

Minutes of Meeting of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 27 May 2021 in the Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon and by virtual means

Chair Councillor Mallaghan

Members Present Councillors Ashton*, Bell*, Black*, Brown*, Buchanan*, Burton*, Clarke*, Colvin*, Corry*, Cuddy*, Cuthbertson, Doris*, Elattar*, Forde*, Gildernew*, Glasgow*, Graham, Hughes*, Kearney*, Kerr, N McAleer*, S McAleer*, McFlynn*, B McGuigan*, S McGuigan*, McKinney*, McLean*, McNamee*, D McPeake*, S McPeake*, Milne*, Molloy*, Monteith*, Mullen, Oneill*, Quinn, Robinson*, Totten* and Wilson*

Officers in Attendance Mr McCreesh, Chief Executive
Ms Canavan**, Director of Organisational Development
Ms Campbell**, Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation
Mr Kelso**, Director of Public Health & Infrastructure
Ms Mezza**, Head of Marketing and Communications
Mr Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
Mr Tohill**, Director of Finance
Mrs Forde, Member Support Officer

* Denotes Members present in remote attendance

** Denotes Officers present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7 pm

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan welcomed everyone to the meeting and those watching the meeting through the Live Broadcast. The Chair in introducing the meeting detailed the operational arrangements for transacting the business of the meeting in the chamber and by virtual means, by referring to Annex A to this minute.

C094/21 Apologies

None

C095/21 Declarations of Interest

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

Councillors Colvin and S McAleer declared an interest in agenda item 19 motion in relation to autism diagnosis, and advised as Members of the Southern Local Commissioning Group he would not vote on the motion.

C096/21 Chair's Business

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan said the news regarding the health crisis was improving and that there had been nine days in the north without a COVID death. He said Mid Ulster cases were now in the middle of the table which was good as for a long time it had been on the top end so this was all moving in a positive direction.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan spoke about the events in Gaza over recent weeks and like everyone else he was shocked at images and congratulated the Dáil who passed a motion in relation to the lands in Palestine that it was a good move for European countries to take an interest. He said all states should endeavour to bring a fair deal to those who live in that part of the world together with peace and it was his hope it was the start of something good.

Councillor Quinn said that the decision of the Dáil was a massive step. He acknowledged it had been proposed by Sinn Féin and said the matter had been discussed several times in the Chamber. He drew attention to a motion he had moved three years ago minute reference C145/18 and asked for an update on how the Boycott Divestment Sanctions Campaign had been implemented. He said that the world is watching in horror at the events in Gaza and Israel and said he did not take no sides but the innocent in Gaza were slaughtered on the streets. He said he was dismayed to hear America, Europe and Britain sidestepping and talk about this and he hoped the motion moved in Ireland would lead the way. Councillor Quinn concluded that all should acknowledge that Israel is wrong and the current situation must end.

Resolved That it be recommended to the Chief Executive that he operate his Delegated Authority under Section 3.3 of the Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officer - that Council receive an update on the motion passed on 26 June 2018 Minute reference C145/18

Councillor Kerr concurred and said that Israel is a terrorist state and over 200 Palestinians had been murdered in their beds. He said that Israel uses biblical passages to say they are the chosen people but killing thousands is wrong, genocide is taking place and spoke of coverage that highlighted families had been given five minutes to leave their homes. He said Israel was committing a holocaust and was a racist apartheid state and Council must do all it can to stop it. Councillor Kerr proposed that Council receive a deputation from a local activist, Deirdre Murphy.

Councillor McLean said that he had not intended to enter the debate but said he believed that Council had enough to do dealing with Mid Ulster issues and as local councillors the remit was to ensure the streets was swept, bins were emptied and the dead buried. He said he believed in the Bible and was a born again Christian thus could not agree with murder irrespective of where it came from and acknowledged that Northern Ireland had had its fill of it. He reflected that Councillor Quinn had said he was not taking sides but had lambasted Israel. Councillor McLean said he totally disagreed with everything said by Councillor Kerr and if Council was receiving a deputation both sides of the story should be heard. Councillor McLean said that he concurred with Councillor Colvin's comments at the previous meeting that Israelites are God's chosen people.

Councillor Colvin said that Councillor McLean had highlighted how many do think stated that context had to be taken and asked how you could negotiate with people who were so 'blind and prejudiced'. He said realism was needed and as highlighted in Isaiah Israel is here to stay. Councillor Colvin said some of the language put forward was not helpful that this was an old conflict the Jewish people had been hounded and a lot of people held this view.

Councillor Monteith seconded Councillor Kerr's proposal.

Councillor Monteith said that a number of people in the district were from Gaza and had deep concerns. He stated that the Israeli state had had its boot on the neck of Gaza for years and its actions had no place in modern society.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan said when people gather on the streets here it is evident the situation matters to them.

Councillor McKinney said this was yet another 'lap of the race track' and tonight if you were looking at proceedings with neutral eyes this Council would show itself again it is one way or no way. He referred to Councillor Kerr's comments and those of Councillor Quinn and said over his lifetime he had seen many horrors. Councillor McKinney supported Councillor Colvin and associated himself with his remarks. He said this was not the United Nations it was Mid Ulster and the duties were more akin to those highlighted by Councillor McLean.

Councillor McKinney highlighted that the Chair had had a photograph taken wearing the chain of office in relation to Gaza and it was his role to be neutral but he did not appear to be.

Councillor Doris said she was a Christian. She said that Council had received a presentation and heard how the Catholic Church had used religion. She claimed that each should treat their neighbour as they wished to be treated and asked how it could be considered right what was happening to the people in Gaza.

Councillor Elattar said this matter was of great relevance to the people of Mid Ulster as many had relatives in the region. She said the Israeli state was a fine tuned war machine compared to the Palestinians and many families were lying together in one room so that if they were hit they would die together. She shared that her father had worked in Jordan and had met people who carried keys of their former homes which had been taken by the Israeli state. She said that it was an international issue and Council should give the Palestinian people its support.

Councillor Molloy referred to the remark that the land had been gifted to Israel and stated that it was not within the remit of those who gave it to do so. He said that Israel had encroached and stolen more land since then. Councillor Molloy said whatever the remit of Council was it right to let the injustice continue and this would happen if the world stayed silent.

Councillor Kerr added to his proposal that a letter be forwarded to the 26 county government asking the Irish Foreign Minister to lobby for the expulsion of the Israeli ambassador.

Proposed by Councillor Kerr
Seconded by Councillor Monteith

- Resolved** That it be recommended to the Chief Executive that he operate his Delegated Authority under Section 3.3 of the Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officer – that
- (i) Deirdre Murphy be invited to make a presentation to the relevant committee regarding the conflict in Gaza; and
 - (ii) Write a letter to Simon Coveney the Irish Minister of the Department of Foreign Affairs in Ireland calling for the expulsion of the Israeli Ambassador

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan said that in reference to comments about his neutrality the Council had twice carried motions in reference to Gaza and therefore he had carried out his role.

Councillor Quinn spoke of a tree planting exercise at Coalisland Canal and advised that the trees had later been ripped out and stolen. He said he had been contacted by many residents and clubs in relation to the matter. Councillor Quinn said while thinking about this he thought it may be a good idea to plant a tree for every citizen in Mid Ulster that he had discussed the issue with former Director of Environment and Property and if it had not been for Covid this would have brought it to the Council.

Councillor Quinn proposed to plant a tree if possible for each citizen in the district or alternatively each household and requested that a report be brought to committee exploring tying the proposal in with projects already in existence.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan said there would be a significant cost and given the 0% rise in rates did not know if it would be possible unless there was grants.

The Chief Executive stated that the matter was not unrelated to a recent resolve to consider planting wildflowers under an environmental strategy and if the Member was satisfied the proposal could be considered within it.

- Resolved** That it be recommended to the Chief Executive that he operate his Delegated Authority under Section 3.3 of the Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officer – that in bringing forward the proposed Environmental Strategy consideration also be given to extensive tree planting throughout the district

Councillor S McPeake asked if the strategy should be discussed within the Climate Change working group.

In response the Chief Executive said it would be considered which mechanism was best placed to deal with the matter.

Councillor Cuthbertson said that there was now discussion about planting 146k trees but when it had been proposed to plant 100 trees to mark the Northern Ireland Centenary there had not been agreement. He also highlighted that Prince Charles had a tree planting programme with schools and council should explore same.

Councillor Wilson concurred with Councillor Cuthbertson and said the hypocrisy of Councillor Quinn in his suggestion was staggering.

Councillor Wilson proposed that Council recognise Stuart Dallas from Cookstown who had won three top football awards at Leeds United and that although civic recognition was still not happening in person requested that a letter be sent from the Chair.

Councillor Cuddy concurred with this and said he was a Leeds supporter and it was great to see Stuart doing so well and that he was a great ambassador for the area. Councillor Cuddy seconded the proposal

Councillor Buchanan said he was a Leeds man and would associate himself with the remarks and reiterated that Stuart was a great ambassador for Cookstown.

Councillor Burton said she did not take much interest in football but that her husband and sons were Leeds supporters and she too would associate herself with the remarks.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan spoke of the virtual event held as a tribute to Mickey Harte and advised the film would be broadcasted in the incoming week and he would recommend it to all.

