

EAST DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th April, 2009 at 7.30 p.m.

Present:

Councillor P. G. Bennett - Chairman
Councillor Mrs A. Warman - Vice-Chairman

Present: Councillors P. G. Cuckston, J. P. Holland and M. G. Simper.

Also in Attendance: Councillors M. C. Birr and S. G. Flower

560. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R. C. Dudman and T. J. Palmer.

561. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

562. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd March, 2009 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

In relation to Minute No. 510 Members were advised that the Treasury Management Policy had been agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee, but that the recommendation considering the appointment of external treasury advisors had not been supported, although the use of external financial information was supported.

563. Presentations by the Public

There were no questions, petitions or deputations received on this occasion.

DELEGATED BUSINESS

564. External Auditor's Management Letter

The Chief Executive submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Glyn Carpenter from the Audit Commission presented the External Auditor's Management Letter 2007/08 to Members for their comments.

Members were advised that the Annual Audit Inspection Letter was a descriptive report which is not scored, and which focuses on providing a catalogue of work which has been carried out by the District Council, as opposed to what work will be done.

In relation to this Members comprehensively discussed the action required

by the Council as set out within paragraph 6 of the report.

Members discussed the action raised in relation to affordable housing, and in particular discussed the issues facing the Council in order to achieve the provision of required affordable housing. Members discussed specifically the lack of available and suitable land, and the work which had been carried out by the Scrutiny Inquiry into affordable housing.

In addition to this Members were advised of a recent acquisition of affordable housing within Wimborne.

Members felt that the result of the Strategic Housing Inspection which had recently been completed needed to be taken into consideration when addressing these issues within the Audit Inspection Letter.

RESOLVED that;

- a) the External Auditor's management letter be noted; and that**
- b) the Committee notes the action in Section 6 of this report which is being taken by the Council to address the main points set out in Section 2 of the Management Letter, and in addition to this consideration be given to the result of the Strategic Housing Inspection.**

Voting: Unanimous

565. Strategic Four Year Audit Plan and Internal Audit Partnership Strategy

The Chief Executive submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Members were requested to consider the approval of the Strategic Four Year Audit Plan for East Dorset District Council as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, and approval of the Internal Audit Partnership Strategy as set out in Appendix 2 to the report. In addition to this Members were informed of the planned audit activity at North Dorset District Council and Christchurch Borough Council.

In relation to this Members discussed a recommendation from the Community and Culture Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee recently completed Inquiry into the Management and Funding of Council-Owned Buildings in East Dorset. Members were advised that one of their recommendations made reference to the possibility of Audits being held more frequently which would review aspects of Community facilities.

Members were advised that Community Facilities are due to be audited within the 2009/10 year, and that prior to the Audit Plan being agreed next year that a risk assessment will consider whether there is a need for more frequent auditing of Community Facilities.

RESOLVED that;

- a) the Strategic Four Year Audit Plan as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved subject to additional consideration being given to the recommendations of the Community and Culture Scrutiny and Policy Development Sub-Committee report into the**

Management and Funding of Council Owned Buildings in East Dorset; and that

- b) the Internal Audit Partnership Strategy as set out in Appendix 2 to the report be approved.**

Voting: Unanimous

566. Audit Review of Water & Sewerage Services

The Chief Executive submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'C' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Members considered the report on the findings of the Internal Auditor following the review of the systems and controls in place in order to administer the Water and Sewerage Service.

RESOLVED that the auditor's opinion be supported.

Voting: Unanimous

567. Audit Review of Payroll

The Chief Executive submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'D' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Members considered the report on the findings of the Internal Auditor following the review of the systems and controls in place in order to administer the Payroll function.

RESOLVED that the auditor's opinion be supported.

Voting: Unanimous

568. Audit Review of Information Security

The Chief Executive submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'E' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Members considered the report on the findings of the Internal Auditor following the review of Information Security.

In relation to information security and the turning off of email forwarding Members felt that this inhibited Members being able to receive information promptly and could present a number of issues relating to Members being able to carry out their Council business.

RESOLVED that;

(a) the auditor's opinion be noted; and

(b) Members do not support Objective 11 - the switching off of auto forwarding of Members emails.

Voting: Unanimous

569. Audit Review of Capital

The Chief Executive submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'F' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Members considered the report on the findings of the Internal Auditor following the review of the systems and controls in place in order to award and administer Capital contracts.

RESOLVED that the auditor's opinion be supported.

Voting: Unanimous

570. Progress Report on Implementing Audit Recommendations

The Chief Executive submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'G' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Members noted the progress made by Service Managers in implementing recommendations agreed with both the internal and external auditors. In addition to this Members were advised that

RESOLVED that Members note the content of the report and agree any variations to previously agreed action dates where necessary.

Voting: Unanimous

571. Audit Programme 2008/2009

The Chief Executive submitted a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'H' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Members were advised on the progress against the audit timetable.

RESOLVED that the Committee approve the updated Audit Review Timetable.

Voting: Unanimous

The meeting ended at 8.42 p.m.

CHAIRMAN