

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 10th September 2025 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT IN COUNCIL CHAMBER (COMMITTEE):

Councillor B Higginson (Chair)

Councillor J Bamford (Vice-Chair)

The Right Worshipful The Mayor
Alderman A Grehan

Aldermen A Ewart MBE and M Gregg

Councillors K Dickson, A Ewing, J Harpur,
G McCleave, N Parker and The Hon N Trimble

PRESENT IN A REMOTE LOCATION (COMMITTEE)

Councillor R Carlin

OTHER MEMBERS OF COUNCIL PRESENT IN COUNCIL CHAMBER:

Councillors G Hynds and U Mackin

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive
Director of Organisation Development & Innovation
Head of Assets
Head of Finance
Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development
Head of Planning & Capital Development
Acting Head of Governance & Communications
Capital Programme Manager
Member Services Officers (RN & EW)

Commencement of Meeting

The Chair, Councillor B Higginson, 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 Chief Executive outlined the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.

During the announcement regarding the evacuation procedures:-

- Councillor R Carlin joined the meeting on a remote basis. (6.01 pm)
- Councillor A Ewing entered the Council Chamber. (6.01 pm)

1. Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting were accepted and recorded on behalf of Alderman P Porter; Councillors T Beckett, J Lavery BEM, and R McLernon.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. Report of Chief Executive

3.1 Trial Arrangements for Enhanced Engagement with Statutory Bodies

In order to provide for more meaningful engagement with statutory bodies, Members noted the arrangements which would be trialled during the term of office of The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Alderman A Grehan. Such arrangements had been discussed with the Party Group Leaders Forum.

The arrangements related to the consultative arrangements with statutory bodies being on the basis of strategic presentations being made at Council meetings and DEA-based Member Workshops.

The Chief Executive responded to Members' questions.

It was noted that:-

- arrangements would be progressed so as to implement the procedures referred to above on a trial basis;
- feedback would be gathered from Members and the statutory bodies to inform on future engagement models;
- following the trial period, any decision on the consultative arrangements to be put in place on a permanent basis would be subject to Council approval.

3.1 Trial Arrangements for Enhanced Engagement with Statutory Bodies
(Continued)

Members were advised that the Northern Ireland Housing Executive would be making its presentation on strategic issues to the meeting of Council on the 23rd September 2025.

Councillor J Lavery had presented an apology for non-attendance at the meeting but – on his behalf – Alderman A Ewart asked to have recorded that Councillor Lavery was not in agreement with the consultative arrangements with statutory bodies being put in place (on a trial basis) as referred to above.

During the Chief Executive's presentation of this item of business, Alderman M Gregg entered the Chamber at 6.03 pm.

3.2 2027 Local Government Elections and NI Assembly Elections

The Chief Executive advised that the next Local Government Elections and also the Northern Ireland Assembly Elections were scheduled for Thursday 6th May 2027. The alignment of two elections on one day presents a significant challenge in terms of logistical co-ordination, budgetary pressure and stakeholder engagement. The Chief Executive reported extensively on the key planning to date, the anticipated challenges and the next steps in the planning process.

In addition to the narrative report, the Business Plan of the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland in regard to April 2025 – March 2026 had been provided.

It was proposed by Councillor G McCleave, seconded by Alderman M Gregg and agreed to recommend that the preparatory work for the 2027 Local Government Elections on the 6th May 2027 in parallel with the Northern Ireland Assembly Elections on the same date be noted.

4. Report of Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development

4.1 Local Government Staff Commission
Consultation on Updated Code of Procedures on
Recruitment and Selection

The Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC) is consulting on its Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection.

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

- LGSC's Proposed Draft Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection;
- a draft response prepared by Officers in regard to the Proposed Draft Code;

4.1 Local Government Staff Commission
Consultation on Updated Code of Procedures on
Recruitment and Selection (Continued)

- the current LGSC Code of Procedures on Recruitment & Selection (2009 version);
- LGSC's summary of amendments to the Code.

It was proposed by Councillor N Trimble, seconded by Councillor G McCleave and agreed to recommend that the draft response prepared by officers in regard to the Local Government Staff Commission's proposed Draft Code of Procedures on Recruitment & Selection be approved as the Council's response thereto and be submitted to the Local Government Staff Commission.

The Head of Service noted a comment that some reference to the lifespan of the LGSC should be included in the response and he clarified that the response already included reference to the longevity of any proposal, given expected end-date of the LGSC.

4.2 Workforce Reports

Reports on the undernoted topics in relation to Council staff across all Departments had been provided with the report and their contents duly noted.

- Attendance Management Report for period ended 30th June 2025;
- Recruitment reports – (i) Advert & Selection; and (ii) Appointments;
- Workforce Profile.

The Head of Service responded to Members' questions.

