

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting of the Development Committee held remotely and in the Council Chamber, Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn on Thursday 6th April, 2023 at 6.04 pm

PRESENT IN THE CHAMBER:

Alderman A G Ewart, MBE (Chairman)
Alderman A Grehan (Vice Chairperson)
Aldermen W J Dillon MBE and D Drysdale
Councillors R T Beckett, C McCreedy, U Mackin and A Swan

PRESENT IN A REMOTE LOCATION:

Deputy Mayor, Councillor M Guy
Alderman J Baird
Councillors F Cole and A Givan

OTHER MEMBER PRESENT IN THE CHAMBER:

Alderman S Martin

OTHER MEMBER PRESENT IN A REMOTE LOCATION:

Alderman J Tinsley

IN ATTENDANCE

Director of Service Transformation (Council Chamber)
Head of Economic Development (Council Chamber)
Head of Assets (Council Chamber)
Member Services Officers (BS and EW)
IT Officer

Commencement of Meeting

The Chairman, Alderman A G Ewart, extended a welcome to all present to the April meeting of the Development Committee.

The Chairman advised that the meeting was being audio recorded unless the item was being considered under confidential business.

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

Commencement of Meeting (Cont'd)

The Chairman asked that any Member entering or leaving the meeting advise the Member Services Officer accordingly so that this might be accurately reflected in the minutes.

The Chairman outlined the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.

1. Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting were accepted and recorded on behalf of The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor S Carson, and Councillors J Gallen and G McCleave.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest declared at the meeting.

3. Report by Head of Economic Development

3.1 Major Tourism Events Funding/Tourism Small Grants

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Economic Development in connection with the Council's Major Tourism Events Funding and Tourism Small Grants initiative.

The Committee had been furnished with copies of a number of related documents including: guidance notes for major event funding, governance of Tourism Major events as well as summaries of both tourism major event grants and tourism small event grants.

It was proposed by Alderman W J Dillon, seconded by Councillor C McCready, and agreed to recommend that:

- a) the funding being awarded as part of the 2023/24 Tourism Major Events funding programme be noted,
- b) should additional budget slippage become available in-year the Tourism Small Grants programme be re-introduced in the 2023/24 financial year and each subsequent year, up to a maximum total indicative budget of £10,000, and
- c) delegated authority be granted to the Director to agree any necessary changes to the annual Tourism Small Grants criteria to take account of changing economic circumstances.

3.2 Public Artwork on Approach Roundabout

The Head of Economic Development reminded the Committee of the Council's Roundabout Sponsorship Scheme which secured private sector sponsorship to offset some of the costs of the maintenance and planting of key roundabouts/gateways across the Council area.

The Head of Economic Development reminded the Committee of the report presented to the March 2020 Development Committee meeting advising of the interest of a local businessman, Mr J McBride of McBride Construction, to erect a piece of public art, namely; a replica motorcycle and rider, on the newly constructed roundabout at Temple to commemorate the Temple 100 road race.

The report outlined the proposed approach to erect the replica motorcycle and rider, including the placement of sponsorship signage on the roundabout and the Council's requirement to apply to the Department for Infrastructure for the necessary license. It was noted that the Council was required to put in place an appropriate legal agreement.

It was proposed by Councillor U Mackin, seconded by Alderman J Baird, and agreed to recommend that the approach as outlined in the report be agreed, namely; the Council takes responsibility for the public art work installation on Temple Roundabout under an appropriate legal agreement drawn up by the Council's solicitor.

It was proposed by Councillor A Swan, seconded by Councillor U Mackin, and agreed to recommend that the possibility of similar initiatives involving artwork reflecting the local area for other roundabouts within the Lisburn and Castlereagh area be considered.

3.3 Lisburn and Castlereagh Labour Market Partnership (LMP) Job Fairs

Alderman W J Dillon and Councillor U Mackin left the meeting at 6.21 pm.

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Economic Development in connection with the delivery of two Job Fairs as per the Lisburn and Castlereagh Labour Market Partnership action plan. The first of the job fairs had taken place in November 2022, and the second one in February 2023, the aim of which had been to provide local residents with an increased awareness of local job vacancies and employability support programmes that are available across the Council area.

A copy of an infographic in connection with the job fairs had been furnished to the Committee.

Councillor U Mackin returned to the meeting (6.23 pm).

The Head of Economic Development noted comments from the Committee in connection with the success of the job fairs.

3.3 Lisburn and Castlereagh Labour Market Partnership (LMP) Job Fairs (Cont'd)

It was agreed that the report on the initial outputs from the above-mentioned job fairs be noted, with further reports in this regard being brought to the Committee in due course.

4. Report by Head of Assets

4.1 Procurement of Electricity and Natural Gas Supplies

Alderman W J Dillon returned to the meeting at 6.24 pm.

