

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 28TH JUNE, 2023

**MEMBERS:** Councillors Thomas Fawns (Chair), Nawshad Ali, Nelly Gyosheva, Elisa Morreale, Sabri Ozaydin (Chief Whip), Michael Rye OBE, Paul Pratt and Edward Smith

**Officers:**

Fay Hammond (Executive Director Resources), Kevin Bartle (Interim Director of Finance), Gemma Young (Head of Internal Audit and Risk Management), Terry Osborne (Director of Law and Governance), Claire Reilly (Head of Policy & Contract Development), Michael Sprosson (Head of Procurement Services) and Annette Trigg (Chief Accountant)

**Apologies:** Councillors Joanne Laban, Alessandro Georgiou, Ayten Guzel. Penny Halliday (Acting Director Meridian Water)

### 1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from;  
Cllr Joanne Laban, substituted by Cllr Edward Smith  
Cllr Alessandro Georgiou substituted by Cllr Paul Pratt  
Cllr Ayten Guzel

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In relation to item 5 Cllr Michael Rye declared that he was a Governor at St Andrews School (Enfield) CE Primary School.

### 3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

**AGREED** that the minutes of the previous meetings held on 19 January and 16 March 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

### 4. 2022-23 ANNUAL COUNTER FRAUD REPORT

Gemma Young (Head of Internal Audit and Risk Management) presented this item highlighting the key points from the report, including overpayments being identified and potential savings of £2.6m, mainly through National Fraud Initiative data experts, right to buy clams and financial investigations.

An area of increased activity in the past year has been in relation to the investigation of secondary employment where there have been 5 cases in Enfield. Training has been provided to prevent secondary employment issues and whistleblowing has been promoted.

## **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE - 28.6.2023**

In responding to members' questions, Officers explained they have recovered 8 Council properties this year and are keen to increase the recovery rate arising from housing fraud.

**NOTED** the 2022-23 Annual Counter Fraud Report.

### **5. 2022-23 ANNUAL DATA PROTECTION OFFICER REPORT**

Gemma Young (Head of Internal Audit and Risk Management) introduced the report which explained that there had been some 99 corporate breaches during the year, with just 5 needing to be referred to the ICO and none of which resulted in any action being taken. Data protection impact assessments had been made more user friendly and officers had run an awareness campaign on the new process. Corporate training has been delivered to staff and members, including Lunch & Learn sessions. Specific training was provided for staff in the People department.

There has been positive engagement from Schools. A total of 44 breaches were reported, 9 of which met the threshold to be reported to the ICO. No further action was taken as the schools had taken steps to mitigate the risks.

In response to a specific question from members, officers confirmed that no members had lost any devices. Officers confirmed that if a device is lost it can be wiped remotely.

**NOTED** the 2022-23 Annual Data Protection Officer Report.

### **6. 2022-23 ANNUAL REPORT ON CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES, WAIVERS AND PROCUREMENT SERVICES UPDATE**

Michael Sprosson (Head of Procurement Services) and Claire Reilly (Head of Policy and Contract Development) presented this item highlighting the key points from the report, including the new procurement service and the emerging Procurement Bill which will require enhanced transparency and, therefore, more reporting. The Bill is going for its third and final reading in the House of Commons and implementation is expected in October 2024.

**ACTION: Michael Sprosson to send link to procurement self-service intranet page**

In response to members' questions on low carbon footprint measures, officers explained that they do not have this yet but are working with the internal climate action team and external partners.

## **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE - 28.6.2023**

In response to members' questions, officers confirmed that the translation service is a pay by use service, and that the cycle to work scheme is run by HMRC and has a zero cost to the Council.

Officers also confirmed that the waste collection software will optimise the efficiency of routes. The car park AMPR software helps to improve security and has the function to make charges for parking. Members commented that in future they wish to see contract lengths and costs included in the report.

**ACTION:** Claire Reilly to confirm length and cost of the translation service contract.

**NOTED** the 2022-23 Annual Report on Contract Procedure Rules, Waivers and Procurement Services Update

### **7. BDO PROGRESS REPORT ON THE EXTERNAL AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS**

Kevin Bartle (Interim Director of Finance) presented this item explaining that there is ongoing disappointment that BDO could not attend again this evening, and would not be present for the July meeting despite officers' attempts to encourage their attendance.

BDO will be reporting back to the Council in October. The Government has appointed Neil Harrison to resolve the national audit issue and are committed to resolving the problem. Members expressed their dissatisfaction.

Members agreed to invite the Leader of the Council to write to BDO to express the Council's dissatisfaction and the expectation that BDO will attend future meetings of the General Purposes Committee and provide an action plan to address how they will complete all audits up to 2022/23.

**NOTED** the BDO Progress Report on the External Audit of Accounts

### **8. THE AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT SERVICE PROGRESS UPDATE**

Gemma Young (Head of Internal Audit and Risk Management) introduced the report, explaining that the Audit Plan for 2022/23 is 85% complete. The Audit Plan will be coming to the committee in July.

Members had questions on what schools are doing to turn around their progress. Officers explained that schools have agreed timelines set to undertake the agreed actions, and progress would be monitored and reported back to committee in due course.

In response to members' questions regarding the audit of the Dugdale, officers confirmed it is common practice for the Chief Executive to make an audit request if he feels there are issues that need to be reviewed.

## **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE - 28.6.2023**

Kevin Bartle (Interim Director of Finance) confirmed his team have now provided the information required on their audit in relation to budget and forecasting. Colleagues are confident the actions in place will be sufficient.

**NOTED** the ARMS Progress Update

### **9. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2022/23**

Kevin Bartle (Interim Director of Finance) and Annette Trigg (Chief Accountant) introduced the item confirming that Enfield Council achieved publication of its Statement of Accounts by the required deadline and that the Council was one of eight London Boroughs to meet the deadline. The report included the draft 2022/23 Statement of Accounts and provided an update on the audit status for each year of the open accounts. London Borough of Enfield has open, unaudited accounts for the three financial years 2019/20, 2020/21, and 2021/22.

Following a query from Members, officers explained that the fundamental issue are, unlike with NHS audits, there is no deadline date for our external auditors to complete their audit, and this is unsatisfactory. The PSA previously attended the committee and explained the new contracting arrangements and why they would lead to improvements in service delivery and timeliness.

**NOTED** the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts

### **10. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2022/23**

Kevin Bartle (Interim Director of Finance) presented this item, highlighting the key points.

The Finance Improvement Board (soon to be called 'Financial Resilience Board') is an internal board which was set up two years ago to drive continuous finance improvement. The Board is chaired by the Finance Director.

**AGREED** to approve the draft Annual Governance Statement 2022-23, for inclusion in the Council's draft 2022-23 statement of accounts.

### **11. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

**NOTED** the future meeting dates.

### **12. PART 2 - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**AGREED** to pass a resolution under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972 excluding the press and public from the meeting for the items of business listed on part 2 of the agenda on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in those paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006).

## GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE - 28.6.2023

### 13. MERIDIAN WATER RISK REGISTER

The confidential report provided an update on the Meridian Water Risk Register.

**AGREED** that the report be noted.