Councillor Kerr requested that the Chair send a letter to Coalisland Fianna member Padraig Hempsey who has been appointed Tyrone GAA Senior Team Captain.

Councillor Cuthbertson highlighted that asbestos had been dumped at Cottage Quinn and also on private lands at Milltown. He said Environmental Health and the NIEA were on the issue but considering recent anti social behaviour at the cemetery asked if officers would investigate the possibility of installing CCTV.

Councillor Burton requested that the Chair write to Ashbrook B&B, Aughnacloy who had been listed in the Top 100 attractions in Northern Ireland under accommodation category.

Councillor Kerr requested that the Chair send a letter of congratulations to Moortown St Malachy's GAA on winning the intermediate reserve Championship final and to Galbally GFC on winning the Ulster Translink Community Club Award for County Tyrone,

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan said he had attended the HomePlace opening of the refurbished library and encouraged Members to take the opportunity to go and see it. He paid tribute to Councillors S McPeake and Burton who had seen the project through and said as venues opened the HomePlace would be busy as this would be the year of the staycation. He said it was hoped this would be a prosperous summer for tourism across Mid Ulster.

Councillor Kearney spoke of St Vincent de Paul and its close relationship with Council. He highlighted the book received by Councillors outlining their work and requested that the Chair send a letter to the President of St Vincent de Paul on their work throughout the pandemic.

Resolved That it be recommended to the Chief Executive that he operate his Delegated Authority under Section 3.3 of the Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officer – that the Chair send letters to:

- (i) Stuart Dallas for his recent achievements with Leeds United Football Club where he was awarded three top awards;
- (ii) Coalisland Fianna member Pdraig Hempsey who has been appointed Tyrone GAA Senior Team Captain;
- (iii) Ashbrook B&B, Aughnacloy listed in the Top 100 attractions in Northern Ireland under accommodation category.
- (iv) Letter of congratulations to be forwarded to Moortown St Malachy's GAA on winning the intermediate reserve Championship final.
- (v) Letter of congratulations to be forwarded Galbally GFC on winning the Ulster Translink Community Club Award for County Tyrone,
- (vi) Letter to the President of St Vincent de Paul on their work throughout the pandemic.

Remarks from Chief Executive – Remote Meeting Regulations

The Chief Executive said that “Members, would recall that last year, the Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 were introduced to provide certainty that Councils could hold meetings remotely. I notified you at April Council that these Regulations would expire on 7 May 2021.

The Department for Communities advised there would be a break between 7th May until the new legislation was put in place to allow for the continuation of meetings in hybrid form. I took a report on this at April Council, where approval was provided for the implementation of the emergency provision of the Scheme of Delegation to allow for the operation of meetings to continue in hybrid/ remote form during this time.

This is just to remind Members that in order to limit any potential challenge made with regard to the operation of Council Meetings in hybrid form, all decisions until the new legislation is in place will be implemented by the Chief Executive, under

delegated authority. I further advise that this arrangement is likely to be required until the Regulations are in place, which may now run into late June.”

Matters for Decision

C097/21 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters in “Open Business” at the Special Council Meeting held on Thursday 22 April 2021

Councillor Cuthbertson drew attention to his request that a copy of the policy document in relation to flags be forwarded to Members and stated that to date it had not been received.

Proposed by Councillor Kerr
Seconded by Councillor Doris and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Chief Executive that he operate his Delegated Authority under Section 3.3 of the Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officer – That the Minutes of the Special Council held on Thursday 22 April 2021 (SC010/21 – SC014/21) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated, were considered and adopted.

C098/21 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Council Meeting held on Thursday 22 April 2021

Councillor Colvin proposed the minutes but referred to *C085/21 Correspondence* and stated that the minutes were accurate but in relation to the comments about the Israeli government blocking vaccines it would depend on what source you rely on for information. He highlighted that he had read that Palestine did not accept vaccines for Covid because the plane had landed in Israel first.

Councillor Cuthbertson drew attention to *C076/21 Chair’s Business* when he had highlighted that all East Timorese groups throughout the district needed support but Council’s assistance had been directed at one group. He referred to a Policing and Community Safety Partnership meeting the previous day when an independent member of the group had raised a similar issue in that a group had been offered support by Council then it had been withdrawn. Councillor Cuthbertson stated that Council needed to reflect on what was agreed and meet and offer the same support to all groups.

Councillor Doris sought an update on C081/21 Development Committee minutes in relation to progress on planting schemes for Coalisland town centre as it had been previously indicated that this would be reviewed when the public realm scheme was completed. She also sought an update on use of lands at the old railway track in Coalisland for use for allotments. Councillor Doris spoke of visiting a similar facility in Newmills and it would be good to have it replicated in Coalisland. She requested that the matter be discussed at relevant committees.

The Chief Executive stated that reports would be brought to appropriate committees.

Resolved That it be recommended to the Chief Executive that he operate his Delegated Authority under Section 3.3 of the Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officer – Reports to be brought to future committee in relation to extended flower planting scheme and an allotment scheme at the former railway line in Coalisland

Councillor Kerr said that last year some people had tried to launch the Coalisland Bloom Initiative and it may be worthwhile to re-engage with this to expand flower initiatives and revitalise the town.

In response the Chair, Councillor Mallaghan said that bloom groups are community driven and Council responds and supports but emphasised that it was community driven.

Proposed by Councillor Colvin
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Chief Executive that he operate his Delegated Authority under Section 3.3 of the Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officer – That the Minutes of the Council held on Thursday 22 April 2021 (C074/21 – C086/21 and C093/21) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated, were considered and adopted.

C099/21 **Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” Planning Committee Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 4 May 2021**

Proposed by Councillor S McPeake
Seconded by Councillor D McPeake and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Chief Executive that he operate his Delegated Authority under Section 3.3 of the Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officer – That the Minutes of Planning Committee held on Tuesday 4 May 2021 (P063/21 – P067/21 and P073/21) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated, were considered and adopted.

C100/21 **Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” Policy and Resources Committee Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 6 May 2021**

Councillor Molloy referred to a Policy and Resources committee in January when the decision was taken to purchase branded face coverings. He stated that his intention was that it would be provided to staff but they had not received them.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan concurred that this would be done

Resolved That it be recommended to the Chief Executive that he operate his Delegated Authority under Section 3.3 of the Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officer That branded face-masks be provided to staff

Proposed by Councillor Quinn
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Chief Executive that he operate his Delegated Authority under Section 3.3 of the Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officer – That the minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on Thursday 6 May 2021 (PR089/21 – PR099/21 and PR109/21) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated, were considered and adopted.

C101/21 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” Environment Committee Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 11 May 2021

Councillor Kerr drew attention to *E134/21 Minutes of Environment Committee* in relation to vermin and proposed that Council investigate the possibility of having a vermin/pesticide removal team in order that it can be more proactive in this area.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan stated that with a zero rise agreed in the rates it would be difficult.

Councillor Cuthbertson stated that he had previously raised a similar matter in relation to wasp nests and beehives and asked that this be incorporated in the investigation.

Councillor Cuthbertson drew attention to *E130/21 Review of Policy on Dual Language Nameplate Signage* and said it was his belief that the policy was not fit for purpose that there was confusion at the meeting with regard to screening and legal advice and he would propose that the Dual Language Nameplate Signage Policy is not adopted.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan asked the Director of Public Health and Infrastructure to comment on aforementioned issues.

The Director of Public Health and Infrastructure said that in relation to the Dual Language Nameplate Signage the policy had been brought through committee, it had been agreed to report back to committee regarding screening, this had been duly done and the committee considered the matter then agreed the policy.

In relation to the proposal for vermin/pesticide removal the Director said he would bring a report to a future committee and highlighted that it would require a significant resource to deliver.

Councillor McKinney drew attention to previous comments regarding affordability due to a zero rise in the rates and asked the Director of Finance and Chief Executive if a 'few buckets of rat poison' could be paid for out of the Council reserves

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan highlighted that the Director had indicated it would take a considerable resource.

Councillor Burton concurred with Councillor Cuthbertson's comments and stated that back in the day Councils did deliver such services and a lot of people were complaining about rats at the moment but more often it was wasps' nests and bee hives which were problematic. She referred to the comments about zero rise in rates and said that at a recent policy and resources committee the Chief Executive had been tasked to look at lands and properties which could be sold or leased out and sought an update on progress stating that monies raised could be used to finance a vermin/pesticide removal team.

Councillor Monteith seconded Council Kerr's proposal. He stated that no one had said the total service should be free of charge it could be income based as a lot of time it was elderly people making contact with Members and when advising them to contact private companies he had been made aware of imposters calling around doors and elderly people being robbed. Councillor Monteith stated that there is an expectation that Council can be trusted thus should go further in its current response and be in a position to point to reputable providers.

Councillor McLean seconded Councillor Cuthbertson's proposal and highlighted that there was also a motion listed on the agenda for debate.

Councillor B McGuigan stated he was happy to second the minutes as presented.

Councillor McFlynn said she would support the need for a report on a vermin/pesticide team but stated that other bodies such as the Northern Ireland Housing Executive should have a remit as well.

Councillor McKinney reiterated his earlier question and stated he had not received a response.

The Director of Finance stated there was two perspectives to the question yes it would be easy to fund a supply of poison but to adequately resource a service this would increase costs.

