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Meeting	Audit & Governance Committee
Date	6 November 2013
Present	Councillors Potter (Chair), Brooks (Vice-Chair), Ayre, Barnes, Burton and Mr Whiteley (Co-opted Non-Statutory Member)
Apologies	Councillors Watson and Wiseman

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## **Part A - Matters Dealt With Under Delegated Powers**

### **30. Declarations of Interest**

Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, any prejudicial interests or any disclosable pecuniary interests which they may have in respect of business on the agenda. Councillor Barnes declared a personal interest in agenda item 8 (Corporate Risk Monitor 2) in respect of references to the Community Stadium, as he was involved with one of the tenant clubs. He took no part in the discussion on that item.

### **31. Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of 26 September 2013 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

### **32. Public Participation**

It was reported that there was one registration to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Ms Gwen Swinburn raised the following issues:

- In respect of agenda item 5 (Protocol for Webcasting, Filming and Recording of Council Meetings), she stated that she welcomed the introduction of webcasting and hoped that it would be extended to other meetings, for example scrutiny.
- In respect of agenda item 4 (Forward Plan), Ms Swinburn requested that there be an opportunity for citizens to have

input in the work that was taking place in respect of Council Procedure Rules.

### 33. **Forward Plan**

Consideration was given to a paper which presented the future plan of reports expected to be presented to the Committee during the forthcoming year to September 2014.

Members were asked to identify any further items they wished to add to the Forward Plan.

Noting the request that had been made under the item on Public Participation, Members agreed that it would be useful for there to be some input by members of the public in the work that was taking place regarding Council Procedure rules.

- Resolved:
- (i) That the committee's Forward Plan for the period up to September 2014 be noted.
  - (ii) That it be recommended that there be an opportunity for citizen involvement in the work that was taking place to review Council Procedure rules.<sup>1</sup>

- Reasons:
- (i) To ensure the committee receives regular reports in accordance with the functions of an effective audit committee and can seek assurances on any aspect of the Council's internal control environment in accordance with its roles and responsibilities.
  - (ii) To seek opportunities for the views of citizens to be taken into account in the review of the procedures.

#### Action Required

1. Forward the request to those involved in the review of the procedures

AD

### 34. **Protocol for Webcasting, Filming and Recording of Council Meetings**

Members considered a report which presented a draft protocol for the Webcasting, Filming and Recording of Council meetings.

The draft protocol incorporated suggestions put forward at the Audit and Governance Committee meeting held on 26 September 2013.

Members suggested minor amendments to the wording of the protocol including:

- Paragraph 7 – amend to read “Chairs have...”
- Paragraph 8 – greater clarity required
- Paragraph 14 – remove the wording “as our webcasts are accessible by people of different ages”
- Paragraph 15 – replace “close-up images” with “identifiable images”

Members expressed their support for the protocol and recommended that it be introduced prior to the next Full Council meeting, subject to the Chair and Vice-Chair being satisfied that the final wording reflected the requested changes put forward by the Committee.

Resolved: That the introduction of the webcasting protocol be supported in principle and the Chief Executive use her delegated powers, in conjunction with the Chair and Vice-Chair, to implement the protocol as soon as possible subject to the minor changes identified above.

Reason: The protocol strikes a balance between allowing webcasting of meetings with the needs of those who either do not wish to be filmed or are young people.

Action Required

1. Finalise the protocol for approval

SH/AD

**35. Mazars Draft Annual Audit Letter**

Members considered a report which presented the Annual Audit Letter which summarised the 2012/13 audit of the Council.

The Chair expressed her appreciation of the work that officers had carried out and which had been reflected in the key messages outlined on page 3 of the letter from Mazars.

Resolved: That the Annual Audit Letter 2012/13 be noted.

Reason: It is a statutory requirement that the Annual Audit Letter is issued on completion of the audit.

**36. Treasury Management mid year Review and Prudential Indicators 2013/14**

Members considered a paper that presented the Treasury Management Mid Year Review and Prudential Indicators 2013/14 report. The information provided an update of treasury management activity for the first six months of 2013/14.

Officers went through the report with Members and clarified issues raised.

Resolved: That the Treasury Management Mid Year Review and Prudential Indicators 2013/14 be noted.

Reason: To ensure that those responsible for scrutiny and governance arrangements are updated on a regular basis and that those implementing policies and executing transactions have properly fulfilled their responsibilities with regard to delegation and reporting.

**37. Corporate Risk Monitor 2 (including directorate risks)**

Members considered a report that presented an update on the key corporate risks and highlighted in more detail any emerging risk issues with a view to Members considering any further information they would wish to receive on these matters.

Members noted the update on the highways risk management which had been provided at their request following efficiency savings which had been made within the Highways departments. Although Members had requested an update to ascertain whether those savings had had a detrimental impact on the numbers of claims received and the number that had been settled, it was acknowledged that sufficient time may not have elapsed to identify whether this was the case.

