

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Re-scheduled Meeting of the Corporate Services Committee held remotely and in the Council Chamber, Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn on Monday 16th May 2022 at 6.00 pm.

**PRESENT IN
COUNCIL CHAMBER
(COMMITTEE):**

Councillor J Laverty, BEM (Chairman)

The Right Worshipful The Mayor
Alderman S Martin

Aldermen J Dillon MBE, A Ewart MBE. O Gawith,
A Grehan and P Porter

Councillors A Ewing, S Hughes, S Lowry and
The Hon N Trimble

**PRESENT IN A
REMOTE LOCATION
(COMMITTEE):**

Alderman M Henderson, MBE (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor R Carlin and S Carson

**OTHER MEMBERS
OF COUNCIL
PRESENT IN
COUNCIL CHAMBER**

Councillors S Lee, S Skillen and A Swan

**OTHER MEMBERS
OF COUNCIL
PRESENT IN A
REMOTE LOCATION**

Councillors M Gregg and C McCready

IN ATTENDANCE:

Director of Finance & Corporate Services
Director of Service Transformation
Head of Assets
Head of Corporate Communications & Administration
Head of Finance
Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development
IT Officer
Events Technician
Member Services Officers (RN & BS)

Commencement of Meeting

At the outset of the meeting, the Chairman, Councillor J Lavery, thanked Members and Officers for accommodating the change of date necessitated by the technical difficulties experienced in relation to the scheduled meeting of the 11th May 2022. The Chairman apologised for any inconvenience this may have caused.

The Chairman proceeded to welcome everyone to the meeting and advised that it was being live-streamed to enable members of the public to both hear and see the proceedings.

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, although the meeting was being live-streamed, unauthorised recording was still 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.

Councillor S Lowry entered the meeting during the housekeeping announcement. (6.02 pm)

1. Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting were accepted and recorded on behalf of Councillors U Mackin and J McCarthy.

Councillor M Gregg joined the meeting remotely. (6.04 pm)

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 with the papers for the meeting and which were also available in the Chamber.

There were no declarations made.

3. Report of Head of Corporate Communications & Administration

3.1 Building Illumination Requests

3.1.1 Declined Requests

The Head of Service reported receipt of the following requests for the illumination of Lagan Valley Island:-

Organisation	Date of proposed light up and colour	Request received
Ards & North Down Borough Council for light up in support of and in solidarity with the people of Ukraine	In yellow and blue (on rotation) on days when there are no scheduled lighting commitments	25 th April 2022
Language Rights Campaign Group An dream Dearth	In red on or before the 21 st May 2022	21 st April 2022

In her report, the Head of Service detailed the reasons as to how neither organisation had satisfied the criteria set out in the Building Illumination Policy and also how Exceptional Circumstances had not been identified for either group.

It was proposed by Alderman O Gawith, seconded by Councillor N Trimble and agreed to recommend that the requests as detailed above be declined on the grounds that neither had met the criteria set out in the Building Illumination Policy nor had Exceptional Circumstances been identified for either.

3.1.2 Survey of Organisations

The Chairman, Councillor J Laverty, asked that those organisations for which Lagan Valley island had been illuminated over the past year be contacted to enquire if:-

- they had found the light-up to be a positive step in highlighting the work of their organisation;
- they had any other ideas by which the work of their organisation might be promoted by the Council.

3.2 National Police Memorial Day
Belfast Waterfront Hall
Sunday 25th September 2022

Notification had been received from “National Police Memorial Day” that the 2022 event would be held in Belfast Waterfront Hall on Sunday 25th September 2022 followed by a Civic reception at that venue. There would also be an opportunity for attendees to visit the RUC GC Garden at Knock on the 23rd, 24th and 25th September. There were no fees for either event, however admission thereto would be by ticket only generated via the registration process.

The Head of Service was asked to consult with the organisers as to any limit there might be on the number of attendees from any organisation.

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

- in the event of there being a limit on the number of attendees from the Council that can attend the event, the Mayor of the Day, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Day, Councillor J Palmer and any other Members of Council who were retired/serving members of the RUC/PSNI be nominated to attend National Police Memorial Day in Belfast on the 25th September 2022, together with the related visit to the RUC GC Garden at Knock;
- the Council be responsible for the payment of any approved expenses that may be incurred by Members in relation to their attendance at the event/s.

3.3 Lisburn & Castlereagh Policing & Community Partnership
Minutes of Meeting

Members had been provided with the minutes of a Private Meeting of the Lisburn & Castlereagh Policing & Community Safety Partnership held on the 15th March 2022, the contents of which were noted.

By way of information, the Committee noted that the next meeting of the Lisburn PCSP was a public one being held in the Connect Hall, Rathfriland Road Dromara on Tuesday 17th May 2022 at 7.00 pm.

