

## **Derry City and Strabane District Council**

**Open Minutes of Assurance, Audit and Risk Committee held in the Council Chamber, Guildhall on Thursday 30 June 2016 at 4.00pm.**

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**Present: - Councillor McGinley (in the Chair); Aldermen M Hamilton, Ramsey and Thompson; and Councillors Carlin, Donnelly, Duffy, Hastings, D Kelly, M McHugh, McKeever, Reilly and Robinson.**

**Non Members of Committee: - Councillors Carr and P Kelly.**

**In Attendance: - Chief Executive (Mr J Kelpie), Director of Business and Culture (Mr S Gillespie), Lead Finance Officer (Mr A Dallas), Internal Audit Manager (Mr J Harrigan), Lead Legal Services Officer (Mr P Kingston), Independent Advisor (Mr T Jackson) and Committee Clerk (Mrs S Lynch).**

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### **AAR81/16 Notice and Summons for Meeting**

The Chief Executive read the Notice and Summons for the Meeting.

### **AAR82/16 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gallagher.

### **AAR83/16 Request for Suspension of Standing Orders**

An Independent Member of Council requested a suspension of standing orders. He advised the Committee that he wanted to discuss the proceedings of a recent Community Planning meeting. He stated there was a lot of controversy during the meeting and people felt intimidated, so much so that one lady withdrew her application and departed from the meeting. He stated that he felt the procedures outlined at the meeting were inconsistent with other areas.

The Chief Executive stated he would seek assistance on the matter from the Lead Legal Services Officer as to whether or not such a discussion was relevant to this committee and if it would require Committee approval to discuss.

The Lead Legal Services Officer stated that he felt the issue did not relate to matters on the agenda however it was a decision for Members and they could vote on whether they wanted to suspend standing orders to discuss. A vote to suspend standing orders required a qualified majority being 80% of those present and voting.

The Chair proceeded to take a vote on whether or not Members wished to suspend standing orders to discuss the issue.

The proposal on being put to the vote was declared lost, with voting 6 For and 5 Against.

An Independent Member of Council queried this result as he believed the proposal had been carried. The Chair confirmed that the proposal had fallen as the amount in favour was not a qualified majority given that three Members were not present.

The Independent Member of Council expressed his disgust that some Members voted against and could not understand their reason for doing so. He felt this was a current issue which required immediate attention and he believed everyone should be free to voice their concerns.

#### **AAR84/16 Declarations of Members' Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **AAR85/16 Attendance**

It was at this point in the meeting (recorded at 4.08pm) Committee Members Aldermen Ramsey and Thompson joined the meeting.

#### **Open for Decision**

#### **AAR86/16 Deputations**

There were no deputations.

#### **AAR87/16 Chairperson's Business**

There was no Chairperson's Business.

**AAR88/16 Confirmation of the Open Minutes of the Assurance, Audit and Risk Committee held on 9 June 2016**

The Open Minutes of the Assurance, Audit and Risk Committee held on 9 June 2016 (AAR66/16 – AAR76/16) were confirmed and signed by the Chairperson as correct.

**AAR89/16 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

**AAR90/16 Annual Governance Statement**

The Internal Audit Manager advised Members that the purpose of this report was to seek Members comments and approval on Derry City and Strabane District Council's Annual Governance Statement for the financial year 2015/2016.

A Member of the Sinn Fein grouping referred to paragraph 3.2 within the report. She queried the issue on the transferring functions grant for Off Street Car Parking and the additional £150k which was received. She asked if Council have now broken even in terms of what they were expecting, setting aside the Queens Quay issue.

The Lead Finance Officer stated that this issue was detailed further within the Year End Financial Outturn report. He stated that the £150k received from DRD was very welcome progress and had reduced the year end overspend from £180k to £30k. Officers were looking at all possible alternatives to address this overspend position going forward. He clarified that although it had been reduced substantially it was not entirely eliminated. He stated that Queens Quay was still an ongoing issue.

The Committee

**Recommended that Council approve the Annual Governance Statement 2015/2016 and the Annual Governance Checklist.**

**AAR91/16 Code of Governance**

The Internal Audit Manager advised Members that the purpose of this report was to seek Members comments and approval on Derry City and Strabane District Council's Code of Governance for the financial year 2015/2016.

The Committee

**Recommended that the Council's Code of Governance be approved.**

**AAR92/16 Public Sector Internal Audit Standards**

The Internal Audit Manager advised that the purpose of this report was to seek Members comments and approval on the Internal Audit Section's self-assessment against the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

The Committee

**Recommended that Council approve the Internal Audit Section's self-assessment against the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.**

**AAR93/16 Thanks**

The Chair extended thanks to the Audit staff for bringing together the Governance Statement. He stated it contained a lot of useful information and he was mindful that it would not have been an easy task.

**Open for Information**

**AAR94/16 Proper Arrangements Questionnaire**

The purpose of this report was to advise Members of the contents of the recently completed Proper Arrangements Questionnaire 2015/2016.

Members noted the contents of this report.

**AAR95/16 NIAO Audit Strategy**

The purpose of this report was to advise Members of the Northern Ireland Audit Office's Audit Strategy for Derry City and Strabane District Council's Improvement Audit & Assessment for 2016/2017.

Members noted the contents of this report.

**AAR96/16 Year End Financial Outturn**

The purpose of this report was to inform Members of the financial outturn of Derry City and Strabane District Council for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 including proposed transfers to reserves as reported to the Governance and Strategic Planning Committee.

Members noted the contents of this report.

**The Meeting terminated at 4.16pm.**