

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**AUDIT COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

**Date: Monday 24 March 2014**

**Time: 6.00 p.m.**

**Place: Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage**

**Present:** Councillors: L Chester (Chair), J Gardner (Vice Chair),  
P Bibby, C Latif and R Parker CC.

**Also Present:** B Mitchell (Independent Member)  
P Westerman (Grant Thornton)  
T Barnett (Shared Internal Audit Service)

**Started:** 6.00 p.m.

**Ended:** 6.55 p.m.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor D Cullen.

There were no declarations of interest.

**2. MINUTES – AUDIT COMMITTEE – 3 FEBRUARY 2014**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 3 February 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**3. EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN**

The Committee had before it the Audit Plan for the year ending 31 March 2014 from the Council's Auditors, Grant Thornton.

In reply to a question the Committee was advised of the processes undertaken for a 'walkthrough' audit and of the methodology behind the selection of transactions for more detailed investigation.

In reply to a further question the Committee was advised of the interrogation processes for journal entries.

The Committee acknowledged that the Council Audit fee remained unchanged and that the Grant Certification fee was in line with previous years. No fees had been paid for 'Other Services' although the Council was in negotiation with Grant Thornton for work covering the Single Status agreement.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Audit Plan 2013/2014, as received from the Council's external auditors, Grant Thornton, be noted.

#### **4. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee received an update to the Internal Audit Progress Report and was advised that as of 24 March 92% of the 2013/2014 Audit Plan days had been delivered. Of the 14 projects listed in the report as being at the Fieldwork stage, 6 were now at draft report and 2 were at the quality review stage with a further 4 expected to be at that stage by week ending 28 March. Overall there was confidence that the target of 95% project completion would be achieved.

The Committee was further advised that in early April there would be a meeting to discuss the Audit Plan for 2014/2015 and it was intended to change the audit planning and reporting protocol from a quarterly to a monthly format. This would permit more accurate monitoring of progress against the plan and prevent the perceived rush of activity at the end of the year.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

#### **5. INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN.**

The Committee had before it a report to provide Members with the proposed Stevenage Internal Audit Plan for 2014/2015.

In reply to a question it was confirmed that the Audit Plan would be reformatted to the proposed monthly format and presented to the Committee at its next meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Stevenage Borough Council Internal Audit Plan 2014/2015 be approved.

#### **6. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

The Assistant Director (Finance) presented a report to advise the Committee on the Council's self-assessment against the requirements that form the six key principles of corporate governance in the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework; to update the Committee on progress made against actions identified for delivery in 2013/2014; and to advise of actions planned for 2014/2015 to enhance the Council's corporate governance arrangements.

The Committee was advised that the Council was just under 90% compliant and that an action plan, attached as an appendix to the report, had been agreed to address areas of non-compliance.

It was **RESOLVED**

1. The Council's self-assessment against the requirements that form the six key principles of corporate governance in the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework, as set out in Appendix A to this report be noted.
2. That the progress made against actions identified for delivery in 2013/14, and actions planned for 2014/15 to enhance the Council's corporate governance arrangements, as identified in Appendix A be noted.

## **7. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS.**

The Committee was advised that a training session on Treasury Management would be arranged for members of the Audit Committee and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The training would be held at Daneshill House and the invitation would be extended to Members of neighbouring authorities.

The Committee was advised that as a result of a discussion at the Executive on 18 March a report explaining how the Council allocated capital resources in the Programme with due regard to the use of Capital Receipts on short life assets and financing costs would be presented at the next meeting of the Audit Committee.

## **8. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That under Section 100 (A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1-7 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by SI 2006 No.88.

2. That having considered the reasons for the following item being in Part II it be determined that maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighed the public interest in disclosure.

## **PART II**

### **9. STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER – QUARTER 3**

The Committee had before it the Strategic Risk Register for Quarter 3 of 2013/2014.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

**10. URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

**Chair**