

CORPORATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Corporate Affairs Committee was held on 26 September 2007.

PRESENT: Councillor Clark (Chair), Councillors Jones, McPartland, Mrs H Pearson and Porley.

OFFICIALS: B Baldam, J Bennington, C Davies, R G Long and R Painter.

PRESENT BY INVITATION: District Audit:
S Nicklin and R Walker.

PRESENT AS OBSERVERS: Councillors Mrs B Thompson, Executive Director of Children, Families and Learning and Councillor N J Walker, Executive Director of Resources.

**** AN APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE** was submitted on behalf of Councillor Elder.

**** DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made at this point of the meeting.

**** MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Affairs Committee held on 27 June 2007 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2006/2007

A report of the Director of Resources was presented regarding the audited 2006/2007 Statement of Accounts which included extracts from the audited Statement of Accounts providing details of the main accounting financial statements. A copy of the full statement had been provided to Members and made available in the Members' Resources section.

Details were provided of alterations, which had been made from the draft, which were mainly presentational matters, which ensured complete compliance with revised Statement of Recommended Practice requirements and Best Value Accounting Code of Practice.

It was confirmed that there were no major issues raised by the District Auditor and significant progress had been made from the previous year in the production of the 2006/2007 Statement of Accounts. The draft and final statements had been produced within timetable and the quality of the working papers had once again improved.

The report outlined the main components of the Accounts as follows: -

Appendix A – Income and Expenditure Account
Appendix B – Statement of Movement on the General Fund Balance
Appendix C – Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses
Appendix D – Balance Sheet
Appendix E – Cash Flow Statement
Appendix F – Statement of Internal Control.

In order to ensure that next year's closure of accounts was even more straightforward reference was made to an additional training programme to be provided in respect of technical accounting for appropriate staff.

ORDERED that the revised 2006/2007 Statement of Accounts be approved and the Chair of the Corporate Affairs Committee on behalf of the Council sign the formal letter to that effect.

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REPORT 2005/2006

Mr S Nicklin (District Auditor) presented the Annual Governance Report 2006/2007, which had been formulated in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing (United Kingdom & Ireland) – ISA (UK&I)-260 'Communication of Audit Matters to Those Charged With Governance' and other associated legislation and guidance.

As part of the Auditor's responsibilities there was a requirement to review and report on the Council's financial statements and whether the Council had made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

The Annual Governance report summarised the significant findings, conclusions and recommendations arising from the audit work undertaken.

In overall terms it was stated that the audit process had gone well and further improvements had been achieved from the previous year. The Committee's attention was drawn to a few observations on key areas on technical points where it was felt that the Council could consider achieving further improvements.

ORDERED as follows: -

1. That the information provided be noted and approved.
2. That all concerned be thanked for their efforts in securing improvements resulting in a positive report.
3. That on behalf of the Council the Chair of the Corporate Affairs Committee signs the representation letter to the District Auditor.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN – ANNUAL LETTER 2006/2007

The Members' Office Manager submitted a report in respect of the Local Government Ombudsman's annual letter as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, which commented on the performance of the Council in respect of complaints to the Ombudsman.

It was acknowledged that there had been a decrease in complaints to the Ombudsman in respect of the Council compared to 2005/2006 reflecting a downward trend in Ombudsman complaints. A breakdown of complaints over the past 5 years was given in the table contained in Appendix 2 of the report submitted.

It was confirmed that it had been the fourth year in succession where there had been no findings of maladministration against the Council. The largest increase in decisions related to findings of No Maladministration (an increase from 5 in 2005/2006 to 17 in 2006/2007) and Premature Complaints in the case of complaints made to the Ombudsman before the Council had had the opportunity to consider it through the Council's Complaints Procedure (an increase from 5 in 2005/2006 to 10 in 2006/2007).

A decrease had also been demonstrated in the number of local settlements, which involved cases where the Council had settled the complaint to the satisfaction of both the Complainant and the Ombudsman.

Although response times had again increased slightly over the previous year they continued to be within 28 days maximum response time required by the Ombudsman's office.

During 2006/2007 the Council had taken advantage of the training in complaints handling that was available from the office of the Ombudsman. It was noted that there were currently 70 people who had registered an interest from across the Council in attending such training in the forthcoming year.

The Committee acknowledged that the Ombudsman's Annual Letter had demonstrated that the Council was performing well in respect of complaints to the Ombudsman and that one

contributory factor was the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure, which appeared to be effective and robust. It was noted that most complaints relating to Council services were dealt with internally and to the satisfaction of the complainant. Only a minority number of cases progressed to the Ombudsman, which required further action from the Council.

ORDERED that it be noted that the report from the Ombudsman was very positive and that the Ombudsman had been generally positive both in respect of the process and outcomes relating to complaints.

SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES – LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL GOVERNORS – APPOINTMENTS

A report of the Head of Education Resources and Commissioning was presented regarding vacancies for Local Authority appointed School Governors, which had arisen as a result of resignations, the expiry of terms of office or the removal of Governors due to non-attendance.

The nominations received for such vacancies were outlined in Appendix 1 of the report submitted and in an updated report circulated at the meeting.

It was noted that there were currently 15 vacancies out of a total of 142 Governorships for LA representatives, which equated to 10.56%.

ORDERED as follows: -

1. That the following appointments be approved for a four-year term of office with effect from 1 January 2008: -

<u>School</u>	<u>Governor</u>
Abingdon Primary	Councillor McPartland, Mr A McDonald, Mr R Brady
Ayresome Primary	Mr R Peacock, Mrs M Toase
Beechwood Primary	Councillor Clark, Mr L Poole, Mr R Speakman
Berwick Hills Primary	Miss A O'Brien
Caldicotes Primary	Mrs S Hamlin
Chandlers Ridge Primary	Ms S Mian
Green Lane Primary	Mrs H Ellis
Hemlington Hall Primary	Councillor J Walker
Lingfield Primary	Councillor Ward
Marton Grove Primary	Councillor Rooney
Newham Bridge Primary	Councillor Biswas (subject to his approval)
North Ormesby Primary	Councillors Jones and Lancaster
Pallister Park Primary	Councillor Coppinger
The Avenue Primary	Councillor Mrs B Thompson
Thorntree Primary	Councillor Purvis

Acklam Grange Secondary Councillor Mrs H Pearson, Mr A R Peacock,
Mrs L Green

Beverley Special Dr S J Green

Complementary Management Board Councillors Bishop and Mrs B Thompson.

2. That appointments to the following vacancies be deferred pending the receipt of nominations in respect of:

Berwick Hills Primary School

Brambles Primary School

Green Lane Primary School

Marlon Primary School

Park End Primary School

Ormesby Secondary School

3. That by mutual consent Councillor Rehman replaces Councillor Biswas in respect of Breckon Hill Primary School for a four-year term of office with effect from 1 January 2008.
4. That by mutual consent Councillor Bishop replaces Councillor Coppinger in respect of Newport Primary School for a four-year term of office with effect from 1 January 2008.