

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Leisure and Community Development Committee held in the Island Civic Centre, Lisburn, and remotely, on Tuesday 3rd January, 2023 at 6.00pm

PRESENT: Councillor A McIntyre (Chairman);
The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor S Carson;
and Councillors N Anderson, D J Craig,
A Gowan, J Lavery BEM, H Legge and T Mitchell.

PRESENT IN A REMOTE LOCATION: The Deputy Mayor, Councillor M Guy;
Aldermen A Grehan, M Henderson MBE and S Martin;
Councillors R Carlin, S Mulholland, Jenny Palmer
and S Skillen.

OTHER MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Aldermen D Drysdale (Zoom) and S P Porter;
Councillors A Ewing (Zoom), A Givan, C McCready
and N Trimble (Zoom).

IN ATTENDANCE: Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing
Head of Communities
Head of Parks and Amenities
Head of Sports Services
Member Services Officers (BF and EW).

1. Apology (2.05)

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor R T Beckett.

2. Declarations of Interest (2.20)

Regarding item 4.1, i.e., 'Hardship Funding Programme', the Deputy Mayor Councillor M Guy, and Councillors A Gowan, S Mulholland and Jenny Palmer, declared interests in that they had relatives who were members of organisations in receipt of funding under the programme. In addition, Councillor S Skillen indicated that she had a non-pecuniary interest in this matter as she was associated with a sub-group of the Ballybeen Improvement Group.

3. Report of Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing

3.1 Notice of Motion – Energy Payments (3.44)

The Director reminded the Committee that The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor S Carson, at the meeting of the Council on 19th December, in accordance with Standing Order 16.1, had referred, without debate, the following motion, which had been proposed by Councillor R Carlin and seconded by Councillor G McCleave, to the Committee for consideration:

"This Council is deeply concerned that the £600 energy support payment due to people across Lisburn and Castlereagh who are enduring severe cost-of-living pressures has not yet been made, despite DUP assurances it would be paid in November. Notes that as a result of the DUP boycott of power-sharing, responsibility for delivering this

payment rests with the British Government. Is further concerned that as temperatures drop and winter deepens many families struggling to pay soaring energy bills will have budgeted for this payment being made before Christmas as promised. And therefore calls on the British Government to urgently provide clarity on the delivery of the payments, it is well past time that these are delivered with no more broken promises”.

The Chairman invited Councillor R Carlin to address the Committee and he outlined the scope and rationale for the motion.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor A Gowan,
Seconded by Councillor N Anderson,

That the motion in the name of Councillor R Carlin be amended with the removal of all wording after “This Council” to enable their replacement with the following words, “welcomes progress being made towards the payment of the £600 Energy Bill Support Payment; stresses that any further delay in issuing support is unacceptable; and calls on the Government and energy companies to proceed with haste to provide this essential support”.

Adjournment

The Committee agreed, on the proposal of Alderman S Martin, which was seconded by Councillor T Mitchell, to adjourn the meeting to enable the Chairman to consider the admissibility of the amendment under Standing Orders.

(The Committee stood adjourned from 18:24 to 18:35)

At the recommencement of the meeting, the Chairman indicated that, having considered the content of the amendment, he was satisfied that it be deemed legitimate, admissible and voted upon, since, in accordance with Standing Orders 17.1 (1) and 17.1 (2) (b, c and d), it was within the scope and context of the original proposal which it sought to amend, it was not proposing a direct negative and was not, in effect, a new proposition on a different matter, but an amended version of a course of action suggested within the original proposal.

Prior to proceeding to a vote, it was proposed by Councillor D J Craig, seconded by Councillor J Laverty, and agreed that a recorded vote be entered into the minutes.

On a recorded vote, fifteen Members voted for the amendment and one against and it was declared carried.

In favour: Councillor N Anderson, the Right Worshipful the Mayor Councillor S Carson, Councillor D J Craig, Councillor A Gowan, Alderman A Grehan, the Deputy Mayor Councillor M Guy, Alderman M Henderson, Councillor J Laverty, Councillor H Legge, Councillor S Mulholland, Councillor A McIntyre, Alderman S Martin, Councillor T Mitchell, Councillor Jenny Palmer and Councillor S Skillen.

Against: Councillor R Carlin.

