

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting of the Regeneration & Growth Committee held remotely and in the Council Chamber, Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn on Thursday 15th June, 2023 at 7.04 pm

**PRESENT IN
THE CHAMBER:**

Councillor J Lavery BEM (Chairman)

Councillor T Mitchell (Vice Chairperson)

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor A Gowan

Aldermen J Baird, M Gregg, A Grehan and M Guy

Councillors P Burke, K Dickson, A Martin and N Parker

**PRESENT IN A
REMOTE LOCATION:**

Councillor C McCready

IN ATTENDANCE

Director of Regeneration & Growth (Council Chamber)

Head of Economic Development (Council Chamber)

Head of Planning & Capital Development (Council Chamber)

Member Services Officers (BS and EW)

IT Officer

Commencement of Meeting

The Chairman, Councillor J Lavery, extended a welcome to all present to the first meeting of Regeneration & Growth Committee of the new Council term, and in particular extended a warm welcome to the new Members who had been elected to the Council following the recent Local Government Elections.

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.

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 (00:02:40)

Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting were accepted and recorded on behalf of the Deputy Mayor, Councillor G McCleave, Aldermen A G Ewart MBE and S P Porter, and Councillors J Gallen and U Mackin and also the Head of Assets.

2. Declarations of Interest (00:03:24)

There were no Declarations of Interest declared at the meeting.

3. Report by Head of Economic Development (00:03:54)

3.1 Regional Tourism Partnership – Visit Belfast Annual Service Level Agreement
(00:04:10)

Councillor R Carlin joined the meeting remotely during this item of business (7.08 pm).

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Economic Development in connection with the background and key issues relating to the Council's membership of the Greater Belfast Region Tourism Partnership (BRT) through Visit Belfast's Service Level Agreement at a cost of £30,000 per year. The report also outlined the Council's previous decision to purchase the additional Gold Sponsorship Package for a further £6,000 per year which included a prominent display compartment within Belfast Welcome Centre. Details on the Gold Sponsorship Package were outlined in the report.

The report detailed a number of new initiatives associated with the Regional Tourism Partnership that had been implemented over the past 12 months. Also, the Committee had been furnished with a copy of an evaluation report which outlined a detailed breakdown of activity for the 2022/2023 financial year.

The Head of Economic Development undertook to respond directly to a Member's question in relation to a reference contained in the document appended to the report.

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Alderman M Gregg, and agreed to recommend that Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council continues its long standing membership of the Greater Belfast Regional Tourism Partnership at a cost of £30,000 plus and a further £6,000 for the 'Gold' promotional package, as outlined, for a further year.

3.2 Business Development Collaboration Programme 2023-2024 (00:09:10)

Councillor C McCready left the meeting during consideration of this item of business (7.18 pm).

3.2 Business Development Collaboration Programme 2023-2024 (Cont'd)

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Economic Development on the Council's annual collaboration programme of business development activity that supports the Council's overall strategy of engagement and collaborative working with stakeholders including businesses, business groupings and government. The report outlined the benefit of the on-going activity associated with the various business development programmes as well as the various projects currently envisaged for 2023-2024.

A number of key issues were highlighted in the report including (a) a proposed Invest NI-led new NI-wide 11-council Collaborative Local Industrial Decarbonisation project and (b) the Council's match funding of Belfast Region City Deal funding towards the revenue costs to deliver the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund for businesses from November 2022 to March 2026. Further detail on the proposed overall budget for business collaborative activity during 2023-2024 had been provided in a paper appended to the report.

At this point the Chairman, Councillor J Laverty, on behalf of the Committee, congratulated The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor A Gowan, on his election to the position of Mayor and conveyed good wishes to Councillor Gowan for his year in Office.

In response The Right Worshipful the Mayor reciprocated the sentiments expressed by the Chairman, Councillor J Laverty, and conveyed best wishes to the Chairman and the Vice Chairman, Councillor T Mitchell, on their election to Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Regeneration & Growth Committee.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor welcomed the Business Development Collaboration Programme and put on record his desire to see more programmes for funding for businesses of all types coming forward and in this regard extended an offer, through his Office of Mayor, to support and promote any initiative under the Business Development Collaboration Programme going forward. In response the Director referred to a number of funding streams that were starting to come forward such as the UK Prosperity Fund, PEACEPLUS and TRPSI initiatives and undertook to liaise with the Chairman and the Mayor in relation to bringing a further report to the Committee on this matter.

