

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting of the Shadow Corporate Services Committee held in the Cherry Room, Lisburn City Council offices, Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn on Tuesday 13th January 2015 at 5.48 pm

PRESENT:

Councillor John Palmer (Chairman)

Councillor J Tinsley (Presiding Member)

Councillor S Martin (Deputy Presiding Member)

Councillors R Butler, S Carson, P Catney, O Gawith, A Grehan, T Jeffers, W Leathem, H Legge, J McCarthy, B Mallon, L Poots, A Redpath and G Rice

OTHER MEMBERS:

Councillors J Baird, J Gallen, A Girvin, A Givan, J Gray, U Mackin, T Mitchell and M Tolerton

IN ATTENDANCE:

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Chief Executive

Director of Finance and Convergence of IT Systems

HR Business Partner

Financial Controller

Lisburn City Council

Director of Corporate Services

Assistant Director Corporate Services (Central Administration)

Assistant Director Corporate Services (Marketing & Communications) (Ms A Goddard)

Transition Manager

Committee Secretary

Castlereagh District Council

Acting Chief Executive

Acting Director of Finance

Acting Director of Administration & Community Services

National Association of Councillors (NI Region)

Alderman Michael Henderson

Councillor Monica Digney

1. Apologies

It was agreed that an apology for non-attendance at the meeting be accepted and recorded on behalf of Councillor T Morrow.

2. Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

The Chairman invited Members to declare any Conflicts of Interest 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.

Declarations of Interest were made as follows:-

- Item 4 - National Association of Councillors Presentation – Declarations by Councillors P Catney, T Jeffers, U Mackin, John Palmer and G Rice (members of Executive Committee of NAC). Forms were completed and submitted by Councillors P Catney, T Jeffers and U Mackin.
- Tabled item – Request from NILGA for rental of Castlereagh Borough Council offices at Bradford Court, Upper Galwally – Declaration by Councillor S Martin (NILGA general member). Councillor Martin completed and submitted a form in this regard.

3. Minutes of Meeting

It was proposed by Councillor O Gawith, seconded by Councillor P Catney and agreed that the minutes of the meeting of the Shadow Corporate Services Committee held on the 9th December 2014 as adopted by the Shadow Council at its meeting held on the 17th December 2014 be confirmed and signed.

4. National Association of Councillors

The Chairman welcomed the representatives of the National Association of Councillors (Northern Ireland Region) to the meeting. With the aid of PowerPoint, the officials made a presentation on the aims, objectives and activities of the NAC and highlighted those aspects specific to the NI Region. An information leaflet was distributed to those Members present.

After the representatives from the NAC had answered Members' questions, the Chairman thanked them for their informative presentation and they left the meeting. (6.05 pm)

Councillors R Butler and L Poots had entered the meeting during the presentation. (5.55 pm and 6.00 pm).

It was agreed to recommend that the presentation in relation to the National Association of Councillors be noted.

5. Confidential Business

It was proposed by Councillor P Catney, seconded by Councillor A Redpath and agreed that the Confidential Report of the Director of Corporate Services (Lisburn City Council) be discussed "in Committee".

5.1 Report of Director of Finance and Convergence of IT Systems

Dealt with later in the Meeting.

5.2 Report of Acting Chief Executive/Acting Director of Finance (Castlereagh Borough Council)

Dealt with later in the Meeting.

5.3 Report of HR Business Partner

Dealt with later in the Meeting.

5.4 Somme Pilgrimage

Dealt with later in the Meeting.

5.5 Draft Estimates of Income & Expenditure for 2015/2016

Draft estimates for the Corporate Services Department for 2015/2016 had been provided with the Confidential Report. A further copy of the Draft Estimates was provided at the meeting.

It was agreed to recommend that - subject to the undernoted - the Draft Estimates as presented for Corporate Services be noted and be submitted into the overall Estimates of the Council for the year commencing the 1st April 2015:-

- a breakdown of the contributory elements to the Mayor's Allowance and its comparison to that for the extant councils in 2014/2015;
- a different presentation of the figures to clearly reflect the estimates of services for Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council as compared to those for the extant councils, particular mention being made to the Mayor's Allowance, Insurances, Special Projects & Contributions to Other Bodies;
- a report on the above matters being submitted to the Shadow Council on the 28th January 2015.

