

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL**Minutes of Meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Committee held in the Council Chamber, Island Civic Centre, on Wednesday 7 January, 2026 at 6.01 pm****PRESENT IN CHAMBER:**

Alderman O Gawith (Chair)

Councillor S Burns (Vice-Chair)

Alderman J Baird

Councillors J Bamford, P Catney, A Givan, G Hynds, B Magee, C McCready, M McKeever and N Parker

PRESENT IN REMOTE LOCATION:

Alderman S Skillen

Councillors D Bassett and R McLernon

IN ATTENDANCE:

Director of Environmental Services

Head of Service (Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning)

Head of Service (Waste Management & Operational Services)

Business Support Manager (DI)

Member Services Officers (EW and BS)

Commencement of the Meeting

The Chair, Alderman O Gawith, welcomed those present to the meeting and advised that it would be audio recorded unless the item on the agenda was to be considered under confidential business. The Chair stated that unauthorised recording was not permitted, as per the Council's Standing Orders. The Chair asked that mobile phones be put on silent or switched off for the duration of the meeting.

In accordance with the Protocol for Remote Meetings, the Chair asked that those attending via zoom to ensure that the meeting could not be seen or heard by any other person at their remote location when confidential business was being considered. The Chair proceeded to outline the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.

1. **Apologies**

Apologies were recorded on behalf of the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan and Councillor A Gowan.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. Report by Head of Service (Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning)

3.1 Office of Product Safety & Standards (OPSS) Grant Funding for Reporting on Regulatory Capability and Capacity

Councillor D Bassett joined the meeting via Zoom during consideration of this item (6.07 pm)

Following a request from Councillor B Magee, regarding reporting against the performance for the funding received, the Head of Service (Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning) agreed to furnish Members with the Performance Report.

In response to a query from Councillor G Hynds regarding the ability of the team to carry out the work and the impact of the withdrawal of the OPSS funding, the Head of Service advised that implementation would be completed by the end of the financial year and there would be no additional cost to the council as the result of the cessation of the funding.

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Councillor P Catney, and agreed to recommend approval for the acceptance of the 2025/2026 grant offer of up to £49,500 from OPSS, the national regulator for product safety, for activities carried out by the Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning Unit as detailed in the report.

3.2 Environmental Crime

In response to comments from Councillor N Parker about the plans set out in the report for addressing the various elements of Environmental Crime, the Head of Service advised that the additional money from the Out Of Hours Dog Warden Service (OOHDWS) was being used to support both new and existing initiatives. He also advised that there were currently five enforcement officers which were split into two teams, one of whom dealt with dog fouling and the other team dealing with the other types of environmental crime. He also advised that within the new structure there would be an additional enforcement officer from the start of February 2026, and he further advised that the team would be multi-disciplined officers delivering the full functions of environmental crime.

Following comments from Councillor G Hynds about the community supporting the implementation of measures to address environmental crime, the Head of Service advised that the removal of graffiti was the responsibility of the property owner or the agency responsible for the street furniture. However, the council would support the removal of graffiti where possible and particularly in the case of "offensive" graffiti and would welcome any community support and local cooperation to reduce this matter.

In response to a query from Alderman S Skillen about the dog micro chipping events referenced in the report, the Head of Service advised that three community events for dog micro chipping would be held before the end of March 2026 and that they would be advertised through media channels.

3.2 Environmental Crime (Cont'd)

It was proposed by Councillor G Hynds, seconded by Alderman J Baird, and agreed to note the details of how the re-allocation of the OOHDS funding will be used to target environmental crime across the council area.

3.3 Update on the Landlord Registration Scheme NI Transfer to LCCC

It was proposed by Councillor A Givan, seconded by Councillor P Catney, and agreed to note the updated report on the implementation of the Landlord Registration Scheme NI and its transfer to the council.

4. Report by Head of Service (Waste Management & Operational Services)

4.1 Eco Schools Request for Financial Support 2026/2027

In response to a question from Councillor B Magee about educational school visits by the environmental officers from Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful (KNIB), the Head of Service (Waste Management & Operational Services) advised that if Option 1 was put forward there would not be a reduced capacity for council officers to attend school visits.

Following a query from Alderman J Baird, the Head of Service advised that the funding to the Eco Schools Programme was in addition to the annual KNIB funding and would be taken from the Waste Management & Operational Services budget.

In response to a query from Councillor N Parker, the Head of Service advised that in the letter from Eco Schools requesting funding it didn't suggest how numbers would be increased in the 'Wheelie Big Challenge'.