Councillor Burton asked if an update could be given in relation to excess lands and properties.

In response the Chief Executive stated that the matter had been discussed at senior management team and acknowledged it was a huge undertaking commencing with analysing the property portfolio. He advised that a report would be brought to committee in due course but assured Members it was an ongoing project.

Councillor Burton stated she was not pushing to sell assets but if properties and lands could be leased short term and monies raised highlighting the recent interest in lands in Cookstown.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan stated that a strategy was required.

The Chair Councillor Mallaghan called a vote on the proposal

Proposed by Councillor Cuthbertson
Seconded by Councillor McLean

That the Policy on Dual Language Nameplate Signage is not adopted.

For	15
Against	25

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan stated that the proposal was lost.

Proposed by Councillor S McGuigan
Seconded by Councillor B McGuigan and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Chief Executive that he operate his Delegated Authority under Section 3.3 of the Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officer – That the Minutes of Environment Committee held on Tuesday 11 May 2021 (E123/21 – E140/21 and E150/21) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated, were considered and adopted.

C102/21 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” Development Committee Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 13 May 2021

The Chief Executive drew attention to D088/21 Economic Development – item 2.5 Small Grant Business Marketing Scheme and advised that an additional £100k had been secured thus making the total £250k which would permit a grant of £300 to be given to 833 businesses.

Councillor Cuthbertson drew attention to *D089/21 Railway Park* and expressed concern in relation to the proposed 3G pitch. He stated that the size proposed would not allow for competitive sport, it was to be located on a flood plain and there would be no changing facilities at the site. He also said that Dungannon Park would be a better location for such a pitch as currently there is no provision for hockey and limited provision for rugby. Councillor Cuthbertson also highlighted that there was areas such as the Bush which had no play equipment and there was only limited provision at Tamnamore and Moy. Councillor Cuthbertson proposed that Council should wait on the outcome of the pitch strategy before progressing this pitch.

Councillor Cuddy concurred with comments and stated whilst work is welcome in the Railway Park area there is need across the town, he said that Neighbourhood Renewal was coming up trumps but emphasised that resources should be spread and not concentrated in one small area. He said he was from the Railway Park area of town but the balance needed to be right. Councillor Cuddy concluded saying that it was important that the network for the linear park around the town was completed but this was £500k of rates money that may be better utilised.

Councillor Molloy said that those who read the papers presented would be aware that officers carried out a scoping study which asked residents if this facility was provided would they use it and there was a resounding yes! He said he had also previously raised a lack of a pitch in Moy. Councillor Molloy stated that the recommendation alludes to the fact that there is a timeline to the work which would mean that the pitch strategy would be completed before works at Railway Park commenced thus it would all take care of itself.

Councillor Monteith concurred with Councillor Molloy and said he lived in the area and highlighted that the recommendation was conditional on issues regarding flooding being sorted out. He said he would have more sympathy if they objected to any planning issues regarding this and stated to call a spade a spade this scheme was balancing the neglect of over 20 years during which millions had been invested in Dungannon Park and Drumcoo but no capital investment in Railway Park which was the most densely populated area in the district. He concluded stating he had never spoke out against a facility going into communities and was flabbergasted that a Member in Dungannon DEA would speak out against this scheme and if changing rooms was needed down the line they could be provided just like they had been in Drumcoo and Dungannon Park when required.

Councillor Cuthbertson stated that Dungannon Park was a facility for everyone and his argument was the large amount of money being invested in a pitch that would not accommodate competitive sport.

Councillor Cuddy said he understood Councillor Monteith's point of view that he had done great work in the area and always had supported schemes throughout the town and his thoughts would be it is pure rates money and the resource should be spread around the town.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan sought clarity as to whether Councillor Cuddy was seconding Councillor Cuthbertson's proposal.

Councillor Cuddy clarified that no he was satisfied there was to be further investigations.

Councillor Kerr sought an update on road improvements in Coalisland and advised he had been contacted by a member of the Community Group at Lough Neagh and they had extended thanks for the facilities provided at Washingbay.

In response to Councillor Kerr's query the Director of Public Health and Infrastructure advised that a date had been secured in the Members diary for a meeting in relation to road improvements at Coalisland.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan stated he had been in the Washingbay this week and the area was stunning.

Proposed by Councillor Kerr
Seconded by Councillor Doris and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Chief Executive that he operate his Delegated Authority under Section 3.3 of the Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officer, that the Minutes of Development Committee held on Thursday 13 May 2021 (D078/21 – D096/21 and D101/21) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated, were considered and adopted.

C103/21 Centenary Commemoration of the opening of the Ulster Tower

The Head of Democratic Services presented previously circulated report which brought to the attention of Members the opportunity to attend the Centenary Commemoration of the opening of the Ulster Tower.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan stated Members should register their interest with Democratic Services.

Proposed by Councillor Ashton
Seconded by Councillor and Cuthbertson

Resolved That it be recommended to Chief Executive that he operate his Delegated Authority under Section 3.3 of the Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officer – That approval be granted to the following Members who wish to attend the Centenary Commemoration of the opening of the Ulster Tower with costs attributed to individual Member conference budget.

C104/21 Civic Recognition Nomination

The Head of Democratic Services sought approval for the previously circulated report on civic recognition requests from Members, in line with the stated Council Policy, and as detailed within the report at appendix A.

Proposed by Councillor Kerr
Seconded by Councillor Elattar and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Chief Executive that he operate his Delegated Authority under Section 3.3 of the Scheme of Delegation for

Senior Officer that approval be given to submitted requests for civic recognition as outlined in the report and be dealt with as previously resolved by April 2020 Council in that recipients receive a letter together with an award, where appropriate

Matters for Information

C105/21 Correspondence

Members noted previously circulated report providing correspondence received for the attention of Council.

Councillor Quinn drew attention to the motion carried at Newry, Mourne and Down District Council in relation to dental services during Covid 19 pandemic particularly in relation to access to free dental care for 12 months post pregnancy and proposed Council support this.

Councillor Quinn drew attention to letter received from Department for Infrastructure in relation to the railway network and suggested that Council include the restoration of the network in its response to the Regional Strategic Transport Network Plan consultation. Councillor Quinn also proposed that Council give consideration to recognising the resilience and bravery of children during the Covid 19 pandemic as highlighted in correspondence received from Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council.

Councillor Monteith seconded the proposals and speaking of the railway network said Council should request that the Tyrone railway network be restored.

Councillor Monteith also drew attention to correspondence received in relation to the former mother and baby homes and said that these groups should be invited in to allow Members to learn more about the situation. He also said he did not know if local government had any role in the administration of the homes in days gone by but if they had Councils should apologise.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan said that Council was participating in a campaign via social media to encourage people to come forward.

Councillor McFlynn seconded Councillor Monteith's proposal and said Council should have a meeting with these groups. She said the issues raised regarding these homes would bring a tear to anyone's eye. She welcomed any action on it and acknowledged that governments had apologised and so should Councils if formerly they had played a role.

Councillor Ashton referred to correspondence received via email from officers earlier in the evening, in particular she highlighted the letter from Ards and North Down Borough Council in relation to the refusal by Stormont to permit a stone sculpture to mark the Northern Ireland centenary. Councillor Ashton asked if the letter, not included within the papers could be considered at the meeting.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan clarified she could continue.

Councillor Ashton proposed that Council write to the Speaker and support Ards and North Down stating that the decision should be reversed and an opportunity had been missed by Sinn Féin to demonstrate that Northern Ireland was inclusive.

Councillor Burton seconded the proposal.

Councillor Monteith concurred with comments in relation to the railway and stated that if it reaches Caledon it would then progress through the Clogher Valley. Councillor Monteith said Council should be engaging and moving this forward and said it was an act of vandalism that it was ever removed. He concluded saying over the years some hoped to turn the former lines into a cycling trail but was emphatic that if the government wanted cars off the road an alternative was required.

The Chief Executive stated it was included in the Mid South West growth deal.

Councillor Kearney highlighted the letter received from Simon Harris TD Minister for Further and Higher Education Research, Innovation and Science and said that some avail of the exchange programme.

Councillor Cuthbertson referred to correspondence received via email from officers earlier in the evening, in particular he highlighted that Council had finally received a response from the Department of Finance but expressed his disappointment that many businesses such as garages and insurance companies were not receiving adequate help or a rates holiday yet their businesses were badly hit. Highlighting insurance companies he said many had lost out on business as people had went on line and this would ultimately lead to them vacating the town centres. He concluded expressing disappointment in the response.

Councillor S McPeake referred to Councillor Ashton's proposal issue of the memorial stone in Stormont and said he thought the right decision had been taken and that Stormont should be a neutral place for all and the proposal had not met the commission's standards.

Councillor S McPeake proposed that Council did not support Ards and North Down and should not write to the Speaker.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan stated that because the correspondence had only been received by Council earlier in the day it had not met the three days requirement and should be considered the following month. He stated it had been circulated for information.

Councillor Ashton accepted the ruling but stated that she had asked at the outset if it was for consideration.

Councillor Kerr drew attention to correspondence received from Fermanagh and Omagh District Council in relation to a motion carried regarding the Protection of Native Honeybees. He asked if Council supported the Protection of Native Honeybees and was it committed to the All Ireland Pollinator Scheme.

