

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL**Minutes of Meeting of the Regeneration & Growth Committee held in the Council Chamber, Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn on Thursday 4th April, 2024 at 6.00 pm****PRESENT IN THE CHAMBER:**

Councillor J Laverty BEM (Chairperson)

Aldermen J Baird, A G Ewart MBE, M Gregg, A Grehan and S P Porter

Councillors K Dickson, J Gallen and N Parker

OTHER MEMBERS:

Councillor G Hynds

IN ATTENDANCE

Director of Regeneration & Growth

Head of Economic Development

Head of Assets

Project Co-Ordinator, Portfolio Office

Member Services Officers (BS and EW)

IT Officer

Commencement of Meeting

The Chairperson, Councillor J Laverty, extended a welcome to all present at the April meeting of the Committee and reminded those present that the meeting was being audio recorded unless the item was being considered under confidential business.

The Chairperson reminded the Committee that in accordance with the revised regulations for meetings, Members were now required to be physically present in the Council Chamber. However, for observational purposes, Members were permitted to view meetings remotely via Zoom but a) would not be recorded as present or included as part of the quorum, b) would not be permitted to interact with the meeting in any way, speak or vote, and c) would not be permitted to use the 'raised hand' function or the messaging function on Zoom.

Aldermen A Grehan and S P Porter entered the meeting at 6.03 pm.

At this point in proceedings, the Member Services Officer read out the names of the Elected Members in attendance at the meeting.

The Chairperson asked that any Member entering or leaving the meeting advise the Member Services Officer accordingly so that this might be accurately reflected in the minutes.

The Director of Regeneration & Growth outlined the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.

1. Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting were accepted and recorded on behalf of The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor A Gowan, Alderman M Guy, Councillors P Burke, U Mackin, A Martin and C McCready.

2. Declarations of Interest

Alderman A Grehan declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 4.2 Grove Activity Centre – Disposal Under Community Asset Transfer due to her involvement as a volunteer in fund raising and lobbying on behalf of the organisation concerned to find suitable premises for their project.

3. Report of Head of Economic Development

3.1 Tourism Major Events – Refresh on Approach

The Head of Economic Development's report outlined the background and key issues in connection with the Council's tourism major events strategy and in particular the refresh on approach following discussion at the meeting of the Committee in February 2024. Issues raised had been regarding the reporting methodology used for the outcome of the assessment, and also in relation to consistency of reporting grant outcomes across Committees.

The Committee had been furnished with a copy of the following related documents:

- current guidance documents and application form,
- assessment criteria and scoring matrix,
- post-event evaluation form, and
- the agreed current governance arrangements.

The Head of Economic Development outlined the proposed changes for implementation of the tourism major events approach, from the final quarter in 2024/25 onwards, namely:

a) the following additional information be presented in the revised approach from the October 2024 call (for the 2025/26 year) onwards:

- Event Promoter
- Brief Event Description
- Event target outputs
- Total number of applications received, the number of unsuccessful or withdrawn applications, with a high level general summary narrative as to why they were unsuccessful or withdrawn

3.1 Tourism Major Events – Refresh on Approach (Cont'd)

- b) when the outcome of the application process is presented to the committee for noting (usually around March each year), that a summary of the evaluation outcomes of the previous year's Major Events Programme is also reported to the Committee for noting. That is, the evaluation of the 2024/25 Major Events Programme performance would be presented for noting to the March 2025 Committee meeting alongside the outcome of the applications for funding for the 2025/26 year. It should be noted that there would need to be some flexibility built in around the reporting dates to take account of the actual event dates should they fall in the Spring.

It was noted that Officers had also reviewed the existing scoring criteria and had proposed that no changes be recommended.

The Head of Economic Development responded to a number of questions from Members in connection with:

- the scoring criteria in regard to the visitor number target
- the non-applicability of charitable organisations to apply for tourism major event funding. In order to ensure consistency of approach, the Head of Economic Development undertook to amend wording on page 1 of the Application for Tourism Events funding. The amended wording to read "Where the main purpose of the event is to raise money for a charity and/or charities, financial assistance will not be provided by Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council.'
- the cost of advertising the scheme in the Belfast Telegraph and any evidence of gain. In view of the comments raised by a number of Members, the Head of Economic Development undertook to give consideration to the matter of advertising in the Belfast Telegraph. The Chairperson commented also the need for the other Directorates to follow the same approach on this matter.

