

Minutes of Meeting of the Development Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 6 November 2014 in Magherafelt District Council Offices

Members Present: In the Chair, Councillor Forde (Chair)
Councillors Elattar, Mallaghan (7.09pm), McNamee, Molloy, C O'Neill, T Quinn, Reid, G Shiels and Wilson

Members in Attendance: Councillor Clarke

Officers in Attendance: Mr Tohill, Chief Executive
Mr Barrett, Head of Recreation (DSTBC)
Mr Cassells, Director of Technical Services and Leisure Services (MDC)
Ms Campbell Director of Policy & Development (MDC)
Mr Glavin, Head of Leisure Services (CDC)
Mr Henry, Good Relations Officer (MDC)
Mrs Forde, Mayor's PA/Member Support Officer (DSTBC)
Mr McElhatton, Good Relations Officer (CDC)
Ms McCloskey, PCSP Manager (CDC)
Mr McCreesh, Acting Chief Executive (CDC)
Miss Mullan, Learning & Development Manager (DSTBC)

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm.

D33/14 Apologies

Councillors Burton, McAleer, McEldowney and Monteith. Councillor Molloy advised that Councillor Mallaghan would be arriving late.

D34/14 Election of Chair for Meeting

The Chief Executive having received apologies for both the Chair and Vice Chair sought nomination for a Member to Chair the meeting.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson
Seconded by Councillor Reid and

Resolved That Councillor Forde act in the position of Chairperson for the Development Committee meeting of 6 November 2014.

Councillor Forde took the Chair.

D35/14 Declaration of Interest

The Chair reminded members of their responsibility with regards to declarations of interest.

D36/14 Briefing on Seek Programme

The Chair, Councillor Forde welcomed the SEEK representative to the meeting.

Miss Mullan drew attention to a powerpoint presentation detailing the aim of SEEK, “to increase the supply of skilled, educated, knowledge workers in our economy and help them gain sustained employment/ self-employment by providing training opportunities/skills development for approximately 60 unemployed people over a three year period.”

Drawing attention to the programme partners, make up of management committee and the transnational element Miss Mullan explained the curriculum of the course emphasising aspects of learning approaches, creative methodologies and the project outcomes. Advising that the current programme was not completed Miss Mullan said previous programme outcomes included 58 persons completing the training of which 21 went into further education training, 8 attained fulltime jobs, 12 attained part-time jobs and one became self-employed. All participants attained qualifications which included ECDL, NVQ levels 2 & 3, ESOL and ECDL.

Councillor Mallaghan entered the meeting during the presentation at 7.09pm

The Chair, Councillor Forde thanked Miss Mullan for the presentation commenting on the project outcomes. Councillor Quinn advised that Cookstown District Council was twinning with a town in Poland and sought clarification of the town visited by SEEK. In response Miss Mullan advised the town was Lobin in the South East of Poland.

In response to Councillor Molloy’s question on the future development of the programme Miss Mullan advised there was a new round of funding becoming available in the coming weeks and SEEK was now dealing with new partners in the cluster by meeting with colleges to establish level of interest. Miss Mullan added that the programme was funded through the Department of Employment and Learning with a core purpose to benefit the unemployed and employers in Dungannon but any widening out across Mid Ulster District Council area would have to be established together with new partners.

Responding to Councillor Wilson’s question on the budget Miss Mullan advised that the current programme was £465k which included match funding from public and in-kind sources.

Miss Mullan left the meeting at 7.15pm.

In response to Councillor Wilson’s request to discuss the programme the Chair, Councillor Forde, advised that the discussion should take place in committee.

Matters for Decision

D37/14 Receive and confirm minutes of the Development Committee meeting held on Thursday 9 October 2014

Proposed by Councillor Mallaghan
Seconded by Councillor Quinn and

Resolved That the minutes of the meeting of the Development Committee held on Thursday 9 October (items D20/14-D32/14), were considered and signed as accurate and correct.

D38/14 Mid Ulster Good Relations Strategy and Plan

Mr Henry advised that the purpose of the report was to update Members on the Good Relations Programmes currently delivered in Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt Councils and to seek direction on the development of the Mid Ulster Good Relations Strategy and Action Plan.

Stating that community relations first began in 1989 as an effort to bring the main traditions together, Mr Henry advised that various events, such as country and western concerts, have been organised as part of the process. Stating that things had moved on Mr Henry advised that the legal basis for Good Relations was borne out of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998) which states that 'public authorities are required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion and racial group'.

