

Minutes of Meeting of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 28 May 2015 in the Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon

Members Present: Councillor Dillon, Chair

Councillors Ashton, Bateson, Bell, Buchanan, Burton, Clarke (7.05pm), Cuddy, Cuthbertson, Dillon, Elattar, Forde, Gildernew, Gillespie, Glasgow, McAleer, McEldowney, McFlynn, McGinley, B McGuigan, S McGuigan, McKinney, McLean, McNamee, McPeake, Molloy, Monteith, Mullen, Mulligan, C O'Neill, J O'Neill, M Quinn, T Quinn, Reid, Robinson, G Shiels, J Shiels, Totten and Wilson

Officers in Attendance: Mr A Tohill, Chief Executive
Mrs Canavan, Lead HR Officer
Mrs Campbell, Director of Arts and Leisure
Mr Kelso, Director of Public Health and Infrastructure
Mr McCreesh, Director of Business and Communities
Mrs Mezza, Head of Marketing and Communications
Mr Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
Mr JJ Tohill, Lead Finance Officer
Mrs Forde, Member Support Officer

The meeting commenced at 7 pm.

C89/15 Apologies

Councillor Kearney.

The Chair, Councillor Dillon extended sympathies to Councillor Kearney on the death of his brother.

C90/15 Declarations of Interest

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

C91/15 Receive and consider minutes of matters transacted in "Open Business" at Council meeting held on Thursday 23 April 2015

Proposed by Councillor S McGuigan
Seconded by Councillor Buchanan and

Resolved That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday 23 April 2015 (C71/15 – C82/15 and C88/15), transacted in "Open Business" having been printed and circulated were considered and signed as accurate and correct.

Councillor Wilson referred to page 2 of the minutes where it had agreed to send letters of congratulations to Ms Susan Parke and Ms Rachel McKeown. Stating that the letters had been received Councillor Wilson requested that the two individuals be included in a civic reception to honour their achievements as it was on the agenda under notices of motion to honour various sporting club achievements. He also requested that David Ames and Ian Sloan, Great Britain hockey players, Norman Espie, Men's Royal British Legion Standard Bearer (National), Cookstown Primary School, Winners of Northern Ireland Primary School Hockey Cup, and Linda Black, Women's Personality of the Year in Ulster Hockey also be honoured at a civic reception for their achievements.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor Reid

That the aforementioned be recognised at a civic reception.

Councillor McNamee asked how the receptions would be delivered as there was no decision yet regarding motions to be considered later in the meeting.

Councillor Clarke entered the meeting at 7.05pm

The Chair, Councillor Dillon stated that at present there was no policy for civic receptions and the request to honour the Tyrone Under 21 Gaelic Team was because it was an All-Ireland achievement. She stated that throughout her year in office it was her intention to host receptions to honour achievers across the district.

Resolved That

- (i) Letters of congratulations be forwarded to aforementioned individuals on their achievements; and
- (ii) Civic Receptions be discussed at the next available Party Leaders to determine the way forward.

C92/15 Receive and consider the minutes and recommendations of matters transacted in "Open Business" at the Planning Committee meeting held on Tuesday 5 May 2015

Proposed by Councillor Cuthbertson
Seconded by Councillor McLean and

Resolved That the Minutes and recommendations of the Planning Committee meeting held on Monday 5 May 2015 (P35/15 – P39/15 and P45/15) transacted in "Open Business", having been printed and circulated were considered and adopted.

C93/15 Receive and consider the minutes and recommendations of matters transacted in "Open Business" at the Policy and Resources meeting held on Monday 11 May 2015

With regard to PR75/15 Councillor Bateson asked that at paragraph 8 on page 3 his comment made at the meeting be also included in the minute to reflect that he concurred with Councillor Mallaghan's comments that newspaper circulations should be independently checked.

The Chief Executive in response to Councillor Cuddy's query stated that the debt of one of the former Councils was not classified as such due to their debt management approach.

Proposed by Councillor S McGuigan
Seconded by Councillor Ashton and

Resolved That the Minutes and recommendations of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on Monday 11 May 2015, (PR71/15 – PR83/15 and P88/15) transacted in "Open Business", having been printed and circulated, subject to the foregoing were considered and adopted.

C94/15 Receive and consider the minutes and recommendations of matters transacted in "Open Business" at the Environment Committee meeting held on Tuesday 12 May 2015

Proposed by Councillor McNamee
Seconded by Councillor McFlynn and

Resolved That the Minutes and recommendations of the Environment Committee meeting held on Tuesday 12 May 2015, (E54/15 – 75/15 and E83/15), transacted in "Open Business", having been printed and circulated were considered and adopted.

