

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee **(to be confirmed at the next meeting)**

Date: Monday, 23 June 2014

Venue: Collingwood Room - Civic Offices

PRESENT: T G Knight
(Chairman)

L Keeble
(Vice-Chairman)

Councillors: P J Davies, N R Gregory, Miss T G Harper, D L Steadman and
D J Norris (deputising for P W Whittle, JP)

**Also
Present:**



1. APOLOGIES

An apology of absence was received from P W Whittle, JP.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 10 March 2014 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Suzanne Smith and Andy Jefford from Mazars (Internal Auditors).

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISCLOSURES OF ADVICE OR DIRECTIONS

There were no declarations of interest from members in accordance with Standing Orders and the Council's Code of Conduct.

5. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations made at this meeting.

MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR CONFIRMATION

6. REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Finance and Resources which reviewed the Introductory Statue of the Regulations and Financial Regulation 3 – Responsibilities of Other Officers.

RESOLVED that the Committee recommends to Council that the proposed changes to these regulations as set out in Appendix B and D to the report be approved.

DECISIONS MADE UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

7. QUARTERLY AUDIT REPORT

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Finance and Resources on the Quarterly Audit report.

At the Invitation of the Chairman, Andy Jefford from Mazars, presented the report to the Committee and took questions from members.

RESOLVED that the Committee notes the progress of the Contractor Internal Audit Plan, attached as Appendix A to this report.

8. HEAD OF AUDIT'S ANNUAL OPINION

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Finance and Resources on the Head of Audit's Annual Opinion.

Members noted that there were no minimal or limited assurances issued this year, there were no errors on expenditure or income collection noted during audits and that there were no new essential recommendations.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report are noted as a source of evidence for the 2013/14 Annual Governance Statement.

9. COUNTER FRAUD INVESTIGATION PROGRESS

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Finance and Resources on Counter Fraud Investigation progress. The report summarised the number and type of investigations that have been carried out into suspected cases of fraud that have arisen during 2013/14.

The Head of Audit and Assurance highlighted the biggest change in the report which related to the way in which benefit fraud will be dealt with from October 2014 with the introduction of the SFIS (Single Fraud Investigation Service). This will mean that the DWP (Department of Work and Pensions) will now become the lead authority on Housing and Council Tax Benefit fraud investigations, and as a result Fareham Borough Council's fraud caseload will transfer to them on 1 October 2014.

RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.

10. COUNTER FRAUD STRATEGY PROGRESS

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Finance and Resources which provided an update on the Counter Fraud Strategy work in progress or carried out in the last 6 months.

The Head of Audit and Assurance presented the report to the Committee and highlighted the results of the Committee's request from its meeting on 25 November 2013 regarding incentives for reporting of fraud. The Chairman expressed his thanks for the work and research undertaken in regards to this request.

Several members raised concerns regarding the right of succession in relation to Council properties, it was agreed that this is an issue that would need to be addressed by the Health and Housing Committee.

RESOLVED that the Committee notes the progress made to date as part of the Counter Fraud Strategy.

11. REVIEW OF COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Finance and Resources which reviewed the current work programme for the Committee.

RESOLVED that the Committee approved the Work Programme for the remainder of the year, as set out in Appendix A of the report.

12. REVIEW OF MEMBERS TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT AND DETERMINATION OF PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Finance and Resources on a review of Member's training & development and the determination of the programme.

Councillor Miss Harper enquired if the information provided at training sessions could be put into a directory for all Councillors to access, with the information being listed by department or subject matter. The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that she would make arrangements for this to be put into action.

Councillor Davies stated that he felt that all training sessions should have a suitable learning outcome that would benefit all members. The Head of Democratic Services reassured the Committee that all member training sessions are designed with an appropriate learning outcome.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

- (a) notes the content of the report and approves the framework for members' training and development in 2014/15 which is set out in Appendix A of this report; and
- (b) agrees to a training needs survey to be circulated to all members in February 2015 and the results be reported to this Committee.

(The meeting started at 6:00pm
and ended at 7:27pm).