

**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 6<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at 6.00 pm.**

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

Councillor T Mitchell (Chair)  
Councillor A Givan (Vice-Chair)  
Deputy Mayor  
Alderman H Legge  
Alderman A McIntyre  
Councillors T Beckett, R Carlin, K Dickson, B Higginson, G McCleave and G Thompson

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

Alderman S Skillen  
Councillors J Craig, J Gallen, C Kemp, S Lowry and The Hon N Trimble

**PRESENT IN COUNCIL CHAMBER (NON-COMMITTEE)**

Councillors P Catney and G Hynds

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

Alderman J Tinsley

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing  
Head of Communities  
Head of Sports Services  
Business Support Officer (SC)  
Member Services Officers (RN & FA)

**Commencement of Meeting**

The Chair, Councillor T Mitchell, welcomed everyone to the meeting and wished them a Happy, Healthy and Peaceful New Year.

The Chair 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

There were no apologies.

Councillor S Lowry joined the meeting on a remote basis. (6.02 pm)

2. Declarations of Interest

During the course of the meeting the following Declarations of Interest were made by Alderman S Skillen:-

- Item 4.1 of Report of Head of Communities – “Notice of Motion on Childcare – Update”. Daughter had participated in a number of the Council’s holiday schemes in the Castlereagh East DEA. Did not leave the meeting.
- Item 5.3 of Any Other Business – “EVAWAG Local Change Fund”. Associated with Ballybeen Improvement Group which had been a recipient of funding. Did not leave the meeting.

3. Report of Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing

3.1 Dundonald International Ice Bowl – Project Update

Members had been furnished with a report providing an update and progress made to date in respect of the redevelopment of Dundonald International Ice Bowl, together with associated programmes. A workshop and tour for Members was scheduled for the 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2026 at 1.00 pm.

Members welcomed the progress that was being made on site.

The Director and Head of Sports Services responded to Members’ questions and:-

- noted comments that – given that the existing facilities would be in use for some time – essential and routine maintenance should continue in order to reflect the standards expected by customers and Members alike;
- confirmed that the process was in hand for the formal procurement of the catering provision.

It was proposed by the Deputy Mayor, Alderman H Legge, seconded by Councillor A Givan and agreed to recommend that the update and progress report be noted.

3.2 Update on Process for Overseeing Bonfires on Council-Owned Sites

In addition to the narrative report, Members had been provided with the link to the previously agreed process from February 2025.

The Director responded to Members' questions and noted several queries to include the expansion of the interagency group.

In order to address one section of the report, it was proposed by Councillor G Thompson, seconded by Councillor G McCleave and agreed to go "into Committee. (Recording was paused at this stage in proceedings. The press member left the meeting and there were no public present. 6.25 pm)

During the course of discussion whilst "in Committee", the Director:-

- reminded Members of the previously agreed process for overseeing bonfires on Council-owned sites and noted how steps taken by Officers aligned with the agreed process;
- advised Members that the report was focused on the physical site location and outlined the work that had been undertaken to inform the report;
- noted that the review should capture all items pertaining to the process of overseeing bonfires on Council-owned sites and advised the Committee of a related staffing consideration;
- confirmed that groups seeking financial assistance under the proposed process would require to be fully constituted.

During discussion of this item whilst "in Committee", Councillor P Catney left and returned to the Council Chamber at 6.30 pm and 6.32 pm respectively.

On a Proposal made by Councillor G Thompson and seconded by Councillor K Dickson, it was agreed to come "out of Committee". (Normal business and the audio recording were resumed; and the press member returned to the Chamber. 6.39 pm)

It was proposed by Councillor K Dickson, seconded by Councillor A Givan and agreed to recommend that:-

- the sum of £25,000.00 included in the 2026/2027 budget estimates to support the hiring of beacons for events on Council-owned lands be agreed;
- the hiring of beacons on behalf of community groups for events on Council-owned lands be procured by Officers of the Council.

4. Report of Head of Communities

4.1 Notice of Motion on Childcare – Update

A Notice of Motion on the subject of Childcare had been considered by the Committee in December 2023 with a commitment that Officers would continue to work on providing safe, affordable and enjoyable opportunities for children and young people.

In addition to the narrative report, a schedule of services and schemes offered by the Council was also provided.

The progress report provided an update in relation to supporting childcare provision within the Council area and its content and that of the related appendix were duly noted on a Proposal made by Councillor G Thompson and seconded by Councillor R Carlin.

The Head of Communities agreed to:-

- provide Members with (i) further detail as to how the programmes referred to in the report had expanded since December 2023; (ii) any plans for expansion of the schemes in general; (iii) any plans for enhanced provision being put in place in rural areas;
- have a Rural Needs Impact Assessment prepared so as to inform on childcare provision that should be offered by the Council for rural areas.

