

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Council held in the Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn, on Tuesday, 29th November, 2016 at 6.30 pm

PRESENT:

The Right Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor R B Bloomfield MBE

Deputy Mayor
Alderman S Martin

Aldermen W J Dillon MBE, D Drysdale, A G Ewart,
T Jeffers, W A Leathem, S P Porter, G Rice MBE and
J Tinsley

Councillors N Anderson, R T Beckett, S Carson, P Catney,
J Craig, A P Ewing, J Gallen, O Gawith, A Girvin, A Givan,
J Gray MBE, A Grehan, B Hanvey, V Kamble, H Legge,
A McIntyre, U Mackin, T Morrow, J Palmer, A Redpath,
M Tolerton, N Trimble and R Walker

IN ATTENDANCE:

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Director of Environmental Services
Lead Head of Planning and Building Control
IT Assistant Manager (Infrastructure)
Member Services Officer
Attendance Clerk

Transport NI

Mr Kevin Monaghan - Eastern Divisional Manager
Mr Eamonn McMahon – Section Engineer

NI Housing Executive

Mr Clark Bailie - Chief Executive
Ms Catherine McFarland - Director of Finance,
Audit & Assurance
Mr Aengus Hannaway - Area Manager,
Lisburn & Castlereagh
Mr Robin Hawe - Place Shaper Belfast Region

NI Water

Mr Mark Mitchell - Head of Capital Business Unit
Mr Garry Presho – Water Business Unit Manager
Dr Steve Blockwell – Head of Strategic Investment Planning

Commencement of the Meeting

At the commencement of the meeting, The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor B Bloomfield, welcomed those present and asked that all mobile phones be switched off or put on silent mode.

1. Purpose of Meeting

The special meeting of Council had been convened in order to receive the following presentations:-

- Transport NI in respect of their Autumn Report
- NI Housing Executive in respect of their Housing Investment Plan
- NI Water in respect of their Outline Investment Priorities

In addition to the above, a confidential report by the Chief Executive had been presented for consideration.

In regard to the presentations, The Right Worshipful The Mayor asked Members that - should they have questions for any of the agencies for which time might not permit an adequate answer to be provided – such questions should be submitted through Member Services for onward submission to the appropriate agency.

2. Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance at the special meeting were accepted and recorded on behalf of Alderman M Henderson MBE; Councillors J Baird, J McCarthy, B Mallon, T Mitchell, L Poots and S Scott; the Chief Executive and the Lead Head of Development.

Councillors J Gallen and M H Tolerton entered the meeting. (6.32 pm and 6.33 pm respectively)

3. Declarations of Interest

The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor B Bloomfield, 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 at the meeting.

The following Declaration of Interest was made:-

- Councillor H Legge – Item 3.2 of the Agenda – “Presentation by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in regard to their Housing Investment Plan for the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area” (Member of the Board of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive)

Councillors A Grehan and R Walker entered the meeting. (6.34 pm)

4. Transport NI - Autumn Report

The Transport NI officials entered the meeting at 6.35 pm.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor B Bloomfield, extended a welcome to the officials from Transport NI who were in attendance to present their Autumn Report. A copy of that report had been loaded to SharePoint in advance of the Meeting.

Mr Kevin Monaghan (Eastern Divisional Manager) thanked the Council for the opportunity to address the meeting and proceeded to outline the salient points of the report. In addition to his verbal presentation, Mr Monaghan confirmed that:-

- a number of questions had been raised by Members in advance of the meeting and had been submitted to Transport NI for response. Written responses would be supplied in regard to those questions.
- Transport NI officials had facilitated a question and answer session for Members immediately prior to the meeting. This session had dealt with matters of a more operational and/or technical issue. Written responses would be provided to those issues which remained outstanding or for which time had not permitted an adequate response to be provided.

Following their presentation, the officials responded to a number of questions, noted comments in respect of certain schemes and agreed to investigate as follows:-

Main Street, Moira – Resurfacing Scheme

Whilst Members accepted that the above had been a good scheme, they did express concern at the level of disruption it had caused to traders and, in particular, that experienced on Armistice Day. Mr Monaghan confirmed that the scheme had been a difficult one to deliver, he apologised for the disturbance caused and expressed appreciation for the co-operation and understanding displayed by traders and users. A few minor works such as road markings, yellow box markings etc remained outstanding. Comments in regard to the advantages of night-time/out-of-hours working in future contracts were noted by the officials.

