

Minutes of Meeting of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 26 January 2023 in the Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon and by virtual means

Chair Councillor Corry

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

Officers in Attendance Mr McCreesh, Chief Executive
Mr Black, Strategic Director of Communities and Place (SD: C&P)
Ms Canavan, Strategic Director of Organisational Development Strategy and Performance (SD:ODSP)
Mr McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement (HoSS&E)
Mr Moffett, Assistant Director of Organisational Development, Strategy & Performance (AD:ODSP)
Mr Tohill, Strategic Director of Corporate Service and Finance (SD:CSF)
Ms Kate Keys, Marketing and Communications Manager*
Mrs Forde, Member Support Officer

Deputation: Health & Social Care Trust

NHSCT Attendees

Jennifer Welsh**	Chief Executive
Owen Harkin**	Deputy Chief Executive
Wendy Magowan**	Director of Operations
Neil Martin**	Director of Strategic Planning, Performance and ICT.

SHSCT Trust Representatives

Mrs Lesley Leeman**	Acting Director of Performance & Reform –
Mr Colm McCafferty**	Interim Director of Children and Young People's Services/Executive Director of Social Work

* Denotes Members present in remote attendance

** Denotes Officers present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7 pm.

The Chair, Councillor Corry 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.

C001/23 Notice of Recording

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

C002/23 Apologies

Councillors Graham, Mullen and S McPeake

C003/23 Declarations of Interest

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

C004/23 Chair's Business

The Chair, Councillor Corry wished everyone a Happy New Year and said that over the year council would continue to demonstrate commitment to the growth and development of the district for the betterment and benefit of all citizens.

The Chair, Councillor Corry welcomed Councillor Mark Robinson to the Council and expressed thanks to his father, former Councillor Wills Robinson, for his dedication and service over the years. The Chair wished Wills all the best for the future.

The Chair, Councillor Corry welcomed the news that Maghera is set to benefit from £9m Levelling Up funding to support economic growth and drive regeneration in the town. She said it was fantastic news for Maghera and its surrounding area. Under the investment, a much-needed public realm scheme will transform the look of the town centre. Public realm schemes deliver significant physical and intrinsic benefits to town and city centres, making them more accessible, vibrant and welcoming places to be for residents and visitors alike. She stated that as well as providing new green space and outdoor recreational opportunities for the local population, the investment in what has been a historically overlooked area will also create jobs and economic growth via the creation of a new business park.

The Chair, Councillor Corry highlighted the launch of the 2020 Grant Aid Programme this month and the provision of help and support to grow community groups and sports clubs in Mid Ulster, many of which will have plans for the year ahead with events and projects. It was stated that the grants can make a big impact on communities and it's good to see money being spent on the ground where it is needed. And, with the launch of this year's new online system, the process will be made even simpler for applicants, again illustrating the Council's commitment to improving services for residents.

The Chair, Councillor Corry concluded that it's great to see the Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership work to improve employability outcomes for residents in recent months. With an ambitious action plan now agreed and funding confirmed by the Department for Communities, the Mid Ulster LMP team is beginning work to better understand local market needs and improve employability outcomes. The Chair, highlighted that interventions will also contribute to the continuing drive to improve economic activity in the Mid Ulster area. For example, one of the programmes currently running is the Employer Led Disability Inclusion Programme. As well as increasing the number of people with disabilities in paid employment, the programme will engage with Mid Ulster employers to improve their understanding of disability needs in the workplace. It will also raise awareness of the benefits of tapping into what can be an under-utilised labour pool and will create a number of job opportunities that are suited to employees with a long-term disability or health condition.

The Chair, Councillor Corry recommended that as many Mid Ulster employers as possible take advantage of this support to make their workforces productive, diverse and inclusive.

The Chair, Councillor Corry expressed condolences to Dr Boomer SD: Planning on the death of his brother.

Councillor N McAleer said he had two issues he wished to raise the first of which was in relation to Department for Infrastructure winter gritting schedule. He said that over the latest cold snap he and most likely every other councillor was inundated with requests for gritting, he did not name roads as across the district there would be quite a few, however he stated it is clear that there are significant gaps in the current schedule.

Councillor Burton also asked that the letter reiterate the need for grit piles on rural roads which are currently not on gritting schedule. She said that DfI had previously indicated that grit piles would not be replenished but carers in particular were contacting Members to say they could not reach clients, also it was important to have roads near schools gritted. Councillor Burton emphasised that the gritting schedule needed to be widened but highlighted rural dwellers were good at sorting problems and previously grit piles had allowed them to do so.

Proposed by Councillor N McAleer
Seconded by Councillor D McPeake and

Resolved That Council write to DFI requesting

- (i) the current criteria for gritting and the current gritting routes;
- (ii) seek a review on the criteria and existing routes to better reflect the needs of local communities particularly in rural areas;
- (iii) reiterate the need for grit piles on rural roads which are currently not gritted.

Councillor N McAleer drew attention to Battery Harbour in Moortown and said that

the Director and Assistant Director of Communities and Place would be aware that the electricity supplied through the pillars down at the harbour had been switched off by the council. He said that to date there has been no indication given as to when the supply would be restored, and the issue has been ongoing for a few years. Councillor N McAleer highlighted that Council was scheduled to invest in an upgrade to the playpark at the location, which will be most welcome but to fully exploit the sites potential remedial works reconnecting the power supply need carried out as soon as possible. He concluded that given the length of time that has elapsed he would propose that an urgent meeting is held with council officers and the Battery Harbour Management Committee with the aim of resolving this issue and would request that a report follows to the relevant committee with an update on how this is progressing.

Proposed by Councillor N McAleer
Seconded by Councillor D McPeake and

Resolved That Council

- (i) progress a meeting with Battery Harbour Management committee to discuss ongoing issue impacting the electricity supply to pillars at Battery Harbour; and
- (ii) an update report is brought to future development committee.

