



July 5th, 2024

**TO: The Right Worshipful the Mayor and Members
of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council**

A meeting **of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council** will be held on **Tuesday, 25th June 2024** at **7:00 pm** in the Council Chamber for the transaction of the business on the undernoted agenda.

A hot buffet will be available in the Members' Suite from 5.45 pm for those Members who have confirmed in advance.

DAVID BURNS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Agenda

1.0 BUSINESS OF THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL THE MAYOR

For Noting

📄 *Mayor's engagements for Full Council June.pdf*

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2.0 APOLOGIES

3.0 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

- (i) conflict of interest on any matter before the meeting (Members to confirm the specific item)
- (ii) pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest (Member to complete disclosure of interest form)

4.0 COUNCIL MINUTES

4.1 Meeting of Council - 28 May 2024

📄 *MM 28.05.2024 Draft Minutes for adoption.pdf*

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4.2 Annual Meeting of Council - 7 June 2024

📄 *AM 07.06.2024 Draft Minute for adoption.pdf*

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5.0 MATTERS ARISING

6.0 DEPUTATIONS

(None)

7.0 BUSINESS REQUIRED BY STATUTE

7.1 Signing of Legal Documents

Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Hillhall Regeneration Group, 14 Hillhall Road, Lisburn BT27 5DE – Lease relating to Land and Buildings at Hillhall Road, Cromwell's Close, Lisburn

Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Department of Infrastructure, Clarence Court, 10-18 Adelaide Street, Belfast BT2 8GB – Deed of Surrender relating to Lands and Car Park at Moira Demesne

Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Live Life Social Enterprises Limited, 9 Magheralone Road, Ballynahinch, Co Down BT24 8ND – Sub-Lease of Land and Buildings at The Grove Leisure Centre, Lisburn

Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Ulster Supported Employment Ltd (USEL), 182-188 Cambrai Street, Belfast BT13 3JH – Contract for Collection, transportation, recycling and/or recovery of mattresses from Council Household Recycling Centres (Ref: T23/24-027)

Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Irish Waste Services Ltd, 94-96 Hillsborough Road, Carryduff BT8 8HT – Contract for Recycling and Recovery of Residual and Bulky Wastes from Council Household Recycling Centres and Council Bulky (Amenity) Collection Service (Ref STA23/24-043)

Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and J&K Contracts, 7 Beaghbeg Road, Cookstown BT80 9PE – Contract for LCCC Small Settlements – Aghalee Traffic Calming Works

8.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

- 8.1 Communities & Wellbeing Committee - 4 June 2024**
[📄 CW 040624 draft minutes for adoption2.pdf](#) *Page 22*
- 8.2 Environment & Sustainability Committee - 5 June 2024**
[📄 ESC 05.06.2024 DRAFT minute for adoption.pdf](#) *Page 28*
- 8.3 Regeneration & Growth Committee - 5 June 2024**
[📄 RGC 05 06 2024 Draft Minutes for Adoption.pdf](#) *Page 35*
- 8.4 Corporate Services Committee - 12 June 2024**
[📄 CSC 12 06 2024 DRAFT Minute for adoption2.pdf](#) *Page 45*
- 8.5 Governance & Audit Committee - 13 June 2024**
[📄 GAC 130624 Draft Minutes for Adoption.pdf](#) *Page 57*
- 8.6 Planning Committee - 13 May 2024 (for Noting)**
[📄 PC 13.05.2024 - Ratified Minutes.pdf](#) *Page 62*

9.0 REPORT FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

(None)

10.0 REPORTS FROM MEMBERS ON BOARDS

(None)

11.0 REPORTS ON DECISIONS SUBJECT TO THE RECONSIDERATION PROCEDURE

(None)

12.0 NOTICES OF MOTION

(None)

13.0 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

13.1 Requirement to enter into a Section 76 Planning Agreement for Planning Application LA05/2022/0947/F

For Decision

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

 **Section 76 report - Full Council - LA0520220947F Hillsborough Rd Lisburn.pdf** **Not included**

13.2 Review of Adjudication Hearing Decision

For Decision

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

 **Council 250624 Lessons Learned Assistant Commissioner.pdf** **Page 72**

 **Report on the Assistant Commissioner for Standards against former LCCC Councillor final.pdf** **Page 74**

13.3 Lessons Learned

For Decision

Confidential due to:

- Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information)
- Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the council or a government department and employees of, or office holders under, the council)

14.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS FOR FULL COUNCIL MEETING

Saturday 8th June

Mayor to attend Summer Fair to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Old Warren Primary School

Mayor to visit Dromara Community Group D-Day grant event, afternoon tea and family fun day

Mayor to attend D-Day grant events in Hillsborough Parish Green to include Hillsborough Old Guard, Dunbeg, Ashvale & Kilwarlin Community Groups and Hillsborough Fort Guard

Sunday 9th June

Mayor to attend Golden Jubilee Celebration for Fr. Dermot's 50th Anniversary of his ordination, St Patrick's Church, Lisburn

Monday 10th June

Mayor to attend D-Day grant event organised by Resurgam Youth Initiative, afternoon tea and Arts Workshops

Wednesday 12th June

Mayor to attend launch of the 2024 Ulster in Bloom, Hinch Distillery

Thursday 13th June

Mayor to attend the Lisburn Chamber of Commerce President's Lunch, Gowdy's at Down Royal

Friday 14th June

Mayor to host families of soldiers who lost their lives in Lisburn Half Marathon bombing, LVI

Mayor to attend Lisburn Half Marathon Bombing Memorial Service, Market Place

Saturday 15th June

Mayor to attend unveiling of headstone for a Polish soldier, Second World War Veteran, Major Florian Perepeczkoin, Glenavy

Mayor to attend North of Ireland Tennis Open Championships, Downshire Tennis Club

Sunday 16th June

Mayor to attend 40th Anniversary service for Canon Howards Ordination, Anahilt Parish Church

Mayor to attend 40th Anniversary lunch for Canon Howards Ordination, Larchfield Estate

Mayor to attend Celebration Day for 'EID' to mark the end of Ramadan, St Patrick's Chapel, Lisburn

Tuesday 18th June

Mayor to visit Action Mental Health, Railway street, Lisburn to view the services and facilities available to residents

Mayor to attend presentation of awards for Ireland's Best Kept Towns 2024, Riddell Hall, Belfast

Mayor to attend Beechlawn School summer Concert, Hillsborough

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LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL**Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Council held on Tuesday 28 May, 2024 at 7:00 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,
M Guy, H Legge, S P Porter and J Tinsley

Councillors D Bassett, P Burke, S Burns, R Carlin, P Catney,
D J Craig, K Dickson, N Eaton, A P Ewing, J Gallen, A Givan,
B Higginson, G Hynds, C Kemp, P Kennedy, J Lavery BEM,
S Lowry, C McCready, A McIntyre, M McKeever,
R McLernon, U Mackin, A Martin, N Parker and G Thompson

IN ATTENDANCE:

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Chief Executive
Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing
Director of Organisation Development and Innovation
Director of Regeneration and Growth
Acting Director of Environmental Services
Member Services Officers
Technician
IT Officer

Mr D Roberts, Mayor's Chaplain

Commencement of the Meeting

At the commencement of the meeting, The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor A Gowan, welcomed those present to the meeting of Council which was being live streamed to enable members of the public to hear and see the proceedings. He 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 Chief Executive 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.

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Prayers

Councillors P Burke and R Carlin arrived to the meeting at 7.02 pm.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor A Gowan, expressed condolences in respect of the following bereavements:

- Brygida Barbara Jochemska, mother of Patrycja McMaster, employee at Dundonald International Ice Bowl; and
- Annie Brady, mother of Danny Brady, employee within the Assets Unit.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor welcomed his Chaplain, Mr D Roberts, to the meeting. Mr Roberts gave an address and said a prayer during which he also referred to the above bereavements and offered his sympathy to the families. The Right Worshipful the Mayor, having paid tribute to Mr Roberts for having taken on the role of Mayor's Chaplain for the past year, thanked him for his attendance and he left the meeting (7.11 pm).

1. Business of The Right Worshipful the Mayor

1.1 Mayor's Engagements

The Council noted a number of engagements attended by The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor A Gowan, and the Deputy Mayor, Councillor G McCleave, since the last meeting of Council.

In particular, Councillor Gowan highlighted the Mayor's Parade. He thanked all staff involved for their hard work and efforts in making it the very successful event it had been and asked that his sentiments be conveyed to those staff members.

2. Apologies

It was agreed to accept apologies for non-attendance at the meeting on behalf of Alderman A Grehan and Councillors R T Beckett, T Mitchell and N Trimble.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Council Minutes

It was proposed by Councillor A Givan, seconded by Alderman M Gregg and agreed that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 23 April, 2024 be confirmed and signed.

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5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

6. Deputations

There were no deputations.

7. Business Required by Statute

(i) Signing of Legal Documents

Councillor J Laverty asked that the meeting go 'into committee' as he wished to discuss an item of a financial nature.

"In Committee"

It was proposed by Councillor J Laverty, seconded by Alderman S P Porter and agreed that this item be considered "in committee", in the absence of members of the press and public being present, the reason being that it contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information). The livestream was paused at 7.16 pm.

The Chief Executive having answered a number of queries raised, agreed that an update report would be presented to the September meeting of the Regeneration and Growth Committee in respect of Citywatch CCTV.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor A Givan, seconded by Councillor A P Ewing and agreed to come out of committee and normal business was resumed. The live stream of the meeting was recommenced at this stage (7.21 pm).

It was proposed by Councillor S Lowry, seconded by Alderman J Baird and agreed that the following legal documents be signed at the meeting:

- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and R&M Greenkeeper Limited, Unit C1, Kilcronagh Business Park, Cookstown BT80 9HG – Contract for Provision of a Haulage Service for Residual and Green Wastes from Council Household Recycling Centres (Ref: STA23/24-040)
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and The Resurgam Community Development Trust Limited, 3 Laganview Enterprise Centre, 69 Drumbeag Drive, Lisburn BT28 1NY – Development and Agreement for Lease of Hilden Primary School
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Eclipse Sales Ltd t/a Steeltech NI Sheds, 412 Cushendall Road, Rathkenny, Ballymena BT43 6QE – Contract for Aberdelghy Driving Range (T22/23-083)
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Dawson Manufacturing and Engineering Ltd, 3 Charlston Crescent, Portadown BT63 5ZE – Contract for T23/24-025 Tender for the Provision of Welding/Fabricating Services

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(i) Signing of Legal Documents (Contd)

- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and M&M Contractors (Europe) Ltd, 4 Pilots View, 18 Heron Road, Belfast BT3 9LE – Contract for Tender for New Meeting Room and Offices at The Irish Linen Centre and Lisburn Museum, Lisburn (T23/24-018)
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Citywatch CCTV Northern Ireland, PSNI, 15 Barrack Street, Lisburn BT28 1TJ – Letter of Offer to Citywatch CCTV Northern Ireland
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Belfast City Council, Belfast City Hall, Donegall Square North, Belfast BT1 5GS – Funding Agreement in respect of Destination Royal Hillsborough (item 13.4 refers)
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Historic Royal Palaces, Hampton Court Palace, Surrey KT8 9AU – Collaboration Agreement in respect of Destination Royal Hillsborough (item 13.4 refers)

8. Adoption of Minutes of Committees**Environment and Sustainability Committee****1 May, 2024**

Proposed by Councillor C McCready

Seconded by Councillor G Hynds

Page 213, Item 7.3Funding from DAERA

Councillor G Hynds thanked the Minister for his reply regarding funding for animal welfare. Whilst he understood that budgets were tight, he was disappointed and concerned that animal welfare funding had been halved and there was no commitment going forward. Councillor Hynds hoped that pressure would be put on the Minister to provide the appropriate funding and that this would not fall to ratepayers.

Verbal Matter – Incident at Drumlough Household Recycling Centre

The Chair of Environment and Sustainability Committee, Councillor C McCready, put on record his thanks to Council staff for having dealt with a recent incident at Drumlough Household Recycling Centre. No injuries had occurred and Councillor McCready hoped a safety message could be released to prevent future such incidents occurring.

Regeneration and Growth Committee**2 May, 2024**

Proposed by Councillor J Laverty

Seconded by Alderman A G Ewart

Communities and Wellbeing Committee**7 May, 2024**

Proposed by Councillor J Gallen

Seconded by Alderman S P Porter

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Page 223, Item 4.4
Flower Beds and Grass Cutting

Alderman S P Porter referred to complaints he had received over the past number of weeks regarding grass cutting in the Council's cemeteries. Grass had not been cut for a period of time and when this had taken place, grass cuttings had blown over graves, which had been upsetting for many constituents. Alderman Porter sought an assurance that grass cutting in cemeteries was up-to-date and asked that an early report be provided to Members indicating how this situation had arisen and setting out what steps were being taken to ensure it did not happen again. Councillors G Hynds and C McCreedy also voiced concerns on this matter.

In response, the Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing confirmed that staff had mobilised across a number of sites. Grass cutting at a number of sites had already been completed but all would be finalised by end of the week. A number of operational factors, as well as the weather, had contributed to the situation but the Director assured Members that Officers would continue to review and monitor to ensure that the schedule was maintained and adhered to going forward. She agreed that a report would be presented to a future Communities and Wellbeing Committee meeting on this matter.

Corporate Services Committee
 Proposed by Alderman O Gawith
 Seconded by Councillor A P Ewing

8 May, 2024

The Chair of Corporate Services Committee, Alderman O Gawith, thanked Members of that Committee, as well as Officers, for their support during his term as Chair.

Planning Committee

15 April, 2024

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting of 15 April, 2024 had been circulated for noting only as these minutes had been agreed at the subsequent meeting of the Planning Committee on 13 May, 2024. It was proposed by Alderman M Gregg, seconded by Councillor U Mackin and agreed that their contents be noted.

9. Report from Chief Executive

There were no reports from the Chief Executive.

10. Reports from Members on Boards

There were no reports from Members on Boards.

11. Reports on Decisions Subject to the Reconsideration Procedure

There were no reports on decisions subject to the reconsideration procedure.

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12. Notice of Motion

There were no Notices of Motion.

Prior to considering confidential business, The Right Worshipful the Mayor stated that Any Other Business would be taken at this time.

13. Any Other Business

13.1 Antisocial Behaviour – Grand Street Housing Development Councillor D J Craig

Councillor D J Craig referred to a new housing development at Grand Street, operated by Triangle Housing. Prior to occupation of the dwellings, assurances had been given that tenants would be peaceful people with no issues and that procedures were in place to deal with any antisocial behaviour that might arise. Unfortunately, the first tenants had moved in last Thursday and the environment since had not been peaceful. It was alleged that most of the tenants were dealing with the Justice System in one way or another. One allegedly had a major addiction problem that had overspilled into the community. Last night, a major fight had developed in the area, with weapons used, and terrified residents in the vicinity had witnessed this. Councillor Craig thanked the PSNI for the actions its Officers had taken to deal with the matter so quickly and for making two arrests. Having contacted Triangle Housing since, Councillor Craig stated his disappointment in the response he had received, with blame having been levied on the Housing Executive and the system used for selecting tenants. There had been an admission made that Triangle Housing had no procedures in place to deal with this situation.

Councillor Craig proposed that the Council write to Triangle Housing to request that its representatives attend a meeting with the Council, the PSNI and the Housing Executive to discuss what steps could be taken to avoid a situation arising similar to that in a housing development in Graham Gardens a number of years ago. This proposal was seconded by Councillor G Hynds and agreed. Councillor Hynds commented on the frightening situation the previous evening when the fight had broken out and thanked representatives of Lisburn Safe and Hilden Community Association for assistance they had given. He stated that Triangle Housing had committed to investigating the matter.

Councillor P Catney, who had also been at the scene the previous night, commented on the matter. He went on to state that the NI Fire and Rescue Service was currently in attendance at a fire at the Hilden Mill site. He hoped that damage would be minimal and that steps could be taken to progress regeneration of that site.

Alderman S P Porter, as Chair of the Lisburn & Castlereagh Housing Liaison Forum, stated his support for this proposal. There were many good families in need of social housing; however, people did not want social housing in their area because of lack of management and concerns about the tenants allocated

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13.1 Antisocial Behaviour – Grand Street Housing Development (Contd)
Councillor D J Craig

occupancy on many occasions. Alderman Porter stated that this was not a matter for only one Housing Association; all Housing Associations, as well as the Housing Executive, needed to work together to address this issue.

13.2 Agenda Item – Reports from Members on Boards
Councillor U Mackin

Councillor U Mackin referred the item on each Council agenda regarding Reports from Members on Boards and, given that there was normally no business included under that item, he asked if the Chief Executive could consider removing that from future agendas or having an alternative way of communicating any such business to Members, should any arise.

13.3 Death of George Lavery
Councillor P Catney

Councillor P Catney referred to the recent death of Mr George Lavery. Mr Lavery was born just outside Moira and had been a keen sportsman in Gaelic Football. Councillor Catney having outlined his many achievements over the years, asked that a letter of condolence be sent to Mr Lavery's family. The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor A Gowan, agreed to write a letter to Mr Lavery's family conveying the Council's sympathies on his recent passing.

13.4 Derriaghy Football Club – Clarence Cup
Councillor G Hynds

Councillor G Hynds expressed his congratulations to Derriaghy Football Club on having recently won the Clarence Cup.

13.5 Review of IT Security Policy
Councillor G Hynds

Councillor G Hynds referred to details that had come to light during the ongoing Covid 19 Enquiry in relation to missing phones, laptops, wiping of devices, etc. He stated concerns that currently if an Elected Member left the Council, their mobile phone was wiped and information relating to calls and messages was not saved anywhere. He enquired if this procedure was the same for Officers. In the interest of openness and transparency, Councillor Hynds proposed that a review of the Council's IT Security Policy be carried out in respect of, not only how Members and Officers were directed to use their device and how long all information should be kept, but how the Council dealt with devices when a Member or Officer left the Council. This proposal was seconded by Councillor P Catney. A number of Members pointed out difficulties around this proposal given that not all Members availed of a Council-provided device. The Chief Executive agreed that a review would be undertaken and a report presented to a future meeting of the Corporate Services Committee.

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13.6 Abolitionist Frederick Douglass
Councillor P Catney

The Chief Executive agreed to provide Councillor P Catney with an update in respect of a previous decision of the Council to undertake a feasibility study, including planning considerations, and other options, and costings for further review by Members, to erect a statue or memorial in Market Square, adjacent to Lisburn First Presbyterian Church, in commemoration of Frederick Douglass.

14. Confidential Business

The matters contained in the confidential report would be dealt with "In Committee" due to containing information (a) relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information); (b) relating to any individual; and (c) which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

"In Committee"

It was proposed by Councillor J Lavery, seconded by Councillor A P Ewing and agreed that the following items be considered "in committee", in the absence of members of the press and public being present. The livestream was paused at 8.01 pm.

14.1 Requirement to Enter into a Section 76 Planning Agreement for Planning Application LA05/2022/0018/F
(Report would be available after the Agreement was signed and sealed)

It was proposed by Alderman M Gregg, seconded by Councillor D J Craig and agreed that approval be given to the signing and sealing of the Agreement by the Mayor and Chief Executive. Both Members commended the developer involved in the application for having taken on board the wishes of the Planning Committee to have affordable housing included.

14.2 Item 14.2 had been withdrawn from the agenda.

14.3 Requirement to Enter into a Section 76 Planning Agreement for Planning Application LA05/2021/0009/F
(Report would be available after the Agreement was signed and sealed)

It was proposed by Councillor P Catney, seconded by Councillor D Bassett and agreed that approval be given to the signing and sealing of the Agreement by the Mayor and Chief Executive.

