

THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD TUESDAY 6 JANUARY 2026

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No	Item	Decision
1.	The Mayor's Business	Received
2.	Apologies	Alderman Boyle, Councillors Callaghan and Wallace
3.	Declaration of Members' Interests	None
4.	Minutes of The Council Meeting held Tuesday 2 December 2025	Confirmed as a correct record
5.	Minutes of Environmental Services Committee meeting held Tuesday 9 December 2025	Adopted and Recommendations therein approved
	Matters Arising	
5.1	Deputation – Presentation on Regulation of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Item 4)	That Council invites the NI HMO Manager from Belfast City Council to present to a future Council Meeting
6.	Minutes of Finance Committee meeting held Thursday 11 December 2025	Adopted and Recommendations therein approved
7.	Minutes of Leisure and Development Committee meeting held Tuesday 16 December 2025	
	Matters Arising	
7.1	Tourism Events Programme 2026/27 (Item 9)	Motion Lost: That a report is brought to Leisure and Development Committee 6 months

		<i>in advance of each of event, where we can look at the previous years' programme; we can look at what we are planning to do in the coming year; the budget and how we are going to promote each event</i>
7.2	Adoption of the Minutes	<i>Adopted and Recommendations therein approved</i>
8.	Minutes of Audit Committee meeting held Wednesday 17 December 2025	<i>Adopted and Recommendations therein approved</i>
9.	Matters for reporting to the Partnership Panel	<i>None</i>
10.	Conferences	<i>None</i>
11.	Correspondence	
11.1	Joseph McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement, Mid Ulster District Council	<i>Noted</i>
11.2	Councillor Ruairí McHugh, Mayor, Derry City and Strabane District Council	
12.	Consultation Schedule	<i>Noted</i>
13.	Seal Documents	<i>Seal Affixed (Items i-vi)</i>
14.	Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Russell Watton seconded by Councillor Elder (abbrev. UU Housing Study)	<i>Support The Notice of Motion</i>
15.	Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor Richard Holmes, seconded by Councillor Bateson and Alderman Knight McQuillan (abbrev. Kirea Bridge)	<i>Support The Notice of Motion</i>

16.	Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor Leanne Peacock, seconded by Councillor Ciaran McQuillan (abbrev. CAR chimeric antigen receptor)	<i>Referred to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee</i>
	<i>'In Committee' (Items 17 – 17.1)</i>	
17.	Correspondence	
17.1	Councils' Standing Orders – Continuing Effect of Schedule 3 to the Local Government (Transitional, Supplementary, Incidental Provisions and Modifications) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014	<i>Noted</i>

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER ON
TUESDAY 6 JANUARY 2026 AT 7.00 PM**

- In the Chair : The Mayor, Councillor McMullan
- Members Present : Alderman Callan, Fielding, Hunter,
Knight-McQuillan, McAuley, S McKillop, Scott,
Stewart
- Councillors Anderson, C Archibald, N Archibald,
Bateson, Chivers, Elder, Holmes, Huggins, Kane,
Kennedy, Kyle, Mairs, McAuley, McCully,
McGlinchey, McGurk, McShane, Peacock, Storey,
Watson, Watton, Wilson, Wisener
- Members In Attendance : Alderman Coyle (R),
Councillors MA McKillop (R), McQuillan (R), Nicholl (R),
Schenning (R)
- Officers Present : D Jackson, Chief Executive
M Quinn, Director of Corporate Services
A McPeake, Director of Environmental Services
P Mulvenna, Director of Leisure and Development (R)
D Wright, Chief Finance Officer (R)
M Jones, Planning and Regulatory (R)
A Hamilton, Democratic and Central Services Manager (R)
S Duggan, Committee & Member Services Officer
- In Attendance: G Fall, Tourism Events Manager (R)
J Welsh, Head of Community and Culture (R)
- C McTaggart, ICT Officer
L Boyd, ICT Officer
- Press: 3 no. (R)
Public: 2 no. (R)

Key – R = Attended Remotely

The Mayor advised Council of its obligations and protocol whilst the meeting was being audio recorded.

