

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held in the Council Chamber and Remote Locations on Thursday, 12 June, 2025 at 6:00 pm

PRESENT IN CHAMBER:

Councillor D Lynch (Chair)
Mr E Jardine (Independent Member and Vice-Chair)
Aldermen O Gawith and J Tinsley
Councillors J Bamford, D Bassett, S Burns, D J Craig, A P Ewing, B Magee, A Martin, M McKeever, R McLernon

PRESENT IN REMOTE LOCATION:

Alderman S P Porter
Councillor J Gallen

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT IN CHAMBER:

Councillor G Hynds

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive
Director of Organisation Development and Innovation
Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development
Head of Environmental Health
Head of Sports Services
Internal Audit Manager (remotely)
Performance Improvement Officer
IT Officer
Member Services Officers (CR and CH)

Northern Ireland Audit Office:

Mr R Ross (remotely)

RBCA

Mr B Stewart (remotely)

Commencement of the Meeting

The Chair, Councillor D Lynch, welcomed those present to the meeting. 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 Chair asked that those attending via zoom ensure that the meeting could not be seen or heard by any other person at their remote location when confidential business was being considered.

Councillors D J Craig and A P Ewing arrived to the meeting at 6.02 pm.

The Chair, Councillor D Lynch 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.

1. Apologies

Alderman J Tinsley arrived to the meeting at 6.03 pm.

It was agreed to accept apologies for non-attendance at the meeting on behalf of The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan, and Councillor S Lowry.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

At this point, the Chair, Councillor D Lynch, extended a welcome to Mr R Ross, Northern Ireland Audit Office, and Mr B Stewart, RBCA.

3. Report from the Performance Improvement Officer

3.1 Customer Care Feedback – Quarter 4 2024/25

Councillor J Gallen left the meeting at 6.03 pm.

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a copy of a dashboard report showing compliments and complaints during Quarter 4 of 2024/25.

Councillor M McKeever enquired about the stage 2 complaint that was upheld and the Performance Improvement Officer agreed to provide him with information on this.

3.2 Performance Improvement Objectives, Case Studies & Associated KPIs – 4th Quarter Review (2024/25)

Councillor J Gallen rejoined the meeting during consideration of this item of business (6.09 pm).

Members were provided with a copy of:

- (a) a quarterly monitoring document (covering January to March 2025) on all projects that demonstrated improvement against the 2024/25 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 3; and
- (b) details of the KPI results for the period January to March 2025.

3.2 Performance Improvement Objectives, Case Studies & Associated KPIs – 4th Quarter Review (2024/25) (Contd)

A number of Members' queries having been addressed by the Performance Improvement Officer, it was agreed that the contents of the reports be noted.

In response to comments by Mr E Jardine as to whether the heading of KPI 234 could be worded differently, the Performance Improvement Officer agreed to liaise with the Head of Planning & Capital Development regarding this matter and report back at the next meeting.

3.3 Corporate Plan KPIs – Quarter 4 2024/25 All Directorates

Mr R Ross, Northern Ireland Audit Office, joined the meeting during consideration of this item of business (6.14 pm).

Members were provided with a copy of a summary report, as well as a more detailed report, detailing the Q4 2024/25 Corporate Plan KPIs. A number of queries having been addressed by the Director of Finance and Corporate Services, it was agreed that the contents of the reports be noted.

3.4 Corporate Plan KPIs – 2025/26

It was proposed by Councillor D J Craig, seconded by Councillor M McKeever and agreed to recommend that the Corporate Plan KPIs for 2025/26 be approved.

3.5 Consultation Report on the Draft Performance Improvement Objectives 2025/26

It was proposed by Councillor A P Ewing, seconded by Councillor J Bamford and agreed to recommend that the consultation report on the draft performance improvement objectives for 2025/26 be approved.

3.6 Draft Performance Improvement Plan 2025/26

It was proposed by Councillor M McKeever, seconded by Councillor D Bassett and agreed to recommend that the draft Performance Improvement Plan for 2025/26 be approved.

3.7 Review of Customer Service Guidelines

A number of queries having been addressed, it was proposed by Councillor D Bassett, seconded by Alderman J Tinsley and agreed that the Customer Service Guidelines 2025 be approved.

The Director of Organisation Development and Innovation responded to comments by Councillor M McKeever around the possibility of including more detail around the voicemail system.

Mr E Jardine referred to there having been 7 agenda items relating to performance improvement and suggested the possibility of consolidating performance improvement-related reports to avoid duplication.

4. Report from the Environmental Health Manager (Acting)

4.1 Corporate Risk Register

In the absence of the Environmental Health Manager (Acting), her report was presented by the Head of Environmental Health.

This report provided an update in respect of the quarterly review of the Corporate Risk Register.

Members agreed to note the contents of the Corporate Risk Dashboard.

5. Report by Internal Audit Manager

5.1 NIAO – Effective Audit and Risk Assurance Guidelines

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a copy of the NIAO Effective Audit and Risk Assurance Guidelines.

Prior to the consideration of confidential business, the Chair, Councillor D Lynch, asked if Members had any non-confidential items of Any Other Business to raise, which they did not.

6. Confidential Business

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

The following Officers left the meeting at 6.31 pm: Head of Environmental Health, Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development, Head of Sports Services and Performance Improvement Officer.

6.1 Report by Internal Audit Manager

6.1.1 Internal Audit Annual Report FY2024/25

(Report would be made available following ratification by Council)

It was proposed by Councillor M McKeever, seconded by Councillor D Bassett and agreed to recommend that the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2024/25 be approved.

6.1.2 Internal Audit Progress Report

(Report would be made available following ratification by Council)

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 13 March, 2025. A copy of any internal audit reports referred to in the progress report were also provided in full on Decision Time for Members' information.

6.1.3 Chief Executive's Statement of Assurance October 2024 – March 2025

(Report would never be made available)

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a copy of the Chief Executive's Statement of Assurance October 2024 – March 2025.

The Chief Executive arrived to the meeting at 6.37 pm.

6.1.4 Self Evaluation Questionnaire

(Report would never be made available)

The Internal Audit Manager provided an update to Members in relation to forthcoming governance and audit training.

It was proposed by Councillor D Bassett, seconded by Councillor R McLernon and agreed to recommend that the report on the findings of the self evaluation questionnaire be approved.

It was proposed by Councillor J Gallen and seconded by Alderman O Gawith that, in the next Council mandate, there be 2 Independent Members on the Governance and Audit Committee. Discussion followed, during which other Members commented that they would welcome more information in order that an informed decision could be made. The Director of Organisation Development and Innovation pointed out that such a change would require a review of the Committee's Terms of Reference. Councillor Gallen stated that he was content for a report to be presented to a future meeting for consideration and this was agreed.

Prior to the conclusion of confidential business, the Chair, Councillor D Lynch, asked if Members had any confidential items of Any Other Business to raise, which they did not.

At this stage, a number of Members referred to the fact that this was the last Governance and Audit Committee meeting at which the Director of Finance and Corporate Service would be in attendance before she left the Council's employment. They paid tribute to the service she had given to the Council and wished her well for the future.

Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor A P Ewing, seconded by Councillor D J Craig, and agreed to come out of committee and normal business was resumed.

There being no further business, the meeting was terminated at 6.50 pm.

Mayor/Chairman