

# MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATE COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY, 3RD DECEMBER, 2018, 19:00.

## PRESENT:

**Councillors: Isidoros Diakides (Chair), Dana Carlin (Vice-Chair), Dawn Barnes, Barbara Blake, Eldridge Culverwell, Makbule Gunes, Liz Morris, Alessandra Rossetti and Yvonne Say**

### 39. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair referred Members present to agenda Item 1 as shown on the agenda in respect of filming at this meeting, and Members noted the information contained therein.

### 40. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS (IF ANY)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Hakata and Cllr Stone.

### 41. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

### 42. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Rossetti and Cllr Carlin advised that they sat on the HfH Board.

### 43. DEPUTATIONS / PETITIONS / PRESENTATIONS / QUESTIONS

None.

### 44. MINUTES

The Committee commented that, in relation to the action around asset disposals, the minutes suggested that the Committee had considered the issue and that a discussion had taken place, rather than a statement made by the Chair at the meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> July. The Committee requested that the minutes be amended to better reflect this. **(Action: Clerk).**

The Committee reiterated its request to receive some information around the use of an exemption process in relation to asset disposals. The Legal advisor to the Committee cautioned that discussions with the Chair were ongoing around the most appropriate forum to consider the issue if there was indeed an issue. It was suggested that this issue was not within the Terms of Reference for Corporate Committee and that it may be more appropriate for Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the

matter. Members of the Committee felt that this should be an issue for Corporate Committee as it related to the Council's governance and reputation.

The Committee requested that they receive a position statement and a list of the relevant properties at the next meeting, setting out where officers had got to in providing this information. Action: **(Minesh Jani/Clerk)**.

The Head of Audit and Risk Management advised that a follow-up audit had been undertaken at Chestnuts School. It was noted that the report was still being prepared, but that an improvement in the overall assurance level was anticipated. An audit for Stamford Hill School had to be postponed and would be rearranged for after the Christmas holidays.

The Head of Audit and Risk Management also advised that two training sessions for school governors were held on 25<sup>th</sup> September, with around 25 people in attendance. Two further sessions were being set up and it was also anticipated that there would be a further training session specific to anti-fraud considerations.

The Committee requested an update from the AD Schools and Learning on the audit process for academy schools and on the analysis of which schools did not attend audit training and any correlation with those receiving poor audit scores. **(Action: Clerk)**.

In relation to the use of income generated from events held in Finsbury Park, officers advised the Committee that this information had been shared with the Friends of Finsbury Park. The Legal advisor to the Committee agreed to share the information that was sent to the solicitors acting on behalf of the Friends group as part of the litigation process. **(Action: Legal Advisor)**.

The Committee reiterated its concerns in relation to the monitoring of fraud investigations and keeping a record of whom they were targeted against, for equalities purposes. The Committee noted that there had been recent articles in the press around the targeting of certain ethnic minorities by the Police and cautioned that this could become a significant issue. In response, the Chair agreed to meet with officers and the relevant Committee members to discuss how best to progress the issue outside of the meeting. **(Action: Chair)**.

## **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> September be agreed as a correct record of the meeting, subject to the above amendment.

### **45. UPDATE ON RENAMING OF TOWN HALL APPROACH ROAD TO NEW WINDRUSH GARDENS**

The AD for Planning gave a verbal update to the Committee. It was noted that the Council consulted with 52 addresses on Town Hall Approach Road, 43 of whom were within the business centre. Of the seven responses received, one was in support of the name change and six were objections, most objections related to the additional costs likely to be incurred. Of the two businesses that offered a financial breakdown,

one requested £3k and the other £2480 in reimbursement of costs. The Committee was advised that it was anticipated that the costs would run to at least £21.5k. As a result it was decided not to proceed with the name change due to the costs involved. The AD Planning advised that officers would be looking to incorporate the name into one of the new developments taking place in Tottenham.

## RESOLVED

The Committee noted the verbal update.

### 46. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY REVIEW, STRATEGY AND ANNUAL REPORT.

The Committee received a report which sought approval for the draft Corporate Health and Safety Strategy 2018-2022, as well as the draft Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Statement Policy. The Committee were also asked to note the Health and Safety Annual Report 2017-18, which was included in the report at Appendix C. The report was introduced by Andrew Meek, the Head of Organisational Resilience and was included in the published agenda pack at pages 9-56.

The following was noted in discussion of the report:

- a. In response to a request for clarification, the Committee was advised that it was responsible for Health and Safety in relation to people who were not Council employees who used Council premises as a place of work, such as agency workers or who are otherwise affected by the Council's activities, such as service users. Staffing and Remuneration Committee was responsible for Health and Safety in relation to Council employees.
- b. The Committee raised concerns that the definition above, as set out in paragraph 4.4 of the report, seemed to be limited to full/part time employees and suggested that it should be broadened to include temporary workers. The Committee also requested that an amendment be made to the first paragraph after the bullet point on page 30 of the agenda pack to make it clear that agency workers under the Council's control also have the right to refuse to carry out a dangerous activity. The Head of Organisational Resilience agreed to amend this. **(Action: Andrew Meek)**.
- c. In response to a query around performance indicators that related to members of the public, officers advised that this was captured by Indicator 4: The number of 'major' and '7 day' accidents. The Head of Organisational Resilience agreed to look at rewording the indicator to make the fact that it related to members of the public clearer. **(Action: Andrew Meek)**.
- d. In response to a concern about staffing levels within the Health and Safety Team officers advised that, after a delay, a team manager had been recruited and was in post. Similarly, two Health and Safety Advisor posts were being recruited so that the service would have a full complement of staff. The Committee was assured that these would be full-time permanent Council employees.
- e. The Committee sought reassurance about why the monthly Property Compliance Board meetings were discontinued. In response, officers advised that the Board would be re-established with a different format as there were

