

Derry City and Strabane District Council

Open Minutes of the Meeting of Health and Community Committee of Derry City and Strabane District Council held remotely on Thursday 22 July 2021 at 4.00pm.

Present: - Councillor Fleming (Chair); Aldermen Devenney, Guy and Kerrigan; Councillors Seenoi-Barr, M Boyle, Burke, Duffy, Edwards, Farrell, Ferguson and Harkin.

Non-members of Committee – Alderman Hussey and Councillor O’Neill.

In Attendance: - Director of Health and Community (Mrs K McFarland), Head of Community Development and Leisure (Mr B O’Hagan), Head of Health and Community Wellbeing (Mr S Donaghy), PA to Health and Community Director (Mrs L Shields) and Committee Services Assistant (Ms N Meehan).

HC170/21 Notice and Summons for Meeting

The Director of Health and Community read the Notice and Summons for the Meeting.

HC171/21 Members Attendance and Apologies

The Director of Health and Community recorded Members attendance. An apology for absence was received from Councillor Tierney.

HC172/21 Statement for Remote Meetings

The Chairperson read the statement for remote meetings.

HC173/21 Declarations of Members’ Interests

Item 6 – Chairperson’s Business – Deaths Due to Domestic Violence – Councillors Ferguson and Fleming

Item 12 – Launch of the Consultation for the Development of a New Rural Policy Framework for Northern Ireland – Councillor Ferguson

Item 17 – Melvin Arena Launch – Councillor M Boyle

Item 20 – Derry and Strabane Policing and Community Safety Partnership Annual Report – Aldermen Devenney, Guy, Kerrigan, Councillors M Boyle, Duffy and Fleming.

Open for Decision

HC174/21 Deputation: To receive Mr T Sullivant from the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, Ms K Lesslar from the Royal College of Occupational Therapists and Ms H Smyth, Labour Relations Agency to present on Rehabilitation Services

The Chairperson welcomed Mr T Sullivant and Mr E McComiskey from the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy who gave a powerpoint presentation on Community Rehabilitation – A Right to Rehabilitation for Everyone, a copy of which had previously been circulated.

The Chairperson welcomed Ms K Lesslar from the Royal College of Occupational Therapists who gave a powerpoint presentation on What Council Can Do to Support Rehabilitation in the Local Community - a copy of which had previously been circulated.

The Chairperson welcomed Ms H Smyth, Labour Relations Agency who gave a presentation on the purpose and the services provided by the Agency, a copy of which had previously been circulated.

The Chairperson and Members thanked the four representatives for their extremely detailed and comprehensive presentations.

Members then raised the following issues:

- Expressed concern at the figures in relation to the number of people suffering long Covid which would undoubtedly increase in the future.
- Referred to the symptoms and impact of long Covid and its similarities with ME.
- Queried if the rehabilitation programme for ME was being used for those suffering from long Covid or did this require a more specific and tailored process.
- Referred to the need for increased funding for rehabilitation services which were essential to improve the quality of life for those suffering from long Covid.
- Welcomed the advice from the Labour Relations Agency in regards to sufferers of long Covid returning to work in terms of support and managing this condition in the workplace.
- Referred to the importance of Unions in terms of supporting the return to work process.

- Referred to the daily challenges facing people with disabilities and the need for these to be addressed at the planning and design stage of all proposed new developments/services/infrastructure within the Council area.
- Referred to Council's responsibility in terms of supporting the rehabilitation services necessary for sufferers of long Covid.
- Referred to the importance of rehabilitation services in terms of the long term outlook for those suffering from long Covid.
- Acknowledged the right for every individual within the Council area to be able to access rehabilitation services as, and when required.
- Agreed with the need for additional disabled provision within all Council facilities.
- Agreed that the infrastructural recognition of personal difficulties and challenges was something which could and should be addressed through the development of our built environment in going forward.
- Whilst acknowledging the ongoing lack of resources within the Occupational Therapist service, sought clarification in regards to how Brexit had impacted on this problem.
- Enquired as to the potential cost involved in terms of the provision of rehabilitation services required to address long Covid.
- Sought clarification in regards to from where it was anticipated that these much needed financial resources would be made available.
- Acknowledged issues in regards to appropriate funding in respect of Covid rehabilitation costs.
- Acknowledged the excellent work carried out by Occupational Therapists and impact of this on those with disabilities.
- Agreed with the need for disabled provision to be included in all Council's future planning.
- Was it anticipated that any new policies would be required to assist with the effect of long Covid particularly in regard to a return to work.
- Pointed out that Sinn Fein had requested the Health Minister to ensure that resources were available for Covid rehabilitation and to address the issues surrounding long Covid.
- Whilst acknowledging the many competing demands currently being faced by the Health Service referred to the need to ensure that the impact and effects of Covid and long Covid on both physical and mental health could be addressed.
- Suggested that Covid had highlighted and exacerbated the many inequalities and issues which existed within communities.

- Questioned the suggested 21,000 currently suffering from long Covid and referred to the possibility of many of those suffering from this condition not having been diagnosed.
- Queried what steps employers should take in terms of facilitating the return to work of employees suffering from long Covid.
- Referred to the fact that rehabilitation was tremendously resource intense which was often a reason for not investing in this service. However, if this service did not receive the necessary investment problems would continue to re-emerge with a greater impact on the health service.
- Referred to the need to reorganize the health service with a greater focus on prevention and rehabilitation which would result in greater savings in the long term as well as the having a positive impact on the wellbeing of those concerned.
- Pointed out that as was evident during the pandemic, monies could be identified when required. These monies were required in respect of rehabilitation services.
- Whilst acknowledging the Executive's lack of tax raising powers suggested that it could place greater taxes on the wealthiest in society and larger corporations to assist in providing funding for the health service.
- Acknowledged the importance of planning in terms of health service provision and the chaos being created by the involvement of the private sector in terms of service delivery. This would not be set up to cater for those in most in need who could not afford private health care.
- Opposed the introduction of a two-tier health service.
- Acknowledged the huge shortages in workforce across all sectors of the NHS and the impact thereof.
- Expressed serious concern at the government's proposed 3% wage increase for NHS staff which was totally demoralising.
- Pointed out that the NHS would not attract prospective employees with the required expertise if it did not offer an acceptable salary and terms and conditions.
- Queried what, if any measures were being taken to encourage an uptake among young people in the allied health professions and to live work and remain in this area.
- Referred to the need for schools to encourage students towards a career the areas of allied health.
- Referred to the need for community intervention and assistance in regards to the provision of aids/implements such as wheelchairs for short term use within local communities.

