

**Minutes of Meeting of the Development Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 15 April 2021 in the Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon and by Virtual Means**

**Members Present**

Councillor McNamee

Councillors Ashton\*, Black, Burton\*, Clarke\*, Corry\*, Cuddy\*, Doris\*, Elattar\*, Hughes\*, Kearney\*, Kerr\*, Milne\*, Molloy\*, Monteith\*, Wilson\*

**Officers in Attendance**

Mr McCreesh\*\*, Chief Executive  
Ms Campbell, Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation  
Mr Browne\*\*, Head of Tourism  
Mr Gordon, Head of Leisure  
Mr Hill\*\*, Head of Parks  
Ms Linney\*\*, Head of Community Development  
Mr McCance, Head of Culture and Arts  
Ms McKeown\*\*, Head of Economic Development  
Mr Greer, ICT Support  
Ms Grogan, Democratic Services Officer

**Others in Attendance**

Deputation: Fionnuala Boyle Mother & Baby Home Enquiry  
Councillor S McGuigan\*\*\*

- \* Denotes Members present in remote attendance
- \*\* Denotes Officers present by remote means
- \*\*\* Denotes Others present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm.

*The Chair, Councillor McNamee welcomed everyone to the meeting and those watching the meeting through the Live Broadcast. Cllr McNamee 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.*

*The Chair, Councillor McNamee wished everyone a Happy New Year, he stated that last year was difficult but that there was now a vaccine and the infection rate was coming down and that he hoped the situation would improve in the coming months.*

**D059/21 Apologies**

None.

**D060/21 Declarations of Interest**

The Chair Councillor McNamee reminded Members of their responsibility with regard to declaration of interest.

## **D061/21      Chair's Business**

The Chair advised that agenda item 16 Decade of Anniversaries Commemorations 2021/22 Updated Action Plan would be raised in open business and taken immediately after agenda item 9.

He also advised members that the Community Grants were now open and will remain open until the 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

The Chair referred to the welcome news coming out of an application to Sport NI in relation to the extension to Mid Ulster Sports Arena and happy to say we got an indicative funding offer for an 8 lane floodlit running track and a 3G pitch. He said he was pleased to advise members that the Council had received an indicative award of £1m for that project and wanted to say a huge thank you to all the officers and staff who had worked on this over the last number of years. He also wanted to thank the Cookstown DEA Councillors as this was started in the legacy Council when Michelle O'Neill was the DARD Minister with a few letters written to her seeking more land and thankfully the members received the right sound bites then and said all was looking good.

The Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation advised that confirmation was received yesterday that the Council had received £1m indicative award which meant that the Council could now move on to the next stage and actually start with the detailed designs, appoint ICT Teams and apply for planning permission to allow to put together a detailed plan for a floodlit 8 lane athletic track and 3G infield synthetic pitch with lights. She said that work had been ongoing through an Officer and Councillor team for a number of years and was delighted to have gotten it to this stage. Officers would be firing ahead in the next number of weeks to get designs and approval processed to get consultants appointed which would allow Officers to take to completion.

Councillor Kerr advised that he had been contacted by a representative from Killeeshil-Galbally Responders seeking Council's help on some issues. He said that the group had a major concern trying to open a bank account which was stopping them from applying for charity status. This organisation also carries out ambulance services and first responder treatment in conjunction with the Ambulance Service and the lack of house numbering for more rural housing was an issue and would like to highlight along with Council for homeowners to display numbering to help them find a residence to help them carry out their medical assistance. This group also carries out CPR, defibrillator and first aid training and believed that this would be beneficial to see if the Council could coordinate with the group to help raise awareness which was within their main functions and encourage council staff to undergo this type of training offered. He referred to the recent incident involving Michael Coleman in America who took a cardiac arrest, the term the 'widow-maker' and statistics have shown only a 12% success rate of survival outside the medical facilities. He also referred to incident involving Conor Gormley's father whilst attending a GAA match between Ardboe and Carrickmore who took a turn and thankfully the defibrillator was within reach and saved his life and also the sudden

death syndrome and a close friend of his Johnny Curran. He said that it would be very beneficial to issue an invite this group to make a presentation.

Proposed by Councillor Kerr  
Seconded by Councillor Monteith

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to issue an invite to Killeeshil-Galbally Responders to make a presentation to a future meeting to make Council aware of the work they carry out and to encourage Council staff and the general public to participate in first responder training.

Councillor Monteith said that he would be happy to support Councillor Kerr's proposal as this organisation carry out fantastic work and also highlights the issue which he was aware of other groups coming across in terms of the inability of local voluntary groups to open bank accounts which was an ongoing and scandalous issue and should be up to Council to challenge these issues with Banks on behalf of local community groups. He said it was about time the Council started liaising with funders as there was a need for another mechanism for funding as Banks were not going to allow community groups and sporting groups to open accounts with funding having to be channeled in another mechanism as groups were on hold and not acceptable.

Councillor Doris concurred with points made by previous members but in relation to defibrillators raised an issue regarding an incident which happened at the Canal Walk this week with no signs to point to the nearest defibrillators were and asked if it would be possible for staff to erect signage on the route to point to the nearest defibrillators were.

