

Extraordinary Council – 14 June 2022

Minutes of the meeting of **Extraordinary Council** held on **14 June 2022** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr M J Steptoe
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Mrs J E McPherson

Cllr Mrs D L Belton	Cllr Mrs C M Mason
Cllr Mrs L A Butcher	Cllr R Milne
Cllr Mrs T L Carter	Cllr G W Myers
Cllr M R Carter	Cllr J E Newport
Cllr J E Cripps	Cllr L J Newport
Cllr A G Cross	Cllr Mrs C E Roe
Cllr D S Efde	Cllr D W Sharp
Cllr A H Eves	Cllr Mrs L Shaw
Cllr I A Foster	Cllr D J Sperring
Cllr Mrs E P Gadsdon	Cllr Mrs D P Squires-Coleman
Cllr J N Gooding	Cllr C M Stanley
Cllr Mrs J R Gooding	Cllr I H Ward
Cllr M Hoy	Cllr M J Webb
Cllr T D Knight	Cllr A L Williams
Cllr R Lambourne	Cllr V A Wilson
Cllr J L Lawmon	Cllr S A Wilson
Cllr Mrs J R Lumley	Cllr S E Wootton

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs R P Constable, J R F Mason and M G Wilkinson.

OFFICERS PRESENT

J Stephenson	- Chief Executive Officer
A Hutchings	- Strategic Director
S Summers	- Strategic Director
I Winslet	- Strategic Director
M Harwood-White	- Assistant Director, Assets and Commercial
M Hotten	- Assistant Director, Place and Environment
A Law	- Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic
N Lucas	- Assistant Director, Resources
N Mann	- Corporate Manager, HR
L Moss	- Assistant Director, People and Communities
D Tribe	- Assistant Director, Transformation and Customer
S Worthington	- Principal Democratic and Corporate Services Officer
H Lock	- Democratic Services Officer
W Szyszka	- Democratic Services Officer

109 REVISED PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2022/23

Council considered the report of the Chief Executive presenting a revised Pay Policy Statement which had been reviewed as part of the partnership arrangements with Brentwood Borough Council for Council's approval.

Cllr M Hoy moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr S E Wootton to amend the Equality and Diversity Implications within the report to include "the equality impact statement within this report is based wholly on the Pay Policy Statement, not all that the other factors within the pay remuneration processed for our employees. There are other factors, such as recruitment; job evaluation; work arrangements (part-time/full-time) etc. Therefore, this Statement says "should" and not "will" because the Statement on its own cannot fulfil this commitment. The Council will always endeavour to pay and remunerate our employees fairly and the Pay Policy Statement is one mechanism to ensure this happens and hence why it is reviewed annually."

The amendment was unanimously agreed.

A Member queried whether the 100% attendance award for PO 20 would continue to be implemented.

Officers advised that paragraph 4.1 on page 3.7 of the Report was identical to the policy that was presented to Council in February earlier this year. The policy statement would undergo reviews, particularly in light of the planned alignment of grades 20 and below across both Councils to avoid differing arrangements.

Cllr M J Steptoe moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr S E Wootton that the recommendation at paragraph 7.1 of the Report be approved.

Resolved

(1) That the Pay Policy Statement at Appendix 1 be adopted.

(This was unanimously agreed.)

110 SHARED INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE WITH BASILDON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Council considered the report of the Assistant Director, Resources seeking Council's approval to delegate its internal audit service to Basildon Borough Council under Sections, 101, 111 and 113 of the Local Government Act 1972 with effect from 1 July 2022.

Cllr Mrs L A Butcher moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr G W Myers that the recommendations at paragraph 8.1 of the Report be approved.

A Member raised a question regarding why the budgeted cost for internal audit was lower than the anticipated budget and requested clarification on whether the budget was based on full-staffing requirements or the current staffing arrangements.

Another Member raised a query regarding the £14,000 saving resulting from this arrangement and questioned whether a price ceiling would be applied to the expenditure budget. A further question was raised querying how the audit services provided by Basildon Borough Council (BBC) be monitored and on the timescales that these services would be reviewed by the Audit Committee.

Officers responded that the amount of deliverable audit hours was consistent with the current internal audit plan. It was anticipated that some efficiencies would be expected as a result of the joint working arrangement which would result in overall savings for the Council. It was expected that other work currently carried out by the Principal Auditor, e.g., on assurance matters would result in the spare budget capacity being redirected to cover the costs of this work separately from the Internal Audit arrangements. The costs recharged to Rochford District Council (RDC) from BBC were not subject to an absolute cap; however, BBC would charge RDC on a cost-basis that would be monitored throughout the year. S151 Officer would remain accountable for KPI responsibilities and reporting the progress back to the Audit Committee on a quarterly basis to ensure that the Internal Audit Plan was delivered in line with what had been agreed.

A Member raised a query regarding the final bullet point under paragraph 3.8 on page 4.3 of the Report whether commercial opportunities would be of financial benefit to RDC or solely BBC.

Officers responded that this point alluded to the shared service between RDC and BBC; however, an opportunity for other councils to join this agreement, i.e., Brentwood Borough Council would be open for consideration. Officers further advised that this was a collaborative arrangement and shared benefits would have to be taken to account and this was open to negotiation with BBC.

In response to a Member query regarding whether BBC had the same external auditor as RDC and whether there were any implications arising from the Internal Audit Plan to the external audit arrangement, officers responded that there were no direct implications arising due to RDC having a separate external auditor to BBC. Officers further advised that the work undertaken by external audit differed in scope and was carried out independently. Officers added that the external audit arrangements with Public Sector Appointments Committee were due to be retendered in the future, thus officers were unable to advise Council who would undertake the external audit role in the upcoming years.

A Member raised a question regarding Recommendation 8.2 on page 4.5 of the Report querying the length of the agreement and whether RDC was aware of dates for renewal or re-assessments of the agreement.

Officers responded that this was a S113 agreement which granted delegated authority, therefore in principle, the agreement would continue for such time as the Council agreed that it did not want it to be in place. The agreement would be reviewed after the first year, with a minimum term of 3 years. Officers further advised that there was no notice period as this was not a contractual arrangement, but instead a delegation. Officers also clarified that in light of the

fact that this was a joint working agreement, it was appropriate to provide 12 months' notice to terminate this agreement to allow for sufficient time to unwind the arrangements.

Resolved

- (1) That its Internal Audit Service be delegated to Basildon Borough Council under Section 101, Section 111 and Section 113 of the Local Government Act 1972 and any other relevant legislation, with effect from 1 July 2022; and
- (2) That the Assistant Director (Resources) in consultation with the Assistant Director (Legal and Democratic) be authorised to approve the final terms of the joint working arrangement and to enter into all necessary and appropriate contracts and agreements to implement delivery from 1 July 2022. (ADR & ADLD)

(This was unanimously agreed.)

The meeting closed at 8.05 pm.

Chairman

Date

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