LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting of the Regeneration & Growth Committee held in the Council Chamber, Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn and in remote locations on Thursday, 1 October, 2026 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT IN THE CHAMBER:	Alderman J Baird (Chairman) Alderman A G Ewart MBE (Vice Chairman) Councillors J Harpur, C Kemp, J Laverty BEM, U Mackin, C McCready, T Mitchell, and G Thompson
PRESENT REMOTELY:	Councillors K Dickson, J Gallen, S Lowry and D Lynch
OTHER MEMBER IN THE CHAMBER:	Councillor G Hynds
IN ATTENDANCE	Director of Regeneration & Growth Head of Economic Development Principal Planning Officer (PMcF) Member Services Manager (Acting) Member Services Officer (FA) IT Officer

Commencement of Meeting

The Chairperson, Alderman J Baird, extended a welcome to everyone in attendance at the October meeting of the Regeneration & Growth Committee.

The Chairperson reminded those present that the meeting was being recorded unless the item was being considered under confidential business.

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

1. Apologies

It was agreed to accept apologies for non-attendance on behalf of Councillor A Gowan.

Councillor S Lowry joined the meeting at 6.02 pm.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor K Dickson declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 5.1 Committee for Infrastructure Call for Evidence on a Proposed Tree Protection Bill in view of him being employed as an Account Executive by Chambré Public Affairs. The Woodland Trust, which is supporting the True Protection Bill currently before the Northern Ireland Assembly, is a client of Chambré Public Affairs. Councillor Dickson withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item of business.

3. Report of Head of Economic Development

3.1 Balmoral Show

The Committee considered a report outlining the background and key issues in connection with the evaluation of the 2026 Balmoral Show. The report also set out a number of recommendations in connection with the next three years of the Balmoral Shows (2027-2030).

The undernoted documents had been appended to the Officer's report:

- Balmoral Show 2026 Evaluation Report which set out visitor and exhibitor engagement, project outcomes, lessons learned and recommendations for future participation.
- Equality/Good Relations Screening
- Rural Needs Impact Assessment

It was proposed by the Vice Chairman, Alderman A G Ewart, seconded by Councillor T Mitchell, and agreed to recommend that:

a) the Balmoral Show 2026 Evaluation Report and the positive outcomes achieved in terms of visitor engagement, business participation, destination promotion and support for local tourism and retail businesses, be noted,

b) the recommendations as set out in the evaluation report be approved as part of the future delivery and continuous improvement of the Council's Balmoral Show showcase, namely:

- maintain the destination-led approach, promoting the full breadth of the Council area's tourism and economic offering,
- retain the current networking hub configuration and visitor welcome area,
- liaise with RUAS to enhance external signage and wayfinding to increase visibility and attract additional visitors to the showcase area,
- review stand graphics to provide greater visibility and branding opportunities for participating businesses whilst maintaining a consistent Visit Lisburn & Castlereagh identity,

3.1 Balmoral Show (Cont'd)

- continue the use of interactive features and visitor engagement activities which proved successful during the 2026 event, and
- maintain exhibitor pricing at current levels where possible to ensure accessibility for local businesses.

c) Officers proceed with the procurement of a Delivery Agent and Shell Scheme Provider for the Balmoral Show showcase for the period 2027-2030, in accordance with Council procurement procedures and subject to the availability of approved budgets using the criteria outlined.

The Director of Regeneration & Growth requested that Members forward any further suggestions for future Balmoral Shows to Officers in Economic Development.

3.2 Food and Drink Programme Update and Proposals

Councillor D Lynch joined the meeting during consideration of this item of business (6.12 pm).

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Economic Development which outlined the background and key issues in connection with the Council's Food and Drink Programme which continues to be a priority within the approved Tourism Strategy 2025–2030 and also remains a key mechanism for supporting local producers, driving visitor spend and promoting the Council area as a food and drink destination.

The Committee had been furnished with an executive summary of the evaluations for the 2024/2025 Food and Drink Programme for each of the Food & Drink events in Moira, Royal Hillsborough, Carryduff, and Dundonald.

In addition, the Committee had been furnished with an overall Food & Drink Programme Summary Performance, the Equality/Good Relations screening and the Rural Needs Impact Assessment documents.

It was noted that a number of practical recommendations had emerged from the evaluations which Officers propose to incorporate into future procurement specifications and programme delivery plans, the details of which had been outlined in the report circulated.

The Head of Economic Development and the Director of Regeneration & Growth responded to a number of questions and noted comments from the Committee in connection with a number of issues, including:

- available car parks at the Moira event
- advance communication and promotion of the Dundonald and Carryduff events

3.2 Food and Drink Programme Update and Proposals (Cont'd)

- timings of specific events, in particular those events involving primary schools.
- importance of ensuring there is no clash of dates with committee meetings
- visitor satisfaction levels,
- the number of traders at the Dundonald and the Carryduff community markets
- weather contingency plans.
- limited value of sales on the evening of some of the events
- need for more food and drink events in Lisburn City Centre.

