

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 13th September 2023 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT IN COUNCIL CHAMBER (COMMITTEE):

Alderman O Gawith (Chairman)

Councillor A Ewing (Vice-Chairman)

Deputy Mayor
Councillor G McCleave

Aldermen A Ewart MBE, M Guy and H Legge

Councillors P Burke, R Carlin, K Dickson, N Eaton, A Givan, C Kemp, U Mackin and the Hon N Trimble

PRESENT IN A REMOTE LOCATION (COMMITTEE):

The Right Worshipful The Mayor
Councillor A Gowan

OTHER MEMBERS OF COUNCIL PRESENT IN COUNCIL CHAMBER

Aldermen M Gregg and A Grehan

Councillors D Bassett, G Hynds, J Lavery BEM, A Martin and M McKeever

OTHER MEMBERS OF COUNCIL PRESENT IN A REMOTE LOCATION

Aldermen P Porter and S Skillen

Councillor C McCready

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive
Director of Finance & Corporate Services
Director of Organisation Development & Innovation
Director of Regeneration & Growth (Remote)
Head of Corporate Communications & Administration
Head of Finance
Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development
Acting PCSP/Member Services Manager
Member Services Officer (RN)

Commencement of Meeting

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting and thanked Members for accommodating a later starting time in view of a meeting of an Ad Hoc Committee held earlier in the evening.

The Chairman advised that the meeting would be audio recorded unless the item on the agenda was to be considered under confidential business.

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 Acting PCSP/Member Services Manager.

The Chairman stated that unauthorised recording was 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 Acting PCSP/Member Services Manager accordingly so that this might be accurately reflected in the minutes.

1. Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting were accepted and recorded on behalf of Councillors T Beckett and B Higginson; and Alderman J Tinsley (non- Member of Committee).

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.

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. Report of Director of Finance & Corporate Services

3.1 Notice of Motion – Support of the LGBTQ + Community in Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (00:00:01)

The following Notice of Motion in the name of Councillor D Bassett and seconded by Councillor K Dickson had been referred to the Committee by the Council at its meeting held on the 22nd August 2023.

3.1 Notice of Motion – Support of the LGBTQ + Community in Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (Continued)

“That Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council:-

- Strongly condemns all forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression, advocating for policies that safeguard LGBTQ+ rights in housing, education, employment, and healthcare.
- Commits to enhancing awareness and understanding of LGBTQ+ issues among council members, staff, and the wider community through education and sensitivity training.
- Supports initiatives that provide safe spaces, counselling, and support services for LGBTQ+ youth to combat bullying, harassment, and mental health challenges.
- Actively participates in local Pride events to demonstrate the council’s visible support for the LGBTQ+ community and identifies areas to display LGBTQ+ pride symbols in appropriate public spaces.
- Seeks collaboration with local LGBTQ+ organisations and community groups to better comprehend their needs and explore joint projects that celebrate diversity and inclusivity.

By adopting this motion, we reaffirm our council’s dedication to promoting equality and inclusivity, with the aim of nurturing a more cohesive community that values its diverse members.”

Councillor D Bassett proposed the Notice of Motion and it was seconded by Councillor K Dickson.

An amendment was proposed by Councillor A Ewing and seconded by Councillor A Givan that:-

“This council being mindful of its duty to ensure fair services delivered without discrimination continues their policy of providing services on this basis. Of course this Council has a duty to consult with all the relevant groups but this must also include faith groups and churches. The Council must be mindful of the rights and the need to protect spaces such as single sex changing rooms and toilets. The motion does not take that into account. It is important to note that Pride is a protest movement and while people are free to participate, the council as a public body should not be an active participant and should remain neutral.”

Councillor Bassett spoke to his Notice of Motion as did Councillor Dickson.

3.1 Notice of Motion – Support of the LGBTQ + Community in Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (Continued)

The amendment was shared by the Chief Executive to all Members of Council via e-mail.

