

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Audit Committee Minutes

Date: 16th January 2007

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

Present: Members: Councillors, J.R. Raynor (Chair), J.G. Gardner (Vice-Chair) and G. Clark. Independent Member: Mr. B. Mitchell.

Start Time: 6.00pm

End Time: 7.15pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor A.T. Turner.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES - Wednesday, 27th September, 2006

The Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on Wednesday, 27th September 2006, having been circulated, were taken as read, and it was RESOLVED that they be signed as a correct record subject to Councillor Turner being deleted from the attendance list.

The Head of Finance updated the Committee on follow up work that had been carried out since the audit of our car park income. Members were advised that elements of the Management Action Plan previously reported as accepted, had not been actioned. However, subsequent assurances had been received that appropriate processes were now being kept up to date, and officers were undertaking further process mapping work, which it was hoped, would ensure that the processes were as efficient as possible and this work might have benefits that could be cascaded across other revenue generation areas of work.

The Chair also commented on the useful training workshops, which had been held before Christmas. It was hoped that further training could be arranged later in the year.

3 DATA QUALITY AUDIT REPORT

Officers submitted a report advising Members of the Audit Commission feedback on the Data Quality Review.

Members were pleased to note that the Audit Commission report concluded that the Council had robust arrangements in place to secure the quality of data. The Audit Commission also identified several items of 'notable practice' when reviewing management arrangements. In particular, the improved

performance management and monitoring arrangements over key performance indicators.

As a result of the audit, the Audit Commission identified the Council's strengths, and areas for improvement. Members noted an action plan addressing the recommendations in the feedback.

It was RESOLVED that the Audit Commission feedback on the Data Quality Review be noted.

4 BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN STATUTORY REPORT

Officers submitted a report informing Members about the Audit Commission Statutory Best Value Performance Plan Report. The Audit Commission is required by the Local Government Act 1999 and the Code of Audit Practice to carry out an audit of the Council's Best Value Performance Plan.

Members were pleased to note that the District Auditor had not identified any matters to report to the Council that prevent the conclusion that the plan had been prepared and published in accordance with Statutory requirements and statutory guidance.

It was RESOLVED that the Audit Commission BVPP Statutory Report be noted.

5 VERBAL UPDATE FROM HEAD OF FINANCE ON:

FINAL ACCOUNTS

The Head of Finance advised that the 2004/05 Accounts and the 2005/06 Accounts had now been signed off by the Audit Commission.

USE OF 2006/07 RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

The Assistant Chief Executive (Finance) updated the Committee on the Use of Resources Assessment for 2006/07. Members noted that the score for the Authority was currently being considered and reviewed by the Audit Commission. The Council would be informed of the result on 12th March 2007.

CAPITALISATION ISSUES

It was noted that new guidance had been issued to all officers involved in capitalisation issues and the matter would be raised at the Corporate Capital Review Group.

BANK RECONCILIATION

Officers advised that since the problems experienced following the installation of the financial system the Council had changed the way cash was processed and that existing manual systems had been altered. Members were pleased to note that the bank reconciling issues had been resolved.

6 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

Members noted the latest Strategic Risk Register for Stevenage Borough Council. A number of recommendations to improve the Council's systems for managing risk have been made from the Audit Commission, Comprehensive Performance Assessment Inspection and most recently as part of the CPA Use of Resources Review.

It was RESOLVED that the Strategic Risk Register be noted.

7 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT - OFFICER'S EXPENSES

The Audit Partnership Manager submitted a report providing Members with internal audit assurance in relation to Officer's expenses.

A revised Management Action Plan was circulated as the responsible officer for credit card administration had changed recently and the Officer taking responsibility forward had updated the plan.

An audit of Officers Expenses was carried out as part of the 2005/06-audit plan. The audit was concerned with reviewing the four main processes available to Officers for claiming expenses; petty cash, travel and subsistence, mileage allowances and corporate credit card.

Following discussion, it was RESOLVED that the internal audit reports and completed management action plans be noted.

8 URGENT PART I BUSINESS

None.

9 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

None.

10 URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.