

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Special Meeting of the Council held in the Council Chamber and in Remote Locations on Thursday, 8 February 2024 at 6.02 pm

PRESENT IN CHAMBER:

The Right Worshipful The Mayor
Councillor A Gowan

Deputy Mayor
Councillor G McCleave

Aldermen J Baird, A G Ewart MBE, O Gawith, M Gregg,
A Grehan, M Guy, S P Porter and J Tinsley

Councillors D Bassett, R T Beckett, S Burns, R Carlin,
D J Craig, K Dickson, N Eaton, A P Ewing, A Givan,
B Higginson, G Hynds, C Kemp, P Kennedy, S Lowry,
U Mackin, A Martin, C McCready, A McIntyre,
M McKeever, R McLernon, N Parker, G Thompson and
Rt Hon N Trimble

PRESENT IN REMOTE LOCATION:

Alderman H Legge, Councillors P Burke, J Gallen and
T Mitchell

IN ATTENDANCE IN CHAMBER:

Chief Executive
Director of Finance & Corporate Services
Head of Finance
Member Services Officers (BS & EW)
IT Officer
Technician

Commencement of the Meeting

At the commencement of the meeting, The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor A Gowan welcomed those present to the special meeting of Council, which had been convened to consider recommendations in connection with the striking of the district rate for 2024/2025. The special meeting was being live-streamed to enable members of the public to hear and see the proceedings.

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

At this point, the Member Services Officer read out the names of the Elected Members and Officers in attendance at the meeting.

1. **Apologies** (00:03:10)

It was agreed that an apologies for non-attendance at the meeting be accepted on behalf of Alderman S Skillen and Councillors P Catney and J Lavery BEM.

2. Declarations of Interest (00:03:28)

There were no declarations of interest.

Alderman M Guy joined the meeting at 6.05 pm.

3. Special Corporate Services Committee – 24 January, 2024 (00:04:10)

It was proposed by Alderman O Gawith, seconded by Councillor A P Ewing, and agreed that the minutes of the special meeting of the Corporate Services Committee held on 24 January, 2024 be confirmed and signed.

4. Report by the Chief Executive (00:04:58)

4.1 District Rate and Draft Estimates of Income and Expenditure for 2024/2025 (00:05:09)

Members had been provided with a copy of the Draft Estimates of Income and Expenditure for 2024/2025 for the various departments of the Council.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor invited the Chairman of the Corporate Services Committee, Alderman O Gawith, to address the Council.

At the outset Alderman Gawith referred to the ongoing cost of living crisis and stated that with this in mind the Council had taken the decision to freeze prices for the Council's leisure services, car parks and a number of other corporate services for the coming year.

Alderman Gawith acknowledged the many financial pressures being experienced by ratepayers which, he stated, also affected the council. He advised that the council also recognised the challenges being faced by Central Government and the Council had been impacted already by reduction in funding. Despite this, the Council had made every effort to keep the proposed rate rise below the rate of inflation which was currently sitting at 4%.

Alderman Gawith referred to the important role of the Council in delivering vital services which, he stated, were second to none in terms of quality, efficiency and value for money. The Council also had an important role in turning key plans in the area into reality.

Alderman Gawith having referred to the Council's ambitious capital investment plans for 2024/2025 which totalled £128 million highlighted a number of the areas of planned expenditure which included:

- £29.7m on a range of capital projects, including the new Dundonald International Ice Bowl, two new sports pitches in Lisburn and Carryduff, as well as the former Hilden Primary School which was being transformed into a tea room and childcare facility.

4.1 District Rate and Draft Estimates of Income and Expenditure for 2024/2025 (Cont'd)

- £14.5m on disposal of waste and recycling services
- £6.4m on maintaining leisure and community centres
- £5.5m on the upkeep of the council's award-winning parks and green spaces
- £2.7m on street cleansing and public spaces
- £2m on protecting public health
- £1.7m on overseeing planning and building control

Councillor Gawith having outlined the recommendations in connection with the striking of the district rate commended the efforts of Members, the Chief Executive, Directors and all Officers who had participated in the estimates process, enabling the Council to keep the rate increase below the rate of inflation.

It was proposed by Alderman O Gawith, seconded by Councillor A P Ewing, and agreed unanimously that:

- (a) approval be given to the strategies and related policies contained within the estimates documents; and
- (b) the district rate for the financial year 2024/2025 be set at 0.3658% for domestic properties and 25.6984% for non-domestic properties.

A number of Members, on behalf of their respective political parties, as well as the Vice Chairman of the Corporate Services Committee paid tribute to the Chief Executive, Directors and Officers who had worked hard over a number of months to ensure a rate rise below the rate of inflation for 2024/2025.

5. Any Other Business (00:13:38)

5.1 Condolences to Alderman S Skillen (00:13:42)

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor A Gowan, on behalf of the Council, expressed deepest sympathy to Alderman S Skillen on the very recent and sudden passing of her mother and asked everyone to keep Alderman Skillen and her family in their thoughts and prayers at this difficult time.

Conclusion of the Meeting

At the conclusion of the meeting, The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor A Gowan, also wished to convey his thanks to all Members, the Chief Executive and his team of Officers for their efforts throughout the estimates process.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor thanked those present for their attendance and there being no further business, the Special Meeting concluded at 6.16 pm.

Mayor