



MINUTES

Audit and Standards Committee

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| Date: | Thursday, 18 January 2018. |
| Venue: | Town Hall, St Annes. |
| Committee Members Present: | Councillor John Singleton JP (Chairman) Councillor David Donaldson (Vice-Chairman) Councillors Delma Collins, Peter Collins, Edward Nash, Graeme Neale, Louis Rigby, Roger Small. |
| Officers Present: | Tracy Morrison, Paul O'Donoghue, Tara Walsh. |

1. Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded that any disclosable pecuniary interests should be declared as required by the Localism Act 2011 and any personal or prejudicial interests should be declared as required by the Council's Code of Conduct for Members. No interests were declared on this occasion.

2. Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 16 November 2017 and 23 November 2017 as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

3. Substitute Members

There were no substitutes.

Standard Information Item

4. Issues Raised with the Monitoring Officer

The Committee noted the Monitoring Officer's periodic report regarding standards issues raised since the previous report in September 2017. Members were advised that 2 Borough matters had been brought to the attention of the Monitoring Officer.

Audit Decision Items

5. KPMG Certification of Claims and Returns – Annual Report 2016/17

Paul O'Donoghue, Chief Financial Officer, presented the certification of claims and returns annual report for 2016/17. He explained that the letter presented to the committee confirmed the certification of one claim, the Housing Benefit Subsidy claim, for £18.962m. It was noted there were no issues or errors with the claims, and the claim was certified unqualified and without amendment. In addition, Mr. O'Donoghue advised that there were no recommendations for the council arising from certifying the claim.

It was therefore RESOLVED:

1. To note the contents of the Certification of Claims and Returns annual report for 2016/17.

2. To formally thank the Finance team for their work on the Certification of Claims and Returns annual report.

6. Public Speaking

(Councillor Louis Rigby arrived for the meeting in time for the discussion of the item)

By way of introduction, Tracy Morrison, Director of Resources, explained that in June 2017 the committee deferred two separate reports regarding a review of the public speaking arrangements. Firstly for the arrangements at Planning committee and in addition, the more general arrangements for other committees. Ms. Morrison went on to advise that a key purpose of the item was to invite members to consider incorporating the public speaking procedures for the Planning Committee into the constitution. Furthermore, the report outlined the option to merge all the public speaking arrangements for the Council and its various committees into one composite section within the constitution for ease of reference. The proposed article was attached to the agenda papers.

Members were advised that at the previous Audit and Standards committee meeting, a number of options regarding the arrangements for public speaking at committee were outlined. These proposals came as a result of the consultation with members and officers. These options were included within paragraph 6 of the report for member's comments.

The Committee also reconsidered a request put forward by the Chairman of the Planning Committee with respect to when Town and Parish Councils request matters that otherwise be determined under delegated authority, be presented for debate instead, that they should be represented in some guise, either by a representative of that council or an individual from the locality in order for this to take place. Otherwise the matter would stand to be put to the vote without discussion. Members of the Audit and Standards Committee felt that 'representation' could be expanded to incorporate a Parish Clerk within its meaning. There was also a debate about whether dual hatted Borough members who were also Town/Parish Council members, could represent their respective Parishes. Ms. Morrison advised that this would be possible under the Code of Conduct but it was recognized that some Parishes would be disadvantaged by such an arrangement. It was decided that the District Parish Liaison Group should be consulted on its views regarding the matter.

Following a full discussion, it was AGREED to:

1. Recommend to Full Council to adopt Article 15 - Public Speaking at meetings of the Council and its Committees, as outlined in appendix 1, and;
2. Refer the matter relating to matters requested for debate at the Planning Committee by Town and Parish Councils, and suggested changes to this convention, to the District Parish Liaison Committee for debate and a report be brought back thereon in due course.

Audit Information Item

7. Appointment of External Auditors from 2018/19 Financial Year – Update

The committee was presented with an update in regards to the appointment of the External Auditor to the Council from 2018/19. It was noted that in December 2017 Deloitte LLP had been appointed as external auditor for a five-year period, commencing with the audit of accounts for 2018/19.

The committee noted the report.

8. Mid-Year Updated on the Strategic Risk Register

The committee noted the mid-year update of the risks contained within the Strategic Risk Register, which provided members with oversight of all strategic risks including those managed by other committees.

9. Business Continuity Update

This Information report provided members with an update on progress made in relation to the business continuity arrangements and plans.

10. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000: Authorisations

In line with the requirements to report on a quarterly basis regarding the use of covert surveillance and covert human intelligence sources, the information report advised that in the quarter to January 2018, there had been no authorised operations.

Next meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee

At the conclusion of this meeting, the Chairman advised members that the next meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee would consider the usual internal audit decision items.

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