The Chair said that he was aware of this being addressed through the Environment Committee and may be best referred to that team as there was a mapping exercise for defibs right across the District and any defib which was logged onto the mapping system the Ambulance Service was aware of it, but said that Councillor Doris' comments would be passed on to the Environment Committee.

The Chair said that he was glad to hear of Mickey Coleman's recovery and wished him well.

Councillor Molloy said that members would be aware of the meetings with the East Timorese Community and their formulated group and referred to press reports relating to traumatic flooding in East Timor and surrounding areas and the devastation that has caused to a lot of communities and many family members which were resident in the South Tyrone area. He felt that anything that members within the group could do to assist them or help them as there would be family members at home which need support, possibly even offering counselling and anything that the Council could do to support them would be greatly appreciated.

Councillor Monteith concurred with Councillor Molloy's comments and said that he was aware of the Council securing some resources for the people. He said that he had been involved all week in helping the East Timorese gather up essential items like food, tinned food, clothing, bedding and shoes etc, and would like to pay tribute to the East Timorese Community locally and to the nationalities and Irish who had really rose to the

occasion with an overwhelming response to the call for help. He suggested that to arrange a DEA meeting and for any other Councillor interested to get an up to date situation on what was actually going on as this has devastated the large capital city and surrounding areas and feedback from the people stating that this was going to be a long drawn out process of a rebuild. He said that it was important as a local Council to be involved as there was going to be some sort of campaign from the East Timorese people to get aid home on an ongoing basis and would be vitally important to support them. He advised that there was another flood last year and the East Timorese Community organised aid also but this was a lot more of a catastrophic natural disaster this time around and wanted to pay tribute to the ongoing work and was aware that Officers had been talking to representatives from East Timor community over this last 10 days or so. He said that it would be important that a meeting was organised asap on this issue to see what we can do or can't do as this Council wasn't found wanting when it came to emergency crisis this time last year when there was the Covid outbreak and would have no doubt they would be found in wanting helping out this emergency in East Timor.

The Head of Community Development to take the issue on board.

Councillor Black said as this was the first meeting of the Development Committee since the passing of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh last week he would like to take this opportunity to express condolences on behalf of the DUP to her Majesty the Queen at this sad time on the loss of her husband, their children on the loss of a father and their children on the loss of their grandfather and great grandfather. Prince Philip was a great role model, serving his country with courage, honor and distinction, both as a member of the armed forces and as a member of the Royal family. Prince Philip came across as having many passions in life none more so than setting up the Duke of Edinburgh award as this has benefitted many young people across these Islands, giving them a great opportunity for personal development and learning new skills and he knew many young people locally including himself who were very grateful for this opportunity and believed that this would be all part of a great legacy which he had left behind for future generations.

#### **D062/21      Deputation – Fionnuala Boyle Mother & Baby Home Enquiry**

The Chair welcomed to the committee Ms Fionnuala Boyle – Mother & Baby Home Enquiry and invited her to address the committee.

Ms Boyle thanked members for allowing her to make her presentation tonight as this was something very close to her heart. She advised that she was a survivor of the Mother and Baby Home and wanted to tell her story to members present and her ambition to help other people looking for their lost babies and mothers.

Councillor Kerr commended Fionnuala on her bravery and said that he fully supported her campaign and undoubtedly as a corporate body would support her going forward. He said that the way young mothers, women and children were treated was disgraceful and a crime against humanity and was aware of the previous good work she had carried out in the community and her passionate about helping people. He concurred with Fionnuala's comment about turning her negative energy into something positive

and very glad to see her going down this route as she deserved justice, accountability and transparency and wanted to stress that he was very sorry about what did happen to her brother but hoped that this would give her strength going forward and wanted to commend her again on her campaign.

Councillor Monteith commended Fionnuala as he was aware of how nervous Fionnuala was but said that she was brilliant and wanted to pay tribute to her bravery. He said that it was one of the most moving presentations brought before this committee and made the right decision as there was no need for a presentation with statistics as she spoke from the heart to get the message across very well. He stated that Fionnuala had spoken about the horror of the homes and said that this was exactly what they were, as those homes were horrific, horrendous and as Councillor Kerr had stated, a crime against humanity and he would most certainly supporting her in any way he could and was confident that all Councillors here would be of the same opinion and generate unanimous support for her campaign. He asked Fionnuala to keep the Council informed and come back on a regular basis and keep members up to date and if she thinks that this organisation could do to help her, never be afraid to get in touch. He felt that it was a very humbling presentation and couldn't stress enough the tribute he paid her.

Councillor Monteith said he wished to ask Fionnuala a question as it was the 32<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the Hillsborough disaster and the panel involved with her campaign and was aware of Phil Scraton being involved with the Hillsborough families and couldn't be in better hands for someone to scratch back the layers of cover ups and asked her about the team which was working with them.

Ms Boyle advised that there were three experts on the panel, Deirdre Mullan, a social work background from the Department of Health, Dr Maeve O'Rourke, Barrister and Lecturer in Human Rights in University College, Galway and finally Phil Scraton a former Queens University Lecturer. She said that Mr Scraton had worked on some very high profile cases and had written a book into the high profile investigation into the Hillsborough disaster, he also worked with the people involved in Lockerbie and Dunblane and more recently he has been working with the families from Grenfell Tower in London as well. She said that when Mr Scraton introduced himself and heard his background, for the first time in years she had a glimmer of hope that actually something could be achieved and said the most important thing for her would be that this doesn't get lowered down the pile of issues with other things coming along deemed more important as Mothers which were in those homes were dying now and there was no time to wait and deserve to have peace, which was too late for her mother, but was determined to help every other family to get a resolution.

