

**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 12<sup>th</sup> November 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, M Gregg and P Porter  
Councillors T Beckett, R Carlin, K Dickson, A Ewing,  
J Harpur, G McCleave, N Parker and The Hon N Trimble

**PRESENT IN  
REMOTE LOCATION  
(COMMITTEE)**

Councillor J Lavery BEM

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

Alderman O Gawith

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

Alderman J Tinsley  
Councillor P Catney

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chief Executive  
Director of Organisation Development & Innovation  
Head of Assets  
Head of Finance  
Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development  
Acting Head of Governance & Communications  
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 and Communications who was seated in the public gallery. Ms McNamee would take up her post in the near future.

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. Item 6.12 on Agenda – Employment Procedures

The Chair, Councillor B Higginson, referred to Item 6.12 on the agenda - Employment Procedures. The Chair advised that a query on this item had arisen earlier in the day and that it required to be investigated by Officers. Accordingly Item 6.12 – Employment Procedures - would be removed from the agenda before the meeting and would not be discussed. The item would be deferred to a future meeting of Committee.

2. Apologies

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

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

4. Report of Acting Head of Governance & Communications

4.1 Committees – Terms of Reference

In addition to the narrative report, the draft Terms of Reference for the following Committees (showing updates where appropriate) had been provided:-

- Communities & Wellbeing Committee (updated);
- Environment & Sustainability Committee (updated);
- Regeneration & Growth Committee (updated);
- Corporate Services Committee (updated);
- Governance & Audit Committee;
- Planning Committee.

4.1 Committees – Terms of Reference (Continued)

It was proposed by Councillor R Carlin, seconded by Councillor A Ewing and agreed that the Terms of Reference for the Committees as set out above be approved.

The Council's Standing Orders, Constitution, Scheme of Delegation and Accounting Manual documents would be amended to reflect the revised Terms of Reference of the Committees and would be presented to the Corporate Services Committee in due course.

4.2 Illuminations 2026

In addition to the narrative report, the draft Calendar of Illuminations for 2026 had been provided. The narrative report explained how the calendar had been compiled. The Building Illumination Policy was available also.

It was proposed by Councillor J Bamford, seconded by Councillor R Carlin and agreed to recommend that the draft Calendar of Illuminations for 2026 be approved.

The Acting Head of Service advised that – in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair - any new Chair of the Committee would be provided with a range of various photograph opportunities to accompany light-ups, eg photograph with charity or photograph of building with the charity logo.

4.3 Lisburn Sea Cadets – 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Founding  
Request to illuminate Lagan Valley Island

In addition to the narrative report, copy of a letter dated the 29<sup>th</sup> October 2025 from Lisburn Sea Cadets had been provided, requesting that the Council light up its civic building in blue on the 17<sup>th</sup> December 2025 to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Lisburn Sea Cadets.

It was proposed by Councillor A Ewing, seconded by Councillor K Dickson and agreed that – recognising the symbolic importance of this anniversary - the request referred to above be acceded to.

5. Report of Head of Finance

5.1 Treasury Outturn Half Yearly Report – Quarter 2 of 2025/2026

Members noted the content of the following:-

- the information contained in the narrative report;
- the Treasury Management Report for the first half of 2025/2026;
- the Prudential Indicators for the first half 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.

5.1 Treasury Outturn Half Yearly Report – Quarter 2 of 2025/2026  
(Continued)

The Head of Finance responded to Members' questions.

Alderman P Porter sought information on existing loans and also amounts outstanding on maturity loans. The Head of Finance advised that such information had been contained in an appendix presented to the September 2025 meeting of the Committee but that she would provide Alderman Porter with a further copy.

6. Report of Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development

6.1 HR & OD Strategy – Supporting the Council's Ambitions

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

- HR & OD Visual Strategy;
- Equality screening document.

The strategy would deliver on the ambitions of the Corporate Plan and would run for its duration. It was not intended to cover the routine tasks of the HR & OD Unit.

The Head of Service responded to Members' questions.

It was proposed by Alderman P Porter, seconded by Councillor A Ewing and agreed to recommend that the content of the HR & OD Strategy be agreed.

