

**LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Special Meeting of the Council held in the Council Chamber and in Remote Locations on Thursday, 9 February 2023 at 6.02 pm**

**PRESENT IN CHAMBER:**

The Right Worshipful The Mayor  
Councillor S Carson

Aldermen J Baird, W J Dillon MBE, A G Ewart, O Gawith,  
A Grehan, S P Porter and J Tinsley

Councillors R T Beckett, D J Craig, A P Ewing, A Givan,  
A Gowan, S Hughes, U Mackin, J McCarthy,  
C McCready, A Swan and N Trimble

**PRESENT IN REMOTE LOCATION:**

Deputy Mayor  
Councillor M Guy

Aldermen D Drysdale and S Martin,

Councillors R Carlin, J Gallen, M Gregg, J Lavery BEM,  
S Lee, H Legge, S Lowry, G McCleave, A McIntyre,  
R McLernon, T Mitchell, S Mulholland, Jenny Palmer,  
John Palmer and S Skillen

**IN ATTENDANCE IN CHAMBER:**

Chief Executive  
Director of Finance & Corporate Services  
Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing  
Director of Service Transformation  
Head of Finance  
Member Services Officers (BS & EW)  
Technician

**Commencement of the Meeting**

At the commencement of the meeting, The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor S Carson, 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 2023/2024. The special meeting was being live-streamed to enable members of the public to hear and see the proceedings.

The Chief Executive proceeded to outline the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.

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

1. Apologies (00:02:36)

It was agreed that an apologies for non-attendance at the meeting be accepted on behalf of Councillor N Anderson

2. Declarations of Interest (00:03:53)

There were no declarations of interest.

Councillor H Legge joined the meeting at 6.05 pm.

3. Special Corporate Services Committee – 25 January, 2023 (00:04:32)

It was proposed by Councillor S Hughes, seconded by Councillor U Mackin, and agreed that the minutes of the special meeting of the Corporate Services Committee held on 25 January, 2023 be confirmed and signed.

4. Report by the Chief Executive (00:05:17)

4.1 District Rate and Draft Estimates of Income and Expenditure for 2023/2024 (00:05:20)

Members had been provided with a copy of the Draft Estimates of Income and Expenditure for 2023/2024 for the various departments of the Council.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor invited the Chairman of the Corporate Services Committee, Councillor S Hughes, to address the Council.

Alderman S P Porter entered the meeting during Councillor S Hughes' address (6.08 pm).

At the outset Councillor S Hughes acknowledged that the past year had been a particularly challenging year and that the Council was aware of the financial pressures that ratepayers are facing. He referred to the spiralling energy costs and food prices, as well as the rising interest and inflation rates which, he stated, affected the council too; but despite this the Council had made every effort to keep the rate rise below the rate of inflation which was currently at 10.5%. He stated that the Council had not taken its decision lightly in regard to the increase in the district rate but the reality was that the Council was responsible for the delivery of vital services. Councillor Hughes also outlined a number of significant additional cost pressures facing the Council which were in the region of £7 million and which were driven by factors such as the unprecedented rise of the cost of utilities, waste services, materials and supply contacts as well as salary costs.

Councillor Hughes elaborated on the Council's aim to deliver what was important for its residents such as high quality leisure facilities, delivering essential services and progressing ambitious plans for the Council area. He also highlighted the various initiatives associated and enterprise development and employment programmes.

4.1 District Rate and Draft Estimates of Income and Expenditure for 2023/2024 (Cont'd)

In concluding Councillor Hughes referred to the Council's focus on sustainability and its green agenda across the Council area, as well as keeping the community active and promoting mental wellbeing.

Councillor Hughes having outlined the recommendations in connection with the striking of the district rate put on record his thanks to Members for having provided constructive feedback throughout the process during the past few months. The Chairman also expressed thanks to the Chief Executive, Directors and all Officers who had participated in the estimates process, enabling the Council to keep the rate increase below the rate of inflation.

It was proposed by Councillor S Hughes, seconded by Councillor U Mackin, and agreed unanimously that:

- (a) approval be given to the strategies and related policies contained within the estimates document, namely the Treasury Management Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and the Capital Strategy; and
- (b) the district rate for the financial year 2023/2024 be set at 7.49% for domestic properties and 5.23% for non-domestic properties.

Conclusion of the Meeting

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

The Right Worshipful the Mayor thanked those present for their attendance and there being no further business, the Special Meeting concluded at 6.13 pm.

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Mayor