3.4 Health Working Group

Members had been provided with the minutes of a meeting of the Health Working Group held on the 29th March 2022.

It was proposed by Alderman P Porter, seconded by Alderman O Gawith and agreed to recommend that the minutes of the meeting of the Health Working Group held on the 29th March 2022 be adopted.

3.4 Health Working Group (Continued)

By way of information, the Committee noted that:-

- the SE Trust had provided a briefing to Members on the 25th April 2022 in relation to the maternity facility at the Lagan Valley Hospital;
- a meeting of the Health Working Group with all Members of Council invited to attend, would be held on the 31st May 2022. Update reports would be provided by both the Belfast and South Eastern Trusts. As previously agreed, one of the updates by the SE Trust would be in relation to the consultation on Urgent & Emergency Care at the Lagan Valley Hospital.

Alderman P Porter asked that – at the meeting to be held on the 31st May 2022 - the SE Trust be asked to update Members on the situation with regard to respite care associated with clients of the Hillhall Residential & Resource Centre.

4. Report of Head of Finance

4.1 Northern Ireland Local Government Association
Annual Subscription Fees 2022/2023

Members had been provided with copy of a letter dated the 21st April 2022 from NILGA in regard to key priorities for 2022/2023 and the Council's annual subscription which had been calculated at £52,540.00 (excluding VAT) for that same period. The committee was recommended to note the subscription fee and that it be paid through the Council's weekly payment run.

It was proposed by Alderman J Dillon and seconded by Alderman A Ewart that:-

- payment of the Council's contribution be deferred pending an explanation from NILGA in regard to their future plans and, in particular:-
 - the section entitled "Planning for The Future";
 - the section entitled "Elected Member Development";
- the legal ramifications of any deferment of the Council's payment be ascertained.

4.1 Northern Ireland Local Government Association
Annual Subscription Fees 2022/2023 (Continued)

A number of Members spoke in support of the work carried out by NILGA on behalf of local councils over the years, citing their work during the Covid-19 pandemic as being particularly helpful to councils. The valuable contribution of Alderman D Drysdale as Chairman of the Audit Committee Working Group was also noted. Only by participating fully in NILGA, could its benefits be maximised. Any Member with a query about NILGA activities should address such queries through NILGA members.

It was proposed by Councillor S Lowry and seconded by The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Alderman S Martin, that the recommendation of the report be accepted that the Council's subscription fee to NILGA for 2022/2023 in the sum of £52,540.00 (excluding VAT) be noted and be paid through the Council's weekly payment run. This proposal was later withdrawn by its Proposer and Secunder.

After further discussion, it was agreed on a Proposal made by Alderman J Dillon and seconded by Alderman A Ewart that payment of the Council's contribution in the sum of £52,540.00 (excluding VAT) be made and that an explanation be sought from NILGA in regard to:-

- NILGA's future plans and, in particular those sections in relation to "Planning for The Future" and "Elected Member Development";
- the basis of cost calculations for Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council's contribution.

Councillor S Skillen entered and left the meeting during discussion. (6.22 pm and 6.25 pm respectively.)

Councillor C McCready joined the meeting remotely during discussion. (6.25 pm)

4.2 Local Government Staff Commission

4.2.1 Contribution for 2022/2023

Further to the previous meeting of the Committee, Members were provided with copy of a letter dated the 27th April 2022 from the Local Government Staff Commission for NI so as to assist them in their decision about payment of the Council's contribution to the LGSC in the sum of £31,359.

Alderman J Dillon advised that he had been present at the meeting of NILGA on the 13th May 2022 when the matter of Councils' contributions to the Local Government Staff Commission had been discussed. NILGA on the 13th May 2022 had unanimously agreed that:-

4.2 Local Government Staff Commission (Continued)

4.2.1 Contribution for 2022/2023 (Continued)

- a call be made to the Minister for Communities for the Local Government Staff Commission to be wound up;
- no Council pay its contribution for 2022/2023.

The Director confirmed that – to date – NILGA’s decision as referred to above had not been received by the Council.

The Chief Executive of NILGA had stated that Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council had agreed to the payment in the autumn of 2021. The Director informed those present that the Council had consulted with the LGSC about its level of payment during the estimates’ process but at no stage had a payment been made or agreed. Such consultation during the estimates process would be normal procedure.

It was proposed by Alderman M Henderson, seconded by Alderman P Porter and agreed that payment of the Council’s contribution to the LGSC be deferred pending the Council’s receipt of the decision of NILGA on the 13th May 2022 that no Council pay its contribution to the LGSC and that the Minister for Communities be called on to wind up the LGSC.

Alderman A Grehan left and returned to the meeting during discussion. (6.43 pm and 6.50 pm respectively.)

