

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a Meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Guildhall, Gainsborough on Tuesday 28 July 2015, commencing at 6.30pm.

Present: Councillor Giles McNeill (Chairman)
Councillor Jackie Brockway (Vice Chairman)

Councillor Mrs Sheila Bibb
Councillor David Bond
Councillor Hugo Marfleet
Councillor Angela White

Mr Peter Walton (Independent Co-opted Member)
Alison Adams (Independent Co-opted Member)

In Attendance:

Ian Knowles	Director of Resources and S151 Officer
Alan Robinson	Strategic Lead – Democratic and Business Support / Monitoring Officer
Lyn Marlow	Team Manager Customer Strategy and Services
Alison McCulloch	Revenues Team Leader
Katie Coughlan	Governance and Civic Officer

Also Present: Councillor Chris Darcel

Apologies: None received for the meeting.

21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

22 MINUTES

- (a) Meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held on 23 June 2015 (GA.14 15/16)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held on 23 June 2015 be approved and signed as a correct record.

23 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

24 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE SETTING OUT CURRENT POSITION OF PREVIOUSLY AGREED ACTIONS AS AT 20 JULY 2015 (GA.15 15/16)

Members gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule which set out the current position of all previously agreed actions as at 20 July 2015.

RESOLVED that progress on the Matters Arising Schedule as set out in report GA.15 15/16, be received and noted.

25 ANNUAL FEEDBACK REPORT (GA.16 15/16)

Members gave consideration to a report which reviewed the number, type and results of complaints, comments and compliments made to the Council during 2014/15. The report further advised on any trends, areas for learning, the costs of complaints and future management of feedback.

In responding to Members' questions, Officers confirmed that no compensation had been paid as a result of Ombudsman decisions during 14/15. It was noted that there was no "normal" level of compensation. This was very much dependent on the individual circumstances and it was the Ombudsman's responsibility to determine what if any compensation should be paid.

Members commented that in areas such as planning, complaints could always be expected and some of those could simply be customers not happy about the decision made, rather than the service received. Officers confirmed this to be the case and that 8 out of the 22 complaints received for that area were of that nature.

On request a further breakdown of the complaints received in Operational Services was provided.

RESOLVED that the 2014/2015 results be noted.

26 ANNUAL FEEDBACK REPORT ON FRAUD (GA.17 15/16)

Members gave consideration to a report which reviewed the number, type and results of fraud investigations made to the Council during 2014/2015.

In the ensuing debate, the Monitoring Officer indicated the ways in which Housing Benefit Fraud investigations had changed; in that a single Fraud Unit had been established by central government, specifically to undertake this role and thus this function was no longer undertaken by West Lindsey District Council.

Therefore the data in the report did not include any Fraud which may have been detected in the District by this Unit.

RESOLVED that the 2014/2015 results be noted and the work plan, going forward, including corporate fraud be supported.

27 ANNUAL REPORT ON WHISTLE BLOWING INCIDENTS (GA.18 15/16)

Members gave consideration to a report which set out the annual review of Whistleblowing incidents.

RESOLVED that the Committee be assured the Whistleblowing Policy is in place and working effectively.

28 PRESENTATION OF STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER (GA.19 15/16)

Consideration was given to a report which presented Members with the strategic risks facing the Council as at July 2015.

Independent Member, and Risk Champion Alison Adams, confirmed she had recently met with Directors to discuss risk and was pleased with the progress that was being made.

Making reference to the Risk entitled “Effective Workforce and Political Skills” Committee sought and received explanation as to the differences between agile as opposed to flexible working.

With regard to the Risk entitled “ICT Strategy” Committee sought an update as to outcome of the meeting on 22 July 2015 as referred to in the list of associated actions. It was noted that this meeting had not taken place, the reasons for which were outlined, and as a result the Draft ICT Strategy was now likely to be submitted in the early New Year.

RESOLVED that having reviewed the Strategic Risks as presented, the position be noted.

29 WORK PLAN (GA.20 15/16)

Members considered their work plan for remaining meetings during the ensuing civic year.

As referred to during consideration of the Strategic Risk Register, it was intended to present a revised Risk Management Strategy for consideration in the early New Year. Officers therefore undertook to ensure this was added to the Work Plan.

RESOLVED that the work plan as at 20 July 2015 be noted subject to the inclusion of the Risk Management Strategy.

30 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

31 QUICKLINE BUSINESS PLAN / PAYMENTS – MONITORING REPORT (GA.22 15/16)

Members received a report for assurance purposes and to give the Committee confidence that Quikline were able to meet the conditions of the loan.

In presenting the report Officers indicated at present the arrangement was in line with expectations, with only one area of concern. The reasons for this were outlined to Members, but assurance was offered that this matter was monitored on monthly basis by CLT and to date all payments had been received on time and in full.

Capital repayments would commence the following month and would be included in the next monitoring report.

At the request of Members the relationship between BDUK and Quikline was outlined together with how this was effecting provision across the District.

Some Members initially expressed concerns at sale targets not being met.

In light of a number of Members being new to the Committee, Officers outlined broadly the way the commercial loan had been set up, the social benefits the project aimed to deliver and the securities that were in place in the event of default to safeguard the Council's money.

It was stressed that Council had a commercial loan arrangement with the company, it had no direct involvement in the way the company ran its business, and could not deal with service complaints regarding the company, although these were passed on if received.

Members were keen to understand why contracts in neighbouring authorities had recently been terminated and Officers undertook to seek this information from the company.

RESOLVED that having received the monitoring information, Members be assured that the conditions of the loan are being met / can be met.

The meeting concluded at 7.29 pm.

Chairman