Councillor McKinney referred to the Levelling Up Fund awarded to Council for the former school site in Maghera. He extended thanks to all officers who had worked on the project and said he looked forward to the development of the site. He said that often the Tory government is complained about but this was great news that £9m was coming into the district.

Councillor Hughes entered the meeting at 7.12 pm

Councillor McLean welcomed Councillor Mark Robinson to the council team. He paid tribute to his father former Councillor Wills Robinson and said Mark had big shoes to fill but had no doubt he would do so. Councillor McLean stated that Wills had been highly respected by both Councillors and officers and had served council over three terms during which he had been a marvelous advocate for the rural community working diligently in delivering broadband and the new planning system. He spoke of the true gentleman Wills was whose personality was embedded in Christian principles which he lived out. He wished Wills and his wife Frances a healthy, happy and long retirement.

Councillor S McAleer also extended best wishes to Wills and said as a fellow Councillor in the Clogher Valley he had warmly welcomed her to Council and she in turn welcomed Mark who would be a great addition to Clogher Valley DEA.

Councillor Burton reiterated Councillor McLean's comments and said that Wills was a colleague in the Clogher Valley DEA and had always lobbied for the rural area and she would miss him. She welcomed Mark to the team.

Councillor Mallaghan welcomed Mark to both the Council and planning committee. He extended best wishes to Wills who he said was a great man on the planning committee and a sensible voice at a site meeting.

Councillor Glasgow welcomed Mark to Council and he too extended best wishes to Wills for the future. He said Wills had always had a level head when it came to planning and they would miss the tradition of hearing the price he was getting for milk. Councillor Glasgow said Wills had been passionate about his church and always had a word for everyone.

Councillor Gildernew said that Wills had been one great fellow and in welcoming Mark said he had big shoes to fill but would make the mark! He concluded that Wills was a country man who took life as it come and extended thanks to him for his service to the rural community and council.

The Chief Executive on behalf of the senior management team and staff welcomed Mark to the council. He stated his father had been a pleasure to work with and had been an absolute gentleman.

The Chief Executive said he did not often single people out but in relation to the Maghera project he would extend thanks to the DEA Councillors who have worked tirelessly to get the project over the line. He also extended thanks to the officer team, Mark Kelso, Raymond Lowry, Annemarie Campbell, Terry Scullion, Fiona McKeown and Paul McCready. He concluded that currently the officer team were considering options to ensure the project is delivered on time within budget.

The Chair, Councillor Corry on behalf of the Carntogher Councillors thanked all who had worked diligently on the project.

Councillor Kearney concurred with comments in relation to the Maghera levelling up funding stating it would drive investment and boost the Maghera area. He also thanked the public and traders together with Mark Kelso and Davina McCartney.

Councillor Kearney then spoke of the devastating cuts planned for Radio Foyle which would impact the breakfast show and other programmes and impact up to 40 jobs. He said the station had provided a great service to north west listeners who were also license payers and he proposed that Council write to the Chair and Director of the BBC to asked to reconsider the decision.

Proposed by Councillor Kearney
Seconded by Chair, Councillor Corry and

Resolved That Council write to Chairman and Director General of BBC expressing Council's opposition to proposed cuts which will impact programmes and jobs at Radio Foyle requesting that the decision is reconsidered and services maintained.

Councillor Doris spoke of the girl harassed and physically assaulted along the Coalisland walkway in recent days. She said safety is always a priority but there had to be reflection on men's issue of violence against women and this was an issue for

men not women to sort. Councillor Doris highlighted that the girl was minding her own business when the attack took place and change had to come. She highlighted the number of women killed by men in Ireland and yet the focus was on making females responsible for their safety. Councillor Doris said female politicians had been lambasted for raising the issue and it should be noted that not all men were perpetrators as she had many men who had supported her in life especially in her role in male dominated life of politics. She said that the message had to go out to offending males that this behavior would not be tolerated. Councillor Doris emphasised that women should not be sexually harassed and whilst it was not easy to be the one who speaks out in a group it should be done. She said if there was a bad image call it out, if women are being hassled in a bar speak out and it was time that courts put women above the comfort of men. Councillor Doris highlighted statistics reporting that only a small number of reported rapes end in conviction. She stated that the figures and incidents are beyond frightening but she had hope that change would come and encouraged victims to speak out, report incidents and speak to supporting organisations such as Nexus.

The Chair, Councillor Corry commended Councillor Doris on the powerful words and said that in recent weeks she had met with different organisations regarding such instances. She said that all such behavior from the lowest level of misogyny needs to be challenged as women must be safe. She highlighted her desire to work on this for International Women's day.

Councillor Kerr spoke of two incidents in the past week one the runner already mentioned and another a parent who too was verbally abused and left frightened. He said people from the area were bewildered by such behavior which appeared to be coming from one group who had also approached an elderly pensioner preventing her from passing. He expressed his outrage at the incidents and said the Coalisland pathway was a well-used facility and it was extremely disappointing what was happening. He said in general the young people of Coalisland were good hardworking youths who wanted to get involved in positive activism. He said he would be using his influence to get the behavior nipped in the bud as it was totally unacceptable. He said that some constituents had suggested to him to consider floodlighting at the Gortgonis trek as it could be used as an alternative walking route. He concluded by saying that the incidents aforementioned magnify the seriousness of what is taking place and those demonstrating the behavior need to stop.

Councillor Quinn concurred and said that the incidents were not isolated and that he too had heard about the elderly lady abused earlier in the day. He also spoke of reports in November when someone had been wielding a knife. He said Coalisland Canal is a centerpiece, the main link to the Gortgonis Centre and something needed to be done fast. He said that crimes against women could be highlighted and people could be frightened but action was needed. He advised he had emailed the Chief Executive and SD: Communities and Place to organiaae a meeting to see best how the problem could be tackled. He called for collective working.

Resolved That Council progress a meeting to discuss ongoing issues at Coalisland walkway.