The Chairman of the Committee, Alderman O Gawith, cited 17.1.1 of the Council's standing orders and stated that the amendment could not be considered as an amendment as parts thereof were not to do with the original proposal. The Chairman stated that he would neither be allowing the amendment nor hearing it. The original motion would therefore be debated upon.

Councillor A Givan spoke in opposition to the Notice of Motion and asked for a Recorded Vote on any decision taken. The proposal for a Recorded Vote was seconded by Alderman M Guy and agreed.

Alderman P Porter and Councillor A Ewing spoke in opposition to the Notice of Motion. Councillor Ewing asked to have recorded his personal hurt at how he has been treated following the removal – at his demand - of his photograph from social posts associated with Pride.

Alderman M Guy and Councillors R Carlin, C Kemp and N Trimble spoke in support of the Notice of Motion.

Following debate, the Notice of Motion in the name of Councillor D Bassett (a non-member of the Committee) was proposed by Councillor R Carlin and seconded by Councillor K Dickson.

The Recorded Vote was taken, the voting being as follows:-

For the Proposal: Councillor P Burke, Councillor R Carlin, Councillor K Dickson, Councillor N Eaton, Alderman O Gawith, Alderman M Guy, Councillor C Kemp, Alderman H Legge, Councillor G McCleave, Councillor N Trimble. (Total = 10)

Against the Proposal: Alderman A Ewart, Councillor A Ewing, Councillor A Givan, Councillor A Gowan, Councillor U Mackin. (Total = 5)

The proposal was carried and the Notice of Motion was therefore adopted.

During this item of business:-

Councillor U Mackin entered the Chamber during Councillor Bassett's reading of his Notice of Motion. (6.42 pm)

Councillor A Martin entered the Chamber during Councillor A Givan's contribution to the debate. (6.57 pm)

3.1 Notice of Motion – Support of the LGBTQ + Community in Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (Continued)

Councillor N Trimble left the Chamber during Alderman P Porter's contribution to the debate and returned to it during Alderman M Guy's contribution. (7.22 pm and 7.25 pm respectively).

Alderman S Skillen and Councillor C McCready left the meeting on a remote basis at the conclusion of this item of business. (7.30 pm)

3.2 National Association of Councillors (NI Region) – Constitution
(00:41:10)

Further to the meeting of Committee held on the 21st June 2023, Members were provided with the following:-

- e-mail dated the 22nd March 2023 from the National Association of Councillors (NAC) (NI Region), together with the draft constitution of the NAC;
- NAC constitution as at 2016;
- letter dated the 25th July 2023 from the NAC (NI Region) providing a copy of the NAC's audited financial statement for the years ending 31st July 2021 and 2022.

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

- the proposed changes to the NAC Constitution be approved;
- the correspondence dated the 25th July 2023 from the NAC (NI Region) be noted.

The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor A Gowan, and Alderman P Porter left the meeting on a remote basis at the conclusion of this item. (7.31 pm)

4. Report of Chief Executive (00:42:43)

The Director of Regeneration & Growth joined the meeting on a remote basis. (7.31 pm)

Presented by the Chief Executive and Director of Finance & Corporate Services.

4.1 Annual Somme Pilgrimage (00:42:48)

4.1.1 Somme Pilgrimage 2023 (00:42:54)

A report prepared by the Chief Executive in relation to the attendance of the Council's participants in the 2023 Somme Pilgrimage was provided and its content duly noted.

4.1.2 Future Somme Pilgrimages (00:43:00)

Further to the December 2022 meeting of the Committee, a number of options as to how the Council might be represented at future Somme Pilgrimages for the remainder of the current Council term were detailed.

It was proposed by Alderman M Guy and seconded by Councillor R Carlin that the attendees at the Somme Pilgrimage for the remainder of the current Council term be three attendees, ie Mayor of the Day, Chair of the Day of the Corporate Services Committee and the Chief Executive (or his nominee) as the Lead Officer.

An amendment was proposed by Councillor N Trimble and seconded by Councillor A Givan that the attendees at the Somme Pilgrimage for the remainder of the current Council term be five attendees, ie Mayor of the Day, Chair of the Day of the Corporate Services Committee and the Chief Executive (or his nominee) as the Lead Officer; plus up to two Members preferably from parties not already represented by the Mayor and Committee Chairman and who have not represented the Council in past years. This arrangement would mean that one vehicle only would be required.

