

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of a Special Meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber, Lagan Valley Island on Monday 11 November, 2024 at 6:00 pm

PRESENT IN CHAMBER:

The Right Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor K Dickson

Aldermen A G Ewart MBE and S P Porter

Councillors D Bassett, D J Craig, A P Ewing, J Harpur,
B Higginson, G Hynds, U Mackin, M McKeever and
G Thompson

PRESENT IN REMOTE LOCATION:

Aldermen M Gregg and S Skillen

Councillors N Eaton, A Givan, A Gowan, J Lavery BEM,
D Lynch, G McCleave, C McCready and N Parker

IN ATTENDANCE:

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Director of Organisation Development & Innovation
Acting Director of Environmental Services
Member Services Officers
Technician
IT Officer

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

In Chamber:

Ms G Long, Chief Executive
Mr D Marley, Lisburn and Castlereagh Area Manager
Ms F McGrath, Head of Place Shaping Belfast Region
Ms A McDermott, Head of Housing Solutions and Support,
Belfast Region

Attending Remotely:

Mr L Gunn, Belfast Regional Manager
Mr A Kennedy, Assistant Director Asset Strategy
Mr M Halliday, Assistant Director Project Delivery
Mr C Stitt, Lisburn and Castlereagh Housing Services Manager
Mr D Brown, Strategic Planning Manager Belfast Region
Ms F Boyle, Head of Private Grants (Belfast and South East)
Mr A Mawhinney, Assistant Director Supporting People

Commencement of the Meeting

At the commencement of the meeting, The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson, welcomed those present to the special meeting of Council which was being live streamed to enable members of the public to hear and see the proceedings. The Mayor pointed out that, should the meeting go into committee to consider confidential business, any members of the press and the public in attendance would be required to leave the Council Chamber for the duration of those matters.

The Assistant Director of Environmental Services outlined the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor requested that all mobile phones be put on silent or switched off for the duration of the meeting and pointed out that, in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, whilst the meeting was being live-streamed, unauthorised recording was not permitted.

There was a short pause in the meeting from 6.04 pm to 6.09 pm to address technical issues.

1. Apologies

It was agreed to accept apologies for non-attendance at the meeting on behalf of the Deputy Mayor, Councillor R Carlin, and Councillors S Burns, P Catney, J Gallen, C Kemp, S Lowry, A Martin and N Trimble.

Due to technical difficulties, the livestream only commenced at this point in the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. To Receive Officials from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive

3.1 Lisburn & Castlereagh Housing Investment Plan 2023-26

During consideration of this item of business, Councillor A Gowan joined the meeting (6.17 pm), Councillor U Mackin left the meeting (6.49 pm) and Councillor J Harpur left, and returned to, the meeting (6.42 pm and 6.45 pm respectively).

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson, welcomed the Northern Ireland Housing Executive representatives to the meeting.

Ms Long made a presentation to Members on the Annual Update for 2024 in respect of the Lisburn & Castlereagh Housing Investment Plan 2023-26. Her presentation provided an update on a number of areas, including community

3.1 Lisburn & Castlereagh Housing Investment Plan 2023-26 (Contd)

planning, Housing Executive spend for 2023/24, Housing for All Programme, waiting list trends 2021-2024, Social Housing Development Programme, projected spend for 2024/25 and key housing challenges and opportunities.

A number of Members put on record their appreciation for the work of staff within the teams responsible for the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area.

Representatives responded to a number of queries raised by Members relating to:

- Cavity Wall Insulation Programme;
- demolition of Rathmoyne House and Coolmoyne House tower blocks, Seymour Hill;
- provision of temporary accommodation and the effect on overall waiting lists;
- the impact that Mears Group buying and renting houses in the Council area was having on the price of rentals and the previous tenants of the houses that organisation bought being made homeless;
- maintenance of planted areas;
- housing in Tullycarnet Estate;
- future collaborations with housing associations;
- potential for councils to purchase derelict properties to renovate and use for social housing;
- gap between social housing demand and supply; and
- review of points allocation system and, specifically, intimidation points.

Arising from discussion:

- Ms Long encouraged Members to notify the Housing Executive of anyone who visibility required their assistance and who they were not aware of;
- Ms McGrath took note of comments that it would be useful if Elected Members could be made aware of future housing proposals;
- Ms Long undertook to provide an update to Councillor C McCreedy in respect of a fee for provision of a new stairwell at community houses in Castlevue Avenue, Moira; and
- Ms Long undertook to liaise with Councillor C McCreedy in respect of a query raised by a constituent in Hillsborough regarding paring back of trees.

3.2 Impact of Low Investment in Social Housing Provision

At a recent Council meeting, discussion had arising regarding the commitment in the Local Development Plan that new developments would have 20% affordable housing. Members had raised concerns about low investment in social housing provision through less funds in the DfC Capital Programme and how that may impact on completion of developments in the Council area.

3.2 Impact of Low Investment in Social Housing Provision (Contd)

In response, Ms Long stated that, last year, there had been a record level of investment and that had been possible because of the partnership between this Council as a planning authority and the Housing Executive as a strategizing authority, having the right sites in the right places and that being supported by local housing needs. All of that together and having a capital budget had meant homes could be built. Fundamentally, the long-term solution was a good housing supply strategy and a strong focus on capital investment over the next 10-15 years. Housing should be funded over the long term rather than on a year-to-year basis, which made it difficult to plan.

A number of Members' queries were addressed and, arising from discussion, Ms McGrath agreed to investigate comments by Councillor D J Craig regarding Housing Executive support for a proposed housing development in Milltown and advise him accordingly.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson, thanked the Housing Executive representatives for their attendance at the meeting. He further thanked all Housing Executive staff for the work they did both locally and across Northern Ireland.

There being no further business for consideration, the meeting was terminated at 7.13 pm.

Mayor