The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Alderman A Grehan, entered the Council Chamber during the Head of Service's presentation of this item. (6.15 pm)

5. Report of Acting Head of Governance & Communications

5.1 Books of Condolence - Review

In addition to the narrative report, the Protocol for Opening of Books of Condolence approved in October 2022 had been provided.

In line with the decision of October 2022, a review of the format in which Books of Condolence should be presented was to have been carried out. The Acting Head of Service reported on the review.

It was proposed by Alderman A Ewart, seconded by Councillor A Ewing and agreed to recommend that the Council proceed with a digital only Book of Condolence as the standard approach, with The Right Worshipful The Mayor retaining discretion to open a physical book where it is deemed appropriate.

5.1 Books of Condolence – Review (Continued)

The Acting Head of Service agreed to confirm if in fact there had been a physical Book of Condolence in place in October 2023 for the Israel-Hamas Conflict.

5.2 Catering Update

Members noted the progress report in respect of the catering provision at Lagan Valley Island further to the appointment of Craft Event Company as the successful provider for the Catering and Bar Services contract with effect from the 1st August 2025.

Progress during the mobilisation period and transition; early successes in service delivery and feedback were all positive.

The Acting Head of Service also confirmed that the availability of refreshments at evening events had been trialled; and that there were plans to enhance coffee and bar provision.

5.3 Somme Pilgrimages 2025 and 2026

5.3.1 Somme Pilgrimage 2025

A report prepared by the Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing in relation to the attendance of the Council's participants in the 2025 Somme Pilgrimage was provided and its content duly noted.

The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Alderman A Grehan; the Chair of the Committee, Councillor B Higginson; and Councillor G Hynds, had all participated in the 2025 Pilgrimage and expressed their thanks for the opportunity to do so and for the arrangements which had been put in place.

5.3.2 Somme Pilgrimage 2026

The Acting Head of Service referred to the decision of the Committee in September 2023 that the composition of attendees at future Somme Pilgrimages be the Mayor of the Day, the Chair of the Day of the Corporate Services Committee and the Chief Executive (or his nominee) as the Lead Officer; plus up to two Members who had not represented the Council in past years. This would mean that only one vehicle would be required. In addition, the Committee decision had recorded that the two additional attendees should preferably be from parties not already represented by the Mayor and Committee Chair.

The Committee noted that work would commence in the near future to identify the 2026 attendees, thereby allowing flights and accommodation to be secured at best value.

6. Report of Head of Finance

6.1 Estimates 2026/2027 – Schedule of Meetings

A draft programme of meetings for the 2026/2027 Estimates' process had been provided and was duly recommended for agreement on a Proposal made by Alderman M Gregg and seconded by Councillor J Bamford.

6.2 Treasury Outturn – Quarter 1 of 2025/2026

Members noted the content of the following:-

- the information contained in the narrative report;
- the Treasury Management Report for Q1 of 2025/2026;
- the Prudential Indicators for Q1 of 2025/2026 setting out a review of the Council's performance against the indicators approved for 2025/2026. All indicators had been complied with.

The Head of Finance agreed to respond accordingly to a Member's query made that investments are in line with the Council's climate change declaration.

7. Report of Head of Assets

7.1 Procurement Thresholds

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

- the Procurement Threshold table:-
 - from the existing Accounting Manual Procedures (Table 1); and
 - as proposed and detailing changes for the Accounting Manual (Table 2);
- letter dated the 28th August 2024 from the Department for Communities confirming that there is no impediment to increasing procurement thresholds;
- Procurement Policy Note PPN 04/21 entitled "Procurement Control Limits" developed by the Procurement Policy Branch (Construction & Procurement Delivery) of the Department of Finance.

It was proposed by Alderman M Gregg, seconded by Alderman A Ewart and agreed to recommend that:-

7.1 Procurement Thresholds (Continued)

- the report of the Head of Assets and associated appendices be noted;
- subject to the correction of a possible typographical error, the new Procurement Thresholds be increased as outlined in Table 2 with a lead-in time (ie allowing CIA system to be updated along with the Accounting Manual and other relevant documentation to be edited);
- the threshold for presenting Business Cases to Committee be in line with the increased tender limit.

8. Any Other Business – Non-Confidential

8.1 “Blue Bridge” at Hilden
Councillor G Hynds

Councillor G Hynds sought an update in regard to the ownership of the “Blue Bridge” at Hilden.

The Head of Assets would update Councillor Hynds off-line on this matter.

8.2 Notice of Motion on Transparency
Councillor G Hynds

Councillor G Hynds referred to measures which were to be introduced further to the Council’s adoption of a Notice of Motion on the subject of transparency. Councillor Hynds understood from the May 2025 meeting of the Committee that a report on this matter was nearing completion.

The Chief Executive noted these comments and explained the reasons as to why this report had not yet come before the Committee.

