

## **Northern Ireland Audit Office – Press Statement**

### **Castlereagh Borough Council**

I am aware that Castlereagh Borough Council has decided to undertake an investigation into those matters arising for the Council from the Spotlight programme broadcast on 7<sup>th</sup> January. The local government auditor for the Council has been consulted on the terms of reference for the investigation and continues to monitor this issue closely.

I welcome the Council's recognition that, as part of its stewardship responsibilities in respect of ratepayer and elector interests, a prompt and thorough investigation is required of the significant governance concerns raised by the programme.

A local government auditor is responsible for ensuring that district councils comply with statutory requirements and that proper practices have been observed. They will consider whether, in the public interest, they should report on any matter and if this report should be prepared ahead of the annual audit.

The local government auditor for Castlereagh Borough Council will issue a public interest report on matters covered by the Council's investigation and the investigation itself. This report may also indicate wider lessons for local government.

The public interest report will be issued as soon as possible, dependent on progress of the Council's investigation. Under local government legislation this report will be copied to the Department of Environment. The report and its findings must be considered by the Council within one month of its receipt.

The Castlereagh Borough Council public interest report, and the Council's response, will be published by the local government auditor.

John Buchanan  
Chief Local Government Auditor  
13 January 2010