

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 8th February 2023 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT IN COUNCIL CHAMBER (COMMITTEE):

Councillor S Hughes (Chairman)

Councillor U Mackin (Vice-Chairman)

Aldermen A Ewart MBE, O Gawith, S Martin, P Porter and J Tinsley

Councillors A Ewing, J Laverty BEM, T Mitchell, and The Hon N Trimble

PRESENT IN A REMOTE LOCATION (COMMITTEE):

The Right Worshipful The Mayor
Councillor S Carson

Councillors R Carlin and S Lowry

OTHER MEMBERS OF COUNCIL PRESENT IN COUNCIL CHAMBER

Aldermen J Dillon MBE and A Grehan

OTHER MEMBERS OF COUNCIL PRESENT IN A REMOTE LOCATION

Councillors A Gowan, Jenny Palmer, John Palmer and S Skillen

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive
Director of Finance & Corporate Services
Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing
Director of Service Transformation
Head of Corporate Communications & Administration
Head of Finance
Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development
Portfolio Manager
Member Services Officers (CH & RN)

Commencement of Meeting

The Chairman, Councillor S Hughes, advised that the meeting 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 Chairman stated that unauthorised recording was not permitted, as per 8.5 of the Council's Standing Orders. The Chairman 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 Chairman 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 (00:02:29)

There were no apologies.

2. Declarations of Interest (00:02:36)

The Chairman 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 was made during the course of the meeting:-

Alderman S Martin - Item 4.5 of Report of Head of Corporate Communications & Administration – "Health Working Group" (Employee of South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust)

3. Report of Chief Executive (00:03:10)

3.1 Committee Structure (00:03:17)

Members were provided with three options in regard to a revision of the number of standing committees for efficiency purposes. The Chief Executive advised of a Member workshop earlier in the week, the feeling of which being to investigate Option 2 more fully.

It was proposed by Councillor N Trimble and seconded by Councillor U Mackin that Option 2 as presented, ie the removal of the Capital Projects Committee thereby resulting in six committees, and a revisit of the Terms of Reference of the committees be progressed.

An amendment was proposed by Alderman O Gawith and seconded by Alderman S Martin that Option 3 as presented, ie a reduction to five committees with a more transformative, cross-cutting committee structure, be progressed.

3.1 Committee Structure (Continued)

The amendment in the name of Alderman O Gawith and seconded by Alderman S Martin was put to the meeting, the voting being three in favour of the Amendment and 11 against. The amendment was declared “lost” and the Proposal in the name of Councillor N Trimble and seconded by Councillor U Mackin was agreed and carried.

More formal proposals would be presented in due course with the intention being to have the revised structure in place for the new Council mandate.

The Committee also noted progress reports on work being done in relation to the following governance documents of the Council, such work to be completed in advance of new Council mandate, with continued engagement with Members and updates as appropriate:-

- Constitution
- Standing Orders
- Scheme of Delegation
- Accounting Manual

4. Report of Head of Corporate Communications & Administration (00:26:20)

4.1 Access to Council & Committee Meetings, Agenda, Reports, Minutes & Recordings – Protocol (00:26:46)

A revised copy of the document entitled “Access to Council & Committee Meetings, Agenda, Reports, Minutes & Recordings – Protocol” had been provided, and its content duly noted. The revised document highlighted the amendments which had been made.

4.2 ABF The Soldiers’ Charity (00:27:37)
Musical Tribute to Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II
Waterfront Hall, Belfast – 15th April 2023

Members had been provided with copy of letter dated the 12th January 2023 from ABF The Soldiers’ Charity inviting the Council to support the above event by purchasing tickets for it.

The Committee was invited to identify an exceptional factor which would allow the Council to support the event. The feeling of the Committee was that the event should be supported.

4.2 ABF The Soldiers' Charity
Musical Tribute to Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II
Waterfront Hall, Belfast – 15th April 2023 (Continued)

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

- the event referred to above be supported by the purchase of tickets for the following persons, or their nominees:-
 - The Right Worshipful The Mayor
 - the Chairman of the Corporate Services Committee
 - the Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Services Committee
 - the Veterans' Champion
- the Council be responsible for the payment of any vouched expenditure incurred by the Members (or their nominees) referred to above.

It was further agreed that all other Members of Council be encouraged to attend the above event, the purchase of tickets, and any other expenditure, being at their own expense.

