

DÚN LAOGHAIRE-RATHDOWN COUNTY COUNCIL
Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Audit Committee
held in the Old Town Hall Annex on Thursday 19th October 2023 at 2.30pm

PRESENT: Noreen Fahy, Penelope Kenny, Conor O'Brien, Justin McCarthy, Councillor Anne Colgan, Councillor Jim O'Leary, Councillor Tom Kivlehan

OFFICIALS: Stephen Brady (Director of Corporate Affairs), Elizabeth Clarke (Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Affairs), Mary Murtagh (Administrative Officer, Internal Audit), Ciara Mulcahy (Senior Staff Officer, Internal Audit), Stuart Hughes (Staff Officer, Internal Audit), Aidan Blighe (Director of Planning and Economic Development), Anthony Fitzpatrick (Senior Executive Officer, Planning and Economic Development), Orla Jackson (Administrative Officer, Planning and Economic Development), Therese Langan (Director of Community, Cultural Services and Parks), Paul Kennedy (Director of Infrastructure and Climate Change, Road Maintenance and Traffic), Helena Cunningham (Director of Finance), Johanne Codd (Acting Senior Executive Engineer, Drainage Planning), Sean McGrath (Senior Engineer, Traffic), Michele Costello (Senior Executive Planner, Active Travel), Anne Devine (Director of Forward Planning Infrastructure), Vivienne Byrne (Senior Planner, Forward Planning Infrastructure), Kieran McGlynn (Senior Engineer, Forward Planning Infrastructure), Fearghal Rooney (Senior Quantity Surveyor, Forward Planning Infrastructure)

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Bernard Barron from Mazars (Item No. 4)

1. Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 29th June 2023

The adoption of the minutes of Thursday 29th June 2023 was proposed by Cllr Tom Kivlehan and seconded by Justin McCarthy.

2. Matters arising from Minutes of meeting held on 29th June 2023

- Item No. 1 was completed. Members attended a three hour session about the 'Thinking Environment Programme' on 12th September.
- Item Nos. 2 and 3 are on the agenda for today's meeting.

3. Conflict of Interest Procedure

In relation to Item 11 on the agenda, Cllr Kivlehan advised he is a Director of DLR Properties. The Chairperson and Stephen Brady confirmed that as the item is for the Committee's information only, with no decision making involved, no conflict of interest arises.

4. Review of Planning Compliance Submission Procedures by Mazars

The audit report was noted as read.

Bernard Barron, Mazars advised the audit identified 1 high priority, 5 medium priority and 3 low priority findings. The report was given a 'Limited Assurance' level. He gave an overview of the scope, findings and recommendations in the report.

Aidan Blighe advised he has a busy team who work with compliance submissions and staff resources are limited. He confirmed there will be additional resources for Planning. His department are committed to working with referral departments and addressing control weaknesses identified in the report.

A discussion took place during which Aidan Blighe, Anthony Fitzpatrick, Orla Jackson, Paul Kennedy, Therese Langan, Helena Cunningham, Stephen Brady responded to members' queries. Discussion points included staff resourcing challenges, particularly in recruiting Planners and mitigations to address this; impact on communities as a result of compliances that are 'deemed to be agreed'; backlog of compliance submissions; importance of updating processes and procedures; complex nature of the compliance submission process which requires technical input from various departments; challenge of meeting statutory timeline.

The Chairperson thanked everyone for their contributions.

5. Enhancing the risk reporting framework and building consistencies across DLRCC

Eileen Fox presented the Corporate Risk Register. She outlined the background to the formation of the risk registers, separation of departmental and corporate risks, how opportunities and mitigations are identified, the benefits of the risk register module on the ViClarity system which includes reporting. She highlighted the high risks on the register.

A discussion took place during which Eileen Fox, Helena Cunningham and Stephen Brady responded to members' queries. Discussion points included the volume of high risks on the register; potential for a cyber-attack and mitigations in place; risk registers and the budget process; access of Councillors to risk registers; risks linked to Corporate Plan themes and goals.

The Chairperson thanked Eileen for the presentation and conveyed their appreciation of the standard of the presentation.