Councillor S McAleer said in speaking on women's issue Northern Ireland does not have a health strategy. She highlighted that Scotland, England and Wales all had such strategies in place and in Northern Ireland this needed progressed to ensure that health and wellbeing is maintained. Councillor S McAleer proposed that Council progress a meeting to discuss lobbying for a Women's Health Strategy for Northern Ireland.

Resolved That Council progress a meeting to discuss lobbying for a Women's Health Strategy for Northern Ireland.

C005/23 Deputation: Northern Health & Social Care Trust and Southern Health & Social Care Trust

The Chair welcomed to the meeting representatives from Northern Health & Social Care Trust and Southern Health & Social Care Trust and invited them to address the committee.

Ms Welsh referred to the debate in Chair's business regarding the safety of females stating that the NHSCT had a large female workforce and thus would support Councillor Doris' comments. She also referred to Councillor S McAleer's comments with regard to a women's health strategy and said the responsibility for it lay with the Department of Health and Public Health Agency and the implementation of it would benefit women of today, their families and future generations. In conclusion she welcomed the news of the Levelling Up funding awarded to Maghera.

Ms Welsh NHSCT delivered a presentation (appendix a) giving an overview of the corporate objectives, Trust and GP Workstreams. In relation to out of hours care she advised that Dalraida provide urgent care and like others it was difficult to fill GP rotas as many no longer want to work out of hours. It was noted that until the National GP shortage was addressed this would be an ongoing issue. In relation to Domiciliary care it was noted that services were procured and some chose the route of direct payments as designed by the Department of Health.

Speaking on the outcome and experience of the patient Ms Welsh NHSCT highlighted waiting times particularly in relation to ambulance and endoscopy waits which had greatly improved and since 14 January target times had been met. Responding to Members queries in relation to speech and language it was noted that 107 children were waiting appointments of which 37 breaching target time. With regard to comments in relation to wheel chair provision Ms Welsh advised that like all trusts they had to adhere to the criteria defined by Department of Health but advised that individuals could obtain wheel chairs on loan from organisations such as the Red Cross and Shop mobility.

Ms Welsh NHSCT highlighted recent statistics regarding the £400m shortfall in health budget and the reported Stormont budget shortfall of £1bn and said it was imperative that delivery of health services was re-evaluated.

Making reference to the recent industrial action Ms Welsh said that there had been a full day strike involving three trade unions Unison, Unite and NIPSA which had resulted in cancellation of surgery and over 1000 service users impacted across the

hospital and GP treatments rooms. She urged all to negotiate and find a solution as it was beyond the remit of the individual trusts to resolve pay disputes stating it was imperative that staff were awarded fairly. In conclusion she stated that within the Integrated Care System councils had an important role to play.

Ms Leeman SHSCT extended apologies on behalf of their Chief Executive. She referred to the briefing paper forwarded to Members in response to questions forwarded prior to the meeting. In relation to Primary care she highlighted that the SHSCT similar to NHSCT worked with GP colleagues and engaged in weekly meetings. She stated that the SHSCT had supported GP practices both in Craigavon and Dungannon.

Ms Leeman SHSCT drew attention to waiting lists and stated that as a result of the pandemic they had increased significantly with 67k waiting to see consultants, 24k waiting for general appointments, 6k waiting mental health appoints all of which were significant waits. She stated that even to bring levels back to pre-pandemic levels was challenging but highlighted examples of change such day surgery at South Tyrone site for cataracts, overnight stays at Daisy Hill site. Ms Leeman advised that up to £15m was used to provide additional capacity by buying in services but there was concern that this money would reduce in the incoming year.

Ms Leeman SHSCT advised that out of hours services is managed in house and the previous five sites had been temporarily reduced to two. She said like Dalriada it was difficult to get GPs to cover shifts however that they were working on a skills mix basis that included mental health, palliative care, telephone advice, nursing services and consultation. She highlighted the introduction of new services specifically for a Dungannon Community Care Centre which is a priority within the 10 year capital plan profiled for the next four years ie 2027/28 the case had been resubmitted for capital funding of which they awaited outcome. Ms Leeman said that Oakridge SEC remained a priority social care scheme which subject to available capital was scheduled to take place within the next two years. It was noted that significant cuts were pending but the SHSCT would continue to work with Department of Health.

Ms Leeman SHSCT advised that like NHSCT they were seeking to change the model for delivering domiciliary care and they too had entered a procurement process. She highlighted current statistics in relation to inhouse and private sector delivery and said there was currently over 600 people waiting on care packages that they could not deliver on. Ms Leeman acknowledged that the previous Minister for Health had set funding aside but there needed to be major changes in the sector which had been hard hit during recent industrial action but it was a service she believed would benefit from a review.

Ms Leeman SHSCT referred to the Mental Health Regional Strategy which had presented year one priorities. She spoke of a pilot scheme in East London and stated that a model established in England would be applied to provide therapy. She said that the demand for staff and experienced mental health practitioners remains high that there was approximately some 6k people on waiting lists with some waiting 32 weeks.

Similar to the NHSCT Ms Leeman SHSCT advised that there were over 1700 children waiting on speech and language appointments with some waiting over one year. She advised that the SHSCT had a contract with the red cross for temporary loans (less than six months) for wheelchairs but some choose to hire their own.

Mr McCafferty SHSCT advised that they had particular concern in relation to speech and language as they simply could not deliver the service they wished. He acknowledged the significance of early intervention but like other services they struggle to maintain speech and language therapists as the numbers trained were simply inadequate. He said referrals had slowed down during covid but now that children were back in school there had been a sharp rise. He said the SHSCT were exploring ways of addressing the need but like other services current industrial action had impacted on delivery. He said there had been some increased investment in schools and from February a help line to provide advice would be live.

