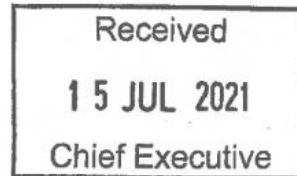


Our Ref: TJ/344/21

8 July 2021

Mr Adrian McCreesh
Chief Executive
Mid Ulster District Council
Dungannon Office
Circular Road
Dungannon
BT71 6DT



Derry City & Strabane
District Council
Comhairle
Chathair Dhoire &
Cheantar an tSratha Báin
Derry Cille & Strabane
Destrict Council

Dear Mr McCreesh

At a Meeting of Derry City and Strabane District Council held on 24 June 2021, the following Motion was passed:

That Council notes the legal and social movement globally for the 'Rights of Nature' aimed to strengthen protections for people, place and planet.

Council recognises that 'Rights of Nature' can help catalyse an innovative rethinking about how to create regenerative, not extra-activist economies while also making human and other living communities safer, stronger and more resilient.

Council commends the excellent work already being done by Council officers on the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis but recognises the need for a rights based approach to nature.

Council will, over the next 6 months, collaborate with civic society (including The Gathering, Friends of the Earth Northern Ireland and trade unions) to explore what rights of nature mean for the people and economies of the region and to investigate how Rights of Nature could be expressed in community plans, corporate plans, improvement objectives and other strategic frameworks. In particular, the Council will in the next 6 months hold two community workshops and work with the local community and stakeholders including DAERA, NFU, UFU, IFA and any local farming groups to draw up a Declaration for the Rights of Nature for the Council area to be brought back before Council for adoption.

Derry

C/o Council Offices
98 Strand Road
Derry
BT48 7NN

Strabane

C/o Council Offices
47 Derry Road
Strabane
BT82 8DY

John Kelpie MEng., CEng., MStructE., MIEI

Chief Executive
Derry City and Strabane District Council

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Council asks for a report to come to Council on embedding 'Rights of Nature' as a keystone concept into Council's operational practices, planning processes and long term decision making.

Council notes our position as a border region and our mutual environmental obligations under the Espoo Convention and so invites Donegal County Council, in addition to all Councils in the North to also explore 'Rights of Nature' for their Council areas.

I would appreciate your consideration in this important matter would be grateful for a response in relation thereto.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'John Kelpie', with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

**John Kelpie
Chief Executive**

From the Office of the Minister
Gordon Lyons MLA



Councillor Paul McLean
Chairperson
Mid-Ulster District Council
E-mail: Eileen.Forde@midulstercouncil.org

Netherleigh
Massey Avenue
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02890 529250
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Our Ref: CORR-1079-2021

10 August 2021

Dear Paul,

Broadband Investment

Thank you for your letter of 30 July 2021, in which the Council have requested that the £14m clawback due from British Telecom due in 2023 and 2024, should be redirected into broadband provision into rural areas with poorest broadband speeds.

The Department for the Economy (DfE) fully appreciates the impact of poor broadband on local communities, particularly in rural areas of Northern Ireland, and recognises that the Covid-19 crisis has emphasised the greater challenges faced by those with poor broadband coverage.

The terms of the contracts for the Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project (NIBIP) and the Superfast Rollout Project (SRP) include clawback provisions to enable the Government funders of these projects to share in excess revenues, as a result of greater than expected take-up of broadband services during the life of the contracts. The projects were jointly funded by my Department and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

The NIBIP contract ends on 31 March 2023, and the SRP contract ends on 31 December 2024. Clawback accumulates until the end of the contracts, at which point it will be paid by the supplier to the Department.

It is currently estimated that total clawback that will accrue to Government over the life of the two contracts might total £14 million. This final amount will not be confirmed until the contracts have ended.

Northern Ireland, along with the rest of the UK's contracting authorities, received an amount of clawback early (£1.7Million), and used it for additional broadband delivery under the Superfast Rollout Project (SRP). This clawback was paid in advance of being due contractually, as part of a UK wide agreement between DCMS and Openreach. It has been deducted from the clawback accumulating under NIBIP.