Councillor Burton said that she appreciated Fionnuala coming along and telling her story here tonight on the absolutely horrific things that happened during her life journey and hoped that going forward that she would be able to rise about this. She said as a mother of four children she couldn't comprehend this happening to her as life was so precious and a chance for a good upbringing but was encouraged to hear she had a good life with her adopted parents. She referred to the television programme Long Lost Families and said that that these people go through an awful time to try and find their families which was heartbreaking but said that the presentation tonight was from Fionnuala's heart and felt that sometimes the best way to get through difficult situations

was to speak about it. She concurred with other members asking Fionnuala to stay in touch and to contact the Council if she required any further assistance.

Councillor Doris thanked Fionnuala for her really emotional presentation and said that it was unbelievable that people use Christianity to shame women into this and responsibility should be all on them. She referred to the Irish Government's handling of this issue and said that it was absolutely disgraceful and advised that Linda Dillon MLA was working closely with Kathleen Funchion TD in the Dail in trying to get access to paperwork and this may not be the top priority on Fionnuala's list but it was something, somehow which may be a help. She thanked Fionnuala for speaking tonight and said that everyone handles grief very differently and agreed what was said about some people not feeling comfortable about discussing the issue within their families and for Fionnuala speaking out and helping countless peoples to help them deal with their trauma. She said that she wished her well going forward in her campaign and was a real privilege to hear the story tonight.

Councillor Elattar thanked Fionnuala for sharing her touching story tonight and wished her every success in her campaign as she was confident that a lot of support would be given, especially by Dr Maeve O'Rourke. She advised that she was able to be part of a deputation from Mother and Baby Homes with her party and Martina Anderson MEP to Brussels to present their story to the EU and spent a few days with the group, with mothers and children who had been in these institutions and will never forget the stories in which they told, emotions that were involved and the long lasting consequences on what had happened to the people involved in these unfortunate places. She said that she would like to think as working as a midwife that this has changed and hoped that never again that people would have to go through such horrendous experiences which affected so many in the past and asked that the Council be kept updated on progress.

Councillor Kearney thanked Fionnuala for bringing it to members' attention tonight especially about neglect and hunger at those horrific times with no religious boundaries being shown at that time. He advised that his oldest grandchild was first year post primary and the same age as one of the victims and could relate to what Fionnuala was speaking about. He wanted to acknowledge her bravery in pursuing truth and justice for the victims of such horrific actions against the most vulnerable.

Councillor Molloy wished Fionnuala for the best for the future and was confident that she would generate the success she was campaigning for. He stated there were still a lot of countless other unmarked graves which was being currently worked upon in Dungannon as these victims needed to be given the dignity they deserved in such adverse times and have their graves marked out of respect.

Councillor Corry thanked Fionnuala for her harrowing presentation and said that anything that this Council could do to please come forward and get in touch. She agreed with Councillor Doris' comments around the name of Christianity and how these people were supposed to help the most vulnerable at that time.

Councillor Wilson advised that this was one of the most moving presentation that he had listened to in the last 30 years of being a Councillor. He said that Fionnuala was an incredible brave lady and wished her well in her campaign in the pursuit of truth and justice for all the victims and that Council would support her in any way they possible could.

Councillor Burton enquired if Fionnuala was aware of any mothers alive and children trying to find each other or whether this campaign was about lost children in the past.

Ms Boyle advised that there was still mothers and children looking for each other but there was some difficulty due to children being moved to another jurisdictions, across the border element. She said that she was aware of a man being born in Marianvale Home and ending up in Co. Donegal in another jurisdiction which was totally heartbreaking. She said that she was fortunate that she was one of the younger children in the Home, but this operation still continued up to 1990 and felt that people should have easier access to information as there were complete blocks for her trying to locate her mother and baby brother. She said her aim was to try and help other people as there were people out there in trauma over their past and also to try and match mothers and their children up as there was so many unclaimed babies.

The Chair thanked Fionnuala for sharing her story this evening and was confident that members would be very supportive and had no doubt that Officers would be in contact with her to see what they could do to help progress her campaign.

Councillor Monteith stated that in light of Fionnuala's campaign it may be an idea to try and help the victims to get their message across and proposed that this Council write to the 10 other Councils asking them to facilitate a presentation so Fionnuala and other people like her in their campaign in the pursuit of truth and justice. He said that the more elected members to hear these horrendous stories the better as the human story was needed to come out and felt that this was something proactive this Council could do. He felt that it would be useful for a presentation to be heard by victims in their own local Council area as enough people cannot hear these horror stories and would be certain that the Council Officers would take forward anything that was asked to do.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith  
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to write to the other 10 Councils asking them to facilitate a meeting with Fionnuala and others like her to get their message across.

Ms Boyle thanked members for their overwhelming support and left the meeting at 7.52 pm.

