

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting of the Corporate Services Committee held remotely and in the Council Chamber, Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn on Wednesday 12th October 2022 at 6.02 pm.

PRESENT IN COUNCIL CHAMBER (COMMITTEE):

Councillor S Hughes (Chairman)

Councillor U Mackin (Vice-Chairman)

Aldermen A G Ewart MBE, O Gawith, S Martin, and J Tinsley

Councillors A P Ewing, J Lavery BEM, T Mitchell and The Hon N Trimble

PRESENT IN A REMOTE LOCATION (COMMITTEE):

The Right Worshipful The Mayor
Councillor S Carson

Alderman S P Porter

Councillor S Lowry

OTHER MEMBERS OF COUNCIL PRESENT IN A REMOTE LOCATION

Alderman A Grehan

Councillors A Gowan and S Skillen

IN ATTENDANCE:

Director of Finance & Corporate Services
Director of Service Transformation (Remote)
Head of Assets
Head of Corporate Communications & Administration
Head of Finance
Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development
Head of Planning & Capital Development (Remote)
Portfolio Manager (Remote)
IT Officer
Events Technician
Member Services Officers (CH & RN)

Commencement of Meeting

The Chairman proceeded to welcome everyone to the meeting and advised that it was being live-streamed to enable members of the public to both hear and see the proceedings.

The names of those Elected Members who were in attendance at the meeting, both in person and on a remote basis, were read out by the Member Services Officer.

The Chairman stated that, although the meeting was being live-streamed, unauthorised recording was still not permitted, as per 8.5 of the Council's Standing Orders. The Chairman also reminded everyone to ensure that mobile phones were turned off or on silent mode for the duration of the meeting.

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services proceeded to outline the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency. Finally the Chairman asked that any Member entering or leaving the meeting alert the Member Services Officer accordingly so that this might be accurately reflected in the minutes.

Alderman A Grehan joined the meeting remotely at 6.06 pm.

1. Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting were accepted and recorded on behalf of the Deputy Mayor, Councillor M Guy; Alderman M Henderson MBE and Councillor R Carlin.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Chairman 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.

The following Declaration of Interest was made:-

- Alderman S Martin - Item 3 of Report of Head of Corporate Communications & Administration – “Health Working Group”. (Employee of South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust)

3. Director of Finance & Corporate Services

3.1 Retention & Disposal Schedule for Planning

Presented by Head of Planning & Capital Development.

The Head of Service reported on a joint project by 10 councils and the Department for Infrastructure (Planning) to develop and configure a new IT system for delivering the planning function. The system is due to go live in Autumn 2022.

3.1 Retention & Disposal Schedule for Planning (Continued)

To support the new Planning IT System, a new Retention & Disposal Schedule for Planning had been created. This would be separate to the Council's policy on Retention & Disposal.

It was proposed by Alderman J Tinsley, seconded by Alderman O Gawith and agreed to recommend that:-

- the new Retention & Disposal Policy for Planning Records be agreed;
- the Planning Retention & Disposal Schedule be appended to the Council's schedule for the Retention and Disposal of Records as a replacement for the DoE Disposal of Records schedule, subject to agreement with PRONI.

3.2 Finance & Corporate Services – Performance Report

Members had been provided with reports on the following in regard to the Finance & Corporate Services Directorate:-

- Management Accounts for Q1 (1st April – 30th June 2022);
- Operational Metrics/Service KPIs for Q1 (1st April – 30th June 2022).

It was agreed that the summary budget reports and the outturn of Operational Metrics/Service KPIs for Q1 (1st April – 30th June 2022) in regard to the Finance & Corporate Services Directorate be noted.

3.3 District Electoral Area Local Investment Programme Quarter 2 Report

In the absence of the Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing, her report was presented by the Portfolio Manager who also responded to Members' questions in this regard.

The report provided an update on the DEA Local Investment Programme and updates on the following were noted:-

- DEA Investment Programme (2022-2023) – Quarter 2 report;
- DEA Investment Programme - 2021-2022 update.

It was agreed on a Proposal made by Councillor N Trimble and seconded by Councillor A P Ewing that the updates on the DEA Local Investment Programme (2022-2023) and the DEA Local Investment Plan (2021-2022) be noted, and that the actions as outlined so as to progress all projects be agreed.

