

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 21st June 2023 at 5.35 pm.

PRESENT IN COUNCIL CHAMBER (COMMITTEE):

Alderman O Gawith (Chairman)

Councillor A Ewing (Vice-Chairman)

Aldermen M Guy and H Legge

Councillors K Dickson, N Eaton, A Givan, B Higginson, C Kemp and the Hon N Trimble

PRESENT IN A REMOTE LOCATION (COMMITTEE):

Councillors P Burke and R Carlin

OTHER MEMBERS OF COUNCIL PRESENT IN COUNCIL CHAMBER

Alderman A Grehan

Councillor G Hynds

OTHER MEMBERS OF COUNCIL PRESENT IN A REMOTE LOCATION

Alderman P Porter

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive
Director of Finance & Corporate Services
Director of Organisation Development & Innovation
Director of Regeneration & Growth
Head of Corporate Communications & Administration (Remote)
Head of Finance
Acting Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development
Acting PCSP/Member Services Manager
Member Services Officers (RN & CH)

Commencement of Meeting

The Chairman, Alderman O Gawith, thanked the Committee for facilitating the earlier starting time of the meeting for those Members who might wish to attend the Half Marathon/Fun Run later in the evening. The Chairman also welcomed those present at the meeting, particularly newly-elected Members and also returning Member who had not previously served on the Committee.

The Chairman 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 (00:03:52)

Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting were accepted and recorded on behalf of The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor A Gowan; Alderman A Ewart MBE, Councillors T Beckett and U Mackin.

2. Declarations of Interest (00:04:22)

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.

Declarations of Interest were made as follows:-

- Councillor A Ewing – Item 4.2 of Report of Director of Finance & Corporate Services – “National Association of Councillor - Constitution”. (Council appointee to the National Association of Councillors)
- Councillor G Hynds – Item 4.2 of Report of Director of Finance & Corporate Services – “National Association of Councillors – Constitution”. (Council appointee to National Association of Councillors)
- Councillor G Hynds – Item 9.2 of Confidential Report of Director of Finance & Corporate Services – “Procurement of Catering Services at Lagan Valley Island”. (Director and Owner of the Grand Café and Sandwich Bar). Councillor Hynds left the meeting for this item of business.

3. Report of Chief Executive (00:05:43)

3.1 Decision taken under Delegated Authority (during Election period)
(00:05:58)

Presented by the Director of Finance & Corporate Services.

It was proposed by Councillor B Higginson, seconded by Councillor A Givan and agreed to recommend that the decision taken under delegated authority during the Election period to continue to nominate in the Pride of Place Awards Scheme 2023 be noted. A report on this matter had been presented to the Communities & Wellbeing Committee on the 13th June 2023.

4. Report of Director of Finance & Corporate Services (00:06:53)

4.1 Budget Consultations – Responses to Consultations (00:06:59)

Responses submitted by the Council in regard to consultations on the budget allocations for 2023/2024 for the following departments had been provided with the report:-

- The Executive Office;
- Department for Communities;
- Department for Infrastructure.

The Director elaborated on the Council's responses with particular reference to:-

- those areas of the Council's activities that would be adversely impacted by reduced financial allocations from the above departments;
- suggestions made to the appropriate departments as to where they might achieve savings.

Furthermore, requests had been made to the appropriate departments for them to meet with the Council on their projected budgets.

The departments had indicated that early responses well ahead of the stipulated closing date of their consultations would allow for more in-depth consideration of comments made. To this end, the above responses had been submitted and a similar course of action would be followed for any further consultation on other departmental budget consultations.

Given that the responses had already been submitted to meet stipulated closing dates, it was agreed on a Proposal made by Councillor N Eaton and seconded by Alderman M Guy that the Council's responses as referred to above be noted on a retrospective basis.

4.1 Budget Consultations – Responses to Consultations (Continued)

During discussion of this item of business:-

- Councillor P Burke joined the Meeting on a remote basis. (5.45 pm)
- the Chief Executive left the Chamber at 5.46 pm and returned to it at 5.48 pm. The Chief Executive again left the Meeting at 6.00 pm.

4.2 National Association of Councillors (NI Region) – Constitution
(00:28:16)

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services reported the receipt of correspondence dated the 22nd March 2023 from the National Association of Councillors (NI Region) in regard to a proposed reconstitution of that organisation. The salient points of the proposed reconstitution were detailed in the report.

The following documentation had been provided with the report:-

- a draft of the revised constitution of the National Association of Councillors (NAC) (NI Region) which had accompanied the correspondence dated the 22nd March 2023 from the NAC (NI Region) referred to above;
- the existing constitution of the NAC (NI Region);
- a draft letter addressed to the Secretary of the NAC (NI Region) seeking clarification on a number of issues, particularly those in relation to the financial implications to the Council should the reconstitution proceed.

