

Minutes of Meeting of the Development Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 10 March 2022 in the Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon, and by Virtual Means

Members Present Councillor Molloy, Chair

Councillors Ashton, Black, Burton, Clarke*, Corry*, Cuddy, Doris*, Elattar*, Hughes*, McNamee*, Milne*, Monteith*, Quinn* and Wilson

Officers in Attendance Mr McCreesh, Chief Executive
Ms Campbell**, Strategic Director of Environment
Mr Galloghy**, Rural Development Programme Manager
Ms Linney**, Assistant Director of Development
Mrs Forde, Member Support Officer

Others in Attendance **Secondary Schools Union**

Morgan Shuttleworth***, President
Ellie Jo Taylor***, Equality Officer

* Denotes Members present in remote attendance

** Denotes Officers present by remote means

*** Denotes Others present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm.

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

D039/22 Notice of Recording

This meeting will be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast on the Council's YouTube site

D040/22 Apologies

Councillor Kerr

D041/22 Declarations of Interest

The Chair, Councillor Molloy reminded Members of their responsibility with regard to declaration of interest.

D042/22 Chair's Business

The Chair, Councillor Molloy advised that Coalisland Clonoe Comhaltas have been awarded the privilege of hosting the Tyrone Fleadh for the incoming year and requested that Officers engage with the group in relation to the event.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy spoke of the recent paper brought to Committee regarding the Blackwater Feasibility Study and requested that an update be brought to the next meeting.

Councillor Doris congratulated the Coalisland Clonoe Comhaltas on the Tyrone Fleadh coming to Coalisland and supported the call for Officers to engage with the group regarding the event.

Councillor Doris requested that officers provide clarity to herself regarding proposed lighting at the Coalisland Canal walkway stating that there had been discussion that any proposed lighting be wildlife friendly.

Councillor Doris advised that she had clarification that lands at Stewartstown carpark were owned by the Department for Communities and requested that Council engage with the department to endeavor to secure additional car parking for the area. She highlighted that the additional parking was much needed as there was new businesses in the village and requested that an update be brought back to relevant committee.

Councillor Burton requested that Council officers make contact with representatives of Ulster Rugby regarding progressing a project within the Aughnacloy area.

Councillor Wilson related how he, like many others was shocked and horrified about the ongoing situation in Ukraine and the slaughter and murder of innocent people. He said he knew it was not a matter for the meeting this evening but requested that Members receive a report about the ongoing work of Community Development team with local groups responding to the crisis. He said too that Council should show its support to the local community highlighting how they had reached out across the world to help.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy stated that it was heartwarming to see how community groups throughout the district were responding.

Councillor Burton said it was heartwarming to see rural groups who have pulled together and filled cattle trailers to the roof with supplies to be shipped across Europe to assist the people of Ukraine. She spoke in particular of Colin Tinsley who had coordinated the response. She concluded that it was so sad to see how wickedness can impact so many lives.

Councillor McNamee concurred with what has been said and commended all groups in their response. He also spoke of the appeal on the news for foster families and said that officers should follow up on this also.

The Chief Executive advised that the AD: Development was in communication with groups in order to coordinate community response and if any Members was aware of participating groups to refer them to the officer team. He said that Council were awaiting guidance from the Northern Ireland Office in relation to any resettlement programmes and that Members would be kept updated.

The AD: Development advised that the Department for Communities had scheduled a multi agency meeting for the incoming week following which she would provide an update to Members.

D043/22 Deputation: Secondary Students Union NI: School Uniform Campaign

The Chair, Councillor Molloy welcomed representatives of the Secondary Students Union NI to the meeting and invited them to make their presentation with regard to the School Uniform Campaign.

Miss Taylor delivered presentation detailed at appendix A outlining the focus and progress to date on the School Uniform Campaign.

