

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL**Minutes of Meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Committee held in the Council Chamber, Island Civic Centre, on Wednesday 2 September 2026 at 6.00 pm****PRESENT IN CHAMBER:**

Alderman S Skillen (Chair)

Councillor N Parker (Vice-Chair)

Alderman J Baird , M Gregg

Councillors J Bamford, S Burns, P Catney, A Givan, G Hynds, and M McKeever

PRESENT IN REMOTE LOCATION:

Councillors D Bassett and B Magee

IN ATTENDANCE:

Director of Environmental Services

Head of Service (Waste Management & Operational Services)

Head of Service (Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning)

Head of Service (Building Control & Sustainability)

Member Services Officers (EW and FA)

Commencement of the Meeting

The Chair, Alderman S Skillen, 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.

In accordance with the Protocol for Remote Meetings, the Chair asked that those attending via zoom to ensure that the meeting could not be seen or heard by any other person at their remote location when confidential business was being considered. The Chair proceeded to outline the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.

1. **Apologies**

Councillor D Bassett joined the meeting via Zoom during this item of business (6.03 pm)

Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting were accepted and recorded on behalf of Councillors A Gowan, C McCreedy and R McLernon.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Report by the Director of Environmental Services

3.1 Presentation on Terms of Reference

The Director of Environmental Services made a presentation to Members in respect of the Terms of Reference for the Environment and Sustainability Committee.

4. Report by the Head of Service (Building Control & Sustainability)

4.1 Department for Economy Consultation on Geothermal Regulation

The Head of Service (Building Control & Sustainability) delivered this report, which the Members had already been furnished with.

It was proposed by Councillor P Catney, seconded by Alderman M Gregg, and agreed to recommend that retrospective approval be given to the previously submitted LCCC response to the above consultation.

5. Report by the Head of Service (Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning)

5.1 Data Sharing Agreement between Councils and Landlord Registration Scheme Northern Ireland (LRSNI)

The Head of Service (Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning) delivered this report, which the Members had already been furnished with.

It was proposed by Councillor P Catney, seconded by Councillor A Givan, and agreed to recommend approval of the Data Sharing Agreement for signing by the relevant Head of Service on behalf of the council, allowing the council's housing teams to access the data relating to registered landlords.

Following a comment from Councillor G Hynds regarding the delay in the formal appointment for the council as the Registrar for this Scheme, the Head of Service (Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning) advised that there was no operational impact.

5.2 Request to Waive Cemetery Fees

It was proposed by Councillor A Givan, seconded by Councillor G Hynds, and agreed to recommend approval of the request by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to waive the applicable fees.

In response to Councillor A Givan's query regarding confirmation of the exact location where the Rifleman had been laid to rest, the Head of Service (Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning) advised that this had been confirmed by the supporting paperwork provided by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

5.3 Toy Safety Regulations Call for Evidence

Councillor S Burns proposed that each political party submit its own response to all the consultations to be considered at the meeting. The proposal was seconded by Alderman J Baird.

For clarity, the Director of Environmental Services advised that several consultations required either retrospective approval or approval under delegated authority.

Following discussion, a vote was taken on Councillor S Burns' proposal, the voting being as follows:

In Favour: Aldermen J Baird, Councillor S Burns, Councillor A Givan, Councillor G Hynds and Alderman S Skillen.

TOTAL: 5

Against: Councillor J Bamford, Councillor D Bassett, Councillor P Catney, Alderman M Gregg, Councillor B Magee, Councillor M McKeever and Councillor N Parker.

TOTAL: 7

Councillor N Parker proposed that the Council's responses be submitted alongside any individual party responses. The proposal was seconded by Councillor J Bamford, and a vote was taken as follows:

In Favour: Councillor J Bamford, Councillor D Bassett, Councillor P Catney, Alderman M Gregg, Councillor B Magee, Councillor M McKeever and Councillor N Parker.

TOTAL: 7

Against: Councillor S Burns and Councillor A Givan.

TOTAL: 2

Abstain: Alderman J Baird, Councillor G Hynds and Alderman S Skillen.

TOTAL: 3

Councillor G Hynds expressed concern about the potential impact of the Windsor Framework and indicated that he was not fully in agreement with the Council's response.

The Director of Environmental Services acknowledged Councillor G Hynds' comments and advised that the draft response had been tabled to allow submission prior to the consultation closing date of 6 October 2026. She further advised that the response could be amended through the agreement of a proposer and seconder.

