LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting of the Corporate Services Committee held remotely and in the Council Chamber, Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn on Wednesday 9th April 2025 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT IN COUNCIL CHAMBER (COMMITTEE):	Councillor The Hon N Trimble (Chair) Councillor N Eaton (Vice-Chair) Aldermen A Ewart MBE, M Gregg, A Grehan and H Legge Councillors T Beckett, A Ewing, J Harpur, B Higginson, C Kemp, J Laverty BEM, and G McCleave
PRESENT IN A REMOTE LOCATION (COMMITTEE)	The Right Worshipful The Mayor Councillor K Dickson Councillors A Givan and D Lynch
OTHER MEMBERS OF COUNCIL PRESENT IN COUNCIL CHAMBER:	Councillor G Hynds
OTHER MEMBERS OF COUNCIL PRESENT IN a REMOTE LOCATION:	Alderman J Tinsley
IN ATTENDANCE:	Chief Executive Director of Finance & Corporate Services Director of Organisation Development & Innovation Head of Assets Head of Communities Head of Corporate Communications & Administration Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development Head of Finance Head of Planning & Capital Development Capital Programmes Manager Member Services Officers (RN & EW)

Commencement of Meeting

The Chair, Councillor N Trimble, welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that it would be audio recorded unless the item on the agenda was to be considered under confidential business. Unauthorised recording was not permitted, as per 8.5 of the Council's Standing Orders. Mobile phones were to be turned off or on silent mode for the duration of the meeting. Members attending remotely were asked to keep their cameras on. Finally, the Chair 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.

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services outlined the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of interest.

3. Report of Director of Organisation Development & Innovation

3.1 Data Protection Policy

In addition to the narrative report, the following had been provided:-

- Revised Data Protection Policy (in draft)
- Equality Impact Assessment
- Rural Needs Impact Assessment.

The sections of the policy relevant to Elected Members would be identified and covered in Elected Member training.

It was proposed by Alderman M Gregg, seconded by Councillor B Higginson and agreed to recommend that the revised Data Protection Policy be approved for implementation.

4. Report of Head of Corporate Communications & Administration

4.1 Membership of Ad Hoc Working Groups within Council

Further to the meeting of Committee on the 13th November 2024, the Head of Service reported on the procedure to establish ad hoc working group appointments within the Council including research that had been done to understand arrangements in Councils across Northern Ireland. An equality screening document had been provided also.

Officers were commended on the work that had gone into the preparation of the report on this matter.

Two options for the process to be followed in the future were detailed in the report.

It was proposed by Councillor B Higginson, seconded by Alderman H Legge and agreed to recommend that:-

- Option 2 be adopted for determining the membership of ad hoc working groups within the Council, such membership being:-
    - Six places allocated through running a D'Hondt process in the same way as allocations are made to external groups;
    - The Mayor;
    - The Chairperson of the reporting Committee.
- the appointment of the Chairperson of the working group be allocated via a further D'Hondt process in line with that for appointing positions of responsibility. (Member Services will keep a record of all allocations so as to manage nominations as required);
- in relation to the term of membership for ad hoc working groups operating beyond a single Council term:-
    - the representation of the Mayor and the Chair of the Committee change in accordance with the outcome of the Annual Meeting; and
    - the Chair and Membership of the working group remain consistent as far as is possible so as to maintain stability and continuity for the duration of the project.

In putting the recommendation to the Committee for agreement, the Chair had noted the dissent of Councillor G Hynds – a non-Member of the Committee.

Councillor D Lynch joined the meeting on a remote basis during discussion of this item. (6.07 pm)

5. Report of Head of Finance

5.1 Sustainable NI
Annual Subscription

In her report, the Head of Service outlined the aims and objectives of the charity "Sustainable Northern Ireland" and the ways in which it could assist the Council in meeting the objectives of its corporate plan and the legislative requirements within the Climate Change Act 2022 and the Climate Change (Reporting Bodies) Regulations (NI) 2024 through a shared service.

The annual report 2023/2024 for Sustainable NI was provided.

Three membership options were available and were detailed in the report.

It was proposed by Councillor B Higginson, seconded by Councillor C Kemp and agreed to recommend that:-

- the Option 1 subscription as a "Supporter" be taken out at a cost of £6,000.00 per annum, this subscription enabling access to sustainability tools, resources and collaboration with other organisations working in the net zero space;

- the annual subscription be added to the full list of annual subscriptions agreed by the Committee on 21st June 2023 and be paid on an annual basis for the term to 2026/2027, on the provision that it does not exceed the budget agreed during the relevant year's estimates process.

