



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE  
HELD IN ANTRIM CIVIC CENTRE ON TUESDAY 12 DECEMBER 2023 AT 6.30 PM**

- In the Chair** : Councillor A Bennington
- Committee Members Present (In person)** : Alderman - M Magill  
Councillors - A McAuley and S Wilson
- Independent Member (Remote)** : Mrs G Nesbitt
- Non Committee Members (Remote)** : Councillor B Webb
- In Attendance (In person)** : Seamus Wade, Director NIAO  
Kathy Doey, Manager, NIAO
- Officers Present** : Chief Executive – R Baker  
Director of Finance & Governance – S Cole  
Deputy Director of Finance – J Balmer  
Head of Internal Audit – P Caulcutt  
Borough Lawyer and Head of Legal Services – P Casey  
Head of Organisation Development – L Millar  
Lead Human Resources Manager – P Greer  
ICT Change Officer – A Cole  
Member Services Officer – C McGrandle  
Member Services Officer – S Boyd

The Director of Finance and Governance advised Members that apologies had been received from the Committee Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, and in accordance with Section 9 of Standing Orders, she requested that Members nominate a Chairperson for the meeting.

Proposed by Alderman Magill

Seconded by Councillor Wilson that Councillor Bennington chair the meeting.

Councillor Bennington took the Chair.

### **CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the quarterly Audit and Risk Committee Meeting and reminded all present of recording requirements.

The Chairperson extended a welcome to Seamus Wade and Kathy Doey from the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) and, further welcomed the Chief Executive to his first Audit and Risk Committee Meeting.

#### **1. APOLOGIES**

Councillor M Goodman

Councillor B Mallon

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Item 5.4 - Mrs Nesbitt confirmed that she would not be participating in the recruitment process for a new Independent Member and sought Members' agreement that this did not represent a conflict. Members agreed and advised that Mrs Nesbitt could remain during consideration of Item 5.4.

#### **3. ITEM FOR DECISION**

##### **3.1 FI/AUD/02 REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE 2023/24**

The purpose of this report was to obtain approval from Members to hold a facilitated self-assessment session on 15 February 2024 to review the effectiveness of the Audit and Risk Committee during 2023/24.

Members were reminded that CIPFA's Audit Committee – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police, placed a requirement on Audit Committees to "report regularly on their work, and at least annually report an assessment on their performance".

Members were also reminded that in previous years, Members of the Audit and Risk Committee participated in a facilitated self-assessment review of the performance of the Committee.

This self-assessment included the completion of an 'Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Audit Committee' checklist which enabled the Committee to undertake and report on the assessment of their performance throughout the year. This assessment and the Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report were then reported to the Committee and Council meetings in June.

The Review of the Effectiveness of the Audit and Risk Committee for 2023/24 was now due. To assist the Members in completing this review, it was proposed to facilitate a self-assessment session on Thursday 15 February 2024.

Appropriate arrangements would be made with Members in due course.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson  
Seconded by Councillor McAuley and agreed that

**a facilitated self-assessment session on 15 February 2024 be approved.**

*ACTION BY: Paul Caulcutt, Head of Internal Audit*

#### **4. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

##### **4.1 FI/FIN/SOA/09 NIAO: ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2022/23**

The purpose of this report was for Members to note the Local Government Auditor's 2022/23 Annual Audit Letter.

Members were reminded that in September 2023, the Audit and Risk Committee approved the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023.

The Local Government Auditor had now issued the Annual Audit Letter 2022/23 (circulated) following completion of the audit of the Statement of Accounts by the Northern Ireland Audit Office.

Proposed by Councillor McAuley  
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and agreed that

**the report be noted.**

*NO ACTION*

##### **4.2 FI/FIN/SOA/09 NIAO: REPORT TO THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE 2022/23**

The purpose of this report was for Members to note the final Report to Those Charged with Governance.

Members were reminded that in September 2023, the Audit and Risk Committee approved the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31

March 2023. Members were also provided with a copy of the draft Report to Those Charged with Governance.