4.3 Lagan Valley Island – Building Illumination Requests (00:29:50)

It was proposed by Councillor T Mitchell, seconded by Alderman S Martin and agreed to recommend that the requests for LVI illuminations as set out below be acceded to, both requests being in compliance with the Building Illuminations' Policy:-

| Organisation | Date | Colour |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| World Fairtrade Fortnight | 27 th February 2023 | Blue, Green & Black |
| Global Intergenerational Week | 24 th April 2023 | Pink |

The Committee also noted the reasons as to why requests for the following illuminations had been declined:-

- Dry January Feel Good February – January 2023
- World Encephalitis Day – 22nd February 2023

4.4 Building Illuminations – Evaluation (00:31:06)

An analysis report on the illumination of Council property in furtherance of requests from charities etc was provided.

The Chairman advised that this item had now been withdrawn as it had been recognised that further work was required in relation to the report and that there were connections between the recommendations listed therein and the report of the Chief Executive on committee structures. For such reasons, the report would be re-listed at a later stage.

4.5 Health Working Group (00:31:32)

Alderman S Martin - as an employee of the South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust - declared an interest in this item of business.

4.5.1 Meeting – 10th October 2022

The minutes of a meeting of the Health Working Group held on the 10th October 2022 were provided. It was agreed to recommend that the aforementioned minutes be adopted.

Councillor J Lavery expressed concern that the SE Trust had not as yet responded to issues raised at the above meeting and enquired as to when the minutes had in fact been furnished to the Trust. The Head of Service agreed to expedite such responses and to ascertain as to when the minutes had been furnished to the Trust. The Head of Service would revert to Councillor Lavery.

4.5.2 Special Meeting – 13th December 2022

A special meeting of the Health Working Group had been held on the 13th December 2022 in order to receive a deputation from “COLD” (Carers Of Learning Disabled). SE Trust officials had not been present, however they had since been provided with a summary of the issues raised with a request that they respond to them at the next meeting of the Health Working Group.

Alderman P Porter ask that - in addition to the SE Trust responding to the “COLD” issues at the next meeting of the Health Working Group – they be requested to provide a response as soon as possible to either “COLD” or to the Council.

4.5.3 Next meeting – Monday 27th March 2023

The Head of Service advised those present that the next meeting of the Health Working Group had been arranged for Monday 27th March 2023. The SE Trust had been asked to respond to the issues in regard to COLD.

Councillor A Ewing asked that the issue of staff parking provision at the Lagan Valley Hospital site be conveyed to the SE Trust for response at the meeting.

4.6 Freedom of the City – The Gettys (00:39:19)

The Committee noted the update in respect of the ceremony on the 1st June 2023 to confer the Freedom of the City on Keith and Krystin Getty.

The Head of Service gave an assurance that every effort would be made to re-purpose those items for which costs had already been incurred. Such costs had been incurred due to the previously planned Freedom of the City event for the Gettys which had to be postponed due to the pandemic.

5. Report of Head of Finance (00:43:30)

5.1 Repairs & Renewals (00:43:54)

The Committee noted the breakdown of the Repairs & Renewals spend for 2022/2023 (Q3), together with the attendant explanatory report.

6. Agenda Item Brought Forward (00:44:33)
Any Other Business

As the remainder of the business before the meeting was of a confidential nature, the Chairman sought agreement to bring forward Item 7 of the agenda – Any Other Business – so that items of a non-confidential nature might be raised when proceedings were being recorded. This was agreed.

6.1 Council Chamber - PA System (00:44:55)
Councillor U Mackin

Councillor U Mackin raised concerns about the workings of the PA system in the Council Chamber, Councillor Mackin enquiring about the maintenance programme and response time that are in place for the PA system.

The Head of Corporate Communications & Administration advised of action taken to date and that issues would be reported to the contractor. The Head of Service would also respond on the matter of maintenance and response time.

Councillor A Gowan left the meeting remotely during discussion. (6.47 pm)
Councillor N Trimble left the Chamber during discussion. (6.50 pm)

6.2 Council Chamber – Heating (00:45:35)
Councillor U Mackin

Councillor U Mackin raised concerns about the cool temperature of the Council Chamber.

The Head of Corporate Communications & Administration advised that planned maintenance had been carried out the previous week. However the current issue was due to a fault. Engineers would be onsite the following morning to resolve.

Councillor N Trimble returned to the Chamber during discussion. (6.54 pm)

7. Confidential Report from Director of Finance & Corporate Services (00:52:47)

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

7.1 Local Investment Programme Pilot – Phase 3 (2023-2024)
(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

Report to be available in March 2023.

7.2 Hillhall Regeneration Group
(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. (28th February 2023)

7.3 Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields (Portion)
(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 post disposal.

7.4 Hybrid Working Pilot – Review of Pilot and Further Considerations
(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 following Council ratification. (28th February 2023)

7.5 Efficiency Review Steering Group

(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.