It was proposed by Councillor P Catney, seconded by Alderman S Skillen, and agreed to recommend approval that:

- KNIB be provided with funding totalling £7,270 to support the Eco Schools Programme and Awards Ceremony in 2026/2027; and
- a community planning approach to develop enhanced levels of engagement in this area of work to maximise outputs/outcomes for the council area.

In advance of consideration of confidential business, the Chair, Alderman O Gawith advised that Any Other Business would be considered at this stage.

5. Any Other Business

5.1 Update on Bryson Recycling Councillor S Burns

Councillor J Bamford left and returned to the meeting during this item of business (7.10 pm and 7.13 pm respectively)

In response to a query from Councillor S Burns about the uplift of bins in Castlereagh East, the Head of Service (Waste Management & Operational Services) advised that he, along with the Director and contract management

5.1 Update on Bryson Recycling (Cont'd)
Councillor S Burns

officers, met with the Chief Executive of Bryson House on Monday 5 January and asked the Director to provide an update.

The Director apologised for the prolonged and continued disruption of service in Castlereagh. She further stated that Bryson were equally apologetic, and gave assurances that a recovery plan was being put in place with more immediate measures. This includes additional collection crews that will operate on an evening and weekend basis to complete as many collections as possible on the scheduled day or within 24 hours. This will ensure that each household has had at least a weekly collection. The Director also advised that any staff in Bryson with the relevant licence are being redeployed from other duties to driving collection rounds and there has been a comprehensive review of recruitment and retention practices that have been undertaken including job descriptions, rates of pay and training. There have been three new members of staff recruited this week and a further five are due to start by mid-January. The implementation of the recovery plan will take a number of weeks to embed and it is unlikely that improvements to service will be fully implemented until the start of February.

5.2 Bryson Recycling
Councillor D Bassett

In response to comments made by Councillor D Bassett, the Director advised that the terms and conditions of the contract with Bryson were being robustly monitored by the Head of Service and his team. In response to a proposal put forward by Councillor Bassett for Bryson to come to the Council Chamber, the Director asked that the committee afford Bryson the opportunity to implement its recovery plan over the next four to six weeks at which time a further assessment can be made regarding improvements to the service delivery.

5.3 Bryson Recycling
Alderman S Skillen

Alderman S Skillen stated that she had received complaints from frustrated constituents over bins not being emptied and she said that with food wasted being left for four weeks it had the potential to attract vermin.

5.4 Bryson Recycling and DAERA Consultation Update
Councillor P Catney

Councillor P Catney stated that as there was now a plan in place with Bryson that this should be given time to work through and revisit after the time allocated if required. He also enquired about an update to the DAERA consultation on 'Rethinking Our Resources'. The Director advised Councillor Catney that there was no update available at present.

5.5 Updated Report
Councillor M McKeever

In response to comments made by Councillor M McKeever around bins not being lifted for a long period of time, the Director advised that the service was still deliverable with the monitoring of the contract and that Bryson reported twice daily on the crews that are out, the crews that are not out, the disruption to the service and the mop-up they will perform, either that evening or the next day. The Director also wanted to reassure the committee that there was no additional cost to the council and that Bryson has borne the cost of the remedial actions. It was agreed by the Director in response to a request by Councillor McKeever to bring an update report to the committee in respect of the service disruption experienced by council through its contract with Bryson, how it has been monitored and plans for improvement.

5.6 Advice to Constituents
Councillor S Burns

In response to a query from Councillor S Burns regarding information to constituents, the Head of Service (Waste Management & Operational Services) agreed that the DEA representatives would be given information as to when there would be a disruption to service and when to expect this service to be reinstated.

5.7 Capacity to Help
Councillor A Givan

In response to a query from Councillor A Givan around the potential for council to perform the bin collections in the affected areas, the Head of Service (Waste Management & Operational Services) advised that the council did not have the spare capacity in terms of drivers to undertake this contract.

5.8 Email Correspondence
Councillor D Bassett

Following a request from Councillor D Bassett, the Director agreed to send email correspondence to all the DEA representatives to include what Bryson have agreed with council to restore the service.

5.9 Bin Collections, Localised Winter Programme, Litter and Fly-tipping and Condition of Roads and Paths
Councillor G Hynds

Councillor B Magee left and returned to the meeting during this item of business (7.18 pm and 7.20 pm respectively)

Councillor G Hynds wished it to be put on record his praise to staff and thanked the Head of Service for his advice and support during the week. He also praised the staff at The Cutts for helping an elderly woman at this facility.