The Local Government Auditor had now issued the final Report to Those Charged with Governance (circulated) following completion of the audit of the Statement of Accounts by the Northern Ireland Audit Office.

The Report included Council's Management Responses to the findings raised, which had been reviewed and agreed by the Corporate Leadership Team.

Mr Wade from NIAO provided a brief overview of the report.

Proposed by Alderman Magill  
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and agreed that

**the report be noted.**

*ACTION BY: Richard Murray, Head of Finance*

#### **4.3 G/GEN/019 CODE OF GOVERNANCE**

The purpose of this report was for Members to note the Council's updated Code of Governance.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council was committed to the principles of good governance and had a Code of Governance to reflect this (circulated).

The document consolidated the key governance practices within the Council, demonstrating the Council's governance structures were consistent with the core and supporting principles contained in the Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework (April 2016).

The Code of Governance was approved by the Policy and Governance Committee in October 2023. It was then uploaded to Council's website, to provide details of Council's existing processes and documentation to demonstrate compliance with the framework.

Mr Wade from NIAO provided a brief overview of the report.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson  
Seconded by Councillor McAuley and agreed that

**the report be noted.**

*NO ACTION*

#### **4.4 PT/CI/059 PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT REPORT 2023/24**

The purpose of this report was to provide an update on the recent Audit and Assessment carried out by the Local Government Auditor on the Council's performance improvement 2023/24.

The Local Government Auditor assesses whether the Council was likely to comply with its performance improvement responsibilities under Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (the Act).

Part 12 of the Act provides all councils with a general duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions.

##### **Audit Findings**

The Local Government Auditors report identified no issues requiring a formal statutory recommendation under the Act, and made no new proposals for improvement, which represented good practice to assist the Council in meeting its responsibilities for performance improvement.

The Auditor considered that the Council had discharged its duties in connection with (1) improvement planning and (2) publication of improvement information in accordance with section 92 of the Act and had acted in accordance with the Department for Communities' guidance sufficiently.

A copy of the Local Government Auditor's report was circulated.

The Independent Member commented on the success of the Audit and thanked all Officers involved.

Proposed by Alderman Magill  
Seconded by Councillor McAuley and agreed that

**the report be noted.**

*NO ACTION*

#### **4.5 PT/CI/049 PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2023/24 – QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORT**

The purpose of this report was to provide a Quarter 2 update on corporate performance against the Council's Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2023/24.

Members were reminded that Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 put in place a framework to support the continuous improvement of Council services.

The Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2023/24 was approved in June 2023. The Plan set out a range of robust performance targets, along with six identified improvement objectives alongside a number of statutory performance targets. In August 2023 it was agreed that quarterly performance updates would be reported to the relevant committee or working group.

The Council's Quarter 2 corporate performance update for 2023/24 was circulated.

Following a question from a Member the Director of Finance & Governance and Head of Organisation Development provided clarity relating to the Q1-2 staff satisfaction survey results.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson

Seconded by Councillor Bennington and agreed that

**the report be noted and clarity is provided in future reports that improvement targets are annual.**

*ACTION BY: Lesley Millar, Head of Organisation Development*

#### **4.6 PT/CI/049 PERFORMANCE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS 2023/24**

The purpose of this report was to share the Performance Governance Arrangements 2023/24 which were in place to support the delivery of the Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2023/24.

The Performance Governance Arrangements serve to ensure the delivery, measurement and improvement of our services and that we meet our statutory responsibilities as outlined in Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014. The Act also put in place a framework to support the continuous improvement of Council services.

The revised Performance Governance Arrangements 2023/24 were circulated.

Proposed by Alderman Magill

Seconded by Councillor McAuley and agreed that

**the report be noted.**

*NO ACTION*

#### **4.7 FI/AUD/02 UPDATE ON AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE ACTIONS**

The purpose of this report was for Members to note the progress on actions raised at previous Audit and Risk Committees.

The following table provided a progress update on the actions raised.

Item	Action	Progress update	Anticipated Completion Date
<b>December 2022</b>			
<b>4.6</b>	<b>RECOVERY PLAN- 2022/23 – PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORT QUARTER 2</b>		
(i)	A review of how Council assess customer satisfaction be undertaken.	<b>In Progress</b> A review of how the Council obtains and assesses customer satisfaction is underway.	31/03/24
<b>March 2023</b>			
<b>4.2</b>	<b>INTERNAL AUDIT STRATEGY 2023-2027 AND AUDIT PLAN 2023-24</b>		
(i)	Officers agreed to further consider a number of issues raised by Members and respond to them in due course.	<b>In Progress</b> Suggestions raised by Members will be considered during the development of the 2024/25 Internal Audit Strategy and Plan.	31/03/24
<b>September 2023</b>			
<b>4.1</b>	<b>AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>		
(i)	Councillor Bennington asked that track changes be made to documents going forward for Members' information.	<b>Complete</b> Request noted and will be actioned going forward.	N/A
<b>4.2</b>	<b>ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2022/23</b>		
(i)	The Annual Governance Statement be approved and signed and dated by the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee.	<b>Complete</b> The Annual Governance Statement was signed by the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee.	N/A
<b>4.3</b>	<b>FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023</b>		
(ii)	The Statement of Accounts be approved and signed and dated by the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee.	<b>Complete</b> The Statement of Accounts was signed by the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee.	N/A
<b>5.5</b>	<b>INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE REPORT</b>		
(i)	Further detailed regular reporting on attendance management be brought to the Committee.	<b>Complete</b> A report on Attendance Management has been included on the agenda for this Committee.	N/A

Proposed by Councillor McAuley  
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and agreed that

**the report be noted.**

*NO ACTION*

#### **4.8 FI/AUD/01 INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE REPORT**

The purpose of this report was for Members to note the Internal Audit activity since the Audit and Risk Committee last met in September 2023.

A report containing a summary of Internal Audit activity was circulated. The report included the objectives and conclusions reached for each completed engagement and management comments as applicable.

The report also provided details of the progress of the implementation of agreed Internal Audit recommendations and the results of Internal Audit's Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme (QAIP).

Following a question from the Independent Member regarding the Safeguarding Audit, the Head of Internal Audit clarified when this was last carried out and that this had been provided with a satisfactory level of assurance.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson  
Seconded by Alderman Magill and agreed that

**the report be noted.**

NO ACTION

#### **4.9 FI/AUD/03 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER**

The purpose of this report was for Members to note the updated Corporate Risk Register.

Members were reminded that a report providing details of the Council's Corporate Risk Register, was presented to the Audit and Risk Committee on a quarterly basis.

All Corporate risks had been reviewed and updated in line with the review and reporting timeframe.

In accordance with the reporting protocol, a report setting out the Corporate Risk Register and the changes made to risks, was circulated for Member's review.

Proposed by Councillor McAuley  
Seconded by Councillor Bennington and agreed that

**the report be noted.**

NO ACTION

#### **4.10 PT/TP/021 POST PROJECT EVALUATIONS**

The purpose of this report was to provide an update on the Council's Post Project Evaluation process and circulation of the bi-annual Post Project Evaluation schedule.

The Post Project Evaluation process encompassed the whole project lifecycle



from inception to post project evaluation. The process was administered by the Performance Improvement team. Project owners were responsible for setting the pre-project targets within the business case and completing the post project evaluation against these targets at the end of the realisation period(s).

Once post project evaluations had been completed they were shared with the relevant approving Committee. Evaluations were also circulated to the Corporate Leadership Team and Audit and Risk Committee bi-annually, in December and June, to provide the necessary assurances that the post project evaluations had been completed.

An updated Post Project Evaluation schedule was circulated for information.

The schedule shows that:

- Part 1 (Capital) of the evaluations were in progress and would be reported to the relevant Committee once complete.
- Part 2 (Client) of the evaluations were in progress and to allow for a thorough customer satisfaction response the deadline had been extended to 30 November 2023.

A further PPE update would be provided to the Audit & Risk Committee in June 2024.

