

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Special Meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber, Island Civic Centre, Lisburn, and remotely, on Monday 18 November, 2024 at 6:00 pm

PRESENT IN CHAMBER:

The Right Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor K Dickson

Aldermen A G Ewart MBE, O Gawith, A McIntyre and
J Tinsley

Councillors R T Beckett, P Catney, D J Craig, A P Ewing,
A Gowan, B Higginson, G Hynds, C Kemp, U Mackin,
C McCready, M McKeever and N Parker

PRESENT IN REMOTE LOCATION:

Deputy Mayor, Councillor R Carlin

Aldermen M Gregg and S Skillen

Councillors N Eaton, J Gallen, J Harpur, J Lavery BEM,
S Lowry and G McCleave

IN ATTENDANCE

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Director of Regeneration & Growth
Member Services Officers (BS & EW)
IT Officer
Technician

Department for Infrastructure – Roads (Eastern Division)

Des McFarlane - Divisions Roads Manager
Paul Thompson, Section Engineer
Graeme Salmon - Network Traffic Manager

Commencement of the Meeting

At the commencement of the meeting, The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson, welcomed those present to the Special Meeting of Council which had been convened to receive representatives from DfI Roads (Eastern Division) in order to present Eastern Division's Annual Report 2024.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor stated that, whilst the meeting was being live streamed, unauthorised recording was not permitted, as per the Council's Standing Order 8.5.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor asked that mobile phones be turned off or put on silent for the duration of the meeting. The Director of Regeneration & Growth outlined the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.

1. Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance at the special meeting were accepted and recorded on behalf of Aldermen J Baird, A Grehan, H Legge and S P Porter, and Councillors D Bassett, S Burns, P Kennedy, D Lynch and G Thompson.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. Deputations

3.1 Department for Infrastructure, Roads (Eastern Division) – Annual Report 2024

Councillor M McKeever entered the meeting at 6.05 pm.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson, extended a welcome to the representatives of Department for Infrastructure (DfI), Roads (Eastern Division): Des McFarlane (Divisions Roads Manager), Paul Thompson, Section Engineer and Graeme Salmon (Network Traffic Manager). A copy of the 2024 DfI Roads (Eastern Division) Annual Report had been circulated previously.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor thanked Mr McFarlane for having prepared the responses to Members' pre-submitted questions, a copy of which also had been furnished to Members.

At the outset Mr McFarlane provided Members with an overview of Eastern Division's annual report for 2024 which included works completed across the Council area during 2024/2024 and which set out initial proposals for schemes to be undertaken during 2024/2025. Mr McFarlane highlighted a number of key issues including:

- staffing and resources issues which impacted DfI's ability to deliver on programmes and services generally. Mr McFarlane encouraged Members to avail of DfI's online reporting facility provided by NIDirect for road defects.
- DfI's involvement with the development of major projects including: the Eastern Transport Plan, Belfast Rapid Transport initiative, Active Travel plans and the new Belfast Grand Central Station.
- the Northern Ireland wide Active Travel Delivery Plan. Mr McFarlane encouraged Members to take part in shaping the future for plans for active travel in their Council area, a key scheme being the active travel path between Crumlin and Glenavy.

Mr McFarlane also highlighted the ongoing major improvement scheme at the junction of McKinsty Road and The Cutts, the North Lisburn Feeder Road Phase 3 and the Hillsborough Public Realm Scheme.

Summary of the questions from Members in attendance at the meeting and the responses from DfI Roads Officials

Alderman S Skillen

- tree maintenance issues at the following locations:

- a) Cumberland Close, Dundonald - no action having been taken since previous request. Alderman Skillen asked if this could be looked at as a tree at Cumberland Close was particularly dangerous for residents as it was difficult to avoid the hanging branches
- b) Park & Ride, Dundonald, - this had been raised with DfI Roads approximately 18 months ago who were to discuss this issue with the arboriculture colleagues in Belfast City Council
- c) Longstone Meadow at the Comber Greenway – tree bent over causing difficulties

Mr Thompson undertook to engage with the arboriculture services in Belfast City Council on the issues raised and have a response issued to Alderman Skillen in due course.

