

**LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held in the Council Chamber on Thursday, 13th June 2024 at 18:00**

**PRESENT IN CHAMBER:**

Alderman S P Porter (Chairperson)  
Mr E Jardine (Independent Member and Vice-Chairperson)  
The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor K Dickson  
Alderman O Gawith  
Councillors D Bassett, S Burns, D J Craig, A P Ewing, C Kemp, P Kennedy, S Lowry and M McKeever.

**ALSO ATTENDED:**

Councillors P Catney and G Hynds.

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Director of Organisation Development and Innovation  
Director of Finance and Corporate Services  
Director of Regeneration and Growth  
Acting Director of Environmental Services  
Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development  
Head of Communities  
Performance Improvement Officer  
Member Services Officers (BF and EW)

NI Audit Office  
Mr R Ross

**Commencement of the Meeting**

The Chairperson welcomed all to the meeting.

1. **Apologies**

Apologies were reported on behalf Councillors P Burke, D J Craig, J Gallen, A Givan and A Martin.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **Report of the Performance Improvement Officer**

3.1 **Compliments and Complaints Report – Quarter 4 2023/24**

The Committee considered a comparative report which had been drafted from data obtained from the Council's Customer Care System, which detailed the number of comments, complaints and compliments received during Quarter 4 of 2023/24.

The Committee noted the information provided.

3.2 Performance Improvement Objectives, Case Studies & Associated KPIs – Quarter 4 Review

The Committee considered the following:

1. a quarterly monitoring report which included several case studies for improvement undertaken from 1st January to 31st March 2024; and
2. a report detailing the key performance indicators for the period from 1st January to 31st March 2024.

The Performance Improvement Officer outlined the main aspects of the report and its associated appendices. The Committee was informed that, of the 57 indicators identified for consideration during the 2023/24, 33 had been achieved by the end of the financial year and, of the 24 not yet met, 8 of these was outside of the control of the Council. Details of the learnings from the review were also outlined to the Committee.

The Committee noted the information provided.

(Councillor A Ewing entered the Chamber at 18:09)

3.3 Service KPIs – Quarter 4 2023/24 - all Directorates

The Committee considered a report and several appendices which detailed the performance of each Council directorate against its key performance indicators during the last quarter of the financial year 2023/24.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services responded to a Member's query regarding the figures reported for the payment of invoices within the 10-day target. The Committee was advised that the matter remained under constant review at a Corporate Management Team level, and the issue had been added to departmental risk registers across the Council. She acknowledged that, whilst challenges remained, directors and officers continued to work proactively to streamline processes and to identify efficiencies.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development answered a Member's query regarding absence rates across the Council. He acknowledged that, whilst the figure had slightly increased over the previous twelve months, the Council remained in a positive position when compared to other local authorities across Northern Ireland. The Committee was informed that officers had been working proactively to identify the key underlying issues which had contributed to the increase, which would enable appropriate actions to be introduced. It was pointed out that the matter had been considered also by the Corporate Services Committee and it was anticipated that a revised attendance policy would be introduced across the Council in September, together with a wider wellbeing programme. It was projected that the revised policy would address absence at an earlier stage and that additional training would be provided to line managers in this regard.

The Committee noted the information provided.

### 3.4 Review of Departmental Objectives 2023/24

The Performance Improvement Officer presented a report which provided a year-end analysis of performance against departmental objectives for each of the Council's several directorates. The Committee was informed that, overall, 66% of objectives had been met across all directorates, whilst work was progressing against the remaining 34% to enable those targets to be met.

It was proposed by Councillor A Ewing, seconded by Councillor D Bassett, and agreed that the Committee approve the report and note the information provided within the associated appendices.

### 3.5 Delivery Plan and Related Service KPIs

(The Director of Organisation Development and Innovation presented this report.)

The Director reminded the Committee that the Council's Corporate Plan and Ambitions document had been launched in April. She referred Members to an appended document, which outlined an associated delivery plan and detailed the range of service-related key performance indicators for 2024/25, which had been identified to measure outcomes against the actions identified within the Plan. The Committee noted that the service level KPIs, as identified, would be presented for consideration on a quarterly basis.

The Director of Regeneration and Growth clarified the KPI in relation to planning applications.

It was proposed by Councillor D Bassett, seconded by Councillor P Kennedy, and agreed that the Committee approve the Delivery Plan and Related Service KPIs for 2024/25.

### 3.6 Consultation Report on the Draft Performance Improvement Objectives 2024/25

The Committee considered the contents of a consultation report regarding the draft Performance Improvement Objectives for 2024/25, the main aspects of which were outlined by the Performance Improvement Officer. It was noted that a public consultation exercise in this regard had been undertaken during April and May of 2024.

It was proposed by Councillor S Lowry, seconded by Councillor M McKeever, and agreed that the consultation report, as presented, be approved.

### 3.7 Draft Performance Improvement Plan 2024/25

The Committee considered the draft performance improvement plan which had been provided as a final draft following the consultation. The Performance Improvement Officer outlined that, if approved, progress against this plan would be reported to the Committee on a quarterly basis.

It was proposed by Councillor P Kennedy, seconded by Councillor A Ewing, and agreed that the Committee approve the Draft Performance Improvement Plan for 2024/25, with a view to its publication by 30th June 2024.

4. Report from the Risk Officer

4.1 Corporate Risk Register

(In the absence of the Acting Environmental Health Manager, the Acting Director of Environmental Services presented this report.)

The Acting Director of Environmental Services outlined the main aspects of a report and provided details on the data reported as a result of a quarterly review of the Risk Dashboards for each of the service directorates.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services provided clarity the reasons for the inclusion of a risk on the finance system, which had been reported within an associated appendix.

The Committee noted the information provided.

5. Confidential Business

The Chairperson advised the Committee that the matters contained within the confidential report would be dealt with “in committee” since they contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

It was proposed by Councillor A Ewing, seconded by Councillor M McKeever, and agreed that the following matters be considered “in committee” in the absence of members of the press and public.

5.1 Report by Internal Audit Manager

5.1.1 Internal Audit 2023/24 Plan – Year End Annual Report

The Committee was provided with the Internal Audit - Year End Annual Report, which set out the Internal Audit Manager’s opinion, together with a summary of the of the work of the Internal Audit Service to the end of 2023/24.

It was proposed by Alderman O Gawith, seconded by Councillor A Ewing, and agreed that the report, as presented, be approved.

5.1.2 Internal Audit – Progress Report

The Committee considered the Internal Audit Progress Report, which summarised the achievements, thus far, of Internal Audit against its 2024/25 Operational Plan.

The report provided also an update on outstanding audit reviews which had been undertaken since the last meeting of the Committee.

The Committee noted the information provided.

5.1.3 Chief Executive's Assurance Statement

The Committee was provided with, and noted the contents of, the Chief Executive's Assurance Statement for the period from 1st October 2023 to 31st March 2024.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Alderman O Gawith, seconded by Councillor D Bassett, and agreed to come out of "committee" and that normal business be resumed.

6. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The meeting ended at 18:40.

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Chairperson