

**LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Meeting of the Corporate Services Committee held remotely and in the Council Chamber, Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at 6.00 pm.**

**PRESENT IN  
COUNCIL CHAMBER  
(COMMITTEE):**

Councillor The Hon N Trimble (Chair)

Councillor N Eaton (Vice-Chair)

The Right Worshipful The Mayor  
Councillor K Dickson

Aldermen A Ewart MBE, M Gregg, A Grehan and H Legge

Councillors T Beckett, A Ewing, A Givan, J Harpur, B Higginson,  
C Kemp, J Lavery BEM, and G McCleave

**OTHER MEMBERS  
OF COUNCIL  
PRESENT IN  
COUNCIL CHAMBER:**

Alderman O Gawith

Councillors P Catney and G Hynds

**OTHER MEMBERS  
OF COUNCIL  
PRESENT IN  
REMOTE LOCATION:**

Alderman S Skillen

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Director of Finance & Corporate Services  
Director of Organisation Development & Innovation  
Head of Assets  
Head of Corporate Communications & Administration  
Head of Finance  
Member Services Officers (RN & EW)

**Commencement of Meeting**

The Chair 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. 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.

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services outlined the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.

Finally, the Chair 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.

Alderman A Grehan left the Chamber during the housekeeping announcements.  
(6.03 pm)

1. Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting were accepted and recorded on behalf of the Deputy Mayor, Councillor R Carlin; and Councillor P Burke.

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.

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. Report of Head of Organisation Development & Innovation

3.1 Equality Update

In addition to the narrative report, an update on the Equality Scheme had been provided. As well as a general update, the report advised of actions related to the Notice of Motion on the subject of the LGBTQ+ community as presented to the Council at its meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2023 and thereafter considered by the Corporate Services Committee on the 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

The Directors responded to Members' questions.

The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor K Dickson, expressed his thanks to the Officers for progressing the LGBTQ+ Notice of Motion and for briefing both him and Councillor D Bassett (proposer of the Notice of Motion). Councillor Dickson looked forward to the Council building on the measures already put in place.

The Right Worshipful The Mayor and other Members welcomed the proposed establishment of the Disability Forum.

The overall updated Equality Scheme was welcomed by the Chair and a number of other Members.

3.1 Equality Update (Continued)

It was agreed that the report of the Director of Organisation Development & Innovation and the attendant Equality update be noted.

It was further agreed on a Proposal made by Councillor C Kemp and seconded by Councillor G McCleave that any appropriate forthcoming consultations and documents published by the Council incorporate an “easy read” version.

Councillor C Kemp asked to have placed on record her concerns in relation to Equality Screenings both in terms of when they are applied, and – at times - their relevance and/or absence of data. The Director of Organisation Development & Innovation noted these comments.

Councillor A Givan asked to have placed on record that all sections of the community within Section 75 should be treated as equal and viewed as equal. There should be no hierarchy of importance within Section 75.

Alderman A Grehan returned to the Chamber during the presentation of this item. (6.06 pm)

4. Report of Head of Corporate Communications & Administration

4.1 Draft Illuminations Policy

In addition to the narrative report which set out the key changes to the Illuminations Policy, the following items had been provided:-

- Minutes of meetings of the Illuminations Working Group held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023, and the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024;
- Draft illuminations Policy;
- Updated Equality Screening;
- Current Illuminations Policy (for comparative purposes only).

The Head of Service explained and elaborated on the draft policy and responded to Members’ questions.

The Head of Service confirmed that any illuminations already agreed for 2025 would be honoured and that the call for applications would include those groups whose requests had been declined.

Subsequent to Council ratification on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024, a call for applications for building illuminations would be made and based on the outcome thereof, the annual programme of building illuminations for 2025 would be presented to the December 2024 meeting of Committee.

4.1 Draft Illuminations Policy (Continued)

The social media information surrounding an illumination would be as informative as possible in regard to the aim, objectives and history of the charity involved. Furthermore, the publicity for an illumination would – if applicable – also refer to other illuminations that the Council may have programmed for related charities.

The Head of Service advised that - when the programme of building illuminations was being presented each year, the attendant report would include an evaluation of any feedback sourced from the Council's website and from the website of the charities in question.

