

**LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Meeting of the Corporate Services Committee held remotely and in the Council Chamber, Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at 6.00 pm.**

**PRESENT IN COUNCIL CHAMBER (COMMITTEE):**

Alderman O Gawith (Chair)  
Councillor A Ewing (Vice-Chair)  
Aldermen A Ewart MBE, M Guy and H Legge  
Councillors K Dickson, N Eaton, B Higginson and U Mackin

**PRESENT IN A REMOTE LOCATION (COMMITTEE):**

Councillors P Burke and C Kemp

**OTHER MEMBERS OF COUNCIL PRESENT IN COUNCIL CHAMBER**

Alderman A Grehan  
Councillor G Hynds

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chief Executive (Remote)  
Director of Finance & Corporate Services  
Director of Organisation Development & Innovation  
Director of Regeneration & Growth  
Head of Finance  
Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development  
Administration Manager  
Acting Member Services/PCSP Manager  
Member Services Officers (RN & CH)

**Commencement of Meeting**

The Chair 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 names of those Elected Members who were in attendance at the meeting, both in person and on a remote basis, were read out by the Member Services Officer.

The Chair stated that unauthorised recording was not permitted, as per 8.5 of the Council's Standing Orders. The Chair also reminded everyone to ensure that mobile phones were turned off or on silent mode for the duration of the meeting.

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services proceeded to outline the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency. Finally, the Chair asked that any Member entering or leaving the meeting alert the Member Services Officer accordingly so that this might be accurately reflected in the minutes.

Councillor N Eaton entered the Chamber during the housekeeping announcements. (6.02 pm)

1. Apologies (00:02:47)

Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting were accepted and recorded on behalf of The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor A Gowan; the Deputy Mayor, Councillor G McCleave; Councillors T Beckett, R Carlin, A Givan and The Hon N Trimble; and the Head of Corporate Communications & Administration.

2. Declarations of Interest (00:03:43)

The Chair invited Members to declare any interests they might have in relation to the business of the meeting and reminded them of the requirement that they complete Declaration of Interest forms in this regard which had been provided with the papers for the meeting and which were also available in the Chamber.

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. Report of Director of Regeneration & Growth (00:04:30)

3.1 Amendment to the Protocol for the Operation of the Planning Committee (00:04:40)

In addition to the narrative report, the Protocol for the Operation of the Planning Committee had been provided.

At its meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2023, the Planning Committee had asked that – in the interest of openness and transparency – all votes at meetings of the Planning Committee be recorded.

It was proposed by Councillor K Dickson, seconded by Alderman A Ewart and agreed to recommend that the Protocol for the Operation of the Planning Committee be amended to state that – except where a decision on a planning application is unanimous – a recorded vote be taken.

4. Report of Head of Corporate Communications & Administration (00:06:00)

4.1 Veterans' Awards Dinner – 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023 (00:06:25)

In the absence of the Head of Corporate Communications & Administration who had presented an apology for non-attendance at the meeting, her report was presented by the Acting Member Services/PCSP Manager.

In addition to the narrative report, a copy of an e-mail received on the 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023 from Veterans Awards Ireland advising that a number of individuals from the Council's area had been shortlisted for an award had been provided.

It was proposed by Alderman A Ewart, seconded by Councillor B Higginson and agreed to recommend that approval for the attendance of Members at the Veterans' Awards Dinner in Belfast on the 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023 be approved on a retrospective basis.

It was noted that – going forward – this event would be considered as part of the annual programme of Council events.

Alderman H Legge entered the Chamber during presentation of this item of business. (6.10 pm)

5. Report of Head of Finance (00:07:27)

5.1 Department of Finance – Consultations (00:07:38)

The narrative report related to the undernoted consultations which had been received from the Department of Finance, with copies of the consultations being also provided:-

- “Financial context for revenue raising consultations”. (Closing date: 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024)
- “Domestic Rating Measures”. (Closing date: 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024)
- “Non-Domestic Rating Measures”. (Closing date: 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024)

5.1 Department of Finance – Consultations (Continued)

In regard to the consultations, it was noted and agreed that:-

5.1.1 “Financial context for revenue raising consultations”  
(Closing date: 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024)

- NILGA would be submitting a response further to a consultation event on the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023;
- there was a likelihood that political parties would be submitting responses at a NI level;
- the Head of Finance had invited comments from Members by the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023 with the intention of a draft submission – if applicable - being presented to the Committee on the 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024. In order to satisfy the closing date of the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024, the Head of Service had recommended that delegated authority be sought from the Council on the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023 for the Committee to agree – if applicable – any Council submission to this consultation.

