

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, 13 January, 2015 at 4:00 pm

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

OTHER MEMBERS: Councillors P Catney, A Girvin, A Grehan, John Palmer and M Tolerton

IN ATTENDANCE: Lisburn City and Castlereagh District Council
Chief Executive
Director of Finance and the Convergence of IT Systems
Financial Controller
Lisburn City Council
Director of Corporate Services
Assistant Director Corporate Services (Central Support)
Transition Manager
PCSP Manager
Health, Safety & Risk Management Officer
Performance Development Officer
Committee Secretary

Commencement of the Meeting

At the commencement of the meeting, the Chairman, Councillor W A Leathem, apologised for the earlier start time, which had been necessary in order to accommodate a special Council meeting taking place later in the evening.

1. Apologies

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

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Jenny Palmer, as a member of the Board of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, declared an interest in item 4.5, Transfer of Functions and Powers to Local Government – Due Diligence Deloitte Report, as this referred to housing matters.

Councillor Jenny Palmer, as an Executive Member of NILGA, declared an interest in Item 4.9, NILGA Subscription.

3. Minutes

It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting of Committee held on 9 December, 2014, as adopted at the meeting of Shadow Council held on 17 December, 2014, be confirmed and signed.

4. Report from Chief Executive

Councillor A Givan arrived to the meeting at this point (4.02 pm).

It was proposed by Councillor S P Porter, 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 Effective Risk Management

Councillor J Baird arrived to the meeting during consideration of this item of business (4.04 pm).

Members were provided with a copy of a report on Effective Risk Management. In order to further progress and realise the benefits of effective risk management across Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, it was proposed by Councillor U Mackin, seconded by Councillor J McCarthy and agreed to recommend that Officers:

- (a) review and merge existing policies, strategies and toolkits by 1 February, 2015 for consideration at the Directors' Forum and the Governance and Audit Committee in February 2015;
- (b) run workshops during late February 2015 with the Chief Executive, Directors and Transition Managers, with a view to reviewing and merging departmental/corporate register, with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee attending these workshops; and
- (c) run further workshops with Heads of Service of merging sections/units/ departments after 1 April, 2015.

The Chairman, Councillor W A Leathem, requested that the Health, Safety and Risk Management Officer take account of concerns raised by Councillor Jenny

4.1 Effective Risk Management (Contd)

Palmer that the report on Effective Risk Management did not include any role in terms of Internal Audit.

4.2 Northern Ireland Policing Board Reconstitution – Statutory Consultation

Councillor S Martin arrived to the meeting during consideration of this item of business (4.10 pm).

Members were provided with a copy of a letter dated 19 December, 2014 from the Minister of Justice regarding the next reconstitution of the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB), due to take place by May 2015, together with further details on the proposed approach to the reconstitution, views on which had been requested initially by the Minister by 16 January, 2015. Members were advised at the meeting that this date had since been extended to 30 January, 2015.

The PCSP Manager, Lisburn City Council, advised Members present at the meeting that correspondence had been received which updated the information previously provided by the Board in relation to Comparison of Remuneration Rates. The minimum workload days per annum for the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson had been amended to reflect the actual workload days per annum and, therefore, this altered the daily equivalent remuneration for each.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Councillor J Tinsley, seconded by Councillor A Givan and agreed to recommend that the PCSP Managers of Lisburn City Council and Castlereagh Borough Council prepare a draft response to the consultation paper, incorporating the following concerns raised by Members:

- (a) the daily equivalent remuneration rate for the Chair of the Policing Board was higher than the Chairs of many of the other organisations listed in the “Comparison of Remuneration Rates” table;
- (b) the Rolling Appointments Model may not assist with corporate governance;
- (c) reduction in remuneration rates for 2015 should be proportioned equally to the Chair, Vice-Chair and Members;
- (d) there remained a security threat to Members serving on the Policing Board and this required to be taken into consideration when determining remuneration rates; and
- (e) how the appointments process was equality screened.

It was further agreed that the draft response prepared by the PCSP Managers be presented to the Shadow Council at its meeting to be held on 28 January, 2015 for consideration and approval.

4.3 The Draft Local Government (Performance Indicators & Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 – Consultation Paper

Members were provided with a copy of a letter dated 23 December, 2014 regarding the above consultation paper, comments on which had been requested by the Department of the Environment no later than 2 March, 2015. It was

4.3 The Draft Local Government (Performance Indicators & Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 – Consultation Paper (Contd)

proposed by Councillor J Tinsley, seconded by Councillor A Givan and agreed to recommend that a draft response to the consultation paper be prepared by Officers for consideration by the Committee at its meeting to be held on 10 February, 2015.

4.4 Northern Ireland Commissioner for Complaints Consultation “Northern Ireland Commissioner for Complaints’ Guidance on the NI Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors” – NILGA Response

Members were reminded that, at the meeting of Committee held on 9 December, 2014, it had been agreed that any comments Members wished to make on the above consultation be forwarded to the Transition Manager by 23 January, 2015 so that a submission could be forwarded to the NI Commissioner for Complaints by the stipulated closing date of 30 January, 2015.

Members having been provided with a copy of a draft NILGA response to the above consultation, it was proposed by Councillor J Tinsley, seconded by Councillor A Givan and agreed to recommend that, subject to any comments or concerns Members had in respect of the NILGA response, the NI Commissioner for Complaints be advised that the NILGA response was representative of the views of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council.

Items for Noting

4.5 Transfer of Functions and Powers to Local Government – Due Diligence Deloitte Report

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of the following:

- final draft of the above report, prepared by Deloitte;
- copy of a letter dated 19 November, 2014 from the Chief Executive Designate of Newry Mourne & Down District Council, on behalf of the Local Government Chief Executives’ Group (LGCEG), to the Minister of the Environment highlighting a number of significant outstanding issues and concerns that had emerged from this work and which needed to be resolved as a matter of urgency; and
- copy of the Minister’s reply to the LGCEG dated 16 December, 2014.

It was noted that this matter was to be considered later in the evening by the Corporate Services Committee.

4.6 Policy Convergence Project

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a copy of a report on the above matter, which had been prepared by the Performance Development Officer, Lisburn City Council, and the Policy, Performance & Information Officer, Castlereagh Borough Council. These Officers had been tasked with coordinating, collating and reporting on the work ongoing departmentally in both councils to ensure that a key set of functioning policies would be in place for use

4.6 Policy Convergence Project (Contd)

by the new Council by 1 April, 2015. Members also noted the contents of a synopsis of the progress made to date in each area, which it was noted was a 'living document' and would continue to change and evolve. A further update report on this matter would be presented to the Committee at its meeting to be held on 10 February, 2015.

4.7 Directors' Work Plan

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a copy of the Directors' Work Plan, which indicated the current status of projects.

4.8 Positions of Responsibility

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a copy of a letter dated 7 January, 2015 from Mr I Maye, Deputy Secretary, Local Government, Road Safety & Corporate Services Group, DOE, to the Chief Executive of Belfast City Council regarding the above matter.

The Chief Executive advised the Committee that a meeting had been scheduled for 23 January, 2015 between the DOE and Chief Executives in an attempt to move this issue forward. She further advised that the Assistant Director Corporate Services (Central Support), Lisburn City Council, and the Acting Director of Administration and Community Services, Castlereagh Borough Council, were currently preparing a booklet in relation to positions of responsibility for Lisburn & Castlereagh Borough Council. This would be distributed to Members in early February and would be considered at the meeting of the Committee to be held on 10 February, 2015.

Additional Report

4.9 NILGA Subscription

Members were provided with a copy of a letter dated 9 January, 2015 from the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) advising that, based upon detailed projections provided and ongoing consultations with Chief Executives, together with consultation responses received from Shadow Councils, including Lisburn and Castlereagh, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council should forecast a maximum figure of £47,000 for 2015/16 in respect of its NILGA subscription.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Councillor S P Porter, seconded by Councillor J Gallen and agreed to recommend that a letter be forwarded to NILGA seeking the following information:

- (a) on what basis were NILGA subscriptions for each new Council area determined;
- (b) had any fixed term contract posts, put in place to assist with RPA, been extended into 2015/16; and
- (c) would NILGA be in a position to avail of any grant aid opportunities in the coming year.

