approved which is higher and closer to 31 Crancussy Road. The Planning Manager advised that noise assessments had been taken in relation to the current application and the difference between that and the turbine already approved were minimal.

The Planning Manager also advised it would be appropriate to add a condition to tonight’s application in that this application will supersede the application approved in 2010, that is, there will only be one turbine located at the site.

The Planning Manager asked Members not to make a judgment based on previous financial settlement between applicant and objector. He also confirmed that there was minimal exceedance of ETSU guidelines but that these were only guidelines.

Proposed by Councillor McPeake
Seconded by Councillor Bateson and

Resolved That planning application I/2012/0423/F be approved subject to conditions as per the officers report with the added condition that previous application is superseded.

Members considered the remaining planning applications as per agenda.

**H/2011/0057/F 225kw wind turbine with tower height of 31m approximately
330m NE of 34 Brough Road, Castledawson for Mr and Mrs
M McMullan**

Application listed for refusal on the grounds stated in the officer's report.

Proposed by Councillor Bell
Seconded by Councillor Bateson and

Resolved That planning application H/2011/0057/F be refused on grounds stated in the officer's report.

**I/2013/0335/F 30kw wind turbine 190m NE of 21 Carnenny Lane, Pomeroy
for Eric Black**

Application listed for refusal on the grounds stated in the officer's report.

In response to Councillor Glasgow's question, Ms McCullagh (SPO) advised that the applicant was reminded on at least three occasions to provide the additional information required.

Proposed by Councillor Bell
Seconded by Councillor Reid and

Resolved That planning application I/2013/0335/F be refused on grounds stated in the officer's report.

The Planning Manager advised of numerous similar planning applications in which further information was requested from the applicant. The Planning Manager advised that the failure to provide the required information is causing a backlog in the planning system and requested the assistance of Members in bringing these applications to a resolution.

**I/2013/0400/F 20kw wind turbine 140m SW of 80 Gortsraheen Road,
Pomeroy for Michael McElhone**

Application listed for refusal on the grounds stated in the officer's report.

Proposed by Councillor Reid
Seconded by Councillor McAleer and

Resolved That planning application I/2013/0400/F be refused on grounds stated in the officer's report.

**I/2014/0255/F 60kw wind turbine on 18m monopole at site 100m SW of 316
Pomeroy Road, Pomeroy for Eric Black**

Application withdrawn.

H/2014/0258/F Hydro electric scheme, including new fish pass to existing weir, water intake screens, sluice gates, mill race and turbine house approximately 500m W of 240 Hillhead Road, Castledawson for Moyola Hydro Ltd

Application listed for approval subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

Proposed by Councillor McKinney
Seconded by Councillor Reid and

Resolved That planning application H/2014/0258/F be approved subject to conditions as per the officers report.

I/2014/0296/F Wind turbine, 30.4m hub height with 14.55m blades, associated access and 2 electricity cabinets at lands 270m N of 20 Beaghbeg Road, Cookstown for Mr Charles Quinn

I/2014/0375/F Wind turbine with 30m hub height and 14.55m blades, associated access and 2 electricity cabinets at lands 350m N of Ballynagilly Lane, Cookstown for Mr Derek Campton

Applications listed for approval subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

Councillor Clarke advised that both applications were located with an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and proposed that these applications be deferred until the conclusion of the deliberations of the wind turbine working group.

The Planning Manager suggested deferral of these applications for one month in order to allow Committee Members an opportunity to view the sites of the proposed wind turbines and to allow further consideration of Special Planning Policy Statement and possible impact to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Chair advised the committee that a request to speak on both applications had been received and invited Mr Larkin to address the committee.

Mr Larkin felt there were not sufficient grounds to delay these applications and should be determined based on the information provided.

Councillor Bell seconded Councillor Clarke's proposal.

The Planning Manager advised that officers would consider position on Special Planning Policy Statement and report back before end of meeting.

In response to Councillor Cuthbertson's question the Planning Manager advised that any similar applications were removed from last month's agenda.

In response to Councillor Bell's question the Planning Manager advised he was not aware of how many wind turbines were located within Mournes AONB.

H/2014/0443/F Retention and conversion of existing farm building to accommodate 2 proposed dwellings at site approximately 10m SE of 49 Moyola Road, Castledawson for Richard Stewart

Application listed for approval subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

Proposed by Councillor Reid
Seconded by Councillor Robinson and

Resolved That planning application H/2014/0443/F be approved subject to conditions as per the officers report.

M/2015/0151/O Replacement dwelling at 53 Coalisland Road, Dungannon for Ms Joanne O'Reilly

Application listed for approval subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

Proposed by Councillor Mallaghan
Seconded by Councillor McAleer and

Resolved That planning application M/2015/0151/O be approved subject to conditions as per the officers report.

LA09/2015/0147/F 6no. 2 bed apartments, with parking, at 32 Mullaghboy Lane, Magherafelt for Mr Philip Donaghy

Application withdrawn.

LA09/2015/0200/O Dwelling and garage 230m NE of 8 Cookstown Road, Dungannon for Gary Stewart

Application withdrawn.

LA09/2015/0214/F 2 no.free range poultry sheds with 4 no. feed bins, 2 no. gas tanks, an office and standby generator building (30,000 free range broilers) at lands adjacent to 18 Favour Royal Road, Aughnacloy for Mr Victor McFarland

Application listed for approval subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

Proposed by Councillor Cuthbertson
Seconded by Councillor Reid and

Resolved That planning application LA09/2015/0214/F be approved subject to conditions as per the officers report.

LA09/2015/0229/O Site for dwelling and garage at lands adjoining (N&E) 11 Ballynasaggart Road, Curran, Ballygawley for Mr Noel Bingham

Application listed for approval subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

Proposed by Councillor Cuthbertson
Seconded by Councillor Robinson and

Resolved That planning application LA09/2015/0229/O be approved subject to conditions as per the officers report.

LA09/2015/0323/F Free range poultry shed, feed bin and standby generator building (8,000 free range egg laying hens) at lands approximately 323m NW of 17 Tullybleety Road, Aughnacloy for Mr James Burton

Application listed for approval subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

Proposed by Councillor Reid
Seconded by Councillor Robinson and

Resolved That planning application LA09/2015/0323/F be approved subject to conditions as per the officers report.

LA09/2015/0346/O Dwelling and garage 75m SW of 42 Tullagh Road, Cookstown for Philip Donaghy

Application withdrawn.

LA09/2015/0470/F Free range poultry shed with 2 feed bins, standby generator building and manure storage shed (16,000 free range egg laying hens) at lands approximately 125m SW of 25 Coolmaghry Road, Dungannon for Mr Gary Watt

Application listed for approval subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

Councillor McKinney declared an interest in this application.

In response to Councillor McKinney's request, Ms McCullagh (SPO) advised upon objections received in relation to this proposal.

Proposed by Councillor Cuthbertson
Seconded by Councillor Robinson and

Resolved That planning application LA09/2015/0470/F be approved subject to conditions as per the officers report.

The meeting recessed at 9.00 pm and recommenced at 9.14 pm.

Continuation of Items I/2014/0296/F and I/2014/0375/F

The Planning Manager advised that having looked at Special Planning Policy Statement it advised that a moratoria should not be placed on applications for wind turbines but that a cautious approach should be taken within designated landscapes. The Planning Manager felt it would be appropriate for the committee to undertake a site visit to the locations of both proposals.

Proposed by Councillor Mallaghan
Seconded by Councillor Reid and

Resolved That planning applications I/2014/0296/F and I/2014/0375/F be deferred for site meeting and brought back to committee for determination.

LA09/2015/0471/O Dwelling and garage 61m S of 79 Kinrush Road, Ardboe for Mrs Geraldine Ryan

Ms McCullagh (SPO) presented a report on planning application LA09/2015/0525/F advising that it is recommended for refusal.

Councillor Mallaghan declared an interest in this application and requested to speak on it.

Councillor Mallaghan advised that further medical information was available in relation to this application and requested an office meeting.

Proposed by Councillor Bateson
Seconded by Councillor Bell and

Resolved That planning application LA09/2015/0471/O be deferred for an office meeting.

LA09/2015/0525/O Dwelling and garage 15m W of 26 Drumkee Road, Dungannon for Mr and Mrs Brown

Mr Marrion (SPO) presented a report on planning application LA09/2015/0525/F advising that it is recommended for refusal.

The Chair advised the committee that a request to speak on the application had been received and invited Mr Marshall to address the committee.

Mr Marshall advised that this application is to facilitate a family returning from Australia. Mr Marshall reported inaccuracies within the officers report and requested an office meeting.

The Planning Manager felt there were grounds to facilitate an office meeting.

Proposed by Councillor McKinney
Seconded by Councillor Cuthbertson and

Resolved That planning application LA09/2015/0525/O be deferred for an office meeting.

Councillor Reid commented that Council should look at this application in a positive way in that it is bringing people back to the local area.

The Planning Manager agreed with the Councillor's comments but stated that clustering should not be excessive.

LA09/2015/0627/F Alterations and extension to dwelling at 1 Annaghbeg Park South, Aghareany, Donaghmore for Mr Oliver Doris

Application listed for approval subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

Proposed by Councillor Mallaghan
Seconded by Councillor McAleer and

Resolved That planning application LA09/2015/0627/F be approved subject to conditions as per the officers report.

LA09/2015/0635/O 2 no. dwellings between 50-62 Annaghmore Road, Coalisland for Mr and Mrs Pat Devlin

Application withdrawn.

LA09/2015/0693/F Amended house design from approval M/2008/0518/F at site 70m S of 8 Reenaderry Road, Aghamullan for Claire and Paul Envy

Application listed for approval subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

Proposed by Councillor Mallaghan
Seconded by Councillor Robinson and

Resolved That planning application LA09/2015/0693/F be approved subject to conditions as per the officers report.

LA09/2015/0696/F Extension to anaerobic digestion plant at lands approximately 220m E of 14 Tullywiggan Cottages for PAR Renewables Ltd

Application listed for approval subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

Councillor Glasgow referred to conditions of approval and that traffic movements are permitted between 0700 hrs and 2200 hrs, the Councillor asked why movements were permitted until 2200 hrs and felt this should be reduced given that the plant is located close to housing.

The Planning Manager advised that the hours permitted for traffic movements came from the original planning approval, however he stated that consideration could be given to varying these hours.

Councillor Cuthbertson raised concern in that this scheme was now being added to.

The Planning Manager advised that Members needed to base their decisions on the information before them.

The Chair advised the committee that a request to speak on the application had been received and invited Ms Jackson to address the committee.

Ms Jackson advised that during the time this anaerobic digestion plant had been in operation no complaints have been received in relation to noise.

Councillor Bell felt that this application signals that anaerobic digestion plants are the way forward and proposed approval of the application as per officers report.

Councillor McPeake seconded Councillor Bell's proposal.

Councillor Glasgow stated that he was not against the proposal only the hours permitted for traffic movements. Councillor Glasgow proposed that application be approved with condition of reduced hours of traffic movements to 2000 hrs.

Councillor McKinney seconded Councillor Glasgow's proposal.

Councillor Bateson felt that as no complaint had been received in relation to noise from traffic movements there was no reason to change this condition.

Members voted on Councillor Glasgow's proposal –

Councillor Glasgow requested a recorded vote.

For – 5 (Councillors Cuthbertson, Glasgow, McKinney, Reid, Robinson)

Members voted on Councillor Bell's proposal –

For – 8

Resolved That planning application LA09/2015/0696/F be approved subject to conditions as per the officers report.

LA09/2015/0707/F Retrospective application for change of use from domestic garage to part-time hairdressing salon at 11 Tullagh Drive, Cookstown for Stephen Richmond

Ms McCullagh (SPO) presented a report on planning application LA09/2015/0707/F advising that it is recommended for refusal.

The Planning Manager advised that this application may benefit from an office meeting.

Proposed by Councillor Robinson
Seconded by Councillor McPeake and

Resolved That planning application LA09/2015/0707/F be deferred for an office meeting.

LA09/2015/0716/F Two terrace dwellings adjacent to 13 Lisnaclyn Court, Dungannon for Mr P Marshall

Application listed for approval subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

Councillor Cuthbertson asked if NIHE should have been consulted in relation to this application given they have a lot properties in the area. The Councillor raised concern with regard to shortage of parking in the area and the further pressure the two proposed dwellings will have on parking.

Councillor Bell felt that if NIHE had any concerns in relation to the proposal they should have brought these to the attention of the planning department itself instead of via a Member.

The Chair advised the committee that a request to speak on the application had been received and invited Mr Marshall to address the committee.

It was confirmed that due consideration had been given to parking in relation to this application.

Proposed by Councillor Reid
Seconded by Councillor Bateson and

Resolved That planning application LA09/2015/0716/F be approved subject to conditions as per the officers report.

LA09/2015/0799/O Infill dwelling and garage at lands adjacent to 42 Agharan Road, Dungannon for Paul McQuaid

Application listed for approval subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

Proposed by Councillor Mallaghan
Seconded by Councillor Robinson and

Resolved That planning application LA09/2015/0799/O be approved subject to conditions as per the officers report.

H/2012/0171/F Wind turbine with a 40m hub height and 31m rotor diameter at 190m SW of 9 Drumanee Road, Bellaghy for Mr Jason Kennedy

Application listed for refusal on the grounds stated in the officer's report.

Proposed by Councillor Clarke
Seconded by Councillor McPeake and

Resolved That planning application H/2012/0717/F be refused on grounds stated in the officer's report.

M/2013/0356/F Use of redundant shed for farm purposes at 70m NW of 21 Terryglassog Road, Eglish for Mr Sean Jordan

Application listed for approval subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

Proposed by Councillor McKinney
Seconded by Councillor Robinson and

Resolved That planning application M/2013/0356/F be approved subject to conditions as per the officers report.

H/2014/0046/O Hotel development between Glenshane Filling Station, 31 Glenshane Road and 10 Fallagloon Road, Maghera for M Bradley

Application listed for approval subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

Proposed by Councillor McPeake
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

Resolved That planning application H/2014/0046/O be approved subject to conditions as per the officers report.

M/2014/0299/F Community and sports hub providing hall, fitness suite, crèche and changing facilities at Black Lane, Mullaghanagh, Dungannon for Dungannon United Youth

Application listed for approval subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

Members present declared an interest in this application. (Councillors Bateson, Bell, Clarke, Cuthbertson, Glasgow, Kearney, Mallaghan, McAleer, McEldowney, McKinney, McPeake, Reid, Robinson.)

Councillor Cuthbertson proposed that the condition relating to operational hours of the building should be reduced from 2300 hrs to 2030 hrs to limit the disturbance to nearby properties.

Councillor Reid proposed the approval of the application as per the officers report stating that Council should encourage the use of the building.

Councillor McPeake seconded Councillor Reid's proposal.

Resolved That planning application M/2014/0299/F be approved subject to conditions as per the officers report.

Councillor Cuthbertson asked for confirmation that sight lines will be addressed prior to commencement of this application.

It was confirmed that, one of the conditions of the application is that sight lines will be completed prior to the commencement of the proposal.

H/2014/0356/F Fun farm with indoor soft play area, animal pens, cafeteria and associated parking to be run with existing agricultural business at 45m NE of 47 Magherafelt Road, Castledawson for Mr Adrian Cudden

Application listed for approval subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

Councillor McPeake declared an interest in this application.

Proposed by Councillor Reid
Seconded by Councillor McAleer and

Resolved That planning application H/2014/0356/F be approved subject to conditions as per the officers report.

H/2014/0439/O Dwelling and garage on a farm at 30m NW of 34 Motalee Road, Desertmartin, for Mr Niall Higgin

Application listed for approval subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

Proposed by Councillor Bell
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

Resolved That planning application H/2014/0439/O be approved subject to conditions as per the officers report.

LA09/2015/0184/O Dwelling and domestic garden at 30m S of 46 Tullagh Road, Cookstown for Paul and Louise Bryne

Application listed for approval subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

Councillor Mallaghan declared an interest in this application.

Proposed by Councillor Clarke
Seconded by Councillor Robinson and

Resolved That planning application LA09/2015/0184/O be approved subject to conditions as per the officers report.

LA09/2015/0612/F Retention of re-orientated modular dwelling opposite 30 Annaghmore Road, Moortown for John and Paula Quinn

Application listed for approval subject to conditions as per the officer's report.

Proposed by Councillor Bateson
Seconded by Councillor McKinney and

Resolved That planning application LA09/2015/0612/F be approved subject to conditions as per the officers report.

Matters for Information

P141/15 Advice Note on Economic Policy

The Planning Manager presented previously circulated report regarding release of a Planning Advice Note on Implementation of Planning Policy for the Retention of Zoned Land and Economic Development Uses (DOE 16 November 2015).

Members noted the content of the report.

P142/15 Report of Delegated Decisions Issued in October 2015

Members noted the content of the report of delegated decisions issued in October 2015.

P143/15 Enforcement Appeal Decisions Received

The Head of Development Management presented previously circulated report advising Members of recent decisions by Planning Appeals Commission.

Members noted the content of the report.

Councillor Mallaghan queried that should an application be refused, if there is a timeframe (ie. 2 years) before the same application can be brought back for consideration.

The Planning Manager advised that if an application is refused and then brought back it may depend on the design of the application whether it is accepted.

CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

Proposed by Councillor McPeake
Seconded by Councillor Robinson and

Resolved That items P144/15 to P146/15 be taken as confidential business.

P147/15 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7.00pm and ended at 11.00 pm.

Chair _____

Date _____

D

Minutes of Meeting of Policy and Resources Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 3 December 2015 in the Council Offices, Ballyronan Road, Magherafelt

Members Present	Councillor S McGuigan, Chair Councillors Ashton, Bateson, Buchanan, Cuddy, Forde, Gildernew, McKinney, McLean, McPeake, Mallaghan, Molloy, M Quinn (7.10 pm) and Totten
Officers in Attendance	Mr A Tohill, Chief Executive Mrs A Campbell, Director of Culture and Leisure Mrs Canavan, Lead Human Resources Officer Ms Mezza, Head of Marketing and Communications Mr Moffett, Head of Democratic Services Mr O'Hagan, Head of ICT Mr JJ Tohill, Lead Officer for Finance Mrs Grogan, Committee Services Officer

The meeting commenced at 7.01 pm

PR167/15 Apologies

Councillors Elattar and T Quinn.

PR168/15 Declaration of Interest

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

PR169/15 Receive and confirm minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee held on Thursday 5 November 2015

Proposed by Councillor McPeake
Seconded by Councillor Bateson and

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on Thursday 5 November 2015 (PR151/15 – PR159/15 and PR166/15) were considered and signed as accurate and correct.

PR170/15 Member Networks Representation – NILGA

The Head of Democratic Services drew attention to the previously circulated report and advised that it was to give further consideration to agreeing on nominations/representation from Council to two Member Networks now established by the NI Local Government Association (NILGA).

Proposed by Councillor McLean
Seconded by Councillor McPeake and

Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council that nominations be brought to Party Leaders for the appointment of a representative to the Community Planning & Well Being Member Network and a representative to the Planning & Regeneration Member Network.

Councillor M Quinn entered the meeting at 7.10 pm

PR171/15 Publication Scheme for Council

The Head of Democratic Services drew attention to the previously circulated report which was to consider to the adoption of a Publication Scheme for Mid Ulster District Council.

Councillor McLean enquired if the Scheme was over committing the Council to undertaking the documented activities. The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that the Scheme was compiled drawing the Information Commissioners Model Scheme.

Councillor McPeake queried if the charges contained with the proposed Scheme were also applicable to Councillors. The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that the charges applied to everyone wishing to access the service.

Proposed by Councillor McLean
Seconded by Councillor Forde and

Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council to adopt the draft Publication Scheme

PR172/15 Registration Services

The Lead HR Officer drew attention to the previously circulated report and advised that it was to align fees charged for room hire for weddings and civil partnerships ceremonies across the 3 legacy council locations and venues.

In response to Councillor Molloy's query on previous applicable fees for Council owned venues which includes The Hill of the O'Neill, the Lead HR Officer advised that she would investigate the matter and bring a response back to Committee.

Proposed by Councillor Cuddy
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council the following Marriage/Civil Partnership Fees be charged across the 3 Locations as outlined below and that a response be brought back on applicable fees for Council owned venues.

Ceremonies at Registry Offices: £50 for Room Hire
£40 for Caretaking/security at weekend & Public Holiday

Ceremonies at Approved Venues: Dungannon fees to be brought in line
With Magherafelt and Cookstown as follows:

Monday – Friday£160
Saturday£260
Public Holiday£310

PR173/15 Learning & Development Policy

The Lead HR Officer drew attention to the previously circulated report and sought approval for the Mid Ulster District Council Learning & Development Policy.

Councillor Cuddy felt that it was a good idea, but enquired if this was relative to each department only and whether this would benefit personal or organisational development.

The Lead HR Officer advised that it would be a corporate wide policy. She advised that there would be a need to have it carefully managed, as training and development would have to be relevant to an employee's post, with a proper formal process being followed.

The Lead HR Officer stated that development was two-fold as there would be a need to develop an employee and the organisation. There are different learning and development needs.

Councillor Ashton referred to item 5.2 on the draft Policy and enquired if an employee had started a course before gaining employment with the Council, does this mean the Council would be eligible to pay their fees.

The Lead HR Officer advised if an employee was midway through a course there would be an onus on the Council to deal with the request favourably.

Proposed by Councillor Molloy
Seconded by Councillor Bateson and

Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council to approve the Learning & Development Policy.

PR174/15 Ulster-Scots Language Policy EQIA

The Director of Culture and Leisure drew attention to the previously circulated document to advise Members on the progress in respect of the Ulster-Scots Policy assessment of equality impacts and public consultation and to obtain approval for the issue of the EQIA consultation report.

Councillor Buchanan felt that the policy wasn't powerful enough to promote the Ulster-Scots Language and asked if amendments can be made to it.

The Director of Culture and Leisure advised that the policy was in draft form only and that the document would be available on the website accompanied with a pro-forma response form for anyone to make suggestions/ amendments as they deemed necessary.

Proposed by Councillor Cuddy
Seconded by Councillor M Quinn and

Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council that members make their submissions to the draft Ulster-Scots Language Policy before proceeding.

PR175/15 Irish Language Policy – Good Relations Implications

The Director of Culture and Leisure drew attention to the previously circulated report to advise Members of the possible Good Relations impacts of the draft Irish Language Policy and to consider recommendations as to the mitigating actions.

Councillor Buchanan referred to recommendation 5 and asked why this was included as it was a different status.

Councillor McLean felt his only concern would be the deliverance and monitoring of the Irish Language programme.

Councillor McPeake advised that at the last Good Relations Working Group held on Wednesday 25 November it was agreed that an Irish Language Implementation Group be established and have the same membership as the Good Relations Working Group. The Group will form the development of the Implementation Plan and provide oversight and guidance on the rolling out/implementation and monitoring of the Policy.

Proposed by Councillor M Quinn
Seconded by Councillor Bateson and

Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council that the Irish Language Policy be approved and implementation now be progressed.

Matters for Information

PR176/15 Christmas Holiday Period Office Closure

The Lead HR Officer drew attention to the previously circulated report to inform members of the Christmas Holiday Period Office Closure for the 3 Council Offices and associated satellite offices.

Councillor Cuddy felt that it would be beneficial to record how many calls were received this year and if not a considerable amount, consideration should be given to completely closing all the offices next year from a resource perspective.

The Lead HR Officer advised that all Funeral Directors have been informed of registration opening hours to make them aware of arrangements and they had the contact numbers for the Registration Service out of hours.

Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council that members note the contents of the report.

The Chief Executive left the meeting at 7.34 pm

Councillor McLean left the meeting at 7.34 pm and returned at 7.37 pm

PR176/15 Six Month Statutory and Corporate Performance Indicator Progress Report (Q1 and Q2) for 2015/16

The Head of Democratic Services drew attention to the previously circulated report and advised that it was to provide Members with monitoring information at the end of Quarter 1 (Apr-June) and Quarter 2 (Jul-Sept) for review of performance against our Statutory (7 in total) and Corporate Performance Indicators (8 in total) for 2015/16.

Councillor Cuddy queried if the achievement of the performance indicators would be used to measure the performance of the staff. It was confirmed that there were no plans to undertake this.

Councillor Mallaghan in referring to the corporate indicator on Freedom of Information Requests whilst referencing Planning felt that the system was progressing well. His only concern was of prolific objectors and requesters of information, who abused the process, as this can have a negative effect on the target indicators.

Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council that Members note the contents of the report.

Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor Buchanan
Seconded by Councillor M Quinn and

Resolved: That items (PR177/15 to PR187/15) be taken as confidential business.

PR188/15 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7.00 pm and ended at 8.45 pm.

Chair _____

Date _____

E

**Minutes of Meeting of Environment Committee of Mid Ulster District Council
held on Tuesday 8 December 2015 in Council Offices, Ballyronan Road,
Magherafelt**

Members Present

Councillor McFlynn (Chair)

Councillors Buchanan, Burton (7.07 pm), Cuddy,
Cuthbertson, Gillespie, Glasgow, Kearney, B McGuigan,
S McGuigan, McNamee, Mullen, Mulligan, J O'Neill,
Totten

**Officers in
Attendance**

Mr Cassells, Director of Environment and Property
Mr Kelso, Director of Public Health and Infrastructure
Mr Lowry, Head of Technical Services
Mr McAdoo, Head of Environmental Services
Mrs McClements, Head of Environmental Health
Mr Scullion, Head of Property Services
Mr Wilkinson, Head of Building Control
Miss Thompson, Committee Services/ Senior Admin
Officer

**Others in
Attendance**

Councillor G Shields

Agenda Item 3 – Northern Ireland Electricity Networks
Mr Keys, Customer Relations Manager
Mr Maynes, Network Access Manager

Agenda Item 4 – TransportNI
Mr Hackett, Network Development Engineer
Mr Keenan, Network Development Manager

The meeting commenced at 7.01 pm

E227/15 Apologies

Councillor McGinley.

E228/15 Declarations of Interest

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

E229/15 Northern Ireland Electricity Networks (NIEN)

The Chair welcomed Messrs Keys and Maynes to the meeting and invited them to make their presentation.

Mr Maynes proceeded with a powerpoint presentation which provided Members with an overview to Northern Ireland Electricity Networks (NIEN) and the electricity industry structure. Mr Maynes also briefed Members on NIEN's winter preparations

and the meter replacement scheme. Members were also advised of NIEN's involvement in the community and were updated on price control.

Councillor Burton entered the meeting at 7.07 pm during presentation of the above.

The Chair, Councillor McFlynn thanked the representatives for their presentation and advised that the Committee appreciates the work undertaken by NIEN. The Councillor also referred to the value of the priority telephone service provided to Members.

Councillor Cuthbertson referred to work carried out by NIEN as part of local Public Realm Schemes and felt that more liaison was required with Councillors and businesses to make them aware of what works were going to be carried out when.

Mr Maynes advised that NIEN will try to work with businesses to keep disruption to a minimum. Mr Maynes referred to Ballymena Public Realm Scheme and advised that an open day had been held to enable those concerned to discuss any issues.

In response to Councillor Cuddy's questions Mr Maynes advised that work in relation to the North/South Interconnector was being carried out by SONI, he also stated that it is critical that the Interconnector is in place by 2019. In relation to connection costs, Mr Maynes advised that there will be competition in connections starting in 2016, he further advised that NIEN are obliged to provide a connection at "least cost". With regard to meter replacement Mr Maynes advised that this is simply a replacement scheme and will have no effect on wastage.

Councillor B McGuigan referred to complaints relating to renewable connections.

Mr Maynes advised that Northern Ireland is favourable with other parts of the EU in relation to renewable connections however he was aware of ongoing issues and realised there were restrictions. Mr Maynes advised that as many connections as possible are being made and that funding is being sought to fund upgrades to the network. Mr Maynes also commented that the North/South Interconnector would help additional connections to be made.

In response to Councillor Kearney's comments regarding insulation to overhead lines Mr Keys advised that the purpose of this insulation is to prevent lines clashing during a storm.

Councillor Gillespie referred to problems acquiring connections to new dwellings, the Councillor advised of homes that were in a finished state but could not be moved in to as they did not have an electricity supply.

Mr Maynes advised that there should be no reason for undue delays but stressed the importance of making a connection application as soon as possible as a new connection may require an upgrade to nearby infrastructure.

Councillor Burton commended the priority telephone service for Councillors advising she had used it in the past. The Councillor also stressed the importance of tree and hedge cutting and asked if electricity poles could be moved as part of a maintenance programme.

Mr Maynes advised that NIEN has an ongoing maintenance programme in which poles, lines, conductors etc can be replaced. With regard to pole replacement, Mr Maynes advised that it was more than likely that this would be replaced in the same location as NIEN would have wayleave agreements with landowners. If a pole was knocked down as a result of an accident, again the onus would be on NIEN to restore electricity supply to customers as quickly as possible and a pole would be replaced in the same location. Mr Maynes advised the Councillor that if her concern related to road safety she may wish to raise this with DRD.

Councillor Glasgow asked if there was an opportunity for an incident centre specifically for Mid Ulster.

Mr Maynes advised that calls from both Cookstown and Dungannon areas are dealt with by the local incident centre in Omagh. Calls from Magherafelt area are dealt with by the centre in Ballymena.

Mr Maynes advised that the diversion of calls was based on customer numbers within an area and stated that he was confident that the level of service within the Mid Ulster area was as good as anywhere else in Northern Ireland. Mr Maynes advised there were no plans to locate a local incident centre within Mid Ulster.

The Chair, Councillor McFlynn thanked Messrs Keys and Maynes for their attendance following which they left the meeting at 7.45 pm.

E230/15 TransportNI

The Chair welcomed Messrs Hackett and Keenan to the meeting and invited them to make their presentation to Members.

Members were briefed on notable schemes within the Local Transport and Safety Measures, Bridges and Street Lighting Draft Programme for Mid Ulster for the period 2016-2018. Members also received Autumn Update from Western Division.

Mr Hackett advised that all the proposed schemes were considered to be high priority, had been assessed and represented good value for money. Members were advised however that based on current funding levels it would not be possible to deliver all the schemes included in the draft programme over the 2016-2018 period. Mr Hackett advised that the Division will continue to bid for additional funding and plan ahead by developing schemes in terms of design and land acquisition to ensure additional funding can be utilised should it become available.

Councillor Cuthbertson referred to Park and Ride facility proposed at Stangmore Roundabout and felt that this scheme had not been given enough consideration. The Councillor advised that the landowner was not willing to sell the land identified for locating the facility, he further commented that the proposed facility would be located in front of housing which would cause additional difficulties. Councillor Cuthbertson added that the purpose of having the Park and Ride facility would be to divert vehicles from parking on the hard shoulder of the A29-Moy Road, however a large number of employees at a nearby business currently use the hard shoulder for parking and the Councillor felt that TransportNI would be, in theory, creating a car park for their use.

Councillor Cuthbertson advised that TransportNI own a piece of land close to the M1 Motorway service station and felt that this location would be ideal for use as a Park and Ride facility stating that it is close to both Eglisk junction and Stangmore junction.

Mr Hackett advised he was aware of Councillor Cuthbertson's concerns and referred to the success of similar schemes at Ballygawley and Tamnamore. Mr Hackett advised that the aim of Park and Ride facilities is to provide the public with an alternative mode of transport for their journey, he advised that consultants have looked at various sites and emphasised the need to locate these type of facilities close to strategic junctions.

In response to Councillor Cuddy's question regarding relocation of TransportNI offices to within Mid Ulster area Mr Keenan advised there were no future plans.

In reference to Councillor Cuddy's comment regarding quicker journey times throughout Mid Ulster Mr Keenan referred to Cookstown bypass scheme and stated that the preferred route for this was announced in 2010. Mr Keenan advised that the next stage of this scheme would be land vesting and he encouraged Members to lobby for the progression of this scheme. Members were also advised that the A29 is a strategic route and that a number of schemes are ongoing and have been completed along this route in recent years.

In response to Councillor Cuddy's question regarding Castledawson Park and Ride facility Mr Hackett advised that this scheme should be ready to commence in early 2016.

Councillor Cuddy asked how many schemes TransportNI hoped to complete in the next twelve months.

Mr Hackett advised that the draft programme contains an overprofiling of schemes which are subject to resources.

Councillor J O'Neill felt that more priority needed to be given to Safer Routes to Schools scheme at Aghamullan Primary School and that the scheme should not be delayed due to waiting on funding for two warning signs.

Mr Hackett advised that it was slightly more complicated than just the provision of the signs in that electricity connections were also required.

Councillor Kearney acknowledged the inclusion of the Safer Routes to Schools Schemes within the draft programme. Councillor Kearney also queried who provides provision of shelters and toilets at Park and Ride facilities.

Mr Hackett advised that TransportNI will deliver the infrastructure and car park at a Park and Ride facility and that shelters are provided by Translink. With regard to toilet provision Mr Hackett advised that this has not been done at Park and Ride facilities in the past but that TransportNI would be keen to work with Council in this respect.

Councillor Glasgow referred to the large roads network within Mid Ulster which requires additional funding to maintain. The Councillor asked that, out of the five million budget, how much of this money was received within Mid Ulster.

Mr Keenan advised that out of the one million budget for street lighting repairs, Mid Ulster received £75,000. With regards to resurfacing budget Dungannon received £241,000 and Cookstown/Magherafelt received £284,000 between them.

In reference to Councillor Gillespie's request regarding provision of grit in rural areas Mr Hackett advised this would be passed to the relevant department.

The Chair, Councillor McFlynn thanked Messrs Hackett and Keenan for their report following which they withdrew from the meeting at 8.20 pm.

E231/15 Receive and confirm minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on Tuesday 10 November 2015

Proposed by Councillor McNamee
Seconded by Councillor S McGuigan and

Resolved That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Environment Committee held on Tuesday 10 November 2015 (E199/15 – E214/15 and E226/15) were considered and, subject to the foregoing, signed as accurate and correct.

E232/15 Chair's Business

Maghera Walled Garden

The Chair, Councillor McFlynn advised Members that Maghera Walled Garden recently received an award from Joseph Rowntree Trust and asked that a letter of thanks be sent to Lorraine Gardner, staff member who is based at the Walled Garden.

E233/15 Flooding

Councillor Cuthbertson referred to recent flooding and damage caused to shops at Linen Green, Moygashel. The Councillor conveyed his thanks to Council officers who provided assistance on Sunday and since.

Councillor Cuthbertson advised that part of the mill race which flooded and caused the damage at the Linen Green runs through council property, the Councillor felt that the mill race is in poor condition and that Council needs to carry out any remedial works necessary on the section which runs through property belonging to Council.

Councillor Cuddy concurred with Councillor Cuthbertson's comments stating that it was important for Council to provide assistance in this type of event, to learn from it and reflect on what could be improved upon in future from a Council response point of view.

Councillor J O'Neill also referred to flooding of homes at King's Row, Coalisland and that Council need to investigate what caused the flooding at this location.

The Director of Public Health and Infrastructure advised that Council will investigate the circumstances which caused the flooding at Linen Green and King's Row.

Matters for Decision

E234/15 TransportNI proposals to Mid Ulster District Council

Members considered previously circulated report regarding proposals from TransportNI to introduce measures to enhance safety and development of the transport network with a range of transport projects.

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to endorse the proposals submitted by TransportNI as follows –

- Proposed 30mph speed limit – Coash Road, Gortgonis Road, Washing Bay Road, Ballygittle Road and Lisaclare Road, Coalisland.

E235/15 Department for Regional Development proposals to Mid Ulster District Council

Members considered previously circulated report which sought Members approval in relation to proposals from Department for Regional Development /TransportNI to abandon a length of the Killyliss Road, Dungannon under the (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016.

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to endorse the proposal for an abandonment order at Killyliss Road, Dungannon submitted by the Department for Regional Development.

E236/15 Winter Maintenance

The Director of Environment and Property presented previously circulated report which sought approval to enter into an Agreement with DRD/TransportNI in relation to footways in the business centres of the main towns within the Mid Ulster District following heavy snow falls or prolonged freezing. The report also sought the endorsement of Members in relation to the position with regards to car parks at times of ice and snow.

Councillor McNamee referred to the annual service fee paid to Council as per the agreement and was of the belief that in the past Councils were paid for each event a request was made for assistance.

The Director of Environment and Property advised he was not aware of a payment being made per event in the past but confirmed he would investigate.

In response to Councillor McNamee's comments in relation to treatment of car parks at times of ice and snow the Director of Environment and Property advised that Council does not have the necessary resources to carry out such treatment. The Director also advised it was important for Council to have a clear policy in relation to car parks and to adhere to such policy as a defence against any claim.

Councillor Glasgow raised concern that the footpaths on Coagh Street in Cookstown were not included in the schedule of gritting.

The Director of Environment and Property advised that the purpose of the Agreement was to treat the main business areas of the towns identified, he stated that there were limited resources for this task and it would be impossible to treat every street in each town. The Director advised that the list of footways to be treated were taken from legacy agreements.

Councillor Glasgow again expressed his concern that the footpath on Coagh Street was not included within the gritting schedule and referred to the hotel and businesses located on this street and the high volume of people using the footpath. Councillor Glasgow stated he could not support the approval of the Agreement as it stood and asked that further consideration be given to the inclusion of Coagh Street to the gritting schedule.

The Director of Environment and Property advised that the maps provided within the report are the same as those used for legacy agreements and what is proposed is the same as what was done in the past.

Councillor Cuthbertson referred to Dungannon gritting schedule and felt that Northland Row should be included.

Councillor McNamee felt that footfall on Union Street in Cookstown along with Coagh Street would warrant footpaths being gritted.

Councillor Kearney left the meeting at 8.45 pm

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that the Director of Environment and Property would review the issues raised by Members in relation to Winter maintenance and report back to committee.

E237/15 Off-Street Car Parking: Disabled Badge Holders; Acceptance of Isle of Man Disabled Parking Blue Badge Scheme

The Director of Environment and Property presented previously circulated report which recommended that Mid Ulster District Council recognises the use of the Isle of Man Disabled Blue Badge within its Off Street Car Parks.

Councillor S McGuigan referred to the difference of opinion within Councils in relation to this matter and asked if DRD had been consulted in relation to same.

The Director of Environment and Property advised that Council had been consulted with regard to off street car parks and that he would investigate if DRD had been consulted in relation to on street parking.

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that –
1 Vehicles displaying valid Disabled Parking Blue Badges issued by the Isle of Man government shall enjoy the same parking discretions within the Off Street Car Parks of the Mid Ulster District Council as if they had been issued by any other issuing

- authority within the jurisdiction of the United Kingdom, Ireland or other European Union participating authority.
- 2 Director of Environment and Property to check situation with DRD regarding use of Isle of Man Disabled Parking Blue Badges at on street car parks.

E238/15 Commonwealth War Graves Commission Signage: Cookstown Cemetery

The Director of Environment and Property presented previously circulated report which sought approval to allow the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to erect signage at Cookstown Cemetery indicating that war graves are contained within the Cemetery.

Councillor S McGuigan felt this matter should be discussed at the next Good Relations Working Group.

The Chair, Councillor McFlynn advised she had no issue with giving permission to erect the proposed signage.

Councillor Cuddy referred to the public interest in war history and that Council should permit the erection of signage.

Proposed by Councillor Buchanan
Seconded by Councillor Glasgow

That Council permit the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to erect 'Green Visitors Signs' at the entrances to Cookstown Cemetery.

Councillor McNamee also felt this matter should be discussed by the Good Relations Working Group,

The Chair, Councillor McFlynn asked Councillor Buchanan if he would withdraw his proposal to allow for matter to be discussed at Good Relations Working Group.

Councillor Buchanan stated he would not withdraw his proposal.

Members voted on Councillor Buchanan's proposal –

For – 5
Against - 7

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that this item be deferred for discussion at next Good Relations Working Group.

E239/15 Street Naming and Property Numbering

The Head of Building Control presented previously circulated report in relation to the street naming of a new residential development at Lurganagoose Road, Curran, Magherafelt.

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to name new development at Lurganagoose Road, Curran, Magherafelt as 'Kirk Meadows'.

E240/15 Review of the Public Health Act (Northern Ireland) 1967

The Head of Environmental Health presented previously circulated report in relation to consultation response to be provided to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety on the review of the Public Health Act (Northern Ireland) 1967.

Proposed by Councillor McNamee
Seconded by Councillor Cuddy and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to respond to Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety on the review of the Public Health Act (Northern Ireland) as per report.

Matters for Information

E241/15 NILGA Reference Guide for Waste and Resource Efficiency

Members noted previously circulated report which provided Members with reference guide on Waste and Resource Efficiency.

E242/15 Rethink Waste Capital Funding

Members noted previously circulated report which provided update on the outcome of a funding application to the Rethink Waste Capital Fund for 2015/16 in relation to Drumcoo Recycling Centre.

Councillor Cuddy referred to ongoing works at Drumcoo Civic Amenity Site and felt that Members had not been kept up to date with the issues as to why the site will not be reopening this month.

The Director of Public Health and Infrastructure advised that an update on the Drumcoo scheme was included in the contracts update report due to be presented later in the meeting.

Councillor Cuddy felt an update should have been brought before tonight.

E243/15 Waste Management Plan

Members noted previously circulated report which provided update on the appointment of consultants for the preparation of a revised joint Waste Management Plan for Mid Ulster District Council, Omagh and Fermanagh Council and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council.

In response to Councillor S McGuigan's question the Director of Environment and Property advised that an appropriate tendering process was undertaken to appoint consultants for the preparation of the Waste Management Plan.

Councillor Cuddy referred to the strategic location of Tullyvar and that it should be kept in mind going forward along with the past working relationships with other Councils.

The Director of Environment and Property advised that the revised Waste Management Plan will cover the period up to 2020. The Director also spoke of Mid Ulster areas strategic position but voiced concern that the local market is not conducive to competition for blue bin material.

E244/15 Northern Ireland Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics Report April to June 2015

Members noted previously circulated report which provided update on the Council's performance in relation to recycling and landfill diversion as outlined in the NIEA Northern Ireland Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics Report for April to June 2015.

E245/15 Building Control Workload Analysis

Members noted previously circulated report which provided update on the workload analysis for Building Control across Mid Ulster District Council.

E246/15 Entertainment Licensing

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

In response to Councillor McFlynn's question the Head of Building Control confirmed that officers will be conducting inspections of premises over the Christmas/New Year period.

E247/15 Affordable Warmth Scheme

The Head of Environmental Health presented previously circulated report and updated Members on the current position of the Affordable Warmth Scheme.

Councillor McNamee felt that the proposed pilot should only be a short term measure which will be further considered as part of a review of the Affordable Warmth Scheme.

The Head of Environmental Health advised that a review of the scheme will take place in February 2016.

Councillor Glasgow spoke positively with regard to the Affordable Warmth Scheme and requested that his thanks be conveyed to staff involved. The Councillor also stated that any additional funding of the scheme would be welcomed.

Members noted the report.

E248/15 Education for Sustainable Development – Update

Members noted previously circulated report which provided update on Environmental and Sustainability educational activities provided through the Council's Sustainability and Biodiversity Programme.

E249/15 Dungannon Public Realm Scheme – Market Square

The Director of Public Health and Infrastructure presented previously circulated report which provided Members with an update on the outstanding issues regarding Dungannon Public Realm – Phase 1 and the proposal to proceed to tender for the appointment of design consultants to investigate the potential improvements to car parking, traffic management and pedestrian safety in Market Square, Dungannon.

Councillor Buchanan stated that this Public Realm Scheme did not seem to offer value for money in that additional expenditure was now required.

The Director of Public Health and Infrastructure advised that the first phase of the Public Realm Scheme had been well received however as a result of comments raised in relation to parking arrangements and pedestrian access it was now proposed to appoint a consultant design team to review the current arrangements and make recommendations as regards options for improvement.

Councillor Burton felt that the review should look at pedestrian access in Market Square as a priority.

Members noted the content of the report.

Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor McNamee
Seconded by Councillor B McGuigan and

Resolved That items E250/15 – E256/15 be taken as confidential business.

E257/15 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7.00 pm and ended at 10.05 pm.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____

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**Minutes of Meeting of the Development Committee of Mid Ulster District Council
held on Thursday 10 December in the Council Offices, Ballyronan Road,
Magherafelt**

Members Present

Councillor Burton, In the Chair

Councillors Clarke, Elattar, Forde, McAleer (7.10 pm),
McEldowney, McNamee, Molloy, Monteith (7.15 pm),
T Quinn, Reid (7.11 pm), J Shiels, G Shiels and Wilson

**Officers in
Attendance**

Ms Campbell, Director of Culture and Leisure
Mr McCreesh, Director of Business and Communities
Mr Glavin, Head of Leisure
Mr Hill, Head of Parks
Ms Linney, Head of Community Services
Mr McCance, Head of Culture and Arts
Ms McKeown, Head of Economic Development
Ms Grogan, Committee Services Officer

**Others in
Attendance**

Agenda Item 3: Supporting Communities NI

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm.

D230/15 Chairs Business

The Chair passed the condolences of the committee to the Director of Business and Communities on the recent death of his mother.

The Chair referred to the recent flooding at McCague Day Centre, Aughnacloy and advised that it provided an invaluable service to the residents of Clogher Valley area and would be grateful of any support that is available to get it operational again.

The Director of Business and Communities advised that he would follow up.

D231/15 Apologies

Councillor Dillon.

D232/15 Declaration of Interests

The Chair, Councillor Burton reminded members of their responsibility with regard to declarations of interest.

*Councillor McNamee declared an interest in Fr Rocks GAC and AOH Cookstown
Councillor McEldowney declared an interest in Slaughtneill GAC
Councillor Clarke declared an interest in Irish Language Activity Funding
Councillor Wilson declared an interest in Cookstown District No. 3 Orange Lodge*

D233/15 Supporting Communities NI

The Chair, Councillor Burton welcomed to the Committee Mr Colm McDaid and Mr Martin Quinn from Supporting Communities NI.

Mr McDaid on behalf of Supporting Communities NI passed on his condolences to the Director of Business and Communities on the recent death of his mother.

Mr McDaid gave a brief synopsis of the work carried out by Supporting Communities NI and advised that it has been in existence for over 35 years, as an independent voluntary sector organisation which aims to achieve meaningful participation in the social housing sector by developing community groups and promoting effective tenant and community involvement.

The key area of Supporting Communities work focuses on the establishment and support of community/residents groups, in that they assist groups to; form, constitute themselves and become more sustainable and productive. Supporting Communities staff will support groups to develop action plans, reflecting the needs of their communities, focusing on; housing, social, environmental and economic concerns.

The organisation act as an honest broker and provide an independent facilitation role to over 200 Inter Agency meetings across Northern Ireland, bringing statutory agencies and Community Groups together so that real issues affecting communities can be addressed in a co-ordinated manner.

There is support to local landlords through:

1) Housing Executive Support

Supporting Communities provides a comprehensive independent support service to the Housing Executive through a Central Service Level Agreement (SLA). Each of the Housing Executive's 13 areas also have a SLA with Supporting Communities which outlines the service to be provided to Area Managers.

Among the key services provided to the Housing Executive include:

- To support and facilitate the tiers of the Housing Community Network (District/Area/Regional/Central)
- Independent Support and advice to the 450 Groups involved in the HCN
- Comprehensive Scrutiny Panel support and Training to 13 Area Panels
- Digital Inclusion Support and Training
- Mystery Shopping Exercise
- Customer Journey Mapping
- Housing Executive Staff Support
- Best Practice Sharing
- Benchmarking

2) Housing Associations

Providing a training and support service to Housing Associations across Northern Ireland to enable staff and tenants to effectively participate and develop Tenant Participation in housing. A range of services offered includes:

- The research and development of effective and bespoke Tenant Participation Strategies for Housing Associations
- Tenant Participation Training
- Digital Inclusion Support and Training
- Mystery Shopping
- Tenant Led Inspections
- Customer Journey Mapping
- Staff Support
- Scrutiny Support and Training
- Benchmarking

The services provided by Supporting Communities NI includes:

- a) Administration – provision of a high quality and efficient administration service to staff, communities and other organisations through the provision of:
 - A PAYE service
 - Financial Assessments
 - Administration of meetings
 - Survey Analysis
 - Report Writing
- b) Group Work – Through ‘grass roots, self-help’ approach, continually empowering communities by enabling them to make changes within their communities. This is done through:
 - Support to individuals and groups
 - Supporting groups through AGM’s Committee Meetings
 - Facilitating Housing Forums and Inter-agencies
- c) Training – Providing a wide variety of training to individuals, organisations and collaborative groups across Northern Ireland. The training provided can be accredited, depending on their needs. A specialist team who are also available to design and deliver bespoke training best to suit their needs. Supporting Communities is also an OCN accredited Centre.
- d) Digital Inclusion – Through Supporting Communities partnership with Department of Finance and Personnel, are able to offer accredited and non-accredited Digital Training to communities across Northern Ireland, thus empowering individuals to address the issues and barriers surrounding Digital inclusion.
- e) Funding Service – Through the organisation’s funding support service to staff, communities and stakeholders provision can be made to:
 - Funding Enquiry Services
 - Funding Bulletins
 - One to One funding support
 - Funding E-News
 - Factsheets
 - Funding Clinics
 - Training

f) Policy and Information Service – Provision of an expert policy and information service to stakeholders through the provision of:

- Information Factsheets
- Fortnightly E-zine
- Bi-Annual SCNI News
- Policy and Consultation responses impacting the sector
- Website
- Facebook
- Twitter

Councillor Elattar declared an interest as a Housing Executive board member.

Councillor Elattar advised that she wasn't aware of what the organisation done in the past, but was encouraged to see the extent of their work through their impressive presentation.

Councillor Forde felt that their meetings are very useful but it would be beneficial if all agencies could be encouraged to attend eg Roads Service, PSNI etc as they could answer any concerns raised.

Mr Quinn advised that it depends on the area whether some agencies attend or not.

The Chair, Councillor Burton referred to Fivemiletown and felt that it would be useful to set up an Inter-Agency group to include the PCSP, PSNI, Housing Executive, Roads Service and local Residents Association.

The Chair, Councillor Burton thanked the representatives of Supporting Communities NI at which they withdrew from the meeting.

D234/15 Receive and confirm minutes of the Development Committee meeting held on Thursday 12 November 2015

Proposed by Councillor Clarke
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Development Committee held on Thursday 12 November 2015 (D209/15 to D229/15 and D224/15 to D228/15), were considered and signed as correct and accurate.

Matters for Decision

Councillor Wilson declared an interest in Regional Start Initiative and Interim Skills Research.

D235/15 Regional Start Initiative
a) Previous Service Level Agreement period (1 April – 22 October 2015; now extended to 31 March 2016)

b) Interim Skills Research Paper

The Head of Economic Development drew attention to the previously circulated report to provide Members with an update on key activities as detailed.

Councillor Wilson left the meeting at 7.35 pm and returned at 7.47 pm.

The Head of Economic Development reminded Members that they had agreed at a previous meeting to establish a new Mid Ulster Skills Forum. This Forum is proposed to consist of Council representatives and key stakeholders from the public and private sector and would act as a vehicle to identify and address priority skills issues/shortages for Mid Ulster. She further advised that this Interim Skills Research Paper was prepared in advance of establishing the Mid Ulster Skills Forum and would act as a good 'working document' for discussion.

The Chair, Councillor Burton commended the Head of Economic Development on the work which has been achieved to date.

Councillor G Shiels agreed with the Chair, and recommended that the Mid Ulster Skills Forum be established as soon as possible.

