

**A MEETING OF THE POLICY AND ORGANISATION BOARD
WAS HELD ON 17 MARCH 2022**

Councillors Burgess, Ms Ballard, Bradley, Mrs Hook, Mrs Huggins, Hylands, Jessop, Pepper, Philpott, Blackman (Substituting for Casey), Earle (Substituting for Chegwyn) and Scard (Substituting for Raffaelli)

113. APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE

Apologies for non attendance were received from Councillors Casey, Raffaelli, Chegwyn and Ballard.

114. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

115. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON 27 JANUARY 2022

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 27th January be signed as a true and correct record.

116. DEPUTATIONS - STANDING ORDER 3.4

There were none.

117. PUBLIC QUESTIONS - STANDING ORDER 3.5

There were none.

118. CITIZENS ADVICE GOSPORT

A presentation was given by Citizen's Advice.

**119. AMENDMENTS TO CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS AND ARRANGEMENTS
FOR DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF BREACHES OF THE CODE OF
CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS**

Consideration was given to a report of the Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer seeking approval of amendments to the Council's Code of Conduct for Members and Arrangements for Dealing with Allegations of Breaches of the Code of Conduct for Members (taken together and referred to as "the Code") following endorsement of the Standards and Governance Committee and a public consultation exercise which concluded on 11 March 2022.

Members welcomed the report and acknowledged the significant amount of work that had gone in to it.

The Board were advised that the code allowed for any change of law to be implemented on an interim basis until Full Council could approve any changes.

RESOLVED: That the Board approves the amended versions of the Code of Conduct for Members and Arrangements for Dealing with Allegations of Breaches of the Code of Conduct for Members and further recommends these to Full Council as a change to the Council's Constitution.

120. PROCUREMENT OF SPECIALIST CLEANING SERVICE

Consideration was given to a report of the Neighbourhood Services Manager setting out the Council's requirement for a specialist cleaning service to be procured in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

In answer to a Member's question, the Board was advised that the procurement would be placed on the portal. The Board was also advised that local companies would be encouraged to register for the portal and a number of them already were already registered.

RESOLVED: That the Board provides delegated authority to the Head of Housing to award a contract following completion of a procurement exercise which is anticipated to exceed the EU threshold.

121. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2020/21

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Internal Auditor seeking approval from Members in regards to the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2020/21.

Members welcomed the report and recognised the importance of the Committee system in transparent democracy.

RESOLVED: That the Policy and Organisation board approve the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2020/21, following the recommendation from the Standards and Governance Committee

122. EXTERNAL AUDIT (EY) - AUDIT RESULTS REPORT 2020/21

Consideration was given to a report of the External Auditor summarising the findings to date from the 2020/21 external audit, which is well progressed. It includes the messages arising from the audit of financial statements and the arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.

The report includes only matters of governance interest that have come to attention in performing the audit under the requirements of the National Audit Office's Code of Audit Practice and International Standards of Auditing (ISAs).

This is an important report that is a requirement of ISA 260 and must be presented to the Council in the role as those charged with governance, before the financial statements are approved.

The Board recognised that this work undertaken was up until the 31 March 2021 and that improvements had been made since then. There was slower progress than had been expected but it was accepted that this was in part due to policy, training and implementation. It was also accepted that the pandemic had contributed in that many staff had to be redeployed.

The Board recognised that there was a drive to improve the procurement process that was being implemented to ensure Value for Money.

RESOLVED: That the Board reviewed and noted the conclusions to date set out in the Audit Results Report

123. FINAL ACCOUNTS 2020/21

Consideration was given to report of the Borough Treasurer summarising the outturn position for the 2020/21 financial year and recommends the approval of the Statement of Accounts for 2020/21.

RESOLVED THAT:

- i) The Board note the outturn position summarised in the report and the Narrative Report contained in the Statement of Accounts (Appendix A)
- ii) The Board approves the Statement of Accounts for 2020/21 at Appendix A
- iii) The Board approve the Letter of Representation at Appendix B (not included in report issued and will follow separately).
- iv) The Board delegate to the Borough Treasurer in consultation with the Chairman of the Policy & Organisation Board the decision to agree any final changes to the financial statement arising from the completion of the audit.

124. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY & MRP POLICY 2022/23

This report outlines the Council's policy for charging unfinanced capital expenditure to revenue (MRP) together with the expected treasury operations for this period. It fulfils a key legislative requirement.

In answer to a Member's question, the Board was advised that there were not investments within Russia, and it was acknowledged that the Bank of England had increased interest rates to .75% wef 17/3/2022.

That the

- Minimum Revenue Provision Policy, as identified in 2.1
- The Treasury Management Strategy, as identified in 2.2

Be approved.

125. ANY OTHER ITEMS

There were none.

126. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That the public be excluded from the meeting by virtue of paragraph (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

127. PURCHASE OF NORTHGATE SOFTWARE FOR THE BENEFITS AND REVENUES SERVICE

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Benefits, Procurement and Insurance. This report sets out the requirement for the purchase of additional systems software for the Benefits and Revenues sections which will improve and streamline the services provided to residents whilst achieving financial savings and efficiencies.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations be approved.

CHAIRMAN

Concluded at 7.12 pm