In conclusion Ms Leeman SHSCT spoke of the rapid diagnostic centre at the South Tyrone Hospital site and there was a capital case for investment in CT and MRI scanner on the site. She said there had been patients progressed in a test prior to Christmas and said it was a pilot site and they were looking forward to close co-operation across trusts. It was noted that currently the SHSCT had to take referrals from the South West Acute Hospital but current impact was minimal.

The Chair, Councillor Corry thanked the respective trusts for their presentations and said it was encouraging to see improvements. She sent solidarity to the staff out on strike and stated her hope was that negotiations progressed and a fair pay deal would be reached. The Chair stated the importance of the Assembly and acknowledged the 6k waiting list for mental health and the lack of GPs. The Chair invited Members questions.

Councillor Burton referred to the birthing pool which had been previously removed from the midwifery led unit and sought clarity as to whether it had been replaced.

In response Ms Leeman SHSCT advised that it was on the capital priority list and she would revert with a firm time scale but it should be done by March 2023.

Councillor Kerr expressed solidarity to striking staff and stated he was aware those presenting did not have the remit to bring the changes required. He said the trust staff impacted carried the population through the pandemic faced immense stress facing an enemy they could not see and it was now important for councils and trusts to lobby for those same people.

Councillor McKinney thanked the respective trusts for the presentations and stated his DEA lay within the remit of the Northern Trust. He welcomed the Northern Trust positive reports and spoke of having a relative through the Casualty system on a Saturday afternoon within 30 minutes. He said the positive turn around would help morale for all.

The Chief Executive thanked the teams for their presentations and thanked the Directors and their teams for their support and leadership in relation to the Growth Deal Project in relation to care provision.

He referred to the exasperation of the integrated hospital site and said some feel it may be at the expense of Loane House, he requested a meeting with Trust staff to discuss in particular Oakridge SEC at which the Dungannon DEA members would be present. He stated that year on year Oakridge SEC is reported as a priority capital project but it had been a priority since 2014 and with the business case and budget agreed the project had to become a reality.

In response Ms Leeman concurred stating that the Southern Trust echoed the frustration and stated they would be happy to convene a meeting to discuss. It was noted that the Department of Health allocate the budget for major projects.

Resolved That Council and SHSCT progress a meeting to discuss Oakridge Adult Education Centre. Dungannon DEA Members to be invited.

The Chair, Councillor Corry thanked representatives from NHSCT and SHSCT following which they withdrew from the meeting at 8.23pm

Matters for Decision

C006/23 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Council Meeting held on 15 December 2022

Councillor Monteith drew attention to C246/22 Chair’s Business at which cuts to youth sector funding had been raised. He said that he had spoken of Dungannon and Ogras Youth Clubs and had proposed an urgent meeting and yet weeks down the line nothing had been done, there was a massive gap in funding across six counties and today he had read that Belfast and Derry had the hole in their budgets filled and yet Mid Ulster was high and dry. Councillor Monteith highlighted that £90k reduction in budget at least which had staff jobs and programmes in jeopardy. He stressed the seriousness of the situation emphasising that the current provision was not sustainable. He proposed again that Council put calls out to the centres mentioned and the youth alliance emphasising that it was voluntary youth clubs that were impacted.

Councillor Doris concurred and said the lost funding was ridiculous at a time when centres were busier than ever. She highlighted that Neighbourhood Renewal were engaging with the centres.

The Chief Executive emphasised that the matter would be picked up immediately.

Councillor Kerr expressed disappointment that the meeting had not taken place stressing that the youth clubs are used by hundreds of people.

Resolved Education Authority Cuts: update to be provided regarding meeting with voluntary clubs impacted with cuts to be progressed.

Proposed by Councillor Mallaghan
Seconded by Councillor Monteith and

Resolved That the Minutes of the Council held on Thursday 15 December 2022 (C243/22 – C257/22 and C265/22) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated were considered and adopted.

C007/23 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Planning Committee Meeting held on 9 January 2023

Proposed by Councillor Mallaghan
Seconded by Councillor Brown and

Resolved That the Minutes of the Planning Committee held on Monday 9 January 2023 (P001/23 – P005/23 and P011/23) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated were considered and adopted.

C008/23 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Environment Committee Meeting held on 10 January 2023

Councillor Kerr drew attention to E005/23 DfI Roads and said he had attended the A5 launch Enough is Enough Campaign. He highlighted that over 40 lives had been lost on the stretch of road and thought it would be useful to invite the group to present to Council.

Councillor Monteith seconded the proposal stating that improvements on the A4 had been a long battle.

Resolved That the A5 Enough is Enough group to be invited to make presentation to Council

Councillor Cuthbertson highlighted that the A29 had been closed for three weeks to be resurfaced. He also mentioned that the Granville Road was closed and there was a traffic light system on the Moy Road. He said it sent out a message that Dungannon was closed and was emphatic that it needed to be made clear with DfI Roads that it is not acceptable.

Councillor Monteith concurred and said much of the works could be carried out at night. He said that there had been little or no notice regarding the works especially all happening at one time.

Councillor Burton said any letter to DfI should also seek an urgent update on the assessments which had been carried out on the M1 that had been closed on Sunday morning. She referenced the number of fatalities over a two year period.

Resolved That Council write to DfI Roads seeking an urgent update on M1 assessment between junctions 14-15; and also express concern on the amount of simultaneous road works taking place on key roads in Dungannon;

Councillor Burton also drew attention to E005/23 DfI Roads regarding the introduction of a no waiting time. She reiterated comments made at the Environment Committee that there is engagement with local businesses as a lot of traffic parks in the designated area and could potentially move around to a nearby housing estate.

Resolved That as expressed at Environment Committee there is engagement with businesses and assurance that as parking area is redesignated as no waiting area that traffic does not park in nearby housing areas.

Councillor S McAleer advised she had also attended the A5 Enough is Enough campaign and asked if Council would be sending representation to the public enquiry which had been moved from January to May 2023.

