

**LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Meeting of the Corporate Services Committee held in the Cherry Room, Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020 at 6.00 pm.**

**PRESENT:**

Councillor R Carlin (Chairman)

The Right Worshipful The Mayor  
Councillor A Givan

Deputy Mayor  
Councillor J McCarthy

Aldermen A G Ewart MBE, S Martin and S P Porter

Councillors S Carson, A P Ewing, J Gallen, M Guy,  
D Honeyford, S Hughes, J Lavery BEM, U Mackin,  
John Palmer, A Swan and N Trimble

**OTHER MEMBERS:**

Alderman A Grehan

Councillor S Lee

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Chief Executive  
Head of Human Resources & Organisational Development  
Head of Finance (Acting)  
PSCP/Member Services Manager  
Administration Manager  
Member Services Officer

Land & Property Services

Mr David Ross, Director of Valuation

**Commencement of Meeting**

The Chairman, Councillor R Carlin, extended a welcome to all present to the meeting. He then proceeded to outline the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.

The Chairman reminded everyone to ensure mobile phones were turned off or on silent mode for the duration of the meeting and also advised that unauthorized recording was not permitted as per 8.5 of the Council's Standing Orders. 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

There were no apologies for non-attendance at the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

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 at the meeting.

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. Presentation by Land & Property Services  
Reval2020

The Chairman, Councillor R Carlin, extended a welcome to Mr David Ross, Director of Valuation at Land & Property Services, who was in attendance to make a presentation in relation to Reval2020, the current revaluation of non-domestic properties in Northern Ireland.

Mr Ross thanked the Committee for the opportunity to address the Meeting and with the aid of PowerPoint, he made the presentation entitled "Reval2020 – Revaluing properties for business rates".

Mr Ross emphasised that a revaluation is about the redistribution of the rate burden and does not increase or decrease total NI rates revenue. The last non-domestic revaluation in Northern Ireland had been in 2015.

The presentation showed the following information for Lisburn & Castlereagh:-

- growth compared to overall NI growth
- changes in NAV (Net Annual Value)
- NAV growth by sector (retail, offices, industrial, warehouses).

Key dates in the process were also provided. Draft values were currently available online and the new list would be published online on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

The methods of appeal were also provided.

Factsheets for local councillors and Council briefing packs would be provided to the Council in the near future.

Mr Ross answered several questions put to him by Members and after the Chairman had thanked him for his informative presentation, he left the meeting at 6.42 pm.

During the presentation, Councillor J Gallen and J Lavery entered the meeting at 6.09 pm and 6.30 pm respectively.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor J McCarthy, left the meeting at 6.36 pm.

Alderman A Grehan left the meeting after the presentation at 6.43 pm.

#### 4. Report from Business and Democratic Services

In the absence of a Head of Service, the report from Business and Democratic Services was presented by the PCSP/Member Services Manager.

It was agreed that the report and recommendations from Business and Democratic Services be adopted, subject to any decisions recorded below and other items noted.

##### 4.1 Northern Ireland Local Government Association Seminar – “Councils Driving the Local Economy” Canal Court Hotel, Newry 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020

Members noted that - further to the decision of the previous meeting of the Committee – Councillors Jenny Palmer and A Swan had been registered for attendance at the above seminar.

The PCSP/Member Services Manager verbally reported that NILGA had advised earlier in the week of the cancellation of the seminar and – accordingly - those Members and Officers registered for attendance had been notified.

##### 4.2 Dunmurry Manor Care Home Presentation by Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland

Members were aware of the agreement by the Commissioner for Older People for NI to meet with the Council in regard to his investigation into Dunmurry Manor Care Home once that investigation was complete.

The Commissioner would be in a position to meet with the Council after the 29<sup>th</sup> January 2020 and had confirmed his attendance for the meeting of Committee on the 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020. Other deputations scheduled for February and March 2020 had confirmed their availability for attendance in March and April 2020 respectively.