5.1.2 “Domestic Rating Measures” and  
“Non-Domestic Rating Measures”  
(Closing date: 13 February 2024)

- there was a likelihood that political parties would be submitting responses at a NI level;
- the Head of Finance had invited comments from Members by the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023 with the intention of proposed submissions – if applicable - being presented to the Committee on the 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024 with the ratified submissions being submitted to the Department of Finance by the closing date of the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

5.1.3 Decision

In regard to the three consultations referred to above, ie “Financial context for revenue raising consultations”; “Domestic Rating Measures”; and “Non-Domestic Rating Measures”, it was agreed on a Proposal made by Councillor U Mackin and seconded by Alderman M Guy that a letter be sent to the Permanent Secretary at the Department of Finance welcoming the consultation process and thanking him for the opportunity to make responses to the consultations but advising that the Council:-

- would not be making submissions at this point in time as it considered that it was not in receipt of sufficient information to make meaningful responses;
- may be willing to engage at some point in the future if it were in receipt of sufficient and meaningful information to make responses.

6. Report of Head of Human Resources & Organisational Development  
(00:15:31)

6.1 Workforce Reports (00:15:43)

Reports on the undernoted topics in relation to Council staff across all Departments had been provided with the report and their contents duly noted.

- Attendance Management Report for period ended 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023;
- Recruitment reports – (i) Advert & Selection; and (ii) Appointments;
- Workforce Profile.

The Head of Service responded to Members' questions and:-

- advised that information from the NI Audit Office regarding the performance of all NI councils for attendance/absenteeism was awaited and should be available for inclusion in the next quarterly report;
- noted comments that the term "Pregnant exc Maternity Leave" as a reason for sickness would be more appropriate if termed "Pregnancy Related Illness". The former term was however that used by the NI Audit Office.

7. Any other Business – Non-Confidential (00:28:06)

7.1 Maintenance works at Lagan Valley Island (00:28:18)  
Alderman A Ewart

Alderman A Ewart referred to the number of maintenance works which were outstanding at the Lagan Valley Island building, particularly those in regard to heating and water infiltration.

The Director of Regeneration & Growth responded to such concerns, advising that a number of defects could be attributed to the age of the building. The Director outlined remedial measures which were underway and advised that other remedial schemes would be presented within the Capital Programme.

8. Confidential Report from Director of Finance & Corporate Services (00:34:04)

The Chair asked that - in line with Item 5.15 of the Protocol and Etiquette for attending meetings on a remote basis – those Members attending the meeting on a remote basis ensure that the meeting could neither be seen nor heard by any other person at those remote locations.

The reasons for confidentiality were as set out in the agenda, ie:-

8.1 Report on Tender Award

(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).)

Redacted report to be available following ratification and signing of contract.

8.2 Standing Orders – Local Government (Standing Orders) Regulations (NI) 2016

(Confidential for reason of information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.)

Redacted report to be available following Council ratification.

8.3 Event Booking System – Financial Appraisal

(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).)

Redacted report to be available on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2024.

8.4 Provision of Catering at Lagan Valley Island

(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).)

Redacted report to be available in February 2025.

8.5 Management Accounts – Period 7 of 2023/2024

(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).)

Redacted report to be available following Council ratification on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

8.6 Estimates 2024/2025 – Updated position at corporate level

(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).)

Report will never become available. (Final estimates will be released.)

8.7 Estimates 2024/2025 – Directorate Update

(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).)

Report will never become available. (Final estimates will be released.)

8.8 Consolidated Scheme of Allowances payable to Councillors  
(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information)).

Redacted report to be available following Council ratification on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

In Committee (00:34:56)

It was proposed by Councillor A Ewing, seconded by Alderman A Ewart and agreed that the Confidential Report of the Director be considered "in Committee". (Recording was paused at this stage in proceedings.)

Chairman

The Chair of the Committee, Alderman O Gawith, advised that it was necessary for him to leave the meeting and that the Vice-Chair, Councillor A Ewing, would conduct the remainder of the business before the Committee.

Alderman Gawith wished those present a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year, and left the Chamber at 6.38 pm.

The Vice-Chair, Councillor A Ewing, took the Chair and conducted the remainder of the business before the Committee. (6.38 pm)

8.1 Report on Tender Award

Presented by the Director of Regeneration & Growth.

The Director commented on the tender before the Committee for consideration.

It was proposed by Alderman H Legge, seconded by Councillor N Eaton and agreed to recommend that the tender awarded in regard to the undernoted contract, together with the attendant tender report, be noted:-

- Planned Preventive Maintenance Inspections of Water Features.

It was further agreed to recommend that the signing and sealing of the Tender document be approved.

