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GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

4 NOVEMBER 2015

(7.15 pm - 7.47 pm)

PRESENT Councillors Councillor Peter McCabe (in the Chair),
Councillor Janice Howard, Councillor Adam Bush,
Councillor Stephen Crowe, Councillor Mary Curtin,
Councillor Ian Munn, Councillor David Williams,
Councillor Agatha Mary Akyigyina and
Councillor Pauline Cowper

ALSO PRESENT Caroline Holland (Director of Corporate Services)
Andrew Robertson (Head of Electoral Services)
Paul King (External Auditor, Ernst & Young)
Lisa Jewell (Democratic Services)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Laxmi Attawar

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

No declarations of interest were received

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

The Committee noted that additional information requested at the meeting on 16 September had been sent to them via email. This information provided details on how much of the £25.756m short term debtors had been collected, with the total amount collected being £23.2m. Members asked the Director of Corporate Services what she thought about an uncollected figure of £2.5m. The Director of Corporate Services replied that good progress had been made in the collection of debtors and that debt reports were sent to Cabinet.

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2015 were agreed as a true record

4 REVIEW OF POLLING PLACES (Agenda Item 4)

The Head of Electoral Services introduced his report on the review of Polling Places which dealt with two polling places. The first was Christchurch Hall, the current polling place for district KB in Village ward and polling district LA in Raynes Park ward. This is to be demolished and the recommendation is to designate Christ Church which is next door, as the polling place for these two polling districts. The second polling place reviewed was Hillcross Primary School, polling district SD in Cannon Hill Ward. A consultation exercise was undertaken on the future use of the

school as a polling place. The recommendation is that there should be no change Hillcross School, as a longstanding polling place.

RESOLVED

- A. That the General Purposes Committee recommends that the full council agrees the designation of Christ Church as the polling place for polling district KB in Village Ward and polling district LA in Raynes Park Ward.
- B. That the General Purposes Committee recommends that the full council makes no change to the polling place for polling district SD in Cannon Hill Ward.

5 EXTERNAL AUDITOR:ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER (Agenda Item 5)

Paul King, Executive Director, Ernst &Young, presented the Annual Audit Letter 2014/15. He highlighted the issues detailed in the 'Looking Ahead' section of the letter; Highways Network Assets, Better Care Fund, and Earlier deadline for production and audit of the financial statements from 2017/18, as national issues relevant to the Council.

Members discussed the change to the deadline for audit production. They noted that currently the closing date for production of the audit of financial statements was 30 September each year but that new legislation required this to be brought forward to 31 July. Paul King explained that the intention was to aim for 31 August for the 2015/16 audit and 31 July 2017 as preparation for 2017/18. Members discussed how the timetable of General Purpose Committees would need to change in order for the Committee to approve the final accounts. There was a concern that this would require a General Purposes meeting in the School Summer Holidays. Paul King explained that Ernst &Young, as auditors to several 100 Local authorities, would have to consider their processes and possibly simplify them as far as they were allowed.

6 PROGRESS REPORT - RISK MANAGEMENT (Agenda Item 6)

The Director of Corporate Services introduced the progress report on Risk Management. Members noted that changes had been made to the risk management process since it was last brought to General Purposes Committee. Members noted that strategic oversight of Risk Management is provided by Cabinet and General Purposes Committee, and that there will regular updates to both.

Members asked The Director of Corporate Services who owned the risk register within the council. The Director of Corporate Services explained that the risk register is owned by the Council; each department manages their risks through their risk register, and these are reviewed quarterly by DMTs. Any significant risks which may have a strategic impact are escalated by the Corporate Risk Management Group to CMT for inclusion on the Key Strategic Risk Register to ensure that risks which affect the council are being effectively monitored and managed. The Key Strategic Risk Register as at October 2015 was attached to the report at Appendix 1 – this contained all the significant risks that are currently being monitored and managed.

The Director of Corporate Services was asked about the review of the risk management system. She explained that this review of Risk management had been helped by Insurance advisors, and examples from other councils had been considered. There were now risk champions in every department, and the system covered risks other than just financial, there was now an issues register, and more challenge around impact was included. Significant risks that may have a strategic risk are escalated to CMT.

Members asked if the specific risk to fail to adhere to public contract regulations 2006 and contract standing orders, was just a reputational risk, and whether it should also be a financial risk. The Director of Corporate Services replied that it was up to the risk owner to make this decision and in this case it the risk owner wanted to monitor the reputational risk. Regarding this same risk members asked for an explanation on the given likelihood that there was a 50:50 chance of being in breach of the regulations. The Director of Corporate Services answered that this was a risk but that it was being monitored, there would be a revision of contract standing orders, officers would be made aware of the new regulations and this would reduce the likelihood.

RESOLVED

- A. That the General Purposes Committee reviews the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment.
- B. To consider the Key Strategic Risks and Issues faced by the Council, and determine whether these are being actively managed