

Minutes of Meeting of Policy and Resources Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 3 October 2024 in the Council Offices, Ballyronan Road, Magherafelt and by Virtual Means

Members Present

Councillor Quinn, Chair

Councillor Brown, F Burton*, J Burton (7.48 pm)* Cahoon, Corry, Gildernew, McConnell (7.06 pm)*, McLean, McLernon*, S McPeake, Molloy, Totten*, Wilson

Officers in Attendance

Mr McCreesh, Chief Executive*
Ms Dyson, Head of Human Resources (HoHR)*
Ms Linney, Assistant Director of Development (AD: DEV)
Mr Moffett, Assistant Director of Organisational Development, Strategy & Performance (AD: ODSP)
Mr McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement (HoSS&E)
Ms McNally, Assistant Director of Corporate Services & Finance (AD: CS&F)
Mr O'Hagan, Head of IT (HoIT)
Mr Tohill, Strategic Director of Corporate Services and Finance (SD: CS&F)
Mrs Grogan, Committee and Member Services Officer

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm.

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

PR175/24 Notice of Recording

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

PR176/24 Apologies

Councillors Johnston, McAleer.

PR177/24 Declarations of Interest

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

PR178/24 Chairs Business

Councillor Gildernew said as Chair of the A5-N2 Cross Border Committee, she was absolutely delighted that Minister for Infrastructure, John O'Dowd had announced the commencement of the A5 road scheme starting with the Ballygawley to Strabane section. The member said that she had been on record on numerous occasions about the need for this project to be commenced immediately to save lives, first and foremost and to improve infrastructure and connectivity in this area.

Councillor Gildernew stated that she had the privilege of attending an extremely heartfelt event in St. Ciaran's College, Ballygawley this afternoon, where Minister O'Dowd addressed the entire school community, and would like to commend the staff and students from St. Ciaran's Ballygawley for campaigning so hard on this issue and ensuring the voice of our community was heard. The member said that she was delighted to have been able to facilitate a meeting with the A5-N2 Committee and Minister O'Dowd in Aughnacloy in August to discuss this vital project and the key issues affecting the Northwest corridor, as well as the significant increase in deaths on our roads over the last number of years both North and South of the border. This project along with A5 will significantly improve the safety of all travelling to and from the Northwest and hopefully prevent any more lives from being lost on the A5.

The A5-N2 Committee comprises Councillors from Mid Ulster District Council (lead authority of the current year); Derry City & Strabane District Council; Donegal County Council; Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and Monaghan County Council. The member said that whilst this news was something we have lobbied for consistently, our job was not finished, and we will continue to seek progress to the projects along the A5, N2 and Donegal TEN-T corridor to ensure that the entire Northwest region safety and connectivity is improved.

Councillor Gildernew would like to ask that this committee to continue to support these campaigns to ensure our roads are fit for purpose and safe to travel on.

Councillor F Burton referred to the possibility of getting rail travel to our area built into future plans and enquired if there was any way this committee could seek to have a feasibility study undertaken now that the new road was going ahead. The member advised that a presentation was provided to members in the past from a group trying to lobby for rail travel and was disappointed that the West of the Bann was not being recognised and hoped to make sure that rail travel gets to our area in the future. The member enquired if there was any hope of a feasibility study being carried out as there were other parts of the world that seemed to be able to avail of new road infrastructures and include rail beside it. The member felt that this was our last hope to raise it at this stage and would ask that Council explore the possibility of looking at options to include it.

The Chair in response to Councillor F Burton's comment, stated that he would not be opposed to the idea but was something that could be looked at through Development Committee next month as this was not the appropriate committee to do so.

Members all agreed.

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that options be explored for a potential rail travel initiative for the area and brought to next Development Committee meeting.