- speed limit on Spine Road at Coopers Mill Park leading to Millmount is currently 40 mph but appears to be more appropriate to be a 30 mph speed limit - if clarification could be provided on this.

Mr Salmon undertook to look at this stretch of road to ascertain if enhanced road markings would be beneficial.

- parking on Cumberland and Raeville with the Ulster Hospital and the suggestion if residents' parking permits would be possible, the concern being if emergency vehicles had to get to a resident's house.

- need for traffic lights Grahamsbridge Road

Mr Salmon advised that a feasibility study had been carried out previously and that there were no plans in place to provide traffic lights at this junction

- need for a yellow box junction at Dunlady Road at Little Gems Day Nursery.

Mr Salmon advised that they had looked at this several times and had deemed that a yellow box would not be of any benefit and therefore there were no plans to provide one at this time.

- drivers 'running' the red light when turning right at Church Road, the issue of no right turn at certain times but drivers waiting to turn right caused congestion.

Mr McFarlane was of the opinion that the 'running' of red lights was a matter for the PSNI. Mr Salmon undertook to refer this matter to the PSNI.

Alderman S Skillen (Cont'd)

- request previously submitted to Translink and DfI Roads in connection with the use of Park and Ride facility at Dundonald for Twelfth of July celebrations in 2025.

Mr McFarlane advised that as this was a public car park that it would not be appropriate for DfI Roads to enter into any exclusive arrangement with the organisers of the event in question.

- request for grit box at Morven Park, Dundonald which has a 20% gradient.

Mr McFarlane advised that if this area had already been assessed it would be unlikely be assessed again due to the current resource issues within the DfI Roads. Mr Thompson undertook to look into this matter and revert to Alderman Skillen.

- issues caused by cars waiting to turn right into Eastlink Road to McDonalds Fast Food outlet. Could be an issue for emergency vehicles.

Mr Salmon was doubtful that there was sufficient space in the carriageway for a right turn pocket but undertook to have a look at the layout of this area.

- issue of banners on the flyover at Dundonald High School and request for clarity around seeking permission and if there were relevant forms for completion in light of health and safety issues.

Mr McFarlane advised that DfI had no policy around the placing of such banners on flyovers and that this practice was likely to be illegal.

- ongoing serious traffic issues in Dundonald.

Mr McFarlane undertook to provide a written update to Alderman Skillen on the issues she had raised that evening.

Councillor P Catney

- re-surfacing of footpaths in Richmond Court and the issue of a tree growing on the footpath. He had asked the site engineer if this would result in the footpath being brought out onto the road and if there was a tree preservation order on this particular tree.

Mr Thompson undertook to contact the arboriculture services in Belfast City Council with a view to having a meeting on site.

Councillor P Catney left the meeting at 6.31 pm.

Deputy Mayor, Councillor R Carlin

At the outset the Deputy Mayor advised that he had submitted his questions to DfI late and therefore would be content to wait on a response from DfI Roads in due course.

Deputy Mayor, Councillor R Carlin (Cont'd)

- request for an update on the 359 spaces at Cairnshill Park & Ride and also plans for the turning circle for the Belfast Rapid Transit to be extended to Carryduff.

Mr McFarlane undertook to check the detail of this and to revert to Councillor Carlin.

- residents' safety concerns around heavy traffic on Beechill Road, in particular the speed of traffic and pollution from vehicles.

Mr Thompson confirmed that the Section Office had been instructed to re-paint the speed ramps that were in place on the Beechill Road.

- request for clarification on the proposals for a new road parallel to the Beechill Road and additional housing in that area, such proposals going back as far as 2014 when the Belfast cycle network maps had been progressed.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor R Carlin, agreed to furnish further detail on this query to Mr McFarlane which may assist in a response being formulated

Councillor D J Craig

- enquired what triggers a road being included in the schedule of works for resurfacing.

- two street lights left unchanged at the end of Elm Corner, Lambeg.

Mr Salmon undertook to check this out.

