

CITY OF NEWCASTLE

Minutes of the Briefing Committee Meeting held in the Council Chambers, 2nd Floor City Hall on Tuesday 18 October 2016 at 7.33pm.

PRESENT

The Lord Mayor (Councillor N Nelmes), Councillors D Compton, T Doyle, B Luke, S Posniak, A Robinson, A Rufo and L Tierney.

IN ATTENDANCE

F Cordingley (Interim Chief Executive Officer), A Glauser (Acting Director Corporate Services), P Chrystal (Director Planning and Regulatory), F Giordano (Manager Legal and Governance) and K Sullivan (Council Services/Minutes/Webcasting).

APOLOGIES

MOTION

Moved by Cr Rufo, seconded by Cr Robinson

The apologies submitted on behalf of Councillors Clausen, Crakanthorp, Dunn and Osborne and Waterhouse be received and leave of absence granted.

Carried

DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Councillor Luke

Councillor Luke declared a non-pecuniary less than significant conflict of interest in Item 7 - Adoption of 2015/16 Annual Financial statements indicating a family member had a contract to commence employment with PricewaterhouseCoopers (Council's auditor).

Councillor Luke

Councillor Luke declared a less than significant conflict of interest in Item 7 - Adoption of 2015/16 Annual Financial Statements indicating that a family member worked for the company Pitcher and Partners who carried out council audits.

He stated that a member of the public could view the company as a perceived competitor and as Council was receiving a briefing and not appointing an auditor he considered the conflict less than significant. Councillor Luke stated that if a decision was required in the future to appoint an auditor he would leave the Chamber for the discussion.

BRIEFING COMMITTEE REPORTS

ITEM-7 18/10/16 BC - ADOPTION OF 2015/16 ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Council will be reviewing the Annual Financial Statements and Notes to the Accounts for 2015/16, together with the Auditor's Report for adoption at the Ordinary Council Meeting on 25 October 2016.

The briefing on the Annual Financial Statements was presented by Caroline Mara, Partner, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC). Ms Mara spoke on the conduct and outcomes of the audit.

The key elements of the report covered:

- The procedures that were followed and based on those procedures PWC formed an opinion the financial reports were presented fairly.
- Council achieved an operating surplus before capital contributions for 2015/16 (as was the cash for 2014/15).
- Council's cash position increased to \$312m from \$274m and highlighted an increase in the amount of restricted funds.
- Council restrictions now have a broader scope and include funds required for works carried forward.
- It was noted that Council met, and in many instances, significantly exceeded Office of Local Government benchmarks for the performance indicators presented in the PWC report.

The meeting concluded at 7.41pm.