

Minutes of Meeting of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 25 July 2024 in the Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon

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| Chair | Councillor McConnell |
| Members Present | Councillors Bell, Black, J Buchanan, W Buchanan, F Burton, Cahoon, Carney, Clarke, Corry, Cuthbertson, Forde, Gildernew, Graham, Groogan, Johnston, Kelly, Kerr, Martin, McAleer, McElvogue, McFlynn, McGuigan, McLernon, McNamee, D McPeake, S McPeake, McQuade, Molloy, Robinson, Quinn, Varsani and Wilson |
| Officers in Attendance | Mr McCreesh, Chief Executive Ms Campbell, Strategic Director Environment (SD: Env) Ms Canavan, Strategic Director of Organisational Development Strategy and Performance (AD: ODSP) Mr Tohill, Strategic Director of Corporate Services and Finance (SD: CSF) Mr Moffett, Assistant Director of Organisational Development Strategy and Performance (AD: ODSP) Mr McKeown, ICT Mrs Forde, Committee and Member Services Manager |

The meeting commenced at 7 pm.

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

C142/24 Notice of Recording

Members noted that the meeting would be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast on the Council's You Tube site.

C143/24 Apologies

Councillor Brown, J Burton, Monteith, Totten, McLean, Milne, Mullin and Totten

Councillor McGuigan acknowledged that Cathal Mallaghan had been successful in being elected as Member of Parliament for Mid Ulster and wished him well. He advised that Donna Mullin had been co-opted into the vacant position and advised that although currently on holidays she would be representing Cookstown District Electoral Area going forward.

C144/24 Declarations of Interest

The Chair, Councillor McConnell reminded Members of their responsibility regarding declarations of interest.

C145/24 Chair's Business

The Chair, Councillor McConnell welcomed all to the meeting and extended congratulations Councillors Carney, Martin, Kerr and J Burton on the births of their children.

The Chair, Councillor McConnell extended best wishes to neighbouring County Armagh for Sunday's All Ireland Gaelic Football title. He also extended best wishes to Tyrone ladies under 18 minor team for their forthcoming final and extended congratulations to Derry who had won the All-Ireland Minor title for the second year in a row.

Matters for Decision

C146/24 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in "Open Business" at the Council Meeting held on 27 June 2024

Proposed by Councillor McLernon
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

Resolved That the Minutes of the Council held on Thursday 27 June 2024 (C117/24 – C129/24 and C141/24) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated, subject to the foregoing were considered and adopted.

C147/24 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in "Open Business" at the Planning Committee Meeting held on 2 July 2024

Proposed by Councillor S McPeake
Seconded by Councillor D McPeake and

Resolved That the Minutes of the Planning Committee held on Tuesday 2 July 2024 (P092/24 – P097/24 and P102/24) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated, subject to the foregoing were considered and adopted.

C148/24 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in "Open Business" at the Environment Committee Meeting held on 8 July 2024

Councillor Kerr drew attention to E150/24 Bus Shelter update and said a parent had made contact with him to request that the Education Authority be lobbied to put in place a bus pick up for 12 number pupils travelling to St Ciaran's Ballygawley. He said the bus shelter was already in existence and pupils from other schools were collected.

Resolved That Council write to the Education Authority requesting a school transport pick up point at Kildrum bus stop at Galbally for children travelling to St Ciaran's Ballygawley.

Councillor F Burton drew requested that during the school holidays the opportunity be taken to maintain bus stops and their locations for example painting and grass cutting. She also drew attention E155/24 street signage and sought clarity as to when the signpost at Carnteel Road, Aughnacloy would be replaced as some people were missing post.

Proposed by Councillor McAleer
Seconded by Councillor Groogan and

Resolved That the Minutes of the Environment Committee held on Monday 8 July 2024 (E145/24 – E165/24 and E174/24) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated were considered and adopted.

C149/24 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Development Committee Meeting held on 9 July 2024

Councillor Kerr drew attention to D127/24 and stressed the importance of Council continuing dialogue with relevant stakeholders in relation to potential redundancies at Terex stating that it was imperative to support those impacted.

Proposed by Councillor Gildernew
Seconded by Councillor McNamee and

Resolved That the Minutes of the Development Committee held on Tuesday 9 July 2024 (D120/24 – D130/24 and D136/24) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated were considered and adopted.

C150/24 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on 10 July 2024

Proposed by Councillor S McPeake
Seconded by Councillor McAleer and

Resolved That the Minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee held on Wednesday 10 July 2024 (P137/24 – PR146/24 and PR154/24) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated were considered and adopted.

