

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of a Special Meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber, Lagan Valley Island on Monday 14 April, 2025 at 6:00 pm

PRESENT IN CHAMBER:

Deputy Mayor
Councillor R Carlin

Aldermen J Baird, A G Ewart MBE, A McIntyre and J Tinsley

Councillors J Bamford, P Catney, A P Ewing, B Higginson, G Hynds, J Lavery BEM and U Mackin

PRESENT IN REMOTE LOCATION:

Aldermen M Gregg

Councillors D Bassett, S Burns, N Eaton, C Kemp, S Lowry, G McCleave and N Parker

IN ATTENDANCE:

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Chief Executive
Member Services Officers (CR and EW)
Technician
IT Officer

South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust

Ms R Coulter, Chief Executive
Ms H Moore, Director of Planning, Performance & Informatics
Ms L Vladeanu, Assistant Director of Prevention and Population Health, Health & Wellbeing

Belfast Health & Social Care Trust

Mr A Campbell, Director of Performance, Planning & Informatics
Mr B Nelson Co-Director of Public Health

Commencement of the Meeting

In the absence of The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor R Carlin, took the chair and conducted the business on the agenda.

At the commencement of the meeting, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor R Carlin, welcomed those present to the special meeting of Council which was being live streamed to enable members of the public to hear and see the proceedings. The Deputy Mayor pointed out that, should the meeting go into committee to consider confidential business, any members of the press and the public in attendance would be required to leave the Council Chamber for the duration of those matters.

The Chief Executive outlined the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.

Alderman J Tinsley and Councillor A P Ewing arrived to the meeting (6.01 pm).

The Deputy Mayor requested that all mobile phones be put on silent or switched off for the duration of the meeting and pointed out that, in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, whilst the meeting was being live-streamed, unauthorised recording was not permitted.

1. Apologies

Alderman A McIntyre arrived to the meeting and Councillors N Eaton and N Parker joined the meeting (6.02 pm).

It was agreed to accept apologies for non-attendance at the meeting on behalf of The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson, Alderman S P Porter and Councillors R T Beckett, D J Craig, D Lynch, A Martin, C McCready and M McKeever.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. To Receive Officials from the South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust

During consideration of this item of business, Alderman J Tinsley left and rejoined the meeting (6.05 pm and 6.07 pm respectively), Alderman M Gregg joined and left the meeting (6.09 pm and 6.50 pm respectively) and a number of Members left the meeting, namely Councillors P Catney and N Eaton (6.54 pm), Councillor S Lowry (7.01 pm), Councillor C Kemp (7.06 pm), Councillor A P Ewing (7.07 pm) and Councillor N Parker (7.08 pm).

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor R Carlin, welcomed to the meeting:

- Ms R Coulter, Chief Executive
- Ms H Moore, Director of Planning, Performance & Informatics
- Ms L Vladeanu, Assistant Director of Prevention and Population Health, Health & Wellbeing

Ms Coulter began by providing Members with a strategic overview, making reference to the challenges facing Health & Social Care at this time. She spoke about financial constraints and workforce challenges and the partnership work that was ongoing to endeavour to address the needs of service users. Ms Coulter stressed the importance of the Trust's relationship with Elected Members and gave a commitment to continue working in partnership with the Council.

Ms Moore made a presentation on issues such as health inequalities in the Council area, the South Eastern Area Integrated Partnership Board Draft Plan, a snapshot of a week in the life of the Trust, the Trust's hospital network, improving patient flow and patient flow focus for 2025-26, the Lagan Valley Hospital site, the encompass digital record patient/service user My Care app and the Trust's priorities for 2025-26.

3. To Receive Officials from the South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust (Contd)

Ms Moore addressed questions submitted in advance of the meeting in respect of the removal of a hut at the car park in front of Lagan Valley Hospital and issues around drug misuse and dealing in A&E.

Officials responded to a number of queries raised by Members relating to:

- provision of respite care for both children and adults;
- support for children with autism and the recruitment of additional assessors;
- disparity in life expectancy between deprived areas and the average;
- integration of health and social care, especially in respect of discharge;
- Urgent Care Service;
- partnership working with the PSNI;
- domiciliary care in rural areas;
- linking Encompass with private care;
- arrangements for children with special needs attending Emergency Departments;
- Children's Social Care Reform;
- ambulance waiting times;
- making changes to the Encompass system;
- link with multidisciplinary teams and out-of-hours services;

Arising from discussion, Ms Coulter:

- asked that Councillor G McCleave provide details of a group he spoke about from the Council area, which was registered with the Trust, and had six bedrooms available for respite care;
- agreed to provide Councillor G McCleave with the number of children on the autism assessment waiting list;
- agreed to provide Alderman J Tinsley with a breakdown of Urgent Care figures;
- agreed to provide Councillor N Parker with information on adult respite provision;
- stated that she would be happy to facilitate a focussed session on Children's Social Care Reform for any Members wishing to avail of that; and
- took note of comments regarding courts, visitations and contacts and stated that this was something that could possibly be explored with a view to doing in a different way and may need modernised.

Ms Moore agreed to check with Mr Neil to seek clarification from the last meeting and site visit relating to arrangements being made for children with special needs being prioritised when attending Emergency Departments, possibly by way of being flagged through the Encompass system.

Councillor G Hynds referred to the good work being done by Health Service staff, especially those on the front line, and put on record that they often felt the weight of things that were beyond their control and more political decisions were required to be made.

Alderman J Tinsley, on behalf of all Members, put on record thanks to all Health Service staff, from the top down, for their fantastic work.

Ms Coulter left the meeting at 7.08 pm.

4. To Receive Officials from the Belfast Health & Social Care Trust

Councillor J Bamford left the meeting during consideration of this item of business (7.09 pm).

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor R Carlin, welcomed to the meeting:

- Mr A Campbell, Director of Performance, Planning & Informatics
- Mr B Nelson, Co-Director of Public Health

Mr Campbell and Mr Nelson made a presentation on issues such as statistical information regarding the Trust, a review of the Trust for 2023/24, scale of challenges for a Belfast child, health inequalities, examples of work undertaken, Carer's Strategy, the consultation on the Future Provision of GP Out of Hours and the Trust's top 10 strategic priorities.

Mr Campbell addressed a query submitted in advance in respect of issues around drug misuse and dealing in A&E.

Mr Campbell answered a number of queries raised by Members in relation to:

- arrangements being made for children with special needs being prioritised when attending A&E Departments; and
- development of electronic prescribing.

During discussion, Mr Campbell agreed to respond to Councillor Higginson regarding his comments on the possible closure of Purdysburn Ambulance Station.

There being no further business for consideration, the meeting was terminated at 7.23 pm.

Mayor