

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held in the Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn, on Wednesday, 21 September, 2016 at 5:30 pm

PRESENT:

Councillor T Mitchell (Chairman)

The Right Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor R B Bloomfield MBE

Deputy Mayor
Alderman S Martin

Aldermen W A Leathem, G Rice MBE and J Tinsley

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive
Director of Corporate Services
Head of Internal Audit and Risk
Head of Finance & IT
Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development
(Acting)
Transition Manager
Community Planning Manager
Financial Transaction Policy & Reporting Manager
Performance Development Officer
Internal Audit Assistant
Member Services Officer

Northern Ireland Audit Office

Mr A Knox

1. **Apologies**

It was agreed to accept apologies for non-attendance at the meeting on behalf of Alderman M Henderson MBE and Councillor J Baird.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes

It was proposed by Councillor J Gallen, seconded by Councillor A Grehan and agreed that the minutes of the meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held on 20 June, 2016, as adopted at the meeting of Council held on 28 June, 2016, be confirmed and signed.

It was agreed that the confidential business on the agenda 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 reports would be dealt with “In Committee” due to containing information (a) relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information); (b) relating to any individual; and (c) likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

“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.

The three confidential reports were considered in the following order: additional confidential report, further additional confidential report, confidential report.

4.1 Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Report to Those Charged with Governance 2015-2016

The Chairman, Councillor T Mitchell, welcomed to the meeting Mr A Knox, Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO).

Members had been provided with a copy of the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Report to Those Charged with Governance 2015-2016. Mr A Knox made a verbal presentation on the report, during which he pointed out that the report was still in draft form as management had not had an opportunity to respond to the audit findings. Once the NIAO received the management response, the final document would be issued to the Council. Mr Knox thanked all Council Officers involved for the co-operation and assistance afforded to NIAO staff during the audit process.

It was proposed by Alderman W A Leathem, seconded by Alderman G Rice and agreed to recommend that (a) the draft Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Report to Those Charged with Governance 2015-2016 be approved; and (b) upon receipt of the final report, this be presented to the Committee together with a traffic light report in order that implementation of recommendations could be monitored.

4.2 Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Statement of Accounts For Year Ended 31 March, 2016

Alderman G Rice left, and returned to, the meeting during consideration of this item of business (5.48 pm and 5.50 pm respectively).

The Deputy Mayor, Alderman S Martin, arrived to the meeting during consideration of this item of business (5.52 pm).

Members had been provided with a copy of the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Statement of Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March, 2016. The Head of Finance & IT having answered several Members' queries, it was proposed by Alderman J Tinsley, seconded by Councillor A Grehan and agreed that the Statement of Accounts be accepted and signed by the Chairman, Councillor T Mitchell, and the Chief Executive.

Mr A Knox, Northern Ireland Audit Office, left the meeting at this point, as did the Director of Corporate Services, Head of Finance and IT and the Financial Transaction Policy & Reporting Manager.

4.3 Media Enquiry

Members were provided with the following:

- (a) copy of a report by the Head of Marketing and Communications in respect of media queries that had been received regarding the Local Government Auditor's Report 2016;
- (b) copy of the NIAO press release relating to this matter; and
- (c) copy of the NIAO Local Government Audit Report 2016.

Members noted the contents of the above correspondence and agreed that, in the event of a Member receiving a press query, this should be referred to the Head of Marketing and Communications for co-ordinated response.

4.4 Internal Audit Report – MCU

Members were provided with a copy of the Marketing Function Internal Audit Report June 2016, together with a summary of the report. The Head of Internal Audit and Risk having made a verbal presentation on the report and answered several queries raised by Members, it was proposed by Councillor D J Craig, seconded by Councillor P Catney and agreed to recommend that the Marketing Function Internal Audit Report June 2016 be approved.

4.6 Recommendations from External Report

Councillor D J Craig left the meeting during consideration of this item of business (6.14 pm).

Members were provided with a copy of recommendations arising from an external report carried out by Harry McConnell. Following discussion, it was proposed by Alderman J Tinsley, seconded by Councillor S Carson and agreed

4.6 Recommendations from External Report (Contd)

to recommend that the recommendations contained in the external report be approved. It was noted that further reports would be made at future Committee meetings regarding the items relating to 'Petitions' and 'Social Media Training for Members' and those reports would address a number of suggestions put forward by Members on those issues.

4.7 Extension of Statistician Contract

The Chief Executive set out in her report, information relating to the statistician currently on secondment with Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council and Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council. The Community Planning Manager having answered a number of queries raised by Members, it was proposed by Councillor A Redpath, seconded by Councillor A Girvin and agreed to recommend that, in agreement with Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, the contract for the statistician be extended to March 2017, at which time the Council's needs would be reassessed in line with its strategic review.