In response the Director of Public Health and Infrastructure said he would report back to the Member.

Proposed by Councillor Kerr
Seconded by Councillor Monteith and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Chief Executive that he operate his Delegated Authority under Section 3.3 of the Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officer – That confirmation be provided to the Environment committee if Mid Ulster Council supports the All Ireland Pollinator Scheme as outlined in the motion adopted by Fermanagh and Omagh Council. Should it be found that Council has not registered its support that it does so.

Proposed by Councillor Quinn
Seconded by Councillor Monteith and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Chief Executive that he operate his Delegated Authority under Section 3.3 of the Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officer, that Council

- (i) support the notice of motion moved by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council in relation to the Dental Services during Covid 19 pandemic;
- (ii) include in its response to the Regional Strategic Transport Network Plan consultation by the restoration of Armagh/Dungannon and Clogher Valley Tyrone Railway network; and
- (iii) Council consider implementing in Mid Ulster the initiative adopted by Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council to recognise the resilience and bravery of children during the Covid 19 pandemic.

C106/21 Consultations Notified to Mid Ulster District Council

Members considered previously circulated report on consultations notified to Mid Ulster District Council for comment.

Councillor Kerr proposed that Council submits a response to the Department for Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (NI Environment Agency) Consultation on the Draft third cycle River Basin Management Plan 2021-2027

Councillor Monteith proposed that Council hosts a workshop to prepare a response to the Department of Education Review of Pre School Admission of Socially Disadvantage Circumstances. He said pre school places was a major issue for Dungannon and Coalisland and provision should be for all.

Councillor Clarke seconded the proposal to Department for Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (NI Environment Agency) Consultation on the Draft third cycle River Basin Management Plan 2021-2027.

Proposed by Councillor Kerr
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Chief Executive that he operate his Delegated Authority under Section 3.3 of the Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officer – That Council submits a response to the Department for Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (NI Environment Agency) Consultation on the Draft third cycle River Basin Management Plan 2021-2027

Councillor Burton concurred with Councillor Monteith and said every child should be entitled to a pre school place and some parents were disadvantaged if they work. She highlighted that some private child care was in excess of £50 per day and parents were struggling. Councillor Burton concluded that the whole family should be considered.

Councillor Molloy said that he concurred with previous speakers as pre school places had become a postcode lottery saying that BT71 covers Coalisland to Benburb and children should get places in local facility regardless of background.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Chief Executive that he operate his Delegated Authority under Section 3.3 of the Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officer – That Council hosts a workshop to prepare a response to the Department of Education Review of Pre-School Admission of Socially Disadvantage Circumstances.

C107/21 Notice of Motion

Councillor Doris introducing the motion said

“I have previously spoken to Council about the need to support victims of domestic violence with access to housing an essential part of helping victims put in place a practical policy that allows them to feel supported and to leave their abuser. The process of leaving a relationship from someone you loved and cared about is often the most dangerous time for victims. It is therefore essential that victims are assisted with this time period to allow time from work so they can be accommodated to seek

necessary counselling services, find housing or in many cases take time to provide support to their children who also suffer as a result of this. Women with careers must be supported as this is often a huge lifeline where they have a safe space and a form of independence. Economic abuse is a form of entrapment for victims.

Yet again I am asking Council to unequivocally condemn domestic abuse and calls on the Minister for the Economy to introduce legislation to support victims by creating a statutory entitlement and access to 10 days special paid leave.”

Councillor Doris moved the motion:

“That this Council condemns unequivocally domestic abuse; recognises that domestic abuse continues to be hugely underreported; acknowledges the important legislative progress promised by the Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill; further acknowledges that domestic abuse often follows victims into their workplace; highlights the impact that domestic abuse can have on a victim’s employment through the impact on their physical and mental health; notes the existing Civil Service special leave policy which enables staff paid time off for domestic reasons including domestic abuse; and calls on the Minister for the Economy to introduce legislation to create a statutory entitlement to ten days of paid special leave for victims of domestic abuse.”

Councillor Elattar seconded the motion and said that domestic abuse had increased due to Covid and it was known that one in five of people abused had to take time off work. She said that at all times they should be met with an empathetic non judgemental approach and if such leave was an entitlement it would help alleviate stress and provide victims with flexibility.

Councillor Wilson supporting the motion said that most recent PSNI statistics from April 2020 to March 2021 highlighted 2111 reported instances of reports of domestic abuse in Mid Ulster. He said it is often not one incident and also takes many different forms. He said reporting the abuse does not end it but it is a vital step towards accessing support as domestic abuse impacts all areas of life victims often need emergency accommodation, time to attend court, may have to look new housing, seek non molestation orders all which impacts physical and mental health. Councillor Wilson said that if victims are employed they need time to access vital support and statutory leave would help them, it would also lessen the stigma in accessing support. He concluded saying he would support the motion.

Councillor Hughes said the SDLP would support the motion and highlighted that the 10 days would help support victims as they take the courageous step of leaving an abuser for whatever reason. She said it would help if a victim of domestic abuse did not have to take a financial hit in taking unpaid leave. Councillor Hughes concluded that domestic abuse could affect anyone.

Councillor Ashton said that

"We support Councillor Doris in the condemnation of domestic abuse. We have full compassion and empathy for anyone that finds themselves in this distressing position. Our grouping have been discussing this issue with the Minister for the Economy and she is fully aware of the need for society to support victims of domestic abuse including the workplace. During the progression of the Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill taken forward by the Justice Minister the issue of paid special leave for victims of domestic abuse was raised, which the Economy minister agreed that this issue did need serious consideration. Our group will be supporting Councillor Doris motion however noting that any new legislation regarding the introduction of a new statutory employment right, meaningful engagement with relevant stakeholders would be required and cost implications for employers and government would need to be established and assessed. Our party would encourage all employers to support employees who are victims of domestic abuse with empathy and flexibility while this legislation is being worked on."

Councillor Monteith said it was an excellent motion and every opportunity should be taken to call out the horror of domestic abuse. He said that sadly like others he had had to deal with situations like this and these two weeks would be such a help to those who find themselves in such circumstances. Councillor Monteith said it should be a basic right for all workers across both the public and private sector and he paid tribute to organisations who supported such victims highlighting in particular Women's Aid. He also reflected that it was a sad society when the person incurring the abuse had to be the one to move as it should be the abuser but that debate was for another time. He concluded that he would support the motion.

The Chair Councillor Mallaghan said at the beginning of his year as Chair he had made Women's Aid a priority that he commended the motion and it was just one of many issues. It was also noted that non nationals receive no support at all.

Councillor Doris thanked everyone for their support and stated that it was good to work collectively on such issues but this is only one string of helping.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan affirming that it had received unanimous support declared the motion carried.

C107/21 Notice of Motion

Councillor McNamee referred to the undernoted motion:

"That this Council recognises that the discussions about a constitutional change is now well underway and this Council has a duty to consult with its ratepayers on this important issue and the implications for the Council area. Therefore, calls on the Council to establish a working group on Irish unity and to begin a consultation with ratepayers and community and business representatives to assess views on the issues related to constitutional change."

Councillor McNamee said he was aware that two amendments had been lodged and in the spirit of compromise he would amend the wording from working group to workshops to include everyone in the process.

Councillor McNamee continued saying that everyone was aware of the human cost of partition and the decades of under investment incurred in the North. He said that it was the slowest economy across the islands and people deserved a modern Ireland with their civil and religious liberties protected whether they were Irish, British or other nationalities all should be protected under the law. He said he had brought the motion before the Council as conversations on unity are taking place everywhere and Council needed to commence its conversation.

The motion was amended to

“That this Council recognises that the discussions about a constitutional change is now well underway and this Council has a duty to consult with its ratepayers on this important issue and the implications for the Council area. Therefore, calls on the Council to progress workshops on Irish unity and to begin a consultation with ratepayers and community and business representatives to assess views on the issues related to constitutional change.”

Councillor N McAleer seconded the motion saying that all had seen through Brexit the disaster of constitutional change without discussion thus discussions in relation to this needed to progress.

Councillor Cuthbertson stated that once again Sinn Féin were going out of the way to cause division, it was not within the remit of Council and this was a political stance. He said they would drag Council staff into the political arena and that the United Kingdom works for everyone and highlighted the point made when an RTE reporter had been interviewing Michelle O'Neill and it had been highlighted that in relation to the vaccine roll out it was better to be part of the United Kingdom. He also made reference to the fact that people in Northern Ireland were 20% better off mentioning the support received over the course of the pandemic and was it being said it is alright to pay for health care, prescriptions, increased road taxes and asked when Sinn Féin would face up to real issues. Councillor Cuthbertson said the DUP would oppose the motion.

Councillor Wilson said that Sinn Féin really needed to get a grip on reality as Dublin had no desire to take Northern Ireland back and this had been highlighted back in 1921 when the 26 counties left Britain and De Valera knew it would not work. He said that economically Northern Ireland requires £10bn from London each year, that the United Kingdom was a leader highlighted in 2010 when Ireland received a £3.25bn bail out from London. He also asked why anyone would want to exchange the health system and reminded Members of the billions received from London during furlough together with the benefit of the vaccine rollout. Councillor Wilson reflected that polls had never shown more than a 40% wish for a United Ireland and as such the Secretary of State had no reason to call for a border poll. He highlighted that Republicans would not engage with Britain to cement relations and thus should

not be surprised that Unionists did not want to engage in this process. He said many in Northern Ireland were Ulstermen and had British identity all of whom wished to be good neighbours and enjoy good relations and work together on neutral beneficial projects but did not want to be governed by Ireland. He concluded saying that the bloody deeds of the IRA campaign had cemented partition but Sinn Féin had a reluctance to speak of that.