Relaxation of traffic enforcement measures during the festive period

The officials were asked to consider the above, it being highlighted that in one particular town in Northern Ireland, no traffic enforcement penalties were known to have been issued. The manner in which traffic wardens carried out their duties was also one of concern. Mr Monaghan agreed to convey these issues to the Traffic Enforcement Officers.

7.5 ton weight restriction in Hillsborough

Mr Monaghan acknowledged the significant level of objection to the proposed introduction of the above restriction and confirmed that discussions had taken place with Elected Representatives in this regard.

4. Transport NI - Autumn Report (Continued)

Provision of filter light at McKinsty Road/The Cutts

Mr Monaghan confirmed that funding had not yet been secured for the above scheme, however he had instructed his officials to do some preparatory work in the hope that this might be forthcoming.

Proposed Knockmore/Sprucefield Link

The two traffic corridors associated with the above were reiterated, ie one to the east of Marks & Spencer and one to the west of the A1/line of the old railway line.

Dundonald – Air Quality

The officials were asked to introduce measures so as to increase air quality at Dundonald. Problems were exacerbated by the topography of the area and planned housing could lead to a further diminution of air quality. This matter was one of the pre-submitted questions and a full response would be sent to Alderman T Jeffers.

Laurelgrove housing development, South Belfast – Traffic Calming Measures

Given the increased development of the area and the demographics of its population, the officials were asked to consider the provision of traffic calming measures. Alderman G Rice had raised this some time ago with Transport NI and was disappointed that she had not received a response.

Saintfield Road, Belfast – Traffic Conjestion

The high level of traffic on the Saintfield Road, Belfast required serious address. It was becoming grid-locked between 6.30 am and 9.30 am. Planning legislation needed revision so that planning applications for housing developments were not looked at in isolation in regard to traffic flow but rather the cumulative effect of such planning applications should be considered. Alderman G Rice suggested that the Council write to the Minster for Infrastructure in this regard.

Provision of park & ride facilities in the hinterlands of Carryduff

The officials were asked to consider the above provision so as to service commuters from Downpatrick, Newcastle and Kilkeel in an endeavour to relieve traffic on the Saintfield Road.

Public transport links between Carryduff & Lisburn and Castlereagh South & Lisburn

The provision of the above was considered a necessity. Mr Monaghan stated that this was a matter for Translink and as such the Council should raise it with Translink.

Market Square, Lisburn and vicinity of Public Realm area - Parking enforcement

Mr Monaghan confirmed that the above should be in place week commencing 5th December 2016.

4. Transport NI - Autumn Report (Continued)

Balmoral Show – Traffic Management

Mr Monaghan acknowledged problems associated with the transport network at the time of Balmoral Show. He noted comments that a spur on and off the M1 could help and should be investigated although this would be developer-led as opposed to Transport NI. Mr Monaghan confirmed that Transport NI worked closely within the inter-agency group to address traffic management at the time of the Balmoral Show.

Blaris Road, Lisburn – Speed Restriction

The officials were asked to consider the provision of a 40 mph speed restriction on the above road between the cemetery and its junction with the Hillsborough Road, Lisburn. Mr Monaghan confirmed that the criteria for such a speed limit may be met by virtue of the new housing developments on that road.

LD1 development at Brokerstown – Road junctions

Alderman S P Porter referred to a letter sent to Transport NI by the Lead Head of Building Control seeking a meeting of himself and Alderman W A Leathem in regard to three outstanding junctions associated with the LD1 development at Brokerstown, namely the Knockmore Road/ Ballinderry Road junction, the Knockmore Road/Prince William Road junction and the Prince William Road/Ballymacash Road junction. Alderman Porter asked that this meeting be expedited as a matter of urgency and Mr Monaghan agreed.

Upper Newtownards Road, Dundonald Village, Comber Road – Traffic Management

Attention was drawn to the fact that traffic emerging from the Coopers Mill development onto the Newtownards Road could be queued back to Coopers Mill Avenue (distance of one mile approx). Officials were asked if there were any plans to provide traffic lights at this junction. Given that the traffic on the Upper Newtownards Road could also be queued, problems may originate in Dundonald village/Comber Road area.

The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor B Bloomfield, reminded Members that any additional questions they might have for Transport NI should be submitted via Member Services.

