

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber, Lagan Valley Island and Remote Locations on Tuesday 24 February, 2026 at 7:00 pm

PRESENT IN CHAMBER:

The Right Worshipful the Mayor
Alderman A Grehan

Deputy Mayor, Alderman H Legge

Aldermen J Baird, A G Ewart MBE, M Gregg,
A McIntyre, S P Porter, S Skillen and J Tinsley

Councillors J Bamford, D Bassett, R T Beckett, S Burns,
D J Craig, K Dickson, A P Ewing, A Givan, J Harpur,
B Higginson, G Hynds, C Kemp, S Lowry, U Mackin,
B Magee, A Martin, T Mitchell, C McCready and M McKeever

PRESENT REMOTELY:

Councillors R Carlin, P Catney, J Gallen, J Lavery BEM,
D Lynch, R McLernon, N Parker and G Thompson

IN ATTENDANCE:

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Chief Executive
Director of Organisation Development and Innovation
Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing
Director of Environmental Services
Director of Regeneration and Growth
Member Services Manager (Acting)
Member Services Officer (RN)
Technician
IT Officer

Commencement of the Meeting

At the commencement of the meeting, The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan, welcomed those present to the February meeting of Council.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor reminded that the meeting was being livestreamed to enable members of the public to hear and see the proceedings. The Mayor pointed out that, should the meeting go into committee to consider confidential business, any members of the press and the public in attendance would be required to leave the Council Chamber for the duration of those matters.

The Chief Executive outlined the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.

Commencement of the Meeting (Cont'd)

The Right Worshipful the Mayor requested that all mobile phones be put on silent or switched off for the duration of the meeting and pointed out that, in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, whilst the meeting was being live-streamed, unauthorised recording was not permitted.

Prayers

Councillor D Lynch joined the meeting remotely at 6.03 pm.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor welcomed Rev Andrew Thompson to the meeting of Council. Rev Thompson addressed the meeting and said a prayer, during which he expressed condolences to Michael Hamilton, Cleansing Officer, Altona Road Depot, on the death of his father, Alexander (Sandy) Hamilton.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan, thanked Rev Thompson for his attendance and contribution, following which he left the meeting.

1. Business of The Right Worshipful the Mayor

1.1 Mayor's Engagements

The Council noted a number of engagements attended by The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan, and the Deputy Mayor, Alderman H Legge, since the last meeting of Council.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor put on record her thanks to the Deputy Mayor, Alderman H Legge, for having deputised at a number of engagements during the month.

2. Apologies

It was agreed to accept apologies for non-attendance at the meeting on behalf of Alderman A Gawith, and Councillors A Gowan and G McCleave.

3. Declarations of Interest

Alderman S Skillen advised that she had declared a number of interests at the Communities & Wellbeing Committee meeting on Tuesday 3 February 2026 which had been recorded in those minutes.

4. Council Minutes

4.1 Council Meeting – 27 January, 2026

It was proposed by Alderman A G Ewart, seconded by Councillor T Mitchell, and

4.1 Council Meeting – 27 January, 2026 (Cont'd)

agreed that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 27 January, 2026 be confirmed and signed.

4.2 Special Meeting of Council - 5 February, 2026

It was proposed by Alderman A G Ewart, seconded by Councillor T Mitchell, and agreed that the minutes of the Special meeting of Council held on 5 February, 2026 be confirmed and signed.

5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the above minutes.

6. Deputations

There were no deputations.

7. Business Required by Statute

(i) Signing of Legal Documents

It was proposed by Councillor S Lowry, seconded by Councillor A Givan, and agreed that the following legal documents be signed at the meeting:

- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Studyseed CIC, 27 Lurgan Road, Moira BT67 0LX – Consultancy Agreement via a Service Company for delivery of T25/26-018 – Gamified Learning Programme as per the Lisburn and Castlereagh Labour Market Action Plan 2025/26 (Year 1) and (Year 2)
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and The Mount Charles Group, Annon House, 261-263 Ormeau Road, Belfast BT7 3GG - T24/25-050 - Tender for the Provision of Cleaning Services

8. Adoption of Minutes of Committees

Communities and Wellbeing Committee

3 February, 2026

Proposed by Councillor T Mitchell

Seconded by Councillor A Givan

Environment and Sustainability Committee

4 February, 2026

Proposed by Councillor S Burns

Seconded by Councillor C McCready

Special Governance & Audit Committee**10 February, 2026**

Proposed by Councillor D Lynch

Seconded by Councillor M McKeever

Matters ArisingPapers Circulated on the EveningCouncillor G Hynds

Comments were noted from Councillor G Hynds in regard to the circulation of the papers for the above meeting. It was proposed by Councillor G Hynds, seconded by Councillor T Mitchell, and agreed that any reports that are circulated at a Committee meeting on the evening be subsequently furnished to all Members of Council.