Councillor Colvin concurred and asked what universe people were living when they issue statements like the people of the north have been failed. He said that any economist will tell you people in Northern Ireland are better off and read from a report penned by Dr Graham Gudgin stating “when the connection is made living standards again emerge as closer to 20% higher in Northern Ireland. This result is staggering it means that after 60 years as a tax haven and 48 years inside the EU if the Republic of Ireland has not managed to raise the living standards of its people to that in Northern Ireland, if the Republic of Ireland were to rejoin the United Kingdom it would be as the UK poorest region just as it was a century ago.”

Councillor Colvin continued saying that the South relies on international companies and spoke of the rates of corporation tax of which Northern Ireland already charged appropriate rates. He said that what the southern exchequer relies on could be pulled out from under them. Councillor Colvin concluded that in the words of Clinton “it’s the economy stupid, it boils down to money” and asked how Sinn Féin could ignore the elephant in the room.

Councillor Kerr expressed appreciation for the amendment and said that the conversations should be widened out to one universal health care system and affordable homes. He spoke of other countries that had and do enjoy universal health care such as Cuba and Venezuela. Councillor Kerr said the problem of partition had been highlighted in the pandemic and that following an interview with Dominic Cummings many will have a different outlook when they realise that the government was responsible for the death of 1000s. He said that the huge majority supported a United Ireland and all should look to the future, help shape it and look for ways to smoothly unify the country.

Councillor Glasgow said he liked to dabble in statistics and highlighted that it was quite interesting that 63% in the Republic of Ireland did not want to pay for a united Ireland, 54% in the United Kingdom did not want to pay and Ulster simply did not have the money. He also said statistics showed that 68% in Ireland said the peace would be at risk and 63% in Northern Ireland felt likewise thus this talk is reckless and yet early in the agenda Israel was criticised yet they would risk the peace process. Councillor Glasgow said that the Minister for Health Robin Swan had not shied away from health issues and reflecting on comments of underspend said that when it came to allocating monies the particular party should stand up and put money into health. He reflected that the Republic would want the NHS and may be keener to join the United Kingdom and we should encourage that. In conclusion he highlighted statistics in relation to vaccine roll out noting that the Republic were far behind.

Councillor Monteith welcomed the motion and the opportunity to discuss the unification of Ireland. He thanked Councillor McNamee for the voluntary amendment which makes it inclusive thus he would not move his amendment. He said it would come as no shock that he got involved in politics for the reason of a United Ireland and reflected on the lies told by the United Kingdom during the pandemic as it had been told it would be herd immunity at all costs. Councillor Monteith said although they had changed their ways many were dead across the six counties due to the government. Councillor Monteith said that Irish unity is about moving forward as a positive nation he did not want to become part of the 26 county regime as the current situation does not serve people. He said that the British government had done much down the barrel of a gun and it was not a case that people wanted Northern Ireland but they were threatened with war by the British government by whom they suffered much. He said the reality is that all have to share this Ireland and what was needed was a republic based on democracy that the opportunity was there to create something unique.

Councillor McLean stated he was appalled by what had been put before the meeting and said if what the unionist people faced in Mid Ulster where Sinn Féin had undermined culture and creed is what will be faced in the new Ireland unionists did not want it. He said the message received is 'Brits Out' and stated he was a British subject and he did not believe the motion was legal and would ask the Chief Executive if officers could implement what was being put forward.

Councillor Quinn thanked Councillor McNamee for the motion and said that over the past 10 years there had been a shift towards Irish unity. He spoke of the vote in Scotland for pro independence and said that the union as it had been known was ending. He said the SDLP looked forward to discussions and had launched their new Ireland commission last month and encouraged people to take part from all backgrounds. He said it wasn't about joining the republic but about creating something new and all voices needed to be heard. Councillor Quinn said that any findings from discussions should be presented to the shared Ireland unit in Dublin who were actually investing in roads and waterways in the North. Councillor Quinn concluded that the SDLP supported the motion and said there was nothing to be feared from conversations that would include everyone.

Councillor Cuddy said that those who support Northern Ireland understand that the union is critical to a shared future after all the conflict suffered. He said that Northern Ireland is growing, boasted good education system, lower living costs and was one of the top ten digital centres. He said that Irish unification would end the £10b per year and drive up state debt, employment rates would fall and healthcare at the point of need would be lost. He said he could not understand those who portray Northern Ireland as dysfunctional as it had long since moved from having a poor international reputation. He said that all benefitted from being part of the United Kingdom and should want to rebuild and take pride in the place everyone calls home.

Councillor Corry said that much of what she wanted to say had been said but said that many talk of the £10b but if there was a united Ireland there would be access to the European Union and rights would be protected. She said she wanted health care

reform as a two tier system was creeping in and the underfunding during austerity was telling. Councillor Corry said everyone needed to be involved in creating a new Ireland for all.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan said the motion was welcome and was a good opportunity to open discussions which were already taking place in peoples kitchens, clubs and churches. He said the economist John Fitzgerald had looked at this and highlighted the unification of Germany. He said there was much he did not like about the Republic of Ireland and also Westminster and thus it had to be something new and the reality was that you could be looking at the Dáil made up of 25% and at the proposed workshops unionist would have opportunity to highlight the benefits of the union but emphasised the need for responsible discussion. The Chair said that the Good Friday agreement assures a unity referendum will happen in the future and looking at Scotland it would be good to get out in front.

Councillor McNamee said that it had been a good debate and he hoped that the motion would be carried and that unionists would come to the table.

Councillor Cuthbertson reminded the Chair that Councillor McLean had asked for a ruling on drawing staff into the political arena.

The Chief Executive advised he could not comment unless he had a proposer and seconder.

Proposed by Chair Councillor Mallaghan
Seconded by Councillor Cuthbertson

That the Chief Executive be permitted to speak in relation to the motion

The Chief Executive referred to standing orders page 10, 16.1.2 that every motion shall be relevant to the local government residents.

Councillor Cuthbertson stated this did not answer the question about bringing staff into the political arena. The Chair Councillor Mallaghan said the motion, if carried, would not do that.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan called for a vote on the motion

For	25
Against	15

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan declared the motion carried.

Councillor McNamee called on all to participate in the conversation stating that Council.

C108/21 Notice of Motion

Councillor Cuddy speaking on the motion said he was seeking to get a way forward that would resolve the ongoing issue. He said the current policy leaves people behind and it was the job of unionists in the Chamber to represent the minority and sought a mature conversation. He said the Good Friday agreement called on respect for both communities and they had all expressed concerns on the damage being done to signs and no one was happy about that. He said unionist may be the smallest party but should still have a voice and appealed to the Chair to show leadership. Councillor Cuddy said that he looked forward to the day when all could enjoy language free from political pressure and said Council must find a way through the current situation. He continued saying that unionist feel the largest party is walking right over them and if the current situation continues more signs will be damaged and what he was endeavouring to do was find a way forward. Councillor Cuddy said that he understood it was difficult to take a step back but they were endeavouring to bring balance and appealed to Members to support the motion as the situation would not go away.

Councillor Cuddy moved the motion:

“UUP Councillors continue to receive representations on why English is not placed first on Mid Ulster road/street signs. The UUP ask Mid Ulster Council to review this section of the policy to put English first and then whichever languages are agreed next. This is how the original Local Government (NI) Order in 1995 was intended - to support by agreeing to include minority or second languages on new signage. We feel the current policy has not correctly interpreted the original Order. To be clear the issue is not another language on the signs – it is the ordering of the languages – English names should be first. English is the working language for us all. English is the language that all our new Nationals who have come to Mid Ulster to set up their homes and start a new life understand. English is the universal language and we all use the English Language all the time. The job of the Council is to act responsibly and find a consensus of agreement. The current policy leaves a large proportion of the people of Mid Ulster feeling left behind and could be easily resolved with this suggestion. We appeal to the Council to reconsider its position for the sake of harmony and moving forward together.”

Signed: Cllr. Walter Cuddy, Cllr. Mark Glasgow, Cllr. Meta Graham, Cllr. Robert Colvin, Cllr Trevor Wilson, Cllr. Derek McKinney. As required by Standing Order 24 (Rescission of a preceding Resolution)

Councillor Graham seconded the motion stating that she had continuously argued that English should be first and she did understand that the policy stated adjacent and this was at the discretion of the Council. She said that we live in a diverse society but everyone speaks English to some degree and the current situation was causing bad feeling and leading to division. Councillor Graham said that they were repeatedly accused of attacking the Irish language and each time the matter is raised unionists are outvoted and no one would listen. She concluded by saying that this time she would like a different outcome emphasising that they only asked that

English be the first language and that many times nationalist councillors in the chamber speaking on various topics had called for the use of plain English.