## **Matters for Decision**

### **D063/21 Collaborative Tourism Cluster – Partnership Agreement**

The Head of Tourism presented previously circulated report to seek approval for Mid Ulster Council to enter into a partnership agreement with Antrim & Newtownabbey Council and for Mid Ulster Council to lead on the delivery of the Lough Neagh Shoreline tourism cluster.

Councillor Doris said that she was happy to propose the recommendation but in terms of Tourism Cluster which she had raised on numerous times and was aware that the Head of Tourism had sent an email which she hadn't an opportunity to read yet regarding tourism signage. She advised that Linda Dillon MLA had sent an email to Nichola Mallon, Minister for DfI regarding brown tourism signage, but their whole aspect of it was for redirecting traffic and not for advertising and more for traffic management rather than for tourist attractions. Ms Dillon MLA had then written to the Minister for Economy, but still awaiting a reply and was looking to see if this committee could write a letter to DfE and if need be to DfI also to see if there could be a change around legislation in terms of Brown Tourism Signage as this was something tourism businesses were crying out for.

The Head of Tourism concurred with Councillor Doris' perception around signage and directing of traffic not being related to tourism advertising and attractions. He said that he would put the issue on the agenda for the next Tourism Development Group as a subject for decision at that group.

Proposed by Councillor Doris  
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that Mid Ulster Council enters into a partnership agreement with Antrim and Newtownabbey Council and that Mid Ulster Council to lead on the Lough Neagh Shoreline cluster. Brown Tourism Signage to be put on Agenda for next Tourism Development Group as a subject for decision.

Councillor Kerr asked for clarity on whether there was any discussion with Lough Neagh Partnership as they carry out similar initiatives and if this was the case asked if it was possible to carry out a collaboration or duplication of Lough Neagh Partnership as he was aware of some members sitting here being on the board of LNP.

The Head of Tourism said that advised that Officers work closely with the team of Lough Neagh Partnership who were aware of the ongoing work and Officers always co-ordinate working with them an endeavor to work with them on this programme also.

#### **D064/21 Economic Development Report – OBFD**

The Head of Economic Development presented previously circulated report to provide an update on key activities and sought approval for the following:

- (i) **MEGA (Manufacturing and Engineering Growth & Advancement) Network**
  - a) **MEGA Strategic Review and 3 Year Action Plan**

Councillor Molloy said that he would be happy to accept the officer recommendation.

Councillor Monteith sought clarity on whether there was any trade union involvement.

The Head of Economic Development advised that the MEGA group was not operated by the Council and was led by the private sector. She added it was not within the Council's remit to intervene regarding MEGA's membership. MEGA has proven itself over the last few years to be a very successful body to represent manufacturing and engineering businesses in Mid Ulster and Council is but one small funder in comparison to Invest NI. She said that as far as she was aware MEGA did not have union involvement but was focused on developing opportunities to grow this important cluster of companies in Mid Ulster.

Councillor Monteith said that he would have major issues with allocating the funding requested and proposed not to disagree to not award but to get in contact with the organisations involved and ask if they would accept a strategic input from some local trade unions at a strategic level as he would be more comfortable funding an organisation who have workers input.

Councillor Black said that he would be happy to second the officer recommendation, given the prominence of the engineering sector in the Mid Ulster area and the importance it has to the local economy

Proposed by Councillor Black

That MEGA be invited to present to a future committee once they had completed their strategic review to update us on the work in which they were doing, outcome of the review and their plans for the future.

The Chief Executive advised that the Head of Economic Development had outlined the structure of MEGA with amalgam with over 50 local engineering companies, small, medium and large which were self-sustained and self-established with many of them created family businesses with some of them being now multi-national conglomerates. He said that it has been an overwhelming success and was the talk of all career and skills discussions and now the go-to body for all NI agencies in terms of developing skills agenda and he suspected that it would be a major input into the new NI Skills agenda which was anticipated to be brought forward in the next 5 to 6 months. He said that there was a fine line as Council were not here to tell MEGA what to do and the success of MEGA was because it was not owned by Council or Invest NI or any other government body, but in relation to union representation, he had no difficulty relaying the comments back and asking them for this consideration and didn't foresee any issue relating to this. He felt that the way forward for these companies should be shaped by management, staff, customers and everyone alike.

Councillor Kerr said that he welcomed the Chief Executive's comments and seconded Councillor Monteith's proposal as we were fortunate to have a huge amount of engineering companies within the Mid Ulster area. He said that thousands of workers were employed locally and there was a need for trade union input in relation to salaries, longer breaks, better working conditions amongst other issues and any future discussion must include the invitation to trade unions for all sectors of the community.

Councillor Monteith advised that he wasn't against the proposal but to agree in principle until a conversation was held first regarding the involvement of trade unions being invited to the table to help all sections of the community.

Councillor Molloy said that he would be happy to agree with Councillor Monteith's proposal regarding the engagement of trade unions.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith  
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to approve funding contribution of £5,000 from Council's Economic Development budget, subject to MEGA securing match funding from Invest NI's Collaborative Growth Programme to undertake a Strategic Review and 3 Year Action Plan. Discussions to take place first with MEGA at a strategic level to encourage Trade Union involvement.

Councillor Ashton seconded Councillor Black's proposal.

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that MEGA be invited to present to Committee once they had completed their strategic review to update on the work they were doing, outcome of the review and their plans for the future.