- policy on emergency contact details and the standard email contact for routine enquiries
- request for an update on why there had been no painting of double yellow lines at the entrance to Priory Close, Lambeg, and complaints from residents that vehicles were parking on corners at Priory Close.

Mr McFarlane advised that an incremental approach was in place for double yellow line painting. Mr Salmon undertook to look into when Priory Close was scheduled for line painting and report back to Councillor Craig.

- welcomed the resurfacing of Derriaghy Road. Councillor Craig paid tribute to the late former Member of Council, Margaret Tolerton, whose hard work and dedication had resulted in the major improvements at The Cutts, Derriaghy, being implemented.

Councillor J Gallen left the meeting at 6.40 pm.

Alderman M Gregg

- request for a yellow box junction at Dunlady Road at Little Gems Day Nursery (as also referred to by Alderman Skillen).
- Dfl's maintenance policy on pothole repairs and the cause of sunken ironworks (gratings) on almost every trunk road.

Mr McFarlane asked that particular areas of concern re sunken ironworks be made known to Mr Thompson in order that his team can have a look at those areas.

- enquired about the viability of the proposal to unlimit the waiting restrictions at parking bays on the Comber Road due to the fact that there was a complaint against this proposal.

Mr Salmon provided further detail on the above-mentioned objection against this proposal and advised that as the objection had not been resolved, this proposal would not be progressed at this time.

- request for clarification on the reference to the pedestrian link at the Carrowreagh Road (page 16 of Dfl Road's Annual Report) and also the reference to the cycle path feasibility study (page 51 of Dfl's report) which it stated that this project had been taken no further due to costs.

Mr McFarlane undertook to read the detail of both the above projects and respond to Alderman Gregg directly.

Councillor U Mackin

- update on progress on the overdue realignment schemes on the A49 and B6 roads at Crossan, Lisnastrean and Ballymacbrennan junctions. Councillor Mackin requested Dfl Roads to review the scheduling of that scheme in view of the number of road traffic accidents at these junctions.

Mr Salmon provided an update on these realignment schemes. It was noted that there had been problems with one of the preferred options in terms of capacity and was now being reviewed for adjustments, and that this matter was on-going.

- Ballycoan Road speed limits update and assessment for speed controls. Councillor Mackin advised that the meeting with residents had not happened and requested Dfl Roads to organise this meeting on site at the earliest opportunity.
- issue of the two walls continually being hit by vehicles at number 104 on the A49 road. Councillor Mackin highlighted that there had been 12 road traffic accidents over the past three years at that location, and stated that there was a need for an interim measure such as reflective sign posts to be erected as each side of the road approaching the houses concerned.

Councillor U Mackin (Cont'd)

Mr Salmon provided an update on this matter and undertook to look into the suggestion of marker posts at this location. Mr McFarlane also gave an assurance that this was a particular area of concern for DfI Roads and that it was being treated as a priority area.

Councillor B Higginson left the meeting at 7.01 pm.

Councillor G Hynds

- lack of planned works in North Lisburn especially in residential areas. He referred to the poor condition of the footpaths at Glenmore Walk and Glenmore Park where there is barely any concrete left, (pre-submitted question no. 17 refers) and also Llewellyn Avenue and Llewellyn Park. Also the resurfacing in Ashbourne Park where only half of roads appear to have been re-surfaced (pre-submitted question no. 25 refers).

Mr McFarlane advised that complaints issues such as this should be raised via the Portal.

- right turn in Hill Street causing huge disruption for residents and businesses in Hill Street. (pre-submitted question no. 21 refers)

Mr Salmon advised that this team continue to talk to the PSNI on these issues especially as it is close to the PSNI station and check the collision history at this location; and gave an assurance that his team would continue to monitor this situation.

- contact email address for DfI Roads as stated on the Annual Report which states "no longer engaging with individual correspondence."

Mr McFarlane emphasised that the best and most efficient method of getting complaints into the system was by the online portal.

- lack of attendance by DfI Officials at interagency meetings and what is being done by the Minister and the Department in regard to the lack of staff.

Mr McFarlane advised that DfI Roads, in the short term, was looking at a stabilisation plan which would focus on safety critical work.