During discussion, Alderman S Skillen declared an interest in this item of business. (See Item 2, above)

5. Any Other Business – Non-Confidential

5.1 Success of local football clubs  
Councillor T Mitchell (Chair) & Councillor G Hynds

The Chair, Councillor T Mitchell, congratulated the following clubs on their recent successes:-

- Ballymacash Rangers Football Club on winning the Steel & Sons Cup (Christmas Day);
- Derriaghly Cricket Club Football Club on winning the Border Cup (27<sup>th</sup> December 2025)

Councillor G Hynds concurred with these comments and highlighted that Derriaghly CC FC had won four trophies recently which was remarkable given the small size of the club. Councillor Hynds asked that the successes of the above football clubs be recognised. The Chair undertook to progress this request with The Right Worshipful The Mayor and the Director.

5.2 Anna Cheyne Visual Art Award 2026 and Exhibition  
Alderman A McIntyre

Alderman A McIntyre thanked the Director and her staff for the re-introduction of the Anna Cheyne Visual Art Award. The attendant exhibition would launch on the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

5.3 EVAWAG Local Change Fund  
Councillor S Lowry

Councillor S Lowry referred to the inclusion of an amended Letter of Offer from the Executive Office in regard to the Change Fund Action Plan which was to do with the EVAWAG initiative (Ending Violence Against Women And Girls).

Councillor Lowry sought confirmation that this correspondence and information on associated events would be promoted via the Council and the Lisburn & Castlereagh Policing & Community Safety Partnership. This was confirmed by the Director.

During discussion, Alderman S Skillen declared an interest in this item of business. (See Item 2, above)

6. Confidential Report from Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing

The reason for confidentiality was as set out in the agenda, ie:-

6.1 Leisure and Community Wellbeing Directorate  
Draft Estimates 2026/2027

(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information)).

Report never to become available. (Final Estimates will be released.)

“In Committee”

It was proposed by Councillor B Higginson, seconded by Councillor K Dickson and agreed that the Confidential Report of the Director be considered “in Committee”. (Recording was paused at this stage in proceedings. The press member left the meeting and there were no public present. (6.51 pm)

6.1 Leisure and Community Wellbeing Directorate  
Draft Estimates 2026/2027

This item was presented by the Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing with the Heads of Service and the Business Support Officer being present to assist in discussion if so required.

6.1 Leisure and Community Wellbeing Directorate  
Draft Estimates 2026/2027 (Continued)

In addition to the narrative report which outlined the background and key issues in relation to the Estimates' process for 2026-2027 for the Leisure & Community Wellbeing Directorate, the following in relation to that Directorate had been provided:-

- Estimates for 2026/2027 with 2025/2026 Period 7 Actuals;
- Payroll, Non-Payroll and Income split;
- Detailed Estimates Overview per Service Unit;
- Repairs & Renewals;
- Capital Programme Listing.

The Director responded to Members' questions and:-

- provided a verbal update in relation to factors affecting the domestic and non-domestic rate movements.
- agreed to furnish Members with the timeline for works to the Aghalee Changing Facilities.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Councillor B Higginson, seconded by Councillor R Carlin and agreed to recommend that the draft Estimates 2026/2027 as presented for the Leisure & Community Wellbeing Directorate be agreed, and be submitted into the overall Estimates of the Council for the year commencing the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026.

7. Any Other Business – Confidential

7.1 Lough Moss – Feasibility Study  
Councillor B Higginson

In response to comments from Councillor B Higginson, the Director and the Head of Sports Services provided an update as to the preparation of a Feasibility Study for Lough Moss, which would be presented to the Committee in due course.

7.2 Pitches Strategy  
Councillor G McCleave

In response to comments from Councillor G McCleave, the Director provided an update as to the Pitches Strategy, it being noted that late February/March 2026 was the likely timeline for a Members' workshop.

7.3 Community Investment Fund  
Holy Trinity Church of Ireland, Ballylesson, Drumbo  
Councillor J Craig

In response to comments from Councillor J Craig, the Director agreed to confirm the funding streams agreed by the Council in regard to the project at Holy Trinity Church of Ireland, Ballylesson, and to revert to Councillor Craig off-line accordingly.

7.4 Billy Neill Country Park – Boardwalk  
Alderman S Skillen

Alderman S Skillen referred to a boardwalk within the Billy Neill Country Park that required to be repaired.

The Director noted these comments for appropriate action.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by the Deputy Mayor, Alderman H Legge, seconded by Councillor R Carlin and agreed to come “out of Committee”. Normal business and the audio recording were resumed. (7.08 pm)

8. Any Other Business

Dealt with under Item 5.

The Chair, Councillor T Mitchell, thanked those present for their attendance and - there being no further business - the meeting concluded at 7.08 pm.

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MAYOR/CHAIR