**b) MEGA's Ongoing 3 Year Work Programme (2019/20 – 2021/22)**

Proposed by Councillor Molloy  
Seconded by Councillor Black and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that approval be granted to reallocate £4,000 if its funding contribution to the MEGA Project in year 2 (2020/21) to year 3 (2021/22). This flexibility will allow various aspects of the project to be completed, having been delayed as a result of the pandemic. There is no additional cost to Council related to this request.

**ii) Mid Ulster Gift Card**

Councillor Corry advised that this was something that businesses were crying out for and enquired if this was across all sectors of businesses.

The Head of Economic Development advised that the Gift Card would be available to all businesses that wanted to participate across Mid Ulster.

Councillor Burton referred to the purchase of a gift card and in the event of the business closing down enquired what would be the outcome.

The Head of Economic Development advised that when a member of the public purchased a Mid Ulster Gift Card they could choose to redeem the card in any

participating Mid Ulster business, so if one business closed down, there would be lots of others businesses to choose from to spend their card value.

Proposed by Councillor Corry  
Seconded by Councillor Burton and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to approve a budget of £57,000 towards the implementation of a Mid Ulster Gift Card Scheme from Council's economic development budget over a 3 year period (2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24) and progress to tender for a suitable organisation to develop and deliver the scheme. Note the budget is subject to variance as it is dependent on the number of businesses participating on the scheme on an annual basis.

Councillor Kerr referred to Coalisland Public Realm Scheme and said that now that it was almost completed it was unfortunate that there had been no financial commitment from any the statutory bodies involved for a major resurfacing schemes on the roads around the area as many roads have been neglected for many years. He proposed that a meeting be held with senior Council Officers and Road Service officials to try and get a commitment to improve the general roads in around Coalisland Town Centre.

**Resolved** That it be recommended to the committee to refer the matter to the Environment Committee requesting that a DEA meeting be held with Senior Officers from Council and DFI local section office to get the matter of resurfacing of certain sections of road in Coalisland which had been overlooked.

#### **D065/21 Master Plan/Business Case – Maghera Walkways**

The Head of Parks presented previously circulated report to seek Council approval to appoint a suitably qualified consultancy team to develop a Master Plan/Business Case for the potential development of lands between Mullagh Road/Tobermore Road as an outdoor recreational green space for the Maghera area.

Councillor Corry said that she like to propose the item as it was very welcome news for Maghera as the Walled Garden has been a huge success and a well-loved and well used feature in Maghera and had also increased the appetite for further development of outdoor recreational greenspace for the village. She said that getting outdoors has been a great importance for people, especially during the past year for physical and mental health and this addition to increase greenspace would be a great asset with community input to the masterplan and the creation of habitat, biodiversity and conservation, natural play and a network of community trails in the area. She stated that this would add to enhance the Walled Garden and the Largantogher Walkway and looked forward to seeing the development of the project.

Councillor Black seconded the recommendation and concurred with Councillor Corry's comments regarding the appetite within the local community for some time for further greenspace to be provided and was no doubt that these calls would be strengthened due to the importance that has been placed on greenspace over this last year since the

onset of the pandemic. He said that he believed on the progress on securing this land and the commissioning of a consultancy team to put together a masterplan for the provision of greenspace and an outdoor recreation area in Maghera has shown that the Council had been listening to the requests coming from the community and trusts that this would be the next step in delivering what would be a great amenity for the people of Maghera and its surroundings areas.

Councillor Kearney wished to place on record his thanks to Council officials who had negotiated the purchase and transfer of the significant 37 acres. The physical development and action plan with the key message for Maghera at time which was devised as a vibrant welcoming place where people work in referred to the five opportunity sites which were heralded in the 2017-2030 action plan. He said that it was great to add another project to the list alongside another recent development the Trim Trail at the former PSNI station and felt that the greenspace identified would go a long way to satisfy the interests and needs of the people and looked forward to the next phase of this development and the involvement of the consultancy team to develop a master plan and business case as these were exciting times.

Proposed by Councillor Corry  
Seconded by Councillor Black and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council be granted to progress procurement of a suitably qualified Consultancy Teams to develop a Master Plan/Business Case for the potential development of lands between Mullagh Road/Tobermore Road as an outdoor recreational green space for the Maghera area.

#### **D066/21 Leisure and Outdoor Recreation Service Level Agreements 2021/22**

The Head of Parks presented previously circulated report to agree proposals on Community Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for the financial year 2021/22 only.

*Councillor Clarke declared an interest in Broughderg Area Development Association (BADA).*

Councillor Kerr said that he was very happy to see this and knew of a lot of community groups organising litter picks etc within their local communities. He said that he had been contacted regarding issues relating to Washingbay Walkway in relation to the replacement of bins on the public walkway and asked if comments be brought to the attention of the relevant department.

Councillor Burton advised that as a Council it was important to support these facilities and ensure that leisure was an option for those areas and the tie in they have with the community and schools.

Proposed by Councillor Elattar  
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council:

- i) Members are asked to note record of Council Minute D092/20 - (9th July 2020) which refers to the Development Committee's recommendation to accept option two as presented:

***Option 2.*** *Subject to Council approval, Service Level Agreements impacted upon by Covid-19 restrictions would be paid as per current terms and conditions, without pro rata reductions.*

- ii) To grant approval to extend current arrangements afforded to Community Service Level Agreements under the terms of option two, subject to Full Council Approval.
- iii) To grant approval to make annual payments in full associated to Leisure and Outdoor Recreation Service Level Agreements for the period 2021/22 financial year only.