Alderman Guy withdrew her proposal and that in the name of Councillor N Trimble and seconded by Councillor A Givan was put to the meeting and – on a show of hands – declared carried, the voting being 10 in favour and three against.

Councillor D Bassett left the meeting during consideration of this item.
(7.32 pm)

4.1.3 Donations in relation to Somme Pilgrimage Tours & Visits
(00:57:16)

A number of free tours are provided as part of the Somme Pilgrimage. Such tours enhance the knowledge and enjoyment of the Pilgrimage. To support the delivery of such tours, and to enable their sustainability on a non-fee basis, a donation of £25.00 per person per tour was considered appropriate.

4.1.3 Donations in relation to Somme Pilgrimage Tours & Visits
(Continued)

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

- for any significant tour (in excess of one hour) at The Somme and for which there is no charge, a £25.00 donation for each delegate be made, such donations to apply both for 2023 and for future Pilgrimages;
- in respect of 2023, a retrospective donation of £150.00 be made, ie for the three delegates at each of the two tours (Commonwealth Graves Commission and Vimy Ridge).

5. Report of Director of Organisation Development & Innovation (00:58:10)

5.1 Departmental Plans (00:58:25)

It was proposed by Councillor N Trimble, seconded by Councillor U Mackin and agreed to recommend that the Departmental Plans for 2023-2024 be approved.

6. Report of Head of Corporate Communications & Administration (00:59:56)

6.1 Royal British Legion – NI Festival of Remembrance 2023
Belfast Waterfront Hall – 4th November 2023 (01:00:10)

(This item and also 6.2 were subject to call-ins. These minutes were ratified by Council on 26th September 2023 with the exception of this item and also 6.2.)

Given the time-scale for the placing of advertisements by way of sponsorship and to secure tickets which are always in high demand, the Mayor, the Committee chair and vice-chair had agreed that:-

- the Council sponsor a half page advertisement in the Festival of Remembrance programme at a cost of £500.00;
- four tickets for the event (£25.00 per ticket) be purchased, the attendees to be Mayor & Guest; Chair and Vice-Chair of Corporate Services Committee.

It was proposed by Alderman A Ewart and seconded by Councillor A Givan that the decisions referred to above be approved on a retrospective basis.

Councillor R Carlin asked to have recorded that he was not in agreement with the proposal.

The proposal in the name of Alderman A Ewart and seconded by Councillor A Givan was put to the meeting and – on a show of hands – declared carried, the voting being nine in favour and three against.

6.1 Royal British Legion – NI Festival of Remembrance 2023
Belfast Waterfront Hall – 4th November 2023 (Continued)

Alderman M Guy left the Chamber during debate. (7.50 pm)

Councillor C Kemp left the Chamber at the conclusion of this item. (7.51 pm)

6.2 Anniversary of the Greenfinches (01:02:35)

(This item and also 6.1 were subject to call-ins. These minutes were ratified by Council on 26th September 2023 with the exception of this item and also 6.1.)

It was proposed by Alderman A Ewart and seconded by Councillor A Givan to recommend that:-

- the format and timing of the event as outlined in the report be agreed;
- the arrangements for the event be made in consultation with The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor A Gowan, and Alderman J Tinsley.

Councillors R Carlin and G McCleave (Deputy Mayor) asked to have recorded that they were not in agreement with the proposal.

The proposal in the name of Alderman A Ewart and seconded by Councillor A Givan was put to the meeting and – on a show of hands – declared carried, the voting being eight in favour and three against.

6.3 Lisburn War Memorial – 100 Year Anniversary (01:05:22)

It was proposed by Councillor N Trimble and seconded by Councillor U Mackin to recommend that the proposal of The Right Worshipful The Mayor to hold a commemorative event to mark the centenary of the unveiling of the Lisburn War Memorial be approved.