Proposed by Councillor Bennington  
Seconded by Councillor McAuley and agreed that

**the report be noted.**

*NO ACTION*

#### **4.11 HR/GEN/019 MANAGING ATTENDANCE UPDATE APRIL 2023 – OCTOBER 2023**

The purpose of this report was to provide an update on the management of attendance for the period April 2023 to October 2023 (summary circulated).

Absence at the end of October 2023 was above target by 1.12 days, with 8.32 average days lost per employee against a target of 7.2 days. Covid absence was not included in the reported figure because a significant number of these employees work from home during the isolation period.

There continued to be a positive return to work of short-term absence cases. There were 14 long-term absence cases ending in October 2023, 4 of which had now left the Council's employment.

Further analysis of absence figures for October 2023 indicated the following:

##### **100% Attendance**

The 100% attendance rate continued to be above target. 72% of our workforce achieved full attendance to the end of October 2023 against a target of 60%.

If employees with 100% attendance were excluded from the average day's calculation, the actual absence incurred by those employees with absence episodes would be:

Period	% of workforce with absence	Long term average days	Short term average days	Overall average days
October 2023	28%	24.64	3.9	28.54
Same period last year 2022/23	27%	29.23	3.76	32.99

The above figures show a reduction in the average length of long-term absence when compared to the same period last year. This demonstrated our active commitment to reducing days lost to long-term sickness absence.

#### **Formal Case Reviews from April 2023 to October 2023**

Formal Case reviews (FCRs) were initiated when all possible steps had been taken but had failed to secure an employee's return to work within a maximum of 9 months.

- **Concluded Cases – 10**, with employees at FCR stage either returned to work, obtained ill health retirement or left the organisation.
- **In Progress – 2**
- **Approaching – 0**

#### **Long-term Absence – 87% of the overall absence figures**

Long-term absence was defined as continuous absence greater than 20 days. Although there was a slight decrease in long-term absence from 88% to 87% compared to the previous month, 14 long-term absence cases had ended and it was expected that this figure would decrease in the coming year. This was due to our continued efforts to address complex long term absence cases, conduct regular wellbeing meetings with employees, utilising Occupational Health services, promotion of the Staywell App, and holding timely absence review meetings.

- **% of Challenging long term cases – 45%**, this included absence related to road traffic accidents, disability related illness and general injuries.
- **Returned to work – 10 cases** had successfully returned to work with a further **4** leaving the Council's employment.

#### **Short Term Absence – 13% of the overall absence figures**

Short term absence was defined as absence less than 20 working days. Whilst it was understood that short term absences were inevitable, it was crucial for Managers/Supervisors, Human Resources and employees to work together to

minimise the impact of these absences on service delivery.

- **Main Reasons:**

- Cold/flu, stomach bug, infection (accounting for 44% of short term absence)
- Stress Depression, Mental Health
- Chest and respiratory issues

**Overall Absence**

Stress-related absence (including work related stress) accounted for 47% of total absence. Proactive work was ongoing to address this as follows:

- Encouraging open communication to address stress and mental health concerns in wellbeing meetings.
- Providing mental health awareness training for employees.
- Providing access to mental health support services, through Inspire Counselling service, the Council's Occupational Health service, Northern Recovery College and additional information available through STAYWELL.
- Implementing flexible working arrangements, supporting phased returns and reasonable adjustments where possible in the workplace.
- Encouraging physical activity through the promotion of the Council's employee subsidised Gym Membership Scheme.
- Encouraging participation in our wellness programme with regular wellbeing activities and health advice promoted weekly through the STAY MORE CONNECTED kudoboard.
- HSENI Managing Work Related Stress training "A Line Manager's Approach" held in October 2023 with 45 line managers across departments attending.
- Line Managers had been invited to attend the HSENI training on "Burn Out and Fatigue" on 15 November 2023.
- Partnering with legal advisors and Employers for Disability NI to arrange awareness sessions on mental health illnesses, to provide training to managers on managing stress and how to encourage open communication to reduce stress-related absence and to promote a healthy work environment.