The money will be shared between DfE and DCMS in proportion to each Department's original funding provided for the projects. Clawback funds are not ring-fenced for future

telecoms projects, and it will be for the NI Executive to decide how Northern Ireland's share of clawback funds are used.

My Department is currently rolling out Project Stratum, and working with DCMS on the UK's Project Gigabit to identify future broadband needs. The need to make a case to the Executive for access to this funding will be considered in due course.

My Department will ensure that all clawback funds are paid in line with the supplier's obligations under the contracts.

Yours sincerely,



GORDON LYONS MLA
Minister for the Economy

**From the office of the Minister for Infrastructure
Nichola Mallon MLA**

Councillor Paul McLean

Eileen.Forde@midulstercouncil.org

Room 708
Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
BELFAST
BT2 8GB
Telephone: (028) 9054 0540
Email: Private.office@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Your reference: XXXX
Our reference: INV-0281-2021
2 August 2021

Dear Councillor McLean,

RURAL ROADS

Thank you for your letter of 30 June 2021 requesting a meeting to discuss the condition of rural roads in the Mid Ulster district and the impact of the current absence of an asphalt resurfacing contractor in the area.

I am aware that my officials met with the Council on 22 July 2021 to deliver the annual spring council report. At that meeting they provided an update on the current situation with respect to the contracts, and the efforts that are being made to mitigate the difficulties with the asphalt term contracts in particular. Work is also ongoing to procure one-off contracts to resurface longer sections of carriageway in the Mid Ulster area. At this stage it is envisaged that two major schemes will be delivered in the Council area over the coming 12 months. The first will be on the A29 Dual Carriageway between Cookstown and Moneymore. The second scheme will be on the B34 between Ballygawley and Dungannon. The combined cost of these schemes is anticipated to be in the region of £2.3m.

The Small Scale Responsive Works contract is still in place in Mid Ulster, and this is the main vehicle by which works on rural roads are delivered. Increased funding has been secured to resurface approximately 170 sites as part of the Road Recovery programme. The majority of these sites will be rural in nature and this work is always well received by local communities. This represents a 27% increase over that delivered during the 2020/21 financial year.

In addition budgets have been amended to deliver a comprehensive Surface Dressing programme on rural roads within the Mid Ulster area. In total over 830,000m² of surface dressing has been delivered which represents a 31% increase on the 2020 surface dressing programme. Surface dressing is a preventative treatment used on roads in a reasonable condition, to protect and prolong their life. These works will seal and waterproof the road and provide improved skid resistance.

The Section offices also plan to deliver a number of footway resurfacing schemes to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport within the Mid Ulster area

I hope that the details above and the information provided at the meeting with my officials on the 22 July is helpful in setting out the situation.

However, if you wish to discuss the matter further with the Divisional Roads Manager, David McKinley is happy to meet with your council members and officials at any time. David can be contacted at david.mckiney@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk or by telephone at 028 82254169.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Mallon'.

NICHOLA MALLON MLA
Minister for Infrastructure

FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

www.health-ni.gov.uk

Councillor Cathal Mallaghan
Chair
Mid Ulster District Council

info@midulstercouncil.org

Castle Buildings
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Email: private.office@health-ni.gov.uk

Your Ref: C 105/21

Our Ref: CORR-1980-2021

Date: 6th September 2021

Dear

Cathal,

Thank you for your letter of 4 June 2021 in relation to an extension to the 12 month free dental care period for mothers. Please accept my apologies for the delay in providing this response.

Exemptions to dental charges are outlined in the Dental Charges Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1989 (as amended) and the Travelling Expenses and Remission of Charge Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004 (as amended). The exemption status of a patient is determined at the time that the Health Service Dental Claim form is signed for acceptance of treatment. The exemption status remains for the course of treatment even if the individual's qualification for the exemption changes.

Whilst no changes to the legislation are currently planned, this issue will be considered further as part of the wider general dentistry rebuilding plans.

I trust you find this response helpful.

Yours sincerely

Robin Swann MLA
Minister of Health