Councillor Cuthbertson said that the DUP has been consistent and have opposed the signs on the grounds of cost. He said the only purpose of the dual language signs was to mark out areas and raise sectarian issues. He proposed the following amendment:

“Further to this, that the use of the Irish language on Council Branding, external signage, and internal signage in Council buildings and facilities is also reviewed.”

Councillor S McPeake said “ On reading the wording of the Motion and listening to what has been said on how the Irish language and the visibility of that language is somehow something that is threatening or in some way is harmful to large sections of the community needs to be called out for what it is. This is complete nonsense and demonstrates both an inability to tolerate the language itself and to understand the rationale and the need for minority language policies in the first instance. Irish language is the minority language that is under threat here and that’s why specific measures are needed to protect the language. I don’t think anyone would for a moment believe that the English language is in any way being threatened with extinction, and that’s why there are specific measures proposed around increasing the visibility of the minority Irish language in order to promote it.

That said it is a pity that there is actually the need or requirement for policies aimed at preserving minority, indigenous languages in the first instance. But the reality of the situation is that the Irish language is no different from many other indigenous languages throughout the world or indeed throughout these islands in that languages such as Welsh, Scots Gaelic and Ulster Scots also require additional protections to stymie their demise. I am told that there are 6,000 languages throughout the world that need support and protection to ensure their continued existence and to allow them to flourish side by side with other stronger and more dominant languages. In the absence, to date, of a stand alone Irish language Act here in the north, there are already a number of statutory legislative instruments which afford minority languages some basic forms of protections.

The British/Irish Agreement Act (1999) established the North South Implementation Bodies and the North South Ministerial Council. Foras na Gaeilge was established as the Irish Language support part of that body and has the responsibility of promoting the Irish language here in the north and with a statutory role in advising public administration’s such as Councils’ as well as the private and voluntary sectors in all matters relating to the promotion and advancement of the Irish language.

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) was adopted by the Council of Europe to protect indigenous, minority languages. Now I would guess that some within the chamber may not have great affinity to rules and treaties that emulate out of Europe, nevertheless I do and I am glad to say that this EU treaty was supported by the UK government in 2001 and Irish was ratified to Part 111 of the Charter along with Scottish Gaelic and Welsh. Ulster Scots was ratified into a

separate Section of the same charter with separate protection mechanisms built in for it.

When we in Mid-Ulster Council began to formulate our Irish Language Policy back in 2014/15 we looked at examples of best practice and what we should be doing to best promote the Irish language within a new languages policy. We listened to the community. We listened to the views of a vibrant and sizeable Irish language community that exists within our district. We consulted widely with the general public. We engaged with the Equality Commission and we took our own legal advice. We did Section 75 Screenings and Equality Impact Assessments. We engaged with Foras na Gaeilge, as I have already mentioned are the advisory body on the protection of minority languages and who provided us with best practice advice on the visibility on bi-lingual signage on any policies that Council may be providing.

That expert advice quite correctly stated that bi-lingual signage was a key tool in raising public awareness and the visibility of the minority language seeking promotion. The Foras na Gaeilge advice manual states that in regards to bi-lingual signage is that the minority language (in this case Irish) is positioned first (above or to the left) Because all Irish speakers can read English, the Irish text would be superfluous if it was to be placed second. Irish has equality with English so as not to suggest to the Irish-speaking public that their language would be in any way less important than that of English. We as a council have a duty to promote and protect our Irish language. I believe we have a duty to listen and to take on board best practice advice from groups such as Foras na Gaeilge on measures to promoting and develop Irish language. With minority languages rights being quite rightly adopted and promoted in other parts of these islands, such as Wales or Scotland, we then ask ourselves why is the north of Ireland different? Why is there intolerance towards Irish here? There can be no justification for this. I would call on all political parties to show leadership on this issue and to call out intolerances in whatever guises they manifest themselves including lack of respect for the rights of language minorities, similar to other jurisdictions. It is now time to show that leadership."

Councillor Kearney said this is not the first time working parties and committees have discussed the issue since 2015 and highlighted that there was obligations towards the language and to date Council had shown civic and political leadership and should meet and exceed on its obligations. He said Council had been exemplar in its support of the Irish language. He reflected that the motion centres on the positions of the language and following comprehensive consultation they reflect the majority. He said in the legacy Magherafelt council this had happened and the languages sat comfortably beside each other. He said many travelled to Scotland and there is dual language signage and in Wales there is only Welsh. He said what is good for neighbouring nations is good for us and that in Mid Ulster many road and street names come from the Irish and the language is not in the possession of one side of the community highlighting that everyday people use Irish. He said some Scots brought Gaelic to Ireland and most of them were protestant. Councillor Kearney spoke of the efforts of people like Linda Irvine in promoting the shared heritage and the challenge for all nationalists of all shades was not to alienate. He said he did not

accept the damage of any sign and asked that people were not defined by opposition and said all could reconnect to their historical language and move on. He said that he had been granted the opportunity to learn and teach Irish and put simply in English 'a country without a language is a country without a soul'.

In conclusion Councillor Kearney quoted Seamus Heaney

"Not to Learn Irish is to miss the opportunity of understanding what life in this country has meant and could mean in a better future. It is to cut oneself off from ways of being at home. If we regard self-understanding, mutual understanding, imaginative enhancement, cultural diversity and a tolerant political atmosphere as a desirable attainments, we should remember that a knowledge of the Irish language is an essential element in their realisation."

Councillor Kerr said that talk of English being universal associated with him their long history of colonialism and people barred from speaking their native languages or playing Gaelic music.

Councillor McKinney said he did not know what the nationalists have to fear for those anti-British anti English as when you travel on the road to Londonderry the word London was scored out so many times the sign had to be erected higher. He reflected on other signs that had English first and Irish below and said that yet again you could predict the vote 15 for 25 against.

Councillor Monteith stated that he did not believe the reversal of the language would make a difference as they were being stolen and Council should call out racism and fascism and call this the attack on culture that it is. He said that English is used predominantly because it was forced down the barrel of a gun right across the world and the colonial experience for all was taking all the good and the resources out of the colony for the central empire. He said he accepted the mover of the motion did not come from the stance of attacking the Irish culture but this is how it would be viewed.

Councillor Colvin said that Mandarin was the largest native language with 1.117 billion speakers and that across the world people in the commonwealth wanted to learn English as it was the top language with 1.32 billion speakers. He said English was used in the airline and all they were requesting was that English gets its proper place and spoke of a sign in his DEA where people had had no opportunity to express their views as their opinion did not count. He said the policy needs to be reviewed it may appear democratic but it was not.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan sought clarity on the sign were people had not been asked for their views as this would be against the policy.

Councillor Colvin confirmed it was a group of houses which had a different name but shared the same road.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan thanked Councillors S McPeake and Kearney for their eloquent and factual contributions. He said he had learned Irish at school and what was interesting now was how much came back to you when you drove past a sign and realisation that the learning had stayed with you. He said many appreciated Council's investment as they go about their daily lives and see their language visible.

The Chair stated that Councillor Cuddy had made a personal plea to him and as a group leader Sinn Féin come to Council as a group. He said that there is a settled view on the democratic decision making process and yet time and again unionist said the Irish Culture is being put down their throats yet there is more unionist flags on posts than ever thus he was sure their culture was safe and sound.

Councillor Cuddy said he had listened commenting that Councillor Kearney had spoken with a passion he understood. He said unionist were moving the motion as it was a clash of culture commenting that he did not learn Irish in the schools he went to but what he was asking was to be met halfway. He said he would love to see the day when people could enjoy the language free from political pressure and said to the Chair he was not just group leader he was the first citizen of the borough and 40% of those citizens would like to see him move on this. He said that a language act would most likely put English first and concluded saying he would accept the amendment proposed and add it to the motion.

Councillor Ashton seconded Councillor Cuthbertson amendment.

The amendment was distributed and shared on screen and accepted.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan called for a vote on the amended motion.

For	15
Against	25

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan said the motion had fallen.

Councillor Cuddy expressed his disappointment and said he wished Council could find common ground reiterating that Unionist had nothing against any other language and in closing said it was his hope that in the future this could be resolved.

C109/21 Notice of Motion

Councillor Corry introduced the motion saying that

"I would like to begin by thanking the individuals and groups who have tirelessly worked and continue to work to eradicate discrimination and inequalities faced by the LGBTQ+ community. We owe you such a debt of gratitude and recognise that while we have come a long way there is still much to be done. Recently I and my party colleague Emma Sheerin MLA met with Mid Ulster Pride who are a young group and already doing great work in the area. We already know that by nature, the LGBTQ+ community is dispersed, often without a support network, and the very real dangers

that have to be considered before any social life can even exist. This group of fantastic young people highlighted that, due to difficulty accessing transport, and logistics, the barriers for LGBTQ+ people in rural areas are even-worse, with rural isolation exacerbated by the issues that face our LGBTQ+ community everywhere. A big issue was on education in schools around diversity and inclusion, training for schools on sexuality, relationships, gender identity and sex education. I remember sex education in my own school days and it was basically non-existent. This needs to change the Education Minister must act to prepare our young people for going into the world and to be understanding and accepting of diversity and so that those who are LGBTQ+ can be free to embrace who they are openly without fear or having to hide who they are. The current stalemate in services for those within our trans community who are in the process of transitioning and being left without any health care as a result is unacceptable. The Brackenburn clinic is the only service for trans people across the north, and the waiting list for referrals hasn't moved in 5 years.