- Referred to the challenges already facing the rehabilitation services prior to Covid which had been exacerbated since the pandemic.
- Sought advice for Members in regards to advising constituents in terms of employers who display less compassion and sympathy to employees suffering from long Covid who were returning to work.

The presenters responded as follows:

- Referred to the difficulties in regards to the diagnosis and treatment of long Covid given its infancy.
- Whilst acknowledging similarities between long Covid and ME, pointed out that long Covid responded differently to those suffering from ME and therefore the guidance had to be tailored to the needs of the individual.
- Pointed out that a 'one size fits all' approach could not be adopted in respect of long Covid. This required a very personalized and individual rehabilitation programme.
- Whilst welcoming the £1m which had been allocated to the treatment of long Covid referred to the financial challenges which would be presented given the growing numbers suffering from this condition and the individualized treatments required.
- Referred to the expertise required to provide those suffering from long Covid with the best rehabilitation to enable them to return to normal life.
- Acknowledged the ongoing financial difficulties in regards to the health service in general.
- Pointed out that the £1m funding allocation from the Health Minister had arisen from monies resulting from the June monitoring round.
- Pointed out that an assessment had been made to begin to put in place the much needed Assessment/Treatment centres which it was anticipated would become operational in October.
- Pointed out that work was ongoing in regards to staff levels in different areas which could result in one additional full-time Physiotherapist for each Trust area which would not be sufficient to address the anticipated level of demand.
- Suggested that future funding sources was a matter for consideration by the Executive.
- Referred to numerous requests and lobbies to the Executive to have additional funding made available to the Health Minister. The current health budget was not adequate in terms of rebuilding services, introducing additional services together with appointment

of advanced practitioners to address waiting lists in respect of elective care.

- Referred to consultation which was currently taking place in regards to the introduction of an alternative commissioning model to replace the local commissioning groups. The body responsible for this would decide how resources were spent and what services would be commissioned.
- Pointed out that the local commissioning groups had strong local government representation. However, it was unclear as to what level of local government representation there would be on the new commissioning models.
- Urged Council to respond to the consultation process to ensure strong local government representation on the new commissioning body in going forward.
- Pointed out that Covid was not only an acute health care challenge in isolation and would impact on many sectors in the future if the necessary rehabilitation services were not available to address the problem.
- The long term impact of Covid required an inter-departmental approach in terms of funding to ensure that the necessary services were made available.
- Pointed out that Brexit had proved something of a huge distraction removing the focus from important issues such as the provision and delivery of health services. It had also caused disruption in regards to varying opinions within the political system and had resulted in instability within the Stormont Executive at a time when this was needed most.
- Acknowledged the role of Occupational Therapists in terms of housing issues but referred to a move towards a more efficient redirecting of the duties and involvement of Occupational Therapists in this regard.
- Referred to possible input by Occupational Therapists at the housing planning/design/development stage.
- Referred to the possibility of increased engagement between Occupational Therapists and elected representatives particularly through Community Planning in terms of future planning and design to best meet the needs of people with a disability.
- Referred to the need for advance planning in terms of meeting the many needs of the general public in regards to all future developments.
- Referred to the extreme challenges being faced by Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists in terms of recruitment.
- Referred to the direct correlation between Brexit and workforce.

- Pointed out that there had been an approximate 96% decrease in the numbers registered on the Healthcare Professions Council from European countries following the 2016 Brexit referendum.
- This problem was further exacerbated by the fact that recruitment issues were also being experienced in Donegal leading to competition in terms of attracting workforces.
- Acknowledged the heightened sense of anxiety stemming from the Covid pandemic as well as the many challenges facing people together with those who had been diagnosed with Covid and long Covid.
- Referred to the need for careful and sensitive management of employees with long Covid returning to work.
- Referred to the need for employers to listen to the needs of their employees and to accommodate them as far as possible.
- Expressed concern that the long-term impact of the pandemic would escalate mental health issues which was one of the main focuses of the Labour Relations Agency.
- Urged the public to avail of the services being provided by the Labour Relations Agency particularly in regards to mental health issues.
- Referred to the possibility of long Covid resulting in a long term disability for the sufferer and the potential for subsequent work adjustments to be made for employees concerned. This might involve continuous carrying out of risk assessments to assess the needs of the employees in terms of health and safety.
- Referred to the need for employers to be mindful of the needs of employees suffering long Covid together with the risk of discrimination claims and equality issues.
- Referred to ongoing difficulties experienced within the Western Trust in terms of workforce requirements. This could be partly addressed by the relocation of the Allied Health Undergraduate School to the Magee Campus.
- Referred to difficulties experienced within the Western Trust in terms of attracting doctors across a range of specialties which had formed part of the rationale for the location of the Post Graduate Medical School at Magee.
- It was anticipated that the relocation and locating of these courses to the Magee Campus would have a knock on effect based on the tendency of medical professionals to practice in the area in which they had trained.
- Referred to the development of first contact Physiotherapy posts in primary care within the Western Trust due to the pressure being

placed on GP practices where there was the greatest decline in the number of GPs.