### **D067/21 DfC Strategy for Sport Consultation**

The Head of Leisure presented previously circulated report to seek members' approval in responding to the consultation for the new Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Northern Ireland, prepared by the Department for Communities (DfC). A copy of the proposed consultation response is in Appendix B.

Councillor Monteith advised that this was a very comprehensive response and had no difficulty with its contents but wanted to highlight a few things that he felt needed added to give it substance.

He referred to:

- Question 4 – There was a need for infrastructure as there was a need for pitches and facilities which needed funded and done. He felt that any strategy which hadn't the significant money for increased facilities was ultimately going to fail and this was needed for non-elite sports as the majority of Council owned facilities were primarily of those competing at a competitive level whether locally or on a higher stage. If Council were serious about life-long sport then this was where it was needed for more pitches and facilities as there weren't enough facilities to deal with the current sporting activity which were concentrating on and around competition and if people were expected to take on life-long sports then funding must be made available for major facilities.
- Question 6 – Not enough facilities especially in urban areas as there could be a tendency sometimes to look in a different direction and sometimes the suggestion of major sporting hubs and agreed there was a role for them but this was not going to be possible necessarily in urban environments. There was an onus on Council to make sure that there were facilities available in local communities for a mixture of urban and rural facilities which were accessible and immediate to people's local environment.

- Question 7 – The need for adequate funding for life-long sports and encourage funding through other streams as well as our own. He said there was a need to reassure people that the Council would consider funding a sport which wasn't competitive but more life-long and recreational.
- Question 12 – Onus on the Council as an organisation for housing developments passed to have access to greenspace. He reiterated the need as a condition for approving housing developments to have open greenspace on zoned lands and to tie in with the area plan as the Council had the ability to change the mind-set going forward.

Councillor Molloy concurred with Councillor Monteith's comments and commended the officer team which collated the response. He said that over the last 12 months has shown that peoples' quality of life had changed dramatically but was encouraging to see the huge uptake of walking and running in the fresh air. He agreed with non-competitive/organised sports as we have seen successful projects in different areas where facilities were provided for non-competitive sports for people to come together like football, squash etc. but to engage in physical activity but funding was the key criteria and this should not be a wish list but the reassurance that funding would be provided.

Councillor Kerr concurred with the previous speakers and said that it was important to not just target elite sports but to entice all abilities to come together as the last 12 months have shown how good sports was for physical and mental health and this was important to broaden out the target audience.

The Head of Leisure said that he would take the comments on board and reflect that within the response. He said that it was anticipated to bring forward a paper in May outlining the previous update given in February about the future pitch and open space strategy when consultants were appointed outlining what the strategy may look like.

Councillor Burton referred to her meeting with the Head of Leisure in Fivemiletown along with John Hughes from NILGA last week and she took the opportunity to lobby for not 3G pitches but for also floodlit 3G pitches for all sections of the community in that area. She also referred to the wish list to have a hub and a great need right across the place for better hockey facilities and felt that the whole view of this consultation across the community was to have a strategic framework for a departmental, ambitious and comprehensive approach promoting participation in excellence in sports and physical activity and hoped at the end of this that there was a long term view on what was needed in the community and working with them to try and ensure that physical activity was something that was easily accessible. She said that over the pandemic that if it hadn't been for the outdoor spaces to help with physical and mental health things could have been much worse as she had seen numerous people out walking and running in towns, roads and especially the forests to get their head space and looked forward to helping the community in getting what they want out there and hoped that the Head of Leisure would keep in mind that there were rural football groups that need the encouragement to tap into this consultation.

Councillor Kearney concurred with the previous speakers and due to the week that was in it felt it was important to recognise the achievements of local man Kenny Shiels and the Northern Ireland's Women's Football Team which started from very humble beginnings. He advised that Kenny had been in that job from 2019 and had brought great belief and unbelievable success in that short time and had brought the ladies football to a new level for qualifying for the Euros. He said that Kenny was a very plain speaking no-nonsense person and his proven record of success has stood him in a very good stead with everyone being really proud of him and suggested that he and his team be invited for one of the training sessions at the new pitch in Maghera. He wanted to mark the success of Kenny and Northern Ireland's Women's team here tonight.

Councillor Burton advised that whilst previously speaking she had meant to congratulate the team as Mid Ulster had their own representative on the team, Samantha Kelly from Castlecaulfield who had played on the night and was fantastic to see what the girls had achieved. She said that they were real ambassadors in speaking in the aftermath of the event and in previous years they had to wear men's gear and now it was great to see them wearing their own and encouraging to see the younger girls coming on at the end of game and great to see what can be achieved within our communities on role models for sports.

The Chair advised that he knew the goalkeeper really well Jackie Burns and was a tremendous achievement.

Councillor Black concurred with all previous comments and wished to be associated with them and said he also knew Kenny and Jackie. He said that this was a tremendous achievement and were great ambassadors for the area and exciting to look forward to see them progress.