It was proposed by Councillor N Trimble, seconded by Alderman S Martin and agreed that:-

- the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland be received at the meeting of Committee to be held on the 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020 in order to present on the “Home Truths” investigation into the Dunmurry Manor Care Home;
- an invitation be extended to all Members of Council to attend the meeting of Committee on the 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020 for the Commissioner’s presentation;
- the COPNI publication entitled “Home Truths: A Report on the Commissioner’s Investigation into Dunmurry Manor Care Home (June 2018)” be placed on SharePoint in advance of the meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

5. Report of Head of Finance (Acting)

It was agreed to recommend that the report and recommendations of the Head of Finance (Acting) be adopted, subject to any decisions recorded below and other items noted.

5.1 Presentation by Land & Property Services – Reval2020

Dealt with at Item 3 above.

6. Report of Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development

It was agreed to recommend that the report and recommendations of the Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development be adopted, subject to any decisions recorded below and other items noted.

6.1 Investors in People Combined Insights Assessment and Health and Wellbeing Award

As part of continuous assessment by Investors in People, the Council had achieved a Silver Award under the Version 5 Framework in June 2017. That framework had now been replaced by Generation 6.

The Council had committed in June 2019 to prepare for an Insights Assessment and Survey aligned to the Generation 6 Standard. The Council had also agreed to include assessment against the IIP Health & Wellbeing Award.

The Head of Service reported extensively on the results of the survey which were considered to be positive yet acknowledging that work was still required to be done. Accreditation in relation to the Health & Wellbeing Award was reported, the Council being the only one in Northern Ireland to achieve such accreditation. An extract from the Combined Insights Assessment and Health &

Well-Being Award Assessment Report had been provided with the Head of Service's report.

It was proposed by Councillor J Laverty, seconded by Alderman A G Ewart and agreed to recommend that:-

- the development of an action plan to support the enhancement of people management and development practices in the Council which will assist progression against all nine framework indicators within three years, be approved and be presented to the next meeting of Committee;
- the Council's accreditation in relation to the Health & Wellbeing Award be noted, together with a culture which is people focussed and clearly aligns strategy, policy and practice.

The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor A Givan, commended the Chief Executive, the Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development, and all staff in achieving the accreditation in relation to the Health & Wellbeing Award and for the positive comments arising from the Insights Assessment and Survey.

Alderman A Grehan re-entered the meeting at 6.50 pm.

## 7. Confidential Report of Chief Executive

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

### 7.1 2020/2021 Estimates for Corporate Services

(Confidential for reason of information which reveals that the Council proposes to make an order or direction under any statutory provision.)

### 7.2 Bad Debt Write-Off

(Confidential for reason of information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.)

### 7.3 Bad Debt summary report for April – December 2019

(Confidential for (i) reason of information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual and (ii) for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person [including the Council holding that information].)

### 7.4 Review of Charges

(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person [including the Council holding that information].)

### 7.5 Replacement of Audio Visual and Public Address Equipment in Council Chamber

(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person [including the Council holding that information].)

7.6 Revision to Policy on Invitations to Civic Functions, Visits and Council Events

(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person [including the Council holding that information].)

7.7 Efficiency Review Steering Group  
Amendment to Costs for Voluntary Severance

(Confidential for reason of information relating to any individual.)

7.8 Review of Local Government Reform – Terms of Reference

(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person [including the Council holding that information].)

7.9 Citizenship Ceremonies

(Confidential for reason of 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 Right Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor A Givan, seconded by Councillor S Hughes and agreed that the Confidential Report of the Chief Executive be considered “in Committee”, in the absence of members of the press and public.

The member of the press left the meeting at 6.51 pm.

It was agreed that the Confidential Report and recommendations of the Chief Executive be adopted, subject to any decisions recorded below and other items noted.

7.1 2020/2021 Estimates for Corporate Services

The Committee had been provided with a report on the Draft Estimates of Income and Expenditure for Corporate Services for 2020/2021.

The Chief Executive reported on the salient points of the Draft Estimates and the adjustments made since the meeting of Committee on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2019. Comments made by the other Standing Committees had been taken into account also. The Chief Executive and Acting Head of Finance responded to Members’ questions.

It was proposed by Alderman S P Porter, seconded by Councillor N Trimble and agreed to recommend that the Draft Estimates 2020/2021 for Corporate Services as presented be approved on the basis that further possible savings be identified and a balance be applied if necessary so as to reduce the overall figure to that identified at the meeting.

