

MEETING: AC.06 13:14
DATE: 24.10. 2013

South Somerset District Council

Draft minutes of a meeting of the **Audit Committee** held in the Main Committee Room, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil on **Thursday 24th October 2013**

(10.00 a.m. – 10.23 a.m.)

Present:

Members:

Derek Yeomans (Chairman)
John Calvert
John Dyke

Ian Martin
Roy Mills
Colin Winder

Officers:

Donna Parham
Simon Garlick
Peter Lappin
Anne Herridge

Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services)
Director Grant Thornton
Senior Manager Grant Thornton
Democratic Services Officer

43. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on the 26 September 2013, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

44. Apologies for Absence (Agenda item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Tony Lock, David Norris, John Richardson and Terry Mounter.

45. Declarations of Interest (Agenda item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

46. Public Question Time (Agenda item 4)

No questions or comments were raised by members of the public.

47. 2012/13 Annual Governance Statement Action Plan (Agenda item 5)

The Assistant Director - Finance & Corporate Services summarised the report as detailed in the agenda, she made reference to the attached Action Plan which the Audit Committee had previously approved. She confirmed that all actions were underway and that:

- The Cash Receipting System would 'go live' a bit later than had been anticipated. That would have an impact on the Internal Audit Review which would be delayed until the new system had been implemented.
- Work was being carried out on Procurement Procedure Rules and an updated report would be reviewed through the Audit Committee at their meeting in December.
- The retendering of the cash collection contract was in hand, but had only attracted 2 bidders.

The Chairman thanked the Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services) for the information, he raised his concern that Data and Fraud was an area that caused most unease in the current climate.

RESOLVED:

That Audit Committee members noted the progress made.

Lead Officer: Donna Parham, Assistant Director – Finance and Corporate Services
Contact Details: Donna.Parham@southsomerset.gov.uk

48. Local Code of Corporate Governance (Agenda item 6)

The Assistant Director - Finance & Corporate Services commented that it was good practice to review the Local Code of Corporate Governance on a regular basis; a review had not been carried out since the Council Plan had been introduced.

The Code indicates how SSDC is committed to good governance and identifies the arrangements made including continuous improvement to ensure that it was applied to all aspects of the Council's work.

The Assistant Director - Finance & Corporate Services would remind all service managers of the importance of keeping their contribution up to date.

A short discussion ensued regarding a recent news article suggesting that in future Members of Parliament should be pre-qualified in order to stand for Parliament. During discussion it was noted that the majority of SSDC Councillors were good at regularly attending training sessions to ensure that they were up to date with new procedures etc.

RESOLVED: That

- 1. The Audit Committee approves the revised Local Code of Corporate Governance;**
- 2. The Assistant Director - Finance & Corporate Services is delegated to make any future changes to job titles.**

Lead Officer: Donna Parham, Assistant Director – Finance and Corporate Services
Contact Details: Donna.Parham@southsomerset.gov.uk

49. Annual Audit Letter (Agenda Item 7)

Simon Garlick, Director - Grant Thornton, in referring to the Annual Audit Letter, told members that the end of year report was extremely good and all in all contained good news. The Value for Money had concluded that SSDC had managed its finances effectively, and had put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ending 31 March 2013.

The Chairman congratulated the Assistant Director - Finance & Corporate Services and her team for the hard, extremely good work undertaken by them all. He further commented that this work would become worse over the next 3 years or so due to the current economic situation but was confident in the knowledge that the Service was in good hands.

RESOLVED: That
The contents of the Annual Audit Letter as set out in the report be noted.

Lead Officer: Mark Williams, Chief Executive
Contact Details: Mark.williams@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462101

50. Audit Committee Forward Plan (Agenda Item 8)

Reference was made to the agenda report, which informed members of the proposed Audit Committee Forward Plan. The Assistant Director - Finance & Corporate Services confirmed that a report on the process for applications to vary or discharge the requirements of a Section 106 planning obligation, will be presented to Audit Committee members in November when the Assistant Director (Legal and Corporate Services) and Assistant Director (Economy) will attend. The process for these applications will be dealt with in detail in the first instance, compliance issues would be dealt with at a later date if considered necessary.

Discussion then ensued about the recent requests by Yarlington Housing Group to discharge S106 requirements relating to planning approvals within South Somerset on developments already completed. Each Area Committee had made differing resolutions.

In response to a question, the Assistant Director - Finance & Corporate Services explained that the Audit Committee had recommended regular monitoring of S106 planning obligations. Since then, more robust reports had been presented to Area Committees.

The Chairman concluded that a rigorous process was required in order to ensure that planning obligations were treated with due care and diligence.

RESOLVED: that the Audit Committee Forward Plan be noted as attached at Appendix A.

Lead Officer: Anne Herridge, Committee Administrator
Contact Details: anne.herridge@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935)462570

51. Date of the Next Meeting (Agenda Item 9)

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Audit Committee would be held on Thursday 28th November 2013 at 10.00 a.m. in the Main Committee Room Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

Lead Officer: Anne Herridge, Committee Administrator
Contact Details: anne.herridge@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935)462570

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Chairman