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- 14.4 Contracts for Funding Agreements regarding BRCD (Belfast Region City Deal) Destination Royal Hillsborough
(Redacted report would be available post the signing and sealing of the documents relating to the contract for works as well as the aware of the HRP related works contracts)

It was proposed by Alderman A G Ewart, seconded by Councillor G Thompson and agreed that approval be given to the signing and sealing of the documents listed in the report.

The Chief Executive agreed to seek advice form the Director of Regeneration and Growth regarding comments made in relation to having works expedited.

- 14.5 Request for Additional Employment
(Report would never be available)

The Chief Executive left the meeting for consideration of this item of business (8.11 pm).

It was proposed by Alderman S P Porter, seconded by Alderman J Baird and agreed that approval be given to the request for additional employment as set out in the report of the Director of Organisation Development and Innovation.

The Chief Executive returned to the meeting at 8.12 pm.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor P Catney, seconded by Alderman J Tinsley and agreed to come out of committee and normal business was resumed. The live stream of the meeting was recommenced at this stage (8.12 pm).

There being no further business for consideration, the meeting was terminated at 8.12 pm.

Mayor

AM 07.06.2024

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LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council held in the Council Chamber, Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn, on Friday 7 June, 2024 at 2.00 pm****PRESENT:**

The Right Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor A Gowan (Outgoing)
Councillor K Dickson (Incoming)

Deputy Mayor
Councillor R Carlin (Incoming)

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

Councillors D Bassett, R T Beckett, P Burke, S Burns,
D J Craig, N Eaton, J Gallen, A Givan, B Higginson, G Hynds,
C Kemp, P Kennedy, J Lavery BEM, U Mackin, A Martin,
T Mitchell, C McCready, A McIntyre, M McKeever,
R McLernon, N Parker, G Thompson and N Trimble

IN ATTENDANCE:

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Chief Executive
Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing
Director of Organisation Development and Innovation
Director of Regeneration and Growth
Acting Director of Environmental Services
Acting PSCP/Member Services Manager
Member Services Officers
Technician
IT Officer

Mr D Roberts, Mayor's Chaplain

Commencement of Meeting

At the commencement of the meeting, The Right Worshipful the Mayor (Outgoing), Councillor A Gowan, welcomed those present to the Annual Meeting of Council which was being live-streamed to enable members of the public to both hear and see the proceedings.

The Outgoing Mayor, Councillor A Gowan, 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.

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

1. Business of The Right Worshipful The Mayor

The Right Worshipful the Mayor (Outgoing), Councillor A Gowan, welcomed his Mayor's Chaplain, Mr D Roberts to the meeting. Mr Roberts thanked Councillor Gowan for having afforded him the opportunity to be Mayor's Chaplain for the past year, which had been a great privilege. He stated that he had enjoyed attending Council meetings and other events, getting to know and support the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Members and Officers. Councillor Gowan thanked Mr Roberts for the effective, caring and loving way in which he had fulfilled his role.

Councillor A Gowan, highlighted the events associated with the 80th anniversary of D Day the previous day and stated that being part of that had been an amazing way to finish his term in office. He paid tribute to all those staff involved in for their work in ensuring that the commemorations were given the respect and credence they deserved.

2. Apologies

It was agreed to accept apologies for non-attendance at the meeting on behalf of the Outgoing Deputy Mayor, Councillor G McCleave, and Councillors P Catney, A P Ewing and S Lowry.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

4. Minutes of Annual Meeting held on 7 June, 2021

The minutes of the Annual Meeting of Council held on 8 June, 2023, as adopted and signed at the Meeting of Council held on 27 June, 2023, were noted.

5. Election of Members to Positions of Responsibility 2024/2025

5.1 Election of Mayor 2024/2025

The Right Worshipful the Mayor (Outgoing), Councillor A Gowan, began by thanking the electorate in Downshire East for having voted for him last May. He stated that it was an honour to represent the community in which he lived. He thanked his party colleagues in the DUP for nominating him for the position of Mayor and for the support they had given him over the last year. Councillor Gowan also extended his thanks to his colleagues in other parties in the Council for their support and for the respectful and courteous manner in which they had worked together.

Councillor Gowan paid tribute to a number of Council Officers for their dedication and hard work – the staff in the Mayor's office, the Comms Team, the concierge,

5.1 Election of Mayor 2024/2025 (Contd)

receptionists, porters, the Chief Executive and Directors and the staff in each of their teams. He also thanked the staff in Stepping Stones who had catered for all his events.

Councillor Gowan paid tribute to those who had sat on the Charity Committee. Through their efforts, over £70,000 had been raised for Cancer Fund for Children. He thanked the community for their generosity in having donated to his chosen charity.

Councillor Gowan thanked his wife, Nicola, and family for their support during the past year. He had been extremely busy with Council duties and that had placed a great deal of additional burden and responsibility on Nicola. Now that his Mayoral term had come to an end, Councillor Gowan looked forward to spending more time at home.

Councillor Gowan referred to the sad passing of his father during his Mayoral year and hoped that he had made him proud by fulfilling the pledges he had made when accepting the role of Mayor last year – to promote inclusivity, commitment to hard work, be totally committed to the role, be positive and fair.

Councillor Gowan stated that there had been many highlights during his term of office. He referred to volunteers, without whom the fabric of the community would fall apart. This being Volunteers Week, Councillor Gowan had enjoyed welcoming volunteers at Lagan Valley Island on Monday and hearing of their contribution and commitment to making the community a better place. He also referred to the Mayor's Community Awards having been a special night and to the very successful fund-raising Mayor's Dinner, which had raised £28,000 for Cancer Fund for Children. Councillor Gowan spoke of the Mayor's Parade, Christmas festivities, sports day for local special schools and stated that he had enjoyed his engagement with the deaf community.

Councillor Gowan stated that it had been the privilege of a lifetime to have served as Mayor. Being First Citizen was something that brought not only responsibility, but a huge honour. He finished by thanking everyone for their support during the good times and the bad times throughout the last year.

On behalf of their parties, a number of Members paid tribute to the Outgoing Mayor, namely Alderman J Tinsley, Alderman A Grehan, Councillor J Gallen, Councillor N Trimble, Councillor G Hynds and Councillor R Carlin. Reference was made to the great leadership shown by Councillor Gowan during his term in office, having engaged with all sections of the community, and the fact that he had fulfilled all the promises he had alluded to at last year's Annual Meeting. He had done the Council proud over the last year and was especially admired for how he had carried out his duties following the sad passing of his father. A fantastic amount of money had been raised for Cancer Fund for Children and this too was commended.

Councillor Gowan paid tribute to the Outgoing Deputy Mayor, Councillor G McCleave. He thanked him for having represented him on those occasions he

5.1 Election of Mayor 2024/2025 (Contd)

had been unavailable. Councillor Gowan stated that himself and Councillor McCleave had worked well together and that the Deputy Mayor had fulfilled his role superbly well.

As the Outgoing Deputy Mayor, Councillor G McCleave, had been unable to attend the meeting, a video message was played for Members. Councillor McCleave stated that the last year had been his best since joining the Council. Being Deputy Mayor had enabled him to attend so many events and meet fantastic people along the way. Holding this office would not have been possible without the support of this family, for which he thanked them. He paid tribute to the staff in the Mayor's office. Councillor McCleave thanked the Outgoing Mayor, Councillor A Gowan, whose efforts and focus had been remarkable, and who he had worked very well with. Finally, Councillor McCleave extended his best wishes to the Incoming Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

On behalf of their parties, a number of Members paid tribute to the Outgoing Deputy Mayor, namely Alderman J Tinsley, Alderman A Grehan, Councillor J Gallen, Councillor N Trimble and Councillor R Carlin. Members thanked Councillor McCleave for the manner in which he had discharged his duties as Deputy Mayor and for having carried out an outstanding job in assisting the Mayor during the past year.

At this point, The Right Worshipful the Mayor (Outgoing), Councillor A Gowan, declared the offices of Mayor and Deputy Mayor vacant. Councillor Gowan removed his Chain of Office.

The Outgoing Mayor having sought nominations for the position of Mayor of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council for 2024/25, Alderman A Grehan (Nominating Officer for APNI) stated that it gave her great pleasure in nominating Councillor K Dickson. This proposal was seconded by Councillor A McIntyre and agreed.

The Outgoing Mayor, having declared Councillor K Dickson elected as Mayor for 2024/25, handed over his Chain of Office and vacated his seat at the top table.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson, took his seat at the top table and signed the Declaration of Office.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson, began by stating how humbled and honoured he was to have been appointed the next Mayor of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council. He was a proud Lisburn man and holding this office would give him the opportunity to give back to and serve the community. He felt a profound sense of gratitude and responsibility and promised to serve with dedication and passion.

Councillor Dickson thanked the electorate of Downshire East, without whom this opportunity would not have been possible. They would be in the forefront of his mind as he sought to represent the Council in the coming year. Councillor Dickson extended his thanks to his APNI colleagues in the Council, as well as the entire Lagan Valley Alliance Association, for their continued support.

5.1 Election of Mayor 2024/2025 (Contd)

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson, thanked his family, many of whom were present in the public gallery, for their support. He went on to pay tribute to his predecessor, Councillor A Gowan, who had been a great representative for the Council, as well as the Outgoing Deputy Mayor, Councillor G McCleave, who had carried out his role with dedication.

Councillor Dickson stated that the Council was fortunate to have good relationships between each of the political parties and individuals in the Council Chamber, who wanted to do their very best for the communities which they represented. In the last 10 years, since Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council had been established, the Council had grown and changed into the diverse community it was today, with Elected Members from all backgrounds, communities and generations. Councillor Dickson stated that this diversity was a strength for the Council area and hoped that over the course of the coming year he could highlight the many ways the Council area could be a shared space for everyone.

There would be several firsts associated with Councillor Dickson's appointment to the position of Mayor. He hoped his appointment would signify that anyone in the Council area had the potential to become Mayor; it was not limited to one type of person or background. For the first time, there were many in this Council area who would see someone with a potentially similar life experience to them in this role. Councillor Dickson also referred to the fact that he was the youngest person to serve as Mayor of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council and it would be a clear goal of his to involve young people in much of what he did this year.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson, advised that his theme for the coming year was 'Healthy Minds, Healthy Planet', comprising two themes for which he was incredibly passionate. The first of those was mental wellbeing. NI had pretty shocking statistics around mental health, particularly amongst young people. He hoped that over the coming year he could use his role to have some open and frank conversations about what could be done to look after the most important organ in the body – the brain. The second of the themes was environmental activism. It was important to promote biodiversity throughout the Council area. Climate emergency was a challenge and everyone had a role to play in addressing that.

Councillor Dickson advised that his Mayoral Charity for the coming year would be Emerge Counselling Services in Lisburn. This was a community-based charity that focussed on mental health and wellbeing.

On behalf of their parties, a number of Members congratulated the Incoming Mayor, namely Alderman J Tinsley, Councillor J Gallen, Councillor N Trimble, Councillor G Hynds and Councillor R Carlin. Members wished Councillor Dickson well for the year ahead and commended his chosen charity.

5.2 Election of Deputy Mayor 2024/2025

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson, sought nominations for the position of Deputy Mayor for the ensuing year 2024/2025.

5.2 Election of Deputy Mayor 2024/2025 (Contd)

Councillor R Carlin (Nominating Officer for SF) nominated himself for the position of Deputy Mayor of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council for 2024/25. This proposal was seconded by Councillor D Bassett and agreed.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson, handed over the Deputy Mayoral Chain. The Deputy Mayor, Councillor R Carlin, took his seat at the top table and signed the Declaration of Office.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Carlin, who had been an Elected Member of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council for 5 years, stated that he had loved every minute of being a Councillor, engaging with community activists, sports groups, etc. He commended the cross-community and cross-party approach that existed in the Council and thanked his colleagues for that.

Councillor Carlin thanked the electorate of Castlereagh South for voting for him. It was a great honour to serve the people of that area.

Councillor Carlin paid tribute to the Outgoing Mayor, Councillor A Gowan, for the way in which he had fulfilled his role and commended the fantastic amount of money raised for his charity. He went on to pay tribute to the Outgoing Deputy Mayor, Councillor G McCleave, who had made history by becoming the first Sinn Féin Deputy Mayor of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council. Councillor Carlin referred to Councillor Dickson now being the Council's youngest Mayor, as well as a number of other historic changes in other council areas. He stated that this showed change in society and there was a chance to become a more young, modern and inclusive society. He looked forward to the year ahead, shared in a collaborative way.

Councillor Carlin congratulated Councillor Dickson on his appointment to the position of Mayor and stated that, as Deputy Mayor, he would support and assist him anyway he could. He looked forward to working with the Mayor in the year ahead to deliver for people right across the Council area. He also commended the Mayor's chosen charity.

Councillor Carlin finished by thanking his party colleagues for nominating him for the position of Deputy Mayor and his family for their support.

On behalf of their parties, a number of Members congratulated the Incoming Deputy Mayor, namely Alderman J Tinsley, Alderman A Grehan, Councillor J Gallen and Councillor N Trimble. They wished him well in his new role and looked forward to working with him.

5.3 Election of Chairs and Vice-Chairs for 2024/2025

Arising from the nominations made by the Nominating Officers, the following appointments of Chairs and Vice-Chairs for 2024/2025 were agreed on a proposal made by Alderman J Tinsley and seconded by Alderman A Grehan:

5.3 Election of Chairs and Vice-Chairs for 2024/2025 (Contd)

(i) Planning Committee

Chair Alderman M Gregg
Vice-Chair Councillor S Burns

(ii) Governance & Audit Committee

Chair Alderman S P Porter

(iii) Communities and Wellbeing Committee

Chair Councillor D J Craig
Vice-Chair Alderman H Legge

(iv) Environment and Sustainability Committee

Chair Councillor P Catney
Vice-Chair Councillor G Hynds

(v) Regeneration and Growth Committee

Chair Alderman M Guy
Vice-Chair Alderman A G Ewart

(vi) Corporate Services Committee

Chair Councillor N Trimble
Vice-Chair Councillor N Eaton

6. Election of Members to Committee Positions 2024/2024

Arising from the nominations made by the Nominating Officers, the following nominations for membership of Standing Committees for 2024/2025 were agreed on a proposal made by Alderman J Tinsley and seconded by Alderman A Grehan:

6.1 Planning Committee

Alderman J Tinsley
Councillor D J Craig
Councillor U Mackin
Alderman O Gawith
Councillor G Thompson
Councillor A Martin
Councillor N Trimble
Councillor D Bassett
Councillor P Catney

6. Election of Members to Committee Positions 2024/2024 (Contd)

6.2 Governance & Audit Committee

Councillor S Burns
Councillor D J Craig
Councillor A P Ewing
Councillor A Givan
Alderman O Gawith
Councillor N Eaton
Councillor P Kennedy
Councillor M McKeever
Councillor S Lowry
Councillor A Martin
Councillor R McLernon
Councillor D Bassett
Councillor P Burke
Councillor J Gallen

It was noted that The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson, and the Deputy Mayor, Councillor R Carlin, were ex-officio Members of the above Committee.

6.3 Communities and Wellbeing Committee

Alderman S P Porter
Alderman S Skillen
Councillor R T Beckett
Councillor B Higginson
Alderman A Grehan
Councillor C Kemp
Councillor S Lowry
Councillor A McIntyre
Councillor G Thompson
Councillor T Mitchell
Councillor D Bassett
Councillor G McCleave
Councillor J Gallen

It was noted that The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson, and the Deputy Mayor, Councillor R Carlin, were ex-officio Members of the above Committee.

6.4 Environment and Sustainability Committee

Alderman S Skillen
Alderman J Tinsley
Councillor S Burns
Councillor A Gowan
Councillor C McCready
Alderman O Gawith
Councillor P Kennedy

6.4 Environment and Sustainability Committee (Contd)

Councillor A McIntyre
Councillor M McKeever
Councillor N Parker
Alderman J Baird
Councillor R McLernon
Councillor G McCleave

It was noted that The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson, and the Deputy Mayor, Councillor R Carlin, were ex-officio Members of the above Committee.

6.5 Regeneration and Growth Committee

Councillor A Gowan
Councillor J Lavery
Councillor U Mackin
Councillor C McCready
Alderman M Gregg
Alderman A Grehan
Councillor C Kemp
Councillor N Parker
Alderman J Baird
Councillor A Martin
Councillor T Mitchell
Councillor P Burke
Councillor J Gallen

It was noted that The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson, and the Deputy Mayor, Councillor R Carlin, were ex-officio Members of the above Committee.

6.6 Corporate Services Committee

Alderman A G Ewart
Councillor R T Beckett
Councillor A P Ewing
Councillor A Givan
Councillor B Higginson
Councillor J Lavery
Alderman M Gregg
Alderman A Grehan
Alderman M Guy
Councillor C Kemp
Alderman H Legge
Councillor P Burke
Councillor G McCleave

It was noted that The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson, and the Deputy Mayor, Councillor R Carlin, were ex-officio Members of the above Committee.

7. Lisburn & Castlereagh Policing & Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) Chairman 2024/2025

In accordance with the Justice (NI) Act 2011 under which the position of Chairman of the Policing & Community Safety Partnership was rotated in turn by each of the four largest parties represented on the Council immediately after the last local general election, it was noted that the Chairman of the Lisburn & Castlereagh PCSP for 2024/2025 was an APNI Member.

Alderman A Grehan, Nominating Officer for APNI, advised that Councillor S Lowry would be Chairman of the Lisburn & Castlereagh PCSP for 2024/2025. This information was noted.

At the conclusion of the meeting, The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson, thanked those present for their attendance and, there being no further business for consideration, the meeting concluded at 3.11 pm.

Mayor

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL**Minutes of the Communities and Wellbeing Committee held in the Island Civic Centre, Lisburn on Tuesday 4th June 2024 at 18:00**

PRESENT: Councillor R T Beckett (Chairperson);
 Deputy Mayor Councillor G McCleave;
 Aldermen A Grehan, H Legge and P Porter;
 Councillors D Bassett, D J Craig, N Eaton, J Gallen,
 B Higginson, S Lowry, A McIntyre and G Thompson.

ALSO ATTENDED: Councillor G Hynds.

IN ATTENDANCE: Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing
 Director of Director of Regeneration & Growth
 Head of Communities
 Acting Head of Parks and Amenities
 Head of Sports Services
 Member Services Officer (BF & EW)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received on behalf of The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor A Gowan; Alderman S Skillen; Councillor R Carlin and Councillor T Mitchell.

2. Declaration of Interest

Councillor G Hynds declared interests in items 4.1 and 7.2, in that he was member of the Board of Trustees of Lisburn Recreation and Community Hub.

3.0 Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing

3.1 DEA Local Investment Programme for 2024/25

(The Director of Organisation Development and Innovation, and the Acting Head of Portfolio, IT and Commercialisation attended in connection with this item.)

At its meeting on 5th March, the Committee had approved the DEA Local Investment Programme for 2024/25. The Director reported that, in reviewing several projects which had been included within previous programmes, officers had recommended that three projects be suspended and reviewed, given their increased costs, community guidance and location considerations. The three projects were, namely, the refurbishment of the Ramblers' Bridge at McIlroy Park, the installation of a barrier at Hillsborough Forest Park and the creation of a dog exercise area in Maghaberry. The Director added that the projected financial considerations would be £58,000, which would be held in reserve until the 2024/25 programme had been fully reported, to enable Members to make an informed decision on any reallocation of funding.

