

**LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Committee held in the Council Chamber, Island Civic Centre, on Wednesday 3 September, 2025 at 6.00 pm**

**PRESENT IN CHAMBER:**

Alderman O Gawith (Chair)

Councillor S Burns (Vice-Chair)

The Right Worshipful the Mayor  
Alderman A Grehan

Alderman J Baird

Councillors J Bamford, A Givan, A Gowan, G Hynds,  
B Magee, C McCready, M McKeever and N Parker

**PRESENT IN REMOTE LOCATION:**

Alderman S Skillen

Councillors D Bassett, P Catney and R McLernon

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Director of Environmental Services  
Head of Service (Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning)  
Head of Service (Waste Management & Operational Services)  
Head of Service (Building Control & Sustainability)  
Acting Member Services Manager  
Member Services Officers (CR and EW)

**Commencement of the Meeting**

The Chair, Alderman O Gawith, 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**

It was agreed to accept an apology for non-attendance at the meeting on behalf of the Deputy Mayor, Alderman H Legge.

## 2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made at this point. The following non-pecuniary declaration was made at the conclusion of item 3:

- Councillor B Magee in respect of item 5.1 'DAERA Consultation – New Rules for Selling and Supplying Puppies and Kittens in Northern Ireland', as she was a committee member of a cats' charity.

## 3. 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 Head of Service (Building Control and Sustainability)

### 4.1 DAERA Public Consultation on the Draft Third NI Climate Change Adaptation Programme (NICCAP3) – Retrospective Approval

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Councillor G Hynds and agreed to recommend that retrospective approval be given to the previously submitted LCCC response to above consultation.

Councillor A Givan made a number of comments in relation to costs associated with the NICCAP3 and environmental damage brought about by some Green Initiatives. The Head of Service (Building Control and Sustainability) advised that a meeting with the Department had been held earlier in the day where Officers had made it clear that the Council would require financial support to deliver the proposed climate actions within recent public consultation documents. He assured Councillor A Givan that his comments would be taken account of in the Council's response to the DAERA Consultation on the NI Draft Climate Action Plan 2023-27 (item 4.2 refers).

### 4.2 Consultation – DAERA Consultation on NI Draft Climate Action Plan 2023-27

It was proposed by Councillor N Parker, seconded by Alderman J Baird and agreed to recommend that delegated authority be given to the Committee, at its meeting to be held on 1 October, 2025, to consider and approve a response, on behalf of the Council, to the above consultation and that this be submitted to the Department by the closing date of 8 October, 2025.

In response to a request by Alderman J Baird, the Head of Service (Building Control and Sustainability) agreed to liaise with the Director of Environmental Services with a view to this item being made available to Members at the earliest opportunity to afford them adequate time to consider it.

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

5.1 DAERA Consultation – New Rules for Selling and Supplying Puppies and Kittens in Northern Ireland

It was proposed by Councillor G Hynds, seconded by Councillor A Givan and agreed to recommend that approval be given to the draft response to the above consultation being submitted to the Department by the closing date of 15 September, 2025, and that the Department be made aware that the response was subject to ratification by Council at its meeting on 23 September, 2025.

The Head of Service (Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning) responded to a number of queries raised by Alderman S Skillen and, at her request, he provided an update in relation to Max, the abandoned dog. It was noted that Max was still under the Council's care and was healthy and well.

5.2 Consultation Response on Proposed Dilapidation Bill

Councillor M McKeever left, and returned to, the meeting during consideration of this item of business (6.40 pm and 6.42 pm respectively).

It was proposed by Councillor G Hynds, seconded by Councillor C McCready and agreed to recommend that delegated authority be given to the Committee, at its meeting to be held on 1 October, 2025, to consider and approve a response, on behalf of the Council, to the above consultation and that this be submitted to the Department by the closing date of 10 October, 2025.

The Chair, Alderman O Gawith, advised that item 5.5 on the agenda would now be considered as item 5.3 and item 5.3 on the agenda would be considered as item 5.5.

5.3 Out of Hours Dog Warden Service

It was proposed by Councillor G Hynds, seconded by P Catney and agreed to recommend that approval be given to:

- (a) the retention of the current Out-of-Hours Dog Warden Service provision (Option 3) on a permanent basis;
- (b) the use of the £20k budget for the Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning Service to support initiatives which addressed key issues identified as drivers in environmental crime; and
- (c) ongoing education/awareness raising of the current Out-of-Hours Dog Warden Service via social medial channels and other relevant methods of communication.

