

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 19th May 2021 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT IN COUNCIL CHAMBER:

Alderman P Porter (Chairman)

The Right Worshipful The Mayor
Councillor The Hon. Nicholas Trimble

Deputy Mayor
Councillor Jenny Palmer

Alderman W J Dillon MBE and O Gawith

Councillors S Carson, A P Ewing, S Hughes, J Lavery BEM,
S Lowry, J McCarthy, U Mackin, John Palmer and A Swan

PRESENT IN A REMOTE LOCATION:

Alderman S Martin (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor R Carlin

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT IN A REMOTE LOCATION:

Alderman A Grehan

Councillors S Lee and S Skillen

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive (Remote)
Director of Finance & Corporate Services
Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing (Remote)
Head of Corporate Communications & Administration (Remote)
Head of Finance (Remote)
Head of Assets (Remote)
Head of Parks & Amenities (Remote)
Acting Head of Communities (Remote)
Business Improvement Officer (Remote)
Acting Member Services/PCSP Manager
IT Officer
Events Technician
Member Services Officer (LMcF & RN)

Commencement of Meeting

The Chairman, Alderman P Porter, extended a welcome to all present at the meeting and advised that it was being live-streamed to enable members of the public to both hear and see the proceedings.

The names of those Elected Members who were in attendance at the meeting, both in person and on a remote basis, were read out by the Acting Member Services/PCSP Manager.

The Chairman stated that, whilst the meeting was being live-streamed, unauthorised recording was not permitted, as per 8.5 of the Council's Standing Orders. The Chairman also reminded everyone to ensure that mobile phones were turned off or on silent mode for the duration of the meeting.

The Chairman proceeded to outline the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency. Finally the Chairman asked that any Member entering or leaving the meeting alert the Acting Member Services/PCSP Manager 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 Alderman A G Ewart MBE.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Chairman 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.

No declarations of interest were made.

3. Report of Director of Finance & Corporate Services

3.1 Customer Care Policy (Complaints, Comments & Compliments)

Members had been provided with a copy of the Council's revised Customer Care Policy which had undergone the necessary screening. The revised policy is a two-staged procedure, thereby making the procedure more efficient for both the complainant and the Council.

3.1 Customer Care Policy (Complaints, Comments & Compliments)
(Continued)

It was noted that the Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman planned to recommend a standardised two-staged complaints procedure throughout the public sector although its launch date was not likely to be until the end of 2021. On receipt of the Best Practice, the Council's policy would be reviewed again to ensure compliance.

It was proposed by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Jenny Palmer, seconded by Councillor A Swan and agreed to recommend that the revised Customer Care Policy be approved. Training on the policy would be provided during the summer months to all services, with an anticipated live date of the end of August 2021.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Jenny Palmer, expressed her thanks for the work which had gone into revising the Complaints Policy and Procedure.

The Vice-Chairman, Alderman S Martin, and Alderman A Grehan joined the meeting during discussion of this item. (6.06 pm)

4. Report of Head of Corporate Communications & Administration

4.1 Light up of Council Offices

(a) National Police Memorial Day

Members were advised of the receipt of a request from National Police Memorial Day for the Council offices to be lit in blue on the 25th September 2021. The building had been similarly lit in 2020.

It was proposed by Councillor John Palmer, seconded by Councillor S Lowry and agreed to recommend that:-

- the request referred to above be acceded to;
- National Police Memorial Day be added to the Council's annual schedule of light-ups.

In response to comments made by Councillor John Palmer about the Council arranging an event involving local police organisations, such as the Disabled Police Officers Association and the Retired Police Officers Association, to coincide with National Police Memorial Day, the Chairman stated that such a decision would be one for the incoming Mayor, Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

(b) Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke – 75th Anniversary

The Chairman verbally advised of the following light-up which had been dealt with in accordance with the powers delegated to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, along with The Right Worshipful The Mayor, under the exceptional circumstances section of the LCCC Building Illumination Policy. The request was contained in the Decision Log of the 18th May 2021.

- building lit in red on the 14th June 2021 to mark the 75th anniversary of Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke.

(c) Locations adjacent to Lagan Valley Island

The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor N Trimble, enquired about the light-ups being not confined to Lagan Valley Island but instead encompassing Union Bridge and Castle Gardens also.

The Chairman confirmed that the light-up of Castle Gardens had been examined when the Building Illumination Policy was recently revised and that it could be illuminated in certain circumstances. Union Bridge is not in the Council's ownership.

It was proposed by The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor N Trimble, seconded by Councillor A Swan and agreed that the light-up of areas adjacent to Lagan Valley Island be kept under consideration for lighting as and when appropriate.

4.2 NI Centenary Working Group – Minutes of Meeting

It was agreed to recommend that the minutes of a meeting of the NI Centenary Working Group held on the 24th March 2021 be noted. Councillor S Carson, Chairman of the Group, stated that he had a few amendments but would speak to the Head of Service in this regard.