The amendment was thereupon put to the Committee as the substantive motion and, in accordance with Standing Order 17.1 (3), it was agreed that the amendment, as set out below, be adopted, without the requirement of a further vote:

“This Council welcomes the progress being made towards the payment of the £600 Energy Bill Support Payment; stresses that any further delay in issuing support is unacceptable; and calls on the Government and energy companies to proceed with haste to provide this essential support.”

4. Report of the Head of Communities

4.1 Hardship Funding Programme (1.12.09)

(The Deputy Mayor Councillor M Guy, and Councillors A Gowan, S Mulholland, Jenny Palmer and S Skillen retired from the meeting whilst this matter was under consideration.)

The Head of Communities reminded the Committee that, in September 2022, the Council had approved the establishment of a Hardship Fund, in the sum of £80,000, and had delegated authority to the Head of Communities, in conjunction with the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman, to approve successful applications for funding.

The Fund had been open for the receipt of applications from 28th October until 21st November, and 69 applications had been received, 64 of which had been deemed eligible for support. The total amount of funding requested had been £105,833.67, which was £25,833.67 in excess of the available fund.

The Committee was reminded also that, at its meeting on 6th December, it had agreed that a further sum of £34,000 be allocated to the Hardship Fund from within Council’s reserves, a decision which was endorsed by the Corporate Services Committee on 14th December.

Accordingly, given there existed a shortfall of £25,833.67 in the original allocation, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman had agreed that the aforementioned amount be sourced from within the additional £34,000 to enable the successful applicants be provided with the full amount based on their assessed score.

The Committee noted the outcome of the process and congratulated officers for the work which had been undertaking in progressing the Fund.

4.2 The King’s Coronation – Programme of Events and Working Group Minutes (1.20.31)

(Alderman S P Porter left the meeting at 19:35)

The Committee agreed to endorse the minutes of the King’s Coronation Working Group of 21st December, together with the associated Programme of Events, subject to the amendment, as proposed by Councillor N Anderson and seconded by Councillor D J Craig, that a letter be forwarded to the Northern Ireland Office to ascertain if additional funding might be available from central government to support the Council in the delivery of its Programme of Events.

5.0 Any Other Business

5.1 Mr Adam Wilson (1.24.36)

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor S Carson, reported that Mr Adam Wilson, a staff member within the Parks and Amenities Unit, had been successful in an application for inclusion of the Royal and Ancient Golf Scholarship Programme on Greenkeeping Management. He indicated that this achievement was an honour for the Council and that he would be extending congratulations to Adam on his achievement.

5.2 Hilden Primary School Site (1.26.30)

Both Alderman S Martin and Councillor D J Craig requested that steps be taken to repair the damaged fencing at the former Hilden Primary School to prevent vandalism and access to the site by younger persons.

In response, the Head of Communities and the Head of Parks and Amenities updated the Committee in this regard and outlined a course of action that would be undertaken to address the issue.

5.3 Good Relations Funding 2023/24 (1.29.20)

The Head of Communities updated the Committee on the Council's Good Relations Action Plan for 2023/24. She indicated that, given prevailing timescales, a draft action plan would be submitted to the Executive Office in January, subject to the proviso that it would be considered by the Committee at its meeting in February. She indicated that the amount requested for the forthcoming financial year would be similar to that which had been requested in 2022/23.

The Committee noted and endorsed the course of action as outlined by the Head of Communities and her comments thereon.

6. Confidential Report of the Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing

The Chairman advised that the reason for confidentiality for the following matters was by virtue of the Local Government Act (2014) Northern Ireland, i.e., 'information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information)'.

It was proposed by Councillor D J Craig, seconded by Councillor N Anderson, and agreed that the confidential report of the Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing be considered 'in committee', in the absence of members of the press and public.

6.1 Leisure and Community Wellbeing Department – Estimates of Expenditure 2023/24

Moved by Alderman S Martin,
Seconded Alderman A Grehan, and

Resolved – that the Committee approve the draft estimates of expenditure for the Leisure and Community Wellbeing Directorate for 2023/24, and that they be submitted for approval as part of the overall Council estimates for the financial year commencing 1st April, 2023.

6.2 Procurement of Arboricultural Services

It was proposed by Councillor H Legge, seconded by Councillor A Gowan, and agreed that the Committee note the outcome of the above-mentioned tendering exercise and associated award of contract.

7. Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor J Lavery, seconded by Councillor A Gowan, and agreed that normal business be resumed.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 20:40.

Chairman