The Right Worshipful The Mayor thanked the officials for their attendance and informative presentation and they left the meeting at 7.10 pm.

4. Transport NI - Autumn Report (Continued)

Questions pre-submitted and Question & Answer Clinic

Questions had been pre-submitted by Alderman T Jeffers; Councillors S Carson, J Gallen, A Girvin, J Gray and B Hanvey.

A number of Members expressed concern at the manner by which Transport NI had dealt with those questions which had been submitted to them in advance of the meeting. There had been an expectation that such questions would have been dealt with in the Question & Answer Clinic prior to the meeting but due to time constraints and other questions being addressed, the pre-submitted questions had not been addressed nor had responses been available.

It was agreed that:-

- the lists of pre-submitted questions be again submitted to the relevant agencies with a request that such questions be responded to as a matter of urgency;
- responses to the questions be issued (i) on receipt to the Member who had raised the question and (ii) to all Members at the next meeting of Council after the receipt thereof.
- a longer time slot be allocated for the Question & Answer Clinic prior to the next presentation by the agencies;
- the system be revised so that responses to pre-submitted questions were in fact available – perhaps in writing – at the Question & Answer Clinic. This would thus allow time for answers to be provided to any ad hoc questions which might be raised at the Clinic.

During the course of this item of business, Councillor A McIntyre entered the meeting at 6.36 pm.

Councillor U Mackin entered the meeting at 6.37 pm.

The Deputy Mayor, Alderman S Martin, left the meeting at 6.38 pm, re-entered it at 6.39 pm, left it at 7.02 pm, re-entered it at 7.04 pm, left it at 7.13 pm, re-entered it at 7.15 pm.

Alderman G Rice and Councillor V Kamble entered the meeting at 6.45 pm and left at 7.15 pm.

Alderman W A Leathem and Councillor P Catney left the meeting at 6.46 pm.

Alderman D Drysdale entered the meeting at 6.50 pm.

Alderman T Jeffers left the meeting at 7.02 pm and re-entered it at 7.05 pm.

Councillor N Anderson entered the meeting at 7.08 pm.

Alderman W J Dillon left the meeting at 7.11 pm.

Alderman J Tinsley left the meeting at 7.11 pm.

Councillor B Hanvey left the meeting at 7.14 pm.

5. NI Housing Executive - Housing Investment Plan

The NI Housing Executive officials entered the meeting at 7.15 pm.

The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor B Bloomfield, extended a welcome to the officials from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive who were in attendance to present on their Housing Investment Plan. A copy of the Annual Update of the Housing Investment Plan for 2016 had been loaded to SharePoint in advance of the Meeting. The PowerPoint presentation was also available on SharePoint.

Pre-submitted questions from Members had been submitted to NIHE in advance of the meeting.

Mr Clark Bailie (Chief Executive) thanked the Council for the opportunity to address the meeting and – with the aid of PowerPoint - made a presentation in respect of the Annual Review of the Housing Investment Plan. The presentation centred on the following areas:-

- the purpose of the Housing Investment Plan;
- an overview of the Housing Investment Plan;
- the themed approach which is taken to the Housing Investment Plan;
- key housing issues;
- Housing Executive expenditure in the Council area - actual in 2015/2016 and projected for 2016/2017;
- maintenance investment for 2015/2016;
- next steps in regard to the Housing Investment Plan including local priorities for the area and the identification of housing need in the Council's area.

Following the presentation, Mr Bailie and Mr Aengus Hannaway (Area Manager, Lisburn & Castlereagh) responded to a number of questions, noted comments in respect of certain schemes and agreed to investigate as follows:-

Future of five tower blocks at Seymour Hill (pre-submitted question by Councillor J Craig)

Mr Bailie stated that the Department for Communities had appointed Savills (international firm of property consultants) to carry out a review of Housing Executive stock. Savills had prepared a report giving projections for the next 30 years. Arising from that report was one entitled "Tower Block Investment Strategy" which had been signed off by the former NI Assembly at the end of its term. A paper in relation to the NIHE tower block provision in Northern Ireland was being presented to the Board of the NI Housing Executive on the 30th November 2016.