It was moved by Councillor A McIntyre, seconded by Alderman P Porter, and agreed that the Committee endorse the following course of action:

1. That the three aforementioned projects be suspended for the reasons outlined; and
2. That, subject to the commencement of the DEA Local Investment Programme for 2024/25, the projected saving of £58,000 be held in reserve and considered as part of an overall evaluation of the financial status of the 2024/25 programme.

The Director clarified a number of queries in respect of the programme budget and underspend and undertook to provide an update to a Member in relation to the future plans for the undertaking of enhancement work at the Ramblers' Bridge. The Director also advised Members that any reallocation of significant funds, within the programme, would be brought before the Committee for its consideration.

3.2 Redevelopment of Dundonald International Ice Bowl and Associated Works

(The Director of Regeneration and Transformation and the Head Planning and Capital Development attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report which provided an overview of the progress achieved to date in the redevelopment of Dundonald International Ice Bowl and Associated Works.

The Committee commended officers for the work which had been undertaken to date in relation to the project.

4.0 Report of the Head of Communities

4.1 Communities Facilities Fund 2024/25

(Councillor G Hynds, who had declared an interest in this matter, did not partake in any discussion whilst the item was under consideration.)

The Head of Communities reported that 46 applications for funding had been received under the above-mentioned scheme, 28 of which had been deemed successful. The 18 remaining applications had been unsuccessful since the applicants had either been in receipt of a previous grant under the fund, or their application did not meet the scoring threshold/eligible amount applied for.

The Committee was informed that the total amount of eligible funding to be awarded was £379,894.22 and noted that there remained an underspend of £40,105.78 in the fund.

It was moved by Alderman A Grehan, seconded by Alderman P Porter, and agreed that the Committee endorse the following course of action, that:

1. the successful applicants be awarded a total of £379,894.22;
2. officers offer feedback, support, and signposting to unsuccessful applicants; and
3. the underspend of £40,105.78 be reallocated across remaining projects in the DEA Investment Programme, subject to the associated demand in each of the areas.

5.0 Report of the Acting Head Parks & Amenities

5.1 Request for the Use of Wallace Park

It was moved by Councillor A McIntyre, seconded by Councillor B Higginson, and agreed that the Committee grant approval to the Belfast and District Amalgamated Committee of the Apprentice Boys of Derry to use Wallace Park as an assembly and dispersal point for its parade on Easter Monday, 21st April 2025.

It was agreed also that the byelaw prohibiting the use of the park for religious services be set aside for this purpose, and that small-scale infrastructure support be provided in accordance with Council policy.

6.0 Any Other Business – Non-Confidential Matters

6.1 Hydebank Playing Fields

The Vice-Chairperson, Councillor J Gallen, placed on the record his thanks to the Acting Head of Parks and Amenities, who had overseen the erection of goalposts at above-mentioned venue over the previous weekend.

6.2 Grass Cutting at Council Parks and Amenities

The Acting Head of Parks and Amenities provided clarity in relation to the plans to undertake additional grass cutting at various Council sites and cemeteries over the forthcoming period.

6.3 Councillor R T Beckett – Last Meeting as Chairperson

The outgoing Chairperson, Councillor R T Beckett, placed on the record his thanks to the Members of the Committee, the Vice-Chairperson and officers, for the manner in which they had supported him throughout his term in the Chair.

Several Members thanked the Chairperson for the manner in which he had conducted meetings and promoted the work of the Department over the past year.

7.0 Confidential Report of the Director

The Chairperson advised that the reasons for confidentiality for the following matters were by virtue of the Section 6, Part 1, of the Local Government Act (2014) Northern Ireland, namely, in that the reports contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any person (including the Council holding that information).

It was moved by Councillor S Lowry, seconded by Councillor D Bassett, and agreed that the confidential report of the Director be considered 'in committee'.

7.1 Winter Programme 2024

(The Head of Economic Development, together with the Regeneration Manager, attended in connection with this matter.)

The Director outlined the principal aspects of a report which made a number of recommendations in respect of the delivery of the Council's programme of winter events in 2024. Members were provided with an outline of the feasibility of providing additional 'pole mounts' for lighting purposes across the Council area as part of the programme.

It was moved by Alderman P Porter, seconded by Councillor B Higginson, and agreed that the Committee approve the Council's Winter Events Programme for 2024, and associated budgets, as outlined in the report which would include a drawdown on ringfenced funds as previously agreed in 2021.

Arising from discussion, the Director undertook to provide further information to a Member in relation to the management of ticketing arrangements for several events hosted as part of the programme.

7.2 Community Investment Fund – Phase 3

(Councillor G Hynds, who had declared an interest in this matter, did not partake in any discussion whilst the item was under consideration.)

(Councillor S Lowry left the meeting at 18:40 and returned at 18:42.)

The Head of Communities gave an overview of the outcome of the assessment of the applications which had been received under Phase 3 of the above scheme. She reported that the following four top scoring applications had been identified as eligible for partnership, subject to the due diligence process:

1. **Hillhall Regeneration Group** (Downshire East) - Council investment of £350k against an overall cost of £720k to develop a bespoke Community Hall/Resource hub on lands adjacent to Ashmount Gardens in Hillhall Estate;
2. **Carryduff GAC** (Castlereagh South) - Council investment of £290k against an overall development cost of £580k;
3. **Ballinderry War Memorial Hall** (Killultagh) - Council investment of £350k against an overall cost of £1,029,600 for the restoration and regeneration of the hall; and
4. **Canal Boxing Club** (Lisburn South) - Council investment of £285,455 against an overall cost of £573,324 for the construction of a sports hub at Queen Elizabeth II playing fields.

Several Members expressed gratitude to officers for the work which had been undertaken in compiling the report and welcomed the benefit which the funding would bring to communities across the Council area.

It was moved by Councillor J Gallen, seconded by Councillor B Higginson, and agreed that the Committee approve the following course of action:

1. that the four successful applicants be deemed as the Council's project partners under Community Investment Fund – Phase 3 and that match funding be offered in the sum outlined;
2. that 'in principle' letters of offer be issued to the four partner projects under the terms outlined by the Head of Service; and
3. that feedback and support be provided as required to unsuccessful applicants.

7.3 Pitches Strategy – Terms of Reference

(Councillor N Eaton left the meeting at 18:55 and returned at 19:00.)

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Councillor G McCleave, seconded by Alderman A Grehan, and agreed that the Committee approve the Terms of Reference for the undertaking of a review and

development of a Council Pitches' Strategy and that a suitably qualified individual, or organisation, be appointed for this purpose within the budget outlined, provision for which had been identified within existing budgets.

7.4 Hydebank Playing Fields – Pavilion Refurbishment

It was moved by Councillor B Higginson, seconded by Councillor J Gallen, and agreed that the Committee note the contents of a report in relation to the above-mentioned matter and agrees to approve the uplift in costs as outlined; and that the contract be awarded and the conclusion of the process to the most economically advantageous tender received.

7.5 Moira Demesne – Community Shed Business Case

It was moved by Alderman A Grehan, seconded by Councillor B Higginson, and agreed that the Committee approve the Project Initiation Request & Strategic Outline Case (PIRSOC) for the above development and that the project progress to business case stage with a view to awarding the tender to construct a community shed in Moira Demesne.

7.6 Lough Moss 3G Pitch

It was moved by Councillor D Bassett, seconded by Councillor S Lowry, and agreed that the Committee adopt the criteria for the allocation of the 3G Pitch at Lough Moss, which would enable officers to make operational decisions on the usage of the newly developed pitch.

It was noted that the criteria would be reviewed by officers after a period of 12 months.

7.7 St Patrick's Gaelic Athletic Club – Grounds Management Request

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Councillor G McCleave, seconded by Councillor D Bassett, and agreed that the Committee note the information provided in an associated report and agree that the matter be progressed with the development of an options appraisal paper which would be presented for consideration at a future meeting.

7.8 Dundonald International Ice Bowl – Service and Exclusivity Agreement

It was moved by Councillor S Lowry, seconded by Alderman H Legge, and agreed that the Committee approve the terms of a Service and Exclusivity Agreement with the Belfast Giants for their use of facilities at the above-mentioned venue.

7.9 Request to Vary an Existing Contract

It was moved by Councillor D Bassett, seconded by Councillor A McIntyre, and agreed that the Committee accede to the request for the variation of an existing contract as outlined by the Acting Head of Parks and Amenities.

8.0 Any Other Business – Non-Confidential Matters

8.1 Funding Workshop

The Director provided an overview on the arrangements that would put in place for the holding of two Members' workshops to consider the management of the Council's overall grants' programmes.

It was noted that, subject to the identification of suitable dates, it was anticipated that two workshops would be held over the summer period.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was moved by Councillor D Bassett, seconded by Councillor B Higginson and agreed that normal business be resumed.

The meeting ended at 19:36.

Chairperson

DRAFT

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL**Minutes of Meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Committee held in the Council Chamber, Island Civic Centre, on Wednesday 5 June 2024 at 6.00 pm****PRESENT IN CHAMBER:**

Councillor C McCready (Chair)

Deputy Mayor
Councillor G McCleave

Aldermen J Baird, M Gregg and J Tinsley

Councillors S Burns, P Catney, G Hynds, P Kennedy,
J Lavery BEM, A McIntyre, M McKeever, R McLernon
and N Parker

IN ATTENDANCE:

Acting Director of Environmental Services (RH)
Head of Service (Building Control & Sustainability) (CD)
Head of Service (Waste Management & Operational
Services) (WM)
Acting Head of Service (Environmental Health, Risk &
Emergency Planning) (SC)
Member Services Officers (RN, BS)

Commencement of the Meeting

The Chair, Councillor C McCready, 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. The Chair stated that unauthorised recording was not permitted, as per the Council's Standing Orders. The Chair asked that mobile phones be put on silent or switched off for the duration of the meeting.

The Acting Director of Environmental Services proceeded to outline the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.

1. **Apologies**

It was agreed to accept apologies for non-attendance at the meeting on behalf of Councillor R Carlin (Vice-Chair) and Alderman S Skillen.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3 Report by Head of Service (Building Control & Sustainability)

3.1 Roadmap – “Improving Safety in High-Rise Residential Buildings”

The Committee was advised of the publication by the Department for Communities in April 2024 of its roadmap entitled “Improving Safety in High-Rise Residential Buildings”.

The roadmap is available at <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/roadmap-improving-safety-high-rise-residential-buildings-implementation-ni-expert-panel-report>

The roadmap sets out the context on how Northern Ireland will progress in the aftermath of the Grenfell tragedy in which 72 people lost their lives to fire in a high-rise residential building.

In his report, the Head of Service outlined the aims and objectives of the roadmap and its implications for local councils. The Head of Service confirmed that discussions had taken place with the Department of Finance about potential implications and changes within the Building Regulations concerning fire safety and that any remedial measures required through the recommendations of this report and the inherent financial implications for both the Council and property owners would be raised with the Department for Communities through ongoing engagement. Any response would be reported to the Committee.

It was agreed to recommend that the Department for Communities’ roadmap entitled “Improving Safety in High-Rise Residential Buildings”, together with the report of the Head of Service on this matter be noted.

Councillor P Catney referred to difficulties which owners of properties within high-rise residential buildings or apartment blocks were experiencing in terms of any potential re-sale in the event of a requisite certificate not being in place. The Head of Service undertook to speak with Councillor Catney on this matter.

4. Report by the Head of Service (Waste Management & Operational Services)

4.1 Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA) Consultation document – “Re-thinking our Resources: Measures for Climate Action and a Circular Economy in NI” (Extended Closing Date: 27th June 2024)

The above consultation document had been published on the 7th March 2024 and had an extended closing date for the receipt of comments of the 27th June 2024.

A Members’ workshop had been held on the 30th April 2024 to help inform on the Council’s draft response. In addition, Members had been invited to submit any comments they might wish to make on the consultation, direct to the Head of Service.

4.1 Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA)
Consultation document – “Re-thinking our Resources: Measures for
Climate Action and a Circular Economy in NI”
(Extended Closing Date: 27th June 2024) (Continued)

The draft response on behalf of the Council was provided with the report. The Head of Service and the Acting Director responded to Members' comments.

Alderman M Gregg advised of a number of concerns he had in regard to the draft response, both on its content and on what he considered to be a more emphatic direction that the Council's response should be taking. These comments, together with other comments made by other Members, were noted by the Head of Service.

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Councillor G Hynds and agreed to recommend that the draft response be accepted as the Council's response to the above consultation document on the understanding that it would be amended prior to submission in the event of any additions being for the purpose of justifying/evidencing the rationale for responses as per the current draft. (Response comments based on information of a financial nature were being worked on.)

Alderman M Gregg asked that his dissent to the decision be recorded. Alderman Gregg also indicated that the Alliance Party could not accept the response for the reasons as outlined by him.

The Chair, Councillor C McCreedy, advised that Any Other Business would be considered at this point in the meeting.

5. Any Other Business
(Agenda Item 6.0 refers)

5.1 Replacement Landfill Bins
Councillor G Hynds

Councillor G Hynds referred to landfill bins which were damaged - not by fault of the householder - but by wear and tear. Bins of a considerable age could display such characteristics. Councillor Hynds asked that the policy be revised so that such bins – damaged but not at the fault of the householder – be replaced free of charge.

Having outlined the current policy as to when a replacement residual-waste bin was at no charge to a householder, the Head of Waste Management & Operational Services advised that all policies relating to waste disposal were to be reviewed and that the circumstances referred to by Councillor Hynds would be considered within that review.

Councillor Hynds accepted the Head of Service's response on this matter.

5.2 Bin Collection Service in Gregg Street, Lisburn
Councillor A McIntyre

Councillor A McIntyre expressed his thanks to the Head of Waste Management & Operational Services and his staff for resolving an issue regarding bin collection in the Gregg Street area of Lisburn. Local residents had been appreciative of this also.

5.3 Thanks of Chairman
Councillor C McCready

The Chair, Councillor C McCready, referred to this being the last meeting of the Committee before the Annual Meeting on the 7th June. Councillor McCready expressed his thanks to the Committee members, the Acting Director and also all Officers who serviced or who had serviced the Committee during his chairmanship.

Alderman M Gregg; and Councillors P Catney and G Hynds, expressed their thanks to Councillor McCready for his effective chairing of the Committee during his term of office.

Councillor A McIntyre left the Council Chamber. (6.57 pm)

6. Confidential Report by the Acting Director of Environmental Services (Agenda Item 5.0 refers)

The Chair, Councillor C McCready, advised that the confidential report items would be dealt with "In Committee" due to containing information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

The member of the press left the Council Chamber. (6.58 pm)

"In Committee"

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Councillor M McKeever and agreed that the following matters be considered "in Committee", in the absence of members of the press and public being present.

6.1 Out-of-Hours Dog Control Service
(Redacted Report will be made available following Council ratification)

Presented by the Acting Head of Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning. The Acting Director and the Acting Head of Service responded to Members' questions.

6.1 Out-of-Hours Dog Control Service
(Redacted Report will be made available following Council ratification)
(Continued)

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

- a benchmarking document detailing the Out-of-Hours Dog Control Services as provided by the other Councils in Northern Ireland;
- an Options Appraisal for the Council's Out-of-Hours Dog Control Service;
- Equality & Good Relations Screening for an update on the current Out-of-Hours Dog Warden Service;
- Rural Needs Impact Assessment for the Out-of-Hours Dog Warden Service.

It was proposed by Councillor P Catney, seconded by Councillor N Parker and agreed that Option 3 as set out in the Options Paper be explored with a report thereon being brought back to Committee and to include financial and other information as requested by Members.

Councillor A McIntyre returned to the Council Chamber during discussion of this item of business. (7.05 pm)

Alderman J Tinsley left the Council Chamber during discussion of this item of business. (7.10 pm)

6.2 Tender for the Servicing and Maintenance of Waste Compactors and Containers at Council Household Recycling Centres
(Redacted Report will be made available following Council ratification)

Presented by the Head of Waste Management & Operational Services.

In addition to the narrative report, the Business Case and the Preliminary Expenditure Application for the Contract for the Servicing and Maintenance of Waste Compactors and Containers at Council Household Recycling Centres had been provided.

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Alderman M Gregg and agreed to recommend that:-

- a Single Tender Action for the period 13th July 2024 - 12th October 2024 be awarded to the current provider;
- the Business Case and Preliminary Expenditure Application for the provision of a contract for the Servicing and Maintenance of Waste Compactors and Containers at Council Household Recycling Centres be approved.

- 6.3 Arc21 – The Supply of Services relating to the Receipt, Processing, Treatment, Recycling and Disposal of Street Sweepings Waste Contract Award
(Redacted Report will be made available post commencement of Contract)

Presented by the Head of Waste Management & Operational Services.

In addition to the narrative report, the Tender Report dated May 2024 for the above service had been provided.

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Councillor P Catney and agreed to recommend that the contract for Lot 2 for the supply of services relating to the Receipt, Processing, Treatment, Recycling and Disposal of Street Sweepings Waste Contract Award be awarded to the firm as set out in the Head of Service's report and on the terms and conditions as contained within that report also.

- 6.4 Termination of Lease for Greenwood Warehouse
(Redacted Report will be made available on 30th September 2024)

Presented by the Acting Director of Environmental Services.

The Acting Director outlined the Council's use of Unit 4, Greenwood Business Park, 19A Ballinderry Road, Lisburn for the lease period of 1st July 2019 – 30th June 2023, together with issues associated with the hand-back to the Landlord.

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Councillor R McLernon and agreed to recommend that the negotiated position as a fair and reasonable settlement of the lease for Unit 4, Greenwood Business Park, 19A Ballinderry Road, Lisburn be approved.

7. Any Other Business (Confidential)

- 7.1 Information & Correspondence Schedule (June 2024)
Minutes of Meeting of Corporate Health & Safety Committee
held on 29th January 2024 - Insurance information
Councillor J Laverty

Councillor J Laverty referred to information in relation to insurance claims which had been contained in the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Health & Safety Committee held on the 29th January 2024. The minutes had been contained within the Information & Correspondence Schedule for June 2024.

It was proposed by Councillor J Laverty, seconded by Councillor N Parker and agreed that:-

- an explanatory report on the Insurance claims as referred to above be presented to the Committee at its next meeting;
- information on Insurance claims be reported to the Committee as opposed to being included within the Information & Correspondence Schedules.

7.2 Hilden Mill – Fire
Councillor G Hynds

Councillor G Hynds expressed his thanks to the Officers who were and remain involved in dealing with the aftermath of the recent fire at Hilden Mill, including ongoing discussions with the owner and/or his agent.

It was proposed by Councillor G Hynds, seconded by Councillor P Catney and agreed that a report on this matter be presented to the Committee.

The Acting Director confirmed that a report was due to be presented to the Committee. The report would deal with the issue of redundant buildings and their inherent dangers, as opposed to a specific building.

7.3 Traffic Warden Enforcement Arrangements – 12th & 13th July 2024

The Acting Director reported on traffic warden enforcement arrangements on the 12th and 13th July 2024.

7.4 Department for Infrastructure – Flooding Support Schemes

The Acting Director updated Members on the number of applications received in regard to financial assistance under the Flooding Support Schemes.

7.5 Antrim Street Car Park - Resurfacing
Deputy Mayor, Councillor G McCleave

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor G McCleave, enquired about the resurfacing of the Antrim Street Car Park.

The Acting Director advised of the current stage of the contract for the above works and confirmed that re-charging points were included within the specification.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor J Laverty, seconded by Alderman M Gregg and agreed to come “out of Committee” and normal business was resumed.

The Chair extended best wishes to the incoming Chair and Vice-Chair for the year ahead and - there being no further business - the meeting concluded at 7.46 pm.

