

Minutes of Meeting of the Development Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 13 October 2022 in the Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon and by Virtual Means

Members Present

Councillor Black, Chair

Councillors Ashton, Black, Burton*, Clarke*, Corry* (7.15 pm), Cuddy, Elattar*, Kerr, McNamee*, Milne*, Molloy*, Monteith, Quinn*, Wilson

Officers in Attendance

Mr Black, Strategic Director of Communities and Place
Mr Gordon, Assistant Director of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing
Ms Linney**, Assistant Director of Development
Ms McKeown**, Assistant Director of Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes
Mr Brown**, ICT Support
Mrs Grogan, Democratic Services Officer

Others in Attendance

Councillors S McAleer and S McGuigan

Deputation:

Knockmany Runners Club: Development of Lumford's Glen
Ms Donna McKenna
Ms Oonagh Armstrong
Mr Conor McCarroll
Mr Gerry McCaffrey

* Denotes Members present in remote attendance

** Denotes Officers present by remote means

*** Denotes Others present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7 pm.

In the absence of the Chair, Councillor Clarke who was attending virtually, the Deputy Chair, Councillor Black took the Chair.

The Chair, Councillor Black welcomed everyone to the meeting and those watching the meeting through the Live Broadcast. Councillor Black in introducing the meeting detailed the operational arrangements for transacting the business of the committee in the chamber and by virtual means, by referring to Annex A to this minute.

D150/22 Notice of Recording

This meeting will be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast on the Council's You Tube site.

D151/22 Apologies

Councillor Martin.

D152/22 Declarations of Interest

The Chair, Councillor Black reminded Members of their responsibility with regard to declaration of interest drawing attention in particular to agenda item on grants. He stated that if Members had already declared the interest it did not need reiterated.

Councillor S McAleer advised that although she was not a member of Development Committee declared an interest in the Deputation (Knockmany Runners Club) as was the Chairperson of the group.

Councillor Wilson declared an interest in agenda item 6 – Development Report – Community Grants, Good Relations Grant - Sollus School of Highland Dance as his granddaughter was part of the group.

D153/22 Chair's Business

The Chair advised that Councillor Wilson wished to raise an issue under Chair's Business.

Councillor Wilson sought clarification on how many members of a team which was being recognised could attend the Civic Awards event when they are being invited as one team.

The SD: C&P advised that he would investigate the matter and respond to the member directly with an update tomorrow.

Councillor Wilson said that this would be appreciated as there was an event taking place next week which included a number of teams.

D154/22 Deputation: Knockmany Runners Club: Development of Lumford's Glen

The Chair welcomed to the committee representatives of Lumford's Glen Rejuvenation Project and invited them to address the committee.

Ms McKenna thanked members for the opportunity to present to committee tonight. (appendix).

She advised that the group were not just a running club, but also a volunteer group with genuine interest in encouraging people to get outdoors in the beautiful Clogher Valley countryside. Lumford's Glen consists of a Waterfall and a Glen Route. The waterfall leads to a stunning natural 60 foot waterfall and the glen trail route ranging in distance to approximately 1.4 miles and if re-established would create a new 3.7 mile (6km) loop to incorporate Knockmany Cairn and the Waterfall.

Ms McKenna updated members on the heritage associated with Lumford's Glen and why they felt it should be restored and who would most benefit from it.

She said that the local Clogher Valley Community and the recently increased footfall in Knockmany would extend to Lumford's Glen:

- Local Schools (including preschools, primary and secondary)
- Sure Start
- Local Sports Teams
- Clogher Valley Walking Group and associated local walking groups (including Knockatallan, Dungannon, Cooneen)
- Knockmany Running Club
- Knockmany Forest Ramblers

The Chair thanked Ms McKenna for her impressive presentation which had included a lot of interesting history and what it could become going forward. He hoped that the Council could work in partnership which could benefit a lot of people in that area.

Councillor Burton said that she was delighted to have Donna, Conor, Gerry and Oonagh in attendance at this meeting tonight and was just sorry that she wasn't actually in the chamber, but had another meeting to go to. She advised that Lumford's Glen has been brought up and referenced very regularly and especially over the period of Covid, she was regularly contacted by people wanting to use and did use Lumford's Glen for walking and whilst some did deem that although it wasn't a safe place to walk, they had such fond memories from back in the day from when they visited as children. She said that she was in attendance at the night in Knockmany when the group received the Queen's Award and was absolutely delighted to see how many people that came out from the tiniest tots to the older generation. She commended the work which the group has put into Knockmany to develop the carpark and the change in facilities etc. which bodes very well and she felt that this was the next progression. At this point, Councillor Burton wished to pay tribute to MUDC staff as they receive a lot of requests from Councillors and in turn they have to go and seek out opportunities to carry out these studies. She was delighted to say that through Slieve Beagh Partnership which included (Fermanagh & Omagh Council, Monaghan County Council and Mid Ulster District Council), that confirmation had come through that the Shared Island Fund through that partnership, that there would be a feasibility and scoping study to see what we can do and was also delighted that the maps were widened out so it was assured that Lumford's Glen will go forward in that. She felt that this was a real positive meeting and the history that has been brought to light and as one of the local Councillors, she was thinking more about the tourism product and what it could bring, but it was also now evident with the historical side of it which was a wonderful thing that this Council should be getting more involved in. Over a period of time there will be workshops and consultations and would encourage people right across the Clogher Valley to get involved in so that when capital funding is opened that we are basically shovel ready to bring this project to a more live part. She said that there was a substantial amount of funding over the three councils but we will certainly have our part in that.

