

## Minutes of a meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held on Friday 20 February 2015 at City Hall, Bradford

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Commenced 1005  
Concluded 1145

### PRESENT – Councillors

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR
Eaton	M Slater
	Swallow

Apologies: Councillor L Smith and Councillor J Sunderland

### Councillor M Slater in the Chair

#### 60. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

- (1) In the interest of transparency Councillor M Slater disclosed an interest in Minutes 51 and 52 as he was a Member of the West Yorkshire Pension Fund Joint Advisory Group and Investment Advisory Panel.
- (2) In the interest of transparency all those who were in the West Yorkshire Pension Fund disclosed an interest.

**ACTION:** *Assistant City Solicitor*

#### 61. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

There were no appeals submitted by the public to review decisions to restrict documents.



## 62. CERTIFICATION OF CLAIMS AND RETURNS 2013/14

The External Auditor submitted **Document “AI”** which summarised the External Auditor’s certification work on claims within the Audit Commission’s grant regime for 2013/14.

It was reported that the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council received more than £182m in funding from grant-paying government departments which required certification within the Audit Commission’s grant regime. These departments attached conditions and restrictions to these grants which the Council must meet otherwise funding may be withdrawn or clawed-back.

It was therefore important that the Council could demonstrate that it:

- Had put in place adequate arrangements to prepare and authorise each claim and return; and
- Can evidence that it had met the terms and conditions put in place by the grant paying body for each claim and return.

The External Auditor had assessed the control environment for the one claim within the scope of the Audit Commission’s certification arrangements and had not identified any weaknesses in the control environment for the preparation of the claim.

It was reported that all prior year recommendations had been implemented and there were no recommendations arising from the 2012/13 certification report.

Members were informed that the External Auditor’s initial testing identified two cases where earned income had been calculated incorrectly which resulted in an overpayment of housing benefit subsidy. An additional testing of a sample of 40 cases had identified 4 further errors in the calculation of earnings.

It was reported that Management had put in place measures to reduce the likelihood of reoccurrence of this error next year including the introduction of a 10% check of all cases where a change in earnings had been identified.

Members requested a report on the measures that Management had put in place to ensure earned income was correctly calculated when assessing housing benefit subsidy.

### **Resolved –**

**That the Assistant Director, Revenue and Benefits submit a report to the Committee in relation to the management measures that have been put in place to reduce the likelihood of income being calculated incorrectly resulting in overpayment of housing benefit subsidy.**

***ACTION: Assistant Director, Revenue and Benefits***

## 63. BRADFORD YOUTH OFFER REVIEW

The Strategic Director of Children’s Services submitted **Document “AG”** which informed the Committee of the outcome following the Council commissioned independent review of Bradford’s Youth Provisions.

The review undertook an analysis of existing and potential service arrangements and the views of young people and key stakeholders to inform a set of recommendations on how best to develop a new Youth Offer in the District. The report summarised the findings of the review, the totality of the current youth offer for young people and the range of places to go and things to do/available in the District.

Members commented on a number of issues which included:

- Were enough young people consulted on the review process?
- How were the key stakeholders that had been consulted chosen?
- Engaging with 1004 young people seemed a small percentage compared with the number of young people in the district; were some young people chosen from the original Youth Service Cuts campaign that took place last year?
- How were elected Members consulted? Did elected Members respond? the consultation felt as if it was something the service was promoting rather than wanting a response from Members.
- The report gave a false impression that all 90 Councillors were given an opportunity to respond to the consultation,
- Members would have liked to have been consulted more widely as all 90 Councillors were in favour of this piece of work; Members represented the population of the district and felt they had a valuable contribution to make.
- The uniformed youth sector was not difficult to identify; there were a number of young people aged 5-11 going through such organisations; it was important to obtain their views.
- What was the culture and relationship between uniformed organisations and the Youth Service?
- Needed more work undertaken on cohesion and integration; there should not be a situation where young people were afraid or did not want to attend a certain centre because of the individuals that would be there.
- Voice of young people including those not engaging with the Youth Service was a gap in the district and this was something the Committee would wish to see addressed.
- Needed to ensure Youth Service was accessible for all children and youth offer is open to all individuals.
- Organisations needed to be supported on how to gain external funding rather than relying on Council funds.
- An outcomes framework that acknowledges and accredits young peoples informal learning experiences is to be welcomed, and this should be something that all those working across the Youth Sector can adopt and contribute towards.
- Wanted to see the vision for the Youth Offer; young people needed to be given the best service; have to look at what young people want and what can be done to help that; funding was available in different areas/places and needed to look at different areas to solve problems. Any Youth Offer should be both aspirational and ambitious.

In response to Members' questions it was reported that:

- The consultation process received a healthy response; the webportal for the project received 2,260 views.

- Campaigners from the Youth Service Cuts Campaign had access to the consultation; the 1004 young people consulted were young people from across the Youth Sector and not just those who were engaged in the Youth Service offer; confident that engagement was undertaken appropriately with a wide range of groups.
- Responses were received from interviews that were undertaken with the list of people detailed on page 111 of the report (consultation responses); the email to Councillors was encouraging them to talk to people and encourage young people to participate in the Youth Offer Review and make comment about what they thought about the existing Youth Offer.
- Relationship between different organisations and the Youth Service was better and the review gave some common ground on which to collaborate and develop.
- Work on improving integration and cohesion was ongoing.
- The Local Authority Youth Services had a highly skilled group of people who targeted the needs of vulnerable groups but made sure that services offered by other organisations were linked to that.
- Further work needed to be undertaken on commissioning, recognising that commissioning was not always about “buying” services, but included sharing of resources and skills across the sector.

**Resolved -**

**That the comments made by the Committee be incorporated into the report that is submitted to the Executive.**

***ACTION: Strategic Director, Children’s Services***

**64. YOUTH SERVICE BUILDINGS REVIEW**

The Strategic Director of Children’s Services submitted **Document “AH”** which informed the Committee of the findings of the Youth Service Buildings Review. It sought the Committee’s comments and recommendations in relation to proposed retention and opportunities to identify alternative estate arrangements in partnership with local community and voluntary sector organisations.

Members commented on a number of issues which included:

- How many ward members were engaged in the process?
- It was not appropriate to use the word disposal in the report.
- Needed to ensure that buildings remained accessible for people with special needs.
- Organisations that took over buildings under Community Asset Transfer needed advice and support in gaining external funds etc; some community groups did not have the support they needed to access external funding.

In response to Members’ questions it was reported:

- There had been a fair representation of Members engaged in the process. Members had been consulted in their wards and each ward had been represented. Members had also been invited to attend feedback sessions during which summaries of the findings were presented for their comments
- Impact on particular groups was being looked at and the Equalities Impact Assessment would be submitted as part of the report to the Executive.

- Agreed that support was needed for groups taking on buildings under Community Asset Transfer and that there was a potential to set up an advisory group to support such organisations.

**Resolved -**

**That the comments made by the Committee be incorporated into the report that is submitted to the Executive.**

***ACTION: Strategic Director, Children's Services***

Chair

**Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Committee.**