The Portfolio Manager agreed to ascertain the current position of the project associated with the public toilet facility adjacent to the car park in Ballynahinch Street, Hillsborough and to advise Alderman A G Ewart accordingly.

Councillor S Skillen joined the meeting remotely during discussion of this item of business. (6.16 pm)

4. Report of Head of Corporate Communications & Administration

4.1 Audio & Video

4.1.1 Recordings of Council and Committee meetings
(Notice of Motion on Transparency & Accountability
in Local Government)

The Head of Corporate Communications & Administration referred to a Notice of Motion agreed in principle in November 2021 that webcast recordings of all Council and Committee meetings be published on the Council's website.

The Head of Service reported extensively on this matter under the following considerations:-

- Access to Meetings;
- Legal obligations;
- Operational/financial considerations;
- GDPR considerations.

An equality screening document was also provided.

It was proposed by Alderman S Martin, seconded by Alderman J Tinsley and agreed to recommend that:-

- Streaming of Full Council meetings continue;
- Webcast recordings of Full Council meetings on the Council's website be published;
- Streaming of Committee meetings be ceased;
- Audio recordings of all committee meetings on the Council's website be published.

It was also agreed that the minutes of meetings be time-stamped so as to assist in locating any particular item on the audio recording.

4.1.2 Format of Minutes

The Head of Corporate Communications & Administration referred to a decision of the Corporate Services Committee on the 9th February 2022 that changes to the format of minutes should form part of the considerations associated with the Notice of Motion in regard to the publication of webcast recordings.

4.1.2 Format of Minutes (Continued)

The Head of Service reported extensively on this matter and provided an example of a committee minute in the proposed format. It was noted that the Planning Service had confirmed that a comprehensive minute of meetings of the Planning Committee was required so as to illustrate how Members engaged with the planning policy in reaching their decisions.

It was proposed by Councillor N Trimble, seconded by Alderman O Gawith and agreed to recommend that:-

- with the exception of the Planning Committee – minutes of Council and Committee meetings be a summary of the decision item as outlined in the report;
- any comments made by Members with a specific request that they be included in the minutes be done so accordingly.

4.2 Update of Protocol for Opening of Books of Condolence

Members were provided with a revised protocol in draft form for the Opening of Books of Condolence. The main revision was in relation to books of condolence being in virtual format with provision for The Right Worshipful The Mayor to – in Exceptional Circumstances - permit a physical book or books to be put in place. An equality screening document had also been provided.

The recommendation was that the revised Protocol for the Opening of Books of Condolence be agreed, it being acknowledged at the meeting that the policy allowed for the provision of a physical book being made available at the discretion of the Mayor.

An amendment was proposed by Alderman S P Porter and seconded by Councillor T Mitchell that:-

- the revised Protocol be accepted subject to one actual book of condolence being placed in the Civic Headquarters at Lagan Valley Island so that in 12 months' time, a review of the Protocol in terms of actual and virtual signatories might take place;
- the book of condolence being presented to the bereaved family/organisation be as requested by the recipients, ie (i) a physical one, incorporating a hard copy of the virtual condolences, or (ii) a dedicated pdf version.

A vote was taken on the Proposal made by Alderman Porter, the voting being eight votes for and five votes against. The proposal in the name of Alderman S P Porter and seconded by Councillor T Mitchell was therefore declared carried.

The Head of Assets left and returned to the Council Chamber during discussion of this item. (6.32 pm and 6.36 pm)

4.3 Health Working Group

4.3.1 Membership 2022/2023

The Committee noted that – further to the Annual Meeting of Council on the 7th June 2022 – the membership of the Health Working Group for 2022/2023 was as follows:-

PARTY/POST	REPRESENTATIVE
Chairman of the Day of the Corporate Services Committee	Councillor S Hughes (Chairman)
Vice-Chairman of the Day of the Corporate Services Committee	Councillor U Mackin (Vice-Chairman)
Mayor of the Day	The Right Worshipful The Mayor Councillor S Carson
Independent (formerly DUP)	Councillor N Anderson
UUP	Councillor H Legge
APNI	Councillor F Cole
SDLP	Councillor J McCarthy
SF	Councillor G McCleave
SDLP (formerly Green Party)	Councillor S Lee

4.3.2 Minutes of meeting held on the 31st May 2022

Members had been provided with the minutes of a meeting of the Health Working Group held on the 31st May 2022. Clarification from Belfast Health & Social Care Trust in relation to some matters was also provided to Members. Responses to queries raised at the meeting in regard to the SE Trust had been forwarded to all Members of Council on the 10th August 2022.

