

Derry City and Strabane District Council

Minutes of Meeting of the Governance and Strategic Planning Committee (Open) held in the Guildhall, Derry on Tuesday 10 April 2018 at 4.00 pm

Present:- Councillor Fleming (Chairperson), Aldermen Hussey, Kerrigan, Ramsey and Thompson, Councillors Boyle, cooper, Donnelly, C Kelly, McKeever, McKnight, McMahon, Robinson and Tierney.

Non-Members of Committee – Aldermen Devenney and M Hamilton and Councillors Carr and P Kelly.

In Attendance:- Chief Executive (Mr J Kelpie), Director of Health and Community (Mrs K McFarland), Lead Assurance Officer (Mrs D McDonnell), Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer (Miss E Cavanagh), Business Support and Change Manager (Mrs R Craig) and Committee Services Assistant (Ms N Meehan).

GSP54/18 Notice and Summons of Meeting

The Chief Executive read the Notice and Summons for the Meeting.

GSP55/18 Apologies

There were no apologies for absence.

GSP56/18 Declarations of Members' Interests

The Chairperson, Councillor Fleming declared an interest in items 17 – North West Regional Development Group and 18 – Correspondence – Citizens Advice NI.

Chairperson's Business

GSP57/18 Condemnation - Attack on Councillor Campbell's Home

The Chairperson condemned outrightly the attack at the home of elected representative, Councillor Campbell and his family which had taken place over the weekend. He stated that many would recognise the excellent work carried out by Councillor Campbell in his

constituency and in the wider district. He stated that those responsible for such a misdemeanour had much to answer for. He continued that many had acknowledged Councillor Campbell's contribution to the local community and had shown their solidarity to Councillor Campbell and his family. He extended Council's best wishes to Councillor Campbell and his family at this time.

There was a consensus of support in opposition to the recent attack at the home of Councillor Campbell.

Alderman Devenney said the attack at Councillor Campbell's home was deplorable as were attacks on any member of the community. He stated that all such issues should be referred to the PSNI for investigation. He questioned alleged events which had taken place following the attack at Councillor Campbell's home when a property was visited by a number of high profile Sinn Fein members, which, if proven, was not the correct way to handle the situation. He said he understood that the attack at Councillor Campbell's home was in response to his condemnation of an attack on the PSNI the previous weekend.

Councillor Donnelly referred to the unfortunate increase in this type of attack which he condemned. He said he was also aware of an alleged visit by senior members of Sinn Fein to a property following the attack on Councillor Campbell's home which he also condemned. He expressed concern at large scale attacks on homes by the PSNI and the British State which in many cases involved young children and caused fear and insecurity within the community.

Councillor Tierney concurred with the comments made by the Chairperson regarding the attack at Councillor Campbell's home and referred to the need to send Council's support to Councillor Campbell and his family. He referred to a vigil which himself and a number of his SDLP colleagues had attended at the home of Councillor Campbell to show their opposition to this type of attack. He said such attacks had a long lasting impact on those affected.

Alderman Hamilton supported Members comments in regards to the condemnation of the attack as did Councillor P Kelly.

Alderman Thompson on behalf of DUP also condemned the attack which he described as disgraceful and said it was important that all available information was given to the PSNI. He welcomed the

statement from senior Loyalists confirming their support for law and order.

GSP58/18 Condemnation - Hawthorn Drive

The Chairperson condemned the recent hoax attack on the local community at Hawthorn Drive and the subsequent damage arising therefrom.

GSP59/18 Confirmation of the Open Minutes of the Governance and Strategic Planning Committee held on Tuesday 6 March 2018

The Open Minutes of Meeting held on 6 March 2018 (GSP35/18-GSP48/18) were submitted.

Alderman Hussey referred to Minute GSP43/18 of the Minutes wherein it indicated that he had both proposed and seconded the proposal

Alderman Thompson advised that he had been recorded as present at the Meeting although he had not been in attendance.

It was agreed that the Minutes would be amended accordingly.

The Open Minutes of Meeting held on 6 March 2018 (GSP35/18-GSP48/18), as amended, were subsequently accepted and adopted.

Matters Arising

GSP60/18 Measuring the Impact of UK City of Culture 2013 (GSP41/18)

In response to a query from Alderman Hussey, the Chief Executive confirmed that a response had not yet been received from the Department for Communities regarding the Belfast Jobs Fair.

GSP61/18 Displays Bearing the Council Logo (GSP42/18)

In response to a query from Alderman Hussey, the Chief Executive confirmed that at the previous Meeting it had been agreed that no action be taken at this stage regarding the above issue.

GSP62/18 Ten Month Financial Outturn (GSP43/18)

Alderman Hussey requested that the proposals in relation to the proposed enhancement works to the Castle site at Castlederg be

displayed in the area together with a timetable in respect of the said works.

The Chief Executive advised that an Officers Meeting of Capital Projects had been scheduled for later that week when he undertook to discuss the most appropriate method of displaying this information and liaise accordingly with Members of the district electoral areas.

