

Minutes of Meeting of Environment Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Tuesday 14 January 2025 in Council Offices, Burn Road, Cookstown and by virtual means

Members Present

Councillor McAleer, Chair

Councillors J Burton, J Buchanan, Cuthbertson, Kelly, Groogan, Johnston, Martin, Milne*, Mullin*, McElvogue, McGuigan, McNamee, Robinson, Varsani

Officers in Attendance

Mrs Campbell, Strategic Director of Environment (SD: Env)

Mr Conlon, Head of Technical Services (HoTS)

Mr McAadoo, Assistant Director of Environmental Services (AD: ES)

Mr Scullion, Assistant Director of Property Services (AD: PS)

Miss Thompson, Committee and Member Services Officer

* Denotes members and members of the public present in remote attendance

** Denotes Officers present by remote means

*** Denotes others present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7.01 pm

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

E001/25 Notice of Recording

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

E002/25 Apologies

Councillor Cahoon.

E003/25 Declarations of Interest

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

Councillor Cuthbertson declared an interest in Agenda Item 18 - Provision of Grass Cutting Services.

E004/25 Chair's Business

Councillor J Burton referred to the jetties in Dungannon Park and that a number of them are inaccessible. The Councillor stated that it is good to see the café is now open at the Park and that hopefully footfall will increase in Spring and asked that a piece of work be done in relation to the jetties.

The Strategic Director of Environment stated she would refer the matter to the Parks team.

Matters for Decision

E005/25 Environmental Services Proposed Scale of Charges for 2025/26

The Assistant Director of Environmental Services (AD: ES) presented previously circulated report which sought approval for a proposed scale of charges in relation to Environmental Services for the period 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026.

Councillor Cuthbertson referred to the charging for the black, blue and brown bin as outlined in the report and that it had been explained in previous years that there is a lesser charge for a blue bin to try to increase recycling. The Councillor stated he did not believe that this does help to increase recycling and felt it is unfair that there is such a difference in the prices of the three bins.

The AD: ES advised that in most cases the black, blue and brown bin are purchased together and in such cases the total charge for the three bins is reduced to £90. The AD: ES stated that the rationale for the lesser charge for the blue bin is to encourage people to buy a second blue bin to recycle more. The AD: ES stated that Council cannot give everyone a second blue bin but that a second blue bin will be collected from a property at no extra cost.

Councillor Robinson asked if there is any evidence that people purchase a second blue bin to benefit recycling.

The AD: ES advised that there are some second blue bin sales and he would encourage Members to advise the public of this as it will help to improve recycling rates.

Councillor McNamee proposed the recommendation.

Councillor McGuigan seconded Councillor McNamee's proposal. The Councillor stated he did not realise a second blue bin could be purchased and that this is good news to encourage recycling.

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that the proposed scale of charges as outlined in report be approved for 2025/26.

Councillor Cuthbertson referred to the recent number of missed bin collections and stated whilst credit is due to staff who have been out in all weathers in the past week there seemed to be some sort of mix up in relation to bin collections prior to the bad weather, particularly in relation to the two Saturday collections. The Councillor stated that some of this may have been down to the people not being aware but highlighted that some bins that were put out for these collections were missed. Councillor Cuthbertson felt that the design of the bin hangers to advise residents of collections over the Christmas period could be improved to ensure that they stay on the bin. The Councillor stated that whilst he accepted it was a holiday period and some staff were on leave there was no direct point of contact for Members during this time and felt that if staff are in over a holiday period for bin collections there should be some way of making contact with supervisors instead of waiting on a reply to an email when the relevant officer returned to work.

Councillor J Burton supported Councillor Cuthbertson's comments and stated that if some work could be done in relation to having a point of contact it would be helpful.

The AD: ES advised that the bin hangers did notify residents of the substitute Saturday collections and stated that he accepted that some of these could have blown off and that the design could be looked at for future. The AD: ES stated that there was bad weather on the substitute collection on Saturday 4 January and that a lot of the collection for that day could not be done. The AD:ES highlighted that the bad weather continued all of last week and that teams have been trying to catch up over this period and this has been completed in the main.