Corporate Services Committee**11 February, 2026**

Proposed by Councillor B Higginson

Seconded by Councillor J Bamford

The Chairman, Councillor B Higginson, reminded Members that the minutes of the Corporate Services Committee were subject to the Call-In procedure until 10.00 am on Wednesday, 25 February 2026.

Regeneration and Growth Committee**12 February, 2026**

Proposed by Councillor C Kemp

Seconded by Councillor J Harpur

The Chairman, Councillor C Kemp, reminded Members that the minutes of the Regeneration & Growth Committee were subject to the Call-In procedure until 10.00 am on Wednesday, 25 February, 2026.

Planning Committee**5 January, 2026**

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting of 5 January, 2026 had been circulated for noting only as these minutes had been agreed at the subsequent meeting of the Planning Committee on 3 February, 2026. It was proposed by Alderman J Tinsley, seconded by Councillor G Thompson, and agreed that their contents be noted.

9. Report from Chief Executive9.1 Requirement to enter into a Section 76 planning agreement for planning application on lands north of 60 Rathfriland Road and southwest of 52 Rathfriland Road, Dromara (LA05/2022/0821/F)

It was proposed by Alderman M Gregg, seconded by Councillor D J Craig, and agreed that approval be granted to the signing and sealing of the above agreement by the Mayor and Chief Executive.

9.2 Requirement to enter into a Section 76 planning agreement for planning application on lands adjacent to 3-19 Moira Road, Lisburn (LA05/2023/0377/F)

It was proposed by Alderman M Gregg, seconded by Councillor D J Craig, and agreed that approval be granted to the signing and sealing of the above agreement by the Mayor and Chief Executive.

10. Reports from Members on Boards

There were no reports from Members on Boards.

11. Reports on Decisions Subject to the Reconsideration Procedure

There were no reports on decisions subject to the reconsideration procedure.

12. Notice of Motion

12.1 Delays in Postal Deliveries throughout Lisburn and Castlereagh Area

A copy of the undernoted Notice of Motion in the name of Alderman A G Ewart, had been circulated to Members with the notice convening the meeting:

“This Council notes widespread public concern regarding persistent delays in postal deliveries throughout the Lisburn and Castlereagh area. Council affirms the importance of a dependable postal service in supporting residents, local businesses and access to essential services. Council calls on Royal Mail to account for current performance and provide firm assurances on service standards. Council further agrees to write to Royal Mail requesting a cross-party meeting to press for immediate improvements and sustained reliability.”

The Notice of Motion was proposed by Alderman A G Ewart and seconded by Alderman J Baird.

Alderman Ewart having stated that his Notice of Motion was not an attack on postal staff who were doing their best to keep the postal service going, proceeded to elaborate on his Notice of Motion during which he highlighted key areas of concern, including:

- the lack of a reliable postal service across this Council area is causing concern for residents, businesses and the most vulnerable members of society
- postal services are not a luxury, but an essential public service that people depend on for receiving bills, medical appointments, financial information and important personal correspondence
- Royal Mail used to be a first class service, it was sold for a second class price, and now offering a third class service
- Royal Mail are prioritising the delivery of parcels rather than letters

12.1 Delays in Postal Deliveries throughout Lisburn and Castlereagh Area (Cont'd)

- delays in the postal service can create real hardships for small businesses which rely on timely mail, and elderly residents without digital access are disproportionately affected
- when deliveries become inconsistent, this erodes trust in a system that communities have long relied on
- residents in this Council area deserve the same standards of service as everywhere else and should not be left facing ongoing disruption without clear communication, accountability or a timeline for a solution therefore urgent action is needed to restore a dependable and consistent postal service across the area

Alderman Ewart concluded by emphasising that clear updates, transparency about staff on operational issues and a firm plan to resolve this situation would go a long way towards rebuilding confidence in Royal Mail's services.

