

Minutes of a meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held on Thursday, 26 January 2023 at 10.30 am in Committee Room 1 - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 10.30 am
Concluded 11.40 am

Present – Councillors

| LABOUR | CONSERVATIVE | LIBERAL DEMOCRAT |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Tait Thornton Godwin | Felstead | Griffiths |

Councillor Tait in the Chair

41. ALTERNATE MEMBERS (Standing Order 34)

42. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

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

43. MINUTES

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2022 be signed as a correct record.

44. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

45. AUDIT COMPLETION REPORT 2021/22 - AUDIT OF CBMDC - PROGRESS UPDATE

The External Auditor presented (**Document “Y”**) which summarised the findings from the audit of the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council.

The report provided the Governance and Audit Committee with an update on progress in delivering the responsibilities of the external auditors. It also included a summary of recent national reports and publications for information.

Members of the Committee were advised that the final report will be presented at the next Governance and Audit Committee in March 2023.

Resolved –

That the update detailed in Document “Y” be noted.

46. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2021/22 - PROGRESS UPDATE

The Director of Finance and IT provided a verbal update on progress on the Council’s 2021-22 draft Statement of Accounts.

Members of the Committee were advised that the final written report will be presented at the next Governance and Audit Committee in March 2023.

Resolved –

That the financial position of the Council’s 2021-22 Statement of the Accounts be noted.

ACTION: Director of Finance and IT

47. REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA 2000) - LEVEL OF USE (QUARTERLY REVIEW)

The Director of Legal and Governance submitted (**Document “Z”**) which provided information relating to:

- The number of authorised and approved covert surveillance operations (Nil return) undertaken by the Council’s criminal investigation teams during 2022.
- The use of the Council’s CCTV equipment by the Police/ Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) for covert surveillance.

It was reported that that all departments returned a nil return for 2022, this indicated that the enforcement teams’ criminal investigators were able to obtain evidence without the need for covert surveillance.

The Officer reported that the Council owned a substantial CCTV system which assisted the West Yorkshire Police and the Council in the prevention and detection of crime within the centres of Bradford, Bingley, Shipley, Keighley, Silsden, Ilkley, Baildon, Wrose, Oakworth, Wibsey and Idle. The CCTV equipment was occasionally used by the Police or DWP. In order for the Police or DWP to use the Council CCTV for directed surveillance evidence must be provided to the Council’s CCTV manager that the use of the CCTV was necessary and proportionate to detect or prevent crime in a police operation.

The Officer reported that the Council's RIPA Co Coordinator and Monitoring Officer reviewed the Council's Policy and Guidance document in January each year and the review was currently being undertaken.

Members were keen to understand what the total number of criminal investigations were carried out in the last 6 months. In response the Officer advised that he did not have the figures but would be happy to provide.

Members were keen to understand how useful CCTV was in solving crimes. In response the Officer advised that the next report would have more context including figures.

Resolved –

That the contents of the report Document "Z" be noted.

48. LGO COMPLAINTS

The Strategic Director for Health & Wellbeing presented (**Document "AA"**) the report provided details of an investigation into a complaint lodged by a Bradford resident into the service he received from Bradford Council's Adult Care Social Service in 2019, the LGSCO undertook a detailed investigation and found fault causing injustice with recommendations made. The LGSCO published this as a public interest report, with a request that the report was presented to a committee of elected members.

Members of the Committee were concerned to read the extent of the poor experiences of the complainant, reflected that the report made a 'pretty damning reading' and that a number of opportunities to support him more appropriately had been missed.

The Committee also commented positively on the council's comprehensive response to the report, but explored in detail why the Care Act 2014 had not been properly embedded into the council's practice at that time for people with autism and sought assurances that this would not happen again.

Members were particularly interested in how the service user was passed around between mental health teams and adult social care, and commented that this did not suggest the two organisations were working together as one.

Members of the Committee sought assurance that this was now resolved and no similar complaints had been received.

Members also explored the training offer to social workers, that this was a rolling programme of training to deal with turnover of staff and that there was higher level training continually available for autism champions.

Members explored the possibility of practice quality audit processes being part of

the council's internal audit plan for adults and children's social care in 2023/24.

Members were keen to understand if there was an audit process in place to identify such issues in the service.

In response the Officer reported that there was an internal audit process in place and assessments were checked by managers. The Officer provided assurance that there was a much more robust system in place to ensure good level of service.

Resolved –

That Members noted the report and the responses from Council.

ACTION: Director of Health & Wellbeing

49. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT REVIEW

The Director of Finance and IT submitted **Document “AB”** the report reviewed progress on the significant governance concerns reported in the Council's Annual Governance Statement 2021-22.

It was reported that the Governance and Audit Committee would be kept informed of the progress in addressing weaknesses and areas of concern.

The following governance challenges were identified by the Annual Governance Statement;

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Children
- Elective Home Education
- Ensuring an effective, integrated system of health and social care
- Key Staffing Skills
- Budget pressures
- Procurement

The Officer reported that a review of these governance issues had been undertaken and the update was provided in Appendix 1 of the report.

Members sought further clarification on how cases and needs were assessed for Elective Home Education (EHE) and the new Schools Bill.

The Officer reported that the Schools Bill is set to deliver on the government's mission to raise standards across the country, increasing attendance and improve safeguarding for children wherever they are educated. However, the new Bill would not provide any funding. The parent does not need the agreement of the school or Local Authority to home educate your child, however, a parent could request a statutory assessment or reassessment of their child's needs in the same way as a child attending a school if the child was attending a special school.

Members were concerned that there was an increasing number of vulnerable children educated at home or outside school who may not be receiving an effective education. Some also may not be known to the agencies that were there to protect them. As stated in the report, there was a potential risk that children who were home educated may be perceived as 'unseen' and therefore possibly more at risk.

The Officer reported that there were new requirements set out by the Schools Bill which required local authorities to keep a register of Children Not in School but this would require significant extra resource.

Resolved –

- 1. That Members noted the information contained in the report and Document "AB" and the progress made in addressing the significant governance challenges.**
- 2. That Members endorsed further actions planned as detailed in Appendix 1.**
- 3. That officers and Members are made aware of any emerging governance concerns requiring review during 2022-23.**

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.

THIS AGENDA AND ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS HAVE BEEN PRODUCED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER