

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) held**  
**at 10.00 am on Monday, 15 September 2014**

Present:

Members:                   Councillor R Sandy (Chair)  
                                  Councillor J Birdi  
                                  Councillor R Brown  
                                  Councillor J Clifford  
                                  Councillor D Galliers  
                                  Councillor L Harvard  
                                  Councillor R Lakha  
                                  Councillor T Sawdon  
                                  Councillor D Welsh

Other Members:           Councillor F Abbott

Employees:

P Jennings, Resources Directorate  
K Larsen, Resources Directorate  
L Read, Resources Directorate  
M Rossi, Resources Directorate

Apologies:                Councillor D Gannon, M Hammon, L Kelly and J Mutton

**Public Business**

**7.       Declarations of Interest**

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared.

**8.       Minutes**

The minutes of the Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2014 were signed as a true record.

**9.       Individual Electoral Registration**

The Scrutiny Board considered a briefing note of the Electoral Services Manager providing information on the work that had been undertaken by the City Council in relation to Individual Electoral Registration.

The Board focussed on public engagement activities and sought clarification over the percentage of residents who were matched to the new system of registration and the differences between Wards.

The Scrutiny Board noted the close working relationships with both Coventry and Warwick University by sharing information to ensure that students were registered

to vote. Members also noted the work in BME communities, in particular with the Interfaith Forum, to raise awareness of individual registration.

The Scrutiny Board also questioned officers on the Full and Open Registers. Members noted that previously the Open Register was referred to as the "Edited Register". The Full Register was used for electoral purposes and occasionally for credit reference checking and the prevention of crime and fraud. The Open Register was available to purchase for any purpose. If an elector does not "opt out" of this register then their details would be sold on.

**RESOLVED, that the Scrutiny Board –**

- 1. Noted the progress on individual electoral registration.**
- 2. Requested that the Public Engagement Strategy and details of the electors by ward, who have been matched to the new system, be sent to Members of the Board.**

**10. West Midlands Pension Fund (WMPF) and the City Council**

The Scrutiny Board considered a briefing note of the Executive Director, Resources on the Pension Fund and its forecast impact on the City Council in the coming years.

The Scrutiny Board welcomed the report on West Midlands Pension Fund (WMPF) and the City Council and questioned officers on a range of issues including:

- The amount of payment for past employees and how this problem was going to increase;
- The lack of control the Council had regarding the fact that pension costs were increasing due to people living longer, investments made were at a very low level of return and that there was less money available to fund the pensions;
- The investments that were made and the ethical considerations given to them;
- Whether the Council had an ethical investment framework;

Scrutiny Board members were particularly concerned about how the financial return from investments can be balanced with ethical investment considerations. Legal advice from the West Midlands Pension Fund suggest that ethical views are not to be considered only the treasury management of the return on investment.

Members acknowledged that it would be extremely difficult to police and enforce an ethical investment policy. The Board wished to see examples of ethical investment policies and examples, if any, of a local authority introducing such a policy. The Scrutiny Board agreed that a report would be produced in conjunction with Treasury Management Advisers and brought back to their meeting of 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2014.

**RESOLVED, that the Scrutiny Board recommend that the Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources) ask West Midlands Pension Fund to investigate existing ethical investment policies with a view to finalising or creating a legal, practicable and deliverable scheme to deliver ethical investment within the Pension Fund with sound returns on investment.**

(NOTE: Councillor Sawdon abstained from voting on this matter)

11. **Work Programme 2014-15**

The Scrutiny Board noted that ethical investment was due to be considered on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2014.

12. **Meeting Evaluation**

The Scrutiny Board evaluated the meeting and their comments would be used to ensure the continued efficiency and effectiveness of future meetings.

13. **Any other items of Public Business**

There were no additional items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 11.35 am)