

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 26 June 2012 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT:

Councillors: Ms De-Lara-Bond, Mrs Knight, Mrs Syson, Wilkinson and Williams.

Independent representatives: Mr C Purser, Miss J Ratcliffe and Mr P Willers.

Parish and Town Council representatives: Councillors: Cooke, Mrs Gordon, Owen and Smart.

Officers: Mr R Barr (Audit & Risk Manager) Mr A Jones (Deputy Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer) and Mr G Leach (Civic and Committee Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs Falp, Kirton, Mrs Sawdon and Independent Representative Mr C Bennett.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 April 2012 were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

3. INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11

The Committee considered a report from finance that formed part of the evidence for the Annual Governance Statement. The Committee was required to note the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2011/12.

The report was brought forward to enable the Council to comply with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government in the United Kingdom 2006 that provided the "proper practices" referred to in Regulation 4 of The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 in respect of production of an annual governance statement.

The Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee had considered the report on 29 May and raised no issues.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT

The Committee considered a report from Finance that presented the outcomes from the review of the effectiveness of the Council's internal audit function for the year ended 31 March 2012 undertaken in accordance with the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)

The regulations required the review at least once a year and presentation of the results to the committee designated to consider or approve the Annual Governance Statement.

The report had been considered by the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on 29 May 2012 and the Committee's only comment had been that while members supported the report, they were keen to see that succession planning was not overlooked in respect of the Internal Audit function and therefore asked officers to bear this in mind.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

5. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2010/11

The Committee considered a report from the Monitoring Officer that set out the Annual Governance Statement for 2011/2012.

The CIPFA/SOLACE governance framework required an Annual Governance Statement for Warwick District Council.

The Annual Governance Statement described the governance arrangements that were in place during that financial year. This statement was to be signed by the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council, subject to the views of the Committee.

On 29 May 2012 the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee considered reports entitled Internal Audit Annual Report 2011/12 and Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit 2011/12. Comments from that Committee that were pertinent to this Committee's consideration of Corporate Governance were considered as part of the appropriate items on this agenda.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Annual Governance Statement for 2011/2012 for Warwick District Council, as set out at Appendix A to the report, be approved;
- (2) the Code of Corporate Governance at Appendix B, be confirmed; and
- (3) the recommendations contained within the Internal Audit Annual Report and the Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit reports (both on this agenda) and any comments made by the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee on 29 May 2012 in respect of the aforementioned reports, be noted.

6. COUNCIL AGENDA 27 JUNE 2012

The Committee considered the following non-confidential item which would be discussed at the meeting of the Council on Wednesday 27 June 2012.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)

Item Number 15 – New Standards Regime

The Standards Committee welcomed the work by all on the new arrangements and supported the recommendations in the report.

The Committee felt that the Council should continue to call it “Standards Committee” because it was recognised publicly as a responsible place for considering complaints about the conduct of Councillors. The proposed changes in process and name could lead to confusion and lack of clarity.

The Committee welcomed the change in approach by the Government to enable the current Independent Representatives to be appointed as the Council’s Independent Persons under the Localism Act for a transitional arrangement up to 1 July 2013.

Based on this the Standards Committee recommended to Council that the Council appoint two of the current Independent Representatives as the Independent Persons for the Council until new Independent Persons could be appointed and no later than 1 July 2013.

7. WORK PLAN

The Committee considered its work plan for the ensuing municipal year.

The Civic and Committee Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer informed the meeting that the work plan would need to be considered in more detail when the new Standards Committee was formed.

RESOLVED that the work plan be noted.

8. THANK YOU

The Chairman took the opportunity to thank all members of the Committee for their work on the Committee, because this was to be the last meeting of the Committee under the current Code of Conduct arrangements.

He paid particular tribute to his fellow independent members who had volunteered for their roles and brought considerable knowledge and skill to some very tricky situations.

The Councillors thanked the Chairman for his work and the work of the independent members and expressed their disappointment at the new legislation that would not permit their continued work with the Council in the new role of Independent Person after 1 July 2013.

(The meeting ended at 7.15 pm)