In response to a question from a Member the Director referred to the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund which was being progressed through the Belfast Region City Deal initiative and assured that there would be engagement with Members on this area of funding in due course.

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Alderman M Guy, and agreed to recommend that the annual business collaborative programme of activities for 2023-2024 together with the associated cost, as outlined, be agreed.

3.3 Enterprise Lisburn Castlereagh Programme 2023-2024 (00:17:10)

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Economic Development in regard to the Enterprise Lisburn Castlereagh Programme 2023/2024 the key aim of which was to grow the local economy.

The Head of Economic Development outlined a number of key issues and proposals for the Council to develop programmes to target key sectors; namely;

- a) Youth Entrepreneurship - working with key partners such as the Princes Trust, Enterprise NI/Local LEA's, Young Enterprise NI and 4C UR Future, and
- b) Female Entrepreneurship – developing a programme of activity to assist current or aspiring female entrepreneurs.

The Head of Economic Development's report also outlined the success of the Economic Development Unit in securing grant funding through a number of funding applications to the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Invest NI towards business support growth programmes.

A further paper on the proposed Enterprise Lisburn Castlereagh Programme for 2023-2024 with indicative budget breakdown had been appended to the Head of Service's report.

The Head of Economic Development responded to comments and questions from the Chairman in connection with an announcement earlier that day advising of the immediate withdrawal of funding to Young Enterprise NI by the Department of Education and in particular, in regard to the impact of such funding cuts on any of the Council's programmes with schools and/or the Education Authority. The Head of Economic Development undertook to look into this matter and report back to the Committee on any significant impact on such projects as a result of funding cuts by the Department of Education.

It was proposed by the Vice Chairman, Councillor T Mitchell, seconded by Alderman M Guy, and agreed to recommend that the Enterprise Lisburn Castlereagh Programme of activities for 2023-2024, as outlined, be agreed.

3.4 Appointment of Specialist Services on a Call-Off Contract for Evaluation Services (00:21:37)

The Committee considered a report outlining the background and key issues in connection with the appointment of specialist services on a Call-Off Contract for evaluation services. It was noted that as a condition of funding, the council was contractually obliged to evaluate the performance and impact of funded initiatives across the council area such as the integrated marketing campaign, the cross-council Christmas programme and all DfC funded projects.

**3.4 Appointment of Specialist Services on a Call-Off Contract for Evaluation Services
(Cont'd)**

The Committee had been furnished with a copy of the Financial Appraisal which had been agreed by the Council's Financial Services team.

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by the Vice Chairman, Councillor T Mitchell, and agreed to recommend that the appointment of specialist services to deliver evaluation services for a 3 year period on an annual basis (1+1+1), as outlined, be agreed.

3.5 International Trade Programme 2023/2024 (00:24:39)

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Economic Development in connection with the Council's annual programme of International trade activity as part of its overall strategy to support local businesses achieve growth.

The Committee had been furnished with a paper that had been appended to the report detailing a number of projects the aim of which was to maintain and strengthen the local economy's international linkages. It was noted that the proposed indicative activity for 2023-2024 included both virtual trade programmes and overseas visits as deemed appropriate.

The Head of Economic Development responded to questions from the Committee in relation to the outcomes in respect of the undernoted trade programmes:

- the Council's visit to Galway in 2022 and a reciprocal visit by Galway County Council to Lisburn and Castlereagh, and
- the Council's virtual trade programme with Foshan in China, and outcomes, and the Foshan Friendship agreement.

The Director of Regeneration & Growth and the Head of Economic Development, having made a number of positive comments in relation to the virtual trade programme with Foshan, China, advised that a report on the outcomes of this trade initiative, including details on the Foshan Friendship agreement, would be brought to the Committee in due course. It was noted that reports on the outcome of the other trade visits would also be brought to Committee at a future date.

