



City of Douglas

City Hall,
Douglas,
8th January, 2025

At a MEETING of the COUNCIL of the CITY OF DOUGLAS, duly convened and holden at 2.30 p.m. on WEDNESDAY, the 8th day of JANUARY, 2025, in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, within the CITY HALL, at which Meeting the following Members were present, that is to say: -

The Mayor

COUNCILLOR MRS NATALIE BYRON-TEARE, JP

Councillors

Mr J.E. Skinner

Mrs C.L. Wells

Mr A.J. Bentley

Mr F. Horning

Mr I.J.G. Clague, MBE

Ms J. Thommeny

Mr D.R. Watson

Mr P.J. Washington

Mr S.R. Crellin

The Director of Finance as acting Chief Executive, Director of Environment and Regeneration, and the Director of Housing and Property were in attendance.

Apologies for absence were submitted by the Chief Executive and Mr Councillor S.R. Pitts.

1. **Minutes – 11th December, 2024**

The minutes of the monthly Council meeting held on Wednesday, 11th December, 2024, were approved and signed.

2. **Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor S.R. Pitts**

Mr Councillor S.R. Pitts asked the Leader of the Council:

- 1.1 *Which officers of the council have authority to spend budgets without approval?*
- 1.2 *Can purchases be made without being discussed with the finance director or the finance department?*
- 1.3 *What is the limit of any one purchase?*
- 1.4 *How many individual purchases can be made in any one financial year?*

Reply by the Leader of the Council:

- 1.1 *Approval to spend against budgets is given by Council at Rate Setting when the revenue estimates are approved. F20 of the Financial Regulations states: "The inclusion of items in the approved estimates shall constitute authority to incur such expenditure." All officers must have the necessary delegated authority to spend against the approved budgets. Different officers are allocated different levels of spending authority, appropriate to their role and seniority. It is ultimately the Budget Managers who are nominated by their Chief Officer, that are responsible for monitoring expenditure within approved estimates under their control.*

No expenditure should be incurred which would result in the approved revenue estimates being exceeded.

There are specific rules that also apply to capital expenditure. The procedures for Tenders and Contracts are set out in Standing Orders part V, and also in the Procedure Notes for Management of Construction Projects issued by the Isle of Man Treasury.

- 1.2 *Provided that the intended purchases can be accommodated within the approved estimates, and provided that the amount to be incurred is within the delegated approval limits, then there should be no need for the Budget Manager or Purchasing Officer to consult or discuss with the Finance Department.*

If however, the proposed expenditure item would lead to a budget being exceeded, then Finance should be consulted in order that necessary arrangements can be made to ensure that the necessary approvals can be put in place before the expenditure is committed. This could be by way of a virement or diversion of funds to cover the spend or if necessary, by way of a supplementary funding request to Committee, which may require ultimately funding from Council reserves.

- 1.3 *Different officers will have their own spending authority limit, depending upon their role and seniority, and those limits should not be exceeded. Neither do officers have the authority to exceed the limit of the approved budget amounts. Chief Officers do however have the authority to divert or "vire" budgets for other purposes up to the limit of £13,000 and the Chief Executive has the authority to approve expenditure up to £27,000 on an item that is essential to meet any immediate needs created by an emergency, subject to a retrospective report to Committee.*

- 1.4 *There is no limit to the number of purchases that can be made in any one financial year, provided that the approved budget amounts are not exceeded.*

3. **Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner**

Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner asked the Leader of the Council:

What is the purpose of having a Constitution, Standing Orders or other written Protocols and are they needed by the Council, additionally is it recognised that bullying can take many different forms and that there is no place for it in this Council?

Reply by the Leader of the Council:

The Constitution contains the Articles of the Constitution, responsibilities for functions and scheme of delegation, rules of procedure, codes and protocols, members allowance scheme and management structure.