Chair

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL**Minutes of Meeting of the Regeneration & Growth Committee held in the Council Chamber, Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn on Wednesday 5th June, 2024 at 8.00 pm****PRESENT IN THE CHAMBER:**

Councillor J Laverty BEM (Chairperson)

Councillor T Mitchell (Vice Chairperson)

Aldermen J Baird, A G Ewart MBE, A Grehan and M Guy

Councillors P Burke, K Dickson, U Mackin, A Martin, C McCready and N Parker

OTHER MEMBERS:

Councillor G Hynds

IN ATTENDANCE

Director of Regeneration & Growth

Head of Economic Development

Head of Assets

Tourism Development Manager

Member Services Officers (BS and EW)

IT Officer

Commencement of Meeting

The Chairperson, Councillor J Laverty, having apologised for the lateness in the commencement of the meeting which had been occasioned by the previous Committee meeting having overrun, extended a welcome to all present at the June meeting of the Committee which was the last meeting of the Committee for the 2023/2024 year.

The Chairperson reminded those present that the meeting was being audio recorded unless the item was being considered under confidential business and 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. He then 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 Alderman S P Porter and Councillor J Gallen, and the Head of Planning & Capital Development.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor U Mackin declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 3.1 Draft Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2029 in view of his membership of the board of Lagan Valley Regional Park.

3. Report of Head of Economic Development

3.1 Draft Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2024 - 2029 Presentation

The Tourism Development Manager was in attendance in order to present to Members on the draft Tourism Strategy and Action Plan for 2024-2029.

At the outset the Head of Economic Development outlined the background and key issues in connection with the Council's draft Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2029, The report circulated detailed a number of recommendations that the Draft Strategy would focus on and it was noted that a workshop for Members had taken place on the emerging Tourism Strategy and Action Plan in January 2024.

The Committee had been furnished with a copy of a summary of the Draft Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2029 together with the proposed questionnaire for the planned eight-week public consultation period.

The Tourism Development Manager proceeded to make his presentation on the draft Tourism Strategy the aim of which was to provide a strategic road map for raising the profile of Lisburn and Castlereagh as a tourism destination. During his presentation the Tourism Development Manager highlighted the five key areas of the draft strategy, including the Vision statement and value proposition; and also the action plan which set out how the key areas would be delivered.

At the conclusion of his presentation the Tourism Development Manager, along with the Director of Regeneration & Growth and the Head of Economic Development, responded to a number of questions and comments from the Committee in connection with issues arising from the presentation, including:

- the absence of the Tourism Consultants. Officers confirmed that the Consultants unfortunately were not available that evening due to a long-standing commitment. The Director of Regeneration & Growth gave an assurance that endeavours would be made to have the consultants in attendance in order to present the final outcomes after the public consultation of the draft Tourism Strategy.
- the Council's representation at this year's Balmoral Show. A Member requested that the Council reviews the budget for its representation at Balmoral Show next year with a view to increasing its presence. The Chairperson, Councillor J Laverty, concurred with

3.1 Draft Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2024 - 2029 Presentation (Cont'd)

the sentiments expressed about the Council's increased presence at next year's Balmoral Show and stated that it was important that this matter be taken account of during the forthcoming estimates debates and requested that his comments in this regard be recorded.

- attracting investors to the Council area
- clarity on what document was being provided for the public consultation. It was noted that some Members would have preferred to have sight of the full 90-page Tourism Strategy document at this stage. The Tourism Development Manager undertook to circulate the full document to the Committee.
- other key features that could be included in the Executive Summary, such as the birthplace of Harry Ferguson, the linen heritage, Hilden Mill, Lagan Valley Regional Park and the Frank Pantridge story
- the nature and examples of an 'immersive' experience

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird that the Officer's recommendation, as set out in the report, be agreed subject to the full 90-page Draft Tourism Strategy document being circulated to the Committee with any questions thereon to be raised with Officers in advance of the June Council meeting. There was no seconder for this proposal and following further comments from the Chairperson, Alderman J Baird withdrew his proposal.

Following further discussion it was agreed that the Officer's recommendation be not accepted and that a further report be brought back to the Regeneration & Growth Committee at its meeting in September 2024 which would take account of the sentiments and points raised by Members, it being noted that there would be no detriment as a result of this delay. This course of action was proposed by Alderman J Baird and seconded by Councillor U Mackin and agreed.

3.2 Royal Hillsborough and Historic Moira Tourism Promotional Programme

The Head of Economic Development's report outlined the background and key issues in connection with the Royal Hillsborough Historic Moira (RHHM) campaign.

The Committee had been furnished with a copy of an evaluation of activity from the 2023 RHHM campaign, a number of highlights of which had been detailed in the report circulated.

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

3.2 Royal Hillsborough and Historic Moira Tourism Promotional Programme (Cont'd)

- a) the success of the Royal Hillsborough and Historic Moira initiative be noted,
- b) a further round of this programme be commissioned in 2024/2025 as per the current Economic Development allocation, and
- c) should additional budget be secured from potential grant aid, an enhanced programme be developed for delivery across 2024/025 and presented to the Committee for consideration and a decision thereon.

The Tourism Development Manager left the meeting at 9.08 pm.

3.3 Labour Market Partnership – Draft Action Plan 2024/25

The Head of Economic Development's report outlined the background and key issues in connection with the Labour Market Partnership Draft Action Plan 2024/2025 which was funded by the Department for Communities (DfC).

Alderman A G Ewart left the meeting at 9.03 pm and returned at 9.12 pm.

The Head of Economic Development reminded the Committee that DfC had confirmed recently that up to 25% of the administrative budget had been agreed by the Department and that the level of funding for the remainder of 2024/2025 was not yet agreed as a consequence of significant budgetary pressures elsewhere in the Department and at NI Block level.

It was noted that the funded initiatives that would be delivered via the Labour Market Partnership were required to be completed in full by 31 March 2025. A copy of the submitted Action Plan was appended to the Officer's report.

As a formal offer of funding for Programme delivery was not anticipated until Summer 2024 and to allow Officers sufficient time to deliver the programmes with stipulated timeframes it was being proposed that the Committee approves, subject to budget availability, the aforementioned draft Action Plan 2024/2025.

The Head of Economic Development and the Director of Regeneration & Growth responded to a number of comments and questions from Members arising from the Officer's report. The Chairperson, Councillor J Laverty, asked that his thanks and appreciation be conveyed to the Officers concerned for their efforts in connection with the success of a recent Employability programme.

Councillor K Dickson left the meeting at 9.23 pm.

3.3 Labour Market Partnership – Draft Action Plan 2024/25 (Cont'd)

The Committee noted a verbal update by the Head of Economic Development in regard to the Multiply Programme, an adult numeracy programme, which had been agreed previously by the Committee. It was noted that the Council had secured an additional £200,000 towards this programme and that a team of Officers were now actively procuring this initiative.

It was proposed by Councillor U Mackin, seconded by Councillor N Parker, and agreed to recommend that:

- a) in order to ensure that Officers have sufficient time to deliver the LMP programmes within the stipulated timeframes, the draft LMP Action Plan 2024/2025 be agreed, subject to funding, and also agrees to sign the associated Letter of Offer when received over the Summer months,
- b) the Council's Employability & Skills budget be used to match fund the draft LMP Action Plan 2024/2025 as outlined in the report, and
- c) the final Action Plan 2024/2025, when agreed by DfC, be presented to a future meeting of the Committee for noting.

3.4 Business Development Collaboration Programme 2024-2025

The Head of Economic Development's report outlined the background and key issues in connection with the Council's annual business development collaboration programme that aligned with the Council's overall strategy to engage with stakeholders including businesses, business groups and government. The report also detailed the ongoing aims of the initiative and the projects that were currently envisaged for 2024/2025.

The Committee had been furnished with a copy of a paper outlining the proposed overall budget for business activity during 2024/2025.

The Head of Economic Development responded to questions from Members in connection with:

- key issue number 2 of the report which highlighted that NI would fall short of the 2050 net zero emission target unless swift action was taken. The Member enquired if there was any scope within the Business Collaboration Programme to set Lisburn and Castlereagh apart from other areas in Northern Ireland as a renewables hub for new business start-ups. The Head of Economic Development advised that the Council had recently commissioned a piece of work on the Green Growth agenda and that an industrial de-carbonisation seminar was taking place the following week on this subject.

3.4 Business Development Collaboration Programme 2024-2025 (Cont'd)

- any engagement with farmers in the local area to assess how the Council could assist farmers in reaching their operating targets. The Head of Economic Development discussed the support that had been provided to on-farm businesses through the TRPSI programme and previous iterations of the NI Rural Development Programme.

Councillor K Dickson returned to the meeting at 9.26 pm.

It was proposed by Alderman M Gregg, seconded by Councillor U Mackin, and agreed to recommend that the annual business collaborative programme of activities 2024/2025, as outlined in the Officer's report, be agreed.

3.5 Enterprise Lisburn Castlereagh Programme 2024-2025

The Head of Economic Development's report outlined the background and key issues in connection with the Enterprise Lisburn Castlereagh Programme 2024/2025. The report also detailed the proposed development of targeted programmes focusing on the undernoted key sectors:

- Empowering Youth Entrepreneurship
- Supporting Female Entrepreneurship
- Facilitating a Support Network for Entrepreneurs and Promoting Innovation in the Micro-business sector

The Committee had been furnished with a copy of the breakdown of the proposed Enterprise Lisburn Castlereagh Programme for 2024/2025 which detailed an overview and outputs and which would enhance and further develop the programme.

It was noted that the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Business Awards would take place in 2025, it being noted that a proposed increase in the Council's primary sponsorship amount to this key event was included in the current budget estimates.

It was proposed by Alderman M Guy, seconded by Alderman M Gregg, and agreed to recommend that the Enterprise Lisburn Castlereagh Programme for 2024-2025 as outlined in the Officer's report, be agreed.

3.6 Investment Programme 2024-2025

The Head of Economic Development's report outlined the background and key issues in connection with the Council's annual Investment Programme 2024/2025. The report also detailed the number of key activities to aid the delivery of the Investment Programme, it being noted that the 2024/2025 programme included a 2-day Westminster Networking &

3.6 Investment Programme 2024-2025 (Cont'd)

Business Showcase Event which was scheduled to take place in March or September 2025.

The Committee had been furnished with a copy of the proposed inward investment programme for 2024/2025.

The Head of Economic Development responded to a number of questions from the Committee in connection with key issues outlined in the report including outcomes from previous investment events and other major Cities being considered aside from London for the Networking and Business Showcase event.

Alderman A G Ewart left the meeting at 9.42 pm.

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Councillor C McCready, and agreed to recommend that the annual inward investment programme of activities for 2024/2025, as outlined in the Officer's report, be agreed.

3.7 International Trade Programme 2024-2025

The Head of Economic Development's report outlined the background and key issues in connection with the Council's annual International Trade Programme the aim of which was to support local businesses by facilitating entry into new export markets and securing fresh opportunities for trade. The report also highlighted the outputs of the Council's successful on-going international trade linkages.

The Committee had been furnished with a copy of an outline of the proposed international trade programme for 2024-2025, which included several projects to maintain and strengthen the local economy's international linkages.

The Head of Economic Development and the Director of Regeneration & Growth responded to questions from the Committee in connection with key issues outlined in the report, including:

- the outcomes of the trade development visit to Cork and Galway
- the reinstatement of the NI-NLTrade Society
- the business hub in Galway

It was proposed by Alderman A Grehan, seconded by Alderman J Baird, and agreed to recommend that the annual International Trade Programme of activities for 2024-2025 as outlined in the report, be agreed.

4. Report by the Director of Regeneration & Growth

4.1 City Centre Public Convenience Provision

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Regeneration & Growth Committee in connection with the provision of public conveniences within Lisburn City Centre and also in regard to the erection of wayfinding signage which would include access to public conveniences.

A copy of the report and related appendices that had been considered by the Environmental Services Committee in December 2022 on the extent of public convenience availability had been appended to the Director's report.

A Member reiterated the request that a unit be identified in the City Centre for the provision of public conveniences and also enquired about the timeframe for such a project.

It was proposed by Councillor N Parker, seconded by Councillor U Mackin, and agreed to recommend that:

- a) the content of the Director's report on City Centre Public Convenience Provision be noted, and
- b) a unit be identified in the City Centre for the provision of public conveniences,

Alderman A Grehan left the meeting at 10.07 pm

5. Any Other Business

5.1 Update on DfC Flooding Scheme Head of Economic Development

The Head of Economic Development updated the Committee in regard to the progress of the Flooding Scheme payments to businesses in the Lisburn and Castlereagh area. It was hoped that funding from the Department for Communities would be received by the Council in the very near future.

The Chairperson, Councillor J Laverty, asked that the Committee's thanks be conveyed to the Officers concerned for their efforts in progressing the Flooding Scheme.

5.2 Thanks to the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson Alderman M Guy and Councillor C McCready

Alderman M Guy commended, and expressed thanks to, the Chairperson Councillor J Laverty, for his efforts and commitment as Chairperson of the Regeneration & Growth Committee during the past year. Alderman Guy also extended thanks and appreciation to the Vice Chairperson, Councillor T Mitchell.

5.2 Thanks to the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson (Cont'd)
Alderman M Guy and Councillor C McCready

Councillor C McCready, having thanked the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson for their efforts, also thanked the Director of Regeneration & Growth and his team of Officers for their hard work during the year.

Alderman A Grehan returned to the meeting during this item of business (10.10 pm).

The Chairperson reciprocated the sentiments expressed by the previous speakers and thanked the Director and Heads of Service for their efforts during the year. He asked the Director and Heads of Services to pass on his thanks and appreciation to their respective teams of Officers. He also wished the incoming Chairperson and Vice Chairperson every success during their Term of Office.

In concluding the Chairperson expressed thanks to the Vice Chairperson, Councillor T Mitchell, for his support during the year. He also thanked the media representative for his interest in the work of the Committee.

6. Confidential Report from Director of Regeneration & Growth

The Chairperson, Councillor J Laverty, advised of the undernoted reasons for confidentiality for the following confidential report items:

- 6.1 Removal of Deed of Covenant: Confidential due to containing (a) information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information, and (b) information in relation to which a claim of legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings
- 6.2 Requested Increase to Contracted Rates ref Electrical Call off Contract,
- 6.3 Requested Increase to Contracted Rates ref Mechanical Call off Contract, and
- 6.4 Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields Development Site: 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 the Vice Chairperson, Councillor T Mitchell, seconded by Councillor C McCready, and agreed that the Confidential Reports be considered "in Committee" in the absence of press or members of the public. The audio recording was paused at this stage in proceedings (10.16 pm).

6.1 Removal of Deed of Covenant
(Redacted Report to be published following the June Meeting of Council)

The Head of Assets' report outlined the background and key issues in connection with the removal of a deed of covenant at lands at Drumbo, Lisburn.

It was proposed by Alderman M Gregg, seconded by the Vice Chairperson, Councillor T Mitchell, and agreed to recommend that the removal of the Deed of Covenant on the land at Drumbo, Lisburn, as outlined in the report, be agreed.

6.2 Requested Increase to Contracted Rates ref Electrical Call off Contract
(Redacted report to be published 31 March 2026 subject to further extensions)

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Assets outlining a request by the service provider to an increase in the contracted rates in regard to the call-off contract for electrical services, the content of which was noted.

6.3 Requested Increase to Contracted Rates ref Mechanical Call off Contract
(Redacted report to be published 31 March 2026 subject to further extensions)

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Assets outlining a request by the service provider to an increase in the contracted rates in regard to the Mechanical Services Contract priced elements, the content of which was noted.

6.4 Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields Development Site
(Redacted report to be published March 2025)

The report by the Director of Regeneration & Growth outlined the background and key issues in regard to a development site at the Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields.

It was proposed by Alderman A Grehan, seconded by Alderman J Baird, and agreed to recommend that the draft heads of terms to the sporting Club concerned be approved and that this forms the basis for the agreement of a lease which will be presented to Council for signing and sealing in due course.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor N Parker, seconded by Alderman M Gregg, and agreed to come out of Committee and normal business was resumed.

Conclusion of Meeting

The Chairperson thanked everyone for their attendance and there being no further business for consideration the meeting was concluded at 10.30 pm.

Chairperson

CSC 12.06.2024

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LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL**Minutes of Meeting of the Corporate Services Committee held in the Council Chamber, Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn on Wednesday 12th June 2024 at 6.00 pm.**

PRESENT: Councillor The Hon N Trimble (Chair)

Councillor N Eaton (Vice-Chair)

The Right Worshipful The Mayor
Councillor K Dickson

Deputy Mayor
Councillor R Carlin

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

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

OTHER MEMBERS: Councillor G Hynds

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive
Director of Finance & Corporate Services
Director of Organisation Development & Innovation
Head of Assets
Head of Corporate Communications & Administration
Head of Finance
Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development
Acting Head of IT, Portfolio & Commercialisation
Member Services Officers (RN & CR)

Commencement of Meeting

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting, in particular those Members who had not previously served on the Corporate Services Committee. The Chair advised that – after the conclusion of the business of the meeting – the Director would make a brief presentation on the Terms of Reference of the Committee.

The meeting 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. 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.

Councillor A Ewing arrived to the Meeting at the conclusion of the housekeeping announcement. (6.02 pm)

1. Apologies

An apology for non-attendance at the meeting was accepted and recorded on behalf of Councillor A Givan.

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 made.

3. Report of Chief Executive

3.1 Draft Works Programme Proposals including Capital Programme emanating from District Electoral Area Workshops

The Committee was reminded that – following a series of workshops – each of the District Electoral Areas (DEAs) had come forward with a consensus of the projects that they wished to put forward for their respective areas. To this end, Members were provided with a draft programme which reflected the totality of the suggested works-related projects.

In his narrative report, the Chief Executive reported extensively on the principles that would be used for the progression of the projects, the key issues and the next steps in the process. The Chief Executive confirmed that the Programme would be a “rolling” document and - accordingly – an up-to-date Programme would be available at any time.

CSC 12.06.2024

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3.1 Draft Works Programme Proposals including Capital Programme emanating from District Electoral Area Workshops (Continued)

The Chief Executive responded to a number of questions posed by Members, and also noted for appropriate action, the following issues:-

- “Carryduff Community Facility – GAC” – Re-wording of project name for the purposes of clarity;
- “Standalone Recycling Centre, Dundonald – Feasibility Study” – Update to “Funding Source” information;
- “Carryduff Primary School & Killynure Community Association – 3G pitches etc” – Relevant officers to be asked to ensure that documentation was in place so as to allow for submission of a grant application to Sport NI which could have a short deadline.

It was proposed by Alderman A Ewart, seconded by Alderman H Legge and agreed to recommend that:-

- the draft works programme as outlined be approved;
- the expenditure associated with the bringing forward of the feasibility studies up to a value of £200K be approved.

In addition to the narrative report and draft works programme, Equality Screening and Rural Needs Impact Assessment documents had been provided.

4. Report of Director of Finance & Corporate Services

4.1 Department for Communities Minister’s Initial Budget Allocations for 2024-2025 (Closing date: 3rd September 2024)

Copy of a letter dated the 5th June 2024 from the Department for Communities on the subject of the Minister for Communities’ initial budget allocations for 2024-2025 had been provided with the Director’s narrative report.

Details were available at <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/news/minister-launch-budget-consultation>

Whilst it was likely that political parties would be submitting responses to the construction, the Council would also intend to do so. Given the time scale for the submission of responses, it would be necessary to seek delegated authority from the Council for the Committee’s chair and vice-chair to approve the response.

