

**Mid Ulster District Council**2nd July 2021

Dear Council colleagues,

Representing more than 1400 GPs across Northern Ireland, we are getting in touch to inform you about the current difficulties facing primary care and to ask for your support as we seek to address our challenges and deliver excellent patient care.

We thought it may be useful to put the current situation and environment in which GPs are working into context.

Throughout the pandemic, GPs and practice staff have worked hard to keep surgeries open while adhering to and implementing Government mandated infection control measures. Many of our surgery buildings are too small to allow adequate social distancing, and crowded waiting rooms with potential Covid-19 positive patients meant that practices had to take early and decisive action to reduce the number of people able to openly walk into our premises.

All GPs have had to put appropriate alternatives in place, offering telephone and video appointments where suitable. To keep footfall in our surgeries to a minimum in order to protect everyone, we only offer face-to-face consultations where clinically necessary but we do stress that when patients need to see a doctor they can do so

In terms of availability and access, it is important to note that Department of Health statistics show that approximately 200,000 patients per week - almost 10% of the population across the North are contacting their GP surgery on a weekly basis.

General practice did not enter the pandemic in a particularly good place and was already under extreme pressure but this has been exacerbated by Covid-19. Prior to the pandemic, a 2 week wait for an appointment was common and many appointment times did not accommodate patients who had workplace or other family commitments.

As well as continuing to deliver day to day GP services, GPs also have set up and run Covid-19 Assessment centres to ensure that patients who potentially have covid001 have somewhere to go for safe and effective treatment which in turn keeps practices, our staff and patients as safe as possible.

On top of this, in October 2020 we ran the biggest ever winter flu campaign quickly followed by the highly successful rollout of the Covid-19 vaccination programme, with GPs administering close to half of all vaccines doses to date

We do acknowledge that patients may have difficulty in getting through to practices and in some cases are not getting the service they should expect. Unfortunately, despite our very best efforts, this comes down to the fact that demand for GP services is infinitely higher than the supply we can offer. Spiralling waiting lists mean that patients need to continue to see us for care, support and medication while they wait for the procedure or surgery they need, we are not training enough GPs and the demographics of the current workforce mean that many are due to retire in the next

It is therefore extremely demoralising and upsetting for our GPs and their practice staff who are working beyond capacity, have often not had a break in over a year and who are completely exhausted, to be made to feel they do not care for their patients.

Please work with us as we try and amend our services to suit your needs best. Support our call for more GPs, more resources for our practices and for the acceleration of the transformation of the health service that our patients so badly need.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Laurence Dorman
RCGPNI Chair



Dr Alan Stout
Chair, BMA NI GP Committee

From: +Comm Public Accounts Public Email <committee.publicaccounts@niassembly.gov.uk>
Sent: 04 July 2021 10:48
To: Eileen Forde <Eileen.Forde@midulstercouncil.org>
Subject: RE: Audit Report into Broadband Investment

Thanks Eileen, I can confirm receipt. The Committee have agreed to look at this NIAO report as part of their Autumn/Winter work programme, the date is to be confirmed for this inquiry,

Thanks,
Karen

KAREN BARRY

Clerical Supervisor
Public Accounts Committee

work: [028 90521632](tel:02890521632)
email: Karen.Barry@niassembly.gov.uk
twitter: [@NIA_PAC](https://twitter.com/NIA_PAC)

Room 344
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
Belfast
BT4 3XX

From: Eileen Forde [<mailto:Eileen.Forde@midulstercouncil.org>]
Sent: 02 July 2021 13:09
To: +Comm Public Accounts Public Email <committee.publicaccounts@niassembly.gov.uk>
Subject: Audit Report into Broadband Investment

Good afternoon

Please find attached correspondence from Mid Ulster District council which I would respectfully ask you to bring before the Public Accounts Committee.

Best regards

Eileen
Eileen Forde
Member Support Officer
Dungannon Office
Telephone 03000 132 132 Ext 24004
Mobile: 07825140198



Our Ref: Democratic Services

Date: 14 June 2021

Email: democratic.services@fermanaghomagh.com

To: All Council Chief Executives in Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland

Dear Chief Executive

Re: Motion - Implementation of our BDS support in relation to PSNI/An Garda Síochána partnerships with Israeli security forces and companies with involvement in illegal Israeli settlements

At the Council meeting held on 2 June 2021, the Council approved the following Motion: -

The Israeli Human Rights Organisation, B'Tselem, and the UN Human Rights Watch have both recently reported that Israel is guilty of crimes of apartheid and persecution, and the 'Ministry for Public Security' was strongly criticised for their treatment of Palestinians in the HRW As a Council who has adopted and is supportive of the Palestinian call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council hereby call on the Chief Constable of the PSNI and the Garda Commissioner, as well as the Department of Justice & Policing Board in the North and Minister for Justice & Policing Authority in the South, to immediately withdraw their respective forces from any and all partnerships with the Israeli ministry responsible for police and prisons (Ministry of Public Security) and from companies which are involved in surveillance in illegal Israeli settlements report.

Patrick Corrigan from Amnesty International noted that "as a matter of urgency, the PSNI should suspend all programmes with the Israeli police and security services where there's a clear risk of involvement in human rights violations...[the] police service must ensure it is not implicated in Israel's human rights violations. The distressing scenes from East Jerusalem and Gaza should now be a wake-up call."

As such, and mindful of our BDS commitments, we call on the PSNI Chief Constable and Garda Commissioner to immediately cease all partnership and involvement with the security forces of apartheid Israeli. In support of this we call on all Councils on this island to back this motion and lend their voices in support of the Palestinian call for international solidarity and BDS action".

