

At a meeting of the West London Waste Authority held on Friday 26 June 2020 at 10.00 am at the Virtual Meeting - Online.

Present:

Councillor Graham Henson (Chair)

Councillor Philip Corthorne, Councillor Guy Lambert, Councillor Mik Sabiers, Councillor Krupa Sheth and Councillor Julia Neden Watts

Andrea White

50. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

51. Declarations of interest

RESOLVED: There were no declarations of interest.

52. Minutes of the meetings held on 24 January 2020

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Audit Committee and Authority meetings held on 24 January 2020 be taken as read and signed as correct records.

53. Appointment of Chair, Vice Chair, Audit Committee, Chair of Audit Committee and Independent Members

Members noted the membership of the Audit Committee comprised all members of the Authority in the 2019/20 municipal year due to the previous difficulties in being quorate. Whilst it was necessary to appoint a Chair of the Audit Committee, who was not also the Chair of the Authority, the Authority itself would discharge the functions of the Audit Committee. The Member appointed as Chair of the Audit Committee would take the Chair during the Authority meeting for audit items.

RESOLVED: That (1) the Authority discharge the functions of the Audit Committee;
(2) Councillor Graham Henson be appointed as Chair of the Authority for the 2020/21 municipal year;
(3) Councillor Mik Sabiers be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Authority for the 2020/21 municipal year;
(4) Councillor Krupa Sheth be appointed as Chair of the Audit Committee for the 2020/21 Municipal Year;
(5) the appointment of Andrea White as the Independent Member of the Audit Committee be re-confirmed to 30 June 2021.

54. Meetings for the Municipal Year 2020/21

RESOLVED: That the following dates of meetings of the Authority and the Audit Committee be confirmed:-

Friday 25 September 2020
Friday 4 December 2020
Friday 22 January 2021 at 11.00am (Audit Committee at 10.00am)
Friday 26 March 2021 at 10.00am
Friday 25 June 2021 at 10.00am (including Audit items)
Friday 24 September 2021 at 10.00am
Friday 3 December 2021 at 10.00am

55. General Ledger Internal Audit

Sarah Hydrie, Internal Auditor, introduced the report which presented the Internal Audit risk based assurance review. The purpose of the review was to provide assurance to the management team of the Authority and the Audit Committee in relation to the key risks around the General Ledger.

The Internal Auditor advised that, overall, she was able to give substantial assurance in relation the key risks to the achievement of objectives of General Ledger.

RESOLVED: That to report be noted.

56. Annual Internal Audit Report 2019/20

Sarah Hydrie, Internal Auditor, introduced the report which presented the Annual Internal Audit Report 2019/20. The report summarised the main findings arising from the Internal Audit work 2019/20.

The Audit Committee welcomed the positive report commenting that control was strengthening and that it was pleasing to see the continuing collaborative approach that Internal Audit were taking in working with management in order to help achieve positive outcomes for the Authority.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

57. External Audit Report

Members received the draft Audit results for the year ended 31 March 2020.

Maria Grindley and Larisa Midoni, External Auditors, Ernst and Young LLP, outlined the content of the report. Ms Grindley advised that the audit had been undertaken in the context of the COVID 19 pandemic and had therefore been difficult to complete as it had not been possible to work face-face or alongside officers. The work had been undertaken differently and remotely.

Larisa Midoni outlined the content of the report and advised that the overall recommendation was to focus on scrutiny and control of land and buildings and that a series of adjustments on disclosures in the accounts were proposed. In terms of materiality, these had initially been based on the previous year's statements but had then been reassessed as further information had become available.

Maria Grindley explained that, as a result of COVID 19, organisations that were due to sign their opinion would move into a consultation which may result in a change and "Emphasis of Matter" regarding COVID 19 and going concern due to the impact of the pandemic. A

Member questioned the rationale and requested that the External Auditor provide information regarding any proposed “Emphasis of Matter”.

In response to a question about the audit fee currently appearing to be open-ended, the External Auditor advised that this would be discussed with officers and be submitted to the Audit Committee.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

58. Risk Register

Members received the report which provided an update on the Authority’s Risk Register.

Jay Patel, Finance Director, reported that since the last meeting the register had been updated to include COVID 19. In response to a question in relation to the Amber Brexit risk and the comment that this was a short term solution, he advised that this had initially been identified as a financial risk but it was necessary to also consider the wider implications such as employment ie contractors being able to recruit. Emma Beal, Managing Director, reminded Members that she had given a commitment at the previous meeting to update the Risk Register in terms of Brexit. To date this had not been done due to the pandemic and it had been impossible to ascertain what the position would be by the end of the year.

A Member questioned whether the Authority could influence the reduction of air quality issues associated with West London Composting. The Managing Director advised that the Environment Agency had been advised of the concerns and that she would be visiting the site in July.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

59. Assurance Statements

Members received a report which provided Assurance Statements from the Authority’s Chief Officers and Senior Managers and formed part of the overall governance framework and supported the approval of the annual Statement of Accounts.

RESOLVED: That the Assurance Statements be noted.

60. Statement of Accounts for year ending 31 March 2020

Members received the report which presented the 2019/20 Statement of Accounts.

Jay Patel, Finance Director, outlined the contents of the report and advised that he recommended that reserves be retained due to the current health emergency and be re-visited next year. He responded to questions as follows:-

- In terms of the budget variance in relation to employees, this was due to the pension valuation adjustments which were outside the Authority’s control;
- He would distribute a breakdown of the period 12 monitoring report which provided a fuller explanation of variances;
- Boroughs would still be able to drawn down from Reserves to deal with food waste.

RESOLVED: That (1) the 2019/20 Statement of Accounts be approved;
(2) the Chair of the Authority be authorised to approve any changes resulting from the LPFAs’ auditors assurance to Ernst and Young expected in August 2020 and finalisation of

their audit.

61. Budget Monitoring Report - Period 2

Members received a report which provided an update on financial and operational matters.

Jay Patel, Finance Director, explained that due to prioritising work on COVID 19, the Key Performance Indicators were not currently available.

A Member commented that residents residual rubbish was an issue given the pandemic and the closure of recycling sites. Officers responded that social distancing placed significant constraints at the HRRC and that it was hoped that, in the long term, residents could be encouraged to reduce their residual waste.

RESOLVED : That (1) the current financial position, forecast for 2020/21 and sensitivity analysis be noted;

(2) it be noted that the Key Performance Indicators would be reported at the next Authority meeting;

(3) the financial decisions taken under the Scheme of Delegation to Officers be noted.

62. Health and Safety: Annual Review of Performance in 2019/20 and plans for 2020/21

Members received the report which reviewed the Authority's Health and Safety arrangements for the year 2019/20 and presented the Authority's Health and Safety Plan for 2020/21.

Sarah Ellis, Operations Manager, introduced the report and advised that COVID 19 had had a significant impact in terms of health and safety. The 2019/20 action plan had one outstanding action as a result of COVID 19.

Kevin Kerin, Health and Safety Adviser, outlined the high level content of the report. He explained that in 2020/21 work on accident and incident statistics would be undertaken with a view to eradicating the section 'other'. Of the 13 accidents/ incidents on site this year none had been RIDDOR.

Members welcomed the report and the focus on health and safety and the clarification that the job descriptions referred to in the report related to Authority staff. A Member commented that climate emergency was missing from the report.

RESOLVED: That (1) the report be noted;

(2) the actions taken in the Health and Safety action plan for 2019/20 be noted;

(3) the Authority's Health and Safety Action Plan for 2020 /21 be approved.

63. Coronavirus Update and Contingency Planning

Emma Beal, Managing Director, introduced the report which provided details of the management and contingency planning related to the COVID 19 pandemic.

The Managing Director outlined the content of the report and highlighted the risks associated with the health and safety of staff, increased costs and the Authority's strategy.

In terms of the booking system and expansion of the collection of bulky waste, the Managing Director advised that this was to mitigate queries and the constraints in moving

people through the HRRC.

RESOLVED: That the increased cost and activity due to coronavirus and mitigations to date be noted.

64. Projects and Waste Minimisation Update

Members received a report which provided an update on the Authority's waste minimisation, efficiency and joint working projects.

Peter Tilston, Projects Director, introduced the report and advised that COVID 19 had not had a significant impact on projects but that risks had increased. A number of short term projects had been pushed through quickly. In terms of HRRC sites, Harrow and Abbey Road had introduced a booking system. Queues at sites had been causing issues on the surrounding roads and the booking system would mitigate this.

In response to a Member's question as to how residents could be prevented from visiting the HRRC without booking an online appointment, the Projects Director explained that work had been done with the Brent Communications team and messages sent out via social media, newspapers and leaflets. As a result of early teething issues, a phone line had also been set up. A Member reported that there had been mixed feedback from residents in terms of the need to use a booking system.

The Managing Director reported that 30% of waste authorities had adopted a booking system for HRRCs whilst a further 30 % were considering introducing a system. It should be noted that there was a knock on impact of other waste authority decisions; there had been an increase of Barnet users at Abbey Road when North London Waste Authority introduced a booking system at the start of lockdown.

Members sought clarification on the collection of bulky waste and were advised that currently residents should book a collection and it would be collected as soon as operatives were available.

Mildred Jeakins, Waste Minimisation Manager, advised that

- the team were working on HRC data and that each of the constituent authorities would be able to login to view;
- work was being done to digitalise the administration process across the Authority;
- work on abandoned vehicles was being finalised;
- national data to identify best practice had been analysed;
- areas of improvement were being considered.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

65. Contracts and Operations Update

Sarah Ellis, Operations Manager, introduced the report which provided an update on the Authority's various waste treatment arrangements and procurements.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

66. Procurement Update

Beth Bayley, Contracts Manager, introduced the report which provided an update on changes to the Authority's procurement rules.

In response to a Member's comment in relation to using the Authority's influence for market development, the Managing Director advised that that some clarification was required in the legislation but that this aligned with lobbying work.

RESOLVED: That the Authorisation Tables for the procurement of Supplies/ services and the procurement of Works, which would form part of the updated WLWA Procurement Rules, be agreed.

The meeting finished at 12.07 pm.

The minute taker at this meeting was Alison Atherton.