

Public Document Pack

Civic Affairs

Civ/1

Wednesday, 13 September 2017

CIVIC AFFAIRS

13 September 2017

6.00 - 6.35 pm

Present: Councillors McPherson (Chair), Gawthrope, Holt, O'Connell and Robertson

Officers:

Chief Executive: Antoinette Jackson

Head of Corporate Strategy: Andrew Limb

Head of Customer Services: Jonathan James

Head of Finance: Caroline Ryba

Head of Internal Audit: Steve Crabtree

Business and Development Manager: Jenna Varga

Electoral Services Manager: Vicky Breeding

Principal Accountant (Technical & Financial Accounting): Charity Main

Committee Manager: Claire Tunnicliffe

Others Present:

Ernst & Young External Auditor: Suresh Patel

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

17/35/Civ Apologies for Absence

Apologies were submitted by Councillor Benstead and Councillor Ratcliffe attended as substitute.

Apologies were received from Mr Sean Brady (Independent Person) Mr Rob Bennett (Deputy Independent Person).

17/36/Civ Declarations of Interest

| Name | Item | Interest |
|----------------------|-----------|--|
| Councillor Ratcliffe | 17/43/Civ | Personal: A trustee of the New Chesterton Institute, which has been used by the City Council as polling station. |

17/37/Civ Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2017 were signed as a correct record by the Chair.

17/38/Civ Public Questions

There were no public questions.

17/39/Civ Statement of Accounts 2016-17

The committee received a report from the Principal Accountant (Technical & Financial Accounting) regarding the external audit conclusions and approval of the statement of accounts.

The Committee were informed an invoice had been received from the County Council for contributions towards the City Deal (now known as the Greater Cambridge Partnership) for the period to 31 March 2017 after the draft accounts had been completed and subsequently agreed an amendment to the amount following a review of the calculation basis. The agreed contribution of £594k had been reflected in the 2016/17 Statement of Accounts.

Suresh Patel, representing the External Auditor Ernst and Young summarised the conclusions of the Audit that an unqualified opinion would be given. It was a clean audit opinion which reflected well on the Council with no significant matters to report.

In response to a question from Councillor O' Connell, Mr Patel concluded that the Council's 'risk appetite' was underpinned by a sound decision making process and deemed appropriate.

Resolved (unanimously) to:

- i. Receive the audit findings presented by Ernst & Young
- ii. Approve the Statement of Accounts for year ending 31 March 2017
- iii. Authorise the Chair to sign on behalf of the Council the Letter of Representation and Statement of Accounts year ending 31 March 2017.

17/40/Civ Annual Report on Freedom of Information, Data Protection and Transparency

The committee received the annual report from the Head of Corporate Strategy on transparency issues, performance and activity during 2016/17, conveying data protection; requests for information under Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR); and open data

In response to Members' questions the Head of Corporate Strategy said the following:

- i. The number of FOI requests and EIR requests had increased but with an improvement in working practices, the recent procurement of an FOI case management system, good time management and a sensible proactive approach by officers the workload continued to be manageable.
- ii. The media contributed to the number of FOI requests.
- iii. There had been escalation in the complexity and detail of the FOIs requested.
- iv. Cambridge City Council took the matter of FOI and transparency seriously.
- v. Increased awareness of data protection amongst staff had resulted in more enquiries especially around information sharing and safe disposal of information.
- vi. Officers to aim to achieve the Council's corporate performance target to respond to 100% of FOI requests within 20 working days.

Resolved (unanimously) to:

- i. Note the Council's performance on transparency issues during 2016/17

17/41/Civ Annual Complaints Report 2016-17

The committee received a report from the Business and Development Manager regarding the Annual Complaints and Feedback Report 2016/17.

In response to Members' questions the Business and Development Manager said the following:

- i. Acknowledged an increase in stage 2 complaints, where services had not responded with the 7 day target time.

- ii. The introduction of the new complaints-tracker system would support managers to track the complaints, providing a full customer history, which it was hoped would prevent the complaint going to stage 2 as deadlines would not be missed.

Resolved (unanimously) to:

- i. Approve the draft Annual Complaints Report for 2016/17 for publication on the Council's website.

17/42/Civ Internal Audit Plan: Progress Report

The committee received a progress report from the Head of Internal Audit regarding the Internal Audit Plan 2017/18. The original audit plan had been agreed by the Civic Affairs Committee on 15 February 2017.

Resolved (unanimously) to:

- i. Note progress against the original audit plan together with the associated assurance levels established; and
- ii. Note any proposed amendments / re-phasing of the audit plan.

17/43/Civ Review of Elections - 4 May & 8 June 2017

The committee received a report from the Chief Executive on the Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority elections held on 4 May 2017 and the UK Parliamentary general election held on 8 June 2017.

Members of the committee congratulated the Returning Officer, the Electoral Services Manager and the elections team for their hard work and commitment on successfully running both the elections with no major issues.

In response to a question from Councillor Robertson, the Electoral Services Manager confirmed the following:

- i. An Electoral Services Support Officer had been recruited.
- ii. There was a specific post dedicated to encouraging individuals to vote and that the officer would work closely with the Universities to encourage the student vote.
- iii. The majority of work on promoting electoral registration would be carried out close to an election.

Resolved (unanimously) to:

- i. Note the report.

17/44/Civ Council Calendar of Meetings 2018/19

The committee received a report from the Committee Manager regarding the Council's meeting calendar for the Municipal Year 2018/19.

Members were reminded that the calendar was indicative due to the review of the council's committees involving Group Leaders, the Chair of Civic Affairs Committee and the Chief Executive, which may recommend some changes.

Resolved (unanimously) to:

- i. Delegate final approval to the Chief Executive in consultation with Group Leaders.

17/45/Civ Cambridge City Council's Independent Person

The committee received notification of Mr Sean Brady's resignation from the position of the Council's Independent Person with effect from 25 September 2017.

Resolved (unanimously) to:

- i. Thank Mr Brady for his valuable contribution as the Council's Independent Person since February 2013.
- ii. Note Mr Rob Bennett (Deputy Independent Person) had agreed to take up the vacant post until February 2018.

The meeting ended at 6.35 pm

CHAIR

This page is intentionally left blank