Councillor Wilson also wished to add his congratulations to the team and felt that everyone played their part in this success and no one player should be individualised as people can easily forget as we had Jackie Burns from Cookstown, Simone Magill originally from Magherafelt but now playing for Everton, Samantha Kelly from Castledawson. He also wanted to pay tribute to the backroom team including Kenny and Dean Shiels as well as Dwayne Nelson from Castledawson and Gary Boyd from Dungannon and felt that this was the complete list of all those in the Mid Ulster area and said that it was important to recognise the success of everyone from this area.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith  
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to approve the consultation response to the new Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Northern Ireland, prepared by the Department for Communities (DfC).

Councillor Ashton said that it would be important for the Council to recognise the success of Northern Ireland Women's Team getting to the Euros.

Proposed by Councillor Ashton  
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to look at recognising the Northern Ireland Ladies team and those associated with it as part of our receptions procedures.

**D068/21 Decade of Anniversaries Commemorations 2021-2022 Updated Action Plan**

The Head of Culture & Arts presented previously circulated report and sought members' approval for the Decade of Anniversary Commemorations 2021/22 Action Plan.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson  
Seconded by Councillor Ashton and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to approve the Decade of Anniversaries Commemorations 2021-2022 Updated Action Plan.

Councillor Monteith advised that he had no difficulty in supporting the plan but felt there was still a lot of room for manoeuvre on a few issues and said there was a need to come back before this was implemented as each person's experiences were different in relation to community representation, exhibitions etc. and the incorporating of grants.

The Chair agreed that there was a need to have a balance.

**Matters for Information**

**D069/21 Minutes of Development Committee held on 11 March 2021**

Members noted minutes of Development Committee held on 11 March 2021.

Councillor Clarke referred to Davagh and its success for over 40 years and continuing to do so with people coming in droves daily and weekends. He said that Davagh attracted different types of people, whether for mountain biking, walking, recreational and family days out and felt that upgrades were badly needed on basics like toilets as they were really backward for a lot of visiting families and not fit for purpose due to the lack of investment over the years. He also referred to the old effluent system which dated back over 50 years and not up to standard and the old pump track which needed maintained or repaired and asked that these concerns be taken on board.

Proposed by Councillor Clarke  
Seconded by Councillor McNamee and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to look at upgrading facilities at Davagh to improve modestly what was there to meet the needs of the site in relation to mountain biking, playpark, toilets etc. Investigations to be carried out on the effluent system and pump track.

Councillor Wilson enquired if Mountain Bike Clubs were consulted on new trails around Davagh as they had complained that they were not consulted and asked that going forward that they be kept in the loop as to bring them along with us.

Councillor Burton referred to Knockmany and said that a lot of mountain biking enthusiasts used the Forest which was picked up by the press and asked that Mountain Bikers within other areas of Council be also kept up to date on issues.

Councillor Burton referred to D048/21 – Provision of Access for Outdoor Recreation in Northern Ireland – Key Stakeholder Consultation. She referred to White Lough and commended the work which had been done as it was a great job on the new footpath which was carried out by the Rivers Agency and the involvement of Council staff but felt that the area would benefit from the installation of a bin and asked if this could be looked at.

She commended that work carried out at the Brantry and White Lough which were very busy, but asked if there were any future plans for Creeve Lough to be upgraded as the public can only walk a little of the way and would be great to see this area getting attention also during these unprecedented times of the pandemic to encourage people to get out and about. She said that Brantry Lough was so busy now at the weekends people were going to the White Lough and would be wonderful to see the upgrade at Creeve Lough and asked if there were any future considerations in the pipeline and if not she proposed to have it looked at.

The Head of Parks advised that White Lough was still managed through the Inland Fisheries and was not in the Council's remit but discussions have ensued with the Rivers Agency and Inland Fisheries in reviewing the circumstances around the lakes and proposed that White Lough comes along with other venues also regarding litter lifts and they have been included in the discussions and hoped to bring proposals to committee in the not-to distance future.

In relation to mountain biking the Head of Parks advised that consultations had taken place with mountain biking groups including Grassroots Mountain Bikers in relation to Davagh and Knockmany as commitment was given to include them with a certain line of communication being open. He advised that meetings had been held with Grassroots Mountain Biking group at Davagh but would continue to liaise with them going forward.

Councillor Burton advised that there was a need to continually promote mountain biking at Blessingbourne.

In relation to query regarding Creeve Lough, the Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation advised that there was a Playpark Strategy and an Outdoor Recreation Strategy and funding which Council had allocated was towards those strategies but can check to see if Creeve Lough was included in those, but if not, funding may not be there. The Capital Programme was being reviewed but would provide an update to the member on the situation.

Councillor Monteith referred to item D052/21 Paupers' Grave and enquired if there was any response to the letter sent to Southern Trust regarding Workhouse Graves at South Tyrone Hospital.

The Head of Community Development advised that a letter was issued to the Southern Trust on 26 March 2021, but to date no response has been received. She advised that

a meeting was scheduled to take place with the local History group to follow up on Council's support through them.

Councillor Molloy referred to earlier comments made by Councillor Clarke regarding the influx of people visiting Davagh and the deluge of traffic on these inadequate roads which were not fit for purpose. He said that recently there had been a public announcement asking people not to visit Cuilcaigh Mountain due to the high volume of traffic and felt that this was akin with Davagh and suggested that a mechanism needed to be explored to reduce the huge volume of traffic on these types of roads possibly the investigation of providing shuttle buses to ease congestion.