4.1 Department for Communities
Minister's Initial Budget Allocations for 2024-2025
(Closing date: 3rd September 2024) (Continued)

It was proposed by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor R Carlin, seconded by Councillor G McCleave and agreed to recommend that:-

- delegated authority be granted to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Corporate Services Committee to approve the Council's response to the above consultation;
- a copy of the final response be presented to the Committee at its September 2024 meeting.

5. Report of Acting Head of IT, Portfolio & Commercialisation

5.1 Digital Journey – Enabling Efficiency and Customer Access

The narrative report of the Acting Head of IT, Portfolio & Commercialisation provided an overview of the Council's ongoing digital journey, and its content was duly noted.

The Acting Head of Service made a PowerPoint presentation by means of Shared Screen. The presentation supported the narrative report and dealt with the following:-

- Infrastructure – Achievements to date and upcoming plans;
- Digital progress – Achievements to date and upcoming plans;
- Upskilling and Reskilling for a future that is digital first but with no-one left behind;
- Corporate Plan 2024/2028 themes

The narrative report and the PowerPoint presentation were both noted.

The Acting Head of Service informed Members that the provision of an on-line booking system for leisure pitches was being developed.

The Acting Head of Service and the Director of Organisation Development & Innovation responded to questions posed by Members. In regard to the ongoing efficiencies, reports on the data analysis thereof would be brought back to Committee.

Box Office bookings

In response to a query raised by Alderman A Ewart at the previous meeting of the Committee regarding the use of the Box Office to sell tickets for a Mayoral event, the Head of Corporate Communications & Administration advised that she had already responded to the Member's query by e-mail.

Box Office bookings (Continued)

The issue had been resolved and ticket sales for Mayoral events of this nature would be permitted via the Box Office. Use of the Box Office to sell tickets for other off-site events organised by the Council would be considered on their own merit as a range of factors would have to be taken into consideration for each event.

6. Report of Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development

6.1 Equality and Disability Action Plans – Progress Report

In addition to the narrative report of the Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development on the above subject, the following had been provided in regard to 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024:-

- Draft Annual Progress Report on Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties;
- Equality Action Plan – Progress Update;
- Disability Action Plan – Progress Update.

The Head of Service responded to questions posted by Members.

It was proposed by Councillor C Kemp, seconded by Alderman H Legge and agreed to recommend that the Draft Annual Progress Report on Public Authority Statutory Equality & Good Relations Duties for 2023/2024 be approved.

6.2 Workforce Reports

Reports on the undernoted topics in relation to Council staff across all Departments had been provided with the report and their contents duly noted.

- Attendance Management Report for period ended 31st March 2024;
- Recruitment reports – (i) Advert & Selection; and (ii) Appointments;
- Workforce Profile.

The Head of Service explained the reasons for the posts which were termed as “on hold” with the recruitment report (Advert & Selection).

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor R Carlin, left the Council Chamber during presentation of this item of business. (6.47 pm)

7. Report of Head of Assets

7.1 Electric Vehicle Charging at Lagan Valley Island

In her narrative report, the Head of Assets reported extensively on the provision of Electric Vehicle Chargers at Lagan Valley Island which was ready for activation subject to a decision on the tariff to be applied.

The chargers for public use would be located as follows:-

- Lighters Café Car Park
- Staff Car Park
- Island Arts Car Park
- Main Car Park
- Car park adjacent to the LVI building and primarily used by Members.

A discussion on the tariff to be applied took place.

It was proposed by Alderman M Gregg, seconded by Councillor T Beckett and agreed to recommend that the:-

- activation of the electric charging rates at the five locations referred to above be at a rate of 40p per KWh;
- subsequent planned promotion, including an Expression of Interest for other Electric Vehicle Charging opportunities on the Council's estate, be approved.

The Head of Assets undertook to inform Councillor T Beckett of the EV charging rates applicable in the Benson Street Car Park.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor R Carlin, returned to the Council Chamber during the presentation of this item of business. (6.49 pm)

8. Report of Head of Corporate Communications & Administration

8.1 Armed Forces Day 2027

The Head of Service referred to Armed Forces Day which is annual event taking place on the last Saturday of June. The council marks Armed Forces Day each year, however a key NI regional event is held at a different location each year. Lisburn hosted Armed Forces Day in 2019 and there is an opportunity to express an interest in hosting it in 2027.

The programme for the 2019 event had been provided with the report.

8.1 Armed Forces Day 2027 (Continued)

It was proposed by Councillor A Ewing and seconded by Councillor B Higginson that officers submit an application for Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council to host Armed Forces Day in June 2027.

Councillor G McCleave outlined the reasons as to why his political party could not support this event. Councillor McCleave also sought confirmation that an Equality screening process would be carried out. The Head of Service confirmed that the event would be screened as part of the overall Council events' calendar and that screening work for this particular event would be carried out by the Leisure & Community Wellbeing Department who would lead on this event.

The proposal in the name of Councillor A Ewing and seconded by Councillor B Higginson was put to the meeting and – on a show of hands – declared “carried”, the voting being 13 in favour and three against.

It was therefore agreed to recommend that officers submit an application for Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council to host Armed Forces Day in June 2027.

8.2 D-Day 80: 6 June 2024 - Progress Report

In addition to the narrative report, copies of the undernoted items had been provided and were duly noted:-

- the minutes of the meeting of the D-Day Working Group held on the 2nd May 2024 (subject to the inclusion of the name of Councillor T Beckett in the list of apologies);
- the programme of events, together with required budget, as of June 2024.

Details on the outworking of the event would be provided in due course, however the Head of Service relayed that the event had taken place and was well received with extensive, positive media coverage.

The Chair of the D-Day Working Group, Alderman H Legge, placed on record her thanks to the members of the Working Group, and to all officers involved in the organisation of the event, with a particular mention to the Head of Corporate Communications and Administration who had been the Lead Officer on this matter.

Alderman A Grehan endorsed these comments and asked to have recorded her appreciation of the contribution made by the immediate Past Mayor, Councillor A Gowan, to the success of the commemorations.

A number of Members endorsed their thanks to the Working Group, its Chairman and all officers involved in the success of the day.

Alderman A Ewart left the Council Chamber during presentation of this item of business. (7.08 pm) Alderman Ewart returned and left the Chamber during Members' comments (7.11 pm and 7.14 pm respectively)

8.3 Citizenship Ceremonies at Hillsborough Castle

In her narrative report, the Head of Service reported extensively on the hosting of Citizenship Ceremonies in the Council's area. The original venue for such ceremonies had been Hillsborough Castle but for various reasons, they had moved to Lagan Valley Island both in person and virtual. Circumstances now allowed for Hillsborough Castle to become the main venue for the Citizenship Ceremonies once again.

It was proposed by Alderman H Legge, seconded by Alderman A Grehan and agreed to recommend that the return of Citizenship Services to Hillsborough Castle as from October 2024 with Lagan Valley Island as a back-up location, be agreed.

Councillor A Ewing left the Council Chamber during presentation of this item of business. (7.18 pm)

The Acting Head of IT, Portfolio & Commercialisation left the Council Chamber at the conclusion of this item of business. (7.19 pm)

9. Report of Head of Finance

9.1 Northern Ireland Local Government Association National Employers and LGA Representation Services 2023/2024 Fees

In addition to the narrative report, Members were provided with copy of a letter dated the 14th May 2024 from the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) in regard to the Council's contribution of £3,592.48 (excluding VAT) for work carried out by the National Employers and for other related external partnership work for the year 2023/2024.

The Head of Service referred to the decision of the Committee in June 2023 that those subscription charges normally reported to the Home Committees be approved for the 4-year council term and only be reported to the Home Committee in subsequent years if the subscription charge exceeded the approved budget. This particular subscription had been omitted from that schedule.

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9.1 Northern Ireland Local Government Association
National Employers and LGA Representation Services
2023/2024 Fees (Continued)

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

- the Council's contribution to NILGA in the sum of £3,592.48 (excluding VAT) for the period 2024/2025 in regard to work carried out by the National Employers and for other related external partnership work be approved for payment;
- approval be granted for the fees as referred to above to be paid on an annual basis up to 2026/2027 on the provision that they do not exceed the budget agreed during the relevant year's estimates process.

Councillor N Eaton left the Council Chamber at the conclusion of this item of business. (7.20 pm)

10. Any Other Business – Non-Confidential

10.1 Deafblind Awareness Week
Councillor J Laverty

Councillor J Laverty referred to the request included in the Information & Correspondence Schedule for June 2024 that Lagan Valley Island be lit on the 27th June 2024 to mark Deafblind Awareness Week. As the request had not been received within the requisite timeframe, it had been declined.

Councillor Laverty asked that – in view of the Council's involvement with the Deaf Association – some other means of support be afforded to them.

The Head of Corporate Communications & Administration agreed to look into this matter with a view to see what support could be offered.

Councillor A Ewing returned to the Chamber at the conclusion of this item of business. (7.23 pm)

The Acting Head of IT, Portfolio & Commercialisation returned to the Council Chamber at the conclusion of this item of business. (7.24 pm)

11. Confidential Report from Director of Finance & Corporate Services

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

11.1 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.

11.2 Accounting Manual

(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.

11.3 Management Accounts for Period 12 of 2023/2024 (Draft)

(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 full Council meeting on 25th June 2024.

11.4 Efficiency Review Steering Group - Meetings

(Confidential for reason of information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Council or a government department and employees of, or office holders under the Council.)

Redacted report to be available following full Council meeting on 25th June 2024.

In Committee

It was proposed by Councillor A Ewing, seconded by Councillor C Kemp and agreed that the Confidential Report of the Director be considered "in Committee". (Recording was paused at this stage in proceedings, and the members of the press and public left the meeting.

11.1 Report on Tender Awards

Presented by the Head of Assets.

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

11.1 Report on Tender Awards (Continued)

It was proposed by Alderman A Grehan, seconded by Alderman H Legge and agreed to recommend that the tenders awarded in regard to the following contracts, together with the attendant tender reports, be noted:-

- T23/24-029 – Annahilt Environmental Improvement Scheme;
- T23/24-035 – Food and Drink Programme;
- T23/24-036 – Build, Installation, Development, Maintenance and Support of a Website, Registration Portal, Database and Case Management System for the NI Landlord Registration Scheme for Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council.

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

Councillor N Eaton returned to the Chamber during the presentation of this item of business. (7.25 pm)

11.2 Accounting Manual

Presented by the Head of Finance.

The revised Accounting Manual had been provided with the narrative report. The Head of Service advised that the Financial Regulations would be reviewed to reflect the content of the Accounting Manual. These would be presented for approval as part of the Council's Constitution.

It was proposed by Alderman A Grehan, seconded by Councillor B Higginson and agreed to recommend that the revised Accounting Manual be approved, effective from the 1st July 2024.

Members were appreciative of the workshop which had been held in regard to the Accounting Manual and for the user-friendly format of the Manual.

11.3 Management Accounts – Period 12 of 2023/2024 (Draft)

Presented by the Head of Finance.

The Management Accounts for the period ending the 31st March 2024, together with an extensive narrative report by way of explanation, were provided and duly noted.

The Head of Finance responded to questions posed by Members.

11.4 Efficiency Review Steering Group (ERSG) Meetings

Presented by the Director of Organisation Development & Innovation.

In addition to the narrative report, the minutes of the undernoted meetings of the Efficiency Review Steering Group (ERSG) had been provided:-

- meeting held on the 7th May 2024;
- meeting held on the 4th June 2024.

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

- the minutes of the meetings of the Efficiency Review Steering Group held on the 7th May and 4th June 2024 be noted;
- the recommendation of the Efficiency Review Steering Group in regard to the proposed staffing structure as detailed in the Director's report be approved.

12. Any Other Business – Confidential

There was no further business of a confidential nature raised.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor R Carlin, seconded by Alderman H Legge and agreed to come "out of Committee". Normal business and audio recording were resumed.

13. Any Other Business

There were no further items raised.

The meeting concluded at 7.43 pm.

After the meeting was pronounced as closed, the Director of Finance & Corporate Services made a short presentation on the Terms of Reference of the Corporate Services Committee.

MAYOR/CHAIR

GAC 13.06.2024

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

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Minutes of Meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held in the Council Chamber on Thursday, 13th June 2024 at 18:00**PRESENT IN CHAMBER:**

Alderman S P Porter (Chairperson)

Mr E Jardine (Independent Member and Vice-Chairperson)

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson

Alderman O Gawith

Councillors D Bassett, S Burns, D J Craig, A P Ewing, C Kemp, P Kennedy, S Lowry and M McKeever.

ALSO ATTENDED:

Councillors P Catney and G Hynds.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Director of Organisation Development and Innovation

Director of Finance and Corporate Services

Director of Regeneration and Growth

Acting Director of Environmental Services

Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development

Head of Communities

Performance Improvement Officer

Member Services Officers (BF and EW)

NI Audit Office

Mr R Ross

Commencement of the Meeting

The Chairperson welcomed all to the meeting.

1. **Apologies**

Apologies were reported on behalf Councillors P Burke, D J Craig, J Gallen, A Givan and A Martin.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **Report of the Performance Improvement Officer**3.1 **Compliments and Complaints Report – Quarter 4 2023/24**

The Committee considered a comparative report which had been drafted from data obtained from the Council's Customer Care System, which detailed the number of comments, complaints and compliments received during Quarter 4 of 2023/24.

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The Committee noted the information provided.

3.2 Performance Improvement Objectives, Case Studies & Associated KPIs – Quarter 4 Review

The Committee considered the following:

1. a quarterly monitoring report which included several case studies for improvement undertaken from 1st January to 31st March 2024; and
2. a report detailing the key performance indicators for the period from 1st January to 31st March 2024.

The Performance Improvement Officer outlined the main aspects of the report and its associated appendices. The Committee was informed that, of the 57 indicators identified for consideration during the 2023/24, 33 had been achieved by the end of the financial year and, of the 24 not yet met, 8 of these was outside of the control of the Council. Details of the learnings from the review were also outlined to the Committee.

The Committee noted the information provided.

(Councillor A Ewing entered the Chamber at 18:09)

3.3 Service KPIs – Quarter 4 2023/24 - all Directorates

The Committee considered a report and several appendices which detailed the performance of each Council directorate against its key performance indicators during the last quarter of the financial year 2023/24.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services responded to a Member's query regarding the figures reported for the payment of invoices within the 10-day target. The Committee was advised that the matter remained under constant review at a Corporate Management Team level, and the issue had been added to departmental risk registers across the Council. She acknowledged that, whilst challenges remained, directors and officers continued to work proactively to streamline processes and to identify efficiencies.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development answered a Member's query regarding absence rates across the Council. He acknowledged that, whilst the figure had slightly increased over the previous twelve months, the Council remained in a positive position when compared to other local authorities across Northern Ireland. The Committee was informed that officers had been working proactively to identify the key underlying issues which had contributed to the increase, which would enable appropriate actions to be introduced. It was pointed out that the matter had been considered also by the Corporate Services Committee and it was anticipated that a revised attendance policy would be introduced across the Council in September, together with a wider wellbeing programme. It was projected that the revised policy would address absence at an earlier stage and that additional training would be provided to line managers in this regard.

The Committee noted the information provided.

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3.4 Review of Departmental Objectives 2023/24

The Performance Improvement Officer presented a report which provided a year-end analysis of performance against departmental objectives for each of the Council's several directorates. The Committee was informed that, overall, 66% of objectives had been met across all directorates, whilst work was progressing against the remaining 34% to enable those targets to be met.

It was proposed by Councillor A Ewing, seconded by Councillor D Bassett, and agreed that the Committee approve the report and note the information provided within the associated appendices.

3.5 Delivery Plan and Related Service KPIs

(The Director of Organisation Development and Innovation presented this report.)

The Director reminded the Committee that the Council's Corporate Plan and Ambitions document had been launched in April. She referred Members to an appended document, which outlined an associated delivery plan and detailed the range of service-related key performance indicators for 2024/25, which had been identified to measure outcomes against the actions identified within the Plan. The Committee noted that the service level KPIs, as identified, would be presented for consideration on a quarterly basis.

The Director of Regeneration and Growth clarified the KPI in relation to planning applications.

It was proposed by Councillor D Bassett, seconded by Councillor P Kennedy, and agreed that the Committee approve the Delivery Plan and Related Service KPIs for 2024/25.

3.6 Consultation Report on the Draft Performance Improvement Objectives 2024/25

The Committee considered the contents of a consultation report regarding the draft Performance Improvement Objectives for 2024/25, the main aspects of which were outlined by the Performance Improvement Officer. It was noted that a public consultation exercise in this regard had been undertaken during April and May of 2024.

It was proposed by Councillor S Lowry, seconded by Councillor M McKeever, and agreed that the consultation report, as presented, be approved.

3.7 Draft Performance Improvement Plan 2024/25

The Committee considered the draft performance improvement plan which had been provided as a final draft following the consultation. The Performance Improvement Officer outlined that, if approved, progress against this plan would be reported to the Committee on a quarterly basis.

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It was proposed by Councillor P Kennedy, seconded by Councillor A Ewing, and agreed that the Committee approve the Draft Performance Improvement Plan for 2024/25, with a view to its publication by 30th June 2024.

4. Report from the Risk Officer

4.1 Corporate Risk Register

(In the absence of the Acting Environmental Health Manager, the Acting Director of Environmental Services presented this report.)

The Acting Director of Environmental Services outlined the main aspects of a report and provided details on the data reported as a result of a quarterly review of the Risk Dashboards for each of the service directorates.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services provided clarity the reasons for the inclusion of a risk on the finance system, which had been reported within an associated appendix.

The Committee noted the information provided.

5. Confidential Business

The Chairperson advised the Committee that the matters contained within the confidential report would be dealt with "in committee" since they contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

It was proposed by Councillor A Ewing, seconded by Councillor M McKeever, and agreed that the following matters be considered "in committee" in the absence of members of the press and public.

5.1 Report by Internal Audit Manager

5.1.1 Internal Audit 2023/24 Plan – Year End Annual Report

The Committee was provided with the Internal Audit - Year End Annual Report, which set out the Internal Audit Manager's opinion, together with a summary of the work of the Internal Audit Service to the end of 2023/24.

It was proposed by Alderman O Gawith, seconded by Councillor A Ewing, and agreed that the report, as presented, be approved.

5.1.2 Internal Audit – Progress Report

The Committee considered the Internal Audit Progress Report, which summarised the achievements, thus far, of Internal Audit against its 2024/25 Operational Plan.

The report provided also an update on outstanding audit reviews which had been undertaken since the last meeting of the Committee.

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The Committee noted the information provided.

5.1.3 Chief Executive's Assurance Statement

The Committee was provided with, and noted the contents of, the Chief Executive's Assurance Statement for the period from 1st October 2023 to 31st March 2024.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Alderman O Gawith, seconded by Councillor D Bassett, and agreed to come out of "committee" and that normal business be resumed.

6. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The meeting ended at 18:40.

Chairperson

DRAFT

PC 13.05.2024

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LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL**Minutes of Planning Committee Meeting held in the Council Chamber and in Remote Locations on Monday, 13 May, 2024 at 10.00 am****PRESENT IN CHAMBER:**

Alderman M Gregg (Chair)

Councillor U Mackin (Vice-Chair)

Aldermen O Gawith and J Tinsley

Councillors D Bassett, S Burns, P Catney, D J Craig, A Martin, G Thompson and N Trimble

IN ATTENDANCE:

Director of Regeneration and Growth
 Head of Planning & Capital Development
 Principal Planning Officer (RH)
 Senior Planning Officer (MB)
 Senior Planning Officer (PMcF)
 Member Services Officers (CR and EW)

Mr B Martyn (Cleaver Fulton Rankin) – Legal Advisor

Commencement of Meeting

At the commencement of the meeting, the Chair, Alderman M Gregg, welcomed those present to the Planning Committee. He pointed out that, unless the item on the agenda was considered under confidential business, this meeting would be audio recorded. He went on to outline the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies but it was noted that Councillor P Catney would be arriving late to the meeting.

