

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Minutes of Audit Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 12 January 2021
via Microsoft Teams.**

Chairperson: Ms B Slevin Independent Chairperson

In attendance: **(Committee Members)**

Councillor P Byrne
Councillor C Casey
Councillor L Devlin
Councillor A Lewis
Councillor D Murphy
Councillor G Sharvin
Councillor M Gibbons

Non Members: Councillor D Curran
Councillor A Finnegan

Officials in attendance: Ms M Ward, Chief Executive
Ms D Carville, Director of Corporate Services
Mr M Lipsett Director Active & Healthy Communities
Mr K Montgomery, Assistant Director, Corporate Services (Finance)
Ms K Bingham, Head of Performance and Improvement
Ms A Robb Assistant Director Administration
Mr G McBride Head of Administration & Customer Services
Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager
Ms L Dillon, Democratic Services Officer

Also in attendance: Ms C Hagan, ASM
Mr B O'Neill, NIAO
Ms D McKim NIAO

AC/001/2021: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

The following apology was received:

Councillor O Hanlon
Councillor K Owen
Councillor C Enright

AC/002/2021: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of Interest received.

AC/003/2021: ACTION SHEETS ARISING FROM:
AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING: 24 SEPTEMBER 2020
SPECIAL AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING: 24 NOV 2020
SPECIAL AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING: 07 DEC 2020

Read: Action Sheets arising from Minutes of the following: Audit Committee Meetings:-

- Audit Committee Meeting - Thursday 24 September 2020.
- Special Audit Committee Meeting – Tuesday 24 November 2020
- Special Audit Committee Meeting – Monday 07 December 2020.

(Copies circulated)

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Casey seconded by Councillor Byrne it was agreed to note the Action Sheets arising from:**

- Audit Committee Meeting - Thursday 24 September 2020.
- Special Audit Committee Meeting – Tuesday 24 November 2020.
- Special Audit Committee Meeting – Monday 07 December 2020.

CORPORATE SERVICES (OPEN SESSION)

AC/004/2021: CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

Read: Report dated 12 January 2021 from Ms D Carville, Director of Corporate Services regarding the Corporate Risk Register. **(Copy circulated)**

Ms Carville said the Corporate Risk Register had been presented to the Senior Management Team Meeting on 09 December 2020 together with quarterly assurance statements

Ms D Carville, presented the Corporate Risk Register highlighting the following points:

- All corporate risks have been reviewed, updated and aligned to the Council's new strategic objectives. A corporate risk in relation to the impact of Brexit has also been included in the Corporate Risk Register, outlined at CR15.

- Directorate Risk Registers are currently being reviewed and updated.
- Corporate Risk 10 regarding Industrial Relations was reviewed at the Senior Management Team Meeting on 09 December 2020, and will be updated to take account of more recent developments.
- A Corporate Risk regarding IT will remain on the Corporate Risk Register focusing on Cyber Security, while a Corporate Risk regarding IT in terms of operational and statutory requirements, may be retained as a risk at Directorate Level.

AGREED: **It was agreed as follows:**

- a) To note the Corporate Risk Register.**
- b) The Planning Consultant report to be brought back to a meeting of the Audit Committee in due course.**
- c) ASM to include an update report on Health and Safety, as part of their reporting on follow up work, to the Audit Committee Meeting in April 2021.**
- d) Information regarding progress on outstanding Planning Applications and historic Planning Applications, to be provided to Councillor Casey.**
- e) The current corporate risk regarding IT to be refocused on the Corporate Risk Register towards cyber security risk.**

AC/005/2021: **PROMPT PAYMENT STATISTICS**

Read: Report dated 12 January 2021 from Ms K Bingham Head of Performance & Improvement, regarding Prompt Payment Statistics. **(Copy circulated)**

Ms Bingham presented the above Report.

