

GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 17 September 2014

Present:

Councillor Tony Owen (Chairman)
Councillor Russell Mellor (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Nicholas Bennett J.P., Eric Bosshard,
Kim Botting, Mary Cooke, Peter Fookes, Ellie Harmer,
William Huntington-Thresher, Colin Smith, Diane Smith,
Pauline Tunnicliffe and Michael Turner

24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Tim Stevens, who was replaced by Cllr Colin Smith. Apologies had also been received from Councillor David Livett.

25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

A number of Members declared an interest in relation to minute 28 (Audit of Financial Statements 2013/14) as they were associated with organisations mentioned in the statements, including Councillors Peter Fookes, William Huntington-Thresher, Nicholas Bennett, Pauline Tunnicliffe and Michael Turner.

26 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15TH JULY 2014

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15th July 2014 be confirmed.

27 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING

No questions had been received.

28 AUDIT OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013/14 Report FSD14061

The Committee received the Council's 2013/14 statutory accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011. Janet Dawson of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC), the Council's external auditors, attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Committee. She confirmed that they expected to sign the opinion on the accounts in the next few days. She also reported that she expected to be

able to conclude on the objection raised to the 2012/13 accounts in relation to the parking enforcement contract by the end of October.

Ms Dawson highlighted to the Committee that the Value for Money (VFM) risk rating had been increased from normal to significant to reflect the increasing pressures and significant budget gap identified in the Council's medium term financial strategy. This took account of the requirement to consider the financial resilience of the Authority into the foreseeable future and the definition of foreseeable future being expanded by the Audit Commission to include the medium term (i.e. 3 to 5 years) rather than the next 12 months. This was not unusual to Bromley and a similar approach was being taken with other PwC clients. Ms Dawson was satisfied that the Council had a financial planning process in place and had identified this risk, so she was able to give an unqualified VFM opinion for the 2013/14 accounts, but the risk should continue to be assessed and monitored. Members agreed that there was an increased risk, and noted that as the Council had already made considerable efficiency savings it was becoming increasingly difficult to set a balanced budget. The Chairman asked whether auditors had seen any good examples of achieving value for money elsewhere that could be applied to Bromley; Ms Dawson responded, as an observation rather than a recommendation, that they had observed an increase in a move towards joint contracts and shared services although it was too early to comment whether these had been successful.

A Member asked whether PwC monitored service standards and the use of Council assets such as buildings. Ms Dawson responded that they did consider external inspection reports and regulator's assessments as part of their work on VFM as well as reviewing the information contained within the Annual Governance Statement, and where necessary would discuss how these impacted on financial performance with management. They did not look at individual buildings, but did consider the overall asset portfolio and asset management plan.

The Chairman thanked Ms Dawson for attending and for her report.

RESOLVED that

- (1) The Council's statutory accounts for 2013/14 be approved.**
- (2) In accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011, following approval, the Chairman of this Committee shall sign and date the statutory statements on page 1 as a formal record of the Committee's approval.**
- (3) The external auditors' report be noted.**
- (4) Agreement with the auditors' conclusion on their independence and objectivity is confirmed.**

(5) The Chairman of this Committee be authorised to sign the letter of representation for 2013/14 on behalf of the Council.

(6) The Annual Governance Statement which accompanies the statutory statement of accounts be approved.

29 NHS PENSIONS DIRECTIONS ORDER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF
Report HHR14003

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 transferred responsibility for certain Public Health functions from Primary Care Trusts to Local Authorities from 1st April 2013. The report sought the approval of the Committee for an application to be made to the Secretary of State for Health for an NHS Pensions Directions Order.

RESOLVED that an application be made to the Secretary of State for Health for an NHS Pensions Directions Order to enable newly recruited public health professionals to have access to the NHS Pension Scheme (NHSPS.)

30 FIXED ODDS BETTING TERMINALS
Report CSD14136

An approach had been received from the London Borough of Newham asking for the Council's support for their campaign under the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 to reduce the maximum stake permissible on Fixed-Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs) from £100 to £2.

RESOLVED that the campaign by LB Newham to reduce the maximum stake on FOBTs from £100 to £2 be supported.

(Councillor Nicholas Bennett requested that his abstention be recorded.)

31 APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES
Report CSD14124

At its meeting on 10th June 2014 the Committee had made appointments to various outside bodies. The report provided an update on five cases where the Committee in June had asked that the continuing need for appointments to be made was reviewed. In the cases of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Support Committee and the Phillips and Lubbock Foundation it was proposed that appointments now be made; further consideration was needed for the William Mosyer Charity, St Mary Cray, Bromley Relief in Need and the Joanna Collett Charity, Chelsfield.

In addition, a vacancy had arisen on the Cray Valley War Memorial Hall due to the resignation of Councillor Chris Pierce. One nomination had just been received, but it was decided that the matter needed further consideration.

Councillor Nicholas Bennett gave notice to the Committee that he was intending to resign as one of the Council's representatives on the Affinity Sutton Regional Scrutiny Board.

RESOLVED that

(1) Councillor Hannah Gray be confirmed as one of the appointments to the Duke of Edinburgh Award Committee and officers seek interest from other Members in the remaining appointment.

(2) The following representatives be appointed to the Phillips and Lubbock Foundation, as recommended by the Foundation - Mrs Brenda Powell, Mr John Bowers, Cllr Charles Joel and Mrs Jane Woodhead.

(3) Consideration of appointments to the William Mosyer Charity, St Mary Cray, Bromley Relief in Need and the Joanna Collett Charity, Chelsfield be deferred.

(4) Consideration of the vacancy on the Cray Valley War Memorial Hall for a four year term to 8th June 2018 be deferred.

32 AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25TH JUNE 2014, EXCLUDING EXEMPT INFORMATION

The minutes of the Audit Sub-Committee meeting held on 25th June 2014 (excluding exempt information) were received.

33 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (VARIATION) ORDER 2006 AND THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

RESOLVED that the Press and public be excluded during consideration of the items of business referred to below as it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that if members of the Press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.

**The following summaries
refer to matters
involving exempt information**

34 AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE: EXEMPT MINUTES - 25TH JUNE 2014

The exempt minutes of the Audit Sub-Committee meeting held on 25th June 2014 were received.

The Meeting ended at 7.21 pm

Chairman