C95/15 Receive and consider the minutes and recommendations of matters transacted in "Open Business" at the Development Committee meeting held on Thursday 14 May 2015

Councillor J Shiels requested amendments as undernoted in relation to D81/15 and D85/15

Page 6, paragraph 5 of D81/15 amended to read, Councillor J Shiels stated that the scheme had been a big success in cities throughout the UK and that he was delighted to see the opportunity of rolling it out in Mid Ulster. Councillor Shiels proposed that the recommendation made by the officers be accepted regardless of cost but did ask if the £8000 fee could be negotiated upon. The proposer be amended from Councillor T Quinn to J Shiels

Page 10, paragraph 2, D85/15 amended to read, Councillor J Shiels speaking of the benefits of the scheme stated although he recognised the cuts that the Education Minister's Department was facing he would propose that the recommendation of the Officer be adopted and that a letter be sent to the Minister requesting that he reconsider his position with regards to funding for the Business Education

Partnership (BEP). The proposer be amended from Councillor McNamee to Councillor J Shiels.

Councillor McNamee with regard to item D90/15 on the Greenvale Leisure Consultative Group proposed that a meeting be held before the end of June.

Proposed by Councillor McNamee
Seconded by Councillor McGinley and

Resolved That

- (i) a meeting of Greenvale Leisure Consultative Group be held before the end of June;
- (ii) That the Minutes and recommendations of the Development Committee meeting held on Thursday 14 May 2015, (D73/15 – D95/15 and D98/15) transacted in “Open Business”, having been printed and circulated, subject to the foregoing were considered and adopted.

C96/15 Standing Orders for the Regulation of Business

The Chief Executive drew attention to the previously circulated report seeking adoption of the Standing Orders for the transaction of Mid Ulster District Council business and indicated that he had reported the detail on same at the April meeting of Council.

Councillor Mallaghan stated that Standing Orders were first raised in May 2014 with the draft now reflecting the necessary changes and the NILGA response, and thus tailored to suit the working of the Council. He continued that he had one issue in that considering the number of motions on the agenda for May council meeting proposed that each party be permitted to submit a single motion at any one meeting. Thus every party including the independent would have the opportunity to submit one.

Proposed by Councillor Mallaghan
Seconded by Councillor McGinley and

That notices of motion presented to a meeting be limited to one from each party plus the independent member.

Councillor Cuddy stated that his party did not have a problem with the proposal as time could be better spent at meetings but he felt that five could be too many. He suggested that the matter be discussed by the Party Representatives Group.

Proposed by Councillor Cuddy
Seconded by Councillor Wilson

That the number of notices of motion presented to a meeting be discussed at a party representatives meeting.

Councillor Mallaghan concurred with this and subsequently withdrew his proposal.

Councillor Wilson suggested that the standing orders presented be adopted with a proviso of amending the section on Motions.

Councillor Ashton sought clarity on 15.2 and 15.3 in the standing orders regarding any member wishing to raise an issue having to submit same in writing 48 hours prior to the meeting. Responding the Chief Executive advised that if a member provides a written request 48 hours in advance they are entitled to receive a response but a member still could ask for an update.

Proposed by Councillor Mallaghan
Seconded by Councillor McGuigan and

Resolved That the Standing Orders be adopted with the proviso that Motions be discussed by the Party Representatives Group.

Councillor McPeake requested that the standing orders be published as a booklet as it was convenient to have a hard copy. The Chair concurred with this.

Proposed by Councillor McPeake
Seconded by Councillor McLean and

Resolved That the Standing Orders once complete be formed into a booklet and provided to Members.

Councillor Cuthbertson sought clarity on whether the Chair of each meeting was held to standing orders or could they overrule as they went along as he had experienced this. The Chief Executive advised that it would be expected that the Chair conduct the meeting within the Standing Orders but once the meeting had commenced the Chair had the authority to interpret the Standing Orders and rule on same.

Councillor J Shiels asked if an appeal through a 'call in' process could be made. In response the Chief Executive advised that there could only be a 'call in' with regard to a decision not on how a Chair had conducted the business of a meeting and indicated that there were other ways to seek redress of this.

The Chair, Councillor Dillon suggested that any member should speak to the Chair of the meeting regarding any issue.

C97/15 Conferences and Seminars

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

C97.1/14 IRRV NI Tourism Conference 2015: Looking to the Future (Institute of Revenues, Rating & Valuation), Belfast City Hall Tuesday 23 June 2015 at a fee of £80 per person.

Proposed by Councillor McGinley

Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

Resolved That the attendance of Members and officers, the payment of attendance fees and associated costs as incurred be approved and that anyone wishing to attend contact officers.

C97.2/14 APSE Seminar: First 100 Days and Beyond in Braid Town Hall, Museum and Arts Centre, Ballymena at a fee of £175 per person

Proposed by Councillor McGinley
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

Resolved That the attendance of Members and officers, the payment of attendance fees and associated costs as incurred be approved and that anyone wishing to attend contact officers.

