

Appendix A Civic Recognition - Mid Ulster District Council

Consideration Paper

Arrangements to allow for the provision of civic recognition have been in place since the early years of this Council. These have been in place since November 2015 with current arrangements being developed because of a review and refinement in 2018.

The current arrangements allow for the acknowledgement of organisations and persons whose achievements have brought a distinction to our district. This is primarily provided through the provision of civic recognition in the form of a reception of varying levels or a letter of congratulations from the Chairperson of Council. A letter from the Council Chairperson is issued where it has been determined that the achievement does not sit with any of the criteria set.

Consideration

The 2018 review refined the arrangements in place by:

- tightening up the criteria,
- limiting the numbers who could attend from recipient organisations/ sports clubs,
- placing a three-year limit on when a reception could be awarded again and
- introducing an electronic form to submit requests for consideration from Members

Whilst the changes in 2018 placed tighter controls by for example reducing the number of receptions and the numbers of people attending, the current arrangements have become unsustainable in their current form.

It is the view of officers that the current process be revised rather than playing around the edges of the current system. Working on the basis that Members will continue to want to celebrate the successes to the same extent as we've been doing to date the focus could be on:

- **Mid Ulster Council awards type evenings** whereby up to 3 events are held annually as part of annual themed programmes (i.e., themed along the lines of sports, culture, music and community for example). Reflecting on recipients of our civic recognition to date gives an indication that for example, a Mid Ulster Junior Sports Awards, Mid Ulster Senior Sports Awards and Mid Ulster Community, Arts & Culture Awards would capture a lot of what has been coming forward to date. Each award's evening could have for example, up to 8 categories and be open for public nomination, with the winner of each and runner up being invited to an awards evening. The logistics of this would need to be teased out in terms of the relevant leads within the Council, budget, awards categories, how nominees would be assessed and if external sponsorship would be required.
- **Civic Receptions** being held on a case-by-case basis for individuals or organisations where it is felt that on the assessment of council officers (using the current criteria as a guide) that an exceptional achievement has been attained or the need arises for one in instances such as hosting dignitaries to the district or

conferences/events to the district. These would be at the request of Councillors only or where identified by senior officers. These would really be those which would fall under our current Civic Honour ie. be truly exceptional or if the need arises to host someone or a group who is visiting the district. Officers would consult with the Chair on their assessment and apply discretion on how best to host the reception dependent on the audience receiving the reception.

NOTE: Chair and Deputy Chair Receptions are outside the scope of this discussion. These receptions are a matter for the Chair to be held at their discretion up to the allowable budget as set within the Council's Scheme of Allowances for Councillors.

Issues Arising – the current process

It is evident that due to the extent of the current levels of provision of civic recognition under existing arrangements that the value to recipients is at risk of being diminished, given the frequency of receptions held. Members have expressed the view that civic recognition should be something recipients value and as such be sought after from the Council. Issues extend to:

- The frequency and increasing number of receptions being held
- Ensuring that civic recognition retains its value
- Ensuring that civic recognition is something that is sought after by recipients as being prestigious
- There is little room for discretion in the application of the policy/arrangements with significant effort made in checking requests and records being kept to meet the requirements of the policy
- The process has become over-engineered with significant time spent researching and checking the success of recipients for eligibility purposes and to ensure recognition hasn't been provided within the three preceding years
- Civic receptions have become a case of an individual or organisation receiving an award for winning an award

The current process is detailed at the end.

The Way Forward

Members may wish to consider the following as options moving forward:

1. Continue with the current arrangements as they are,

2. Refine existing arrangements further by enhancing the criteria or
3. Introduce a separate mechanism that would provide an outlet to recognise the successes of individuals/groups from our district, still accommodating civic receptions (refer to page 1 above)

15th November 2022


The Current Process

The current process on requesting civic recognition requires that Members complete and submit the form entitled *Request for Civic Recognition from Mid Ulster District Council* to Democratic Services. Democratic reviews the information provided against the criteria set within the Council's policy to determine whether the recipient/recipient group should receive a Civic Honour Reception; a Civic Reception or be recommended to receive a letter from the Chairperson if it does not meet the criteria for either of these receptions. Eligibility checks can take a number of days/weeks subject to the availability of 3rd parties coming back to us. A check is made also if recognition has been provided within the preceding 3 years for the same attainment.

