

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Council held in the Island Civic Centre on Monday 31 March 2025 at 6.10 pm

PRESENT IN CHAMBER:

The Right Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor K Dickson

Aldermen A G Ewart, A Grehan, A McIntyre and J Tinsley

Councillors J Bamford, S Burns, A P Ewing, A Gowan,
B Higginson, G Hynds, J Lavery BEM, U Mackin,
C McCready and M McKeever

PRESENT IN REMOTE LOCATION:

Deputy Mayor Councillor R Carlin

Aldermen M Gregg and S Skillen

Councillors D Bassett, P Catney, A Givan, J Harpur, S Lowry,
G McCleave, N Parker and G Thompson

IN ATTENDANCE:

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Director of Regeneration and Growth
Member Services Officers
Technician
IT Officer

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. He stated that, whilst the meeting was being live streamed, unauthorised recording was not permitted, as per the Council's Standing Order 8.5. He asked that mobile phones be turned off or put on silent for the duration of the meeting. The Director of Regeneration and Growth outlined the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.

1. **Apologies**

Apologies for non-attendance were recorded on behalf of Alderman S P Porter, Councillors R T Beckett, D J Craig, C Kemp, D Lynch, A Martin and Chief Executive, Mr D Burns.

Alderman A Grehan entered the meeting (6.12 pm).

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of Interest.

3. Deputations

3.1 Northern Ireland Water

During consideration of this item of business, Councillor P Catney left the meeting remotely (6.49 pm), Alderman A Grehan left the meeting (6.50 pm), Councillor G McCleave left the meeting remotely (6.58 pm), Councillor G Thompson left the meeting remotely (7.01 pm) and Councillor D Bassett left the meeting remotely (7.09 pm).

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson reminded the Council that representatives from Northern Ireland Water were in attendance to present their investment plans, challenges, and development constraints, specifically those for the Council area. Accordingly, he welcomed the following representatives to the meeting:

- Dr Stephen Blockwell - Head of Investment Management, Engineering and Sustainability Directorate, and
- Mr Mark Mitchell – Head of Integrated Capital Delivery, Infrastructure Delivery Directorate.

Dr Blockwell reported that Northern Ireland's wastewater system was at breaking point, with 40% (approx. 950) of all storm overflows already failing the standard with 1,200 still to be assessed. In respect of the issue of blue-green algae caused by the presence of high levels of nutrients, the Council noted that NI Water were working in partnership with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) to mitigate the impact of drinking water at Lough Neagh, ensuring water was safe to drink.

Dr Blockwell provided an overview of the current position of the organisation's investment plan, known as PC21 (Price Control 2021-2027), which aimed to deliver wastewater services and capital infrastructure across Northern Ireland following years of underfunding which had impacted the economy and environment. He stated that the PC21 plan currently had a funding shortfall of up to £0.8 billion, the impact of which had put a halt to the wastewater recovery plan.

Regarding planned capital investment within the Council area the officials referred to a number of planned schemes programmed to be delivered within the PC21 period. Specifically, Knockbracken and Mill Road storm overflow upgrade, a new pumping station on the existing site of Waringfield wastewater pumping station, upgrades to the Dromara wastewater treatment works, Aghalislone water pumping station to Boomer's service reservoir trunk watermain replacement, Lurgan Moira (WIIM 2.1) watermain rehabilitation work package and Lisburn North borehole scheme.

The Council was also provided with an overview of new connection issues within the Council area that were outside of developer funded solutions for the following reasons:

- an area within the wastewater network that is 'closed' to any further connections due to high polluting assets;
- the wastewater treatment works within the catchment is operating at or over its design capacity; and
- the availability of funding to undertake the required capital upgrades to existing assets.

3.1 Northern Ireland Water (Cont'd)

The Council noted that Glenavy and Ravernet wastewater treatment works were at capacity, and some areas in the following city/towns were affected by network constraints: Belfast, Carryduff, Dundonald, Dunmurry, Hillsborough, Lisburn and Moira.

