

**LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held in the Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn, on Tuesday, 10 March, 2015 at 4:30 pm**

**PRESENT:** Councillor W A Leathem (Chairman)  
  
Presiding Member – Councillor J Tinsley  
  
Councillors S Carson, D Drysdale, J Gallen, O Gawith, A Givan, H Legge, J McCarthy, U Mackin, Jenny Palmer and S P Porter

**OTHER MEMBERS:** Councillors P Catney, A Grehan, A McIntyre and John Palmer

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council  
  
Director of Finance and the Convergence of IT Systems  
Community Planning Manager  
HR Business Manager  
  
Lisburn City Council  
  
Transition Manager  
Head of Audit  
Committee Secretary  
  
Castlereagh Borough Council  
  
Transition Manager

1. Apologies

It was agreed to accept apologies for non-attendance at the meeting on behalf of Councillors A G Ewart and A Redpath and the Chief Executive.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this point in the meeting; however, Councillor Jenny Palmer later submitted a declaration of interest form in respect of Item 4.2 “Consultation on Draft Guidance for Local Government Performance Improvement – Draft NILGA Response”, due to her membership of NILGA.

3. Minutes

It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting of Committee held on 10 February, 2015, as adopted at the meeting of Shadow Council held on 25 February, 2015, be confirmed and signed.

4. Report from Chief Executive

It was proposed by Councillor A Givan, seconded by Councillor S Carson and agreed that the reports and recommendations of the Chief Executive be adopted, subject to any decisions recorded below.

Items for Decision

4.1 Risk Management Policy and Risk Management Strategy & Toolkit

Councillors Jenny Palmer, J McCarthy and A McIntyre arrived to the meeting at this point (4.33 pm).

Members having been provided with copies of the Risk Management Policy and Risk Management Strategy & Toolkit, it was proposed by Councillor S P Porter, seconded by Councillor S Carson and agreed to recommend that they be approved.

4.2 Consultation on Draft Guidance for Local Government Performance Improvement – Draft NILGA Response

Members were provided with a copy of NILGA's draft response, dated 27 February, 2015, to the consultation on Draft Guidance for Local Government Performance Improvement. It was proposed by Councillor U Mackin, seconded by Councillor S Carson and agreed to recommend that any comments Members wished to make on the draft response, or any amendments they considered necessary, be advised to the Transition Manager for conveying to NILGA by 18 March, 2015.

4.3 NIAO Launch of Good Practice Guide on Conflicts of Interest 26 March, 2015 – Malone House, Belfast

Members having been provided with information in relation to the above seminar, it was agreed to recommend that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, or their nominees, be nominated to attend.

Items for Noting

4.4 Data Protection Act 1998, Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004

Councillor D Drysdale arrived to the meeting during consideration of this item of business (4.38 pm).

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a copy of a letter dated 17 February, 2015 from the Information Commissioner's Office in relation to councils' compliance with the above legislation during the period of transition to the new authorities.

Following comments by Councillor S P Porter in relation to the issue of data protection, it was agreed to recommend that the Director of Finance and the

4.4 Data Protection Act 1998, Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (Contd)

Convergence of IT Systems investigate if the council's liability cover extended to Members operating outside of council property, eg. holding information about constituents.

4.5 The Making of Local Government Bye-Laws – Guidance for Local District Councils

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a copy of the Department of the Environment's finalised bye-laws guidance for local district councils.

4.6 Community Planning Workshop  
25 March, 2015 – Lagan Valley Island

It was noted that, to launch the start of the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council's Community Planning process, a workshop had been arranged for the afternoon of 25 March. All Members were invited to attend, together with the statutory partners and relevant Officers of the council to discuss the preparation of the Community Plan. Further information on the agenda for the workshop would be provided to Members in due course.

4.7 Dundee City Council Community Planning Study Visit – 20 February, 2015

The Community Planning Manager advised that a report in respect of the above study visit had been made available to Members electronically earlier in the afternoon. As Members had not had a chance to read the paper, the Chairman, Councillor W A Leathem, asked that it be discussed both at the Community Planning Workshop on 25 March and at the next Governance and Audit Committee meeting. The Community Planning Manager advised that there may be an opportunity for a further study visit and asked that Members advise her if they were aware of good experiences in any other councils that she could research.

4.8 Update on RTOB Readiness Report

Members noted the contents of a copy of the NI Local Government Reform Organisational Design Regional Reporting Actions. The report indicated that the council was 100% compliant across the four key strategic areas of measurement.

**Additional Report**

Items for Noting

4.9 Local Government (Transitional, Incidental, Consequential and Supplemental Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a copy of the above Regulations, which had come into operation on 9 March, 2015. It was proposed

4.9 Local Government (Transitional, Incidental, Consequential and Supplemental Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 (Contd)

by Councillor S Carson, seconded by Councillor U Mackin and agreed to recommend that, as the Regulations were now in operation, the Charter for Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council be applied for.

5. Confidential Report

Councillor P Catney arrived to the meeting at this point (4.49 pm).

It was agreed that the reports and recommendations of the Chief Executive be adopted, subject to any decisions recorded below.

“In Committee”

It was proposed by Councillor J McCarthy, seconded by Councillor S Carson and agreed that the items in the Confidential Report and Additional Confidential Report be considered “in committee”, in the absence of members of the press and public being present.

