

LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL

Audit Committee

Minutes of the meeting of Louth County Council Audit Committee held in Setanta Room, County Hall, Dundalk on Monday 25th January 2016 at 2.00 p.m.

In Attendance: Dr. Philip Byrne (Chairman)
Mr. Billy Doyle
Mr. Richard Bowden
Councillor Conor Keelan
Ms. Mary Murtagh, Senior Executive Officer, LCC

Apologies: Councillor Kevin Callan

Also in Attendance: Ms. Pauline Poots, Capita
Mr. Alan Davidson

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd November was confirmed on the Proposal of Cllr. Conor Keelan seconded by Mr. Billy Doyle.

2. Matters Arising from the Minutes

The Chairman, Dr. Philip Byrne, identified a number of issues arising from the minutes.

Cllr. C. Keelan requested a copy of legal opinions, referred to at the monthly meeting of Louth County Council, in relation to the issue of Rent Arrears. M. Murtagh to check with Management Team and arrange for a response to issue to all members.

Training Workshop on Local Government Reform, to be delivered by Dr. Philip Byrne, agreed for Friday 4th March commencing at 1.00p.m. Also agreed that the Chairman would check the availability of a representative from NOAC to attend to give a presentation with reference to Louth specific issues.

Members noted that Local Government Auditor, Maurice O' Neill has transferred to another area and requested details of the replacement Auditor (s)

- Review of Audit Committee Charter to be listed as an agenda item for the next meeting. Noted that three key areas require discussion
 - (I) Financial Statements/ Process
 - (II) Internal Audit and
 - (III) Value for Money (which is a key priority)

3. Conflicts of Interest

The Chairman offered the members an opportunity to raise at this point any matters where they felt there would be a conflict of interest in regard to items listed on the agenda. There were no conflicts noted.

4. Review of Internal Audit on Emergency

Ms. Pauline Poots and Mr. Alan Davidson from Capita joined the meeting. Members was advised that a number of areas were examined and linked back to the Risks Register as part of the Audit with a number of high priority recommendations made. These related to the need for better controls to manage annualised hours, the requirement to deliver the Community Fire Safety Strategy in a measurable, targeted way using “Champions” to deliver, the need to introduce regular reporting of operational issues, delivery and monitoring of staff training and the need to introduce outcome driven performance rather than solely demand driven.

Members complimented Capita on the standard of the report, a copy of which was provided to all members.

5. Review of 2015 Work Programme

Members were circulated with the status update as at 21st January 2016 and advised that a meeting had been held with Management Team in Louth County Council to discuss progress, outcomes and recommendations. Noted that no significant issues arising on IT Security, with a report to Management due shortly. Draft report on HR Management due before next meeting and meeting held on Housing Procedures Review with a report due to be provided before next meeting. It is also hoped to provide an Annual Assurances Report for the next meeting. Work on-going / planned on Corporate Estate, Procurement and Corporate Governance.

Dr. Philip Byrne, Chairman agreed to issue a copy of the Governance Framework Document launched by the IPA in December 2015 to Members for information.

It was agreed that the 2016 proposed Annual Plan would be placed on the next Agenda of the Audit Committee.

6. Protected Disclosures Interim Policy and Procedures

The Interim Policy, as circulated, was noted by members. It was agreed that clarification should be provided to members on the role of the Audit Committee in relation to this policy. Members also requested clarification in relation to the legislative position when false allegations are made and if any approved procedure is included within the policy.

7. Section 60 Report

Members were advised that the Section 60 Report was listed as an Agenda Item for Louth County Council with no observations made.

8. Housing Procedures Update

Noted that this item had, in effect, been covered in the review of the 2015 Workplan which was an earlier agenda item. Agreed that the report would be listed as an Agenda item for the next meeting of the Audit Committee.

10. Any Other Business

Members were circulated with details of Audit Committee member Training scheduled for 29th February in Athlone. It was noted that members had already availed of this training on an earlier date.

11. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of the committee would be on Monday 7th March 2016.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

Confirmed at Meeting held on: _____

Chairman: _____

Meetings Administrator _____