7.6 Citizenship Service – Update Report

(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. (28th February 2023)

7.7 National Living Wage Increase – Requests in relation to Contracts

(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 April 2023.

7.8 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 after Estimate-setting process.

7.9 Management Accounts Period 9

(Confidential for reason of information (i) relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and (ii) related 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 employee of, or office bearers under, the Council.

Redacted report to be available after full Council meeting. (28th February 2023)

7.10 Consolidated Scheme of Allowances Payable to Councillors

(Confidential for reason of information (i) relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and (ii) related 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 employee of, or office bearers under, the Council.

Report to be available after full Council meeting. (28th February 2023)

7.11 Recruitment

(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.

In Committee

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.)

7.1 Local Investment Programme Pilot – Phase 3 (2023-2024)

Presented by the Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing with the Portfolio Manager also in attendance.

The following appendices to the report had been provided:-

- Local DEA Investment Programme Assessment Flow Diagram
- Proposed Local Investment Programme 2023-2024
- Local Investment Programme Evaluation Report 2021-2022
- Equality Screening document

It was proposed by Alderman P Porter, seconded by Councillor N Trimble and agreed to recommend that the proposed programme of work for Phase 3 of the Local Investment Programme as outlined in the appendix be agreed.

Councillor S Skillen left the meeting remotely during discussion of this item.
(6.56 pm)

Hazel King, Portfolio Manager

The Chairman, Councillor S Hughes, referred to this being the last meeting at which the Portfolio Manager – Hazel King – would be in attendance, Hazel having secured a post elsewhere. Councillor Hughes thanked Hazel for all her work with the Council over the years and extended best wishes to her in her new post. These sentiments were endorsed by Alderman A Ewart, Chairman of the Development Committee, who thanked Hazel for all her work within the Service Transformation directorate. Hazel thanked Members for their kind words and best wishes.

7.2 Hillhall Regeneration Group

Presented by the Director of Service Transformation.

The following appendices to the report had been provided:-

- Deed of Surrender of Existing Lease;
- Draft Renewal Lease, Hillhall Regeneration Group

It was proposed by Councillor U Mackin, seconded by Councillor N Trimble and agreed to recommend that the recommendation of the Director in regards to the issue of a new lease to Hillhall Regeneration Group and on the terms, conditions and associated matters as detailed in the report be approved.

Councillor A Gowan returned to the meeting remotely during presentation of the report. (7.00 pm)

The Portfolio Manager left the Chamber during presentation of the report. (7.00 pm)

Alderman A Grehan left and returned to the Chamber during presentation of the report. (7.00 pm and 7.05 pm)

7.3 Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields (Portion)

Presented by the Director of Service Transformation.

The following appendices to the report had been provided:-

- Map of Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields, Limetree Avenue, Lisburn
- Report to meeting of Leisure & Community Development Committee held on 2nd March 2021 in regard to “Laurelhill Sports Zone”.

It was proposed by Alderman S Martin, seconded by Alderman O Gawith and agreed to recommend that:-

- through an Expression of Interest process, the land designated on the map of the Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields be released as per the method detailed in the Director’s report;
- the Council writes to the Department for Communities seeking authority to dispose of the asset on a “less than best price” basis;
- a legal representative be appointed to draft any lease and to support the process of disposal as outlined.

Alderman A Ewart left and returned to the Chamber during discussion. (7.26 pm and 7.30 pm respectively)

7.4 Hybrid Working Pilot – Review of Pilot and Further Considerations

Presented by the Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development.

The following appendix to the report had been provided:-

- Evaluation of the Hybrid Working Pilot – February 2023

It was proposed by Alderman J Tinsley, seconded by Alderman O Gawith and agreed to recommend that:-

- Hybrid be continued as a pilot for a further number of months so that there was a full year of impact and that Hybrid could be fully assessed over the period of a working year, to include a review of performance KPIs;
- a further report be brought to the Committee after a full year post-pilot, such a report being aimed to be presented in September 2023.

The Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing and the Director of Service Transformation left the Chamber during presentation of this item. (7.47 pm)

Councillor T Mitchell left and returned to the Chamber during presentation of this item. (7.48 pm and 7.50 pm respectively)

Alderman A Grehan left the Chamber during discussion. (7.52 pm)

Alderman J Dillon left the Chamber at the conclusion of this item of business. (7.55 pm)

7.5 Efficiency Review Steering Group

Presented by the Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development.

The following appendix to the report had been provided:-

- Minutes and action notes of the meeting of the Efficiency Review Steering Group held on the 1st February 2023

It was proposed by Councillor T Mitchell, seconded by Alderman J Tinsley and agreed to recommend that:-

- the minutes and action notes of the meeting of the Efficiency Review Steering Group held on the 1st February 2023 be noted;
- the recommendations of the ERSG in respect of amendments to the staffing structure as detailed in the report be approved.