In response the Chief Executive said Council could express an opinion and he would clarify to Members regarding attendance at public enquiry.

Proposed by Councillor B McGuigan
Seconded by Councillor S McGuigan and

Resolved That the Minutes of the Environment Committee held on Tuesday 10 January 2023 (E001/23 – E018/23 and E027/23) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated were considered and adopted.

C009/23 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on 11 January 2023

Proposed by Councillor McLean
Seconded by Councillor S McAleer and

Resolved That the Minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee held on Wednesday 11 January 2023 (PR001/23 – PR009/23 and PR020/23) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated were considered and adopted.

C010/23 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Development Committee Meeting held on 12 January 2023

Councillor Kerr drew attention to D012/23 Economic Development – Coalisland town centre and said he had been contacted about by local residents regarding Mimi’s corner regarding congestion and fumes coming from vehicles and asked that Council investigate the issues. He also sought an update on Kings Road regarding a meeting with local section office.

Councillor Monteith seconded Councillor Kerr’s proposal regarding air quality and congestion. He reminded Members that at a recent meeting regarding air quality at Newell Road and Charlemont Street, Moy other areas had been mentioned including Mimi’s Road and Circular Road.

The Chief Executive stated he would revert to Member regarding King's Road.

Councillor Quinn referred to the air quality and the King's Road issues and said that perhaps the Town Centre Forum could drive the matter forward.

The Chief Executive said he would seek clarity on the issues and the best methodology of addressing them.

Councillor Cuddy left the meeting

Proposed by Councillor Kerr
Seconded by Councillor Monteith and

Resolved That an

- (i) Update to be provided to Members regarding status of meeting with Council and Dfl local section office with regards to flooding at King's Row, Coalisland; and
- (ii) meeting to be convened regarding congestion at Mimi's Corner roundabout and air quality impacts

Proposed by Councillor Clarke
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

Resolved That the Minutes of the Development Committee held on Thursday 12 January 2023 (D001/23 – D015/23 and D019/23) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated were considered and adopted.

C011/23 Conferences, Seminars and Training

The HoSS&E sought approval for the previously circulated report on conferences, seminars and training as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report.

Councillor Kearney encouraged Members to attend the forthcoming NILGA conference.

Proposed by Councillor McLean
Seconded by Councillor Kearney and

Resolved That approval be given to submitted requests for conferences, seminars and training as outlined at Appendix 1 to the report.

C012/23 Civic Recognition Requests

The HoSS&E 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 McFlynn and

Resolved That approval be given to submitted requests for civic recognition detailed at Appendix A as outlined in the report.

Matters for Information

C013/23 Consultations

Members noted consultations received for attention of Council.

Proposed by Councillor Milne
Seconded by Councillor Corry and

Resolved That Council respond to Department of Health: Autism Strategy 2023-2028. (All Member workshop to be convened) Closing Date: 8 March 2023

C014/23 Correspondence

Members noted update on correspondence received for attention of Council.

Councillor Monteith drew attention to correspondence from NI Water regarding the mast at Castlehill. He said whilst it was welcome that NI Water are revisiting the matter he felt they had been dismissive and he would in fact dispute some statements as he can remember discussions with legacy Council Chief Executive over 15 years ago when it had been established that the blue light service did not need to be on the current unsightly mast.

Councillor Cuddy returned to the meeting

Councillor Monteith proposed that Council respond to NI Water and seek a meeting with senior representatives as soon as possible. He was emphatic that the pressure needed to be kept on the matter. He welcomed the opportunity to present to the Board but a meeting was of paramount importance. He said the mast and capped reservoir both needed to be on the agenda as both would open the western side of the hill. He said the Spelga Dam provides water to a large part of Ulster but people can walk around it.

Councillor Kerr concurred supporting the proposal.

Councillor Mallaghan supported Councillor Monteith and said although not his DEA it was an all important site in Mid Ulster.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

Resolved That Council respond to NI Water letter regarding mast at Castle Hill, Dungannon and again seek urgent meeting to discuss mast and also the opening of capped reservoir at site.

Proposed by Councillor Kerr
Seconded by Councillor Monteith and

Resolved That Council support Newry, Mourne & Down District Council motion: Workers Legal Rights to Tips

The Chief Executive referred back to the A5 Campaign and confirmed Council had made a response to the consultation prior to Christmas but as previously advised he provide clarity.

C015/23 Notice of Motion

Councillor Cuthbertson moving the motion stated:

“The Coronation of His Majesty The King Charles III, will take place at Westminster Abbey on Saturday 6th May, 2023, 100 days from now. The Coronation Service will take place on the morning of Saturday, 6th May. The Coronation is a solemn religious service, as well as an occasion for celebration and pageantry. The Coronation Weekend, will provide an opportunity to spend time and celebrate with friends, families and communities. This will happen in Dungannon, Mid Ulster, Northern Ireland, the entire United Kingdom, and across the Realms and the Commonwealth, in celebration of this historic occasion. On Monday, 8th May, members of the public will be invited to take part in “The Big Help Out” which will encourage people to try volunteering for themselves and join the work being undertaken to support their local areas. Planned also over the weekend is the event entitled ‘Lighting up the Nation’, which will see the country join together in celebration as iconic locations across the United Kingdom are lit up using projections, lasers, drone displays and illuminations. Thousands of events are expected to take place in every corner of the United Kingdom this May as people take to their streets, gardens, public parks and community spaces to join the Coronation celebrations and mark this historic occasion. There are many things Mid Ulster Council can do over the Coronation weekend. From screening the events on large screens in public spaces, lighting up of public buildings, flying the Union flag at the Council offices, inviting communities to volunteer in our public parks, for example participate in council organised litter picks and tidy ups. Mid Ulster Council’s response to this significant occasion in our country’s history must be Officer lead, particularly as it will be on the run up to the local government elections. There is no precedent set for such an occasion as this, the Councils previous strategy of celebrating the decade of anniversaries is over, this is not an anniversary, it is an issue of National importance which will attract interest across all religious and political divides and nationalities we find living in the Mid Ulster District Council area. *This year on 6th May 2023, the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III will take place, having previously acceded to the throne on 8th September 2022, following the passing of his mother, the late Queen Elizabeth II. To mark this historic occasion, Mid Ulster District Council will write a letter of congratulations*

and best wishes to His Majesty and also organise a programme of meaningful and respectful events to commemorate this significant occasion.”