Councillor P Catney and Alderman J Tinsley joined the meeting on a remote basis during discussion. (6.16 pm and 6.18 pm respectively)

Ms Judith McNamee (the recently appointed Head of Governance & Communications) and the IT Officer left the meeting. (6.18 pm)

7. Any Other Business – Non-Confidential

7.1 Disability Action Plan  
Councillor K Dickson

Councillor K Dickson referred to the Disability Action Plan which was to include the use of alternative text on images. Councillor Dickson stated that the posts regarding Remembrance Sunday had not been available in alternative text.

The Acting Head of Governance & Communications noted these comments for appropriate action by the Communications Unit.

8. Confidential Report from Chief Executive

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

8.1 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 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025 and the signing of the contracts.

8.2 Proposed Departmental Pricing Schedule 2026/2027

(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 on completion of the Estimates process (February 2026).

8.3 Quarterly Finance Reports – Quarter 2 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 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

8.4 Management Accounts – Period 6 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 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

8.5 Reserves as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 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 become available following ratification by Council on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

8.6 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 become available following ratification by Council on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

8.7 HMRC VAT Assessment

(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.

8.8 On-Call Policy

(Confidential for reason of information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matters arising between the Council; or a Government Department and employees of, or office holders under, the Council.

Report to become available post consultation with the JCNF.

8.9 Training Policy

(Confidential for reason of information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matters arising between the Council; or a Government Department and employees of, or office holders under, the Council.

Report to become available post implementation.

8.10 Salary Sacrifice Shared Cost AVCs

(Confidential for reason of information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matters arising between the Council; or a Government Department and employees of, or office holders under, the Council.

Redacted report to become available post implementation.

8.11 Succession Planning

(Confidential for reason of information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matters arising between the Council; or a Government Department and employees of, or office holders under, the Council.

Redacted report to become available post consultation with the JCNF.

8.12 Employment Procedures

As reported earlier in the meeting, this item of business had been removed from the agenda to allow for investigation of a query that had arisen earlier in the day.

In Committee

It was proposed by Councillor A Ewing, seconded by Alderman P Porter and agreed that the Confidential Report of the Chief Executive be considered "in Committee". (Recording was paused at this stage in proceedings. There were no members of the public or the press present.) (6.19 pm)

### 8.1 Report on Tender Awards

Presented by the Head of Assets who, together with the Chief Executive, responded to Members' questions.

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

It was proposed by Alderman M Gregg, seconded by Alderman P Porter and agreed to recommend that the tenders awarded in regard to the following contracts, together with the attendant tender reports, be noted:-

- T24/25-049 – Lisburn Orientation & Walkability Project – Wayfinding Signage in Lisburn City Centre – Procurement of a Signage Company;
- T25/26-004 – Design Team for Proposed Changing Rooms at Aghalee Playing Fields and Seycon Park.

It was further agreed on the Proposal made by Alderman M Gregg and seconded by Alderman P Porter to recommend that the signing and sealing of the Tender documents be approved.

The Head of Assets agreed to pick up directly with Councillor T Beckett, an enquiry regarding Aghalee Playing Fields.

### 8.2 Proposed Departmental Pricing Schedule 2026/2027

Presented by the Acting Head of Governance & Communications who responded to Members' questions.

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

- Equality screening;
- Rural Needs Impact Assessment.

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

- the content of the narrative report be noted;
- the pricing points as outlined in the report to support the Estimates' 2026/2027 process be agreed.

### 8.3 Quarterly Finance Reports – Quarter 2 of 2025/2026

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

Members noted the content of the following:-

- the information contained in the narrative report;
- the report on Repairs & Renewals for Q2 of 2025/2026;
- the report on Department for Communities' budgets for Q2 of 2025/2026.

#### 8.4 Management Accounts – Period 6 of 2025/2026

Presented by the Head of Finance.

The Management Accounts for the period ending the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025, together with the narrative report by way of explanation, were provided and duly noted.

The Head of Assets and the Acting Head of Governance & Communications left the Chamber during discussion. (6.36 pm)

#### 8.5 Reserves as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

Information on the Reserves Summary as at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 had been presented to the Committee on the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2025. That meeting had requested further information on the Reserves.

