

## GENERAL PURPOSES AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Meeting held on Wednesday 28 January 2015 at 6.35pm, Committee Room F9,  
The Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX.

### MINUTES – PART A

**Present:** Councillor Matthew Kyeremeh (Chair);  
Councillor Humayun Kabir (Vice Chair);  
Councillors: Emily Benn, Carole Bonner, Jason Cummings, Yvette Hopley, Dudley Mead.

Independent Non-Voting Co-opted Members: Mrs. Sabia Noor and Mr. Nero Ughwujabo (for part of the meeting)

**Absent:** Councillors Jan Buttinger & Mike Selva.

### Also in Attendance

Julie Belvir	Director of Democratic & Legal Services
Richard Simpson	Director of Finance and Assets & Section 151 Officer
Ian Lewis	Director Social Care and Family Support
Nigel Cook	Head of Pensions & Treasury
Malcolm Davies	Head of Insurance Risk and Corporate Programme Office
Simon Maddocks	Head of Governance
Andy Opie	Head of Public Safety
Dominic Bradley	Grant Thornton

### A01/15 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 5 November 2014 be agreed and signed by the Chair.

### A02/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (agenda item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jan Buttinger and Mike Selva.

### A03/15 DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST (agenda item 3)

No disclosures of interest were made during the course of the Committee meeting.

### A04/15 URGENT BUSINESS (agenda item 4)

None

### A05/15 EXEMPT ITEMS (agenda item 5)

The Committee **NOTED** that there was no Part B agenda item.

**A06/15 PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDERS** (agenda item 6)

The Head of Public Safety, introduced his report on the Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO), one of the new powers being introduced under the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014, and which are intended to deal with a particular nuisance or problem in a particular area that is detrimental to the local community's quality of life, by imposing conditions on the use of that area.

The Head of Public Safety outlined the role that ward Members and Cabinet Members would play in the consultation prior to any PSPOs being introduced as well as the ability of Members to raise potential areas where a PSPO might be beneficial.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1.1 Agree that the Director of Environment (replaced by the Director of Safety when the new Places Department is launched in April 2015) be given delegated authority to undertake the Council's functions in respect of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, including in relation to the introduction, approval, variation and enforcement of PSPOs.

1.2 Agree that a report detailing PSPOs introduced under this delegation and their operation will be presented to General Purposes and Audit Committee (GPAC) annually.

**A07/15 PRESENTATION BY THE DIRECTOR SOCIAL CARE AND FAMILY SUPPORT ON CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE** (agenda item 7)

Following a request from the Committee at its meeting on 5 November 2014, the Director of Children's Social Care & Family Support gave a presentation on Children's Social Care.

The Director outlined the responsibilities of the service, the increasing number of contacts and the external factors which impact on the service.

Members were advised that the service is awaiting its first assessment under the new framework issued by Ofsted in November 2013. The Director outlined the work which had been undertaken in remodelling and restructuring the service with additional training, support and supervision being introduced as part of a systemic approach to service delivery.

The Committee was advised that there has been a reduction in the use of agency staff, but there was a recognition that the salary agency staff could command was one that the Council could not match for permanent social workers; this is a position replicated across London.

Councillor Cummings advised the Committee that the Children & Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee would be receiving a report on Children's Social Care at its meeting on 17 March 2015.

The Committee noted and thanked the Director of Children's Social Care & Family Support for his presentation.

**A08/15 REPORTS FROM GRANT THORNTON** (agenda item 8)

Dominic Bradley, Audit Manager, introduced the Grant Thornton reports

The Committee noted the content of the Certification Report for 2013-14 for Croydon Council.

Richard Simpson, Director of Finance & Assets advised that a report on the on-going work with Grant Thornton on the closing down of the accounts for 2014-15 would be presented to the next Committee meeting on 25 March.

The Committee noted the content of the update reports from Grant Thornton.

**A09/15 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT, MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY STATEMENT & ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2014/15 MID-YEAR REVIEW** (agenda item 9)

Members were reminded that a Learning & Development event on Treasury Management would be held at 5pm on 25 March ahead of the next meeting of the Committee.