- Suspected a further decline in GP numbers within the Western Trust post Covid due to the stresses arising from this.
- Pointed out that first contact posts involved advanced practice role Physiotherapists who had moved into a primary role to remove the pressures placed on GPs and act as a first point of contact for people suffering from muscular related problems.
- This provided a more efficient system which allowed Physiotherapists to demonstrate the skills which they had gained through their extensive training and prevent onward referrals for diagnostics into secondary care. This could also lead to a reduction in the number of unnecessary prescriptions.
- Expressed concern that the Chief Allied Health Professions Officer was not represented at the same level as other Chief Health Professionals such as Nurses and Social Workers. This was despite continued lobbying to get equal representation for allied health services in the decision making process.
- Referred to the need for structural changes to allow greater input from the allied health professions to the commissioning processes in regards to redesigning and rebuilding services.
- Pointed out that members of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy would attend careers events in local schools/colleges to promote and encourage students towards a career in allied health professions.
- Pointed out that the Occupational Therapy profession was currently somewhat overscribed and referred to the possibility of incorporating alternative groups into all of the allied health professions through apprenticeships and MScs.
- Referred to the Conditions Management Programme to assist Council in supporting the return to work of employees suffering long Covid.
- Acknowledged the impact on society of people not being given appropriate rehabilitation.
- Referred to the importance of the allied health services within Care Homes to ensure quality of life for residents and prevent occupational deprivation.
- Referred to the need to be cognizant of the effect of other worldwide catastrophes when planning for the longer term mental health impact of Covid.

- Pointed out that the lack of any diagnostic test for long Covid exacerbated the difficulties in terms diagnosing this condition.
- Pointed out that diagnosing long Covid was a timely diagnostic process which involved eliminating other causes of the symptoms being experienced?
- Referred to the impact of Covid on the elderly community.
- Pointed out that the issues arising from Covid in regards to the workplace did not necessarily require new policies.
- Referred to the need for employers to consider a review of existing policies to address issues in regards to a return to work for employees suffering long Covid.
- Referred to the importance of engagement with Trades Unions in regards to any policy reviews.
- Referred to the need for clear and consistent communication and awareness training throughout any organization to ensure staff and management were aware of all policies and procedures in going forward.
- Suggested that Elected Members direct constituents with issues pertaining to Covid to the Labour Relations Agency's free Workplace Information Service where they would receive confidential, professional and expert advice.
- Acknowledged the hesitancy among employees to return to work following Covid and referred to the need for employers to highlight and communicate those measures which had been put in place to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of employees.
- Referred to the need for employers to listen to the concerns of their employees and, where possible, accommodate these concerns.
- Referred to the need for alternative working arrangements to be kept under review and a recognized process through which issues could be addressed.

The Chairperson thanked the four representatives for their detailed and very informative presentations and responses.

Mr Sullivant welcomed the opportunity to address the Committee.

Subsequently Councillor Harkin Proposed, Councillor Farrell Seconded

That Council condemns the Tory proposal to offer NHS workers a paltry 3% increase following their heroism throughout the pandemic. Council urges the

Stormont Executive not to follow Boris Johnson's treatment of our health service workers. Council stands in solidarity with all health service workers and unions in their campaign to win the pay increase they are demanding and deserve.

Councillor Farrell, in expressing his Party's support for the proposal, stated that health service workers deserved a pay increase of over 3%. He referred to speculation that this proposed 3% would be delivered through a one and a half per cent permanent payrise and a one and a half per cent one off payrise which was even more derisory and miserly. He compared the proposed 3% increase to the lavish extravagance of the Test and Trace system which would likely cost in the region £40 billion with consultants receiving £20,000 per day to develop the system. A Westminster Committee had indicated that this system made no measurable difference to managing the pandemic.

Councillor Farrell referred to the immeasurable difference made by doctors, nurses and NHS staff in terms of managing the pandemic and who deserved a payrise well in excess of 3%

Alderman Hussey suggested that the proposal deserved the attention of full Council. With regard to the wording of the proposal he pointed out that the Tory Party had in fact offered a pay increase of only 1% following which it was agreed that the matter be referred to the Pay Review Body for consideration. He said it was the Pay Review Body who had recommended the 3% increase which, he agreed, was totally inadequate.

In regards to approaching the Stormont Executive, Alderman Hussey referred to the need to be aware of the Barnett consequential. He stated that if the proposed 3% pay increase was agreed in mainland UK, this would subsequently be presented to the Health Minister at Stormont as a 3% increase in his budget as a Barnett consequential. He referred to the need to identify some mechanism through which to mitigate against this proposed increase on the local health service and to ensure that if the Stormont Executive were minded to increase the 3% it could be assured that funding would not be redirected from elsewhere within the health service budget.

Councillor M Boyle expressed her Party's support for the proposal. She referred to the frustrations expressed in recent days by all healthcare workers and in particular nurses regarding this proposed 3% increase.

She acknowledged that NHS pay awards had been an ongoing issue which had become more pertinent because of the Covid pandemic and the extreme pressures under which staff had been working. She referred to a statement by the Royal College of Nursing which suggested that whilst nurses were generally opposed to industrial action this might prove their only route. She referred to the impact this would have on the entire health service at this time.

Councillor M Boyle acknowledged the phenomenal contribution from nurses and health care workers during the pandemic.

Alderman Devenney expressed his Party's support for the proposal but concurred with the sentiments expressed by Alderman Hussey in regards to the Barnett consequential. He anticipated that any pay increase would not be redirected from existing budgets given the financial crisis facing the entire health service at this time.

Councillor Harkin welcomed Members' comments. He agreed that the proposal warranted discussion by full Council. However, this issue had arisen earlier that week and he felt Council must be responsive. He referred to the possibility of further discussion on the matter in the near future but referred to the need for Council to reaffirm its support for a 10-15% pay increase for health and social care workers which fell far short of the proposed 3%. He felt it was important that Council made known its total opposition to the proposed increase which did not reflect the increase which health and social care workers deserved.

He felt the proposed 3% increase was miserly and disrespectful to health and social care staff who had worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic. He referred to the need to tax billionaires to properly fund the health service as well as public services and to ensure acceptable pay and conditions for all workers.

Subsequently the Committee

Recommended that Council condemns the Tory proposal to offer NHS workers a paltry 3% increase following their heroism throughout the pandemic. Council urges the Stormont Executive not to follow Boris Johnson's treatment of our health service workers. Council stands in solidarity with all health service workers

and unions in their campaign to win the pay increase they are demanding and deserve.

Chairperson's Business

HC175/21 Condolences

Councillor Ferguson expressed her Party's condolences to the family of Noel O'Donnell on his recent passing. She said Mr O'Donnell had been a huge community activist and presence for the Strathfoyle community.