In response to a query from Councillor G Hynds regarding fly-tipping, the Director said that the council would welcome any evidence he had about this matter in order that it can be pro-actively addressed.

5.9 Bin Collections, Localised Winter Programme, Litter and Fly-tipping and Condition of Roads and Paths (Cont'd)
Councillor G Hynds

Councillor Hynds further asked the Director about gritting in the city centre to which she replied that there was a protocol in place for adverse weather conditions, but it didn't extend to areas further than the city centre. It was on main thoroughfare routes where council staff as advised by DFI would grit as directed. Such gritting would be undertaken by teams from Street Cleansing and Parks & Amenities.

5.10 Suspension of Brown Bin Collection
Councillor B Magee

Councillor M McKeever left and returned to the meeting during this item of business (7.16 pm and 7.18 pm respectively)

In response to a query from Councillor B Magee regarding brown bins, the Head of Service advised that the suspension of the brown bin collection was the first time trying this out over the Christmas period, but he understood that some people may not have been checking the website to see this information and that it would be looked at to see how best the information can be relayed in the future.

5.11 Missed Bin Collection
Councillor G Hynds

In response to a query from Councillor G Hynds regarding missed bin collections, the Head of Service advised that collections affected at the start of the week due to the weather conditions should be completed by Saturday at the latest, however if there were any areas not completed, he asked that Members get in touch with him in order to get these scheduled for collection.

5.12 Localised Winter Programme
Councillor G Hynds

In response to a query from Councillor Hynds regarding gritting in adverse weather, the Director advised that the council would not have the funding, resources or manpower to carry out such an extensive programme of gritting across the council area. The Director advised that DFI supplied grit boxes to residential areas and the request for a grit box could be applied for on the NI Direct website.

6. Confidential Report by the Director of Environmental Services

The Chair, Alderman O Gawith, advised that the confidential report items would be dealt with "In Committee" due to containing information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

“In Committee”

It was proposed by Councillor P Catney, seconded by Councillor A Givan, and agreed that the following matters be considered “In Committee,” in the absence of members of the press and public being present.

The member of the press seated in the public gallery left the Council Chamber (7.23 pm).

6.1 2026/2027 Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (pEPR) Update
(A Redacted Report will become available following ratification by Council in January 2026)

Following the presentation of the report, the Director of Environmental Services and the Head of Service (Waste Management & Operational Services) responded to questions raised by Members.

It was proposed by Alderman J Baird, seconded by Councillor P Catney, and agreed to the recommendations as set out in the report which included:

6.1 2026/2027 Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (pEPR) Update
(Cont'd)

- noting the updated payment value to be received through pEPR in 2026/2027;
- agreeing to contribute to revenue budgets to support uplift in waste management costs, specifically those associated with recycling disposal; and
- agreeing to allocate the remaining balance to the Waste Fund for allocation in accordance with the terms and conditions of the pEPR Scheme.

6.2 Evaluation and Award criteria in the Tender for the Collection, Transportation and Recovery of Waste Wood from Council Household Recycling Centres
(A Redacted Report will become available following council approval at the end of January 2026)

Following the presentation of the report, the Head of Service (Waste Management & Operational Services) responded to a question raised by a Member.

It was proposed by Councillor A Givan, seconded by Alderman J Baird, and agreed to recommend approval of the evaluation and award criteria as outlined in the report for the tender for the collection, transportation and recovery of waste wood from council Household Recycling Centres.

6.3 Estimates Process – Directorate Update
(The Report will never become available, final estimates will be released)

Councillor R McLernon and Alderman S Skillen left the meeting during this item of business (7.40 pm and 7.43 pm respectively)

6.3 Estimates Process – Directorate Update (Cont'd)

Following the presentation of the report, the Director of Environmental Services responded to questions raised by Members.

It was proposed by Councillor P Catney, seconded by Alderman J Baird, and agreed to recommend approval of the draft estimates for the Environmental Services Directorate as presented in order to be submitted into the overall estimates of the council for the year commencing 1st April 2026.

7. Any Other Business (Confidential)

The Director of Environmental Services and the Head of Service (Waste Management & Operational Services) responded to a number of questions raised by Members.

Resumption of Normal Business

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

The Chair, Alderman O Gawith, thanked Members for their attendance.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7.59 pm.

Chairperson