

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting of the Communities & Wellbeing Committee held remotely and in the Council Chamber, Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn on Tuesday 4th February 2025 at 6.00 pm.

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

Councillor J Craig (Chair)
Alderman H Legge (Vice-Chair)
Aldermen A Grehan, A McIntyre and P Porter
Councillors T Beckett, J Gallen, B Higginson,
S Lowry, G McCleave, and G Thompson

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

Alderman S Skillen
Councillors D Bassett and C Kemp

**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:

Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing
Head of Communities
Head of Parks & Amenities
Head of Sports Services
Member Services Officers (RN & EW)

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and reminded Members 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.

The Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing outlined the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency. 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.

1. Apologies

An apology for non-attendance at the meeting was accepted and recorded on behalf of Councillor T Mitchell.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Chair invited Members to declare any interests they might have in relation to the business of the meeting and reminded them of the requirement that they complete Declaration of Interest forms in this regard which had been provided with the papers for the meeting and which were also available in the Chamber.

The following Declarations of Interest were made in regard to Item 4.1 of the Report of the Head of Communities – “Community Support Grant Funding”:-

- Councillor G Hynds - Committee member of Lisburn Recreation & Community Hub which is listed as seeking funding under this initiative.
- Councillor C Kemp – Non-remunerated Director/current Chairperson of Glenclare Community Group which is listed as seeking funding under this initiative.
- Alderman S Skillen - Non-pecuniary interest. Member of sports group associated with the Ballybeen Improvement Group which is listed as seeking funding under this initiative.
- Councillor G Thompson – Non-pecuniary interest. Observer on the Committee of Hillsborough & District Committee which is listed as seeking funding under this initiative.

Alderman S Skillen also made a declaration under Item 4.2 of the Report of the Head of Communities – “Community Festivals Funding” in relation to Ballybeen Improvement Group which is listed as seeking funding under this initiative.

3. Report of Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing

3.1 Delegated authority to Communities & Wellbeing Committee
Process for overseeing bonfires on Council-owned sites

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

- Paper and associated process for the managing of bonfires on Council-owned sites;
- Equality Screening document.

The Director responded to Members’ questions.

3.1 Delegated authority to Communities & Wellbeing Committee
Process for overseeing bonfires on Council-owned sites
(Continued)

It was proposed by Alderman A McIntyre, seconded by Alderman H Legge and agreed to recommend that delegated authority be granted to the Communities & Wellbeing Committee in relation to processes surrounding the management of bonfires on Council- owned lands. This delegated authority would include the ability to call a special meeting of the Communities & Wellbeing Committee to make decisions relating to Council-owned lands on which there is a bonfire.

3.2 DEA Local Investment Plan

A comprehensive report on the DEA Local Investment Plan (including the proposed Local Investment Programme for 2025/2026) had been provided.

The DEA Local Investment Plan is delivered by means of the funding streams listed below:-

- Community Facilities Fund;
- Sports Fund;
- Bursary Scheme;
- Community Conversation;
- DIY & Technical Fund.

The Director responded to Members' questions.

It was proposed by Alderman P Porter, seconded by Alderman A Grehan and agreed to recommend that - subject to approval of the Financial Resilience report being considered by the Corporate Services Committee on the 12th February 2025:-

- the delivery of the 2025/2026 DEA Local Investment Programme be agreed;
- the DIY & Technical Fund be increased by £40,000.00;
- the Community Facilities Fund be increased by approximately £100,000.00 for pitch development/maintenance;
- under the Community Facilities Fund, the criteria be varied so that any groups who had made application to the Fund outside of a two-year period would be eligible to re-apply.

Members asked that the Council's website be checked out to ensure that information on the availability of funding streams was up-to date.

4. Report of Head of Communities

4.1 Community Support Grant Outcome of Assessments 2025/2026

In addition to the narrative report, Members had been provided with copy of a table of outcomes of assessment under the Community Support Grant programme for 2025/2026.

The Head of Communities reported extensively on the above programme in terms of its objectives, the number of applications received during the application process, the outcome thereof and information sessions to engage with the public. It was noted that a Letter of Offer regarding funding had not as yet been received from the Department for the Communities so the projected amount from the DfC was being taken at risk.

The Head of Communities responded to Members' questions.

It was proposed by Alderman P Porter, seconded by Alderman A Grehan and agreed that:-

- the allocated amount of funding for each successful applicant based on weighted score be approved, it being noted that as the recommended percentage reduction was not being applied, the programme would come in over budget for 2025/2026;
- the unsuccessful applicants receive feedback and support from staff as required.

4.2 Community Festivals Funding 2025/2026

In addition to the narrative report, Members had been provided with copy of a table of outcomes of assessment under the Community Festivals Fund for 2025/2026.

The Head of Communities reported extensively on the above Fund in terms of its objectives, the number of applications received during the application process, the outcome thereof and information sessions to engage with the public. It was noted that a Letter of Offer regarding funding had not as yet been received from the Department for the Communities so the projected amount from the DfC was being taken at risk.

The Head of Communities responded to Members' questions.

4.2 Community Festivals Funding 2025/2026 (Continued)

It was proposed by Alderman P Porter, seconded by Alderman A Grehan and agreed that:-

- the allocated amount of funding for each successful applicant based on weighted score be approved, it being noted that as the recommended percentage reduction was not being applied, the programme would come in over budget for 2025/26;
- the unsuccessful applicants receive feedback and support from staff as required.

The Head of Communities noted a correction required to the DEA associated with the Moorcroft Rural Community Association.

5. Any Other Business – Non-Confidential

5.1 “Blue Bridge” at Hilden - Site visit
Councillor G Hynds

Councillor G Hynds expressed his thanks to the Officers for facilitating a site visit to the Blue Bridge at Hilden and expressed the hope that the issues concerning this location could soon be resolved.