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Assets in connection with the tender for the procurement of electricity and natural gas supplies, it being noted that Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council had been participating in a collaborative electricity and natural gas supply procurement process for a number of years. A new collaborative tender procurement process had been undertaken in January/February 2022 but due to the volatility of the energy market at that time the process failed to attract successful bids.

The Head of Assets responded to questions from a Member in connection with the above-mentioned collaborative tender.

It was proposed by Alderman D Drysdale, seconded by Alderman W J Dillon, and agreed to recommend that in order to undertake a speedy approval, retrospective delegated authority is granted to the Chief Executive to approve the award of the electricity and natural gas tenders, as necessary, when they had been evaluated.

5. Any Other Business

5.1 Planning Application for Mixed Use Development and New Road at Blaris – Called In Chairman, Alderman A G Ewart

It was agreed to recommend on a proposal by the Chairman, Alderman A G Ewart, and seconded by Alderman D Drysdale, that the Council writes to the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Infrastructure to express the serious concerns of the Council in respect of the delay in the major development at Blaris worth in the region of £600 million investment in the area, the planning application having been called in by the Department almost 2 years ago.

It was agreed that the letter include extensive detail in respect of the social and economic disadvantage to the Lisburn and Castlereagh Council area as a result of the Department's decision to call in this planning application.

5.2 Tributes to Alderman W J Dillon MBE
Chairman, Alderman A G Ewart

The Chairman, Alderman A G Ewart, having referred to this meeting being the last meeting of the Development Committee of the current Council term, wished to pay tribute to Alderman W J Dillon who was retiring from local government after 46 years of public service and who had been a long serving and valued member of the Development Committee, having made significant contributions over the years.

The Chairman highlighted Alderman Dillon's many achievements and accolades during his time in local government, having been elected on to the then Lisburn Borough Council in 1977. During his time he has sat on many Committees where he made many valuable contributions. He had been Chairman and Vice Chairman of various Committees during his time on the Council. Alderman Dillon had been elected to the position of Deputy Mayor of the then Lisburn Borough Council in 1998/99 and 1999/2000 and then Mayor of Lisburn in 2000/01 and 2001/02.

The Chairman referred to Alderman Dillon having been instrumental in many Council initiatives with perhaps one of the most prominent being the re-development of the Lagan Valley Island site and the new civic building which is the Council's headquarters today. The Chairman also mentioned that Alderman Dillon had the privilege during his Mayoral term of representing the Council at the Official opening of Lagan Valley Island in 2001 when he welcomed the late HM Queen Elizabeth II and the late Duke of Edinburgh at the official opening of Lagan Valley Island. Also of note was that during Alderman Dillon's Mayoral term of office Lisburn had been granted City Status on 14 March 2002 by the late HM Queen Elizabeth II as part of the Queen's Golden Jubilee celebrations. Another significant accomplishment by Alderman Dillon was the celebration of the achievement of Professor Frank Pantridge, a native of Lisburn, who invented the portable defibrillator. Alderman Dillon was also instrumental in progressing the Harry Ferguson Memorial Aircraft Sculpture.

The Chairman also referred to Alderman Dillon's keen interest in all planning matters having made many valuable contributions with his razor sharp mind and astute judgement at the Planning Committee meetings over many years.

In 2018 Alderman Dillon had been awarded a lifetime achievement award by NILGA for his services to local government.

The Chairman concluded by thanking Alderman Dillon for his friendship over the years and for his long service to the Development Committee. He had no doubt that Alderman Dillon would continue to be a voice of support and advocate of the work of this Committee.

5.2 Tributes to Alderman W J Dillon MBE (Cont'd)

At this point the Committee stood and gave a round of applause in acknowledgement of Alderman Dillon's dedication to the Development Committee.

Alderman A Grehan, Alderman J Baird, Alderman D Drysdale, Councillor U Mackin, Councillor A Swan and Alderman S Martin spoke in support of the Chairman's sentiments and wished Alderman Dillon well for the future.

Alderman J Tinsley joined the meeting remotely at 6.42 pm.

Alderman W J Dillon, in response, expressed gratitude to all his colleagues on the Council irrespective of political party.

5.3 Thanks to the Chairman, Alderman A G Ewart
Vice Chairman, Alderman A Grehan

The Vice Chairperson, Alderman A Grehan, wished to put on record her thanks to the Chairman, Alderman A G Ewart, for his efforts and hard work during his time as Chairman of the Development Committee. The Vice Chairperson welcomed in particular the £20m funding that this Committee had secured through the Belfast Region City Deal initiative and commended the Chairman for his efforts in that regard. She also referred to the Chairman's valuable help to businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic.