Alderman J Baird, having seconded the Notice of Motion, also highlighted the fundamental concerns in relation to Royal Mail's on-going service issues. He stated that everyone is frustrated that Royal Mail are currently not meeting their charter for delivery timescales and also expressed concern in relation to postal staff having been instructed to prioritise parcels and tracked mail.

Councillor K Dickson stated that the Alliance Party members would be supporting the Motion and reiterated the concerns raised by the previous speakers. He also elaborated on how the Alliance Party have been actively engaging with Royal Mail and other service users in relation to these serious issues. He made reference to the efforts of Michelle Guy MLA and Sorcha Eastwood MP in highlighting these issues.

Councillor Dickson advised that the Alliance party wished to propose an amendment to the Notice of Motion to include two additional sentences, to be inserted before the last sentence, namely:

“Council also recognises and places on record its appreciation for the dedication and professionalism of local postal workers who continue to serve our communities, often under significant operational pressures. Council acknowledges that service challenges are linked to wider resourcing, staffing and organisational issues rather than the efforts of frontline employees.”

Councillor J Bamford seconded Councillor Dickson's amendment.

Alderman A G Ewart indicated that he was in agreement that the amendment be included in his Notice of Motion. There were no Members against the amendment.

Councillors G Hynds spoke in support of the Notice of Motion, as amended, as did Councillors D Bassett, J Gallen and Alderman J Tinsley, on behalf of their respective political parties.

12.1 Delays in Postal Deliveries throughout Lisburn and Castlereagh Area (Cont'd)

Comments were noted from Councillor P Catney in connection with the issue of the high cost to households when changing their registered home address with Royal Mail, particularly when there were a number of family members over the age of 16 residing at this address. Councillor Catney asked that this matter be raised with Royal Mail at the cross-party meeting.

In summing up Alderman A G Ewart thanked Members for their support to his motion that evening and stated that he looked forward to the cross party meeting with Royal Mail.

The amended Notice of Motion, as proposed by Alderman A G Ewart and seconded by Alderman J Baird, was put to the meeting and agreed unanimously, the amended Motion being as follows:

“That this Council notes widespread public concern regarding persistent delays in postal deliveries throughout the Lisburn and Castlereagh area. Council affirms the importance of a dependable postal service in supporting residents, local businesses and access to essential services. Council calls on Royal Mail to account for current performance and provide firm assurances on service standards. Council also recognises and places on record its appreciation for the dedication and professionalism of local postal workers who continue to serve our communities, often under significant operational pressures. Council acknowledges that service challenges are linked to wider resourcing, staffing and organisational issues rather than the efforts of frontline employees. Council further agrees to write to Royal Mail requesting a cross-party delegation meeting to press for immediate improvements and sustained reliability.”

13. Any Other Business

13.1 Live Here Love Here Awards Deputy Mayor, Alderman H Legge

The Deputy Mayor, Alderman H Legge, referred to the Live Here Love Here awards ceremony that had taken place at Belfast City Hall the previous evening, which she had the honour of attending, and at which she had presented the Regional Community Champion Awards to two Lisburn and Castlereagh groups. The Deputy Mayor reported that the runner up for the Regional Community Champion award on the evening was Hillsborough Castle Gardens Volunteers and that the winner was Carryduff Regeneration Forum. The Deputy Mayor commended the enthusiasm of the Hillsborough Castle Gardens Volunteers in regard to the work they carried out in and around the Hillsborough Castle Gardens.

The Deputy Mayor put on record her congratulations to these two groups and asked if a letter of congratulations on these achievements from The Right

13.1 Live Here Love Here Awards (Cont'd)
Deputy Mayor, Alderman H Legge

Worshipful the Mayor could be sent to both groups and also to recognise their work in their respective communities.

At a later point in the meeting Councillor B Higginson wished to be associated with the sentiments expressed by the Deputy Mayor, Alderman H Legge, regarding the success of Carryduff Regeneration Forum.