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

- Reserves as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025;
- Breakdown of legal costs for Period 6 of 2025/2026.

It was proposed by Alderman P Porter, seconded by Councillor A Ewing and agreed to recommend that the information contained in the report be noted and that the earmarking of Reserves as set out in the report be agreed.

The Head of Finance agreed to provide additional information on the Income and Expenditure on specific budget lines.

Councillor P Catney left the meeting on a remote basis during discussion of this item. (6.54 pm)

#### 8.6 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 LG17/2025 from the Department for Communities providing revised rates for Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances applicable from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025;
- the Council's updated Scheme of Allowances Payable to Councillors for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.

### 8.7 HMRC VAT Assessment

During the course of discussion of this item, the Chair, Councillor B Higginson, left the meeting at 7.20 pm to attend another engagement (as previously advised to the Chief Executive). The Vice-Chair, Councillor J Bamford, took the Chair and conducted the remainder of the business before the meeting.

This item was presented by the Head of Finance who, together with the Chief Executive, responded to Members' questions. These officers gave assurances that they were content with the current processing and submission of VAT returns.

The report in regard to a VAT assessment by HMRC was noted.

During discussion, the following Members left the Chamber:-

- The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Alderman A Grehan. (6.56 pm)
- Councillor A Ewing. (7.05 pm)
- The Chair, Councillor B Higginson. (7.20 pm)
- Alderman A Ewart. (7.27 pm)

### 8.8 On-Call Policy

Presented by the Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development.

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

- draft of the proposed On-Call Policy;
- current On-Call Policy;
- On-Call Policy showing tracked changes;
- Equality screening document.

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

- the amended On-Call Policy be approved to progress to JCNF for consultation;
- the policy be reviewed in 12 months' time and at that time, information be provided as to the number of times each on-call person had been called out.

### 8.9 Training Policy

Presented by the Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development.

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

- draft of the proposed Training Policy;
- current Training Policy;
- Equality screening document.

It was proposed by Alderman P Porter, seconded by Councillor J Harpur and agreed to recommend that the amended Training Policy be approved to progress to JCNF for consultation.

### 8.10 Salary Sacrifice Shared Cost AVCs (Additional Voluntary Contributions)

Presented by the Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development.

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

- proposed Pension Policy 2025;
- Equality screening document.

It was proposed by Alderman P Porter, seconded by Councillor J Harpur and agreed to recommend that:-

- the intention to implement Shared AVCs (Additional Voluntary Contributions) be approved;
- the proposed Pension Policy be approved to progress to consultation with the Council's recognised trade unions through the JCNF.

### 8.11 Succession Planning

Presented by the Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development.

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

- paper entitled "Proposed Succession Planning and Workforce Development Approach";
- Equality screening document.

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

- the salary increases for Higher Level Apprenticeships be approved effective from the date of ratification of decision;
- the proposed salary for Graduate posts be approved.

8.12 Employment Procedures

As reported earlier in the meeting, this item of business had been removed from the agenda to allow for investigation of a query that had arisen earlier in the day.

9. Any Other Business – Confidential

9.1 Council Chamber – Acoustics  
Alderman P Porter

Alderman P Porter asked that the sound system in the Council Chamber be looked at in view of the acoustics in the Chamber not being of a good quality.

9.2 Council Mobile Phones  
Councillor T Beckett

Councillor T Beckett referred to issues with his mobile phone which he was experiencing since the change in the Council's mobile provider. Councillor Beckett was aware that other Members were experiencing similar issues.

The Head of Organisation Development & Innovation confirmed that Officers were aware of ongoing issues concerning mobile phones and that such issues were being actively pursued with the provider.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor N Parker, seconded by Alderman P Porter and agreed to come out of Committee and normal business and the recording were resumed.  
(8.07 pm)

10. Any Other Business

Dealt with under Item 7.

After the Acting Chair, Councillor J Bamford, had thanked those present for their attendance, the meeting concluded at 8.07 pm.

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MAYOR/CHAIR