HC176/21 Deaths Due to Domestic Violence

Councillor Ferguson referred to reports that another woman in Northern Ireland had been murdered a result of domestic violence. In the past sixteen months ten female deaths had occurred as a result of domestic violence. She said this was a tragic situation with many women living in constant fear. She referred to the increase in the number of reported incidents of domestic violence during lockdown as well as the number of unreported cases.

Councillor Ferguson referred to Le Dolce Vita Project which was a local charity which offered help and support to all victims of domestic violence. The organisation had noted a considerable increase in the number of referrals both from the PSNI and individuals in recent months. She pointed out that currently twenty-eight members of the local community were awaiting assessment. She stated that referrals dealt with a number of issues including offering safety and protection and emotional and legal support.

Councillor Ferguson said the organisation had also agreed a partnership research project with Ulster University at the Magee Campus which it was anticipated would begin in August 2021. She said the organisation had applied to numerous bodies for financial support having more recently submitted an application to the Big Lottery Fund. However, unfortunately due to the limited knowledge regarding parental alienation within the health service, their application was unsuccessful and they were now, due to their lack of finances, facing closure.

Councillor Ferguson acknowledged Council's limited resources and the fact that numerous charities were competing for funding from Council.

She therefore suggested that Council Officers work with Le Dolce Vita project and write to the relevant bodies in an effort to identify potential funding streams which would help the organisation to continue the excellent work which they have been doing for the City and District.

Councillor Ferguson said that she had contacted a number of organisation in her capacity as Elected Representative. However, she suggested that given their knowledge and expertise, Council Officers write to the Department for Health, Department for Communities and the Department for Justice, as well as other partners in an effort to identify possible funding sources to assist the organisation in continuing its service.

Councillor Ferguson Proposed, Seconded by Councillor Duffy

That Council will write to the Department of Health, Department of Communities, Department of Justice as well as our statutory partners to try and identify funding streams that could help La Dolce Vita Project a much needed service for the City and district stay open.

Councillor Duffy acknowledged the excellent work carried out by Le Dolce Vita project in regards to domestic violence and parental alienation. She expressed concern at the impact of Covid on the project particularly in regards to its financial situation. She expressed her support for the proposals put forward by Councillor Ferguson and anticipated that Council would be able to provide some assistance to enable the organisation to continue carrying out such fantastic work with victims of domestic violence.

Councillor Reilly expressed his support for the proposal. He acknowledged the increase in domestic violence during the pandemic and referred to the need for Council to do all in its power to support organisations who work with victims of domestic violence.

Councillor Harkin welcomed and expressed his Party's support for the proposal. He acknowledged the excellent work carried out by LDVP and the assistance they had been providing for victims of domestic violence. He agreed that Council should do everything possible to assist organisations like this.

Alderman Devenney also welcomed and expressed his Party's support for the proposal. He said this was an issue which was being raised increasingly at meetings of PCSP.

Alderman Guy concurred with the sentiments expressed by the previous speakers. He requested that the proposal include the PCSP.

Subsequently the Committee

Recommended that Council will write to the Department of Health, Department of Communities, Department of Justice, the PCSP as well as our statutory partners to try and identify funding streams that could help La Dolce Vita Project a much needed service for the City and district stay open.

HC177/21 Industrial Action by Department for Infrastructure (DfI) (Roads) Staff Against Bullying by Management

Councillor Harkin pointed out that earlier that day he had joined with staff from DfI (Roads) at the Woodburn Depot in Waterside who were taking industrial action against management bullying. He referred to current temperatures which resulted in this having been a somewhat unpleasant experience. He said the workers, who were members of the UNITE Union, had balloted in respect of this one-day strike when over 90% were in favour of industrial action. The workers had indicated that issues in regards to bullying had been ongoing for many years and they felt this action was necessary in order to have the problem addressed. He said that these were frontline workers who had worked continuously throughout the pandemic. He referred to the current pressure on Roads Service staff given the increasing number of issues pertaining to pot holes/laneways/gullies. He pointed out that it was ultimately the responsibility of frontline staff to have these works carried out.

Councillor Harkin said that unfortunately this workplace bullying, intimidation and harassment was impacting on the health and wellbeing of the staff affected. He said his Party were contacted regularly by workers in other organisations experiencing similar treatment regarding their rights. Many were reluctant to speak out about workplace bullying and harassment particularly if they were not a member of a Trade Union.

He said the workers believed that there was a culture of bullying within the Department for Infrastructure. UNITE was calling for the DfI Minister to meet with representatives from the Union to address these issues. He said this was a straightforward request. He referred to frustrations expressed by staff that the problem had not already been addressed by the Minister and that it had been necessary for them to take industrial action in order to put forward their case. He suggested that Council stand in solidarity with the workers and call on the Minister to meet with representatives of UNITE as soon as possible to address these issues. He said that if such a meeting did not take place, further industrial action would be taken until the matter was resolved. This would have a knock on impact on the work being carried out by frontline staff.

Subsequently Councillor Harkin Proposed

That Council stands in solidarity with DfI Road Service workers at the Woodburn Depot on strike today against management bullying. Council urges the DfI Minister to meet with Unite the Union representatives to address workers' grievances.

Alderman Guy expressed his Party's support for the proposal to support the workers in their industrial action.

Alderman Guy Proposed the following Amendment, Seconded by

That Council stands in solidarity with DfI Road Service workers at the Woodburn Depot on strike today against management bullying. Council urges the DfI Minister to meet with Unite the Union representatives to address workers' grievances. That DfI Road Service Officials come to Council to discuss alleged work place bullying and also UNITE representatives.

Councillor Harkin expressed his support for the Amendment.

Alderman Devenney expressed his Party's support for the proposal and pointed out that bullying was unacceptable in any form whether in the workplace or in society in general. He felt it was important that Council urge the Minister to meet with the Union representatives to discuss the matter. He also supported the Amendment proposed by Alderman Guy.

Alderman Hussey queried if the industrial action had only taken place at one Depot and was the issue of bullying localised or were UNITE suggesting that it was more widespread. He said such behaviour must be condemned.