AGREED: **It was agreed to note Report dated 12 January 2021 from Ms K Bingham Head of Performance & Improvement, regarding Prompt Payment Statistics.**

CORPORATE SERVICES (CLOSED SESSION)

Items restricted in accordance with Part 3 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Devlin seconded by Councillor Byrne, 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 Part 3 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during these items of business.

**AC/006/2021: UPDATE
RE: AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS**

Read: Report dated 12 January 2021 from Ms K Bingham Head of Performance & Improvement, regarding an update on Internal Audit Recommendations made since formation of Newry Mourne & Down District Council and a review of progress on NIAO recommendations.
(Copy circulated)

**AC/007/2021: UPDATE
RE: FRAUD AND WHISTLEBLOWING**

Read: Report dated 12 January 2021 from Ms D Carville Director of Corporate Services regarding Fraud and Whistleblowing. **(Copy circulated)**

AC/008/2021: DIRECT AWARD CONTRACTS

Read: Report dated 12 January 2021 from Ms K Bingham Head of Performance & Improvement regarding Direct Award Contracts. **(Copy circulated)**

**AC/009/2021: UPDATE
ASM INVESTIGATION – SINGLE TENDER ACTIONS**

Read: Report dated 12 January 2021 from Ms D Carville Director Corporate Services providing an update on the ASM Internal Audit Investigation regarding Council's use of Single Tender Actions. **(Copy circulated)**

Read: Report from ASM dated 01 December 2020 regarding the Investigation into the Council's use of Single Tender Actions. **(Circulated – Committee Members only)**

**AC/010/2021: REGISTER OF INTERESTS
(ELECTED MEMBERS)**

Read: Report dated 12 January 2021 from Ms D Carville Director Corporate Services regarding Elected Members' Register of Interests. **(Copy circulated)**

AC/011/2021: OVERVIEW OF COMPLAINTS

Read: Report dated 12 January 2021 from Mr G McBride Head of Administration & Customer Services regarding an overview of complaints received by Council. **(Copy circulated)**

INTERNAL AUDIT (CLOSED SESSION)

AC/012/2021: ASM INTERNAL AUDIT - SUMMARY REPORT

Read: ASM Internal Audit Summary Report dated 12 January 2021. **(Copy circulated)**

**AC/013/2021: ASM INTERNAL AUDIT FIELDWORK
REVIEW OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE**

Read: ASM Internal Audit Fieldwork Report dated 07 January 2021 regarding a Review of Accounts Payable. **(Copy circulated)**

**AC/014/2021: ASM INTERNAL AUDIT FIELDWORK
CAPITAL GRANTS MANAGEMENT**

Read: ASM Internal Audit Fieldwork Report dated 05 January 2021 regarding Capital Grants Management. **(Copy circulated)**

**AC/015/2021: ASM INTERNAL AUDIT FIELDWORK
EMERGENCY PLANNING**

Read: ASM Internal Audit Fieldwork Report dated 05 January 2021 regarding Emergency Planning. **(Copy circulated)**

NIAO (CLOSED SESSION)

**AC/016/2021: NIAO
REPORT TO THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE**

Read: Correspondence dated 04 January 2021 from the Northern Ireland Audit Office regarding Newry Mourne and Down District Council Financial Statements for year ended 31 March 2020 – Report to Those Charged with Governance. **(Copy circulated)**

On the proposal of Councillor Casey seconded by Councillor Murphy it was agreed to come out of Closed Session.

When the Committee came out of Closed Session the Chairperson reported the following decisions had been taken on the items discussed:

AC/006/2020: Update re: Audit Recommendations

AGREED: It was unanimously agreed to note Report dated 12 January 2021 from Ms K Bingham Head of Performance & Improvement, regarding an update on Audit Recommendations.

AC/007/2021: Fraud & Whistleblowing

AGREED: It was unanimously agreed to note Report dated 12 January 2021 from Ms D Carville Director Corporate Services regarding an update on Fraud & Whistleblowing.

AC/008/2021: Direct Award Contracts

AGREED: It was unanimously agreed to note Report dated 12 January 2021 from Ms K Bingham Head of Performance & Improvement regarding Direct Award Contracts.