The Chair Councillor Molloy thanked the representatives for the presentation saying that when he went to school the only branded item was a tie and maybe a blazer but having four children himself he was well aware of the additional pressures. He advised some schools were helpful whilst others were maybe not so supportive regarding the issue. The Chair invited Members questions.

Councillor Corry commended the representatives on the presentation and said she could remember going home with fear due to lack of finance in the home to have to ask for maybe new shoes. She said the matters need to be addressed and items should be brand free which would make them more affordable.

Councillor Corry proposed that Council write to the Minister for Education in relation to brand free/affordable school uniforms.

Councillor Corry commended the representatives of SSUNI and told them to keep up the good work.

Councillor Doris said she was very impressed with the facts presented and commended the representatives in how they had coped with the technical difficulties and pressed on. She spoke of the cost of living impacting everyone and said whilst it used to be single parent families in stress now even with two people working in the home families were getting it hard. Councillor Doris spoke of the stigma attached to not wearing the current brand and said that the whole point of a school uniform was to move away from this thus branding was ludicrous. She spoke of a motion moved by Sinn Féin at the Assembly in December and said she would follow up with her MLA colleagues as to its outcome.

Councillor Doris seconded the proposal to write to the Minister.

Mr Shuttleworth advised that the group had sought a meeting with the Minister but it had been cancelled by the Department of Education and they had been told it would be rescheduled. He further advised that the Minister had provided a response to a letter forwarded by SSUNI but it had been somewhat disappointing as it had indicated that whilst there was guidance the Department of Education could not make it statutory that schools did not stipulate branded clothing. He also stated that the letter had indicated there would not be much progress in relation to uniform grants either.

Councillor Doris requested that aforementioned points be included in the proposed letter to the Minister. She reiterated that she would follow up with the group in relation to the motion brought to the NI Assembly regarding school uniforms.

Councillor Monteith thanked SSUNI for the presentation and said that the uniform issue goes back over a long time. He stressed that it should not be swept under the carpet and that uniform grants had never met the cost of uniforms and whilst the difference has become paramount the grant has always been inadequate. He said that the grant needed to be uplifted to a realistic level and serious consideration to eligibility needed to be given. Councillor Monteith spoke of schools receiving extra income if students attending were from areas of deprivation and it was ludicrous that the school expected them to buy branded sports gear. He said that every school uniform could be quite simple and if there was political will it could be sorted out. He spoke of the expense of sports kits and the various kits required for different sports which included kit bags. He reiterated the need for political will and said that August was an unbearable month for many families and the most expensive one outside of December. He concluded that the uniform grant needed to be improved and the rules around uniforms should be black trousers, white shirt and school tie.

Councillor Elattar said that like many of the other Members in the room she attended secondary school about 40 years ago and uniforms was an issue then. She said that she was the eldest of eight children and not only was uniforms expensive but you were checked for specific underwear for physical education classes. She stated that young people were attending school to be educated not to be a status symbol and it was crazy in current times that students could not participate in classes due to lack of uniform. Councillor Elattar spoke of the stigma associated with this and said that she could remember in the 1980s when her father had lost his job she took a pack lunch rather than avail of free school meals. She concluded that she was fully supportive of the campaign.

Councillor Ashton thanked the group for the presentation and said it was good that they had not only highlighted the difficulties but had recommendations as to how they could be addressed. The Councillor concluded that Council should support the SSUI in their quest.

Councillor Wilson thanked the SSUNI for the presentation and said that the comments had been well made. He wished them well in their campaign and supported their issues stating that if the clothing wasn't branded it would be a start.

Councillor Quinn thanked the SSUNI for the presentation and stated that the school uniform issue was well known and many families struggled with it. He concluded wishing the group all the best with the campaign.

Proposed by Councillor Corry
Seconded by Councillor Doris and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to write to the Minister for Education in relation to brand free/affordable school uniforms and that guidance provided to schools with regard to uniforms be reviewed.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy concluded that Council unanimously supported and wished them well with the campaign. He concluded that they should keep pushing it and demanding answers.

