

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2014**

Councillors: Meehan (Chair), Griffith (Vice-Chair), Adamou, M Blake, Ejiofor, Elliott, Engert, Ibrahim, Jogee, Opoku, Ozbek and Wright

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/ DECISION	ACTION BY
CNCL377	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)</p> <p>Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Jogee and from Paul Dossett (Grant Thornton).</p>	
CNCL378	<p>URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>There were no items of urgent business.</p>	
CNCL379	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>Councillor Wright declared an interest in agenda item 11 as a Governor of Highgate Wood School. The interest declared was not a disclosable pecuniary or prejudicial interest.</p>	
CNCL380	<p>DEPUTATIONS / PETITIONS / PRESENTATIONS / QUESTIONS</p> <p>There were none.</p>	
CNCL381	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the minutes of the meeting held on 29th September 2014 be approved as a correct record of the proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.</p>	
CNCL382	<p>TREASURY MANAGEMENT SEPTEMBER 2014 MID-YEAR ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE UPDATE</p> <p>George Bruce, Head of Finance – Treasury and Pensions, introduced the report as set out in the agenda.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Treasury Management activity undertaken during the six months to 30th September 2014, and the performance achieved, be noted.</p>	
CNCL383	<p>TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2015/16 - 2017/18</p> <p>George Bruce, Head of Finance – Treasury and Pensions, introduced the report as set out in the agenda.</p>	

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In response to a question from the Committee, it was reported that new counterparties included in the list for investments were Santander UK, Svenska Handelsbanken, National Australian Bank and Australia and New Zealand Banking Group.

In response to concern expressed by members of the Committee in regard to having to take a decision on this matter without having first received sufficient training, officers stated that regular training sessions were provided for members of the Committee. However in response to the Committee's concerns, the Assistant Director – Finance gave an undertaking that a training session specifically relating to this matter would be provided by Arlingclose, an independent treasury advisory company, commencing at 7.00pm, immediately before the next meeting of the Committee.

It was noted that following its consideration at this meeting, the Treasury Management Strategy Statement would be scrutinised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee before being re-submitted to the Corporate Committee in January 2015, after which it would be presented to Full Council in February 2015 for final approval.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2015/16 to 2017/18 be agreed and approved for submission to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, before being re-presented to Corporate Committee for further consideration at its meeting in January 2015, subject to any updating to reflect the agreed Capital Programme.

CNCL384 INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE INTERNAL AUDIT FUNCTION

The report was introduced by Anne Woods, Head of Audit and Risk Management, who informed that Committee that all local authorities were required to have had an independent review of their internal audit function carried out by 1 April 2018. Anne Woods went on to draw attention to the findings arising from the external assessment of the Council's internal audit service, and the arising recommendations which were included in the Action Plan attached to the report. She went on to say that the Council would work closely with Grant Thornton, the Council's external auditor, to expedite the implementation of the recommendations.

The Committee thanked Anne Woods and her staff for the report and the positive information it contained.

RESOLVED:

1. That the findings of the independent review, attached at Appendix A to the report, which confirm that, in accordance with PSIAS definitions, Haringey Council's internal audit service generally complies with the PSIAS requirements, be noted.

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	<p>2. That the Action Plan, attached at Appendix B to the report, to address the recommendations included in the peer review, be approved.</p>	
CNCL385	<p>ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER</p> <p>The Committee considered the Annual Audit Letter for the London Borough of Haringey, which was introduced by Paul Jacklin of Grant Thornton.</p> <p>The Chair stated that the recommendations listed in Appendix A to the report were being acted upon and were on target for implementation by the due date stated.</p> <p>The Assistant Director, Finance informed the Committee that following its consideration by this Committee, the Annual Audit Letter would be submitted to Cabinet at its meeting in January 2015 for approval.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the contents of the report be noted.</p>	
CNCL386	<p>EXTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS UPDATE</p> <p>Paul Jacklin, of Grant Thornton, introduced the report and stated that two items relating to the certification of the Teachers' Pensions claim and the Council's Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit claim were still being worked on by Grant Thornton, and that consequently a further report on these matters would be submitted to the Committee at its meeting in January 2015.</p> <p>Anne Woods, Head of Audit and Risk Management, stated that a report detailing the Council's overall performance in key areas would be submitted to the Committee either at its meeting in January 2015, or the subsequent meeting in March 2015, and that the report would include benchmarking comparisons against other London Boroughs. Members of the Committee were concerned that the benchmarking information contained in the forthcoming report would be restricted to London Boroughs and not extended to include all local authorities, and they asked what was the percentage of fraud discovered in terms of the Council's overall turnover.</p> <p>Anne Woods, Head of Internal Audit and Risk Management, stressed that the benchmarking data was restricted to what was provided to the Council by the Audit Commission, and that the data gave comparator information against other authorities selected by the Commission. However, she undertook to include in the forthcoming report as much comparator information as was possible, based on what was provided to the Council by the Audit Commission, and also undertook to contact a select number of other local authorities, including Birmingham City Council and Bournemouth Borough Council, with the request that they</p>	