Members' attention was drawn to the Customer and Business Support Risk report (Annex B of the report).

Some Members expressed their concerns at the implications arising from Key Corporate Risk (KCR) 0016 Capital Programme (Financial Contribution from Tenant Clubs re the Community Stadium). They requested that further information on the risk management process in relation to this project be presented to the Committee.

- Resolved: (i) That the report be noted.
- (ii) That a report on the risk management process in relation to KCR 0016 be presented at the next meeting.

Reason: To provide assurance that the Authority is effectively understanding and managing its key risks.

### **38. Internal Audit Follow Up Report**

Members considered a report that set out the progress made by council departments in implementing actions agreed as part of internal audit work.

Members noted that the majority of agreed actions had been satisfactorily implemented and that the escalation process had been instigated in only three cases, none of which were priority 1.

Resolved: That the progress made in implementing internal audit agreed actions, as detailed in paragraphs 5-10 of the report, be noted.

Reason: To enable Members to fulfil their role in providing independent assurance on the Council's control environment.

### **39. Audit and Counter Fraud Monitoring Report**

Members considered a report that provided an update on progress made in delivering the internal audit work plan for 2013/14 and on current counter fraud activity.

Members questioned why problems had arisen in achieving the efficiencies intended in the Purchase to Pay system. Officers explained that progress had been made but that this had not

been at the rate that had been anticipated. This matter was, however, being addressed.

Resolved: That the progress made in delivering the 2013/14 internal audit work programme, and current counter fraud activity be noted.

Reason: To enable Members to consider the implications of audit and fraud findings.

#### **40. Internal Audit Charter**

Members considered a report which asked them to review the proposed internal audit charter and approve its adoption.

Members' attention was drawn to Appendix 2 of the report which outlined the relationship between the Audit and Governance Committee and internal audit.

Resolved: That the internal audit charter (annex 1 of the report) be approved.

Reason: In accordance with the responsibility of the committee to consider reports dealing with the management of the internal audit function, and to comply with proper practice for internal audit.

#### **41. Audit and Governance Committee Effectiveness - Action Plan Update**

Members considered a report that provided details of the progress made to address the items included in the effectiveness action plan.

Members agreed that it would be useful for training sessions to be arranged on topics related to the work of the committee. It was agreed that a training session on treasury management would be held prior to the commencement of the next meeting. The Chair encouraged Members to email her with suggested topics for other training sessions.

Members also agreed that efforts should be made to recruit a second independent person to the committee.

- Resolved:
- (i) That the progress made to address the items included in the effectiveness action plan (annex 1 of the report) be noted.
  - (ii) That, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, arrangements be made to hold a series of training sessions for the committee.
  - (iii) That officers, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, put in place arrangements to seek to appoint a second independent person to the committee.

Reason: To ensure that the Audit and Governance Committee remains effective.

## **Part B - Matters Referred to Council**

### **42. Review of the Petitions Scheme**

Members considered a report that sought their support for changes to the Petitions Scheme which had been in operation for the last three years.

Discussion took place regarding the proposed changes including:

- The inclusion of wording stating that the scheme did not cover petitions which respond to a public consultation organised by the Council. Officers explained that this proposed amendment would remove the situation whereby a petition could trigger a debate at both the consultation stage and then later at the point when the decision was made.
- The deletion of the provision to call an officer to account. Officers confirmed that, although this option was included in the current scheme, it had never been used. There were, however, other mechanisms by which an officer could be held to account.

Members suggested that the final sentence of the first paragraph on Securing a Full Council Debate be amended to read “This means that the issue(s) it raise(s) will be discussed at a meeting which all Councillors can attend and the views will be considered by the relevant decision-makers”.

Members also recommended that petition organisers be provided with the paragraph in the report detailing the action that could be taken if they believed that their petition had not been dealt with properly.

Councillor Ayre proposed and Councillor Brooks seconded that the draft scheme be amended to remove paragraph (c) under the section on petitions not covered by the scheme (i.e. respond to a public consultation organised by the Council). On being put to the vote the motion was lost.

Councillor Ayre then proposed and Councillor Brooks seconded that the draft scheme be amended to reinstate the provision to petition to call officers to account. On being put to the vote the motion was lost.

Recommended: That the revised scheme set out in the annex to the report be adopted as the Council's arrangements for handling petitions subject to the final sentence of the first paragraph on Securing a Full Council Debate being amended to read "This means that the issue(s) it raise(s) will be discussed at a meeting which all Councillors can attend and the views will be considered by the relevant decision-makers".

Reason: To ensure that the Council has clear arrangements in place to deal with petitions.

Councillor Potter, Chair  
[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.45 pm].