

CIVIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

27 June 2007
(6.00pm-7.10pm)

PRESENT: Councillors Blackhurst, Boyce (Chair), Bradnack, Hart, C Rosenstiel (Vice-chair), Ward.

FOR ADOPTION BY THE COUNCIL

07/CIV/30 REVIEW OF CONTRACT REGULATIONS

The Committee noted a report from the Director of Finance which set out the reasons why the Council's Contract Procedure Rules should change and consequent alterations needed to officer delegations. In short, the changes had been driven by: the Public Contracts Regulations 2006, model guidance from CIPFA, new contracting methods used by the Council and revisions to Project Assessment Procedures.

Council is recommended –

- 1) To agree to replace Part 4G of the Constitution with that set out in appendix 1.
- 2) To agree the changes to Section 9.3 of the Constitution (General Delegations) in appendix 2.

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FOR INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

07/CIV/31 MINUTES

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2007.

07/CIV/32 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none.

07/CIV/33 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

07/CIV/34 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present.

07/CIV/35 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COUNCIL'S SYSTEMS OF INTERNAL AUDIT

The Director of Finance advised the Committee that the requirement to report was under the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006.

The Chair welcomed the fact that very few of the Council's current processes, procedures and practices failed to adhere to the CIPFA Internal Audit Code of Practice. It was noted that of those that were either partially compliant or not compliant, actions were in place to address it in 2007/08. The Internal Audit Service Plan would be updated in November with progress on these actions.

Cllr Bradnack asked what would the Council need to do to achieve a 4

rating (given under the Use of Resources Assessment). The Director of Finance stated that it would take longer than a year for the Council to achieve a 4 rating, one reason being that as it was a new measure, the criteria were changing again.

Cllr Ward questioned the benefits of an annual process (of the Internal Audit's systems). The Director of Finance agreed, hence the 'light touch' approach this year. The Committee noted that there was a current national debate about the cost-benefit of such an exercise and it may change.

It was noted that in the CIPFA table 5.5.1 should be a 'Y'

In conclusion, the Committee had reviewed and challenged the Director of Finance's opinion as required.

07/CIV/36 HEAD OF INTERNAL AUDIT – ANNUAL OPINION 2006/07

The Committee noted the report. In discussion of the information included in table 1, it was agreed that it could be presented differently next year as it related to the Council's Risk Register which the Committee did not have access to.

In conclusion, the Committee had reviewed and challenged the Head of Internal Audit's opinion as required.

07/CIV/37 ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK AND STATEMENT ON INTERNAL CONTROL

In response to a query from Councillor Hart, the officers agreed that in Appendix C, the table should use words rather than 'X' in the 'Gaps identified which need to be included in future audit plans' as it could be misread that there was a gap.

The Committee had reviewed and challenge the draft SIC and incorporated officer action plan having had regard to the Head of Internal Audit's opinion and information in appendices B and C and advise the Leader and Chief Executive on the implications of the review.

07/CIV/37 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2005/06

The Committee noted an introduction from the Head of Accounting Services explaining the change in format from last year which was in accordance with the national Code of Practice on Accounting (SORP). An amendment sheet was circulated with a highlighted text change to page 30 referring to two ongoing legal challenges and to page 42 (table 58) which highlighted two figures changed (other non-cash transactions 1,200, decrease in debtors 526)

Resolved –

That the draft Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2007 be approved and that Cllr Boyce as Chair, sign the Accounts on behalf of the Council.

07/CIV/38 EXTERNAL AUDIT – AUDIT AND INSPECTION PLAN 2007-08

Andy Perrin, representing the Council's External Auditors, presented the 2007/08 Plan. The Committee noted that the Auditor would be looking to do work this year on health inequalities across the County's authorities.

The Committee placed on record its appreciation of the work of the Director of Finance and his team for ensuring that the Council's audits were sound and also well regarded after Internal and External Scrutiny

The meeting ended at 7.10pm

Chair