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	<p>share benchmarking data with Haringey Council.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the progress report provided by the external auditor, Grant Thornton, be noted.</p>	
CNCL387	<p>QUARTERLY INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT</p> <p>Anne Woods, Head of Audit and Risk Management, introduced the report, and in doing so provided the Committee with a verbal update on audits carried out at Highgate Wood School and Tiverton School. In response to questions from the Committee she reported that considerable work had been carried by the Corporate Anti-Fraud Team working with Registered Providers in order to tackle housing and tenancy fraud. Anne Woods went on to say that training of Registered Providers had been, and would continue to be, carried out, and that over the next six months as more staff of the Registered Providers were trained up the Council would gradually withdraw from leading on this matter, with the Registered Providers taking the lead role.</p> <p>Anne Woods informed the Committee that the key amnesty associated with tenancy fraud had so far resulted in one set of keys being handed back, but it was expected that further keys would be handed in before the amnesty period expired. She then stated that the property for which the keys had been handed back was due to be re-let during the forthcoming week. Anne Woods went on to inform the Committee that people who had pending legal action against them being taken by the Council in regard to housing fraud had been written to asking them to take part in the amnesty. If the individuals agreed to take part it would result in a 'win-win' situation as those concerned avoided acquiring a criminal record and the Council would get the keys to the associated properties back.</p> <p>In response to further questions, Anne Woods stated that in regard to audit progress reports, a summary of all finalised audit reports was provided on a monthly basis to members of the Committee and that the summary report included details of the key findings together with all recommendations made, including Priority 1, 2 and 3 recommendations, for each audit. She then informed the Committee that when the Council was reclaiming properties it took measures, including liaising with all appropriate agencies, to ensure that the departing individuals or families, particularly those with children where the Council had a duty to re-house, were not left homeless. Anne Woods continued by stating that in regard to tenancy fraud she was confident that the targets set would be achieved, and that in regard to Right to Buy fraudulent applications, two staff had been re-assigned to deal with this, resulting in the Council out-performing its targets. Anne Woods stressed that housing was a valuable resource to the Council and therefore resources were allocated where possible to deal with housing fraud, and she went on to inform the Committee that the Council was now working with three banks, and their anti-fraud teams in order to share information relating to potential fraud</p>	

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cases in order that appropriate action could be taken against those concerned.

In response to a question from the Chair regarding the Pan-London (Major) Equipment Service, Anne Woods undertook to check if the deadline given as being the end of October 2014 had been further revised.

RESOLVED:

That the audit coverage and counter-fraud work completed be noted, along with the actions taken during the quarter to ensure audit recommendations are implemented and to address the outstanding recommendations during the second quarter 2014/15.

CNCL388 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

Anne Woods, Head of Audit and Risk Management, introduced the report and informed the Committee that the Corporate Risk Register was reviewed on a quarterly basis by the Council's Statutory Officers Group. In relation to the risk identified as 'Failure to manage significant future reductions in local and national income streams' it was noted that the Council's rent policy was due to be confirmed in the near future by Cabinet, prior to submission to Full Council for final approval in February 2015.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Corporate Risk Register be noted and approved, subject to the following amendments:
 - a) The revision of the wording in the 'Future Action(s)' column relating to the risk 'Failure to manage significant future reductions in local and national income streams' in order to clarify what actions had been identified.
 - b) The revision of the wording 'Implement and embed a comprehensive and coordinated Early Years and Early Help offer' in the 'Future Action(s)' column relating to the risk: 'Children's Services and Schools and Learning: Failure to ensure that the process for every child and young person in Haringey to have high quality education and lead healthy and fulfilling lives are in place' in order to provide more clarity.
 - c) The revision of the wording 'Work to discharge duty to the Private Rental Sector. Determine rent policy' in the 'Future Action(s)' column relating to the risk: 'Failure to manage the impact of Welfare Reform Act and Benefits Cap on Council resources, residents and applicants for support' in order to provide more clarity.
 - d) The insertion of the wording 'No further action' being included

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	<p>in the 'Future Action(s)' column relating to the risk 'Failure to manage increased service demands from changing area population demographics (longer term) and residents impacted on by deteriorating economic conditions (shorter term).</p> <p>2. That the interpretation and understanding of the Corporate Risk Register be included in the future training programme for members of the Committee.</p>	
CNCL389	ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE	
	<p>There were no items of urgent business.</p>	
CNCL390	DATE OF NEXT MEETING	
	<p>It was noted that the next meeting was due to be held on Thursday 29 January 2015 and that the meeting would start at 7.45pm, instead of the usual start time of 7.00pm, in order to accommodate a training session for members of the Committee immediately prior to the commencement of the meeting.</p>	

The meeting ended at 8.47pm.

COUNCILLOR GEORGE MEEHAN
CHAIR