4.9 NILGA Subscription (Contd)

Councillor S P Porter referred to the fact that, in previous years, NILGA subscriptions were determined on the basis of a council's population. He asked that Officers investigate what Lisburn City Council and Castlereagh Borough Council paid last year and, based on the population that had now gone to Belfast City Council, calculate the percentage increase Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council was now being asked to pay.

4.10 Strategic Interface with Reserve Forces and Cadets Association for Northern Ireland

Members were provided with a copy of a letter dated 6 January, 2015 from the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association for Northern Ireland requesting that a strategic interface be established between the Association and Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council for future engagement regarding MOD-related business in the new Council area. It was proposed by Councillor S Carson, seconded by Councillor J Tinsley and agreed to recommend that the Chief Executive meet with the Association to consider this matter and that the local Commanding Officer in Thiepval Barracks also be invited to attend this meeting.

4.11 Responsibility for Local Government Audits

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a copy of a letter dated 9 January, 2015 from the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) advising that Colette Kane would assume responsibility or the lead NIAO Director role for the audit of the Local Government sector.

5. Confidential Report

"In Committee"

It was proposed by Councillor S P Porter, seconded by Councillor Jenny Palmer and agreed that the following items be considered "in committee", in the absence of members of the press and public being present.

5.1 Internal Audit Service Provision

Members were provided with a copy of a report in relation to Internal Audit Service Provision. Following discussion, it was proposed by Councillor S P Porter, seconded by Councillor Jenny Palmer and agreed to recommend that a further report be prepared (a) providing more comparable information relating to the Internal Audit Service in Lisburn City Council and in Castlereagh Borough Council; and (b) advising how Internal Audit Service was delivered in other councils.

Councillor Jenny Palmer commented that it would be beneficial for Internal Audit staff to visit Belfast City Council to observe the processes and mechanisms used to deliver its Internal Audit Service.

5.2 Coat of Arms for the New Council

Members having been provided with a copy of a draft coat of arms for the new Council, which had been approved by the AGM Working Group, it was proposed by Councillor S P Porter, seconded by Councillor J Tinsley and agreed to recommend that it be approved, subject to Officers investigating the possibility of the motto “Ex Igne Resurgam”, which was Latin for I Will Arise, being changed to the Latin for We Will Arise.

5.3 Royal Borough Status

Members were provided with a copy of a letter dated 16 December, 2015 from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland regarding the Council’s request that the title “Royal” be awarded to it because of the links that it would have with Hillsborough Castle. It was proposed by Councillor S P Porter, seconded by Councillor S Carson and agreed to recommend that Officers investigate the appropriate bodies or individuals to take forward the development of a detailed case in order to allow Ministers to make a recommendation to Her Majesty that Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council achieved Royal Borough Status.

Officers took note that (a) Councillor P Catney requested that the process of identifying appropriate bodies or individuals be as inclusive as possible; and (b) Councillor J McCarthy requested that money allocated to this matter be kept to a minimum as there was possibility that the status may not be granted.

5.4 Draft Estimates of Income and Expenditure for 2015/16 for the Governance and Audit Committee

Members were provided with a copy of the draft Estimates of Income and Expenditure for 2015/16 for the Governance and Audit Committee. It was proposed by Councillor O Gawith, seconded by Councillor U Mackin and agreed that the draft Estimates be noted. It was further noted that Officers were still working on the Estimates and that Members would, in due course, be provided with a detailed copy of the full Estimates.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor S P Porter, seconded by Councillor Jenny Palmer and agreed to come out of committee and normal business was resumed.

6. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

There being no further business, the meeting was terminated at 5.19 pm.

Presiding Member/Chairman