E006/25 Bus Shelters Update

The Head of Technical Services (HoTS) presented previously circulated report which provided update on current bus shelter status.

Councillor Cuthbertson stated he was happy to propose the recommendations and welcomed the bus shelter at Northland Row. The Councillor highlighted attack on bus shelter at Drumkee Road at the weekend and that the incident was notified to Police. Councillor Cuthbertson thanked staff for getting the bus shelter back into a useable condition so quickly and highlighted that the same shelter has been targeted on previous occasions and that such attacks should be condemned.

Councillor Johnston seconded Councillor Cuthbertson's proposal and stated she was delighted to see the bus shelter for Innishrush moving forward.

Councillor Varsani welcomed the bus shelter application opposite Millview Manor as there are often people standing out at that location and the bus shelter at Northland Row where a large number of school children wait for a bus. The Councillor stated that people need to find better things to do than attack bus shelters and that all attacks on Council property including Irish language signage should be condemned.

- Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that –
- Bus shelter application listed under 3.4 is recommended for approval and to move from stage 5: 1Nr – 3.4.1
 - Coalisland Road, Dungannon (Opposite Millview Manor).

- Bus shelter applications listed under 3.7 is recommended for approval to installation this month: 2Nr
 - 2016-017 Innisrush Village, Clady.
 - 2024-001 Northland Row, Royal School Dungannon.

E007/25 Street Naming and Property Numbering

The Assistant Director of Property Services (AD: PS) presented previously circulated report which considered the naming of new streets within residential Housing Developments within Mid Ulster District Council.

Site off Main Street, Tobermore

Proposed by Councillor McGuigan
Seconded by Councillor Johnston and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to name development off Main Street, Tobermore as Churchmore Rise.

Site off Blackpark Road, Toomebridge

Proposed by Councillor Milne
Seconded by Councillor Johnston and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to name development off Blackpark Road, Toomebridge as Blackpark Meadows.

E008/25 Dfl Roads Proposal to Mid Ulster District Council – Disabled Persons Parking Bay at Highfield Road, Magherafelt

The Assistant Director of Property Services (AD: PS) presented previously circulated report which sought agreement in relation to a revised proposal from Dfl Roads to introduce a Disabled Persons Parking Bay at Highfield Road, Magherafelt.

Proposed by Councillor Cuthbertson
Seconded by Councillor McNamee and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to endorse the revised proposal submitted by Department for Infrastructure Roads in relation to introducing a Disabled Persons Parking Bay at Highfield Road, Magherafelt.

Matters for Information

E009/25 Environment Committee minutes of meeting held on 2 December 2024

Members noted minutes of Environment Committee held on 2 December 2024.

E010/25 Recycling Centre Opening Hours

Members noted previously circulated report which provided update on the implementation of agreed Recycling Centre opening hours.

Councillor Cuthbertson referred to the closing time of recycling centres and asked if the gate of the site closes 10 minutes prior to the closing time or if the site closes at the times outlined.

Councillor McElvogue referred to the closing time for Coalisland and felt that a later opening time for this site would be better.

The AD: ES advised that there is signage erected at the sites to make users aware that the last admission is 10 minutes before the closing time and that this has always been the case. In relation to the opening/closing times of the sites the AD: ES stated that this matter was considered at great length by the working group and has been approved by Council.

Councillor McGuigan concurred that the opening hours of Recycling Centres had been discussed by the working group and brought forward through Committee and agreed by Council.

E011/25 Winter Maintenance

Members noted previously circulated report which outlined previously agreed arrangements for Winter Maintenance.

Councillor Cuthbertson referred to previous discussion in relation to the length of time before the Agreement is triggered and asked if anything has changed in relation to this.

