

# Minutes

**Meeting of** : Audit Committee  
**Meeting held in** : Meeting Room, City Hall, Salisbury  
**Date** : Wednesday 26 September 2007  
**Commencing at** : 6.30 pm

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**Present:**

Mrs J Clarkson JP (Independent Person) *Chairman*

Councillors D J Luther, C Devine and J King

**Officers:**

Steve Milton (Principal Democratic Services Manager), Alan Osborne, Matthew Tiller and Diana Melville (Financial Services)

**Apologies:** Mr P Downing (Independent Person) and Councillor I Mitchell.

**Also present:**

Peter Brown and Brian Bethell (Audit Commission)

**21. Public Questions:**

There were none.

**22. Councillor Questions/Statement Time:**

There were none.

**23. Minutes:**

**Resolved** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2007 (previously circulated) be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

**24. Declarations of Interest:**

There were none.

**25. Chairman's Announcements/Questions:**

The Chairman pointed out that the Audit Committee was a non-political body but all of the council representatives were drawn from a single opposition group. She asked if this might cause any difficulties for the Committee and whether there should be wider representation from the other groups. Members considered that as the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair were held by Independent non-council members, it should not be a problem although they agreed that the matter should be examined during the constitutional review being undertaken by the Standards Committee.



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Following a request from a member present, the Chairman asked for the terms of reference of the Audit Committee to be circulated to all new members.

**26. Annual Report of the Audit Committee to Full Council including Self Assessment:**

Further to minute 17 of the meeting held on 13 June 2007, the Chairman informed the Committee that the first draft of the annual report would be available at the next meeting for consideration.

**27. Revisions to the Annual Audit Plan:**

The Chief Internal Auditor (CIA) reported that the Internal Audit Plan for 2007/8 had been approved by the Audit Committee in April 2007. The plan was linked to the council's strategic objectives at that time. The recent decision on the unitary authority and the change of political priorities since the May elections meant that it was appropriate to review the plan to ensure it remained relevant to the council's risks and objectives.

The Committee discussed the need for members to have sight of the terms of reference of the Audit reviews, preferably prior to any work being undertaken. The CIA outlined the approval process for the reviews. The Chair asked members to consult the CIA about any reviews in which they had a particular interest outside of the meeting.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the revised audit plan for 2007/08 be approved; and
- (2) The audit work for the first part of 2007/08 be noted.

**28. Governance Framework and Governance Statement:**

The CIA reported that new governance framework for local government had been issued. Although the decision on unitary status meant that the governance framework would have a very short life span, the publication of the governance statement for 2007/8 was a statutory requirement. The governance review also provided an opportunity to identify areas of strength and weakness, which the council should seek to address in future negotiations on the governance arrangements of the new unitary authority.

**Resolved:**

- (1) that the proposed approach to the governance review be approved; and
- (2) that the Chairman be appointed to serve as the Committee's representative on the Governance Project Team

**29. Risk Registers:**

The Committee considered the following risk registers:

- Cabinet risk register as reported to Cabinet on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2007.
- Transition group draft risk registers.
- Business as usual group draft risk register

**Resolved:** that the risk registers be noted.

**30. Training for Members of the Audit Committee:**

**The Committee considered** any specific training in addition to those areas covered by the council 's new modular training and development programme for members. Members identified risk management as the only area they felt needed to be covered in more detail.

**Resolved:** that training on risk management be arranged at an early opportunity and bolted on to a future meeting of the Committee if feasible.

**31. Annual Meeting of the Chairman of the Audit Committee with the Audit Commission and Chief Internal Auditor:**

The Chairman gave a verbal update on the above meeting and indicated that she had no areas of concern she wished to raise other than for the need for training on risk management which had been covered elsewhere on the agenda.

### 32. Audit Commission Annual Governance Report 2006/07:

The Committee considered the previously circulated report of District Auditor. Peter Brown and Brian Bethell of the Audit Commission presented their findings to the Committee, as follows:

- The detailed audit was now substantially complete.
- The Authority had taken a positive and constructive approach to the audit and council's assistance and co-operation had been appreciated.
- Work on the financial statements was complete and an unqualified audit opinion had been issued on 28 September 2007.
- The Statement on Internal Control (SIC) had been prepared in accordance with proper practice specified by CIPFA and was consistent with the findings of the audit.
- Work on the council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources was complete and an unqualified conclusion on the use of resources was issued on 28 September 2007.

Councillors questioned the statement of adjustments and misstatements, but the District Audit Team indicated they had no concerns about the figures contained therein. Members also questioned the cost of the Audit work and the short length of time provided for members of the Committee to consider the detailed report.

**Resolved:** that the Audit Commission Annual Governance Report 2006/07 be noted.

### 33. Date of next meeting:

**Resolved:** that dates be circulated for agreement between 5<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> January, the meeting to commence at 6.00 pm.

*The meeting concluded at 8.20 pm  
Members of public in attendance 0*