Officials reported that Northern Ireland Water previously implemented the 3-stage pre-development process for developers to follow, which had been successful in using wastewater impact assessments to identify developer funded solutions. Unfortunately, areas had now been identified, where storm offset opportunities could not be found, this resulted in the adjustment of the pre-development process with new waste impact assessments in these areas. The Council noted that in the affected areas, applicants would be informed as part of the pre-development enquiry assessment response, that their development site is above a high polluting asset that is not suitable for solution engineering and required a Northern Ireland Water capital upgrade or intervention to facilitate a connection to the wastewater network. The response would also include indicative timelines for capital upgrades, if known.

In summary, officials stressed the importance of a permanent funding solution being implemented and advised that without change to the wastewater system, Northern Ireland faced a permanent future of higher levels of pollution, severe constraints on the ability to build new homes, putting off new investors and slowing development of existing businesses.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson then invited questions from Members in respect of the presentation. During discussion, a number of matters were clarified in relation to: Northern Ireland Waters proposed capital programme for the Council area beyond 2025; solutions required for Lisburn west to enable growth; new computerised logistics system implemented at the Holland site which would increase capacity by 20%; update on fly grazing; update on capacity at Drumbeg treatment works; information on Event Duration Monitors (EDMs) which monitor and record spills that were being installed across NI Water's wastewater network over a multi-year investment programme; Waringsfield wastewater pumping station works to expand capacity at times of heavy rainfall; update on river basin management plan with NIEA due to funding constraints; renewable energy schemes implemented by Northern Ireland Water including: Dunore Solar Farm, solar panels installed at buildings and sites where possible, hydroelectric schemes, potential for wind power as Northern Ireland's second largest landowner, storm separation schemes, and gravity solutions at treatment works; flooding at Park Avenue was caused by a blocked Rivers Agency Culvert and pipe issue at Moat Park which had been resolved and reassurance provided of additional desilting works scheduled to take place in respect of this issue.

In regard to Lisburn and Castlereagh City Councils Local Development Plan to facilitate the delivery of 12,335 new homes across the borough, over the period 2018 to 2032, officials confirmed that they were aware of and wanted to support the Councils plans, however underfunding would create challenges. Engagement with developers would continue and pre-development enquiries should take place prior to purchasing land, and if an issue was identified, a wastewater impact assessment would be completed to identify possible solutions.

3.1 Northern Ireland Water (Cont'd)

The following undertakings were noted in response to Members' questions:

- Alderman J Tinsley queried who had responsibility for fencing the Northern Ireland Water land that had been rented to farmers. Officials undertook to investigate the matter and provide an update.
- In response to a question from Alderman J Tinsley in respect of illegal dumping at Stoneyford, Mr Mitchell explained that they had tried to prevent the illegal dump the previous year by installing concrete bollards but had encountered issues. He undertook to discuss the issue with colleagues and report back to Council.
- Alderman J Tinsley referred to a connection issue in respect of access to a new house via a shared laneway. Officials agreed to follow up directly with Alderman J Tinsley after the meeting in respect of this matter.
- Responding to a request made by Alderman J Tinsley regarding installation of litter bins along the Stoneyford Reservoir walkway, Dr Blockwell agreed to engage with the Council to discuss possible solutions.
- Alderman A McIntyre referred to issues in respect of overflows at Gowan Meadows/Heights pumping station. Officials confirmed that if the station was found to be discharging or overflowing it would be reported and entered into the Capital Programme for a base maintenance solution, or if appropriate, an enhancement solution, in the next price control period.
- In response to queries raised by Councillor U Mackin, Mr Mitchell confirmed that Northern Ireland Water didn't deliberately spill into the River Lagan, he undertook to find out how many pumping stations there were along the river lagan and how frequently accidental spills occur.
- Councillor C McCready referred to the delay in resurfacing the Cockhill Road due to sewage upgrade works being undertaken by Northern Ireland Water. Officials undertook to investigate and provide an update on the proposed timeline for works to take place.
- Councillor A P Ewing referred to an ongoing issue at Manor Park over the last six months which was cleared promptly each time it was reported, but that a permanent fix was required. Mr Mitchell undertook to investigate the issue and provide an update.
- In response to a query raised by Alderman J Tinsley, officials confirmed that feedback from questions not answered at the meeting would be responded to within approx. four weeks.
- Alderman J Tinsley referred to a scenario whereby a resident selling a site which was built twenty years ago found that the site hadn't been adopted. Officials agreed to follow up directly with Alderman J Tinsley after the meeting in respect of this matter.