The revised draft Estimates of Income & Expenditure for all Departments would be presented to a Special Meeting of the Corporate Services Committee on the 29<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

In addition to the above, the Chief Executive agreed:-

- to look at providing a separate line in the Draft Estimates figures going forward that details the budget associated with temporary staff across each Department, ie numbers, costs, mode of employment (agency, fixed term etc); **(This bullet point had been amended on agreement by the Council at its meeting held on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2020.)**
- to provide Alderman A G Ewart with information in relation to consultant fees and legal fees incurred by the Council;
- that updates on the use of any Applied Balance be reported during the course of the financial year;
- that for future years and at this stage in the Estimates' process, consideration be given to the inclusion of the following information in the Draft Estimates:-
  - costs associated with the employment of temporary workers and the cost of using them to cover sickness absence occasioned by permanent employees;
  - current budget, estimate for year-end, proposed budget for following year;
  - departmental-wide information so that an overall picture of a particular budget could be gained.

During the course of discussion of this item of business:-

- The Deputy Mayor, Councillor J McCarthy, re-entered the meeting at 6.50 pm;
- Alderman S Martin left the meeting at 7.00 pm;
- Councillors S Lee and J Gallen entered the meeting at 7.05 pm and 7.15 pm respectively;
- Councillor M Guy left and re-entered the meeting at 7.20 pm and 7.25 pm;
- Councillor A P Ewing left and re-entered the meeting at 7.21 pm and 7.26 pm;
- Councillor S Hughes left and re-entered the meeting at 7.29 pm and 7.30 pm.

## 7.2 Bad Debt Write-Off

Presented by the Acting Head of Finance.

It was proposed by Councillor A Swan, seconded by Councillor A P Ewing and agreed to recommend that a Bad Debt in the sum of £1,635.25 be written off, details of which being recorded in the Chief Executive's report.

The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor A Givan, left the meeting. (7.52 pm)

7.3 Bad Debt summary report  
April – December 2019

Presented by the Acting Head of Finance.

It was proposed by Councillor J Gallen, seconded by Councillor A P Ewing and agreed to recommend that the summary report in relation to Bad Debts which had been written off by the Director of Corporate Services/Chief Executive in line with the provisions of the Accounting Manual during the period April – December 2019, be noted.

7.4 Review of Charges

Presented by the Administration Manager.

It was proposed by Councillor John Palmer, seconded by Councillor D Honeyford and agreed to recommend that:-

- charges for Lagan Valley Island bookings remain unchanged with the next review of LVI Theatre Package to take effect from 2021/2022;
- fees for attendance of the Registrar/Deputy Registrar at approved venues remain unchanged with the next review to take effect from 2021/2022;
- the fees for Garden Allotments be revised, the detail of which being as set out in the Chief Executive's report.

It was further agreed that:-

- the Administration Manager provide Councillor S Carson with a breakdown of garden allotments in terms of numbers of full and half size;
- Members' comments be noted about the negative publicity that enhancements to a facility followed by an increase in related charges could have, plus the advantages of smaller regular increases in charges as opposed to a one-off large increase.

7.5 Replacement of Audio Visual and Public Address Equipment in  
Council Chamber

Presented by PCSP/Member Services Manager.

It was agreed to recommend that:-

- the tender award for the above project as was detailed in the Chief Executive's report be noted;
- a familiarisation brief for Members in the use of the equipment be held in the Council Chamber at 5.15 pm on Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> January 2020, ie in advance of the Meeting of Council later that evening;
- the full functionality of the system be on a phased-in basis to ensure its familiarity by Members and Staff and to ensure the minimisation of disruption at meetings.

7.6 Revision to Policy on Invitations to Civic Functions, Visits and Council Events

Councillor S Carson left and re-entered the meeting during discussion of this item. (8.05 pm and 8.08 pm)

Presented by PCSP/Member Services Manager.

Further to the meeting of Committee in April 2019, a review had been undertaken into how the Council dealt with requests for attendance at or sponsorship of events. The policy on Invitations to Civic Functions, Visits and Council Events had since been examined.

