

**LISBURN CITY COUNCIL/CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**TRANSITION COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the proceedings of the Lisburn City Council/Castlereagh Borough Council Transition Committee held in the Council Chamber, Castlereagh Borough Council, Civic & Administrative Offices, Bradford Court, Upper Galwally, Castlereagh, BT8 6RB, on Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> July 2009, at 7.00 p.m.

**PRESENT:-**

**Lisburn City Council**

The Right Worshipful the Mayor of Lisburn  
Councillor A Ewart

Councillor D J Craig                    (in the chair from 7.15 pm)

**Castlereagh Borough Council**

Alderman M Henderson  
Alderman J White

Councillor J Beattie  
Councillor B Hanvey                    (in the chair until 7.15 pm)  
Councillor G Robinson

**IN ATTENDANCE:-**

**Lisburn City Council**

Chief Executive  
Director of Environmental Services  
Asst Director Corporate Services (Miss E Shields)  
Asst Director Corporate Services (Mrs L Scott)

**Castlereagh Borough Council**

Acting Chief Executive  
Director of Finance  
Asst Members' Services Officer

## **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies from Lisburn City Council were recorded on behalf of Alderman W J Dillon MBE, Alderman S P Porter, Councillor R Crawford, Councillor T J Lunn and the Director of Leisure Services.

Apologies from Castlereagh Borough Council were recorded on behalf of the Mayor of Castlereagh - Councillor L Walker, Alderman G Rice MBE, Councillor J Spratt, Director of Administration & Community Services and the Acting Director of Leisure Services.

Noted.

## **2. QUORUM**

Members' attention was drawn to the requirement of a quorum comprising 3 representatives from Lisburn City Council and 3 representatives from Castlereagh Borough Council as agreed at the Transition Committee meeting of 20 May 2009 (Minute 4.13 refers)

As there were only two Elected Members from Lisburn City Council present at tonight's meeting, Members discussed whether a quorum was applicable in this instance.

Councillor Robinson stated that the meeting should proceed on the basis that the Transition Committee was currently a voluntary group and the standing order relating to a quorum would not take effect until it became a Statutory Committee. Furthermore, as the minutes of the Transition Committee would be tabled at each of the respective Council meetings for ratification, Elected Members would have an opportunity to raise any issues or disputes relating to their content.

The Vice-Chairman sought the opinions of the two Elected Members from Lisburn City Council and they agreed that the meeting could proceed on the basis that Members would only be making recommendations at tonight's meeting and the minutes would subsequently be tabled at both Council meetings for ratification.

**RECOMMENDED:** That

- (a) the standing order relating to quorums would not be applicable to the present Transition Committee, due to the fact that it was still operating on a voluntary basis and standing orders would only take effect once it became a statutory committee.

- (b) the Transition Committee, at this stage, could only make recommendations on the basis that the minutes would be tabled at each of the subsequent respective Council meetings, providing Elected Members with an opportunity to raise any issues or concerns arising from their content.

### **3. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**

Members referred to the recent resignation of Alderman E Poots as Chairman of the Transition Committee. Following a proposal from Councillor Robinson, which was seconded by Alderman White, Members agreed that Councillor Craig be appointed as Chairman Designate of the Transition Committee.

At this point in the meeting, the Vice-Chairman welcomed Councillor Craig as Chairman Designate and he took over as chair for the remainder of the meeting.

RECOMMENDED:- That, Councillor D J Craig be appointed as Chairman Designate following the recent resignation of Alderman E Poots as Chairman of the Transition Committee.

### **4. MINUTES OF THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE DATED 18 JUNE 2009**

Tabled:- Minutes of the Transition Committee meeting dated 18 June 2009 (copy previously circulated)

Members were advised that these minutes had not been approved by Castlereagh Borough Council.

Noted.

### **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE MEETING OF 18 JUNE 2009**

#### **5. MEETING WITH IAN MAYE, LOCAL GOVERNMENT POLICY DIVISION (Minute Ref No: 3.1 refers)**

Councillor Robinson referred to Mr Maye's presentation at the last Transition Committee meeting, at which Elected Members had raised a number of issues.

Mr Maye had advised at the meeting that he would take these issues on board and agreed to raise any outstanding concerns with his Minister.