Councillor Mulligan left the meeting at 7.24pm

C98/15 Community Safety College, Desertcreat

The Chair, Councillor Dillon advised that there had been notice on social media that there were reports on positive moves on the Community Safety College, Desertcreat and although it was not confirmed the Chair proposed that Council write to the Department of Justice and request a meeting to be updated on the position.

Proposed by Councillor Dillon
Seconded by Councillor T Quinn and

Resolved That Council write to the Department of Justice and request a meeting to receive an update on the Community Safety College, Desertcreat.

C99/15 Consideration of Motions

C99.1/15 Councillor Mallaghan to move motion

Councillor Mallaghan in moving the undernoted motion stated he had great delight in the achievement of the under 21 football team especially as the Captain, Ciaran McGerry was a fellow club man, a talented athlete and a hero in his eyes. Councillor Mallaghan further stated that the former Councils had attributed to GAA success in assisting with resources and it was fitting that the first civic reception for Mid Ulster be for a group of young people.

Councillor Mallaghan proposed the motion,

This Council notes the Achievement of Tyrone GAA Under 21 Football Team and their success in winning the All Ireland Championship in Parnell Park Dublin on the 2nd May. That this council commends the players, management, back room

team and the County Board for their hard work in bringing this great honour to the District and the County. That this council hosts a civic reception in their honour

Councillor Cuthbertson sought clarification as to whether the Chair of Council had authority to go ahead and host a reception out of the Chair's allowance regardless if the motion was carried or fell. The Chief Executive confirmed that to be the case.

Councillor Mallaghan stated that the function should be a civic reception hosted by Council and should be funded from the Civic Reception budget not the Chair's Allowance.

Seconded by Councillor McNamee

In seconding the motion, Councillor McNamee extended congratulations to the team stating that they were following on from other Tyrone successes and indeed those of Derry. He stated that at both county and club level the success was a catalyst for the future.

Councillor McLean emphasising that he had no issue with the reception or the team, queried if Council was setting a precedent prior to having a policy in place. He stated that the motion should be held back until a policy was in place as it was 'putting the cart before the horse.'

Proposed by Councillor McLean
Seconded by Councillor Cuthbertson

Postpone the notice of motion until a reception policy is in place.

Councillor M Quinn expressed his support for the motion stating that it had been a while since the Under 21 team had enjoyed such a success and it was superb that the Manager was a local person.

Councillor Mallaghan stated he understood what was being said but regardless of the situation surrounding a policy, an All-Ireland success is something Council should support and the team was very deserving of a Civic Reception.

The Chair, Councillor Dillon called for a vote on the motion;

For	23
Against	14

The Chair, Councillor Dillon called for a vote on proposal of Councillor McLean

For	14
Against	23

The Chair, Councillor Dillon declared the motion carried.

Responding to Councillor Mallaghan's comments as to whether he had a conflict in relation to the reception Councillor Wilson advised he had no difficulty but thought it would be wise to await a policy on civic receptions.

Councillor Mallaghan expressed his thanks to those who supported the motion, especially the county Derry Councillors.

C99.2/15 Councillor C O'Neill to move the motion

Councillor C O'Neill in moving the motion stated that Council should condemn with deep regret the recent comments made by Councillor McLean in the Irish News and call on him to retract the comments immediately.

Councillor C O'Neill stated that her comments were in relation to a call by Councillor McLean for homosexuality to be made illegal coming on the back of the political debacle which has seen the resignation of the DUP Health Minister, Jim Wells MLA who caused much hurt to the LGBT community when asked for his views on civil marriage equality at a hustings event during his Westminster election campaign.

Councillor C O'Neill further stated that the motion was coming less than a week after Equal Marriage was given a resounding green light as the result of the referendum in the 26 counties and the right to marriage equality being enjoyed by Irish citizens should be shared in the North. Stating that Sinn Féin would continue to campaign for marriage equality for all in the North and to end discrimination against the LGBT community, Councillor C O'Neill stated that there would be a high level of public interest in the debate as it was regrettable that in the opening years of the 21st century a motion rebuking the DUP's Councillor McLean's unhelpful and insensitive comments had to be tabled. Emphasising that the LGBT community in Mid Ulster, like anywhere else, contribute much in terms of positivity in the community and deserved respect she stated that like many of her colleagues in education and youth service she sees the devastation caused by prejudice against the gay community and made reference to the sense of isolation felt, self-harm and the suicide rate amongst many young gay people which must be tackled once and for all. Continuing, she stated that there must be no place in society for homophobia and all its manifestations.