It was proposed by Councillor N Parker, seconded by Councillor J Bamford, and agreed to recommend approval of the response to the consultation thereby enabling the council to respond before the closing date of 6 October 2026.

5.4 Consultation – Fireworks and Pyrotechnics in the UK

Councillor G Hynds referred to the proposed reduction from 120 decibels to 90 decibels and asked whether comparative evidence was available on fireworks restrictions in Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK. The Head of Service (Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning) advised that the research had covered all UK regions.

Councillor A Givan raised the issue of sky lanterns and asked whether their use could be prohibited on Council-owned land and at Council facilities. The Head of Service advised that the Council's byelaws already prohibit the use of sky lanterns at its properties.

It was proposed by Councillor P Catney, seconded by Councillor N Parker, and agreed to recommend approval of the response to the consultation thereby enabling the council to respond before the closing date of 7 October 2026.

5.5 Consultation – Tobacco and Vapes: Packaging, Appearance and Display

Councillor G Hynds stated that he would not support the consultation response. He raised concerns that some proposals may be difficult to enforce and noted his objection to government restrictions on the choices of adults. He asked that his objections be recorded.

The Head of Service (Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning) advised that there was clear evidence that regulation and changes to statutory provisions can have a positive impact. By way of example, he referred to smoke-free legislation and its benefits for public health.

The Director of Environmental Services advised that the Tobacco and Vapes Act had already received royal ascent, and this consultation was specifically regarding how the Act may be regulated.

In response to a query from Councillor J Bamford about whether the regulations would prevent vape advertising in shop windows, the Head of Service advised that this was expected to follow a similar approach to tobacco products.

Councillor P Catney asked whether, if the regulations were passed, the financial responsibility would rest with this Council and other councils. The Head of Service advised that there had been no indication that funding would transfer. However, the Public Health Agency currently provides funding to support smoke-free legislation, and a similar funding route may be used, although this has not been confirmed.

It was proposed by Councillor J Bamford, seconded by Councillor P Catney, and agreed to recommend approval of the response to the consultation thereby enabling the council to respond before the closing date of 2 October 2026.

5.6 Consultation: Consultation on the Draft Air Quality (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026

The Director of Environmental Services left the meeting during this item of business (7.03 pm).

Councillor M McKeever sought clarification on the consultation responses relating to the implementation timelines referenced at Question 11, the neutral response regarding impact assessments at Question 12, and the position on equality and disability screening at Question 13. The Head of Service (Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning) advised that the proposed implementation date of 1 January 2028 was considered unrealistic, given the time required to develop and implement the necessary strategies and policies. He further advised that, as the Council had not undertaken screening of the documents in respect of impact assessments or rural needs, it was not in a position to express a view on those matters.

Councillor P Catney commented that the department's approach seemed to be a backhanded way of addressing financial matters, noting that consultations were often left open-ended and expressed concern that the associated costs of policing or enforcement would ultimately fall on ratepayers.

Councillor A Givan expressed concern regarding the lack of monitoring stations in Northern Ireland to obtain a representative sample reading. The Head of Service advised that an air quality monitoring programme is in place across the Council area and that an automated monitoring station is located in Dundonald.

Councillor S Burns enquired how the legislation would affect the provision of smoke-free and non-smoke-free zones. The Head of Service advised that such zones would generally not be required, as most new buildings constructed did not use an open fire as the primary heating source.

It was proposed by Councillor P Catney, seconded by Alderman M Gregg, and agreed to recommend retrospective approval be given to the previously submitted LCCC response to above consultation.

5.7 Consultation – Proposed Animal Welfare Policy Reforms in Northern Ireland 2026

Councillor D Bassett left the meeting during this item of business (7.04 pm).

The Director of Environmental Services returned to the meeting during this item of business (7.09 pm).

Alderman J Baird welcomed paragraph 1.9 of the report, which proposed making it an offence for dog owners to fail to update their ownership details when required.

Councillor S Burns welcomed the report but expressed concern about the increasing regulatory responsibilities being placed on council, particularly in relation to adverse training devices. She asked whether any additional funding would be provided by the Department to support these responsibilities. The Head

5.7 Consultation – Proposed Animal Welfare Policy Reforms in Northern Ireland 2026 (Cont'd)

of Service (Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning) advised that no additional funding would be available from the Department.