The Chair advised the Committee that there had been an assurance that the bridge itself was “sound”.

5.2 Strathearne Place/Delacherois Avenue, Hilden, Lisburn
Councillor G Hynds

Councillor G Hynds referred to steps and railings in the vicinity of Strathearne Place/Delacherois Avenue, Low Road, Hilden which were in disrepair and posing health and safety issues. A lack of street lighting at this location also posed health and safety concerns.

The Head of Parks & Amenities was aware of the above issues and advised that he was addressing them. Councillor Hynds asked that the concerns be resolved as soon as possible.

5.3 Damask Community Outreach – Provision of Community Fridge
Councillor G Hynds

Councillor G Hynds advised of the recent launch of a Community Fridge by the Damask Community Outreach. This project had been the recipient of funding under the Community Support Fund.

5.4 Storm Éowyn
Councillor B Higginson

Councillor B Higginson expressed his thanks to the Head of Communities and her team for the assistance provided in the aftermath of Storm Éowyn on the 24th January 2025.

Reference was made to the visit made to the Council's area by Gordon Lyons, Minister for the Communities, to view the destruction caused by Storm Éowyn and the steps being taken by the Council to assist the community. The Department of Communities had made available a £1m emergency fund to assist householders in the aftermath of the Storm. This fund was being administered by Councils. On behalf of a number of householders who had benefited from this fund, Councillor Higginson passed on their thanks to the Head of Communities and her team.

The thanks to the Head of Communities and her team were endorsed by Aldermen P Porter and S Skillen.

5.5 Applications for Funding – Assistance to Applicants
Alderman P Porter

Alderman P Porter enquired if a course could be organised for unsuccessful applicants for grant-aid, the aim of such a course being to fully equip and inform them on the pre-requisites for a fully completed application.

The Head of Communities confirmed that the aim of the Communities Team was to enable comprehensive applications to be made; however the process is highly competitive as a limited amount of funding is available. Engagement sessions had been held for recent grant-aid programmes, and more outreach clinics would be organised.

5.6 Applications for Funding – Marked Score
Alderman P Porter

The officers noted comments made by Alderman P Porter about the anomalies presented by a marked scoring type of assessment in grant-aid applications.

6. Confidential Report from Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing

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

6.1 Community Investment Fund - Letter of Offer: Carryduff GAC
(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 June 2025.

6.2 Variation to Contract

(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 April 2025.

6.3 Stewarding & Crowd Control

(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 July 2025.

In Committee

It was proposed by Councillor T Beckett, 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.) (6.39 pm)

6.1 Community Investment Fund
Letter of Offer: Carryduff GAC

Presented by the Head of Communities who, together with the Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing, responded to Members’ questions.

It was proposed by Councillor J Gallen, seconded by Councillor D Bassett and agreed to recommend that a formal Letter of Offer be issued to Carryduff GAC to commence the project as described in its submission associated with its application under Phase 3 of the Community Investment Fund.

The Director advised that a report on the CIF would be presented to the Committee later in the year, such a report to include the terms and conditions of the Fund and an update on those three organisations who had been issued with a Letter of Offer “in principle”.

Particular concern was voiced by Members about the Peace Plus funding and how a non-decision by the funding body to date was impacting on groups attempting to meet their funding requirements under the above Fund.

6.2 Variation to Contract

Presented by the Head of Parks & Amenities who responded to Members’ questions.

It was proposed by Alderman H Legge, seconded by Councillor J Gallen and agreed to recommend that Option 1 as set out in the report with regard to the “Static Attendance and Open & Close of Sites” contract as provided by the firm detailed in the report be agreed.

6.3 Stewarding & Crowd Control

Presented by the Head of Parks & Amenities who responded to Members' questions.

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

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

- the report on Stewarding & Crowd Control be noted;
- the Business Case for the Stewarding & Crowd Control contract be approved; and
- Option 2 as contained in the Business Case be accepted and be progressed to procurement.

Alderman S Skillen and Councillor D Bassett left the meeting on a remote basis during discussion of this item. (7.11 pm)

7. Any Other Business – Confidential

7.1 Lough Moss Leisure Centre – Feasibility Study Councillor J Gallen

Councillor J Gallen referred to the demand for increased leisure facilities in the Carryduff area.

It was proposed by Councillor J Gallen, seconded by Councillor B Higginson and agreed that the consideration of a swimming pool at Lough Moss Leisure Centre be explored in the Feasibility Study being carried for that facility. The Director outlined to the Committee, the Council's Capital Governance process and reminded Members that the feasibility was not an investment decision.

7.2 Meeting attendees at remote locations Alderman P Porter

Alderman P Porter stated that meeting attendees in the Chamber should be aware of who is attending the meeting on a remote basis.

It was agreed that this matter be explored and until this information was available on a screen in the Chamber, the attendee list be read out at the meeting.

7.3 “Santos” Football Pitch
Councillor B Higginson

Councillor B Higginson enquired about the football pitch at the Scout field in Carryduff which had previously been leased by Santos Football Club.

The Head of Parks & Amenities advised that the football pitch was in fact available for bookings and that portaloos would be made available on-site.

7.4 Aberdelghy Golf Clubhouse
Councillor G Hynds

In response to comments from Councillor G Hynds, the Head of Sports Services advised that preparation of a Feasibility Study in relation to Aberdelghy Golf Clubhouse was underway.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor S Lowry, seconded by Alderman A McIntyre and agreed to come “out of Committee”. Normal business and the audio recording were resumed.

8. Any Other Business

Dealt with under Item 5.

The meeting concluded at 7.32 pm.

MAYOR/CHAIR