

AUDIT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 21 APRIL 2010

Present: Mr M Bonner, Independent Chairman;
Councillors: P C Connolly; Mrs J Hully; R Pitt; G Scurrah and
J G Sunderland.

An Apology for absence was received from Councillor D Wilson.

Officers: K Parker, Acting Corporate Director, Quality of Life; A Clark, Accountancy Services Manager; M Robinson, Audit and Fraud Prevention Officer; K Dowle, Fraud Prevention Team Leader; C Willoughby, Member Services Technical Support Officer;

Also in attendance: R McGahon, Audit Commission and Councillor J Bowman

AU 115 Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2010 be signed by the chairman as a correct record, subject to it being shown that Councillor Mrs J Hully declared a personal and prejudicial interest due to being in receipt of Housing Benefits.

AU 116 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Mrs J Hully declared a personal and prejudicial interest due to being in receipt of Concessionary Travel and Housing Benefits. Councillor P Connolly declared a personal and prejudicial interest due to being in receipt of Concessionary Travel.

AU 117 Fraud Section Quarterly Monitoring Report

The Acting Corporate Director, Quality of Life introduced the Fraud Section Quarterly Monitoring report to Members and highlighted the good performance by the Fraud Team. Committee was advised that all targets set for the Fraud Section had been exceeded.

Members were advised that due to the forthcoming changes to Shared Services, the format of future reports to Committee may change.

In the discussion that followed, Members asked how much had been recovered and were advised that this was the responsibility of the Benefits Team, the figures being reported elsewhere.

Members discussed the staff implications resulting from Shared Services and were advised that this was being reviewed.

Committee noted the very good results produced by the Fraud Section and asked for their thanks to be passed on to the staff concerned.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

AU 118 Audit Services Quarterly Monitoring Report

Consideration was given to the Audit Services Monitoring Report for the Fourth Quarter 2009/10, which was introduced by the Acting Corporate Director, Quality of Life. At this point an Audit Recommendations – Use of Resources Report December 2009 was distributed to Members.

A very good performance was highlighted by the Audit Section.

During the discussion that followed, Members stated that the report was very encouraging. Members also questioned the interest rate being paid on long term loans and were assured that the interest was less than paying an early redemption penalty. It was also stated that the arrangements were under constant review.

Members also discussed the Housing Renewal Policy and Improvement Grants.

Committee noted the very good results produced by the Audit Section and asked for their thanks to be passed on to the staff concerned.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

AU 119 Statement of Accounts 2009/10 – 2009 SORP and Accounting Policies

A Clark, Accountancy Services Manager presented a report to Members informing them of revisions to the 2009/10 Statement of Accounts, due to the implementation of the 2009 Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP). The report also provided the draft Accounting Policies for Member's consideration for inclusion within the 2009/10 Statement of Accounts.

During the discussion that followed, Members were advised that guidance from the Audit Commission was still awaited and it was hoped this would be received shortly.

RESOLVED - That

- a) the changes to the Statement of Accounts required by the 2009 SORP be noted,
- b) the draft Accounting Policies outlined in Appendix A and B of the report be noted, and
- c) the appropriate Accounting Policy (either A or B) be included in the 2009/10 Statement of Accounts and that this be dependent upon the outcome of discussions with the Audit Commission.

AU 120 Closure of Accounts 2009/10 (Update)

Committee received an update from the Accountancy Services Manager on the Closure of Accounts 2009/10.

Members were advised that although deadlines remained very tight, improvements made in processes and the comprehensive closedown plan put in place, have significantly improved the Council's performance against the 2008/09 closedown.

Completion of the Financial Statements of Accounts accurately and to deadline was an achievable target.

RESOLVED - That the update be noted.

AU 121 Statement from R McGahon, Audit Commission

At this point in the meeting, Mr McGahon advised Committee on the future of External Audit.

For information only, Members were advised that at present the Audit Commission utilise the services of Audit Practice to conduct the external audit of the Council and this will be the case for the 2009/10 and 2010/11 accounts. After that time it is the Audit Commission's intension to outsource to a major audit firm.

AU 122 Annual Audit Plan 2010/11

Consideration was given to a report setting out the first draft Audit Plan for 2010/11 based on the anticipated resources available under the proposed internal audit shared service arrangement.

RESOLVED - That the draft Internal Audit Plan be approved and the intention to update the Audit Plan once the Shared Service structure is implemented be noted.

The meeting closed at 3:40pm

Chairman

Date