

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 11th June 2025 at 6.30 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, K Dickson, A Ewing, J Harpur,
J Lavery BEM, G McCleave and R McLernon

**PRESENT IN A
REMOTE LOCATION
(COMMITTEE)**

The Right Worshipful The Mayor
Alderman A Grehan
Councillor N Parker

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

Councillor G Hynds

**OTHER MEMBERS
OF COUNCIL
PRESENT IN a
REMOTE LOCATION:**

Alderman A McIntyre

IN ATTENDANCE:

Director of Finance & Corporate Services
Director of Organisation Development & Innovation
Head of Assets
Head of Corporate Communications & Administration
Head of Finance
Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development
Member Services Officers (RN & BS)

Commencement of Meeting

The Chair, Councillor B Higginson, welcomed those present to the meeting, in particular those Members who had not previously served on the Corporate Services Committee. The Chair advised that – after the conclusion of the business of the meeting – the Director would make a brief presentation on the Terms of Reference of the Committee.

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

During the housekeeping announcements, the following Members joined the meeting on a remote basis:-

- Alderman A McIntyre and Councillor N Parker at 6.32 pm;
- The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Alderman A Grehan, at 6.34 pm.

1. Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting were accepted and recorded on behalf of the Deputy Mayor, Alderman H Legge; Alderman P Porter, Councillor R Carlin and the Chief Executive.

2. Declarations of Interest

The following Declaration of Interest was made:-

- Councillor J Bamford – Declaration of Interest in Item 3.2 of Report of Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development – “Workforce Reports”. Husband is an employee of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council. Non-Pecuniary interest. Would be leaving the meeting for this item.

3. Chair's Business

The Chair, Councillor B Higginson, was aware that The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Alderman A Grehan, had an item which she would wish to raise under Any Other Business. As the Mayor had other matters to attend to later in the meeting, the Chair invited the Mayor to speak on her item of business at this point in the meeting.

3.1 Learning Disability Week (16th – 22nd June 2025)
Illumination of Council building

The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Alderman A Grehan, referred to Learning Disability Week which takes place from the 16th – 22nd June 2025. The Mayor would wish for the Council building to be lit in purple on the 17th June 2025 to mark Learning Disability Week.

The Chair, Councillor B Higginson, advised that the Mayor had not had an opportunity to raise this matter prior to taking up position. Whilst the request fell outside of the Illuminations Policy as the dates of the commemorative week did not permit it to go to Council, he considered the illumination to be important and therefore sought agreement for it to proceed.

It was proposed by The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Alderman A Grehan, seconded by Councillor K Dickson and agreed that the Council building be lit in purple on the 17th June 2025 to mark Learning Disability Week from the 16th to the 22nd June 2025.

The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Alderman A Grehan, left the meeting on a remote basis at the conclusion of this item. (6.37 pm)

4. Report of Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development

4.1 Equality Annual Progress Report 2024/2025

In addition to the narrative report, the following had been provided in regard to the year, 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025:-

- Draft Annual Progress Report on Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties;
- LCCC Equality Action Plan (2021-2025);
- Disability Action Plan (2021-2025).

The Head of Service responded to questions posed by Members.

The following actions were agreed:-

- the Head of Corporate Communications & Administration would provide Councillor K Dickson with the date of the last review of the Communications' methods and policies, together with the findings thereof;
- a review of the Communications' policies so as to provide for alternative text on images, and also to reflect on future developments in the communications' field;

4.1 Equality Annual Progress Report 2024/2025 (Continued)

- the Director of Finance & Corporate Services would speak with the Director of Environmental Services about a review of the policy on bi-lingual signs and revert back to Councillor G McCleave accordingly.

It was proposed by Councillor K Dickson, seconded by Councillor J Lavery and agreed to recommend that the Draft Annual Progress Report on Public Authority Statutory Equality & Good Relations Duties for 2024/2025 be approved.