Councillor S Lee left the meeting during discussion. (6.54 pm)

Councillor N Trimble left and returned to the meeting during discussion. (6.57 pm and 7.00 pm)

The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Alderman S Martin, left the meeting during discussion. (7.05 pm)

4.2.2 Negotiation Panel

Alderman M Henderson enquired about a proposal to establish a Negotiation Panel.

The Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development confirmed that the Council (as recommended by the Corporate Services Committee) had agreed to engage in consultations about the establishment of the Negotiation Panel however, discussions with the trade unions had not enabled this to progress.

It was agreed that Officers discuss this matter with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee and that – if necessary - an update on the Negotiating Panel be sought from the Local Government Staff Commission. Any relevant information would be furnished to Members.

5. Agenda Item Brought Forward
Any Other Business

As the remainder of the business before the meeting was of a confidential nature, the Chairman sought agreement to bring forward Item 6 of the agenda – Any Other Business – so that items of a non-confidential nature might be raised when the Committee was in Live Stream. This was agreed.

5.1 Wallace High School – Request for Financial Assistance

Councillor C McCready referred to a forthcoming trip to Brazil by a number of pupils from Wallace High School, Lisburn who were finalists in the Lego-League competition from the 5th – 7th August 2022. The school was seeking financial assistance towards the trip.

The Director advised that this matter would be reported to the June 2022 meeting of the Committee.

Councillor C McCready left the meeting at the conclusion of this item of business. (7.12 pm)

6. Confidential Report from Director of Finance & Corporate Services

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

6.1 Disposal of Land at Hillsborough Road, Lisburn
(Confidential for reason of information (i) relating to any individual); (ii) which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual; (iii) relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

Report to be redacted following completion of sale transaction.

6.2 Drumlough Landfill Site – Closure Implementation
(Confidential for reason of information (i) relating to any individual); (ii) which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual; (iii) relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information); (iv) which reveals that the Council proposes to make an order or direction under any statutory provision.

Report to be redacted following Council ratification on the 24th May 2022.

6.3 Request for Earmarked Reserves

(Confidential for reason of information relating to (i) the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information); (ii) 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 employees of, or office holders under, the Council.)

Report will never become unrestricted.

6.4 Update on Judicial Review Proceedings

(Confidential for reason of information (i) relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information); (ii) in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

Report will never become unrestricted.

6.5 Bradford Court

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

Report will never become unrestricted.

In Committee

It was proposed by Councillor A Ewing, seconded by Alderman A Ewart and agreed that the Confidential Report of the Director be considered “in Committee”. (The live-stream was paused at this stage in proceedings.)

6.1 Disposal of Land at Hillsborough Road, Lisburn

Presented by the Director of Service Transformation, assisted by the Head of Assets.

A report prepared by the Head of Assets, together with a location map, had been provided in relation to the above matter.

It was proposed by Alderman A Ewart, seconded by Alderman A Grehan and – on a show of hands - agreed to recommend that subject to the following, approximately 1.4 hectares (3.3 acres) of surplus Council land adjacent to the rear and side of property at Hillsborough Road, Lisburn as shown on the attendant location map be disposed of at the purchase price offer as set out in the report:-

6.1 Disposal of Land at Hillsborough Road, Lisburn (Continued)

- an affirmation from Lagan Valley Regional Park that they had no objection to the Council disposing of the area of land in question;
- consideration of conditions of sale and inclusion in the contract regarding the future use of the land.

Alderman P Porter asked to have recorded his dissent to the decision recorded above on the grounds that he would have wished for additional information to be sought and made available so as to make a better informed decision on this matter.

It was further agreed that the policy on the Disposal of Council Assets be progressed as a matter of urgency.

Councillor S Carson left the meeting during the Director's presentation of this item. (7.35 pm)

6.2 Drumlough Landfill Site – Closure Implementation

Presented by the Director of Service Transformation, assisted by the Head of Assets.

A report prepared by the Head of Assets, together with a location map and draft correspondence to a named addressee, had been provided in relation to the above matter.

It was proposed by Alderman O Gawith, seconded by Alderman J Dillon and agreed to recommend that:-

- draft correspondence to a named landowner be approved and be sent to that person by way of the Council's solicitors;
- in the event of the written approach not being successful, the Council then move to progress the matter as set out in the report.

It was further agreed that details of legal costs incurred regarding the issues at the above location be furnished to Members.

Councillor N Trimble left and returned to the meeting during discussion. (8.05 pm and 8.08 pm respectively.)

6.3 Request for Earmarked Reserves

Presented by Head of Finance.

A report presented by the Head of Finance had been provided in relation to the above matter.

It was proposed by Councillor N Trimble, seconded by Alderman O Gawith and agreed to recommend that - subject to any year-end adjustments and an annual review of expenditure for certain projects which fell outside the mandate of the current Council - the items outlined in the report for earmarking within the general reserves be approved.