Councillor Burton concluded by thanking Donna and her team for coming to committee tonight and reassured them that the Council were totally on board with what the group was trying to achieve and to ensure that places that possibly can have the opportunity

to carry out equestrian, cycling and walking activities, that this should be all built into this feasibility study which will all come out in the consultation and really looked forward to working with the group.

The Chair invited the AD: Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes to provide an update to what Councillor Burton alluded to regarding funding which may have been secured.

The AD: EDT&SP said that Slieve Beagh Partnership is a grouping of three Councils; (Fermanagh & Omagh District Council, Monaghan County Council and Mid Ulster District Council). Two elected representatives serve on the partnership from each of the three Councils. Mid Ulster's serving members are Councillors Burton and S McGuigan. Tourism staff from each Council area also represented on the Partnership.

The Partnership identified a funding opportunity through the Shared Island Fund (SIF) and worked together to make a bid for funding. Monaghan County Council acted as the lead partner in terms of making the funding submission. The Partnership have recently been advised they've been successful in obtaining €145,000 funding to undertake a comprehensive feasibility study of the wider Slieve Beagh area which includes Lumford's Glen, Knockmany Forest etc in the Mid Ulster District. She advised the feasibility study would allow for scoping work to be carried out across a range of work packages, including walking, cycling, equestrian, signage/public art, hero attractor, investor engagement and accommodation and ancillary services.

The AD: EDT&SP said that the work would be publicly tendered under the stewardship of the lead Council, Monaghan County Council. She reminded Members that Mid Ulster District Council has previously agreed to co-fund the feasibility study with a financial contribution of £5,000, and the two partner Councils had agreed to do likewise. She said that there were exciting times ahead for the Sliabh Beagh area as they start to map out their requirements, however, she added there is much work to do once a successful organization is on board to undertake the Feasibility Study. This will involve widespread consultation at the appropriate time with the community, whilst also seeking Members views to shape the plans. When this Study is complete, it will prove to be a very valuable document and position the Partnership to make bids for capital funding as opportunities arise.

Councillor Molloy thanked Donna for her presentation and commended her on the content. He said that he had walked around Lumford's Glen, Knockmany and into St. Patrick's Chair and Well and up into Knockatallen and said that the whole area was a hidden gem for a lot of people when they discover it. He advised that the whole River Blackwater Catchment area and Blackwater Valley and all feeds into the same project of Slieve Beagh and all comes in together as a massive package if this was all developed in the right way and not talking about overuse but more about people coming to use it, to appreciate it for what it is and wished the group well for the future and hoped they get over the line on it.

Councillor Cuddy said that this was a great project and had spent a lot of time around the area when he was young and agreed that it was a beautiful area which had loads of potential and hoped that work could be carried out on it in the future. He said that it was very important to follow the policies.

The Chair said that he took on board the member's point but this was a good news story which was recent, where funding was secured and progressed as part of the scoping study which was touched upon within the presentation which was useful for the group to hear that when they were in attendance tonight.

Councillor S McAleer declared earlier in the meeting that she was Chairperson of Knockmany Runners and was delighted that the group were facilitated for the presentation. She said that in her opinion that no group works harder and probably why they received the Queen's Award this year, everything is voluntary and can assure that when they are involved in any project that it was backed 100% by the local community. She referred to the pride that this would take in the local community if this goes ahead with a scoping study and technical design officers coming in, it will meet the needs of the people and since the redevelopment of Knockmany has been carried out, Lumford's Glen is mentioned by everybody now and they are living in hope of a positive outcome. She thanked Donna and her team for all their hard work and attending the committee tonight to provide their impressive presentation.

Councillor Ashton said that although she wasn't a Clogher Valley Councillor, she was a local resident to Knockmany and commended the group on their recent award and very well deserved as they had done a lot of work around the trails which were currently opened. She referred to all the work Councillor Burton had done in the area with the group to try and open up those trails and said that it was great to hear the good news story that things were developing well and to give the group our support in whatever format that can take whether from Officers or Councillors, but felt that it was great that there was a local organisation which were willing to take such keen interest in driving this solely forward.