Drawing attention to key issues for a thematic approach for Mid Ulster District Council the undernoted issues were listed as areas of priority:

- Our Children and Young People;
- Our Shared Community;
- Our Safe Community;
- Our Cultural Expression; and
- Programme Actions.

Mr Henry referred to information being compiled through the community planning exercise and advised that following on from the 11 December 2014 it was proposed to compile a Mid Ulster District Council Action Plan for Good Relations and present to January committee. Mr Henry indicated that budget implications would be clearer following the forthcoming Good Relations Conference.

It was recommended that Members approve the thematic approach proposed for the development of the Good Relations Action Plan. Managers and Good Relations Officers from the three Council areas will continue to help inform the development of the action plan liaising with OFMDFM.

The Chair thanked Mr Henry for his presentation and asked how it was proposed to measure outcomes. In response Mr Henry advised that outcomes would be measured with questionnaires depicting attitudes before project and after project similar to that done with Peace III.

Councillor Quinn stated that all should realise the importance of Good Relations within communities commending the three officers on exceptional work throughout the years. Emphasising that the work went well beyond country and western concerts Councillor Quinn stated that hardly a week would pass when he was not in touch with the Cookstown Good Relations Officer who deals regularly with difficult situations. Stating that the role of Good Relations was the responsibility of all Councillor Quinn recalled that in 1989 when Mr Jessie Jackson was visiting Belfast he delivered a speech separately to people on either side of the divide stating that 'racism and sectarianism hinders growth and destroys community spirit.' In response Mr Henry stated that the majority of Good Relations work was the same across the district with some differences for example Dungannon Council had a more diverse population.

Councillor Mallaghan thanked Mr Henry for the presentation stating that the role of the Good Relations officers is not the picture in the paper but the dealing of delicate matters, brawls stopped and hours of preparation prior to events.

Councillor G Shiels stated that he was aware that the success of Good Relations wasn't the 'in your face' approach but the incidental and accidental daily work which did not succeed if standing on ceremony.

Mr Henry stated that the Good Relations Officers would be working closely with the PCSP's action plans.

Proposed by Councillor Quinn
Seconded by Councillor Mallaghan and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council that approval be granted to the thematic approach proposed for the development of the Good Relations Action Plan and that Managers and Good Relations Officers from the three Council areas continue to help inform the development of the action plan liaising with OFMDFM

D39/14 Policing and Community Safety Partnerships

Ms McCloskey presented a report seeking direction on development of a new PCSP Strategy and Action Plan for 1 April 2015. Advising that the PCSP will mirror the 11 new Council areas Ms McCrystal advised that the recruitment of independent members was launched on 5 November and would close on 29 November 2014. Outlining the range of duties of PCSPs which are set in legislation Members were advised that a strategy and action plan needed to be developed for the new Mid Ulster PCSP. In lieu of guidance from the Department of Justice and NI Policing Board the current PCSP Managers had compiled a paper and attention was drawn to undernoted options.

- 1 Develop and prepare a complete PCSP Strategy and action plan for 2015-2018 for implementation on 1 April 2015.

- 2 Develop a PCSP Strategy for 2015-16 with a one year transitional action plan for 2015-16 and then work with PCSP to develop new action plan for 2016 onwards.
- 3 Prepare a one year transitional strategy and action plan for 2015 and then work with new PCSP to develop new strategy and action plan for 2016 onwards.

Ms McCloskey recommended option three advising that the Managers would also work together on developing common consultation across the three existing PCSPs to help inform the development of the action plan. This consultation would be complementary to the community planning consultation. It was also noted that although not confirmed officially that PCSPs were preparing for a 15% budget cut.

Proposed by Councillor McNamee
Seconded by Councillor Quinn and

Resolved That it be recommended to the Council that option 3, 'Prepare a one year transitional strategy and action plan for 2015 and then work with new PCSP to develop new strategy and action plan for 2016 onwards.' be progressed.

Councillor McNamee stating it would appear that independent members would not be in place until May 2015 asked what their numbers would be on the partnership. Ms McCloskey advised that it would depend on the number of Council members.

Councillor Wilson advised that a query had been raised with him as to whether the attendance allowance would remain the same as that paid currently is £60 per meeting and that although people engaging as independent members were not necessarily doing it for the remuneration it did help.

