

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL**Minutes of Meeting of the Regeneration & Growth Committee held in the Council Chamber, Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn and in remote locations on Thursday, 2 April, 2026 at 6.00 pm**

PRESENT IN THE CHAMBER:	Councillor C Kemp (Chairperson) Aldermen J Baird and A McIntyre Councillors K Dickson, J Lavery BEM, U Mackin and A Martin
PRESENT REMOTELY:	Councillor J Harpur (Vice Chairperson) Councillors J Gallen and D Lynch
OTHER MEMBER IN THE CHAMBER:	Councillor G Hynds
IN ATTENDANCE	Director of Regeneration & Growth Head of Assets Head of Economic Development Head of Planning & Capital Development Member Services Manager (Acting) Member Services Officer IT Officer

Commencement of Meeting

The Chairperson, Councillor C Kemp, extended a welcome to everyone in attendance at the April meeting of the Regeneration & Growth Committee.

The Chairperson reminded those present that the meeting was being audio recorded unless the item was being considered under confidential business. The Chairperson also outlined the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.

1. **Apologies**

It was agreed to accept apologies for non-attendance on behalf of Aldermen A G Ewart MBE and M Gregg, and Councillor T Mitchell.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

Councillor D Lynch joined the meeting remotely at 6.03 pm.

3. Report of Head of Economic Development

3.1 Lisburn and Castlereagh Labour Market Partnership (LMP) Job Fair

The Vice Chairperson, Councillor J Harpur, joined the meeting remotely during this item of business (6.07 pm).

The Head of Economic Development's report detailed the background and key issues in connection with the Lisburn and Castlereagh Labour Market Partnership (LMP) Job Fair which had taken place in the Lagan Valley LeisurePlex on Thursday 26th February 2026. The event had attracted 387 attendees and 67 employers had showcased over 1,200 jobs on offer on the day.

In addition to the Officer's report, the following had been provided:

- an infographic setting out a number of outcomes of the Job Fair.
- Equality/Good Relations screening document,
- Rural Needs Impact assessment document

The Head of Economic Development elaborated on a number of key issues as set out in his report, it being noted that there was a downward trend in numbers attending the job fairs over the past three years.

The Head of Economic Development responded to comments from the Committee in connection with:

- the possibility of introducing support for a wider range of job seekers to the jobs fair for the likes of graduates, individuals returning to work after having family, or those looking for a new career path, and
- the employability & Skills conference which was planned to take place later in 2026.

A number of Members welcomed the success of the recent job fair and also the development of a local Employability and Skills Conference.

It was proposed by Alderman A McIntyre, seconded by Councillor A Martin, and agreed to recommend that:

- a) the Council and the Labour Market Partnership collaborate on the development of a local Employability and Skills Conference, to be staged later in 2026, and
- b) the update on the LEP and statistics outlined in the attached infographic, be noted.

3.2 NI Enterprise Support Service - Go-Succeed – 2026/27 funding

The Head of Economic Development's report highlighted the background and key issues in connection with the NI Enterprise Support Service 'Go Succeed' funding programme 2026/2027.

The Head of Economic Development elaborated on a number of significant developments in connection with the current position on the funding for the Go Succeed initiative.

It was noted that while Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council remained committed to maintaining high-quality business support services, the reduced funding position would require a review of the delivery model, with a more fundamental assessment needed over the medium to long term.

It was also noted that for the 2024/25 reporting period, Lisburn and Castlereagh City had exceeded its statutory target in regard to job creation, having achieved 118 new jobs against a target of 116.

In response to questions and concerns from a Member in connection with the continuation of a business support service, the Head of Economic Development provided further clarification on specific issues relating to the timing of government funding for such programmes which had contributed to the funding deficit. He also provided an assurance that the Council could provide a local service which would be procured post 2027 should this be necessary.

In addition to the Officer's report, the following had been provided:

- Go Succeed Outputs Table 2026/2027
- copy of a letter from DfE confirming the LCCC Business Start-Up Performance 2024/25 against statutory targets.
- Equality/Good Relations screening document,
- Rural Needs Impact assessment document

It was proposed by Councillor J Laverty, seconded by Alderman J Baird and agreed to recommend that:

- a) the Council increases its contribution to the Go Succeed programme to match the current offer of funding from the Department for the Economy, as outlined in the Officer's report, and
- b) it be noted that a further report on Go Succeed will be provided when a response had been received from DfE on the request for enhanced funding and to consider a review of the statutory jobs targets.

3.3 Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF) Potential Contingency

The Head of Economic Development's report highlighted the background and key issues in connection with the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF) and the potential for contingency budget to be required. The report set out the breakdown of the Council's match-funding revenue contribution total of £69,644 which had been funded from the economic development budget estimates. It was noted that the Council's revenue contribution was expected to leverage up to £600,000 in capital grant funding for local businesses.

In addition to the Officer's report, the following had been provided:

- a list of the businesses that have received Letters of Offer to date
- Equality/Good Relations screening document,
- Rural Needs Impact assessment document

The Head of Economic Development discussed the current position in relation to available funding for the final Call 7 which had been reduced substantially, it being noted that Council representatives on the DTFF Steering Group had endorsed proceeding immediately with Call 7 applications on the basis that applicants clearly acknowledge the risk associated with limited remaining funding.

It was proposed by Councillor K Dickson, seconded by Councillor J Laverty, and agreed to recommend that:

- a) the DTFF Steering Group's consensus position allowing Call 7 to proceed without delay, for the reasons outlined in the report, be agreed, and
- b) the sum of £4,800 towards additional associated revenue costs be approved, should the programme extend beyond March 2027.

The Director of Regeneration & Growth paid tribute to the efforts of Greg Allen, Economic Development Officer, and the Economic Development team, in regard to the success of the current DTFF initiative.

3.4 Small Settlements update

The Head of Economic Development's report highlighted the background and key issues in connection with the Small Settlements programme. The Department for Communities (DfC) had agreed to extend the letter of variance to cover the delivery of the remaining projects, it being noted that Officers had requested an extension until 30th September 2026.

In addition to the Officer's report, the following had been provided:

3.4 Small Settlements update (Cont'd)

- an update on completed and ongoing progress of projects with associated spend
- Equality/Good Relations screening document
- Rural Needs Impact assessment document

The Head of Economic Development reported that to date the Council had delivered a total of 25 projects to the value of £2,170,040.

The report circulated detailed the status of the four remaining agreed projects, namely;

- Glenavy Village pedestrian crossing,
- hospitality provision at Navigation House,
- Greenway Investment Framework, and
- a further phase of the Royal Hillsborough Historic Moira (RHHM) initiative

It was also noted that DfC had confirmed that there was no further opportunity to bring forward any additional projects under this programme and that it was anticipated that the new Shaping Sustainable places programme, when finalised, would provide new opportunities for both urban and rural settlements.

The Head of Economic Development responded to a question from a Member in connection with any impact on the current public realm works in Royal Hillsborough as a result of any works associated with the above-mentioned further phase of the Destination Tourism Package for Royal Hillsborough.

It was agreed that the update report on completed and in-progress projects relating to the Small Settlements projects be noted.

4. Any Other Business

4.1 Tourism Sign on Seymour Street and Queen's Road Councillor G Hynds

In response to comments from Councillor G Hynds in connection with the Tourism sign that sign-posted the direction of Lisburn Cathedral, the City Centre and the Southern Regional College, which had been down for the past six months, the Director of Regeneration & Growth undertook to follow up on this matter with DfI Officials.

4.2 Tourism Major Event Opportunity – October 2026 Councillor D Lynch

Councillor D Lynch requested that the Council consider supporting a Tourism Major event which was taking place in October 2026 which, he stated, would benefit the Lisburn

4.2 Tourism Major Event Opportunity – October 2026 (Cont'd)
Councillor D Lynch

area economically due to the number of visitors that would come into the area.

The Director of Regeneration & Growth reminded the Committee that the call for budget allocations for the Tourism Major Events had gone out in December 2025, the report on which had been subsequently noted by the Committee. The Director acknowledged that the opportunity of the Council supporting this Tourism Major Event had come forward following the Tourism Major Events funding allocation having been agreed. He also advised that he was also aware of other tourism major event opportunities that may also come forward and in this regard offered to bring a further report to the Committee on the outcome of a second call for Tourism Major Events funding subject to budget availability.

The Director reminded the Committee that under this programme the maximum budget that the Council could approve towards Tourism Major Events was £10,000.

Councillors J Gallen and K Dickson supported Councillor Lynch's proposal that a second call be issued for the Tourism Major Event initiative.

Councillor K Dickson drew the Committee's attention to the report on the Fleadh coming forward to Committee in the near future. The Director confirmed that this report was due to come before the Communities & Wellbeing Committee under its Culture remit.