The Chairman of the Working Group – Councillor S Carson – placed on record his thanks to all involved - including the Very Rev Sam Wright and the other clergy - in the Service of Thanksgiving on the 9th May 2021.

4.3 Health Working Group – Report of Meeting

It was agreed to recommend that the report of a meeting of the Health Working Group held on the 30th March 2021 be adopted, thereby allowing the decisions of that meeting to progress.

4.4 Lisburn & Castlereagh Policing & Community Safety Partnership Minutes of Meeting

It was proposed by Councillor A Ewing, seconded by Councillor S Lowry and agreed to recommend that the minutes of a Private Meeting of the Lisburn & Castlereagh PCSP held on the 16th March 2021 be noted.

5. Report of Head of Finance

5.1 Scheme of Allowances payable to Councillors from 1st April 2021

Members had been provided with copy of Circular LG07/2021 from the Department for Communities providing a consolidated record of councillor allowances as from 1st April 2021.

It was proposed by Councillor John Palmer, seconded by The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor N Trimble, and agreed to recommend that:-

- the revised rates for Dependants' Carers' Allowance applicable from 1st April 2021 be accepted and applied from that date;
- Circular LG 07/2021 from the Local Government & Housing Regulation Division of the Department for Communities which consolidates all councillor allowances as from the 1st April 2021 be noted; and
- the Council's updated Scheme of Allowances Payable to Councillors for the period 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022 be approved.

5.2 Treasury Management Review 2020/2021

The Head of Finance reminded Members that the Council adopts a Treasury Management Strategy as part of its rates setting process. This Strategy has been developed to determine the framework within which the financial resources of the Council will be managed.

Members had been provided with the 2020/2021 Outturn Treasury Management Report which provided a full review for Treasury Management policies, practices and activities for the Council, all investment decisions having been made in line with the Treasury Management Strategy.

The Head of Finance drew Members' attention to the possibility which existed for the Council to make loans to other local authorities, both in Northern Ireland and in Great Britain. Such lending would be subject to due diligence and in consultation with the Council's treasury management advisors.

It was proposed by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Jenny Palmer, seconded by Alderman O Gawith and agreed to recommend that the 2020/2021 Outturn Treasury Management Report be noted.

6. Agenda Item Brought Forward
Any Other Business

As the remainder of the business before the meeting was of a confidential nature, the Chairman sought agreement to bring forward Item 7 of the agenda – Any Other Business – so that items of a non-confidential nature might be raised when the Committee was in Live Stream. This was agreed.

7. Any Other Business

7.1 Signage for Toilet facilities for the disabled
Councillor S Skillen

In response to comments from Councillor S Skillen, the Director confirmed that new signage for toilets for the disabled (both visible and non-visible disabilities) was in the process of being erected in Council facilities but that she could not say when this would be completed for the full portfolio of the Council's buildings/facilities.

7.2 RADAR Keys (Royal Association for Disability & Rehabilitation)
Councillor S Skillen

Councillor S Skillen referred to the Council scheme that was in place for the provision of RADAR keys at a small fee and enquired if the criteria for the provision of such keys and the website information about this matter could be enhanced in any way.

The Head of Assets confirmed that 6-12 RADAR keys were issued per year.

It was agreed that this matter be looked at and that a report be brought to the June 2021 meeting of the Committee.

7.3 Payment recognition to health and social care employees
Alderman W J Dillon

Alderman W J Dillon expressed concern that the payment recognition of £500.00 to health and social care employees had still not been made.

A response from the Minister of Health to a letter sent to him on this subject arising from the previous meeting of the Committee had been included in the Noting Schedule of the 18th May 2021. In regard to the HSC statutory sector, the payment would be made in July 2021 and a procedure had been put in place so that the payment could be made in instalments in order to suit the financial circumstances of recipients. In regard to the independent sector, discussions with that sector about eligibility and payment were ongoing so they could in fact be working to a different timescale.

7.3 Payment recognition to health and social care employees
Alderman W J Dillon (Continued)

It was proposed by Alderman W J Dillon, seconded by Councillor A Ewing and agreed that an update on the payment recognition be sought from the Minister of Health, such a letter to acknowledge with thanks the fact that the payment had been approved and also the Minister's decision to put in place a scheme whereby the payment could be paid in instalments so as to suit the financial circumstances of recipients.

8. Confidential Report from Director of Finance & Corporate Services

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

8.1 Charging Point and Vehicle Parking for Lagan Valley Rural Transport
(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person including the Council holding that information.)

8.2 Efficiency Review:
Consideration of Structures within the Parks & Amenities Service
(Confidential for reasons of information related to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Council or a Government Department and employees of, or office holders under, the Council.)

