

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held in the Council Chamber and Remote Locations on Thursday, 14 September, 2023 at 6:00 pm

PRESENT IN CHAMBER:

Councillor R McLernon (Chairman)

Mr E Jardine (Independent Member and Vice-Chairman)

Alderman O Gawith

Councillors D Bassett, P Burke, S Burns, D J Craig, A P Ewing, A Givan, C Kemp, P Kennedy and A Martin

PRESENT IN REMOTE LOCATION:

Councillors S Lowry and M McKeever

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT IN A REMOTE LOCATION:

Alderman J Tinsley

IN ATTENDANCE:

In Chamber:

Director of Organisation Development and Innovation

Director of Finance and Corporate Services

Director of Regeneration and Growth

Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development

Performance Improvement Officer

Risk & Business Continuity Officer

IT Officer

Member Services Officers

In Remote Location:

Internal Audit Manager

Commencement of the Meeting

At the commencement of the meeting, the Chairman, Councillor R McLernon, welcomed those present. He pointed out that, unless the item on the agenda was considered under confidential business, this meeting would be audio recorded. In accordance with the Protocol for Remote Meetings, the Chairman asked that those attending via zoom to ensure that the meeting could not be seen or heard by any other person at their remote location when confidential business was being considered.

At this point, the Member Services Officer read out the names of the Elected Members and Officers in attendance at the meeting.

The Chairman, Councillor R McLernon, asked that mobile phones be put on silent or switched off for the duration of the meeting. The Director of Organisation Development and Innovation outlined the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.

Councillor A P Ewing arrived to the meeting and Councillor S Lowry joined the meeting at 6.01 pm.

1. Apologies (00:01:59)

It was agreed to accept apologies for non-attendance at the meeting on behalf of the Deputy Mayor, Councillor G McCleave, Alderman S P Porter, Councillor J Gallen, the Head of Finance and Mr R Ross, Northern Ireland Audit Office.

2. Declarations of Interest (00:02:31)

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Report from the Performance Improvement Officer (00:02:53)

3.1 Compliments and Complaints Report – Quarter 1 2023/24 (00:03:04)

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a copy of a comparative report taken from the Council's Customer Care System detailing the number of comments, complaints and compliments in Quarter 1 of 2023/24.

3.2 Performance Improvement Objectives, Case Studies & Associated KPIs – 1st Quarter Review (00:04:07)

Members were provided with a copy of:

- (a) a quarterly monitoring document (covering April – June 2023) on all projects that demonstrated improvement against the 2023/24 Performance Improvement Objectives, including the relevant Performance Improvement KPIs. An additional section was included detailing some case studies and customer feedback that had demonstrated improvement during Quarter 1; and
- (b) a report from the 'Performance Management System' detailing the Performance Improvement Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the period April – June 2023.

Members stated that it would be useful if future reports provided information, by graphical means, as to whether or not targets were on track to be met and a percentage indication of how far along targets were in respect of the timescales allotted to them. The Performance Improvement Officer advised that the information could be provided and agreed to consider work to determine if future reports could provide this information by graphical means.

It was proposed by Councillor P Kennedy, seconded by Alderman O Gawith and agreed to recommend that the reports at (a) and (b) be approved.

3.3 Service KPIs – Quarter 1 2023/24 All Directorates (00:08:01)

Mr E Jardine and Councillor S Lowry left the meeting during consideration of this item of business (6.28 pm and 6.30 pm respectively). Alderman J Tinsley joined the meeting during consideration of this item of business (6.26 pm).

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a copy of reports detailing the Quarter 1 2023/24 KPIs for each directorate.

During discussion:

- (a) it was suggested that the yearly targets for KPI 214 and 215 be increased to allow for any potential slippage to be addressed. The Performance Improvement Officer agreed to raise this matter with the Acting Director of Environmental Services and report back in due course;
- (b) the Performance Improvement Officer took note of a suggestion that future reports include an equivalent figure for the same period the previous year for comparison purposes, as well as figures for other councils, if possible;
- (c) in respect of KPI 29, relating to enforcement cases, the Director of Regeneration and Growth pointed out the importance of consistency around the figures published, but agreed that Members could be provided with a summary based on the manual account of enforcement cases;
- (d) the Director of Regeneration and Growth responded to comments in relation to the processing time for local planning applications and agreed to look into a particular case referred to by a Member; and
- (e) in relation to the Leisure & Community Wellbeing Directorate, whose targets were being measured on an annual basis, the Performance Improvement Officer agreed to provide Members with interim reports, if figures were available.

Mr E Jardine returned to the meeting at 6.31 pm.

3.4 Performance Improvement Report 2023/24 (00:31:07)

Members having been provided with a copy of the draft Performance Improvement Report for 2023/24, it was proposed by Councillor A P Ewing, seconded by Councillor A Givan and agreed to recommend that this be approved.

3.5 Review of the Customer Care Policy (Compliments, Complaints & Comments) (00:32:45)

Members having been provided with a copy of a Customer Care Policy (Compliments, Complaints & Comments), it was proposed by Alderman O Gawith, seconded by Councillor C Kemp and agreed to recommend that this be approved.

4. Report from the Risk & Business Continuity Officer (00:37:20)

4.1 Corporate Risk Register (00:37:29)

Alderman J Tinsley left the meeting during consideration of this item of business (6.40 pm).

The Risk & Business Continuity 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.

5. Report from the Internal Audit Manager (00:42:20)

5.1 Internal Audit Charter (00:42:31)

Members were provided with a copy of the Internal Audit Charter. It was noted that, following a recent review, no changes were required to the Charter which had been approved in September 2022.

6. Confidential Business

The matters contained in the confidential report would be dealt with “In Committee” due to containing (a) information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information); and (b) information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Council or a government department and employees of, or office holders under, the Council.

“In Committee”

It was proposed by Councillor D J Craig, seconded by Councillor A P Ewing and agreed that the following matters be considered “in committee”, in the absence of members of the press and public being present.

6.1 Report by Director of Organisation Development and Innovation

6.1.1 Gifts & Hospitality Policy (Staff) and Gifts & Hospitality Policy (Elected Members)

(Redacted Report will be available post-ratification)

Members having been provided with a copy of both a Gifts & Hospitality Policy for staff and one for Elected Members, it was proposed by Councillor D J Craig, seconded by Councillor A Givan and agreed to recommend that they be approved and that the policy for staff be progressed for consultation with Trade Unions thereafter.

6.1.1 Gifts & Hospitality Policy (Staff) and Gifts & Hospitality Policy (Elected Members) (Contd)

The Director of Organisation Development and Innovation confirmed that, in section 9 of the Elected Members' policy, the word biannually should read biennially.

6.2 Report by Director or Regeneration and Growth

6.2.1 Asset Management

(Redacted report will be available following ratification at full Council)

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a copy of an update report in respect of the Council's Asset Management, including the response to Internal Audit recommendations.

6.3 Report by Internal Audit Manager

6.3.1 Internal Audit Plan 2023/24 – Progress Report

(Redacted report will be made available on 30 September, 2023)

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a copy of an Internal Audit Progress Report summarising internal audit work and progress against the Operational Plan since the last meeting of the Committee on 22 June, 2023. A copy of any internal audit reports referred to in the progress report were also provided in full on Decision Time for Members' information. The Internal Audit Manager advised of an error in the table at item 1.3 of the report.

The Director of Regeneration and Growth, Performance Improvement Officer and Risk & Business Continuity Officer left the meeting (7.01 pm).

6.4 Report by Head of Finance

6.4.1 Annual Audit Letter 2021-22: Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

(Report will be available following ratification at full Council)

In the absence of the Head of Finance and Mr R Ross, Northern Ireland Audit Office, this report was presented by the Director of Finance and Corporate Services.

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a copy the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Annual Audit Letter for 2021-22.

Resumption of Normal Business

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

7. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

There being no further business, the meeting was terminated at 7.01 pm.

Mayor/Chairman