The Chair concurred with Councillor Gildernew's comments and advised that progress on A5 was a tremendous announcement as he was aware that this was something that all parties were working towards for a number of years. It's distressing to see the loss of life on a monthly basis on that stretch of road and recalled travelling up the road and witnessing 3 cars sitting along the side and was just baffling that it has taken this long. The Chair stated that there was still a lot of work to be done and would continue to work on it as it was more about saving lives rather than improving the infrastructure of the road.

Matters for Decision

PR179/24 Request(s) to Illuminate Council Property

Members considered previously circulated report which sought approval to illuminate and light up the Council's three designated properties to raise awareness for the following:

- Child Brain Injury Trust – Child Brain Injury Glo Week: Be Seen Not Hurt – 28 October 2024 – Colour: Purple and Blue
- Stars Foundation – World Orphan Day – 11 November 2024 – Colour: Purple
- Positive Life NI – World Aids Day – 29 November 2024 – Colour: Red

Proposed by Councillor Corry

Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to illuminate the three designated Council properties as follows –

- Child Brain Injury Trust – Child Brain Injury Glo Week: Be Seen Not Hurt – 28 October 2024 – Colour Purple and Blue
- Stars Foundation – World Orphan Day – 11 November 2024 – Colour: Purple
- Positive Life NI – World Aids Day – 29 November 2024 – Colour: ed

PR180/24 Member Services

No issues.

Matters for Information

PR181/24 Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 5 September 2024

Members noted Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee held on 5 September 2024.

Councillor F Burton wished to record her gratitude to Councillors and Officers, not only to those who had sent cards on the loss of her mother and Councillor J Burton's grandmother, but also to the Chair, Councillor Quinn and Chairman of the Council for noting it at the last Council meeting. The member said that it was very touching and very moving for them as a family that so many of the Officers and Councillors did attend both the wake and funeral and wished to say a massive thank you to those who did.

PR182/24 Complaints Handling Arrangements Update

Members noted previously circulated report which provided an update on the implementation of the complaints management arrangements within Council following adoption, in October 2023, of the Model Complaints Handling Procedures as published by the Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman Office (NIPSO)

Live broadcast ended at 7.11 pm.

Local Government (NI) Act 2014 - Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor Gildernew
Seconded by Councillor S McPeake and

Resolved In accordance with Section 42, Part 1 of 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 PR183/24 to PR188/24.

Matters for Decision

PR183/24 NI Water Mast, Hill of The O'Neill, Dungannon

Matters for Information

PR184/24 Confidential Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee held on 5 September 2024

PR185/24 Treasury Management – Update August 24

PR186/24 Contracts and DAC Registers

PR187/24 Financial Report for 5 Months Ended 31 August 2024

PR188/24 Staff Matters for Information

P189/24 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7.00 pm and ended at 7.58 pm.

Chair _____

Date _____

Annex A – Introductory Remarks from the Chairperson

Good evening and welcome to the Council's [Policy & Resources/Environment/Development] Committee in the Chamber, [Cookstown/Magherafelt] and virtually.

I specifically welcome the public watching us through the Live Broadcast. The Live Broadcast will run for the period of our Open Business but will end just before we move into Confidential Business. I let you know before this happens.

Just some housekeeping before we commence. Can I remind you:-

- If you have joined the meeting remotely, please keep your audio on mute unless invited to speak and then turn it off when finished speaking
- Keep your video on at all times, unless you have bandwidth or internet connection issues, where you are advised to try turning your video off
- If you wish to speak please raise your hand in the meeting or on screen and keep raised until observed by an Officer or myself
- Should we need to take a vote this evening I will ask each member to confirm whether they are for or against the proposal or abstaining
- When invited to speak please introduce yourself by name to the meeting
- For any member attending remotely, if you declare an interest in an item, please turn off your video and keep your audio on mute for the duration of the item
- If referring to a specific report please reference the report, page or slide being referred to
- Lastly, I remind the public and press that taking photographs of proceedings or using any means to enable anyone not present to see or hear proceedings, or making a simultaneous oral report of the proceedings are not permitted

Thank you and we will now move to the first item on the agenda - apologies and then roll call of all other Members in attendance.