Referring to the result of the referendum in the 26 Counties Councillor O'Neill stated it would help tackle homophobia whilst the continuing blocking of the rights of gay people at Stormont and reckless comments by elected politicians in the media would not. Making mention of attempts by Sinn Féin to introduce marriage equality in the North which had been blocked by the main unionist parties whilst the SDLP and Alliance had sat on the fence Councillor C O'Neill was emphatic that it was not good enough for the SDLP's MLA for East Derry together with his South Down colleagues to go missing when a vote was called.

Councillor C O'Neill quoted Mid Ulster journalist, Michael McGlade's editorial in a recent newspaper stating "with a growing swell of public figures calling for a change in the law here, people in Magherafelt, Cookstown and beyond will be watching very

carefully to see how this debate unfolds, and study the comments of the people they elected.”

Concluding her remarks, Councillor C O'Neill requested that Council took the opportunity to show much needed solidarity with its LGBT citizens who contribute so much positivity in terms of community life across the district and beyond and as such put on record opposition to the comments of Councillor McLean in relation to homosexuality and take the opportunity to request him to withdraw his comments.

Finishing by quoting Amnesty International's Patrick Corrigan who recently stated “that the North is the last bastion of discrimination against gay people in these islands”, Councillor C O'Neill proposed the motion.

Proposed by Councillor C O'Neill
Seconded by Councillor McPeake, that

This council notes the positive contribution that the LGBT community make to the Mid Ulster Society. That council acknowledges that this district is a welcome place for everyone regardless of your sexuality or gender. This council condemns with deep regret the comments made by Councillor Paul McClean last month in the Irish News and calls on him to retract those comments immediately.

Councillor McLean responding stated that he had spent time considering the motion and with a young family, members could imagine the conversations which had taken place in his home. Referring to his first reaction on reading the motion he asked what right Sinn Féin had to lecture him or anyone else in the chamber on ethics or morals and request that he withdraw comments based on their history. Outlining his political career which had spanned over 25 years on Magherafelt District Council, Councillor McLean stated that he had heard Sinn Féin representatives justify and condone the murder, capture and torture of innocent people and that there were those in the chamber who still justify the Provisional IRA's campaign of murder. Councillor McLean continued stating that when every Councillor in the Chamber condemned the Provisional IRA's actions then Councillor C O'Neill's call for equality would carry more weight and thus challenged Members to stand up and condemn anyone in the Chamber who had justified or participated in the Provisional IRA. Councillor McLean stated that he would not condemn the motion but trusted that his comments would render it unnecessary.

Councillor McLean emphasised that he wanted Mid Ulster to be a welcoming place for everyone and would note the positive contribution that all people make in the community. Stating that the debate on the motion had arisen from a quote in the Irish News concerning homosexuality which read, “The Biblical perspective speaks against it and I take the Biblical perspective. It goes against the Bible's stance so I don't believe it should be legal.” Councillor McLean explained that the Irish News had initially contacted him several years prior during a discussion of redefining marriage at which time he had said, “As a Christian who believes in the stance of the Bible I believe homosexuality is morally wrong. It is spiritually wrong and I don't believe it should be legal”. Continuing he stated that the Bible lists numerous

matters and describes them as sin and whether of Christian faith or not no one disputes it and that it was not his belief that every sin listed should be a criminal offence nor was it his belief that homosexuality should be one. Emphasising that he was no theologian but a simple Christian, he stated that he would defend the rights of Christian people to quote the scriptures and live lives according to God's Word and that they should not be forced by any law of the land to dilute the Bible or their sincerely held beliefs. Stating that whilst he endeavoured to apply God's Word to every aspect of his life but often failed he was not setting himself up on a "holier than thou" pedestal. However, Councillor McLean stated categorically that he believed in marriage between one man and one woman but that did not make him homophobic and within both society and Council care must be taken not to lapse into extremist language and a view taken on any topic based on a Christian belief did not mean that a person hated another. Councillor McLean related that he was in politics because he was passionate about both his country and community and thus wanted to help others, see the district prospering and lay a foundation for others to build upon but that he felt Mid Ulster Council had not got off on the right footing.

Councillor McLean stated that he had been open with the meeting and it had not been nor was his intention to cause offence to anyone but that he was entitled to express his dearly held Christian view. Stating that it was time for others in the Chamber to step up to the mark he said he wanted Mid Ulster Council to be a place where everyone feels welcome but what about the Royal British Legion and the poppy sellers and he posed the question, was the Chamber going to address the decision to block the organisation selling poppies in the building. Commenting that Councillor C O'Neill had brought the motion about words he had used and requested the Council to condemn what he said challenged the Councillor to bring a motion in June asking the Council to condemn not words but actions and involvement of her Party colleagues in the Provisional IRA.

