

Minutes of a meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held on Thursday, 28 November 2019 in Committee Room 3 - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 10.00 am
Concluded 10.35 am

Present – Councillors

LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT AND INDEPENDENT GROUP
Johnson Thornton	Reid

Councillor Johnson in the Chair

28. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

In the interests of transparency all those who were Members of the West Yorkshire Pension Fund disclosed an interest.

Action: City Solicitor

29. MINUTES

Resolved-

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2019 be signed as a correct record.

30. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

31. MINUTES OF WEST YORKSHIRE PENSION FUND (WYPF) JOINT ADVISORY GROUP HELD ON 25 JULY 2019

The Council's Financial Regulations required the minutes of meetings of the WYPF Joint Advisory Group to be submitted to this Committee.

In accordance with this requirement, the Director of West Yorkshire Pension Fund submitted **Document "R"** which reported on the minutes of the meeting of the

WYPF Joint Advisory Group held on 25 July 2019.

Resolved-

That the minutes of the West Yorkshire Pension Fund Joint Advisory Group held on 25 July 2019 were considered.

32. MINUTES OF WEST YORKSHIRE PENSION FUND (WYPF) LOCAL PENSION BOARD MEETING HELD ON 8 OCTOBER 2019

The Council's Financial Regulation requires the minutes of meetings of the WYPF Local Pension Board to be submitted to this Committee.

In accordance with this requirement, the Director of West Yorkshire Pension Fund submitted **Document "S"** which reported on the minutes of the meeting of the WYPF Local Pension Board held on 8 October 2019.

Resolved-

That the minutes of the West Yorkshire Pension Fund Local Pension Board held on 8 October 2019 were considered.

33. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN - REVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMPLAINTS 2018/19

The Assistant Director of the Chief Executive's Office submitted **Document "T"** which summarised the number of complaints and investigations undertaken by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) for the year ended 31 March 2019 and compared Bradford's performance against that of other local authorities.

It was reported that:

- The Review of Local Government Complaints 2018/19 identified that the LGSCO received a total of 115 new complaints and enquiries about Bradford between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019 compared to 123 in the previous year.
- 17 complaints (30 in 2017/18) were subject to a detailed investigation carried out by the LGSCO; 7 of those complaints were not upheld with 10 being upheld i.e. 59% of the total complaints investigated by the LGO were upheld compared to 15% in 2017/18.
- In 20% of upheld cases the Council provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman; this compared to an average of 14% in similar authorities.

- For the first time, the LGSCO included data on authorities' compliance with their recommendations; the LGSCO was pleased Bradford agreed to

provide the proposed remedies in the 9 cases (100%), however there was a delay in implementing remedies in 2 of the above cases. Bradford's 100% compliance compared to an average of 99% in similar authorities.

- The LGSCO published 43 public interest reports during 2018/19, compared to 42 during 2017/18; none of the 43 public reports were against Bradford Council, whilst one was published in 2017/18.

In response to a Member's question it was reported that in relation to paragraph 3.3 and learning from complaints the recommendations relating to Children's Services had been actioned.

Resolved-

That the Committee takes assurance from the result of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Annual Review of Local Government Complaints 2018/19, that the Authority's complaints process is overall satisfactory.

34. INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2019/20 - MONITORING REPORT AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2019

The Director of Finance submitted **Document "U"** which reported on any significant issues arising from the audit work undertaken to date and the progress made up to 30 September 2019 against the Internal Audit Plan, which was approved by the Committee on 18 April 2019. In addition the report included an update on progress made in implementing the recommendations of the external review of Internal Audit.

It was reported that:

- The Internal Audit Plan for 2019/20 had 229 days (10%) more capacity than in 2018/19 (2505 days v 2276 days). The net increase is due to the full year effect of recruiting four Senior Auditors (3.35FTE) in August 2018, the reduction in working hours of one Senior Auditor effective from 1.4.19 (0.4FTE) and the transfer of one member of staff to Financial Services (1FTE). Internal Audit was currently ready to advertise for an Internal Audit Graduate Trainee to support succession planning and future service delivery.
- Currently, it was forecast that Internal Audit would achieve its target level of 90% completion of the audit plan by the end of the financial year.
- The audit work had identified that 80% of controls examined were operating satisfactorily. All concerns arising from the audit assignments resulted in an audit recommendation. To date, as in 2018/19, 100% of our audit recommendations had been accepted by management.