Councillor S McGuigan said that although he was not a member of the Development committee, he would like to say a few words of support as a Clogher Valley Councillor and a member of Slieve Beagh Partnership. He said that there was great delight in receiving the initial funding and hoped that it would allow for a number of projects to be supported right across that region.

Councillor S McGuigan declared an interest in Knockmany as he was part of Killeeshil Running Club which used Knockmany facilities for many years.

He said that the group had shown leadership in taking this initiative forward and even the project which they had taken up to now and one of the aspects of being shovel ready is having a good community group which stands the test of time and said that he was fully supportive of the group and they should be commended.

The Chair thanked Donna and her team for coming in to speak with members tonight and felt that it was useful for the committee to hear what the group had to say and hoped they were encouraged by the comments from the committee and welcome the positive news of the potential for a scoping study around all of this.

The group left the meeting at 7.30 pm.

Councillor S McGuigan and S McAleer left the meeting at 7.30 pm.

Matters for Decision

D155/22 Development Report

The AD: Development presented previously circulated report which provided update and sought approval on the following:

- **Rolling Community Grants 2022-23**
- **Chatty Places – Let’s Get Together**
- **Community Grants Review - Festive Lights**
- **Development Department Update**

It was

Proposed by Kerr
Seconded by Corry and

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

- **Rolling Community Grants 2022-23**

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve the allocation of the Community Grants as recommended in appendix 1 of the Officers report.

- **Chatty Places – Let’s Get Together**

Councillor Monteith felt that this was a good idea, but was aware of a number of other community initiatives which were talking about similar ideas and felt that it would be important that there was co-ordination so that people were sharing the same information. He said that this was not going to suit everyone, either in the rural or urban setting, but felt it was important that the Council acts as a contact point for other community groups and facilities which were proposing or if not the same or similar type of ideas. He felt that it would be important to help the community to publicise their groups as the Council were lucky in the fact they can access more avenues to the media and would be confident if the feelers were put out, most rural communities would have something up and running and was also aware of some urban settings that were thinking the same. He felt that it was a good idea but it would benefit from having a bit of work being done on sending word out to various community groups to see what else is out there.

Councillor Corry concurred with Councillor Monteith’s comments and was aware of one café in Stewartstown called Café Connect which was a Chatty Space launched last week through Mid Ulster Loneliness Network along with the Northern Trust and felt that it could be something that our project could be tied in with as she was aware of a number of cafés looking to broaden this out. She felt that it would be beneficial that there was no duplication and for everyone to work together to try and get a good spread of urban and rural.

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve the Chatty Places – Let’s Get Together in our towns of Dungannon, Cookstown and Magherafelt and for officers to reach out our community partners and promote any similar types of initiatives operating across the District.

- **Community Grants Review - Festive Lights**

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve the Community Grants Review Festive Lights Awards as recommended in appendix 2 of the Officers report. That it be further recommended to the Policy and Resources Committee that consideration be given to providing additional ‘one off – in year’ funding to support current recipients with costs to replace current lighting stock.

- **Development Department Update**

Councillor Monteith referred to the Cost of Living Crisis and said that a proposal was put forward by himself and Councillor Kerr a few months ago regarding a hardship fund and it was said at the time, similar to what Derry and Strabane Council were also saying that they hadn’t anything worked out and nothing more could be done. Now, we see from the media two weeks ago, Derry and Strabane have now launched an initiative regarding a hardship fund.

Councillor Monteith proposed that officers engage with Derry and Strabane District Council to see the mechanism in which they are facilitating this and that as far as he was aware that it was being done through community initiatives. He said that it was his understanding that it was a one off payment of £100 to help people in need.

He proposed that Officers revisit this as it was previously agreed to do so and felt that as another Council has gone through the nitty-gritty of how to do it, there was now an opportunity to sit down and talk to them and bring a report back to the next Development Committee meeting on how to proceed. He said that this was a matter of urgency, because if this was not done now, it would run into December, January and would result in it being too late.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that our Officers liaise with Derry and Strabane District Council Officers regarding the hardship fund in which they have launched and that a report be brought back to next month’s Development Committee meeting to see if this Council can facilitate something similar.

Councillor Kerr said that he was happy to support Councillor Monteith’s recommendation and was also aware of the report in the media regarding the Cost of Living Grant being awarded by Derry and Strabane District Council. He felt that this was a great opportunity for a local authority to intervene on behalf of the residents as he

was aware of a lot of people facing hardships and although there was initiatives launched, he believes that this Council should be offering any extra support necessary and it was imperative that a report is brought back to the next committee to get it from theory to practicable as soon as possible.