Councillor D Lynch removed himself from his camera during this item.
(6.19 pm)

6. Any Other Business – Non-Confidential

6.1 250th anniversary of the Declaration of American Independence
Alderman A Ewart

Alderman A Ewart referred to the 250th anniversary on the 4th July 2026 of the Signing of the Declaration of American Independence and enquired if the Council would be marking this in some way.

The Chief Executive confirmed that this matter was being explored. Report to appropriate committee in due course.

The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor K Dickson, left the meeting on a remote basis at the conclusion of this item. (6.21 pm)

7. Confidential Report from Director of Finance & Corporate Services

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

7.1 Update on Financial Position of the Capital Programme
(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

Report will never become available.

7.2 Capital Programme – Movements and Changes
(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

Report will never become available.

7.3 Report on Tender Awards
(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

Redacted report to be available following ratification by Council on the 29th April 2025 and the signing of the contract.

7.4 Provision of Cleaning Services – Tender Evaluation Exercise
(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

Redacted report to be available in December 2025.

7.5 Management Accounts – Period 11 of 2024/2025
(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

Redacted report to be available following ratification by Council on the 29th April 2025.

7.6 Consolidated Scheme of Allowances payable to Councillors
(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

Report to be available following ratification by Council on the 29th April 2025.

7.7 Job Evaluation Implementation Update
(Confidential for reason of information relating to 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, or office holders under, the Council.)

Redacted report to be available after implementation of process.

7.8 Efficiency Review Steering Group (ERSG) Meeting

(Confidential for reason of information relating to 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, or office holders under, the Council.)

Redacted report to be available following ratification by Council on the 29th April 2025.

7.9 Director of Finance & Corporate Services (Recruitment) and the role of Chief Financial Officer

(Confidential for reason of information relating to (i) any individual and (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, or office holders under, the Council.)

Redacted report to be available post appointment of the post.

In Committee

It was proposed by Councillor A Ewing, seconded by Councillor B Higginson and agreed that the Confidential Report of the Director be considered "in Committee". (Recording was paused at this stage in proceedings, and any members of the press and public left the meeting.) (6.22 pm)

7.1 Efficiency Review Steering Group (ERSG) Meeting

It was agreed that the above item be brought forward to allow relevant staff to leave the meeting once it had been discussed.

Presented by the Director of Organisation Development & Innovation. The Head of Communities was also in attendance.

In addition to the narrative report, the minutes and action document of a meeting of the Efficiency Review Steering Group (ERSG) held on the 4th March 2025 had been provided. The presentation which had been made to the ERSG in respect of the proposed staffing structure was also provided.

It was proposed by Councillor J Harpur, seconded by Councillor B Higginson and agreed to recommend that:-

- the minutes and action document of the meeting of the Efficiency Review Steering Group held on the 4th March 2025 be noted;

- the recommendation of the Efficiency Review Steering Group in regard to the proposed staffing structure as detailed in the Director's report be approved.

7.1 Efficiency Review Steering Group (ERSG) Meeting (Continued)

Councillor D Lynch returned to the meeting on a remote basis during this item at 6.26 pm having removed himself from his camera earlier in the meeting during open discussion.

Alderman A Grehan left the Chamber at the conclusion of this item. (6.27 pm)

7.2 Update on Financial Position of the Capital Programme

Presented by the Head of Planning & Capital Development.

In addition to the narrative report, the Capital Programme Spend Profiles (February 2025) had been provided.

The Head of Service provided a verbal update to the recommendation and the "Finance and Resource Implications" sections of the report.

The Chief Executive and the Head of Planning & Capital Development responded to Members' questions.

It was proposed by Alderman M Gregg, seconded by Councillor B Higginson and agreed to recommend that the current financial position of the Capital Programme at the 28th February 2025 be agreed.

The Head of Communities left the Chamber during the presentation of this item. (6.29 pm)

Alderman A Grehan returned to the meeting during discussion and prior to decision. (6.30 pm)

Councillor G Hynds left the Chamber at the conclusion of this item. (6.39 pm)

7.3 Capital Programme – Movements and Changes

Presented by the Head of Planning & Capital Development.