5. Confidential Business

The Chairperson, Councillor C Kemp, advised that the confidential reports were required to be considered under confidential business 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 J Baird, seconded by Councillor K Dickson, and agreed that the Confidential Reports be considered "in Committee" in the absence of press or members of the public. The audio recording was paused at this stage in proceedings and the member of the press left the Council Chamber (6.47 pm).

It was agreed that agenda item 4.4.1 be considered at this point in the meeting.

5.1 Confidential Report from the Head of Assets

5.1.1 Knockbracken Healthcare Park Site, Stakeholder Group Update (Report never to be published)

At the outset the Chairperson, Councillor C Kemp, addressed those Members of the Committee who were also members of the Planning Committee in relation to the above update. The Director of Regeneration & Growth and the Head of Planning & Capital Development also addressed the Committee on this matter.

The Head of Assets having presented her report, responded to questions from Members in connection with key issues as outlined in the report. Two of the Members expressed thanks to the Head of Assets for her work on the above Stakeholder Group.

It was agreed that the Committee note:

- a) the confidential update in respect of the Stakeholder group,
- b) that contributions from Council officers would be subject to further consideration by the Department of Health, and
- c) a further update report would be brought to the Committee in due course.

Councillor J Gallen left the meeting remotely at 7.00 pm.

5.2 Confidential Report from the Director of Regeneration & Growth

5.2.1 Lagan Valley Island CCTV Control Room Upgrade (Redacted report to be published post award, estimated May 2026)

The Director of Regeneration & Growth's report outlined the background and key issues in connection with the Lagan Valley Island CCTV Control Room Upgrade.

The Committee had been furnished with a copy of the Project Initiation Request and the associated draft Business Case which would be subject to further refinement post transition of the Citywatch service offering.

The Director responded to comments and questions from two Members in connection with key issues set out in the report.

It was proposed by Councillor J Laverty, seconded by Alderman J Baird, and agreed to recommend that: the Project Initiation Request and the associated Business Case in relation to the CCTV Control Room Upgrade, for inclusion on the Council's capital programme, be approved.

5.3 Confidential Report from the Head of Economic Development

5.3.1 Future Cities Fund Update

(Redacted report to be published on completion of the Pilot Programme)

The Head of Assets left the meeting during consideration of this item of business (7.22 pm).

In response to a question from a Member regarding planning matters, the Director of Regeneration & Growth, the Head of Economic Development and the Head of Planning and Capital Development, provided clarification thereon.

It was proposed by Councillor U Mackin, seconded by Alderman J Baird, and agreed to recommend that:

- a) Letters of Offer are issued to successful applicants, as detailed in the Officer's report, once match funding is confirmed by DfC, and
- b) Officers continue with the EoI and application process on a rolling basis, as outlined, subject to the availability of funding and the necessary market demand.

5.4 Confidential Report by the Head of Planning & Capital Development

5.4.1 Letter from the Department for Communities in respect of a consultation for a Proposed Listing

(Redacted Report to be published when a decision is made by the Department for Communities on whether the buildings should be added to the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest)

The Head of Planning & Capital Development responded to questions from a Member in connection with the above proposed listing.

It was proposed by Alderman A McIntyre, seconded by Councillor U Mackin, and agreed to recommend that the Council has no comment to make in respect of the proposed listing.

5.5 Confidential Report from the Head of Assets

5.5.1 Removal of Burden

(Redacted Report to be published following ratification by Council)

This report was presented by the Director of Regeneration & Growth.

5.5.1 Removal of Burden (Cont'd)

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Councillor K Dickson, and agreed to recommend that the removal of the Deed of Covenant on the land at 128 Hillhall Road, Lisburn be approved.

6. Any Other Business (Confidential)

The Head of Planning & Capital Development left the meeting at 7.43 pm.

6.1 Tourism Major Events - October 2026 Councillor D Lynch

Councillor D Lynch made a number of further comments in relation to his request that the Council consider supporting Tourism Major Event opportunities. The Director of Regeneration & Growth and the Head of Economic Development clarified a number of points raised by Councillor Lynch and Alderman J Baird.

The Head of Economic Development undertook to consider running a second call for the Tourism Major Events programme which would be subject to any events meeting the guidance on Tourism return and subject to available budget. The outcome would then be reported to the Committee for noting.

It was proposed by Alderman A McIntyre, seconded by Councillor U Mackin, and agreed to recommend that the above course of action be approved.

Resumption of Normal Business

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

Conclusion of Meeting

The Chairperson thanked everyone for their attendance and wished everyone a lovely Easter. There being no further business for consideration the meeting was concluded at 7.44 pm.

Chairperson