Councillor Reilly pointed out that SDLP MLA Mark H Durkan had also attended the strike action and had spoken to the workers directly affected. He expressed his Party's support for the Proposal.

Councillor Duffy expressed Sinn Fein's support for the Proposal and the Amendment. She said she was aware that some of the workers had been in touch with other Elected Representatives from her Party.

Subsequently the Committee

Recommended that Council stands in solidarity with DfI Road Service workers at the Woodburn Depot on strike today against management bullying. Council urges the DfI Minister to meet with Unite the Union representatives to address workers' grievances. That DfI Road Service Officials come to Council to discuss alleged work place bullying and also UNITE representatives.

HC178/21 Matters Arising from the Open Minutes of the Health and Community Committee Meeting held on Thursday 17 June 2021

There were no matters arising.

HC179/21 Protect Duty Consultation

The Head of Health and community Wellbeing presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He pointed out that the purpose of the report was to advise Members that the home Office has published a Protect Duty Consultation document entitled "Making the public safer at publicly accessible locations" and to approve the draft consultation response.

Councillor Doyle enquired if this would affect businesses' public liability insurance. He referred to the wide ranging risk assessment required

which he felt might affect businesses in terms of securing adequate insurance cover for their business. He referred to the cost of public liability insurances for businesses and referred to the need for clarity to be sought in regards to the matter. He suggested that this be one of the main considerations outlined in Council's consultation response.

The Committee

Recommended that Members approve the draft consultation response with the inclusion of the comments suggested by Councillor Doyle.

HC180/21 Community Centre Venue Fund Assessment Panel 2021/2022

The Head of Community Development and Leisure presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that the purpose of the report was to seek Members' approval for the recommendations of the Community Centre Venue Grant Aid Fund 2021-2022 assessment panels.

Councillor Farrell said this was welcome news for the 21 organisations who would receive full or partial funding. However, it was disappointing for those nine organisations who met the scoring threshold but could not avail of funding as it was currently exhausted. He referred to the importance of the reserve list should any additional monies were identified.

In regards to the funding contract from DfC, Councillor Farrell enquired if there was any indication when these monies would be confirmed.

The Head of Community Development and Leisure said this confirmation was expected in the coming weeks and undertook to investigate the matter. He said this was not a matter of concern pointing out that such delays were not unusual in regards to Letters of Offer both within the Good Relations Fund and the VCU Community Support Fund.

Alderman Devenney welcomed the full and partial funding which would be forthcoming to the 21 successful applicants. However, he expressed serious concerns regarding the nine applicants who would not be receiving funding even though they were deemed successful having scored above the 60% threshold. He said these applications were in

respect of extremely important facilities referring specifically to those in the rural area. He referred to the excellent work carried out at these facilities particularly during the pandemic. He acknowledged that should further funding become available the nine applicants together with the two in receipt of partial funding would be placed on a reserve list and allocated funding accordingly. He expressed concern, however, at the likelihood of such a situation arising.

Subsequently, Alderman Devenney Proposed, Alderman Kerrigan Seconded

That Officers go away and review funding sources for those groups that met the criteria but weren't funded.

Alderman Devenney requested that Officers meet with those applicants who had not met the criteria to discuss their viability and sustainability and offer assistance, where possible.

Alderman Guy concurred with the sentiments expressed by the previous speakers. He referred to the impact of this decision on those applicants and the facilities concerned placing them into an uncertain and unsustainable position. Whilst acknowledging that it might be unrealistic for applicants to depend solely on this funding in order to operate, he said there appeared to be less funding opportunities available in the rural area compared with urban areas.

Alderman Guy queried how often applicants who were deemed successful having met the threshold did not receive funding due to budgetary constraints but were subsequently awarded funding. In regards to the scoring exercise he referred to the huge contrast between the highest and lowest scores awarded. He acknowledged that Council Officers would work with those unsuccessful applicants to offer advice, assistance and support in going forward. However, he reiterated his concerns regarding the huge differentiation emerging between the highest and lowest scoring applicants and referred to the possible need to review the current process in regards to the allocation of funding.

Councillor M Boyle welcomed the funding for the successful applicants many of which were located in the rural area. She said that as a members of the Sperrin Rural Growth Partnership she was aware of the anomalies which existed in terms of accessing funding in the rural area. Whilst again welcoming those rural applicants who had been successful

she expressed disappointment regarding the unsuccessful applicants particularly those who had met the threshold but due to budgetary constraints would not receive funding. She anticipated that the monies forthcoming from DfC would be sufficient to address this shortfall.

Councillor M Boyle acknowledged the number of facilities in the urban area which were struggling financially particularly emerging from the pandemic. She acknowledged the difficulties involved in the funding allocation process and anticipated that those applicants who had not been successful at this stage would be successful in round two of the process.

Alderman Hussey endorsed the previous speakers' comments. Whilst congratulating those applicants who had been successful he expressed concern regarding those applicants who had met the threshold but would not be allocated funding. He expressed serious trepidation that this decision would prove disastrous for a number of the facilities concerned. He agreed that a review of the process was necessary and said Council could not allow these very active and vibrant community hubs which had provided a lifeline for many during the pandemic to perish.

Alderman Hussey referred to the funding awarded up to a maximum of £12,000. He enquired if these monies had been awarded on a percentage score basis up to £12,000, would this have enabled funding to have been distributed to other applicants who had also met the threshold.

Alderman Kerrigan concurred with the sentiments expressed by Alderman Hussey. He echoed his serious concerns that this decision could prove fatal for a number of those facilities dependant on this funding from Council.

Councillor Duffy, whilst acknowledging the sentiments expressed by the previous speakers, urged caution in terms of unravelling the existing process. She referred to similar issues which had arisen at the June Meeting of Committee in regards to the Good Relations funding. She acknowledged the excellent work carried out by all of the applicants. However, it was necessary to establish a fair and equitable process through which the available funding could be distributed and, as in similar processes there would unfortunately be winners and losers. She said Council Officers would work with and assist those applicants who had met the threshold but would not be receiving funding in

identifying alternative funding sources as well as being placed on Council's reserve list. Officers would also work with the unsuccessful applicants in relation to their capacity and in terms of the application process to ensure an adequate scoring in future years.