The Chair thanked Officers for their successes, as outlined in paragraphs 3.4.6, 3.4.9 and 3.4.11 in, respectively:

- Securing long-term funding from the Public Works Loan Board at 20 basis points less than the prevailing PWLB rates
- Securing a favourable credit facility with the European Investment Bank to fund capital schemes within the Council's Education Capital Strategy
- Ensuring that the Council's average external debt level and the interest rate payable on that debt remains below the average across London boroughs.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to note the content of the report and to

- (a) Approve the revision of the Council's list of approved Specified and Non-Specified Investments as set out in paragraph 3.3.4 and as detailed in Appendix B of the report.
- (b) Endorse the continued implementation of the Council's Treasury Strategy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement & Annual Investment Strategy 2014-15 by the Director of Finance and Assets.

**A10/15 INTERNAL AUDIT MONITORING REPORT: APRIL TO NOVEMBER 2014** (agenda item 10)

The Head of Governance introduced the monitoring report.

Members expressed repeated concern about the number of schools appearing in the report which had limited assurance levels and they discussed how this could best be addressed.

The Head of Governance offered to draft a letter to all Members, specifically aimed at those who are governors, to reiterate the responsibilities of school governing bodies in addressing issues highlighted by the audit process.

It was agreed that once the Internal Audit Plan for 2015-16 is finalised that Councillors who are governors of schools scheduled to be audited are written to and advised accordingly.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the Internal Audit Monitoring Report for April to November 2014.

**A11/15 ANTI-FRAUD: APRIL TO NOVEMBER 2014** (agenda item 11)

The Head of Governance introduced the report detailing the work of the Council's Anti-Fraud Team (CAFT) between April and November 2014, including updates on key performance indicators and a breakdown of monies recovered during that period.

The Committee welcomed the fact that the CAFT had been part of two successful bids to the DCLG Counter Fraud Fund:

- one working with Bexley to support the development of their internal capacity in tackling fraud;
- the other, with the Home Office and local NHS bodies to tackle health tourism and support provided by the Council to those with no recourse to public funds.

The Head of Governance also highlighted the Audit Commission Fraud Briefings which enabled the London boroughs to compare activities and outcomes. The comparative data supports the cross-agency work which Croydon has pursued for some time, as well as the targeted approach to the use of resources.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to note the Anti-Fraud Activity of the Corporate Anti-Fraud Team between 1 April and 30 November 2014.

**A12/15 COUNCIL RISK REGISTER** (agenda item 12)

The Head of Risk and Corporate Programme Office presented the report advising the Committee that no red risks had been escalated or de-escalated since its last meeting on 5 November 2014 and that the register is regularly reviewed by the Corporate Leadership Team, as detailed in the register entries.

Further to the entry on the risk register relating to significant reductions in grant funding to the Council, the Committee requested that the Chief Executive be invited to attend the next meeting on 25 March 2015 to outline the vision for the future structure of the Council.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the Corporate Risk Register as at January 2015.

**A13/15 AMENDMENT TO ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING DATE FOR 2015 AND 2016** (agenda item 13)

The Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer introduced the report.

The Committee by a majority of 4 to 3 **RESOLVED**:

- 1.1 To approve on behalf of the Council a revised date of Thursday 21 May 2015 for the Annual Council Meeting; and
- 1.2 To approve the revised date for the Annual Council Meeting 2016 as Monday 23 May 2016.

Councillors Jason Cummings, Yvette Hopley, and Dudley Mead asked that their votes against the recommendations be formally recorded.

**A14/15 ELECTION MATTERS: UPDATE FROM THE (ACTING) RETURNING OFFICER** (agenda item 14)

Councillor Dudley Mead made a declaration of personal, non-pecuniary, interest in this item as a Council appointed Member of the Board of Fairfield (Croydon) Ltd.

The Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer introduced a report updating Members on progress being made in preparation for the UK Parliamentary Election on 7 May 2015, in particular the issues surrounding Individual Electoral Registration.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note the implications of Individual Electoral Registration
2. Note the change of venue for the postal vote verification process
3. Note the proposals around Operation Black Vote
4. Note the Count venues for Croydon Central, Croydon North and Croydon South

**A15/15 POLLING DISTRICT REVIEW 2014/15** (agenda item 15)

The Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer introduced the report outlining the underlying principles of the review and the rationale for some of the specific changes being suggested.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to agree the changes to the Polling Districts and Polling Places as set out in the Report of the Acting Returning Officer at Appendix A to the report.

The meeting ended at 8.45pm.