The Council's Constitution covers the Council's decision-making processes and seeks to ensure:

- *accountability;*
- *transparency;*

- *effective decision-making;*
- *community leadership; and*
- *continuous improvement to services.*

The Constitution is divided into 14 Articles which set out the basic rules governing the Council's business. More detailed procedures and codes of practice are provided in separate rules and protocols at the end of the document. For instance, the Council's Standing Orders are included in Part 4 – Rules of Procedure.

The Local Government Act 1985 sets out the requirements for Local Authorities and under section 27 of the Act, Local Authorities are required to make standing orders governing their proceedings. Local Authorities are recommended to have at least 6 Standing Orders: covering the management of meetings, tenders, contracts, exclusion of members with specified interests etc.

The Department of Infrastructure has produced a Local Government Handbook (for Members and Officers of Local Authorities) which should be used in conjunction with Corporate Governance Principles and Code of Conduct as a model to work to.

Bullying is not acceptable in any quarter of the Council and is clearly stated in the updated Member Code of Conduct, General Conduct section which was approved by Council in November 2024, and which is an integral document within the Constitution as well as the Employee Code of Conduct, Employee and Councillor Working Relationship Protocol which is expected to be approved at the January 2025 Executive Committee meeting and other Council policies and procedures such as the Whistleblowing Policy.

Douglas City Council recognises that bullying can manifest in various forms, including verbal, physical, emotional, misuse of power of position and cyberbullying.

Douglas City Council continues to be committed to promoting equal opportunities creating an environment where there is fairness, equal opportunity, mutual respect, trust and confidence. Bullying, harassment or victimisation is not condoned or tolerated.

There is no place for bullying within the Council and the Council is committed to fostering a safe and inclusive environment for all individuals and Councillors. Employees are encouraged to speak out against bullying, support one another and promote respect and kindness.

Every Councillor and employee should feel valued and safe.

4. Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner

Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner asked the Chair of the Housing and Property Committee:

Including those that were uninhabitable how many flats were there in the block vacated in Lord Street and how many were created in the “Mary Halsall” and “Thomas Keig” blocks in Peel Road.

Reply by the Chair of the Housing and Property:

*The **Lord Street Flats** consist of 56 apartments as follows;*

24 one-bedroom units;

24 two-bedroom units;

8 three-bedroom units.

*The **Peel Road Apartments** consist of 66 units as follows;*

18 one-bedroom apartments;

48 two-bedroom apartments.

The apartments are arranged between two buildings as follows;

Thomas Keig Apartments – Numbers 1 to 51 (51 units)

Mary Halsall Apartments – Numbers 52 to 66 (15 units)

The Peel Road apartments has resulted in a net gain of 10 housing units.

5. Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner

Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner asked the Chair of the Housing and Property Committee:

How many flats are there being built in the new Williston development, when are they due to be occupied and what significant impact will this have on the current “waiting list”?

Reply by the Chair of the Housing and Property Committee:

The new building will provide 48 two-bedroom flats, with construction expected to be completed by mid-2025. Assuming no unforeseen delays, apartment allocations will begin in the third quarter of 2025, reducing the current waiting list by approximately 20%. Allocations / transfers will be reviewed closer to the completion date.

6. Executive Committee – 18th December, 2024

Motion moved by Councillor Mrs C.L. Wells, seconded by Mr Councillor I.J.G. Clague, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Executive Committee, as contained in report of meeting held on Wednesday, 18th December, 2024, be received by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and the Motion was carried unanimously.

7. Housing and Property Committee – 12th December, 2024 – Clauses A1 to A9

Motion moved by Mr Councillor D.R. Watson, seconded by Mr Councillor P.J. Washington, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Housing and Property Committee, as contained in Clauses A1 to A9 inclusive of report of meeting held on Thursday, 12th December, 2024, be received by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and the Motion was carried unanimously.

8. Chair of the Meeting

Under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1985, the Mayor declared an interest in the next item and relinquished her seat as Chair. Mr Councillor I.J.G. Clague was unanimously elected to Chair the meeting.