Councillor Duffy Proposed the following Amendment to Alderman DeVenny's Proposal

That Officers work with those groups that met the criteria but weren't funded to source alternative options.

The Chairperson referred to those processes in regards to Good Relations and Community Centre Support which had produced similar outcomes and expressed concern at the prospect of unravelling any of these processes.

Whilst acknowledging the comments made by the previous two speakers, Alderman Hussey said his concerns were in regards to the allocation of the funding and not the assessment process. He referred to the maximum £12,000 which he said was a target and not a set amount and as such he felt that there should be some reflection of the scoring which the various groups had received. He acknowledged the need for a cut-off point but felt the allocation should also reflect the scoring.

Alderman Devenney said he would be willing to defer his proposal and refer the matter to the July Council Meeting.

Alderman Guy agreed that it would not be prudent to change the process at this stage, he felt that there was scope to consider possible alterations in the future in regards to the way in which the process was rolled-out.

Following some discussion the Amended Proposal was carried unanimously.

Subsequently the Committee

Recommended (i) that Members approve the decisions of the assessment panels for Community Centre Venue 2021/2022 as set out in Appendix 1; and

(ii) that Officers work with those groups that met the criteria but weren't funded to source alternative options.

HC181/21 Gating Orders for Galliagh Park and Carnhill

The Head of Community Development and Leisure presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that the purpose of the report was to seek approval for gating orders for Carnhill and Galliagh Park.

Councillor Farrell welcomed the report and said this was a tremendous development for the residents of Galliagh Park and Carnhill who had been plagued by anti-social behaviour for many years. He anticipated that the proposed gates would have the required effect and make a notable difference to the quality of life of the residents of both areas. He said this was an excellent example of partnership working in Ballyarnett through the Community Safety Team and he commended both the PCSP and the Housing Executive on their input.

Councillor Farrell stated that having been involved in the survey process he was aware of just how important this was for the residents of the areas. He anticipated that there would not be any objections to the Gating Orders when advertised.

Councillor Farrell enquired as to the next steps in the process and the timescales involved if no objections were received in respect of the Gating Orders.

The Head of Community Development and Leisure said he was unsure as to the precise timescale. He said following approval by Council the PCSP would proceed with the process without delay. He said Officers would endeavour to progress this in the coming months.

Councillor Duffy concurred with the sentiments expressed by Councillor Farrell. She acknowledged the anti-social behaviour which had prevailed in both Carnhill and Galliagh Park and agreed that this was a tremendous development for the residents of these areas. She commended the work carried out by the Community Safety Team and the PCSP in terms of moving this forward.

Councillor Doyle echoed the comments made by the previous two speakers. He acknowledged that this had been ongoing for some time and agreed that this would be wholly welcomed by the residents of Galliagh Park and Carnhill. He also paid tribute to the work carried out by the Community Safety Team.

Councillor Harkin, whilst welcoming the proposed development, said he could not share the enthusiasm of other Parties. He said that anti-social behaviour had prevailed in these areas which had not been given the amenities or the ability to challenge this. He referred to the correlation between areas of deprivation and incidents of anti-social behaviour. He said the installation of gates would not solve the problem and felt it was disappointing that this was being regarded as a solution.

Councillor Harkin said the real solution would only be found through addressing the poverty which existed and the legacy of deprivation which created conditions for anti-social behaviour to thrive. He did not consider this could be regarded as progress for Council.

The Committee

Recommended that Members approve the gating orders for Carnhill and Galliagh Park to enable gates to be installed at the locations detailed in the maps provided.

HC182/21 COVID Recovery Funds and Social Supermarkets

The Head of Community Development and Leisure presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that the purpose of the report was to seek Members' consideration and comments on funding to be provided from the Department for Communities in relation to COVID Recovery and Social Supermarkets.

Councillor Burke welcomed the report. She said the pandemic had exacerbated a serious situation which already existed throughout the Council area in relation to poverty. She referred to a presentation which had been made at a recent meeting of the Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group which highlighted various indicators across the board and the extent of poverty and deprivation which existed within this Council area. She said that despite having prior knowledge of the problem

which existed, she was startled at the figures presented in regards to the levels of poverty and deprivation which existed. She said that through her role in the community she had considered the social supermarket model and this had been discussed at the meeting of the Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group in terms of how it could address some of the challenges facing local communities. However, it was obviously not the sole answer to addressing this problem.

Councillor Burke suggested that this be adopted as a pilot scheme in order to determine what benefits it could produce for local communities. She referred to a recent visit the Grass Roots Group in Strabane who had used the Social Supermarket model. Their work involved applying a more holistic approach in addressing some of the core issues and empowering local communities to make meaningful changes to their lives.

Councillor Farrell welcomed the anticipated approximate £750k for this Council area. He queried what type of community led interventions it was felt would be approved and if Officers had a plan in regards to the allocation of the funding. Would this be similar to the previous tranche of funding which was DEA focused with some monies being allocated to the food bank etc?

Councillor Farrell referred to paragraph 2.3 of the report and enquired if proposals had been agreed in respect of the £129,105.59 outstanding in regards to the Access to Food programme. He referred to his Party's main concern in regards to the pressure being placed on Council's Community Development team. He said their workload had increased immeasurably since the onset of Covid in terms of allocating the various fundings which had been forthcoming. Councillor Farrell sought clarification in regards to the additional resources required. He pointed out that the proposal put forward in respect of item 9 of the Agenda would result in more pressure for the Community Development Team which had not been anticipated.

In regards to the £750k, the Head of Community Development and Leisure pointed out that Council had not yet received details from the Department in regards to how these monies should be spent. However, they were moving more towards recovery rather than those type of programmes which had been rolled out during the pandemic. He said this was similar to the previous summer when there were recovery plans in place. He assured that when the Letter of Offer had

been received further reports would be presented to Committee for Members' approval.

