

Minutes of the meeting of the AUDIT,
GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS
COMMITTEE held at 9.30am on Wednesday
30 January 2013 at the Civic Centre, Stone
Cross, Northallerton

Present

Councillor J N Smith (In the Chair)

Councillor D E Adamson
Mrs C S Cookman

Councillor Mrs B S Fortune
M Rigby

(An apology for absence was received from Councillor R Hudson)

AGS.23

MINUTES

THE DECISION:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 31 October 2012 (AGS.17 - AGS.22), previously circulated, be signed as a correct record.

AGS.24

REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT – REVIEW OF ACTIVITY

All Wards

The subject of the decision:

The Director of Corporate Services presented a report advising the Committee that the Council, like many public authorities, was governed by the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA). This Act ensured that public authorities complied with their obligations under the Human Rights Act when undertaking investigations which might interfere with the rights of individuals. The Act introduced safeguards on activities such as surveillance undertaken by public bodies. The Committee had now been given responsibility for RIPA matters. This would involve the Committee reviewing the Council's Policy Statement and receiving quarterly reports on any activities which had been authorised under RIPA.

From 1 November 2012 the Council was only able to use RIPA for directed surveillance for potential criminal activity with a possible penalty of at least six months imprisonment. This meant that the Council could no longer use the procedure for low-level offences such as littering, dog control and fly-tipping. For serious offences the Council needed approval from a magistrate before it could use directed surveillance.

Alternative options considered:

None

The reason for the decision:

To comply with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)

THE DECISION:

That it be noted that no RIPA activity was undertaken by the Council during the period 1 November 2012 – 31 January 2013.

AG.25

STATUTORY AUDITOR – ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2011/12

All Wards

The subject of the decision:

The Director of Resources presented a report on the Statutory Auditor's Annual Audit Letter summarising the conclusions and significant issues, arising from the Auditor's audit and inspection work for the financial year 2011/12.

Alternative options considered:

None.

The reason for the decision:

To take account of the Statutory Auditor's Annual Audit and Inspection Letter for 2011/12.

THE DECISION:

That the Statutory Auditor's Annual Audit Letter for 2011/12 be received.

AG.26

STATUTORY AUDITOR – ANNUAL GRANT CLAIMS AND RETURNS 2011/12

All Wards

The subject of the decision:

The Director of Resources presented the Statutory Auditor's Annual Grant Claims and Returns for 2011/12.

Alternative options considered:

None.

The reason for the decision:

To take account of the Statutory Auditor's Annual Grant Claims and Returns Report for 2011/12.

THE DECISION:

That the Statutory Auditor's Annual Grant Claims and Returns Report for 2011/12 be received.

AGS.27

STATUTORY AUDITOR – QUARTERLY UPDATE

All Wards

The subject of the decision:

The Director of Resources provided an opportunity for the Council's statutory auditor, Deloitte, to give an update to the Committee on its activities to date.

Sarah Anderson from Deloitte attended the meeting to provide the update and answer questions.

Alternative options considered:

None.

The reason for the decision:

To respond to a request from the Committee.

THE DECISION:

That the comments of the auditor on his quarterly update be noted.

AGS.28

INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT 2012/13

All Wards

The subject of the decision:

The Director of Resources presented a report informing Members of progress made to date in delivering the Internal Audit Plan for 2012/13.

Veritau North Yorkshire (VNY) completed 12 of 28 internal audit reviews to final report stage in the period April - December 2012; in addition one draft report had been issued. This represented 43% of the plan delivered to final report stage. In only one instance was a final audit report issued which gave a less than satisfactory opinion (Limited Assurance): Depots and Stores, management were nevertheless implementing appropriate action to address the weaknesses identified

Veritau's opinion was that a Substantial Assurance could be given based on the work undertaken. However, this opinion might be subject to change in the light of findings emerging from work carried out later in the year.

Alternative options considered:

None.

The reason for the decision:

To take account of the work of Internal Audit to date.

THE DECISION:

That the work undertaken by Internal Audit in the year to date be noted.

AG.29

ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE AUDIT VISION AND CHARTER

All Wards

The subject of the decision:

The Director of Resources presented a report updating Members on the current position regarding the Audit Vision and Charter for the Internal Audit Service.

The Accounts and Audit Regulations required all Councils to provide an adequate and effective Internal Audit function; Veritau North Yorkshire (VNY) provided this function for Hambleton District Council which was delivered in accordance with the Audit Vision and Charter approved by the Committee.

The view of the Audit Commission and the Council's external Auditors, Deloitte, was that the Vision and Charter documents should be reviewed annually and a review of the Vision and Charter had been scheduled. However, CIPFA, the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors (CIIA) and HM Treasury had recently consulted on a new set of Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) which would supersede those currently used in the various parts of the public sector. This consultation had now been completed and the new standards were expected to take effect from 1 April 2013. As the current Vision and Charter was based on the CIPFA Code of Practice, Veritau North Yorkshire (VNY) proposed to prepare a new Vision and Charter which complied with the new PSIAS for approval by the Committee after that date.

Alternative options considered:

None

The reasons for the decision:

To approve a postponement of the review of the Audit Vision and Charter until after the revised Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) come into force.

THE DECISION:

That the Internal Audit Vision & Charter for 2013/14 be revised and submitted to the committee for approval at the first suitable meeting of the 2013/14 financial year.

The meeting closed at 10.05am

Chairman of the Committee