**To improve absence rates and encourage earlier returns to work, the following actions are being undertaken:-**

- The consultation for the alignment of Terms & Conditions of employment had commenced and this included the proposal of one single policy for managing attendance. Subject to the successful outcome of a workplace ballot, it is anticipated that the agreement of a single policy would support staff, line management and HR in the management of absence cases.
- Case management discussions were held with legal advisors to support a targeted approach for complex cases. These help Directors, Heads of Services, and HR to review cases, consider reasonable adjustments, and understand the legal context, enabling specific action plans for individual

cases.

- Meetings held with directorates with high or complex absence cases had been increased to analyse cases and agree on next steps, with attendance from relevant Directors, Deputy Directors, and Heads of Service. Formal case reviews were scheduled as needed.
- The HR Business Partnership team was working closely with managers and Occupational Health on an individual case management basis. This ensured prompt action was taken to keep absences within target and provide support to managers in absence review trigger meetings for fair and consistent approach.
- Monthly case management discussion meetings were scheduled as needed to review complex cases with an Occupational Health consultant. Case managers attend these sessions to ensure effective use of the Occupational Health service and support earlier returns to work where possible.
- The Corporate and Human Resources Risks registers had been reviewed to reflect the current absence rate position, with actions and interventions recorded to mitigate risks.
- Managers within Parks and Planning had received training on effectively managing absence caseloads. A number of toolkits had been identified and shared on STAYWELL to further assist managers and employees.
- Targeted training was being planned in areas of high absence provided by Human Resources, legal advisors, and in partnership with employers for disability or other relevant organisations.
- Development continued on an online training module to promote the importance of attending work. This would be rolled out to new staff initially and then across the wider organisation.
- An annual flu jab clinic was held in October with 33 employees receiving the vaccine. A further flu jab clinic was scheduled in November 2023.
- Through staff communications, Breast Cancer awareness had been promoted across the Council during October 2023
- There were a number of health and wellbeing initiatives scheduled in November 2023 as part of the Employee Engagement Framework including: Action Cancer Big Bus and International Men's Day event.
- The use of the Wellbeing Calendar was promoted to continue to support employee wellbeing.
- Our Employee Engagement Working Group would recommence in November 2023 with participation being cross departmental and cross generational.
- Physiotherapy services were being provided for appropriate cases of back and musculoskeletal-related absence.
- HR would review the absence paperwork, including the absence notification and return to work forms.
- HR were designing and developing a Managing Attendance action plan.

The Lead Human Resources Manager responded to a Members query regarding the amount of stress related absences and relevant training for line managers.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson

Seconded by Councillor McAuley and agreed that

**the report be noted and that the number of managers who had attended stress related absence training be included in the next report.**

*ACTION BY: Pauline Greer, Lead Human Resources Manager*

#### **PROPOSAL TO PROCEED 'IN CONFIDENCE'**

Proposed by Councillor McAuley  
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and agreed that

**any remaining Committee business be taken in Confidence.**

**The Chairperson advised that the live stream and audio recording would now cease.**

### **6. ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS**

The Independent Member spoke on how useful she found the NILGA and Northern Ireland Audit Office training which she attended on 6 October 2023 and highly recommended that Members who were unable to attend on that date, do so on a future date.

### **5. ITEMS IN CONFIDENCE**

#### **5.1 IN CONFIDENCE FI/AUD/04 NIPSO: INVESTIGATIONS – COUNCIL SERVICES**

The purpose of this report was for Members to note the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman's investigations in respect to Council services.

There were currently no Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman's investigations in respect to Council services for Member's consideration.

Proposed by Councillor McAuley  
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and agreed

**that the report be noted.**

*NO ACTION*

#### **5.2 IN CONFIDENCE FI/AUD/04 CONCERNS RAISED AND INVESTIGATIONS UPDATE**

The purpose of this report was for Members to note the update on concerns raised and investigations.

A report containing an update on concerns raised and investigations, since the Audit and Risk Committee last met in September 2023, was circulated.