Councillor S Martin asked to have recorded his concern in relation to the inclusion in the 2015/2016 draft estimates of charges relating to a facility at Lagan Valley Island. It was pointed out that the actual introduction of such a facility would require Council approval.

The Financial Controller left the Meeting. (6.35 pm).

5.6 Report of Acting Chief Executive/Acting Director of Finance
(Castlereagh Borough Council)

At this point in the meeting, the Chairman referred to the current hospitalisation of Mr Michael McCormack, Director of Finance at Castlereagh Borough Council. Councillor Palmer asked that Mr McCormack might know God's presence at this time and extended sincere best wishes to Mr McCormack and his family.

The Acting Chief Executive introduced Ms Sinead O'Neill who would be assuming the role of Acting Director of Finance during Mr McCormack's absence.

5.6.1 Projected Reserves position as at 31st March 2015

It was agreed to recommend that the position dated the 31st December 2014 in relation to the Projected Reserves Position for 31st March 2015 be noted.

5.6.2 Capital Expenditure & Loan Applications

(a) Cregagh Community Centre – Capital Expenditure

It was proposed by Councillor S Martin, seconded by Councillor O Gawith and agreed to recommend that capital expenditure in the sum of £416,188 be approved in respect of the purchase of the Cregagh Community Centre from the South Eastern Education & Library Board, the purchase cost being £458,342.50 less a contribution/deposit of £42,000 paid in 2003. The Cregagh Community Centre would be transferred to Belfast City Council.

(b) Cregagh Community Centre – Loan Application

It was proposed by Councillor S Martin, seconded by Councillor O Gawith and agreed to recommend that a Loan Application for £380,000 for a term of 23 years as a fixed annuity be approved in respect of the Cregagh Community Centre. It was noted that the Asset and Loan would transfer to Belfast City Council.

(c) Robinson Centre – Loan Application

It was proposed by Councillor O Gawith, seconded by Councillor S Martin and agreed to recommend that a Loan Application in the sum of £435,785 for a term of five years as a fixed annuity be approved in respect of the Robinson Centre. It was noted that the Asset and Loan would transfer to Belfast City Council and that this funding arrangement would minimise the costs of interest to that Council.

(d) Industry Barge Project – Loan Application

It was agreed to recommend that a Loan Application in the sum of £200,000 be noted in respect of the Industry Barge Project. It was noted that the Asset and Loan would transfer to Belfast City Council.

The Acting Chief Executive and the Acting Director of Finance left the Meeting.
(6.45 pm)

5.7 Report of HR Business Partner

5.7.1 Workforce Plan: Casual Workers

In furtherance of a previous decision, the Committee noted the number of Casual Workers in both councils and the nature of work they carried out.

5.7.2 Transfer of Staff to Belfast City Council

It was agreed to recommend that a progress report in respect of the above be noted.

5.7.3 Filling of Posts in the New Structure

It was agreed to recommend that a progress report in respect of the above be noted. This matter would be considered by the Shadow Council at its meeting to be held later in the evening.

5.7.4 Communication with Staff

It was agreed to recommend that a progress report in respect of the above be noted.

5.7.5 Capacity Building Plan

The Committee noted that Members had been provided with an updated schedule of capacity building events.

5.7.6 Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

The Committee noted the content of a letter dated the 5th January 2015 from the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland confirming that Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council had been registered with the Commission in accordance with the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998. The first annual monitoring return was due for completion on or before the 1st May 2015.

5.8 Somme Pilgrimage 2015

Further to the meeting of Committee on the 9th December 2014, a list of attendees recommended for participation in the 2015 Somme Pilgrimage had been provided in the Confidential Report. The Director apologised for omitting to consult the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee in the process of compiling this list and taking this matter forward.

5.8 Somme Pilgrimage 2015 (Continued)

It was agreed that:-

- a decision on the above be deferred pending a meeting of the group agreed by the Committee on the 9th December 2014 to discuss this matter;
- the meeting take place as soon as possible so as to allow for a report thereon to be made to the Shadow Council at its meeting on the 28th January 2015.

It was proposed by Councillor M Tolerton, seconded by Councillor P Catney and agreed to come “out of Committee” and normal business was resumed.