5.4 SG17 – SG Council Funding & Safeguarding Requirements

It was proposed by Councillor M McKeever, seconded by Councillor A Givan agreed to recommend that the contents of the SG17 – Council Funding and Safeguarding Requirements procedure be noted.

## 5.5 Environmental Crime

During consideration of this item, a number of Members left the meeting – The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan, (7.04 pm), Councillor J Bamford (7.17 pm) and Councillor A Givan (7.17 pm).

It was proposed by Councillor J Bamford, seconded by Councillor N Parker and agreed to recommend that:

- (a) the information contained in the Head of Service's report be noted;
- (b) engagement be carried out with Members on a DEA/Party Group basis to ascertain key issues in the local areas which would assist in defining the future direction of the enforcement section;
- (c) targeted enforcement of environmental crime be carried out in targeted hotspots; and
- (d) subject to the outcome of discussions regarding funding currently allocated to the Out-of-Hours Dog Warden Service and the estimate setting process, consideration be given to the use of this £20k budget to resource additional targeted approach towards dog fouling and general environmental crime, particularly illegal dumping.

Discussion ensued during which Members' queries were responded to and Officers took note of a number of comments on the following which could be discussed further in the forthcoming engagement sessions:

- further enforcement around dog fouling and the use of cameras for detection;
- the provision of dog poo bag dispensers in public areas, play parks, etc in all DEAs. Community groups may assist in replenishing the dispensers and where there was no public area to locate the dispensers, local shops could be used to distribute the bags; and
- the rolling out of initiatives such as 'Paint Means Poo'.

Councillor A Gowan put on record his thanks to those members of community groups who assisted in lifting rubbish in their areas. In particular, he paid tribute to the commitment of one gentleman in Anahilt who had lifted 733 bags of rubbish over a 237 day period, which demonstrated the scale of the problem.

At the request of Councillor C McCready, it was agreed that an environmental crime report would be presented to the Committee on an annual basis going forward.

## 6. Report by the Head of Service (Waste Management and Operational Services)

### 6.1 Extension of arc21 Contract for the Receipt and Processing of Mixed Dry Recyclables

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Councillor G Hynds and agreed to recommend that approval be given to a second 6-month extension from 1 April, 2026 until 30 September, 2026, or incremental parts of those 6 months, if required.

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

## 7. Any Other Business

### 7.1 Cemetery Benches Councillor N Parker

Councillor D Bassett left the meeting during consideration of this item of business (8.11 pm).

Councillor N Parker referred to the current policy whereby memorial benches in cemeteries were paid for and maintained by family members. However, as time lapsed, the person responsible could pass away or become unable to keep up the maintenance and they would fall into a state of disrepair. It was proposed by Councillor N Parker and seconded by Councillor G Hynds that, in such circumstances, Officers investigate the possibility of the Council replacing those benches and undertaking the subsequent upkeep and maintenance.

In response to comments made, the Director of Environmental Services, pointed out that this was a cross-departmental matter, in that cemetery maintenance was carried out by the Parks and Amenities team. She stressed that, in respect of families who had lost loved ones and found the cemetery a place of solace, the Council was sensitive of this matter. It was important to for the Council to respectfully engage with families, particularly where benches had fallen into disrepair and became a health and safety issue. The Director further advised that space at Blaris Cemetery was at a premium and there was a contractor presently leveraging a number of graves from the space available. The Director appreciated how sensitive and emotive this issue was and she did not want there to be any perception by the public that there was any disrespect from the Council towards families who had suffered a bereavement.

Following discussion, the Director of Environmental Services agreed that she would liaise with the Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing with a view to a report being presented to a future meeting. The report would include considerations around benches in line with policy, as well as other issues relating to burial provision.

Further to comments by Alderman S Skillen regarding the disparity in charges at Roselawn Cemetery for residents of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council and the residents of Belfast City Council, the Chair, Alderman O Gawith, advised that a separate response would be provided on this matter.

### 7.2 Mechanical Sweepers Councillor G Hynds

Councillor M McKeever left, and returned to, the meeting during consideration of this item of business (8.10 pm and 8.14 pm respectively), as did Councillor P Catney (8.12 pm and 8.14 pm respectively), Alderman J Baird (8.16 pm and 8.19 pm respectively). Councillor R McLernon left the meeting (8.20 pm).