Meanwhile, those people who are in the 'backlog' are in crisis, with many being forced to go elsewhere for much needed healthcare and often getting into debt. In a recent session with Transgender NI, we learned that 48% of under 25s in the trans community have attempted suicide. The trans community are at risk, and there is an onus on all of us to step up and not just call out the abuse that they face, but do what we can to improve services. I would like to welcome the recent debate on banning 'so called' conversion therapies in the assembly and am delighted that my party colleague Deirdre Hargey is beginning the process to ban the practice of conversion therapy. I know that all MLAs, from across all parties, were overwhelmed with emails supporting the call to ban this harmful practice. The ban needs to be comprehensive, and outlaw all forms of 'conversion therapy', covering not just sexuality but also those targeting gender identity, in all settings, including faith. Last week we attended a zoom meeting organised by the rainbow project which included various activists, religious groups as well as individuals some who had been through so called conversion therapy, due to pressure from family members and friends, religion, cultural pressure or because they had no choice. In the 2020 GICT survey it revealed half of respondents were under 18 when offered conversion therapy including a 12 year old. To me that is just shocking. The survey found that most respondents who had been through the practice suffered severe mental health problems as a result including depression, anxiety, PTSD, self harm, suicidal thoughts and attempts and eating disorders. Many actually turned away from religion and relationships with family and friends worsened as a result. The therapy did not work there is no cure and no one needs to be cured for who they are. Some of the stories told of victims and survivors on the night and some which can be read on the ban conversion therapy website are horrific, telling of forced isolation, verbal abuse, beatings, sexual violence, force feeding and food deprivation among some tactics used to attempt conversion. Again and again the same words kept coming up about feeling shame, guilt, rejection, not good enough, self hatred, wrong, evil, sinful, unacceptable to God and that they would go to hell. Imagine being made to feel like that because of who you were born and who you are.

There is a lot of positive work now ongoing with religious groups including Global inter faith which is a broad church of church leaders from all backgrounds who have pledged an affirmation which includes if I can quote a little from it

“We affirm that all human beings of all sexual orientations, gender expressions and gender identities are a precious creation and are parts of the natural order. All equal under God and therefore equal to one another and call for all to be equal under the law. Love and compassion should be the basis of faith, and hatred can have no place in religion. We call for attempts to change, suppress or erase a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity or expression commonly called conversion therapy to end and for these harmful practices to be banned. That we should celebrate inclusivity and the extraordinary gift of diversity”. I feel this embraces what religion should be preaching and teaching. We are calling on our executive to commit to human rights and equality for all sections of society- a brilliant first step in this would be the long awaited establishment of a Bill of Rights for the north, first committed to in the 1998 Good Friday Agreement.

Mid Ulster MLA Emma Sheerin chairs the Ad Hoc Committee on a Bill of Rights and the UUP’s Mike Nesbitt vice chair. I know that all parties involved in the process, have committed to sectoral groups from the LGBTQ+ community to establishing a broad Bill of Rights that will deliver for us all. I hope that I and the members here tonight can play a small part in the task ahead to end discrimination. To commit to equality, respect and human rights for all in our words and deeds and I ask you to support this motion tonight.”

Councillor Corry moved the undernoted motion -

“That this Council recognises the struggle for equality by generations of people who identify as LGBTQ+; acknowledges the successful work of LGBTQ+ activists in eradicating elements of institutionalised discrimination; condemns the continued inequalities experienced by those who identify as LGBTQ+; welcomes the initiative of the Minister for Communities in beginning a process to ban the practice of conversion therapy; calls on the Minister of Health to address the serious deficits in healthcare services for transgender individuals, particularly at Brackenburn Clinic in Belfast; further calls on the Minister of Education to ensure that sex and relationship education guidance for schools is inclusive and covers LGBTQ+ relationships and transgender identities; and calls on the Executive to commit to equality, respect and human rights for all sections of our society in its actions, words and deeds.”

Councillor D McPeake said that in recent times there was more acceptance for people of the LGBTQ+ but many had had to leave here to build new lives in more tolerant societies which was sad in 2021. He seconded the motion.

Councillor Forde said that the DUP believes discrimination past of present based on sexual orientation is totally wrong and did not support conversion therapy. She said that their approach to legislation would be in adherence and there must be a balance and safeguarding. She said there should be no restrictions on religious beliefs and

expressed concern that some debate was proposing this and as such the DUP would not support the motion.

Councillor Hughes said that the SDLP had welcomed the banning of conversion therapy and that ministers had the responsibility to support the LGBTQ+ community. She stated that they would support the motion.

Councillor Wilson said they would not support discrimination of any form and had shown clear commitment in their support of the LGBTQ+ community. He highlighted that the UUPs Robin Swann had delivered more support to this community than any other in Health.

Councillor Kerr said he fully supported the motion and much wider conversations were needed to ensure that from a young age mutual respect is taught.

Councillor Monteith commended the motion and said many lived lives of fear and Council should be sending out the clear message that people should be accepted for what they are not what others think they should be. He said discrimination in the community needed much more work and in talking to people many say it is harder for rural communities to fully identify. Councillor Monteith said it was important that people could be what they are and live and prosper in the district. He also proposed that Mid Ulster Pride be invited to make a presentation to the appropriate committee as a first step to engagement and engage with Council as to how they could be supported.

Councillor Corry agreed and stated that the Rainbow project had offered to do training also.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan said it had been a privilege to stand with Members of Mid Ulster Pride in a silent protest a few years ago and spoke in relation to the 26 county referendum on marriage equality. He said that many had to hide their sexual identity from their families and had to move away thus anything Council could do to help educate it should.

Councillor Corry said that in the previous debate someone had mentioned that people irrespective of their identity were better off in the union but this was not true especially in this instance.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan called for a vote on the motion.

For	25
Against	9
Abstained	6

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan declared the motion carried.

Councillor Corry thanked everyone for their support and said people should not have to move away due to their sexual orientation and people should reflect on how much

talent the district was losing. She also mentioned an event Mid Ulster Pride were planning for September.

C110/21 Notice of Motion

Councillor Burton moving the motion said that she welcomed the ongoing dialogue with fellow Council members at NILGA and said that the matter of rural roads was a corporate concern for council. She highlighted that many Mid Ulster roads were in a poor condition and there had been meetings regarding pot holes, dangerous trees, drainage and maintenance. Councillor Burton said the matter was regularly discussed both at Council and NILGA and all would acknowledge that between now and budget setting in February 2022 much work needed to be done to ensure that rural roads budget got a significant uplift and emphasised the need for all to work towards this.

Councillor Burton moved the undernoted motion –

“That this Council notes the poor conditions of our rural roads in Mid Ulster and joins with other councils through NILGA in respect of evidence based lobbying across local government in making joint representation to the Minister of Infrastructure to support an increased budget to improve maintenance in this and future financial years.”

Councillor Black seconded the motion saying that the issue was continuously raised in the chamber and Council should use every avenue at its disposal.

Councillor McFlynn stated that the SDLP would support the motion and requested an amendment that Council also write to the Minister for Finance along with the Minister for Infrastructure.

Councillor McFlynn said that the lack of an executive for three years had impacted the issue further. She said that the Minister for Infrastructure could only work within the budget granted and highlighted she had asked for an additional £15m but only got £2m. Councillor McFlynn commended the Minister for Infrastructure on what had been achieved highlighting the example of 20mph scheme outside 100 schools and the introduction of active travel. She concluded that they were happy to support the motion with the proviso amendment.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan asked Councillor Burton if she accepted the amendment. Councillor Burton stated she did.

Councillor Glasgow said the Minister should be congratulated on the work she had done and also for finding a bridge in Mid Ulster but highlighted she had failed to find the chamber.

Councillor Glasgow welcomed the amendment and said that the district was heavily reliant on its roads and bridges and without a good network rural districts would be cut off. He added if he wanted to go to Portstewart he would have to change bus

four times. He said whilst the Minister doesn't control the budget she receives she does have the power to change policy and highlighted that in the draft consultation it acknowledges the 15mm is costing more money but there is no amendment to the policy. He concluded that both the budget and the policies needed fixed and that the UUP were happy to support the motion.

Councillor Kerr said he fully supported the motion and like many other Councillors if you looked at his phone gallery it was full of photos of potholes and spoke of one incident when a health care worker was out of action for two days as her vehicle had been damaged.

Councillor Colvin welcomed the motion and said Councillor Glasgow puts the case eloquently saying that the people who work locally are as helpful as they can be but the budgets offered are ridiculous thus they cannot deliver what is required. He said it is frustrating when you see how hands are tied and what was required was effective decision making at Stormont especially when in Mid Ulster the industry depends on its roads of which many need resurfaced just like water and sewage infrastructure needed to be upgraded.

Councillor Oneill thanked Councillor Burton for the motion and spoke of the motion he brought in 2011/12 to bring 20mph speed limits in and the DUP had voted against it and now supported such issues.

Councillor Milne agreed with the motion and referring to the amendment said if the Finance Minister put more money into roads which department should he take it off as currently health received 49% of the budget. He said Members must be real and the Department of Finance could only distribute what they received.

