

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Governance Committee held on
Friday, 28 June 2013 at 9.00 a.m.

PRESENT:	Councillor Francis Burkitt – Chairman Councillor David McCraith – Vice-Chairman	
Councillors:	Richard Barrett Douglas de Lacey	Andrew Fraser John Williams
Officers:	Alex Colyer John Garnham Fiona McMillan Ian Senior Sally Smart	Executive Director, Corporate Services Head of Finance, Policy & Performance Legal & Democratic Services Manager and Monitoring Officer Democratic Services Officer Principal Accountant Financial & Systems
External:	Daniel Harris	RSM Tenon

Councillors Simon Edwards and David Whiteman-Downes were in attendance, by invitation.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bridget Smith.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee authorised the Chairman to sign, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2013.

3. INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2012-13

The Committee received and noted the Internal Audit Annual Report 2012-13.

Councillor John Williams expressed concern at the apparent lack of improvement in the carrying out of housing repairs. Councillor Richard Barrett assured the Committee that customer feedback was becoming more positive and that technical issues with the computer system had been resolved. The Executive Director (Corporate Services) reminded Members that the Annual Report was an historical document only.

4. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee received and noted the Internal Audit Progress Report for 2013-14.

The Committee noted that new Internal Auditors would soon be assuming responsibility for monitoring the Council's internal processes. Those present discussed the practicalities of the handover, and identified that, in relation to the 2013-14 projects listed on page 1 of the report, the current Auditors (RSM Tenon) would continue work on the first six listed, whereas the incoming Auditors would assume responsibility for monitoring the Council's response to the Welfare Reform Project and the other Quarter 2, 3 and 4 projects listed on pages 1 and 2 of the report. Dan Harris said that, on the basis of the Quarter 1 work undertaken by RSM Tenon, he was satisfied that there was little or no likelihood of the

Council receiving any red alerts.

Councillor Douglas de Lacey highlighted an issue with South Cambridgeshire District Council's Code of Connection (CoCo) Compliance. The Executive Director (Corporate Services) said that this security measure was overseen by central Government Audit and was something upon which the Council's Internal Auditors could comment. He informed the Committee that South Cambridgeshire District Council had been the first Local Authority in the County to meet the Government's new security assessment.

The Executive Director (Corporate Services) undertook to make sure that the Council's Security Certificate was valid and up-to-date.

The Committee placed on record its appreciation of, and gratitude for, the work carried out by Dan Harris and his colleagues at RSM Tenon during the past three years.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Corporate Governance Committee considered a report on the Council's Risk Management Strategy and process.

The Corporate Governance Committee **approved** the Risk Management Strategy, and instructed officers to present it, for information, to the meeting of Full Council on 25 July 2013.

6. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2012/13

The Committee considered a report on the draft Annual Governance Statement 2012-13 prior to the statement being signed by the Leader and Chief Executive and being included in the statement of accounts for the year ending 31 March 2013.

The Chairman reminded Members that production of an Annual Governance Statement was a statutory requirement and that, while there was a core audience made up of District Councillors and Parish Council Chairman, every effort should be made to ensure that the document was written so as to be understandable by anyone wishing to read it, including members of the Youth Council. Councillor Douglas de Lacey said that, in future, the Youth Council, in particular, should be asked for its comments, and should be invited to assess the draft for comprehension. Committee members were happy with the draft in principle, but agreed with Councillor Andrew Fraser that the final version should include less jargon and fewer acronyms. The Legal and Democratic Services Manager undertook to finalise the Annual Governance Statement before September 2013 and include it as an information item on the agenda for the next Corporate Governance Committee meeting. Members said that primary publication of the final document should be via the Council's website, with hard copies, in an A5 format, being distributed to all South Cambridgeshire District Councillors, all Parish Councils and Parish Meetings in the district, and to the Youth Council.

The Chairman tabled copies of the Annual Governance Statement annotated with comments and suggestions from Councillor de Lacey. Members accepted these and asked officers to amend the Statement accordingly.

7. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2012/13 (SUBJECT TO AUDIT)

The Corporate Governance Committee considered a report on the 2012-13 Statement of Accounts.

This represented the last opportunity for the Committee to make representations about the Accounts. The Executive Director (Corporate Services) summarised the process from the date of this meeting until presentation of the final Statement of Accounts to the Committee in September 2013.

A Plain English version of the Statement of Accounts would be produced in due course.

The Executive Director (Corporate Services) paid tribute to the Principal Accountant (Financial and Systems) for the work she had put into preparing the document. The Chairman endorsed this comment and extended thanks to the Principal Accountant (Financial and Systems).

8. REGULATION OF INVESTIGATING POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA) QUARTERLY UPDATE

The Corporate Governance Committee received and noted a report on the use of RIPA powers in the last two quarters.

Members were assured that powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 were being used sparingly and in an effective manner.

9. MATTERS OF TOPICAL INTEREST

Members had no matters of topical interest they wished to discuss at the meeting.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members noted the dates of the next two meetings but the Chairman requested that the meeting on 27 September 2013 should start at 9.30am rather than 9 o'clock. This was to allow the Committee and other interested Members of South Cambridgeshire District Council to receive from Cambridgeshire County Council's lead officer on Pensions a presentation about latest developments concerning the Local Government Pension Scheme, with particular reference to Cambridgeshire. This Briefing would begin at 9.00am.

The Meeting ended at 10.55 a.m.