Councillor Robinson commented that Minute Ref No: 3.1 contained insufficient detail to identify those specific issues raised. He advised that it was usual Local Government practice to record detailed information from question and answer sessions in the content of minutes. The recording of such information ensured that there was a subsequent follow-up to outstanding issues that had not been addressed during the course of the meeting. Councillor Robinson therefore requested that the Chief Executive (LCC) arrange for the relevant Committee Secretary to provide a more detailed account of those questions and answers discussed in Minute Ref No: 3.1. The revised minute should then be forwarded to Mr Maye in order that those concerns raised by Elected Members could be addressed.

The Director of Finance (CBC) confirmed that Mr Maye's office had been in contact with him, as they had been unable to identify those issues raised by Elected Members from the content of the minute. They had suggested that further clarification should be sought from the Committee Secretary's notes during the course of the meeting.

The Chief Executive (LCC) took on board Councillor Robinson's comments but referred to the different styles of minute recording operated by both Councils. He advised that Lisburn City Council did not include detailed discussion within the body of their minutes but merely recorded decisions taken.

Following further discussion, the Chief Executive (LCC) confirmed that he would arrange for the preparation of a more detailed minute of the question and answer session that took place following the presentation, which would in turn be circulated to each member of the Transition Committee.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (a) that the Chief Executive (LCC) would arrange for a more detailed minute to be prepared recording details of the question and answer session that took place following Mr Maye's presentation and, in particular, identifying the specific concerns raised by Elected Members, which Mr Maye had taken on board and had agreed to raise with his Minister
- (b) that a copy of this revised minute would be circulated to all members of the Transition Committee as well as being forwarded to Mr Maye in order that he could address and follow up those specific issues raised by Elected Members during the course of his presentation.

**5.1 POSTS OF CHANGE MANAGER AND COMMITTEE SECRETARY  
(Minute Ref No: 3.2 refers)**

Councillor Beattie requested that the second paragraph of this minute be deleted.

Alderman White expressed concern that much of the relevant discussion that had taken place in relation to this matter had been excluded from the minutes.

RECOMMENDED: That the second paragraph from Minute Ref No: 3.2 be deleted from the minutes of the Transition Committee dated 18 June 2009.

## **5.2 CAPITAL SCHEMES (Minute Ref No: 3.5 refers)**

Councillor Robinson advised that the content of this minute did not reflect the extent of dissatisfaction expressed by some Elected Members in relation to the lack of important financial information that had been omitted by officers prior to discussion of this matter.

He asked that, in future, Councillors should be furnished with the relevant detailed information relating to all financial matters prior to discussion at this committee, as Elected Members could not make informed decisions with financial repercussions without the necessary reports and information being made available.

RECOMMENDED: That, at future meetings of the Transition Committee, officers ensure that Elected Members were provided with detailed information relating to all matters, particularly those with financial repercussions, prior to being asked to make decisions on important matters.

## **5.3 MEETING OF THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE - MEDIA, PUBLIC AND PRESS (Minute Ref No: 3.8 refers)**

Following a proposal from Alderman Henderson, which was seconded by Councillor Beattie, it was

RECOMMENDED: That Minute Ref No: 3.8 be withdrawn.

## **5.4. AWAY DAY (Minute Ref No: 3.9 refers)**

The Acting Chief Executive (CBC) referred to previously suggested nominations for the post of facilitator at the forthcoming Away Day to be held in mid-September. He reiterated that the post-holder would be acting in a facilitating capacity at the event.

Alderman White referred to the suggested candidates and expressed concern that there might be a conflict of interest in relation to Assembly Committees and issues regarding Local Government. He asked whether Mr Robert Gilmore had

been approached to ascertain if he would be interested in acting as a facilitator. The Acting Chief Executive (CBC) advised that Mr Gilmore was currently working as a consultant for SOLACE but he would contact him to ascertain his interest in facilitating the event.

The Director of Finance (CBC) referred to a recent Away Day in which Mr Gilmore had been asked to act as facilitator but had been unable to attend. However, he had suggested the name of a former Chief Executive from an English council, who had subsequently fulfilled the role.

Following discussion, Members were in agreement that it be

**RECOMMENDED:-**

- (a) that officers would contact Mr Robert Gilmore to ascertain if he would be interested in acting as facilitator for the forthcoming Away Day in mid-September or if he could suggest a possible substitute if he was unavailable to attend.
- (b) that finalisation of the date for the Away Day be deferred until the appointment for the post of facilitator had been determined.

**5.5 COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS (Minute Ref No: 3.10 refers)**

Councillor Robinson advised that a decision could not be taken on this issue until officers had prepared a report in respect of the entire estates of both Councils.

