

**LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held on Monday, 13 March, 2023 at 6:00 pm**

**PRESENT IN CHAMBER:**

Alderman D Drysdale (Chairman)  
Aldermen O Gawith, and J Tinsley  
Councillor A Swan

**PRESENT IN REMOTE LOCATION:**

The Right Worshipful the Mayor  
Councillor S Carson  
Councillor Jenny Palmer (Vice-Chairperson)  
Alderman S Martin  
Councillors J Gallen, J McCarthy, G McCleave, C McCready and John Palmer

**INDEPENDENT MEMBER:**

Mr E Jardine (present remotely)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

In Chamber:

Chief Executive  
Director of Service Transformation  
Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development  
Performance Improvement Officer  
Risk Officer  
IT Officer  
Member Services Officers (BS CH)

In Remote Location:

Director of Finance and Corporate Services  
Internal Audit Manager

Northern Ireland Audit Office

Mr Richard Ross (present remotely)

**Commencement of the Meeting**

At the commencement of the meeting, the Chairman, Alderman D Drysdale, welcomed those present to the meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee. He pointed out that the meeting would be audio recorded unless the item on the agenda was considered under confidential business. The Chairman asked that mobile phones be put on silent or switched off for the duration of the meeting. The Chief Executive outlined the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.

The Chairman, Alderman D Drysdale, welcomed to the meeting Mr Richard Ross, Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO).

1. Apologies (00:02:17)

It was agreed to accept apologies for non-attendance at the meeting on behalf of the Deputy Mayor, Councillor M Guy, Alderman S P Porter, Councillor J Craig, Councillor S Lowry and the HoS of Finance, Mrs J Hewitt.

2. Declarations of Interest (00:02:48)

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Report by Performance Improvement Officer (00:03:14)

3.1 Complaints Report – Q3 2022/23 (00:03:26)

Councillor C McCready joined the meeting remotely at (6.08 pm).

Members were provided with a copy of a comparative report taken from the Council's Customer Care System detailing the number of comments, complaints and compliments in Quarter 3 (October – December inclusive) of 2022/23. The Committee agreed to recommend that the Q3 Complaints Report be noted.

Members also noted a verbal update by The Performance Improvement Officer in relation to a 'Model Complaints Handling Procedure' for the Public Sector which had been developed by the Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman (NIPSO). It was reported that the Council had already successfully implemented a similar process last year and that work would take place in the coming months to ensure that the Council's procedure incorporated the NIPSO recommendations. A reviewed procedure would then be brought to the Committee for consideration in June.

3.2 Performance Improvement Objectives, Case Studies & Associated KPIs – 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Review (00:05:37)

Councillor J McCarthy joined the meeting remotely at (6.10 pm).

Members were provided with a copy of:

- (a) a quarterly monitoring document (covering October – December 2022) on all projects that demonstrated improvement against the 2022/23 Performance Improvement Objectives, including the relevant Performance Improvement KPI. An additional section was included detailing some case studies and customer feedback that had demonstrated improvement during Quarter 3; and
- (b) a report from the 'Performance Management' System (Dashboard) detailing the Performance Improvement Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) results for the organisation for the period October – December 2022 inclusive.

3.2 Performance Improvement Objectives, Case Studies & Associated KPIs – 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Review (Cont'd)

Members noted from the report of the Performance Improvement Officer, that 17 KPIs had been achieved by the end of December, therefore 100% of the Council's Performance Improvement KPIs scheduled for completion at the end of Q3 had been achieved.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Councillor A Swan, seconded by Alderman J Tinsley and agreed to recommend that the reports at (a) and (b) above be approved.

3.3 Draft Performance Improvement Objectives and Projects 2023-24  
(00:10:10)

Members having been provided with a copy of the Draft Performance Improvement Objectives and Projects for 2023/24, it was proposed by Alderman O Gawith, seconded by Councillor S Swan and agreed to recommend that these be approved.

4. Report by Head of Finance (00:12:17)

4.1 Delegated Authority for Signing Annual Accounts in June 2023 (00:12:24)

The Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development and the Performance Improvement Officer left the meeting at (6.16 pm).

The Chief Executive presented this item of business and outlined the background in relation to the above matter.

It was proposed by Alderman S Martin, seconded by Vice-Chairperson Councillor Jenny Palmer and agreed to recommend that delegated authority to the meeting of the Governance & Audit Committee on 29 June, for the purpose of noting the Council's Financial Statements 2022/23 be approved, and that these be forwarded to the Northern Ireland Audit Office accordingly.

5. Report by Internal Audit Manager (00:13:13)

5.1 Governance and Audit Committee Self-Evaluation Outcome Report  
(00:13:21)

Members were provided with a copy of an Outcome Report in respect of a Governance and Audit Committee Self-Evaluation exercise that had been undertaken in February 2023. The Committee agreed to recommend that the Governance & Audit Committee Self Evaluation Outcome Report be noted.

5.2 NIAO Audit Strategy for 2022/23 (00:14:03)

Members were provided with a copy of the NIAO Strategy for 2023/23. Mr R Ross, NIAO, made a verbal presentation to the Committee in respect of the Strategy, highlighting significant risks identified that could impact on the audit and answered queries raised. The Committee agreed to recommend that that 2022/23 Audit Strategy be noted.

6. Report from the Risk Officer (00:20:24)

6.1 Corporate Risk Register (00:20:33)

The Risk Officer set out in her report, an update in respect of the quarterly review of the Corporate Risk Register. Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a copy of the Corporate Risk Dashboard.

The Director of Service Transformation provided a verbal update in relation to the actions currently being implemented to reduce CRR 6 IT/Cyber Security Threats. It was reported that an internal audit was due to be carried out on completion of the upgraded systems, with it being anticipated that the risk rating would be reduced.

Members having been asked to identify the next two corporate risks to undergo deep dive in the new financial year it was proposed by Vice-Chairperson Councillor Jenny Palmer, seconded by John Palmer and agreed to recommend that these would be 'Health and Safety' and 'Asset Management'.

7. Confidential Business (00:26:27)

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 Alderman S Martin, seconded by Councillor G McCleave and agreed that the following matters be considered "in committee", in the absence of members of the press and public being present.

7.1 Confidential Report by Internal Audit Manager

7.1.1 Internal Audit Progress Report – March 2023  
(Redacted report to be published 31/03/2023)

Members were provided with a copy of an Internal Audit Progress Report – March 2023. This report summarised internal audit work and progress against the Operational Plan since the last meeting of the Committee on 8 December, 2022. A copy of any internal audit reports referred to in the progress report were also provided in full on SharePoint for Members' information.

The Committee agreed to recommend that the Internal Audit Progress Report be noted.

7.1.2 Draft Audit Strategy 2023-2026 / Draft Internal Audit 2023/24 Operational Plan (Redacted report to be published 31/03/2023)

Members having been provided with a copy of the draft Internal Audit Strategy 2023-26 and Internal Audit Operational Plan 2023/24, it was proposed by Councillor A Swan, seconded by Vice-Chairperson Councillor Jenny Palmer and agreed to recommend that they be approved.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor A Swan, seconded by Vice-Chairperson Councillor Jenny Palmer, and agreed to come out of committee and normal business was resumed.

8. Any Other Business (00:26:52)

8.1 Governance and Audit Self-Evaluation Questionnaire (00:26:58)

The Chairman, Alderman D Drysdale raised a query in relation to completing the Governance and Audit Self-Evaluation Questionnaire. It was agreed by the Committee that a copy of the CIPFA principles would be issued to Members alongside the Questionnaire going forward for reference purposes.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 6.36 pm.

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Mayor/Chairman