

<u>Committee and Date</u>

West Mercia Energy Joint Committee

20 th September 2024

WEST MERCIA ENERGY JOINT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2024

**In the Wilfred Owen Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2
6ND**

2.00 - 4.00 pm

Responsible Officer: Tim Ward

Email: tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257713

Present

Councillors Gwilym Butler (Chairman), Lee Carter, Nathan England, Adam Kent and
Adrian Hardman (Vice Chairman)

67 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Graham Biggs and Dean
Carroll

*Councillor Peter Stoddard joined the meeting remotely, taking no part in the voting
on any of the items for consideration.*

68 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the West Mercia Energy Joint Committee held on 26th September
2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

69 Public Questions

No public questions had been received.

70 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no interests declared

71 Supplier contracts

The Director confirmed that there were no entries to report

72 External Audit Plan 2023/24

The Head of Finance and Billing introduced the report which set out the proposed
external audit plan for 2023/24.

John Fletcher, External Auditor took Members thought the report drawing their attention to the following points –

- Materiality had been determined using the benchmark figures set out in the table on page 10 of the pack and that the levels had been set to ensure that sufficient audit work was carried out.
- 2 significant risks identified in the plan are standard to all audits and the Committee should be satisfied that there are controls in place.

A Member raised the risk of loss of key personnel and business continuity. The External Auditor stated that this was considered as part of the “going concern” assumption.

RESOLVED:

That the Joint Committee

- a) approve the draft audit plan for 2023/24 as presented by WR Partners attached at Appendix 1
- b) approve the commissioning of WR Partners to undertake the audit in accordance with the audit plan.

73 Internal Audit Performance Reports to March 2024

The Auditor presented the report which provided an update on the work completed by Internal Audit against the approved Internal Audit Plan 2023/24. She advised Members that all planned audit work for 2023/24 had been completed, and that reviews attracting good assurance were Finance, Debtors, Corporate Governance including Risk Management and Procurement and that the review of the IT Strategy attracted a reasonable assurance.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee endorse the performance to date against the 2023/24 Audit Plan as set out in the report.

74 Internal Audit Strategic Plan 2024/25

The Auditor presented the report which set out the proposed programme of audit work for the year 2024/25.

RESOLVED

That the Committee endorse the proposed programme of audits for 2024/25.

75 Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2023/24

The Director presented the report which set out the draft transparency statement which was required as part of the Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Policy.

RESOLVED

That the Joint Committee:

- a) approve the draft WME Transparency Statement for 2023/24
- b) delegate authority to the Director to finalise the WME Transparency Statement and publish it in accordance with section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

76 Risk Management Update

The Director presented the report which set out the current Risk Management Strategy and risk register. He advised Members that there was currently 1 risk assessed as high and 5 assessed as medium risk and that these were set out in paragraph 5.4 of the report. He went on to say that since the last review 2 risks, poor performance by a key supplier leading to customer service issues including a) billing issues, b) information - pricing/budgets, and loss of key staff had been downgraded to low risk from medium.

In response to a question the Director confirmed that he felt that work done in restructuring the workforce and recruiting and training additional staff had addressed concerns regarding the loss of key staff.

RESOLVED

That the Joint Committee

- a) approve the WME Risk Management Strategy attached at Appendix A
- b) accept the position as set out in the report.

77 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED:

That under Section 100(A)(A4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they might involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12(A) of the Act.

78 Exempt Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Exempt Minutes of the West Mercia Energy Joint Committee held on 26th September 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

79 Annual Business Plan and Budget 2024/25 including review of 2023/24

The Director presented an exempt report for approval.

RESOLVED

That the recommendations contained within the exempt report be approved together with an additional recommendation.

80 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting would take place in September 2024. Date to be confirmed.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: