

Audit Committee and Audit Committee (Advisory) - 29 September 2014

Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee and Audit Committee (Advisory) held at Committee Room 4, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 29 September 2014 at 7.30 pm.

Present: **Councillors:** Richard Greening (Chair), Raphael Andrews and David Poyser
Also Present: **Independent Member:** David Bennett

Councillor Richard Greening in the Chair

10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Parker.

11 DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)

None.

12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)

All Councillors declared an interest in Item B3, Elected Member Pensions. The Committee noted the legal advice, that a dispensation was not required for this item and members were able to discuss and vote on the matter.

13 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee and Audit Committee (Advisory) held on the 19 June 2014 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

It was noted that a report regarding Individual Electoral Registration was to be submitted to the Audit Committee in January 2015 and that additional days had been set aside for the audit priorities on data protection, leaseholder service and major works charges and the joint review on public health.

14 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2013/14 AND ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REPORTS (Item B1)

The external auditors, KPMG, reported that they had issued an unqualified audit opinion on the financial statements and VFM conclusion.

The Committee noted the comments of the external auditor that working papers supplied during the audit were of a high quality and officers dealt efficiently with audit queries and within the planned timescales.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The 2013/14 Statement of Accounts and the accompanying Annual Governance Statement be approved;
- 2) The auditor's Annual Governance Reports and value for money conclusion be noted;
- 3) The action plan in Appendix 1 of the Annual Governance report be agreed;
- 4) The letter of representation set out in Appendix B be approved.
- 5) The Chief Accountant and his team be thanked for their excellent work on the Statement of Accounts.

15 LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSIONS SCHEME 2014 - DISCRETIONARY POLICY

(Item B2)

The Committee noted that the trade unions had received a copy of the draft report and no comments had been received.

It was also noted that there was no significant financial loss in retaining the current discretionary policies and policies agreed could be changed if considered necessary at a later stage.

RESOLVED

That the following policy statements be agreed:-

1) Regulation 16(2)(e) and 16(4)(d) – funding of additional pension

Not to fund additional pension either by way of regular on-going contributions or by way of a one off lump sum payment, as is the current approach.

2) Regulation 30(6) – flexible retirement.

To continue with the council's existing provision for flexible retirement.

3) Regulation 30(8) – waiving of actuarial reduction.

To consider the early release of pension benefits without actuarial reduction on the grounds of redundancy/efficiency but not on compassionate grounds, as is the current policy.

4) Regulation 31 – Award of additional pension.

To continue with the current policy.

5) Additional discretions.

i) Not to switch on the 85 year rule for those who retire before the age of 60 as is the current policy.

ii) to consider the early release of pension benefit for leavers post 31 March 2008 and pre 1 April 2014 in line with discretions enacted in the relevant policies in force pre 1 April 2014.

6) the policy discretions in respect of Regulation 30(8), where the council is the administering body and a former employer has ceased to be a scheme employer be agreed as detailed in resolutions minute no.15, 1-5 above.

16 ELECTED MEMBER PENSIONS (Item B3)

The Audit Committee noted that the Local Government Association was to meet on the 9 October 2014 to consider options for pension provision for elected members.

RESOLVED that:

1) the current position regarding membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme for elected members and the advice contained in the report be noted;

2) the matter be considered further once the outcome of the Local Government Association discussions regarding member pensions was known.

17 THE COUNCIL'S USE OF SURVEILLANCE UNDER THE REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (Item C1)

It was noted that the OSC inspection was in November 2013 although the update to Audit Committee was not submitted until September 2014.

RESOLVED that:-

- 1) The OSC report, following the inspection on the 15 November 2014, be noted.
- 2) The Council's Action Plan to address the recommendation so the OSC report be noted.
- 3) The level and nature of covert surveillance undertaken by the Council be noted.
- 4) future updates be submitted to the next available Audit Committee following the OSC inspection report, rather than on an annual basis.

18 INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER (Item C2)

RESOLVED that the Internal Audit Charter be noted.

19 THE COUNCIL'S USE OF SURVEILLANCE UNDER THE REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 - EXEMPT APPENDIX (Item 1)

RESOLVED that the exempt appendix be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm

CHAIR