

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 January, 2017 at 5:30 pm

PRESENT:

Alderman M Henderson MBE (Acting Chairman)

The Right Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor R B Bloomfield MBE

Deputy Mayor
Alderman S Martin

Aldermen G Rice MBE and J Tinsley

Councillors J Baird, S Carson, P Catney, D J Craig,
J Gallen, A Girvin, A Grehan, B Hanvey, V Kamble and
A Redpath

OTHER MEMBERS:

Councillor T Morrow

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive
Director of Corporate Services
Director of Environmental Services
Head of Finance & IT
Head of Marketing & Communications – Mrs C Bethel
Transition Manager
Community Planning Manager
Audit and Risk Manager
Performance Development Officer
Policy Officer
Internal Audit Assistant
Member Services Officer

Northern Ireland Audit Office

Ms C Kane, Director

Capita Business Services Limited

Mr A Rotherham

Chairman

In the absence of the Chairman, Councillor T Mitchell, the Vice-Chairman, Alderman M Henderson, took the chair. Alderman Henderson having advised Members that Councillor Mitchell's father had passed away the previous weekend, the Committee expressed its condolences to Councillor Mitchell and his family.

1. Apologies

It was agreed to accept apologies for non-attendance at the meeting on behalf of the Chairman, Councillor T Mitchell, and Alderman W A Leathem.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest expressed at the meeting; however, a declaration of interest form was submitted after the meeting from Councillor D J Craig in respect of item 5.4.3 "Letter to Sharon O'Connor, Chair of Education Board", given that Councillor Craig was a member of the Education Authority.

3. Minutes

It was proposed by Councillor J Baird, seconded by Alderman J Tinsley and agreed that the minutes of the meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held on 13 December, 2016, as adopted at the meeting of Council held on 20 December, 2016, be confirmed and signed. In the absence of the Chairman, Councillor T Mitchell, it was agreed that signing of the minutes would take place later in the month.

It was agreed that the confidential business would be considered at this point in the meeting.

4. Confidential Business

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

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 Redpath, seconded by Alderman J Tinsley and agreed that the following matters be considered "in committee", in the absence of members of the press and public being present.

4.1 Northern Ireland Audit Office – Final Report to Those Charged with Governance

The Acting Chairman, Alderman M Henderson, welcomed to the meeting Ms C Kane, Director, Northern Ireland Audit Office.

Members had been provided with a copy of the final Report to Those Charged with Governance and Ms Kane made a verbal presentation in relation to the document.

4.1 Northern Ireland Audit Office – Final Report to Those Charged with Governance (Contd)

It was proposed by Alderman J Tinsley, seconded by Councillor A Grehan and agreed to recommend that the final Report to Those Charged with Governance be accepted.

The Acting Chairman, Alderman M Henderson, thanked Ms Kane for her attendance and she left the meeting (5.36 pm).

The Deputy Mayor, Alderman S Martin, arrived to the meeting at this point (5.36 pm).

4.2 Draft Estimates 2017/18

Councillor D J Craig arrived to the meeting during consideration of this item of business (5.37 pm).

Members had been provided with a copy of the draft estimates for Governance and Audit for 2017/18. It was proposed by Alderman J Tinsley, seconded by Councillor A Grehan and agreed to recommend that the draft estimates be agreed and submitted into the overall estimates for the Council for the year commencing 1 April, 2017.

4.3 Elected Member Management and Governance Structure for Key Investment Projects (See Council minute of 24.01.17 where the decision on this item was amended – it was agreed that the Members Advisory Board consist of 14 Members)

Further to consideration of this matter at previous meetings of Council, when it had been agreed that 'Option 3 – Governance with a Members Advisory Board' would be pursued as the accepted form of governance structure for taking forward the Council's capital projects, Members were provided with a copy of (a) a summary of legal opinion; (b) Schedule 2 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, as referred to in the legal opinion, to explain the system off selecting Members to Committees; and (c) the result of using the calculation for 8, 9 and 10 Committee Members.

The Chief Executive answered several queries raised by Members in relation to membership of the Members Advisory Board.

It was proposed by Councillor A Redpath and seconded by Councillor A Grehan that the Members Advisory Board would consist of 9 Members (4 DUP, 2 UUP, 2 APNI and 1 SDLP), with Members being nominated by Party Group Leaders and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman being nominated by the Advisory Board from within its membership. The proposal by Councillor Redpath was put to the meeting and, on a vote being taken, was declared 'carried', the voting being 9 in favour of and 3 against the proposal.