In response to comments from Alderman H Legge, the Head of Service advised that an illumination for International Women's Day may be included within Section 6 – "Days of Observance" or – if agreed – added to the list that would be presented to the Committee in December 2024.

It was proposed by Councillor C Kemp, seconded by Alderman H Legge and agreed to recommend that:-

- the Draft Illuminations Policy be approved;
- the minutes of the meetings of the Illuminations Working Group and the updated Equality Screening be noted.

The Chair thanked the Officers for the work associated with this matter and also the Members of the working group for their constructive input. These comments were endorsed by other Members present.

5. Any Other Business – Non-Confidential

5.1 Armed Forces Day 2027  
Councillor B Higginson

Councillor B Higginson sought an update on the Council's application to host Armed Forces Day in 2027.

The Head of Corporate Communications & Administration advised of the receipt of an interim response but that there was no confirmation as yet.

5.2 Consultation – "The 'Good Jobs' Employment Rights Bill"  
Councillor C Kemp

Councillor C Kemp referred to the consultation from the Department for the Economy entitled "The 'Good Jobs' Employment Rights Bill" and to which a response (prepared by Officers) had been included in the October 2024 Information & Correspondence Schedule.

5.2 Consultation – “The ‘Good Jobs’ Employment Rights Bill” (Continued)  
Councillor C Kemp

Councillor Kemp referred to the extensive consultation period and expressed concern that it had apparently not be possible to bring the draft response to Committee.

The Head of Organisation Development & Innovation advised that – whilst the consultation period had been 1<sup>st</sup> July – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024, the Council only received the consultation days prior to the closing date. An extension of time for submission of a response had been given for a period of two days only. For this reason, it had not been possible to bring the draft response to Committee; however it had been considered appropriate that a response be made.

Councillor C Kemp asked that it be noted that the response to the consultation by Officers was not supported by the Alliance Party NI.

5.3 ”Blue Bridge” at Hilden  
Councillor G Hynds

Councillor G Hynds enquired as to the ownership of the “Blue Bridge” at Hilden which had fallen into disrepair along with an adjacent fence.

The Chair, Councillor N Trimble, advised that the “Blue Bridge” was a Department for Infrastructure asset. The Head of Assets confirmed that this was likely the case but that she would confirm with DFI.

6. Confidential Report from Director of Finance & Corporate Services

The reasons for confidentiality were as set out in the agenda, ie:-

6.1 Report on Tender Awards

(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information.)

Redacted report to be available following ratification and signing of contracts.

6.2 Estimates 2025/2026 – First Draft

(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information.)

Report will never become available – Final Estimates will be released.

6.3 Reserves at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information.)

Redacted report will be available after Council ratification on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024.

6.4 Housing Ideation: Innovation Project

(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information.)

Report will never become available.

In Committee

It was proposed by Councillor A Ewing, seconded by Councillor J Lavery 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.) (6.42 pm)

The Head of Corporate Communications & Administration left the Chamber. (6.42 pm)

Alderman S Skillen left the meeting on a remote basis. (6.42 pm)

6.1 Report on Tender Awards

Presented by the Head of Assets who also responded to Members’ questions.

Tender Reports and a Summary of Tenders Awarded had been provided with the narrative report.

It was proposed by Alderman M Gregg, seconded by Councillor J Lavery and agreed to recommend that the tenders awarded in regard to the following contracts, together with the attendant tender reports, be noted:-

- T24/25-012 – Gamified Learning Skills Programme – Re-Tender;
- T24/25-007 - Community Numeracy Bootcamp (Additional Needs).

It was further agreed to recommend that the signing and sealing of the Tender documents be approved.

The Head of Assets agreed to:-

- look into a revision of the format of tender reports so that the matrix of marks might be included;
- confirm the duration of the Gamified Learning Skills Programme and advise Alderman O Gawith accordingly.

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services noted comments about the minimum number of persons on a tender evaluation panel and confirmed that she was supportive of this.

6.1 Report on Tender Awards (Continued)

During this item of business:-

- Councillor G McCleave left the Chamber during the Head of Assets' presentation of T24/25-007 and returned to it during discussion. (6.45 pm and 6.47 pm respectively.)
- Councillor P Catney left the Chamber during discussion. (6.46 pm)
- Councillor B Higginson left and returned to the Chamber during discussion. (6.48 pm and 6.51 pm respectively.)