Social Housing in Castlereagh East – Dundonald, Ballybeen, Moneyreagh, Crossnacreevy (pre-submitted question by Councillor A Girvin)

Mr Hannaway confirmed that there were 21 family houses on site in Ballybeen and 20 more projected for 2018/2019. Work was ongoing to identify sites in Dundonald for elderly person housing. Latent demand test for social housing would be carried out in rural areas. Council would be kept informed.

5. NI Housing Executive - Housing Investment Plan (Continued)

Homelessness

Mr Hannaway explained and provided a breakdown of the statistics in relation to accepted homelessness and agreed to provide Councillor A Grehan with the most up-to-date figures in terms of homelessness and length of time in temporary accommodation.

Planned Maintenance

The importance of adequate budget for the above was emphasized.

Housing Allocation

Alderman D Drysdale agreed to provide Mr Hannaway with details of a required housing allocation relating to a constituent.

Bute Park, Dundonald – Street Lighting

Alderman D Drysdale referred to a problem concerning the lack of lighting to the rear of houses at the above location. The DoE and Power NI had been involved but the issue had not been resolved. Mr Hannaway agreed to investigate.

Single Skimmed Dwellings – Grant for Insulation

Alderman D Drysdale referred to a grant with a threshold of £16,500 which was available for the insulation of single skimmed dwellings. He undertook to pass the officials, information relating to a request that the threshold for eligibility for the grant be increased.

Dementia Friendly Housing

Enquiries were made about the provision of the above. Mr Hannaway was not aware of any plans for this but agreed to convey the enquiry to the appropriate agencies such as the Health Trust.

Hilden Mill development, Lisburn

The officials confirmed that they were working with Choice Housing Association in relation to the type of housing to be provided at the above location.

Sub-letting of Housing Executive property

The officials asked that they be made aware of any instances where a Housing Executive tenant was sub-letting his property or where a person was the tenant of more than one property.

The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor B Bloomfield, reminded Members that any additional questions they might have for the NI Housing Executive should be submitted via Member Services.

The Right Worshipful The Mayor thanked the officials for their attendance and informative presentation and they left the meeting at 7.58 pm.

5. NI Housing Executive - Housing Investment Plan (Continued)

During the course of this item of business, Councillor B Hanvey re-entered the meeting at 7.25 pm.

Councillor A Redpath left the meeting at 7.30 pm.

Alderman J Tinsley re-entered the meeting at 7.30 pm, left it at 7.38 pm and re-entered it at 7.40 pm.

Councillor R Walker left the meeting at 7.38 pm.

Councillor S Carson left the meeting at 7.50 pm.

The Deputy Mayor, Alderman S Martin, left the meeting at 7.52 pm and re-entered it at 7.54 pm.

Councillors A McIntyre and T Morrow left the meeting at 7.58 pm.

6. NI Water - Outline Investment Priorities

The officials entered the meeting at 8.00 pm.

The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor B Bloomfield, extended a welcome to the officials from NI Water who were in attendance to present on their Outline Investment Priorities. The PowerPoint presentation was available on SharePoint.

Pre-submitted questions from Members had been submitted to NI Water in advance of the meeting.

Dr Steve Blockwell thanked the Council for the opportunity to address the meeting and – with the aid of PowerPoint – he and Mr Mitchell made a presentation in respect of Outline Investment Priorities. The presentation centred on the following areas:-

- Customer Promises
- Capital Investments
- Top investments – Projects completed and Projects about to start
- “Closing the Efficiency Gap”
- Service Improvement
- Education Activity
- Current Public Initiatives
- “Don’t wait, Insulate” campaign
- Major Incident Plan, winter Contingency Planning, Civil contingency planning & liaison

Following the presentation, Messrs Steve Blockwell and Mark Mitchell (Head of Capital Business Unit) responded to a number of questions, noted comments in respect of certain schemes and agreed to investigate as follows:-

New housing development adjacent to Pantridge Link Road – Pumping station

Alderman A G Ewart advised that the pumping station at the above location had not yet been fitted and that the developer was having to pump the effluent out. Mr Mitchell agreed to attend to this and to revert to Alderman Ewart with an update.

6. NI Water - Outline Investment Priorities (Continued)

Castor Bay project – Road defects at Chapel Road, Aghalee (pre-submitted question by Councillor R T Beckett)

At the outset, Councillor Beckett expressed concern that he had not received a response to his question which had been submitted some six weeks previous. Mr Mitchell stated that he had received notification of the question the previous week with a notice to speak of it at the meeting. Mr Mitchell was of the understanding that the trench reinstatement of Chapel Road had been acceptable. However he undertook to have it looked at again to achieve a better customer outcome and to correspond with Councillor Beckett in this regard.