Councillor Buchanan stated that many communities in Mid Ulster will want to mark the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III. To accommodate these communities he asked that this Council follows the wishes of these citizens and organises a series of events for the people. Councillor Buchanan stated this is an event which occurs for some people only once in a lifetime and there are people now in their late 60s who have never witnessed a Coronation and this will be an event which many people in Mid Ulster, both young and old will look forward to so it gave him great pleasure to second the motion.

Councillor Mallaghan proposed an amendment to the motion, he stated that it was a simple amendment following on from the word also ...*'empower the community to celebrate this event using existing Council funding through our festivals and Good Relations programming.'*

Councillor Mallaghan stated that many people would see this as an important and historic occasion but many others will not and it is up to each individual to decide for themselves but there is funding already programmed within Council budgets and he felt that is the most appropriate place for funding events.

The amendment was shown on screen.

Councillor B McGuigan seconded Councillor Mallaghan's amendment.

Councillor Glasgow stated the UUP would support the motion. He stated that the Platinum Jubilee had showed the great positive attitude that the community within Mid Ulster had come together from all backgrounds and from any religion because the Royal family is held in high regard. He said that the Royal family tries to encourage respect and honour and has always been well received at local level. Councillor Glasgow stated that the fact that the Councillor has mentioned the number of events that Buckingham Palace has announced had one aim and that was to bring everyone together. The Councillor stated that on thinking back, it has been mentioned in the past, by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, when she made the comments – “Even with the most deeply held differences, treating the other person with respect and as a fellow human being is always a good first step towards greater understanding.” Councillor Glasgow stated that those comments should be taken on board before any decision is made. He advised that King Charles III had previously said – “As stewards of this precious planet, it is our actions and our actions alone that will determine its future.” So it just shows how prominent and how strong the Royal family is within the livelihood of the people and the life of the people of Mid Ulster and further afield and that this occasion will bring them together. The Councillor stated it has been quite dark the last number of years, in particular with Covid 19, and people need something to look forward to and people need that inspiration and plus it has a great balance where it has the prominence and importance of the religious part of what is within the divine right of God within the Royal family in which they are appointed but also the community aspect where it brings people from all backgrounds, both political and religious to come together and that is clearly demonstrated as has been previously displayed.

Councillor Monteith stated he respected other Councillors right to hold the British monarchy in high esteem however it would be remiss of him not to express the feelings of himself and many of the people he represents. The Councillor stated the British monarchy does not represent him, the trappings of empire do not represent him, he said it is an organisation which is exclusive to one religion, and is the handing on of privilege and power based on birth right rather than ability. He said as a republican he believed that all positions of power come from the people, not from any supposed divine right or birth right and he could not in good conscience support the celebration of that type of handing on of power and could not support the celebration of the trappings of the British empire which has a track record across the world of atrocity after atrocity. He said it had left a trail of destruction behind it to the point that the headpiece which the British monarch is crowned with is even under contention where the diamond the Koh-I-Nûr was stolen from the people of India and what is now Pakistan and both those people are of the opinion that it should be returned to them. He said he had no difficulty and would not hinder anyone who believes the Coronation is worthy of celebration and he would support their right to do so, and had no difficulty with them accessing funding of which many opportunities had been announced in the last couple of weeks for communities. He extended good luck to any community that wished to celebrate the Coronation but stated as a Republican he could not support it and from a corporate view he would not support organising events to mark the endorsement of monarchy regardless of whether that monarchy was British or Irish. He drew attention to spending pressures and some of the things being suggested would be considerably expensive and wondered how it would fit in with rates estimates. Councillor Monteith also put on record that he had not been involved in discussions regarding flying of the Union flag previously at the Council buildings but had stated his objection and would ask that his objection to any proposal for it to fly in the future was noted. He concluded that Council policy of 'no flags' at corporate events or on corporate facilities has served the organisation well and it does not bode well to deviate from that.

Councillor Quinn stated that the SDLP from its foundation was based on respect including for other people's views and opinions. He said that when King Charles visited Cookstown with Camilla, it had been a successful visit and passed off very well and people from both traditions had lined the streets to have a look at them passing. He acknowledged that the Royal family plays a very important part in the Unionist community and he had no wish to interfere with that whatsoever. He said they had certainly made the headlines over the last couple of months, and he had watched the Netflix series about Meaghan and Harry and would not give away which side he came down on but on looking at the amendment he had no problem with with it and had no problem with a letter being sent.

Councillor Kerr stated it would be no surprise to anyone that as an Irish Republican he would oppose the motion and all forms of monarchy. He stated that he believed the monarchy to be an outdated system which has many associations with colonialism and controversy in Ireland. He said many people in East Tyrone lost their lives to British state collusion and many local families suffered from British violence in Ireland overseen by British royal families throughout the last decades. He said people in Meenagh Park where he lived suffered at the hands of British state terrorism and the Royal family in recent times has limped from one crisis to another

with allegations of racism, dodgy financial dealings and many other issues. He said as a Republican how could he support a system which allows people to be born into privilege, hoard land, power and wealth while many of the so called Royal family subjects are facing death due to poverty, cold and not being able to afford this crisis caused by capitalism.

