

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Governance Committee held on  
Thursday, 28 November 2013 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT:	Councillor Francis Burkitt – Chairman Councillor David McCraith – Vice-Chairman	
Councillors:	Douglas de Lacey John Williams	Bridget Smith
Officers:	Patrick Adams Alex Colyer Fiona McMillan	Senior Democratic Services Officer Executive Director, Corporate Services Legal & Democratic Services Manager and Monitoring Officer
External:	Rachel Brittain Crabtree	Ernst & Young Peterborough City Council

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Richard Barrett and Peter Topping.

### **21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

### **22. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2013 were agreed as correct record, subject to the following amendments:

- The following sentence be included in item 13: "Councillor John Williams suggested that the Asset Management Plan, including the disposal and acquisition of property, should be included in the Internal Audit Plan for 2015/16."
- The words "(FONT SIZE INCORRECT)" be removed from item 16.
- The structure of the second paragraph in minute 17 be amended to include three bullet points and the word "assured" altered to "reassured".

### **23. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT**

Steve Crabtree presented this report, which updated the Committee on progress made against the delivery of the 2013/14 Internal Audit Plan. He explained that Megan Russell, who had been appointed as the Council's Internal Auditor, was unable to attend this meeting, but would be present at the next meeting in March.

Steve Crabtree explained that the three remaining audits initiated by RSM Tenon had been concluded with no concerns identified. He further explained that the audit on Proactive Fraud Work had focused on procurement and tender exercises and he had no concerns to report.

Steve Crabtree stated that he was satisfied with the systems in place for Payroll. It was noted that it was possible that areas such as Payroll, which were currently audited annually, could be audited once every two years in future.

**Complaints procedure**

It was noted that the Council's complaints procedure was currently being audited and the auditors would be focussing on the process and not on individual cases. It was understood that there was a difference between a service request to fix a problem and a complaint. It was agreed that Councillor Kevin Cuffley should liaise with Steve Crabtree regarding a complaint that had not been processed efficiently.

**Audit Planning 2014/15**

It was noted that a draft Plan would be circulated to Executive Management Team on 26 February 2014. It was agreed that the plan should then be e-mailed to all members of the Committee and copied to all other councillors for their comments. The Plan would then be agreed at the next meeting of the Committee in March.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

**24. EXTERNAL AUDIT: ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER**

Rachel Brittain presented the Annual Audit Letter to the Committee, which highlighted the key issues resulting from audits relating to 2012/13. It was noted that the Letter concluded that there were no areas of concern to report to the Committee.

It was understood that the audit on Housing Benefit Claims, which was investigating the period to the end of the month, would be reported at the next meeting of the Committee in March. It was noted that only two minor issues had been discovered so far, and whilst under the Department of Work and Pensions rules this meant that a qualified opinion had to be given, Rachel Brittain assured the Committee that she had concerns regarding this audit.

The Committee **NOTED** the Annual Audit Letter.

**25. MATTERS OF TOPICAL INTEREST****Housing Company Pilot Scheme**

In response to questioning the Executive Director explained that the proposed Housing Company, which Council was being asked to set up that afternoon, would be a limited company, to protect the Council from any liability, but it would still be subject to the same audit scrutiny as any other area of the authority.

**Annual Governance Statement**

It was noted that the draft Annual Governance Statement would be discussed at the next meeting of the Committee in March. The Chairman stated that he had reviewed some other Council's Annual Governance Statements (including Westminster, Guildford, Cornwall and Birmingham) and made two points:

- a) Unlike the Council they had no section in their Statement which reviewed performance against the authority's stated aims. After a discussion, it was agreed that next year we would mirror those other councils and include a link to the separate performance document included in the Statement.
- b) The Annual Governance Statement was included within their annual accounts as part of the explanatory forward. After a discussion, it was agreed that we would do the same next year, although the Statement, as extracted from the explanatory forward, would also be published as a separate document on the website.

**26. REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA) REVIEW OF POLICY AND USE OF ACT**

The Committee **NOTED** that there had been no RIPA authorisations in the last quarter.

**27. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

The Committee agreed the following meeting dates:

- Friday 21 March 2014 at 9am
- Friday 27 June 2014 at 9am
- Friday 26 September 2014 at 9am
- Thursday 27 November 2014 at 10am (will only go ahead if deemed necessary)

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**The Meeting ended at 11.00 a.m.**

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