5.1 Audit Service Provision

As requested by the Committee at its meeting on 13 January, 2015, Members were provided with information in relation to the provision of audit services, either internally or externally sourced, in other council areas. Following discussion, it was proposed by Councillor U Mackin, seconded by Councillor S Carson and agreed to recommend that:

- (i) the Internal Auditor of Lisburn City Council and the External Auditor of Castlereagh Borough Council meet, as a matter of urgency, to develop an Audit Workplan for the new council for the year 2015/16, which would include management letters; and
- (ii) as part of the ongoing review of the effectiveness of the system of the audit service provision to deal with the existing service audits, and especially the transferring-in functions, a CIPFA representative, or equivalent, be appointed to compile a report on the provision of audit service moving forward, to include Terms of Reference of the Audit Committee and Review of the Audit Workplan, especially with the transferring-in functions.

Following comments by Councillor S P Porter regarding the vast difference in the amount of money spent by different councils on the provision of audit services, it was agreed that the Committee be provided with information on comments made by the Northern Ireland Auditor at the end of the financial year on each council.

5.2 Days in 2015 for Hoisting Flags on Government Buildings in Northern Ireland from 8.00 am Until Sunset

Members were provided with a copy of DOE Circular LG 06/2015, dated 9 February, 2015, regarding the above matter. Members were reminded that

5.2 Days in 2015 for Hoisting Flags on Government Buildings in Northern Ireland from 8.00 am Until Sunset (Contd)

Lisburn City Council and Castlereagh Borough Council currently had different policies in place in relation to the hoisting of flags in their respective council areas. It was the council's understanding that any change in policy would require a full Equality Impact Assessment.

It was proposed by Councillor S P Porter, seconded by Councillor S Carson and agreed to recommend that Officers investigate the matter in terms of developing a new policy for the new council area and bring a further report to a future meeting for consideration. It was noted that, until such time as a new policy was developed, the policies currently in place in the Lisburn City Council and Castlereagh Borough Council areas would remain in place.

5.3 Report of HR Business Partner

Members were provided with a copy of a report prepared by HR Business Partner containing the following matters:

5.3.1 Appointment of Heads of Service

The Transition Manager, Lisburn City Council, and the Head of Audit left the meeting at this point (5.00 pm).

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, an updated plan for the appointment of Heads of Service to the new council.

The Transition Manager, Lisburn City Council, and the Head of Audit returned to the meeting at 5.06 pm.

5.3.2 Evaluation of Posts in the New Council Structure

It was agreed to recommend that the GLPC Scheme be used to evaluate posts in the new council structure, it being noted that Lisburn City Council and Castlereagh Borough Council had recently purchased a licence for the scheme and, therefore, there would be no cost to the council for its continued use.

5.3.3 Revised RPA Staff Severance Scheme and Requests for Voluntary Redundancy

Members were provided with a copy of the LGRJF Circular LGRJF/11 RPA Staff Severance Scheme for Local Government Staff. Having considered the contents of the circular, together with information set out in the HR Business Manager's report, it was proposed by Councillor O Gawith, seconded by Councillor S Carson and agreed to recommend that:

- (a) the cost of severance for staff identified for release under the RPA Staff Severance Scheme be noted and the relevant staff be confirmed as being released under the Scheme on 10 April, 2015; and

5.3.3 Revised RPA Staff Severance Scheme and Requests for Voluntary Redundancy (Contd)

- (b) the council accede to the request for Voluntary Redundancy from the PA to the Chief Executive (Lisburn City Council) for release under the RPA Staff Severance Scheme on 1 April, 2015.

5.4 Report of the Director of Finance and the Convergence of IT Systems

Members were provided with a copy of a report prepared by the Director of Finance and the Convergence of IT Systems containing a number of items in relation to Winding Up Issues. Members noted the Director's report, the contents of which were to be considered by the Corporate Services Committee later in the evening.

**Additional Confidential Report**

5.5 The Assets & Liabilities Transfer Schemes to Belfast City Council

Members were provided with a copy of (a) a letter dated 3 March, 2015 from Edwards & Co Solicitors, on behalf of Lisburn City Council and Castlereagh Borough Council, to the Department; (b) a letter from Edwards & Co to Belfast City Council; and (c) a letter dated 9 March, 2015 from the DOE Local Government Policy Division 1, in relation to a number of areas of disagreement connected to the transfer of assets and liabilities to Belfast City Council. Members were also provided with copies of the Castlereagh Borough Council and Lisburn City Council Transfer Schemes.

It was proposed by Councillor A Givan, seconded by Councillor S Carson and agreed to recommend that the direction from the Department to Belfast City Council be noted and that the Transfer Schemes of Castlereagh Borough Council and Lisburn City Council be agreed.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor O Gawith, seconded by Councillor J McCarthy and agreed to come out of committee and normal business was resumed.

6. Any Other Business

6.1 Audit Performance Fees  
Director of Finance and the Convergence of IT Systems

The Director of Finance and the Convergence of IT Systems reported receipt of an email the previous day advising that there would be no charge to the council in the first year in respect of audit performance fees and that the charge in the second year would be £40,000.

6.2 Recording of Council Meeting  
Transition Manager, Lisburn City Council

The Transition Manager, Lisburn City Council, reminded Members that, from 1 April, 2015, meetings of the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council would be recorded. In advance of this, it was noted that a trial recording of the council meeting on 25 March would be carried out.

In respect of the trial recording of the Governance and Audit Committee meeting on 10 February, 2015, the Transition Manager advised that a link would be provided shortly to Members so they could listen to the recording.

**Conclusion of the Meeting**

At the conclusion of the meeting, which was the last meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee of the Shadow Council, the Chairman, Councillor W A Leatham, thanked the Vice-Chairman, Members and Officers for the support they had given him during his term as Chairman and for the professional manner in which business had been conducted. He also extended thanks to the Members of the Committee's two working groups to discuss branding and arrangements for the Annual General Meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was terminated at 5.29 pm.

---

Presiding Member/Chairman