3.1 Northern Ireland Water (Cont'd)

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson, thanked the officials for their presentation.

3.2 Department for Infrastructure Roads, Eastern Division

During consideration of this item of business, Councillor B Higginson left the meeting (7.18 pm), Councillor A Given left the meeting remotely (7.47 pm) and Councillor A Gowan left the meeting (7.57 pm).

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson reminded the Council that representatives from DfI Roads were in attendance following dissatisfaction at the meeting of Council held in February, that updates had not been provided on the queries that had arose from the special meeting of Council on 18 November 2024. Accordingly, he welcomed the following representatives to the meeting:

- Mr Colin Woods – Deputy Secretary, Transport and Road Asset Management, and
- Mr Gareth McKibbin – Acting Divisional Roads Manager, (Eastern Division).

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson invited questions from Members. At the outset, an Elected Member reiterated their disappointment that the queries raised at the November special Council meeting with DfI had not been responded to in a timely manner, which he felt was unacceptable. These sentiments were echoed by other Members throughout the course of the meeting. In response, Mr McKibbin reiterated his sincere apology on behalf of DfI for the delay, which he explained had occurred due to key staff absence/administrative oversight.

During discussion, a number of matters were clarified in relation to: street lighting which on end of lifespan would not be replaced due to not meeting the current policy or because it wasn't a DfI asset; timeline for work to be carried out when issues reported on portal; issues reporting on the portal with no updates provided; update provided in respect of works at Royal Hillsborough; safety concerns in respect of station road from new car park to train station; works at Ballynahinch Road, Dromara; completion of traffic lights at Annahilt Primary School – officials clarified that this was not DfI works programme; treatment works update on Knockbracken Road; officials reiterated that DfI do not own Hilden Blue Bridge, however DfI arranged an upcoming meeting with LCCC and Northern Ireland Water to discuss the matter; update on Maghaberry crossing works with completion scheduled by end of April 2025 and fallen trees along roadsides following storm Eowyn.

DfI officials encouraged Members to continue to report defects via the online portal as the issues would be flagged immediately by staff for review on their next road inspection. It was reported that the system was not designed to provide progress updates, and also there was currently no budget to update the system to provide this functionality.

3.2 Department for Infrastructure Roads, Eastern Division (Cont'd)

The following undertakings were noted in response to Members' questions:

- Councillor J Lavery referred to a previous request for Halfpenny Gate Road, Moira be included in the winter gritting programme, and noted the response received by DfI that the road did not meet the criteria outlined in RSPPG E022. Given that Brookfield Special School was located on the Halfpenny Gate Road, Councillor J Lavery requested that officials engage with the school to discuss concerns and also to review/reconsider their decision.
- In response to queries raised by a number of Members regarding street lighting removal, officials agreed to circulate to Members a link to the current policy.
- Councillor C McCready referred to Berwick Heights request for a grit box which was referred to in DfI's written response as Berwick View. Officials agreed to assess Berwick Heights for a grit box once adopted.
- In response to a request by Councillor C McCready for a map of the laneway to Magherahinch House showing what was owned by the farmer and what was adopted by DfI, officials undertook to review the matter and report back to the Member.
- Responding to a request by Councillor C McCready, officials agreed to assess the Hillsborough Road for resurfacing.
- Alderman A McIntyre referring to monitoring carried out by DfI on the M1 at Junction 6 to allow traffic lights to be adjusted, asked if similar monitoring was undertaken of the B103 and B23 roads. Officials confirmed that very little monitoring took place due to budget constraints, however agreed to look at the request and report back on the matter.
- In response to Councillor A Gowan's concerns around communication of permanent removal of street lighting and the significant impact on elderly residents, officials agreed to give some thought to the issue.
- Responding to a request by Councillor A Gowan in relation to gritting places in the community which were required to be accessed safely during adverse weather such as doctor surgeries and schools, officials noted the request and reiterated that until the policy was reviewed the current policy was required to be implemented and additional gritting would not be possible.
- Officials agreed to follow up in respect of requests made by Councillor A Gowan on the following issues: proposals to address pot holes and safety concerns on Old Ballynahinch Road; overgrown weeds/grass on pavement and road verges at Legacurry which was agreed would be removed on 8 November 2024 and had not been completed; update on Glebe Road Pavement; communication received on 10 May 2023 that Cluntagh Road was assessed, and agreed marker posts would be installed and signage erected which had also not been completed, and lastly to investigate if a study of the traffic flow on Quarterlands

3.2 Department for Infrastructure Roads, Eastern Division (Cont'd)

Road had been carried out.

- In response to a request by Councillor J Harpur, officials undertook to assess the Hillsborough Road at Carryduff for installation of traffic calming measures.
- Responding to a query raised by Councillor J Harpur, officials agreed to provide a timeline for completion of works on the Knockbracken Road.
- Alderman A G Ewart referred to a blocked gully outside the old Moira bakery. He expressed concern that that work had been completed but the surface was not suitably repaired. Officials agreed to follow up to ensure the surface was adequately repaired.
- Alderman A G Ewart referred to road markings on the road from Moira roundabout to Airport Road. He explained that at station road there was a turning right arrow which would be more suitable as a turning left arrow towards the busy station road. Officials undertook to investigate the matter.
- Councillor G Hynds advised that he had brought a number of items to the meeting in November and had been provided assurance he would receive further feedback which hadn't happened, including issues raised in respect of Glenmore Walking Paths and Hill Street at Laganbank Road in respect of the right turn. Officials agreed to follow up and respond in writing on all of the issues that he raised at the November meeting.
- In response to a request by Councillor G Hynds in respect of recent reports of children being knocked down at Governors Road, Lisburn at the cinema, officials undertook to investigate the matter.
- Responding to a request by Councillor A P Ewing, officials agreed to assess Warren Gardens footpath and road for works similar to the works that were carried out at Kensington Park.
- Councillor U Mackin referred to the previous response he had received in respect of the A49, whereby two walls were continually being hit by vehicles. The response referred to the Creevytenant Road which was three miles from the site he referred to. Officials suspected the wrong section of road had been assessed and agreed to follow up with Councillor Mackin directly to arrange a site visit.
- In response to a query raised by Councillor U Mackin in respect of the A49 junctions at Crossan crossroads, Lisnastrian junction with Saintfield Road, and Saintfield Road with Comber Road, officials undertook to investigate and provide an update.
- Officials agreed to follow up in respect of requests made by Councillor U Mackin on the following issues: Traffic surveys on the Ballyskeagh and Hillhall Roads previously discussed, however egress from each end of Quarterlands Road needed to be reviewed for traffic calming measures; white lines at potholes which indicate that work should be done, can the work actually be

3.2 Department for Infrastructure Roads, Eastern Division (Cont'd)

Completed and when Dfl senior engineers change, an email be sent to notify Elected Members.

During the meeting Alderman A McIntyre proposed that the Council write to the Minister for Infrastructure in respect of the lack of feedback received on reports made through the online portal, and request that the portals functionality be explored to provide automatic progress updates in future. This proposal was later seconded by Councillor U Mackin and unanimously agreed by Council.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson, thanked the officials for their attendance. There being no further business the special meeting concluded at 8.26 pm.

Mayor