13.2 Petition re Road Safety in Carryduff
Councillor J Harpur

Councillor J Harpur referred to the petition that he was progressing in regard to pedestrian safety in Carryduff. The petition currently had 767 signatures reflecting a very strong feeling within the community following the tragic death of an elderly woman who had been knocked down on a dangerous stretch of this road. Councillor Harpur said first and foremost his thoughts were with the deceased lady's family and her loved ones.

Councillor Harpur emphasised that residents had been raising concerns about pedestrian safety in the area for some time. The level of footfall was high with people accessing shops and services, older residents walking into the centre of town, and young people travelling to and from school. Councillor Harpur also emphasised that as Carryduff continued to grow this footfall would only increase and unfortunately the current layout did not provide a safe environment for safety measures for pedestrians.

Councillor Harpur having read out some of the wording from the petition welcomed the fact that this campaign had cross party support from those Members representing Castlereagh South DEA and thanked those Members for their support. He emphasised that this was not a political issue and stated that this matter was about road safety and about improving the lives of the residents in Castlereagh South.

In concluding, Councillor Harpur asked that the Council emphasises clearly that pedestrian safety must be at the core of any future public realm piece in Carryduff and also that the Council commits to working proactively with DfI to ensure pedestrian safety is central to any decision on infrastructure in the area. Regeneration & growth must be built around safety for the residents.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor advised Councillor Harpur that the Chief Executive would undertake to have this matter taken up by the relevant Officers.

At a later point in the meeting Councillor B Higginson commended his DEA colleague, Councillor J Harpur, on his collaborative approach with DfI on this road safety matter. Councillor Higginson stated that he had raised this same issue at the PCSP's Road Safety Partnership who had since arranged for speed camera vans to be in place along the Saintfield Road on a regular basis. Also, the PSNI Unit in that area had been contacted in regard to any increased presence of their speed guns along this road.

13.3 Ballymacash Sports Academy – King’s Award for Voluntary Services
Councillor J Bamford

Councillor J Bamford conveyed congratulations to Ballymacash Sports Academy for having been awarded the Kings Award for Voluntary Service at a ceremony held at Lagan Valley Island on Monday 16 February 2026. Councillor Bamford also extended thanks to Officers for their efforts in ensuring the night was a huge success.

13.4 Old Warren Play Park
Alderman S P Porter

Alderman S P Porter, on behalf of the Lisburn South Members highlighted the on-going issues with Old Warren Play Park, it being noted that a number of Members had been contacted on this matter by concerned local residents. Alderman Porter requested that this matter be addressed as a matter of urgency in terms of proposals for this facility. It was noted that the Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing would take this matter up with Alderman Porter and that any update would be furnished to all Lisburn South Members.

13.5 Damage to Moat Park Sign
Councillor S Lowry

Councillor S Lowry raised the issue of damage to the iron arch sign by contractors and expressed appreciation for the quick response by Officers. Councillor Lowry stated that this issue required to be resolved as quickly as possible and requested that she be informed as to when this damage would be repaired.

13.6 Attendance at Council by the South Eastern and the Belfast Health and Social Care Trusts
Councillor U Mackin

Councillor U Mackin, having stated that it had been some time since the Health Trusts had presented to the Council, raised the issue of difficulty in accessing GPs and the fact that Members would be contacted regularly about this issue. Councillor Mackin also raised an issue in connection with the Health Trusts’ new digital system, Encompass. Apparently one patient’s test results had been released to her via this new system prior to the patient’s Consultant having had the opportunity to discuss the results with the patient. Councillor Mackin emphasised that clarification was required on this issue.

It was proposed by Councillor U Mackin, seconded by Councillor A P Ewing, and agreed that, as a matter of urgency, the South Eastern (SEHSCT) and the Belfast Health & Social Care Trust (BHSCT) be invited to make their annual presentation to the Council, together with a representative from General Practice, if possible.

The Chief Executive undertook to liaise with the Chief Executive of the SEHSCT about an available date to present to the Council, in the first instance.

13.7 Lough Moss Feasibility Study – Update
Councillor D Bassett

The Chief Executive responded to comments from Councillor D Bassett in regard to any update on the feasibility study of Lough Moss. It was noted that the relevant Director would be in touch with Councillor Bassett on this matter.