It was proposed by Councillor N Trimble, seconded by Alderman S P Porter and agreed to recommend that:-

- the revision to the Policy on Invitations to Civic Functions, Visits and Council Events be approved;
- subject to the following amendments to the guidelines, they be approved and appended to the Policy:-
  - insert the words "where possible" in the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraphs of "Considered by Standing Committee" and "Considered by Council" so that the sentence now reads "where possible, the maximum number of places that should be booked will be agreed at the meeting";
  - insert the words "As far as practicable" in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> paragraphs respectively of "Considered by Standing Committee" and "Considered by Council" so that the sentence now reads "As far as practicable, only once attendees have confirmed his/her availability should any places be booked."

The PCSP/Member Services Manager left the meeting. (8.14 pm)

7.7 Efficiency Review Steering Group  
Amendment to Costs for Voluntary Severance

It was proposed by Alderman A G Ewart, seconded by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor J McCarthy, and agreed to recommend that an amended cost of staff release (previously agreed by the Efficiency Review Steering Group in June 2019) be approved on a retrospective basis, the amendment being due to pension release age having been reached by two of those identified for severance.

7.8 Review of Local Government Reform – Terms of Reference

Members had been provided with a copy of the draft Terms of Reference which the Audit Office would wish to use in regard to the cost benefit analysis of the Review of Local Government Reform during the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

The terms of reference would be agreed between the Department for Communities and SOLACE NI.

It was proposed by Alderman A G Ewart, seconded by Councillor J Gallen and agreed that the undernoted comments be conveyed to SOLACE NI via the Council's Chief Executive:-

- a risk analysis of the situation as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 compared to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 could be counterproductive in that it could put councils against each other;
- the new Councils did not know what they were inheriting from constituent councils until they were actually in the midst of Reform, eg different levels of staff and resources for the same function;
- a number of benefits of merging are non-monetary, eg community enhancements, effectiveness and efficiency of a larger council, community planning, partnership arrangements;
- some facilities/functions did not transfer easily and could not be termed "rich neutrals", eg the car parking function.

It was further agreed that the above comments be submitted also to the NI Audit Office.

7.9 Citizenship Ceremonies

Members were informed of the background to the Council's hosting of Citizenship Ceremonies and of a request by the Lord Lieutenants that these revert to Hillsborough Castle where they had been held prior to the Castle's refurbishment.

Members had been provided with a paper detailing five options as to arrangements for the hosting of the Citizenship Ceremonies. The options had been discussed with the Lord Lieutenants.

It was proposed by Alderman S P Porter, seconded by Councillor John Palmer and agreed to recommend that Option 4 (augmented by one clause of Option 3) be put in place, ie that:-

- Citizenship Ceremonies be hosted at Hillsborough Castle from November to February and at Lagan Valley Island from March to October;
- HRH The Prince of Wales be afforded the opportunity to host one of the Citizenship Ceremonies at Hillsborough Castle;
- a review of the arrangements be undertaken after one year of operation.

#### Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor John Palmer, seconded by Councillor A Swan and agreed to come “out of Committee” and normal business was resumed.

Councillor S Lee left the meeting. (8.35 pm)

#### 8. Any Other Business

##### 8.1 Personal Injury Claims Councillor U Mackin

Councillor U Mackin referred to an article in the Belfast Telegraph on the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020 concerning personal injury claim pay-outs across the Councils in Northern Ireland.

The Chief Executive advised that CMT were giving consideration to the level of claims in the Council’s system and that a report thereon would be presented to the Committee for noting in due course. The Chief Executive also gave an assurance that every effort was being made to ensure that the Council’s facilities etc were of optimum condition so as to minimise the potential for claims.

#### 9. Additional Item from Chief Executive

##### 9.1 National Association of Councillors Conference – “Environment/Climate Change” Ripon Spa Best Western Hotel, Ripon 24<sup>th</sup> - 26th January 2020

The Chief Executive verbally reported that Alderman M Henderson had given notice of the above conference at the meeting of Council on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2019.

Subsequent to that, the Chief Executive had issued details of the conference to all Members of the Council. To date, four Members had expressed an interest in attending, however one of those Members – Councillor S Lee - was not one of the Council's representatives on the NAC. Councillor Lee - a member of the Green Party - had an interest in the conference content.

It was proposed by Councillor J Gallen, seconded by Councillor N Trimble and agreed that the attendance of Councillor S Lee at the NAC conference on Environment/Climate Change in Ripon on the 24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> January 2020 be approved.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 8.40 pm.

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MAYOR/CHAIRMAN