Councillor R T Beckett

- shared-use footpath from Crumlin to Glenavy. This pathway goes into the rural area where there are no houses. Councillor Beckett enquired about the policy in terms of new footpaths and additional costs of street lighting.

Mr McFarlane requested sight of drawings of this in order to see the extent of this project which, he stated, straddled two council areas. Mr McFarlane also stated that he would wish to see what the Active Travel policy stated for the promotion of active travel.

Councillor R T Beckett (Cont'd)

- water freezing on Stoneyford Road due to water coming down on to the road from a local farmer's field. Councillor Beckett advised that he had had a site meeting with one of DfI Roads officials about this matter and it had been identified where the water was coming from. Due to the dangers of road traffic accidents at this location, Councillor Beckett enquired what steps Roads had taken to alleviate this problem. He also asked if Roads could write to the farmer and that this matter be prioritised.

Mr McFarlane reminded that water discharging onto public roads was illegal under Roads Order, and undertook to have this matter checked to ascertain if any progress had been made.

Councillors U Mackin and C McCreedy left the meeting at 7.19 pm and Councillor A P Ewing left the meeting at 7.20 pm.

Councillor J Laverty

- request that Halfpenny Gate Road, Moira, be included in the winter gritting programme. Councillor Laverty's concern was that Brookfield Special School was on the Halfpenny Gate Road, which was a semi-rural setting, and that this road had never been gritted despite several accidents on this road. Councillor Laverty, on behalf of the Brookfield Special School's Board of Governors and the entire School community, requested that Halfpenny Gate Road be included in DfI's winter gritting schedule programme.

Mr Thompson undertook to carry out an assessment of the Halfpenny Gate Road. Mr McFarlane stated that his team would need to check the winter gritting policy against that particular road.

Councillor A Gowan

Councillor A P Ewing returned to the meeting at 7.22 pm.

- grass cutting policy which states that two cuts each year. Councillor Gowan was of the opinion that Roads should be more responsive to ad hoc cuts outside of the routine schedule. Some of the junctions along the A49 have particularly long grass, eg. at Crossan crossroads.

Mr McFarlane discussed the change in grass cutting policy last year to a more biodiverse approach which was generally two cuts per year but also one cut if safety permitted.

- online reporting portal and concern that in some cases some issues seemed to fall off the portal without any resolve or feedback. An example was the issue of subsidence on the Upper Ballynahinch Road just past the Pheasant towards Legacurry. This was quite a serious road safety issue.

Councillor A Gowan (Cont'd)

Mr McFarlane was of the opinion that that the portal should have been able to deal with this matter and asked Mr Thompson to assess this subsidence.

- removal of street lights and the need for DfI to consider issuing a letter to residents to give them prior notice.

Mr McFarlane undertook to liaise with colleagues in Street Lighting to see what could be done in terms of advance communication.

- poor condition of Cargygray Road. Councillor Gowan stated that this was a long stretch of road and in view of the Department's budget constraints suggested doing this road in sections at least some progress would be made

Mr McFarlane stated that this project would have to be assessed and then take its place in the queue.

- requirement for more proactive communication by DfI Roads. Councillor Gowan discussed the lack of notice of road closures in Anahilt which blocked the main road from Ballynahinch to Hillsborough. This impacted those who rely on public transport as public transport could not access the village. Councillor Gowan stressed that a piece around communication on the road closure was needed, at least to the Elected Members who represented that area who could have relayed this notice in advance.

Mr Salmon explained that it is difficult for DfI Roads to notify Members of each scheme due to the number of schemes. He also explained the process for major schemes which involve stakeholder meetings. He also asked Councillor Gowan to furnish him with the details of this particular incident.

- oil spill on the Upper Ballynahinch Road and the fact that it took almost 24 hours for DfI to respond. Councillor Gowan stated again DfI Roads need to get some communication on the likes of this out on their socials. Councillor Gowan undertook to provide Mr McFarlane with further details of this incident.

Councillor D J Craig left the meeting at 7.28 pm and Councillor G Hynds left at 7.33 pm.