The Head of Community Development and Leisure referred to previous reports which had been presented to Committee on the £129,105.59 in respect of the Access to Food. As indicated in the report £36,687 had already been allocated and the remainder had to be spent within the current financial year. He said further details would be presented to Members as and when these initiatives had been agreed.

The Head of Community Development and Leisure said there were still uncertainties regarding the level of additional staff resources required. He said that whenever the pandemic began the Community Development team went into Covid response until the end of summer 2020. He said in emerging from the first phase of the pandemic the team began to work on recovery and return to normal service in regards to Good Relations, grant aid, DEA engagement and resume all of their normal duties. However, as additional Covid and Advice services monies had been forthcoming from the Department, the Community Development and Good Relations teams were now spending ninety per cent of their time on the allocation of these funds given the huge monitoring and auditing requirements from the Department in regards to this funding. He said the teams were still monitoring and allocating monies and with further funding being made available the teams were at maximum capacity. He said Officers wanted Members to be aware of the potential implications in terms of service delivery.

In regards to the proposal put forward in respect of item 9 on the Agenda he said that at present the necessary staff would not be available to meet with the groups concerned. He said engagement did take place with groups through a variety of mechanisms including webex and forwarding suggestions to groups. However, he reiterated his concerns that as further funding was made available in the coming weeks the team would be fully involved in the allocation of these monies. He said Officers were in the process of scoping out the level of additional resources which would be required. He said the Community Development team were not working in normal circumstance and were not providing normal community development delivery as they would have been in previous years.

Councillor Harkin said the challenges in terms of poverty and deprivation had been well established. He reminded Members that this

Council area had the highest poverty rates and the highest economic inactivity rates in the North as well as the highest level of youth unemployment. He said if the Conservative government was forced to renege on its plans to slash the £20 universal credit increase this would unfortunately force more people into deprivation during the winter resulting in greater hardship.

Councillor Harkin referred to the rise in inflation with gas and electricity bills constantly being increased which would challenge those in greatest poverty to afford the basic necessities. He welcomed any funding which would be forthcoming to address the basic food and fuel requirements as well as all other areas of need. He anticipated that lessons had been learned during the pandemic and that the allocations of this funding would be fair and inclusive and target those in most need.

Alderman Devenney acknowledged the comments made by the previous speaker in regards to the allocation of this funding. He expressed his Party's support for the recommendation contained in the report.

The Committee

Recommended **that Members approve the allocation of funding agreed by Officers in respect of monies to be provided from the Department for Communities in relation to Covid Recovery and Social Supermarkets.**

HC183/21 Launch of the Consultation for the Development of a New Rural Policy Framework for Northern Ireland

The Director of Health and Community presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. She pointed out that the purpose of the report was to advise Members of the launch of the consultation process for the development of a new Rural Policy Framework for Northern Ireland.

The Committee

Recommended **that Members note and contribute to the public consultation for the development**

of a new Rural Policy Framework for Northern Ireland and to approve the submission of a response to the consultation through delegated authority of the Chief Executive.

HC184/21 Internal Audit Plan/Resources

The Director of Health and Community presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that the purpose of the report was to seek Members' endorsement for additional resources for the Community Development Section in order to allow the Section to provide the necessary input to the audit processes agreed by Council.

Councillor Farrell expressed his Party's support for the audits outlined in the report. He acknowledged the existing pressures on the Community Development team which would increase as additional monies were made available. He expressed concern that the recommendation contained in the report was vague. He enquired if there was any understanding of the exact additional resources which would be required. He referred to the need for clarity in regards to the nature of these additional resources and the costs involved. Would this involve appointing new staff, redirecting staff from other roles within Council, employees working overtime? He enquired if these additional resources would require a level of audit expertise and if it involved appointing new staff how long was this process likely to take.

The Director of Health and Community explained that in terms of the quantum of the report Officers were relying on the terms of reference which had been developed, presented and agreed by Members in September by the Audit team to be put in place. She said this was required in order to evaluate the extent of the resource. In regards to the nature of the resources she referred to Council's policy which was to consider internal resourcing initially which might potentially require resources from other areas of Council which were not being fully utilised in terms of specific project management or where projects had been completed. She stated that sometimes these resources could be acquired on an interim basis, however, this would depend on the projected duration of the work involved which would be taken into account.

The Director of Health and Community pointed out that management would make a recommendation which would be presented to Members in September in the Audit report in regards to the extent and cost of those resources which were required. She said it would not be possible to provide a conclusive response until the terms of reference had been completed.

In response to a query from Councillor Farrell, the Director of Health and Community explained that it would only be possible to quantify the extent of the additional resources required when the terms of reference had been completed and signed off by Members. She stated that at that stage there would be a reflection on what the level of staffing was together with the demands being placed on individual officers.

The Committee

Recommended that Members' endorse additional resources for the Community Development Section in order to allow the Section to provide the necessary input to the audit processes agreed by Council.

Open for Information

HC185/21 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021: Memorandum of Understanding between the 11 District Councils and PSNI with regard to the enforcement of the regulations

The Head of Health and Community Wellbeing presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that the purpose of the report was to update Members on the work of the Environmental Health Department with regards to the (i) the work of the Environmental Health Department with regards to The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (including the previous Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020); and (ii) the latest Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (Appendix 1) between the 11 District Councils and PSNI with regard to the enforcement of the regulations.

Members noted the content of the report.

HC186/21 Mental Health Strategy 2021-2031

The Head of Community Health and Wellbeing presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that the purpose of the report was to inform Members that the Health Minister launched the publication of the new Mental Health Strategy 2021-2031 on 29 June 2021.

Councillor Farrell described the Mental Health Strategy approved by the Minister as being comprehensive in nature and ambitious in its approach. He referred to the thirty-five key actions contained in the Strategy which, if all delivered, would transform mental health services and outcomes across the North. He said it was useful yet concerning that the Mental Health Strategy had a funding plan attached to it and it was envisaged that over the ten-year period £1.2 billion would be required to fund all of the elements included in the Strategy. He said it was the view of his Party that a dedicated funding model needed to be agreed to ensure that all of the key actions included in the Strategy were delivered. He referred to the need for all Political Parties to work together and cooperate and ensure that this became a reality.