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

- the correspondence in regard to the proposed changes to the NAC constitution be noted;
- the proposed action be agreed that the Council writes to the NAC stating that (i) the Council is content to approve the new constitution, subject to an acknowledgement by the NAC that they will ensure appropriate financial governance arrangements are in place so as to minimize the financial burden on the Council by the dissolution of the NAC; and (ii) that this may include the establishment of a reserve to build up costs to deal with such circumstances.

5. Report of Director of Regeneration & Growth and Director of Finance & Corporate Services (00:31:55)

5.1 Capital Programme Governance Refresh (00:32:14)

The report was presented by the Director of Regeneration & Growth.

Given the new Committee structure and the fact that there is no longer a Capital Projects Committee, a refreshed governance model for managing capital projects is required. A proposed refreshed governance model entitled “LCCC Governance Model for Delivery of Capital Projects and Capital Works Projects” in draft form was provided with the report. The model reflected the learning experience from the previous method by which the governance of capital projects had been dealt with.

The report detailed in length, the various steps of the Governance Model. The Directors responded to questions from Members.

It was proposed by Councillor N Trimble, seconded by Alderman M Guy and agreed to recommend that the refreshed governance model for the Capital Programme be agreed.

6. Report of Head of Corporate Communications & Administration (00:52:11)

6.1 Representation on Internal Working Groups and External Bodies
(00:52:40)

The Head of Corporate Communications & Administration was in attendance on a remote basis and available to contribute as necessary. However her report on this item of business was presented by the Acting PCSP/Member Services Manager who was present in the Chamber.

The report set out the background upon which appointments to Internal Working Groups and to External Bodies are proposed to be made.

The following appendices to the report had been provided:-

- a schedule of internal working groups (2023-2027) to be agreed across all committees, this list having been provided to Members and Party Group Leaders following the Annual Meeting of Council on the 8th June 2023. The internal working groups had prescribed memberships.
- a schedule of External Bodies (22 in total) requiring Council representation for the duration of the Council mandate (2023 – 2027). Two of the external bodies required cross-party representation.

6.1 Representation on Internal Working Groups and External Bodies
(Continued)

The recommendations of the report were as follows:-

- Nominating Officers advise Member Services by a date to be confirmed of their nominees in respect of the internal working groups and those two external bodies which have a prescribed membership;
- the proposed approach of using the principles of d'Hondt to appoint representatives to the remaining 20 external bodies at a meeting of the Nominating Officers on a date to be confirmed be endorsed;
- payment of expenses relating to Nominated Members' attendance at events associated with external bodies for the duration of the Council mandate be approved.

An amendment was proposed by Councillor N Trimble and seconded by Alderman H Legge that where there is a requirement in any group (internal or external) for cross-party representation, the membership be based – at the outset – on one representative from each political party represented on the Council, including Independents, with the remaining membership being based on the d'Hondt method of selection.

The amendment in the name of Councillor N Trimble and seconded by Alderman H Legge was put to the meeting. The voting was 10 against the amendment and two for the amendment. The amendment therefore fell.

The recommendations of the report as set out above were put to the Meeting. On a Proposal made by Alderman M Guy and seconded by Councillor A Givan, they were agreed, ie that:

- Nominating Officers advise Member Services by a date to be confirmed of their nominees in respect of the internal working groups and those two external bodies which have a prescribed membership;
- the proposed approach of using the principles of d'Hondt to appoint representatives to the remaining 20 outside bodies at a meeting of the Nominating Officers on a date to be confirmed be endorsed;
- payment of expenses relating to Nominated Members' attendance at events associated with external bodies for the duration of the Council mandate be approved.

It was noted that a report on the nominations would be presented for ratification to a meeting of Council subsequent to the meeting of the Nominating Officers.

Alderman P Porter joined the Meeting remotely at 6.43 pm during discussion of this item of business.

7. Report of Head of Finance (01:13:40)7.1 Annual Subscription Fees (01:13:51)

The Head of Finance advised that in line with the terms of reference agreed for all committees, all subscriptions are to be presented to the Corporate Services Committee for the new term.

It was proposed by Councillor B Higginson, seconded by Councillor K Dickson and agreed to recommend that the Council's subscriptions listed as follows be approved for payment on an annual basis for the terms 2023/2024 to 2026/2027 on a proviso that they do not exceed the budget agreed during the relevant year's estimate process. Where a subscription charge is over the approved budget, a separate report will be presented to the Home Committee for approval.