Matters for Decision

Declaration of Interest

Councillor Quinn declared an interest in Craic Theatre.

D044/22 Development Report

The AD: Development presented the previously circulated report to provide an update on key activities and sought approval for the following:

- Community Grants – to agree the rolling grant awards – Local Community Festivals, and Good Relations.
- DfC Real Living Wage Salary Uplift for the General Advice Support Project – to approve the direct transfer of finance through the community support programme.
- Arts – Arts Festival and Arts Outreach Plan – to note the arts festival and plan for Mid Ulster under the current arts development programme.
- PCSP Plan – to note the PCSP plan for information
- Development – to update on Development

Proposed by Councillor Quinn
Seconded by Councillor Wilson

Resolved To propose the Development Report as detailed below:

- **Community Grants**

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to agree the rolling grant awards – Local Community Festivals, Good Relations, and the Strategic Events

- **DfC Real Living Wage Salary Uplift for the General Advice Support Project**

The AD: Development advised that Council are a conduit in relation to this funding and would be uplifting it as detailed in the report and passing it on to MIDAS/STEP.

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that approval be given to the direct transfer of finance through the community support programme

- **Arts – Arts Festival and Arts Outreach Plan**

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that approval be given to the Mid Ulster Arts Festival 2023 & Mid Ulster Arts Outreach programme

- **PCSP Plan**

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to note the PCSP Plan for Mid Ulster

- **Development**

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to note the update on Development

D045/22 Strategic Community Development Update

The AD: Development presented the previously circulated report to provide an update on a number of key areas of delivery under Strategic Development for social housing provision including the Draft Dungannon Place Shaping Plan Pilot; Women's Aid/Apex Supported (social) Housing Scheme; and the response to DfC Housing Supply Strategy Consultation. Updates on the delivery of the Mid Ulster Anti-Poverty Plan and Council Anti – Poverty Plan were also provided.

In relation to the Women's Aid/Apex Housing Scheme the AD: Development advised that a paper had been considered by the Policy and Resources Committee and now the next stage was to secure the funding package. She advised that once the funding was secured a further paper would be brought to Policy and Resources regarding the sale of the lands.

Councillor Doris welcomed the progress in relation to the project and stated it was well known that lack of housing was a big obstacle to people leaving abusive relationships. She stated there was a huge need and it was heart breaking when families have to be turned away from Women's Aid due to lack of resources. Councillor Doris advised she had been liaising with Women's Aid and commended officers on driving the project forward. She also welcomed the points added to the document in relation to intimidation regarding the housing supply consultation document.

Councillor Elattar drew attention to the response to the Response to DfC Housing Supply Strategy Consultation and said it was good to have the high cost of rents included but it should be more specific in that housing association and private rents is the problem. She concluded that it was a good document but a line should be added in to include the comments regarding rent and that reference also be made to infrastructure and water.

Councillor Monteith sought clarity with regard to the agreement with the Housing Association in relation to the Women's Aid project. He was emphatic that it should be detailed in the document that proposed rents would be affordable.

In response the AD: Development said that officers were currently working through the legal aspects of the project one element being with Land and Property Services and the second the covenant that Women's Aid have first choice on the housing and the remaining should be category one social need. She stated that there would be further caveats but to date rental and what would be deemed a fair rent had not been discussed. She concluded that if the purchase of the land was passed at a lower cost that should be written into the covenant that it should be reflected in the rent.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy reflected that there should be a level of control.

Councillor Monteith stated that the rate payer is providing a big subsidy and whilst he agreed with the decision he would have serious concerns regarding the rents charged by social housing suppliers. He was emphatic that the conversation with the Housing Association should be that the rent is equivalent to those charged by the NI Housing Executive. He stated that the affordability of rent has become a farce and stated that in Stormont over the past few when the Minister had abdicated from a decision. He concluded that Council must take the opportunity that if the Housing Association wanted help from Council to deliver the project it would be granted with a caveat regarding the rest.

