

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE 26 SEPTEMBER 2017
--

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2017 AT 1400 HOURS IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, COUNCIL HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM

PRESENT:-

Councillor Spencer in the Chair;

Councillors M Jenkins, Quinnen, Rice, Robinson and Tilsley.

NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

- 984 The Chairman advised and the meeting noted that this meeting would be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet site (www.birminghamnewsroom.com) and members of the press/public could record and take photographs except where there were confidential or exempt items.

APOLOGIES

- 985 Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mariam Khan and in her absence Councillor Spencer (Deputy Chair) took the Chair.
- Councillor Robinson wished to submit a late apology for the last meeting which he thought had been cancelled.

The business of the meeting and all discussions in relation to individual reports was available for public inspection via the web-stream.

MINUTES

- 986 **RESOLVED:-**

That the Minutes of the last meeting be confirmed and signed.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2016/17

The following report of the Interim Chief Finance Officer was submitted:-

(See document No 1)

The following addendum to appendix 1 - the Audit Findings report was tabled at the meeting:-

(See document No 2)

The following amendment to appendix 3 – the Annual Statement of Accounts in respect of the Annual Governance Statement was tabled at the meeting:-

(See document No 3)

Phil Jones and Laura Hinsley, Grant Thornton, explained the different sections of the Audit Findings report and the addendum thereto and responded to Members' comments thereon which included revenue overspend, senior management exit packages, capital expenditure, planned savings and the waste strike.

At 1445 hours, in response to a request by Councillor M Jenkins, the Committee agreed to exclude the public in order to discuss issues relating to equal pay including liabilities and claims and the impact it might have on the accounts.

The web-streaming of the meeting was suspended during the private discussion.

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

987 **RESOLVED:-**

That, in view of the sensitive nature of the discussion due to take place relating to equal pay, the public be now excluded from the meeting.

PUBLIC

988 For ease of reference all of the public part of the meeting has been kept together in the Minutes.

At 1505 hours, after Members had made representations in private concerning equal pay (Minute No 995 refers), the Committee returned to the public agenda.

The web-streaming of the meeting re-commenced.

EQUAL PAY

- 989 For clarification purposes, upon returning to the web-streaming of the public part of the meeting, Councillor Spencer, Deputy Chair, advised that she had requested that the Committee receive regular updates on equal pay at future meetings as appropriate.
-

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2016/17

Hereon, the Committee continued with its consideration of the report regarding the Statement of Accounts 2016/17.

Steve Powell, Assistant Director (Corporate Finance), drew Members' attention to the Annual Governance Statement and explained the amendment thereto tabled at the meeting.

990 **RESOLVED:-**

- (i) That the Audit Findings report and addendum thereto from Grant Thornton be noted and the recommendations set out in appendix A of that report be accepted;
 - (ii) that the Annual Governance Statement and amendment thereto included in the Statement of Accounts for 2016/17 be approved;
 - (iii) that the Statement of Accounts 2016/17, subject to confirmation from the external auditor of a final opinion following the resolution of one outstanding issue, be approved;
 - (iv) that the letter of representation to Grant Thornton, External Auditor, be approved.
-

OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

The Chairman was of the opinion that the following items should be considered as matters of urgency in view of the need to expedite consideration thereof and instruct officers to act:-

A. Corporate Governance Framework

- 991 Councillor Spencer, Deputy Chair, informed the Committee of a meeting that had taken place with the Interim Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer and that Members had been provided with assurances that the corporate governance framework remained effective, particularly with regard to the ongoing waste strike.
-

B. Apologies Submitted by Councillor Mariam Khan

- 992 Councillor Spencer, Deputy Chair, noted the comments by Councillor M Jenkins and his concern regarding the apologies submitted for today's meeting by Councillor Mariam Khan. However, Councillor Spencer did not consider that Councillor Mariam Khan's commitment to the Committee had been comprised as a result of her absence.
-

C. Response to Questions Submitted to the Interim Chief Executive

- 993 Councillor M Jenkins expressed concern that he had not received a response to various questions that he had sent to the Interim Chief Executive including a request for details of text messages between the former Leader of the Council – Councillor John Clancy and the union representative(s) regarding the ongoing waste strike.

Councillor Spencer, Deputy Chair, advised that the Interim Chief Executive had undertaken to provide Members with information, in an audit and value for money context, concerning the balance of the budget and delivery of savings in respect of waste issues.

Councillor Spencer stressed the importance of the role of the Audit Committee, particularly with regard to being an independent critical friend of the Council in finance and governance terms.

AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS

- 994 **RESOLVED:-**

That in an urgent situation between meetings the Chair, jointly with the relevant Chief Officer, has authority to act on behalf of the Committee.
