

Minutes of a meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held on Thursday, 14 July 2022 in Committee Room 3 - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 10.30 am
Concluded 12.00 pm

Present – Councillors

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
Tait Thornton Godwin	Felstead	Griffiths

Councillor Tait in the Chair

9. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received.

10. MINUTES

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2022 be signed as a correct record.

11. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

12. REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA 2000) - LEVEL OF USE (QUARTERLY UPDATE)

The Interim City Solicitor submitted **Document “E”** which provided information relating to:

- The number of authorised and approved covert surveillance operations (Nil return) undertaken by the Councils criminal investigation teams for the first two quarters of 2022.
- The arrangements for training to be provided to officers of the Council.
- The use of the Councils CCTV equipment by the Police or Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) for covert surveillance.

It was reported that a nil return was shown for all relevant departments which indicated that the enforcement team’s criminal investigators were able to obtain evidence without the need for covert surveillance under RIPA or the Human Rights Act 1998.

Members were informed that arrangements would be made for officers to receive training on RIPA by external lawyers and that the Interim City solicitor was now trained in his role as authorised officer.

The Chair stressed the need for the new Director of Governance to receive training on RIPA.

Members sought further clarification in relation to covert and overt surveillance in relation to RIPA and whether a camera which was in operation for littering showed an individual committing an offence other than littering could be prosecuted.

In response the RIPA coordinator stated that it was likely that if an offence was seen by an operator it would be referred to the Police or relevant department depending on the offence.

In response to Members questions it was reported that there were appropriate procedures in place which had to be satisfied before an officer was given authorisation to undertake covert surveillance under the Human Rights Act – the surveillance required would need to be necessary and proportionate and all other means of gathering evidence should have been explored first.

Resolved –

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.**
- (2) That the Councils continued compliance with RIPA as coordinated and monitored by the Councils RIPA Coordinator and Monitoring Officer and the Senior Responsible Officer be noted.**
- (3) That the RIPA training to be arranged be noted.**
- (4) That the Director of Governance receive the necessary training on**

RIPA.

Action: Interim City Solicitor

13. CORPORATE INVESTIGATIONS UNIT PERFORMANCE AND ACTIVITY REPORT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2021/22

The Council has a duty to protect the public purse and has committed to a zero tolerance approach to fraud, theft, corruption (including bribery), or any other financial irregularity committed against the organisation. Fraud is a prevalent cause of concern in the public sector and continues to pose financial threats to local authorities. The Council recognises that each pound lost to fraud represents a loss to the public purse and reduces the Council's ability to provide services to people who need them.

The Director of Finance and IT submitted **Document "F"** which reported on the Council's Corporate Investigation Unit (CIU) latest performance information and provided assurance that the Council's counter fraud arrangements were effective.

Members sought further clarification on the contents of the report which included the time taken to recover financial losses.

In response to a Members question it was reported that the majority of misuse of the blue badge scheme referrals came from Parking Wardens.

Resolved -

That the activity and performance carried out by the Corporate Investigation Unit to prevent, detect and deter the Council from instances of fraud, theft, corruption or any other financial irregularity in 2021/22 be noted.

14. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW FOR THE DISSOLVING OF HAWORTH, CROSS ROADS AND STANBURY PARISH COUNCIL AND CREATION OF CROSS ROADS PARISH COUNCIL AND/EITHER HAWORTH AND STANBURY PARISH COUNCIL

The Interim City Solicitor submitted **Document "G"** which reported that the Council had received a valid petition requesting a Community Governance Review (CGR) for a proposed change to a Local Council in the Worth Valley ward. The Committee must now make arrangements for the CGR, and as a first step must agree its terms of reference. The report summarised the relevant background issues and the proposed draft Terms of Reference to initiate the CGR process.

Members stressed that the consultation should include the full facts in relation to the precept.

Resolved –

(1) That the Terms of Reference highlighted in Appendix 1 for a

Community Governance Review for a proposed dissolving of an existing Local Council and creation of two new Local Councils in the Worth Valley ward, as detailed in the report be approved.

- (2) That the Committee authorise officers to conduct the Community Governance Review in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the statutory guidance which relates to it.**

Action: Interim City Solicitor

15. INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

The Director of Finance and IT submitted **(Document “H”)** which reported that the purpose of the report was to inform members of the Committee about the service Internal Audit had provided to the Council during the financial year 2021/22.

In particular Members are advised of the following:-

- Internal Audit completed 83% of the 2021/22 audit plan which was below the target of 90%.
- Internal Audit’s Client satisfaction identified that 100% of the respondents said that the “recommendations were useful and realistic” and believed that the audit was “of benefit to management.”
- 100% of all high priority recommendations made from the work undertaken were accepted by management.

Members sought further clarification in relation to Significant Systems at paragraph 2.5 of the report and why there had been a delay in improvements being made.

In response to the above the Head of internal Audit reported that Services were trying their best to make improvements to the outstanding internal audit recommendations. He reported that the half year monitoring report to the Committee would include an update on Significant Systems.

Resolved –

That the work carried out by Internal Audit during 2021/22 be

recognised and supported.

16. PUBLIC SECTOR INTERNAL AUDIT STANDARDS - PROPOSALS FOR UNDERTAKING AN EXTERNAL REVIEW OF INTERNAL AUDIT

The Director of Finance and IT submitted **Document “I”** which outlined the benefits of the proposed arrangements for carrying out the external review of the Council’s Internal Audit function, as required by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS).

It was reported that external assessment provided assurance that Internal Audit was focused on the risk management, internal control and proper governance arrangements which operated within the Council.

The table at paragraph 3.1 of the report provided advantages and disadvantages of the options for the external assessment of Bradford Council’s Internal Audit Service.

Resolved –

That Option 2 (the appointment of an independent assessor which is buying in the review from a professional body such as CIPFA or IIA) be agreed as the proposed arrangements for carrying out the external review of the Council’s Internal Audit function, as required by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS).

Action: Director of Finance and IT

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