In response the AD: Development stated that Council can ensure that such a caveat is included and advised that Women's Aid have highlighted the cost of rent is a reason for people returning to relationships that are abusive.

Councillor Corry said she too had worked with Women's Aid in relation to the project and they were endeavouring to remove affordability issues in relation to people having to stay in abusive relationships. She too expressed Women's Aid appreciation of Council's assistance with the project. In relation to the response document to DfC Housing Supply Strategy Consultation she expressed her appreciation to everyone who had contributed and concluded that Council must keep up to date in relation to current issues of rising costs.

Councillor Wilson drew on Councillor Monteith's point and stated that Cookstown Enterprise Centre had endeavoured to support Women's Aid in housing projects but had hit a brick wall as grants were only available to Housing Associations thus it is a closed market which effectively means they can do as they wish. He said that Council should get involved with the issue and write to the Minister for Department for Communities siting the Women's Aid project as an example that they are unable to progress support to a project as the criteria stipulates it has to be a housing association.

Proposed Councillor Doris
Seconded Councillor Elattar

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to note updated key areas of delivery under Strategic Development

- (i) Dungannon Place Shaping Plan Pilot
- (ii) Women's Aid/Apex Supported (social) Housing Scheme
- (iii) Response to DfC Housing Supply Strategy Consultation
- (iv) Mid Ulster Anti-Poverty Plan; and
- (v) Council Anti-Poverty Plan.

D046/22 Sports Representative Grants

The SD: Environment drew attention to the previously circulated report detailing the proposed community grant allocations for the range of:

- Sports Representative Grant – Team and Individuals (February 2022)

Proposed by Councillor McNamee
Seconded by Councillor Wilson

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that it note and give approval for the sports grant allocations as outlined in the report.

D047/22 Macmillan Move More Programme

The SD: Environment drew attention to the previously circulated report providing an update on the funded MacMillan Move More programme, current contract end date and details of an opportunity to extend the programme.

Councillor Corry stated that she was happy to propose and said that the project was invaluable both physically and mentally to its users.

Proposed by Councillor Corry
Seconded by Councillor Wilson

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that it note the contents of the report and give approval to:

- (i) Apply to Macmillan for a maximum investment of £33,333.00 towards costs for the period August 2022 – March 2024
- (ii) To match fund remaining 50% via Council for the above period (approx. £9K Aug 22 – March 23 and approx.. £18k for April 23 – March 24, subject to agreement in the rates estimates process for April 23-March 24.

D048/22 Service Level Agreement with the Drinking Water Inspectorate

The SD: Environment drew attention to the previously circulated report and sought approval for Mid Ulster District to sign an updated Service Level Agreement (SLA) and associated Data Processing Contract with the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI).

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor Burton

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that it note the contents of the report and grant approval to the signing of the updated Service Level agreement with the Drinking Water Inspectorate, for the purpose of undertaking on behalf of the DWI, risk assessments and sampling of private water supplies under The Private Water Supplies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017.

D049/22 Economic Development Report – March 2022 – OBFD

The Rural Development Programme Manager drew attention to the previously circulated report which provided an update on key activities as follows:

- Rural Micro Business Development Scheme 2022
- Lough Neagh Rescue (LNR)

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve the key activities as listed below in the Economic Development Report – OBFD.

- **Rural Micro Business Development Scheme 2022**

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor Clarke

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that approval be given for Council's participation in the 2022 Rural Business Development Grants Scheme and subject to the business case being approved for funding, seek permission for the Chief Executive to sign and return the contract document when received from DAERA in due course.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor Clarke

- **Lough Neagh Rescue (LNR)**

Councillor Doris stated that she was happy to propose the funding for Lough Neagh Rescue.

