

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held in the Council Chamber and Remote Locations on Thursday, 13 March, 2025 at 4:30 pm

PRESENT IN CHAMBER:

Councillor A Givan (Acting Chair)
Mr E Jardine (Independent Member and Vice-Chair)
Alderman O Gawith
Councillors A P Ewing and M McKeever

PRESENT IN REMOTE LOCATION:

Councillors D Bassett, S Burns, N Eaton, S Lowry and R McLernon

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT IN REMOTE LOCATION:

Councillor G Hynds

IN ATTENDANCE:

Director of Organisation Development and Innovation
Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Acting Director of Environmental Service
Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development
Head of Parks and Amenities
Head of Planning and Capital Development
Internal Audit Manager (remotely)
Performance Improvement Officer
IT Officer
Member Services Officers (CR and EW)

Northern Ireland Audit Office:

Mr R Ross

RBCA

Mr B Stewart

Commencement of the Meeting

At the commencement of the meeting, the Director of Organisation Development and Innovation advised that the Chair, Alderman S P Porter, was unable to be present. As the Vice-Chair, Mr E Jardine, was an Independent Member, he was not permitted to chair the meeting and, in line with protocol, this responsibility fell to another Member of Alderman Porter's Party, the DUP. The Director advised that Councillor A Givan would be chairing the meeting in Alderman Porter's absence. She also thanked Members for attending the meeting, which had been rescheduled to commence earlier to facilitate the attendance of a number of Members at the Mayor's Community Awards later in the evening.

The Acting Chair, Councillor A Givan, extended well wishes to Alderman Porter and 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 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.

Councillor M McKeever arrived to the meeting at 4.33 pm.

The Acting Chair, Councillor A Givan 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

It was agreed to accept apologies for non-attendance at the meeting on behalf of the Chair, Alderman S P Porter, and Councillors J Gallen, P Kennedy and A Martin.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

At this point, the Acting Chair, Councillor A Givan, 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 Compliments and Complaints Report – Quarter 3 2024/25

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 of 2024/25. A number of Members' queries having been addressed by the Performance Improvement Officer, it was agreed that the contents of the report be noted.

3.2 Performance Improvement Objectives, Case Studies & Associated KPIs – 3rd Quarter Review (2024/25)

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a copy of:

- (a) a quarterly monitoring document (covering October - December 2024) 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

3.2 Performance Improvement Objectives, Case Studies & Associated KPIs – 3rd Quarter Review (2024/25) (Contd)

- (b) a report from the 'Performance Management System' detailing the Performance Improvement Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the period October - December 2024.

3.3 Corporate Plan KPIs – Quarter 3 2024/25 All Directorates

Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a copy of reports detailing the Quarter 3 2024/25 Corporate Plan KPIs.

A number of Members' queries were addressed by the Director of Finance and Corporate Services, particularly in respect of supplier payments. She stated that it would be useful if the Northern Ireland Audit Office could look at how different councils and central government entities measured prompt payment targets as there was a lot of disparity around this.

3.4 Draft Performance Improvement Objectives and Projects 2025/26

It was proposed by Alderman O Gawith, seconded by Councillor A P Ewing and agreed to recommend that the draft performance improvement objectives and projects for 2025/26 be approved.

4. Report from the Risk & Business Continuity Officer

4.1 Corporate Risk Register

In the absence of the Risk & Business Continuity Officer, her report was presented by the Acting Director of Environmental Services.

The Risk & Business Continuity Officer set out in her report, an update in respect of the quarterly review of the Corporate Risk Register.

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

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

5, 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 M McKeever 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 5.01 pm: Acting Director of Environmental Services, Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development, Head of Parks and Amenities, Head of Planning and Capital Development and Performance Improvement Officer.

5.1 Report by Internal Audit Manager

- 5.1.1 LCCC Draft Internal Audit Strategy 2025-2030 and Draft Internal Operational Plan 2025/26
(Report would be made available following ratification by Council)

It was proposed by Councillor S Lowry, seconded by Alderman O Gawith and agreed to recommend that the Draft Internal Audit Strategy 2025-2030 and Draft Internal Operational Plan 2025-26 be approved.

- 5.1.2 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 12 December, 2024. A copy of any internal audit reports referred to in the progress report were also provided in full on Decision Time for Members’ information.

At the request of the Acting Chair, Councillor A Givan, the Director of Organisation Development and Innovation agreed to investigate if checks were made to ensure safeguarding measures were in place prior to the Council granting funding to groups and sporting clubs.

- 5.1.3 Chief Executive’s Statement of Assurance April 2024 – September 2024
(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 April 2024 – September 2024.

- 5.1.4 NIAO Audit Strategy for LCCC for 2024-25
(Report would never be made available)

Members were provided with a copy of the Northern Ireland Audit Office Audit Strategy for LCCC for 2024-25. Mr B Stewart, RBCA, having presented the report to Members, it was agreed that its contents be noted.

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

Resumption of Normal Business

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

At this point, Councillor A P Ewing acknowledged the hard work of Officers in preparing the reports for this meeting. These sentiments were echoed by the Acting Chair, Councillor A Givan.

There being no further business, the meeting was terminated at 5.18 pm.

Mayor/Chairman