

Audit Committee



Date	Monday 21 July 2008
Venue	Town Hall, St. Annes
Committee members	Councillor John Singleton (Chairman) Councillor Keith Hyde (Vice-Chairman) Councillors Brenda Ackers, Ben Aitken, David Chedd, Maxine Chew, Fabian Craig-Wilson, Louis Rigby, Elaine Silverwood
Other Councillors	None
Officers	Ian Curtis, Lyndsey Lacey
Other Attendees	None

1. Declarations of interest

Members were reminded that any personal/prejudicial interests should be declared as required by the Council's Code of Conduct adopted in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000.

2. Confirmation of minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 30 June 2008 as a correct record for signature by the chairman.

3. Substitute members

The following substitutions were reported under council procedure rule 22.3:

Councillor Ben Aitken for Councillor Simon Renwick

Councillor Fabian Craig-Wilson for Councillor Paul Rigby

Councillor Brenda Ackers for Councillor John Coombes

Councillor Elaine Silverwood for Councillor Elizabeth Oades

Councillor David Chedd for Councillor Paul Hayhurst

Councillor Maxine Chew for Councillor Kath Harper

4. Constitution Refresh

At the request of the Audit Committee at their meeting on 30 June, Ian Curtis (Head of Legal Services) presented an updated report on proposed elements contained within the constitution refresh which required further clarification.

Mr Curtis reminded the Committee that the council's constitution needed to be re-adopted by the council each year. The previous report highlighted some proposed changes to the constitution and the current report provided further clarification on some issues raised at the previous meeting.

The issues raised at the previous meeting included:

- Chief Executive's Delegations. Clarity was sought on where authority currently rested for approving applications for voluntary redundancies
- Reasons for changes to delegations to executive managers regarding the pay and grading procedures
- The extent of powers to be delegated to all executive managers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
- Merits of changing the period of notice for elected members submitting notices of motion from 7 days to 10 days
- Limiting the rights of members to speak on motions at council meetings to 5 minutes from 10
- The use of the closure motion at council meetings.
- The suggestion that Portfolio Holders should remain at 7 as opposed to the proposed reduction to 6.
- Possible changes to the participation arrangements at Cabinet

Councillor Chew raised a further issue at the meeting which related to the way the council deals with amendments council meetings. She suggested that it may be more transparent if the council operated a similar system to the Lancashire County Council model whereby all amendments were required to be put in writing and presented at the meeting. A vote was taken on this proposal and it was subsequently lost.

Mr Curtis addressed all of the issues raised and a full debate took place after which it was RESOLVED to recommend that Council re-adopt the constitution as previously circulated incorporating the changes highlighted in the report subject to the following modifications:

- (i) To change the period of notice for elected members submitting notices of motion from 7 days to 8 days
- (ii) To retain the rights of members to speak on motions at council meetings to 10 minutes
- (iii) To request that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Committee together with the Head of Legal Services make arrangements to attend a LCC council meeting with a view to reporting back to committee on the LCC procedure for dealing with amendments at council meetings.

(Councillor Chew requested that her name be recorded as having voted against the decision to retain the requirement for a simple majority to vote through closure motions)