Proposed by Councillor Wilson

Seconded by Alderman Magill and agreed that

**the report be noted.**

*NO ACTION*

**5.3 IN CONFIDENCE G/LEG/3/254 PLANNING – MISREPRESENTATION OF SOIL SAMPLE ANALYSIS RESULTS**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Proposed by Councillor Bennington  
Seconded by Alderman Magill and agreed that

**the report be noted.**

*NO ACTION*

#### 5.4 **IN CONFIDENCE** FI/AUD/02 **INDEPENDENT AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEMBER**

The purpose of this report was to obtain approval from Members to recruit a new Independent Audit and Risk Committee Member.

Members were reminded that in January 2015, Council approved the appointment of an Independent Member to the Audit and Risk Committee.

This appointment ensured the Committee's composition is in line with the CIPFA Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police, which recommended the appointment of an Independent Member to Audit Committees to:

- Supplement the knowledge and experience of elected representatives in specific areas, such as audit or financial reporting.
- Provide continuity outside the political cycle.
- Help achieve a non-political focus on governance, risk and control matters.

In addition to the CIPFA guidance, the Local Government Auditor also recommended appointing of an Independent Audit Committee Member as "one means of strengthening its (Audit & Risk Committee) independence and widening the range of specialist skills".

Members were advised that the term of the current Independent Member was due to end in March 2024.

To ensure that the Audit and Risk Committee's composition continues to included an Independent Member in line with the guidance, it was recommended that we recruit and appoint a new Independent Member to take up the post in April 2024, with their first Committee meeting taking place in June 2024.

The following key information on the recruitment was provided for Members' consideration.

##### Time, Commitment and Remuneration

In accordance with the Audit & Risk Committee's Terms of Reference, the Committee meet at least four times in a year.

A fee of £[REDACTED] per meeting (subject to PAYE) would be paid to cover the cost of preparation and attendance at meetings, along will reasonable travelling expenses.

[REDACTED]

The appointment would be for four years, with an option to extend for a further two years, depending on performance.

The Independent Member would be required to sign up to the Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors.

#### Skills and experience

To ensure the Independent Member provided the required level of governance and scrutiny to contribute effectively to the Audit & Risk Committee, the Member must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience which would enable them to undertake their role.

The following sets out the core areas knowledge that would be used when assessing the suitability of candidates.

- Audit Committee role and functions
- External Audit
- Governance
- Risk Management
- Internal Audit
- Counter fraud
- Financial management and financial reporting
- Values of good governance

#### Recruitment and Selection

The recruitment and selection process would be similar to the recruitment and selection of Council employees, with the process managed by Human Resources.

The timeframe for this recruitment would be:

- Advertise in January 2024;
- Interviews in February / March 2024;
- Appointment and notification to Council in March / April 2024; and
- Independent Member attending their first Audit & Risk Committee in June 2024.

The Director of Finance & Governance responded to a query from a Member regarding the process of appointing a new Independent Audit & Risk Committee Member.

Members expressed their thanks to the Independent Member for sharing her knowledge and experience during her time with Council.

Proposed by Alderman Magill

Seconded by Councillor Bennington and agreed that



**a) The recruitment and appointment of a new Independent Member for the Audit & Risk Committee be approved; and**

**b) Remuneration of £** [REDACTED]

*ACTION BY: Paul Caulcutt, Head of Internal Audit*

Alderman Magill left and returned to the Chamber during Item 6.

**6. ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS – IN CONFIDENCE**

The Director of Finance & Governance responded to a Member's question relating to procurement processes and award of contracts and advised she would respond to Members following further research.

*ACTION BY: Sandra Cole, Director of Finance & Governance*

Following a question from a Member relating to the arc21 judicial review, the Borough Lawyer and Head of Legal Services agreed to look into the matter and revert to the Member.

*ACTION BY: Paul Casey, Borough Lawyer and Head of Legal Services*

**PROPOSAL TO PROCEED OUT OF 'IN CONFIDENCE'**

Proposed by Councillor McAuley

Seconded by Councillor Wilson and agreed that

**any remaining Committee business be taken in Open Session.**

**The Chairperson advised that the audio recording would resume.**

There being no further committee business the Chairperson thanked everyone for their attendance and participation, wished them a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. The meeting concluded at 7.27 pm.

---

**MAYOR**

***Council Minutes have been redacted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation, and legal advice.***