

**LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL****Minutes of Meeting of the Regeneration & Growth Committee held in the Council Chamber, Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2024 at 8.00 pm****PRESENT IN THE CHAMBER:**

Councillor J Laverty BEM (Chairperson)

Councillor T Mitchell (Vice Chairperson)

Aldermen J Baird, A G Ewart MBE, A Grehan and M Guy

Councillors P Burke, K Dickson, U Mackin, A Martin, C McCready and N Parker

**OTHER MEMBERS:**

Councillor G Hynds

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Director of Regeneration &amp; Growth

Head of Economic Development

Head of Assets

Tourism Development Manager

Member Services Officers (BS and EW)

IT Officer

**Commencement of Meeting**

The Chairperson, Councillor J Laverty, having apologised for the lateness in the commencement of the meeting which had been occasioned by the previous Committee meeting having overrun, extended a welcome to all present at the June meeting of the Committee which was the last meeting of the Committee for the 2023/2024 year.

The Chairperson reminded those present that the meeting was being audio recorded unless the item was being considered under confidential business and asked that any Member entering or leaving the meeting advise the Member Services Officer accordingly so that this might be accurately reflected in the minutes. He then outlined the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.

1. **Apologies**

Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting were accepted and recorded on behalf of Alderman S P Porter and Councillor J Gallen, and the Head of Planning & Capital Development.

## 2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor U Mackin declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 3.1 Draft Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2029 in view of his membership of the board of Lagan Valley Regional Park.

## 3. Report of Head of Economic Development

### 3.1 Draft Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2024 - 2029 Presentation

The Tourism Development Manager was in attendance in order to present to Members on the draft Tourism Strategy and Action Plan for 2024-2029.

At the outset the Head of Economic Development outlined the background and key issues in connection with the Council's draft Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2029, The report circulated detailed a number of recommendations that the Draft Strategy would focus on and it was noted that a workshop for Members had taken place on the emerging Tourism Strategy and Action Plan in January 2024.

The Committee had been furnished with a copy of a summary of the Draft Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2029 together with the proposed questionnaire for the planned eight-week public consultation period.

The Tourism Development Manager proceeded to make his presentation on the draft Tourism Strategy the aim of which was to provide a strategic road map for raising the profile of Lisburn and Castlereagh as a tourism destination. During his presentation the Tourism Development Manager highlighted the five key areas of the draft strategy, including the Vision statement and value proposition; and also the action plan which set out how the key areas would be delivered.

At the conclusion of his presentation the Tourism Development Manager, along with the Director of Regeneration & Growth and the Head of Economic Development, responded to a number of questions and comments from the Committee in connection with issues arising from the presentation, including:

- the absence of the Tourism Consultants. Officers confirmed that the Consultants unfortunately were not available that evening due to a long-standing commitment. The Director of Regeneration & Growth gave an assurance that endeavours would be made to have the consultants in attendance in order to present the final outcomes after the public consultation of the draft Tourism Strategy.
- the Council's representation at this year's Balmoral Show. A Member requested that the Council reviews the budget for its representation at Balmoral Show next year with a view to increasing its presence. The Chairperson, Councillor J Laverty, concurred with

### 3.1 Draft Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2024 - 2029 Presentation (Cont'd)

the sentiments expressed about the Council's increased presence at next year's Balmoral Show and stated that it was important that this matter be taken account of during the forthcoming estimates debates and requested that his comments in this regard be recorded.

- attracting investors to the Council area
- clarity on what document was being provided for the public consultation. It was noted that some Members would have preferred to have sight of the full 90-page Tourism Strategy document at this stage. The Tourism Development Manager undertook to circulate the full document to the Committee.
- other key features that could be included in the Executive Summary, such as the birthplace of Harry Ferguson, the linen heritage, Hilden Mill, Lagan Valley Regional Park and the Frank Pantridge story
- the nature and examples of an 'immersive' experience

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird that the Officer's recommendation, as set out in the report, be agreed subject to the full 90-page Draft Tourism Strategy document being circulated to the Committee with any questions thereon to be raised with Officers in advance of the June Council meeting. There was no seconder for this proposal and following further comments from the Chairperson, Alderman J Baird withdrew his proposal.