Concluding, Councillor McLean stated the motion was trying to label him as homophobic which he certainly was not and that he believed he had clarified his position. He added that his mother had always said that you should always ensure your own doorstep is clean before commenting on anyone else's and this was good advice for the Chamber also and continued to say that he wanted to see a good working relationship where Councillors treat the entire electorate with fairness. Highlighting that regardless of religious background or sexuality he wanted everyone in the area to feel valued and be part of the community they lived and worked in. He asked that the motion be voided and withdrawn as he felt his comments had rendered it pointless to go through an exercise of speeches and then a vote and thus would leave the matter with the Chair and proposer but he felt he had clarified his position.

Councillor McPeake stated that he gave credit to Councillor McLean and his efforts to side track the motion by touching on the conflict, the Royal British Legion and sale of poppies which had nothing to do with it. Councillors McPeake said it was outrageous for a public representative to speak as Councillor McLean had done, he stated that the tightening of standards with regard to the code of conduct for Councillors had been a positive trait, and that the well-rehearsed comments of Councillor McLean were not acceptable in public life and indeed were questionable under the Code of Conduct. Mentioning the ban there had been on blood donation

from the LGBT Councillor McPeake called on Councillor McLean and his party to come out of the wilderness and join the modern age. Councillor McPeake stated that Council should move forward collectively on such issues.

The Chair, Councillor Dillon stated that she could not void the motion and thus called for a vote. A recorded vote was requested.

For	23 (SF) Councillors Bateson, Bell, Clarke, Elattar, Gildernew, Gillespie, McEldowney, Mallaghan, McGinley, B McGuigan, S McGuigan, McNamee, McPeake, Molloy, C O'Neill, J O'Neill, Totten, (SDLP) Councillors McAleer, McFlynn, Mullen, T Quinn, M Quinn and (Independent) Councillor Monteith
Against	10 (DUP) Councillors Ashton, Buchanan, Burton, Cuthbertson, Forde, McLean, Robinson, J Shiels, (UUP) Councillors G Shiels, Reid
Abstained	4 Councillors (UUP) Cuddy, Glasgow, McKinney and Wilson

The Chair Councillor Linda Dillon did not record a vote.

The Chair declared the motion carried.

C99.3/15 Councillor Cuthbertson to move

Councillor Cuthbertson stated that the birth of a baby girl in any home is a joyous occasion and the birth of the Royal baby, Princess Charlotte caused great excitement across Mid Ulster and the United Kingdom, as a whole, and remarked that many of his constituents were glued to television screens for first sightings of the baby.

Proposed by Councillor Cuthbertson
Seconded by Councillor McLean

That this Council, send warmest congratulations and best wishes to their Royal Highnesses, The Duke & Duchess of Cambridge, on the birth of their daughter Her Royal Highness Princess Charlotte Elizabeth Diana of Cambridge, fourth in line to the Throne and sister of His Royal Highness Prince George of Cambridge.

Councillor Mallaghan shared with the Chamber that Councillor Totten had celebrated the birth of a baby in the past week and stated that whilst he would welcome and congratulate any birth and that his party went to great lengths to recognise all people they would not be supporting the motion. He stated that whilst some of the community were happy to be subjects of the Crown he was a Republican and believed in citizenship and equality. He further stated that many children born into the Mid Ulster area would be living in deprivation whilst this Royal baby would have everything because the people paid for it and it was neither fair nor equal.

Councillor Monteith concurred with Councillor Mallaghan's comments and stated that he would confer good wishes to everyone who had welcomed a new baby but as a republican he opposed the monarchy as he believed all human beings come into this world equal and as such no child should be singled out. He asked as to why this child should be privileged and live off the state whilst others lived in deprivation.

Councillor Cuddy supporting the motion stated that a significant proportion of the community were delighted with the Royal birth. He remarked on the recent Royal visit to Ireland and that across the United Kingdom and indeed Ireland the Queen and the Royal family gave communities a lift. Commenting on the tourism industry associated with the Royal family he stated that as a gesture of goodwill a letter should be sent which would cost nothing but not to send it was yet further proof that the unionist were a minority.

Councillor Bateson spoke against the motion stating that republicans did not differentiate.

Councillor Cuthbertson expressed his disappointment but stated that he was not surprised at the outcome. He related that a Roman Catholic member of the community had been in the DUP constituency office and the topic of conversation had been the Royal birth and felt that Sinn Féin had 'got it wrong' in not supporting the motion. Councillor Cuthbertson stated that the great, great, great uncle of Princess Charlotte, Earl Mountbatten had been murdered by colleagues of Sinn Féin thus he was not surprised.

Councillor G Shiels stated that he would support the motion.

The Chair Councillor Dillon called for a vote;

For	14
Against	19
Abstained	4

The Chair declared the motion lost.

C99.4/15 Councillor Bell to move

Councillor Bell in moving the undernoted motion stated that rugby was a sport which had united Ireland and that in going forward he wished Cookstown Rugby Club every success.