The Director of Regeneration of Growth left the Chamber at the conclusion of this item of business. (6.42 pm)

8.2 Standing Orders – Local Government (Standing Orders) Regulations 2016  
(Extended closing date: 5<sup>th</sup> January 2024)

In the absence of the Head of Corporate Communications & Administration, her report was presented by the Acting Member Services/PCSP Manager.

In addition to the narrative report, the following documents had been provided:-

- letter dated the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023 from the Department for Communities seeking comments on the Standing Order regulations with particular focus on the operation of the “call-in” procedure;
- a schedule of the call-ins managed by the Council in recent years.

It was proposed by Alderman A Ewart, seconded by Councillor K Dickson and agreed to recommend that:-

- the comments as set out in the report in regard to the following points be submitted to the Department for Communities by the extended closing date of the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2024:-
  - Timelines;
  - Ad Hoc Committees.
  - Section 41 (1) (a);
  - Section 41 (1) (b).
- any further comments which Members might wish to make be submitted to the Acting Member Services/PCSP Manager by the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023. (Councillor G Hynds advised of comments on the transparency of the call-in process which the Acting Member Services/PCSP Manager agreed to note for inclusion.)

The final response in regard to this matter would be included within the Finance & Corporate Services’ Information & Correspondence Schedule for January 2024.

8.3 Event Booking System – Financial Appraisal

In the absence of the Head of Corporate Communications & Administration, her report was presented by the Administration Manager.

In addition to the narrative report, Members had been provided with the following documents in regard to the provision of an events booking system for Lagan Valley Island and the Island Arts Centre:-

- Preliminary Expenditure Application;
- Business Case;
- Equality Screening document.



8.3 Event Booking System – Financial Appraisal (Continued)

It was proposed by Alderman A Ewart, seconded by Councillor U Mackin and agreed to recommend that – having considered the Preliminary Expenditure Application and Business Case – a procurement exercise for the provision of an event booking system at Lagan Valley Island and the Island Ars Centre be approved so as to allow for a new event management booking system to be implemented by the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2024.

8.4 Provision of Catering at Lagan Valley Island

In the absence of the Head of Corporate Communications & Administration, her report was presented by the Administration Manager.

In addition to the narrative report which provided an update in regard to the provision of catering at Lagan Valley Island, a Single Tender Action Report was also provided. The STA was required to carry the current catering service to the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024.

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services elaborated on the challenges which putting in place a suitable arrangement for the catering service at Lagan Valley Island posed. The Director also responded to a number of questions posed by Members.

It was proposed by Councillor U Mackin, seconded by Alderman A Ewart and agreed to recommend that:-

- the Single Tender Action for the current catering contractor up to the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024 at the value as set out in the report be approved;
- a new business case for the provision of a longer-term catering arrangement at Lagan Valley Island be presented to the Committee in due course, likely in February 2024.

Alderman A Ewart left the Chamber at the conclusion of this item of business. (7.15 pm)

8.5 Management Accounts – Period 7 of 2023/2024

Presented by the Head of Finance.

The Management Accounts for the period ending the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023, together with an extensive narrative report by way of explanation, were noted.

8.6 Estimates 2024/2025 – Updated position at Corporate level

A progress report in regard to the 2023/2024 estimates' process at a corporate level was presented by the Head of Finance. The content of the progress report and the Head of Service's comments thereon were noted.

8.7 Estimates' Process – 2024/2025 within Finance & Corporate Services Directorate; Organisational Development & Innovation Directorate; and the Governance & Audit Unit

A progress report in regard to the 2024/2025 estimates' process within the Finance & Corporate Services Directorate; the Organisational Development & Innovation Directorate; and the Governance & Audit Unit was presented by the Director of Finance & Corporate Services. The Director and the Head of Finance responded to Members' questions.

The content of the progress report and the officers' comments thereon were noted.

Alderman A Ewart returned to the Chamber during the Director's presentation of this item of business. (7.22 pm)

Alderman Ewart left the Chamber again at 7.25 pm during the Director's presentation.

8.8 Consolidated Scheme of Allowances payable to Councillors

Presented by the Head of Finance.

The following documents had been provided with the report. Their contents were noted and agreed.

- the revised rates for Basic and Special Responsibility Allowance as outlined in Circular LG23/2023 and applicable from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023;
- the Council's updated Scheme of Allowances Payable to Councillors for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024;
- the Council's updated Scheme of Allowances Payable to Councillors for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

9. Any Other Business – Confidential

There was no other confidential business raised.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor N Eaton, seconded by Alderman H Legge and agreed to come "out of Committee". Normal business and audio recording were resumed.

10. Any Other Business (00:35:12)

There were no further items raised.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Acting Chair, Councillor A Ewing, wished those present a Happy Christmas and New Year.

The meeting concluded at 7.36 pm.

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MAYOR/CHAIR