Councillor Doris sought an update regarding the recent meeting with Department for Infrastructure regarding dredging at the Barmouth at the Bann estuary.

In response the Chief Executive advised that he had discussed same with the Director of Public Health and Infrastructure and advised that they were awaiting response from ABC Council with regard to the dredging which was mostly in their area however Mid Ulster would work in partnership with them. He stated that officers had engaged with DfI regarding the matter together with possible funding opportunities and that stakeholder mechanisms had to be defined. He concluded that a report would be brought to a future Environment Committee.

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that approval be given for the funding request of £12,000 from Lough Neagh Rescue for 2021/22.

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that a report be progressed to the Environment Committee in relation to the outcome of discussions with ABC Council, Department of Infrastructure and other relevant stakeholders with regard to dredging at the Barmouth.

Declaration of Interest

Councillor Molloy declared an interest in Covid Small Settlement grants in relation to Moy Village Project.

D050/22 Covid Small Settlement Regeneration Programme

The Rural Development Programme Manager drew attention to the previously circulated report that provided an update on key activities relating to the Covid Small Settlement Regeneration Programme.

In response to Councillor Ashton's query in relation to inclusion of projects that had currently missed out in the current programme the Chief Executive advised that Officers would have liked to secure funding for all but it was one grant with many objectives that had to be met. He stated that Council was confident that it could make application to DEARA for two of the projects before the 31 March. He said that the remaining two require support and Council was endeavouring to identify other programmes.

Councillor Ashton referred to the fact that Council had reduced the allocation for four projects and brought forward two from year two and asked if this left space in year two programme for further projects.

In response the Chief Executive advised that the current submission had to be with the Department on Friday 11 March 2022 and the following year has yet to be agreed and the Department would not commit at this time.

Councillor Burton commended the officers on their work but said she was heartbroken that one of the projects in particular was not moving forward at present and asked if there was anyway of escalating same. She reflected that at the meeting to discuss projects going forward all Members had wanted it delivered.

The Chair, Councillor Molloy said that work on the projects that did not meet the criteria was not lost as when a future funding opportunities become available the projects are 'shelf ready.'

In response to Members queries the Chief Executive advised that the project at Claudy where Council owned green space floods due to the carpark would be included.

Proposed by Councillor Milne
Seconded by Councillor McNamee

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that approval be given for:

- (i) The inclusion of projects detailed for Moy and Bellaghy for delivery in 2022/23 under the Covid Small Settlements Regeneration Programme;
- (ii) To grant delegated approval for the Chief Executive to submit Council's revised regeneration plan to DfC immediately following Committee approval given pressures on timescale for the issue of a letter of offer.
- (iii) To grant delegated approval for the Chief Executive to accept a Letter of Offer from DfC should acceptance timescales fall outside of normal Committee or full Council approval timescales.

Matters for Information

D051/22 Minutes of Development Committee held on 10 February 2022

Members noted Minutes of Development Committee held on 10 February 2022.

D052/22 Economic Development Report – March 2022 – OBF

Members noted key activities as detailed below:

- Cookstown Town Centre Forum Minutes 03 & 30.11.21
- Coalisland Town Centre Forum Minutes 29.11.21
- Tourism Development Group Minutes 25.11.21
- Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) Minutes 7.12.21
- Tourism Spring Campaign 2022

Live broadcast ended at 8.05pm

Local Government (NI) Act 2014 – Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor McNamee
Seconded by Councillor Black

Resolved In accordance with Section 42, Part 1 Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 that Members of the public be asked to withdraw from the meeting whilst members consider item D053/22

Matters for Decision

Matters for Information

D053/22 Confidential Minutes of Development Committee held on Thursday 10 February 2022.

D054/22 Duration of Meeting

The meeting commenced at 7 pm and concluded at 8.14pm.

Chair _____

Date _____

Annex A – Introductory Remarks from the Chairperson

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

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

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

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

Thank you and we will now move to the first item on the agenda.