

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **AUDIT AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE** held on **THURSDAY, 29TH FEBRUARY, 2024** at 6.30 pm in Committee Room 2, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT

Councillors Matt Cooper (Vice-Chair), Nasim Ali, Camron Aref-Adib, Richard Cotton, Judy Dixey and Nanouche Umeadi and Fehintola Akinlose and Alan Layton (Independent Member)

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ABSENT

Councillors Sagal Abdi-Wali, Samata Khatoon, Lorna Jane Russell and Gio Spinella

The minutes should be read in conjunction with the agenda for the meeting. They are subject to approval and signature at the next meeting of the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee and any corrections approved at that meeting will be recorded in those minutes.

MINUTES

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Khatoon, Russell and Spinella.

2. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF STATUTORY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS, COMPULSORY REGISTERABLE NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND VOLUNTARY REGISTERABLE NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS IN MATTERS ON THIS AGENDA

In the interests of transparency, it was noted that all Members had an interest in Item 8, the Members' Allowances Scheme.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY)

Broadcasting of the meeting

The Chair announced that the meeting was being broadcast live by the Council to the internet and could be viewed on the website for twelve months after the meeting. After that time, webcasts were archived and could be made available on request. Those who were seated in the meeting room or participating via Teams were deemed to be consenting to having their contributions recorded and broadcast and

to the use of those sound recordings and images for webcasting and/or training purposes.

4. DEPUTATIONS (IF ANY)

There were no deputations.

5. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR DECIDES TO TAKE AS URGENT

There was no notification of urgent business.

6. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 8th November 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

7. CAMDEN LEARNING - ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2022/23

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director Corporate Services, which was introduced by the Senior Financial Adviser to Camden Learning.

In response to questions, the Senior Financial Adviser remarked that there was business development activity taking place in order to put an income generation plan in place and more details of this could be circulated in writing. Camden Learning had much to offer outside of Camden in areas such as consultancy and training and these were some of the things that were being explored. Plans to build surpluses in order to reinvest in schools could also be incorporated in that written briefing.

ACTION BY: Camden Learning

In response to a question regarding how staff were paid, the Senior Financial Adviser clarified that all Camden Learning staff were on Camden's payroll, and that Camden Learning reimbursed the Council for costs incurred. For a period of time after the formation of Camden Learning, staff had been employed by the Council and seconded to Camden Learning. However, staff engaged more recently were on Camden Learning contracts and terms and conditions.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted.

8. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2024/25

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Participation, Partnerships and Communication.

In response to a question, officers advised that the Council was required by law to agree its Members Allowances scheme every year and thus it was not possible to agree that decisions made this year would also apply in 2025/26.

Members remarked that there was a lack of information in the public domain about what the role of councillor involved and the level of time and commitment required and that more could be done to broaden the general understanding of this. Whilst increasing allowances might feel uncomfortable in the current economic climate, Camden's basic allowance was still below the level recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel and it was important to guard against losing dedicated councillors because they could not afford to carry out the role.

RESOLVED –

THAT the Council be recommended to:

- i) Agree the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix A of the report; and
- ii) Delegate authority to the Director of Participation, Partnerships and Communication, in consultation with the Borough Solicitor, to take all necessary steps in relation thereto, including amendments to the Constitution and publication and operation of the Scheme.

9. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2024/25

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of People and Inclusion.

In response to a question, the Reward and HRMI Manager remarked that work undertaken on the pay ratio and the uplift at the bottom end of the pay range had helped with recruitment and retention, but it remained a challenging recruitment market, with particular challenges around recruiting certain professions such as planners, surveyors and social workers.

RESOLVED –

THAT the Council be recommended to agree the pay policy statement for 2024/25 as attached at Appendix 1 of the report.

10. WORK AND TRAINING PLAN AND ACTION TRACKER

Consideration was given to a report of the Borough Solicitor.

Members asked for an indication of the training opportunities available to committee members, and requested that training be scheduled on scrutinising external accounts such as those of Camden Living and Camden Learning.

ACTION BY: Director of Finance

Members commented on the uneven size of agendas throughout the 2023/24 year, with some being very large and others resulting in very short meetings. The Committee Services Manager advised that officers made efforts to ensure an even spread of business when drawing up the annual work plan, but circumstances arising during the year sometimes led to reports being delayed and causing a backlog.

The Director of Finance reminded Members of the upcoming session focussed on reviewing the effectiveness of the Committee, which was taking place on the 9th April at 6.30pm.

RESOLVED –

- (i) THAT the work plan for the remainder of 2023/24, as set out at Appendix A of the report, be noted;
- (ii) THAT the training sessions that took place for members of the Committee in 2022/23 and be noted; and
- (iii) THAT the action tracker for actions arising from the previous meeting, as per Appendix C of the report, be noted.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no urgent business.

The meeting ended at 7.01pm.

CHAIR

Audit and Corporate Governance Committee - Thursday, 29th February, 2024

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MINUTES END