Proposed by Councillor Bell
Seconded by Councillor McNamee that

This council notes the recent success of the Cookstown Rugby Club. In their 25th year, the senior team has won the Ulster Minor League. This is a great achievement for the club and I request that the council acknowledges this great moment for the club in the most appropriate way.

Councillor McNamee stated that he would congratulate the team on winning the league remarking that one of the turning points was a meeting at Malone at which the Cookstown team had lodged a complaint but went on to win the league. He stated the team should be recognised in the most appropriate way.

Councillor T Quinn added his support to the motion stating that the players came from across Mid Ulster district and from all sections of the community.

Councillor Mallaghan stated that there were seven Pomeroy men on the team.

Councillor Wilson added his congratulations also and stated that the team won the Ravenhill Cup on the 9 May and this should be included. Councillor Bell agreed that the Ravenhill Cup be included

Councillor Buchanan stated that he too would support the motion.

In response to the Chair, Councillor Dillon asking how best the Council could honour the team, Councillor Bell stated that he felt the team could be invited to attend an event the Chair was proposing to host during her year of office.

The Chair, Councillor Dillon acknowledging that there was general consensus for the motion stated that it would be considered when the Party Representatives group was discussing the matter of receptions.

Councillor McLean stated that he was still of the opinion that Council should have a policy in place for receptions and asked what sort of precedent and message would it set by hosting receptions prior to a policy and thus he had no difficulty with the matter going to Party Representatives for discussion.

The Chair Councillor Dillon stated that until a policy was in place Council had to follow the processes of the former councils. Councillor Bell stated that he was content with the proposal being discussed by the Party Representatives Group.

C99.5/15 Councillor Wilson to move the motion

Councillor Wilson in moving the undernoted motion stated that as a direct result of the 2015/2016 budget cuts voted through by Sinn Féin and the DUP the modern languages programmes for primary schools and the European studies programme for secondary schools had been cut.

Councillor Mallaghan left the meeting at 8.07pm

Referring to the core modern language programme for P1-P4 classes which had been in place since 2007 Councillor Wilson stated that the Minister for Education had announced at the start of March that all funding for the programme would cease at the end of March. He stated that this had all happened without prior notice for the 100 Peripatetic language tutors who had been delivering the programme or any detailed discussion with the Education Committee whose role it is to scrutinize the decision making of the Minister. Councillor Wilson further stated that the Minister

had suggested that individual schools had the option to continue to teach languages out of their own resources however with budgets planned and a new financial year commencing this would be an unrealistic suggestion. He expressed his fears that in the immediate future that it would be unlikely to be any language provision at primary schools in Northern Ireland. Comparing this to the rest of the United Kingdom, Councillor Wilson advised that the teaching of modern foreign languages such as French, Spanish and German in primary schools was being prioritised with Scotland increasing their investment so that by P5 children will have been introduced to three languages. Stating that the whole area needed to be revisited Councillor Wilson said that a centralised organised programme from Stormont which offers tutors a degree of job security and primary schools a reliable and committed resource for pupils was required.

Councillor Mallaghan returned at 8.10pm

Commenting on secondary schools Councillor Wilson advised that the European Studies Programme had been cut, a programme which had linked schools in Northern Ireland and the Republic with schools across Europe through sustained collaborative projects with the aim of furthering tolerance, mutual understanding and appreciation of the cultures of others. In an increasing globalised he suggested that Council look to fostering the economic wellbeing of children and young people by promoting skills in modern languages in order that they may take advantage of job opportunities within the European Union and farther afield.

Acknowledging that restraints on public spending was a fact of life in the current economic climate Councillor Wilson stated that sympathy could be extended to the Education Minister, and indeed any Minister, if they proved themselves responsible for their department budget. Stating that this was not the case with Education, he emphasised that it was disgraceful that a modern language programme was being axed at the same time as proposals being approved for a new Irish medium secondary school near Dungiven which would be neither viable nor sustainable. Quoting figures sourced from the development proposal for the school Councillor Wilson stated that the Ministers decision had met with opposition from his officials and the wishes of St Patricks, Maghera and had approved a school for an initial estimated intake of 14 pupils which would incur building costs of approximately £2.55 million plus utility costs, fees and VAT yet the budget for language support had been cut.

Councillor Wilson called on Members to support the motion and support children in Mid Ulster who had benefitted from both the modern languages and European studies programme.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor McLean

That Mid Ulster Council calls on the Department of Education to reconsider its decision to cut the modern languages programme for primary schools, and the European Studies programme for secondary schools, and further calls on the Minister to seek to reinstate the programmes after the June monitoring round.