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by the Vice Chairman, Councillor T Mitchell, and agreed to recommend that the annual international trade programme of activities for 2023-2024, as outlined, be agreed.

3.6 Investment Programme 2023/2024 (00:39:30)

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Economic Development in connection with the delivery of the Council's annual programme of investment promotion activity as part of its overall strategy to position Lisburn and Castlereagh as a place in which to do business and to invest. The report highlighted a number of areas of how the Council can assist local businesses to engage, connect and showcase their business.

The report also outlined a number of key activities by Members and Officers to aid the delivery of the investment programme.

A paper appended to the report presented proposals and key recommendations for enhancing and further developing the Council's investment programme during 2023/2024.

In response to a question from the Committee the Director of Regeneration and Growth undertook to re-circulate the development plan, strategy and action plan for the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor Partnership that had been completed recently.

It was proposed by the Vice Chairman, Councillor T Mitchell, seconded by Alderman A Grehan, and agreed to recommend that the proposed programme of investment activity for 2023/2024, as outlined, be agreed.

3.7 Labour Market Partnership (LMP) – Proposed 'Pause' on 2023/2024 Funding (00:44:33)

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Economic Development outlining the background and key issues in connection with the Labour Market Partnership (LMP) and in particular the proposed 'pause' on funding 2023/2024 by the Department for Communities.

The Committee had been furnished with copy correspondence date 9th May 2023, to the Lisburn Castlereagh LMP from DfC's Director of Work & Wellbeing, regarding the current LMP funding position for 2023/24 and stating that following the recent budget allocation announced by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Department for Communities faces a significant budget shortfall and the Department would be unable to fund Labour Market Partnerships (LMPs) beyond the first quarter of this year.

The Head of Economic Development reminded the Committee that unfortunately due to recent funding announcements by DfC, no action plans had been approved for LMPs across NI, and no Letters of Offer had been awarded.

The Head of Economic Development by way of a further update reported verbally that the DfC had confirmed earlier that day that payment would be 25% of the original overall

3.7 Labour Market Partnership (LMP) – Proposed ‘Pause’ on 2023/2024 Funding
(Cont’d)

budget for the Lisburn Castlereagh Labour Market Partnership. He also elaborated on the course of action for the delivery of year one of the programme.

The Director and the Head of Economic Development responded the comments and concerns raised by the Committee in connection with the above decision of DfC, it being noted that the Council had responded to DfC’s consultation which had taken account of the sentiments expressed by the Committee.

Members commended the efforts of the Officers in the Economic Development Unit in relation to their work to date on delivery of the current LMP Year One programmes.

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Alderman A Grehan, and agreed to recommend that:

- a) the funding allocation from DfC be used to deliver the run-out of the current Year One programmes, which were still operational under the 2022/2023 LMP Action Plan, and
- b) the Council continues to work with DfC and other funders seeking further opportunities for the Lisburn Castlereagh LMP to avail of.

3.8 2023 Down Rally – Further Proposal (00:56:32)

Alderman J Baird left the meeting during consideration of this item of business at 8.00 pm and returned again at 8.05 pm.

The Committee considered a report outlining the background and key issues in connection with a further proposal for the 2023 Down Rally. The proposal included a number of activities in Market Square in Lisburn City Centre including:

- ceremonial Start of the Rally on Fri evening (selected cars) in Market Square
- mid-day regroup activity at the start ramp (12:00 - 14:00 approximately)
- ceremonial finish and winners champagne reception at the start/finish ramp (Saturday 22nd around 17:00)
- fanzone in Market Square utilising the Council big screen for live coverage of the rally and possible static displays and family activities
- possibility of organising transport to live action on a stage or stages of the race from Market Square

3.8 2023 Down Rally – Further Proposal (Cont'd)

Comments were noted by the Chairman, Councillor J Lavery, in regard to the need for appropriate engagement with residents and local business with the motor clubs and the PSNI in advance of the event.