9. Housing and Property Committee – 12th December, 2024 – Clause C10

Motion moved by Mr Councillor D.R. Watson, seconded by Mr Councillor P.J. Washington, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Housing and Property Committee, as contained in Clause C10 of report of meeting held on Thursday, 12th December, 2024, be received, approved and adopted by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and there voted **For** the Motion, Councillors: Mr I.J.G. Clague, Mr A.J. Bentley, Mr D.R. Watson, Mrs C.L. Wells, Mr F. Horning – **5**

Against, Councillors: Mr J.E. Skinner, Mr S.R. Crellin, Ms J. Thommeny, Mr P.J. Washington – **4**

Motion carried.

10. Eastern District Civic Amenity Site Joint Committee – 19th November, 2024

Motion moved by Councillor Ms J. Thommeny, seconded by Mr Councillor P.J. Washington, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Eastern District Civic Amenity Site Joint Committee, as contained in report of meeting held on Tuesday, 19th November, 2024, be received by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and the Motion was carried unanimously.

11. Regeneration and Community Committee – 29th November, 2024

Motion moved by Mr Councillor A.J. Bentley, seconded by Mr Councillor S.R. Crellin, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Regeneration and Community Committee, as contained in report of meeting held on Friday, 29th November, 2024, be received by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and there voted **For** the Motion, Councillors: Mr J.E. Skinner, Mr I.J.G. Clague, Mr A.J. Bentley, Mr D.R. Watson, Mr S.R. Crellin, Mr F. Horning, Ms J. Thommeny, Mr P.J. Washington, the Mayor – **9**

Against – Councillor Mrs C.L. Wells – **1**

Motion carried.

12. Environmental Services Committee – 16th December, 2024

Motion moved by Mr Councillor F. Horning, seconded by Councillor Ms J. Thommeny, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Environmental Services Committee, as contained in report of meeting held on Monday, 16th December, 2024, be received by the Council.”

Question put on Motion; a vote was taken electronically, and the nomination was carried unanimously.

13. Adjournment and Resumption

The meeting adjourned at 3.55pm and resumed at 4.15pm with the same Members and officers present.

IN PRIVATE

14. Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner

Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner asked the Leader of the Council:

What purpose or benefit does the granting of “Freedom” bring to either the Council, the City, or the RNLI (Douglas Branch)?

Reply by the Leader of the Council:

To be granted the title of Honorary Freeman is a mark of distinction upon the person whom the Council wishes to honour. The Freedom itself carries no privilege and is purely an honour, reflecting the eminence of the person on whom it is conferred or as recognition of significant and valuable services rendered to the Borough or City by that person. It is normally an honour or award to men or women of note who have lived or worked in the Borough and City, and who are proud to be a part of the City's history by becoming freemen or in the case of HM Services Units, Freedom of Entry.

The overriding principle is that these awards should be made on merit, defined as:

- *Outstanding Achievement or contribution to the community*
- *Exceptional Service*

These should both be in respect of the Borough and City of Douglas.

Awards should not be for a job well done or because someone has reached a particular level. They should be awarded because an individual has ‘gone the extra mile’ in the contribution they have made or stand out ‘head and shoulders’ above others in what has been achieved.

To be considered, the nominee should meet at least 2 of the following criteria:

- *delivered in a way that has brought distinction to Borough and City life and enhanced the Borough and City's reputation in the area or activity concerned*
- *contributed in a way to improve the lives of those less able to help themselves*
- *demonstrated innovation and entrepreneurship which is delivering results in the Borough and City.*

15. Executive Committee – 18th December, 2024 – Clause A3

Motion moved by Councillor Mrs C.L. Wells, seconded by Mr Councillor I.J.G. Clague, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Executive Committee, as contained in Clause A3 of private report of meeting held on Wednesday, 18th December, 2024, be received by the Council.”

Amendment moved by Councillors Mrs C.L. Wells, seconded by Mr Councillor I.J.G. Clague, “That the words, “with membership consisting of just the larger local authorities” be removed from sub-clause A14.”