The proposal was put to the meeting and – on a show of hands – declared carried, the voting being 13 in favour and nil against.

Alderman M Gregg left the Chamber during discussion of this item. (7.54 pm)

Alderman M Guy and Councillor C Kemp returned to the Chamber during discussion of this item. (7.55 pm)

Councillor N Eaton left the Chamber at the conclusion of this item. (7.56 pm)

7. Report of Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development (01:07:36)

The Chairman, Alderman O Gawith, extended a welcome to Mr Greg Bowkett and wished him all the best in his role as Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development.

Councillor R Carlin left the Chamber. (7.56 pm)

7.1 Workforce Reports (01:08:05)

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 30th June 2023;
- Recruitment reports – (i) Advert & Selection; and (ii) Appointments;
- Workforce Profile.

In response to comments from Councillor A Givan about absence figures, the Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development confirmed that reducing days lost in the workplace was a key work focus for his unit. The Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development confirmed that, without increasing headcount, an additional HR Officer would focus on attendance management for at least six months.

Alderman M Gregg and Councillor R Carlin returned to the Chamber during discussion of this item. (7.59 pm)

8. Report of Head of Finance (01:13:28)

8.1 Local Government Staff Commission (01:13:40)

Further to the meeting of Committee held on the 8th March 2023, Members were provided with copy of a letter dated the 30th June 2023 from the Local Government Staff Commission regarding certain information requested by the Council in regard to the activities of the LGSC, together with a comprehensive report covering such information.

It was proposed by Councillor N Trimble, seconded by Councillor R Carlin and agreed to recommend that:-

- the information provided by the Local Government Staff Commission be noted;
- payment of £25,974 (excluding VAT) be made to the Local Government Staff Commission by way of the Council's contribution for 2023/2024.

Alderman A Grehan left the Chamber. (8.04 pm)

8.2 Estimates 2024-2025 – Schedule of Meetings (01:15:18)

It was proposed by Alderman M Guy, seconded by Councillor C Kemp and agreed to recommend that the programme of meetings for the 2024/2025 Estimates' process be approved.

Alderman A Ewart left the Chamber. (8.06 pm)

9. Any other Business – Non-Confidential (01:16:20)

9.1 Lagan Valley Island – Evaluation of Light-Ups (01:16:34)
Councillor J Lavery

Councillor J Lavery enquired as to when a report on the evaluation of building light-ups for charity purposes might be presented to the Committee.

The Head of Corporate Communications & Administration advised that it was intended that a report on this matter would be presented to the October 2023 meeting of Committee.

10. Confidential Report from Director of Finance & Corporate Services (01:18:00)

The Chairman asked that - in line with Item 5.15 of the Protocol and Etiquette for attending meetings on a remote basis – those Members attending the meeting on a remote basis ensure that the meeting could neither be seen nor heard by any other person at those remote locations.

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

10.1 Report on Various 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 and Appendix 1 to be published following ratification and signing of contracts. Appendix 2 to never be published.

10.2 Photography Services Contract
(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 available from the commencement date of the contract (January 2024).

10.3 Graphic Design Services
(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 available from the commencement date of the contract (January 2024).

10.4 Hybrid Working Model

(Confidential for reason of information related 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 employee of, or office bearers under, the Council.)

Redacted report to be available post ratification (26th September 2023).

10.5 Request to undertake additional employment

(Confidential for reason of information (i) relating to any individual ;(ii) which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual; and (iii) information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

Report to never become available.

10.6 Management Accounts Period 4

(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 after full Council meeting (26th September 2023).

10.7 Quarterly Finance Reports – Quarter 1 2023/2024

(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 after full Council meeting (26th September 2023).

In Committee (01:19:08)

It was proposed by Councillor C Kemp, seconded by Councillor A Ewing and agreed that the Confidential Report of the Director be considered “in Committee”. (Recording was paused at this stage in proceedings.)

Alderman A Ewart returned to the Chamber. (8.10 pm)

10.1 Report on Various Tender Awards

Presented by the Director of Regeneration & Growth.

For Members’ information, the Director outlined the circumstances under which tender awards were reported to Committee either for approval or for noting.