1. THE MAYOR'S BUSINESS

The Mayor thanked everyone involved in the festivities prior to Christmas. He commended the number of members of the public that turned out for the Christmas Lights Switch On events and hoped that they were good for local businesses.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were recorded for Alderman Boyle, Councillors Callaghan and Wallace.

3. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no Declarations of Interest.

At this point in the meeting, The Mayor invited the Chief Executive to speak.

The Chief Executive stated there were Councillors not present in the Chamber at the earlier Special Council meeting, where it has been proposed and seconded to move to the hybrid format, as a result of the poor road conditions. The Chief Executive put it to Elected Members whether they wished to do the same for the Council Meeting, it would be a Qualified Majority Vote, 80% of those present in the Chamber.

Alderman Scott stated the DUP would not be supporting suspending Standing Orders for the meeting.

The Chief Executive stated there would be no possibility of a Qualified Majority Vote of those present in The Chamber and on that basis, the Council Meeting would proceed *in person* and those online could listen, but could not vote.

4. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD TUESDAY 2 DECEMBER 2025

Copy previously circulated, presented as read by the Mayor.

Proposed by Councillor Watton
Seconded by Alderman Callan and

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held Tuesday 2 December 2025 are confirmed as a correct record.

5. MINUTES OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD TUESDAY 9 DECEMBER 2025

Copy, previously circulated, presented as read by the Chair or Environmental Services Committee, Alderman S McKillop.

Proposed by Alderman S McKillop
Seconded by Councillor J McAuley and

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Environmental Services Committee meeting held Tuesday 9 December 2025 are confirmed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

5.1 Deputation – Presentation on Regulation of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Item 4)

Councillor Watton proposed the NI HMO Manager from Belfast City Council also present to the Council Meeting, as it was a matter that affected all Councillors.

Proposed by Councillor Watton
Seconded by Councillor Kyle and

RESOLVED – That Council invite the NI HMO Manager from Belfast City Council to present to a future Council Meeting.

The Chief Executive stated an invite would be extended.

6. MINUTES OF FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD THURSDAY 11 DECEMBER 2025

Copy, previously circulated, presented as read by Vice Chair Finance Committee, Councillor Peacock.

Proposed by Councillor Peacock
Seconded by Alderman Scott and

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held Thursday 11 December 2025 are confirmed as a correct record.

7. MINUTES OF LEISURE AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD TUESDAY 16 DECEMBER 2025

Copy previously circulated.

Matters Arising

7.1 Tourism Events Programme 2026/27 (Item 9)

Councillor Wilson stated he wished to return to the item he had raised at the Committee Meeting and summarised his proposal.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson

Seconded by Councillor Kennedy

- That a report is brought to Leisure and Development Committee 6 months in advance of each of event, where we can look at the previous years' programme; we can look at what we are planning to do in the coming year, the budget and how we are going to promote each event.

Alderman J McAuley sought information on how Town Forum meetings operated as currently only the DEA Member would get invited, he represented rural villages around Ballymoney and had no input into town events. He believed, therefore, it was not unreasonable for all Elected Members to be included in a process that reviewed events.

The Mayor put the motion to the Council to vote.

12 Members voted For, 19 Members voted Against, 0 Members Abstained.

The Mayor declared the motion lost.

RESOLVED – Motion Lost

That a report is brought to Leisure and Development Committee 6 months in advance of each of event, where we can look at the previous years' programme we can look at what we are planning to do in the coming year, the budget and how we are going to promote each event.

7.2 Adoption of the Minutes

Chair, Leisure and Development, Councillor Anderson proposed the adoption of the minutes.

Proposed by Councillor Anderson

Seconded by Councillor McGlinchey and

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Leisure and Development Committee meeting held Tuesday 16 December 2025 are confirmed as a correct record.

8. MINUTES OF AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY 17 DECEMBER 2025

Copy, previously circulated, presented as read by the Audit Committee Vice Chair, Councillor Mairs.

Proposed by Councillor Mairs

Seconded by Councillor Archibald and

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting held Wednesday 17 December 2025 are adopted and recommendations therein approved.

