

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting of the Regeneration and Growth Committee held remotely and in the Council Chamber, Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn on Thursday 2nd November, 2023 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT IN THE CHAMBER:

Councillor J Laverty BEM (Chairperson)

Councillor T Mitchell (Vice Chairperson)

Aldermen J Baird, A G Ewart MBE, M Gregg, A Grehan and J Tinsley

Councillors A Martin and C McCready

PRESENT IN REMOTE LOCATION:

Deputy Mayor, Councillor G McCleave

Alderman S P Porter

Councillors P Burke, J Gallen, U Mackin and N Parker

OTHER MEMBERS:

In Chamber:

Councillor G Hynds

IN ATTENDANCE

Chief Executive
Director of Regeneration and Growth
Acting Director of Environmental Services
Head of Economic Development
Member Services Officers (CH and EW)
IT Officer

Commencement of Meeting

The Chairman, Councillor J Laverty, extended a welcome to all present to the November meeting of Regeneration and Growth Committee. The Chairman advised that the meeting was being audio recorded unless the item was being considered under confidential business.

At this point in proceedings, the Member Services Officer read out the names of the Elected Members in attendance at the meeting. The Director of Regeneration and Growth outlined the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.

Alderman S P Porter joined the meeting remotely (6.02 pm).

1. Apologies (00:02:52)

Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting were accepted and recorded on behalf of The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor A Gowan, Alderman M Guy, Councillor K Dickson and the Head of Planning and Capital Development, Mr Conor Hughes.

2. Declarations of Interest (00:03:20)

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. Report by Head of Economic Development (00:03:37)

3.1 Labour Market Partnership Action Plan 2023/2024 (00:03:56)

Alderman J Tinsley entered the meeting (6.06 pm).

The Head of Economic Development provided an update in connection with the Labour Market Partnership (LMP) Action Plan for 2023/2024. It was reported that a number of procurement exercises had been undertaken to appoint delivery agents to manage and deliver the employability initiatives, as outlined in the 2023/24 Action Plan.

The Committee noted that one of the programmes contained in the Action Plan was a Self-Employment Support Programme for Prison Leavers, with a budget of £32,000, however the procurement exercise was unsuccessful with no responses received. It was further reported that a previous procurement exercise as part of the 2022/23 Action Plan was also unsuccessful; feedback from the potential delivery agents indicated that they did not currently have capacity to deliver the programme, due to resources being allocated to the delivery of similar UKSPF Employability and Skills programmes, until 31st March 2025.

The Head of Economic Development responded to questions arising from the report. It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Vice Chairperson, Councillor T Mitchell, and agreed to recommend that:

- the abandonment of the Self-Employment Support Programme for Prison Leavers be approved; and
- the reallocation of funds and any additional slippage funds to the employment academies, as outlined in the Action Plan under Strategic Priority 2: Skilled Labour Supply be approved.

4.0 Report of the Head of Planning and Capital Development (00:08:16)

4.1 Department for Infrastructure (DfI) Consultation on Eastern Transport Plan (ETP) 2035 (00:08:33)

In the absence of the Head of Planning and Capital Development, the Committee considered a report presented by the Director of Regeneration and Growth, in connection with a consultation launched by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI), in relation to the Eastern Transport Plan (ETP) 2035, which would set the framework for making transport policy and investment decisions until 2035. It was reported that the ETP 2035 would replace the previous Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP), and covered five Council areas: Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Ards and North Down Borough Council, Belfast City Council and Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.

The Director outlined in detail, the approach and transport challenges alongside the ETPs draft vision, seven objectives and issues identified by the Council which required further exploration with DfI. A copy of the consultation response submitted on behalf of the Council, had been circulated to Members for information.

The Director responded to questions and comments from the Committee arising from the report. Following discussion, the Committee agreed that the consultation response to DfI outlining the Council's position on the draft vision and objectives of the ETP 2035 be noted.

The Chairman, Councillor J Lavery, advised that Any Other Business would be considered at this point in the meeting.