Proposed by Councillor G Shiels
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council to organise the first meeting of the Mid Ulster Skills Forum in the near future.

Councillor Molloy felt that it was important to proceed with establishing a Mid Ulster Skills Forum as the current system is failing our young people by putting too much emphasis on attaining academic qualifications. He added there are many other good job opportunities for our young people who may not wish to pursue an academic route but these are not being promoted as career choices within the education sector.

Councillor G Shiels said careers advice in schools needs to match students with opportunities.

Proposed by Councillor Reid
Seconded by Councillor T Quinn and

Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council to approve:

- a) Regional Start Initiative (to end of initial SLA period at 31 Oct 2015)**
Progress on the Regional Start Initiative Programme
- b) Regional Start Initiative (from 23 October 2015 to end of new SLA period at 31 March 2016)**
The Addendum to the Service Level Agreement from 23 October 2015 to 31 March 2016.
- c) Interim Skills Research Paper**
The Interim Skills Research Paper and organise the first meeting of the Mid Ulster Skills Forum in the near future.

D236/15 Town Centre Report

The Head of Economic Development drew attention to the previously circulated report to update members on progress being made with Mid Ulster Town Centre Action Plan.

The Chair, Councillor Burton referred to the currently reduced car parking charges and enquired if the public would be made aware of the ending date as she felt this had not been properly communicated to the public last year in Dungannon.

Councillor J Shiels felt that it was good to see Maghera being built up and asked if follow up meetings with Traders had taken place.

The Director of Business and Communities stated that officers had met with Traders informally to deal with specific issues, however, more formal engagements will commence shortly with regard to progressing a new Development Framework and Action Plan for Maghera town.

Councillor McNamee enquired about the timescale for Mid Ulster Shop Improvement Scheme.

The Head of Economic Development advised that a report would be brought to the Development Committee in February 2016, once recommendations are first brought to Party Leaders in January 2016.

The Head of Economic Development stated that events planned to promote Small Business Saturday on 5 December 2015 across Mid Ulster's five town centres (Cookstown, Dungannon, Magherafelt, Coalisland and Maghera) were cancelled in interests of public safety due to very poor weather conditions

The Head of Economic Development referred to Dungannon Christmas Fayre which was due to commence tomorrow. She advised that due to wind warnings issued from the Met Office, a decision was taken in the interests of public safety not to erect the marquees in Dungannon town centre on Friday morning. All other activities on Friday such as street entertainment, music and craft stalls in Ranfurly House would proceed as planned. The Head of Economic Development indicated the marquees would be erected later on Friday evening when the wind speeds are expected to settle and the remainder of the Christmas Fayre weekend on Saturday and Sunday would run as planned.

Proposed by Councillor McEldowney
Seconded by Councillor Reid and

- Resolved:** That it be recommended to the Council to approve the following:
- a) Mid Ulster Shop Improvement Scheme** – Note progress to date
 - b) Maghera Development Framework and Action Plan** – Council to commission a suitably qualified organisation to prepare a Development Framework and Action Plan for Maghera town centre. Funding is available to undertake this initiative from Council's Economic Development budget.
 - c) Town Centre Christmas Marketing Campaign** – Note progress.

- d) **Small Business Saturday** –Note that the event was cancelled due to poor weather conditions.
- e) **Battle of the Buskers** – Note response survey numbers.

D237/15 Moneyneena Community Associaton – Moydamlaght Forest

The Head of Parks drew attention to the previously circulated report and advised that the Council are in receipt of a request from Moneyneena Community Group to consider engaging in a partnership project to develop public access and ecotrail play facilities at Moydamlaght Forest. Approval is sought to engage with Moneyneena Community Group in relation to the developing a suitable proposal in support of the groups intention to seek funding from the Spaces and Place Programme.

Councillor Elattar advised that there is a lot of good work being carried out in the area.

The Chair, Councillor Burton referred to Round Lake in Fivemiletown and advised that it has got a bit dilapidated as trees have got overgrown which is taking up a lot of ground, problem with dog fouling and as fishing is being promoted, work needs to be carried out to enhance the area.

Proposed by Councillor Elattar
Seconded by Councillor Reid and

- Resolved:** That it be recommended to the Council that approval be given to:
- a) Progress negotiations with Moneyneena Community Association regarding the initial stages of the proposal.
 - b) Seek consultations with Forest Service and from Planning Department where necessary.
 - c) Include Moydamlaght Forest proposal in draft development planning process. Implementation of any proposal will be subject to availability of funding and the prioritisation of schemes within the development plan.
 - d) Report to be brought on Round Lake, Fivemiletown.

D238/15 Park Lake Mixed Fishery

The Head of Parks drew attention to the previously circulated report to advise members of the proposed extension of coarse angling activities at Park Lake Fishery, to facilitate mixed fishery operations.

Councillor J Shiels enquired if there were many waters in Northern Ireland which have Trout Masters status.

The Head of Parks advised that there approximately 3 and it was an advantage that Park Lake Fishery is recognised province wide as a premier Trout Master Water.

Proposed by Councillor McNamee
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and

- Resolved:** That it be recommended to the Council to approve:

- a) Progress negotiations with angling stakeholders to consider the introduction of designated seasons that would offer equity of access without conflict. The game angling season would be from 1st April to 30th September. The coarse angling season to be from 1st October to 31st March. These seasons are broadly recognised and accepted in the angling calendar.
- b) Through consultation with stakeholders plan to introduce agreed seasonal arrangements from April 2016 for a 12 month probation period. Monitor quarterly with stakeholder groups and conduct a year one review across agreed performance indicators.
- c) Interim extension of coarse angling access days to include weekends effective from 1st January 2016.
- d) Review of angling tariffs post year one evaluation.

D239/15 Stewartstown Community Association

The Head of Parks drew attention to the previously circulated report and advised that the Council are in receipt of a request from Stewartstown Community Association to further develop children's play facilities in the village. Approval is sought to engage with Stewartstown Community Association in relation to the developing a suitable proposal for older age groups on land identified at Henderson Park.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council to:

- a) Progress negotiations with the Stewartstown Community Association regarding the proposal.
- b) Seek advice from Planning Department in Council.
- c) Include Stewartstown proposal in draft development planning process. Implementation of any proposal will be subject to availability of funding and the prioritisation of schemes with in the development plan.

D240/15 Software Booking System for Parks Services

The Head of Parks drew attention to the previously circulated report and sought approval to seek quotations for a web based management system for the integration of camp site and marina facilities across Mid Ulster District Council.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council to seek tender quotations for suitable web based management and booking system.

D241/15 Irish Language Activity Funding

The Head of Culture drew attention to the previously circulated report and sought approval from Council regarding approval of activity funding for Irish Language project costs after public call for Irish Language activity funding and follow up community consultation as part of the 'Promoting Opportunities to Learn Irish' element of the Irish Language Development Programme and Action Plan.

Proposed by Councillor T Quinn
Seconded by Councillor Monteith and

Resolved: That it be recommended to Council to approve £15,995 of funding from the Action Plan previously approved in order to progress the development of Irish Language Activity across the Mid Ulster Council region with 25 groups identified in appendix 2.

D242/15 Good Relations Working Group

The Director of Business and Communities drew attention to the previously circulated report and sought approval for the meeting report of the Good Relations Working Group held on Wednesday 25 November 2015.

Councillor Wilson advised that at the meeting he had declared an interest in Cookstown LOL District No. 3.

Proposed by Councillor T Quinn
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and

Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council that approval be given to accepting the Good Relations Working Group report and to include Councillor Wilson's declaration of interest in Cookstown LOL District No. 3.

D243/15 Permission to Erect an Art Piece at Killymaddy Centre

The Head of Tourism drew attention to the previously circulated report and sought permission to erect an art piece at the Killymaddy Centre.

Councillor Wilson stated that consideration should be given to relocating the art piece to a more prominent area at Killymaddy.

The Head of Tourism advised that it's only at the investigation stage at the moment and planning permission has to be sought, but would take on board suggestions.

Proposed by Councillor J Shiels
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and

Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council that approval be given to erect an art piece at Killymaddy.

D245/15 Tyrone Milk Cup

The Director of Culture and Leisure advised that £1,000 had been omitted from the Milk Cup funding and it should read £2,000.

Proposed by Councillor Reid
Seconded by Councillor McNamee and

Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council to allocate £2,000 to the Tyrone Milk Cup.

Matters for Information

D244/15 Community Development Section Update and Approvals

The Head of Community Development drew attention to the previously circulated report to update on progress relating to the Community Development Section.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council that Members note the report on Community Development Update and Approvals.

D245/15 Leisure Services Progress Report

The Chair, Councillor Burton requested that Members note the contents of the previously circulated Leisure Services Progress Report.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council that Members note the report on Leisure Services.

D246/15 Leisure Services Progress Report – Update on Events

The Chair, Councillor Burton requested that Members note the contents of the previously circulated Leisure Services Progress Report – Update on Events.

Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council that Members note the report on Leisure Services – Update on Events.

D247/15 Parks Service Progress Report

The Chair, Councillor Burton requested that Members note the contents of the previously circulated Parks Service Progress Report.

Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council that Members note the report on Parks Service Progress.

D248/15 Culture and Arts Progress Report

The Chair, Councillor Burton requested that Members note the contents of the previously circulated Culture and Arts Progress Report.

Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council that Members note the report on Culture and Arts.

Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor Monteith
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

Resolved: That items (D249/15 to D255/15) be taken as confidential business.

D256/15 Duration of Meeting

The meeting for 7 pm and ended at 8.30 pm.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____

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Subject Conferences & Seminars

Reporting Officer P Moffett, Head of Democratic Services

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	To provide an update on seminars and conferences received. To seek approval for attendance and the payment of registration/ attendance fees and associated costs, as incurred.

2	Background
2.1	The following seminar/ conference sessions are presented for consideration of representation from Mid Ulster Council.
2.1	Approval for Consideration of Attendance
2.1.1	<i>Local Government Reform Conference</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thursday 4 February 2016 in Lagan Valley Island, Lisburn (9am - 4pm)
2.1.2	<i>Northern Ireland Housing Conference 2016</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thursday 11 February in Crumlin Road, Goal, Belfast (9am - 1.15pm)
2.1.3	<i>Waste Management Breakfast Seminar, CBI</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thursday 28 January 2016 in Malone House, Belfast (7.45am - 10.45am) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Officer request to attend, Director of Environment & Property

3	Key Issues
3.1	N/A

4	Resources
4.1	<u>Financial</u>
4.1.1	Local Government Reform Conference - Thurs 4 February <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Half Day attendance £150 Full Day attendance £210

4.1.2	Northern Ireland Housing Conference 2016 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance £175
4.1.3	Waste Management Breakfast Seminar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No attendance fee

5	Other Considerations
5.1	Costs associated will be set against 2015-16 member Conference & Seminar allocations.

6	Recommendations
6.1	Approval for attendance at the conferences/ seminars.

7	List of Documents Attached
7.1	Appendix A Conferences Seminars Details

Local government reform conference

Strong • Efficient • Cost effective

Thursday 4th February 2016 • Lagan Valley Island, Lisburn

Since 1 April 2015 significant powers have been transferred across a wide range of policy and delivery functions to the 11 new 'super-councils'. This half day conference will assess how the Councils have performed to date and will look ahead to the next phase of reform. The event will examine in-depth key issues around the transfer of powers and the associated challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Discounted rate available for local government

Key issues examined include:

- ✓ **Implementation of reform**
- ✓ Future opportunities for **additional powers**
- ✓ **Technology** as a driver for change
- ✓ Delivering **community planning**
- ✓ Looking towards the preparation of **local development plans**
- ✓ Enhancing **tourism** and local **economic development**
- ✓ **Regeneration** and **community development**
- ✓ Improving **citizen services**

This conference includes a dedicated workshop on the new councillors' code of conduct

Speakers include:

Marie Anderson
Deputy Northern Ireland
Ombudsman &
Commissioner for
Complaints



Derek McCallan
Chief Executive
NILGA

Lorna Johnston
Executive Director
**Standards Commission
for Scotland**

Andrew Grant
Chief Executive
**Aylesbury Vale District
Council**

Oonagh McGillion
Legacy Director
**Derry City & Strabane
District Council**



Lois Jackson
Planning Manager
**Lisburn & Castlereagh
City Council**

Kieran McCrory
Tourism and Economic
Development Manager
**Fermanagh and Omagh
District Council**

Nichola Creagh
Director of Local
Government Policy
Division
**Department of the
Environment**

[Programme](#)

[Register now](#)

Sponsorship & exhibition opportunities

There are sponsorship and exhibition opportunities available at the conference – an excellent platform to showcase goods and services to a key local government audience. For further information contact Sandra Bolan on 028 9261 9933 or email sandra.bolan@agendaNi.com

Don't miss this important business development opportunity!

How to register

Attend the conference only

Discounted rate for local government delegate fee: £150 + VAT @ 20% = £180

Attend the conference plus Councillors' Code of Conduct workshop

Delegate fee £210 + VAT @ 20% = £252

Programme

0900

Registration and morning coffee

0930

Chairman's welcome & introduction

Derek McCallan, Chief Executive,

NILGA

Implementing local government reform: A progress report and looking to the future

Nichola Creagh, Director of Local Government Policy Division

Department of the Environment

Looking ahead to the next phase of reform

Liam Hannaway, Chief Executive

Newry, Mourne & Down District Council & Chair, Solace

Transforming local services: Improving connectivity with citizens

Andrew Grant, Chief Executive,

Aylesbury Vale District Council

(iESE Council of the Year)

Questions & answers / Panel discussion

1100

Morning coffee / networking break

1130

Developing and implementing local tourism plans

Kieran McCrory, Tourism & Economic Development Manager

Fermanagh & Omagh District Council

Local development planning: A key planning function

Lois Jackson, Planning Manager,

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Transfer of urban regeneration & community development powers: What's next?

Chris Hughes, Director of Urban & Community Policy,

Department for Social Development

Developing a community plan for Derry & Strabane

Oonagh McGillion, Director of Legacy,

Derry City & Strabane District Council

Questions & answers / Panel discussion

1315

Conference lunch / networking break

2.00pm - Additional workshop: Exploring the Councillors' code of conduct

Importance of openness, accountability and good governance in government

Tim Gilling, Deputy Executive Director,
Centre for Public Scrutiny

Good governance in practice: Application of the new Councillors' Code of Conduct

Marie Anderson

Deputy Northern Ireland Ombudsman & Commissioner for Complaints

Enforcing the Councillors' code of conduct: Issues arising in Scotland

Lorna Johnston, Executive Director

Standards Commission for Scotland

Examining the impact of the new code for Councillors

Cllr Charlie Casey, Chair

National Association of Councillors, Northern Ireland

Questions & answers / Panel discussion

1600

Chairman's summary / conference close

Northern Ireland Housing Conference 2016

A changing social housing landscape

Thursday 11th February 2016 • Crumlin Road Gaol, Belfast

As we approach 2016, the Social Housing Reform Programme is making progress. However, there is still continuing uncertainty around a number of key issues as well as a challenging operating environment for many housing providers. This important conference will bring together key stakeholders to discuss the challenges as well as the opportunities for social housing in Northern Ireland.

Key issues examined include:

- ✓ Meeting future needs: Ensuring the provision of **affordable and quality** housing
- ✓ Towards a single **social housing rent** level?
- ✓ The challenge of **building** and **financing** new social housing
- ✓ Implementing **welfare reform** in Northern Ireland
- ✓ Assessing resilience: **Stress testing** your organisation
- ✓ **Beyond housing**: Enhancing your offering
- ✓ Putting the **customer** at the centre: Building meaningful tenant relationships
- ✓ **Digital inclusion** to empower communities

Speakers include:



Ian Snowden
Deputy Secretary
Department for Social Development



Donald Hoodless
Chairman
Northern Ireland Housing Executive



John McLean
Chief Executive
Fold Housing Association



Paddy Gray
Professor of Housing
Ulster University



Emildah Chabata
Residents' Training and
Employment Manager
Thames Valley Housing Association



Cameron Watt
Chief Executive
Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations



Kathy Valdes
Managing Director
Digital Unite



Jim Dennison
Chief Executive
Simon Community

[Programme](#)

[Register now](#)

How to register

Delegate fee **£175** + VAT @ 20% = £210

CIH members discounted rate: **£150** + VAT @ 20% = £180

NIFHA members discounted rate: **£150** + VAT @ 20% = £180

Waste Management Breakfast Seminar

Thursday 28 January (07.45 to 10.45am)

Malone House, Barnett Demesne, Belfast BT9 5PB

A range of key speakers who will address the key objectives of the seminar:

- Identify and understand the market and investment opportunities in the Northern Ireland waste industry – domestic, industrial, agricultural and construction wastes
- Identify key trends in waste production/reduction and progress in achieving EU targets
- Identify how the regulatory environment is impacting on the waste industry – what opportunities/barriers to reducing, recycling, reusing waste and diverting from landfill
- Identify what actions are required to develop a sustainable, and strategically focused, waste management industry in N Ireland and
- Ensure that all parties involved in the industry fully understand their individual and collective responsibilities and the risks associated with failing to act with due diligence in relation to waste management

The seminar will include participants from waste producers, representatives from the waste management sector, key government and local government representatives. The programme for the seminar is set out below:

07.30 **Registration opens (Harberton Room)**

07.45 **Breakfast served (Harberton Room)**

08.15 **Welcome and Introduction – CBI Chair/Director**

08.20 **‘Creating a Circular Economy – the role of the Waste Management Industry’**
[Chris Mills, Director, Northern Ireland Environment Agency](#)

08.40 **Strategic challenges and trends in waste management**
[Alan McVicker, Strategic Investment Board](#)

08.55 **How regulation is impacting on the waste management industry?**
[Grant McBurney, Carson McDowell](#)

09.05 **Panel Session: A series of perspectives on the challenges facing the Waste Management sector:**

- **Local Authority Perspective** – [Tim Walker, Belfast City Council](#)
- **Waste Management perspective** – [Russel Drew, Lagan Group](#)
- **Adviser’s perspective** – [To be confirmed](#)
- **Regulator’s perspective** – [Mark Livingstone, Head of Waste, NIE](#)

9.45 **Panel Discussion and Q&A**
[Chaired by Gary McGhee, Partner, Carson McDowell](#)

10.45 **Close and networking**

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Subject	Rate Support Grant - Update & Motion
Reporting Officer	Chief Executive

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	To update members on the cross council delegation which met with the Minister for the Environment on 11 November 2015 and to consider for adoption a motion being considered by all attending Councils.

2	Background
2.1	A delegation of members and senior officers from Derry City & Strabane, Fermanagh & Omagh, Newry Mourne & Down and Causeway Coast and Mid Ulster Councils met with the Environment Minister on 11 November in the Guildhall, Derry. Mid & East Antrim and Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Councils were unable to attend.
2.2	The meeting pressed the Minister and his Department the importance of the Rate Support Grant to those councils experiencing socio-economic disadvantage and lower rateable values. To this end the delegation sought reassurance from the Minister and the Executive for its commitment towards the Rates Support Grant. Notes of the meeting are attached as Appendix A.
2.3	The Rate Support Grant is vital to Mid Ulster Council as it provides 7% of our income and any further reductions would have a negative impact on the delivery of council services. In addition to this Mid Ulster is the least wealthy of the new councils with the lowest Gross Penny Product the importance of the Grant made all the more to the Council.

3	Key Issues
3.1	The meeting agreed that the councils continue to work together on pressing the Executive to secure the maintenance of the Rate Support Grant. Members are being requested to adopt the following as detailed in 3.2. The other six councils are considering its adoption.
3.2	<i>That this Assembly commits to ring-fencing a sum of £18.325m within Executive budgets from 2016/17 onwards, either from the Department of the Environment budget or otherwise, and until such time that a detailed review is undertaken in conjunction with Local Government officers to determine the real level of future need required to ensure that those Councils with proven socio-economic need can maintain parity of service provision with those Councils with stronger, more sustainable rates bases.</i>

	<p>The above motion is made on behalf of the 7 Councils who rely heavily on this grant and who represent over 58% of the population of Northern Ireland and in recognition of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a clearly recognised need for the grant to assist Councils with proven socio-economic needs and disadvantage and lower wealth (as measured by rates income) to maintain parity of service provision with the more wealthy Councils. - The Grant is a crucial source of funding for 7 of the new 11 Councils providing funds of up to 7.02% of the most affected Council's total income. - The grant has been reduced by almost 25% from its' 2009/10 level (£20.497m) to its' current level of £15.5m. This has resulted in significant rates increases in the impacted Councils. Cuts have been applied through a process of top-slicing resulting in the Council with the greatest need being faced with the greatest cuts. Cuts have obviously had no rates implications for the 4 more wealthy Councils who do not rely on this funding. - The cuts have come at a time of significant challenge for the 7 impacted Councils who are already dealing with significant financial challenges in relation to rates convergence, transferring functions budgets and pension costs whilst striving to generate the necessary efficiencies following reform. - It is strongly contended that any cuts to the Grant (both already applied and potential) is contrary to the policy objectives of this grant and should therefore be subject to equality impact assessment and rural proofing. - Failure to ring-fence the grant will result in those Councils who are in receipt becoming poorer and being forced to significantly increase their district rate, putting their ratepayers at a distinct disadvantage in comparison to other more affluent areas of Northern Ireland.
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4	Resources
4.1	<u>Financial</u> – N/A
4.2	<u>Human</u> – N/A
4.3	<u>Basis for Professional/ Consultancy Support</u> – N/A
4.4	<u>Other</u> – N/A
5	Other Considerations
5.1	N/A

6	Recommendations
6.1	That Council considers for adoption the motion as presented in 3.2 and that this be then passed to the NI Assembly.

7	List of Documents Attached
7.1	Appendix A Notes of Meeting held on 11 November 2015

Notes of Multi-Council Delegation with Minister for the Environment in Guildhall Derry on
11th November 2015 at 11.00am

In attendance

Department of the Environment	Minister for the Environment Mark H Durkan MLA Nicola Creagh Mary Bunting
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Derry City and Strabane District Council	Mayor Elisha McCallion Councillor Patsy Kelly Councillor Patricia Logue Councillor Drew Thompson Councillor Darren O Reilly John Kelpie (Chief Executive) Alfie Dallas (Lead Finance Officer)
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Mid Ulster Council	Councillor Linda Dillon Councillor Cathal Mallagan Councillor Wills Robinson Councillor Derek McKinney Councillor Martin Kearney Anthony Tohill (Chief Executive)
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Fermanagh & Omagh District Council	Councillor Josephine Deehan Councillor John Feely Councillor Robert Irvine Councillor David Mahon Brendan Hegarty (Chief Executive) Joan McCaffrey (Director of Corporate Services and Governance)
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Newry, Mourne and Down District Council	Robert Dowey (Head of Finance) Councillor C Casey Councillor G Craig Councillor D Curran
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Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council	Alderman Norman Hills David Wright (Chief Finance Officer)
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Apologies

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council	Sandra Cole (Director of Finance and Governance)
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Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council	Graham Coulter (Head of Finance)
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All in attendance were provided with a copy of the attached Briefing paper (Appendix 1).

The Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council welcomed everyone to the Meeting and acknowledged the unique opportunity presented for the 7 affected Councils to present a strong collective voice to the Minister.

The Chief Executive of Derry City and Strabane District Council introduced the purpose of the delegation and identified the 3 main issues to be addressed as follows:-

- 1 To demonstrate the importance of the Rates Support Grant to the 7 Councils affected with proven socio-economic needs and disadvantage and lower rateable values;
- 2 To reinforce the impact that cuts to this grant have had on the 7 affected Councils;
- 3 To seek reassurance on the way forward in terms of securing wider Executive commitment for the Rates Support Grant and creating a period of stability for the affected Councils at a very crucial and challenging time.

In relation to Issue 1, Councillor Dillon made the following points:-

- the impact the 2015/16 cuts had had ranging from £175k to £620k across the 7 Councils which is a significant amount of money
- the Multi-Council representation at the Delegation representing 58% of the Northern Ireland population
- cuts to this grant were entirely wrong from an equality perspective
- the massive gap that already exists with the more wealthy Councils with cuts seriously impinging on any possibility of equal service provision
- with particular reference to Mid-Ulster, the costs of reform amount to £4.5m with an additional net annual deficit of £100k with no possible savings and contrary to the objectives of reform.

In relation to Issue 2, Councillor Casey made the following points:-

- the cuts could not have come at a worse time and go against the objectives of the Programme for Government in relation to tackling deprivation
- continued cuts will have significant impact on rural areas and will mean that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer
- the grant is now 25% less than in 2009/10 despite real terms increases in costs and something must be done about this

In relation to Issue 3, Councillor Logue made the following points:-

- the significance of the overall almost £3m reduction in the grant for 2015/16 at a time of increased powers
- to welcome the recent in-year reinstatement of 75% of the cut
- the Review of Public Administration brought additional challenges which shouldn't be an additional cost to ratepayers
- the purpose of the Rates Support Grant was to address inequality.
- Cuts to the grant would increase the wealth gap and it was essential that the Minister carry out an EQIA in terms of both the quantum and calculation formula of the grant
- the need for urgent clarity for 2016/17 as Councils had a legal obligation to strike their rates by 15th February and that the Minister addresses this urgently

In response to these points, the Minister welcomed the opportunity to engage with Local Government. He referred to the unprecedented budgetary challenges across all Government Departments, with the DOE being the most impacted in percentage terms and therefore been left with no alternative options to cutting the grant. This was highlighted in a letter to Executive colleagues at the time with the support of NILGA but to no avail and the Minister did not support the 2015/16 Executive Budget. He did however give a commitment at the time to keep the situation under review during the year and is very pleased to have been able to recently reinstate 75% of the amount cut and is hopeful that further in-year savings will enable the deficit to be further reduced. The Minister highlighted that Local Government Reform is about delivering better and more efficient services and that other Departments also need to step up to the plate to ensure this happens. He acknowledged the uncertainty that Councils in receipt of this grant have been facing on an annual basis, which is also evident in Central Government, but committed to doing as much as possible to give certainty around 2016/17 as soon as possible. In response to comments around the Programme for Government aiming to address imbalance and tackling deprivation and calls for an EQIA in relation to both the quantum and the formula of the Rates Support Grant, the Minister agreed that this needed to be looked at with a potential to be more linked to deprivation.

Whilst acknowledging the circumstances Councillor Dillon emphasised the need for clarity as soon as possible. She advised that cuts to the grant mean that “wealth gaps” get greater with significant impact on services and that this should not be allowed to happen. She commented that the Minister had a small window of opportunity to make a difference in this regard and it was crucial this was taken.

Councillor Irvine commented that the grant had actually reduced much more significantly in real terms given that Councils have an increasing cost base totally beyond their control and face significant challenges in respect of transferring functions budgets. He added that this

funding must not only be ring-fenced but must follow reality in terms of the cost of living as opposed to being reduced.

The Minister acknowledged that these were very valid points that need to be accepted by all Government Departments and that he was determined to avail of the small window of opportunity available to safeguard the grant going into the future. He added that the announcement of the new Environment Fund this week shows his commitment to Local Government and his concerns about what lies ahead.

Councillor Deehan welcomed the Ministers commitment to Local Government and that other Ministers must show the same commitment. She accepted the challenges faced and paid tribute to the recent in-year reinstatement of 75% of the amount cut and looked forward to news that there could be further reinstatement. She added that the Review of Public Administration is a major flagship project for the entire NI Executive including the Department of the Environment, and must succeed both in terms of efficiencies and better services and the whole future of success in this regard depended on proper funding. She expressed concern in relation to the inequality of the situation in that only 7 Councils were significantly disadvantaged.

The Minister acknowledged that the formula should be improved, that reform must succeed and Central Government must step up with the necessary financial support.

Councillor Casey added that when the Review of Public Administration had 2 hopeful outcomes. The first of these was £500m savings over 20 years which was now not possible and the second was efficient delivery of service. Giving the specific example of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, he added that of the £48m budget, £25m related to pay with a further £7m relating to loans and queried whether the possibility of debt forgiveness could be considered. He also stated that the grant should be linked to CPI and inflation.

Councillor Dillon sought clarity from the Minister in relation to his written request to the Executive and whether this specifically made reference to Rates Support Grant.

In response, the Minister advised that a copy of the letter had been made public and referred “grants to Local Government and specifically Rates Support Grant”. He added that he would be keen to see the Rates Support Grant have the same legislative protection as the de-rating grant. In relation to debt forgiveness, the Minister advised that debt forgiveness was not within the remit of his Department.

The Chief Executive of Fermanagh & Omagh District Council highlighted the additional challenges as a result of the indirect impact of the rates convergence transitional relief scheme. The relief formula had presumed that Rates Support Grant would be maintained at its’ current level and that this hadn’t happened. This issue has impacted significantly on the legacy Councils of Fermanagh and Coleraine who rely on Rates Support Grant funding. He

added that, whilst he paid tribute to the relief scheme, it was important to note that the policy had been diluted.

The Minister echoed these feelings and referred to the fact that he had identified this issue in letters to Department of Finance and Personnel.

Councillor Casey asked that in relation to the ring-fencing of this support, could the Minister give a guarantee that this funding would be protected for the next 5 years and asked what needed to be done to ensure this happened.

In response, the Minister reassured delegates that he would do his very best to ensure this happened and asked Councils to use their influence also at a wider Executive level.

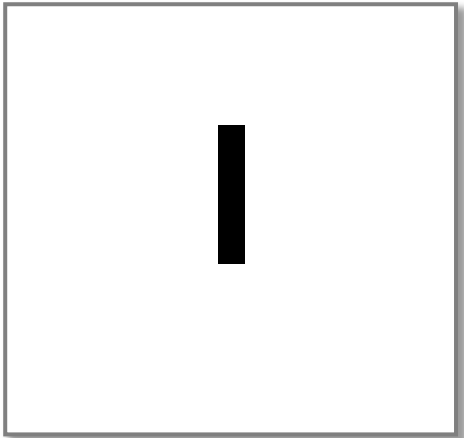
Councillor Irvine added the further issue in relation to waste contracts which would be another inescapable cost and pressure for Councils to address.

The Minister acknowledged that he was aware of these significant issues.

The Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council congratulated the Minister on the recent savings identified and the in-year attempts to address the deficit. She referred to the position paper which had been circulated (Appendix 1) which provided a suggested way forward and a number of important asks. She added that in addition to this, the delegation would be seeking a response from the Minister in relation to the issues identified within 3 weeks and would also be looking for clarity in relation to protection of this grant over a minimum 3 year period to include inflationary adjustments.

In response, the Minister stated that a response would be provided within 2 weeks. He thank the delegation for the opportunity to discuss and advised that this was a priority in his respect. He asked that approval be provided through NILGA to make the strongest possible case to party colleagues.

In concluding, the Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council stressed the importance of working together as a collective group of Councils to ensure this happened.



Subject	Response to Review of NI Local Government Association
Reporting Officer	Chief Executive
Contact Officer	Head of Democratic Services

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	To receive and consider the draft council response compiled in response to the independent review of NILGA.

2	Background
2.1	The Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (Solace) in Business was commissioned to undertake a review of the Association's current position with a view to looking at its role and part to be played in the future.
2.2	<p>The aim of the review was to assess and make recommendations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The services and representation provided by NILGA • NILGA's sustainability into the future • Areas for future focus and development of value to local government • Ensuring performance is measured and communication with councils is optimised
2.3	The review has now been undertaken and a draft report provided to the Association on its future purpose, sustainability, roles, priorities, objectives and structures. It was completed in September 2015.
2.4	A high level response to the findings of the review, providing the council's view, has been sought from the Association. The findings of the review and associated recommendations are set out attached as Appendix A.
2.5	It is intended that Councils have further specific input into the detailed development of the potential outcomes and recommendations following initial responses following the receipt of initial corporate responses.

3	Key Issues
3.1	<p>The report on the findings of the review sets out the current situation and the context in which the Association operates on back of local government reform. The Review Report assesses;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose and role of NILGA • Other functions it could adopt and take on • Its structure and constitution • Communication and relationship with all councils and others • Timescales for bringing forward changes

3.2	<p>The Review Report at appendix A sets out a series of immediate and medium term recommendations.</p> <p>A draft response with a high level corporate view has been prepared for consideration and is set out as Appendix B.</p>
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4	Resources
4.1	<u>Financial</u> – N/A
4.2	<u>Human</u> – N/A
4.3	<u>Basis for Professional/ Consultancy Support</u> – N/A
4.4	<u>Other</u> – N/A

5	Other Considerations
5.1	Mid Ulster District Council is a member council of NILGA, paying it an annual subscription of £42,750.

6	Recommendations
6.1	That the meeting consider and approve the draft response to the independent review of NILGA.

7	List of Documents Attached
7.1	<p>Appendix A Report on the Independent Review of NILGA</p> <p>Appendix B Mid Ulster Council Response to the NILGA Review</p>

DRAFT FOR FINALISATION

NORTHERN IRELAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

(NILGA)

INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE ASSOCIATION'S FUTURE PURPOSE, SUSTAINABILITY, ROLES, PRIORITIES, OBJECTIVES & STRUCTURE

**KIM RYLEY
CHAIR
SOLACE IN BUSINESS
SEPTEMBER 2015**

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. SOLACE in Business, part of the SOLACE Group (U.K), was commissioned by NILGA to carry out a small scale, independent review of the Association's position and part to be played in the wider future governance framework for Northern Ireland. The main fieldwork for this was carried out locally in June 2015.
2. Although significant differences of views were expressed about certain aspects of the matters under review, by a wide range of stakeholders interviewed, there was virtually unanimous support for the notion that local government in Northern Ireland needs an authoritative, credible, unified, single voice. The key question is whether NILGA is enabled to be the body that can best exercise this crucial role.
3. The context for the review is one where the wider governance landscape in Northern Ireland is in a state of flux and transition at every level, as the region moves inexorably towards greater self-determination. It is likely to be several years before this new infrastructure is in place fully and is functioning effectively. NILGA's place in this new, emerging governance structure is, as yet, uncertain and it has taken steps to anticipate, rather than react to, such uncertainty through this review and in terms of previous consultation, strategic restructuring and resource management exercises since 2011. These changes, functionally, have reduced the size and cost of the organisation by over 50% in four years and introduced efficiencies which have been acknowledged by many. Now is the time for NILGA to offer a more sector led sustainable solution that is supported by the local government sector.
4. Bold, high calibre political and professional leadership is needed now in the local government sector in Northern Ireland, if it is to take advantage of the new opportunities to do things differently as presented by these changes. Such shifts in the previous locus of power means that relationships between the various constituent parts of the system need to be re-negotiated actively. It is here that NILGA is most criticised by some of its partners for its current approach and "style". There are widely held perceptions that the political leadership in the Association is inaccessible to its members, lacks transparency, and is unsophisticated in its "management of influence" on behalf of the sector. Conversely, it is acknowledged that NILGA's operational team produces good quality services and have been an integral part of the development and protection of local government in Northern Ireland during the changes above mentioned. Tackling the deficits and effectively communicating successes must be an immediate and high priority for NILGA.

5. There is a clear, shared view that NILGA should concentrate on its “core” purpose, and related roles, as a representative body for local government, and should do fewer things better. There is no consensus about what other functions NILGA might or should perform in addition to this, and there needs to be an open discussion about this with the 11 new authorities, and with other key partners. This discussion will take time, but concentrating on the core purpose of representation and key roles provide a foundation for this discussion now and in the early part of 2016/17.
6. To be effective in future, NILGA needs to enhance its political leadership capacity and capabilities and this leadership has to be understood and bought into by councils. This will involve necessary changes to its structure, membership arrangements, ways of working, support staff deployment, and communications/engagement with stakeholders. The Association needs to adopt a strategic, outcomes-focussed approach and to actively negotiate further devolution of powers and responsibilities to local authorities in the future. It is therefore appropriate that the Association will consult upon a Programme for Local Government over the next few months and is positioned to input into wider, EU, national and regional policy discussions on devolution and subsidiarity.
7. The recommendations in this report, which result from these findings, are unapologetically comprehensive because the fulfilment of them should be extremely beneficial for local government in the medium and long term. They set out a 20 point programme of action for NILGA over the next 3 years, but are NOT to be seen as all being required immediately or required to be done by NILGA – rather they are a template of aspiration for the sector. How the Association and councils choose to respond to this modernisation challenge will be important. Local government is more influential where an effective Local Government Association is operating. This is why all parts of the UK and Ireland have LGAs currently and is why Northern Ireland should seek to operate with a similar body.

In doing these things over time as recommended, the Local Government sector in Northern Ireland can attain the recognition and development it requires to achieve the prize of strong councils with greater impact and local discretion, operating on the solid foundations of excellent shared support services. The recommendations are challenging but the prize is worth achieving.

CONTENTS

- 1. Review Brief and Methodology**
- 2. Context – the Emerging New Governance Landscape**
- 3. The Purpose and Roles of NILGA**
- 4. Other Functions**
- 5. Structure and Constitution**
- 6. Communications and Relationship Management**
- 7. Timescale for Change**
- 8. Recommendations**

1. REVIEW BRIEF AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 Solace in Business, part of the Solace Group (UK), was commissioned by NILGA to carry out a small scale, independent review of the Association's current position and part to be played in the wider future governance framework for Northern Ireland.

1.2 The aim of this independent research study was to carry out a review of the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA), to assess and make recommendations on:

- The services and representation provided by NILGA
- NILGA's sustainability
- Areas for future focus and development, which would add value to local government
- Ensuring performance is measured and communication with, from and to councils, is optimised.

1.3 The main fieldwork for this study was carried out in Northern Ireland in June 2015. Desktop research was undertaken on a number of key background documents relevant to the context for the review, including:

- details of the current organisational structure for the Association and recent changes to this,
- the Association's updated Constitution (June 2015),
- the Association's current Corporate Plan (2012-2016),
- the Consultation paper issued to all Councils by NILGA in November 2014 and the Outcomes Paper of February 2015 resulting from responses received,
- earlier related external studies commissioned by the Association.

1.4 The main evidence gathering for this study came from a large number of face-to-face and one-to-one telephone interviews with a wide range of representatives with an interest in NILGA's activities and possible future role. These included:

- Local councillors who are NILGA Executive members
- Local councillors who are NILGA members, but are not on its Executive
- Local councillors who are not NILGA members
- Local Authority Chief Executives
- Representatives from a wide range of stakeholder agencies, including the Business Community, Higher Education, and Voluntary and Community Organisations,

- Senior officials and Ministers from the Northern Ireland Assembly Government and
- Senior officers from other UK local government associations, including the LGA, WLGA, COSLA, and ANEC.
- (Several written submissions were also received from some of these bodies and these were also taken into account).

1.5 The study used an "Appreciative Enquiry" approach to questioning these interviewees in depth, to reveal both what has been and is positive about the Association's work and achievements, and where and how improvements can be made to this in future. This enabled a "mirror" to be held up to the Association which gives a clear reflection of how it is seen by itself and others. Although significant differences of views were expressed (and are recorded here) about certain aspects of the matters under review, there was virtually unanimous support for the notion that local government in Northern Ireland needs an authoritative, credible, unified, single voice and that, with necessary changes, NILGA is a body that can best exercise this crucial role.

2. CONTEXT – THE EMERGING NEW GOVERNANCE LANDSCAPE

- 2.1 The wider governance framework in Northern Ireland is in a state of flux and transition at every level currently. Key institutions and agencies have been, or are being, re-structured, their functions are changing or being re-distributed, and some organisations (such as the Local Government Staff Commission) will shortly cease to exist. As Northern Ireland moves inexorably towards greater self-determination, there needs to be a co-ordinated and active debate about how to take advantage of these new opportunities to do things differently, particularly in relation to making this whole infrastructure closer and more democratically accountable to the local people that it serves.
- 2.2 It needs to be recognised more overtly that such tectonic shifts in the locus of power means that relationships between the constituent parts of the system need to be re-negotiated. There needs to be an agreed, formal process for this dialogue, given the complexities involved and the likelihood that it will be some years before the new infrastructure is in place fully and is functioning effectively. This will enable a more planned transition, on a “whole system” basis, and enable the organisations affected to evolve at a pace which is viable for them.
- 2.3 Such an approach must not be focussed though on institutions or architecture, but rather on the effective utilisation of all the expertise and resources available, at both regional and local levels. This will help determine not only where particular functions, responsibilities and accountabilities are best located, but also will create a new infrastructure which incentivises greater collaboration, integration and further devolution. Whilst NILGA has communicated this approach since 2011, for example in its responses to the Review of the NI Assembly and number of government departments, the NI Economic Strategy and the proposed Programme for Government, the opportunity for this transformative change presents itself now for the local government sector as a whole.

"Northern Ireland does not need 11 "mini-Stormonts" all doing their own thing! We must avoid the things that divide us." - NIA Minister

- 2.4 It needs to be recognised that the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive is still an immature body and is in the process of re-structuring itself, as well as exploring how its political decision making processes can be made more robust and stable. The Assembly is not yet fully functional. It does not find it easy to let go to others those functions which would be best carried out more locally, and it displays a tendency to be overly directive about how things should be done, rather than focussing on achieving a set of shared and agreed outcomes to improve the quality of life of all its citizens. As a result, the Assembly often duplicates the work of other bodies and its siloed structure has prevented it from taking a joined up approach to tackling

complex issues. There are however, some able politicians in the Assembly who understand the need for change and who will support the development of a fuller role for local government in the future.

- 2.5 In this fluid and uncertain context, it is important that the local government sector is able, collectively, to position itself well, as an increasingly important and influential part of the emerging new governance system. This needs to provide also for the sector to push pro-actively for greater subsidiarity of decision making powers and responsibilities, with further devolution being planned and agreed at a pace which matches the ambition of each local authority, and being supported by a strong business case showing greater value-for-money.
- 2.6 11 new local authorities in Northern Ireland are quickly finding their feet and are picking up the newly acquired devolved functions and responsibilities enthusiastically. Already they are exploring actively how best to collaborate with one another, on both a sub-regional and regional basis, to achieve better economy of scale, as well as greater impact and influence. Such improvements were one of the main reasons for major restructuring of the sector. However, significant further devolution to councils in Northern Ireland is needed if they are to match the roles being performed by those in other parts of the U.K. and Ireland, and be able to deal with the funding cuts to come as part of continuing austerity in the approach of the Government to the future role and size of the State.
- 2.7 In this emerging new landscape the need also to look at the part played by the relatively bloated “quangocracy” in Northern Ireland, which lacks democratic accountability and makes integration of related functions more difficult, cannot be avoided. Many of the functions currently carried out by these bodies will need to continue in the future, but could well be performed differently and else where in the system.
- 2.8 From a local government perspective, there is a particular need in this context for strong, bold leadership that is able to take a longer term, strategic view of the sector’s future role. At this point in time, particularly, there is a need for the sector to have a credible, accepted, unified single voice, not least in its dealings with the Northern Ireland Assembly, as well as with other partners and allies. The key question, therefore, is how NILGA can best exercise this crucial role and how it will need to operate differently in future to do so effectively.

"The range of functions NILGA is best equipped to perform will determine the type of leadership it needs to display. It needs high quality members to be credible." - Voluntary Association Representative

- 2.9 NILGA's place in this new, emerging governance structure is, as yet, uncertain. It has a small number of highly motivated and able staff which supports the Association. The organisation's vulnerability has meant that its workforce is managed in a short term, reactive manner and despite improvements in productivity, this is unsustainable. Therefore, how the Association and councils – as well as SOLACE - respond to the challenging 20 point programme which repositions NILGA will be important, both for NILGA and for the Local Government sector as a whole. There is a salutary warning in the current vitriolic public hostility between the Welsh Government and the WLGA, where working relations have all but broken down completely.

3. THE PURPOSE AND ROLE(S) OF NILGA

- 3.1 It needs to be remembered that NILGA is a voluntary association and a membership body. As such, each member council can decide whether it wishes to join and how active a part it wishes to play in the Association's activities. In general, the appeal of such bodies to potential members tends to rest on them gaining benefits through their membership that would not otherwise be available to them. These tend to include:-
- an opportunity to actively influence policy development on a larger scale;
 - personal / corporate development opportunities and access to high quality, low cost training, mentoring and coaching;
 - early access to important information and examples of best practice;
 - the support of a network of peers;
 - collective work on issues such as investment, procurement, workforce development and innovation and,
 - participation in key events and activities.
- 3.2 It is true, however, that the greater the degree of Members' participation in and contributions to such an association, the greater the value they are likely to extract from being a member of it. Although NILGA is a political association i.e. its members are elected local politicians, *it is owned and "controlled" by the councils that constitute it*, (not by individual councillors), and its role and purpose should not be confused with those of the National Association of Councillors in Northern Ireland.
- 3.3 It is evident, however, that to develop and be successful in the future, NILGA needs to clearly re-define (and widely publicise) its "core" purpose and the role(s) it is best placed to undertake in the emerging new governance framework for Northern Ireland. This needs to demonstrate the relevance of the Association, particularly to the 11 new local authorities, its ability to give value-for-money for its

membership fees, and what benefits and advantages it could/would bring to “my council”.

- 3.4 There is overwhelming support for having an effective body that can provide an authoritative, representative voice for the local government sector in Northern Ireland. *In making this its main objective, NILGA can save the new councils’ time and money*, both of which they are short of, but it must avoid being seen as too directive in its style and tone. NILGA must not act as if it is an independent think tank, and has in fact expressly stated that it is not such a body and its appointed members need to be clear of their role as representatives of their Council and, as a collective, of the regional local government sector in Northern Ireland. (In other words, they have no status or authority, in this context, as an individual councillor).

"NILGA's pivotal role is to co-ordinate a consensus view for the local government sector, and to act as its advocate." - NIA Minister

- 3.5 With a visibly fresh approach, a new NILGA can continue to play a pivotal role as an honest broker of consensus across the sector, and across the political spectrum in Northern Ireland. Its closely related roles are those of advocate, assertive (but not bullying) negotiator, and co-ordinator of key actions to promote the interests of the sector, in the region and beyond. As a legitimate lobbying organisation, NILGA necessarily needs to have a wider (and longer term) perspective than those of individual Councils, and be able to act as a sounding board and a single point of contact to the sector collectively, for businesses, representative bodies, quangos, regional Voluntary Associations, and others who wish to engage with it, in a turbulent and uncertain political environment. To fulfil this, NILGA needs to make further changes beyond and the changes need to be owned and invested in by the 11 councils. Such changes in themselves are less important than the outcomes, mutual acceptance and shared trust that must prevail as a consequence of them.

"NILGA must do less, better! Its credibility depends on its ability to form relationships that enable it to confidently represent the whole local government sector, and to proactively form and sustain alliances of mutual interest. This will be the key to likely further devolution."
- Business Sector Representative

- 3.6 Ideally, *NILGA needs to be viewed widely as the “go to” constituted body, not least for the local authorities it serves. It should be able to act effectively as a regional policy forum, network, conduit, and commentator or influencer of U.K and N.I Assembly Government policy and legislation.* Depending on the key priorities for local authorities in Northern Ireland, this approach would include areas of development such as policy guidance, advocacy, economic growth and prosperity,

skills development, “fairness” and equality, regional improvement, waste and environmental protection, good governance and democratic engagement/ participation. Crucially, NILGA should be able to ensure a regional overview and understanding of such matters, and of the collective actions needed to progress the desired outcomes for local people, as well as to help coalesce ideas, energy and resources around their implementation.

- 3.7 For this to happen, NILGA needs to adopt itself – and advocate to others including councils and wider government - a higher level, more strategic, outcomes-based approach, and embed a credible, respected political leadership capability. Indeed, its value and credibility as an organisation will be based on it being widely accepted as the single, trusted, authoritative, unifying, representative voice for the sector. NILGA needs to attract and retain “top quality” local politicians – those with wide experience and impact, and to develop member “experts” in key areas of policy development, rather than operate through a system of annual political rotation. (This raises issues about how many representatives of the 11 councils sit on NILGA, and how these are appointed – which is dealt with in the next section of this report).
- 3.8 NILGA’s ability to form and maintain new positive, open, honest and “straightforward” relationships with a wide range of partners and allies will be essential to its success in exercising an effective leadership role for the sector. *Nowhere will this be more important than in its better liaison and close joint working with the newly reconstituted SOLACE Branch for Northern Ireland. A co-ordinated joint approach by the two organisations will offer the high quality political and professional leadership that the region needs.* NILGA will, however, need to differentiate its role from the complementary one to be played by SOLACE, and allow each organisation to operate in its own sphere of influence. There will be times when a particular case can be made best by senior council officers working “quietly behind the scenes” and others where a visible democratic mandate posited by NILGA will be more effective. This will allow each organisation to play to its strengths on an agreed, mutual agenda of securing better outcomes for local people.
- 3.9 There is a similar need in forming new relationships for NILGA to differentiate its role from those that the 11 new councils might seek to adopt collectively, on either a regional or sub-regional basis. Similarly, NILGA’s collaborative working relationship with the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive will be a crucial litmus test of the effectiveness of the Association’s new approach and way of working. The key here will be for NILGA to move away from seeing its role as one of scrutinising Assembly decisions and holding the Assembly to account, to one of brokering a genuine strategic outcomes-based partnership designed to promote the principle of greater subsidiarity and devolution to local level. NILGA needs to take the lead pro-actively in re-vamping the current Partnership Panel with the Assembly in these

terms, so that it provides a more effective dialogue about bringing about such governance changes in a planned way, over the next few years. The arrangements already in place between local authorities in Scotland and the Scottish Parliament could provide a helpful model for this improved approach. As mentioned in 2.3 above, it is appropriate that the Association will consult upon a Programme for Local Government over the next few months, has prioritised strategic discussions with OFMDFM, including Junior Ministers responsible for high level policies in this sphere and is positioned to input into wider, EU, national and regional policy discussions on devolution and subsidiarity.

- 3.10 In terms of extending its influence and impact on behalf of the local government sector, NILGA needs also to enhance existing and develop new wider networks, on a pan-U.K. / Irish, pan-European and international basis, not least to tap into and share emerging best practice. This can be done validly as part of a wider objective of putting Northern Ireland on the world stage, to raise its profile for tourism and inward investment, and to demonstrate the ambition of the sector to be a leading player in economic growth for the region. NILGA's securing of the *European Entrepreneurial Region of the Year*, in 2015, for all of Northern Ireland, must be capitalised upon, acknowledging that European and regional partners have been established to ensure an economic and skills legacy to this accolade. One mark of the maturity of Northern Ireland's political institutions will be their ability to look outwards and learn from others in this way, rather than to simply pursue parochial local or party political agendas.
- 3.11 In essence, by doing fewer things better, NILGA can act as a small, but energetic "spider" in the centre of a growing web of influence. Its role is, in part, to act as the glue which holds the system of local public service delivery together. NILGA must develop an effective means to pro-actively form and extend alliances of mutual interest, for the benefit of the sector, even acting as an "outreach partner" able to gain access to and funnel (grant) funding to other bodies, where appropriate, and where they share the Association's values and objectives. Again, for this to happen, it must be a role accepted by the sector.
- 3.12 Success in all this will depend on NILGA increasing its leadership capacity and capability, if it is to operate with confidence across all levels of governance in Northern Ireland. The Association has a key role, therefore, in actively supporting the Councillors' Charter and in developing a new regional framework for the development and training of elected members, not least given the high turnover of local councillors in the recent local government elections. This is already seen as a high priority, particularly in relation to those functions where the 11 councils have acquired new powers and responsibilities such as Planning, and NILGA can prepare the sector to actively take on further devolution to come. In practice, such a programme to create the "21st Century Councillor", as a community leader, and deliver a Programme

for *Local* Government, will need to rely largely on the resources of the local authorities for their implementation, (as would most other functions NILGA might take on).

- 3.13 A further important aspect of NILGA's "core" functions is for the Association to be the protector and promoter of the reputation of local government and locally delivered public services in Northern Ireland. This involves identifying, sharing and celebrating good practice, innovation, and successes/achievements. But, in terms of its joint leadership role for the sector with SOLACE, it means NILGA driving forward a sector-owned comprehensive programme to transform local public services, and citizen engagement, in an age of continuing austerity, rather than this being dictated by regional or national government. This will be a major challenge for the new councils, which are still focussed to a large extent on establishing themselves individually, not least in them emulating the growing trend in the rest of the U.K towards shared services (between local authorities), and integrated service delivery across organisational boundaries and all public service bodies in a particular locality or sub-region. NILGA needs to actively assist the new councils to take up confidently their General Power of Competence and to give their "place-shaping" role high priority, not least in relation to economic growth and community cohesion.
- 3.14 More cost-effective approaches to local public service design and delivery will be needed for many years to come, particularly in relation to a joined-up approach to tackling priorities such as Early Years provision, Crime, and Unemployment, as well as the trend towards "pooled" budgets and "payment by results". NILGA's credibility and, indeed, that of the new councils it serves, depends on a shared ability to make quick and visible progress with this agenda for change and innovation, so that the region moves up the field to join the front-runners in other parts of the U.K.

4. OTHER FUNCTIONS

- 4.1 Although there is a good degree of unanimity of support for NILGA reformulating itself around the "core" roles and functions set out above, views are much more mixed about what other activities, if any, the Association ought to be involved in. As such, some of the ideas presented – **all** of which have come from respondents – are as much about the sector's needs rather than being a matter exclusive to NILGA. However, there are a number of possible areas where NILGA might add value on a regional basis, some of which it is undertaking currently, or which are carried out by other bodies.
- 4.2 Care is therefore needed in considering such proposals to ensure that such activities does not distract from or dilute NILGA's main roles and purpose as a representative body for the sector. Costed business

cases, which demonstrate clearly what value for local councils NILGA's involvement would add, should be a requirement of these considerations, as should an active dialogue about what they might otherwise choose to do for themselves collectively. These proposals will take time to develop but should be part of the dialogue which has been sought by NILGA and needs to be formally re-established between SOLACE and the Association, and should form part of the core agenda of each.

- 4.3 **Economic Growth** – there is a growing expectation in national government that local authorities should see this as their highest priority, and should play a pivotal role in bringing greater prosperity and financial security to all their residents. On the back of winning for NI the EER Award (see 3.10), NILGA could create a new framework which would enable councils to form a more strategic overview of what is needed regionally and sub-regionally, and would support closer working with all stakeholders to identify and take advantage of new opportunities and sources of funding. NILGA could be instrumental also in establishing a joint approach with Invest NI, in putting in place a better framework of support for SMEs and new business start-ups, and for promoting the development of more commercially minded “entrepreneurial” councils.

"You cannot pursue investment and economic growth as an 11x zero sum game, though we do want 11x local "powerhouses", with a collaborative approach and a shared vision for prosperity." - NIA Minister

"NILGA's co-ordination role for local councils in working closely with the Business Sector is central and crucial to Economic Development in Northern Ireland." - Business Sector Representative

- 4.4 **EU Policies and Funding** – although NILGA has a clear track record of success in this context, on behalf of local authorities, the current approach could readily be scaled-up to give Northern Ireland a stronger and more effective voice in Europe. This might involve, for example, investment by OFMDFM in NILGA taking on the role of the Northern Ireland European Regional Forum (NIERF), from January 2016. The support of the new councils for this, and of Belfast City Council in particular as the best known face of the region overseas, is crucial.
- 4.5 **Devolved Functions** – NILGA needs to consider also whether it is best placed to undertake communication and policy guidance on some of the suite of new functions likely to become the responsibility of local authorities under future devolution initiatives and, indeed, the Association should lead the sector in preparations for greater subsidiarity. This could include taking on roles currently carried out by quangos (such as training by the Staff Commission).

- 4.6 **Workforce Planning and Organisational Development** – there is certainly a clear need for a strategic and co-ordinated approach to workforce development issues, given the massive changes in employment practices which are likely in the coming years. As in other parts of the UK, Management skills (particularly in People Management) are a weakness currently in Northern Ireland, and it is essential that current expertise in this area is not lost as a result of planned changes in the institutional architecture that houses it. In relation to local councils, there is a strong case to be made for a framework which provides an *integrated and complementary* approach to the development of both elected members and staff, (not least as the boundaries between the two groups start to break down with the growth of “elected officials”).
- 4.7 Consideration needs to be given to whether NILGA can make a valuable contribution to Industrial relations by undertaking the role of the Regional Employer for local government staff, rather than such matters being left either for individual councils to deal with separately or for determination by (a remote) national government. In short, it is possible as is the case currently for NILGA to be the simple and inexpensive link between the national negotiating machinery and the local government workforce in Northern Ireland. However, the extent of support for this amongst the new councils needs to be tested, in the context of a likely turbulent and challenging period of change as the public sector workforce in Northern Ireland is scaled down, and new technology, new skills requirements, and new ways of working are introduced to improve public sector productivity. The 2015/16 and 2016/17 pay and negotiation climate in a national context is fraught to say the least, with relationships with unions and the National Living Wage proposals being just two key issues. A political and practical link to all such changes which will affect councils in NI financially and structurally is essential and has to be invested in, but need not be complex and costly.
- 4.8 **An Innovation Hub** – there could be merit in NILGA leading an initiative to pull these related strands together into a (virtual) Innovation Hub, as a Northern Ireland Centre of Excellence, (rather than creating a new organisation to replace out-dated ones), owned and run by the new councils collectively, which will drive transformational change across the sector,
- 4.9 **Getting Closer Together** – In reality, given the need to keep NILGA “mean and lean” in future, whatever additional functions it is agreed that NILGA takes on, much of the work involved in any of these extra functions would need to be undertaken using the staffing resources and expertise of the new councils, with NILGA acting as a co-ordinator and facilitator of such activities on the sector’s behalf. This would not prevent groups of councils also working directly together or jointly procuring external support on some initiatives, perhaps at a sub-regional level. Such an approach would, however, mean that NILGA

needs to retain sufficient “core” staff (with the right capabilities for these new roles), supported by a programme of two-way staff development and secondments.

- 4.10 Better co-ordination of the use of all available resources in the sector around councils’ shared themes and priorities for action would also require greater joint working between NILGA, SOLACE, and the Professional Officers Group, to support the various Political Leadership groups tasked with achieving the desired outcomes. This will depend, in turn, on a framework of closer liaison, access and collaboration, based on mutual trust and respect between NILGA staff and senior managers in the local authorities, and on each of the groups feeling welcome in the “camp” of the other. To lead and support this development, the Chief Executive of NILGA will need to gain the confidence of all the Chief Executives of the 11 new councils, and to achieve “parity of esteem” with them.

"NILGA needs a sustainable "critical mass" if councils are to work together on the basis of necessary trust. It needs to build from the bottom up, and to avoid perceptions of "empire building" or of acting on the basis of self-interest." - Senior ANEC Representative

- 4.11 As with Chief Executives and their councils, the NILGA Chief Executive needs to be accepted as the Principal Adviser to, and Spokesperson on behalf of, the NILGA Board. Albeit prompted and supported by their respective professional advisers, in both NILGA and the new councils, it is the role of the elected members to determine political priorities and the best means of realising their ambitions. In re-positioning NILGA in the changing governance landscape of Northern Ireland, and in redefining its “core” purpose, role(s), and ways of working with others, the Association’s new Chair will need particular personal support, if she is to lead these significant changes with confidence.
- 4.12 **Managing Risk** – Given that local government in Northern Ireland has recently entered a period of unprecedented, turbulent, and uncertain change, the sector needs a mature debate about how, collectively, it is going to deal with the risk of failure by any of its councils or related bodies. It seems to be accepted generally that NILGA has a valid “core” role in being the “Guardian” of the reputation of local government in Northern Ireland, and so it has a clear interest in this aspect. However, there is little or no consensus on what part NILGA should play either in promoting Performance Improvement or in dealing with significant under-performance by councils. There is a strong aversion to the Association having any direct “powers of intervention” to prevent the risk of failure, given the role of the Northern Ireland Audit Office and of the Assembly in such matters. However, there is a shared recognition of the need for the sector to take responsibility collectively for its performance, in preference to having a bloated and expensive external audit and inspection regime. This should involve helping local authorities prepare effectively for such external scrutiny/challenge and

acting as “First Responder” in the event of a seriously critical assessment of any council's effectiveness and “good health”.

“Councils will need help to act more “commercially”, like independent businesses, for the first time. NILGA can help guide councils to more cost effective approaches.” - NILGA Member

- 4.13 This sensitive issue is under active review by the other LGAs across the U.K. The recent bruising experiences of several local authorities in Wales is testament to the long term reputational damage that is possible in being unprepared for the publicly damning criticisms of an “aggressive” Audit Office out to make a name for itself. On this basis, there would be merit in actively exploring, as a high priority, whether NILGA could add value by commissioning a new, more effective form of Peer Review process for NI local authorities, working jointly with the other U.K LGAs to achieve economy of scale and value-for-money. Such an approach would fit well with and complement NILGA's role as a catalyst for transformational changes in local public service design and delivery, including scoping and advising councils on the merits and best ways of implementing new business models and ways of working. Again however, this requires clinical discussion and testing.

“NILGA can help map the best way forward for councils and identify best practice elsewhere. Our more proactive future role should be to facilitate genuinely transformational change, and to celebrate success.” - NILGA Non Member

5 STRUCTURE AND CONSTITUTION

- 5.1 NILGA's critics and those who are sceptical about its value would argue that it is the Association's behaviour and “body language” that needs to change, not least in relation to its relationship with the new councils and with the NI Assembly. Its supporters would contradict this. But, to facilitate such a revitalised approach, NILGA needs to do two things – to put in place a new, streamlined structure, with a smaller Board and greater transparency over where decision making is located, together with an effective framework for wider member involvement /engagement, supported by improved, two-way communication and greater openness.
- 5.2 The issue of ensuring political balance within NILGA in this context also needs re-thinking, with this perhaps being left to the constituent councils, as the nominating bodies, to determine and achieve in relation to their overall representation on the Association. To extend influence, access wider skills and perspectives, and introduce a degree of external challenge, the Association should consider introducing positions for a number of non-executive directors, as well as providing, as it has done in the past, for senior civil servants and other “experts” to attend its meetings where appropriate.

- 5.3 The Association should adopt an action-orientated, outcomes-based structure, which moves away from sterile, formal committees to the more fluid and flexible use of Policy Development Groups or of Taskforces, which work in wider partnership across and beyond the sector, as well as with SOLACE. These could be focussed on each of the agreed strategic priorities listed in section 3.6 above, and be tasked to produce specific desired outputs within set deadlines. These groups/taskforces would provide attractive platforms for wider member involvement and influence, on the basis of their personal interests and expertise. The designated Spokespersons for each of these groups would, necessarily, have a higher profile (including with the media), but would articulate an agreed collective view on the matter under consideration, rather than a personal one. It is acknowledged that these task and finish, policy and best practice, spokesperson roles have been put forward at NILGA's AGM and first Executive meetings, there now has to be a cultural change and the implementation developed in the outcomes oriented way referred to above.
- 5.4 On this basis, and given that there would be a regular and frequent flow of information about the Groups' deliberations and outputs, the main Board would meet less frequently. Its role would be that of a Steering Group – setting priorities for the Taskforces within an overall strategic framework of activities and objectives, monitoring and evaluating progress, and ensuring the effective reporting of outputs/outcomes, as well as overseeing the operational requirements of the Association and its staff.
- 5.5 NILGA needs to be future focussed and have a strategic overview of the sector's direction and pace of travel, (particularly in this period where the new councils are distracted, understandably, by the operational requirements of establishing themselves). It needs to formulate a new 3 year Corporate Plan (and related budget) from 2016 up to the next local government elections in 2019. This would set out clear priorities for action and success criteria, based on what the constituent councils want/need. In effect, the Association needs to create a new, medium term Programme for Change for Local Government in Northern Ireland, and to use this overtly, in dialogue with the Assembly Government (and with other key partners/allies) to actively influence the future development of the wider governance framework for the region, and the (growing) place of local government within this, as further devolution to local level is planned and put in place. There needs to be wide, genuine consultation on this prior to the next Assembly elections, with a view to its implementation following immediately afterwards. It should be noted that the Northern Ireland Assembly is not (yet) signed up to the Charter for Local Self-Government.

"NILGA's role needs to be clear and specific. This should include sharing and promoting best practice from its UK networks and beyond. It needs to be future focused and strategic." - Local Authority Chief Executive

- 5.6 To a large extent, the funding and resources NILGA needs to operate effectively depend on the range and nature of the functions that councils agree it should undertake on their behalf. But, regardless of this, there is the need to ensure that NILGA has sufficient “core” funding from its members to enable it to sustain a “critical mass” of appropriately skilled staff who are not employed on renewable short term contracts. NILGA’s core team, for reasons of productivity, development and certainty requires investment that is not part of an uncertain annual “ask” to the 11 councils. NILGA’s Chief Executive therefore needs to work with the Board and member Councils to determine the function and cost of this small team. These could then be supplemented as necessary, by interim appointments, secondments or project based staff, as required by particular functions for which there are discrete, separate funding arrangements (which are not part of the subscriptions of member councils). Within its “core” capacity and capabilities, the Association must be able to support research/policy development and communications/information sharing activities, drawing on expert assistance for/from the new councils also, as needed. In order for it to feel that NILGA is “owned” by its member authorities, there was clearly merit in relocating its offices and meetings facilities into the premises of one of these councils, and office space in others should be a consideration.

6. COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 As a visible symbol of the deeper changes in the way that NILGA intends to work with others in future, the Association needs to “refresh” its brand, keeping the same name but adopting a new look and style. More importantly the Association needs to develop an effective Reputation Management Strategy (and Action Plan), to correct misunderstandings, remove ignorance, and overcome outdated hostility to its roles and ways of doing things in the past.
- 6.2 This could be part of a larger, sector-wide, collective campaign, led and co-ordinated by NILGA, in close collaboration with the new councils, to improve understanding of the part the sector can play in future in the “Leadership of Place” which will be essential to improving quality of life for all the people of Northern Ireland.
- 6.3 More immediately, NILGA needs to put in place a genuine relationship building exercise with all key players/allies (and possible new partners) it needs to collaborate with to achieve the shared objectives of its member councils. This would involve the new councils themselves, the N.I Assembly Government (both Ministers and senior civil servants) the Business and Third Sectors, other local public services and others within the Association’s legitimate networks and growing spheres of influence.

*"NILGA needs to look beyond Northern Ireland, to have wider perspectives and links, so that it can better predict and help others prepare for and respond to the big, strategic trends that are emerging."
- NIA Minister*

- 6.4 The Association needs to do more with councils to share and celebrate its successes and achievements. Also, it must take speedy action to improve the understanding of the many newly elected councillors about NILGA's new role(s) and the benefits these can bring to their authorities. This needs to be based on a framework of more regular, personal visits to councils and shared events by NILGA Executive Board members, by Task Force / Policy Group Spokespersons, to increase the level and frequency of such two-way inter-action. Consideration should be given to establishing a wider "focus group" of all key stakeholders, so as to facilitate their greater influence and contributions, as well as to survey partners' satisfaction/approval levels for NILGA's progress and ways of doing business.

"There is a definite need for NILGA, but it must be "owned and controlled" by councils, and take a lead in binding them together to promote their shared interests. The fundamental issue is one of trust!"
- NIA Senior Official

- 6.5 In this context, NILGA has responsibility to lead on a robust and challenging, (but less aggressive) approach to making more effective the Partnership Panel with the N.I. Assembly. This will need to be based on behaviour which skilfully fosters mutual trust and respect, and reflects parity of status and esteem between the two tiers of government. A key objective in this approach for the Association should be to propose and win agreement to an improved framework of collaboration with the Assembly, similar to that in place between councils and the Parliament in Scotland, in which an in-depth dialogue can take place about further devolution to local authorities.

"The Partnership Panel is the key to a new political relationship between the Northern Ireland Assembly and Local Government - and NILGA can be the vehicle for ensuring that the 11 new councils become an integral part of political decision making." - NILGA President

- 6.6 Finally in this context, NILGA needs quickly to formulate a new two-way Communication framework with councils, designed to enable the Association to take soundings on key issues/developments quickly and easily, as well as to report on its decisions and actions taken on their behalf. To be effective, this will need buy-in and collaboration from the councils so that, for example, there are formal opportunities to report on, discuss, and provide comments on NILGA's progress, which are built into the committee process of each council. This should seek to overcome any perception or feeling that NILGA is remote from or inaccessible to its members.

