

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL**Minutes of Meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Committee held in the Council Chamber, Island Civic Centre, on Wednesday 4 September 2024 at 6.00 pm****PRESENT IN CHAMBER:**

Councillor P Catney (Chairperson)

Councillor G Hynds (Vice-Chairperson)

Aldermen J Baird, O Gawith and A McIntyre

Councillors S Burns, P Kennedy, C McCready, M McKeever, R McLernon and N Parker

PRESENT IN REMOTE LOCATION:

Alderman S Skillen

Councillors A Gowan and G McCleave

OTHER MEMBERS IN REMOTE LOCATION:

Alderman M Gregg

IN ATTENDANCE:

Acting Director of Environmental Services (RH)
 Head of Service (Building Control & Sustainability) (CD)
 Head of Service (Waste Management & Operational Services) (WM)
 Acting Head of Service (Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning) (SC)
 Climate and Sustainability Officer (GR)
 Mr K Bloomfield (Belfast City Council)
 Member Services Officers (CH, EW)

Commencement of the Meeting

The Chairperson, Councillor P Catney, 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 Chair stated that unauthorised recording was not permitted, as per the Council's Standing Orders. The Chair asked that mobile phones be put on silent or switched off for the duration of the meeting. In accordance with the Protocol for Remote Meetings, the Chairperson asked that those attending via zoom to ensure that the meeting could not be seen or heard by any other person at their remote location when confidential business was being considered.

The Chairperson proceeded to outline the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.

The Chairperson, Councillor P Catney, expressed his thanks to Councillor McCready for his effective chairing of the Committee during his term of office.

1. Apologies

It was agreed to accept apologies for non-attendance at the meeting on behalf of The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson and Alderman J Tinsley.

2. Declarations of Interest

The following interest was declared:

- Councillor M McKeever in respect of item 6.6 'Houses in Multiple Occupancy – Review of Licence Scheme Charges and Proposed Increase in Licence Fee from 1 October 2024' given that relatives own HMO property'.

3. Report by Acting Director of Environmental Services

3.1 Change of Date for January 2025 Environment & Sustainability Committee Meeting

The Director of Environmental Services reported that the regular scheduled monthly Environmental & Sustainability meeting in January 2025 coincided with a Bank Holiday (New Years Day). It was suggested that the January Meeting of Environmental and Sustainability Committee be re-scheduled to be held on Thursday 9th January 2025, at 6.00pm.

It was proposed by Alderman O Gawith, seconded by Councillor P Kennedy and agreed to recommend that the change of date for the Environmental & Sustainability Committee, from Wednesday 1st January 2025 to Thursday 9th January 2025, with a commencement time of 6.00pm be approved.

4. Report by Head of Service (Building Control & Sustainability)

4.1 Update Report on the Council's Progress in Relation to Sustainability, External Influences and Activities of the Climate & Sustainability Officer

The Head of Service for Building Control and Sustainability introduced Gemma Richardson, Climate and Sustainability Officer, to the Committee.

In his report, the Head of Service set out the progress made by the Council in relation to Sustainability, the external influences that affect progress and an overview of the activities of the Climate and Sustainability Officer. An appendix report was circulated to Members and provided detailed information in relation to the following:

4.1 Update Report on the Council's Progress in Relation to Sustainability, External Influences and Activities of the Climate & Sustainability Officer (Cont'd)

- The Climate Emergency Declaration and the new role of the Climate & Sustainability Officer
- The strategic context and obligations
- New and awaited legislative targets
- Councils Strategy and Action Plan development
- Energy Management
- Training and Communications; and
- An update on latest NI GHG Figures.

Members were reminded that the Council declared a Climate Emergency in September 2021 and committed to playing its part in meeting net zero targets. Officers responded to a number of comments and questions from the Committee arising from the report.

Responding to a request made by a member of the Committee, Officers agreed to keep the Committee up to date on the timeline for communications as the plan developed.

Alderman M Gregg and the Chairperson, Councillor P Cartney both welcomed the Climate and Sustainability Officer, Ms Gemma Richardson, advising that she had the full the support of the Committee on helping the Council to drive forward the agenda to meet net zero targets.

It was agreed to recommend that the update report on the Councils progress in relation to sustainability, external influences and activities of the Climate and Sustainability Officer be noted.

4.2 Street Naming Proposal off Ballynahinch Road, Carryduff
(This item was referred back to Environment and Sustainability Committee for further consideration).

The Head of Service for Building Control and Sustainability reported that Oakridge Developments had proposed street names (first and second preference), as set out in his report, for a development of 10 dwellings and 9 apartments situated off the Ballynahinch Road, Carryduff. Members were provided with a copy of the development layout and additional information provided by the applicant in support of the naming application.

