

**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 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 7.00 pm.**

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

Alderman O Gawith (Chair)  
Councillor A Ewing (Vice-Chair)  
The Right Worshipful The Mayor  
Councillor A Gowan  
Aldermen A Ewart MBE, M Guy and H Legge  
Councillors A Givan, B Higginson, C Kemp and  
The Hon N Trimble

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

Deputy Mayor  
Councillor G McCleave  
Councillors P Burke, R Carlin, K Dickson and N Eaton

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

Alderman A Grehan  
Councillor B Hynds

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chief Executive (Remote)  
Director of Finance & Corporate Services  
Director of Organisation Development & Innovation  
Director of Regeneration & Growth  
Head of Corporate Communications & Administration  
Head of Finance  
Member Services Officers (RN & BF)

**Commencement of Meeting**

The meeting had commenced later than scheduled. This was due to a Special Meeting of Council having been convened immediately prior to the Committee 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.

1. Apologies (00:03:08)

Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting were accepted and recorded on Councillors T Beckett and U Mackin; and the Head of Assets.

2. Declarations of Interest (00:03:32)

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.

The following Declaration of Interest was made:-

- Councillor A Ewing – Item 6.10 of Confidential Report of Director of Finance & Corporate Services – “Governance in connection with the Transfer of the Landlord Registration Scheme”. (Private Landlord)

3. Report of Chief Executive (00:03:51)

3.1 Community Investment Fund (00:04:01)

In addition to the narrative report, an evaluation of the Community Investment Fund as of January 2024 had been provided. The Chief Executive gave a brief summary of the background, purpose and role of the Community Investment Fund.

It was proposed by Alderman M Guy, seconded by Councillor A Givan and agreed to recommend that:-

- the report of the Chief Executive be noted;
- the pilot process stage of the Community Investment Fund be closed, but with due diligence continuing;
- a further Community Investment Fund be launched with the agreed criteria thereof being as set out in the Chief Executive's report;

3.1 Community Investment Fund (Continued)

- subject to approval of the budget being considered in the Financial Resilience report later in the meeting, the upper limit of the grant from the Community Investment Fund be increased to a maximum of £350k per organisation;
- applications to the Community Investment Fund be accepted only from those organisations that had not previously been recipients of funding from the CIF.

The Chief Executive advised that the launch of the CIF would be April/May 2024 with the confirmed date being reported to the Communities & Wellbeing Committee in due course.

3.2 District Electoral Area (DEA) Local Investment Programme (00:06:54)

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

- DEA Local investment Programme – Evaluation report (2022-2023);
- Equality Screening for DEA Investment Plan (2023-2024);
- Rural Needs Impact Assessment for DEA Investment Plan (2022/2023).

The Chief Executive responded to comments about the chronological sequence of events for the reporting of the DEA Local Investment Programme to the Corporate Services Committee and to the Communities & Wellbeing Committee.

It was proposed by Alderman A Ewart, seconded by Alderman M Guy and agreed to recommend that:-

- the report of the Chief Executive be noted;
- the evaluation report of the DEA Local investment Programme (2023-2024) be noted;
- subject to approval of the budget being considered in the Financial Resilience report later in the meeting, the DEA Local Investment Programme for 2024/2025 as outlined in Table 1 of the report, be referred to the Communities & Wellbeing Committee for consideration.

4. Report of Director of Organisation Development & Innovation (00:12:45)

4.1 Corporate Plan (00:12:57)

In addition to the narrative report which referred to the Member and Officer consultation exercises on the Corporate Plan for 2024-2028, the following had been provided:-

- report on the initial findings from the public consultation exercise in regard to the Council's new Corporate Plan (2024-2028);
- draft Corporate Plan for 2024-2028;
- Equality Impact Assessment in relation to the Corporate Plan (2024-2028);
- Rural Needs Impact Assessment in relation to the Corporate Plan (2024-2028)

The Director of Organisation Development & Innovation highlighted the fact that whilst the previous Corporate Plan had been quality and service focused, the new Corporate Plan focussed more on investment and a community investment programme.

It was proposed by Alderman A Ewart, seconded by Alderman H Legge and agreed to recommend that:-

- the findings from the Public Consultation exercise on the new Corporate Plan for 2024-2028 be noted;
- the draft Corporate Plan (final version) be approved.

It was noted that - following approval of the Corporate Plan, Departmental Plans would then be rolled out.

