

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of Special Audit Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 19 April 2016 at 1.00pm in the Training Room District Council Offices Monaghan Row Newry

Chairperson: Mr J Campbell Independent Chairperson

In Attendance: **(Committee Members)**

Councillor P Brown
Councillor T Hearty
Councillor M Murnin
Councillor J Tinnelly
Councillor C Enright
Councillor P O Gribin

(Non Committee Members)

Councillor G Craig

Officials in Attendance:

Mr L Hannaway	Chief Executive
Mr E Curtis	Director Strategic Planning & Performance
Ms M Ward	Director Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism
Ms D Carville	Director Corporate Services
Mr M Lipsett	Director Active & Healthy Communities
Ms E McParland	Democratic Services Manager
Ms L Dillon	Democratic Services Officer

AC/23/2016:- APOLOGIES AND CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Mr Campbell welcomed Members and Officers to the meeting and said he would give background regarding the purpose of the meeting, after which he would ask Councillor Enright and Mr E Curtis Director of Strategic Planning & Performance to go through each of the six issues listed on the agenda.

Mr Campbell explained that at the end of February 2016 he had been approached by Councillor Enright regarding corporate governance concerns mainly relating to the former Down District Council, and outlining the implications he believed these could have for the new Newry Mourne and Down District Council.

Mr Campbell said Councillor Enright presented him with a dossier of papers regarding the items of concerns which he said he had since read in detail.

After consulting with the Chief Executive as to how the issues raised by Councillor Enright could be addressed, Mr Campbell had agreed that Officers should, in the first instance, be given an opportunity to respond to the various issues raised. It was therefore agreed that Mr E Curtis Director of Strategic Planning & Performance

would co-ordinate the management responses, given the fact he had no input into five of the items raised by Councillor Enright as these related to the former Down District Council. The dossier of papers was subsequently passed to Mr Curtis who then sought management responses.

Mr Campbell said the members of the Audit Committee were now being presented with details of the issues raised by Councillor Enright and the management responses to same.

Mr Campbell indicated to the Audit Committee the importance of them focusing on the corporate governance process and the issues that may arise when considering the detail presented to them at the meeting and asked the Audit Committee to decide if they wished to note the management responses or if they wished for further action to be taken.

Mr Campbell referred to a Notice of Motion which would be tabled at the next Meeting of the Audit Committee on 28 April 2016 at which an audit report on Corporate Governance would also be presented by the Council's Internal Auditors.

Mr Campbell extended thanks to Mr Curtis who he said had carried out a lot of work in compiling the management responses and he also extended thanks to the Directors for providing their responses.

The following apologies were received:

Councillor G Sharvin
Councillor C McGrath
Councillor C Casey
Mr C O Rourke Director of Regulatory & Technical Services

AC/24/2016:- DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

AC/25/2016:- TO CONSIDER CORPORATE GOVERNANCE CONCERNS RAISED BY COUNCILLOR CADOGEN ENRIGHT

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Tinnelly seconded by Councillor Murnin it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the Meeting during discussion on this matter which related to exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

Detailed discussion took place on the issues raised, during which Councillor Enright presented his concerns in relation to six corporate governance items and pointed out he wanted to look at the end to end process involved when decisions are taken and

implemented and identify areas where the Council can learn to strengthen the governance processes for the new Council going forward.

AGREED: It was unanimously agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

AGREED: When the Committee came out of closed session the Chairman reported it had been agreed as follows:

(1) Provision of Renewable Energy at new Down Leisure Centre

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Hearty seconded by Councillor O Gribin it was agreed Officials contact the Consultants to establish what the best options were for installing renewable energy systems at the new Down Leisure Centre, which would be within the conditions of the Planning Permission which had already been granted for this project.

It was unanimously agreed that as well as seeking an opinion from Consultants on future projects/schemes, that Council Officers ensure they also seek, and take into account, 'in-house' advice from Council Officials who may have expertise on a certain area of work.

It was unanimously agreed Ms D Carville Director of Corporate Service, examine the figures compiled by Councillor Enright regarding renewable energy at the new Down Leisure Centre and compare these figures with the figures which had been presented by the Consultants engaged to work on the Down Leisure Centre project.

(2) Failure to include negative variance in former Down District Council Management Accounts

AGREED:

It was unanimously agreed Mr C O Rourke Director of Regulatory & Technical Services prepare an updated report regarding the provision of Wind Turbines and present same to the appropriate Committee Meeting in due course.

It was unanimously agreed Ms D Carville Director of Corporate Services review the format of the Council's Management Accounts.

(3) Provision of Shuttle Bus between Down Civic Campus and Downpatrick Bus Station

AGREED:

It was unanimously agreed Mr E Curtis Director of Strategic Planning & Performance arrange to table an item at the next meeting of the Downshire Estate Shared Management Group to be held on 28 April 2016 regarding the provision of a Bus Shuttle between Down Civic Campus and Downpatrick Bus

Station, and report back with an update to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee in due course.

(4) Application for EU Bathing Water Status at several beaches in former Down District Council area

AGREED:

It was unanimously agreed to note the management response given regarding the Council's application for EU Bathing Water Status and this matter will be reported back to Council via the Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism Committee in due course.

It was agreed that when decisions were taken by Council that Council Officials ensure Members are kept informed on progress.

(5) Contravention of EU Waste Directive in former Down District Council and failure to pursue value for money

(3.10pm – Councillor P Brown left the meeting)

AGREED:

It was unanimously agreed Ms D Carville Director of Corporate Services to investigate the processes which were followed regarding tendering under the EU Waste Directive.

It was unanimously agreed Council Officials ensure all potential options for future projects are estimated to inform options to include in tender.

(6) The financial options tabled to appoint Assistant Director of Sustainability & Climate Change

AGREED:

It was noted a Report on Corporate Governance would be tabled at the Audit Committee Meeting to be held on Thursday 28 April 2016.

It was unanimously agreed a paper setting out the financial options and other relevant considerations for the appointment of an Assistant Director of Sustainability & Climate Change be brought first to a meeting of the Party Representatives Forum before tabling at the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee Meeting.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 3.50pm.

For noting at the Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday 3 May 2016.

Signed: **Mr J Campbell**
Independent Chairperson