6. Report of Director of Corporate Services, Lisburn City Council

6.1 National Association of Councillors – Presentation

Dealt with at Item 4.

6.2 Marketing & Communications Update

6.2.1 Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Website & Intranet Development

It was proposed by Councillor J McCarthy, seconded by Councillor P Catney and agreed that the above matter be discussed “in Committee”.

It was agreed to recommend that the tender report in respect of the Website & Intranet Development for Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council be noted and that the recommendation contained therein be accepted, ie that the firm of Green 17 be appointed in this regard.

It was proposed by Councillor P Catney, seconded by Councillor L Poots and agreed to come “out of Committee” and normal business was resumed.

6.2.2 Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Community Consultation Public Relations

It was agreed to recommend that a progress report in respect of the above be noted.

The Assistant Director confirmed that the availability of Smartphone applications to improve customer communications was being investigated; that everyday information such as bin collection days, facility opening hours etc would be easily and readily accessible on the website; and that Members would be fully informed of ongoing developments.

6.2.3 Reform Magazine

The Committee noted the intention to produce a Road to Reform magazine in March 2015 in advance of Vesting Day.

6.2.4 Ongoing Communications

It was agreed to recommend that a progress report in respect of the above be noted.

6.3 Lagan Valley Island – Fountain

The Committee was advised of a decision of Lisburn City Council's Corporate Services Committee on the 9th December 2014 that the issue of the repair/replacement of the fountain at Lagan Valley Island be referred to the Shadow Council for consideration. An options paper which had been presented at the aforementioned meeting had been provided with the Director's report.

It was proposed by Councillor W Leathem, seconded by Councillor A Redpath and agreed that consideration of the repair/replacement of the LVI fountain be deferred for 12 months to allow for an evaluation of the water feature aspect of the Lisburn City Centre Public Realm Scheme.

6.4 Registration Services

It was proposed by Councillor J McCarthy, seconded by Councillor P Catney and agreed that the above matter be discussed "in Committee".

It was proposed by Councillor P Catney, seconded by Councillor A Redpath and agreed that:-

- the content of correspondence dated the 12th December 2014 from the General Register Office be noted;
- the post of Registrar be based at Lagan Valley Island, Lisburn;
- the post of Senior Deputy Registrar be based at Forestside, Castlereagh;
- Officers proceed to fill the two posts referred to above.

It was proposed by Councillor M Tolerton, seconded by Councillor P Catney and agreed to come "out of Committee" and normal business was resumed.

6.5 Royal British Legion (Lisburn Branch) Festival of Remembrance – November 2015 Request for Free Use of Island Hall, Lagan Valley Island

The Committee had been provided with a copy of an undated letter from the Royal British Legion (Lisburn Branch) regarding their plans to hold a Festival of Remembrance in November 2015 with all proceeds going to the RBL Poppy Appeal. The RBL was seeking the free use of the Island Hall for the event and had a proposed date in this regard.

- 6.5 Royal British Legion (Lisburn Branch)
Festival of Remembrance – November 2015
Request for Free Use of Island Hall, Lagan Valley Island (Continued)

The Director advised Members that Officers would present a policy for the use of Lagan Valley Island to the next meeting of the Committee. The policy would include conditions – where applicable – where a discount could be applied.

It was agreed that consideration of the RBL request be deferred until the new Council had an agreed policy for the use of its LVI facilities.

- 6.6 Department of the Environment for NI
Consultation Document – “Draft Local Government Reorganisation
(Compensation for Loss of Employment) Regulations (NI)”
(Closing Date: 5th January 2015)

Further to the decision of the Committee at its meeting held on the 9th December 2014, it was agreed to recommend that the content of a submission agreed by the Chair of the Committee and conveyed to the Department by way of the Council’s response to the above document be noted.

- 6.7 Health & Social Care Board NI
Consultation - eHealth & Care Strategy for NI
(Closing Date: 9th January 2015)

Further to the decision of the Committee at its meeting held on the 11th November 2014, the Committee noted that no comments in respect of the above consultation had been received from Members and therefore no response had been made to the HSCB.

- 6.8 Post Office Community Branch Fund

It was agreed to recommend that joint correspondence dated the 9th December 2014 from the Post Office and the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland regarding the availability of the Post Office Community Branch Fund be noted. Community branches classified as “vulnerable” could apply for funding from the Fund.

