

## Minutes of Meeting of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 26 June 2014 in the Council Offices, Circular Road, Dungannon

**Members Present:** Councillor Mallaghan, Chair (Presiding Councillor)  
Councillor Reid, Vice Chair (Deputy Presiding Councillor)

Councillors Ashton, Bateson, Bell, Buchanan, Burton, Clarke, Cuddy, Cuthbertson, Dillon, Elattar, Forde, Gildernew, Gillespie, Glasgow, Kearney, McAleer, McEldowney, McFlynn, McGinley, B McGuigan, S McGuigan, McKinney, McLean, McNamee, McPeake, Molloy, Monteith, Mullen, Mulligan, C O'Neill, J O'Neill, T Quinn, M Quinn, Robinson, J Shiels, G Shiels, Totten and Wilson

**Officers in Attendance:** Mr A Tohill, Chief Executive  
Mrs Canavan, Lead Human Resource Officer  
Mr Moffett, Change Manager  
Mr JJ Tohill, Lead Finance Officer  
Mrs Hall, Business Support Officer  
Mrs Smith, Council Business Manager

The meeting commenced at 7 pm

### **C11/14 Chair's Business**

The Chair referred to a number of tragic accidents in the area and on behalf of the Council expressed condolences to the families concerned.

In terms of procedure the Chair stated that on occasions it will be necessary for the Council to take items in committee due to the sensitivity of the business and he hoped that the press and public would understand. He also requested members to identify themselves when speaking.

### **C12/14 Declarations of Interest**

The Chair reminded members of their responsibility with regard to declaration of interest.

### **C13/14 Receive and adopt minute of matters transacted in "Open Business" at Council meeting held on Thursday 5 June 2014**

Proposed by Councillor S McGuigan  
Seconded by Councillor Clarke and

**Resolved** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday 5 June 2014, transacted in 'Open Business' having been printed and circulated be taken as read and signed as correct.

## **Matters for Decision**

### **C14/14 Governance Arrangements for the transitional period**

The Chief Executive presented a report setting out governance arrangement for the Council during the transitional period and sought Members' approval:

- to establish four committees Development, Environment, Planning and Policy and Resources.
- to appoint 16 members to each committee, including the Presiding Councillor and Deputy Presiding Councillor as ex-officio members.
- to permit any member to be present and heard at any committee meeting but only committee members to have voting rights.
- Committee meetings to take place at 7 pm.

Proposed by Councillor McNamee  
Seconded by Councillor Totten and

**Resolved** That the report on the governance arrangements for the transitional period, including the above recommendations, is adopted

### **C15/14 Filling Positions of Responsibility for the transitional period**

Following the adoption of the Governance Arrangements for the transitional period the Chair called upon the nominating officer of each party, in order of d'Hondt, to select and nominate for the next available position of responsibility (11 positions – appendix 1).

### **C16/14 Appointment of Councillors to Committees for the transitional period**

An UUP Member stated that group leaders plus one met, discussed and selected appointments to Committees and was disappointed that the outcome of that meeting was not now being carried forward and stated that does not auger well for the rest of the term and asked once again that Sinn Féin would consider honouring what previously selected.

A DUP Member stated that was of the opinion that everyone was going to honour their word and concurred with the remarks made. He stated that he was unhappy with the situation but that DUP would be honouring its word.

The Chair stated that the meeting was a dry run to consider filling positions, a mistake was made and acknowledged and an email was issued immediately to outline how Sinn Féin would be proceeding.

The Chair called upon the nominating officer of each party to nominate members to fill their entitled minimum spaces on each committee.

The Chair called upon the nominating officer of each party to select and nominate for their remaining positions on each committee.

Paper attached, appendix 1, shows outcome of above procedure.

#### **C17/14      Scheme of Councillors Allowances for the transitional period**

The Lead Finance Officer presented a report setting out legislative requirements in relation to allowances payable to councillors, namely the basic, special responsibility, dependents' carers' and travel and subsistence and recommended that maximum rates specified in the schedule be paid. He sought Members' approval for the proposed scheme of allowances including the suggested allocation of special responsibility allowance.

Proposed by Councillor S McGuigan  
Seconded by Councillor Bell and

**Resolved** That the scheme of allowances, including the suggested allocation of special responsibility allowance, be adopted

#### **C18/14      STC Financial Reporting Arrangements**

The Chief Executive referred to correspondence and legislation advising of the financial reporting requirements in 2013/14 and 2014/15 in respect of Statutory Transition Committees (STC) and the need for the Council to designate an officer of the Council as its Chief Financial Officer and sought approval to appoint the Chief Executive as Chief Financial Officer. He also sought approval of the draft unaudited STC Financial Statements 2013-14.