During this item:-

- The Head of Finance left the meeting and returned to the Chamber. (6.38 pm and 6.40 pm respectively).
- The Head of Corporate Communications & Administration entered the Chamber. (6.40 pm)

Councillor J Bamford left the Chamber at the conclusion of this item. (6.41 pm)

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 31st March 2025;
- Recruitment reports – (i) Advert & Selection; and (ii) Appointments;
- Workforce Profile.

The Head of Service highlighted the improvement in the number of average working days lost but stressed that this remained a work in progress.

The Head of Service responded to Members' questions.

Councillor J Bamford returned to the Chamber after this item had concluded. (6.46 pm)

5. Report of Head of Corporate Communications & Administration

5.1 Review of Civic Policies

The Head of Service advised that the Council's Policy on Invitations to Civic Functions, Visits and Council Events had been developed in consultation with a Members' Focus Group, the membership of which being detailed in the report. The Mayoral Protocol had also been reviewed and the need for a Civic Events Policy had been identified.

5.1 Review of Civic Policies (Continued)

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

- Draft Civic Events Policy;
- Draft Civic Representation Procedures;
- Draft Mayoral Protocol.

In furtherance of a decision at the previous meeting of Committee, the following documents had also been provided for comparative purposes between the existing and proposed policies:-

- Current Policy on Invitations to Civic Functions, Visits & Council Events;
- Current advisory note on Office of Mayor;
- Current advisory note on Mayoral Chains;
- Current guidance on Use of Mayoral Vehicle;
- Current Policy on Invitations to Civic Functions, Visits & Council Events with highlighted changes;
- Current advisory note on Office of Mayor with highlighted changes;
- Equality Screening document.

The Head of Service apologised for the anomalies in the colour coding and explained the amendments as requested at the previous meeting. The Head of Service responded to Members' questions.

Councillor K Dickson had just prior to the meeting, given notification to Members of the Committee and the Officers of changes that he would wish to have made. Alderman A Ewart also asked for an amendment.

It was proposed by Councillor K Dickson seconded by Councillor A Ewing and agreed to recommend that - subject to the following amendments - the Draft Civic Events Policy; the Draft Civic Representation Procedures and the Draft Mayoral Protocol, be approved:-

New Civic Events Policy:

"Additional invitations may be issued in consultation with the Mayor and Chief Executive" to be replaced by "Additional invitations may be issued following agreement by both the Mayor and Chief Executive".

New Civic Representation Procedures

- (i) "Additional invitations may be issued in consultation with the Mayor, Chair and Chief Executive or relevant director, as appropriate" to be replaced by "Any additional invitations must be agreed upon by the Mayor, Chair, and either the Chief Executive or relevant director, as appropriate".

5.1 Review of Civic Policies (Continued)

New Civic Representation Procedures (Continued)

- (ii) Item 3.1 – A rewording of the 3rd paragraph and an inclusion as to who (Mayor or Chairman) decides if it is appropriate for the Chair to have a role in any particular Corporate/Civic Event.

5.2 2025 Anniversaries Programme Update

Members noted the update in regard to the 2025 anniversaries programme. The report covered the VE Day 80 commemoration on the 8th May 2025 and a draft of the commemorations planned for VJ Day 80 on the 15th August 2025.

The Head of Service responded to Members' questions and outlined some of the events as far as was possible at this stage.

Councillor J Harpur referred to the schools' programme at the Irish Linen Centre/Lisburn Museum as part of the VE 80 commemorations. Due to the transport which had been provided by the Council, pupils from St Joseph's Primary School in Carryduff had been able to attend. Councillor Harpur welcomed this and expressed his thanks for the provision of the transport.

5.3 Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance 2025
Assembly Buildings, Belfast – Saturday 25th October 2025

In addition to the narrative report, copy of a letter from the Royal British Legion had been provided. The letter outlined the event and invited the Council to sponsor an advertisement in the souvenir programme.

The Head of Service responded to questions about the advertisement.

It was proposed by Alderman M Gregg, seconded by Councillor R McLernon and agreed to recommend that – as in previous years – the Council sponsor a half page advertisement in the 2025 RBL Festival of Remembrance programme at a cost of £500.00.