C151/24 Standing Orders for Council – Amendment

The Chief Executive presented previously circulated report which considered an amendment to the Standing Orders of Council following the passing of the Local

Government (Remote Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024 by the Northern Ireland Assembly on 24th June 2024, providing Councils with the option to transact council and committee business by remote/hybrid means should it opt to do so.

Proposed by Councillor Corry
Seconded by Councillor Quinn and

Resolved To note the proposed amendments as detailed within Section 3.0 of the report and that any discussion on same stands adjourned until the next ordinary meeting of Council on Thursday 26th September 2024.

C152/24 Conferences, Seminars and Training

The AD: ODSP sought approval for the previously circulated report on conferences, seminars and training as outlined in Appendix A and B of the report.

Proposed by Councillor Kerr
Seconded by Councillor McNamee and

Resolved That approval be given to submitted requests for conferences, seminars and training as outlined at Appendix A and B to the report.

Matters for Information

C153/24 Correspondence

Members noted update on correspondence received for attention of Council.

Councillor Clarke drew attention to correspondence received from Fermanagh and Omagh District Council outlining the Minister for the Economy's comments in the potential of expanding of tourism brands including Ireland's Hidden Heartlands. The letter sought clarity as to whether Council was willing to participate in such initiatives. Councillor Clarke said it was an important initiative and Council needed to be involved as the district had a lot it could contribute, and he proposed that Council agree.

Councillor Varsani seconded the proposal

Councillor Cahoon said that similar proposals had been discussed at the tourism working group, that the district had a strong Northern Ireland spirit and should was not sure what benefits the proposed would bring to tourism in Mid Ulster.

Councillor Gildernew said it had been discussed at the working group of which she was chair and anything that brings tourism into Tyrone would be a strong advertisement for the whole district.

Councillor Corry said that the Derry side of Mid Ulster should also be included.

Councillor McGuigan said the tourism working group was involved in groups such as the Sperrin Partnership which worked across four areas and it was important to support the proposal.

Councillor Varsani said the potential for this to add to Mid Ulster including South Derry was great as most international visitors arrived via Dublin and this would attract more bus tours from the south. She concluded this was something both to look forward to and explore further.

Councillor McFlynn concurred with comments and said a similar issue had been raised at ICBAN where another member was trying to do a project similar to Tullyhogue. She stated that Council had a great project there and should be marketing hidden heritage cross border and cross country.

Councillor Cuthbertson sought clarity as to whether the Minister for the Economy had written to Council as he was unaware of the correspondence.

The Chief Executive said he did not recall specific correspondence but advised there had been press advertisements but at that it did not have a bearing on the decision.

The Chair, Councillor McConnell said there was a consensus to support the initiative.

In response to Councillor Cuthbertson's enquiry the Chief Executive advised that Council was responding to Fermanagh and Omagh District Council request.

Proposed by Councillor Clarke
Seconded by Councillor Varsani and

Resolved That Council progress a workshop with Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Department for Infrastructure regarding grounds maintenance in housing estates.

C154/24 Consultations notified to Mid Ulster District Council

The AD: provided update on consultations notified to Mid Ulster District Council.

Councillor Kerr proposed that Council respond to Department of Education: School Uniform Policy: Closing date: 27 September 2024 at 5pm. He stressed the importance of making a response given the high costs of school uniforms and the number of people having to use food banks as they were on low incomes. He also highlighted school uniform exchange events.

Councillor Molloy seconded the proposal and said his own party including the first Minister Michelle O'Neill had spoken on this. He said schools insist sports clothing is branded and it is very costly especially those who are struggling financially. He emphasised the importance of Councils response.

Proposed by Councillor Kerr

Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

Resolved That Council respond to Department of Education: School Uniform Policy: Closing date: 27 September 2024 at 5pm.

Councillor Gildernew concurred and drew attention to Department for Communities Consultation on Child Maintenance: Accelerating Enforcement (Administrative Liability Orders): She proposed that Council submit a response and shared how a constituent had received a letter to advise that £27k outstanding child benefit was being written off as the absent parent was non-compliant yet the remaining parent had to raise children without the support of this income. Councillor Gildernew said that whilst it was most often the mother left to struggle there was also instances whereby fathers were left with children and little or no support.

Councillor Gildernew supported the response to Department for Infrastructure consultation especially in the emphasis for funding for A29 Cookstown Bypass, A5 and shop mobility scheme,

Councillor Varsani drew attention to NIHE Community Involvement and Cohesion Strategy 2024-2029 Consultation and requested that more emphasis be given to paragraph two of the response particularly in relation to the upkeep of estates. She said Members were receiving complaints regularly from residents, there were issues with spraying of weeds in terms of pavements, that she had repeatedly raised concerns directly and through Dungannon and Coalisland Neighbourhood Renewal. Councillor Varsani concluded that the matter needed to be strongly put with the emphasis to progress improvement and should be kept on Council radar.