Corporate Services Committee

Association	Current Annual Fees (may vary year on year)
National Association of Councillors	£3,200
Northern Ireland Local Government Association	£52,540
Friend of the Somme Association	£1,000
Knockagh Monument Joint Committee	£2,000
Local Government Staff Commission	£25,974
Local Government Training Group	£16,910
Society of Local Authority Chief Executives	£5,000
Employers for Disability	£695
CIPFA – Technical Information Service	£1,030

Regeneration and Growth Committee

Association	Current Annual Fees (may vary year on year)
Social Enterprise NI Corporate Membership	£ 500
Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce	£2,500
Lisburn Chamber of Commerce	£ 525
Visit Belfast (BRTP)	£30,000 plus £6,000 Gold Sponsorship Package
Association of Town Centre Management	£ 330

7.1 Annual Subscription Fees (Continued)**Community and Wellbeing Committee**

Association	Current Annual Fees (may vary year on year)
NI Museums Council	£400
Irish Museums Association	£60
British Pathe	£1,300
Rural Community Network	£200
Northern Ireland Community Voluntary Action	£350
Tourism NI Grading Scheme	£125
Play Resource	£150
Arts Marketing Association	£150
Association of British Theatre Technicians	£250
Arts Professional Association	£150
Autism NI Impact	£1,250

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Association	Current Annual Fees (may vary year on year)
Leisurewatch	£5,100
RIAMS (Regulatory Information and Management Systems)	£5,650
ONUS	£6,000
CADNA (Computer Aided Noise Abatement)	£1,000
CIRIA (Construction Industry Research and Information Association)	£500
British Parking Association	£250
LAEORG (Local Authority Events Organisers Group)	£100
Local Government Partnership on Traveller Issues	£500
Purple Guide	£30
ITSA Trading Standards (Institute of Trading Standards Administration)	£65
Housing Rights Membership	£110
NI Safety Partnership Membership	£200
APEA (Association of Petroleum and Explosives Administration)	£50
LARAC Membership (Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee Membership)	£445
NIEL Membership (Northern Ireland Environment Link Membership)	£160
TAG Membership (Technical Advisory Group)	£305
Local Authority Building Control (LABC)	£1,150
British Standards Institute (BSI)	£1,110
Construction Information Services (IHS Global Ltd)	£7,050

7.1 Annual Subscription Fees (Continued)

Local Government Staff Commission

A discussion took place in regard to the annual subscription to the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC) located within the Corporate Services Committee table.

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services advised that the 2023/2024 payment to the LGSC remained unpaid pending receipt of certain information which the Council had agreed be sought from that body – one of the Council's main concerns being that the LGSC was to have been dissolved a number of years ago, yet it continued to be in existence.

As the payment to the LGSC is a statutory obligation, the payment would remain in the agreed schedule of payments, however at the time of receipt of the invoice for the Council's subscription, it could be brought before the Committee for a decision on any lobbying of the LGSC which might allow for a delay in the payment.

Councillor C Kemp left and returned to the Chamber during discussion of the LGSC matter. (6.49 pm and 6.51 pm respectively)

7.2 Repairs & Renewals (01:23:51)

It was proposed by Councillor A Givan, seconded by Alderman H Legge and agreed to recommend that the breakdown of the Repairs & Renewals spend for 2022/2023 (Quarter 4), together with the attendant explanatory report be noted.

8. Report of Acting Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development
(01:25:06)

The Chairman, Alderman O Gawith, extended a welcome to Mr Dominic McGeown, and wished him all the best in his role as Acting Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development.

8.1 Draft Annual Progress Report on Equality, Good Relations and Disability Duties for 2022-2023 (01:25:21)

The Committee considered a report outlining the background and key issues in connection with the Draft Annual Progress Report on Equality, Good Relations and Disability Duties.

8.1 Draft Annual Progress Report on Equality, Good Relations and Disability Duties for 2022-2023 (Continued)

The following appendices to the report had been provided:-

- a copy of the Draft Annual Progress Report as referred to above;
- the Equality Commission's feedback on the Annual Progress Report for 2021-2022.

The Director of Organisation Development & Innovation and the Acting Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development responded to a number of questions and provided an outline of work that was ongoing. Note was also taken about the provision of documents in formats that were more accessible, both for individuals and for certain demographic groups.

It was proposed by Councillor C Kemp, seconded by Alderman H Legge and agreed to recommend that:-

- the Draft Annual Progress Report 2022-2023 on Equality, Good Relations and Disability Duties be approved for submission to the Equality Commission by the 31st August 2023;
- the Equality Commission's feedback on the Annual Progress Report 2021-2022 be noted.

8.2 Workforce Reports (01:33:04)

Reports on the undernoted topics in relation to Council staff across all Departments had been provided with the report.

- Workforce – Number of staff employed
- Attendance Management
- Recruitment

The Director of Organisation Development & Innovation and the Acting Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development responded to a number of questions in relation to the report on Attendance Management.

It was proposed by Councillor N Trimble, seconded by Alderman H Legge and agreed to recommend that the workforce reports referred to above be noted.

Alderman P Porter left the Meeting on a remote basis during discussion of this item of business. (7.08 pm)

Councillor N Eaton left and returned to the Chamber during discussion of this item of business. (7.17 pm and 7.19 pm respectively).