9. MATTERS FOR REPORTING TO THE PARTNERSHIP PANEL

There were no matters for reporting to the Partnership Panel.

10. CONFERENCES

There were no conferences.

11. CORRESPONDENCE

Report, previously circulated, was presented as read by the Chief Executive.

The following correspondence has been received:

11.1 Joseph McGuckin, Head of Strategic Services and Engagement, Mid Ulster District Council (email dated 4 December 2025)

At its November meeting Council carried the undernoted motion:

That this Council notes with concern the recent introduction of the PSNI's new online firearms licensing system, which requires applicants to renew and manage their firearm certificates exclusively through a digital portal. Council further recognises that while the move to online processing may improve efficiency for some users, it presents significant difficulties for older certificate holders and others within our rural communities who may not have access to, or the ability to use, email or smart phones. Council further notes that many of these individuals are long-standing, law-abiding members of the community who have safely held firearms for decades and should not be disadvantaged by digital exclusion.

Accordingly, this Council resolves to:

1. Write to the Chief Constable of the PSNI and the Minister of Justice expressing concern about the lack of an accessible alternative for applicants without digital access;
2. Urge the PSNI to introduce an alternative application process — whether through paper forms, in-person assistance from Firearms Enquiry Officers, or via registered dealers or clubs — to ensure all applicants can continue to renew their certificates without discrimination.
3. Write to the Equality Commissioner to seek their opinion on the current online portal only arrangements.

I would ask that you bring this to the attention of your elected members and ask that to give strength to the campaign for change in the firearms licensing system that your council also writes to the Chief Constable, the Minister for Justice and the Equality Commissioner as outlined in the motion.

11.2 Councillor Ruairí Mc Hugh, Mayor, Derry City and Strabane District Council (email dated 10 December 2025)

At a meeting of Derry City and Strabane District Council held on 26 November 2025, the following motion was passed:

That in line with Council's corporate position of opposition to the British Government's authoritarian proscription of Palestine Action as a "terrorist" (sic) organisation, Council is concerned regarding the decision by political prisoners imprisoned as a result of Palestine Action activism to embark on a hunger strike.

Council expresses our solidarity with the prisoners and their families;

Council further agrees to a cross party and Independent delegation to meet with prisoner families and representatives to assist efforts to bring this to a resolution.

Council will circulate the motion to all Council's across Ireland and Britain for their consideration.

I would appreciate your consideration in this important matter and would be grateful for a response at your earliest opportunity.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council considers the correspondence.

Council NOTED the correspondence.

12. CONSULTATION SCHEDULE

The following Consultation Documents were listed:

- NIE Network Development Plan submission by Mid-January – extension due to oversight
- Department of Finance DoF Equality Screening template - Remediable Service (Amendment) Regulations - November 2025 submission by 30 January 2026
- HSENI Proposals for amendments to the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004 submission by 10 February 2026

- Department of Education Consultation on a pupil attendance strategy - Attendance Matters submission by 6 March 2026

The Chief Executive advised comments could be submitted to himself or to Democratic Services.

Council NOTED the Consultation Schedule.

13. SEAL DOCUMENTS

Members were advised of the undernoted items for signing and sealing by Council, approval having been previously granted and all necessary legislative requirements being met.

Seal Documents

- (i) Grave Registry Certificates, No's 6102 to 6119 inclusive;
- (ii) Commercial Lease relating to the premises known as the site of the Club Portabin at Dungiven Bowling Green, Dungiven Sports Centre, Curragh Road, Dungiven – Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council and Trustees of Dungiven Outdoor Bowling Club (L&PSC - 250903 CPR - 250923 CM - 251007)
- (iii) Deed of Dedication – Trustees of Limavady Recreation Club and Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council (LD 250218 CM250304)
- (iv) Deed of Dedication – Trustees of John Mitchel's GAC Glenullin and Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council (LD 250218 CM250304)
- (v) Extinguishment of ROW and Grant of New ROW -Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, Stephen Goodhart and Robert Charles Joseph Huggins and Lorna Huggins (L&PSC -251001 CPR -251028 CM -251104)
- (vi) Agreement for Grant of Extended Right of Way -Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, Stephen Goodhart and Robert Charles Joseph Huggins and Lorna Huggins (L&PSC -251001 CPR -251028 CM -251104)

Proposed by Councillor Kane

Seconded by Councillor Chivers and

RESOLVED – That the sealing of documents, as listed, are approved (Items i-vi).

