

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Audit Committee** held at the **Council Chamber B, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil BA20 2HT on Thursday 23 February 2017.**

(10.00 - 11.10 am)

Present:

Members: Councillor Derek Yeomans (Chairman)

Jason Baker	Val Keitch
Mike Beech	Graham Middleton
Mike Best	David Norris
Carol Goodall	Colin Winder

Officers

Donna Parham	Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services)
Karen Gubbins	Principal Accountant (Exchequer)
Moya Moore	Assistant Director, South West Audit Partnership
David Johnson	Audit Manager, Grant Thornton UK LLP
Kelly Wheeler	Democratic Services Officer
Kim Arthur	Benefits and Controls Officer
Ian Potter	Revenues and Benefits Manager

Also Present:

52. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 26th January 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

53. Apologies for absence (Agenda Item 2)

An apology of absence was received from Councillor Tony Lock.

54. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

The Assistant Director declared that she was a director of SWAP following changes to her directorate.

55. Public question time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of the public present during the meeting.

56. Date of next meeting (Agenda Item 5)

Members noted that the next meeting of the Audit Committee was scheduled for 10.00am on Thursday 23rd March 2017 in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

57. Certification of Claims Report (Agenda Item 6)

David Johnson, Audit Manager at Grant Thornton, presented the report from the external auditors on their findings from the signing off of the Housing Benefit Subsidy Claim for 2016/17. He referred to errors which were detailed in Appendix A of the agenda report. He explained that this had been a challenging year for both Grant Thornton and South Somerset District Council.

The Assistant Director noted that unfortunately there would always be an element of human error and that although the amendment required to the subsidy claim figure was high, it was a small percentage. She explained that she was looking at ways to ensure that the figure would be less next year and that SWAP were continuing to do further assessments. She further advised that it was not a training issue.

The Revenues and Benefits Manager advised members that in recent years the working age caseload had become more complex as there are more people working and still needing help to pay their rent. The caseload within the team will become less complex following the roll out of universal credit as those worker claims move off Housing Benefit and in to Universal Credit, leaving mainly pensioner claims which should reduce the amount of errors made. He was hopeful that there would be an improvement next year.

Members were content to note the report.

RESOLVED: that members noted the report.

58. SWAP Internal Audit - Quarter 3 2016/17 Update (Agenda Item 7)

The Assistant Director, SWAP, presented her report to members. She informed members that the IT Skills audit and Key Income Streams audit were underway. She advised members that the Healthy Organisation audits were near completion.

She referred to page 19 of the agenda report and advised that they were now making slightly more progress than stated within the report.

RESOLVED: that members noted the progress made.

59. Treasury Management Performance to December 2016 (Agenda Item 8)

The Principal Accountant summarised her report to members. She explained that she was expecting there to be approximate £110,000 variable on the returns at the end of the year.

She responded to questions from members.

RESOLVED: that members note the Treasury Management Activity for the nine month period ended 31st December 2016 and the position of the individual prudential indicators for the nine month period ended 31st December 2016.

60. Risk Registers for the Transformation and Westlands Projects (Agenda Item 9)

The Assistant Director summarised some of the key points of detail on the Risk Register for both the Transformation and Westlands project.

She confirmed to members that the damaged roof had now been repaired and that recruitment at Westlands was going well. She explained that the business plan for the centre was up and running and would be monitored and that the centre was due to fully open on 28th March.

She responded to members question.

RESOLVED: that members noted the report.

61. Audit Committee Forward Plan (Agenda Item 10)

David Johnson, Audit Manager at Grant Thornton advised members that the External Audit - Annual Governance Report should read External Audit - Annual Findings Report.

RESOLVED: that members noted the Audit Committee Forward Plan.

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Chairman