The Chair agreed that it would be useful for the AD: Development to reach out to Derry and Strabane Council to see if there was a template which could be used by this Council to try and achieve something local.

The AD: Development advised that in relation to timeline, members should be aware that this would be double committee as it would have to be brought to Development and P&R as there were budgetary issues.

Councillor Monteith advised that there used to be a community element to the Development report and this was why he was raising this issue here. It has been brought to his attention issues relating to Loane House and enquired if it would be possible for our community planning department liaise with the Southern Trust. He said that concerns has arisen that staff working in Loane House on a number of occasions had to deal with patients with severe mental health problems which were placed there as there were no other beds or facilities for them to go. He felt that in fairness Loane House was a fantastic facility but staff were not trained to deal with mental health issues and asked that clarity be sought on what was the provision for in-house mental health within this area and what was being done to elevate pressure on staff. He said that staff were under severe pressure and asked if our community planning department would take the matter up with the Southern Trust.

Councillor Monteith stated that also in the past there was an item on the agenda for Leisure Services. He said that he had already liaised with the AD: HL&W regarding disabled access to swimming pools and it had been raised here before about trying to be a leading Council in relation to disabled access. He advised that he met with a parent whose disabled son was a wheelchair user and was unable to access facilities in Dungannon Leisure Centre due to the lack of staff resources to provide the support the young boy needs.

It was proposed by Councillor Monteith that a report be brought to Development Committee before the December meeting on what provision can be provided within our swimming pools and leisure centres and what were the gaps as it was unacceptable for disabled people not being able to access our services. He said that there were a lot more opportunities for able bodied people to avail of leisure including football clubs and community initiatives and there was onus on this Council to look out for the more marginalised group. He felt that it would be useful to talk to the various disability needs organisations to make sure we are doing our best and the fact we are putting a provision in place so as to provide for them. He said that by speaking to various staff members, there were specific needs but it may be beneficial to reach out to Special Olympics Ireland, Paralympics Ireland, Swim Ulster and all those different organisations who were probably getting funding for full time coaches dealing with Paralympic and Special Olympic stuff and may be able to buy into their expertise.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that a report be brought to Development Committee if not next month, then December on what provision can be provided within our swimming pools and leisure centres for disabled persons.

Councillor Corry concurred with comments made by Councillor Monteith regarding access to swimming pools and said that she would be very happy to support that as it was something she was passionate about and everyone having access to our services and possibly tie in with Mid Ulster Disability Forum also.

D156/22 Economic Development Report – OBFD

The AD: Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes presented previously circulated report which provided an update on the following:

- **Covid19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme**
- **Christmas Off Street Car Parking Charges Dungannon and Magherafelt**
- **Dungannon Traders Association Proposal**

It was

Proposed by Councillor Monteith
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve the key activities as listed below in the Economic Development Report – OBFD.

- **Covid19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme**

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council to approve authority for the Chief Executive to sign DfC's Covid-19 Recovery Programme Letter of Variance on Appendix 1, dated 9 September 2022, which grants an extension to the period of funding to 31 March 2023 and approve immediate return of Letter of Variance to DfC following the Development Committee Meeting in October 2022 to meet DfC's response timeframe.

- **Christmas Off Street Car Parking Charges Dungannon and Magherafelt**

Councillor Monteith said that he would be happy to support the recommendation but would also propose to look at free parking for all carparks in Dungannon and if elected representatives of Magherafelt feel it's of benefit to them they should also pursue it. This matter has been doing its rounds for years and felt that there should be free parking as we struggle to get footfall of people in and around the town centres for shopping and doing their bits and pieces and when speaking to people they advise that they go to out of town facilities due to free parking. A number of businesses have closed down due to not enough parking close to their business or if there is, parking has to be paid for and the reality is there is now a necessity for free car parking in a town centre environment. If there is a concern regarding all day parkers, he believed that a bit of imagination and a bit of thought could be used to deal with that situation and

should not be used at all stages to prevent a service that was no longer a luxury and long beyond a necessity.

He advised that he would be happy to agree to the proposed 10 pence tariff for the 6 weeks but also proposed that officers revisit the idea of free parking for various carparks in Dungannon on a permanent basis.

Councillor Kerr said that he would be happy to second Councillor Monteith's proposal as there were a lot of businesses closing down due to the cost of living crisis and free car-parking in the high street would go a long way of getting people back out in increasing the footfall within Mid Ulster.

Councillor Ashton said that although she appreciated where Councillor Monteith was coming from, Council had already been here before with certain issues arising and lobbying taking place. There was hinder within the town due to all day parkers and although she agreed with the issue of revisiting, felt there was also a need to be careful that we do not make a problem worse. She appreciated that this was revisited a number of years ago and we had witnessed the problems and issues which it created.

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council to approve –

- (i) The temporary reduced tariff for the first 3 hours of 10 pence in all Off Street Pay & Display Car Parks in Dungannon and Magherafelt from Saturday 26 November 2022 to Saturday 7 January 2023 (6-week period) at a cost to Council of £24,000.
- (ii) To revisit the idea of free parking for various carparks in Dungannon on a permanent basis.

- **Dungannon Traders Association Proposal**

Councillor Monteith felt that this was a good idea and initiative from traders and should be promoted as much as possible.

Councillor Ashton said that she had no issue with the proposal but sought clarity on the rationale for the nominated day to get footfall into the town. She enquired if the traders anticipated opening on the Sunday to benefit from that.

The AD: EDT&SP stated that she would like to think a number of the businesses would open in the town to benefit from the additional footfall from the event. She said that her team would liaise with the traders to encourage them to open but it cannot be guaranteed, as it will be a choice for each business to make. She said that the main reason why the traders selected Sunday to hold their event was due to the need for a partial road closure and if the road was closed on the Saturday this would impact businesses trading on a busy Saturday pre-Christmas. She also stated that it was her understanding that the Events Space at Feeney's Lane would like to open that day too which would generate a bit of activity in the town and to encourage people to go in.

Councillor Wilson said as a Councillor coming from a town without parking charges and hoped that it would remain that way, there were a couple of issues he wished to highlight on. When this Council took over the carparks as part of the reorganisation of local government, carparks became the remit of local councils, we still pay DfI Roads

for those car parks and a charge still levied against us and wondered if this Council could write to the Stormont Department responsible that in light of the current situation, would they look at reducing carparking charges to local authorities to help bring footfall into towns. He stated that the money that is given to DfI was supposed to be funding to maintain roads and unfortunately he was not at the meeting last Monday night although he had asked for a question to be asked which didn't appear in the answers issued today. He said that members around the chamber will be aware that housing estates were bereft of any tarring or repairs and money should go towards that and asked if it would be acceptable for a proposal as a committee write to the relevant Stormont department asking them to weaver the fees that they charge local authorities.

The Chair felt that this matter would be the remit of the Environment Committee and felt it would be more beneficial to raise the issue there.

Councillor Wilson said that he would raise the issue at the next Environment Committee.

Councillor Cuddy in referring to the Feeney's Lane project, congratulated the AD: EDT&SP and her team as this initiative had great potential going forward and was great to see the two organisations working together for the good of Dungannon.

Councillor Molloy said that this was a fantastic initiative which brought something different, new and possible footfall into Dungannon on the Sunday before Christmas when it was much needed and got the logic around Sunday rather than Saturday because of the road closure. He enquired if our own facilities would be open in the Market Square on that Sunday as well.

The AD: EDT&SP advised that she is liaising with the relevant officers to make the necessary arrangements so that Council facilities would be open when an event is taking place in the town centre.

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council to approve the request from Dungannon Traders Association to reassign Council's budget this financial year totalling £5,500 from the Heels on the Hill event to the new Dungannon Jingle Ball Run event which is proposed will take place on Sunday 18th December from 4pm – 7pm.

That it be recommended to the Council that the matter of town centre parking charges be referred to the Environment Committee to consider and in so doing request that the Environment Committee write to the Department of Infrastructure to request a reduction in car parking fees for local government.

Matters for Information

D157/22 Minutes of Development Committee held on 15 September 2022

Members noted Minutes of Development Committee held on 15 September 2022.

Councillor Kerr referred to D135/22 and enquired if there was any further update on the Cappagh Regeneration Project.

The SD: Communities & Place advised the AD: HL&W had communicated with the Cappagh group and officers were due to discuss how to progress the NEA fund at a board of our outdoor recreation projects next week. Once there was a timeline, then re-engagement will take place with the Cappagh group to make sure they are involved as part of the consideration of going forward to appoint the consultant, and when this takes place, the group will obviously be engaged with the whole process. He said that the project was moving forward and although maybe not moving forward at a quick of a pace as first hoped, we were working towards a deadline of 31 March 2023. He advised that there were other departments involved across the organisations and there was a requirement to make sure there was co-ordination to line up the resources to bring it to completion before the deadline of 31 March.

Councillor Kerr also referred to D131/22 where reference was made to Dungannon and Coalisland Neighbourhood Renewal and wondered if there was any update on the Gortgonis Leisure Centre Project.

The SD: Communities & Place advised that there would be a report being brought back to P&R committee next month in relation to Gortgonis and members will be updated on the current situation at this meeting.

Councillor Monteith referred to page 34 wished to clarify as a matter of accuracy that he had declared an interest in Ballysaggart Area Community Association and not Ballysaggart Lough.

He referred to the anticipated two DEA meetings where were agreed last month, one which was proposed by Councillor Molloy and one by himself in relation to issues around Ballysaggart Lough, Railway Park and Ann Street and accepted there were issues around that some of those meetings were unable to happen, it was extremely disappointing that 4 weeks later we were no further on. He said that elected members were none the wiser on what or what not was happening and felt again this was symptomatic of the drift that occurs in the Council towards bigger capital projects and takes Councillors to almost ask questions on a continual basis in order to move things forward and could argue that this was a member's role but could also argue that when a decision was made it should be implemented. In order to move things forward we were at a stage now where it would be helpful, as obviously other Councillors in other DEA's can make recommendations themselves, but felt we were at a stage where we need to look at the corporate governance of the organisation and there was a need to fit into the corporate governance and corporate structure regular DEA meetings where issues specific particular DEAs can be dealt with on a monthly or bimonthly basis. The committees which are supposed to deal with policy and strategy matters and members are forced to bring up operational issues, which may relate to contracts which were specific to local DEAs and a lot not needs to be done if there was a regular contact point for Councillors on the particular issues that have already been agreed by Council and no need for them to come back and forward to be discussed at committee meetings, progress reports brought forward and Councillors be in a position to talk to the senior officers dealing with these issues. He felt that there should also be an opportunity to talk on smaller issues within their local DEAs, whether it relates to

environmental health or dog matters issues or whatever the case may be and felt that this would definitely be a benefit within the corporate structure. In his opinion, we were long past that point due to the concept of our committees about being about policy and strategy, was not working because everyone is forced to be bogged down on local issues which were DEA specific.

He urged that these DEA meetings which were alluded to in the previous minutes happen with the upmost urgency and felt there also needed to be an urgent discussion across the Council in relation to corporate structure to facilitate localised meetings, as we do it with roads, operational utilities and strategy agencies. We we were well past the point where this would be a benefit to this organisation and would allow the committee structure to work more strategically and would allow Councillors better access to their day to day or week to week information on what or what not was going on within the DEA.

The Chair was confident that Officers would follow up the DEA meetings Councillor Monteith referred to.

The SD: Communities & Place advised that there was a meeting in the diary for the Railway Park site visit which was on the back of a decision which was taken at Development committee last month.

He said that in relation to the wider issues, members will be aware that this Council has a very ambitious capital programme and the P&R committee agreed the revised programme in July. There is work ongoing with Senior Management Team being led by the SD: Environment in terms of reviewing our governance in relation to the capital framework and that will include how we as an organisation and Councillors input into structuring and prioritising our capital programmes, how we make sure we bring projects to a state of shovel readiness, that we can maximise any external opportunities. This may take time working through this process and as we move along this journey, officers will do their very best to make sure members were kept up to date, but there were a lot of projects which were currently live at the minute. He said that he heard members frustration, but assured them that there was work going on in the background to try and put a little structure in governance in moving forward and members will be engaged at the right time as part of that process.

Councillor Monteith referred to D144/22 and enquired if there was any update on the Dog Friendly Park facilities.

The AD: HL&W advised that there had been a meeting with Dogs Trust NI and officers were doing some scoping and benchmarking with other Councils where these facilities were currently in. Officers were currently investigating this issue and hoped to bring a report back to the December committee meeting.

Councillor Quinn referred to a matter which had been brought to his attention in relation to Roughan Lough regarding the lack of life saving equipment at the site. He asked if this was something that officers could investigate as this was an area which was very popular with fishers and swimmers and would be important to get this sorted.

The SD: Communities & Place advised the member that this would be looked at, but was not sure if this was Council's responsibility or remit, but would look at it and if something needed to be done then this would be addressed.

D158/22 Air Quality Report 2022

Members noted update on the current air quality in the Mid Ulster District Council area, and of the ongoing monitoring currently being undertaken in relation to this.

Councillor Molloy advised that he along with Councillor Monteith had mentioned this numerous times around the consistent reports that members get each year around the results relating to the monitoring. Consistently the two highest were the end of McKee's Terrace, Newell Road, Dungannon and Charlemont Street, Moy and whilst there has been a slight reduction we cannot continuously take a note, we need to liaise with the relevant authorities to address this as these people living in a residential area are being affected on a daily basis and work needs to be done to try and elevate the problem.

Councillor Monteith concurred with Councillor Molloy's comments 100% and said that we had received this report on an annual basis which was continually above the recommended limits. It's not good enough that we receive this report every year, this needs actioned immediately as there are people living in these areas susceptible to this high pollution. He said that he had raised this issue before with Environmental Health regarding the fitness of these homes and the air outside not fit for human beings to breathe, inadequate protection behind a single piece of glass where people are living and sleeping and asked how it could be safe for those people to be living there.

Councillor Monteith felt that an urgent meeting needs to be called with Councillors, Roads Service and Environmental Health to look at different legislation available, not just for air pollution but for those homes and people who live there. Air outside those people's homes this last 6 to 7 years has not been fit for people to breathe, never mind people who live there and not fit for human use.