7. TIMESCALE FOR CHANGE

- 7.1 In terms of sequenced actions to demonstrate visibly an improved approach to its “core” purpose, roles and functions, NILGA needs to identify a number of quick wins which will show its intentions, good faith, and progress. This must recognise that, like the wider governance landscape around it, the Association is likely to be in a state of flux and transformation for several years, as it rises to the significant challenges it is now facing.
- 7.2 There will be a period of political uncertainty in the U.K at national government level in the period running up to the planned Referendum on our E.U membership. This coincides roughly with the N.I Assembly elections in May 2016 and the associated review of the Assembly’s organisation structure which will move to 9 departments after that date. This provides NILGA with a key period in which it can discuss, consult on, agree and plan (with the new councils and other key partners) a new set of future arrangements for carrying out its crucial “core” purpose, and any other related functions where the Association can add real value for councils and the wider local public service sector.

"NILGA needs to be allowed and helped to evolve and grow its impact, in the same way that the 11 new councils will." - Local Authority Chief Executive

- 7.3 NILGA should actively seize the opportunity, over the next 12 -18 months to lead a sector wide review of the use of resources available to the whole local government system in Northern Ireland, in order to put together a comprehensive devolution and investment proposition for enhancing the role of the local government sector within this in the future. These new arrangements could then be worked up and put in place fully after the next Local Government elections in Northern Ireland in 2019, with progress towards this objective being reviewed, with the Assembly and other partners, in 2018.

"NILGA needs to present the challenges facing the new councils as opportunities to do things differently. It needs to promote and support new forms and patterns of service delivery across organisational boundaries." - NIA Senior Official

- 7.4 This ambitious programme for change will stretch NILGA and the new councils significantly over the next few years, as the sector’s ability to step up to greater self-determination is put to the test. Without bold and visionary political and professional leadership, clear priorities and outcomes, a coherent medium term plan of action, and a genuine willingness to work collaboratively across the whole regional governance structure, it is unlikely that local government will mature sufficiently or quickly enough to fully realise its potential to be a major player in shaping the future prosperity and cohesion of Northern Ireland, Such failure will leave the region’s residents relatively poorer,

as the rest of the U.K makes better progress and leaves Northern Ireland behind. This would be a democratic and economic missed opportunity of the highest order.

Kim Ryley, Chair, SOLACE in Business, September 2015

APPENDIX ONE.

RECOMMENDATIONS (CATEGORISED AS 2015 / 16 by “NOW”, and as 2016 / 17 and beyond by “MEDIUM TERM”)

It is **recommended** that NILGA:-

NOW (immediately and by March 2016)

- 8.1 Distributes the Independent Review report as a basis for finalisation by the 11 Councils through a wide-ranging dialogue also to include SOLACE about:-
- how NILGA can enhance the legitimacy for its “core” purpose and leadership role, as the representative single voice of the local government sector in Northern Ireland;
 - what other, related functions it should carry out on behalf of the sector, where it can be demonstrated through costed business cases that this adds value to the work of the councils themselves; and does not dilute the Association’s main role; and
 - in what ways its structure, processes, and ways of working should change to improve openness and transparency, increase member support and engagement, and foster trusting relationships to enhance collaboration, and sustain active partnerships that improve the quality of life of the people of Northern Ireland and the resilience of local communities.
- 8.2 Instructs its Chief Executive, once the future functions of the Association have been agreed, to bring forward for consideration clear, costed, proposals developed with members / the 11 Council Chiefs on a consistent basis – as sought by them - for the future size, shape (in terms of capacity and capability), location and investment required for the Association’s “core” staffing complement, to ensure NILGA’s effectiveness and sustainability; how this needs to be augmented to carry out other, related activities through separate funding streams; and for drawing on and co-ordinating the use of the resources and expertise of the local authorities, where necessary, not least through joint working with the SOLACE N.I Branch, as well as the commissioning of external expert support, when needed.
- 8.3 Negotiates and puts in place an effective framework for better liaison and joint working with the newly reconstituted SOLACE Branch for Northern Ireland, to form a co-ordinated joint approach which will provide the high calibre of political and professional leadership the region needs in the uncertain, turbulent and challenging times ahead.
- 8.4 Takes the lead in bringing forward proposals to improve the effectiveness of the Partnership Panel with the N.I Assembly

Government, and which brokers a genuine strategic, outcomes based partnership founded on mutual respect and the principle of greater subsidiarity, rather than seeing the Association's role as being one largely of scrutinising and holding the Assembly to account.

- 8.5 By January 2016 formulates a new, future focussed and strategic Corporate Plan (and related budget) for the three year period 2016-19, which sets out clear desired outcomes, priorities for action, and success criteria, based on what the constituent councils want/need collectively, and uses this Programme for Change for Local Government in Northern Ireland, in the period before the next Assembly elections, as the basis for the dialogue with the Assembly Government (and with other key partners/allies) on the future development of the wider governance framework for the region, which will start to be put in place after those elections.
- 8.6 Drives forward the creation of wider networks of influence beyond the region, which encourage the political institutions of Northern Ireland to look outward to learn from best practice elsewhere and to put the region and its ambitions for economic growth and prosperity on the world stage.
- 8.7 Increases its leadership capacity and capability, as well as those of the wider local government sector in Northern Ireland, by providing support for its new Chair from an experienced senior politician, as a coach/mentor, such as a former Chair of the LGA in England; by actively championing the Councillors' Charter; and by commissioning a new, regional framework for the development and training of elected members, which prepares the local authorities to actively take on the further devolution of new powers and responsibilities to come.
- 8.8 Is consulted with as part of ensuring that there is an effective response by the local government sector to the regional need for a strategic, co-ordinated approach to industrial relations and to workforce planning and development requirements, and that current expertise in this field is not lost, given the massive changes in employment practices which are likely in the coming years.
- 8.9 Identifies and takes action as a priority on a campaigns and actions which will show the Association's intentions, good faith, and progress in improving its effectiveness, as well as lead, over the next 12 – 18 months, a sector-wide review of the use of the resources available to the whole local governance system in Northern Ireland, as part of putting together a comprehensive devolution and investment proposition for enhancing the role of the local government sector within this in the future.
- 8.10 Works with SOLACE to construct effective arrangements to identify share and celebrate the sector's good practice, innovative approaches, and successes/achievements, to enhance the reputation of local

government and its future role in the wider governance structure of the region.

- 8.11 Puts in place a new, streamlined structure for the Association, with a smaller Board, supported by the Office Bearers and new Policy Development Groups or Taskforces for each of the strategic priorities agreed collectively by the new councils, as part of an effective framework for wider member involvement, and with new arrangements for the nomination of “senior” elected representatives by the councils, which achieves overall political balance.
- 8.12 By January 2016 clarifies the role (as a Steering Group) of its Executive Board and establishes a (less frequent) meeting cycle, together with new ways of working, not least in terms of more active and regular contact with each of the local authorities it serves.
- 8.13 Puts in place quickly a genuine relationship building exercise with all its key players, partners/allies (and possible new partners), as part of actively developing the value of and extending the Association’s networks and spheres of influence, including more regular and intensive inter-action with each of the local authorities; the setting up of an inclusive stakeholder “Focus Group”, and regular surveys of (and reporting on) partners’ satisfaction/approval levels for NILGA’s ways of doing business and progress.

MEDIUM TERM (2016 & 2017)

- 8.14 From April 2016 has a new, two-way Communication framework with councils, to enable the Association to readily take soundings on key issues/developments, as well as to report on its decisions and actions taken on their behalf, to overcome any perception that NILGA is remote from or inaccessible to its members.
- 8.15 Refreshes” its brand and profile, with media relations and communication work, as part of a larger Reputation Management Strategy as well as lead and co-ordinate a similar, collective campaign to promote the growing role of the local government sector in the “Leadership of Place”.
- 8.16 Drives forward a sector-owned, comprehensive programme of change to transform the future delivery of local public services, and the greater citizen engagement on which this needs to be based, by a focus on extending the “place shaping” role of local authorities and the creative use of their General Power of Competence, as well as an integrated, joined up approach with other bodies/agencies to tackling cross-cutting priorities.
- 8.17 Creates a new framework which enables and supports local authorities, individually and collectively, to play a pivotal role in bringing about

greater prosperity and financial security for all their residents, through a joint approach with other agencies (such as Invest N.I); a stronger voice in Europe to access greater funding; better support for SMEs and new business start-ups; and promoting the development of more commercially minded “entrepreneurial” councils.

- 8.18 Lead the design and creation of a new “Innovation Hub”, as a virtual “Centre of Excellence” for Northern Ireland, which brings together creative ideas, energy and resources, and which enables experimentation and prototyping of new approaches to take place and be tested before scaling-up what works best, without risk of wider service failure.
- 8.19 Takes views about putting in place new, more effective arrangements which enable the local government sector in Northern Ireland to exercise collective responsibility for its own performance, through the commissioning (jointly with the other U.K LGAs) of a new, more robust form of peer review process, and promoting its active adoption by all the new councils.
- 8.20 Considers introducing positions for a number of “non-executive directors” on its Board, as well as providing, where appropriate, for senior civil servants and other external experts to attend its meetings, so as to provide wider perspectives, greater challenge, and improved decision making.

Draft Response to Review of Northern Ireland Local Government Association

An independent review of the NI Local Government Association's (NILGA) future purpose, sustainability, roles, priorities objectives and structures was undertaken by Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (Solace) in Business. This document provides Mid Ulster District Council's initial position on its findings, subject to further more detailed discussions being undertaken as part of the Review process between December 2015 and March 2016.

Mid Ulster Council's high level response/ corporate view

The Council welcomes the foresight of the Office Bearers and senior officer team of NILGA to initiate a review of its workings and structure, and views it as an opportunity to strengthen the voice of local government at a time when the new Councils are still forming and establishing their presence. For ease of reference Council provides commentary in line with the structure of the findings of the Independent Review:

- ***Local Government Landscape post Reform***

The Council believes that the Association plays an integral role within the local government sector and agrees that there is a continuing need for such a body to progress matters of common purpose and concern to all the new Councils, Mid Ulster District Council included. Whilst Mid Ulster Council feels that there is a continuing need for such a body in the new landscape unanimity needs to be achieved on the focus and work of the body to ensure its relevance to all Councils is maintained. Council feels that financial sustainability is key to the Association maintaining its relevance amongst all councils, whereby the attention of the officer team is firmly on the priorities of local government and its member Councils rather than continually identifying funding streams to secure its existence, which can potentially place its attention on strands of work not akin to the priorities of the local councils.

Short term financial planning should be avoided and consideration given to NILGA's budget being set to coincide with the term of member councils, therefore permitting the Association's senior officer team to concentrate on priority activities with a longer term focus and becoming a stronger credible force with central government. Its reach should be on a north-south, east-west and European level basis becoming a body comparable to those representing the local government sector in other jurisdictions, where local councils can therefore also tap into.

- ***Purpose & Roles***

The Council acknowledges that NILGA has a presence within the local government sector touching many aspects of the activities of councils. It however feels that it should be concentrating on those activities and functions which councils cannot do on their own but rather NILGA could do due to their unique position as a sectoral body. The Council agrees that there needs to be an open discussion between all 11 Councils and other potential member bodies of a future NILGA.

The Council believes that a focus on its core functions, such as those which councils cannot deliver on their own, should be the starting point. For example;

- Influencing government policy and legislation
- Developing political leadership within the sector
- General lobbying on behalf of the sector
- Opening up opportunities for council areas through EU Engagement

A focus should be on delivering its core functions to a high standard and spreading itself too thin avoided.

To maximise its strength as a regional body NILGA should work closely with its member councils to deliver any specialist programmes/ initiatives specific to the functions of all councils. NILGA should draw upon the expertise of council officers to take the lead on specialist initiatives which have an impact across the sector. Although this relationship would have many advantages for NILGA and the development of council officers it would ultimately ensure that the finite resources at the disposal of the Association and councils are used to complement each other rather than compete with one another on similar issues, hence maximising influence and impact.

Established chief officer led groups such as those in finance, HR, environmental health and economic development should be tapped into to progress initiatives and programmes on a sectoral basis, together with existing regional structures of relevance.

• ***Other Functions***

Council agrees that the additional functions as listed are all important to the success of local councils and their areas, however close consideration should be given on NILGA's ability to successfully deliver such functions without impacting on what it would consider to be its core functions as listed above. Further discussion is required in the context of the resources at the disposal of a future NILGA. Attention should be on how it could effectively deliver its functions in partnership with the councils rather than on its own as an organisation on behalf of councils.

Whilst NILGA will not have expertise in everything, it should however act as a vehicle for sharing learning across the sector by researching and disseminating information from other regions on new duties such as performance improvement and new ways of delivery services through shared service arrangements. The Council would be very supportive of this shared learning approach but would be unwilling to incur further expenditure on for example peer reviews linked to the performance improvement duty as it already significantly contributes to the Local Government Auditor.

• ***Structure & Constitution***

The Council concurs that the structure of NILGA is integral to delivering the strategic needs of its member councils. It feels that the structure should be designed around its purpose and core functions with a focus on delivering tangible outcomes through its many activities. To support member spokespersons senior council officers could be identified to support and advise them on a rotational basis thereby integrating councils into the workings of NILGA and spreading resources.

- ***Communications & Relationship Management***

The Council acknowledges the importance of communications as the window to any organisation and feels that NILGA's written communications should undergo a radical redesign to make them more appealing to the reader. The bulletins for example contain valuable information but need to be simplified and written in plainer English so that the intended audiences get the best use from them.

Councils should feel a greater stake in the ownership of NILGA than is at present and further discussion is required to achieve a greater feeling that it is owned by and integrated within the workings of Councils. This cultural shift is something which council believes should develop within the term of the existing Council.

- ***Timescale and Recommendations***

Council provides a general endorsement of the recommendations as detailed within the Review Report and looks forward to meaningful engagement on their roll out as part of the process. Further exploration and clarity is required on the role to be played by NILGA in the provision of a "...strategic co-ordinated approach on industrial relations and workforce planning".

Focus on the implementation of the review recommendations should not distract NILGA from important day to day business. Focus over the next six months in the lead up to the new Assembly mandate should also be on influencing the NI Executive's next Programme for Government to include priority actions of strategic importance to member Councils and in continuing to develop the relevance, place and effectiveness of the Partnership Panel.

Detailed Development of the Potential Outcomes & Recommendations

The council welcomes NILGA's commitment to engage with councils on the potential outcomes and further development of the recommendations. It looks forward to this engagement as part of the next stage of the review.

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Subject	Consultations notified to Mid Ulster District Council
Reporting Officer	Philip Moffett, Head of Democratic Services

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	To update members on the consultations notified to Mid Ulster District Council for comment, since the last meeting of Council.

2	Background
2.1	Council is a consultee for many government departments, statutory agencies and other bodies, and as such receives consultation documentation inviting commentary on a wide range of issues which may be pertinent to council services and/or the District.

3	Key Issues																								
3.1	<p>The following outlines the open consultations of which Council has been notified:</p> <table><tr><th>Organisation</th><th>Issue</th><th>Closing Date</th></tr><tr><td>Department of Agriculture and Rural Development</td><td>Proposals for a Successor to DARD's Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework 2011-15</td><td>20 Jan 2016</td></tr><tr><td>Northern Ireland Assembly - Committee for Environment</td><td>Committee stage of the Proposed Scrap Metal Dealers Bill introduced to the NI Assembly on 17 November 2015</td><td>11 Dec 2015</td></tr><tr><td>Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister</td><td>Draft amendments to the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976</td><td>29 Jan 2016</td></tr><tr><td>Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure</td><td>Sub-Regional Stadia Programme for Soccer</td><td>22 Feb 2016</td></tr><tr><td>Department of Justice</td><td>Alternative method for funding money damages claims. Proposals designed to increase access to the justice system outside the scope of legal aid</td><td>19 Feb 2016</td></tr><tr><td>Northern Ireland Assembly – Committee for Social Development</td><td>Committee stage of The Licensing Bill introduced to the NI Assembly on 24 November 2015</td><td>31 Dec 2015</td></tr><tr><td>Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety</td><td>Public Consultation – Key issues related to the establishment of a Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) for Northern Ireland</td><td>22 Jan 2016</td></tr></table>	Organisation	Issue	Closing Date	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	Proposals for a Successor to DARD's Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework 2011-15	20 Jan 2016	Northern Ireland Assembly - Committee for Environment	Committee stage of the Proposed Scrap Metal Dealers Bill introduced to the NI Assembly on 17 November 2015	11 Dec 2015	Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister	Draft amendments to the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976	29 Jan 2016	Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure	Sub-Regional Stadia Programme for Soccer	22 Feb 2016	Department of Justice	Alternative method for funding money damages claims. Proposals designed to increase access to the justice system outside the scope of legal aid	19 Feb 2016	Northern Ireland Assembly – Committee for Social Development	Committee stage of The Licensing Bill introduced to the NI Assembly on 24 November 2015	31 Dec 2015	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety	Public Consultation – Key issues related to the establishment of a Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) for Northern Ireland	22 Jan 2016
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	Department of the Environment – Road Safety and Vehicle Regulation Division	Proposals to implement the outstanding aspect of EU Directive 2003/20/EC to extend the use of seat belts by child passengers aged 3 – 13 years on buses and coaches	05 Feb 2016
	Documentation on the aforementioned consultations may be provided on request.		

4	Resources
4.1	<u>Financial</u> – N/A
4.2	<u>Human</u> – N/A
4.3	<u>Basis for Professional/ Consultancy Support</u> – N/A
4.4	<u>Other</u> – N/A

5	Other Considerations
5.1	Not applicable.

6	Recommendations
6.1	Members review and note the consultations.

7	List of Documents Attached
7.1	Not applicable.