

# Minutes 27 May 2014

## MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

**MINUTES** of a **MEETING** of the **AUDIT COMMITTEE** held on Tuesday 27 May 2014 at 6.00pm

### Present

**Councillors** R M Deed, R Evans, R M Deed, F J Rosamond, R Radford (substituting for Cllr M D Binks), J D Squire

**Apology** M D Binks

**Councillor:**

### Also Present

**Councillor** Mrs J Roach

### Also Present

**Officers:** A Tregellas (Head of Communities and Governance and Monitoring Officer), A Cawdron (Principal Accountant), C Yandle (Audit Team Leader) and J Stuckey (Member Services Officer)

### Also in

**attendance:** S Johnson (Grant Thornton) and Geraldine Daly (Grant Thornton)

1. **CHAIRMAN - ELECTION** (Cllr E J Berry, Chairman of the Council, in the Chair)

**RESOLVED** that Cllr R Evans be elected Chairman of the Audit Committee for the municipal year 2014/15.

Cllr R Evans then took the Chair.

2. **VICE-CHAIRMAN - ELECTION**

**RESOLVED** that Cllr F J Rosamond be elected Vice-Chairman of the Audit Committee for the municipal year 2014/15.

3 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions from those members of the public present.


4 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (00hrs.03mins.30secs)**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2014 were approved as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

5 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (00hrs.05mins.06secs)**

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Deed and Councillor Squire to the Committee.

6. **PERFORMANCE AND RISK (00hrs.05mins.10secs)**

The Committee had before it, and **NOTED**, a report \*  [Minute 6 \[253kb\]](#) from the Head of Communities and Governance providing Members with an update on performance against the Corporate Plan and local service targets for 2013/14, as well as providing an update on the key business risks.

The Head of Communities and Governance highlighted the carbon footprint indicator: the level of reduction in carbon footprint was largely due to the Anesco investment project on five Council sites (with the installation of energy saving measures).

The Waste and Recycling Service fell below target on several indicators but it was anticipated that recycling performance would improve with the introduction of the new scheme in October 2015. Missed collections had remained constant for quarter 4 but it was anticipated that this would rise for the first quarter of 2014/15 due to the route optimisation project.

Discussion took place regarding the need to educate the public about the recycling scheme and that communication should be a large part of any planned changes.

The Officer informed the Committee that the Housing Service was performing well in many areas, including rents collected, gas safety certificates and empty homes put back into use.

Grant funding had been received to bring Council homes to a decent standard. This was ongoing and further homes were scheduled for improvement. The Officer explained that it was difficult to maintain a 100% Decent Home Standard due to the criteria changing on a regular basis

The target set for the number of new affordable homes came from the Corporate Plan. New schemes in St Andrew Street and Fir Close would contribute to the current year.

Services under Community Well Being were achieving targets set for the number of empty shops in the town centres. Community Action Days were proving difficult to coordinate with austerity cuts affecting all of the

agencies that have been involved in the past. It had been noted that the last Community Action Day held in Silverton was poorly attended by the public.

Discussion took place regarding Planning Performance and the fact that not achieving the new Planning Performance Guarantee could prove costly to the Council. The Officer explained that if applications were not processed within 26 weeks the developer was entitled to reclaim the fee paid.

The Eastern Urban Extension, changes to the National Planning Framework as well as some staffing issues had had an impact on planning performance but this had since been resolved.

Performance Indicators for the Working Environment showed some areas of customer satisfaction falling below target. The Head of Customer First was investigating this. Response to Freedom of Information requests had fallen below target due to the volume of requests received.

Discussion took place regarding Health and Safety. It was **AGREED** to discuss this in depth at agenda item 11.

Note: \* Report previously circulated; copy attached to the signed Minutes

## **7. MEETING MANAGEMENT**

At the request of the External Auditor the Chairman **AGREED** to take agenda item 9 before agenda item 8.

## **8. EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN (00hrs.50mins.10secs)**

The Committee had before it, and **NOTED**, a report \*  [Minute 8 \[200kb\]](#) from the External Auditor which covered work completed for 2013-14. The report highlighted the main issues, how these had been addressed and the results of interim audit work. The report also covered Value for Money, key dates for audits and fees.

Councillor Mrs J Roach handed paperwork to the External Auditor, relating to a delegated decision regarding car parking in Crediton, which the Auditor would review.

Note: \* Report previously circulated; copy attached to the signed Minutes

#### 9. **CERTIFICATION WORK REPORT 2013/14 (01hrs.02mins.55secs)**

The Committee had before it, and **NOTED**, a report \*  [Minute 9 \[133kb\]](#) from the External Auditor summarising their overall assessment of the Council's management arrangements in respect of the certification process. The Auditor explained the roles and responsibilities of the parties involved in the certification process, the arrangements to be followed and the history of claims for 2013/14.

The Auditor informed the Committee that training was available for the Chairman and another Member of the Committee and that the Chairman had received paperwork relating to this.


Note: \* Report previously circulated; copy attached to the signed Minutes

#### 10. **GRANT THORNTON'S EXTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE (01hrs.06mins.15secs)**

The Committee had before it, and **NOTED**, a report \*  [Minute 10 \[111kb\]](#) from the External Auditor summarising progress with the external audit for 2013/14. The report covered progress to 20 April 2014 and emerging issues and developments.

Note: \* Report previously circulated; copy attached to the signed Minutes

11. **INTERNAL AUDIT OUTTURN REPORT FOR 2013/14 (01hrs.10mins.53secs)**

The Committee had before it a report \*  [Minute 11 \[373kb\]](#) from the Audit Team Leader updating it on the work performed by Internal Audit during the 2013/14 financial year, as required by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

Core Audits for 2013-14 had all been completed. In summary 20 audits had been completed in the year and all but three had been well controlled or adequately controlled. The three areas audited as poor had all made significant improvement since the audit.

It was **AGREED** that a paragraph explaining improvements that had been made since each Audit be included in future outturn reports.

Regarding Procurement a separate audit had been started on contracts. Improvements had been made and training had been improved.

Discussion took place regarding Health and Safety. Concern was expressed that plans to alter the recycling service in October 2015 did not change the method of collection which involved manual handling.

It was **AGREED** that the Head of Environmental Services be requested to attend a Special Meeting of the Audit Committee to address areas of concern regarding Health and Safety and the financial implications of the new system.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Note: \* Report previously circulated; copy attached to the signed Minutes

12. **INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS (01hrs.51mins.34secs)**

The Committee had received three Internal Audit reports since their last meeting. In the opinion of the Auditor all were well controlled.

13. **START TIME FOR MEETINGS (01hrs.53mins.50secs)**

It was **AGREED** that future meetings would continue to take place at 6.00pm.

13. **IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING: 24 June 2014 (01hrs.54mins.28secs)**

Draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS)

Draft Annual report and accounts for year ended 31 March 2014

Internal Audit reports

Progress update from the external auditors

Internal Audit Progress Report

2014/15 Audit fee Letter

(The meeting ended at 8.00pm)

**CHAIRMAN**