He felt that there was a duty of care on this Council to inform the residents that they were living in an area which for the last 6 to 7 years the air was not fit for human use. We need to up the ante on this and treat this with the seriousness which it is.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith

That an urgent meeting be arranged with DEA Councillors and Environmental Health asking that a pro-active attitude be brought on using all the legislation available at our disposal in dealing with this now rather than sitting hoping that the figures decrease, this was not good enough for the people living there and a duty of care on this Council as a public body to inform the residents living in those areas of the very serious air pollution in their area.

He said that he had spoken to some residents and felt it was wrong that they haven't been informed and asked that they be contacted as a matter of utmost urgency.

Seconded by Councillor Kerr

Councillor Kerr said that he would be happy to second the proposal and totally agreed that residents should be informed ASAP as the air that they breathe was not fit for human consumption.

The SD: Communities and Place referred to comments received and advised that the process is that officers present this report to members for information and we are not suggesting that we just sit back and hope that something changes. He stated that it was officers' suggestion within the report to bring together all the relevant stakeholders including elected members to look at what actions which can be taken to see if we can reduce the NO₂ pollutant in those two areas. He said that through AD: HL&W and his team, this will be moved forward at pace and get this meeting pulled together, with all the relevant stakeholders around the table and hopefully out of that a number of actions will be agreed.

In response to query, the SD: Communities and Place said that it was his understanding that air quality reports as far as he was aware were published on the Council's website, which were public data.

Councillor Monteith suggested that a letter is formulated to go to all residents in both areas informing them of the seriousness of the situation of the air quality within their area and although he cannot speak for the affected residents in Moy, he was aware that quite a number of the residents in McKee's Terrace in Dungannon had an issue with English and felt it was not good enough just to say that it was on the website.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith

That a letter be formulated in a number of languages immediately or as soon as humanly possible after ratification at full Council meeting with all the relevant information and contact numbers in the event of anyone having concerns after they receive this letter, so they can get in contact with a designated officer from this Council to answer any queries they may have.

Seconded by Councillor Molloy

Councillor Molloy agreed that this would be a similar case in Charlemont Street, Moy as some of those residents which live in the multi-use flat properties, English was not their first language. He felt that it was telling that migrant workers were put into these properties and available to them, as you only have to sit outside these properties, look at the evidence of build-up on the windows and doors of the blackness and soot in which it accumulates and it's a telling sign of what people were breathing. He was happy to second the proposal of communicating with the residents as soon as possible.

The SD: Communities and Place suggested that this be based on legal advice and expert input.

Councillor Monteith said that he would have no issue as long as legal advice was sought before full Council and were in a position to do it, but would query legal advice being a necessity in this case. If there was a public health emergency issue being dealt with in the local area, then engagement would take place with local residents i.e. flooding and working together with Roads Service. He said that this was a public health

emergency and that Council were not treating it as such, for 6 to 7 years the air in these areas was not fit for human consumption and did not see why legal evidence or opinion should be sought as there was a duty of care for Council to protect our residents. If there was evidence of vermin within an area, this Council would have no difficulty in sending out letters to people without asking for permission.

The SD: Communities and Place stated that he wasn't indicating that this cannot be done but was suggesting that expert input be sought before moving forward with the recommendation.

The Chair said as this matter was being talked about in open business and on public record, in terms of letting people know, he couldn't imagine that there would be an issue with that. In terms of what the SD: Communities and Place suggested regarding legal opinion and as long as it was done before full Council ratification, could see no issue on this being moved forward.

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that legal advice be sought before ratification at full Council in relation to a letter being sent to residents living at McKee's Terrace, Newell Road, Dungannon and Charlemont Street, Moy advising of concerns relating to air quality in their area. Letter to be formulated in a number of languages immediately or as soon as humanly possible after full Council with all the relevant information and contact numbers in the event of anyone having concerns after they receive this letter, so they can get in contact with a designated officer from this Council to answer any queries they may have.

Councillor Monteith said that as a point of clarity, the proper naming of Newell Road was actually New Well Road although he was aware that certain signage and local businesses indicated "Newell".

D159/22 Live Here Love Here Small Grants Scheme 2022

Members noted update which provided information on the successful applications that were awarded funding for the 2022 Mid Ulster District Council Live Here Love Here, Small Grants Scheme.

D160/22 Drinking Water Quality Report for Northern Ireland 2021

Members noted update which provided information on the recently published Drinking Water Quality Report for Northern Ireland 2021.