14. NOTICE OF MOTION PROPOSED BY COUNCILLOR RUSSELL WATTON SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR ELDER

That this Council asks that the Ulster University Housing Study Report be presented to a meeting of the full Council.

Councillor Watton advised that when the Housing Study was presented to Planning Committee, there were 2 Elected Members present, 6 Elected Members online, 8 Elected Members were not present. Councillor Watton

referred to a housing crisis within the Borough. Councillor Watton requested that every Elected Member should receive a copy of the report and that the report be presented to Full Council.

Councillor Elder stated that many people were aware of the housing crisis within the Borough as many worked with the issues and saw the impact first hand. Councillor Elder stated it would be valuable for Elected Members to see the proposed presentation in order to be well informed and how Council could respond collectively and strategically.

Councillor Kane concurred and supported the request, Councillor Kane advised the document was on the Members' Portal.

RESOLVED – That Council Support The Notice of Motion.

The Mayor advised an invitation would be extended to present to Council.

15. NOTICE OF MOTION PROPOSED BY COUNCILLOR RICHARD HOLMES, SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR BATESON AND ALDERMAN KNIGHT MCQUILLAN

This council notes the recent closure of Kilrea's Bann bridge due to maintenance issues and the detrimental impact on local businesses and communities. It has served the people of the area well for almost 250 years and is part of the picturesque lower Bann waterway. But in the 21st century we believe it is time to add a new bridge to increase traffic flow and meet the demands of a modern transport infrastructure.

The Regional Development Strategy 2035 prioritised the delivery of transport, stating in RG2 that "to remain competitive in the global market it is important to continue to promote transport which balances the needs of our environment, society and economy. The focus is on managing the use of the road and rail space and how we can use our network in a better, smarter way."

We therefore call for an additional bridge to form part of the Local Development Plan, any future Regional Development Plan and for council to lobby the appropriate bodies to secure funding for and a commitment to a new bridge for Kilrea as part of the existing commitments towards RDS 2035.

The Mayor referred to the all-party motion and allowed one person per Party to address Council.

Councillor Holmes addressed Council,

"William Pitt the younger became the British PM at the ripe old age of 24. That same year Catherine the Great of Russia annexed Crimea, the first untethered balloon flight occurred in France and in Paris Britain formally recognised the United States. That was the year 1783. Closer to home a new Bann bridge was

built at Kilrea for horses, carts, cattle and the locals – 100 years before the invention of the motor car.

And therein lies much of our current problems.

The recent closures of the Kilrea Bann Bridge have exposed the over reliance on old and crumbling infrastructure. The inability to co-ordinate additional maintenance with already planned maintenance in 2022 has had a crippling impact on local traders and inconvenienced the local population.

We have 7 bridges crossing the lower Bann for vehicles in 2025. The bridges in Toome date from 1968 and 2004; Portglenone from 1853. The other 4 fall within Causeway Coast & Glens and form a vital part of our infrastructure.

Of these, the Agivey Bridge was replaced in 1980, Sandleford bridge built in 1975 and the old Coleraine bridge was built in 1844 – replacing at least 3 previous structures.

Which leaves the Kilrea bridge – serving us and several generations of ancestors since 1783. But whilst it is one of the most picturesque bridges of the lower Bann, it is a single carriage dinosaur – analogue in a digital age.

The inability or unwillingness to maintain and upgrade infrastructure is a cancer at the heart of our government – and has been for decades. The current Minister’s single transferable answer of “can’t do anything due to British austerity” wasn’t tested on the businesses and people of Kilrea as the Minister skipped out on opportunities to visit Kilrea and see for herself the consequences of poor maintenance programmes. The cry from locals has been Build Our Bridge, Protect Our History, Build Our Future.