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

2. Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were made:

- in respect of planning application LA05/2022/1170/F, Councillor D Bassett stated that this was within his constituency but he had not been contacted about it. The Chair, Alderman M Gregg, thanked Councillor Bassett for his diligence but advised that it was not necessary for Members to declare an interest in applications within their electoral area;
- in respect of planning application LA05/2022/0631/F, Councillor D Bassett stated that he had received a telephone call about it, but had advised the caller that he was a Member of the Planning Committee and was unable to provide any information; and

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2. Declarations of Interest (Contd)

- in respect of planning application LA05/2023/1000/F, Councillor S Burns stated that she had received an email but had made no comment or response.

The Chair, Alderman M Gregg, stated that, by virtue of being Members of Council, all Members of the Planning Committee would have an interest in planning application LA05/2024/0098/F. However, the dispensation under paragraph 6.6 of the Code of Conduct applied and Members were permitted to speak and vote on the application.

3. Minutes of Meeting of Planning Committee held on 15 April, 2024

It was proposed by Alderman O Gawith, seconded by Councillor D Bassett and agreed that the minutes of the meeting of Committee held on 15 April, 2024 be confirmed and signed.

4. Report from the Head of Planning & Capital Development

4.1 Schedule of Applications

The Chair, Alderman M Gregg, advised that there were 2 major and 3 local applications on the schedule for consideration at the meeting.

4.1.1 Applications to be Determined

The Legal Advisor, Mr B Martyn, highlighted paragraphs 43-46 of the Protocol for the Operation of the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Planning Committee which, he advised, needed to be borne in mind when determinations were being made.

- (i) LA05/2023/1000/F – Proposed change of use of existing building from call centre (B1) to general industrial (B3) including alterations to building elevations and solar panels on roof at 4 Ballyoran Lane, Dundonald

The Senior Planning Officer (PMcF) presented the above application as outlined within the circulated report.

Mr G McGill was registered to speak on behalf of the applicant but had clarified in advance of the meeting that he was there to answer any Members' questions. There were no questions put to Mr McGill.

A number of Members' queries were responded to by Planning Officers.

Debate

During debate, the Chair, Alderman M Gregg, welcomed this application which would see a large site being repurposed and providing much-needed employment opportunities for the local area. The addition of solar panelling was also greatly welcomed.

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- (i) LA05/2023/1000/F – Proposed change of use of existing building from call centre (B1) to general industrial (B3) including alterations to building elevations and solar panels on roof at 4 Ballyoran Lane, Dundonald (Contd)

Alderman Gregg made a comment on Officers having accepted that this application site fell within employment zoning MCH 06, when this had not been accepted for another recent application.

Vote

Having considered the information provided within the report of the Planning Officer, the Committee agreed unanimously to adopt the recommendation to approve this application.

- (ii) LA05/2022/1170/F – Proposed residential development comprising erection of 141 dwellings (comprising 81 detached; 44 semi-detached; 2 bungalows; and 14 apartments) including open space and landscaping, children's play area, access and all associated site works (amendment to approval LA05/2019/0712/F) on lands north of Ballymaconaghy Road, including nos 14 & 22-24 Ballymaconaghy Road, Belfast

The Senior Planning Officer (MB) presented the above application as outlined within the circulated report.

The Committee received Mr T Stokes, accompanied by Mr P O'Rourke, to speak in support of the application and a number of Members' queries were responded to.

A number of Members' queries were responded to by Planning Officers.

During discussion, the Head of Planning & Capital Development confirmed that, should the application be granted planning permission, the condition relating to the completion of improvements to the Four Wind Roundabout would be removed as this would be included within the Section 76 Agreement. Members were content with his recommendation.

Debate

During debate:

- Alderman O Gawith welcomed this application and stated that it should be used by other developers as a benchmark; and
- the Chair, Alderman M Gregg, concurred with Alderman Gawith. He welcomed the EPC A rating on buildings, the mixed tenure, the 20% affordable housing, the fact that the proposal carried forward renewable energy contributions and the inclusion of EV charging points. Alderman Gregg's concerns regarding density had been suitably addressed by the Planning Officers. He did still have concerns regarding storm water runoff into the watercourse but this had been accepted by Rivers Agency and he had submitted questions separately to that body. Alderman Gregg stated that he welcomed this application and was in support of the recommendation of Planning Officers to approve.

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- (ii) LA05/2022/1170/F – Proposed residential development comprising erection of 141 dwellings (comprising 81 detached; 44 semi-detached; 2 bungalows; and 14 apartments) including open space and landscaping, children’s play area, access and all associated site works (amendment to approval LA05/2019/0712/F) on lands north of Ballymaconaghy Road, including nos 14 & 22-24 Ballymaconaghy Road, Belfast (Contd)

Vote

Having considered the information provided within the report of the Planning Officer, the Committee agreed unanimously to adopt the recommendation to approve this application.

Adjournment of Meeting

The Chair, Alderman M Gregg, declared the meeting adjourned at this point for a comfort break (11.00 am).

Resumption of Meeting

The meeting was resumed at 11.07 am.

- (iii) LA05/2024/0098/F – Proposed replacement of changing rooms and minor alterations to existing carpark on a site located to the rear of 8 Lurgan Road and west of 18-27 Broadwater Park, Aghalee

Councillor P Catney arrived to the meeting during consideration of this item of business (12.13 pm).

The Principal Planning Officer (RH) presented the above application as outlined within the circulated report.

There was no-one registered to speak in respect of this application.

A number of Members’ queries were responded to by Planning Officers.

During discussion:

- the Director of Regeneration and Growth agreed to provide the Chair, Alderman M Gregg, with the latest reports in respect of active systems in small scale buildings; and
- the Head of Planning & Capital Development agreed to liaise with colleagues in the Parks & Amenities Unit to ascertain why previous planning permission on this site had not been acted upon and advise the Chair, Alderman M Gregg, accordingly.

Debate

There were no comments made at the debate stage.

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- (iii) LA05/2024/0098/F – Proposed replacement of changing rooms and minor alterations to existing carpark on a site located to the rear of 8 Lurgan Road and west of 18-27 Broadwater Park, Aghalee (Contd)

Vote

Having considered the information provided within the report of the Planning Officer, the Committee agreed unanimously to adopt the recommendation to approve this application. Not having been present for the full consideration of this item of business, Councillor P Catney did not participate in the vote.

- (iv) LA05/2022/0307/F – Replacement of existing garage with ancillary domestic accommodation at 2 Benson Street, Lisburn

The Principal Planning Officer (RH) presented the above application as outlined within the circulated report.

The Committee received:

- Dr L Sands, on behalf of many residents, to speak in opposition to the application;
- Mr S Carson, on behalf of Mr P Givan MLA, to speak in opposition to the application; and
- Mr A McCready to speak in support of the application.

A number of Members' queries were responded to by the speakers.

A number of Members' queries were responded to by Planning Officers.

Debate

During debate:

- Councillor N Trimble stated that he was in support of the recommendation of the Planning Officer to refuse planning permission, given height differences, proximity to curtilage and scale and massing. He stated that he remained to be convinced that this was purely an ancillary building and it seemed to him that it could be a separate accommodation;
- Councillor D J Craig agreed with Councillor Trimble. He too deemed this to be a separate accommodation rather than an ancillary building and was in support of the recommendation of the Planning Officer to refuse planning permission;
- Alderman O Gawith agreed with comments already made. He referred to policy stating that 'a separate self-contained building within the curtilage of an existing dwelling will not be acceptable unless a separate dwelling would be granted permission in its own right'. In this case, a separate dwelling would not have been granted permission in its own right. Alderman Gawith was in support of the recommendation of the Planning Officer to refuse planning permission; and
- the Chair, Alderman M Gregg, concurred with the comments already made.

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- (iv) LA05/2022/0307/F – Replacement of existing garage with ancillary domestic accommodation at 2 Benson Street, Lisburn (Contd)

Vote

Having considered the information provided within the report of the Planning Officer, the Committee agreed unanimously to adopt the recommendation to refuse this application.

Adjournment of Meeting

The Chair, Alderman M Gregg, declared the meeting adjourned at this point for a comfort break (12.26 pm).

Resumption of Meeting

The meeting was resumed at 12.34 pm.

At this point, the Chair, Alderman M Gregg, advised that a late request to address the Committee had been received from Councillor B Higginson. It was acknowledged that the request related to a third party and that no speaking note had been provided in advance of the meeting. In order to afford time to prepare, the Committee adjourned for lunch.

Adjournment of Meeting

The Chair, Alderman M Gregg, declared the meeting adjourned for lunch at this point (12.34 pm).

Resumption of Meeting

The meeting was resumed at 1.30 pm.

Councillor D J Craig did not return to the meeting following lunch.

- (v) LA05/2022/0631/F – Single storey rear sunroom extension at 26 Brackenhill View, Carryduff

The Senior Planning Officer (PMcF) presented the above application as outlined within the circulated report.

The Committee received:

- Mr T Clarke to speak in opposition to the application; and
- Ms KA Watson to speak in support of the application.

A number of Members' queries were responded to by the speakers.

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- (v) LA05/2022/0631/F – Single storey rear sunroom extension at 26 Brackenhill View, Carryduff (Contd)

A number of Members' queries were responded to by Planning Officers.

Debate

During debate:

- Councillor P Catney stated that this structure would have been allowed under Permitted Development Regulations, had it remained within the limit of 3 metres. He raised concern that the extension had been built beyond that, at 3.3 metres, and retrospective approval was being sought. However, given that a form of disability had been indicated as a requirement for the extension, he stated that, on this occasion, he was in support of the recommendation of the Planning Officer to approve planning permission;
- Councillor N Trimble stated that he was in support of the recommendation of the Planning Officer to approve planning permission. He did not consider that the applicant could reasonably have done anything other than what had happened and it was unfortunate that the extension had been built to beyond what could be allowed under Permitted Development Regulations;
- Alderman J Tinsley stated that, on balance, it would be very unfair to go against the recommendation of the Planning Officer to approve planning permission;
- Alderman O Gawith stated that the Planning Officer's conclusion had been that the requirements of HOU7 were met in full by this application. Having heard both sides of the argument, the nett benefit was such that the was in support of the recommendation of the Planning Officer to approve planning permission; and
- the Chair, Alderman M Gregg, referred to comments made that it was unfortunate the extension had been built to beyond the limits of Permitted Development Regulations. He did not agree with that and was of the opinion that applicants and builders should be fully aware of what was allowed under Permitted Development Regulations and what required planning permission. He was also concerned that the extension did have an impact on sunlight on the neighbour's property. However, supplementary guidance did provide a mitigation for allowing this. Alderman Gregg stated that, whilst he was disheartened to see retrospective applications coming before the Committee, he understood the circumstances and hoped the builder concerned would take note that this should not happen in the future. In relation to the cladding on part of the extension being similar to the rendering in colour etc, he did not accept that. Had the extension been 30cm shorter, the gable end could have been rendered and maintained. This was not a neighbour dispute, rather it was a planning issue. On balance, Alderman Gregg stated that he was in support of the recommendation of the Planning Officer to approve retrospective planning permission.

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- (iv) LA05/2022/0631/F – Single storey rear sunroom extension at 26 Brackenhill View, Carryduff (Contd)

Vote

Having considered the information provided within the report of the Planning Officer, the Committee agreed unanimously to adopt the recommendation to retrospectively approve this application.

4.2 Statutory Performance Indicators – March 2024

It was proposed by Councillor U Mackin, seconded by Councillor D Bassett and agreed that information relating to Statutory Performance Indicators for March 2024 be noted, as well as a verbal update provided by the Head of Planning & Capital Development.

At the request of the Chair, Alderman M Gregg, the Head of Planning & Capital Development agreed to provide an update report to the next meeting of the Committee in respect of older applications.

4.3 Appeal Decision – LA05/2021/1364/O

It was proposed by Councillor D Bassett, seconded by Alderman O Gawith and agreed to note the information set out in the report in respect of the decision of the Planning Appeals Commission regarding the above planning application.

4.4 Appeal Decision – EN/LA05/2021/0269/O

It was proposed by Councillor P Catney, seconded by Councillor N Trimble and agreed to note the information set out in the report in respect of the decision of the Planning Appeals Commission regarding the above planning application.

Councillor D Bassett left the meeting at this point (2.54 pm).

4.5 Pre-Application Notice (PAN) – Proposed residential development of approximately 50 dwellings including open space, landscaping, site access and all other associated works on land at Carnreagh Road, opposite nos. 8 to 14A (evens) Carnreagh Road, to the north of Downshire Primary School and south east of nos. 1 to 3 Kilwarlin Mews and no. 23 Kilwarlin Avenue, Hillsborough

It was proposed by Alderman O Gawith, seconded by Councillor P Catney and agreed that the content of the Pre-Application Notice be noted and that it be submitted in accordance with the relevant section of the legislation and related guidance.

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- 4.6 Pre-Application Notice (PAN) – Site for new cemetery including new main vehicular access and secondary access, parking and associated infrastructure works on land 180 metres east of 10 and 140 metres west of 28 Quarterland Road and 80 metres east of 27 Carnaghliiss Road

Councillor G Thompson left the meeting during consideration of this item of business (3.02 pm).

The Head of Planning & Capital Development took note of concerns raised by Members around situations where more than one PAN existed and that, in those cases, correspondence from all previous PANs should be included for consideration as part of any subsequent PAN.

- 4.6 Pre-Application Notice (PAN) – Site for new cemetery including new main vehicular access and secondary access, parking and associated infrastructure works on land 180 metres east of 10 and 140 metres west of 28 Quarterland Road and 80 metres east of 27 Carnaghliiss Road (Contd)

It was proposed by Councillor N Trimble, seconded by Alderman J Tinsley and agreed that the content of the Pre-Application Notice be noted and that it be submitted in accordance with the relevant section of the legislation and related guidance.

- 4.7 Notification by Telecommunication Operator(s) of Intention to Utilise Permitted Development Rights

It was proposed by Councillor P Catney, seconded by Alderman J Tinsley and agreed to note from the report, information regarding notifications by telecommunication operators to utilise Permitted Development Rights at several locations.

5. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

6. Confidential Business

The Chair, Alderman M Gregg, stated that the meeting would now go 'into committee' in order that confidential business could be considered.

"In Committee"

It was proposed by Alderman O Gawith, seconded by Councillor N Trimble and agreed to go 'into committee' to consider a confidential item. Those members of the public in attendance left the meeting.

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6.1 Update of Court Case

The Committee noted a verbal update by the Head of Planning & Capital Development and the Legal Advisor in relation to a recent court case.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor P Catney, seconded by Alderman O Gawith and agreed to come out of committee and normal business was resumed.

The Chair, Alderman M Gregg, advised that the next meeting of the Committee was scheduled to take place on Monday, 3 June, 2024.

Conclusion of the Meeting

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Chair, Alderman M Gregg, thanked those present for their attendance.

There being no further business, the meeting was terminated at 3.21 pm.

Chair/Mayor

Committee:	Full Council
Date:	25 th June 2024
Report from:	David Burns, Chief Executive

CONFIDENTIAL REPORT

Reason why the report is confidential:	3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information).
When will the report become available:	<i>Following the Call in Period</i>
When will a redacted report become available:	
The report will never become available:	

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Review of Adjudication Hearing Decision

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>
1.1	On 8 th March 2024, a decision notice was issued by the Assistant Northern Ireland Local Government Commissioner for Standards, following an investigation into complaints made against a former LCCC Councillor.
1.2	Also on 8 th March 2024, correspondence was received from the Local Government Auditor, indicating that she had received contact under raising concerns regarding the outcome of the adjudication. The Local Government Auditor wished to establish what steps the Council has taken to ensure there have been lessons learned from the issues raised by these events.
1.3	On 20 th March 2024, a report was presented to the Governance & Audit Committee outlining the planned review of the findings from the Assistant Commissioner and to consider any actions taken to date or additional learnings that could improve our processes further. The review has been considered by the Corporate Management Team to ensure cross directorate learning.
1.4	The report to Committee also provided a commitment to report back to Members on the findings and to share any specific learnings for other councils through Solace NI.
1.5	Attached at Appendix 1 is a lessons learned report. This details a mix of action points both for officers and Elected Members and provides a number of guidance and reminder points for Elected Members. These aim to provide clarity on process for Elected Members whilst improving openness and accountability to our citizens.
1.6	The majority of actions can be completed by December 2024 whilst performance of the planning function will be captured through the Council's Performance Improvement Plan and ongoing performance scrutiny.
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u> It is recommended that the Council adopts the actions as detailed in the report.
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u>

	There are no financial implications as a result of this report. Staff time will be made available to progress the actions detailed in the report.	
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	Yes/ No
4.2	<p>Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out</p> <p>This report provides only details of progressed and planned actions to external reviews.</p>	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	Yes/ No
4.4	<p>Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out.</p> <p>This report provides only details of progressed and planned actions to external reviews.</p>	

Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Lessons Learned Following the Report of the Assistant Commissioner for Standards against a former LCCC Councillor.
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Lessons Learned Following the Report of the Assistant Commissioner for Standards against a former LCCC Councillor

1.0 Introduction & Report Purpose

- 1.1 The Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014 included a new ethical framework for local government in Northern Ireland. A key element of this was a mandatory code of conduct for councillors. The Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors was subsequently introduced on 28 May 2014. Part 9 of that Code (planning) was implemented from 1 April 2015. The Act imposes a requirement on councillors to observe the Code.
- 1.2 Given the change to the Code and the transfer of planning to local government, a comprehensive training plan was developed to ensure competency of those on the various Committees making decisions.
- 1.3 Following complaints against a former LCCC Councillor in 2017, the Assistant Commissioner for Standards issued a decision following investigation into the allegations. The hearing found that the former councillor had breached 7 paragraphs within the Code of Conduct for Councillors and subsequently suspended the individual from being a Councillor for a period of 4 years from the written decision in February 2024.
- 1.4 The purpose of this report is to identify any learnings from the Assistant Commissioner's findings with a view to minimising the risk and reputational damage to the Council in the future.

2.0 Summary of Issues

- 2.1 A summary of the matters raised by the Assistant Commissioner and to be considered further in this review is as follows:
 - The action Councillors should take once they have declared a pecuniary or significant non-pecuniary interest regarding a matter to be considered by the Council, Committees or sub groups;
 - The action Councillors on the Planning Committee should take once a relative or employer indicates an intention to make representation on a planning application;
 - The steps Councillors should take where either they or their family submit a planning application where they have an interest in the land associated with the application;
 - Early intervention that could be taken by Members or Officers where concerns regarding declaration of interest exists; and
 - Increasing transparency in the declarations of interest held by the Council and in declarations of interest made during Planning Committee Meetings.

3.0 Terms of Reference

- 3.1 Terms of Reference for this review were developed and agreed by the Corporate Management Team following a report presented to the Governance & Audit Committee on 20 March 2024. The key objectives of the review are to consider:
 - Any weaknesses identified by the Assistant Commissioner in this Council's processes relating to decision making;
 - Whether sufficient improvements have been made to the Council's Planning Protocol;

- Improvements made to policy, processes and training for Elected Members linked to their decision-making role;
- The role of officers in highlighting, reporting and recording of concerns or advice provided to Elected Members;
- What options exist to mitigate future reputational damage;
- The 35 cases referred to within the report and implications for the Council; and
- Whether recommendations need to be made to third party organisations or other councils relating to the Assistant Commissioner's findings.