Alderman J Tinsley having suggested that, in order to fully avail of the expertise of Elected Members in taking forward the Council's capital projects, the Members Advisory Board should comprise of a greater number, it was agreed that the Chief Executive would circulate to Members the following day, the result of using

4.3 Elected Member Management and Governance Structure for Key Investment Projects (Contd)

the calculation for up to 15 Committee Members. This would also be included in the Chief Executive's report to Council on 24 January for Members' further consideration.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor J Baird, seconded by Councillor P Catney and agreed to come out of committee and normal business was resumed.

Councillor J Gallen left the meeting at this point (5.56 pm).

5. Report from Chief Executive

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

Items for Decision

5.1 Volunteers Supporting Delivery of Public Service Conference
8 February, 2017 – Crumlin Road Gaol

Members were provided with a copy of information regarding the above conference, the registration fee for which was £75.00. In order to avail of the early bird discount of two places for £125.00, two places had been booked for the conference. It was proposed by Councillor A Girvin, seconded by Councillor P Catney and agreed to recommend that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, or their nominees, attend the conference.

5.2 Education in Northern Ireland – Improving Attainment and Reducing Inequalities
4 April, 2017 – Belfast

Members having been provided with a copy of information regarding the above conference, the estimated cost of a Member's attendance at which was £223.00, it was proposed by Councillor J Baird, seconded by Councillor P Catney and agreed to recommend that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, or their nominees, attend the conference.

5.3 Report from Audit and Risk Manager

Members were provided with a copy of a report prepared by the Audit and Risk Manager containing the following matters:

5.3.1 Capita Business Services Ltd – Presentation of Internal Audit Reports

Alderman J Tinsley left, and returned to, the meeting during consideration of this item of business (6.06 pm and 6.15 pm respectively).

The Acting Chairman, Alderman M Henderson, welcomed to the meeting Mr A Rotherham from Capita Business Services Ltd.

Members had been provided with a copy of (a) Bank Reconciliation Audit (Satisfactory Assurance); (b) Creditors Audit (Satisfactory Assurance) and (c) Review of ICT Systems.

Mr Rotherham made a verbal report in respect of the above documents and several queries raised by Members were addressed by both Mr Rotherham and Officers present. During discussion, it was agreed to recommend that:

- (a) Members be provided with a list of those Officers authorised to sign official purchase orders; and
- (b) in light of difficulties she had experienced in accessing her reports, Alderman G Rice would, in future, receive hard copies of any Capita Reports being presented to the Committee.

Members were assured that recommendations contained in the above audits would be included in future Recommendation Tracker Reports.

Councillor P Catney commended Officers for the amount of work that had gone into carrying out the above audits and review and stated that he was satisfied with the reports provided.

It was proposed by Councillor P Catney, seconded by Alderman J Tinsley and agreed to recommend that the Capita Reports be accepted.

The Acting Chairman, Alderman M Henderson, thanked Mr A Rotherham for his attendance and he left the meeting (6.21 pm).

5.3.2 Internal Audit Summary Reports

Members were provided with a copy of the following Internal Audit Summary Reports:

- (a) Departmental Year End Stocks as at 31 March, 2016 for Corporate Services, Leisure and Community Services, Environmental Services and Economic Development;
- (b) Procurement Audit 2015/16;
- (c) PCSP 2015/16;
- (d) Off-Street Car Parking; and
- (e) Fleet Usage Policy & Processes

All of the above internal audits having received a satisfactory assurance, it was agreed to recommend that the reports be accepted.

5.3.2 Internal Audit Summary Reports (Contd)

Members noted from the Audit and Risk Manager's report, an update in respect of the following audits that were currently in progress:

- (i) Safeguarding Audit
- (ii) Economic Development Audit
- (iii) Cemetery Audit
- (iv) Golf Courses Audit

5.3.3 Recommendation Tracker

Members having been provided with a copy of an Audit Recommendation Tracker for the Department of Environmental Services, it was agreed to recommend that the report be approved.

5.3.4 Annual Theft and Fraud Report 2015/16

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a copy of the Department of Finance's Annual Theft and Fraud Report 2015/16.

