



Comhairle Ceantair  
**Lár Uladh**  
**Mid Ulster**  
District Council

**Report of**  
**Regional and Minority Language Implementation Working Group of Mid Ulster District**  
**Council**

Report of Regional and Minority Language Implementation Working Group of Mid Ulster Council held on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2017 in the Council Offices, Cookstown

**Attendees**    **Members:** Cllr J Mc Namee (Chair), Cllr P Bateson, Cllr T Wilson, Cllr M Kearney, Cllr S McGuigan, Cllr R McGinley, Cllr S Mc Peake,

**Officers:** T McCance, A McCreesh, D Ó Doibhlin

<b>AGENDA</b>	<b>MATTERS AGREED</b>	<b>ACTIONS &amp; RESPONSIBILITY</b>
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Apologies</b>	
	Cllr K Ashton, Cllr D McKinney,	
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
	Prior to establishing declarations of interest, the Chair welcomed Councillors S McGuigan and M Kearney who replace Councillors C O'Neill and T Quinn.  No declarations of interest submitted.	
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Report on previous meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2017</b>	
	A report of the previous meeting of 5 <sup>th</sup> April was presented to the Working Group.	

<b>4.0</b>	<b>Presentation by Deirdre Speer Whyte, Ulster Scots Community Network (USCN)</b>	
	<p>The Chair welcomed Deirdre Speer Whyte, North West Development Officer with cultural umbrella group The Ulster Scots Community Network to the meeting. Deirdre delivered a presentation entitled “The State of Ulster Scots in Mid Ulster”. The main points raised in summary were;</p> <p>-The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) refers to the promotion of “the language and its attendant culture” and promotion of language “according to the situation of each language”. Mid Ulster District Council is seeking to promote the Ulster Scots language rather than its attendant culture, promoting Ulster Scots as a language as it does for Irish. This is not what the Ulster Scots community needs or desires. What is needed by the Ulster Scots Community is development assistance for cultural promotion and resources should be directed to the Ulster Scots community to allow them to rebuild their confidence in and regain their cultural self-belief.</p> <p>The Ulster Scots Community Network proposed that it could take on the role of delivery agent for a proposed cultural programme including classes, workshops, cultural visits, conferences, ceilidhs, events and concerts. Estimated costs for Year 1 of a proposed programme would be £22,426.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the speaker for her honest and forthright presentation and opened the meeting to a discussion. Cllr McGuigan asked if anything similar to the proposed activity was currently ongoing. T McCance replied that Council was already involved in promoting Ulster Scots culture through events such as the July Celebrations, Burns Night and Scottish Ceilidh.</p> <p>Cllr McPeake stated that Council was obliged by the ECRML to protect and promote the Ulster Scots language and the Irish language first and foremost and not their “attendant cultures”. This was why Council had set up this working group and adopted two language policies. Resources set aside by Council for the protection and promotion of these two indigenous languages could only be used for that purpose, not for general cultural promotion activity.</p> <p>Cllr Wilson stated that it is his opinion that Ulster Scots is not a language, it is a dialect and if the terms of reference of the group only focused on language promotion and language development issues and not the promotion and development of Ulster Scots culture, then the terms of reference needed to</p>	

change to reflect this, otherwise there was no point in Unionist councillors continuing to participate in the Working Group.

Cllr Bateson stated there was a very clear distinction between the obligation to promote an indigenous language and the desire to promote a culture and this would naturally lead to a disparity of approach. Understanding this would lead to a lessening of tension. Deidre Speer Whyte replied that as Ulster Scots is intelligible to all, it being a local dialect of English, Council should expand its definition of language. Cllr McPeake asked if Council had rejected any requests for assistance from the Ulster Scots community in the past. Deidre Speer Whyte replied that the community she represents felt overwhelmed by Irish culture and that it was not in their culture to go and ask for assistance.

Cllr McNamee replied that Council wishes to assist all sections of the community but that the onus was on the Ulster Scots community to come forward and ask as others do. The presentation concluded and the chair thanked Deidre Speer Whyte for her contribution once again. Deidre Speer Whyte thanked the Working Group for their time and left the meeting.

With regard to the above discussion A McCreesh noted that this working group must act within its terms of reference which specifies language promotion and that Mid Ulster District Council is governed by its recently adopted Irish language and Ulster Scots Language policies. All actions which we seek to carry out must be in accordance with these documents, and any activity not based on language promotion is outside the remit of this working Group.

