

**LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Meeting of the Corporate Services Committee held remotely and in the Council Chamber, Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at 6.00 pm.**

**PRESENT IN COUNCIL CHAMBER (COMMITTEE):**

Alderman O Gawith (Chair)  
Councillor A Ewing (Vice-Chair)  
The Right Worshipful The Mayor  
Councillor A Gowan  
Deputy Mayor  
Councillor G McCleave  
Aldermen A Ewart MBE and M Guy  
Councillors T Beckett, R Carlin, K Dickson, N Eaton, A Givan, C Kemp, U Mackin and the Hon N Trimble

**PRESENT IN A REMOTE LOCATION (COMMITTEE):**

Councillor P Burke

**OTHER MEMBERS OF COUNCIL PRESENT IN COUNCIL CHAMBER**

Alderman A Grehan  
Councillors G Hynds and A Martin

**OTHER MEMBERS OF COUNCIL PRESENT IN A REMOTE LOCATION**

Aldermen M Gregg, P Porter and J Tinsley  
Councillors J Lavery BEM, ~~S Lowry~~, C McCready and N Parker

**At the Council meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023, Cllr S Lowry advised that she had not been present at this Corporate Services Committee meeting.**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Director of Finance & Corporate Services  
Director of Organisation Development & Innovation  
Director of Regeneration & Growth  
Head of Corporate Communications & Administration  
Head of Finance  
Member Services Officers (RN & BF)

**Commencement of Meeting**

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting and advised that it would be audio recorded unless the item on the agenda was to be considered under confidential business.

The names of those Elected Members who were in attendance at the meeting, both in person and on a remote basis, were read out by the Member Services Officer.

The Chair stated that unauthorised recording was not permitted, as per 8.5 of the Council's Standing Orders. The Chair also reminded everyone to ensure that mobile phones were turned off or on silent mode for the duration of the meeting.

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services proceeded to outline the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency. Finally the Chair asked that any Member entering or leaving the meeting alert the Member Services Officer accordingly so that this might be accurately reflected in the minutes.

The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor A Gowan, entered the Chamber during the housekeeping announcements. (6.05 pm)

1. Apologies (00:03:10)

An apology for non-attendance at the meeting was accepted and recorded on behalf of Alderman H Legge.

2. Declarations of Interest (00:03:38)

The Chair invited Members to declare any interests they might have in relation to the business of the meeting and reminded them of the requirement that they complete Declaration of Interest forms in this regard which had been provided with the papers for the meeting and which were also available in the Chamber.

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. Report of Director of Regeneration & Growth (00:04:23)

3.1 Review of Scheme of Delegation for Planning (00:04:39)

A final draft of the "Scheme of Delegation: Delegation of Planning Applications and Enforcement" had been provided with the report. The Director explained the revisions to the Scheme.

It was proposed by Councillor U Mackin, seconded by Councillor N Trimble and agreed to recommend that the final draft of the "Scheme of Delegation: Delegation of Planning Applications and Enforcement" be agreed and that it be submitted to the Department for Infrastructure for agreement.

4. Report of Director of Organisation Development & Innovation (00:05:58)

4.1 Draft Corporate Plan 2024-2028 (00:06:10)

The following documents had been provided with the report:-

- the draft Corporate Plan for 2024-2028;
- a draft of a public consultation questionnaire.

The Director outlined the nature of consultation which had taken place in the preparation of the draft Corporate Plan and responded to a number of questions in relation to both the draft Plan and the draft questionnaire.

It was proposed by Councillor C Kemp, seconded by Councillor K Dickson and agreed to recommend that the following documents be approved for onward public consultation:-

- the draft Corporate Plan for 2024-2028;
- the draft public consultation questionnaire.

The Director undertook to speak off-line with Councillor C Kemp in relation to Section 75 requirements associated with this matter.

5. Report of Head of Corporate Communications & Administration (00:15:09)

5.1 Building illuminations (00:15:33)  
Evaluation & Establishment of Working Group

In furtherance of a previous decision, Members were provided with an evaluation of building illumination posts which had been shared via social media during 2022/2023. The report of the Head of Service highlighted the key issues of the evaluation.

The Right Worshipful The Mayor and the Chair of the Corporate Services Committee had asked for a working group to be established so as to take forward the work on building illuminations and/or methods by which charities and worthy causes could be supported.

It was proposed by Councillor N Trimble, seconded by Councillor A Ewing and agreed to recommend that:-

- the establishment of an All-Party Working Group to consider the Illumination Policy and the exploration of alternative options to support charities be noted with the Working Group reporting its recommendations to the Committee in January 2024;

5.1 Building illuminations (00:15:33)  
Evaluation & Establishment of Working Group (Continued)

- Party Group Leaders nominate one member to represent their party on the All-Party Working Group and provide that name to the Acting Member Services/PCSP Manager.

The Head of Service noted comments made by Councillor R Carlin in relation to a more active involvement by the Council's champions in both the Working Group and also in any Council publicity for charities and worthy causes.

Later in the meeting, Councillor Carlin asked that any requests for building light-ups be made known to the Committee in advance of the means by which they are formally reported. The Head of Service confirmed that this would be addressed within the remit of the Working Group.

Councillor J Lavery asked to have recorded his appreciation of the evaluation work carried out in relation to the light-ups.

Councillor N Parker joined the meeting on a remote basis during discussion of this item. (6.19 pm)

6. Report of Head of Finance (00:20:03)

6.1 Car Parking bad-debt write off (00:20:13)

The Head of Finance reported on the matter of Bad Debt associated with the car parking function which had transferred to the Council on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015.

It was proposed by Councillor A Givan, seconded by Councillor N Trimble and agreed to recommend that the debt recorded in relation to car parking is written off the ledgers of the Department for Infrastructure.

7. Any other Business – Non-Confidential (00:23:33)

7.1 Light up of Lagan Valley Island (00:23:58)  
Attacks on Israel

Councillor A Ewing proposed that "this Council lights up its building in blue in solidarity with Israel after the horrendous terror attacks at the weekend". Councillor Ewing elaborated on his proposal. This proposal was not seconded.

The Chair, Alderman O Gawith, reported receipt of a recent request from the DUP Group Secretary "that the building be lit in blue as a sign of peace at the earliest available date to express our sincere condolences and sympathy to the victims of the Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2023 terrorist attack on Israel and subsequent innocent victims of terror and war in the region."

7.1 Light up of Lagan Valley Island (00:23:58)  
Attacks on Israel (Continued)

The Chair stated that – whilst this request had in fact been received outside of the normal timeframe for light-ups - in line with the authority delegated to himself, The Right Worshipful The Mayor and the Vice-Chair of the Committee, the request had been considered and acceded to under Exceptional Circumstances and the light-up would take place to express sincere condolences and sympathy to the victims of the attack which had taken place on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2023. The exceptional circumstances outlined were 'the catastrophic circumstances and the immediacy of the global response to the tragedy.'

A member of each of the political parties represented on the Council and present at the meeting spoke in regard to this matter.

The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor A Gowan, advised that he had opened a Book of Condolence, both online and physical, earlier that day as an expression of condolence and sympathy to the victims of the Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2023 terrorist attack on Israel.

~~Councillor S Lowry joined the meeting on a remote basis during discussion of this item (6.37 pm) and left the meeting at the conclusion of the item. (6.46 pm).~~

~~At the Council meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023, Cllr S Lowry advised that she had not been present at this Corporate Services Committee meeting.~~

Alderman P Porter joined the meeting on a remote basis during discussion of this item. (6.42 pm)

8. Confidential Report from Director of Finance & Corporate Services (00:40:59)

The Chair asked that - in line with Item 5.15 of the Protocol and Etiquette for attending meetings on a remote basis – those Members attending the meeting on a remote basis ensure that the meeting could neither be seen nor heard by any other person at those remote locations.

The reasons for confidentiality were as set out in the agenda, ie:-

8.1 Report on Various Tender Awards  
(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).)

Redacted report to be available following ratification and signing of contracts.

8.2 Exercise Referral Officer – Increase in Substantive Headcount  
(Confidential for reason of information relating to any individual.)

Redacted report to be available following ratification.

8.3 Hosting of Local Government Training Group including Increasing Costs

(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

Redacted report to be available following ratification.

8.4 Noting of Bad Debt write-offs (July – September 2023)

(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

Redacted report to be available after full Council meeting. (24<sup>th</sup> October 2023)

8.5 Management Accounts - Period 5 of 2023/2024

(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

Redacted report to be available after full Council meeting (24<sup>th</sup> October 2023).

8.6 Reserves as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

Redacted report to be available after full Council meeting (24<sup>th</sup> October 2023).

Councillor R Carlin left the Council Chamber prior to commencement of the confidential business. (6.45 pm)

In Committee (00:42:34)

It was proposed by Councillor N Eaton, seconded by Councillor A Ewing and agreed that the Confidential Report of the Director be considered “in Committee”. (Recording was paused at this stage in proceedings.)

8.1 Report on Various Tender Awards

Presented by the Director of Regeneration & Growth.

For Members’ information, the Director outlined the circumstances under which tender awards were reported to Committee either for approval or for noting. The Director also commented specifically on the tenders before the Committee for consideration.

It was proposed by Councillor A Givan, seconded by Councillor N Eaton and agreed to recommend that the tenders awarded in regard to the undernoted contracts, together with the attendant tender reports, be noted:-

8.1 Report on Various Tender Awards (Continued)

- Tender for the Collection, Transportation, Recycling and/or Recovery of Waste Wood from Household Recycling Centres;
- Tender for Aberdelghy Golf Course Four Bay Driving Range & Store.

It was further agreed to recommend that the signing and sealing of the Tender documents be approved.

