

**LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Council held in the Council Chamber and in Remote Locations on Thursday, 6 February 2025 at 6.03 pm**

**PRESENT IN CHAMBER:**

The Right Worshipful the Mayor  
Councillor K Dickson

Deputy Mayor  
Councillor R Carlin

Aldermen J Baird, A G Ewart MBE, O Gawith,  
A Grehan, A McIntyre and J Tinsley

Councillors D Bassett, R T Beckett, S Burns, P Catney,  
D J Craig, N Eaton, A P Ewing, A Givan, A Gowan,  
B Higginson, G Hynds, U Mackin, C McCready, M McKeever,  
R McLernon and Rt Hon N Trimble

**PRESENT REMOTELY:**

Alderman M Gregg and H Legge  
Councillors C Kemp, J Harpur, J Lavery BEM,  
S Lowry, D Lynch, G McCleave and G Thompson

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Chief Executive  
Director of Finance and Corporate Services  
Director of Regeneration & Growth (Remote)  
Head of Finance  
Member Services Officers (BS CR)  
Technician  
IT Officer

**Commencement of the Meeting**

At the commencement of the meeting, The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson welcomed those present to the special meeting of Council, which had been convened to consider recommendations in connection with the striking of the district rate for 2025/2026. The special meeting was being live-streamed to enable members of the public to hear and see the proceedings.

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

Councillor A Givan entered the meeting at 6.05 pm.

1. **Apologies**

It was agreed that an apologies for non-attendance at the meeting be accepted on behalf of Alderman S P Porter, Councillors J Gallen, P Kennedy, A Martin and T Mitchell, and the Director of Organisation Development and Innovation.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Special Corporate Services Committee – 23 January, 2025

It was proposed by Councillor N Trimble, seconded by Councillor N Eaton, and agreed that the minutes of the special meeting of the Corporate Services Committee held on 23 January, 2025 be confirmed and signed.

4. Report by the Chief Executive

4.1 District Rate and Draft Estimates of Income and Expenditure for 2025/2026

Members had been provided with a copy of the Draft Estimates of Income and Expenditure for 2025/2026 for the various departments of the Council.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor invited the Chairperson of the Corporate Services Committee, Councillor N Trimble, to address the Council.

During his address Councillor Trimble acknowledged that setting the annual budget was one of the most important duties of the Council. The annual budget allows the Council to deliver vital services, support local businesses and enhance the quality of life for all the residents in many ways.

Councillor Trimble also referred to the recent challenges that were experienced by the Council during the recent Storm Eowyn and acknowledged the vital role of Council Officers and staff during and after the storm. He put on record his thanks to Officers and staff, many of whom had worked long hours to support the Council's emergency response efforts.

Councillor Trimble also highlighted the Council's focus was on achieving a balanced budget that protected essential services including waste collection, street cleansing, maintenance of parks and play areas, community facilities, environmental health services, and supporting local regeneration projects. He also spoke about the Council's aim to deliver initiatives that improved the wellbeing of residents such as enhancing recreational spaces and promoting safety and sustainability. He referred also to the rising costs faced by households and businesses which also impacted the Council. He advised that cost increases in the likes of waste services, supply contracts and employee wages all had to be accounted for whilst also endeavouring to ensure the Council's proposed district rate increase was as low as possible. Councillor Trimble welcomed the fact that the Council, once again, would be freezing its prices across all its leisure facilities.

In addressing the Council's ambitions for the future Councillor Trimble referred to the multi-million pound investment in the Dundonald International Ice Bowl which he stated would go towards growing the economy regionally, create jobs and enhance tourism locally and right across Northern Ireland. He also highlighted the

4.1 District Rate and Draft Estimates of Income and Expenditure for 2025/2026

Council's capital programme of works which included Lough Moss sports facility, Laurehill Sports Zone, the redevelopment of the former Hilden Primary School as well as much needed ongoing investment in the Council's vehicle fleet. He also referred to the Council's apprenticeship programme the aim of which would go towards building a skilled workforce for the future, and also the investment in the Council's Christmas programme of activities which had further enhanced the Council's reputation as a key visitor destination.

In concluding, Councillor Trimble, having put forward the proposals in connection with the striking of the district rate, commended the efforts of Members, the Chief Executive, Directors and all Officers during the estimates process, enabling the Council to keep the rate increase as low as possible.

Councillor N Eaton, Vice Chairperson of the Corporate Services Committee, also addressed the Council during which she too conveyed thanks for the efforts of the Chief Executive, Directors and Officers in bringing forward the proposals for the striking of the district rate, and indicated that she wished to second Councillor Trimble's proposals. Councillor Eaton also paid tribute to the Officers and staff for their dedication during Storm Eowyn many having left their own families at home to support those in need.

Councillor G Hynds, having acknowledged the efforts of Officers in bringing forward the district rate proposals, wished to put on record his concerns in relation to lack of investment in assets by the Council and associated unnecessary waste, and also in regard to legal costs incurred by the Council. Councillor Hynds indicated that, in view of his concerns, he would not be supporting the proposals in respect of the district rate that evening.

Several Members, on behalf of their respective political parties, spoke in support of the district rate proposals and they too paid tribute to the Chief Executive, Directors and Officers who had worked hard over a number of months to ensure a low as possible rate rise for 2025/2026.

It was proposed by Councillor N Trimble, seconded by Councillor N Eaton, and, on a vote being taken, agreed that:

- (a) approval be given to the suite of plans, policies, strategies and indicators contained within the estimates documents; and
- (b) the district rate for the financial year 2025/2026 be set at 3.99% for both the domestic and non-domestic rate.

There were 32 votes in favour and one vote against the above proposals.

Conclusion of the Meeting

At the conclusion of the meeting, The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson, also wished to convey his thanks to all Members, the Chief Executive and his team of Officers for their efforts throughout the estimates process.

Conclusion of the Meeting (Cont'd)

The Right Worshipful the Mayor thanked those present for their attendance and there being no further business, the Special Meeting concluded at 6.24 pm.

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Mayor