

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held in the Council Chamber and Remote Locations on Thursday, 11 December, 2025 at 5:30 pm

PRESENT IN CHAMBER:

Councillor D Lynch (Chair)

Mr E Jardine (Independent Member and Vice-Chair)

Aldermen O Gawith and J Tinsley

Councillors J Bamford, D J Craig, A P Ewing, B Magee, A Martin, M McKeever

PRESENT IN REMOTE LOCATION:

Councillors D Bassett, S Burns, J Gallen and S Lowry

OTHER MEMBER PRESENT IN CHAMBERu

Councillor G Hynds

OTHER MEMBER PRESENT IN REMOTE LOCATION

Councillor P Catney

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive

Director of Organisation Development and Innovation

Head of Communities

Head of Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning

Head of Finance

Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development

Internal Audit Manager (remote)

Performance Improvement Officer

IT Officer

Member Services Officers

Northern Ireland Audit Office

Mr R Ross (remote)

Ross Boyd Accountants

Mr B Stewart (remote)

Commencement of the Meeting

The Chair, Councillor D Lynch, welcomed those present to the meeting. He pointed out that, unless the item on the agenda was considered under confidential business, this meeting would be audio recorded. In accordance with the Protocol for Remote Meetings, the Chair asked that those attending via zoom ensure that the meeting could not be seen or heard by any other person at their remote location when confidential business was being considered.

The Chair, Councillor D Lynch, asked that mobile phones be put on silent or switched off for the duration of the meeting. The Director of Organisation Development and Innovation outlined the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.

Prior to consideration of the business on the agenda, the Chair, Councillor D Lynch, advised that this was the last meeting at which Member Services Officer, Mrs C Roe, would be in attendance before her forthcoming early retirement. He paid tribute to her work with the Council and stated that she would be missed. Councillors D J Craig and A Martin and Alderman O Gawith also paid tribute to Mrs Roe and wished her well.

1. Apologies

It was agreed to accept apologies for non-attendance at the meeting on behalf of The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan, Alderman S P Porter and Councillor R McLernon.

Councillor A P Ewing arrived at the meeting at 5.02 pm.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

At this point, the Chair, Councillor D Lynch, extended a welcome to Mr R Ross, Northern Ireland Audit Office, and Mr B Stewart, RBCA.

3. Report from the Performance Improvement Officer

3.1 Customer Care Feedback – Quarter 2 2025/26

Councillors M McKeever and J Bamford arrived at the meeting during consideration of this item of business (5.06 pm and 5.08 pm respectively).

Members were provided with a copy of a dashboard report showing compliments and complaints during Quarter 2 of 2025/26. As previously requested, the Performance Improvement Officer outlined in her report a summary of key learning outcomes from complaints, as well as good practice noted from compliments received, and Members thanked her for providing this information.

3.1 Customer Care Feedback – Quarter 2 2025/26 (Cont'd)

Council staff were commended for having resolved the majority of complaints received before they became formal complaints.

It was agreed that the contents of the report be noted.

3.2 Q2 Performance Improvement Monitoring – Objectives, Case Studies, Performance KPIs & Corporate Plan KPIs

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a copy of:

- (a) a quarterly monitoring document, including case studies of improvement for Quarter 2 of 2025/26 (July – September inclusive);
- (b) details of Performance KPI results for Quarter 2 of 2025/26; and
- (c) details of Corporate Plan KPI results for Quarter 2 of 2025/26.

3.3 NI Audit Office – Audit and Assessment Report 2025/26

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of:

- (a) a copy of the NI Audit Office Audit and Assessment Report 2025/26; and
- (b) Certificate of Compliance issued by NIAO.

Council staff were commended for their good working practices which had led to the Council having achieved an unqualified audit.

4. Report by Head of Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning

4.1 Corporate Risk Register

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, copies of the Corporate and Directorate Risk Registers.

Prior to the consideration of confidential business, the Chair, Councillor D Lynch, asked if Members had any non-confidential items of Any Other Business to raise, which they did not.

5. Confidential Business

The matters contained in the confidential report would be dealt with “In Committee” due to containing information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

“In Committee”

It was proposed by Councillor A P Ewing, seconded by Councillor D J Craig and agreed that the following matters be considered “in committee,” in the absence of members of the press and public being present. The member of the press

5. Confidential Business (Cont'd)

seated in the public gallery left the Council Chamber (5.14 pm), as did the Head of Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning, Head of Communities, Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development and the Performance Improvement Officer.

5.1 Report by Head of Finance

5.1.1 2024-2025 Final Report To Those Charged With Governance
(Report will never be available – final certified accounts will be published)

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a copy the 2024-25 Final Report To Those Charged With Governance.

The Head of Finance provided an update in respect of an ongoing HMRC matter and the Chief Executive confirmed that information referred to by Councillor J Bamford would be made available in his office for any Member wishing to have sight of it.

5.1.2 Annual Audit Letter 2024-2025: Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
(Report will be made available following Council ratification)

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a copy of the 2024-2025 Annual Audit Letter

5.2 Report by Internal Audit Manager

5.2.1 Internal Audit – Progress Report
(Report will be made available following Council ratification)

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a copy of an Internal Audit Progress Report summarising internal audit work, progress against the 2025/26 Operational Plan and any outstanding previous years reports. A copy of any internal audit reports referred to in the progress report were also provided in full on Decision Time for Members' information.

At the request of a Member, the Internal Audit Manager agreed to replace colour coding in future reports with wording.

5.2.2 Chief Executive's Statement of Assurance April 2025 – September 2025
(Report would never be made available)

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a copy of the Chief Executive's Statement of Assurance for April 2025 – September 2025.

6. Closed Session

In line with good practice and the Governance and Audit Committee Terms of Reference, Members met with representatives from External Audit and Internal Audit in a closed session, the purpose of which was to afford Members the opportunity to ask questions that may not specifically be addressed as part of an audit.

The following Officers left the Meeting prior to the closed session taking place (5.45 pm): Chief Executive, Director of Organisation Development and Innovation, Head of Finance and Member Services Officers.

The Director of Organisation Development and Innovation and Member Services Officers returned to the meeting at 6.19 pm.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor A P Ewing, seconded by Councillor M McKeever, and agreed to come out of committee and normal business was resumed.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 6.19 pm.

Mayor/Chairperson