Councillor Monteith in referring to the Workhouse Graves was disappointed at the cover up by the Southern Trust and their refusal to work with local authorities. He said that it was dismaying to say the least and the next time the Trust were invited to attend a committee meeting they should be asked for their reasons for not working with this Council.

The Chief Executive advised that the issue of Workhouse Graves would be followed up with the Southern Trust tomorrow with any update being forwarded on to members.

The Chief Executive stated that the demand for outdoor recreation had went through the roof with the Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation and her team working to the best of her ability with the existing budget in place. He said that this was now about realigning the existing budget to cover demand where it was needed most and as an organisation there was a need to reflect where customer needs are.

In response to Councillor Kerr's query regarding ambulance response times, the Chief Executive advised that he would this up but was confident that something had been received.

The Chair advised that there were huge volumes of people taking part in outside activities and would be beneficial to have a bit of refresh to promote outdoor recreation.

## **D070/21      Economic Development Report – OBF1**

Members noted update on Mid Ulster District Council Traders Engagement.

Councillor Corry referred to dereliction and vacancies within the report and noticed that this issue hadn't been raised by Maghera or Magherafelt traders and asked if this could be something that was added on and looked at the same as the other towns like Cookstown, Coalisland and Dungannon as this was an opportunity for premises for new businesses and bringing a shopping experiences to towns again.

The Head of Economic Development advised that she had no issues including Maghera and Magherafelt but with limited funding available in the economic development budget, additional funding would be needed to tackle derelict and vacant premises across Mid Ulster's towns and villages. She added that she had been lobbying the Department for Communities (DfC) for funding on this matter as they have responsibility and corresponding budgets for town centre revitalisation. At this stage, DfC has agreed to

work with Council to look at dereliction in Dungannon and Council has previously set aside a budget (over 3 years of £120k - £40k per annum) to match fund any scheme that DfC may bring forward to assist Council in this regard. At present, there's no additional financial assistance to tackle dereliction in other towns and villages across Mid Ulster.

Councillor Corry asked that other small towns be also considered.

Councillor Monteith also raised concern regarding villages not being included in the consultation and although he accepted the fact that there was a need to start somewhere, it was unfair to exclude small towns and villages and felt that a mechanism needed to be put in place going forward.

He suggested that Economic Development organise engagements with DEA elected representatives and traders of small villages through technology (zoom) to provide them with an opportunity to liaise with Council to hear their views.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith  
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that Economic Development organise engagements with DEA elected representatives and traders of small villages through technology (zoom) to provide them with an opportunity to liaise with Council to hear their views.

Councillor Monteith sought clarification regarding rumours relating to the future of Ann Street and asked that a DEA meeting be organised or for any other interested councillor who wished to attend.

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to organise a Dungannon DEA Meeting to provide Members with an update on the Ann Street Development.

Councillor Elattar concurred with previous members' comments regarding small villages like Ballinascreen and enquired if it was envisaged to have any available funding for any sources for dereliction of villages.

The Chief Executive said that officers were always up for engagement but there was also the need not to create an expectation. He said that 71 letters of offer for shop front schemes had been issued this week for the 2021/22 financial year providing a quarter of a million pounds funding to traders which clearly demonstrates that Council is leading from the front.

Councillor Molloy said that it was good to see engagement from traders and would like to see more but one thing that stood out to him was restrictions around on-street parking and the 2 hours waiting time limit. He enquired if his could be brought to the attention of DfI with the possibility of engaging in conversation to see if anything could be progressed.

The Chief Executive said that this could be brought forward and if members minded that this would be brought to the highest possible level, but everyone would anticipate what

the answer was going to be, but a letter would be issued to the Department tomorrow as a corporate body.

#### **D071/21 Regional and Minority Language Implementation Working Group Minutes of meeting of 3 March 2021**

Members noted Regional and Minority Language Implementation Working Group Minutes of meeting of 3 March 2021.

In relation to Councillor Corry's query, the Head of Culture & Arts advised that the website development was currently being looked at by the Irish Language Officers on what could be translated into Irish. In referring to issue relating to social media channels used the Head of Culture & Arts advised that key events were promoted through the appropriate social media channels that would target those audiences that engage directly through the medium of Irish language.

Councillor Ashton recorded the DUP's objection to the update.

#### **D072/21 Community Development Report**

Members noted key activities relating to:

- PCSP Plan 2021 – 2022
- Community Development

#### **D073/21 Community Planning**

Members noted Community Planning report which provided an update on Community Planning Process for Mid Ulster District.

*Live broadcast ended at 9.10 pm.*

#### **Local Government (NI) Act 2014 – Confidential Business**

Proposed by Councillor Monteith  
Seconded by Councillor Milne 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 D074/21 to D076/21.

#### **Matters for Decision**

D074/21 Economic Development Report – CBFD

#### **Matters for Information**

D075/21 Confidential Minutes of Development Committee held on 11 March 2021

D076/21 Economic Development Report – CBF1

**D077/21      Duration of Meeting**

The meeting commenced at 7 pm and concluded at 9.15 pm.

CHAIR \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_