

FINANCE AND AUDIT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 7 May 2014 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Barrott (Chair): Councillors Mrs Bunker, MacKay, Mrs Mellor, Pittarello, Rhead, Mrs Syson, Wilkinson and Williams.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs Knight, Pratt and Mrs Sawdon.

191. **SUBSTITUTES**

Councillor Wilkinson substituted for Councillor Mrs Knight.

192. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

193. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 April 2014 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

194. **REPORTS FROM EXTERNAL AUDITORS**

The Committee received a report from Finance which asked the Committee to consider the Audit Plan for auditing the 2013/14 Accounts from the external auditors; and if necessary approve any further information required from either officers or the Council's Auditors.

The Council's External Auditors, Grant Thornton, attended the meeting for this item and responded to questions from the Committee.

Grant Thornton had issued details of the Grant Certification work, a Guide to Local Authority Accounts, an Audit Committee Update and the proposed 2014/15 audit fees which were included as an appendix to the report.

The Audit Plan and the Grant Certification work plan were both presented to aid understanding of the role of the Council's external auditors.

Grant Thornton had issued "A Guide to Local Authority Accounts". This guide was designed to help members of audit committees discharge their responsibilities for the financial statements. It aimed to help them understand and challenge the accounts, supporting notes and other statements. The Statement of Accounts would be submitted to the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee in July ahead of being audited, and then to Council in September. Accordingly, this Guide was submitted to the

Committee now rather than awaiting it being presented to the Committee alongside the Accounts in July 2014.

The auditors had prepared an "Audit Committee Update" report. This provided information on current issues as an update to Members.

Details of the proposed audit fees for 2014/15 were set out within the report.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Audit Plan 2013/14, be noted;
- (2) the Grant Certification work plan be noted;
- (3) the Guide to Local Authority Accounts, be noted;
- (4) the Audit Committee Update, be noted; and
- (5) the proposed fee for the 2014/15 audit, be noted.

195. COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE

A report from Civic and Committee Services summarised the Executive's response to comments which the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee gave on reports submitted to the Executive on 16 April 2014.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

196. FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the latest published version of the Forward Plan.

The Forward Plan detailed the future work programme for the Executive. If a non-Executive Member highlighted a decision which was to be taken by the Executive which they would like to be involved in, Members could then provide useful background to the Committee when the report was submitted to the Executive and they were passing comment on it.

RESOLVED that, at present, there were no forthcoming Executive decisions which Members wished to have an input into before the Executive make their decision.

197. REVIEW OF THE WORK PROGRAMME

A report from Civic and Committee Services detailed the Committee's work programme for 2014/15.

The Committee was mindful of the need to review the contract registers for each Service Area and it was thought the most prudent way of doing this was to combine these with the review of the Service Risk Register.

The highest priority for the contract register review was Housing & Property Services and the Committee was of the view this should be undertaken at a special meeting once the new Head of Service had been appointed and was in post for a reasonable amount of time. However in the form of an immediate action the current Chair would meet with Head of Finance and Committee Services Officers to look at a format for these reports and scheduling for the Housing & Property Services meeting.

The Head of Finance informed the Committee that the Statement of Accounts would be brought to the 29 July meeting of the Committee and not the 1 July meeting.

RESOLVED that the work programme for 2014/15 be approved subject to:

- (1) the Statement of Accounts report be brought to 29 July meeting of the Committee; and
- (2) the Chair liaises with the Head of Finance and Committee Services Officer over the format and arrangements for the review of each service areas contract registers.

198. END OF TERM 2013/14

The Committee considered its end of term report to forward to Council that set out the work it had undertaken during the year.

The Committee was required to produce the report for Council under Article 6 of the Constitution.

RESOLVED that the report be approved.

199. EXECUTIVE AGENDA (NON-CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS & REPORTS) – THURSDAY 8 MAY 2014

The Committee did not consider any items on the Executive agenda of 8 May 2014.

200. PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items, by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within paragraphs 1, 3 and 7 of

Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972,
following the Local Government (Access to
Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

201. **EXECUTIVE AGENDA (CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS & REPORTS) –
THURSDAY 8 MAY 2014**

The Committee did not consider any items on the Executive agenda of 8 May 2014.

202. **MINUTES (CONFIDENTIAL)**

The confidential minutes of the meetings held on 15 April 2014 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

203. **COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE – APPENDIX 2 (CONFIDENTIAL)**

The Committee considered a report from Civic and Committee Services that summarised the Executive's response to comments which the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee gave on reports submitted to the Executive on 12 and 26 March 2014.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(The meeting ended at 7.09 pm)