Categorised requests are presented to monthly Council as a recommendation for approval. Approved requests are subsequently referred to the Chief Executive's Office to host the receptions and issue letters of congratulations, where required.

All receptions are organised in line of the current policy i.e., numbers to be invited, who is invited, who presides and where they should be held.

Appendix B

 Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh Mid Ulster District Council	Meeting Report of Civic Recognition Working Group Tuesday 22 November 2022 at 5.30pm
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Report of Civic Recognition Working Group of meeting held on 22 November 2022 at 5.30pm in the Council Offices, Dungannon and by virtual means

Attendees **Members:** Councillors Ashton*, Brown, Buchanan*, Mallaghan, D McPeake*, Molloy*, Quinn*, Wilson (*Denotes virtual attendance)
 Officers: P Moffett (AD: ODSP), J McGuckin (HoSSE) E Forde (Member Support Officer), J Hobson (Executive Officer)

Apologies Councillor Doris

AGENDA	MATTERS AGREED	ACTIONS & RESPONSIBILITY
1.0	Chair	
	Proposed by Councillor Brown, Seconded by Councillor Ashton AGREED: Councillor Mallaghan continue as Chair of the Working Group	No action
2.0	Consideration Paper	
	The Chair drew attention to consideration paper circulated to Members in advance of meeting (appendix a). The AD: ODSP outlined the consideration paper highlighting a proposal for the way forward taking an approach which would include a Mid Ulster Council awards type evening, for example a Junior Sports Awards, Senior Sports Awards, Community awards, Arts and Culture Awards. Councillor Mallaghan proposed to add Industry to the list. AGREED: That 'industry' be captured also as an awards category for industry awards	Council Officers

	<p>Members Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That specific categories and criteria be defined in due course • That Civic Receptions should be as outlined in the consideration paper, for example for hosting visiting dignitary and hosting exceptional achievement on a case-by-case basis • That Chair's & Deputy Chair's Receptions were outside the scope of discussion as such receptions are a matter for the Chair to be held at their discretion up to the allowable budget as set within Scheme of Allowances for Councillors. <p>Reflection on Current Policy</p> <p>In addition to the issues arising with the current process Members made specific reference to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members should refrain from the practice of adding their names to be associated with nominations already submitted by other Members at council meetings and that the practice should be discontinued • Current arrangements had lost their prestige in that so many 'awards' were being provided for the same sporting teams and organisations • Inordinate amount of time being spent by staff in processing nominations/requests for civic recognition under the current arrangements • That the process involving <i>Letters of Congratulations from Council Chair</i> being issued to nominees not identified for 'civic recognition' should be reflected upon <p>Letter of Congratulations from Council Chair</p> <p>Members discussed the practice involving letters being issued by the Chair and raised the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An informal approach is required, that letters be issued under their name at their discretion which would reduce the workload in current situ and maintain their value/prestige • Members consider use of the Council letterhead template adopted to their personal letterhead to send letters to offer congratulations to constituents • Their value could be maintained by limiting to first, second and third place • Going forward, reflecting on the proposal document, qualifying nominees for awards evenings could receive a letter commending achievement • Consideration be given to suspending the issue of letters in the circumstances set out under current policy 	<p>Members to Note</p>
--	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------

	<p>Proposed by Councillor Wilson Seconded by Councillor Brown and</p> <p>AGREED: That it be recommended to P&R Committee that issuing of letters of congratulations under the circumstances within the current policy be set aside</p> <p>Proposed by Councillor Wilson Seconded by Councillor Brown and</p> <p>AGREED: That it be recommended to P&R Committee that a separate mechanism would provide an outlet to recognise the successes of individuals groups from the Mid Ulster district still accommodating civic receptions as outlined on page one of consideration paper (appendix a) be progressed.</p>	<p>Council Officers</p> <p>Council Officers</p>
3.0	Next Steps	
	<p>AGREED: that for next meeting giving cognisance to the foregoing that draft categories be drawn up for awards type evenings as outlined in consideration paper and any other matter that needs progressed</p>	Council Officers
4	Date of Next Meeting	
	<p>AGREED: that working group reconvene December or as soon as practicable thereafter</p>	
<i>Meeting concluded at 6.00 pm</i>		