NI Water Elected Representative Helpline

The officials noted Members' appreciation in regard to the above but that action thereafter was not always so prompt or efficient. In this regard Mr Mitchell apologised in relation to the time taken to resolve an issue regarding a blocked sewer which Councillor R T Beckett had raised on behalf of a constituent.

Adverse Weather Conditions

Mr Mitchell gave an assurance that NI Water was working to ensure that their network was in a good and fit condition so as to be able to cope with severely cold weather conditions. Major incident plans were also in place.

Pumping Stations

Mr Mitchell noted problems in relation to pumping stations associated with housing developments at Chestnut Lodge, Drumbo and at Mountainview, Drumbeg and agreed to investigate these.

Non-Adopted Developments

Non-adopted areas are not the responsibility of statutory agencies. Such areas were emerging more often than before due to financial hardship that developers were facing. Mr Mitchell confirmed that the NI Executive had allocated a small budget for NI Water to deal with legacy problems associated with firms that may have gone into administration.

Hillsborough – Reinstatement of Footpaths

Mr Mitchell noted comments about the need to have footpaths, pavoids etc in Hillsborough reinstated following a recent upgrade. NI Water to revert to Councillor U Mackin on progress in this regard.

Storm Flow

In relation to storm flow, the officials confirmed the sequence in which the water infrastructure and the treatment works deal with this.

Bonds

The officials stated that bonds were a mandatory requirement for contractors and were utilised when necessary. Monitoring schemes are in place to ensure that capital provision is in place when a development is a certain size and over.

6. NI Water - Outline Investment Priorities (Continued)

Drumadoon area of the Ballybeen Estate - Sewage

The officials agreed to investigate the presence of raw sewage in the Drumadoon area of the Ballybeen Estate.

The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor B Bloomfield, reminded Members that any additional questions they might have for NI Water should be submitted via Member Services.

The Right Worshipful The Mayor thanked the officials for their attendance and informative presentation and they left the meeting at 8.45 pm.

During the course of this item of business, Councillor T Morrow re-entered the meeting at 8.02 pm.

Councillor N Trimble left the meeting at 8.20 pm.

7. Pre-submitted questions & Outstanding issues

The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor B Bloomfield, reminded Members that any outstanding issues which Members may have for any of the agencies received that evening should be submitted thereto via Member Services.

The Director of Environmental Services reiterated the decisions of the Council earlier in the meeting that:-

- the lists of pre-submitted questions be again submitted to the relevant agencies with a request that such questions be responded to as a matter of urgency;
- responses to the questions be issued (i) to the Member who had raised the question and (ii) to all Members at the next meeting of Council after receipt thereof.
- a longer time slot be allocated for the Question & Answer Clinic prior to the next presentation by the agencies;
- the system be revised so that responses to pre-submitted questions were in fact available – perhaps in writing – at the Question & Answer Clinic. This would thus allow time for answers to be provided to any ad hoc questions which might be raised at the Clinic.

8. Confidential Report of Chief Executive

Copy of a confidential report by the Chief Executive had been loaded to SharePoint earlier in the day with Members being advised accordingly.

In the absence of the Chief Executive who had presented an apology for non-attendance, her report was presented by the Director of Environmental Services.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor B Bloomfield, advised that the matter contained in the confidential report would be dealt with “in Committee” due to it containing information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

It was proposed by Councillor M H Tolerton, seconded by Councillor N Anderson and agreed that the Confidential Report of the Chief Executive be considered “in Committee”, in the absence of members of the press and public being present.

8.1 Development Committee – 7th December 2016
Delegated Authority

It was proposed by Councillor U Mackin, seconded by Alderman J Tinsley and agreed that – at its meeting to be held on the 7th December 2016 – the Development Committee be delegated authority to consider and take decisions in relation to an options paper on the development of connectivity links between Sprucefield and Lisburn City Centre during the Christmas period 2016.

It was proposed by Councillor N Anderson, seconded by Councillor A P Ewing and agreed to come “out of Committee” and normal business was resumed.

There being no further business, the special meeting concluded at 8.51 pm.

Mayor/Chairman