

CORPORATE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Thursday 7 October 2021 at 6.00 pm
Committee Room (B6) - Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton, London, SW2 1RW

Members Present: Councillor Scott Ainslie, Councillor David Amos (Chair), Councillor Peter Ely, Councillor John Kazantzis and Councillor Jackie Meldrum (Substitute)

Apologies: Councillor Linda Bray

Also present: Councillor Jack Hopkins

Also present online: Councillor Adrian Garden

1 Declaration of Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

2 Minutes

RESOLVED: The minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 July 2021 be approved unanimously as a correct record of proceedings.

3 Work Programme and Action Monitoring Log

Chloe Morris, Democratic Services Officer, provided a brief update which included the outstanding actions on page 19 of the agenda.

It was highlighted to the committee that applications had been received for the independent member role, and that the next steps would be shortlisting. It was noted that although all members were invited to be on the interview panel a minimum of three committee members was required. It was requested that members who were interested email Democratic Services as interviews were likely to take place in late October or early November 2021.

A member raised concerns about the Administration of funds held in trust in connection with THET (Central Hill Estate) regarding to the consultation on what the money would be used for.

It was requested that Democratic Services would recirculate the Internal Audit and Counter Fraud breakdown of contract management reviews performed over the past two to three years.

4 Lambeth Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2020-21

Anu Singh, Independent Chair of the Lambeth Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB), introduced the report and responded to members' questions and highlighted that:

- Financial abuse formed part of the LSAB work programme. Animations were being developed to help individuals understand financial abuse;
- The next annual report would incorporate the effects of COVID to provide an insight on working in a pandemic, post pandemic recovery and examples of lessons learned;
- It was important for practitioners to be allowed space and time to concentrate on important work, as well as everyday activities. However, resources would be focused on safeguarding.

It was noted that going forwards members of the committee could contact Anu Singh with any questions that they may have in relation to safeguarding and financial progression.

In a further discussion the Chair of the Committee responded to a question raised by a member and noted that the Minnie Kidd House closure would be discussed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC). The Chair would also highlight Minnie Kidd House at the next work programme meeting with the chair and vice-chair of OSC.

Moving forwards OSC and Corporate Committee would be working together to identify and address work programme overlaps in order to avoid duplication.

RESOLVED unanimously:

1. To note the contents of the Annual Report of Lambeth Safeguarding Adults Board for 2020-21

5 Adults Social Care Complaints Annual Report 2020-21

David Jennings, Head of Service for Older People, presented the report. It was noted a presentation on this would be circulated after the meeting as it had not been agreed in advance. Officers responded to members questions and highlighted that:

- The Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) section on the report was marked as not applicable as typically an EQIA was undertaken when there had been a change within the service;
- Benchmarking would commence against Lambeths statistical neighbours once the data was available;
- Ideally the committee would want central government to change their Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) core data set, as it was produced in 1984 and was therefore outdated. This would allow for more detail to be captured to reflect the modern world and Lambeth's population;

It was noted that, Richard Outram would liaise with commissioning colleagues in order for an explanation to be provided to committee members on Minnie Kidd House's complaints system. In addition, to identify whether families knew which organisation they would need to complain to.

The Chair of the Committee, highlighted to members that he would have a conversation with Democratic Services to understand why parts of reports were marked as 'not applicable'. Although it was noted that this was used in other organisations.

RESOLVED unanimously:

1. To note the contents of the Adult Social Care Complaints Annual Report 20-21.

6 Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Progress Report 2021-22

Justin Martin, Chief Audit Executive, Nadine Wachuku, PWC and Michael O'Reilly, Counter Fraud Manager, presented the report and noted that the report was slightly dated. This was due to the meeting being rescheduled. Therefore, there had been slight improvements since then. Internal Audit and Counter Fraud responded to questions and explained that:

- There was a pilot exercise which would identify individuals who were bidding for a tenancy although they were not entitled to. For example, if an individual had a tenancy in another borough;
- Annex A, outstanding management actions had progressed since the report was published. However, there had been some delays and this was due to managerial and system changes;
- Internal Audit reported on implementation rates as a whole. It could therefore be suggested as a recommendation to management that direct children's payments could be done better in a measurable way.
- A reflection on COVID especially in terms of business rate grants were captured in the Annual report which was presented at the 22 July 2021 Corporate Committee;
- Thousands of business rates COVID19 grants had been checked across 18 months. The second post payment assessment would go to government in November to identify actions taken and issues that been identified;
- BREXIT was an ongoing issue and had become business as usual, therefore, was part of all workstreams;
- If a member of staff resigned whilst under investigation it was understood that this would be highlighted in their reference. This would be confirmed with Human Resources (HR).

The Chair of the Committee requested that Councillor Ainslie provided a follow up email which outlined the specific matter which he had submitted after the 20 May 2021 meeting to ensure that Councillor Ainslie received a comprehensive response.

The Committee requested a more detailed response on why HfL was substituted as well as to identify when, in the next financial year this would be able to return to the Committee. In addition, Michael O'Reilly would liaise with Housing to identify a precise number of individuals on the housing waiting list and the number of those who were bidding.

RESOLVED unanimously:

1. To note the report which provides an update on matters relating to the Internal Audit and Counter Fraud service, its activities and outcomes

7 Mazars External Audit Update 2020-21

Clare Williams, Assistant Director for Corporate Finance and Suresh Patel, External Audit Partner at Mazars introduced the report. They notified to the committee that they expected Mazars to present their Audit Completion Reports on the audit of the 2020/21 Council and Pension Fund accounts to the next Corporate Committee meeting. In

addition, it was stated that no objections had been received for the 2020/21 accounts.