9. Any other Business – Non-Confidential (01:49:35)

No items of a non-confidential nature were raised by Members.

10. Confidential Report from Director of Finance & Corporate Services (01:50:17)

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

10.1 Report on Various Tender Awards

(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 ratification and signing of contracts.

10.2 Procurement of Catering Services, LVI

(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 award of the contract.

10.3 Management Accounts Period 12 (Draft)

(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. (27th June 2023)

10.4 Withdrawal of Compound Interest Claim on Overpaid VAT

(Confidential for reason of information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

Report to never become available.

In Committee

It was proposed by Councillor A Ewing, seconded by Councillor A Givan and agreed that the Confidential Report of the Director be considered “in Committee”. (Recording was paused at this stage in proceedings.)

10.1 Report on Various Tender Awards

Presented by the Director of Regeneration & Growth.

For Members' information, the Director outlined the circumstances under which tender awards were reported to Committee either for approval or for noting.

It was proposed by Councillor A Givan, seconded by Councillor N Trimble and agreed to recommend that the tenders awarded in regard to the undernoted contracts be noted:

- Self-Employment Option Support Programme
- Electric Vehicle and 1 tonne Dumper Truck
- T2223-071 Planned Preventative Maintenance Inspection of Intruder Alarm Systems
- T2223-068 Planned Preventative Maintenance of Building Energy Management Systems
- T2223-080 Planned Preventative Maintenance Inspections of Air Conditioning and Ventilation
- T2223-049 Planned Preventative Maintenance Inspections of Compressors – Blowers
- T2223-060 Planned Preventative Maintenance Inspections of Oil Interceptors and Effluent Management.

It was further agreed to recommend that the signing and sealing of the Tender documents be approved.

Tender reports for each of the above contracts had been provided with the Director's report and their contents noted

Councillor G Hynds left the Chamber. (7.28 pm)

The Director of Regeneration & Growth left the Chamber. (7.29 pm)

10.2 Procurement of Catering Services, LVI

Having declared an interest in this item of business, Councillor G Hynds had already left the Chamber.

Presented by the Head of Corporate Communications & Administration.

The Head of Service and the Director of Finance & Corporate Services responded to Members' questions on this matter.

10.2 Procurement of Catering Services, LVI (Continued)

It was proposed by Alderman H Legge, seconded by Councillor A Ewing and agreed to recommend that:-

- a new Expression of Interest process, followed by a Tender process be initiated for a new catering contract at Lagan Valley Island for the terms as set out in the report;
- the current arrangement with Stepping Stones, under a one-year STA (Single Tender Action) arrangement to the estimated value as detailed in the report be extended to cover the period until a new contract is in place, ie up to and including the 31st March 2024, with the possibility of a further extension;
- the current arrangement with the mobile bar provider be extended to the 31st March 2024 at the cost as set out in the report.

The Acting Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development left the Chamber during presentation of this item of business. (7.30 pm)

Councillor B Higginson left and returned to the Chamber during discussion of this item. (7.37 pm and 7.42 pm respectively)

Councillor G Hynds returned to the Chamber immediately after the conclusion of this item of business. (7.55 pm)

10.3 Management Accounts Period 12 (Draft)

Presented by the Head of Finance.

The Management Accounts for the period ending the 31st March 2023, together with an extensive narrative report by way of explanation, were noted.

It was proposed by Councillor N Trimble, seconded by Councillor N Eaton and agreed to recommend that the Management Accounts and narrative report for Period 12 be noted.

Alderman H Legge left and returned to the Chamber during presentation of this item of business. (7.55 pm and 8.00 pm respectively)

10.4 Withdrawal of Compound Interest Claim on Overpaid VAT

Presented by the Head of Finance.

The Head of Finance provided the history to this matter which relates to a legal action by all 11 councils in Northern Ireland against HMRC so as to recover previously over declared output VAT in respect of leisure and recreational income.

10.4 Withdrawal of Compound Interest Claim on Overpaid VAT
(Continued)

It was proposed by Councillor N Trimble, seconded by Councillor B Higginson and agreed to recommend that – based on the recommendation by the legal firm dealing with this matter – the withdrawal of compound interest claims on overpaid VAT as made by Castlereagh Borough Council and Lisburn City Council be approved.

11. Any Other Business – Confidential

There were no items of a confidential nature raised by Members.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor B Higginson, seconded by Councillor K Dickson and agreed to come “out of Committee”. Normal business and audio recording were resumed.

12. Any Other Business

There were no items raised.

There being no further business, the Meeting concluded at 8.10 pm.

After the meeting had closed, the Director of Finance & Corporate Services made a short presentation on the Terms of Reference of the Corporate Services Committee.

MAYOR/CHAIRMAN