Councillor Farrell thanked the Health Minister for producing the Strategy together with all of the other stakeholders involved.

Councillor M Boyle concurred with the sentiments expressed by Councillor Farrell in regards to the Mental Health Strategy. She suggested that Professor Siobhan O'Neill be requested to address Committee or Council to brief Members on the Mental Health Strategy locally and identify any problems in terms of the Strategy going forward for this Council area.

The Director of Health and Community undertook to extend an invitation to Professor O'Neill to address a future Meeting of Committee in order to brief Members on the Mental Health Strategy.

HC187/21 MacMillan Move More Programme

The Head of Community Development and Leisure presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that the purpose of the report was to update Members on the

'Move More Derry Strabane' initiative which has been created and funded by MacMillan Cancer Support.

Members noted the content of the report.

HC188/21 Melvin Arena Launch

The Head of Community Development and Leisure presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that the purpose of the report was to update Members on the programme of events for the planned reopening of the upgraded facilities at Melvin Arena.

Councillor M Boyle commended the Director of Health and Community and her team on their efforts in endeavouring to bring this project to fruition. She acknowledged the challenges involved but welcomed the efforts made to have this project progressed and completed for all of the user groups across the Strabane district area and the Derry and Strabane area. She referred to the official tour of the facility scheduled for the following day and said the people of the area were very appreciative of Council's endeavours in assisting them with their concerns throughout the entire process. She welcomed this project both as a Councillor and resident of the area and acknowledged the potential this had for the entire area. She again thanked the Director of Health and Community and her team on their hard work and efforts in bring this project to fruition, particularly bearing in mind the challenges involved.

Councillor Edwards also welcomed the project and acknowledged the efforts and endeavours of Council Officers in terms of bring this to fruition. He referred to the beneficial impact this would have on the wider Strabane area and welcomed the forthcoming activities for the area.

Alderman Hussey also welcomed the project which he considered a good investment in capital infrastructure in Strabane.

Councillor Edwards requested an updated in regards to a previous report presented to Committee on the establishment of a Boxing Club at Melvin.

The Head of Community Development and Leisure advised that this matter was progressing and a Letter of Offer had been received from

Sport NI. A number of issues still required addressing in regards to the technical documentation and the next stage would be to meet with Council's Project Management Team. However, this would be considered in light of implications arising from Covid and in regards to increased building costs.

HC189/21 IPB Pride of Place Awards

The Head of Community Development and Leisure presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that the purpose of the report was to update Members on the nominations from Derry City and Strabane District Council to the IPB Pride of Place Awards 2021.

Members noted the content of the report.

HC190/21 City Baths Investment Works

The Head of Community Development and Leisure presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that the purpose of the report was to update Members regarding the essential works required in City Baths to allow for the safe reopening of the facility.

Alderman Hussey queried the costs involved in the Mechanical and Electrical Services and Structural Engineering surveys referred to in paragraph 2.2 of the report. He referred to the £600,000 in respect of the critical and essential works highlighted and enquired as to how long it was anticipated these works would enable this facility to continue to operate. He also queried the possibility of these costs increasing given the recent rise in the cost of building materials due to the pandemic.

Alderman Hussey enquired if any expenditure had been incurred in respect of the works outlined in paragraph 3.1 of the report. He also expressed concern in regards to the ongoing surveys, inspections and testing referred to in paragraph 3.2.

The Head of Community Development and Leisure referred to the costs involved in the works outlined in paragraphs 2.2 and 3.1 and advised he did not have access to this information at present. He pointed out that the project was being delivered through the Environment Directorate who would collate and provide this information in due course.

The Head of Community Development and Leisure confirmed that the budget in respect of the critical and essential works outlined in paragraph 2.3 remained £600,000. He pointed out that the costs of the additional works outlined in paragraph 3.1 would feed into the Project Board and would ultimately be presented to Committee for consideration. However, current indications would suggest that the £600,000 would be sufficient to cover all of the necessary works.

The Head of Community Development and Leisure said that given the age and structural condition of the building these works could only be guaranteed to provide the facility with a lifespan of 2-3 years.

Alderman Hussey referred to the £600,000 budget in respect of these works and expressed concern that this would only provide a guaranteed lifespan of 2-3 years. He was mindful of the number of play facilities throughout the Council area which could have been accommodated by these monies which would have a much more extensive lifespan.

Alderman Kerrigan concurred with the sentiments expressed by Alderman Hussey.

Councillor Mooney noted the comments made by the previous speakers. He enquired if there was any suggested date in regards to the reopening of the City Baths.

The Head of Community Development and Leisure said the current indications in respect of the reopening of the City Baths was early 2022. He said the contractor, who would not be appointed until September, would provide a detailed project programme and together with regular updates at Project Board meetings. He said Members would be advised when a definite date in respect of the reopening of the facility and project timescale were available.

Councillor Burked welcomed this project and looked forward to the reopening of the City Baths. She acknowledged the comments made by previous speakers in regards to the cost of the project but referred to the social value which this facility provided for regular users which was difficult to quantify in monetary terms.

Councillor Harkin said he understood that these works would allow the City Baths to continue to operate for a further 6-7 years and he

anticipated even longer. He acknowledged the cost involved but referred to the importance of this facility for its regular users and the local community. He suggested that these works progress as soon as possible and Council endeavour to ensure the most extensive and expansive use of the facility. He referred to the need for Members to adopt a united approach and continue to work towards realising funding for as many projects as possible throughout the entire Council area.

HC191/21 Derry and Strabane Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) Annual Report 2020/2021

The Head of Community Development and Leisure presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. He advised that the purpose of the report was to present the Derry and Strabane Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) Annual Report for 2020/2021 (Appendix 1) to Members for information.

Members noted the content of the report.

HC192/21 Correspondence

The Director of Health and Community 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 details of correspondence received by Council.

Members noted the content of the report.

HC193/21 Consultations

The Director of Health and community presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated. She pointed out that the purpose of the report was to advise Members of consultation documents received by Council and for Members to note these for information.

Members noted the content of the report.

The Meeting then went into Confidential Business