- Under the revised method the level of implementation of recommendations would be followed up quarterly by the auditor making the recommendation. Narrative to support the current status would be sought and wherever possible supporting evidence would be obtained. Having the author of the report carrying out the follow up work would allow difficulties in implementation to be identified and discussed.
- A report on the Direct Payments Improvement Plan was agreed by CMT on the 13th November 2019. At the meeting the plan was approved which included case prioritisation based on the time since the last audit and the value of the weekly payment. Of the 86 high priority cases, 64 had so far been finished and the rest timetabled to be completed in the next two weeks. It was envisaged that it would take a year to address the backlog on the lower risk cases. It was agreed that Internal Audit would review the situation in six months to determine the level of progress and report back to CMT.
- The Head of Internal Audit no longer had responsibility for Information Governance.
- The Computer audit resourcing gap that has existed for two years had now been filled. Bradford Council was to enter into a 3 year contract with Salford Council for the provision of Computer Internal Audit services. The contract would be for 60 days per annum over three years from 1/10/19 to 30/9/22.
- The position of Internal Audit Graduate Trainee had been developed and was currently going through the official vacancy approval process.
- Due to an increase in resources, additional audit work would be undertaken compared to previous years; Internal Audit was now more responsive to the needs of the authority.

Members stressed that issues relating to Direct payments had been on going for a considerable length of time and needed to be monitored carefully and regularly; a further report on Direct payments should be submitted to the Corporate Management Team and subsequently to this Committee.

Resolved-

That the Committee:

- (1) Takes assurance from the results to date that show that the control environment, risk management and governance processes of the Council are effective.**
- (2) Endorses the anticipated coverage and changes of Internal Audit work during the year.**
- (3) Require Internal Audit to monitor the control environment, risk management and governance arrangements and continues to assess areas of control weakness and the ability of management to deliver improvements to the control environment when required.**
- (4) Requests that a progress report relating to Direct Payments be**

submitted to the Corporate Management Team in six months time and subsequently to this Committee to determine the level of progress being made.

Action: Director of Finance

35. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW FOR A NEW LOCAL COUNCIL IN THE SHIPLEY AREA

Previous Reference: Minute 27 (2019/20)

Members were reminded that this Committee at its meeting held on 19 September 2019 resolved amongst other things that officers be authorised to conduct the Community Governance Review for a proposed new Local Council in the Shipley area, in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the statutory guidance which related to it.

In accordance with the above the City Solicitor submitted **Document “V”** which provided feedback from the Community Governance Review for a proposed new Local Council in the Shipley area which was triggered by receipt of a petition from local residents.

It was reported that over the two month period of consultation 860 representations were made, with the numbers of responses to the different consultation formats as follows:

- Web survey - 404
- Email - 14
- Paper survey – 442

In addition 65 members of the public attended the drop in sessions; there were more responses in favour of a new Local Council (77%) than there were against (23%).

Members commended the consultation undertaken by the Shipley Area Co-ordinator’s office.

Resolved-

- (1) That the establishment of a new Local Council in the Shipley area be supported – as a consequence of meeting the tests in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, as outlined in paragraph 3.4 of Document “V”.**
- (2) That with no significant opinion against a smaller or larger boundary, the Local Council follow the boundary as proposed and set out in the Community Governance Review Terms of Reference.**
- (3) That the new Local Council being named Shipley Town Council, as set out in the petition received in May 2019 be supported.**

- (4) That the Local Council area being split into wards as outlined at paragraph 3.17 of Document “V”, along with the suggested numbers of local councillors per Local Council ward be supported.**
- (5) That it be noted that it is a requirement of the 2007 Act that the Council must make available a document setting out the reasons for the decisions it has taken at the conclusion of a Community Governance Review and to publicise those reasons.**
- (6) That final approval for the establishment of a new Local Council in the Shipley area be referred to Council at its meeting on 14 January 2020.**

Action: City Solicitor

Chair

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

THESE MINUTES HAVE BEEN PRODUCED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER