
Meeting	Audit & Governance Committee
Date	15 January 2015
Present	Councillors Ayre (Chair), Brooks (Vice-Chair), Potter, Barnes, Fraser, Scott and Taylor (Substitute for Councillor D'Agorne) and Mr Whiteley (Co-opted Non-Statutory Member)
Apologies	Councillor D'Agorne

53. Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, any prejudicial interests or any disclosable pecuniary interests which they may have in respect of business on the agenda. None were declared.

54. Public Participation

It was reported that there were two registrations to speak at the meeting under the council's Public Participation Scheme and that one Member of Council had also registered to speak.

Councillor Warters spoke on the following issues:

- He asked the Audit and Governance Committee to involve the external auditor in respect of the Community Stadium project.
- Referring to the LGA Review (agenda item 3) he expressed his concerns regarding a number of issues, including a politically dominated system, the lack of information that was available to non-Cabinet Members and a culture of secrecy.

Ms Andrea Dudding, UNISON representative, spoke in respect of agenda item 3 (LGA Review). She drew particular attention to those aspects of the report which related to Member/officer relations and stated that some members of staff had raised issues regarding this matter and that not all of them had received appropriate support from their managers. Some members of staff were also reluctant to report such incidents. She stated that this posed a significant risk to the organisation,

including reputational damage and an impact on morale. Ms Dudding also suggested that an independent analysis needed to be carried out to ascertain why the Council was receiving so many Freedom of Information requests, as this was a drain on resources. She urged that action be taken to address the recommendations in the LGA report.

Parish Councillor Martin, member of City of York Council Joint Standards Committee, spoke in respect of agenda item 3 (LGA Review). Commenting on recommendation o in the report, he stated that he supported the need for the Joint Standards Committee to review its way of working to enable it to become more effective and to promote high standards of conduct. The recommendations did not, however, give guidance as to how this could be achieved. It would be helpful if the Joint Standards Committee was made aware of specific problems that had arisen, guidance on how they could be tackled and expected outcomes.

55. LGA Review

Members gave consideration to the Local Government Association (LGA) Review Report which had been prepared in response to a Council Motion of 9 October 2014.

A verbal report from the LGA had been given at the previous meeting and Members were now asked to consider the written report and to agree the next steps in addressing the recommendations detailed in the LGA report.

Officers drew Members' attention to recommendations r and k within the LGA report. It was acknowledged that the Joint Standards Committee would also have a role to play in addressing some of the recommendations.

Copies of proposed recommendations were tabled for Members' consideration *[these are included with the online agenda papers for this meeting]*

Members agreed on the importance of putting in place an Action Plan which addressed the governance issues within the LGA review, the Peer Review and the Organisational Development Plan. It was agreed that Group Leaders should be involved in the development of the action plan. Members requested that

the draft action plan be presented to the Audit and Governance Committee for consideration at their next meeting and should include proposed actions, outcomes and timescales. Members agreed that they would also need to put in place arrangements for the monitoring of the plan.

Members also gave consideration to the establishing and membership of a cross party working group to progress some specific recommendations d-k. It was agreed that the membership of this working group should comprise Group Leaders and a representative of the Independent Members.

It was agreed that all Members of Council should have knowledge of the LGA review report and that the Action Plan should make reference as to how this would best be achieved, for example this may involve a meeting for all Members facilitated by a representative from the LGA.

- Resolved:
- (i) That the Local Government Association (LGA) report be received.
 - (ii) That, in line with the LGA recommendation (recommendation r), officers be instructed to develop one overall action plan that links the governance issues covered within the LGA Review, Peer Review and Organisational Development Plan. This is to be reported back to the February meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee, with a view to the committee reviewing, amending, approving and considering how best to monitor this plan, and that Group Leaders be involved in the development of this report. The action plan to set out clearly the proposed action, responsibility and, where possible, the measure of success. (It was noted that a number of recommendations may be best placed being considered elsewhere e.g. Joint Standards Committee).
 - (iii) That, as part of this action plan, in line with recommendation (k) of the LGA report, a cross party working group be established to take forward some specific recommendations

(recommendations d-k). This work to commence immediately.

- (iv) That the membership of the Cross Party Working Group be Group Leaders and a representative of the Independent Members. For the avoidance of doubt, the report of the Cross Party Working Group is to be reported back to the Audit and Governance Committee as part of resolution (ii) above.
- (v) That the LGA review report be formally circulated to all Council Members.

Reason: To progress work in addressing the recommendations arising from the LGA review.

Councillor Ayre, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 6.20 pm].