It was proposed by Alderman S P Porter, seconded by Councillor J Laverty and agreed to recommend that the minutes of the meeting of the Health Working Group held on the 31st May 2022 be adopted.

4.3.3 Other Items

By way of information, the Committee noted that:-

- a meeting of the Health Working Group to which the Chairman had agreed that all Members of Council be invited had been held on the 10th October 2022;
- the South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust had facilitated a tour by the Health Working Group on the 24th August 2022 of the Lagan Valley Hospital and the Lisburn Primary & Community Care Centre;

4.3 Health Working Group (Continued)

4.3.3 Other Items (Continued)

- a statement made by the South Eastern Health & Care Trust on the 5th July 2022 in regard to the outcome of its recent consultation on Urgent & Emergency Care at the Lagan Valley Hospital had been issued to all Members on the 8th July 2022. The statement had also been included in the July 2022 Items for Noting schedule.

Whilst acknowledging the pressures that Trust staff were under, it was considered important that in order to make the interaction between Trust officials and the Council more effective, prior notification of Members' questions should be provided to the Trusts.

Councillor A Gowan left the meeting remotely during discussion of this item of business. (6.50 pm)

4.4 Centralisation of Registration Service – Update Report

The Head of Corporate Communications & Administration referred to a decision of the Committee in March 2022 that an update report be presented to the Committee after six months of operation of the new centralised service of the Registration Service.

Members now noted the update report which covered the areas of progress update, impact on service and compliments received.

It was agreed that the thanks of the Committee be conveyed to the Registration staff for the professional and compassionate way in which they carried out their duties.

4.5 Building Illumination Requests

A number of requests to have the Council offices lit so as to mark different charities/commemorative days had been received and were set out in the Head of Corporate Communications & Administration's report.

4.5.1 Requests approved by Chairman & Vice-Chairman

It was noted that the following requests which complied with the Building Illuminations Policy had been approved by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee:-

Organisation	Date	Colour
Anti-Slavery Day (from Department of Justice)	18 th October 2022	Red
Black History Month (from North West Migrants Forum)	21 st October 2022	Red

4.5 Building Illumination Requests (Continued)

4.5.2 Request approved under Exceptional Circumstances

A request had been received from Relate NI for the Council offices to be lit in blue and orange on the 4th September 2022 to mark Relationships' Week.

It was noted that - due to the significance of Relate's 75th anniversary in supporting relationships and families across Northern Ireland - the request had been approved under Exceptional Circumstances.

4.5.3 Requests Declined

The committee noted the reasons as set out in the report as to why the following requests for the illumination of Lagan Valley Island had been declined:-

Organisation	Date of proposed light up and colour
Leukaemia & Lymphoma NI	Red on the 1 st September 2022
World Arthritis Day	Blue on 12 th October 2022
National Hygiene Week	3 rd – 9 th October 2022 (Colour not specified)
International Dyslexia Day	Turquoise on 8 th October 2022
Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) Awareness Day	Purple on 14 th October 2022

4.5.4 Passing of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

Further to a request at the Special Meeting of Council held on the 10th September 2022, it was noted that The Right Worshipful The Mayor, and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Services Committee, had - under Exceptional Circumstances – agreed for Lagan Valley Island, Union Bridge and Castle Gardens to be lit in purple to mark the passing of her Late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.

4.5.5 Review

The Head of Service advised that a report on the effectiveness of light-ups would be made to the next meeting of the Committee. The report would also include any ideas that charities may have put forward as to how the Council could further assist in the promotion of their activities.

4.5 Building Illumination Requests (Continued)

4.5.6 Light-Up for Christmas

It was proposed by Alderman S Martin and seconded by Councillor N Trimble that Lagan Valley Island be lit in red and green on a date as close as possible to Christmas Eve/Day so as to mark the festive season.

It was agreed that – subject to the provisions of the Building Illumination Policy:-

- Lagan Valley Island be lit in red and green on a date as close as possible to Christmas Eve/Day so as to mark the festive season;
- the Christmas light-up referred to above be added to the Annual Schedule of Light-Ups.

