

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Tuesday 30th June 2009

COUNCILLORS PRESENT FOR THE WHOLE OF THE MEETING: The Chair (Councillor Hazell), the Vice-Chair (Councillor Simmons), Councillors Brundin, Darke, Keen and Van Nooijen.

OFFICERS PRESENT FOR THE WHOLE OF THE MEETING: The Chief Executive (Peter Sloman), The Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Jeremy Thomas), The Head of Finance (Sarah Fogden), The Head of Human Resources (Simon Howick), Mark Preston (Human Resources), Anna Winship (Finance), William Reed (Legal and Democratic).

Richard Bacon and Christopher Dickens (Pricewaterhouse Coopers); Maria Grindley (Audit Commission).

OFFICERS PRESENT FOR PART OF THE MEETING: Tony Payne (Environmental Development).

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR THE COUNCIL YEAR 2009/10

Councillor Hazell was elected Chair for the Council Year 2009/10.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR FOR THE COUNCIL YEAR 2009/10

Councillor Simmons was elected Vice Chair for the Council Year 2009/10.

3. OUTGOING CHAIR

The Chief Executive expressed his appreciation of the work performed by Councillor Brundin during the time he had chaired the Committee. Members associated themselves with the Chief Executive's remarks.

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Brown. No substitute was appointed.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests by members present.

6. INTERNAL RISK ASSESSMENT AND AUDIT PLAN 2009/10

PriceWaterhouse Coopers (PwC), the Council's internal auditors, submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

PwC explained how the proposals for audit and assurance contained in the Audit Plan would be worked up (namely some further consultation, final approval, agreement of project sponsors for each review, timing, extent and scoping of reviews).

In response to a question PwC explained the difference between and reasons for a full scope and a limited scope review. The different approaches and choices related in part to how recently work had been done in a system area and the extent of risk inherent in the system area. PwC also referred to their limited understanding of risk management processes at present within the Council and that, as they gained a greater understanding and knowledge, the Audit Plan would be adjusted. In response to a further question about emergency work, PwC said that this time could come from the 35 audit management days (OP 4.3).

Resolved to approve the internal audit risk assessment and draft operational plan for 2009/10, noting that work still needed to be done on it before final approval.

7. REGENERATION INSPECTION

The Audit Commission, the Council's external auditors, submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved:-

- (1) (a) To note the generally positive findings in the report, and to thank officers for their work;
- (b) To note that officers were actively pursuing the report's recommendations;
- (2) To ask the Audit Commission to report back upon its view that value for money considerations lacked robustness and how the Commission felt this manifested itself;
- (3) To note the references in the report to area working, and to area committees.

8. AUDIT COMMISSION PROGRESS REPORT

Resolved:-

- (1) To receive and note the contents of a report (previously circulated and now appended) of the Audit Commission;

- (2) To request the Audit Commission to bring back to the Committee's September meeting a schedule of periodic report scheduling.

9. AUDIT COMMISSION 2009/10 AUDIT FEE LETTER

Resolved to receive and note the contents of the Audit Commission's audit fee letter (previously circulated and now appended).

10. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER – QUARTER ONE UPDATE

The Heads of Finance submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Sarah Fogden referred to an additional risk that was to be escalated from a service area risk to a corporate risk, namely the Barton Elderly People's Control Centre (to be tendered shortly).

Sarah Fogden also said that the awareness of risk assessment and the process of risk assessment were becoming more part of the natural order of things for the Council's officers and thus more embedded.

Resolved to note the report.

11. MONEY LAUNDERING POLICY

The Heads of Finance and the Investigation Manager submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved to approve the Money Laundering Policy and to ask the Heads of Finance to indicate what changes had been made to it (paragraph 1 of the report refers).

12. HEALTH AND SAFETY AUDIT – PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION PLAN

The Head of Human Resources submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved:-

- (1) To note the contents of the report;
- (2) To thank staff for work carried out;
- (3) That a report back be made to the Committee's January meeting on progress on all matters in the action plan, addressing in particular:-
 - (a) Outstanding leisure/parks assessments;

- (b) Matters relating to service areas reporting to the corporate safety advisor that assessments had been completed and were in place;
- (c) A comparison of our performance with another like local authority (and explaining the numbers in Appendix 2(b) to the report in lay persons' terms;
- (d) The placing of risk assessment in a readily accessible place on the intranet.

13. ANNUAL REPORT - DRAFT

The Heads of Finance and the Policy, Performance and Communications Manager, submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved:-

- (1) To note the contents of the report;
- (2) To authorise the Chair and Vice-Chair with the Heads of Finance and the Chief Executive to finally agree the report in its various formats.

14. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services submitted the Annual Governance Statement (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved to approve the Annual Governance Statement.

15. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Heads of Finance submitted the Statement of Accounts together with a covering report. They circulated revised pages for the Statement that related to adjustments as a result, in part, of a double entry for the disposal of the Abbey Place car park.

Resolved to approve the Statement of Accounts for 2008/09, to note that it included within it the Annual Governance Statement, and to commend the Statements to Council.

16. TAXI LICENSING AUDIT – ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Head of Environmental Development submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved:-

- (1) To note the contents of the report;
- (2) To thank officers for pursuing recommendations in the action plan ahead of recommended timescales.

17. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Resolved to note that the Committee would meet at 5.00 pm in the Town Hall as follows for the remainder of the 2009/10 Council Year:-

Thursday 24th September 2009
Thursday 24th November 2009
Tuesday 26th January 2010
Tuesday 23rd March 2010
Tuesday 27th April 2010

18. MINUTES

Resolved that the minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of the Committee held on 28th April 2009 be confirmed as a correct record.

19. MATTERS EXEMPT FROM PUBLICATION

Resolved, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 that the press and public be excluded from the remaining item of business on the grounds that their presence would involve the likely disclosure of information as described in paragraphs 2, 3 and 7 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and to record that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm. It resolved to exclude the press and public at 6.23 pm. The meeting closed at 6.24 pm.

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20. ALLEGATIONS OF INTERNAL FRAUD, INVESTIGATIONS AND OUTCOMES

Resolved to receive and note the contents of a report (previously circulated and now appended) of the Heads of Finance.