It was agreed that Lisburn City Council’s Economic Development Unit be asked to offer assistance to the postmaster of the eligible branch in the completion of his application for funding.

- 6.9 Northern Ireland Library Authority (Libraries NI)
Councillor Board Members Vacancy Notice

It was agreed to recommend that the Libraries NI/Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure notice regarding the filling of 12 vacancies on the Board of Libraries NI be noted. Completed application forms were to be returned to DCAL by 12 noon on the 21st January 2015 and all Members had been notified of this communication on the 6th January 2015.

6.10 Workplan for Corporate Services

It was agreed to recommend that the Directors' Work Plan for Corporate Services showing the current status of projects be noted.

7. Any Other Business

7.1 Northern Ireland Local Government Association
Request for rental of office space at Bradford Court, Upper Galwally
(Castlereagh Borough Council offices)

Copy of a letter dated the 13th January 2015 from the Northern Ireland Local Government Association seeking to rent office space from the Council at Bradford Court, Upper Galwally was tabled at the meeting.

It was agreed that the request from NILGA for the rental of office space at Bradford Court, Upper Galwally be delegated to Officers for dealing with and that – in the meantime – NILGA be advised that the Council's response was in the affirmative.

8. Report of Director of Finance and Convergence of IT Systems

It was proposed by Councillor P Catney, seconded by Councillor A Redpath and agreed that the Confidential Report of the Director of Finance and Convergence of IT Systems be discussed "in Committee".

8.1 Financial Estimates 2015/2016

8.1.1 Current Status

It was agreed to recommend that the District Rate Calculation Summary for 2015/2016 as at the 7th January 2015 be noted.

8.1.2 Rates Convergence

Tabular information in relation to Rates Convergence based on different scenarios was tabled at the meeting.

8.1.3 Estimated Penny Product (EPP) 2015/2016 Rate Year

It was agreed to recommend that correspondence dated the 19th December 2014 from Land & Property Services on the subject of the Estimated Penny Product for 2015/2016 be noted.

Members were advised that Wednesday 28th January 2015 at 4.30 pm had been provisionally scheduled for a special meeting of the Corporate Services Committee at which officials from Land & Property Services would be received in order to make a presentation on the above. Subject to the availability of the LPS officials, this arrangement was agreed.

8.1.4 Transferring In Functions – Due Diligence Report

The Committee had been provided with copies of the undernoted items of correspondence:-

- copy of a report entitled “Transfer of Functions and Powers to Local Government: Reconciliation to DoE Report; Final Draft” as prepared by Deloitte on behalf of the Local Government Chief Executives’ Group (LGCEG);
- copy of letter dated the 19th November 2014 from the Chairman of the LGCEG to the Minister of the Environment highlighting a number of concerns in respect of this matter;
- response dated the 19th December 2014 from the Minister of the Environment to the Chairman of the LGCEG.

It was agreed to recommend that:-

- a letter be sent to the Minister of the Environment supporting the concerns expressed by the Chairman of the LGCEG in respect of this matter;
- any comments which Members might wish to make on this matter be submitted to the Director of Finance and the Convergence of IT Systems as soon as possible so that they might be incorporated in the letter to the Minister as referred to above.

8.1.5 Latest Update on other Councils’ Rates

The Director reported that it was difficult to compare the Council’s rate position with that of other councils as a uniform baseline was not being used and some councils comprised more than two extant councils.

8.1.6 Capital Plan and Prudential Indicators

A projected Capital Programme for five years commencing the 1st April 2015 was tabled at the meeting. The draft programme was still subject to discussion with the Chief Executive and Officers.

8.2 Department of the Environment – Consultation Document “Local Government Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) Cost Control Arrangements and Draft Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015” (Closing date: 30th January 2015)

The Committee had been provided with a copy of the above consultation document together with NILGA’s response thereto.

It was agreed to recommend that the response of the Northern Ireland Local Government Association to the above consultation document be endorsed.

It was proposed by Councillor M Tolerton, seconded by Councillor P Catney and agreed to come "out of Committee" and normal business was resumed.

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 7.09 pm.

PRESIDING MEMBER/CHAIRMAN