10.1 Report on Various Tender Awards (Continued)

It was agreed to recommend that the tenders awarded in regard to the undernoted contracts, together with the attendant tender reports, be noted:-

- Glenavy Traffic Calming Measures;
- Tender for the Collection, Transportation and Recycling of Scrap Metals from Household Recycling Centres;
- The provision of Demand Side Operator (to provide Demand Response Income for LVI);
- Planned Preventative Maintenance Inspections of CCTV;
- Winter Services Provision;
- Schedule AT1 Building Maintenance & Minor Works.

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

The Director undertook to provide Councillor A Givan with details in regard to the Glenavy Traffic Calming Measures.

The Director of Regeneration & Growth left the meeting on a remote basis. (8.12 pm)

10.2 Photography Services Contract

Presented by the Head of Corporate Communications & Administration.

The following documents were provided:-

- Preliminary Expenditure Application;
- Financial Appraisal.

It was proposed by Alderman H Legge, seconded by Councillor N Trimble and agreed to recommend that – having considered the Preliminary Expenditure Application and the Financial Appraisal – the Business Case for the provision of Photography Services be approved.

10.3 Graphic Design Services

Presented by the Head of Corporate Communications & Administration.

The following documents were provided:-

- Preliminary Expenditure Application;
- Financial Appraisal.

10.3 Graphic Design Services (Continued)

It was proposed by Alderman M Guy, seconded by Alderman H Legge and agreed to recommend that – having considered the Preliminary Expenditure Application and the Financial Appraisal – the Business Case for the provision of Graphic Design Services be approved.

10.4 Hybrid Working Model

Presented by the Director of Organisation Development & Innovation.

The report on the Evaluation of the Hybrid Working Pilot (August 2023) was provided.

The Committee considered a number of options in regard to working arrangements within the Council.

It was proposed by Councillor U Mackin, seconded by Councillor A Ewing and agreed to recommend that a Hybrid Working Policy based on a different model with increased flexibility to increase the minimum days in the office depending on operational requirements, be developed.

During this item of business:-

Alderman A Grehan returned to the Chamber during discussion. (8.17 pm)
Councillor G Hynds left and returned to the Chamber during discussion.
(8.17 pm and 8.20 pm respectively)
Councillor N Trimble left and returned to the Chamber during discussion.
(8.35 pm and 8.37 pm respectively)

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services left the Chamber at the conclusion of this item of business. (8.50 pm)

10.5 Request to Undertake Additional Employment

Presented by the Director of Organisation Development & Innovation.

It was proposed by Councillor N Trimble, seconded by Alderman H Legge and agreed to recommend that the request of the Director of Finance & Corporate Services to undertake an additional employment be acceded to.

Councillor J Lavery left the Chamber at the conclusion of this item of business. (8.52 pm)

10.6 Management Accounts Period 4

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services returned to the Chamber.
(8.53 pm)

Presented by the Head of Finance.

The Management Accounts for the period ending the 31st July 2023, together with an extensive narrative report by way of explanation, were noted.

Councillor R Carlin sought details on the maximum capacity of the Vitality leisure membership. The Chief Executive undertook to have such information provided to Members of the Committee.

Alderman A Ewart sought information in relation to recycling income. The Head of Finance undertook to inform him of this information.

10.7 Quarterly Finance Reports – Quarter 1 2023/2024

Presented by the Head of Finance.

The undernoted financial reports for Quarter 1 of 2023-2024, together with an attendant narrative report by way of explanation, were noted:-

- Repairs & Renewals
- Capital Expenditure
- Department for Communities' earmarked reserves.

11. Any Other Business – Confidential

There were no items of a confidential nature raised by Members.

Resumption of Normal Business (01:19:20)

It was proposed by Councillor R Carlin, seconded by Councillor K Dickson and agreed to come "out of Committee". Normal business and audio recording were resumed.

12. Any Other Business (01:19:22)

There were no further items raised.

The meeting concluded at 9.02 pm.

MAYOR/CHAIRMAN