Councillor A Gowan rejoined the meeting remotely during discussion of this item of business. (7.03 pm)

5. Report of Head of Finance

5.1 Estimates 2023-2024 – Schedule of Meetings

It was proposed by Alderman A G Ewart, seconded by Councillor T Mitchell and agreed to recommend that the programme of meetings for the 2023/2024 Estimates' process be approved.

5.2 Local Government Staff Commission

The recommendation by the June 2022 meeting of the Committee to pay the Council's contribution of £31,359 (exclusive of VAT) to the Local Government Staff Commission had been referred back from Council on the 28th June 2022.

It was proposed by Councillor N Trimble, seconded by Councillor J Laverty and agreed to recommend that the Council's contribution of £31,359 (exclusive of VAT) to the Local Government Staff Commission be paid.

6. Agenda Item Brought Forward
Any Other Business

As the remainder of the business before the meeting was of a confidential nature, the Chairman sought agreement to bring forward Item 7 of the agenda – Any Other Business – so that items of a non-confidential nature might be raised when the Committee was in Live Stream. This was agreed.

6.1 National Association of Councillors (NI Region)
Annual General Meeting – 21st October 2022
Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services reported receipt of a communication dated the 10th October 2022 from the National Association of Councillors (NI Region) in regard to the AGM of the NI Region being held on the 21st October 2022 in the Glenavon Hotel, Cookstown.

The event was open to all Members of the Council and attendance could be in person or on a virtual basis.

It was proposed by Councillor U Mackin, seconded by Alderman J Tinsley and agreed that the attendance of any Member of the Council at the AGM of the NI Region of the National Association of Councillors on the 21st October 2022 be approved and that the Council be responsible for the payment of approved expenditure in this regard.

Members were invited to notify Member Services if they wished to be registered for the event.

6.2 Resignation of staff from Council's employment
Alderman A G Ewart

Alderman A G Ewart expressed concern at the number of staff leaving the Council's employment and cited the matter of fixed-term contracts as being the reason for this in many cases. Alderman Ewart asked if staff on fixed term contracts could have such contracts made permanent.

The Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development stated that fixed-term contracts were in place by virtue of a number of factors, ie funding arrangements for certain posts and consideration of staffing structures under Efficiency Reviews. Funded posts may always be fixed-term due to the nature of funding. No definitive period for others could be provided as it will depend on the progress and order of structures under the Efficiency Review.

Councillor T Mitchell left the Chamber and returned to it during discussion of this item of business. (7.17 pm and 7.20 pm)

6.3 Efficiency Review Steering Group – UUP membership
Councillor N Trimble

Councillor N Trimble reported that Councillor A Swan had replaced him as the UUP member of the Efficiency Review Steering Group.

7. Confidential Report from Director of Finance & Corporate Services

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

7.1 Boundary Rectification at Maghaberry Community Centre lands – Rectification 2

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

Report to be redacted following completion of the Registry of Transfer Deed.

7.2 Contract Variations – Future consistent approach in relation to requests for an increase in specific tender rates

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

Report to be redacted following ratification by full Council. (25th October 2022)

7.3 Digital Council Business Case – Telephony & Digital Platform

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

Report to be redacted in December 2022 (or when new contracts are in place).

7.4 Tender for the Provision of a Learning Management System – Business Case

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

Report to be redacted post award.

7.5 Procurement of Catering Services – Lagan Valley Island

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

Report to be redacted post further procurement exercise.

7.6 Citywide Residents' Magazine

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

Report to be redacted following Council ratification. (25th October 2022)

7.7 Management Accounts Period 5

(Confidential for reason of information (i) relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information); or (ii) related to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations for negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Council or a Government Department and employees of, or office bearers under, the Council.

Report to be redacted post negotiation.

In Committee

It was proposed by Councillor N Trimble, seconded by Councillor T Mitchell and agreed that the Confidential Report of the Director be considered “in Committee”. (The live-stream was paused at this stage in proceedings.)

7.1 Boundary Rectification at Maghaberry Community Centre lands – Rectification 2

Presented by Head of Assets.

The following documents had been provided:-

- Land boundary overview;
- Land area transfer deed.

It was agreed that the approval by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee to accede to a request by the current landowner/developer to rectify the boundary at the Maghaberry Community Centre lands be noted. The Transfer Deed would be signed and sealed at Full Council.

7.2 Contract Variations – Future consistent approach in relation to requests for an increase in specific tender rates

Presented by Head of Assets.