It was proposed by Alderman A G Ewart, seconded by Alderman J Baird, and agreed to recommend that the proposed changes by way of a refresh of the approach as outlined above be approved.

3.2 Labour Market Partnership – potential 'Multiply Programme'

The Head of Economic Development's report outlined the background and key issues in connection with the UK Government's £560 million numeracy programme branded as the "Multiply" Programme, the aim of which was to improve adult numeracy skills. Funding from this programme had been obtained for Northern Ireland to deliver bespoke adult numeracy programmes targeted at specific groups of people, the details of which were set out in the Officer's report.

3.2 Labour Market Partnership – potential ‘Multiply Programme’ (Cont’d)

The Head of Economic Development advised that the forecasted budget for programme delivery for Lisburn & Castlereagh Council area up to 31 March 2025 was £200,000, and furthermore, the Department for the Economy had offered each Labour Market Partnership, including Lisburn & Castlereagh, a separate additional funding allocation to support delivery of the programme in the sum of £50,000 for the year. A letter of offer had been received by the Council for this aspect of the proposed Programme.

The Head of Economic Development elaborated on the regional approach to delivery of this initiative that was currently being considered by the Labour Market Partnerships, Universities, Further Education Colleges, the Department for Communities and the Department for the Economy. A definitive proposal on how best to proceed had not as yet been fully developed.

There were five possible initiatives currently under discussion and the Department for the Economy had provided summary information which had been appended to the Officer’s report. It was noted that the detailed project plans for these initiatives were currently being developed as part of the wider Labour Market Partnership initiative and an update on activity and proposed outcomes would be reported to the Committee for noting in due course.

The Head of Economic Development responded to a comment from a Member in regard to the cost per head of this numeracy programme.

It was proposed by Alderman M Gregg, seconded by Alderman J Baird, and agreed to recommend that the offer of the £50,000 Multiply Grant be accepted, and that the proposed delivery of the initiatives summarised in the appended document, which would involve the procurement of appropriate third party delivery organisations, be approved.

4. Any Other Business

4.1 Toilet Facilities in Lisburn City Centre Alderman J Baird

Following a request by Alderman J Baird on an update on the provision of toilet facilities in Lisburn City Centre the Director of Regeneration & Growth and the Head of Economic Development responded to a number of comments and concerns from Members in regard to toilet provision in Lisburn City Centre. A number of points were highlighted including:

- toilet provision was the remit of the Environment & Sustainability Committee with input from the Communities and Wellbeing Committee in regard to maintenance of facilities
- Lisburn Square’s covenant which included the requirement to provide toilet facilities

4.1 Toilet Facilities in Lisburn City Centre (Cont'd)

- the signage programme for toilet provision which was being progressed in conjunction with the Council's recent scheme in regard to the promotion of the private sector's toilet facilities in the City Centre. It was noted that the Council's Walkability Strategy included toilet provision in Lisburn City Centre,
- new facilities had been created on the ground floor of Bow Street Mall.
- the importance of toilet facilities being available in the City Centre, including possibly Bow Street, in view of the walking distance to the existing facilities in the Lisburn Museum, Bow Street Mall and Castle Gardens.
- the Council's Changing Places policy. Councillor N Parker asked that it be noted that Changing Places toilet facilities were located in the Island Civic Centre and in the new facilities in Bow Street Mall; and that a new Changing Places facility in Wallace Park required to be progressed as a matter of urgency.

Following further comments from the Chairperson, the Director of Regeneration & Growth undertook to bring forward an update report on the issues raised. In addition an update on the above-mentioned Signage Programme would be provided to the next meeting of the Committee. The Chairperson requested that the relevant Officers from other Directorates be invited to the Committee meeting to provide input where appropriate.

5. Confidential Report from Director of Regeneration & Growth

The Chairperson advised that the Confidential items were confidential 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 Alderman A G Ewart, and agreed that the Confidential Reports be considered "in Committee" in the absence of press or members of the public. The audio recording was paused at this stage in proceedings (6.37 pm).