It was reported that Item 3.3 of the Councils Street Naming Policy identified that family names or the names of owners or former owners of land should not be considered for inclusion in the street naming however, the family name in this instance was responsible for building developments in the vicinity and can be linked with the historic development of the area.

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Vice-Chairperson, Councillor G Hynds and agreed to recommend that the street name Emerson Close be approved, to the proposed development of 10 dwellings and 9 apartments, situated off the Ballynahinch Road, Carryduff.

5. Report by Acting Head of Service (Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning)

5.1 Consultation on the Local Government (Cremation) Regulations (NI) 2024

The Committee considered a report which provided information in connection with a consultation which had been issued by The Department for Communities, which sought views about the regulation of cremations conducted in crematoria that were operated and maintained by Councils. The Committee noted that the closing date for the consultation was 30 September 2024.

It was reported that whilst the 1961 Regulations regulated the provision of cremations carried out by Belfast City Council, they did not apply to crematoria provided and maintained by other councils and urgently needed to be updated to apply a common regulatory system to all council crematoria.

Copies of the Local Government (Cremation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024 Consultation document, and the Council's draft response to the Consultation were circulated to Members for Consideration.

It was proposed by Vice-Chairperson, Councillor G Hynds, seconded by Alderman J Baird, and agreed to recommend that the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council draft response to the Department of Communities Consultation, in relation to the Local Government (Cremation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024, be approved for submission, prior to the closing date of 30 September 2024.

5.2 New Public Health Bill Consultation

(This item was referred back to Environment and Sustainability Committee for further consideration).

The Committee considered a report which provided information in connection with a twelve-week consultation which had been launched by The Department of Health, which sought views on new health protection measures being implemented through a Public Health Bill to replace the current Public Health Act (NI) 1967. The Committee noted that the closing date for the consultation was 27 September 2024.

It was reported that the overarching principle of the legislation was to protect the population against various forms of infection and contamination and enable effective response to public health emergencies. The legislation provided powers and duties for the health management of, and mitigation against, infection and contamination including biological, chemical and radiological in addition to infectious diseases, which was the focus of the 1967 Act.

Members were provided with a copy of the draft response to be submitted on behalf of the Council for consideration.

It was proposed by Councillor N Parker, seconded by Councillor S Burns, and agreed to recommend that the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council draft response to the New Public Health Bill Consultation, be approved for submission to the Department of Health, prior to the closing date of 27 September 2024.

5.3 Office of Product Safety & Standards (OPSS) Grant Funding for the Capacity and Capability Building Programme in Northern Ireland: Non-Food Products 2024/25

The Acting Head of Service for Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning, set out in her report, the background and key information in relation to an offer by the Office of Product Safety & Standards (OPSS) of Grant Funding up to £55,000 for 2024/2025.

It was reported that from 2018, the OPSS, the national regulator for product safety, had worked with district Councils in Northern Ireland to enable them to undertake market surveillance (sampling, complaint investigation etc.) and provided advice and support to local businesses regarding product safety responsibilities. This had included a grant funding arrangement, either made directly to Council, or through a Service Level Agreement with a lead Council.

A list of funded activities for targeted and prioritised regulatory activity on non-food consumer goods had been circulated to Members for consideration.

It was proposed by Councillor C McCreedy, seconded by Alderman J Baird, and agreed to recommend that the acceptance of the 2024/2025 Grant offer of up to £55,000 from OPSS, the national regulator for product safety, for activities carried out, as detailed in the report by the Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning Service Unit be approved.

5.4 Eat Well Spend Less Initiative 2024

The Acting Head of Service for Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning, reported that Lisburn & Castlereagh City had delivered a successful 'Eat Well Spend Less Event' at Lagan Valley Island on 15th March 2024. The purpose of the event was to support Community Groups and members of the public to provide safe, nutritious food on a budget.

It was explained that the event, which was attended by 197 Community Group volunteers and members of the public, consisted of a Safety Presentation, Nutritious Food on a Budget Presentation and a Cookery Demonstration. Attendees were issued with a free Cookery Book – "101 Square Meals", Recipes and fridge thermometers.

Following a request made by Councillor C McCreedy at the May Meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Committee, in relation to the financial implications of running a similar event, the Acting head of service reported that based on an attendance of 200 people, the event would cost approximately £3,841.

It was proposed by Councillor C McCreedy, seconded by Alderman O Gawith, and agreed to recommend that the Eat Well Spend Less Initiative be approved to be held in 2024/2025.

5.5 Cemeteries Rules and Regulations Update

The Committee considered a report on the review and update of the existing operational Cemeteries Rules and Regulations procedures.

A copy of the most recently reviewed document, with changes highlighted, was circulated to Members for consideration.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Vice-Chairperson, Councillor G Hynds, seconded by Alderman A McIntyre, and agreed to recommend that the updated Cemeteries Rules and Regulations procedures be approved.