5.4 Thanks of the Chairman, Alderman A G Ewart

The Chairman having wished the Committee a happy Easter put on record his thanks to the Committee for its support and commitment during the past year. He also thanked the Director of Service Transformation and his team of Officers for their efforts and support during his time as Chairman of the Committee.

The Chairman wished all Members success in the forthcoming local government elections and wished Councillor F Cole well in her future endeavours who was not standing for election.

6. Confidential Report from Director of Service Transformation (00:)

The Chairman advised that the confidential report items were confidential 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 W J Dillon, seconded by the Vice Chairperson, Alderman A Grehan, and agreed that the Confidential Report of the Director of Service Transformation be considered “in Committee” in the absence of press or members of the public. The audio recording was paused at this stage in proceedings.

6.1 Balmoral Show – Council Representation
(Redacted report to be published in June 2023)

The Director of Service Transformation responded to a question from a Member in connection with issues arising from the report.

It was proposed by the Vice Chairperson, Alderman A Grehan, seconded by Councillor A Swan, and agreed to recommend that the recommendations in connection with budget allocations and appropriate promotional activity at the 2023 Balmoral Show, as outlined in the report circulated, be approved.

6.2 Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) – Destination Royal Hillsborough – Department of Finance Approval and Draft Contract for Funding
(Report to be published following project completion)

The Director of Service Transformation responded to comments from the Committee on key issues pertaining to the Destination Royal Hillsborough initiative.

It was proposed by Alderman W J Dillon, seconded by Councillor C McCready, and agreed to recommend that:

- a) the correspondence from the Department of Finance to the Department for the Economy confirming approval of the BRCD £20m funding in connection with the Destination Royal Hillsborough initiative be noted,
- b) the final Contract for Funding (CFF) when received, be signed, provided that the Council’s solicitor recommends no substantive changes to the attached draft CFF and the proposals outlined, with delegated authority being granted to the Chief Executive this regard if necessary, and
- c) further update reports, to include any necessary amendment to the Outline Business Case, be brought to Committee on the development of the project as it progressed.

The Director undertook to respond to a Member directly on a matter raised during the discussion.

6.3 MPLS (Multiprotocol Label Switching) Renewal
(Redacted Report to be published June 2023)

It was proposed by Alderman D Drysdale, seconded by Councillor A Swan, and agreed to recommend that

- a) the Business Case, as circulated, in respect of the MPLS Contract be approved, and
- b) Option 1 of the Business Case be progressed in order to realise enhanced network connectivity, improved resilience, underpinned by a new managed support contract.

6.4 Various Annual Tender Reports for Award of Planned Preventative Maintenance Inspections
(Redacted Report to be published following ratification of award and placing of Order)

It was proposed by the Vice Chairperson, Alderman A Grehan, seconded by Alderman D Drysdale, and agreed the award of the undernoted annual tenders as outlined in the tender reports that had been circulated, being the lowest compliant tender cost received for each tender listed, be noted:

- a. T2223-053 Planned Preventative Maintenance Inspections of Firefighting Equipment
- b. T2223-059 Planned Preventative Maintenance Inspections of Lightning Conductors and Chimneys
- c. T2223-067 Planned Preventative Maintenance Inspections of Sewerage Pumps.

7. Any Other Confidential Business

7.1 City Watch CCTV Northern Ireland - Update

The Director of Service Transformation provided a verbal update to the Committee in connection with the recent developments with City Watch and responded to comments from a Member thereon.

Alderman J Baird left the meeting at 7.33 pm.

7.2 Award of Grant from Northern Ireland Office (NIO) re King's Coronation

The Committee noted a verbal report by the Director of Service Transformation in connection with the award of a grant from the NIO towards the forthcoming celebration of the King's Coronation.

7.3 Thanks of Director of Service Transformation

The Director expressed thanks and appreciation to the Committee for its support including the Committee's scrutiny and challenge. He also expressed thanks to the Committee for the continued appreciation shown in that forum and referred to the fact that there were many 'unsung heroes' working behind the scenes on the various projects and initiatives. The Director also thanked the Chairman and the Vice Chairman for their continued support throughout the year.

The Director reminded the Committee that we were now in the Purdah period and advised that a number of projects and initiatives had been completed and promoted accordingly in recent days.

7.4 NI Chamber of Commerce Annual Lunch

The Chairman, Alderman A G Ewart, advised the Committee that the NI Chamber of Commerce's Annual Lunch was taking place on Friday 23rd June 2023.

It was proposed by Alderman D Drysdale, seconded by Councillor U Mackin, and agreed to recommend that the Council takes a table at this event at a cost of £850.00.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Alderman W J Dillon, seconded by Councillor A Swan, and agreed to come out of Committee and normal business was resumed.

Conclusion of Meeting

The Chairman, Alderman A G Ewart, thanked everyone for their attendance and there being no further business for consideration the meeting was concluded at 7.37 pm.

Chairman