5. Report of Head of Corporate Communications & Administration (00:16:54)

5.1 ABF (Army Benevolent Fund) NI  
80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert by the Band, Bugles.  
Pipes & Drums of the Royal Irish Regiment  
Belfast Waterfront Hall – Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2024 (00:17:05)

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

- letter dated the 20<sup>th</sup> January 2024 from the ABF (NI) regarding the above event;
- Council's policy on Invitations to Civic Functions, Visits & Council Events (January 2020);

5.1 ABF (Army Benevolent Fund) NI  
80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert by the Band, Bugles,  
Pipes & Drums of the Royal Irish Regiment  
Belfast Waterfront Hall – Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2024 (Continued)

- Equality & Good Relations screening document in regard to the Council's policy on Invitations to Civic Functions, Visits & Council Events (January 2020).

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

- the event referred to above be supported by the purchase of VIP tickets (£66.00 per person) for the following persons, or their nominees:-
  - The Right Worshipful The Mayor
  - the Chair of the Corporate Services Committee
  - the Vice-Chair of the Corporate Services Committee
  - the Veterans' Champion
  - the Chair of the D-Day 80 Working Group;
- the Council be responsible for the payment of any vouched expenditure incurred by the Members (or their nominees) referred to above.

Should any other Member wish to attend the event at their own expense, tickets were available from the Waterfront Hall Box Office or website.

In relation to questions posed by Councillor C Kemp about the Equality & Good Relations screening document for the Council's policy on Invitations to Civic Functions, Visits & Council Events, the Head of Corporate Communications & Administration advised that:-

- she would refer Councillor Kemp's comments to the Equality Officer that "different religious/political groups" (on the Council) as referred to in "Available Evidence" (page 5), should be amended to "different political groups";
- the review of the Council's policy on Invitations to Civic Functions, Visits & Council Events" was underway and would be presented to the Committee in due course.

5.2 Retention & Disposal Schedule (00:20:40)

The Head of Service referred to the decision of the Committee in November 2023 that the draft Retention & Disposal Schedule be approved and be submitted to the Public Records Office for NI for approval.

PRONI had since advised that – due to a backlog of schedules from local authorities – they could not provide a timeline for approval of the Council's schedule. Whilst PRONI had stated that draft schedules should not be implemented before being laid before Assembly, they had advised that local authorities should assess the risk element and decide on what action to take.

Since November 2023, a number of changes to the draft schedule had been requested. A copy of a revised schedule had been provided.

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

- the amendments to the draft Retention & Disposal Schedule be agreed and that the revised draft Schedule be submitted to PRONI for approval;
- in order for the Council to minimise its risk in regard to data preservation and bearing in mind the principles of GDPR, the implementation of the Council's draft Retention & Disposal Schedule be progressed in advance of PRONI approval and it's laying before in the Assembly.

5.3 D-Day 80: 6 June 2024 (00:23:01)

In addition to the narrative report, copies of the undernoted items had been provided:-

- Minutes of meeting of the D-Day Working Group held on the 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024;
- draft D-Day Programme (as at 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024), together with associated estimated costs;
- a schedule in regard to options for the lighting of a beacon on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

The Head of Service responded to Members' questions in relation to the format of events, estimated budgets and community/business involvement.

5.3 D-Day 80: 6 June 2024 (Continued)

It was proposed by Alderman H Legge, seconded by Councillor A Ewing and agreed to recommend that:-

- the minutes of the meeting of the Working Group held on the 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024 be noted;
- the draft D-Day 80 Programme and associated estimated costs be agreed;
- the venue for the D-Day 80 beacon lighting be Castle Gardens, Lisburn;
- the progression of the D-Day 80 beacon lighting in Castle Gardens as outlined in the report be agreed.

6. Any other Business – Non-Confidential (00:33:43)

There were no items of a non-confidential nature raised.

7. Confidential Report from Director of Finance & Corporate Services (00:34:20)

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:-

7.1 Internal Audit

(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 award of contract.

7.2 Report on Tender Awards

(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 contracts.

7.3 Building Resilience

(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 when final financial statements are released.

7.4 Bad Debt Write-Off Request

(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 after full Council meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

7.5 Software Licence STA

(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 after full Council meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

7.6 VAT claim relating to Leisure activities

(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 after full Council meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

7.7 Management Accounts – Period 9 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 after full Council meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

7.8 Quarterly Finance Reports – Quarter 3 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 after full Council meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

7.9 Recruitment Matter

(Confidential for reason of 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.

Redacted report to be available on post-advertisement of the Post.

7.10 Governance in connection with the  
Transfer of the Landlord Registration Scheme

(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 once contract has been signed upon completion of the procurement process.



In Committee (00:35:05)

It was proposed by Alderman H Legge, seconded by Councillor C Kemp and agreed that the Confidential Report of the Director be considered “in Committee”. (Recording was paused at this stage in proceedings and the member of the press left the Chamber.)