- problems with the previous iteration in relation to receiving like for like advice for different property types.
- f. The Head of Organisational Resilience agreed to come back to the Committee with further information in relation to the three maintained schools that scored as 'poor' on the Health and Safety questionnaire and the extent to which this was due to incorrectly filling in the form. **(Action: Andrew Meek).**
  - g. The Committee raised concerns with a number of areas of building compliance set out in the Annual Report and commented that there did not seem to be details of corrective action or risk profile. In response, officers acknowledged these concerns and advised that areas of non-compliance were being addressed with Amey. The Head of Organisational Risk agreed to liaise with the Chair around reporting back to the Committee on this issue and a suitable timeframe for doing so. It was suggested that this would be in 6 months' time. **(Action: Andrew Meek).**

## **RESOLVED**

- I. That the Committee approved the draft Corporate Health and Safety Strategy 2018-2022, attached at Appendix A of the report.
- II. That the Chief Executive is authorised in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, with the Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Board and with the Corporate Board to make such amendments to the Strategy as s/he considers minor, such amendments to be reported to the meeting of the Committee next following such amendments being made.
- III. That the Committee approved the draft Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Statement Policy, attached at Appendix B of the report.
- IV. That the Chief Executive is authorised in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, with the Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Board and with the Corporate Board to make such amendments to the Policy as s/he considers minor, such amendments to be reported to the meeting of the Committee next following such amendments being made.
- V. That the Committee notes the Health Safety Annual Report for 2017-2018, attached at Appendix C of the report.

## **47. TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE Q2**

The Committee received a report which provided an update on the Council's treasury management activities and performance in the six months to September 2018. The report was introduced Thomas Skeen, Head of Pensions. The following was noted in discussion of the report:

- a. The Council expected to carry out additional long term borrowing in 2018/19. £50m of additional long term borrowing was taken in the month of October at an average interest rate of 2.61%. This was taken to fund the Council's capital programme.

- b. Officers advised the Committee that the Treasury Management Strategy for 2019/12 would be set in January and that this would contain an updated policy position around options to repay LOBO loans.
- c. In response to a query around a worsening credit score in Quarters one and two of 2018-19, officers advised that this was a result of having all of their investments with the Debt Management Office on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018, which had a better credit score than later investments through money market funds.
- d. In response to a question around the feasibility of restructuring long term borrowing from the PWLB in light of low interest rates, officers advised that these loans has set maturity dates and paying back the loan early would involve a premium. Officers assured the Committee that as old loans matured the Council would take out new loans with a lower rate of borrowing.
- e. In response to a request for clarification about the impact of the Government lifting the HRA Debt Cap, officers advised that this meant that in theory the Council could borrow as much in the HRA as in the General Fund, as long it was prudential and the Council was able to service the debt.

#### **RESOLVED**

- I. That Members note the Treasury Management activity undertaken during the six months to 30 September 2018 and the performance achieved.
- II. That Members note that all treasury activities were undertaken in line with the approved Treasury Management Strategy: in particular the prudential indicators with fixed limits shown in Appendix 1 of the report.

#### **48. INTERNAL AUDIT ASSURANCE REPORT**

The Committee received a report which set out the work undertaken by Internal Audit for the quarter ending October 2018. The report was introduced by Minesh Jani, Head of Audit and Risk Management.

In response to a concern from some members that they had not received a monthly report setting out detailed findings from final audit reports, the Head of Audit and Risk Management agreed to circulate this to the Committee. **(Action: Minesh Jani).**

#### **RESOLVED**

- I. That the Committee noted the audit coverage and follow-up work completed.

#### **49. UPDATED INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN**

The Committee received the Internal Audit Plan, which set out the audit activity planned for the current financial year and reflected changes made to the plan as a result of changing priorities and resources available to perform audit work.

In response to a question, the Head of Audit and Risk Management confirmed that benchmarking against other authorities was undertaken as part of the audit process.

#### **RESOLVED**

- I. The Committee noted the changes proposed and endorsed the revised 2018/19 internal audit plan attached at Appendix A of the report.

## 50. COUNTER-FRAUD UPDATE REPORT

The Committee received a report which detailed the work undertaken by the Counter-Fraud Team for the quarter ending 30 September 2018. The report was introduced by Minesh Jani, Head of Audit and Risk Management. The following was noted in discussion of the report:

- a. There were eight employee investigations under review in Quarter 2, two of which had been referred to the Police. Of those two cases one was not being progressed by the police due to insufficient evidence.
- b. The Committee raised concerns about whether HfH major works claimed for by contractors were actually carried out and whether the cost of some of these may have been double counted. The Committee suggested that monitoring leaseholder complaints was probably an effective yard-stick to measure where problems may exist. In response, the Head of Audit and Risk Management commented that the Council had a Whistleblowing Policy in place and that the Council was also part of the National Fraud Initiative 2018. The Council had submitted their datasets to the National Fraud Initiative in October and was expecting to get data matches back in January. The Head of Audit and Risk Management agreed to come back to the Committee, following receipt of data matches, on potential fraud by contractors carrying out HfH major works. **(Action: Minesh Jani).**
- c. The Committee raised concerns about potential employee fraud in relation to housing applications. The Committee queried whether additional safeguards could be put in place, such as only officers at a certain level being able make a direct offer to tenants.

## RESOLVED

- I. The Committee noted the counter-fraud work completed to the end of Quarter 2.

## 51. ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE

N/A

## 52. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

5<sup>th</sup> February at 19:00.

CHAIR: Councillor Isidoros Diakides

Signed by Chair .....

Date .....