Ms McCloskey stated that according to a recent press release members of PCSPs would not be remunerated and that the expenses were under review she would clarify and report back.

Councillor Mallaghan indicated that there was an information evening on the process scheduled for 19 November in the Glenavon Hotel, Cookstown but that it was on the same evening as the Fivemiletown Community Planning event.

For Information

D40/14 Development and Regeneration Update

Ms Campbell drew attention to report providing Members with a progress update on the Development and Regeneration Forward Work Plan previously presented to committee. Advising that three business workshops had now been held Ms Campbell further advised that it was planned to consult with the community and voluntary sector by means of a questionnaire.

Stating that a comprehensive report would be brought to the December meeting which would focus on the needs of industry Ms Campbell sought the views of the committee as to whether the consultants should attend the meeting or if Members preferred a workshop approach.

In response to Councillor Wilson's question on the number of businesses Intertrade Ireland had worked with Ms Campbell advised that she would seek clarification.

Members noted that progress was being made on Development and Regeneration and that officers should continue to report to committee.

D41/14 Mid Ulster Council Community Planning Process

Mr McCreesh advised that the purpose of the report was to update Members on progress relating to the Mid Ulster Community Planning process. Mr McCreesh drew attention to the three community planning events held in Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt and stated that with the same energy it was hoped the rural events would attract the same success.

Referring to previous comments regarding consultation with youth, migrant workers and the elderly Mr McCreesh advised that there would be an event in each town for the aforementioned groups including a session for people with disabilities to include physical, learning disabilities and mental health issues as the community plan must reflect all.

Mr McCreesh confirmed that capacity building sessions were planned for January 2015.

With reference to Community Planning Partner Legislation Mr McCreesh drew attention to the consultation document making particular reference to statutory partners named and those that Members feel should be included giving examples of Sport NI, Forestry Commission, NI Water, Probation Board. Drawing attention to page 4 when the presumption is made that all government departments are involved Mr McCreesh emphasised that they should be named to secure input and there was sufficient time for the committee to prepare a response upon which Members could comment.

In response to Councillor Wilson's questions on whether the current list of consultees named had attended local community planning events, Mr McCreesh said he would have to consult individual event registration lists.

Councillor Quinn extended his thanks to all staff for the tremendous effort in delivering the individual events but sought clarity as to whether or not the ethnic minority group ie the travelling community had been consulted as there was permanent sites in the district. Mr McCreesh advised that all groups in Section 75 had been covered but that the Member's point was a valid one and if it was the desire of Members an event would be organised for them.

Councillor O'Neill spoke of the noticeable lack of young people attending the events and that Magherafelt Youth Forum was delighted that their comments would now be

taken on board. Mr McCreesh advised that it was proposed to host additional events through schools and youth clubs to ensure the youth voice of Mid Ulster is captured. Stating that in the short time frame available it would be impossible to get everyone Mr McCreesh stated that to date events were successful and the responses would be professionally collated by end of December for evidence.

Councillor Mallaghan commended everyone involved in the community planning events stating that it was no mean feat, over 400 people had participated thanks to the many hands, letters, phone calls and emails. He further stated that all Parties should go back and do work to address the issues on statutory partners as their presence was required. Councillor Wilson concurred and commended everyone involved, stating that the turnout had been phenomenal. Councillor Reid again concurring with previous comments stated that organisations such as boys/ girls brigades, scouts and guiding associations would all provide excellent feedback and it was a good means of collating opinions of all communities suggesting even a questionnaire.

Mr McCreesh stated that questionnaires were in use and that all mechanisms would be used to capture community thought. In relation to staff Mr McCreesh stated that staff at the events had carried out excellent work and with reference to the statutory agencies included in legislation Mr McCreesh stated that a balance would have to be established as a manageable partnership of elected members, statutory agencies and others was required.

Concluding the discussion the Chair, Councillor Forde, emphasised the importance of engaging with young people.

D42/14 Development and Regeneration Risk Register

The Development and Regeneration Risk Register Report was marked read.

D43/14 Sport & Leisure Risk Register

The Sport and Leisure Risk Register Report was marked read.

IN COMMITTEE

Proposed by Councillor Mallaghan
Seconded by Councillor O'Neill and

Resolved That item D44/14-D50/14 be taken in committee.

D51/14 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7pm and ended at 9.00pm

CHAIR _____

DATE _____