Councillor Gildernew supported the motion concurring that rural roads were in a serious bad condition and pressure must be put on the Department of Infrastructure to address issues and no more so than for the Clogher Valley.

Councillor Doris reminded Members that a few meetings ago she had asked Council to write to the Minister to deal with all of these issues. She concurred with the comments of Councillor Milne regarding the Finance Minister and Councillor Glasgow in relation to the Minister not being able to find the chamber. Councillor Doris said she would support the motion.

Councillor Clarke supported the motion and in relation to costs said that in some areas forestry was destroying rural roads with heavy loads yet make no contribution to repairs. He said they are private foresters for private firms and roads particularly those with poor foundations were falling into serious condition. He said they are making huge profits and should have to contribute to the public purse.

Councillor McLean supported the motion and said that in listening to comments whilst each party tried to protect their own ministers but if the Minister for Finance helps alleviate some of the problem it is worth asking. He said that it is not about being critical unless it is needed but it is about leveraging every opportunity possible.

Councillor McKinney in response to Councillor Clarke's remarks said each vehicle on the road paid the appropriate road tax.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan highlighted the recent meeting with the Department of Infrastructure which the Minister had deferred to officials and said that each time a discussion point was made they said it was policy and the Ministers decision. He said it was difficult to get an opinion across on paper but highlighted that every Minister had met with the Council over the past 12 months and expressed his disappointment that the Minister for DfI had not done so. He said he supported the motion but highlighted that Councillor Milne had made a valid point and DfI should see if money could be spent better. He thanked Councillor Burton for bringing the motion.

Councillor Burton thanked Members for their comments emphasising that all needed to work collectively and remarked that there was no mention of schools in the motion. She said the need was highlighted well with Councillor Kerr's comments about the health care worker. She said that the Minister of DfI had done some good work and in particular highlighted active travel. Councillor Burton said that the Minister would be invited to the NILGA executive and collectively the points could be made and the ministerial team would have to make the decisions were to make cuts but said that public safety is a key issue.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan asked if there was any dissent.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan stated that the motion was carried unanimously.

That this Council notes the poor conditions of our rural roads in Mid Ulster and joins with other councils through NILGA in respect of evidence based lobbying across local government in making joint representation to the Minister of Infrastructure and the Minister for Finance to support an increased budget to improve maintenance in this and future financial years

Councillor Burton thanked Members for their support.

C111/21 Notice of Motion

Councillor Bell introducing the motion said that autism is a life-long disability which impacts communication and people relate to others and often is accompanied by sensory difficulties. He said there was a broad spectrum and people are impacted differently. Councillor Bell highlighted that 25% of people with autism also have a learning disability. He said that figures show it effects four males for every one female and that many adults had never had a diagnosis. Emphasising that early diagnosis is vitally important as early intervention was key to support. Councillor Bell said that Council and society could not let the situation continue that everyone was aware there was not enough support to deal with the difficulties and the current help only scratched the surface.

Councillor Bell moved the undernoted motion –

“That this Council is deeply concerned that at the end of 2020 almost 4,500 children across HSC Trusts were awaiting diagnosis for autism, some reportedly waiting more than 2 years; recognises the distress and harm this places on those awaiting diagnosis and tailored support services, their families; further expresses concern at the growing inequality of access to autism services and diagnosis; notes the stark difference in waiting times across HSC Trust areas; and calls for a longer-term strategy to be progressed urgently in partnership with those with autism, their families and carers, the community and voluntary sector organisations in order to ensure equality of care and services, free at the point of access based on need.”

Councillor Bell also added that he would propose to write to the Minister for Health to raise concerns and request that more of an effort is made to lessen waiting times and remove disparity across health authorities.

Councillor Milne said the matter was near to his own heart and he recognised the work of groups who provide support. He said there was no doubt massive steps had been taken in recent years but more must be done in relation to diagnosis. Councillor Milne stated that early diagnosis allows for reasonable adjustment to make daily life easier and give access to support and services. He said everyone should have the opportunity to reach their potential and that he realised the pandemic had had its impact but a vital plan was required to address issues and ensure access to services irrespective of postcode.

Councillor S McAleer said that when the SDLP MLA had piloted the autism bill in Northern Ireland in 2011 it ensured people were included in disability legislation and noted that it was good to see how far society had come dealing with autism and Asperger syndrome in Northern Ireland.

She highlighted that a report in 2020 had indicated that autism assessments had been reduced or suspended so this had also contributed to long waiting lists. Councillor S McAleer also said that the disparity of access to services had been highlighted in the NI Assembly and this needed to be highlighted when dealing with the issues. She concluded they would support the motion.

Councillor Wilson said the last 15 months had been a difficult period for all who take the comfort of routine and structure and paid tribute to groups and volunteers who have done a sterling job at this time. He said the problems were not new and autism had fell victim to under investment and strategic direction and emphasised that many with autism had great potential. He said that early intervention was key and would be more cost effective as timely diagnosis brings with it greater understanding for the child and the access to the support required yet all too often it was too little too late. He said that the current model of autism services is unsustainable the interim strategy will help but more investment was required.

Councillor Kerr supported the motion and said that one in 24 children tested were diagnosed in the North and many have experienced a total wipe out of services. He

said that respite services needed to be co-ordinated and as the motion outlines the issues with diagnosis the issue of lack resources was also great.

Councillor McKinney concurred with what had been said and shared that he had been involved with young people in the Mid Ulster Autism group and when you attend such meetings you see the difficulties this is not a new problem. He said it was lack of funding towards autism services and that the collapse of government had played its part. He said he would support the motion but that all should go back to their MLAs and express their concerns and he could assure that Minister Swann would do all in his power to help. He said the Minister for Health had conducted himself in an exemplary manner even when under attack. He said if opportunity arises finance again will play its part. He also asked the mover of the motion to take back to his party that changing schools was a very big upheaval for people with autism and Asperger. Councillor McKinney concluded that the health service needed people to specialise and it needed to be addressed how people could be reimbursed to make it worth their while to stay.

Councillor Monteith commended the motion and said he had spoken on the topic often and that it would be very worthwhile to hear about the issues from families involved. He said it was a constant battle with officialdom and it was tough enough dealing with the child without having to deal with the red tape to access services. Councillor Monteith also reflected that early diagnosis was vital but many adults had no diagnosis and this was a tremendous difficulty for which there is little or no support. He concluded that a long term strategy was required as the needs at primary school were very different to that in late teens and adulthood.

Councillor McFlynn concurred that the Minister for Health Robin Swann had done a tremendous job. Speaking on autism she said the issue was huge and she had experience in her own family and highlighted that Autism Mid Ulster no longer existed. She said that some Members had met with the Department for Education regarding a consultation on special needs and there was good input and a plan was being derived but had not been released. She said this was very much an education issue and that every child with autism is different and the condition was lifelong. Councillor McFlynn also asked the question where does a child go post 16 and stressed that education, social and emotional needs were paramount. She paid tribute to the group of families who set up an autism support group FACTS and said they had an office in Magherafelt that operated 24/7.

Councillor McFlynn proposed that Council should host a workshop to discuss what it could do and representatives from the Health Trusts and Department of Education should be in attendance.

Councillor McFlynn concluded highlighting statistics which demonstrated that prior to Covid 19 diagnosis showed out of 549 referred 279 had been diagnosed and recent figures showed 365 referred only 13 diagnosed emphasising the number waiting.

Councillor Ashton said time was ticking on and she would concur with Councillor McKinney with regard to the Health Minister and it was up to all to give the support and finance he needs to deliver.

The Chair Councillor Mallaghan said all Members had engaged with families and knew the struggles they faced but that it was amazing when the right help was in place the difference it made and how it could turn many of these young people into huge successes. He asked Councillor Bell if he accepted the amendment to include a workshop.

Councillor Bell accepted the amendment and thanked everyone for their contributions and said it was worthy to note there was more that unites them than divides. He said if someone was a wheel chair user the disability is clear but autism was not like that.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan clarified that there was no dissent and declared the motion carried unanimously.

Councillor Bell thanked Members for their support.

Items restricted in accordance with Section 42, Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014. The public will be asked to withdraw from the meeting at this point.

The live broadcast concluded at 11.10 pm

Proposed by Councillor Kerr
Seconded by Councillor Quinn and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Chief Executive that he operate his Delegated Authority under Section 3.3 of the Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officer – That items C112/21 to C117/21 be taken as confidential business.

Matters for Decision

- (i) Council confidential minutes of meeting held on 22 April 2021;
- (ii) Planning Committee confidential minutes of meeting held on 4 May 2021;
- (iii) Policy and Resources Committee confidential minutes of meeting held on 6 May 2021;
- (iv) Environment Committee confidential minutes of meeting held on 11 May 2021;
- (v) Development Committee confidential minutes of meeting held on 13 May 2021;

- (vi) Document for Sealing: Substation Lease Agreement between Mid Ulster District Council and NI Electricity Networks Limited in respect of lands situated at Gortgonis Leisure Centre, Coalisland.

C118/21 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7.00 pm and ended at 11.24 pm.

Chair _____

Date _____

Annex A - Introductory Remarks from Chairperson

Good evening and welcome to our meeting of Mid Ulster District Council in the Chamber, Dungannon whether you have joined us remotely or in the Chamber.

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 a roll call of members in attendance.