Councillor J Laverty commended the Christmas markets events and the food festival events and thanked the team of Officers in the Economic Development Unit for their efforts behind the scenes with both these types of events.

Councillor S Lowry welcomed the success of both events in Dundonald and Carryduff.

It was proposed by Councillor J Laverty, seconded by Councillor J Harpur and agreed to recommended that:

a) the evaluations of the Food and Drink Programme 2024-25 and the positive outcomes achieved in terms of visitor attendance, trader satisfaction, business growth, destination promotion and support for local food and drink producers be noted, and

b) Officers proceed with the procurement of a delivery partner for the Food and Drink Programme for the period 2027-2030 as outlined in the Officer's report.

4. Report by the Director of Regeneration & Growth

4.1 Destination Royal Hillsborough Gateway One Review and Associated Action Plan

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Regeneration & Growth outlining the background and key issues in connection with the Destination Royal Hillsborough (DRH) Gateway One Review and the associated Action Plan, a copy of both documents having been appended to the Director's report.

It was noted that following the review, a report had been compiled that had given DRH an 'amber' rating, similar to the outcome of the first review (Review Zero), and as before there were several recommendations to help the successful delivery of the programme.

The Director's report set out a summary of the recommendations from The Gateway Review.

4.1 Destination Royal Hillsborough Gateway One Review and Associated Action Plan (Cont'd)

The Director responded to questions and comments from the Committee in connection with a number of issues in respect of the Action Plan and the recent meeting with the Programme Board. The Director provided an update in relation to:

- the progress to date on the public realm works,
- the tender for Car Park A
- potential additional works, ie. the resurfacing on the whole of Main Street and the potential pedestrian crossing which was not included in the initial programme
- the need to consider how any resurfacing works would integrate with the public realm works. The Director undertook to come back to the Committee on these additional works in due course.
- land assembly issues that required to be resolved,
- the business case being particularly complex,
- continued discussions with DAERA, DfI, PSNI and HRP,
- the budget position and likelihood of a budget shortfall due to inflationary pressures.

The Director also reminded the Committee that Royal Hillsborough was a heritage village that required to be protected in the longer term.

The Committee agreed to note the positive assessment on the Destination Royal Hillsborough projects and the subsequent Gateway Review Action Plan.

Councillor D Lynch left the meeting during consideration of this item of business 6.41 pm).

5. Report by the Head of Planning & Capital Development

Councillor K Dickson left the meeting for the consideration of this item of business (6.45 pm).

5.1 Committee for Infrastructure – Call for Evidence on a Proposed Tree Protection Bill

In the absence of the Head of Planning and Capital Development, the Principal Planning Officer presented the above report.

The report by the Head of Planning & Capital Development set out the background and key issues in connection with the Call for Evidence on a proposed Tree Protection Bill. It was noted that the Committee for Infrastructure was seeking views on a draft Tree Protection Bill which had been proposed by Peter McReynolds MLA under Standing Order 30: Public Bills: Introduction and First Stage of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

5.1 Committee for Infrastructure – Call for Evidence on a Proposed Tree Protection Bill (Cont'd)

The undernoted documents had been appended to the Officer's report:

- Tree Protection Bill (Private Members Bill)
- Explanatory and Financial Memorandum
- Draft Council Response.

The Principal Planning Officer responded to questions from the Committee in connection with a number of issues including:

- are ancient trees currently protected by Tree Protection Orders across the Council area
- how many investigations the Planning Enforcement team had carried out when a tree had not been planted. The Principal Planning Officer undertook to forward details of investigations carried out to date by the Council's Planning Enforcement team to Councillor S Lowry.
- the additional bureaucracy, costs and administration for Councils as a result of this Tree Protection Bill as Councils already had powers to protect trees.
- trees affected by planning applications.

It was proposed by Councillor S Lowry, seconded by Councillor J Harpur, and agreed that the content the Members Bill be noted and that the Council's draft response as presented, be approved.

6.0 Any Other Business

Councillor K Dickson returned to the meeting (6.59 pm).

6.1 Removal of Two Car Parking Spaces, Lisburn Street, Royal Hillsborough Councillor T Mitchell

In response to comments from Councillor T Mitchell, the Director of Regeneration & Growth undertook to look into the matter of two on-street car parking spaces having been removed in Lisburn Street, Royal Hillsborough following resurfacing work that had taken place recently.

The Director also drew the Committee's attention to the fact that some Members had been approached about creating a business forum for local business owners. Officers are in the process of arranging the first meeting.

6.2 Greenways Briefing Session
Councillor J Harpur

Councillor T Mitchell left the meeting at this point (6.59 pm).

In response from comments from Councillor J Harpur, the Director of Regeneration & Growth gave an assurance that a date for the Greenways briefing session would be confirmed to Members in the near future.

6.3 Dilapidation Bill and Vacant Buildings, Castle Street, Lisburn
Councillor G Hynds

In response to comments and questions from Councillor G Hynds regarding the current position on the dilapidated and vacant buildings in Castle Street, the Director of Regeneration & Growth advised that he was aware that the Building Control Officers Group had met with department officials recently regarding these matters. The Director also advised that there was ongoing dialogue with the property owners on the Future cities Growth fund. He also undertook to bring a report on the Future Cities initiative to the Committee in due course which would include a comprehensive update on the issues raised by Councillor Hynds.

Councillor J Harpur left the meeting and Councillor T Mitchell returned to the meeting at 7.01 pm.

6.4 Christmas Lights Programme - Update
Councillor C McCready

Councillor C McCready requested an update on the Christmas Lights programme for Lisburn and also the surrounding villages. The Head of Economic Development advised that a chronology of events was in place as per the reports to the Communities & Wellbeing Committee in April and May 2026. Also the Committee had approved the business case for the tender exercise for new lights which was now complete and which included a number of new enhancements.

The Head of Economic Development also advised that the various events would be promoted in CityWide and that the various marketing initiatives were also in place.

The Director of Regeneration & Growth advised that a report on the car parking offering over the Christmas shopping period would be considered by the Environment & Sustainability Committee this month.

The Head of Economic Development hoped that some parts of the Lisburn Light Festival would be replicated in other villages across the Lisburn and Castlereagh areas. He stated, however, that there were some events that could not be replicated such as the Castle

6.4 Christmas Lights Programme – Update (Cont'd)
Councillor C McCready

Gardens Light Display which ran every evening up until Christmas Eve which required staff on duty each evening.

The Head of Economic Development also indicated that he would be content to have a further conversation off line with Councillor McCready on the issues he had raised.

Councillor J Harpur returned to the meeting at 7.03 pm.

7. Confidential Business

Councillor C Kemp left the meeting at 7.22 pm,

The Chairperson, Alderman J Baird, advised that the confidential reports were required to be considered under confidential business due to containing information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information). In addition, the report re item 7.1.1 was confidential due to containing information relating 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 employees of, or office holders under, the Council.

"In Committee"

It was proposed by Councillor J Harpur, seconded by Councillor C McCready, and agreed that the Confidential Reports be considered "in Committee" in the absence of press or members of the public. The video recording was paused at this stage in proceedings and the member of the press left the Council Chamber (7.05 pm).

The Vice Chairman, Alderman A G Ewart, and Councillor J Gallen left the meeting at 7.23 pm.

7.1 Confidential Report from the Director of Regeneration & Growth

7.1.1 Progress on Public Realm CCTV Integration
(Redacted report to be published following completion of new operating model)

The Director of Regeneration & Growth's report set out the background and key issues in relation to the progress on the Integration of the Lisburn Public Realm CCTV System.

A copy of the draft Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) had been appended to the Director's report.

Councillor S Lowry left the meeting at 7.24 pm.

Councillor C Kemp returned to the meeting at 7.25 pm.

7.1.1 Progress on Public Realm CCTV Integration (Cont'd)

The Vice Chairman, Alderman A G Ewart, returned to the meeting at 7.26 pm.

The Director responded to a number of questions from the Committee on the key issues set out in the report circulated following which it was agreed that the Director's update report be noted, including the potential transfer of specialist server assets to the PSNI.

7.1.2 Tender Evaluation Criteria: PPM & RM 02 - Gas Detection Systems Maintenance; PPM & RM 04 - Boiler Plant & Combustion Systems; PPM & RM 09 – Lift Maintenance Services; PPM & RM 11 - CCTV Maintenance Services
(Redacted report to be published following ratification by Council)

It was proposed by Councillor J Laverty, seconded by the Vice Chairman, Alderman A G Ewart, and agreed that the tender evaluation criteria for the above listed contracts, as outlined in the Director's report, be noted.

8. Any Other Business (Confidential)

8.1 Pink October
Director of Regeneration & Growth

The Director of Regeneration & Growth provided the Committee with an update in regard to the Pink October initiative which would be launched this week by the Chairman, it being noted that this charity initiative was primarily led by the City Centre business and supported by Council officers.

8.2 Car Parking Offering
Director of Regeneration & Growth

The Director of Regeneration & Growth referred to the report on the Council's car parking offering over the Christmas shopping period which would be considered by the Environment & Sustainability Committee this month.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor T Mitchell, seconded by Councillor C McCready, and agreed to come out of Committee and normal business was resumed.

Conclusion of Meeting

The Chairperson thanked everyone for their attendance. There being no further business for consideration the meeting was concluded at 7.46 pm.

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Chairman