5. Any Other Business (00:14:17)

5.1 Tourism Major Events Funding
Chairperson, Councillor J Lavery (00:14:32)

The Chairperson drew Members attention to the November Information and Correspondence Schedule for the Committee, which contained information regarding the next round of funding under the Tourism Major Events Funding, which had a closing date of 15th December 2023. Members were encouraged to promote the funding opportunity and were advised that the criteria was outlined within the information schedule.

5.2 Impact of Inclement Weather on Businesses
Director of Regeneration and Growth (00:14:59)

The Director of Regeneration and Growth provided a verbal update on the impact the recent inclement weather had on local businesses, advising the Committee that the opportunity for rates relief for anyone affected by flooding would be promoted, as detailed in the criteria as set out by the department. It was reported that there had been a near miss event, however thanks to the actions of the City Centre Ranger, flooding was averted. The Director confirmed that one report had been received of a local business affected by the inclement weather, having suffered material damage to their business. It was further reported that resources relating to the Regeneration and Growth Committee were being used in support of the Council's Mutual Aid Scheme in order to assist neighbouring councils in distress.

The Chairperson, Councillor J Laverty passed on his appreciation on behalf of the Committee, to all staff efforts that had been made to lessen any impact that may have arisen as a result of the inclement weather.

5.3 Down Royal Festival of Racing
Chairperson, Councillor J Laverty (00:17:30)

The Chairperson informed the Committee that the Down Royal Festival of Racing had been postponed and was rescheduled to take place on Friday 10th and Saturday 11th November 2023.

5.4 December Meeting of Regeneration and Growth Committee
Chairperson, Councillor J Laverty (00:17:50)

The Chairperson advised the Committee that due to Community Christmas Switch Ons taking place on Thursday 7th December, it had been decided that the December meeting of the Regeneration and Growth Committee be brought forward by 30 minutes to 5.30pm, to accommodate attendance at those events.

6. Confidential Report from Director of Regeneration and Growth (00:18:30)

The Chairman advised that the confidential report items were confidential due to containing information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person or organisation (including the Council holding that information).

“In Committee”

It was proposed by Vice Chairperson, Councillor T Mitchell, seconded by Councillor C McCready, and agreed that the Confidential Report of the Director of Regeneration and Growth be considered “in Committee” in the absence of press or members of the public. The audio recording was paused at this stage in proceedings (6.19 pm).

6.1 International Trade Programme – Proposed City Trade Agreement
(Redacted report to be published following completion of the initiative)

The Director of Regeneration and Growth presented this item of business. The Director and Head of Service for Economic Development responded to a number of questions and comments in relation to the report.

Further to discussion, it was proposed by Alderman A G Ewart, seconded by Alderman A Grehan and agreed to recommend that:

- the information and correspondence as outlined in the report be noted, in particular the learning points from the two virtual trade initiatives;
- the Committee not proceed with the Officer’s recommendations as outlined in the report;
- reallocation of funding to progress potential trade initiatives closer to home be approved; and
- a letter of thanks be issued.

7. Confidential Any Other Business

7.1 Free Off-Street Car Parking on Saturdays in January 2024

Alderman A G Ewart left the meeting during this item of business (7.11 pm).
Alderman J Tinsley left the meeting during this item of business (7.26 pm).

The Director of Regeneration and Growth provided a verbal update to the Committee on the above matter. The Committee noted that the matter of free off-street car parking in January 2024 had been raised at the previous evening’s Environment and Sustainability Committee, and that the matter had been referred for further discussion to that evening’s Regeneration & Growth Committee.

The Director outlined the background and key issues, including a straw poll feedback from city centre businesses, in connection with the provision of free car parking within Council owned off street car parks in Lisburn.

7.1 Free Off-Street Car Parking on Saturdays in January 2024 (Cont'd)

The Chief Executive, Director of Regeneration and Growth and Acting Director of Environmental Services responded to a number of comments and questions raised by the committee. Further to discussion, the committee noted that a report would be tabled to the December 2023 Environment and Sustainability Committee, to include statistical data, alongside feedback from local businesses, in order to ascertain the appropriate course of action.

Resumption of Normal Business

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

Conclusion of Meeting

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and there being no further business for consideration the meeting was concluded at 7.34 pm.

Chairperson