Councillor McPeake stated that he had spoken with the Minister for Education regarding the issue and had been advised that the cuts to the Executive budget over the last five years was decimating public services; that overall in 2015 the education budget had been reduced by £97.6 million or 5% of the opening budget in 2014-15 and that the Department had worked to protect front line services and funding targeted at social deprivation and Special Education Needs as much as possible, to include:

- an extra £10m had been injected into the Educational Authority Block Grant;
- continuation of the eligibility criteria to post primary sector which has seen an extra 12,000 pupils, free school meals and uniforms;
- plans to extend the Common funding scheme transitional fund into 2015-2016 which alleviated losses to schools from the change due to Common Funding changes;
- protection to the Irish Medium post primary sector and for Traveller Children.

Councillor McPeake stated that due to the cuts proposed it would be impossible for the Education Department to sustain everything it had been doing and that the blame for these cuts lies at the door of the Conservative Government which seemed determined to decimate public services and hurting the most vulnerable within society by attacking low paid workers and those on welfare benefits. Stating that there was clearly a crisis he stated that there was also strong indications that the British Exchequer could apply a further £25billion more cuts to public services.

Concluding Councillor McPeake stated that Sinn Féin rejects the motion as it does not address the real issues or the problem from which they arise which is the savagery of the Tory cuts to which all parties need to unite against.

Councillor McLean stated that he noted the comments made on the Tory cuts yet Sinn Féin had made noises regarding welfare reform and this was costing more money on a daily basis and that they should sweep and wash their own doorstep.

The Chair, Councillor Dillon asked if the DUP were happy that the Tories kept taking money from the block grant.

Councillor Wilson stated he was disappointed that the motion was not receiving cross party support.

The Chair, Councillor Linda called for a vote on the motion;

For	20
Against	18

The Chair declared the motion carried.

C99.6/15 Councillor Kearney to move the motion

In the absence of Councillor Kearney, Councillor M Quinn moved the motion speaking on the benefits of investment in early education. He emphasised that it forms the building blocks of both the society and the economy and under investment and a lack of long-term strategy in education not only fails children and young people but is detrimental to the economy and to social injustice. Advising that in the first three years of a child's life phenomenal growth in brain development takes place, Councillor M Quinn stated that these years were critical in steering the direction of children's future educational attainment thus ensuring standards are raised in early year development will give children the best start in life and provide a strong foundation for their active involvement in society.

He stated that the aim of the Early Years Fund was to sustain high quality early years services in areas of greatest need and is achieved through provision of direct services to children and families together with infrastructural support and capacity support to service providers. Outlining the key features of the fund which played a crucial role in the delivery of the Pre-School Education Programme Councillor M Quinn stated that cuts to the fund would mean a loss of £1.71 million to the voluntary and community sector which would lead to job losses, loss of 2,500 early childhood places including 620 places for children with special needs and over 250 places lost for children who do not speak English as their first language. Quoting from an Audit Office Report of February 2013, Councillor M Quinn reported that thousands of Northern Ireland's young people leave school unable to read or write indicating that in 2010-11 9000 pupils left full time education having failed to reach the required standard in literacy and numeracy.

Councillor M Quinn sought cross party support for the motion

Proposed by Councillor M Quinn
Seconded by Councillor McAleer

That this Council notes that investment in early education benefits our society and economy enormously; further notes how the Department of Education's Early Years' Fund contributes towards this; expresses its concern about the proposed reduction of £1.71 million to the Early Years' Fund and the risks this poses to 177 jobs and 2500 early childhood places, including over 620 children with Special Needs and calls on the Minister for Education to ensure this Fund is protected against cuts.

Councillor McPeake stated that the motion was flawed and advised that the Early Years Fund was a legacy fund, created by the DHSSPS in 2004 to help sustain early childhood services which were experiencing difficulty when PEACE funding ended. Councillor McPeake further stated that the fund transferred to the department in 2006 and was still open to those groups who were in most need when the fund was established. He said he funding was still in place until August and even if funding ends 2,500 pre-school places will not be lost as they are funded through a different budget, if an establishment closes alternative places will be found and in exceptional circumstances where places are in isolated locations additional funds will be sourced to keep such units open. Concluding, Councillor McPeake stated that money lost to early years had been redirected into frontline classrooms and teachers and to return it to the early year's budget would mean the loss of 60 full time teaching posts. He

stated that his party was opposed to the motion and called for all to stand against the Tory cuts.

Councillor Monteith concurred with Councillor McPeake's comments Tory cuts and stated that everyone should fight the cuts being imposed. He stated that it was a well-known fact in Dungannon that the Department did not have a good track record for listening and would not listen to Mid Ulster Council. Councillor Monteith paid tribute to parents in Dungannon and Coalisland for their ongoing campaign to secure early years places and for parents at Clinty Clay Primary School who opposed cuts noting that the Department could find the money to fight the parent's challenges. He said the Council should stand beside and support citizens especially if special needs funding was being endangered. Concluding that there was high child poverty in Dungannon Councillor Monteith expressed his support for the motion.