Following further discussion it was agreed that the Officer's recommendation be not accepted and that a further report be brought back to the Regeneration & Growth Committee at its meeting in September 2024 which would take account of the sentiments and points raised by Members, it being noted that there would be no detriment as a result of this delay. This course of action was proposed by Alderman J Baird and seconded by Councillor U Mackin and agreed.

### 3.2 Royal Hillsborough and Historic Moira Tourism Promotional Programme

The Head of Economic Development's report outlined the background and key issues in connection with the Royal Hillsborough Historic Moira (RHHM) campaign.

The Committee had been furnished with a copy of an evaluation of activity from the 2023 RHHM campaign, a number of highlights of which had been detailed in the report circulated.

It was proposed by Alderman M Gregg, seconded by Councillor C McCready and agreed to recommend that:

3.2 Royal Hillsborough and Historic Moira Tourism Promotional Programme (Cont'd)

- a) the success of the Royal Hillsborough and Historic Moira initiative be noted,
- b) a further round of this programme be commissioned in 2024/2025 as per the current Economic Development allocation, and
- c) should additional budget be secured from potential grant aid, an enhanced programme be developed for delivery across 2024/025 and presented to the Committee for consideration and a decision thereon.

The Tourism Development Manager left the meeting at 9.08 pm.

3.3 Labour Market Partnership – Draft Action Plan 2024/25

The Head of Economic Development's report outlined the background and key issues in connection with the Labour Market Partnership Draft Action Plan 2024/2025 which was funded by the Department for Communities (DfC).

Alderman A G Ewart left the meeting at 9.03 pm and returned at 9.12 pm.

The Head of Economic Development reminded the Committee that DfC had confirmed recently that up to 25% of the administrative budget had been agreed by the Department and that the level of funding for the remainder of 2024/2025 was not yet agreed as a consequence of significant budgetary pressures elsewhere in the Department and at NI Block level.

It was noted that the funded initiatives that would be delivered via the Labour Market Partnership were required to be completed in full by 31 March 2025. A copy of the submitted Action Plan was appended to the Officer's report.

As a formal offer of funding for Programme delivery was not anticipated until Summer 2024 and to allow Officers sufficient time to deliver the programmes with stipulated timeframes it was being proposed that the Committee approves, subject to budget availability, the aforementioned draft Action Plan 2024/2025.

The Head of Economic Development and the Director of Regeneration & Growth responded to a number of comments and questions from Members arising from the Officer's report. The Chairperson, Councillor J Laverty, asked that his thanks and appreciation be conveyed to the Officers concerned for their efforts in connection with the success of a recent Employability programme.

Councillor K Dickson left the meeting at 9.23 pm.

### 3.3 Labour Market Partnership – Draft Action Plan 2024/25 (Cont'd)

The Committee noted a verbal update by the Head of Economic Development in regard to the Multiply Programme, an adult numeracy programme, which had been agreed previously by the Committee. It was noted that the Council had secured an additional £200,000 towards this programme and that a team of Officers were now actively procuring this initiative.

It was proposed by Councillor U Mackin, seconded by Councillor N Parker, and agreed to recommend that:

- a) in order to ensure that Officers have sufficient time to deliver the LMP programmes within the stipulated timeframes, the draft LMP Action Plan 2024/2025 be agreed, subject to funding, and also agrees to sign the associated Letter of Offer when received over the Summer months,
- b) the Council's Employability & Skills budget be used to match fund the draft LMP Action Plan 2024/2025 as outlined in the report, and
- c) the final Action Plan 2024/2025, when agreed by DfC, be presented to a future meeting of the Committee for noting.

### 3.4 Business Development Collaboration Programme 2024-2025

The Head of Economic Development's report outlined the background and key issues in connection with the Council's annual business development collaboration programme that aligned with the Council's overall strategy to engage with stakeholders including businesses, business groups and government. The report also detailed the ongoing aims of the initiative and the projects that were currently envisaged for 2024/2025.

The Committee had been furnished with a copy of a paper outlining the proposed overall budget for business activity during 2024/2025.

The Head of Economic Development responded to questions from Members in connection with:

- key issue number 2 of the report which highlighted that NI would fall short of the 2050 net zero emission target unless swift action was taken. The Member enquired if there was any scope within the Business Collaboration Programme to set Lisburn and Castlereagh apart from other areas in Northern Ireland as a renewables hub for new business start-ups. The Head of Economic Development advised that the Council had recently commissioned a piece of work on the Green Growth agenda and that an industrial de-carbonisation seminar was taking place the following week on this subject.