In regard to the Lisburn Light Festival and Christmas Programme, the Director of Service Transformation confirmed that reports on this matter including total expenditure and new proposals had been made to the Development Committee and had committed to further engagement.

A member raised a query in relation to a report presented at another Standing Committee of the Council in which funding originally agreed for a specific project was requested to be used for a different project. The member requested confirmation of which policy applies in the circumstances of using a budget for another means. It was noted that the Accounting Manual covered this and that the relevant extract would be provided to Members.

Alderman A Ewart left and returned to the meeting during discussion.
(8.19 pm and 8.20 pm respectively)

Alderman J Dillon left and returned to the meeting during discussion.
(8.19 pm and 8.25 pm respectively.)

6.4 Update on Judicial Review Proceedings

Presented by the Director of Service Transformation.

A report prepared by the Director of Service Transformation, together with a schedule of judicial reviews, had been provided in relation to this matter.

The contents of the report and schedule, together with the extent of the mitigation being applied to avert the risks were noted.

Councillor A Swan (Chairman of the Planning Committee) expressed his thanks to the Director of Service Transformation and the Planning Unit for their considerable work involved in the judicial reviews,

Alderman O Gawith left and returned to the meeting during discussion.
(9.02 pm and 9.05 pm respectively.)

Alderman P Porter left the meeting and returned to the meeting during discussion. (9.07 pm and 9.08 pm respectively.)

6.4 Update on Judicial Review Proceedings (Continued)

The Head of Corporate Communications & Administration left and returned to the meeting during discussion. (9.10 pm and 9.15 pm respectively.)
Councillor S Lowry left and returned to the meeting during discussion. (9.16 pm and 9.20 pm respectively.)

6.5 Bradford Court

Presented by the Director of Service Transformation.

A report prepared by the Head of Assets, together with copies of the following had been provided in relation to Bradford Court:-

1. Annual costs;
2. Annual rental income and associated service charges;
3. Loans, maturity dates and interest rates;
4. Heads of Terms for Lease (draft).

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

- the draft Heads of Terms at Bradford Court between the Council and a named lessee be approved and that the Council's solicitor be engaged to draft the appropriate lease;
- information recorded at items 1-3 above be noted.

7. Any Other Business - Confidential

7.1 Staff Resignations

Alderman A Ewart referred to the apparently significant number of resignations from the Council's employ and issues around procurement which appeared to be very bureaucratic and sought an explanation as to why these issues might be happening.

The Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development confirmed that a UK-wide situation exists with turnover and recruitment and that this is not unique to the Council, however, an exit survey was in place. The Head of Service explained what could be deemed as contributory factors to turnover. The Head of Service responded to a number of related questions and also assured Members that procedures were in place to speak with any person contemplating leaving the Council's employ.

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services asked that she be informed of any particular issues which were of concern to staff and which Members would wish to have investigated.

7.1 Staff Resignations (Continued)

The Director of Service Transformation provided an outline to the process in regard to procurement.

By way of information, the Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development confirmed that the start date for the Hybrid Working pilot had been put back to the 6th June 2022 as the 2nd and 3rd June 2022 were public holidays.

A number of Members asked that their appreciation be conveyed to staff in respect of their contribution to the work of the Council, especially during the time of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Councillor N Trimble left and returned to the meeting during this item. (9.24 pm and 9.26 pm.)

Councillor A Swan left and returned to the meeting during this item. (9.35 pm and 9.36 pm respectively.)

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Alderman P Porter, seconded by Councillor S Lowry and agreed to come "out of Committee". Normal business and the live-stream were resumed.

8. Any Other Business

8.1 Freedom of the City on Health & Social Care - Saturday 21st May 2022

The Head of Corporate Communications & Administration gave an update on the Freedom of the City event on the 21st May 2022 for Health & Social Care. A detailed itinerary would be issued to Members within the next few days.

The Director of Service Transportation and the Head of Assets left the meeting during this item. (9.47 pm)

8.2 Thanks of Chairman

A number of Members referred to the meeting being the last one before the Annual meeting on the 7th June 2022 and expressed their thanks to Councillor J Lavery for the manner by which he had chaired the Committee during his time in post.

Councillor Lavery responded accordingly and expressed his thanks to his Vice-Chairman, Alderman H Henderson; the other members of the Committee, the Chief Executive, the Director of Finance & Corporate Services, the Heads of Service and any other staff associated with the Corporate Services Committee, for their assistance and support to him during his year as Chairman. Councillor Lavery extended best wishes to the incoming Chair and Vice-Chair for 2022/2023.

There being no further business, the Meeting concluded at 9.53 pm.

MAYOR/CHAIRMAN