AC/009/2021: Update re: ASM Investigation re Single Tender Actions

AGREED: It was unanimously agreed to note the update in relation to the ASM investigation into the Council's use of Single Tender Actions, as outlined in Report dated 12 January 2021 from Ms D Carville Director Corporate Services.

AC/010/2021: Register of Interests – Elected Members

AGREED: It was unanimously agreed to note:

The outstanding Register of Interest form has now been completed and uploaded to the Council website.

Elected Members will regularly review their Register of Interest Forms.

On the proposal of Councillor Sharvin, seconded by Councillor Gibbons it was agreed a six-monthly Report on Elected Members Register of Interests will be brought to the Audit Committee to ensure compliance.

AC/011/2021: [Overview of Complaints](#)

AGREED: It was unanimously agreed to note the number and profile of complaints received over the reporting period and note the progress made and in hand, to improve complaints handling, as outlined in Report dated 12 January 2021 from Mr G McBride Head of Administration & Customer Services.

AC/012/2021: [ASM Internal Audit – Summary Report](#)

AGREED: It was unanimously agreed to note ASM Internal Audit Summary Report dated 12 January 2021.

Noted: Councillor Devlin asked it be recorded that staff should be commended on how they responded during the period of the pandemic ensuring lines of communication were open and proper processes were followed which resulted in no impact on our services.

AC/013/2021: [ASM Internal Audit Report – Accounts Payable](#)

AGREED: It was unanimously agreed to note Report dated 07 January 2021 from ASM Internal Audit regarding Audit Fieldwork on a Review of Accounts Payable.

AC/014/201: [ASM Internal Audit Report – Capital Grants](#)

AGREED: It was unanimously agreed to note Report dated 05 January 2021 from ASM Internal Audit regarding Audit Fieldwork on Capital Grants.

AC/015/2021: [ASM Internal Audit Report – Emergency Planning](#)

AGREED: It was unanimously agreed to note Report dated 05 January 2021 from ASM Internal Audit regarding Audit Fieldwork on Emergency Planning.

AC/016/2021: **NIAO: Report to Those Charged with Governance**

AGREED: **It was unanimously agreed to note covering letter dated 04 January 2021 to the Chief Executive , from the Northern Ireland Audit Office and note final report regarding Newry Mourne and Down District Council Financial Statements for year ended 31 March 2020 – Report to Those Charged with Governance.**

NIAO (OPEN SESSION)

AC/017/2021: **NIAO
MANAGING ATTENDANCE IN CENTRAL
AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Read: NIAO Managing Attendance in Central and Local Government.
(Copy circulated)

Agreed: **It was agreed to note NIAO Managing Attendance in Central and Local Government.**

AC/018/2021: **NIAO
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUDITOR'S REPORT 2020**

Read: NIAO Local Government Auditor's Report – 2020.
(Copy circulated)

Agreed: **It was agreed to note NIAO Local Government Auditor's report.**

PERFORMANCE (OPEN SESSION)

AC/019/2021: **UPDATE RE: PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT**

Read: Report dated 12 January 2021 from Ms D Carville, Director of Corporate Services regarding an updated on performance and improvement. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **It was agreed to note the update in relation to current and future performance management arrangements as outlined in Report dated 12 January 2021 from Ms D Carville, Director of Corporate Services.**

CIRCULARS

**AC/020/2021: DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES
GUIDANCE RE: DISPOSAL OF LAND**

Read: Correspondence dated 04 January 2021 from Department for Communities regarding Guidance for Councils: Disposal of Land at Less Than Best Price.
(Copy circulated)

**AGREED: It was agreed to note correspondence from
Department for Communities regarding Guidance for
Councils on the Disposal of Land at Less Than Best
Price.**

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 3.40pm.

For consideration at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 01 February 2021.

**Signed: Ms D Carville
Director Corporate Services**

**Signed: Ms B Slevin
Independent Chairperson**