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

8.4 Security Services – Business Case
(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person including the Council holding that information.)

8.5 Cleaning Services – Business Case
(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person including the Council holding that information.)

8.6 Lagan Valley Island - Catering
(Confidential for reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person including the Council holding that information.)

In Committee

It was proposed by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Jenny Palmer, seconded by Councillor A Swan and agreed that the Confidential Report of the Director be considered "in Committee". (The live-stream was paused at this stage in proceedings.)

8.1 Charging Point and Vehicle Parking for Lagan Valley Rural Transport

Presented by the Head of Assets.

In response to comments from Alderman O Gawith, the Chief Executive and the Head of Assets explained why this report item was to be treated as confidential and also when its subject matter would allow release into the public domain.

It was proposed by Councillor U Mackin, seconded by Alderman O Gawith and agreed to recommend that:-

- Lagan Valley Rural Transport be facilitated in the relocation of their new accessible minibus to secure parking at Lagan Valley Island, revised locations for parking being identified to and noted by the Officers present at the meeting;
- a double electric vehicle charging point be installed for use by Lagan Valley Rural Transport and the Council with the preferred option being subject to funding availability;
- A licence be drafted for Lagan Valley Rural Transport's access arrangements to Council property.

The Head of Assets left the meeting. (7.02 pm)

8.2 Efficiency Review:
Consideration of Structures within the Parks & Amenities Service

Presented by the Chief Executive.

It was proposed by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Jenny Palmer, seconded by Councillor S Carson and agreed to recommend that the structures as outlined in the report of the Efficiency Review Steering Group meeting of the 7th May 2021 be agreed.

The Head of Parks & Amenities left the meeting. (7.05 pm)

8.3 Community Investment Fund

Presented by the Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing.

It was proposed by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Jenny Palmer, seconded by Councillor U Mackin and agreed to recommend that:-

- Ballymacash Sports Academy becomes the partner project under the pilot Community Investment Fund;

8.3 Community Investment Fund (Continued)

- A process is incepted for the remaining applicants to provide feedback and to explore wider support to groups in advance of the roll out of the full Community Investment Fund.

The Acting Head of Communities left the meeting. (7.19 pm)

8.4 Security Services – Business Case

Presented by the Head of Corporate Communications & Administration.

It was proposed by The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor N Trimble, seconded by Councillor S Lowry and agreed to recommend that:-

- the status quo be proceeded with, ie continue with an outsourced security service;
- Officers begin the tender process to procure a single contractor to deliver all Corporate Security Service requirements via an Open Tender process.

8.5 Cleaning Services – Business Case

Presented by the Head of Corporate Communications & Administration.

It was proposed by Councillor J Laverty, seconded by Alderman O Gawith and agreed to recommend that:-

- The recommendation in the business case (Status Quo) be proceeded with, ie continue with an outsourced Corporate cleaning service;
- Officers begin the tender process to procure a single contractor to deliver all Corporate Cleaning Service requirements via an Open Tender process.

8.6 Lagan Valley Island – Catering

Presented by the Head of Corporate Communications & Administration.

It was proposed by Councillor U Mackin, seconded by Alderman W J Dillon and agreed to recommend that – in order to enable a range of interim catering options to be available at Lagan Valley Island (LVI) to facilitate the re-opening of facilities:-

- Officers engage further with local companies as part of market research.
- Officers proceed with Expressions of Interest and short/medium term catering requirements at LVI only to begin from September 2021.

8.6 Lagan Valley Island – Catering (Continued)

- Officers proceed with obtaining the legal advice to understand the alcohol licensing requirements and associated costs.
- Wedding receptions be restricted temporarily to small receptions when guidance permits.

It was noted that a report on other aspects of the catering provision would be presented to the June 2021 meeting of the Committee.

The officers noted several comments made by Members in relation to catering provision at LVI.

9. Any Other Business - Confidential

There was no other confidential business raised by Members.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by The Right Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor N Trimble, seconded by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Jenny Palmer, and agreed to come “out of Committee”. Normal business and the live-stream were resumed.

The Chairman, Alderman P Porter, referred to this meeting being the last one before the Annual Meeting of Council on the 7th June 2021.

Alderman Porter expressed his thanks to the Vice-Chairman (Alderman Stephen Martin), The Right Worshipful The Mayor and Deputy Mayor, the other members of the Committee, the Chief Executive, the Director of Finance & Corporate Services and the other officers who service the Committee for their assistance and co-operation in what had been a very challenging year for the Council.

Alderman Porter wished the incoming Chairman and Vice-Chairman all the best for the tenure of their posts.

The Vice-Chairman, The Right Worshipful The Mayor and the Deputy Mayor reiterated these comments and placed on record their thanks and appreciation of the leadership shown by Alderman Porter.

There being no further business - the meeting concluded at 7.40 pm.

MAYOR/CHAIRMAN