GSP63/18 Rates Support Grant Cuts Update

The Lead Assurance Officer presented the above report a copy of which had previously been circulated. She advised that the purpose of the report was to update Members on recent correspondence in relation to Rates Support Grant and to endorse continued engagement both at Officer and Member level to restore this vital grant to its original level.

Councillor Boyle stated that the situation was as had been predicted which was very disappointing. He concurred with the sentiments expressed in the recommendation and suggested that the proposed meeting be arranged without delay. He continued that regardless of any discussions which had taken place regarding the cuts to the Rates Support Grant the debilitating impact on those seven Councils affected had not been acknowledged. He referred to the need for this to be stressed in the strongest possible terms.

Councillor Cooper concurred with the previous speaker's comments. He stated that the sum of money which Council had been able to leverage through the Rates Support Grant would be removed which he regarded as rather senseless. He also referred to an issue in terms of equality in that the seven least wealthy Councils were being affected.

The Committee

Recommended (a) that Members note the recent correspondence and engagement continues to take place on all fronts at both an officer and Member level in relation to restoring this grant to its' original level of £18.3 m; and

(b) that the Chief Executive again writes on behalf of the 7 impacted Councils to both the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and the Permanent Secretary of

the Department for Communities urgently requesting a 7 Council officer and Member delegation in relation to the impact of Rates Support Grant cuts now that the Department's financial position has been confirmed.

GSP64/18 Establishing an Adverse Weather Group

The Lead Assurance Officer presented the above report a copy of which had previously been circulated. She advised that the purpose of the report was to seek Members' nominations for the establishment of an Adverse Weather Working Group.

The Committee

Recommended that Alderman Hussey and Councillors Donnelly, McKnight and Reilly be nominated onto the Adverse Weather Working Group.

Alderman Thompson advised that the DUP would put forward their nomination.

GSP65/18 Data Protection Policy

The Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer presented the above report a copy of which had previously been circulated. She advised that the purpose of the report was to seek Members' views and approval for the draft Data Protection Policy set out in Appendix 1.

The Committee

Recommended that the Draft Protection policy is approved.

GSP66/18 Draft Performance Improvement Plan 2018/19

The Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer presented the above report a copy of which had previously been circulated. She advised that the purpose of the report was to seek comments and approval to release for consultation the draft Performance Improvement Plan 2018/19 as set out in Appendix 1.

In response to a request from Councillor Cooper, the Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer undertook to provide a uniformed approach in terms of the list of achievements in respect of the various Directorates.

The Committee

Recommended **that subject to Members' comments, approval is given to release for consultation the Draft Performance Improvement Plan 2018/19 as set out in Appendix 1.**

GSP67/18 **Members of Organisations/Associations 2018/19**

The Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer presented the above report a copy of which had previously been circulated. She advised that the purpose of the report was to seek elected Member approval in relation to the continued membership of a number of organisations/associations.

The Committee

Recommended **that membership of the organisations/associations is maintained for 2018/19.**

GSP68/18 **Nominees for NILGA Local Planning Programme for Elected Members**

The Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer presented the above report a copy of which had previously been circulated. She advised that the purpose of the report was to seek two elected Member nominees to undertake the pilot NILGA Local Planning Programme for elected Members and to approve associated travel costs incurred by these Members.

Councillor McMahon advised that Sinn Fein would make their nomination at the April Council Meeting.

Councillor Tierney nominated Councillor Boyle on behalf of the SDLP.

Alderman Hussey queried if a vote would be required if a third nomination was put forward.

Councillor Boyle said it was unfortunate that Council were not permitted to have more than two nominations which he suggested was due to the cost involved. He undertook to share with all Members whatever knowledge he gained through his attendance at the Programme which he regarded as the most appropriate way to proceed.

Alderman Hussey acknowledged the relevance of the programme in terms of planning however having read through the programme's content he felt it was relevant to all Members of Council and anticipated that any information would be distributed accordingly.

Councillor Donnelly queried if the positions should be filled by persons other than the Chairperson and Members of the Planning Committee.

Alderman Thompson suggested that this matter be referred to the April council Meeting and in the meantime Officers ascertain if Council could submit additional nominees to attend the Programme.

Alderman Hussey expressed concern that the initial meeting scheduled for April 22 would take place before the April Council Meeting. He said his Party would not be putting forward a nomination he was concerned however in regard to the distribution of information arising from the Programme.

The Committee subsequently

Recommended that this matter be deferred to the April Council Meeting when Members nominations to attend the Programme would be ratified.

GSP69/18 Nilga Conference

The Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer presented the above report a copy of which had previously been circulated. She advised that the purpose of the report was to consider Member attendance at the Driving Government Locally Summit.

In response to a request from Alderman Hussey it was agreed that he be permitted to attend the Conference without claiming travelling expenses.

The Committee

- Recommended** **(a) that the Council's nominated representatives on Nilga are approved to attend this conference and that these Members share the knowledge acquired with other Members through the Post Conference Feedback process; and**
- (b) Alderman Hussey be approved to attend this Conference.**

GSP70/18 Schedule of Meetings - 2018/19

The Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer presented the above report a copy of which had previously been circulated. She advised that the purpose of the report was to seek elected Members' approval for the proposed schedule of meetings for 2018/19 as set out in Appendix 1.

