

(AGS.30)
Decisions to be considered by
Full Council on 9 April 2013

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

Present

Councillor J N Smith (In the Chair)

Councillor D E Adamson
Mrs B S Fortune

Councillor R W Hudson
M Rigby

(An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs C S Cookman)

AGS.30

MONITORING OFFICER PROTOCOL

All Wards

The subject of the decision:

The Director of Corporate Services presented a report concerning the Monitoring Officer Protocol within the Council's Constitution which governed the role of and support to be given to the Monitoring Officer. Due to recent changes, particularly to the Standards Regime the Protocol needed changing. The changes were of a minor nature, including job titles, and reflected the new Standards Regime.

Alternative options considered:

None

The reason for the decision:

To revise the Monitoring Officer Protocol.

THE DECISION:

To recommend to Council that the revised Monitoring Officer Protocol be adopted.

The meeting closed at 10.30am

Chairman of the Committee

Present

Councillor J N Smith (In the Chair)

Councillor D E Adamson
Mrs B S Fortune

Councillor R W Hudson
M Rigby

(An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs C S Cookman)

AGS.31

MINUTES

THE DECISION:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 30 January 2013 (AGS.23 - AGS.29), previously circulated, be signed as a correct record.

AGS.32

INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2013/14

All Wards

The subject of the decision:

The Director of Resources submitted the proposed Internal Audit Plan for the financial year 2013/14 as the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee had responsibility for overseeing the work of internal audit, and agreeing the plan of work to be undertaken on its behalf by the Council's Internal Auditors. This was in line with good practice as set out in the CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government.

For the first time, the plan was explicitly aligned to the Council's risk registers, which was commonly accepted as good practice and would enable Members of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee and the Management Team to be satisfied that internal audit activity was focused on the main risks to the Council.

John Barnett, from Veritau attended to present the plan.

Alternative options considered:

None.

The reason for the decision:

To ensure that audit resources are utilised in an economic, efficient and effective way.

THE DECISION:

That the Internal Audit Plan for 2013/14 be approved.

AGS.33

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.

It had been agreed to defer the Equalities audit, until the Service Level Agreement with Richmondshire District Council had been firmly established and resourced and to also defer the ICT work, for 2012/13. The IT service was currently being repatriated from the shared service with Richmondshire District Council and it had therefore been agreed with management, that it would be more beneficial to use the 2012/13 day allocation with 2013/14 to give advice and assurance on the repatriation project.

Veritau North Yorkshire (VNY) completed 13 of 26 internal audit reviews to final report stage in the period between April 2012 and February 2013; in addition 8 draft reports had been issued. This represented 50% of the plan delivered to final report stage and 81% to draft 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.

Members raised concerns over the weaknesses at the Depot and requested that these be resolved.

Alternative options considered:

None.

The reason for the decision:

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

THE DECISION:

That:

- (1) the work undertaken by Internal Audit in the year to date be noted;
- (2) management resolve the weaknesses at the Depot.

AGS.34

REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT 2012/13 SELF ASSESSMENT

All Wards

The subject of the decision:

The Director of Resources presented the results of the annual review of the effectiveness of the system of Internal Audit. With effect from 2013/14 the report of the effectiveness of internal audit would be included in the Annual Report of the Head of Internal Audit as required by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

Alternative options considered:

None.

The reason for the decision:

To comply with Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011.

THE DECISION:

That the findings and any actions from the review be approved.

AGS.35

REVIEW OF ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2013/14

All Wards

The subject of the decision:

The Director of Resources presented for review by the Committee the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for the forthcoming year 2013/14.

Alternative options considered:

None.

The reason for the decision:

To fulfil the Committees scrutiny role in relation to Treasury Management.

THE DECISION:

That the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2013/14 be accepted.

AGS.36

AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE – REPORT PROGRAMME 2013/14

All Wards

The subject of the decision:

The Director of Resources presented a report which aimed to identify those reports which the Committee wished to receive on a structured basis.

Alternative options considered:

None.

The reason for the decision:

To identify which reports the Committee wished to receive on a structured basis.

THE DECISION:

That the report programme set out in Annex A of the report be approved.

AGS.37

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 January – 27 March 2013.

The meeting closed at 10.30am

Chairman of the Committee