D161/22 Economic Development Report – OBF1

Members noted previously circulated report which provided an update on the following:

- Gearing for Growth Seminar – 20 October 2022
- TRPSI Rural Business Development Grant Scheme 2022
- Tourism Development Group Minutes on 29 June 2022
- European Heritage Open Days
- The Shared Island Fund

- Blackwater River Update Report

The AD: Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes referred to Blackwater River Update Report and said she wished to update members. At the last Development Committee meeting members asked that a report be brought back to committee in relation to the survey work required for the Blackwater, to work with ABC and progress to procurement of that and to initiate the works. She said that Members will see within their papers this evening, that a Blackwater Report was taken to the Environment Committee in October 2022 with the recommendation outlined on page 244 seeking approval that *“officers progress undertaking required survey work subject to Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon Council agreeing to work in partnership and funding 50% of the cost of fees for legal and technical survey work required at this stage”*. However, the Environment Committee on the 11 October 2022 recommended that a legal opinion is sought in relation to the Department’s responsibility for undertaking the work on the River Blackwater before any money is spent by Council on carrying out further surveys. She said that this was the current position and wanted to update members accordingly.

Councillor Kerr said that by listening to the debate, there was some concern if this really belonged to ABC why Mid Ulster was taking such huge interest. He said that one of the key points when he had met with Lough Neagh Rescue in which he and Councillor Quinn had alluded to many times in the past, was the build-up of silt which denies and slows down the access of the volunteers of Lough Neagh Rescue is someone finds themselves in trouble. 5, 10, 15 minutes in water in this time of year could be life changing, the difference between saving a life or the worst consequences possible and there was requirement to move this project on. He said that this matter has been discussed for one year, seven months to be exact (19 months) and was very important that we get this project moving and reaffirmed the point that human life was at stake here if these decisions were not progressive and would be beneficial for the Lough Neagh area.

The Chair hoped that the legal advice which has been required will be forthcoming quickly to help move this forward.

Councillor Wilson advised that it was him that made the proposal at the Environment Committee meeting to take this legal route due to the fact of the issue relating to Lough Neagh Rescue. It is about the fact of this Council being a local authority spending money on something which is not our responsibility whatsoever and therefore the importance of this legal advice coming back on who actually owns it and whose responsibility it is which was vitally important. If it is the case that it is the responsibility of this Council, then we should move at full speed and if ABC’s they should then move at full speed.

Councillor Quinn said that he had no issues with getting legal advice and felt it was important to establish who is responsible and a collective leadership needs to be shown, not just from our Council and ABC, but from the relevant government departments also as this has been talked about for a long time. He was aware of two options being put on the paper, one was to go up through the mouth of the Blackwater and the other one was to go through the Maghery Canal and if we can get one of them

sorted at this point, we would be happy. It is vitally important that this Council does not spend money just for the sake of it and felt that everyone needed to put their shoulder to the wheel to get this sorted.

The Chair advised that this was a very important issue and should be brought to a head and will show where responsibility sits and if this means working collectively to try and move this forward, then this would be very welcome and to get the clarification to move it in a positive direction.

Live broadcast ended at 8.17 pm.

Local Government (NI) Act 2014 – Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor Kerr
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and

Resolved In accordance with Section 42, Part 1 Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 that Members of the public be asked to withdraw from the meeting whilst members consider items D162/22 to D164/22.

Matters for Decision

D162/22 Economic Development Report – Cbfd
D163/22 Report on Funding and Accommodation Arrangements for RDP & Community Services Staff at Gortlowry House

Matters for Information

D164/22 Confidential Minutes of Development Committee held on 15 September 2022

D165/22 Duration of Meeting

The meeting commenced at 7pm and concluded at 8.28 pm.

Chair _____

Date _____

Annex A – Introductory Remarks from the Chairperson

Good evening and welcome to the Council's [Policy & Resources/Environment/Development] Committee in the Chamber, [Dungannon/Magherafelt] and virtually.

I specifically welcome the public watching us through the Live Broadcast. The Live Broadcast will run for the period of our Open Business but will end just before we move into Confidential Business. I let you know before this happens.

Just some housekeeping before we commence. Can I remind you:-

- If you have joined the meeting remotely please keep your audio on mute unless invited to speak and then turn it off when finished speaking
- Keep your video on at all times, unless you have bandwidth or internet connection issues, where you are advised to try turning your video off
- If you wish to speak please raise your hand in the meeting or on screen and keep raised until observed by an Officer or myself
- Should we need to take a vote this evening please raise your hand in the normal way and keep raised until advised to lower it
- When invited to speak please introduce yourself by name to the meeting
- For any member attending remotely, if you declare an interest in an item, please turn off your video and keep your audio on mute for the duration of the item
- If referring to a specific report please reference the report, page or slide being referred to
- Lastly, I remind the public and press that taking photographs of proceedings or using any means to enable anyone not present to see or hear proceedings, or making a simultaneous oral report of the proceedings are not permitted

Thank you and we will now move to the first item on the agenda.