6.2 Estimates 2025/2026 – First Draft

Presented by the Head of Finance.

Members noted the content of the extensive narrative report in regard to the draft estimates for 2025/2026. The paper reflected discussions that had taken place at Members' workshops regarding the Estimates' process in September 2024.

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services and the Head of Finance responded to Members' questions. The request that any decisions to not fill posts should be reported to the Efficiency Review Steering Group was noted.

During discussion, the Head of Corporate Communications & Administration returned to the Chamber at 6.58 pm. Both she and the Head of Assets left the Chamber at 6.59 pm.

6.3 Reserves at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

Presented by the Head of Finance.

In addition to the narrative report, tabular information on the Reserves Summary as at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 was provided.

The Director of Finance & Corporate Service and the Head of Finance responded to Members' questions. The Director referenced the minute of the previous meeting which had referred to Capital movements.

It was proposed by Alderman M Gregg, seconded by Councillor C Kemp and agreed to recommend that:-

- the report on Reserves be noted;
- subject to the deferral of the earmarked variance associated with the Local Development Plan, approval be granted for the earmarking/transfer of the various Reserves as detailed in the Head of Finance's report.

6.3 Reserves at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 (Continued)

There was discussion on legal costs and Judicial Review costs. The Director of Finance & Corporate Services said there would be additional analysis on legal costs in the Management Accounts going forward.

During discussion:-

- the Head of Assets returned to the Chamber. (7.03 pm)
- the Head of Corporate Communications & Administration returned to the Chamber. (7.05 pm)
- Alderman A Ewart left the Chamber. (7.17 pm)
- Alderman H Legge left the Chamber. (7.19 pm)

6.4 Housing Ideation: Innovation Project

**(At its meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024, the Council agreed that this matter be referred back to the Corporate Services Committee for re-consideration.)**

Presented by the Director of Organisation Development & Innovation.

In addition to the narrative report, the following had been provided:-

- a proposal outlining a business innovation entitled “Innovation in Action - Housing Pilot Proposal: Ideation”;
- a schedule of anticipated costs of Ideation.

With the aid of a shared-screen presentation, the Director explained the aims and objectives of the Housing Pilot Proposal.

It was proposed by Councillor A Givan and seconded by Councillor A Ewing that the Housing Pilot Proposal progress to Business Case stage. The proposal was put to the Meeting and – on a show of hands - declared “lost”, the voting being two in favour, eight against and one abstention.

It was therefore agreed that the progression of the Housing Pilot Proposal to Business Case be not proceeded with.

During the presentation:-

- Councillors B Higginson and G Hynds left the Chamber. (7.22 pm)
- Councillor A Ewing left and returned to the Chamber. (7.22 pm and 7.40 pm respectively.)
- Councillor T Beckett left the Chamber. (7.30 pm)



7. Any Other Business – Confidential

7.1 Reports/Surveys of Council Assets  
Alderman M Gregg

Alderman M Gregg considered that – on the occasions when the Committee was being recommended to agree expenditure for the maintenance of a Council asset – it should be a requirement that Members be provided with the associated “condition/survey of asset” report so that a considered decision could be made when committing expenditure.

Alderman Gregg asked that – not only going forward should this be a requirement, but also that such “condition/survey of asset” reports be provided to Members in regard to asset expenditure for the past four years, ie since October 2020. Such reports could be provided to Members via the Information & Correspondence Schedule.

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services advised that this request would be passed to the Director of Regeneration & Growth for progressing.

7.2 Health Centre building in Linenhall Street, Lisburn  
Councillor A Ewing

Councillor A Ewing enquired if Officers were aware of any plans for the redundant health centre in Linenhall Street, Lisburn.

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services advised that this request for information would be passed to the Director of Regeneration & Growth for appropriate investigation.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Alderman M Gregg, seconded by Councillor C Kemp and agreed to come “out of Committee”. Normal business and audio recording were resumed.

8. Any Other Business

Dealt with under Item 5.

The meeting concluded at 8.05 pm.

---

MAYOR/CHAIR