

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the proceedings of the special Governance and Audit Committee meeting of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council held in the Island Civic Centre, Lisburn, BT27 4RL, on Friday 26 June 2015, at 4.00 pm

IN THE CHAIR: The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor RT Beckett

PRESENT:

Aldermen D Drysdale, A Ewart and J Tinsley

Councillors O Gawith, A Girvin, B Hanvey, H Legge, J McCarthy, U Mackin and T Mitchell

IN ATTENDANCE: Alderman G Rice MBE and Councillor M Tolerton

Chief Executive
Director of Corporate Services
Director of Finance and IT Convergence
Head of Finance and IT
Financial Services Manager
Head of Audit
Internal Auditor
Transition Manager
Committee Secretary

Commencement of the Meeting

In the absence of the Chair and the Vice-Chair, the Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor RT Beckett, welcomed Members and Officers to the special meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee.

1. Apologies

It was agreed to accept apologies from the Chairman, Alderman WA Leathem, the Vice-Chair, Councillor V Kamble, Councillors A Ewing, J Gallen, A Grehan and B Mallon.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor RT Beckett, invited Members to declare any Conflicts of Interest they might have in relation to the business of the meeting and reminded them of the requirement to complete Declaration of Interest forms in this regard, which had been provided at the meeting. No Declarations of Interest were received.

3. Report from Chief Executive

Items for Decision:

3.1 Presentations to Council

It was proposed by Alderman J Tinsley, seconded by Alderman D Drysdale and agreed that it be recommended that special meetings of Council be convened on an ad hoc basis to consider presentations which had implications for the Council as a whole (e.g. housing, planning, water etc.), and that presentations which were specific to local issues be directed to be dealt with by engagement at District Electoral Area level

4. Confidential Business

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor RT Beckett, advised that the following matters of confidential business would be dealt with 'in committee':

- (i) Approval of Draft Accounts
- (ii) Report by Head of Audit

'In Committee'

It was proposed by Councillor U Mackin, seconded by Alderman D Drysdale and agreed that the items in the Confidential Report be considered 'In Committee' in the absence of members of the press and public.

Items for Decision

4.1 Approval of Draft Accounts

The Director of Finance and IT Convergence presented the following draft accounts for Members' consideration:

- Lisburn City Council accounts for year ended 31st March 2015
- Castlereagh Borough Council accounts for year ended 31st March 2015
- Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Shadow accounts for period 26th May 2014 to 31st March 2015

- Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council STC accounts for period 1st April 2014 to 19th June 2014
- Lagan Rural Partnership Joint Committee accounts for year ended 31st March 2015
- Peace Three Joint Committee accounts for the period 1st April 2014 to 31st December 2014

The Director expressed his thanks to the two teams of officers for their work in completing the accounts within the deadline. He provided a detailed summary of the salient issues relating to each set of accounts and both he and the Head of Finance and IT answered Members' questions. The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor RT Beckett, asked that his thanks to the accounts teams for their hard work be recorded.

It was proposed by Councillor T Mitchell, seconded by Councillor J McCarthy and agreed to recommend that the Council approve the draft accounts detailed above.

4.2 Report of the Head of Audit – Internal Audit

It was proposed by Alderman D Drysdale, seconded by Councillor O Gawith and agreed that it be recommended that the Council adopt the recommendations contained within the Head of Audit's Report.

4.2.1. Review of Governance Framework/Drafting of Governance Statement

Members considered a Summary Report of the Review of the Council's Governance Framework that was required to be undertaken under the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2006. It was reported that the Review was required to be considered by Committee or full Council and gave rise to the Governance Statement which formed part of the Abstract of Accounts. The Summary Report contained proposed Recommended Actions considered necessary to bring the Council's Framework in line with Best Practice as espoused by CIPFA/SOLACE.

It was agreed that it be recommended that Council approve the contents of the Summary Report of the Review of the Council's Governance Framework

4.2.2. Statement of Internal Audit Opinion

Members considered the Head of Audit's Statement of Opinion on Risk Management, Control and Governance. It was reported that the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards stated that the Head of Audit should

provide an annual report to the Board (i.e. those charged with Governance) to support the Governance Statement.

It was agreed that it be recommended that the contents of the Head of Audit's Statement of Opinion on Risk Management, Control and Governance be noted.

4.2.3. National Fraud Initiative 2014-15

The Head of Audit advised that he was also the Council's key contact for the purposes of the National Fraud Initiative and was responsible for undertaking or overseeing the investigation or review of the matches. He reported that, in total, there had been 675 matches, including 54 categorised by the Audit Commission as "Recommended".

It was noted that the target date for completion of the matches was January 2016. The Head of Audit reported that all "Recommended" matches had been investigated along with a sample of Non-Priority. None of the matches had revealed anything of a fraudulent nature or financial loss to the Council in the nature of a duplicate payment or similar.

It was agreed to recommend that the Council note the contents of the Head of Audit's report on the National Fraud Initiative.

"Out of Committee"

It was proposed by Councillor U Mackin, seconded by Alderman D Drysdale and agreed to come "Out of Committee" and normal business was resumed.

5. Any Other Business

5.1 Thanks to the Right Worshipful the Mayor

Councillor U Mackin expressed thanks to the Right Worshipful the Mayor for undertaking the chairmanship of the meeting in the absence of the Chair and the Vice-Chair.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 4.30 pm.

Chair