5.6 Memorandum of Understanding - Epizootic Disease

The Acting Head of Service for Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning, set out in her report, the background and key information in relation to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DAERA (the user of the Service) and Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (the provider of the Service) which set out the terms for provision of emergency assistance where an emergency has been declared as a result of a confirmed outbreak of Epizootic Disease.

It was reported that the purpose of the MOU was to set out the basis on which LCCC and other participating Councils would provide the Service to DAERA in the event that an Emergency is declared by DAERA.

The Committee were advised that DAERA would reimburse participating Councils the cost of:

- (a) Staff redeployed to assist with the Emergency.
- (b) Ancillary costs and any other service provision associated costs, for example, plant/equipment loaned by the district council.

The copy of the MOU was circulated to Members for information.

It was agreed to recommend that the Memorandum of Understanding - Epizootic Diseases between DAERA and LCCC be noted.

5.7 Out-of-Hours Dog Warden Service

The Committee considered a report in relation to interim measures which had been established for the operation of the Out of Hours Dog Warden Service (OOHDWS). Members were advised that the previous service provider, Hi-Tech Security Services, had withdrawn their service effective from 1st August 2024. As an interim measure, a new dedicated phone line (028 9244 7600) had been created which would allow members of the public to leave a voicemail message out-of-hours. The recorded message would advise callers that their request would be dealt with on the next available working day.

Members were reminded that an additional report would be tabled to a future Environment and Sustainability Committee meeting regarding options on future service provision, as previously agreed at the June meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Committee.

5.7 Out-of-Hours Dog Warden Service Cont'd

Further to a request made by Councillor N Parker, it was agreed to include detail on the service activities that had been previously provided by the Out-of-Hours Contractor, in the upcoming report.

Officers responded to a number of comments and questions from the Committee arising from the report. Following discussion, it was agreed to recommend that the report on the interim Out-of-Hours Dog Warden Service be noted.

5.8 Food Control Service Plan 2024/25

The Committee considered a report in relation to the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council Food Control Service Plan 2024/2025. It was reported that the Food Standards Agency (FSA) required each competent authority to have an up-to-date, documented Food Service Plan, readily available to food business operators (FBOs) and consumers. It was further explained that the Food Service Plan for 2024/2025 had been developed in order to meet the requirements outlined in the Framework Agreement.

A copy of the Food Control Service Plan 2024/2025 had been circulated to Members for information. It was agreed to recommend that the content of the Food Service Plan for 2024/2025 LCCC be noted.

The Chair, Councillor P Catney, advised that Any Other Business would be considered at this point in the meeting.

6. Any Other Business (Agenda Item 7.0 refers)

6.1 Off Street Carparking Report Update Councillor G Hynds

Responding to a query raised by Vice-Chairperson, Councillor G Hynds, in relation to a previously requested report around free off-street carparking hours; the Acting Director of Environmental services advised a report on the matter of carparking was tabled for the October meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Committee.

6.2 Lancaster Park Site Visit Councillor M McKeever

Councillor M McKeever informed the Committee that through his membership of the All Party Group on Climate Action, he was due to attend a site visit to Lancaster Park, situated at Cairnshill (Northern Ireland's first large-scale passive housing scheme), and agreed to update Members on the site visit at the next Meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Committee.

6.3 Water Refill Stations
Councillor N Parker

Responding to a request made by Councillor N Parker in relation to the rolling out of further Water Refill Stations to all Council owned facilities; the Acting Director for Environmental Services agreed to investigate further and table a report on the matter at a future meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Committee.

6.4 Bulky Waste Collections – American Fridge Freezers and Appointment Wait Times
Alderman M Gregg

In response to a query raised by Alderman M Gregg in relation to American Fridge Freezer bulky waste collections; the Head of Service for Waste Management and Operational Services confirmed that this type of collection was now possible due to the recent delivery of a new vehicle.

Responding to a request made by Alderman M Gregg, the Officer further confirmed that wait time appointments for bulky waste collections were between ten days and three weeks, and an options paper for the Bulky Waste Collection Service would be tabled to a future meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Committee.

6.5 Household Recycling Centre, Dundonald
Alderman S Skillen

Alderman S Skillen requested an update on the report that had previously been requested at the meeting of Environment and Sustainability Committee in June 2023, on the feasibility of a HRC site in Dundonald. The Acting Director of Environmental Services provided an update to the Committee on the matter, reporting that a feasibility study on a HRC site located in Dundonald and the redevelopment of the HRC site in Carryduff, were currently included in the capital programme for consideration.