Councillor A Givan commented that there may be occasions where the use of a choke chain or an electric shock collar was considered necessary for the control of animals, as a secondary measure, with more humane methods being the preferred primary approach.

Alderman M Gregg stated that he wished it to be placed on record that the Council could not advocate cruelty to animals.

The Head of Service advised that appropriate provisions should be in place to ensure that animals were kept under control at all times.

Alderman J Baird commented that there was a significant difference between control and cruelty. He stated that, while some may perceive certain measures as restrictive of a dog's natural behaviour, they could be necessary to ensure the animal remained under control and that owners should be responsible for managing their dogs appropriately.

It was proposed by Councillor P Catney, seconded by Alderman S Skillen, and agreed to recommend that retrospective approval be given to the previously submitted LCCC response to above consultation.

5.8 Consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland

Councillor M McKeever left the meeting during this item of business (7.14 pm).

It was proposed by Councillor P Catney, seconded by Councillor N Parker, and agreed to recommend that retrospective approval be given to the previously submitted LCCC response to above consultation.

5.9 Consultation on Restricting Promotions of High Fat, Sugar and Salt Foods

Councillor M McKeever returned to the meeting during this item of business (7.18 pm).

It was proposed by Councillor P Catney, seconded by Councillor G Hynds, and agreed to recommend delegated authority is granted to the Environment and Sustainability Committee on 7 October 2026 to approve the draft response, thereby enabling the council to respond to this consultation before the closing date of 21 October 2026.

5.10 Proposed Caravan Licence Model Conditions 2026

It was proposed Councillor P Catney, seconded by Councillor A Givan, and agreed to:

- recommend approval for the proposed Caravan Licence Conditions 2026 for consultation with licence holders in accordance with the Caravans Act (Northern Ireland) 1963, as detailed in Appendix 11 EH; and
- considers any feedback received at a future meeting of the committee before implementation.

In response to a question from Alderman M Gregg as to where the second caravan site was situated, the Head of Service (Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning) advised that the site was at Lakeview.

In advance of consideration of confidential business, the Chair, Alderman S Skillen, advised that Any Other Business would be considered at this stage.

6. Any Other Business

6.1 Hilden Court Wall Councillor G Hynds

Councillor G Hynds referred to the cones at Hilden Court Wall and asked why they had not been removed and whether there was any update from the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) on the matter. The Head of Service (Building Control & Sustainability) advised that Council officers were liaising with the local DfI office regarding the issue and that an update would be provided directly to Councillor G Hynds. In relation to the cones, the Head of Service advised that DfI had been instructed by its Health and Safety team to place them there and would be reluctant to move them.

6.2 Hilden Mill Councillor G Hynds

Councillor G Hynds asked if there had been any update regarding Hilden Mill following the most recent fire, particularly in relation to the security of the site. The Head of Service (Building Control & Sustainability) advised that the Council had been in contact with both the contractor and the developer and confirmed that the site was currently secured.

6.3 Four New Sweepers Councillor G Hynds

Councillor G Hynds asked how the four new road sweepers were being utilised. The Head of Service (Waste Management & Operational Services) advised that the sweepers were operating throughout the borough on designated routes and were also being used to provide cover where other vehicles were unavailable.

6.4 Graffiti
Councillor G Hynds

Councillor G Hynds referred to graffiti on utility cabinet boxes and asked whether there was any engagement with the agencies responsible. The Head of Service (Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning) advised that, when graffiti is reported, the Council liaises with the owners of the street furniture, including DfI and utility companies. He further advised that Council officers carry spray paint to remove offensive graffiti where necessary and subsequently notify the relevant agency responsible for the affected street furniture.

6.5 Offensive Graffiti
Alderman S Skillen

Alderman S Skillen asked what the Council deemed to be offensive graffiti. The Head of Service advised that graffiti would be considered offensive if it contained the name of an individual or included content of a hateful, political, or racist nature. Such graffiti would be classified as offensive and prioritised for removal accordingly.

6.6 Paint Re-use Pilot Scheme
Councillor J Bamford

Councillor J Bamford referred to the Paint Re-use Pilot Scheme detailed within the Information and Correspondence Schedule. She welcomed the initiative and requested that a report be brought back to a future committee meeting in the coming months outlining the Scheme's performance and outcomes.

6.7 Thanks
Councillor P Catney

Councillor P Catney wished to thank the Probation Board, whose team carried out a litter-pick along the towpath to Hilden Bridge, returning via Queensway. The team also litter-picked the car park before making its way back into the town centre. He also wished to thank the emergency services for their response to the fatal accident at Hilden Bend.

6.8 Wall on Knockmore Road
Councillor A Givan

Councillor A Givan expressed concern regarding concrete blocks positioned against the wall of a building on Knockmore Road. He advised that the retaining wall behind the blocks appeared to be cracked and leaning, and that the building itself had a significant horizontal crack, indicating potential outward movement caused by pressure. He asked that the Head of Service (Building Control and Sustainability) investigate the matter and assess the condition of the structure.

6.9 Re-using Items from Household Recycling Centres
Councillor N Parker

Councillor N Parker asked whether furniture and other items brought to Household Recycling Centres could be segregated and donated to Habitat or other charitable organisations for re-use, rather than being sent to landfill. The Head of Service (Waste Management & Operational Services) advised that the Council already partners with Habitat on toy re-use schemes and actively signposts residents to similar organisations that facilitate the re-use and extended lifespan of a range of materials and household items.

6.10 Point of Clarity
Councillor G Hynds

Councillor G Hynds queried why Item 6.2 of the report, Offensive Weapons Community Surrender Bins, was scheduled for consideration under Confidential Business. The Director of Environmental Services advised that, as the consultation had not yet been launched, the Department of Justice had requested that the information remain embargoed until its wider promotional campaign for the scheme had commenced.

6.11 Dog Fouling
Alderman S Skillen

Alderman S Skillen advised that she had received reports of dog fouling and requested that the matter be raised with the appropriate team for investigation and follow-up.

7. Confidential Report by Head of Service (Waste Management and Operational Services)

The Chair, Alderman S Skillen, 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).

“In Committee”

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird , seconded by Councillor A Givan, and agreed that the following matters be considered “In Committee,” in the absence of members of the press and public being present.

The member of the press seated in the public gallery left the Council Chamber (7.44 pm).

7.1 Carryduff Household Recycling Centre Tender Evaluation Criteria
 (Redacted report will be available in September 2025, following Council ratification)

Following the presentation of the report, the Head of Service (Waste Management and Operational Services) and the Director of Environmental Services responded to comments and questions from Members.

7.1 Carryduff Household Recycling Centre Tender Evaluation Criteria (Cont'd)

It was proposed by Councillor M McKeever, seconded by Alderman J Baird, and agreed to recommend approval of the tender evaluation award criteria as outlined.

7.2 Offensive Weapons Community Surrender Bins
(Report will be available following launch by DoJ)

Following the presentation of the report, the Head of Service (Waste Management and Operational Services) and the Director of Environmental Services responded to comments and questions from Members.

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Councillor P Catney, and agreed to recommend approval of participation in a three-month scheme to collect offensive weapons at the council's three Household Recycling Centres in partnership with the Department of Justice.

8. Confidential Report by Head of Service (Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning)

8.1 Business Case for Landlord Registration Scheme Expenditure
(Redacted report will be available in September 2025, following Council ratification, business case will never be available)

Councillor N Parker left the meeting during this item of business (8.02 pm).

Following the presentation of the report, the Head of Service (Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning) and the Director of Environmental Services responded to comments and questions from Members.

It was proposed by Councillor A Givan, seconded by Councillor P Catney, and agreed to recommend approval of the business case for the expenditure relating to the Landlord Registration Scheme for IT system changes, service improvements, new regulations and NI Audit Office data-matching exercise.

9. Any Other Business (Confidential)

9.1 Update on status of Kerbside Collection Services
Director of Environmental Services

The Director provided a verbal update to the committee on the current status of this project and receipt of notification of legal proceedings. She advised that a further update would be provided following clarification from the council's legal team.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor A Givan, seconded by Councillor P Catney, and agreed to come out of Committee and normal business was resumed.

The Director of Environmental Services advised the Committee that an invitation had been received from Mark Kelly, Chief Executive of arc21, and had been circulated to Members on 26 August 2026. The invitation was for Members to visit Indaver's Energy Recovery Facility, Carranstown, Duleek, Co. Meath, on Wednesday, 21 October 2026. She further advised that all expenses associated with the visit would be met for Members attending.

The Chair, Alderman S Skillen, thanked Members for their attendance.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 8.13pm.

Chairperson