Councillor Varsani thanked the teams for their work during the recent challenging weather. The Councillor stated that not everyone receives the same level of assistance during such weather and this could be because the road/street is not included on the map within the Agreement and that people are not aware of the policy. Councillor Varsani felt that some work could be done in relation to updating the public as to what will happen during times of bad weather. The Councillor stated that there are a number of developments across the District where Dfl will not provide a grit box because the development has not been adopted and that some work is also needed as to why these developments have not been adopted as the public do not understand why a grit box cannot be provided.

Councillor McNamee also commended staff for the work done in recent days and asked if grit is available for people to come and collect as a number of roads/footpaths were treacherous for several days and if grit is available then people can help themselves in their own areas. The Councillor also referred to grit piles not being left off by Dfl in numerous areas.

Councillor McElvogue referred to comments in relation to adopting developments and advised of a wake last week and that the development where this was taking

place was not gritted nor grit box available because it was not adopted. In that instance, private gritters were asked to come and provide assistance.

The AD: ES advised that the Agreement is essentially the same as other years other than it has been signed for a three year period. The AD: ES stated that the Agreement was triggered by Dfl last week and that Council staff were involved in gritting on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. The AD: ES stated that the issues raised in relation to communication and adoption would be best addressed by Dfl and that officers would raise these matters with them. The AD: ES advised that Council does not make grit available to the public but that Dfl does and this availability was highlighted last week with grit being provided at their Moygashel and Magherafelt sites.

Councillor J Burton referred to previous discussion at Council in relation to having to wait three days before the Agreement is triggered and asked if a response had been received from Dfl in relation to this.

The AD: ES advised that no correspondence had been received from Dfl in relation to changing the length of time before the Agreement is triggered and that Dfl have not asked for any changes to the Agreement. The AD: ES highlighted that the Agreement is for prolonged periods of bad weather and was never designed for regular activation and there would not be the Council resource to provide assistance regularly. In the most recent activation last week the AD: ES advised that staff gritted for three days.

E012/25 Tree Week 2024

Members noted previously circulated report which provided update on activities and events organised for National Tree Week.

E013/25 Northern Ireland Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management (LACMW) Annual Report for 2023/24

Members noted previously circulated report which provided update on Council's performance in relation to recycling and landfill diversion targets as outlined in the NIEA Northern Ireland Local Authority Waste Management Statistics Annual Report for 2023/24.

E014/25 Building Control Workload

Members noted previously circulated report which provided update on the workload analysis for Building Control.

E015/25 Entertainment Licensing Applications

Members noted previously circulated report which provided update on Entertainment Licensing Applications across the Mid Ulster District.

E016/25 Dual Language Signage Surveys

Members noted previously circulated report which advised of the result of surveys undertaken on all applicable residents on the streets/roads in response to Dual Language Signage Nameplate requests.

E017/25 Dual Language Signage Requests

Members noted previously circulated report which advised of requests for Dual Language Signage from residents on the streets/roads in question.

Live broadcast ended at 7.30 pm.

Local Government (NI) Act 2014 - Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor McNamee
Seconded by Councillor McElvogue and

Resolved In accordance with Section 42, Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 that Members of the public be asked to withdraw from the meeting whilst Members consider items E018/25 to E022/25.

Matters for Decision

E018/25 Provision of Grass Cutting Services
E019/25 Capital Projects – Small Settlements - Clady award, IST Procurement

Matters for Information

E020/25 Environment Committee Confidential Minutes of meeting held on 2 December 2024
E021/25 Capital Framework – ICT Contracts Update
E022/25 Capital Framework – IST Contracts Update

E023/25 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7.00 pm and ended at 7.36 pm.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____

Annex A – Introductory Remarks from the Chairperson

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

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

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

- If you have joined the meeting remotely please keep your audio on mute unless invited to speak and then turn it off when finished speaking
- Keep your video on at all times, unless you have bandwidth or internet connection issues, where you are advised to try turning your video off
- If you wish to speak please raise your hand in the meeting or on screen and keep raised until observed by an Officer or myself
- Should we need to take a vote this evening 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.