

Cherwell District Council

Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 21 January 2015 at 7.30 pm

Present: Councillor Mike Kerford-Byrnes (Chairman)
Councillor Dan Sames (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Ray Jelf
Councillor Nicholas Mawer
Councillor Barry Richards
Councillor Barry Wood

Also Present: Councillor Ken Atack, Lead Member for Financial Management
Mick West, Director, Ernst Young, External Auditor
Edward Cooke, Manager, PriceWaterhouseCooper

Apologies for absence: Councillor Lawrie Stratford
Councillor Douglas Williamson

Officers: Paul Sutton, Head of Finance and Procurement
Nicola Jackson, Corporate Finance Manager
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections
Sharon Hickson, Assistant Democratic and Elections Officer

42 **Declarations of Interest**

11. Parish Councils Grant for Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

Councillor Barry Richards, Non Statutory Interest, as a member of Banbury Town Council.

Councillor Mike Kerford-Byrnes, Non Statutory Interest, as Chairman of Finmere Parish Council

Councillor Nicholas Mawer, Non Statutory Interest, as a member of Bicester Town Council

43 **Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no Petitions or Requests to Address the Meeting.

44 **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent Business.

45 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3 December 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

46 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

47 **External Audit Update**

The Director, Ernst and Young, gave a verbal update on external audit informing members that there were no significant issues to report and providing an overview of the future areas External Audit would focus their audit plan on; group accounts for Graven Hill, the Council's capital programme, further joint working and the new financial management system.

Resolved

(1) That the verbal update be noted.

48 **Internal Audit Update**

The manager PricewaterhouseCoopers, gave a verbal update on internal audit. The Committee was advised that financial systems work had been completed and were in the review process and there were no significant issues to report. Work on scoping and finalising the joint working and IT reviews was underway.

Resolved

(1) That the verbal update be noted.

49 **Money Laundering Avoidance Policy, Anti Fraud and Corruption Update**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Resources requesting endorsement of the Council's Money Laundering Avoidance Policy.

The Committee was advised that all staff working in areas more susceptible to this issue had received training on money laundering and the policy. Training on whistle blowing, money laundering and risk would be incorporated into the induction training for new staff.

Anti Fraud and Corruption update: the Head of Finance & Procurement explained that written reports would be submitted to the Committee in future as requested. At the next meeting in March, this update would be linked to the report on the new Corporate Fraud Team arrangements. The work programme for March also includes an update to the Whistle Blowing policy and Anti Fraud and Corruption Strategy.

Resolved

- (1) That the Money Laundering Avoidance Policy be endorsed.

50 **Q3 Treasury Management Report & Draft Treasury Management Strategy 2015-16**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Finance and Procurement on treasury management performance and compliance with treasury management policy for 2014-15 for Quarter 3 ending 31 December 2014 as required by the Treasury Management Code of Practice.

In response to Members' comments, the Head of Finance and Procurement confirmed that officers continue to liaise with Capita Asset Services to ensure that the most up to-date advice was used in the Treasury Management Strategy.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the Quarter 3 (Q3) Treasury Report be noted
- (2) That the draft Treasury Management Strategy 2015-16 be noted

51 **Parish Councils Grant for Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Resources on the Parish Councils Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

The Head of Finance and Procurement explained that Parish councils received their annual letter regarding Parish Precepts and their grant for Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) on 18 December 2014. It subsequently came to light that calculations for the Grant for CTRS were not correct. The grants calculated and notified for 2015-16 had not followed the same principle as previous years and therefore needed to be amended. A revised letter was sent to all parish councils on 9 January 2015, offering assistance if required. The Head of Finance and Procurement confirmed that a number of Parishes had already been in contact.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted.

52 **Review of Work Programme**

The Committee considered its work programme 2014/15.

Resolved

- (1) That the work programme be noted, subject to the addition of New Corporate Fraud Team arrangements together with the and Annual Review of Fraud and Corruption Strategy to March

53 **Nicola Jackson, Corporate Finance Manager**

The Chairman advised the Committee that this was the Corporate Finance Manager's last meeting as she would be leaving the authority in March 2015.

The Committee thanked the Corporate Finance Manager for her hard work and support to the Committee and wished her every success in the future.

The meeting ended at 8.21 pm

Chairman:

Date: