

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting of the Communities & Wellbeing Committee held remotely and in the Council Chamber, Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn on Tuesday 3rd December 2024 at 5.00 pm.

PRESENT IN COUNCIL CHAMBER (COMMITTEE):

Councillor J Craig (Chairperson)
Alderman H Legge (Vice-Chairperson)
Aldermen A Grehan, A McIntyre and P Porter
Councillors T Beckett, B Higginson, C Kemp, S Lowry, G McCleave, T Mitchell and G Thompson

PRESENT IN A REMOTE LOCATION (COMMITTEE)

The Right Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor K Dickson
Deputy Mayor, Councillor R Carlin
Councillors D Bassett and J Gallen
Alderman S Skillen

OTHER MEMBERS OF COUNCIL PRESENT IN COUNCIL CHAMBER

Councillors P Catney and G Hynds

OTHER MEMBERS OF COUNCIL PRESENT IN A REMOTE LOCATION

Alderman J Tinsley

IN ATTENDANCE:

Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing
Head of Communities
Head of Sports Services
Head of Parks & Amenities
Business Support Manager (Acting)
Business Support Officer

Member Services Officers (BS & CH)

Commencement of Meeting

The Chairperson welcomed all present to the December meeting of the Committee and reminded Members that the meeting would be audio recorded unless the item on the agenda was to be considered under confidential business. Unauthorised recording was not permitted, as per 8.5 of the Council's Standing Orders. Mobile phones were to be turned off or on silent mode for the duration of the meeting.

Commencement of Meeting (Cont'd)

The Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing outlined the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency. The Chairperson 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.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies,

2. Declarations of Interest

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.

The following Declarations of Interest were made:-

- Councillor T Mitchell - Item 4.2 of Report of Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing – “Ballymacash Sports Academy”. Non pecuniary interest. Shareholder in Ballymacash Sports Academy
- Councillor G McCleave – Item 4.3 of Report of Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing “Project Initiation and Business Cases in respect of a number of Small Works Programmes” (non-pecuniary in respect of Killultagh Play Park)

3. Report of Head of Communities

3.1 Partnership between The Executive Office and Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council to help end Violence Against Women and Girls

The Head of Communities’ report outlined the background and key issues in connection with the request by The Executive Office for support from the Council to work together and increase investment in a community based and local approach helping to end violence against women and girls.

It was noted that the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) strategy framework 2024-31 had been launched by the First Minister & Deputy First Minister on 16 September 2024 and the Strategy included a first Delivery Plan which would provide funding to support those organisations working to prevent and challenge the attitudes, behaviours and culture that led to violence against women and girls.

3.1 Partnership between The Executive Office and Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council to help end Violence Against Women and Girls (Cont'd)

A link to Strategy and associated documents on The Executive Office's website had been included in the report circulated.

The Head of Communities responded to questions from two Members in connection with:

- the importance of including young girls in these initiatives.
- the recent new offence of coercive control
- the occurrence of domestic violence and coercive control being suffered by males

It was proposed by Councillor S Lowry seconded by Councillor C Kemp, and agreed to recommend that:

- a) the content of the paper in respect of partnership requested by The Executive Office to deliver the 'Change Fund' 2025/26 be noted,
- b) the delivery of an interim programme of prevention from the c£50k 'Momentum Support' funds from The Executive Office for the current 2024/2025 financial year be approved, and
- c) delivery of both programmes, ie. the localised 'Change Fund' programme and the interim 'Momentum Support' programme - be progressed through the PCSP and a broader community planning based approach with reporting of outcomes to the Communities & Wellbeing Committee.

4. Any Other Business – Non-Confidential

4.1 Delivery of 3G Pitch at Lough Moss Leisure Centre
Councillor B Higginson

Councillor B Higginson welcomed the £1.7m investment by this Council for the new 3G pitch at Lough Moss Leisure Centre for Carryduff and the wider Castlereagh South area. Councillor Higginson put on record his thanks to the Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing, the Head of Sports Services and the entire team of Officers for their efforts in bringing forward this major investment project.

The Chairperson, Councillor J Craig, also placed on record his thanks to all the officers and staff involved and stated that it had been a huge honour to officially open this new facility the previous evening.

4.2 Blue Bridge between Hilden and Hillhall
Councillor G Hynds

Councillor G Hynds, having acknowledged the dispute over ownership of the Blue Bridge between Hilden and Hillhall, put on record his on-going concerns in connection with the dangerous state of disrepair of the Blue Bridge. He also stated that he was aware that many women were nervous about crossing this bridge at night due to safety issues. Councillor Hynds requested that Officers arrange site visits at both Hilden and Hillhall to view the condition of the bridge.

The Chairperson concurred with the concerns raised by Councillor Hynds.

The Director undertook to engage with colleagues in the Department for Infrastructure in connection with the concerns raised and also the PCSP.

Alderman A Grehan left the meeting at 5.15 pm.

4.3 Efficiency Review Steering Group (ERSG) – Change of Membership
Alderman S P Porter

Alderman Porter advised that due to his other commitments he was unable to attend meetings of the ERSG and that Councillor D J Craig was replacing him on this Group.

It was noted that as the ERSG reported to the Corporate Services Committee, this change of membership was required to be reported to that Committee.

Alderman A Grehan returned to the meeting a 5.18 pm.

4.4 Heritage Crafts Association - President's Award for Endangered Crafts
Vice Chairperson, Alderman H Legge

The Vice Chairperson, Alderman H Legge, reported on her attendance, along with the Council's temporary Hand Loom Weaver, Donna Campbell, who had been nominated for the President's Award for Endangered Crafts, at the award ceremony at Eltham Palace, London, on the 26th November 2024.

Alderman Legge advised that Donna was a Damask linen weaver in the Council's Irish Linen Centre & Lisburn Museum and was one of only three such hand loom weavers in the United Kingdom. Donna had been shortlisted out of 21 nominations for this award but unfortunately did not receive the award on the evening. Alderman Legge paid tribute to Donna's work and described Donna as an ambassador for this Council. She also said it had given Donna great pleasure to know that her work had been judged by King Charles, who was the President of the Heritage Crafts Association.

Alderman Legge put on record her congratulations to Donna on having reached the final of this prestigious award.

4.4 Heritage Crafts Association - President's Award for Endangered Crafts (Cont'd)

The Chairperson, Councillor D J Craig, added his congratulation to Donna and at the request of the Vice Chairperson, agreed to write a letter of congratulations, on behalf of the Committee, to Donna on her significant achievement.

4.5 'Yours Mine Ours' Project – Reception at QUB Chairperson, Councillor D J Craig

The Chairperson, Councillor D J Craig paid tribute to the 'Yours Mine Ours' initiative and in particular the recent reception for this project at The Queen's University of Belfast at which he, as Chairperson of the Community & Wellbeing Committee, had spoken. Councillor Craig acknowledged the number of different communities that existed across the Council area and welcomed the opportunities that this initiative had provided for these communities to come together to share their culture and experiences.

Councillor Craig also paid tribute to a recent event as part of the 'Your Mine Ours' initiative at the Irish Linen Centre & Lisburn Museum which had been attended by over 800 people throughout the day. Councillor Craig advised that this project, which had been the brainchild of Officers from this Council, had brought a lot of prestige and honour to this Council.

It was agreed, at the request of the Chairperson, Councillor D J Craig, that a letter of congratulations, on behalf of the Committee, be sent to the Officers concerned.

4.6 Dual Purpose Training Nets Deputy Mayor, Councillor R Carlin

The Head of Sports Services responded to questions from the Deputy Mayor, Councillor R Carlin, in connection with the provision of smaller nets that could be availed of by GAA Clubs when training at Lough Moss Leisure Centre.

The Head of Service advised that the Council was in the process of purchasing nets which were dual purpose. He undertook to check out if these nets had been delivered and to report back to the Deputy Mayor directly.

5. Confidential Report from Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing

The reason for confidentiality for each of the confidential reports was due to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

In Committee

It was proposed by Councillor C Kemp, seconded by Councillor B Higginson, and agreed that the Confidential Report of the Director be considered “in Committee”. (Recording was paused at this stage in proceedings, and any members of the press and public left the meeting.)