6.6 Bulky Waste Collection Wait Time

Officers responded to a number of questions and concerns raised by Members in relation to lengthy wait times for bulky waste collections. Councillor A Gowan agreed to forward a personal appointment communication, that he had received for a bulky waste collection, to the Head of Service for Waste Management and Operational Services.

6.7 Heating Oil Leak
Chairperson, Councillor P Catney

The Chairperson, Councillor P Catney updated the Committee on a strong smell of heating oil which was currently present around the River Lagan at Queensway. It was reported that the Rivers Agency had identified the source of the problem which was in the process of being resolved.

7. Confidential Report by the Acting Director of Environmental Services (Agenda Item 6.0 refers)

The Chairperson, Councillor P Catney, advised that the confidential report items would be dealt with “In Committee” due to containing 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 M McKeever, seconded by Councillor P Kennedy and agreed that the following matters be considered “in Committee”, in the absence of members of the press and public being present.

The member of the press seated in the public gallery left the Council Chamber (7.23 pm).

7.1 Residual Waste Disposal Update
(Report will never be made available)

Alderman S Skillen left the meeting remotely (7.25 pm).

Presented by the Head of Service for Waste Management and Operational Services. It was agreed to recommend that the residual waste disposal update be noted.

7.2 Tender for the Provision of a Haulage Service for Residual and Green Wastes from Council Household Recycling Centres
(Redacted report will be made available following Council ratification)

Presented by the Head of Service for Waste Management and Operational Services.

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Councillor R McLernon and agreed to recommend that the progression of a Single Tender Action for the provision of a haulage service for residual and green wastes from Council Household Recycling Centres, as detailed in the report be approved, for the period 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025.

7.3 Tender for the Provision of a Service for the Recycling and Recovery of Residual and Bulky Wastes for Council Household Recycling Centres
(Redacted report will be made following Council ratification)

Presented by the Head of Service for Waste Management and Operational Services.

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Councillor P Kennedy and agreed to recommend that the progression of a Single Tender Action for the provision of a service for the recycling and recovery of residual and bulky wastes from Council Household Recycling Centres, as detailed in the report be approved, for the period 12 October 2024 to 11 March 2025.

7.4 Procurement of Four (4) New Replacement RCVs
(Report will be made available following Council ratification)

Councillor A Gowan left the Chamber (7.24 pm).

Councillor N Parker left the Chamber at 7.39 pm and rejoined the meeting remotely (7.49 pm).

Presented by the Head of Service for Waste Management and Operational Services. Officers responded to a number of comments and questions from the Committee arising from the report.

It was proposed by Councillor C McCreedy, seconded by Alderman J Baird and agreed to recommend that the procurement of the Four (4) new RCVs be approved.

Following lengthy discussion, it was further proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Alderman O Gawith and agreed to recommend that Officers investigate a possible increase to the capital budget as soon as possible, to support and progress further purchases of new fleet, to ensure continued provision of services that the Council are legally obliged to deliver.

7.5 2024-25 Quarter 1 Insurance Claims Reports
(Report will be made available following Council ratification minus appendix)

Presented by the Acting Director of Environmental Services. It was agreed to recommend that the 2024/2025 Quarter 1 Insurance Claims reports and associated appendix be noted.

7.6 Houses in Multiple Occupancy - Review of Licence Scheme Charges and Proposed Increase in Licence Fee from 1 October 2024
(Redacted report will be made following Council ratification)

Councillor M McKeever left the chamber (8.02 pm).

Mr K Bloomfield, Belfast City Council, presented this item of business.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Councillor R McLernon and agreed to recommend that:

- the increase of the HMO licence application fee to the maximum permissible under the 2019 Regulations; and
- increase the costs of varying an HMO licence, as detailed in the report be approved.

8. Any Other Business (Confidential)

Councillor M McKeever returned to the chamber (8.09 pm).

8.1 Abandoned Property
Acting Director of Environmental Services

The Acting Director of Environmental Services provided a verbal update to Members in relation to abandoned properties in the area. It was reported that a workshop for Members would be arranged in the near future. Responding to a question raised by a Member of the Committee, the Acting Director agreed that the workshop would be held in the evening.

8.2 Terms of Reference Presentation -
Environment and Sustainability Committee
Acting Director of Environmental Services

The Acting Director of Environmental Services reminded Members that a short presentation on the Committees Terms of Reference would take place directly after the close of that evening's meeting.

8.3 Commercial Use Fees - HRC Sites
Councillor C McCready

Responding to Councillor C McCreadys query in relation to commercial fees for HRC sites; Officers informed the Committee that fees were regularly reviewed as part of the annual review of schedule of charges. It was further reported that fees were benchmarked against other Councils.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor C McCready, seconded by Alderman J Baird and agreed to come out of Committee and normal business was resumed.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 8.15 pm.

Chairperson