

**LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL**

Minutes of Special Meeting of Council held in the Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn, on Monday 12 October 2015 at 7:00 pm

**PRESENT:**

The Right Worshipful the Mayor  
Councillor R T Beckett

Deputy Mayor, Councillor A Redpath

**ALDERMEN:**

A G Ewart, WJ Dillon MBE, S Martin, S P Porter, G Rice MBE, and J Tinsley

**COUNCILLORS:**

B Bloomfield MBE, R Butler, S Carson, A Ewing, J Gallen, O Gawith, A Girvin, A Givan, J Gray MBE, A Grehan, B Hanvey, V Kamble, U Mackin, B Mallon, A McIntyre, J McCarthy, T Mitchell, Jenny Palmer, John Palmer, S Skillen, M Tolerton and R Walker

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chief Executive  
Director of Development and Planning  
Director of Corporate Services  
Director of Leisure and Community Services  
Transition Manager  
Committee Secretary  
Attendance Clerk

**Commencement of the Meeting**

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor R T Beckett, thanked those present for their attendance.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor asked that any Member entering or leaving the meeting alert him accordingly so that the Committee Secretary might accurately reflect arrival and departure times in the minutes.

1. **Apologies**

It was agreed to accept apologies for non-attendance at the meeting on behalf of Aldermen D Drysdale, M Henderson MBE, T Jeffers and WA Leathem and Councillors J Baird, P Catney, H Legge, T Morrow, L Poots

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Presentations:

3.1 TranslinkNI

Members noted that Translink NI had indicated that its representatives were unable to attend this evening's meeting. It was agreed to write to TranslinkNI expressing the Council's dismay at their non-attendance at the meeting and the short notice given to the Council.

3.2 SONI Ltd

The Right Worshipful the Mayor welcomed to the meeting representatives of SONI, Ms Natasha Sayee, Senior Public Affairs Specialist; Mr Shane Brennan, Project Manager Grid Development, together with Mr Daniel McLaughlin and Mr David Kerr, Strategic Planning.

Ms Sayee thanked Members for the opportunity to come and speak about the work of SONI and in particular about the North South Interconnector Project. Company. She outlined the background and activities of SONI including the following:

- SONI was the System Operator for Northern Ireland working under licence from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
- It had 130 employees and provided graduate and placement programmes, including a placement scheme with Wallace High School
- The company's office in Castlereagh acted as command centre for all electricity output across Northern Ireland
- Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland had joined up to create an all-island wholesale electricity market.
- The North South Interconnector Project was the lynchpin in future development of the grid in Northern Ireland

Mr Brennan then outlined the company's projects within the Council area. He also outlined key facts about the North South Interconnector Project, including:

- Joint project between SONI and Eirgrid
- 400kV overhead line linking electricity networks in NI and ROI
- £204m investment
- 138km in length with 401 new towers across the route, of which 102 would be in Northern Ireland
- Crossing Counties Tyrone, Armagh, Monaghan, Cavan and Meath
- 626 landowners directly impacted

He emphasised the importance of the project in maintaining the security of supply, delivering customer savings and providing potential for business expansion and inward investment. He outlined the timescale for the project with the outcome of

the planning process expected by the year end and construction to be completed by 2020.

The SONI representatives answered Members' questions on a range of issues, including the following:

- The decision to proceed with an overhead line was based on the fact that underground cabling was 5 times more expensive and much less reliable.
- The estimate of £14m customer savings was considered to be a conservative one
- Risks that could impact on the project timeline included issues arising from the planning process; landowner negotiations and compensation; and construction issues
- The risk of outage due to security incidents was reduced by the introduction of a second interconnector in Northern Ireland.
- The project was at a critical point in development and SONI would welcome a formal indication of support from the Council
- The project's job creation potential lay in the development of infrastructure that would attract inward investment from large telecommunication companies dependent on a reliable and secure energy supply

(During Members' questions, Councillor J Gallen left at 7.40 pm; Councillor S Skillen left at 7.42 pm and returned at 7.46 pm; Alderman AG Ewart left at 7.48 pm and returned at 7.58 pm)

The Right Worshipful the Mayor thanked the representatives of SONI for their presentation and they then left the meeting.

It was proposed by Alderman J Tinsley, seconded by Councillor Jenny Palmer and agreed that the Council forward to SONI a formal letter of support for the North South Interconnector Project.

(Councillor J Gray left at 8.02 pm and Councillor S Skillen left at 8.03 pm)

### 3.3 Christians Against Poverty

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor RT Beckett, welcomed the representatives of Christians Against Poverty, Mr Paul Bailie, Lisburn CAP Manager; Ms Heather Purdy, CAP Belfast; and Ms Naomi Bryans who had worked in CAP HQ, Bradford, for 6 years.

The CAP representatives outlined the work of CAP in provision of a free debt counselling service across Northern Ireland, highlighting the following points:

- CAP now had 21 centres in Northern Ireland
- All centres were supported by CAP head office in Bradford
- Its support services included home visits, debt coaching, ongoing support by volunteer befrienders, CAP payment plans, and job clubs.
- Its centres operated in partnership with a local church but support was given regardless of faith or religion

CAP representatives then answered Members' questions including the following:

- If CAP advisors were aware that a client was not availing of benefits to which they were entitled, they would arrange a referral to CAB
- CAP's funding came from a variety of sources, its Life Changing Programme, individual contributions, fund raising events and applications to trusts and funds.
- The service was not provided to people who were self-employed; also, if people failed to keep to the agreed debt management programme, the service could be discontinued.
- CAP was averaging 2 new clients per month in Lisburn and 4 new clients per month in Castlereagh. Over all of Northern Ireland it had 435 active clients. Its emphasis was on providing long term support until clients were debt free.
- The 21 centres around Northern Ireland did not involve dedicated offices as the service was brought out to clients in their homes and the befriending service was provided by volunteers.

(During Members' questions, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor A Redpath, left at 8.19 pm; Alderman SP Porter left at 8.22 pm; Alderman WJ Dillon and Alderman AG Ewart left at 8.25 pm)

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor RT Beckett, thanked the representatives of CAP for their presentation and they then left the meeting. It was agreed that the Council should write to Christians Against Poverty thanking them for their work in providing a free debt counselling service to people in need. Members were also asked to publicise the charity's work wherever possible including sharing on Twitter and Facebook.

(Alderman AG Ewart returned at 8.33 pm)

#### 4. Report by Chief Executive

##### 4.1 Special Meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee on 27 October 2015

It was agreed to hold a special meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee on 27 October 2015 to consider and approve the following:

- a) Legacy Accounts for Lisburn City Council and Castlereagh Borough Council for the Year ended 31 March, 2015
- b) Lisburn City & Castlereagh District Council (Shadow Accounts) for the period ended 31 March, 2015
- c) Lisburn City & Castlereagh Borough Statutory Transition Committee for the period Ended 19 June, 2014
- d) Lagan Rural Partnership for the year ended 31 March, 2015
- e) Lisburn & Castlereagh Peace III Statutory Joint Committee for the period ended 31 December, 2014
- f) Review of Internal Audit Effectiveness – Report from Ernst & Young
- g) Performance Improvement Audit for Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

It was also agreed that the Committee be given delegated authority to approve these matters.

There being no further business, the Special Meeting of Council concluded at 8.37 pm.

---

Mayor