### 3.4 Business Development Collaboration Programme 2024-2025 (Cont'd)

- any engagement with farmers in the local area to assess how the Council could assist farmers in reaching their operating targets. The Head of Economic Development discussed the support that had been provided to on-farm businesses through the TRPSI programme and previous iterations of the NI Rural Development Programme.

Councillor K Dickson returned to the meeting at 9.26 pm.

It was proposed by Alderman M Gregg, seconded by Councillor U Mackin, and agreed to recommend that the annual business collaborative programme of activities 2024/2025, as outlined in the Officer's report, be agreed.

### 3.5 Enterprise Lisburn Castlereagh Programme 2024-2025

The Head of Economic Development's report outlined the background and key issues in connection with the Enterprise Lisburn Castlereagh Programme 2024/2025. The report also detailed the proposed development of targeted programmes focusing on the undernoted key sectors:

- Empowering Youth Entrepreneurship
- Supporting Female Entrepreneurship
- Facilitating a Support Network for Entrepreneurs and Promoting Innovation in the Micro-business sector

The Committee had been furnished with a copy of the breakdown of the proposed Enterprise Lisburn Castlereagh Programme for 2024/2025 which detailed an overview and outputs and which would enhance and further develop the programme.

It was noted that the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Business Awards would take place in 2025, it being noted that a proposed increase in the Council's primary sponsorship amount to this key event was included in the current budget estimates.

It was proposed by Alderman M Guy, seconded by Alderman M Gregg, and agreed to recommend that the Enterprise Lisburn Castlereagh Programme for 2024-2025 as outlined in the Officer's report, be agreed.

### 3.6 Investment Programme 2024-2025

The Head of Economic Development's report outlined the background and key issues in connection with the Council's annual Investment Programme 2024/2025. The report also detailed the number of key activities to aid the delivery of the Investment Programme, it being noted that the 2024/2025 programme included a 2-day Westminster Networking &

### 3.6 Investment Programme 2024-2025 (Cont'd)

Business Showcase Event which was scheduled to take place in March or September 2025.

The Committee had been furnished with a copy of the proposed inward investment programme for 2024/2025.

The Head of Economic Development responded to a number of questions from the Committee in connection with key issues outlined in the report including outcomes from previous investment events and other major Cities being considered aside from London for the Networking and Business Showcase event.

Alderman A G Ewart left the meeting at 9.42 pm.

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Councillor C McCreedy, and agreed to recommend that the annual inward investment programme of activities for 2024/2025, as outlined in the Officer's report, be agreed.

### 3.7 International Trade Programme 2024-2025

The Head of Economic Development's report outlined the background and key issues in connection with the Council's annual International Trade Programme the aim of which was to support local businesses by facilitating entry into new export markets and securing fresh opportunities for trade. The report also highlighted the outputs of the Council's successful on-going international trade linkages.

The Committee had been furnished with a copy of an outline of the proposed international trade programme for 2024-2025, which included several projects to maintain and strengthen the local economy's international linkages.

The Head of Economic Development and the Director of Regeneration & Growth responded to questions from the Committee in connection with key issues outlined in the report, including:

- the outcomes of the trade development visit to Cork and Galway
- the reinstatement of the NI-NLTrade Society
- the business hub in Galway

It was proposed by Alderman A Grehan, seconded by Alderman J Baird, and agreed to recommend that the annual International Trade Programme of activities for 2024-2025 as outlined in the report, be agreed.

#### 4. Report by the Director of Regeneration & Growth

##### 4.1 City Centre Public Convenience Provision

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Regeneration & Growth Committee in connection with the provision of public conveniences within Lisburn City Centre and also in regard to the erection of wayfinding signage which would include access to public conveniences.

A copy of the report and related appendices that had been considered by the Environmental Services Committee in December 2022 on the extent of public convenience availability had been appended to the Director's report.

A Member reiterated the request that a unit be identified in the City Centre for the provision of public conveniences and also enquired about the timeframe for such a project.

