

Minutes of Meeting of Policy and Resources Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 2 July 2020 in the Council Offices, Ballyronan Road, Magherafelt and by Virtual Means

Members Present Councillor Quinn, Chair

Councillors Ashton, Buchanan, Cuddy, Doris*, Elattar, Forde, Gildernew*, Hughes, McFlynn, S McGuigan, McKinney, McLean, S McPeake, Molloy, Totten

Officers in Attendance

Mr A Tohill, Chief Executive
Mrs Canavan, Director of Organisational Development
Mr Cassells, Director of Environment and Property
Mr Kelso, Director of Public Health and Infrastructure
Mr Lowry**, Head of Technical Services
Ms McNally**, Council Solicitor
Ms Mezza**, Head of Marketing and Communications
Mr Moffett**, Head of Democratic Services
Mr O'Hagan**, Head of ICT
Mr JJ Tohill, Director of Finance
Miss Thompson, Democratic Services Officer

* Denotes members present in remote attendance

** Denotes Officers present by remote means

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.

PR096/20 Apologies

None.

PR097/20 Declarations of Interest

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

PR098/20 Chair's Business

The Chair, Councillor Quinn stated this was his first meeting Chairing the Policy and Resources Committee and that he looked forward to working with Members and Officers over the next year.

Matters for Decision

PR099/20 Capital Discretionary Grant Fund

The Chief Executive presented previously circulated report which sought agreement for the funding allocation to the Council Capital Discretionary Grant Awards.

Councillor Cuddy asked that if any of the projects did not commence was there a process of the £50,000 funding coming back to Council.

The Chief Executive stated that Council will be flexible with the organisations and their projects and there was an expectation from Council to see the projects delivered.

Councillor S McGuigan stated that the names of the projects/organisations should have been provided within the report as people reading this report did not know who the groups were nor the projects.

Proposed by Councillor Molloy
Seconded by Councillor Hughes and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to agree the funding of £150,000 to the Council Capital Discretionary Grant budget for the three capital discretionary projects as previously agreed by the Development Committee.

PR100/20 Revision of Email and Instant Messaging Policy

The Head of ICT presented previously circulated report which sought approval for the adoption of a revised Email and Instant Messaging Policy.

Proposed by Councillor Buchanan
Seconded by Councillor S McGuigan and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to adopt the Email and Instant Messaging Policy as set out at Appendix 1 to report.

PR101/20 Revision of Mobile Policy

The Head of ICT presented previously circulated report which sought approval for the adoption of a revised Mobile Device Policy.

Councillor Molloy asked if this policy was applicable to staff.

The Head of ICT advised that the policy was applicable to staff and members – anyone that had been supplied with a mobile device by Council.

Proposed by Councillor Molloy
Seconded by Councillor McFlynn and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to adopt the Mobile Device Policy as set out at Appendix 1 to report.

Due to technical difficulties the meeting recessed at 7.13 pm and recommenced at 7.18 pm.

PR102/20 Committee and Council Meetings: 2020-2021 Update

The Head of Democratic Services presented previously circulated report which provided update in relation to Council and Committee Meeting Schedule for 2020-21.

Councillor Ashton referred to the Audit Committee scheduled for November and asked if it was more advantageous to have this meeting in December.

The Director of Finance advised that as a result of the COVID19 pandemic the Department of Finance had amended legislation as to when accounts needed to be submitted/published – that draft accounts could be submitted up until 31 August instead of 30 June and that accounts could be published up until 31 December instead of 30 September.

The Director of Finance advised that Council intends to submit its draft accounts next week and expects to publish its accounts in September and that the scheduling of the November Audit Committee was a back up schedule. The Director stated that he did not believe the Audit Committee should be moved into December and did not want to schedule it for any earlier in November.

Proposed by Councillor Ashton
Seconded by Councillor S McGuigan and

- Resolved** That it be recommended to Council –
- (I) To convene a meeting of the Council on Thursday 27 August 2020 at 7.00 pm in the Burnavon Arts and Cultural Centre, Cookstown and by virtual means.
 - (II) That the Audit Committee scheduled to take place on 24 November 2020 continues to take place on this date.

PR103/20 Annual Progress Returns 2019-2020 – Equality Commission and Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

The Head of Democratic Services presented previously circulated report which considered Council's progress reports for the period 2019-20 on meeting the statutory equality and good relations duties as detailed within Section 75(1) and 75(2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the Rural Needs Act Northern Ireland (2016).

Councillor Cuddy asked if DAERA ever come back to Council in relation to the reports it submits.

The Head of Democratic Services advised that DAERA can come back with questions but to date this Council has not received any queries in relation to the reports it has submitted but that is not to say other authorities haven't been questioned.

Proposed by Councillor Molloy
Seconded by Councillor S McPeake and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve and submit the Annual Progress Reports (2019-20) as set out at Appendix A and B of report on the implementation and activities surrounding its Equality and Good Relations duties and Rural Needs duties.

PR104/20 Implementation of Review on Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

The Head of Democratic Services presented previously circulated report which provided an update in relation to the Review of the Rural Needs Act legislation.