13.8 Coffee Dock at Lough Moss Leisure Centre
Councillor B Higginson

The Chief Executive undertook to have a Council Officer contact Councillor Higginson with an update on the matter he raised about the coffee dock at Lough Moss Leisure Centre.

13.9 Party Group Leaders Forum (PGLF) - Minutes
Councillor G Hynds

Comments were noted from Councillor G Hynds in connection with the matter of PGLF agenda and minutes being furnished to all Members which, he stated, had been resolved. Councillor Hynds thanked the Chief Executive for having resolved this issue promptly.

13.10 Ballymacash Sports Academy – Kings Award for Voluntary Services
Councillor A P Ewing

Councillor A P Ewing paid tribute to The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan, and Officers for their efforts in regard to the successful evening on Monday 16 February 2026 to recognise Ballymacash Sports Academy's success in receiving the King's Award for Voluntary Services.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor acknowledged the good work of over 120 volunteers at Ballymacash Sports Academy who had thoroughly enjoyed the evening celebrating this success.

13.11 Housing Executive Contractors – Performance Issues
Alderman S Skillen

Alderman S Skillen raised concern in relation to the number of complaints she had received in recent days from constituents relating to the poor performance of those contractors who had been contracted to carry out works on behalf of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE).

It was proposed by Alderman S Skillen, seconded by Alderman A McIntyre, and agreed that a letter jointly signed by the Right Worshipful the Mayor and the Chief Executive be issued to the Chief Executive of NIHE to outline the Council's concerns on behalf of the NIHE tenants across the Lisburn and Castlereagh area in relation to the performance issues outlined. The letter would also request that information be presented to this Council providing details of the circumstances surrounding the contract in place, its poor performance and the remedial plan. It was also noted that there was a sense of frustration amongst NIHE frontline staff regarding this unsatisfactory service to tenants.

13.11 Housing Executive Contractors – Performance Issues (Cont'd)
Alderman S Skillen

The Right Worshipful the Mayor advised that any response from the Chief Executive of NIHE would be furnished to all Members in due course.

14. Confidential Business

The Right Worshipful the Mayor advised that the following matters 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 Alderman A G Ewart, seconded by Councillor A Ewing, and agreed that the confidential matters be considered “in committee”, in the absence of members of the press and public being present.

14.1 Council Facility
Alderman J Tinsley and Alderman S Skillen

Comments were noted from Alderman J Tinsley and Alderman S Skillen regarding issues concerning one of the Council’s facilities. It was noted that these matters would be looked into and that the relevant Officer would be in contact with the Members concerned. The Right Worshipful the Mayor asked that any other Member who was aware of similar issues to contact the Director directly.

14.2 New Year’s Day Fire in Crans-Montana, Switzerland
The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan, advised that the Council had received a letter of thanks and appreciation from the Mayor of Crans-Montana in response to the letter from this Council expressing sympathy and support on behalf of the people of the Lisburn & Castlereagh area. The Mayor of Crans-Montana advised that the sentiments of this Council had brought some comfort at this difficult time.

14.3 Bondi Beach Tragedy
The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan, advised that the Council had received a letter, by way of response, from the Mayor of Waverly expressing thanks and gratitude for the letter of condolence from this Council.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor T Mitchell, seconded by Alderman S Skillen, and agreed to come out of Committee and normal business resumed.

15. Any Other Business15.1 Retirement of Member Services Officer, Mrs Rosemary Nesbitt
Alderman J Tinsley

Alderman J Tinsley, on behalf of the Council, paid tribute and conveyed sincere thanks to Mrs Rosemary Nesbitt, who was in attendance that evening, being her last meeting of full Council prior to her retirement from the Council's employ after 38 years of service. During his contribution Alderman Tinsley referred to the high regard in which Rosemary had been held in her role as Member Services Officer. Alderman Tinsley paid tribute to the high standards and attention to detail in every task that Rosemary attended to, including the meticulous arrangements for the Council's representation at overseas missions. He stated that Rosemary was a credit to the Council and was held in the highest esteem by Members and conveyed best wishes to Rosemary on her forthcoming retirement. At this point the Members and Officers present gave a round of applause as an expression of thanks and best wishes to Rosemary.

Conclusion of Meeting

At the conclusion of the meeting the Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan thanked those present for their attendance.

There being no further business for consideration, the meeting was terminated at 8.03 pm.

Mayor