



website: www.wiltshire.gov.uk

FINAL ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a MEETING of the FINAL ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE held at COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE on WEDNESDAY 25 MARCH 2009.

PRESENT:

Mrs JA Scott (Chairman), Mrs NS Bryant, Mr PCB Coleman, Mr A Davis, Mr P Fuller, Mr JR Henning, Mr JP Johnson and Mr A Molland.

-
1. **Apologies** Apologies for absence were received from Mr C Newbury, Mr RT Rogers, Mrs JH Seager and Mr RS While.

2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Resolved: To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2008.

3. **Annual Audit and Inspection Letter 2007/08** The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive which drew attention to the Audit Commission's Annual Audit and Inspection letter.

Miss M Watson from the Audit Commission and Mr D Gilbert from KPMG answered Members' questions.

Resolved: To request the Officers to draw the attention of Wiltshire Council's new Audit Committee to the contents of this report with a request that it considers those matters relevant to the work programme of that Committee.

4. **Draft Code of Corporate Governance and Annual Governance Statement** Consideration was given to a report by the Director of Resources from which it was noted that local authorities were required to adopt a Code of Corporate Governance and also produce an Annual Governance Statement, which would

replace the Statement of Internal Control.

It was noted that an Assurance Steering Group consisting of key officers with a responsibility for a range of assurance activities had been established to progress this work. During discussion Members expressed the view that there should be some Member involvement in this Steering Group.

Resolved:

- (1) To approve the draft Code of Corporate Governance.**
- (2) To approve the proposal to adopt an Assurance Framework by means of which the Code of Corporate Governance can be linked to the Annual Governance Statement and the Use of Resources element of the Comprehensive Area Assessment.**
- (3) To recommend that two Members, one each from the Standards Committee and the new Audit Committee, be appointed to the Assurance Steering Group in order to strengthen its role.**

5. **Review of Local Government Reorganisation and Business Management Programme Implementation** The Committee received a report by KPMG which set out details of the review carried out of the Council's arrangements for managing the reorganisation process and BMP as part of the 2008/09 Audit Plan.

Mr D Gilbert and Ms T Van-Sloots from KPMG explained their approach to this review and answered Members' questions. It was noted that the review was being carried out in three phases as follows:-

Phase 1 An initial review in the autumn of 2008 to consider the overarching approach and progress achieved at that point – the subject of this report.

Phase 2 A second review prior to vesting day, to consider the preparedness for Wiltshire Council.

Phase 3 Post implementation review – A review after the vesting day for Wiltshire Council and live implementation of the new BMP system.

Resolved: To note the contents of the report and to await receipt of the Phase 2 report which should be available for consideration at the first meeting of the new Audit Committee on 30 June 2009.

6. **Review of Local Area Agreement** Consideration was given to a report by KPMG on the outcome of the review carried out of the Local Area Agreement (LAA). Mr D Gilbert explained that he was impressed with the joined up processes that he had encountered during his review and he was delighted to produce such a positive report without any recommendations.

The Chairman reported that the refreshed LAA was now ready to be signed off.

Resolved: To note the contents of the report.

7. **Audit Progress Report** The Committee considered a report by KPMG which gave an update on the progress being made on the Audit Report for the Council. Mr D Gilbert reported that KPMG had drafted a high level Audit Plan for the 2009/10 financial year, this being the first audit for the new Wiltshire Council, and he intended to report further on this at the first meeting of the new Audit Committee on 30 June 2009.

Resolved: To note the contents of the report.

8. **Internal Audit Progress Report 2008/09** The Committee considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer which presented the Internal Audit Progress Report 2008/09, drawing attention to the position reached so far and the current issues arising in relation to audit work to date.

Attention was drawn to the DCS Focus Project and the work that was being undertaken to provide assurance that adequate controls were maintained within the new processes and which would serve as an 'external challenge' to the effectiveness of revised practices.

Resolved:

- (1) To note the content of the latest Internal Audit Progress Report for 2008/09 and, specifically:
- That Internal Audit has broadly achieved its overall plan to the end of February 2009, and therefore the plan for the year should be fully achieved in terms of overall productive days delivered.
 - The summary of the more significant issues relating to audit work carried out in the period since the last progress report at the end of November 2008.
- (2) To request the officers prepare a report for the first meeting of the new Audit Committee on 30 June 2009, setting out an action plan to address the issues raised and set out in paragraph 18 of the Internal Audit Progress Report 2008/09 regarding the DCS Focus Project.
9. **Wiltshire Council Internal Audit Plan 2009/10** Consideration was given to a report by the Chief Finance Officer which presented the Wiltshire Council Internal Audit Plan 2009/10.

Resolved:

- (1) To note the content of the Wiltshire Council Internal Audit Plan for 2009-10, with particular regard to the following:
- the audit planning process, incorporating risk-based planning,

departmental and corporate governance functions, and external audit liaison

- significant issues having an impact upon the plan, in particular the transition to a unitary council from April 2009
- a summary of available audit resources, and where these will be employed over the operational year.

(2) To note that progress against the plan would be reported regularly to the Wiltshire Council Audit Committee throughout the year.

10. **Risk Management Strategy Update** The Committee received a report by the Service Director Performance and Risk which set out information about the Council's risk management arrangements.

The report also gave an assurance that risks were being managed within the Council and gave a summary of the Council's significant risks.

Resolved: To note the position on the Council's risk management arrangements.

(Duration of meeting: 10.00am – 12.40pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Roger Bishton, Democratic & Members' Services, direct line (01225) 713035 or e-mail rogerbishton@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line (01225) 713114/713115