7.1 Internal Audit

Presented by the Chief Executive.

In addition to the narrative report, the Business Case for Internal Audit, together with the following had been provided:-

- details of a discounted audit rate on a daily basis within the private sector;
- a quotation for the provision of Audit Management Services.

During the Chief Executive’s presentation of this item, the following Members left the Meeting:-

- The Deputy Mayor, Councillor G McCleave, on a remote basis. (7.36 pm)
- The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor A Gowan, from the Council Chamber. (7.37 pm)

It was proposed by Councillor A Givan, seconded by Councillor N Trimble and agreed to recommend that a Single Tender Action award of contract for the provision of Internal Audit as outlined in the Chief Executive’s report be progressed.

7.2 Report on Tender Awards

Presented by the Director of Regeneration & Growth.

It was proposed by Councillor A Givan, seconded by Councillor N Trimble and agreed to recommend that the tenders awarded in regard to the following contracts, together with the attendant tender reports, be noted:-

- T23/24-019 - Digital Academy;
- T23/24-014 – Into Employment Programme;
- T22/23-073 – Tender for the Collection, Transportation & Recycling of Plasterboard from Council Household Recycling Centres;
- T22/23-072 – Tender for the Collection, Transportation, Recycling and/or Recovery of Waste Paints & Aerosols from Council Household Recycling Centres;
- T23/24-008 – Tender for the Collection, Transportation and Recycling of Rubble from Household Recycling Centres.

7.2 Report on Tender Awards (Continued)

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

7.3 Building Resilience

Presented by the Director of Finance & Corporate Services.

A report on building resilience from a financial perspective had been provided. The Director explained the content thereof and highlighted pertinent issues.

Councillor G Hynds left the Council Chamber during the Director's presentation of this item. (7.42 pm)

It was proposed by Councillor N Trimble, seconded by Councillor A Givan and agreed to recommend that the proposed approach to allocating the underspend relating to 2023/2024 as outlined in the report be approved.

7.4 Bad Debt Write-Off Request

Presented by the Head of Finance.

It was proposed by Councillor A Ewing, seconded by Alderman H Legge and agreed to recommend that the debt as set out in the Head of Finance's report be written off.

7.5 Software Licence STA

Presented by the Head of Finance.

In addition to the narrative report, a Single Tender Action report had been provided.

It was proposed by Alderman M Guy, seconded by Alderman A Ewart and agreed to recommend that the Single Tender Action award of contract for the licence costs of the supplier as detailed in the report for up to 12 months duration, be agreed so as to allow for the implementation of the new finance system to be embedded and for all information to be readily accessible for audit purposes.

7.6 VAT claim relating to Leisure activities

Presented by the Head of Finance.

It was proposed by Alderman H Legge, seconded by Councillor N Trimble and agreed to recommend that:-

- the update in relation to the successful outcome of the legal case relating to leisure VAT be noted;
- any repayments relating to Leisure activities be transferred to the Capital Fund and earmarked to fund Leisure capital projects.

The Head of Service placed on record, the Council's appreciation of the work put into this matter by Mr Edward Patterson during his employment as Director of Finance within Castlereagh Borough Council. Members also expressed thanks to the Head of Finance and her team for their work associated with the matter.

7.7 Management Accounts – Period 9 of 2023/2024

Presented by the Head of Finance.

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

Officers responded to Members' questions.

7.8 Quarterly Finance Reports – Quarter 3 of 2023/2024

Presented by the Head of Finance.

The information contained in the narrative report and also in the reports on Repairs & Renewals and DFC Earmarked Reserves were noted.

7.9 Recruitment Matter

Presented by Director of Organisation Development & Innovation.

It was proposed by Councillor N Trimble, seconded by Councillor A Ewing and agreed to recommend that the recruitment process for the post of Director of Environmental Services as set out in the report be commenced.

The Head of Organisation Development & Innovation noted the Elected Member composition of the Shortlisting & Interviewing Panel as agreed by the Committee at the meeting.

7.10 Governance in connection with the  
Transfer of the Landlord Registration Scheme

Presented by the Director of Organisation Development & Innovation.

It was proposed by Alderman H Legge, seconded by Alderman A Ewart and agreed to recommend that the governance structures in relation to the procurement of a new digital system in connection with the transfer of the Landlord Registration Scheme from the Department for Communities to local councils be noted.

8. Any Other Business – Confidential

There was no other confidential business raised.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor N Trimble, seconded by Alderman M Guy and agreed to come “out of Committee”. Normal business and audio recording were resumed.

9. Any Other Business

There were no further items raised.

The meeting concluded at 8.08 pm.

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MAYOR/CHAIR