6. Review of the audits for the 2024 Internal Audit Plan

This was discussed under Item No. 7.

7. Schedule of Audits 2023

Mary Murtagh updated members about progress in completing audits in the current Internal Audit Plan as outlined in the Schedule of Audits document. She advised the Rent Collection and Arrears Management audit and the Review of Overtime Processes are expected to be presented at the December Audit Committee meeting. Both reports missed their original dates for presentation in June and October. Mary confirmed she does not expect the Revenue Grants audit will be ready for presentation in December and confirmed more time is required to finalise the Credit Cards audit which is due for presentation in December. The chairperson advised it would not be possible to receive more than two audit report presentations at the December meeting.

A discussion took place during which the Chairperson expressed concern about the number of audits proposed for the 2024 Internal Audit Plan in proportion to the size of the Council; that agreed presentation dates for a number of reports on the 2023 Internal Audit Plan were not achieved, taking into account that the total audits on the 2023 Internal Audit Plan had been reduced compared to 2022.

Further to the Audit Committee meeting with the Local Government Auditor earlier today, the Chairperson shared concerns about his findings related to the overtime processes which were based on initial findings from Internal Audit. A discussion took

place during which Mary Murtagh confirmed the draft overtime audit report was issued to Finance at the end of August to prepare management comments. Stephen Brady confirmed that that the recommendations in this report when addressed will result in updated procedures and policy.

The Chairperson requested Mary Murtagh to email members a report outlining which audits on the 2023 Internal Audit Plan will be presented at the December Audit Committee meeting (**Action No. 1**). The Chairperson requested that Mary Murtagh reassess the audits to be included in the 2024 Internal Audit Plan, taking into account risks identified in the Corporate Risk Register and the number of audits that can realistically be completed. Members to be emailed the updated list of audits for review and collect feedback from members for consideration at the December Audit Committee meeting (**Action No. 2**).

8. Report on High-Level Overdue Audit Recommendations

There was no discussion under this item.

9. Progress Report on Audit Recommendations

There was no discussion under this item.

10. Progress Update – Title Deeds Audit Recommendations

There was no discussion under this item.

11. Assessment of mitigations in the Forward Planning Infrastructure (FPI) Risk Register by Anne Devine

Anne Devine, Director of Services introduced the FPI risk register and outlined the role of the section's Development Agency Project Team in the implementation of the Cherrywood Planning Scheme and progressing projects. She noted that 17 high risks on the register presented in April have been reduced to 9 and are spread across 8 risk categories.

Vivienne Byrne, Kieran McGlynn and Fearghal Rooney presented on the risks for planning and policy, physical and green infrastructure, costs and project management.

A discussion took place during which Anne Devine and her team responded to members queries. Discussion points included strategies in place to deal with risks related to landowners; impact on the scheme due to staff resources; adequacy of LIHAF funding.

The Chairperson thanked everyone for the quality of their contributions.

12. AOB

The Audit Committee met in private session with the Local Government Auditor at 11am on 19th October to discuss the 2022 Annual Financial Statement and Local Government Auditor's Report. The outcome of their deliberations on the AFS and Auditor's Report will be included in the report of the Audit Committee under Section 121 of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended by Section 60 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 (**Action No. 3**).

13. Actions from Audit Committee Meeting – 19th October 2023

ACTION NO.	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	PROGRESS OF ACTION
1	Mary Murtagh	Email members a report outlining which audits on the 2023 Internal Audit Plan will be presented at the December 2023 Audit Committee meeting	M. Murtagh issued email to members with this information on 27/10/23
2	Mary Murtagh	Reassess the audits to be included in the 2024 Internal Audit Plan. Email members the updated list of audits for review and collect feedback from members for consideration at the December Audit Committee meeting	M. Murtagh issued email to members with this information on 27/10/23
3	Audit Committee	Include the outcome of committee deliberations on the AFS 2022 and Auditor's Report in the report of the Audit Committee under Section 121 of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended by Section 60 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014	Report to be brought to Audit Committee meeting in Q1 2024

Signed: *Dea Feely*

Date: 29/2/24.