Alderman A Grehan returned to the Chamber at the conclusion of this item. (7.57 pm)

7.6 Citizenship Service – Update Report

Presented by the Head of Corporate Communications & Administration.

The following appendices to the report had been provided:-

- Memorandum of Understanding between Historic Royal Palaces and Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council regarding the provision of Citizenship Ceremonies at Hillsborough Castle and Gardens.
- Equality Screening document.

The Head of Service advised that the nature of Citizenship Ceremonies was moving to a more physical one.

It was proposed by Alderman S Martin, seconded by Alderman P Porter and agreed to recommend that:-

- the update report on the matter of Citizenship Ceremonies be noted;
- the Memorandum of Understanding between Historic Royal Palaces and the Council be approved.

Alderman S Martin asked that his appreciation of the work put into Citizenship Ceremonies by staff, both past and present, be recorded.

The Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development left the Chamber during discussion of this item. (8.00 pm)

7.7 National Living Wage Increase – Requests in relation to Contracts

Presented by the Head of Corporate Communications & Administration.

It was proposed by Alderman P Porter, seconded by Councillor J Lavery and agreed to recommend that the requests for increased tender costs relating to increases in labour costs only for the following contracts be approved as detailed in the Head of Service's report:-

- Provision of Cleaning Services at Designated Council Premises
- Provision of Caretaker/Receptionist Services at Bradford Court
- Provision of Security/CCTV/Concierge Services

The Head of Corporate Communications & Administration undertook to confirm issues regarding National Living Wage and to advise Alderman P Porter accordingly.

Alderman J Dillon returned to the Chamber at the conclusion of this item. (8.04 pm)

7.8 Building Resilience

Presented by the Director of Finance & Corporate Services.

A report on building resilience from a financial perspective had been provided. The Director advised of the major amendments since the report had been presented and deferred at the previous meeting.

It was proposed by Alderman A Ewart, seconded by Councillor U Mackin and agreed to recommend that the proposed use of the underspend relating to 2022/2023 as outlined in the report be approved.

7.9 Management Accounts Period 9

Presented by the Head of Finance.

It was agreed that the Management Accounts for the period ending the 31st December 2022, together with an extensive narrative report by way of explanation, be noted.

7.10 Consolidated Scheme of Allowances Payable to Councillors

Presented by the Head of Finance.

It was proposed by Councillor N Trimble, seconded by Councillor T Mitchell and agreed to recommend that:-

- the revised rates for Basic and Special Responsibility Allowance applicable from 1st April 2022 be accepted and applied from that date;
- Circular LG 03/2023 from the Local Government & Housing Regulation Division which consolidates all councillor allowances be noted;
- the Council's updated Scheme of Allowances Payable to Councillors for the period 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023 be approved;
- the Council's updated Scheme of Allowances Payable to Councillors for the period 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024 be approved.

The above documents had been provided with the report.

The Head of Finance agreed to confirm if the allowances for the posts of Mayor and Deputy Mayor were in fact included within the Special Responsibility Allowances and if there was a consistent approach to be applied by councils in this regard. Alderman S Martin to be advised accordingly.

7.11 Recruitment

Presented by the Chief Executive.

It was proposed by Alderman O Gawith, seconded by Councillor N Trimble and agreed to recommend that the recruitment for the post of Director of Organisation Development & Innovation be proceeded with, with nominees to the recruitment panel (Shortlisting & Interview Panel) being identified from the Efficiency Review Steering Group in line with previous recruitment processes, and also noting the associated timescales. The recruitment procedure for the post had been provided with the report.

Councillor A Gowan left the meeting remotely during discussion. (8.31 pm)

8. Any Other Business – Confidential

8.1 Legal Matters
Alderman S Martin

Alderman S Martin sought an update on legal matters.

The Chief Executive and the Director of Finance & Corporate Services remained in the Chamber. All others left the Chamber for this item of business, ie the Head of Corporate Communications, the Head of Finance and the Member Services Officers. (8.35 pm)

The Chief Executive provided an update.

The Head of Corporate Communications, the Head of Finance and the Member Services Officers returned to the Chamber. (8.40 pm)

Resumption of Normal Business (00:53:27)

It was proposed by Councillor T Mitchell, seconded by Alderman S Martin and agreed to come “out of Committee”. Normal business and audio recording were resumed.

9. Any Other Business (00:53:28)

Dealt with at Item 6.

There being no further business, the Meeting concluded at 8.41 pm.

MAYOR/CHAIRMAN