

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 December 2025 at 6.00 pm.

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

Councillor B Higginson (Chair)
Councillor J Bamford (Vice-Chair)
Aldermen A Ewart MBE and M Gregg
Councillors T Beckett, R Carlin, K Dickson, A Ewing,
J Harpur, J Lavery BEM. G McCleave and R McLernon

**PRESENT IN
REMOTE LOCATION
(COMMITTEE)**

Councillor N Parker

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

Councillor G Hynds and U Mackin

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

Councillor P Catney

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive
Director of Organisation Development & Innovation
Head of Assets
Head of Finance
Head of Governance & Communications
Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development
Equality Officer
Member Services Officers (RN & EW)

Commencement of Meeting

The Chair, Councillor B Higginson, welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a particular welcome to Ms Judith McNamee, the recently appointed Head of Governance & Communications, and wished her well in her new role.

The Chair advised that the meeting 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.

1. Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting were accepted and recorded on Alderman P Porter and Councillor The Hon N Trimble.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor N Parker declared a pecuniary interest in Item 4.2 – “Workforce Reports” and advised that she would be leaving the meeting for the duration of that item of business.

3. Report of Head of Governance & Communications

3.1 Somme Pilgrimage 2026

This item was presented by the Chief Executive.

In addition to the narrative report, the Equality screening document for Civic Policies had been provided.

It was proposed by Councillor J Bamford, seconded by Councillor R Carlin and agreed to recommend that Option 1 be agreed, ie that representation at the Somme Pilgrimage 2026 be as set out in the 2023 criteria.

It was further agreed to recommend that – given that Local Government Elections in 2027 are only a matter of weeks before the 2027 Somme Pilgrimage, the criteria agreed in 2023 be applied for the 2027 Pilgrimage.

4. Report of Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development

4.1 Five-Year Review of Equality Scheme

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

- Summary 5-Year Review of Equality Scheme (2021-2025);
- Detailed 5-Year Review of Equality Scheme (2021-2025).

4.1 Five-Year Review of Equality Scheme (Continued)

The council is required to review its Equality Scheme before the end of a 5-year period.

The Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development responded to a number of questions and:-

- agreed to provide information about the Citizenship Engagement Framework and the Consultation Forum;
- agreed to provide the rationale for undertaking a full Equality Impact Assessment;
- advised that the revision of the screening template was being looked at and that a draft would be brought to Committee in due course with a view to it being publicly consulted upon alongside a refreshed Equality Action Plan;
- confirmed that the commitments of the Council to provide easy-read documents and captions on social media were being actively worked through.

Councillor G McCleave asked that the Equality screenings for those new events which had been added to the programme of events be reported to the Committee.

It was proposed by Councillor K Dickson, seconded by Councillor R Carlin and agreed to recommend that the 5-Year Review of the Council's Equality Scheme (2021-2025) in both summary and detailed formats, be agreed.

It was noted that drafts of the Equality and Disability Action Plans would be presented to the Committee early in 2026.

4.2 Workforce Reports

Having declared an interest in this item of business, Councillor N Parker left the meeting on a remote basis immediately before it was discussed. (6.16 pm)

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

The Head of Service responded to Members' questions and:-

- noted comments related to the levels of absenteeism and numbers of agency workers;
- confirmed that workplace surveys are being considered with a focus on qualitative feedback;

4.2 Workforce Reports (Continued)

- agreed to provide all Members with any available details on learnings from workplace accidents; and also on the follow-up and management of such workplace accidents with such information being in respect of both “at-fault” and also “non-fault” accidents.

Councillor N Parker returned to the meeting on a remote basis after this matter concluded, (6.37 pm)

5. Any Other Business – Non-Confidential

No items of a non-confidential nature were raised.

The Equality Officer left the Council Chamber. (6.38 pm)

6. Confidential Report from Chief Executive

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

6.1 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 16th December 2025 and the signing of the contracts.

6.2 Estimates 2026/2027 – Directorate Position

(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. (Final estimates will be released in February 2026.)

6.3 Estimates 2026/2027 – Corporate Update

(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. (Final estimates will be released in February 2026.)

In Committee

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

6.1 Report on Tender Awards

Presented by the Head of Assets who responded to Members' questions.

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

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

- T25/26-023 – Integrated Marketing Campaign;
- T25/26-057 – Contract for the Hire of Chemical Toilets

It was further agreed on the Proposal made by Councillor Bamford and seconded by Councillor Ewing to recommend that the signing and sealing of the Tender documents be approved.

The Head of Assets informed Members that a draft policy on the assessment of the Social Value aspect of a tender would be presented to the Committee early in 2026.

6.2 Estimates 2026/2027 – Directorate Position

Presented by the Head of Finance who responded to Members' questions.

The report and appendices covered the Finance & Corporate Services Directorate; the Organisation Development & Innovation Directorate; and the Governance & Audit Unit.

An extensive narrative report and the 2026/2027 Draft Estimates for the three services referred to above, were provided and duly noted.

The Head of Finance agreed to provide clarification on specific budget lines and an indication of variations of actual compared to budget over a certain level.

During this item of business:-

- Councillor U Mackin left the Chamber at 6.45 pm;
- Councillor P Catney left the meeting on a remote basis (6.54 pm)

6.3 Estimates 2026/2027 – Corporate Update

Presented by the Head of Finance who responded to Members' questions.

An extensive narrative report had been provided. The Head of Finance took Members through the report, and its content was duly noted.

7. Any Other Business – Confidential

7.1 Council Finances
Councillor K Dickson

Councillor K Dickson sought an update in regard to the above matter. The Chief Executive responded accordingly.

7.2 Council Mobile Phones
Councillor T Beckett and Councillor G Hynds

In response to comments from Councillor T Beckett in regard to the above item, the Chief Executive and the Director of Organisation Development assured Members that the issue was very much being addressed. A verbal report would be provided in January 2026.

Later in the meeting, Councillor G Hynds highlighted some functions which he was unable to access on his phone. The Director of Organisation Development and Innovation noted these comments and advised that Central Government advice on mobile phones/phone apps/cyber security was being looked at and that a report thereon would come before the Committee in due course.

7.3 Salary Sacrifice Shared Cost AVCs (Additional Voluntary Contributions)
Councillor R Carlin

In response to comments from Councillor R Carlin, the Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development confirmed that the above matter was going through the consultation process with the recognised trade unions.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor A Ewing, seconded by Councillor K Dickson and agreed to come out of Committee and normal business and the recording were resumed. (7.20 pm)

8. Any Other Business

Dealt with under Item 5.

The Chair, Councillor B Higginson, thanked everyone for their attendance, wished them the Compliments of the Season and - there being no further business - the meeting concluded at 7.21 pm.

MAYOR/CHAIR