Councillor S Lowry

- road safety issues on A23 Ballygowan Road, Manse Road and Upper Braniel Road junction. Councillor Lowry explained that about a year ago she had met with a DfI Official and a local resident about multiple accidents due to the confusion at this particular junction. She had subsequently been advised that there were plans for some improvements in terms of improved road signage and road markings at this junction. Councillor Lowry requested an update on this piece of work.

Mr Salmon reported that following further investigations they realised that this road was planned for re-surfacing and as a result the hi-friction surfacing, which was included as part of this collision remedial scheme, could not be led on the existing surface. Mr Salmon stated that due to budgetary constraints the

Councillor S Lowry (Cont'd)

re-surfacing could not take place this year. Mr Salmon undertook to discuss this matter with his team in the Section Office.

Councillor A Gowan left the meeting at 7.36 pm.

Alderman A G Ewart

- blocked gully in Moira outside the old Moira bakery. Alderman Ewart expressed concern that he had reported this issue in February past and that despite being advised that the gully had been cleared – it was still blocked.

Mr Thompson undertook to have this gully inspected again.

Councillor R T Beckett left the meeting at 7.41 pm.

- flooding on a footpath at the Hermitage, Culcavy resulting in rain gathering at the entrance of Mulgreys Lorries and also at Lagan Valley Steel. Alderman Ewart expressed concern regarding the safety of parents with prams having to walk out on to the road to get by. He stated also that he had requested a gully at this location approximately three years ago and that an undertaking had been given at that time.

Mr Thompson undertook to have this area inspected again.

Alderman A G Ewart left the meeting at 7.42 pm

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor R Carlin, left the meeting at 7.43 pm.

Councillor C McCready

- traffic congestion in Moira (pre-submitted question no. 40 refers). Councillor McCready described this as a massive issue for not only Moira but for Northern Ireland as a region. He stated that most of the traffic travelling through Moira are going to other destinations and that DfI Roads need to consider options to address this congestion and also what avenues he as an Elected Member could do.

Mr Salmon stated that whilst a traffic study had been carried out a few years ago there were no proposals to address the traffic in Moira at this time. He also stated that the Active Transport Plan team may be able to come up with some measures.

- request for 30 mph speed limit on Lurgan Road, Moira (pre-submitted question no. 41 refers). The 40 mph limit needs to be reviewed in light of the number of houses having been built on that road. Residents have complained to him regarding the speed of traffic on this road especially at off-peak times.

Mr McFarlane explained that any review of a speed limit would follow policy and criteria. He also discussed developments often being located off spine roads.

Councillor C McCready (Cont'd)

He also confirmed that there were no reasons within the policy to extend the 30 mph limit at this time.

Councillor D J Craig returned to the meeting at 7.44 pm.

- request for tidy up and reinstatement of footpaths and kerbs along the A3 Moira Road at Lizzy Drakes heading to Maze town (pre-submitted question no. 42 refers). Councillor McCready requested that DfI Roads to look into this matter as it was a safety issue. The footpaths were encroached by debris and dirt and were impassable for anyone walking especially parents with prams.
- resurfacing of Main Street, Moira (pre-submitted question no. 45 refers). Councillor McCready pointed out that the resurfaced part of the road did not run flush with the existing road and asked why this was deemed acceptable.
- Requirement for street lights on Station Road to Railway Street. Councillor McCready expressed concern that it was not safe for people to walk to the new car park at the train station.

Mr McFarlane advised that DfI Roads work in line with policy to ensure consistency. He undertook to have the Active Travel team to consider Councillor McCready's request

- request for a grit box at the steep part in Birkwood View, Moira.

Mr McFarlane advised that the matter of a grit box will be assessed when the street is adopted. He asked Mr Thompson to check on the adoption of this street.

Councillor A P Ewing left the meeting at 7.49 pm.

- pot holes at the entrance to Magherahinch House (the road at this location is referred to as Magherahinch House) and the part of the road concerned may belong to a local farmer who owns the land.

Mr McFarlane undertook to arrange for his team to look at this matter.