The Chief Executive and the Head of Planning & Capital Development responded to Members' questions.

It was proposed by Councillor T Beckett, seconded by Alderman M Gregg and agreed to recommend that the movements and changes to the projects specified in the report be agreed.

7.4 Report on Tender Awards

Presented by the Head of Assets.

A tender report and a summary of the tender awarded had been provided with the narrative report.

It was proposed by Councillor C Kemp, seconded by Alderman A Ewart and agreed to recommend that the tender awarded in regard to the following contract, together with the attendant tender report, be noted:-

- Replacement of Boundary Wall at Moira Demesne.

It was further agreed on the Proposal made by Councillor Kemp and seconded by Alderman Ewart to recommend that the signing and sealing of the Tender document be approved.

7.5 Provision of Cleaning Services – Tender Evaluation Exercise

Presented by the Head of Corporate Communications & Administration.

It was proposed by Councillor C Kemp, seconded by Alderman A Grehan and agreed to recommend that the tender evaluation criteria as outlined in the Head of Service's report be approved.

In response to comments from Alderman A Grehan about the Catering Contract, the Head of Corporate Communications & Administration advised that it was anticipated that a tender report for the Provision of Catering at Lagan Valley Island would be brought to the next meeting of Committee. The Head of Service also confirmed that the Council remains "in contract" for this provision.

Alderman J Tinsley joined the meeting on a remote basis during discussion. (6.55 pm)

7.6 Management Accounts – Period 11 of 2024/2025

Presented by the Head of Finance.

The Management Accounts for the period ending the 28th February 2025, together with an extensive narrative report by way of explanation, were provided and duly noted.

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services responded to questions in relation to legal costs. She stated that the new finance system would enable additional analysis.

7.6 Management Accounts – Period 11 of 2024/2025 (Continued)

Councillor D Lynch left the meeting on a remote basis during discussion. (6.58 pm)

The Head of Planning & Capital Development and the Capital Programmes Manager left the Chamber at the conclusion of this item. (7.00 pm)

7.7 Consolidated Scheme of Allowances Payable to Councillors

Presented by the Head of Finance.

The following documents had been provided with the report. Their contents were noted and agreed.

- Circular LG12/2025 from the Department for Communities providing revised rates for Basic Allowance applicable from 1st April 2025;

- the Council's updated Scheme of Allowances Payable to Councillors for the period 1st April 2025 – 31st March 2026.

The Head of Assets left the Chamber at the conclusion of this item. (7.01 pm)

7.8 Job Evaluation Implementation Update

Presented by the Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development.

A narrative report in regard to the above item, together with the draft terms of reference for the Job Evaluation Working Group had been provided, and their contents were duly noted.

The Chief Executive, the Head of Corporate Communications & Administration, the Head of Finance and the Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development left the Chamber at the conclusion of this item of business. (7.04 pm)

7.9 Efficiency Review Steering Group (ERSG) Meeting

Dealt with under Item 7.1.

7.10 Director of Finance & Corporate Services (Recruitment) and the role of Chief Financial Officer

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services, the Director of Organisation Development & Innovation, and the Member Services staff were present in the Chamber for this item.

Presented by the Director of Organisation Development & Innovation.

7.10 Director of Finance & Corporate Services (Recruitment) and the role of Chief Financial Officer (Continued)

It was proposed by Councillor J Harpur, seconded by Councillor B Higginson and agreed to recommend that:-

- the recruitment of the post of Director of Finance & Corporate Services be commenced as outlined in the report;
- Elected Member representation be as set out in the report so as to support the creation of a balanced recruitment panel.
- for the period between the ceasing of employment of the current Director of Finance & Corporate Services, and the commencement of the new postholder, the role of Chief Financial Officer reverts to the Chief Executive with the appropriate resources sufficient to allow his duties to be performed during this period, and that the NI Audit Office be advised accordingly.

A number of Members representing their political parties, placed on record their appreciation of the contribution made by the Director of Finance & Corporate Services (Cara McCrory) during her employment with the Council, and wished her well in her new post.

8. Any Other Business – Confidential

No other business of a confidential nature was raised.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor C Kemp, seconded by Councillor B Higginson and agreed to come “out of Committee”. Normal business and the recording were resumed.

9. Any Other Business

Dealt with under Item 6.

The meeting concluded at 7.15 pm.

_____

MAYOR/CHAIR