Alderman White stated that, until this voluntary group became a Statutory Committee, Elected Members could not undertake any decision-making relating to Council buildings. However, he advised that this issue should not deter officers from continuing the relevant work in relation to scoping etc, and they should continue to table information at Committee meetings to keep Members updated on any progress.

**RECOMMENDED:** That, as the Transition Committee did not have statutory status at this stage and could therefore not make decisions relating to Council buildings, officers could continue, in the interim, to carry out the relevant work in relation to scoping etc and to keep Members updated on progress.

**5.6 ESTABLISHMENT OF SUB-COMMITTEES  
(Minute Ref No: 3.15 refers)**

Following a request from Councillor Robinson, it was

RECOMMENDED: That Councillor Robinson would change his appointment on the Service Delivery Sub-Committee to an appointment on the Governance, Community Planning and Central/Local Government Relationships Sub-Committee.

**6. ESTABLISHMENT OF SUB-COMMITTEES – ALLOCATION OF TASKS**

Following agreement, it was

RECOMMENDED: That further discussion of this matter be deferred to the next meeting of the Transition Committee.

**7. ESTABLISHMENT OF SUB-COMMITTEES - REPORTING MECHANISM**

The Acting Chief Executive (CBC) referred to previous discussion relating to this matter at the Transition Management Team meeting held on 30 June 2009.

Following agreement, it was

RECOMMENDED: That further discussion of this matter be deferred to the next meeting of the Transition Committee.

**8. AGENDAS FOR TRANSITION COMMITTEES REGARDING PRESS MATTERS - CLARIFICATION OF PROTOCOL**

Councillor Robinson again referred to the voluntary status of the Transition Committee and suggested that, until the Committee becomes statutory, the minutes should not be made available to the public or press.

Therefore, it was

RECOMMENDED: That

- (a) until such time as the Transition Committee becomes statutory, the minutes of the meetings should not be made available to the public or press.
- (b) Furthermore, each Council should, in the interim, consider the minutes of the Transition Committee during the “in committee” section of their respective Council meetings.

- (c) The meetings of the Transition Committee will take place “in Committee”, until such time as it becomes a statutory Committee

## **9. RESIGNATION OF ALDERMAN POOTS**

Tabled: Email dated 8 July 2009 from Lisburn City Council re: Alderman E Poots – resignation from Transition Committee (copy previously circulated)

Noted.

## **REPORT FROM THE ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **10. CAPITAL SCHEMES**

The Acting Chief Executive (CBC) drew attention to details tabled relating to capital schemes and financial implications.

The Director of Finance (CBC) referred Members to a report relating to the Joint Capital Programme for Lisburn City Council and Castlereagh Borough Council that had been circulated at the meeting. He advised that the report was a joint document based on Lisburn City Council’s format and that he, in liaison with the Assistant Director of Corporate Services (Mrs L Scott), had set out each of the Council’s capital programmes over the coming eight years. The information in the report also provided details of the projected loan charges, committed and proposed, for each council as well as outlining a composite projection for both councils.

Following discussion, it was

**RECOMMENDED:** That further consideration of the Joint Capital Programme for Lisburn City Council and Castlereagh Borough Council take place at the next meeting of the Transition Committee.

#### **10.1 STAFFING MATTERS - FIXED-TERM CONTRACTS**

The Acting Chief Executive (CBC) advised that Castlereagh Borough Council, at its special Council meeting of 2 July 2009, had agreed a Notice of Motion to rescind a previous minute relating to fixed-term contracts, which effectively meant that Castlereagh Borough Council would no longer be recruiting on a fixed-term contract basis.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor of Lisburn expressed concern that Lisburn City Council would no longer be permitted to recruit on a fixed-term contract basis.

The Acting Chief Executive (CBC) reiterated that, at the last meeting of the Transition Committee, both Councils' Human Resource Officers had been in attendance and Elected Members had been advised that fixed-term contracts due to cease at the time of merger could be open to a potential legal challenge. However, in response to Councillor Ewart, the Acting Chief Executive (CBC) advised that this clause was not applicable to specific project-type posts and that these could continue to be recruited on a fixed-term contract basis.

Alderman Henderson outlined the importance of both Councils moving forward with agreed recruitment procedures.

Alderman White advised that, during the course of discussion at the last Transition Committee meeting, there had been a slight difference in opinion between the two Human Resource Officers. As a conclusion, it had been agreed that each officer would ascertain the legal position in relation to this matter and report back to the Committee.