It was proposed by Councillor N Parker, seconded by Councillor U Mackin, and agreed to recommend that:

- a) the content of the Director's report on City Centre Public Convenience Provision be noted, and
- b) a unit be identified in the City Centre for the provision of public conveniences,

Alderman A Grehan left the meeting at 10.07 pm

#### 5. Any Other Business

##### 5.1 Update on DfC Flooding Scheme Head of Economic Development

The Head of Economic Development updated the Committee in regard to the progress of the Flooding Scheme payments to businesses in the Lisburn and Castlereagh area. It was hoped that funding from the Department for Communities would be received by the Council in the very near future.

The Chairperson, Councillor J Laverty, asked that the Committee's thanks be conveyed to the Officers concerned for their efforts in progressing the Flooding Scheme.

##### 5.2 Thanks to the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson Alderman M Guy and Councillor C McCready

Alderman M Guy commended, and expressed thanks to, the Chairperson Councillor J Laverty, for his efforts and commitment as Chairperson of the Regeneration & Growth Committee during the past year. Alderman Guy also extended thanks and appreciation to the Vice Chairperson, Councillor T Mitchell.



5.2 Thanks to the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson (Cont'd)  
Alderman M Guy and Councillor C McCready

Councillor C McCready, having thanked the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson for their efforts, also thanked the Director of Regeneration & Growth and his team of Officers for their hard work during the year.

Alderman A Grehan returned to the meeting during this item of business (10.10 pm).

The Chairperson reciprocated the sentiments expressed by the previous speakers and thanked the Director and Heads of Service for their efforts during the year. He asked the Director and Heads of Services to pass on his thanks and appreciation to their respective teams of Officers. He also wished the incoming Chairperson and Vice Chairperson every success during their Term of Office.

In concluding the Chairperson expressed thanks to the Vice Chairperson, Councillor T Mitchell, for his support during the year. He also thanked the media representative for his interest in the work of the Committee.

6. Confidential Report from Director of Regeneration & Growth

The Chairperson, Councillor J Laverty, advised of the undernoted reasons for confidentiality for the following confidential report items:

6.1 Removal of Deed of Covenant: Confidential due to containing (a) information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information, and (b) information in relation to which a claim of legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings

6.2 Requested Increase to Contracted Rates ref Electrical Call off Contract,

6.3 Requested Increase to Contracted Rates ref Mechanical Call off Contract, and

6.4 Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields Development Site: Confidential due to containing information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information)

In Committee

It was proposed by the Vice Chairperson, Councillor T Mitchell, seconded by Councillor C McCready, and agreed that the Confidential Reports be considered "in Committee" in the absence of press or members of the public. The audio recording was paused at this stage in proceedings (10.16 pm).

6.1 Removal of Deed of Covenant

(Redacted Report to be published following the June Meeting of Council)

The Head of Assets' report outlined the background and key issues in connection with the removal of a deed of covenant at lands at Drumbo, Lisburn.

It was proposed by Alderman M Gregg, seconded by the Vice Chairperson, Councillor T Mitchell, and agreed to recommend that the removal of the Deed of Covenant on the land at Drumbo, Lisburn, as outlined in the report, be agreed.

6.2 Requested Increase to Contracted Rates ref Electrical Call off Contract

(Redacted report to be published 31 March 2026 subject to further extensions)

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Assets outlining a request by the service provider to an increase in the contracted rates in regard to the call-off contract for electrical services, the content of which was noted.

6.3 Requested Increase to Contracted Rates ref Mechanical Call off Contract

(Redacted report to be published 31 March 2026 subject to further extensions)

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Assets outlining a request by the service provider to an increase in the contracted rates in regard to the Mechanical Services Contract priced elements, the content of which was noted.

6.4 Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields Development Site

(Redacted report to be published March 2025)

The report by the Director of Regeneration & Growth outlined the background and key issues in regard to a development site at the Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields.

It was proposed by Alderman A Grehan, seconded by Alderman J Baird, and agreed to recommend that the draft heads of terms to the sporting Club concerned be approved and that this forms the basis for the agreement of a lease which will be presented to Council for signing and sealing in due course.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor N Parker, seconded by Alderman M Gregg, and agreed to come out of Committee and normal business was resumed.

Conclusion of Meeting

The Chairperson thanked everyone for their attendance and there being no further business for consideration the meeting was concluded at 10.30 pm.

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Chairperson