We cannot hope to build a 21st century competitive economy on creaking infrastructure as the Regional Development Strategy 2035 pointed out. A new bridge is a priority in the Kilrea area and surrounding towns. It needs to be a priority on the desks of council officials and councillors, of Stormont ministers and DfI officials.

Nobody can realistically hope for a new bridge within this decade but the work needs to start now through the Local Development Plan and any future Regional Development Plan to ensure the 2030’s does not end with another lorry stuck on a 250 year old bridge”.

Alderman Knight-McQuillan referred to the well documented, economic and agriculture impact during the time the bridge was closed, and continued with reduced vehicular movement. Alderman Knight McQuillan stated some had said it was not the responsibility of Council, however, stated the belief the conversation had to start somewhere and to keep the topic live and to the forefront.

Councillor Bateson stated support which he stated was a cross-party issue that had impacted everyone and had only been addressed for the short term. The disruption had shown how fragile transport links were. The Regional Development Strategy 2035 was clear about the need for resilient transport infrastructure that supported the economy, society and environment. An additional bridge would provide that resilience, the commitment to this through the Local Development Plan, and by lobbying together for funding, showing leadership and foresight.

Councillor Kane stated the massive impact on the community, in Kilrea and Rasharkin and stated his support for the motion.

Councillor Kyle stated his Party supported the motion. He had met with an agricultural sector lobby group who had suggested a bridge similar to the Agivey Bridge would sort this issue as an additional bridge. Councillor Kyle stated DFI had led them to believe the initiative must start from Council contacting DFI and not lobby groups.

Alderman Scott questioned whether Council could include individual projects in the Local Development Plan for something that needed Planning Permission.

The Chief Executive stated he would need to clarify with Planning Officers, however he considered the answer was yes, as it sat within the Regional Development Strategy. It needed to be referenced in the Local Development Plan in order for Council to make that request at the Regional level to influence Regional Infrastructure.

Councillor Schenning addressed Council.

The Mayor ruled Councillor Schenning was not allowed to speak.

RESOLVED – That Council Support The Notice of Motion.

The Mayor congratulated a very good Motion.

16. NOTICE OF MOTION PROPOSED BY COUNCILLOR LEANNE PEACOCK, SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR CIARAN MCQUILLAN

That this Council;

- *Conveys it's sincerest and heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of Catherine Sherry, who tragically passed away on May 12th, 2025.*
- *Acknowledges that Catherine tragically passed away in London, separated from her three loving sons, having been forced to travel overseas for treatment that is available on the island of Ireland.*
- *Commends the courageous public commentary of Fergal Sherry, Catherine's husband, and supports the family's campaign for all-Ireland provision of CAR (chimeric antigen receptor) T-cell therapy and cancer care to make sure no other family has to endure what the Sherry family went through.*

- *Agrees entirely with Fergal's words, that, "when you're going through cancer treatment, you need your family near."*
- *Urgently writes to both Health Ministers, Minister Nesbitt and Minister Carroll MacNeill, to ask what plans they have for the provision of this treatment on an all-island basis and to encourage them to explore every option, including existing cross-border frameworks and the Shared Island Unit, to deliver this essential service on an all-Ireland basis.*

The Notice of Motion was referred, without discussion, to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN COMMITTEE'

Proposed by Councillor Watson
Seconded by Councillor McGlinchey

AGREED – to recommend that Council move *'In Committee'*.

- * **Public and Press were disconnected from the meeting at 7.38pm.**

17. CORRESPONDENCE

17.1 Councils' Standing Orders – Continuing Effect of Schedule 3 to the Local Government (Transitional, Supplementary, Incidental Provisions and Modifications) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014

Report, previously circulated, was presented as read by the Chief Executive.

The Chief Executive outlined Council's 'Call In' process.

The Chief Executive stated events had overtaken the correspondence, there was a challenge in Belfast and a Judicial Review would be heard in January 2026 with a legal precedent which may, or may not, result in a change to Council's Standing Orders.

There were no questions put.

Council NOTED the correspondence.

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN PUBLIC'

Proposed by Councillor Kane
Seconded by Councillor Watson

AGREED – to recommend that Council move *'In Committee'*.

This being all the business, the Mayor thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 7.42pm.

Mayor