

MINUTES of a meeting of the AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on WEDNESDAY, 25 MARCH 2015

Present: Councillor T Neilson (Chairman)

Councillors J Cotterill, D Everitt and N Smith

In Attendance: Councillors

Officers: Mr R Bowmer, Ms L Cotton, Mrs R Wallace and Miss E Warhurst

External Audit: Mr J Cornett

30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A Bridges, D Howe, G Jones, C Large and A C Saffell.

31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

32. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2014.

It was moved by Councillor T Neilson, seconded by Councillor N Smith and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2014 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

33. STANDARDS AND ETHICS - QUARTER 3 REPORT

The Head of Legal and Support Services presented the report to Members and advised that one complaint had been received relating to a District Councillor, which has been concluded. Members were informed that there had been a 34 percent reduction in Freedom of Information requests during quarter three compared to the same period in 2013/14. It was also highlighted that between quarter one and quarter three, there had been a 10 percent increase in Freedom of Information requests overall.

It was moved by Councillor T Neilson, seconded by Councillor N Smith and

RESOVLED THAT:

The report be received and noted.

34. WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The Head of Legal and Support Services presented the report and asked Members to recommend its adoption to Cabinet.

In response to a question from Councillor N Smith, the Head of Legal and Support Services gave assurances that complaints could be made anonymously if desired.

Chairman's initials

Councillor T Neilson asked if it was agreed that a complaint be kept confidential and then the identity was revealed, would it be covered under the revised policy. The Head of Legal and Support Services explained that in some circumstances, investigations would lead to other officers becoming involved which could not be avoided. If someone did disclose confidential information it would be dealt with under the disciplinary policy.

Councillor N Smith asked for an explanation as to how a public complaint would be dealt with as this policy only related to members of staff. The Chairman asked for a response to be provided to Councillor N Smith outside of the meeting.

It was moved by Councillor T Neilson, seconded by Councillor J Cotterill and

RECOMMENDED THAT:

Cabinet adopt the draft revised policy.

RESOLVED THAT:

The report be noted.

35. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT - FEBRUARY 2015

The Senior Auditor presented the report to Members and highlighted the Audit Plan progress.

In response to a question from Councillor N Smith, the Senior Auditor reported that she felt the service was doing very well especially considering the size of the team. She was confident that when the external assessment was conducted, they would have a positive outcome.

The Chairman commented that he supported the timing suggested for completing the work as it was needed as soon as possible.

It was moved by Councillor T Neilson, seconded by Councillor N Smith and

RESOLVED THAT:

The report be noted.

36. 2015/16 INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL PLAN

The Senior Auditor presented the report and referred Members to the planned audit areas that could be added to if they felt anything was missing. She added that the plan was flexible and could be amended if Members had any concerns.

The Chairman asked if it was possible to indicate on the non coverage areas when it was previously audited or reviewed. The Senior Auditor agreed to include the information in future reports.

It was moved by Councillor T Neilson, seconded by Councillor D Everitt and

RESOLVED THAT:

(a) The report be noted.

(b) The 2015/16 Internal Audit Annual Plan be approved.

Chairman's initials

37. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY REPORT - APRIL TO FEBRUARY 2015

The Head of Finance presented the report to Members.

Councillor N Smith asked how the recent report in the press regarding the potential drop in the base rate to zero percent would affect the Council. The Head of Finance explained that the borrowing was at a fixed interest rate so it would not affect the expenditure budget; however the investments had varied interest rates so for a short time there could be a reduction. Members were assured that as the investments were low level it would not have a major affect.

In response to a further question from Councillor N Smith, the Head of Finance reported that as the Council did not trade with Europe and all investments were in sterling, if anything were to happen to the Euro it would not have an impact.

It was moved by Councillor T Neilson, seconded by Councillor J Cotterill and

RESOLVED THAT:

The report be noted.

38. EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2014-15

Mr J Cornett, External Auditor, presented the report and drew Members attention to the three key financial statements audit risks.

It was moved by Councillor T Neilson, seconded by Councillor D Everitt and

RESOLVED THAT:

The External Audit Plan 2014 – 15 be approved.

39. COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

By affirmation of the meeting it was

RESOLVED THAT:

The work plan be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.02 pm