4.0 Breaches Identified by the Assistant Commissioner and Developing Actions

In reaching his decision, the Assistant Commissioner for Standards found the following paragraphs of the Code of Conduct for Councillors had been breached. Commentary has been added as appropriate in relation to proposed actions that could improve or refresh our compliance with the Code.

4.1 Paragraph 4.2

You must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your position as a councillor, or your council, into disrepute.

- **Reminder 1 – Councillors to regularly reflect on their conduct as part of their role as an Elected Member to avoid bringing themselves or the council into disrepute.**

4.2 Paragraph 4.3

You must review regularly (at least annually and when your particular circumstances change) your personal circumstances and take steps to mitigate any conflict of interest in relation to your functions as a councillor. Such conflict may arise as a result of circumstances such as a change of business interests, a change in direct or indirect pecuniary interests required to be declared under section 28 of the 1972 Act or involvement on a new committee.

An Internal Audit Report on conflict for interests for staff indicated that a nil return should not be assumed as no alteration to conflicts. As such, all officers must complete the conflict of interest form annually. For consistency in approach, rather than asking Members to advise of any new conflicts of interest annually, Members will be expected to complete and return a Conflict of Interest form. Note, a Conflict of Interest form was sent to all Councillors following the Local Government Election in May 2023. The annual request for updated circumstances was issued following the Annual Meeting, held on 7th June.

Furthermore, and to increase transparency to our citizens, stakeholders and interested parties, the Conflict of Interest register for all Members will be published on the Council's website and updated following the annual refresh.

- **Action 1 – Officers to issue Conflict of Interest Form to all Councillors each year, after the Annual Meeting**
- **Action 2 – Councillors must complete and return the conflict of interest form annually, or more frequently as and when required**
- **Action 3 – Publish annually a combined Elected Member Conflict of Interest Register**

- **Action 4 – advise Solace NI of the proposed requirement being adopted in LCCC with regards to the annual completion of a Conflict of Interest form by all Members.**
- **Reminder 2 – Councillors will refresh their conflicts of interest list during the course of the year should new pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests arise**

4.3 Paragraph 4.6

You must comply with any request of the Commissioner in connection with an investigation conducted in accordance with the Commissioner's statutory powers.

- **Action 5 – Officers to recommend to NILGA that conflicts of interest and complying with the Commissioner for Standards/Ombudsman is strengthened in the standard Member induction training** (NB this could include case studies/examples to help Members ensure they recognise potential or actual conflicts; and that appropriate action is taken on a timely basis to protect themselves and the body corporate. This should also incorporate their responsibilities post term).
- **Reminder 3 - Councillors to note the requirement in law to comply with a Commissioner's request in connection with an investigation, even following the end of their term as a Councillor.**

4.4 Paragraph 6.3

You must declare any significant private or personal non-pecuniary interest in a matter arising at a council meeting. In addition to those areas set out in paragraph 5.2, an interest will also be significant where you anticipate that a decision on the matter might reasonably be deemed to benefit or disadvantage yourself to a greater extent than other council constituents. Any sensitive information mentioned in paragraphs 5.4 to 5.6 is not required to be given.

- **Action 6 – Officers to update declaration of interest form to capture relevant guidance on what is a significant private or personal non-pecuniary interest, including the expected action by those who declare an interest.**
- **Action 7 - Amend the Protocol for Operation of the Planning Committee to note that, where a Councillor declares an interest and does not leave the room without providing valid justification, the matter should be challenged by the Chair of the Committee, or other Councillors. Similar principles to exist for all other Committees, Council and sub-groups.**
- **Action 8 – Member services officers to have immediate access at any Council, Committee, or sub-group meeting, details of the declared conflicts of interest of all Members with voting rights.**
- **Reminder 4 – Councillors to declare any significant private or personal non-pecuniary interest arising at a Council, committee or sub-group meeting**

4.5 Paragraph 6.4

You must declare any significant private or personal non-pecuniary interests in a matter as soon as it becomes apparent. You must then withdraw from any council meeting (including committee or sub-committee meeting) when the matter is being discussed. It is your own personal responsibility to determine, having regard to council advice and guidance, whether you have any such interest.

- **Reminder 5 – Councillors should withdraw from the relevant meeting when the matter to which they have a significant private or personal non-pecuniary interest is being discussed**

4.6 Paragraph 8.1

When participating in meetings or reaching decisions regarding the business of your council, you must:

- a) Do so objectively, on the basis of the merits of the circumstances involved, and in the public interest;***
- b) *Have regard to any particular advice provided by your council's officers, in particular, by the chief executive, the chief financial officer (where appropriate) or the council's legal advisers;*
- c) *Take into account only relevant and material considerations and discount any irrelevant or immaterial considerations;*
- d) *Give reasons for your decisions, when required to do so, in the interests of fairness, openness and accountability and in accordance with any statutory requirements;*
- e) *Act in accordance with any relevant statutory criteria;*
- f) Act fairly and be seen to act fairly;***
- g) Ensure that all parties involved in the process are given a fair hearing (insofar as your role in the decision making process allows);***
- h) Not prejudge or demonstrate bias, or be seen to prejudge or demonstrate bias, in respect of any decision;***
- i) *Not organise support for, or opposing against, a particular recommendation on the matter being considered;*
- j) *Not lobby other councillors on the matter being considered;*
- k) *Not comply with political group discussions on the matter being considered, where these differ from your own views; and*
- l) *Not act as an advocate to promote a particular recommendation in relation to the matter being considered.*

*Paragraph 8.1 (the 4 bold statements) and 9.3 combined were the elements of the Code breached in relation to these 2 paragraphs.

- **Reminder 6 – Councillors to reflect on the 12 requirements in reaching decisions regarding the business of the Council.**

4.7 Paragraph 9.3*

Application of the Code of Conduct with regard to planning matters

Your role as a councillor is to represent the views and aspirations of your community through development of the local development plan, discussions with developers and council planning officers or deciding on planning applications. This Code (and any associated guidance) is intended to assist you in balancing the interests of developers and interest groups with taking planning decisions, by applying your local knowledge and the advice and guidance of planning officers, in a fair, impartial and transparent way, for the benefit of the whole community. This Code applies to councillors at all times when involving themselves in the planning process, including taking part in the decision-making meetings of the council or when involved in less formal occasions, such as meetings with officers or the public. It applies equally to local plan development and planning enforcement as it does to planning applications.

- **Reminder 7 – Councillors on the Planning Committee to continually reflect on their role in relation to the planning process.**

5.0 Declaration of Interests

5.1 Section 28 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 requires members to declare any pecuniary interest, direct or indirect, that may be coming before the Council, Committee or Sub Committee. Pecuniary interests are your business interests (for example, your employment, trade, profession, contracts, or any company with which you are associated) and wider financial interests you may have (for example, investments, and assets such as land and property). In declaring a pecuniary interest, Members should verbally advise the Chair at the beginning of the meeting, record the pecuniary interest in the meeting register of interests and withdraw from the meeting for the duration of that report. Members should note that there are no exceptions for pecuniary interests and they must leave the room during the consideration of the relevant business.

5.2 The Code requires members to also declare any significant private or personal non-pecuniary interests. Non-pecuniary interests are those that do not involve business or financial matters and can include, for example, those interests that arise through a position of responsibility in, or membership of, a club, society or organisation. It is a member's responsibility to determine if they have a significant non-pecuniary interest in any matters being considered by the Council or its Committees. Where a significant non-pecuniary interest exists, members should verbally advise the Chair at the beginning of the meeting, record in the meeting register of interests and withdraw from the meeting. The only exceptions to withdrawing from the room for the duration of that discussion are as follows:

- If special dispensation has been granted by the Department under Section 29 of the 1972 Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) (this should be made available to the Council in advance of the meeting)
- On occasions, you may feel that it would be to your council's benefit if you were to remain in a council meeting when a matter in which you have a significant private or personal non-pecuniary interest is to be debated. Before doing so, you must consider whether your interest is so significant that it would be wrong in any circumstances for you to remain. If you remain in the room, you may only speak and vote on such a matter if :
 - **At least half of the council or committee would otherwise be required to withdraw from the debate due to their personal interests in the matter; or**
 - **Your withdrawal, together with that of other councillors of the council or committee who are required to withdraw due to their interests in the matter, would leave the council or committee without a quorum.**

If you decide to remain in the meeting, you must declare that decision and your reasons for doing so.

5.3 It would, however, be appropriate for you to remain at a council meeting and speak and vote on a matter in which you have declared a significant private or personal non-pecuniary interest if your interest arises because you are:

- A member of a public body; or

- A member or supporter of a charity, voluntary body or other organisation formed for a public purpose (ie not for the personal benefit of members)
 - However, except where you have been appointed by your council as a representative on the organisation, you must not vote (although you may speak) on any matter directly affecting the finances or property of the organisation if you are a member of the organisation's management committee or governing body.
- **Guidance 1 – for circumstances where a Councillor on the Planning Committee works for an MLA or MP who wishes to make representation on a planning application under consideration, a pecuniary interest should be declared and the member should leave the room. There are no exceptions to this because there is a pecuniary interest.**
 - **Guidance 2 – for circumstances where a Councillor on the Planning Committee is related to an MLA or MP who wishes to make representation on a planning application under consideration, a significant non-pecuniary interest should be declared and the member should leave the room. The member could remain in the room if they have been given dispensation by DFC to remain or where they believe it would be to the Council's benefit for the Member to remain. Any members deciding on this latter course of action should be prepared to be challenged by other Members of the Committee and/or by the CEO/Director either during or following the meeting, recognising an increased risk of the report potentially coming under greater scrutiny through the declaration of interest.**

6.0 Monitoring Declarations of Interest

- 6.1 The Assistant Commissioner was concerned about the extent to which Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council had adequately monitored its Planning Committee, to ensure that it was being conducted with proper regard for the Code and in compliance with the Council's Planning Protocol, during the period that the Respondent was a member and, at times, the Chair of that Committee. From the witness evidence...*"it was apparent there had been ongoing concerns about the actions of the Respondent"*.
- 6.2 The Assistant Commissioner observed that this concern had been in existence over an extended period, and it was therefore surprising that the Council appeared not to have taken sufficient action to ensure compliance with the Code and its own Protocol. The Assistant Commissioner indicated that the actions of the former councillor were found to be in breach of the Code and the Protocol and had inevitably damaged public confidence in the work of local government.
- 6.3 The Assistant Commissioner reiterated the Deputy Commissioner's submission.
- "This is a personal responsibility matter, all persons elected to public office in local councils have that responsibility. It is theirs and theirs alone in the final analysis."*
- 6.4 Although this is a personal responsibility matter, it is worth considering the steps Council could take to action or intervene where non declaration of interests may occur. For the investigation carried out by the Deputy Commissioner for Standards, the complaints were first submitted to the Commissioner in December 2017 and a decision was issued to the Council on 8 March 2024, some 6 years later. Although the Commissioner's investigation will have been impacted by the Covid19 pandemic and the particular circumstances of the case, the Council needs to consider how such matters can be resolved quickly and effectively for the purposes of

minimising reputational damage, and minimising the cost to the public purse. In noting the Assistant Commissioner's comment about the adequacy of monitoring of the Council's planning committee, the Chief Executive wrote to the Assistant Commissioner for advice or guidance on what more the Council could have done to mitigate the ongoing concerns regarding conflict of interest.

- 6.5 In a response received on 11th June, the Assistant Commissioner indicated that the case was delayed significantly by the Covid19 pandemic however, it was clear that the solicitor had known for some time that behaviours of the former councillor could have been highlighted at an earlier stage. The Assistant Commissioner has referred this to the Ombudsman for consideration of what might be considered as best practice in such circumstances.
- 6.6 None of the officers involved in the case at that time remain in employment with the Council. Therefore, it is difficult to determine how long an awareness existed regarding non-declaration of interests by the former councillor. It may well be that the time taken to highlight the potential conflict of interest could reflect a new process embedding within the Council, as it had only transferred from Central Government in April 2015. Since that time, transparency in the decision-making process has improved significantly through the audio recording of all Planning Committee meetings and the voting preferences of Members being recorded where the decision is not unanimous.
- 6.7 The Head of Planning, supported by the legal advisor, insists and is assertive to ensure the Members engage with policy with appropriate reasoning in concluding a planning determination. The minute now only captures what the decision is but refers the reader back to the appropriate point in the audio recording where the full detail of the reasons for making the decision can be found. This removes the necessity for the reasons to be drafted into the minute as was our previous improved practice.
- 6.8 In the meantime, to improve transparency around declarations of interest made at the planning committee, and to increase monitoring of such, declarations of interest should be included as part of the annual performance monitoring reports submitted to the Planning Committee. To improve transparency across local government in Northern Ireland, it is recommended that this improvement be shared with Solace NI and NILGA.
- **Action 9 – Amend the Protocol for Operation of the Planning Committee to report annually for noting, all declarations of interest made relating to the work of the Planning Committee and to share this recommendation with Solace NI and NILGA.**
 - **Action 10 – Where the Council's legal advisor has concerns about the action of a Councillor following declaration of interest, the legal advisor should bring those concerns to the attention of the CEO/Director. Officers will confirm this position to the Council's solicitors appointed through the relevant framework.**

7.0 Planning Committee Decisions and Processes

7.1 Decisions

7.1.1 The Findings of Fact on Page 13, Section 12 of the Decision notice details 35 occasions (for 33 planning applications) where the former Councillor had a potential conflict of interest. However, the analysis below gives more nuanced description of the events and the outcomes of those application processes.

- 7.1.2 At page 2 of the Commissioner's report, Complainant 1 makes a complaint in respect of 4 applications and he stated that on 3 of the occasions the former councillor had a casting vote at the same meeting.
- 7.1.3 All decisions taken by the Planning Committee require a majority and in circumstances where the chamber is tied, the Chair has the casting vote. On review of the records we can only find on 2 occasions the former councillor, as Chair, used his casting vote. These were at separate meetings in December 2017 (LA05/2015/0345) and June 2018 (LA05/2016/1050). For the 31 other cases (we make a distinction between the number of occasions when the former councillor's father spoke, being 35 and the number of applications that the Commissioner reviewed which was 33), the vote of the former councillor alone did not have a direct impact on the outcome of the Committee's consideration on 24 of the 33 cases.
- 7.1.4 Details are outlined below of the outcome of the 2 applications that the former councillor used his casting vote:
- LA05/2015/0345 – 16 Dromore Road Hillsborough
- This application was for three dwellings inside the settlement limit of Hillsborough on previously developed land. It was recommended for refusal and approved contrary to the officer's recommendation with the Chair of the Committee using his casting vote following a tie. The dwellings are built and occupied.
- LA05/2016/1050 – Beanstown Road, Lisburn
- This application was for four dwellings inside the settlement limit of Lisburn on zoned housing land. It was recommended for approval and refused contrary to the officer's recommendation with the Chair using his casting vote following a tie. The application was subsequently approved at appeal and costs awarded against the council for bringing an unnecessary appeal. The dwellings are not built.
- 7.1.5 Of the 3 applications referenced at 7.1.2 by Complainant 1 where it is alleged the former councillor used his casting vote, in only 1 application did the former Councillor use his casting vote (this was application LA05/2015/0345). In the other 2 applications there was a majority vote of 5:4 against the officer recommendation to refuse.
- 7.1.6 Beyond the 2 applications referred to at 7.1.4, there are 7 other applications the former Councillor voted with his employer's (and father's) representation in a majority decision. The application references are LA05/2015/0342, LA05/2015/0765, LA05/2016/0542, LA05/2016/0676, LA05/2017/0633, LA05/2017/0097 and LA05/2017/0977. The latter application was a split decision but the casting vote was exercised by the new Chair for that year.
- 7.1.7 Consequently, there are 9 occasions where the former Councillor, exercising his vote, was critical to the outcome of the decision making process. The outcome of 2 of these 9 are highlighted above in paragraph 7.1.4. Of the other 7 applications:
- LA05/2015/0342 was withdrawn by the applicant and no further application was made
 - LA05/2015/0765 was approved and built
 - LA05/2016/0542 was withdrawn and the car park in Antrim Street was closed

- LA05/2016/0676 was approved and one of the dwellings was built
- LA05/2017/0633 was subject to judicial review proceedings remitted back to the council and subsequently refused and no further application has been submitted;
- LA05/2017/0097 was a retrospective development that was approved contrary to the officer's recommendation to refuse
- LA05/2017/0977 was withdrawn and then subsequently approved under delegated authority and is now built

7.1.8 The application subject to judicial review proceedings at 7.1.6 (LA05/2017/0633) and the application overturned at appeal at 7.1.4 (LA05/20165/1050) cost the council circa £110K in terms of legal costs and costs in bringing forward an unnecessary appeal.

7.1.9 More recently (March 2023), the NIAO issued updated guidance in respect of Planning fraud risk that highlights good practice standards for Elected Members based on abiding by the seven Nolan principals and the additional five principals adopted by the NI Assembly and set out in the NI Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors. Consequently, it is intended that this NIAO guidance is incorporated within the council's overall planning improvement programme as prescribed training and part of the protocol for the operation of the Planning Committee.

7.1.10 The risk of a planning decision being overturned increases significantly where the Planning Committee votes against the recommendations made by the professionally trained Planning Officer. This is further supported in a recent set of judicial review proceedings against a planning decision made by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council (Ref: SCO12472). The judgement stated at paragraph 59 under the heading 'A cautionary word':

[59] These proceedings provide an example, in my view, of the dangers of elected councillors rejecting the advice of professional planning officers without valid planning grounds for doing so. The analysis of the NIAO discussed above suggests that there may be more willingness on the part of council members to do so in relation to single houses in the countryside than in relation to some other types of development. Whilst it is entirely permissible for elected councillors (to whom planning powers have been given by statute) to exercise planning judgment in a different way to officers in many instances, or to give material considerations different weight than their officers might, they should be wary of stretching planning policy beyond its proper meaning or making decisions on grounds which are not legally defensible. Where they wish to depart from an officer's recommendation, it will often be better to discuss this in advance, including (at least in some cases) with the benefit of the officers' advice or legal advice as to whether there is legitimate scope for a different view to be taken. Where, as here, an unjustifiably generous approach is taken and a legal challenge ensues, this can result in delay and heartache for the planning applicant whom the councillors may have hoped to benefit; and in significant legal costs to the council concerned.