Councillor Cuddy stated that the UUP would too support the motion advising that in the past Dungannon Councillors had stood together for the good of the citizens. Advising that following the April Council meeting the UUP had taken comments back to their Minister Councillor Cuddy stated that Sinn Féin should do likewise as the Tories could not be blamed for everything.

Councillor McLean stated that the DUP would also support the motion stating that realities must be faced and that they were tired hearing about Tory cuts.

Councillor McGinley stated that Sinn Féin would continue to reject Tory cuts.

Councillor M Quinn expressed his thanks for the cross party support and stated that Sinn Féin should bring the message of the Council to their Minister.

Councillor Mullen asked if Sinn Féin members who availed of early year's places would withdraw their children to allow others to use the places, given the stance they were taking on the motion. The Chair, Councillor Dillon said that every child deserved their place and felt the Councillors comments were out of order.

The Chair, Councillor Dillon called for a vote.

For	20
Against	18

The Chair declared the motion carried.

C99.7/15 Councillor Wilson to move the motion

Councillor Wilson in moving the motion stated he was not as familiar with the full details surrounding Roxborough House, Moy but advised that the former Cookstown District Council had opposed the previous attempts to close Westlands in Cookstown since the first proposal in May 2013. Outlining the campaign Councillor Wilson referred to the undernoted all of which Cookstown Council had opposed:

Councillor M Quinn left the meeting at 8.32pm

- March 2014: HSSB consultation 'Making Choices' and the proposed criteria for change in Statutory Residential Homes, had placed on record its strong opposition to any changes which would result in Westlands closure;
- August 2014: Assessment of Need criteria and No Admissions policy – Cookstown Council had opposed deeming that no admissions equated to no future and also distorted the demands for places;
- September 2014: Councillors met with residents and staff of Westlands and used their comments as part of response to inform the Northern Ireland Local Commission Group - Assessment of Need for residential homes which again emphasised the need for investment in health services;

Councillor McEldowney left the meeting at 8.34pm

Councillor Wilson stated that the HSCB had now published the local Commissioning Group's findings which are somewhat unclear on Westland's future and indicate that a further consultation process is planned which creates further uncertainty for residents, their family and staff. He stated that he welcomed the news that no one would be asked to leave but who would maintain the facility.

Councillor M Quinn returned at 8.35pm

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor McNamee

That this Council notes with deep concern the recent announcement by the H.S.C.B of a consultation on the future of Westlands Cookstown and Roxborough House Moy which Council understands, indicates and supports a process which will invariably lead to the closure of these two homes. This course of action is clearly unsatisfactory and inappropriate given the previous assurances between the legacy councils, Health and Social Care Boards, the Trusts and the Minister. Council opposes this course of action and calls for an immediate meeting with the HSCB and Trusts as a matter of urgency

Councillor McNamee stating that he had met with residents, staff and family of Westlands and agreed with the motion emphasised that if places were made available there would be a waiting list for entry. He referred to pressure from the BBC Nolan Show from which residents received assurances from former Health Minister Edwin Poots that it would not close, but there were now concerns for its future.

Councillor McEldowney returned to the meeting at 8.39pm

Councillor T Quinn stated that the motion outlined the situation well and that every effort should be made to protect the residents as Councillors well new the anguish and stress the situation caused to families. Declaring support for the motion he said that once again Council should fight the cuts.

Councillor Buchanan stated that the needs of residents were paramount, emphasising that if it had not been for the DUP Minister Poots the home would be closed.

Councillor McGuigan stated that the former Dungannon Council had received the same assurances and whilst he supported the motion the bigger picture within health was shifting towards 'transforming your care' and keeping people in their own homes.

Councillor Monteith expressed his support for the motion stating that yet again it was a Department which did not have a great track record of listening. Referring to the former Dungannon Council campaign for Roxborough and Loane House he indicated that when the term 'consultation' is used by the Trust it effectively means 'cut and close'. He stated there was a lack of a democratic process in the decision and that the Trust had been presented with over 8000 signatures which represented all elected representatives, the community and families who want the homes kept open but it appears to be falling on deaf ears. Councillor Monteith stated it was the duty of the civil service to deliver what the public want and that this consultation was an insult to the public.

Councillor Reid concurred with previous comments and stated that in effect there had only been a part turnaround in the decision as with no admissions the home would close. Councillor Reid stated that the public both needed and wanted the residential homes.

Councillor Bell called on the DUP and UUP to oppose cuts as it would be a good starting point. Councillor Wilson expressed his thanks for all who spoke in favour of the motion.

The Chair Councillor Dillon called for a vote.

For	38
Against	0

Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor S McGuigan
Seconded by Councillor Gillespie and

Resolved That items C100/15 to C105/15 be taken in committee.

The press left the meeting at 8.47pm

C106/15 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7pm and ended at 9.04pm .

CHAIR _____

DATE _____