Question put on Amendment, a vote was taken electronically, and there voted **For** the Amendment, Councillors: Mr I.J.G. Clague, Mr A.J. Bentley, Mr D.R. Watson, Mrs C.L. Wells, Mr S.R. Crellin, Mr F. Horning, Ms J. Thommeny, Mr P.J. Washington, the Mayor – **8**

Against – Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner – **1**

Amendment carried.

Question put on Motion as amended, a vote was taken electronically, and there voted **For** the Motion, Councillors: Mr I.J.G. Clague, Mr A.J. Bentley, Mr D.R. Watson, Mrs C.L. Wells, Mr S.R. Crellin, Mr F. Horning, Ms J. Thommeny, Mr P.J. Washington, the Mayor – **8**

Against – Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner – **1**

Motion carried.

Under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1985, Mr Councillor P.J. Washington declared an interest in the item and retired whilst it was considered.

16. Executive Committee – 18th December, 2024 – Clauses A1, A2 and A4 to A9

Motion moved by Councillor Mrs C.L. Wells, seconded by Mr Councillor I.J.G. Clague, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Executive Committee, as contained in Clauses A1, A2 and A4 to A9 inclusive of private report of meeting held on Wednesday, 18th December, 2024, be received by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and the Motion was carried unanimously.

17. **Chair of the Meeting**

Under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1985, the Mayor declared an interest in the next item and relinquished her seat as Chair. Mr Councillor P.J. Washington was unanimously elected to Chair the meeting.

18. **Executive Committee – 18th December, 2024 – Clause C10**

Motion moved by Councillor Mrs C.L. Wells, seconded by Mr Councillor I.J.G. Clague, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Executive Committee, as contained in Clause C10 of private report of meeting held on Wednesday, 18th December, 2024, be received, approved and adopted by the Council, subject to the removal of the following sentence from the seventh paragraph, “this would remove the need for any protection, all manual workers would see their rate of pay increase, and no member of staff would experience any financial detriment.”

Question put on Motion as amended, a vote was taken electronically, and the Motion was carried unanimously.

19. **Housing and Property Committee – 12th December, 2024**

Motion moved by Mr Councillor D.R. Watson, seconded by Mr Councillor P.J. Washington, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Housing and Property Committee, as contained in private report of meeting held on Thursday, 12th December, 2024, be received by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and the Motion was carried unanimously.

20. **Eastern District Civic Amenity Site Joint Committee – 19th November, 2024**

Motion moved by Councillor Ms J. Thommeny, seconded by Mr Councillor P.J. Washington, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Eastern District Civic Amenity Site Joint Committee, as contained in private report of meeting held on Tuesday, 19th November, 2024, be received by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and the Motion was carried unanimously.

21. **Regeneration and Community Committee – 29th November, 2024**

Motion moved by Mr Councillor A.J. Bentley, seconded by Mr Councillor S.R. Crellin, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Regeneration and Community Committee, as contained in report of meeting held on Friday, 29th November, 2024, be received by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and there voted **For** the Motion, Councillors: Mr I.J.G. Clague, Mr A.J. Bentley, Mr D.R. Watson, Mrs C.L. Wells, Mr S.R. Crellin, Mr F. Horning, Ms J. Thommeny, Mr P.J. Washington, the Mayor – **9**

Against – Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner – **1**

Motion carried.

22. **Environmental Services Committee – 16th December, 2024**

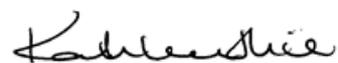
Motion moved by Mr Councillor F. Horning, seconded by Councillor Ms J. Thommeny, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Environmental Services Committee, as contained in private report of meeting held on Monday, 16th December, 2024, be received by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and there voted **For** the Motion, Councillors: Mr I.J.G. Clague, Mr A.J. Bentley, Mr D.R. Watson, Mrs C.L. Wells, Mr S.R. Crellin, Mr F. Horning, Ms J. Thommeny, Mr P.J. Washington, the Mayor – **9**

Against – Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner – **1**

Motion carried.

The Council rose at 4.45pm.



Town Clerk & Chief Executive