Councillor Colvin stated he would not start on the many challengeable statements that have been made by some of the Members tonight as he would not know where to start. He said that when the British left a lot of the African countries they had fell into ruin and actually had to be rebuilt and the control, the government all those things that were in place was substituted with greed and the people at the top looking after themselves. He highlighted other things mentioned about the British government such as £9m Levelling Up funding the appreciation of which should be shown in action. He said Council has to rise above individual positions and recognise that the Coronation is a major thing and goes across the whole community as a lot of people irrespective of background respect the Royal family and as such Council who supposedly represents everybody should set individual political opinion aside and as a gesture of good will support Councillor Cuthbertson's motion fully. He acknowledged that Council failed when the opportunity presented itself at the Platinum Jubilee and now had the opportunity to step forward and do something meaningful as to do otherwise would lead Unionists to think that Council only represents a certain section of the community. He concluded that surely the council is bigger than that and it represents everybody an appropriate recognition of the Coronation, by Council, would be perfectly in order.

The Chair Councillor Corry asked if Councillor Cuthbertson accepted the amendment.

Councillor Cuthbertson rejected the amendment stating that the motion had two actions and the amendment is a direct negative and is replacing the main action of the motion. He stated, "the first paragraph of the motion is just outlining why we are here for the action so it is a direct negative. I would be against the amendment. Unionists are in the minority in this district, we are not asking for everything, all we are asking for is a bit of respect and a bit of fair share when it comes to Council events and Council funds. As the previous Councillor rightly said we were here in January last year with a motion in relation to Platinum Jubilee, it was rejected. The year before in relation to the centenary of Northern Ireland, a motion was also rejected, there was nothing meaningful or worthwhile done for the centenary of Northern Ireland so this is going to be the third year in a row. Unionists are saying what is in this Council for them and to be honest I can't see what is, they get their bins lifted but that is all they are getting out of this Council and I would be against the amendment because it is talking about encouraging community groups to access Council grants and festival and good relations funding, the community groups are already accessing these community grants for their running costs, it is to keep the community groups going, it is to pay their rent, it is to pay their electric and it is to pay their fun days and their Christmas parties. So if we go down that line the people are going to sacrifice their Christmas parties for the children, they are going to sacrifice whatever events, coffee mornings, morning clubs for pensioners because of this one off occasion that is in the national interest. That is not the road to go down and it is time this Council and the Senior Management Team of the Council stepped

up and took a decision for themselves and said this is of national importance, this is the direction we are going and Council officers lead on this matter. This will be during purdah, it is 14 days before the election so Council officers should take the lead on it and not accept the amendment.”

The Chair, Councillor Corry stated that the wording on the amendment is perfectly grand and the amendment was put to a vote:

For	20
Against	14
Abstained	2

The Chair, Councillor Corry stated that the amendment was carried so is now part of the substantive motion and that the substantive motion would now be put to a vote -

This year on 6th May 2023, the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III will take place, having previously acceded to the throne on 8th September 2022, following the passing of his mother, the late Queen Elizabeth II. To mark this historic occasion, Mid Ulster District Council will write a letter of congratulations and best wishes to His Majesty and also encourage community groups to access council grants in festivals and good relations to organise events if they so wish.

For	14
Against	16
Abstain	6

The Chair Councillor Corry stated the motion had fallen.

Councillor Cuthbertson asked why the voting was carried out differently this time, he stated that normally when the amendment is accepted that is the substantive motion and he had not seen two votes taken before.

The Chief Executive advised that standing orders clearly state that when there is an amendment and the amendment succeeds the amendment becomes the substantive motion and that substantive motion is then once again put to the floor.

The Chief Executive asked to make a comment now the motion is over as he is not allowed to speak during motions as they are political. He stated he wanted to make a comment as the Chief Executive as he felt he had to as once again tonight there was reference about officers in motions and he wanted to make it very clear on behalf of every employee in this organisation there is a distinction between the role of an officer and role of an elected member and they should never be confused. The Members make the policy, officers in this organisation are paid to implement it and once again tonight I have seen and heard officers being incorporated into political motions. I will be seeking a meeting with the leader of the relevant party and the Councillor concerned to progress this discussion. It is unfair to all employees of this Council by any elected Member to incorporate us into a political discussion

In response, Councillor Cuthbertson stated it had to be officer led due to purdah in the lead up to election and that was the reason why that was suggested.

C016/23 Notice of Motion

Councillor Wilson moving the motion stated,

“The motion is self explanatory so I don’t intend to read it out. As the cost of living crisis hits people hard it’s important that we as a Council do everything we can to lobby the government for more help. This Council has worked hard to help those most in need and I would like to pay tribute to our staff for all their efforts. However the Assembly must also work in tandem with local Councils to identify need, tailoring support packages for those most exposed to the impact of the cost of living. We as a party welcome the UK government’s announcement several months ago of a £650 grant to people on benefits including Universal Credit, Working and Child Tax Credits and Pensions Credits. The first tranche of this payment (£326) was made to most people between 14th and 31st July and a further payment of £324 before Christmas.

We also welcome the Chancellor’s decision to make an energy discount grant worth £600 to all households in Northern Ireland in January - £200 more than in GB but we believe more could be done. While welcoming the roll out of the scheme now I just hope that price of oil and electric aren’t increased as more people order heating oil. It is very disappointing to hear, if true, that some landlords are refusing to give their tenants the £600 vouchers. We have called for the GB ‘Warm Homes Discount’ to be rolled out in Northern Ireland. The Warm Homes Discount is a sum of money credited to an electricity (and in some circumstances gas) account of the eligible recipient. In winter 2022/2023 this will amount to £150 in GB.

At last month’s Council meeting I asked the Trust boards to look at free parking for their staff and to say I am disappointed with their response is an understatement. Here we have essential workers not only having to pay for extra fuel costs but having to pay to use their works car park. I have been informed that some staff even have to arrive an hour early for their shifts to even get a car space. I wonder how many MLAs or Civil servants have to pay to park at Stormont.