- **Reminder 8 – the risks related to planning decision outcomes increase significantly where the Planning Committee overturns the recommendation of professional planning officers, more notably for single houses in the countryside.**

- 7.2 In summary of the 33 planning cases referred to in the Findings Report, the former Councillor used his casting vote on 2 occasions to overturn the recommendation from officers. In another 7 cases, the outcome of the vote was a margin of 1. Had the former Councillor declared an interest in these cases and left the room, the outcome may have differed and therefore would have been reliant on the vote of the Vice Chair/Deputising Chair in the event of a tie.
- 7.3 In addition to making declarations of interest, Members will be reminded of their obligations to engage with policy in framing any reason which is contrary to the officer's recommendation to ensure that the proper basis for making the planning decision is fully recorded and that there is openness and transparency in the decision making process.
- 7.4 The Council recognises that interested parties will have had the opportunity to engage with the council's complaints process, considered the appropriateness of taking judicial review proceedings or had recourse through the Planning Appeals process. This is where, on occasion, an application was decided contrary to the planning officer's recommendation and where the former Councillor's vote in particular was considered to be critical to the outcome.
- **Action 11 – As part of a continuous improvement journey, NIAO guidance to be included as part of the prescribed training in order to sit on the Planning Committee with a view to minimising risk to the council.**
- 7.5 Planning Guidance & Training
- 7.5.1 Following the Planning function passing to local government on 1st April 2015, a Protocol for the Operation of the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Planning Committee was introduced from that date. This was a newly transferred function to Local Government and significant improvements have been made to policy, procedures and processes over the past 9 years. This has been a combination of new Planning Advice Notes, internal and sector wide audits, recommendations from external bodies such as the PAC (Planning Appeals Commission), self-evaluation and outcomes from appeals to the PAC or through the judicial review system.
- 7.5.2 Paragraph 31 of the 2015 Protocol for the Operation of the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Planning Committee relates to Declaration of Interests and states:
- “At the beginning of every meeting, Councillors will be asked to declare an interest on any item on the agenda and must then leave the meeting for that item. Once discussions are complete, members will be invited to return to the meeting. Notification of the Committee decision will be provided before the meeting reconvenes.”*
- 7.5.3 On 1 March 2017, the Protocol was updated and the Declaration of Interests section was expanded as follows:
- “At the beginning of every meeting, Members will be asked to declare whether they have a pecuniary and/or significant private or personal non-pecuniary interest in any item on the agenda. Should a Member declare such an interest they must leave the meeting room for the duration of that item. Members will then be invited to return to the meeting room and notified of the Committee's decision before the meeting recommences.”*

7.5.4 *Where a Member, in advance of the relevant Committee meeting, has taken a firm view on the planning application (in essence they have “pre-determined” the application) that Member should make an open declaration at the beginning of the relevant meeting and leave the meeting for that entire item. Once discussions are complete, the Member (s) will be invited to return to the meeting. Notification of the Committee decision will be provided to the Member(s) before the meeting reconvenes.”*

7.5.5 The March 2017 Protocol also introduced a specific requirement for training as follows:

“A Member shall not participate in decision making at meetings of the Planning Committee if they have not attended the training prescribed by the Council. Members of the Planning Committee shall also endeavour to attend any other specialised training sessions provided, since these are designed to extend the knowledge of the Member on planning law, regulations, procedures and development plans and to generally assist the Member in carrying out their role properly and effectively.”

7.5.6 The minimum training to be undertaken by all Members includes training on the principles of good decision making and on Part 9 of the Code of Conduct for Councillors. If Members do not attend both of these courses, they cannot participate in the planning committee decision making process. Records are held by the Council’s HR & OD team and training is refreshed for Members following Local Government elections. It has been confirmed that the 11 Members of the current Planning Committee have all undertaken the minimum training requirements and will be subject to any further adoption of prescribed training such as the NIAO recent guidance on fraud risk in a planning context.

7.5.7 The Protocol relating to Declaration of Interests was further refined on 3rd May 2021 as follows:

*“At the beginning of **every** meeting, Members will be asked to declare whether they have any pecuniary and/or significant private or personal non-pecuniary interest in any item on the agenda.*

Should a Member declare such an interest they must have regard for the Members Code of Conduct and it is recommended that they leave the meeting room for the duration of the item unless they have registered to speak on the item. Members will then be invited to return to the meeting room and notified of the Committee’s decision before the meeting recommences. In this circumstance the Member will be invited into the room to address the Committee and answer questions at the appropriate time.

Once discussions are complete, the Member(s) will be invited to return to the meeting room. Notification of the Committee decision will be provided to the Member(s) before the meeting reconvenes.”

7.5.8 Improvements have been made to the planning protocol in relation to declarations of interest while all members of the Planning Committee have received the necessary training to participate in meetings. It should be noted that there is an annual review

of the planning protocol allowed for within the body of the documentation and this review has taken place on several occasions.

7.6 Options Available where Concern exists regarding a Planning Application Decision

7.6.1 Where a planning officer recommendation is overturned by the Committee or where concern exists over a non-declared conflict of interest, the following options exist:

Actions available to Members

- Where the interest is known by other Committee Members or by officers, the matter should be raised at the earliest point possible, being at the Planning Committee, by other Members. The discussion should be captured within the minute of the meeting.
- Where a Member reflects on circumstances and considers that they should have declared an interest in an agenda item, the declaration of interest should be submitted retrospectively. Consideration would be needed as to whether the business should be referred back to Committee for reconsideration.
- Internal Fraud Risk Assessment – Members could refer the case to Internal Audit for internal investigation. This process was followed recently in relation to soil misrepresentation samples highlighted to Council by NIAO and NIEA. Dependent on the outcome, this could be escalated to the Commissioner for Standards for Local Government.
- Refer to the Commissioner for Standards for Local Government – noting the time taken to investigate the case against a former Councillor of the Council, this may not result in early intervention however, the case will be appropriately investigated in due course.

Actions Available to Officers after the above options have been considered

- Any concerns noted by the legal advisor following declaration of interest should be brought to the attention of the CEO/Director by the legal advisor
- The CEO/Director to raise the non-disclosure directly with the relevant Councillor(s) – it is a Councillors responsibility to declare the interest however, in such circumstances, it would be appropriate for the CEO/Director to formally record details of the conversation and to share this with the relevant councillor. The outcome of this may be that no further action is required following the clarification provided; or the Member retrospectively declares the conflict of interest; or the CEO/Director considers one of the options below. Where the Member retrospectively declares the conflict of interest before any decision is issued, consideration would be needed as to whether the decision should be referred back to Committee for reconsideration. Officers may consult with our legal advisers on this on a case by case basis.
- Internal Fraud Risk Assessment – as above.
- Refer to the Commissioner for Standards for Local Government – as above.
- CEO instigates a Judicial Review of the Council Decision – proceedings could progress to quash the decision on the grounds of administrative error. This is only available for a time limited period following the decision of the Planning Committee. This option allows for the decision-making process to be corrected at minimum cost to the Council. For the cases referred to in the Assistant Commissioner's decision notes, a Judicial Review could not be instigated due to the passage of time since the original planning decision.
- Where the planning decision is for a refusal the applicant can take an appeal to the Planning Appeals Commission. Otherwise their recourse is to the judicial review courts or via the Council's complaints system leading to an escalation to the Commissioner's office.
- Revocation of the planning decision – It is a decision not to be taken lightly as there are significant cost implications for the Council. For the cases referred to in the Assistant

Commissioner's decision notice, none of these can be revoked due to the passage of time without first seeking leave to appeal to the High Court due to time limitations for such action.

- **Reminder 9 – Councillors to be aware of the options that exist to the Council to allow for quick and effective engagement with Elected Members where a declaration of a pecuniary or significant non-pecuniary interest has not been made. Early intervention in such circumstances is crucial.**

7.7 Ongoing Improvements to the Planning Service

7.7.1 Recognising good practice guidance issued by the Northern Ireland Audit Office, recommendations from internal audit reports on the planning function and the NI wide improvement plan, 2 improvement projects remain outstanding for the service. These are to develop a LCCC specific planning improvement plan and a review of processes to measure and improve performance within the Planning Unit. Recognising our continuous improvement journey, the Council agreed at the Governance & Audit Committee on 13th June 2024 to include planning performance improvement as a key action for 2024/25. An improvement plan is under development and will be presented to the Corporate Management Team in the near future and thereafter, to the Planning Committee for endorsement.

- **Action 12 – Develop the Planning Improvement Plan and associated planning performance targets by 31st October 2024**
- **Action 13 – Implement the Planning Improvement Plan by 31st March 2025 and note any performance improvements through the annual Planning Improvement Plan reporting process.**

7.8 Land Interest

7.8.1 Paragraphs 22 – 40 of the Findings of Fact within the Decision Notice (Pages 15-18) detail information regarding submission of a planning application by the former councillor on 7 December 2017. The process outlines steps taken to avoid the former councillor declaring an interest in land associated with a planning application. An amended planning application with the correct information was submitted on 7 September 2018.

- **Reminder 10 – Being a councillor requires the highest standards of probity and integrity. In submitting a planning application for land within the Council's boundary, councillors should ensure appropriate declaration of any interest, by them (and of their wider family), in the land.**

8.0 Conclusion

8.1 This timely review of the Decision by the Assistant Commissioner allows the Council to reflect on processes and to remind all on the requirement to comply with the Code of Conduct for Councillors.

8.2 The Planning function transferred to Councils on 1 April 2015 and over the past 9 years, has undergone significant improvements as a result of training, self-assessment, new guidance, appeals and legal outcomes. As part of the Council's continuous improvement journey, an

improvement plan is in development to drive down our current performance trends in relation to planning decision making. In tandem with this, improvement work is ongoing at a NI wide level through joint work between Councils and DFI.

- 8.3 There are learnings from the review for all of local government and the action plan associated with this review should be shared with Solace NI and NILGA.
- 8.4 Both Officers and Members have a role to play in protecting the reputation of the Council and the wider local government sector. It is the individual responsibility of Members to declare pecuniary and significant non-pecuniary interests at Council, Committee and Sub Group meetings as required. However, it is hoped that this review acts as a refresh for all concerned and provides clarity on the steps that can be taken where a conflict of interest hasn't been declared. Furthermore, the proactive actions being proposed through this review should assist in improving openness and transparency to our citizens, stakeholders and those with an interest in the work of local government.
- 8.5 The role of the Planning Committee provides an opportunity to support or refuse new developments within the Council area. Strong justification for over turning planning officer recommendations is essential.

9.0 Summary of Actions, Guidance and Recommendations

No.	Action	For Councillors or Officers	Action Complete? If no, action by when?
A1.	Issue Conflict of Interest Form to all Councillors each year, after the Annual Meeting	Officers	Yes, ongoing
A2.	Councillors must complete and return the conflict of interest form annually	Councillors	Yes, now issued annually. 2024/25 Declaration issued June 2024
A3.	Publish annually a combined Elected Member Conflict of Interest Register	Officers	No, 31 st August 2024
A4.	Advise Solace NI of the proposed requirement being adopted in LCCC with regards to the annual completion of a Conflict of Interest form by all Members	Officers	No, by 30 th September 2024
A5.	Recommend to NILGA that conflicts of interest and complying with the Commissioner for Standards/Ombudsman is strengthened in the standard Member induction training.	Officers	No, by 31 st July 2024
A6.	Update declaration of interest form to capture relevant guidance on what is a significant private or personal non-pecuniary interest, including the expected action by those who declare an interest.	Officers	No, by 31 st July 2024
A7.	Amend the Protocol for Operation of the Planning Committee to note that, where a Councillor declares an interest and does not leave the room without providing valid justification, the matter should be	Officers	No, by 31 st December 2024

	challenged by the Chair of the Committee, or other Councillors.		
A8.	Member Services Officers to have present at any Council, Committee, or sub group meeting, details of the declared conflicts of interest of all Members with voting rights.	Officers	No, by 31 st August 2024
A9.	Amend the Protocol for Operation of the Planning Committee to report annually for noting, all declarations of interest made relating to the work of the Planning Committee and to share this recommendation with Solace NI and NILGA	Officers	No by 31 st December 2024
A10.	Where the Council's legal adviser has concerns about the action of a Councillor following declaration of interest, the legal adviser should bring those concerns to the attention of the CEO/Director. Officers will confirm this position to the Council's solicitors appointed through the relevant framework.	Officers	No, by 31 st July 2024
A11.	As part of a continuous improvement journey a recommendation shall be to include the NIAO guidance as part of the prescribed training in order to sit on the Planning Committee.	Officers	No, by 30 th September 2024
A12.	Develop the Planning Improvement Plan and associated planning performance targets by 31 st October 2024	Officers	No, by 31 st October 2024
A13.	Implement the Planning Improvement Plan by 31 st March 2025 and note any performance improvements through the annual Planning Improvement Plan reporting process.	Officers	No, by 31 st March 2025
	Guidance		
G1.	For circumstances where a Councillor on the Planning Committee works for an MLA or MP who wishes to make representation on a planning application under consideration, a pecuniary interest should be declared and the member should leave the room. There are no exceptions to this because there is a pecuniary interest.	Councillors	Ongoing
G2.	For circumstances where a Councillor on the Planning Committee is related to an MLA or MP who wishes to make representation on a planning application under consideration, a significant non-pecuniary interest should be declared and the member should leave the room. The member could remain in the room if they have been given dispensation by DFC to remain or where they believe it would be to the Council's benefit for the Member to remain. Any members deciding on this latter course of action should be prepared to be challenged by other Members of the Committee and/or by the CEO/Director either during or following the meeting, recognising an increased risk of the	Councillors	Ongoing

report potentially coming under greater scrutiny through the declaration of interest.

	Reminders		
R1.	Regularly reflect on their conduct as part of their role as an Elected Member to avoid bringing themselves or the council into disrepute.	Councillors	Ongoing
R2.	Refresh conflicts of interest declared during the course of the year should new pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests arise	Councillors	Ongoing
R3.	Note the requirement in law to comply with a Commissioner's request in connection with an investigation, even following the end of their term as a Councillor.	Councillors	Ongoing
R4.	Declare any significant private or personal non-pecuniary interest arising at a Council, committee or sub group meeting	Councillors	Ongoing
R5.	A requirement to withdraw from the relevant meeting when the matter to which an Elected Member has a significant private or personal interest is being discussed	Councillors	Ongoing
R6.	Continue to reflect on the 12 requirements of Section 8.1 of the Code in reaching decisions regarding the business of the Council.	Councillors	Ongoing
R7.	Councillors on the Planning Committee to continually reflect on their role in relation to the planning process.	Councillors	Ongoing
R8.	The risks related to planning decision outcomes increase significantly where the Planning Committee overturns the recommendation of professional planning officers, more notably for single houses in the countryside.	Councillors	Ongoing
R9.	Be aware of the options that exist to the Council to allow for quick and effective engagement with Elected Members where a declaration of a pecuniary or significant non-pecuniary interest has not been made. Early intervention in such circumstances is crucial.	Councillors	Ongoing
R10.	Being a councillor requires the highest standards of probity and integrity. In submitting a planning application for land within the Council's boundary, councillors should ensure appropriate declaration of any interest, by them (and of their wider family), in the land.	Councillors	Ongoing

10.0 Examples to assist Members with regard to declaration of interests:

The employer of a Councillor applies for planning permission of any sort – **Action Councillor should declare a pecuniary interest, complete a Declaration of Interest Form and leave the room.**

A Councillor on the Planning Committee is employed by an MLA or MP. The MLA or MP requests permission to speak to a Planning Application – **Action Councillor should declare pecuniary interest, complete Declaration of Interest Form and leave the room.**

A report is presented to Committee on a decision to award a contract for the development of a new IT system for the Landlord Registration System. Several Councillors declare an interest as they are a landlord – **Action, no action required and no requirement to leave the room, as there is no benefit to the Councillor.**

A sports or community group has applied for funding from the Council on the advice of a Councillor. A report has been presented to the Committee to outline the outcome of assessments. The local group are noted as being successful in the award of funding – **No declaration of interest required, as funding criterion only is developed by Committee. The assessment of applications and award of funding in line with criteria is progressed by officers. For the purposes of clarity for Members, the Code could be clearer on where a conflict would exist, perhaps holding an office, employed by or being part of the governing committee. This would differentiate advocating from representing. Officers will raise this point with DFC.**

A sports, advocacy or community group has applied for funding from the Council on the advice of a Councillor. A report has been presented to the Committee to outline the outcome of assessments. The local group has missed out on funding by 1 point. **The Councillor suggests an alteration to the assessment criteria or proposes increase in the funding pot to allow additional awards to be made. This could be deemed to be a significant non-pecuniary interest. In such circumstances, Councillors should avoid such proposals as public perception may suggest that the proposal was made to gain favour with an element of voters.**

A notice of motion referred to the Corporate Services Committee proposes writing to the Health Minister to request a pay rise for all staff in the Health family. Nine members of the Corporate Services Committee declare a pecuniary interest because they have immediate family working in the health sector. **Action – Councillors should declare the interest and complete the register of interests and leave the room, if the committee can continue with the minimum quorum. This is to avoid members of the public suggesting the Council's lobbying of a Minister was for a direct benefit to individual Councillor's financial circumstances. If quorum can't be met, then all Members return and Chair notes the rationale for returning to the room. Alternatively, should the Chair consider the matter to be too significant for those to declare an interest to vote, the matter could be referred to the next Council meeting for decision, if a quorum is likely.**

A report is presented to the Corporate Services Committee following a DFC notification that Councillors allowances have increased in line with inflation. This is a very challenging consideration for Members. On the one hand, there is a DFC recognition that cost of living is impacted by inflation and with 40 councillors from a variety of backgrounds, the financial implication for some will be greater than it is for others. On the other hand, some members may see the hardship being experienced by our residents and seek to deviate away from the DFC recommendation. Despite the long hours and family sacrifices that Councillors may have to make, it can be difficult to be seen to be voting one way or the other. **Action – short term, all Members should declare an interest and a vote should be taken. Officers shall explore further with DFC the possibility of such decisions being taken by DFC as the Department with responsibility for local government. Meanwhile, officers shall develop a report for**

Committee to request that all future inflationary increases applied by DFC be adopted and thereafter to be noted at Committee.

The NILGA corporate plan is presented to the Corporate Services Committee. Six Members of the Committee are nominated as Council representatives on NILGA. **Action – the members should declare a non-pecuniary interest but can remain in the room and speak and vote on the matter, as they have been appointed by the Council as a representative on the organisation.**

A report is presented to committee to indicate a request from NILGA to increase the payments made annually to NILGA Office bearers. Six members of the Committee are nominated as Council representatives on NILGA and one of those is an existing NILGA Office Bearer. **Action – The Office Bearer should declare a pecuniary interest and leave the room. The remaining 5 members should declare a significant non-pecuniary interest but can remain in the room and speak and vote on the matter, as they have been appointed by the Council as a representative on the organisation.**

An award of funding is to be made to Citizens Advice following receipt of a block grant from DFC. 2 members declare an interest (1 is appointed by Council to the Board of Citizens Advice and the other was appointed following a public recruitment process). **Action – Both members should declare a significant non-pecuniary interest however, both can remain in the room. The member appointed to the Board by the Council may speak and vote on the matter. The member appointed following a recruitment process may only speak on matters affecting the finances or property of the organisation, but cannot vote.**

A report is presented to Committee to seek agreement to award funding to a specific sports group following a successful application to the Community Investment Fund (CIF). An elected member is a Director on the sports group – **Action – Councillor should declare interest, complete register of interest and leave room for the duration of this agenda item.**

A report is presented to Committee to note the outcome of sport funding awards to 45 groups in the Lisburn Castlereagh area. Four Councillors are Directors on the board of 6 successful groups – **Action – no action as report is for noting only.**

11.0 References

The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 [Local Government Act \(Northern Ireland\) 1972 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, [Local Government Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

The Northern Ireland Code of Conduct for Councillors, Department for Environment, 27 May 2014 [Northern Ireland Local Government Code Of Conduct For Councillors \(communities-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

The Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors – Guidance for Councillors from the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Standards, Northern Ireland

Commissioner for Standards, May 2017 [Guidance-for-Councillors-from-the-Northern-Ireland-Commissioner-for-Complaints-April-2017-2-1 \(1\).pdf](#)

Planning in Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Office, 1st February 2022 [NIAO Report - Planning in NI.pdf \(niauditoffice.gov.uk\)](#)

Planning Fraud Risks, Northern Ireland Audit Office, 1 March 2023 [Planning Fraud Risks | Northern Ireland Audit Office \(niauditoffice.gov.uk\)](#)

Decision of the Assistant Northern Ireland Local Government Commissioner for Standards following an Adjudication Hearing held on 15 November 2023 and 15 February 2024, Northern Ireland Local Government Commissioner for Standards, 8th March 2024 [Luke Poots | NIPSO](#)