The sponsorship did not include tickets for the event which were not yet on sale either. Details would be reported to the September 2025 meeting of Council at which time representation at the event and the purchase of tickets would be considered.

The Director of Organisation Development & Innovation and the Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development left and returned to the Chamber during presentation of this item at 6.59 pm and 7.00 pm respectively.

5.4 Service for the Day of Reflection
St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast - Saturday 21st June 2025

In addition to the narrative report, copy of a letter received on the 19th May 2025 from the Dean of Belfast and the Leader of the Corrymeela Community in regard to a Service for the Day of Reflection being held in St Anne's Cathedral on the 21st June 2025 had been provided.

It was proposed by Councillor J Bamford, seconded by Alderman M Gregg and agreed that the attendance of any Member who wished to attend the Service for the Day of Reflection be approved, noting that Members' vouched expenditure would be reimbursed accordingly.

6. Any Other Business – Non-Confidential

6.1 "Blue Bridge" at Hilden
Councillor G Hynds

Councillor G Hynds sought an update on the ownership of the "Blue Bridge" at Hilden and also enquired as to remedial works to it.

The Head of Assets confirmed that the owner of the "Blue Bridge" had not yet been identified but that discussions with stakeholders were ongoing. It would be the intention of all concerned that the bridge be maintained in a safe condition. Council officers were in consultation with stakeholders about such maintenance.

7. Confidential Report from Director of Finance & Corporate Services

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

7.1 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 24th June 2025 and the signing of the contracts.

7.2 Single Tender Action – End of Year Position 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 24th June 2025.

7.3 Management Accounts (Draft) – Period 12 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 24th June 2025.

In Committee

It was proposed by Councillor A Ewing, seconded by Councillor J Bamford and agreed that the Confidential Report of the Director 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.) (7.05 pm)

7.1 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. Also provided was tabular information in regard to those contracts for which financial increases had been requested during the 2024/2025 financial year.

The Head of Assets responded to Members' questions.

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

- T24/25-057 - The Manufacture & Delivery of Street Nameplates for LCCC;
- T24/25-046 - Display Feature Maintenance Contract.

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

The information in regard to those contracts for which financial increases had been requested during the 2024/2025 financial year was noted.

7.2 Single Tender Action – End of Year Position 2024/2025

Presented by the Head of Assets.

In addition to the narrative report, a schedule of contracts awarded under the Single Tender Award process for the financial year 2024/2025 was provided and duly noted. Members' attention was drawn to the fact that the number of STAs had reduced significantly during the last three financial years.

7.3 Management Accounts (Draft) – Period 12 of 2024/2025

Presented by the Head of Finance.

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

Alderman M Gregg referred to ongoing vacancies and the operational difficulties for the servicing of meetings which this was causing. The Director of Finance & Corporate noted these comments for investigation.

In regard to the Estimates for 2026/2027, Members' briefings would be held in the near future.

The Director of Finance & Corporate Services agreed to revert back to Councillor J Lavery about the number of Section 76 cases attributable to the entry for legal costs in the draft Management Accounts.

8. Any Other Business – Confidential

No other business of a confidential nature was raised.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor J Harpur, seconded by Councillor A Ewing and agreed to come "out of Committee". Normal business and the recording were resumed. (7.23 pm)

9. Any Other Business

9.1 Thanks to Officers

The Chairman, Councillor B Higginson, referred to this being the last meeting of the Corporate Services Committee at which Cara McCrory (Director of Finance & Corporate Services) and Frances Byrne (Head of Corporate Communications & Administration) would be attending as both were leaving the Council's employment to take up other posts.

9.1 Thanks to Officers (Continued)

The Chair wished Cara and Frances all the best for the future and thanked them for their service and contribution to the workings of the Council. These comments were endorsed by other Members present.

Cara and Frances responded accordingly.

Finally the Chair thanked those present for their attendance, wished them a pleasant time over the summer recess and – there being no further business – the meeting concluded at 7.26 pm.

After the meeting was pronounced as closed, the Director of Finance & Corporate Services made a short presentation by means of Shared Screen on the Terms of Reference of the Corporate Services Committee.

MAYOR/CHAIR