Councillor Robinson asked that consideration of this matter be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee and that each Human Resource Officer should submit their findings in a joint written report.

**RECOMMENDED:** That a report from both Human Resource Officers should be tabled at the next meeting of the Transition Committee, confirming the legal position in relation to potential legal challenges with regard to fixed-term contracts.

## **10.2 SEMINAR - "MAKING TRANSITION WORK : THE ROLE OF ELECTED MEMBERS AND OFFICERS"**

Alderman Henderson reported that he had attended the above seminar on 6 July 2009, which had outlined prospective timetables and the key issues and objectives in 2009.

The Chief Executive (LCC) stated that he had also been in attendance at the seminar and he expressed the view that it had reinforced the amount of work that was required up to May 2011. He welcomed further seminars on this theme but hoped that they would feature more definite certainties rather than being of an analytical nature.

Noted.

### **10.3 CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Tabled:- Copies of correspondence dated 8 June and 22 June 2009 from the Department for Regional Development and correspondence dated 11 June 2009 from the Department of the Environment (copies previously circulated)

Noted.

### **10.4 RESPONSE TO DELOITTE IS STRATEGY DOCUMENT**

Members referred to the joint response prepared by both Councils' IT Officers regarding the Deloitte IS Strategy document.

Following discussion, it was

**RECOMMENDED:** That the joint response prepared by both Councils' IT Officers regarding the Deloitte IS Strategy document should be noted and referred to the appropriate sub-committee for further consideration.

### **10.5 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM COMMUNICATIONS GROUP**

The Chief Executive (LCC) advised Members that a Local Government Reform Communications Group was being established by the Department of the Environment to set up a communications forum.

He stated that, at the last Transition Management Team meeting, three officers had expressed an interest in putting their names forward for representation on the Officers' Group, namely Mr R Gillanders, General Manager Leisure & Marketing CBC, and two officers from Lisburn City Council who currently job-shared the post of Assistant Director Corporate Services.

Following further consideration, Mr Gillanders expressed the view that he would not be in a position to fulfil this appointment due to time constraints.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (a) that the two officers from Lisburn City Council currently job-sharing the post of Assistant Director Corporate Services be appointed as Lisburn City Council/Castlereagh Borough Council's representatives on the Local Government Reform Communications Group.

- (b) that these officers continue to prepare detailed feedback reports arising from meetings of the Local Government Reform Communications Group to keep members of the Transition Committee updated regularly.

#### **10.6 PRESENTATION BY IAN MAYE – LOCAL GOVERNMENT POLICY DIVISION**

The Acting Chief Executive (CBC) advised that this matter had been dealt with earlier in the meeting.

Noted.

#### **10.7 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED IN RELATION TO TRANSITION MATTERS**

The Acting Chief Executive (CBC) referred to correspondence that had been received in relation to transition matters and had subsequently been included in his report.

Following a suggestion from Councillor Robinson, it was

**RECOMMENDED:** That this correspondence be tabled at the next meeting of the Transition Committee to ensure that there was sufficient cross-party representation to discuss the content of the documentation.

#### **10.8 MECHANISM FOR APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS**

The Acting Chief Executive (CBC) referred Members to his report and the proposed reporting structure as agreed by the Transition Management Team, namely:

- All Officer Working Groups - minutes to go to the Transition Management Team (TMT) and report to the TMT
- The TMT reports to go forward to the relevant Sub-Committee and, where appropriate, to the Transition Committee
- All minutes of the aforementioned Working Groups and Sub-Committees to be forwarded, in due course, to the Transition Committee
- All minutes of Transition Committee meetings are agreed by both Councils

Councillor Robinson stated that it was imperative that all minutes from each of the various Groups/Sub-Committees should be tabled at the Transition Committee meetings.

Members discussed the turn-around time for the completion of Transition Committee minutes and agreed that they should go to each of the next available Council meetings for ratification where feasible.

RECOMMENDED: That, where feasible, Transition Committee minutes should be tabled at the next available Lisburn City Council and Castlereagh Borough Council meetings. If necessary, this procedure could be reviewed again in the future.

## **10.9 PREVIOUS GUIDANCE NOTE 07/09 - KEY TASKS & MILESTONES**

The Acting Chief Executive (CBC) referred Members to a copy of the Guidance Note 07/09 – Key Task & Milestones attached to his report, and he reaffirmed the importance of this document in relation to timescales for key tasks. He also referred to the summary of certain key tasks to be undertaken by the Voluntary Transition Committee until September 2009 and sought Members' comments.