The Audit and Risk Manager drew Members' attention to the report's reference to the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) – Data Matching, in which the Council was a participant. The fifth NFI exercise in Northern Ireland had commenced in October 2016 and the matches therefrom would be released in January 2017 for the Council to review and investigate. The Council would take account of the trends and examples of cases highlighted in the report and the findings of investigation work would be provided to the Committee when completed.

The Director of Corporate Services, Director of Environmental Services, Head of Finance & IT and Councillor T Morrow left the meeting at this point (6.26 pm).

Items for Noting

5.4 Community Planning

Members were provided with a copy of an update report by the Community Planning Manager containing the following matters:

5.4.1 Draft Community Plan

Members were provided with a copy of the final draft Community Plan, as presented to the Strategic Community Planning Partnership in later December 2016 in advance of its next meeting on 5 January, 2017. It was noted that the version provided to the Governance and Audit Committee had taken account of comments by Members, Council Officers and partners.

Members commended the Community Planning Manager and other Officers involved in the production of the draft Community Plan.

5.4.2 Communication Plan for Community Plan

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a draft Communications Plan for the draft Community Plan consultation, as agreed by the Strategic Community Planning Partnership on 5 January, 2017.

The Community Planning Manager advised that six community/voluntary organisation public workshops had been arranged and these would be advertised the following week.

5.4.3 Letter to Sharon O'Connor, Chair of Education Board

Members were reminded that the Education Authority, as a named statutory partner, had not been engaging in the community planning process in any meaningful way. Members were provided with a copy of (a) a letter dated 21 December, 2016 from the Education Authority regarding 'Education Authority and Council for Catholic Maintained Schools Statutory Responsibilities to Support Community Planning Partnerships' and (b) a Position Paper on Community Planning by the Education Authority and Council for Catholic Maintained Schools.

It was noted that, as a result of the above correspondence, a letter, agreed with the Chair of the Strategic Partnership, would be drafted and sent to Sharon O'Connor, Chair of the Education Board, to highlight concerns and ask for involvement, as much of what the Partnership was hoping to achieve centred on children and young people. The response would be reported to the Governance and Audit Committee when received.

It was proposed by Councillor J Baird, seconded by Alderman J Tinsley and agreed to recommend that the letter to Sharon O'Connor be copied to the Minister for Education.

The Chief Executive advised that this matter would also be raised by Alderman W A Leatham at the Partnership Panel meeting at the end of January.

5.4.4 Letter to Lord Justice Gillen re Lisburn Courthouse

Members were reminded that it had previously been agreed to send a letter to Lord Justice Gillen regarding his consultation on the civil and family justice system in Northern Ireland given that many of his recommendations reflected what the Council was trying to achieve through the multi-agency work on Lisburn Courthouse. It was noted that this letter had been sent, with input from Janice Spence, local solicitor, seeking a meeting with the Lord Justice early in the New Year. The response would be reported to the Governance and Audit Committee when received.

5.5 Guidance for Handling Petitions – Further Requested Information

At the last meeting of the Committee, it had been agreed to accept the guidance presented in relation to handling petitions, subject to a minor amendment, and

5.5 Guidance for Handling Petitions – Further Requested Information (Contd)

further information was requested on the management of e-petitions in the UK Parliament and NI Assembly. This information was provided to, and noted by, the Committee.

Verbal Item

5.6 NAC Councillor Development Network Meeting
9 February, 2017 – Preston

The Chief Executive reported receipt of a request from the National Association of Councillors (NAC) that, as a nominated NAC Northern Ireland delegate to the NAC Councillor Development Network Meeting on 9 February, 2017 in Preston, Alderman M Henderson's attendance would be classed as official Council business and he would, therefore, receive reimbursement of expenses from the Council. It was agreed to recommend, on a proposal by Alderman J Tinsley, that Alderman Henderson' attendance at the above meeting be approved and that the Council reimburse expenses.

6. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

Conclusion of the Meeting

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Acting Chairman, Alderman M Henderson, having wished those present a Happy New Year, advised that the Transition Manager, Mr R Lawther, had tendered his resignation from the Council and this was the last meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee at which he would be in attendance. Alderman Henderson thanked Mr Lawther for the help and guidance he had given to Members during the transition period and stated that it had been a pleasure working with him. The Chief Executive also referred to Mr Lawther's assistance in respect of the Robinson Centre.

There being no further business, the meeting was terminated at 6.34 pm.

Mayor/Chairman