4.8 Report of the Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development (Acting)

Members were provided with a copy of a report prepared by the Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development (Acting) containing the following matter:

4.8.1 Efficiency Review 2017 – Progress Report

Members noted from the report of the Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development (Acting), a progress report in respect of the Efficiency Review 2017. In particular, it was noted that Councillor U Mackin would be replacing Alderman W A Leathem on the Elected Member Steering Group.

The Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development (Acting) left the meeting at this point.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor S Carson, seconded by Councillor J Gallen and agreed to come out of committee and normal business was resumed.

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 Performance Improvement Report

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor B Bloomfield, left the meeting at this point (6.28 pm).

5.1 Performance Improvement Report (Contd)

Members having been provided with a copy of the Council Performance Improvement Report 2015/16, it was proposed by Alderman J Tinsley, seconded by Councillor A Redpath and agreed to recommend that it be approved.

5.2 Community Planning

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

5.2.1 Thematic Working Groups

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a copy of key themes that had emerged from Thematic Working Group meetings held on 29 July and 3 August, 2016.

5.2.2 Finance

Members noted from the Community Planning Manager's report, details of the financial cost to the Council of Community Planning activities since April 2015.

5.2.3 Strategic Community Planning Partnership Minutes

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a copy of minutes of the Strategic Community Planning Partnership (SCPP) meeting held on 2 June, 2016.

5.2.4 Officers Working Group Minutes

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a copy of the minutes of the Officers Working Group meeting held on 21 June, 2016.

5.2.5 Engaging a Consultant to Facilitate Production of the Community Plan

Councillor A Redpath left the meeting during consideration of this item of business (6.40 pm), as did Councillor P Catney (6.44 pm).

The Community Planning Manager advised that, at the Strategic Partnership meeting held on 1 September, 2016, discussion had taken place regarding the need to engage a consultant to write the Community Plan in order to ensure ownership stayed with the SCPP and was not seen solely as a Council plan. Representatives from statutory agencies on the Partnership disagreed and indicated that they were not in a position to contribute to the cost of a consultant. There was a very tight timescale for the production of the Draft Community Plan and a consultant required to be appointed in the next few weeks. Members were provided with details on the process for engaging a consultant, the estimated cost of which was approximately £28,000.

5.2.5 Engaging a Consultant to Facilitate Production of the Community Plan (Contd)

Discussion took place, during which Members expressed their disappointment and concern that the statutory agencies in the SCPP, with the exception of one, had refused to contribute to the cost of engaging a consultant or towards the funding of the Datahub. Alderman W A Leathem advised that he would be raising this matter at the next Partnership Panel meeting.

It was proposed by Alderman J Tinsley, seconded by Councillor A Grehan and agreed to recommend that the appointment of a consultant to develop the Community Plan, at an estimated cost of approximately £28,000, be approved.

5.2.6 Carnegie UK Trust Conference Towards a Wellbeing Framework: From Outcomes to Actions – 28 September, 2016

Members noted from the Community Planning Manager's report, information regarding the above conference.

5.2.7 Age Friendly Framework

The Community Planning Manager reminded the Committee that the Council was working in partnership with Ards and North Down Borough Council, the Public Health Authority and the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust to develop an Age Friendly Strategy which would be used as a self-assessment tool and a map to chart progress in the delivery of an Age Friendly City Council area. The launch of this would be at a conference on 16 November, 2016, hosted by the Council, after which work would begin on the development of the strategy. As the Age Friendly brand (copy of which Members had been provided with) was widely accepted, it was proposed by Councillor J Gallen, seconded by Alderman G Rice and agreed to recommend that the Council adopt the already-recognised Age-Friendly logo.

In response to comments by Councillor J Gallen, the Chief Executive agreed that training for Members in relation to the General Power of Competence would be arranged and that the establishment of a General Power of Competence Policy would be progressed.

Items for Noting

5.2.8 Partnership Panel Membership

Members noted that Alderman W A Leathem had replaced Councillor L Poots as the DUP representative on the Partnership Panel, with effect from the date of the Annual Meeting of Council, namely 14 June, 2016.

Councillor A Grehan left the meeting at this point (7.01 pm).

5.2.9 Social Media Policy Update

Alderman G Rice left the meeting during consideration of this item of business (7.05 pm).

The Chief Executive reported that a policy for the effective management of Council-owned social media platforms had been developed and forwarded to Heads of Service for consultation before Member approval was sought. Areas covered included the use of social media, relationships with other corporate strategies, the creation of Council social media platforms, employee responsibilities, risk, timeliness of social media, complaints handling and monitoring of platforms.

A policy regarding employees' private use of social media was also currently under development.

It was noted that the Northern Ireland Ombudsman's Office was currently producing Guidelines for Elected Members regarding the use of social media and, once issued, further information would be provided to Members.

6. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

There being no further business, the meeting was terminated at 7.06 pm.

Mayor/Chairman