5.1 Food & Drink Programme – 2022-2023 Evaluations and Business Case for 2024-2026 (Report to be published at the end of the contract period – post March 2026)

The Head of Economic Development outlined the background and key issues in regard to the Council's Food & Drink Programme 2022/2023 and also the Business Case for the 2024/2026 programme.

The Committee had been furnished with executive summaries of the evaluation reports for the 2023 Food and Drink Programme, with full reports available, if required, from the Economic Development Unit.

5.1 Food & Drink Programme – 2022-2023 Evaluations and Business Case for 2024-2026
(Cont'd)

It was proposed by Councillor J Gallen, seconded by Alderman A G Ewart, and agreed to recommend that:

- a) the Executive Summary evaluations of the 2023 Food and Drink Programme, including consideration of the associated recommendations in the delivery of the next phase of the programme, be noted,
- b) the 2024-2026 Business Case, be agreed, and
- c) the 2024-2026 proposals be publicly tendered.

5.2 Grove Activity Centre – Disposal under Community Asset Transfer
(Redacted report to be published June 2024)

Councillor G Hynds left the meeting at 6.47 pm.

The Head of Assets outlined the background and key issues in connection with the disposal of Grove Activity Centre as a pilot under the Council's Community Asset Transfer Policy, the heads of terms having been outlined and approved by the Regeneration and Growth Committee on 7 December 2023. The Director of Regeneration & Growth also addressed the Committee on issues raised including the differentiation of this being an Asset Transfer under a pilot informing the now agreed Community Asset Transfer Policy.

The Committee had been furnished with a copy of the organisation's updated business case and addendum together with a map outlining the lease area.

It was proposed by Alderman S P Porter, seconded by Alderman J Baird, and agreed to recommend that the new Heads of Terms associated with the lease for Grove Activity Centre be agreed which would be presented for signing and sealing by Council post approval from the Department for Communities.

5.3 Update on Asset Management Improvement Plan
(Redacted report to be published March 2025)

The Head of Assets outlined the background and key issues in connection with the update on the Council's Asset Management Improvement plan.

The Committee had been furnished with a copy of the summary of the recommendations from the Audit review, along with a copy of the confidential report that had been

5.3 Update on Asset Management Improvement Plan (Cont'd)

considered by the Governance & Audit Committee in September 2023 and the Action Plan with updates on actions.

It was proposed by Alderman M Gregg, seconded by Alderman J Baird, and agreed that the update on the Asset Management Improvement plan be noted.

5.4 Contract for Funding Agreements regarding BRCD (Belfast Region City Deal Destination Royal Hillsborough)

(Redacted report to be published post the signing and sealing of the documents relating to the contract for works as well as the award of the HRP related works contracts)

The Director of Regeneration & Growth outlined the background and key issues in connection with the Contract for Funding Agreements in connection with the BRCD Destination Royal Hillsborough project.

The Director commended the efforts of the project manager and the Head of Portfolio, IT and Commercialisation in connection with the BRCD Destination Royal Hillsborough project.

The Committee had been furnished with a copy of the draft Contract for Funding between the Council, Belfast City Council and also the draft Funding Agreement between the Council and Historic Royal Palaces for BRCD Destination Royal Hillsborough.

Alderman S P Porter and Councillor J Gallen left the meeting at 7.41 pm and 7.43 pm respectively.

Having responded to a number of questions from the Committee, the Director undertook to speak directly with two Members of the Committee in connection with issues raised.

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Alderman M Gregg, and agreed to recommend that:

- a) the contract for funding agreement as circulated be approved,
- b) in parallel, the funding agreement, as outlined, between HRP and the Council, be approved,
- c) delegated authority be granted to the Chairperson of the Regeneration & Growth Committee and the Chief Executive to accept minor amendments in favour or the

Council before presenting for signing and sealing at the appropriate Council meeting with any minor amendments highlighted for transparency, and

5.4 Contract for Funding Agreements regarding BRCD (Belfast Region City Deal Destination Royal Hillsborough) (Cont'd)

- d) the development of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and HRP, creating a strategic partnership, be noted.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was agreed to come out of Committee and normal business was resumed.

Conclusion of Meeting

The Chairperson thanked everyone for their attendance and there being no further business for consideration the meeting was concluded at 7.51 pm.

Chairperson