One other thing that could help would be that Car fuel duty should be cut with an additional rebate for essential users, not least carers who travel extensively to provide vital support to those who are unable to look after themselves. We have heard from these users the hardship that they face trying to do their job. It’s important that these carers are looked after and a rebate on car fuel duty would go some way to recognise the vital work that they carry out. I am sure everyone has noticed the varying prices that people are paying for their fuel at the pumps. This is maybe something that the Trading Standards Service could get their teeth into to ensure fairness and transparency. When the Assembly is up and running one of their top priorities should be to increase the amount of money into the energy efficiency scheme to help insulate homes. At present the Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme (NISEP) is an £8 million fund, collected

from both domestic and commercial electricity customers through a public service obligation (PSO) for the delivery of energy efficiency schemes but I believe this should be increased.

We as a party supported the recent year's extension of Business Rates holiday in the Assembly with some businesses receiving a further three-month break in payments including retail, hospitality, tourism, leisure, childcare and airports. We also supported small businesses receiving a discount of between 20% and 50%, depending on the Net Annual Value of their business premises and voted to freeze the regional rate for households and businesses for another year. We can only hope that the regional rate is frozen again this year. We believe the current energy crisis is as great a threat to Small Businesses as the Covid pandemic and we will continue to press for a further extensions of the Rates holiday for the extent of the Energy crisis Northern Ireland's utilities are currently regulated separately from Great Britain; hence the problems delivering energy discount grant and we have called for home heating oil provision and bottled gas be brought under the remit of the Utility Regulator NI ensuring parity of regulation with mains gas and electricity. I would also call on retailers who sell home heating oil in small containers to price them at same cost per unit as those charged for bigger deliveries. Lots of people can't afford to buy in bulk and this would help alleviate that problem."

Councillor Wilson moved the motion –

This council notes with concern the significant increase in the cost of electricity, gas and oil for households and businesses across Northern Ireland; acknowledges the intervention from the UK Government including the Energy Price Guarantee; further notes the energy price guarantee support was reduced from December and will be further reduced from March 2023; therefore, agrees to write to HM Treasury to press for the removal of VAT on energy as part of wider intervention measures.

Councillor Colvin seconded the motion highlighting in particular that a reduction of tax on fuel should be supported.

Councillor Monteith said he agreed with the thrust of what has been proposed and that anything to relieve the current crisis which is really a 'capitalism crisis' is welcome. He expressed concern about some landlords, not all and shared that he had been approached by a tenant who had been told the house would be searched if they did not hand over the letter for the £600 voucher scheme. He said a lot of people needed support especially in situations whereby English was not the first language.

Councillor Monteith proposed that the motion include, 'that Council officer team engages with relevant bodies to establish how people overcome issues being experienced regarding the energy support grants.'

Councillor Kerr seconded the proposal.

Councillor Wilson accepted the addition to the motion.

Councillor N McAleer stated that Sinn Féin welcomed the motion and said as a party they had campaigned to have the vat removed by the British Government. He welcomed the £600 payment but said that tax cuts would benefit families as for years tax benefits have only benefited the rich.

Councillor Kerr supported the motion which would help people on the ground and concurred with Councillor Monteith's statement that the crisis was created by greed and capitalism.

Councillor Mallaghan drew on Councillor Monteith's comment saying that the crisis was 'cost of capitalism' but he would call it 'cost of Tory government crisis.' He reflected that the Assembly had introduced a small scale energy bill brought by John O'Dowd with regard to reducing carbon footprint and that local government needed to introduce these schemes. He said Councils need to be more sustainable, removing vat would help and would take money away from the exchequer but the matter of energy companies needed to be addressed. He concluded that the government was good at avoiding paying tax.

Councillor Quinn said that the SDLP supported the motion and stated that whilst many names could be put on the crisis it was a result of bad government. He said all was piled onto the working class not the energy companies and expressed concern that tenants not the landlords were the people entitled to the £600 payment.

Councillor Brown said the DUP would support the motion but stated across the debate he had listened to some drivel. He highlighted that the Tory government was giving the £600 energy support grant and said it was shameful that some landlords were taking it. He also highlighted that £9m from the Levelling Up Fund had just been awarded to the Mid Ulster area. He concluded that the money should be welcomed and drivel should be cut out.

The Chair Councillor Corry said the motion as undernoted was carried unanimously.

This Council notes with concern the significant increase in the cost of electricity, gas and oil for households and businesses across Northern Ireland; acknowledges the intervention from the UK Government including the Energy Price Guarantee; further notes the energy price guarantee support was reduced from December and will be further reduced from March 2023; therefore, agrees to write to HM Treasury to press for the removal of VAT on energy as part of wider intervention measures.

Also

That Council officer team engages with relevant bodies to establish how people overcome issues being experienced regarding the energy support grants.

Councillor Wilson in response thanked Members for their support.

The live broadcast concluded at 9.26 pm.

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.

Proposed by Councillor Kerr
Seconded by Councillor Mallaghan

Resolved That items C017/23 to C029/23 be taken as confidential business.

Matters for Decision

- (i) Council Confidential minutes of meeting held on 15 December 2022
- (ii) Planning Confidential minutes of meeting held on 9 January 2023
- (iii) Environment Confidential minutes of meeting held on 10 January 2023
- (iv) Policy & Resources Confidential minutes of meeting held on 11 January 2023
- (v) Development Confidential minutes of meeting held on 12 January 2023
- (vi) Document for Sealing – Contract Murley Road Footpath
- (vii) Document for Sealing – Lease at Drumcairne – DAERA and MUDC
- (viii) Document for Sealing – Connecting Pomeroy – Forestry Building
- (ix) Document for Sealing – Connecting Pomeroy – Church of Ireland Hall and GAC Building
- (x) Document for Sealing – Connecting Pomeroy – Public Realm and MUGA
- (xi) Document for Sealing – Contract Regarding Derrynoyd and Drumcairne Forests

C030/23 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7.00 pm and ended at 9.32 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.