Councillor McKinney referred to providing feedback to DAERA and stated that a high number of rural households don't have broadband in order to give feedback and are therefore being disadvantaged. The Councillor therefore felt that a true record could not be achieved from most rural parts of this Council area due to lack of broadband.

Proposed by Councillor S McGuigan
Seconded by Councillor S McPeake and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council –

- (I) To review the additional actions detailed in Appendix A of report which will be implemented by the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs; and
- (II) To implement the six recommendations emanating from the Review of the Implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 by approving the associated Action Plan as set out at Appendix B of report.

PR105/20 Policy on Illuminating Council Properties

The Head of Democratic Services presented previously circulated report which considered Council's existing policy and associated arrangements for the lighting up /illumination of Council properties.

The Chair, Councillor Quinn stated that he had brought the request to the Council meeting in June in which he asked that designated Council properties be lit up to recognise the Black Lives Matter movement. Councillor Quinn stated that Belfast City Council and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council had agreed to light up their buildings in respect of the movement and felt that this Council needed to review its policy in relation to illuminating Council properties to allow certain statements to be made on behalf of Council as current policy only allowed for charitable organisations to promote their cause.

Councillor Molloy agreed that now was an opportune time to review the policy on illuminating Council properties and proposed that the policy be reviewed.

Councillor McKinney stated that all lives matter and that any life lost is a tragedy. The Councillor felt that Council needed to be careful as to how it proceeds as the Black Lives Matter movement may be discriminatory to someone of a different colour.

The Chair, Councillor Quinn stated that the Black Lives Matter movement is for everyone.

Councillor S McPeake seconded Councillor Molloy's proposal.

Councillor McLean stated he would also have concerns and that Council needed to be careful going forward otherwise it could be left in a vulnerable position. The Councillor stated that he felt that by keeping the current policy to charitable organisations was a wise decision and asked how a review would be undertaken, whether it would be by officer, sub committee or this committee.

The Chief Executive advised that a working group could be formed in which Members can discuss and review the current policy. Membership of this working group can be restricted to Members of the Policy and Resources Committee or open to all Members under d'Hondt.

Councillor Molloy stated that working groups are normally formed with a membership of 10 Members made up by d'Hondt and proposed that the working group to review policy on illuminating Council properties be formed in this manner.

Councillor McLean seconded Councillor Molloy's proposal.

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to convene a working group to consider and review the current Council policy on illuminating Council properties, made up of 10 Members filled using the Council's d'Hondt calculation.

PR106/20 Member Services

None.

Matters for Information

PR107/20 Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on Thursday 4 June 2020

Members noted Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee held on Thursday 4 June 2020.

PR108/20 Performance Improvement: 2019-2020 (Q1-Q4) Progress Update on Statutory and Corporate Health Indicators

Members noted previously circulated report which provided monitoring information on the review of performance against Council's seven statutory and four corporate performance improvement indicators and standards along with an overview of the Corporate Health Indicators for the first twelve months of 2019 to 2020.

PR109/20 Service Improvement Plans 2020-21: Chief Executive's Office

Members noted previously circulated report which set out the Service Improvement Plans for the three Chief Executive Office services (Democratic Services, Legal Services and Marketing and Communications) for the 2020-2021 year.

PR110/20 Organisational Development Service Improvement Plan 2020-21

Members noted previously circulated report which set out the Service Plan for the Organisational Development Department for 2020/2021.

PR111/20 IT Service Improvement Plan 2020-21

Members noted previously circulated report which set out the Service Plan for the ICT Service for 2020-21.

Councillor Cuddy stated there was a lot of information contained within the service improvement plans and asked if the Chief Executive was happy with their content.

The Chief Executive stated that the Council continues to strive for excellence and continuous improvement and that the plans detailed tonight build on the work to date and pave the way for further improvement and service delivery for the Council area.

Live broadcast ended at 7.39 pm.

Local Government (NI) Act 2014 – Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor Molloy
Seconded by Councillor McKinney 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 Member consider items PR112/20 to PR124/20.

Matters for Decision

- PR112/20 NI Business Start Up Programme 2/GoForIt2 (11 Council model) 2021-2023 Collaborative Agreement with Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (L&CCC)
- PR113/20 Financial Update in relation to Covid19 and Associated Matters
- PR114/20 Financial Report for 12 months ended 31 March 2020
- PR115/20 Environment and Property Organisational Structures
- PR116/20 ICT Staff Restructuring
- PR117/20 Staff Matters for Decision
- PR118/20 Dungannon Leisure Centre / Maghera HS – Capital Projects
- PR119/20 Seamus Heaney HomePlace
- PR120/20 Full Fibre Project Procurement Update

Matters for Information

- PR121/20 Confidential Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 4 June 2020
- PR122/20 Managing Attendance
- PR123/20 Staff Furlough Scheme – Update
- PR124/20 Contracts and DAC

PR125/20 Duration of Meeting

The meeting commenced at 7 pm and concluded at 9.30 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, [Dungannon/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 please raise your hand in the normal way and keep raised until advised to lower it
- 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.