Alderman Henderson proposed that the Transition Committee agree the Action Plan outlining priorities 1-9 for 2009, with a further Action Plan to be agreed in 2010. He added that the resources, structure and format required to fulfil this Action Plan should be completed by the Management Team for the next meeting of the Transition Committee.

This proposal was seconded by Councillor Robinson.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the Transition Committee agree the Action Plan outlining priorities 1-9 for 2009, with a further Action Plan to be agreed in 2010.
- (b) that the resources, structure and format required to fulfil this Action Plan should be completed by the Transition Management Team for the next meeting of the Transition Committee.

## **10.10 MINUTES OF THE TRANSITION MANAGEMENT TEAM (TMT) MEETING HELD ON 30 JUNE 2009**

Tabled: Minutes of the Transition Management Team – 30 June 2009 (copy previously circulated)

The Acting Chief Executive (CBC) referred to the presentation by Mr Chris Totten, in which he had provided an overview of RPA objectives with regard to community planning. He felt that, due to the beneficial content of the

presentation, there might be merit in arranging for this presentation to be received at a future meeting of the Transition Committee.

Alderman Henderson suggested that, whilst he agreed that the presentation was beneficial, the presentation should be scheduled later in the transition process, as community planning was not within the remit of the current Transition Committee.

The Chief Executive (LCC) advised that most of the other 26 councils had pledged their support and commitment to this issue and he agreed to obtain further information on this initiative prior to any further action being taken.

The Chairman stated that it was more important that the Transition Committee prioritised its issues and asked that this matter be tabled on the agenda for the next meeting.

Following discussion, it was

RECOMMENDED: That

- ( a) Agreement and prioritisation of an Action Plan would be included in the agenda for the next meeting of the Transition Committee.
- ( b) In the interim, officers would obtain further information in relation to the Future Partnership Working with Local Government Community Planning initiative, with a view to a presentation being made to the Transition Committee later in the transition process.

#### **10.11 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE LOAN SANCTIONS**

Tabled: Correspondence from the Department of the Environment dated 8 July 2009 re: Capital Expenditure Loan Sanctions (copy previously circulated)

Noted.

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **11. INFORMAL BRIEFING SESSION – DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREAS COMMISSIONER - 4 AUGUST 2009**

The Acting Chief Executive (CBC) advised Members that the Chief Executives from Lisburn City Council and Castlereagh Borough Council had been invited by

the District Electoral Areas Commissioner to attend an informal briefing session on 4 August 2009.

Following discussion, it was

**RECOMMENDED:** That representatives from Lisburn City Council and Castlereagh Borough Council would attend the informal briefing session arranged by the District Electoral Areas Commissioner on 4 August 2009 and would report back to the next Transition Committee meeting.

### **11.1 LISBURN CITY COUNCIL/CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL JOINT EMPLOYEE BULLETINS**

The Chief Executive (LCC) advised Members that, following previous agreement by the Committee, the first bulletin of the Joint Employee Bulletin for Lisburn City Council/Castlereagh Borough Council had now been circulated to all employees of both councils.

Alderman Henderson asked whether the bulletin included feedback or issues format to enable employees to submit comments.

The Chief Executive (LCC) responded that any employee with a specific concern should raise it with their respective Chief Executive, who would then take the matter on board.

The Chairman enquired whether there was a mechanism for feedback from those employees who might wish to retain anonymity.

The Chief Executive (LCC) advised that all valid concerns would be addressed, irrespective of how they had been submitted.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (a) that officers would look at ways of incorporating a form within the Joint Employee Bulletin, which would enable employees to submit feedback or concerns.
- (b) that all valid concerns from employees would be taken on board by the two Chief Executives, irrespective of how they had been submitted.

## **11.2 COMMITTEE SECRETARY'S POST - INTERVIEW PANEL**

The Chief Executive (LCC) advised that the interview panel for the Committee Secretary's post had to be agreed. Although the proposed interview panel was in variance with normal Local Government procedures, it was felt that a panel comprising four officers (two from each Council) would be appropriate in this instance, subject to the approval of the Staff Commission.

**RECOMMENDED:** That, the interview panel for the Committee Secretary's post comprise four officers (two from each Council) i.e. a senior officer from each Council's Human Resource Section and a senior officer from each Council's Members' Services Section.

As there was no further business, the meeting concluded at 8.15 p.m.

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**CHAIRMAN**