Councillor F Burton supported Councillor Varsani and said Council needed to ensure responsibility is taken and progress made on maintenance as some footpaths were a disgrace and a tripping hazard to say the least.

Councillor F Burton seconded Councillor Gildernew's proposal and said much of the time it is a mother left to care for children and it becomes a nightmare having to chase child maintenance. She said one of the biggest problems is that the absent parent keeps changing jobs and thus Child Support Agency can not keep track of them. In reference to the outstanding payments being written off Councillor F Burton said the children are left without and when they have less than others this can lead to other issues such as bullying. Councillor F Burton seconded the proposal and said if the current legislation was not working then there should be change.

Proposed by Councillor Gildernew
Seconded by Councillor Burton and

Resolved That Council respond to Department for Communities Consultation on Child Maintenance: Accelerating Enforcement (Administrative Liability Orders): Closing 29 September 2024

Councillor Groogan said as a proud resident of a housing estate she is constantly contacting the NIHE regarding ongoing issues and often has had to sort problems

herself. She spoke of an elderly resident who was housebound and the weeds and moss covering steps to her home were dreadful. Councillor Groogan said NIHE tenants deserved to be treated well.

Councillor Cuthbertson welcomed the response to the Department for Infrastructure in relation to budgets and said it was unfortunate that the Minister for Justice through the PSNI had closed enquiry offices and people were having to travel across the district. He asked if a letter had been received to ascertain if an equality impact assessment had been carried out.

The Chair, Councillor McConnell said he was not aware of any correspondence outlining this detail.

The Chief Executive said he would clarify.

In response to the comments in relation to child maintenance the Chief Executive said that comments would be included in the response.

The Chief Executive said that there is a strength of feeling in relation to neighbourhood cleansing and that Council would host a workshop with NIHE to endeavour to progress issues.

Councillor Groogan welcomed this and asked that the Department for Infrastructure be included.

The Chair, Councillor McConnell said that often issues were being passed from agency to agency as to whether for example a street was adopted or not. He concluded that people should at the very least be able to put bins out without fear of falling and that if estates were neat and tidy it gives people a lift and encourages everyone to play their part.

Resolved That Council progress a workshop with Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Department for Infrastructure regarding grounds maintenance in housing estates.

Items restricted in accordance with Section 42, Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014. The public withdrew from the meeting at 7.31 pm

Resolved That items C155/24 to C162/24 be taken as confidential business.

Matters for Decision

- (i) Council Confidential minutes of meeting held on 27 June 2024
- (ii) Planning Confidential minutes of meeting held on 2 July 2024
- (iii) Environment Confidential minutes of meeting held on 8 July 2024
- (iv) Development Confidential minutes of meeting held on 9 July 2024

- (v) Policy & Resources Confidential minutes of meeting held on 10 July 2024
- (vi) Delegated Authority to Chief Executive on Matters – August 2024
- (vii) Document for Sealing: Tender for Maghera Public Realm for MUDC Project No: MUDC/TS/C/2017/09
- (viii) Document for Sealing: Contracts for Collection and Processing of Kerbside Dry Recyclables

C145/24 Chair’s Business (*continued*)

The Chair, Councillor McConnell concluded the meeting referring to engagements over the past month, he said, “Just after the last Council meeting, I was pleased to attend the Taste Mid Ulster Market in Pomeroy, and I have to say that it’s really an exceptional venue. We were treated to lots of good food, good music and good family fun, and I commend all the staff who worked so hard to make the event such a success. It’s also extremely positive to see the Maghera Public Realm Scheme get underway. Breaking ground is a significant milestone not just for the Public Realm Scheme, but also for the Maghera Regeneration Programme as a whole, marking the start of realising our vision for Maghera. Our priority now is to ensure that the work is carried out to the highest standards with the minimum of disruption to our residents, businesses and visitors. The complex construction programme is designed to support that aim, completing work in stages, maintaining access to properties for our residents, and most importantly, keeping the town centre open for business.

As Members will know we’ll be taking our summer recess next month and given the back-to-school preparations that start in August I just wanted to highlight the Council’s School Uniform Reuse scheme. Uniforms to recycle can be dropped off at our main recycling centres in Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt, after which the donated uniforms are put on sale in our charity partner shops. All the information is on our website so now is the time to take advantage of the scheme.”

C163/24 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7.00 pm and ended at 7.35pm.

Chair _____

Date _____