Furthermore, this Council calls on An Taoiseach, Micheál Martin, to expel the Israeli Ambassador to Ireland due to the ongoing de facto annexation of Palestine and further requests that Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney TD, use his position as representative for Ireland on the UN Security Council to seek full enforcement of the UN resolutions on Occupied Palestine and East Jerusalem and that the Dublin government also calls on the EU to place sanctions on Israel. We also call on the Dublin government to

recognise the State of Palestine. Furthermore, that this Council invites the Palestinian Ambassador to Ireland, Dr Jilan Wahba Abdalmajid, to meet with the Council so that we may convey our solidarity and support, through her, to the Palestinian people.

Representations have been made to each of the bodies included in the above Motion calling them to take the actions requested within.

The Council requests that you take the action requested of your Department as outlined in the Motion above, and it looks forward to receiving your response in due course.

Yours sincerely



Alison McCullagh
Chief Executive



Our Ref: Democratic Services

Date: 6 July 2021

Email: democratic.services@fermanaghomagh.com

To: All Councils in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland

Dear Chief Executive

Re: Rights of Nature

At the Council meeting held on 5 July 2021, Members approved the following Motion: -

“Fermanagh and Omagh District Council notes the legal and social movement globally for the ‘Rights of Nature’ aimed to strengthen protections for people, place and planet.

We believe that ‘Rights of Nature’ can help inspire an innovative rethinking about how to create regenerative, not extractivist, economies while also making human and other living communities safer, stronger and more resilient.

The positive work already being done by Council staff and groups on the climate emergency and biodiversity crises are commendable, but we recognise the need for a rights-based approach to nature.

We propose, that over the next 6 months, this Council will collaborate with civic society to explore what rights of nature mean for the people and economies of the region and to investigate how Rights of Nature could be expressed in community plans, corporate plans, improvement objectives and other strategic frameworks. In particular, the council will in the next 6 months hold two community workshops and work with the local community and stakeholders to draw up a Declaration for the Rights of Nature for the District area to be brought back before Council for adoption.

We also request that a report, authored in collaboration and with input from the local community be brought to FODC in relation to embedding ‘Rights of Nature’ as a keystone concept into Council’s operational practices, planning processes and long-term decision making.

Mindful of our mutual environmental obligations under the Espoo Convention we call on all Councils, North & South, to also explore ‘Rights of Nature’ for their Council areas, not least in Donegal, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan, Mid Ulster & Causeway, Coast & Glens”.

As outlined in the Motion, the Council is calling on all Councils to explore ‘Rights of Nature’ for their council areas and looks forward to receiving your response in due course.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alison McCullagh". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Alison" and last name "McCullagh" clearly distinguishable.

Alison McCullagh
Chief Executive

FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH



Cllr Cathal Mallaghan, Chair
Mid Ulster District Council

info@midulstercouncil.org

Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
BELFAST, BT4 3SQ
Tel: 028 9052 2556
Email: private.office@health-ni.gov.uk

Your Ref: C110/21

Our Ref: CORR-1981-2021

Date: *8* July 2021

Dear *Cathal,*

Thank you for your correspondence of 4 June 2021 regarding the motion passed at the May meeting of the Mid Ulster Council about the LGBTQ+ community, and specifically within the motion in regard to my Department, the provision of services at the regional Gender Identity Clinic (Brackenburn), in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT).

Firstly, over the last decade there has been a significant rise in demand for gender identity services in Northern Ireland. This increased demand is also being experienced right across the UK and further afield internationally.

The Regional Gender Identity service at Brackenburn lost several key members of staff due to retirement and staff leaving the service. The BHSCT has carried out a number of recruitment exercises to secure staff with the necessary skills and qualifications. Unfortunately, the recruitment exercises were not successful however the BHSCT was able to procure the services of a gender psychiatrist on a part-time basis to carryout assessments. I am advised that further recruitment exercises are planned in the near future.

In order to identify an appropriate service model to meet the needs of Transgender service users in Northern Ireland going forward, the Health and Social care Board, at the request of my Department, established the Gender Identity Pathway Review Group in March 2019 to review the current gender identity service model. The work of the Review Group was paused to enable the health service to focus on its response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The work of the Review Group has already recommenced and it is anticipated that the group will report its findings and recommendations to my Department in September 2021 for consideration.

Furthermore, the Review Group has recently established a Gender Identity Liaison Panel to provide input and assist in taking forward the review, and to facilitate communication between the Review Group and those with lived experience of transgender issues, including families of individuals, to help shape the review.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Robin', is positioned above the printed name.

Robin Swann MLA
Minister of Health

From the Minister of Finance



Councillor Paul McLean

chair@midulstercouncil.org

Private Office
2nd Floor
Clare House
303 Airport Road West
BELFAST
BT3 9ED
Tel: 028 9081 6216
Email: private.office@finance-ni.gov.uk

Our reference: CORR-1055-2021

Date: 14 July 2021

CORR-1055-2021: NI AUDIT OFFICE REPORT INTO BROADBAND INVESTMENT

Thank you for your letter dated 30 June 2021.

The Executive has received £1.7million clawback from the contractor so far and this has been reinvested into additional broadband delivery under the Superfast Rollout Project (SRP).

It is my understanding that further £14 million clawback will be due in 2023 and 2024 when the contracts for the Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement programme (NIBIP) and the Superfast Rollout Programme (SRP) come to an end however this will not be confirmed until that time.

It will be for the Executive to decide on how any funds returned will be invested based on its priorities, and the Economy Minister can bring proposals for further investment in broadband to the Executive for consideration.

Is mise le meas,

**CONOR MURPHY MLA
MINISTER OF FINANCE**