It was proposed by the Vice Chairman, Councillor T Mitchell, seconded by The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor A Gowan, and agreed to recommend that the further proposal for activities in regard to the Down Rally, as outlined, be approved.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor A Gowan, left the meeting at 8.04 pm.

4. Any Other Business

4.1 Air Conditioning Units in Council Chamber (00:01:40)
Chairman, Councillor J Lavery

The Director of Regeneration & Growth responded to a request for an update from the Chairman, Councillor J Lavery, in relation to the replacement of the faulty air conditioning units in the Council Chamber.

5. Confidential Report from Director of Regeneration and Growth (01:03:20)

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 addition, item 5.6 (Lisburn Public Realm Update) was confidential due to Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

“In Committee”

It was proposed by Alderman A Grehan, seconded by the Vice Chairperson, Councillor T Mitchel, and agreed that the Confidential Reports of the Director of Regeneration & Growth be considered “in Committee” in the absence of press or members of the public. The audio recording was paused at this stage in proceedings (8.09 pm).

- 5.1 Requested Increase to Contracted Rates re Provision of Mechanical Services, Reactive and Project Works
(Redacted report to be published following ratification in June 2023)

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Regeneration & Growth outlining a request by the service provider to an increase in the contracted rates in regard to the provision of mechanical services, reactive and project works, the content of which was noted.

- 5.2 Requested Increase to Contracted Rates re Hire, Delivery and Collection of Crowd Control Barriers
(Redacted Report to be published following ratification – June 2023)

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Regeneration & Growth outlining a request by the service provider to an increase in the contracted rates in regard to the hire, delivery and collection of crowd control barriers, the content of which was noted.

- 5.3 Requested Increase to Contracted Rates re Supply and Delivery of Electrical Goods and Fittings
(Redacted Report to be published following ratification June 2023)

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Regeneration & Growth outlining a request by the service provider to an increase in the contracted rates in regard to the supply and delivery of electrical goods and fittings, the content of which was noted.

- 5.4 New lease, Unit 2A Dundonald Omnipark, Dundonald International Ice Bowl
(Redacted Report to be published on ratification and completion of new lease - July 2023)

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Regeneration & Growth outlining the background and key issues in connection with the new lease at Unit 2A Dundonald Omnipark, Dundonald International Ice Bowl (DIIB).

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Alderman A Grehan, and agreed to recommend that the new lease at Unit 2A Dundonald Omnipark, DIIB, as outlined in the report, be approved that that the agreed lease be signed and sealed at Full Council following completion by the signatories to the lease.

- 5.5 Requested Increase to Contracted Rates re Closure of NI Business Start Up Programme (NIBSUP)
(Redacted Report to be published following ratification – June 2023)

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Regeneration & Growth outlining a request for an increase to contracted rates with regard to closure of the NI Business Start-Up (Go For It) Programme (NIBSUP), the content of which was noted.

5.6 Lisburn Public Realm Update Report
(Never to become unrestricted)

The Committee considered an update report by the Director of Regeneration & Growth in relation to the Lisburn Public Realm scheme.

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Alderman A Grehan, and agreed to recommend that the content of the update report be noted and that the recommendation, as outlined in the report, be agreed.

6. Any Other Confidential Business

6.1 Local Development Plan – Draft Plan Strategy
Head of Planning & Capital Development

In advance of a report for noting being presented to the meeting of the Planning Committee on Monday, 19 June 2023, the Head of Planning & Capital Development provided the Committee with a verbal update in connection with progress made by the Department for Infrastructure's Planning Group on their consideration of the Independent Examination report into the Council's Local Development Plan – Draft Plan Strategy. The Director of Regeneration & Growth also addressed the Committee in this regard.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by the Vice Chairman, Councillor T Mitchell, seconded by Councillor K Dickson, and agreed to come out of Committee and normal business was resumed.

Conclusion of Meeting

The Chairman, Councillor J Laverty, extended best wishes to the newly elected Members on the Regeneration and Growth Committee and wished them an enjoyable year ahead. He also encouraged the new Members to contact him on any issue during the year.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and there being no further business for consideration the meeting was concluded at 8.29 pm.

Chairman