LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Special Meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held in the Council Chamber and Remote Locations on Thursday, 24 September, 2026 at 6:00 pm

PRESENT IN CHAMBER:	Councillor M McKeever (Chairperson) Aldermen O Gawith, A Grehan and J Tinsley Councillors D J Craig and A P Ewing
PRESENT IN REMOTE LOCATION:	Mr E Jardine (Independent Member and Vice-Chairperson) Aldermen S P Porter Councillors D Bassett, S Burns, B Magee and J Gallen
OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT IN CHAMBER:	Councillor G Hynds
OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT IN REMOTE LOCATION:	Councillor J Laverty
IN ATTENDANCE:	Chief Executive Director of Organisation Development and Innovation Director of Finance and Corporate Services Head of Finance Internal Audit Manager (Remote) IT Officer Member Services Officers (EW and BS) Northern Ireland Audit Office: Mr C McGeown RBCA Mr B Stewart

Commencement of the Meeting

The Chairperson, Councillor M McKeever, welcomed those present to the Special Meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee. He pointed out that, unless the item on the agenda was considered under confidential business, this meeting would be recorded. In accordance with the Protocol for Remote Meetings, the Chairperson 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.

Commencement of the Meeting (Cont'd)

The Chairperson, Councillor M McKeever, 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 joined the meeting during this item of business (6.02 pm).

It was agreed to accept apologies for non-attendance at the meeting on behalf of Councillor A Bamford and Councillor D Lynch.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

At this point, the Chairperson extended a welcome to Mr C McGeown, Northern Ireland Audit Office, and Mr B Stewart, RBCA.

3. 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 Alderman A Grehan, seconded by Councillor A P Ewing, and agreed that the following matters be considered "in Committee" in the absence of members of the press and public being present.

3.1 Report of Head of Finance

3.1.1 Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council - Statement of Accounts for Year Ended 31 March 2026
(Report will never become available - Final certified accounts will be published)

Councillor D J Craig joined the meeting during this item of business (6.19 pm).

In addition to the narrative report, Members had been provided with a copy of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council's Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2026.

The Head of Finance presented the report and, together with Mr C McGeown, Northern Ireland Audit Office, responded to questions and comments from Members, it being noted that the next item on the agenda would address the issues raised.

3.1.1 Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council - Statement of Accounts for Year Ended 31 March 2026 (Cont'd)

It was proposed by Alderman J Tinsley, seconded by Alderman A Grehan, and agreed that the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2026 (which included the Governance statement) be approved and submitted to the Northern Ireland Audit Office.

3.1.2 Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council – Draft Report to Those Charged with Governance 2025-2026
(Report will never become available - Final certified accounts will be published)

In addition to the narrative report, Members had been provided with the Draft Report to Those Charged with Governance 2025-2026 as issued by the Northern Ireland Audit Office.

The Head of Finance provided the Committee with a summary of some of the key issues contained in the Draft Report to Those Charged with Governance 2025-2026, it being noted that a final version would be presented to the Committee in December 2026.

Mr B Stewart addressed the Committee during which he highlighted some of the key points in the report. Mr Stewart, along with the Head of Finance and the Chief Executive, responded to a number of comments and questions raised by Members in connection with the report.

Mr C McGeown recognised the lateness of the report being made available to Members due to some additional assurance work. If possible, next year's report will aim to be with Council by the Tuesday before the meeting, at the latest.

The Report to Those Charged with Governance in regard to Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council for 2025-2026 was noted by the Committee.

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.

The Chairperson, Councillor M McKeever, thanked Members for their attendance and declared the meeting closed at 6.53 pm.

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Mayor/Chairman