- request for resurfacing on the narrow road beside the old police station building in Moira. There are a number of businesses adjacent and a number of requests had been made from them about the need for resurfacing at a small stretch of this road.
- Cockhill Road. Councillor McCready described this road as a roller coaster and asked if a flattening scheme for this road could be added to DfI's programme of works
- request that Halfpenny Gate Road, Moira, be included in the winter gritting programme. (see response above to same request from Councillor J Lavery).

Councillor C McCready (Cont'd)

- request for resurfacing at Topplane Road (country road off the A1)

Mr McFarlane advised that the highest scoring schemes were included in the schedule for resurfacing and that other schemes should be included in the subsequent schedule.

- water issues on Cornacreevy Road off Kilwarlin junction. Councillor McCready advised that excess water flowed down the hill but that the drainage/gully seemed to be located at the top of the hill.
- safety issues at Trummery Crossroads. Councillor McCready discussed the significant number of road traffic accidents at this location.

Mr Salmon acknowledged that there was a convoluted layout at Trummery crossroads and advised that this junction was being monitored on a yearly basis. He also undertook to have a look to check the conditions of the signs and road markings at this crossroads.

- blocked gully at Meadow Road. Councillor McCready stressed that he had requested that this gully be repaired several times.
- request for update on Royal Hillsborough Public Realm Scheme.

Mr McFarlane advised that DfI Roads were working with the Council on this public realm scheme and also on the planning application for that scheme. He emphasised the importance of this scheme being durable and safe. He also clarified that the Minister had been at the meeting in question in regard to the issue of weight restrictions and that a further meeting was scheduled for the following Monday. 25th November.

Councillor McCready requested a written response to all the issues he had raised that evening.

Alderman J Tinsley

- Request for repairs surface dressing on Ballymacward Road, Dundrod, (between Budore Road and Rusheyhill Road). Alderman Tinsley advised that this work, despite previous requests, had not been completed. Alderman Tinsley also enquired about how the projects were allocated from the online portal.

Mr Thompson undertook to look into this matter.

- open drain on Clantarrif Road, Ballinderry. The concern was that the gully itself was not visible as it was overgrown with grass.

Mr McFarlane advised that again this comes back to the grass cutting policy but undertook to have this gully looked at.

Alderman J Tinsley (Cont'd)

- progress at Maghaberry Crossing. Alderman Tinsley welcomed the progress to date but was disappointed that this project was “stop/start” for over three months.

Mr Salmon apologised for this project having taken so long to complete, the delay was partly due to an issue with the condition of the ground where the posts for the signals were to be placed. He also advised that the signals were being commissioned currently.

- lack of communication on replacement of street lighting. Alderman Tinsley requested that DfI write out to residents in advance and explaining the proposed works and, where possible, in layman’s terms.

Mr McFarlane stated that he had noted the points raised on advanced communication around street lighting.

- deep potholes on the Lowtown Road – these are particularly dangerous and have been reported on the online portal. Alderman Tinsley advised that he had checked this today and the works still had not been attended to.
- query regarding error message on the online portal “no value” at the findings and actions page.

Mr Thompson asked the Member to furnish him with an example of this error message.

Councillor C McCready left the meeting at 8.08 pm.

Alderman O Gawith

- requested that DfI Roads Officials copy him into any responses to the issues raised by Councillor C McCready in connection with Moira.
- issue raised in connection with the speed limit on the Lurgan Road, Moira – it was noted that the pavement runs only on one side of the road. In response to an earlier response on this matter, Alderman Gawith was of the opinion that traffic does not ‘self-regulate’ at this location.
- blocked drains on Main Street, Moira. Alderman Gawith enquired if the drains along Main Street belonged to DfI Roads or due to legacy did some of the drains belong to someone else and hence this being the reason some drains had not been attended to?

Mr Thompson advised that drains at the side of the road, which were taking water off the road, belonged to DfI Roads.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor stated that all Members would receive a copy of all the written responses from DfI Roads, which would come to Member Services in the first instance.

At the conclusion of the question and answer session the Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson, thanked the Dfl representatives for their presentation and also for their feedback that evening.

There being no other business for consideration the meeting concluded at 8.17 pm.

Mayor/Chairperson