The following documents had been provided:-

- schedule of contracts for which the Council has received a request to increase the contracted rates, and the reason for such requests;
- a template report to be used when such a report was being presented to a committee.

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services and the Head of Assets answered questions posed by Members in this regard.

7.2 Contract Variations – Future consistent approach in relation to requests for an increase in specific tender rates (Continued)

It was agreed that the above information and the report template to be used when such items were being reported to the appropriate committee be noted.

It was further agreed that such contract variations be reported to the Corporate Services Committee for noting purposes only.

Councillor N Trimble left the Chamber during discussion of this item of business. (7.35 pm)

7.3 Digital Council Business Case – Telephony & Digital Platform

The Director of Service Transformation invited the Portfolio Manager to present this item of business.

The following documents had been provided:-

- Updated Business Case for Digital Platform and Telephony;
- Tender evaluation report for new telephony system.

It was agreed that the following be noted:-

- Award of 4-year contract for the Digital Platform to the firm and at the costs as set out in the report, including additional budget should the Council wish to extend the contract after 4 years;
- Award of 5-year contract (and optional contract two year extension on a 1+1 basis) to the firm and at the costs as set out in the report for the new council telephony system.

Councillor N Trimble returned to the Council Chamber at the conclusion of this item of business. (7.42 pm)

7.4 Tender for the Provision of a Learning Management System – Business Case

Presented by Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development.

The following documents had been provided:-

- Learning Management System (LMS) – Business Case;
- LMS Equality Screening.

It was agreed that the approval of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Services Committee to the commencement of the tender process for the procurement of a Learning Management System by way of an Open Tender process be noted.

Councillor A P Ewing left the Chamber during the presentation of this item of business. (7.44 pm)

7.5 Procurement of Catering Services – Lagan Valley Island

Presented by Head of Corporate Communications & Administration.

The following documents had been provided:-

- Breakdown of catering spend (April – November 2022);
- Breakdown of projected catering spend for the duration of the STA.

It was proposed by Councillor N Trimble, seconded by Alderman J Tinsley and agreed to recommend that:-

- the extension of the contract with the current provider for a further 12 months via STA to the value as set out in the report be approved, whilst noting the price increases;
- delegated authority be given to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee in regard to negotiations for the STA 12 month contract.

It was further agreed on a Proposal made by Alderman A G Ewart and seconded by Alderman J Tinsley that:-

- the provision of a coffee-dock/cart service at Lagan Valley Island be investigated with a view to it being put in place as soon as possible and certainly within the next 12 months;
- a report on the above matter be made to the next meeting of Committee subject to discussion with the Chair and Vice-Chair on progress made.

The Director stated that such a provision would have to be dependent on a no negative cost impact.

Councillor A P Ewing returned to the Chamber during discussion of this item of business. (7.47 pm)

The Head of Assets left the Chamber at the conclusion of this item of business. (8.29 pm)

7.6 Citywide Residents' Magazine

Presented by Head of Corporate Communications & Administration.

The following documents had been provided:-

- Feedback report on an engagement process undertaken in March 2022;
- Equality screening document;
- Proposal paper on distribution of Citywide.

It was proposed by Councillor T Mitchell, seconded by Alderman O Gawith and agreed to recommend that:-

- the intention to produce a printed edition of Citywide before the end of the 2022/2023 financial year in line with current arrangements be noted;
- Option 3 be approved, ie the production of two editions of Citywide in the 2023/24 financial year in a mainly digital approach but supported by printed copies for local collection and distribution as well as an "opt in" for e-mailed versions as outlined.

Alderman S P Porter asked that his dissent to the above decision be recorded as he did not consider there to be sufficient evidence to support the production of Citywide in a digital format as opposed to a printed one.

Alderman J Tinsley left the Chamber during discussion of this item of business. (8.42 pm)

7.7 Management Accounts Period 5

Presented by Head of Finance.

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services and the Head of Finance responded to Members' questions and noted the request to provide the value of unfilled posts within the rolling monthly figures.

It was agreed that the Management Accounts for the period ending the 31st August 2022, together with an extensive narrative report by way of explanation, be noted.

8. Any Other Business - Confidential

There was no other confidential business raised.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor N Trimble, seconded by Councillor J Lavery and agreed to come “out of Committee”. Normal business and the live-stream were resumed.

9. Any Other Business

Dealt with at Item 6.

There being no further business, the Meeting concluded at 8.58 pm.

MAYOR/CHAIRMAN