Councillor N Trimble left the Chamber during discussion of this item.  
(6.47 pm)

The Head of Corporate Communications & Administration and the Director of Regeneration & Growth left the Council Chamber at the conclusion of this item. (6.49 pm and 6.50 pm respectively.)

8.2 Exercise Referral Officer – Increase in Substantive Headcount

Presented by the Director of Organisation Development & Innovation on behalf of the Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development who was not present at the meeting. The Director responded to a number of questions on this item.

It was proposed by Councillor U Mackin, seconded by Councillor N Eaton and agreed to recommend that the hours of the post of Exercise Referral Officer be increased in the substantive structure by 0.5 resulting in a total of 2.00 FTE (Full Time Equivalent).

Alderman M Guy; and Councillors N Eaton, A Givan and U Mackin all commended the health rehabilitation programmes that the Council has in place.

Alderman A Grehan left the Chamber during discussion of this item. (6.50 pm)  
Councillor K Dickson left and returned to the Chamber during discussion of this item. (6.48 pm and 6.51 pm)

Councillor R Carlin returned to the Chamber during discussion of this item.  
(6.54 pm)

Alderman M Gregg left the meeting on a remote basis at the conclusion of this item. (6.56 pm)

8.3 Hosting of Local Government Training Group  
Including Increasing Costs

Presented by the Director of Organisation Development & Innovation on behalf of the Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development who was not present at the meeting. The Director responded to a number of questions on this matter.

8.3 Hosting of Local Government Training Group  
Including Increasing Costs (Continued)

In addition to the narrative report, a paper from the Local Government Training Group entitled “Local Government Training Group: Next Steps” was provided.

It was proposed by Councillor A Ewing, seconded by Alderman M Guy and agreed to recommend that Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council continue to host the Local Government Training Group to the end of the 2028/2029 budget year and – at the same time – note the resultant increase in contributions which are offset against the income received for hosting.

Councillor C McCready left the meeting on a remote basis during discussion of this item. (6.58 pm)

The Head of Corporate Communications & Administration returned to the Chamber. (6.59 pm)

Alderman A Grehan and Councillor N Trimble returned to the Chamber during discussion of this item. (7.00 pm)

Alderman J Tinsley and Councillor N Parker left the meeting on a remote basis. (7.00 pm)

8.4 Noting of Bad Debt write-offs (July – September 2023)

Presented by the Head of Finance.

Members noted a summary of the debts written off during Quarter 2 of the current financial year (July – September 2023), the writing-off of such debts having been approved by the Director of Finance & Corporate Services in line with Council procedures.

The Director of Organisation Development & Innovation responded to questions in relation to one type of bad debt recorded in the schedule.

Alderman P Porter left the meeting on a remote basis during discussion of this item. (7.02 pm)

8.5 Management Accounts - Period 5 of 2023/2024

Presented by the Head of Finance.

The Management Accounts for the period ending the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023, together with an extensive narrative report by way of explanation, were noted.

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services advised that the terms of reference of the Corporate Services Committee required for Management Accounts to be presented to the Committee on a quarterly basis. In recent years, such accounts had been presented on a monthly basis. The Director invited Members to consider the provision of the Management Accounts on a bi-monthly basis.



8.5 Management Accounts - Period 5 of 2023/2024 (Continued)

It was proposed by Councillor N Trimble, seconded by Councillor R Carlin and agreed that Management Accounts be presented to the Corporate Services Committee on a bi-monthly basis.

8.6 Reserves as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

Presented by the Head of Finance.

In addition to the narrative report, tabular information of the Reserves Summary at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 was also provided. This information also covered Department for Communities' reserves applicable to the Council. The Director of Finance & Corporate Services and the Head of Finance responded to a number of questions.

It was proposed by Councillor R Carlin, seconded by Councillor A Ewing and agreed to recommend that the report on Reserves be noted and that approval be granted for the earmarking/transfer of the various Reserves as detailed in the Head of Finance's report.

It was further agreed that – with regard to legal costs:-

- the figures be presented so as to identify the amount attributable to Planning and that attributable to the other activities of the Council;
- the Head of Planning & Capital Development be asked to inform Councillor J Lavery of legal costs for each Judicial Review, both settled and ongoing.

Alderman M Guy left and returned to the Chamber during discussion of this item. (7.09 pm and 7.13 pm)

9. Any Other Business – Confidential

9.1 Catering Update - Lagan Valley Island  
Councillor U Mackin

Councillor U Mackin referred to the item entitled "Catering Update" which had been included within the Information & Correspondence Schedule for October 2023.

The Head of Corporate Communications & Administration responded to Councillor Mackin's questions about the procurement process for this provision.

Resumption of Normal Business (00:42:42)

It was proposed by Councillor T Beckett, seconded by Alderman A Ewart and agreed to come “out of Committee”. Normal business and audio recording were resumed.

10. Any Other Business (00:42:42)

There were no further items raised.

The meeting concluded at 7.23 pm.

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MAYOR/CHAIR