Cllr Wilson suggested that the terms of reference could be changed from the promotion of both languages to the promotion of the Irish language and Ulster Scots culture. Cllr McPeake made the point that our two language policies had been designed to be in accordance with the measures set out for both in the ECRML and that the Charter sought to protect minority languages, not linguistic minorities. If it was being proposed that Council should now support Ulster Scots culture rather than language that would affect our plans to launch an Ulster Scots language policy which had been externally assessed for its impact on equality in full consultation with the Ulster Scots community. Such an approach would also be at odds with Councils obligations to the Ulster Scots language under the ECRML.

	<p>A McCreesh informed the working group that if the issue was a lack of information with regard to Council policy and Council funding programmes was the issue then council officers were happy to go out and inform the community of Council's approach.</p> <p>It was agreed that officers would seek to marry the Ulster Scots Community Network proposal to Councils Ulster Scots language policy, Grants policy and Arts &amp; Cultural Programme with a view to bringing an agreed approach back to the working group.</p> <p>Cllr Wilson noted that it would be helpful to hear from the Ulster Scots Agency on this matter at some stage in the future.</p>	
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Updated Terms of Reference</b>	
	<p>T McCance reported that the working group's ToR had now been updated to cover regional minority languages rather than the Irish language and proposed that the updated ToR would go for approval to the Development Committee. Proposed Cllr McGinley, seconded Cllr McPeake,</p> <p>Cllr Wilson's objection to the proposal was noted.</p>	T McCance
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Meeting Dates for RML Working Group</b>	
	<p>T McCance presented a list of meeting dates in 2018 for the working group which were accepted. The dates are:</p> <p>15<sup>th</sup> January</p> <p>16<sup>th</sup> April</p> <p>25<sup>th</sup> June</p> <p>8<sup>th</sup> October</p>	T McCance

<b>7.0</b>	<b>Update on Facility Signage</b>	
	<p>T McCance presented proposed designs for bilingual internal signage in Council facilities. The proposed design could be applied generically to all Council facilities, is policy compliant and incorporates international design best practice with regard to bilingualism. This generic design will now form part of a wider Council signage implementation programme which will go to P&amp;R committee for their consideration.</p> <p>A McCreesh informed the group that the gateway signage proposal would be before P&amp;R on Thursday 5th October and that the internal signage proposal could go to November's meeting. He also confirmed that all council facilities will be covered by this proposal but that there may need to be adjustments with regard to specific sites given existing branding considerations, such as the Seamus Heaney HomePlace. He also confirmed that a schedule will be put in place for the roll out of bilingual directional signage through a new cross-departmental working group which has been created to expedite this matter.</p> <p>Cllr McGinley asked for clarification that this group would resolve matters for four areas of signage, facilities, gateways, roads and settlements, and that this would be available for the RML working group to discuss at the January meeting. A McCreesh confirmed this to be the case and stated a meeting of the RML working group could be called before January if necessary if sufficient progress was made in the interim given that the only major outstanding issue was the incorporation of Seamus Heaney HomePlace branding.</p> <p>Councillor Kearney left the meeting at 6.50pm Councillor Wilson left the meeting at 6.53pm</p>	<p>T McCance</p> <p>T McCance</p>
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Proposals for Launching Language Policies</b>	
	<p>D Ó Doibhlin presented the group with the proposed format for the launch of Council's two language policies. It is proposed to invite community representatives and representatives of the main language organisations to a launch in the Burnavon towards the end of November 2017. Entertainment representing both linguistic traditions will be provided by local artists, a representative of Mid Ulster</p>	<p>D O Doibhlin</p>

	District Council will deliver a presentation on the content of the policies and an address on the wider importance of protecting and promoting our indigenous languages will be given by a keynote speaker.	
	<b>Irish Language Update</b>	
	D Ó Doibhlin updated the group on the Irish Language progress report. All programmes are proceeding according to the Irish language Action Plan 2017-18.  A list of schools that have participated in the Primary Irish project to date was shared with the group as previously requested by Cllr Wilson.	D Ó Doibhlin
<b>9.0</b>	<b>A.O.B.</b>	
	Cllr McGinley asked if the Members Allowance could be put towards the cost of the University of Ulster Irish Language Diploma course in Ranfurly. A McCreesh confirmed that this would be clarified.  Cllr McNamee noted the lower level of RML bursary uptake in the Cookstown area. A McCreesh felt that there may be an opportunity to encourage the promotion and development of the language in Holy Trinity. D Ó Doibhlin agreed to follow this up.	T McCance  D Ó Doibhlin
<b>Meeting concluded at 7.15pm</b>		

**Reports of Working Groups:** Finalised Reports of Working Groups should be forwarded to Democratic Services on [committees@midulstercouncil.org](mailto:committees@midulstercouncil.org) with a cover report to be scheduled on the agenda of the next available relevant committee meeting