5.1 Estimates Process 2025/2026 – Directorate Update
(final Estimates report to be published)

Presented by the Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing.

The Director’s report outlined the background and key issues in relation to the Estimates process for 2025-2026 for the Leisure & Community Wellbeing Directorate.

The Committee had been furnished with the draft Estimates for the Leisure & Community Wellbeing Directorate as well as a copy of the Directorate’s Year End Budget report.

The Director responded to a number of questions and concerns raised by Members in connection with draft estimates up-date, as presented.

During the discussion the following Members joined or left the meeting:

- Councillor D Bassett joined the meeting at 5.30 pm.
- Councillor T Mitchell left the meeting at 5.31 pm and returned at 5.34 pm.
- The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson, joined the meeting at 5.34 pm and left at 5.55 pm
- Councillor C Kemp left the meeting at 5.50 pm and returned at 5.52 pm.
- Councillor G Hynds left the meeting at 5.51 pm and returned at 5.52 pm.
- Councillor G Thompson left at 5.52 pm and returned at 5.55 pm.
- Councillor P Catney left the meeting at 5.55 pm.
- Councillor S Lowry left the meeting at 6.07 pm.

Following discussion it was proposed by Alderman S P Porter, seconded by Alderman A Grehan, and agreed that:

- a) the progress on the estimates process for 2025/2026 be noted, and
- b) the draft Community & Wellbeing Directorate Estimates 2025/2026 be not accepted at this stage but that a further report be presented to the Committee in January 2025 which would address the issues and concerns raised during the above-mentioned discussion.

The Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing advised that she was content to meet with political parties or Members individually between now and the Christmas break in order to provide further clarification on the issues raised. She requested that anyone wishing to meet with her, should contact the Director’s office to set up a meeting.

5.2 United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) – Addendum to Letter of Offer for the Community Investment Fund (CIF) Ballymacash Sports Academy and Lisburn Rugby & Football Club
(Report to be published following ratification of decision)

Presented by the Head of Communities.

Councillor S Lowry returned to the meeting and Councillor B Higginson left the meeting at 6.10 pm.

In addition to the narrative report, the Equality and Good Relations Screening and Rural Needs Impact Assessment documents had been provided.

It was proposed by Alderman A McIntyre, seconded by Alderman S P Porter, and agreed to recommend that the Committee agrees to provide funding to:

- a) Ballymacash Sports Academy to fund the provision of additional mechanical and electrical services for the first floor, including upgraded supply and installation of service controls, ventilation and extraction equipment through an addendum to the Letter of Offer issued under CIF; and
- b) Lisburn Rugby & Football Club to fund the physio tables, open lockers/individual pods in the changing facilities, installation of additional shelving for each changing room and expanded range of equipment for health and wellbeing facilities through an addendum to the Letter of Offer issued under CIF.

Councillor B Higginson returned to the meeting at 6.12 pm.

5.3 Project Initiation & Business Cases for Several Small Works Programmes
(Redacted report to be published March 2025)

Presented by the Head of Parks & Amenities.

Alderman J Tinsley joined the meeting at 6.13 pm.

In addition to the narrative report, a number of PIRSOCs and Business Cases in respect of the various small works programmes, as well as a feasibility study drawing and an addendum drawing, had been appended to the Officer's report. This documentation covered playparks, lighting, toilet facilities and feasibility studies to inform future works.

The Director and the Head of Parks & Amenities responded to questions from Members in connection with issues arising from some of the small works' projects.

5.3 Project Initiation & Business Cases for Several Small Works Programmes
(Cont'd)

It was proposed by Councillor J Gallen, seconded by Alderman A Grehan, and agreed to recommend that each of the projects outlined in the Officer's report be progressed to tender and feasibility/construction as detailed within each of the business case appendices.

6. Any Other Business – Confidential

6.1 Camera Turned on when Joining via Zoom
Alderman S P Porter

Comments from Alderman S P Porter were noted in connection with the suggestion that cameras be on when joining Council and Committee meetings remotely in order that the Member attending can be recognised on occasions when their device is registered to another family member's name.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor C Kemp, seconded by Councillor S Lowry, and agreed to come "out of Committee" and normal business was resumed.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 6.26 pm.

MAYOR/CHAIR