

Minutes of Meeting of Policy and Resources Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 8 January 2026 in the Council Offices, Ballyronan Road, Magherafelt and by Virtual Means

Members Present

Councillor Cahoon, Chair

Councillor F Burton, J Burton*, Brown, Corry*, Gildernew*, McAleer, McConnell*, McLernon, S McPeake, Martin* Molloy*, Quinn*, Totten*, Wilson

Officers in Attendance

Mrs Campbell, Strategic Director of Environment (SD: Env)
Mrs Canavan, Strategic Director of Organisational Development, Strategy & Performance (SD: ODSP)
Mr McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement (HoSSE)
Mrs McNally, Assistant Director of Corporate Services and Finance (AD: CS&F)
Ms Dyson, Head of Human Resources (HoHR)*
Mr O'Hagan, Head of IT (HoIT)
Mr Hill, ICT
Mrs Forde, Committee and Member Services Manager

* Denotes members present in remote attendance

** Denotes Officers present by remote means

*** Denotes others present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm.

The Chair, Councillor Cahoon welcomed everyone to the meeting and those watching the meeting through the Live Broadcast. Councillor Cahoon 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.

PR001/26 Notice of Recording

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

PR002/26 Apologies

Councillor McLean

Mr Moffett, Assistant Director: Organisational Development, Strategy & Performance (AD: ODSP)

PR003/26 Declarations of Interest

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

PR004/26 Chairs Business

None

Matters for Decision

PR005/26 Request to Illuminate Council Properties

The Head of Strategic Services and Engagement (HoSSE) presented previously circulated report which sought approval to illuminate and light up the Council's three designated properties to raise awareness for the following:

- Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT) to mark Holocaust Memorial Day on Tuesday 27 January 2026. Colour: Purple
- World Encephalitis International: Sunday 22nd February 2026, World Encephalitis Day. Colour Red
- OG Cancer NI: OG Cancer Awareness Month: Monday 9 February 2025: Colour: Green

Councillor McLernon welcomed the light up for World Encephalitis Day and said her nephew had suffered from this when he was just three and such a serious condition can lead to serious neurological disorders.

The Chair, Councillor Cahoon said it was good for Council to support charities and often when people see the publicity and illumination of properties, they realise they are not alone.

Proposed by Councillor Brown
Seconded by Councillor F Burton and

- Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to illuminate the three designated Council properties as follows –
- Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT) to mark Holocaust Memorial Day on Tuesday 27 January 2026. Colour: Purple
 - World Encephalitis International: Sunday 22nd February 2026, World Encephalitis Day. Colour Red
 - OG Cancer NI: OG Cancer Awareness Month Monday 9 February 2025: Colour: Green

PR006/26 Member Services

No issues.

Matters for Information

PR007/26 Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 4 December 2025

Members noted Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee held on 4 December 2025.

PR008/26 Six Month Progress Update on the Council's Performance Improvement Plan (PIP plan: Q1 to Q2 – 2025/26)

The Head of Strategic Services and Engagement (HoSSE) presented previously circulated report which provided monitoring information on the review of Council's performance against its seven statutory performance indicators/standards and two Council benchmark performance measures (Sickness Absence and Prompt Payments- benchmarked across all eleven NI Councils) for the first six months of 2025/26. The report also provided a performance progress summary against the Council's three corporate improvement objectives and their associated project plans (known as CIP plans). The indicators/standards, benchmark measures, six-month Corporate Plan measures overview and the three improvement projects are contained within our Performance Improvement Plan (PIP plan) for 2025/26.

Councillor Brown drew attention to areas on the appendix to the report were throughout the first two quarters the action is shown to be red and asked if there had been pre-defined standards set, what they are, the areas of shortfall and had adequate measures been put in place to address.

The HoSSE advised that the report encompasses actions of improvement of all council directorates and thus he could not give a definitive response this evening but gave an assurance that the senior officer team meet regularly to see that actions are on target, he advised some although listed for the year may not be actioned until the third or fourth quarter but he was content actions would be met. In relation to statutory indicators the HoSSE advised they are continually reviewed and in areas of slippage officers endeavoured to bring about improvement. He concluded that if the Member forwarded specific queries, he would seek clarification from the appropriate directorate and report back.

Councillor Brown drew attention to item 3.1 of the report and requested specific detail on figures outlined in Quarter One and Quarter Two and what projects they related to, where did projects fall short, and how are they going to be addressed?

The HoSSE advised that officer team continue to work to meet the targets as set by Council but sometimes this isn't feasible and out of our control. He assured Members that directorates are working to ensure measures are delivered on and concluded that he would bring a report to a future committee meeting to provide detail on actions labelled red.

The Strategic Director of Organisational Development, Strategy & Performance (SD: ODSP) advised that in recent weeks measures have been put in place including additional resource to deal with deferred planning applications. In relation to sickness absences the SD: ODSP said pre-covid the target of 5% was realistic but since then sickness has slipped largely due to several long-term absences mostly relating to cancer and cognizance also had to be given to age profile. It was noted that Council

continued to provide services such as Westfield, Counselling and Coaching, mental health talks and are preparing to launch a health and wellbeing strategy all of which would hopefully address some of the causes for rising sickness. The SD: ODSP concluded that there were a few ill health retirements and redeployments, and this would hopefully see a decrease in sickness absence figures.

In response to Councillor McAleer's comments on internet safety for primary schools and recent coverage regarding AI video imaging the HoSSE said he would report directly to the Member.

Councillor S McPeake acknowledged the broad explanations given and commentary provided in Appendix 2. He concurred with the SD: ODSP comments in relation to planning. He said that Council has the highest overall approval rate but to achieve this you cannot always be expedient, new processes had been introduced, and it was hoped this would help. Regarding the GoForIt programme he said that sometimes timeframes clash and again he was satisfied with explanations given and commended officers on their work.

Councillor Wilson said he was not a member of planning committee but in listening to comments on deferrals he highlighted the grants process and said if the relevant information was not made available within timeframe the application is rejected and perhaps planning should look at this.

The Chair, Councillor Cahoon thanked officers for the update report and said in relation to updated planning scheme it would be interesting to view the next quarters figures.

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that a report be brought to future committee to provide detail on actions labelled red.

Live broadcast ended at 7.17 pm.

Local Government (NI) Act 2014 - Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor McLernon
Seconded by Councillor Brown 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 PR009/26 to PR019/26.

Matters for Decision

PR009/26	Land and Property Matters
PR010/26	Staffing Matters for Decision
PR011/26	Staff Resourcing Matters for Decision
PR012/26	Information Technology Grant System Contract Extension and Services update January 2026
PR013/26	Financial report for 8 months ended 30 November 2025
PR014/26	Debt Management Policy - Review

Matters for Information

- PR015/26 Confidential Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on 4 December 2025
- PR016/26 NIAO Annual Audit Letter 24/25
- PR017/26 Contracts and DAC Register – Update
- PR018/26 2026/2027 Rate Estimates Process - Update
- PR019/26 Staff Matters for Information

PR020/26 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7.00 pm and ended at 8.20 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, [Cookstown/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 - apologies and then roll call of all other Members in attendance.