The Committee requested that a more detailed response from Mazars be circulated to set out to committee members the number of outstanding objections and the audit years that they referred to.

RESOLVED unanimously:

1. To note the External Audit Progress Report.
2. To note the Lambeth Pension Fund audit plan.

8 CIPFA Financial Management Code

Clare Williams, Assistant Director for Corporate Finance introduced the report and noted to the committee that a self-assessment on the CIPFA code principals had been undertaken, and an action plan was in the report as there were some areas that required improvement. Officers responded to members and noted that:

The date set for Lambeth to be compliant to the code had moved to the next financial year due to COVID. Moving forwards there would be a regular review to ensure that Lambeth remained compliant with the code. This would also be reported back to the Committee to provide an update on progress.

It was noted that the CIPFA code recommended that the internal audit programme was reviewed every five years. Internal audit highlighted that the London Borough of Ealing had undertaken a peer review, which was near completion. It was hoped that the results would be available for the next Audit Committee meeting.

The Committee requested that there was a more detailed response circulated to members in regard to Lambeth and activity-based costing.

RESOLVED unanimously:

1. To note the introduction of the CIPFA FM Code and the self-assessment of compliance with the Code which is detailed in the appendix to this report.
2. To note the action plan including recommended actions which have been identified and will be carried out to further improve both compliance with the Code and financial management across the authority

9 Risk Management Strategy and Policy 2020-23 - Annual Review

James Rimmington, Risk Manager, presented the report. Committee members thanked James Rimmington on the Risk Management Training that they had received in September 2021. It was highlighted that no changes had been made to the strategy and policy this year as priorities had remained the same and that the processes that were in place had remained robust.

Furthermore, it was explained that all risks had owners; these would typically be senior officers. In addition, political governance bodies such as Corporate Committee would review and gain assurance on processes in place, and OSC could challenge individual risks. However, James Rimmington highlighted that clarity may be gained once the Venn Diagram exercise had been completed.

The Chair of the Committee notified members that once the Venn Diagram exercise was

completed it would be circulated to members for their comments. This diagram would identify the agenda items that Corporate Committee and OSC both covered which could cause duplication.

RESOLVED unanimously:

1. To note the annual review of the risk management strategy and policy 2020-23

10 Key Risk Report Q2 2021-2022

James Rimmington, Risk Manager, presented the report and outlined that although a risk could be long term and high risk, this did not mean that the Council was failing. It demonstrated the varied nature of the services that Lambeth operated in. It was noted that there was a separate COVID risk register at Appendix B and although BREXIT formed business as usual there was still risk that needed to be managed.

In response to questions, it was highlighted that:

- There was a detailed improvement plan in regard to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) risk. James Rimmington would ensure that lessons learned were circulated to committee members;
- Page 230 of the agenda highlighted the uptake of vaccinations within the community and care provider settings and it was hoped that the risk would decrease;
- More information would be provided to members on Private Finance Initiative (PFI) schemes to identify if Lambeth was involved with the scheme and if so, what Lambeth's risks were.

A member of the committee stated that a previous action related to this item was that the Cabinet Member and the Director of Children's Commissioning and Community Safety would be in attendance. This was because the Youth Violence risk had remained high for a long period of time. Although not present due to the change of committee date, it was noted that this would be rescheduled.

RESOLVED unanimously:

1. To note the council's key Corporate, Strategic, COVID-19 and Brexit risks at Q2 2021/22 (tables 1- 6 and Appendices A-B).

11 Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) Update Report

Donald Ford, GDPR Project Manager, noted to the committee members that this was an update from their previous report which attended Corporate Committee in March 2021. Donald Ford mentioned to members that there had been an additional section added to the report which set out how the Council would mitigate the risk of a cyber security attack.

In response to a question raised, it was highlighted by Zoe Bloomfield, Information Governance Lawyer, that a Data Protection Information Assessment (DPIA) could be performed to assess risks and put measures in place to mitigate risks. This was in relation to vulnerable individuals using communal computers within community hubs in order to do their online transactions. It was also made known to officers that some scheme managers were not aware of data protection risks or details of the data protection act.

The Committee welcomed the suggestion of a DPIA and highlighted that they would like the DPIA outcome to be included in the next progress report.

RESOLVED unanimously:

1. To note the work currently being undertaken in Phase 3 of the DPA Project.
2. To note the high risk in relation to cyber security and the mitigating actions being undertaken by the CSIR Programme to address this risk.
3. To note that responsibility for maintaining the currency and accuracy of the Information Asset Register and IA Portal will be transferred to the Directorates and the IAOs.

12 Procurement and Contract Management Update

Malcolm DeVela, Category Manager, Finance and Property, presented the report and responded to members questions as follows:

- There had been discussions to exclude suppliers due to historic poor performance;
- The amount Lambeth spent provided a significant amount of leverage and this was increased further when working in collaboration;
- The new electronic management system allowed for more transparency on contract management. The system would identify contract renewals and when procurements should commence which would prevent rolling contracts and extensions;
- Supplier open days were being looked into for tendering opportunities. It would allow for the procurement process to be discussed in a simplified, understandable way which would avoid where possible procurement jargon.

In addition, procurement had been working more collaboratively across Council areas; for example, with the societal impact team, economic regeneration team and the sustainability team in relation to the Council's commitment to be carbon neutral by 2023.

Members of the committee thanked officers and noted the report.

RESOLVED unanimously:

1. To note the governance and processes to support Procurement.
2. To note the updates on Procurement.

The meeting ended at 7.58 pm

CHAIR
CORPORATE COMMITTEE
Thursday 2 December 2021

Date of Despatch: Friday 15 October 2021

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