7.2 Mechanical Sweepers (Contd)  
Councillor G Hynds

Councillor G Hynds enquired if there was a difference in mechanical sweeping services provided in the Castlereagh and Lisburn areas. In response, the Head of Service (Waste Management and Operational Services) advised that this was not the case. Generally, the mechanical sweepers went out with a driver only. On occasion, there would be a second member of staff, but that was circumstance-driven as the need arose. He explained that the schedule of cleansing was arranged around zoning but it was endeavoured to visit all areas during the course of the year.

7.3 Task and Finish Arrangement  
Councillor G Hynds

Councillor G Hynds referred to the previous arrangement of refuse workers operating on a 'Task and Finish' basis and asked if that had been more financially beneficial than the current arrangement. The Head of Service (Waste Management and Operational Services) reported that 'Task and Finish' was no longer considered by the Health & Safety Executive of Northern Ireland (HSENI) to be safe and, therefore, some years ago, councils had been strongly advised to refrain from using that method. Staff were now working on routes that were designed to occupy the greater part of their day, with an element of flexibility written in to account for property development and unforeseen circumstances such as road diversions.

7.4 Off-Street Parking  
Councillor G Hynds

Councillor G Hynds referred to workshops that had previously been arranged, but which had been cancelled, for the purpose of considering off-street parking arrangements, particularly around free parking at Christmas, and asked if those were to be rearranged in the near future. The Director of Environmental Services agreed to update the Committee on this matter.

7.5 Hilden Mill  
Councillor G Hynds

Councillor A Gowan left the meeting during consideration of this item of business (8.15 pm).

Councillor G Hynds referred to a number of occasions when there had been no padlock on the access to Hilden Mill and referred to the risks associated with that. He had sent a number of emails and was disappointed not to have received a response. He sought an assurance that this matter was being taken seriously, especially in light of his previous Notice of Motion. The Head of Service (Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning) advised that Officers had previously engaged with the agent acting on behalf of the owner in relation to securing the perimeter of the site. The Council did carry out proactive monitoring of the site, which attracted young people in the community over the summer months. The Head of Service assured Councillor Hynds that the Council continued to engage and did have regard to his Notice of Motion around the site.

7.6 Weeding  
Councillor C McCready

Councillor C McCready referred to weeds, which were currently particularly bad in certain areas within his DEA. He was unsure what the Council's obligation was in relation to this matter. Whilst he understood that the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) should carry out the bulk of that work, he asked if there was any assistance that could be provided by the Council given that it was not being done by the Department. The Director of Environmental Services confirmed that weeding was the responsibility of the DfI, particularly on public roads. On occasion, the Council was asked to assist. The Council had carried out this task through the Village Plan process in Drumbo and Anahilt and had assisted as 'one-offs' to bring an area back into order when weeds had been a problem. The Parks & Amenities team carried out weeding in Council-owned parks and open spaces.

The Head of Service (Waste Management and Operational Services) stated that, where concerns were raised by Members, the Council would assist where it could by scraping weeds; however, that was not a solution as it was necessary to spray first and scrape later. He explained that Council staff in his unit did not use sprays as they were not qualified or trained to do so. In response to comments by Councillor C McCready regarding Council staff being trained to carry out spraying, the Head of Service stated that in terms of technicality, this was not the responsibility of the Council and would bring about additional costs.

Aderman S Skillen left the meeting at this point.

8. Confidential Report by the Director of Environmental Services

The Chair, Alderman O Gawith, advised that the confidential report item 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 Councillor C McCready, seconded by Councillor M McKeever, and agreed that the following matter 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 (8.29 pm). Councillor R McLernon rejoined the meeting at this point.

8.1 Interim Fleet Replacement Plan – Procurement of New Replacement RCVs and Mechanical Sweepers  
 (Redacted report will be available in October 2025, following Council ratification of September minutes; business cases will never be available)

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Councillor G Hynds and agreed to recommend that approval be given to the business cases and subsequent procurement of the above new vehicles.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Councillor M McKeever, and agreed to come out of Committee and normal business was resumed.

The Chair, Alderman O Gawith, thanked Members for their attendance.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 8.36 pm.

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Chairperson