Proposed by Councillor Gildernew  
Seconded by Councillor T Quinn and

**Resolved** That the Chief Executive be designated Chief Financial Officer of Mid Ulster District Council and that the draft unaudited STC Financial Statements 2013-14 be approved and signed.

An UUP Member expressed concern at the cost of audit and hoped that this was not reflective of costs moving forward.

The Chief Executive shared the Member's concern but stated that the cost is levied by the Local Government Audit Office and the Council has no control over these and can only express its concern.

#### **C19/14      Lead council for HR and Finance for the transitional period**

The Chief Executive presented a report and sought Council approval for Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council, who had acted as lead council for the Mid Ulster Statutory Transition Committee, to act as lead council on behalf of Mid Ulster District Council during the transitional period in respect of finance and human resource matters.

Proposed by Councillor McPeake  
Seconded by Councillor McLean and

**Resolved**    That approval as sought by adopted.

#### **C20/14      NILGA Consultation Event on Rates Convergence**

The Change Manager presented details of Rate Convergence Consultation Event, organised by NILGA, to be held on Monday 30 June 2014, 10.00 am to 12.30 pm, in Magherafelt District Council Offices.

A UUP Member commented that of the £30m set aside for rates convergence Mid Ulster District Council will not get much benefit as cluster councils were prudent and had competently managed their budgets.

The Chair agreed with the comment made.

Proposed by Councillor Dillon  
Seconded by Councillor B McGuigan and

**Resolved**    That approval be granted for any interested members and relevant officers to attend the event.

#### **C21/14      DSD Budget Allocation Model**

The Chief Executive advised members of correspondence received from the DSD Minister in respect of the DSD Budget Allocation Model. Following consultation the Budget Allocation Model had been revised to reflect comments made by Councils. As a result the proposed allocation of annual budget for Mid Ulster District Council now stands at £2.99m, a reduction of £0.468m in figures previously provided. He stated that this would have a severe detrimental effect on the ability of the Council to discharge its local urban regeneration and community development responsibilities.

The Chief Executive further advised that there was a need for urgent discussions with the DSD Minister in relation to this matter and that a meeting has been scheduled for 1 July 2014 at 3.15 pm in Stormont.

Sinn Féin Members stated that this was a challenging and difficult position, they had concern with how process of calculating figures had been arrived at and that the funding allocation model needed to be subject to rural

proofing. There was a need for robust engagement with the Minister. This was the 6<sup>th</sup> most deprived area, received 2<sup>nd</sup> smallest allocation and is far from the Executive stated position that functions would be cost neutral at point of transfer. In relation to Coalisland and Dungannon neighbourhood renewal no money is currently coming from DSD for project development. Also concern expressed that this might not be the final cut in the budget.

An UUP Member stated that this is the first big test in the RPA process and stated that the Dungannon & South Tyrone area had benefited from funding under neighbourhood renewal and the understanding was that most of the money is being directed to the centre of Belfast. It is very important to have a meeting with the Minister.

A DUP Member stated that questions needed to be asked, that money was preliminary for urban area and asked what funding was coming from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and if do not know that a letter should be issued.

The Chair stated that an announcement was made today by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

A SF Member stated that at the moment Council should be concentrating minds on what in front of it ie DSD funding.

A SDLP Member agreed with the sentiments expressed and asked what the makeup of the delegation was.

The Chair in response stated that it was hoped to send a cross party grouping comprising two from each party plus the independent member and asked that party leads get in touch with the Change Manager to advise of attendees.

The Independent Member stated that was unable to attend meeting but that he agreed with the comments made and particularly that this may not be the final cut in the budget.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith  
Seconded by Councillor Dillon and

**Resolved** That a cross party delegation from Mid Ulster District Council meet with the DSD Minister

### **Matters for Information**

#### **C22/14 Expenditure control for the transitional period**

The Chief Executive advised of a Departmental Direction in respect of expenditure of existing Councils during the transition period. The direction requires existing Councils, in the period 26 May 2014 to 31 March 2015, to seek

the consent of the new Councils (in shadow form) prior to entering into capital contracts in excess of £250k and revenue contracts in excess of £100k.

**C23/14      Local Government Reform capacity building funding allocation for the transitional period**

The Change Manager updated members on the development of a Capacity Building Plan and learning opportunities being scheduled throughout the transitional period for Mid Ulster cluster.

**IN COMMITTEE**

Proposed by Councillor McNamee  
Seconded by Councillor T Quinn and

**Resolved**      That item C24/14 and C25/14 be taken in committee.

The press left the meeting at 7.52 pm.

**C26/14      Duration of Meeting**

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm and ended at 8.06 pm.

CHAIR (Presiding Councillor) \_\_\_\_\_