The Committee

- Recommended** **that, subject to modifications due to public holidays and other circumstances, the meetings schedule for 2018/19, set out in Appendix 1 is adopted.**

GSP71/18 Language Working Group - Review of Options for Language Usage on Council Branding and Signage

The Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer presented the above report a copy of which had previously been circulated. She advised that the purpose of the report was to consider three options which had been identified by a dedicated Language Working Group whose task it was to review the Council's existing language policies in respect of Irish and Ulster-Scots.

Alderman Ramsey stated that since this situation had arisen discussions had taken place with a number of interested groups regarding the possibility of a hasty decision being made by Council on such a culturally sensitive issue which must be seen to have been considered fully, fairly and inclusively. He continued that any suggestion that this was not the case had the potential to re-open arguments which his # Party felt Council had moved beyond and create barriers to building on

the progress which had been welcomed by most of the people and their representatives in this Council area.

Alderman Ramsey referred specifically to the submission put forward by the North West Cultural Partnership which questioned or contradicted elements of the report originally submitted to the Committee. He stated that Party Leaders had received a copy of this new submission.

Alderman Ramsey referred to a number of issues which had been raised in relation to the process, understanding of the complexity of the various different languages and heritage shared within the Council area and the limited nature of the original consultation which his Party viewed as inadequate given the complexity of the subject.

Alderman Ramsey referred to the significance of 10 April in the history of Northern Ireland and the Republic, the anniversary of the Good Friday agreement and suggested that a proposal to defer the decision was in the spirit of the agreement.

Councillor McMahan stated that over recent days a number of stakeholders had expressed their concern regarding this matter and his Party felt there was a need for further consideration in order to gain a wider range of views.

Alderman Ramsey Moved, Councillor McMahan Seconded

That any decision to change the current Language Policy be deferred and in the meantime Council put in place a process whereby it could become more fully informed about the heritage and culture of the various groups that contributed to the development of this area and the linguistic elements which they brought to the area, much of which was used on a daily basis.

Councillor Boyle questioned any suggestion that Council was being hasty in making a decision given the significant consideration attributed to this process. As such he did not regard the request to defer a decision as unreasonable and suggested that more time might not provide a positive outcome. He stated that there was an expressed view by the Working Group to identify an appropriate policy which would work for all.

Alderman Hussey concurred with the sentiments expressed by the previous speaker that a considerable amount of work had already been carried out within the Working Group. However, he did not feel that the process had reached its conclusion. He concluded that much more work was still required in order that a satisfactory outcome could be achieved and as such agreed that the matter be deferred.

Councillor Donnelly sought clarification as to why and where this matter was being deferred. He stated that a considerable amount of time and effort had already gone into the review process through the Language Working Group including discussion with Ulster Scots representatives none of which had been rushed or hasty.

Alderman Ramsey suggested that the process involved a significant amount of learning with greater diversity existing than what was actually apparent and referred to the need to endeavour to reach a position agreeable to all sections of the community and which was in compliance with the Good Friday agreement. He said he was requesting that the matter be deferred to include a wider range of people to assist in the review process and achieve a favourable outcome for all.

In response to a query from Councillor Donnelly, Alderman Ramsey stated that the process would take as long as was necessary in order to achieve a satisfactory outcome for all involved.

Alderman Devenney expressed his support for the deferral of the process to allow further discussion with interested groups. He stated that when Council had initially agreed to a tri-lingual language policy it had delivered a positive message to all which had been built upon. He suggested that if Ulster Scots were to be removed from Council signage this would not be regarded favourably by the Unionist community.

The above proposal was put to the vote and declared carried their voting – For – 11; Against – 2.

Subsequently Alderman Ramsey Moved, Councillor McMahon Seconded and the Committee

Recommended that any decision to change the current Language Policy be deferred and in the meantime Council put in place a process whereby it could become more fully

informed about the heritage and culture of the various groups that contributed to the development of this area and the linguistic elements which they brought to the area, much of which was used on a daily basis.

GSP72/18 Consultation: Framework of Future Provision for Children in the Early Years with Special Educational Needs

The Lead Democratic Service and Improvement Officer presented the above report a copy of which had previously been circulated. She stated that the purpose of the report was to advise Members of the consultation issued by the Education Authority on the proposed Framework of Future Provision for Children in the Early Years with Special Educational Needs.

Members noted the information contained in the report.

GSP73/18 North West Regional Development Group

The Business Support and Change Manager presented the above report a copy of which had previously been circulated. She advised that the purpose of the report was to provide Members with an update on the following meetings of the North West Regional Development Group held on 24 January 2018.

Members noted the content of the report.

GSP74/18 Correspondence - Citizens Advice NI

The Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer presented the above report a copy of which had previously been circulated. She stated that the purpose of the report was to advise Members of correspondence received from the Citizens Advice Northern Ireland.

Members noted the content of the report.

The Meeting terminated at 5.20 pm

The meeting terminated at Time Not Specified