9. Confidential Report from Chief Executive

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

9.1 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 become available following ratification by Council on the 23rd September 2025 and the signing of the contracts.

9.2 Movements and Changes in the Capital Programme to June 2025
(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

Report to never become available

9.3 Update on the Financial Position of the Draft 5-Year Rolling Capital Programme from 2025 to 2030
(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

Report to never become available

9.4 Quarterly Finance Reports – Quarter 1 of 2025/2026
(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 become available following ratification by Council on the 23rd September 2025

9.5 Management Accounts – Period 4 of 2025/2026
(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 become available following ratification by Council on the 23rd September 2025.

9.6 2024/2025 Treasury Outturn Report
(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

Report to become available following ratification by Council on the 23rd September 2025

9.7 Efficiency Review Steering Group
(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 of, or office holders under the Council.)

Redacted report anticipated to become available in November 2025.

In Committee

It was proposed by Councillor A Ewing, seconded by Councillor J Bamford and agreed that the Confidential Report of the Chief Executive be considered "in Committee". (Recording was paused at this stage in proceedings, and the member of the press left the meeting. There were no members of the public present.) (6.40 pm)

9.1 Report on Tender Awards

Presented by the Head of Assets.

Tender reports and a summary of the tenders awarded had been provided with the narrative report.

It was proposed by Alderman A Ewart, seconded by Councillor G McCleave and agreed to recommend that the tenders awarded in regard to the following contracts, together with the attendant tender reports, be noted:-

- T24/25-053 – Moira Community Hub;
- F25/26-007 – Lisburn & Castlereagh Transport Academy;
- T25/26-010 - Greenways Investment Framework;
- T25/26-014 - Framework Schedule – AT2 Hire of Plant & Machinery;
- T25/26-013 – Framework Schedule – AT4 Line Marking;
- T2526-007 – Tender for the Supply and Delivery of Playground Equipment;
- T25/26-011 – Carryduff Recycling Centre Consultancy;
- F25/26-005 – Software as a Service and Support Costs.

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

9.2 Movements and Changes in the Capital Programme to June 2025

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 Alderman M Gregg, seconded by Councillor J Harpur and agreed to recommend that the following be agreed:-

- the narrative report;
- the movements and changes to the projects and programmes as specified in the report;
- financial uplifts as set out in the report for the following projects:-
 - Duncan's/Hillsborough Dams Engineering Project;
 - Public Realm Destination Royal Hillsborough;
 - Hilden Former Primary School.
- the return of a specified sum of money to Contingency from two programmes as detailed in the report.

9.3 Update on the Financial Position of the
Draft 5-Year Rolling Capital Programme to June 2025

Presented by the Head of Planning & Capital Development.

In addition to the narrative report, the Capital Programme Review (July 2025) had been provided.

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

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

- the narrative report be noted;
- the capital budget as at the 31st July 2025 and as set out in the report be agreed;
- the actions outlined in the report to address those projects sitting with an RAG (Red Amber Green) status of red be agreed, thereby bringing the net forecasted costs of the programme back into the agreed budget;
- providing and maintaining a 5% contingency commensurate with the scale of the programme rolling forward as outlined in the report be agreed.

9.4 Quarterly Finance Reports – Quarter 1 of 2025/2026

Presented by the Head of Finance.

Members noted the content of the following:-

- the information contained in the narrative report;
- the report on Repairs & Renewals for Q1 of 2025/2026;
- the report on Department for Communities' budgets for Q1 of 2025/2026.

9.5 Management Accounts - Period 4 of 2025/2026

Presented by the Head of Finance.

The Management Accounts for the period ending the 31st July 2025, together with an extensive narrative report by way of explanation, were provided and duly noted.

9.6 2024/2025 Treasury Outturn Report

Presented by the Head of Finance.

Members noted the content of the following:-

- the information contained in the narrative report;
- the 2024/2025 Treasury Management Outturn Report;
- the Prudential Indicators approved for 2024/2025 against which performance was compared;
- Outstanding Loans at 31st March 2025.

9.7 Efficiency Review Steering Group

Being dealt with later in the meeting.

10. Any Other Business – Confidential

No other business of a confidential nature was raised.

All officers apart from the Chief Executive, the Director of Organisation Development & Innovation, the Head of Finance and the Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development left the meeting. (7.04 pm)

11. Efficiency Review Steering Group

The Director of Organisation Development & Innovation presented the findings of the recent Efficiency Review Steering Group, including structure review proposals for the Governance & Communication Service.

It was proposed by Councillor N Trimble and seconded by Councillor J Bamford to accept the recommendations of the Efficiency Review Steering Group and agreed unanimously by the Committee.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor J Harpur, seconded by Councillor A Ewing and agreed to exit confidential business.

After the Chair had thanked all present for their attendance, the meeting concluded at 7.10 pm.

MAYOR/CHAIR