

The **AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE** met at **WARWICK** on the **5<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2006**.

**Present:-**

**Independent Member**

John Bridgeman (Chair)

**County Councillors**

Sarah Boad

Les Caborn

Mick Jones

Tim Naylor

Bob Stevens

John Vereker

**Officers**

David Carter, Strategic Director of Performance and Development.

David Clarke, Director of Resources

Greta Needham, Head of Law and Governance.

Joanna Rhodes, Head of Strategic Resource Development

Garry Rollason, Audit Services Manager.

Neil Gulliver, Principal Committee Administrator

**1. Chair of the Committee**

The Committee noted the appointment by the Council of John Bridgeman as Chair of the Committee. In the event of Mr Bridgeman being unable to attend any meeting, the chair would be taken by Mark Magowan.

**2. General**

**(1) Apologies for Absence**

An apology was received from Mark Magowan.

**(2) Members Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests**

Councillor Sarah Boad declared an interest in Agenda Item 5 in particular in view of her husband's involvement in the Supporting people programme.

**(3) Minutes of the previous meetings of the Standards Committee (3<sup>rd</sup> May 2006) and the Audit Panel (12<sup>th</sup> January 2006)**

were noted.

### **3. Terms of Reference of the new Audit and Standards Committee**

In considering the Terms of Reference, David Carter explained that the Committee would now be independent of the Executive and Scrutiny functions of the County Council. Both internal and external audit would report direct to this Committee. He assured Members that the role of the Committee with regard to 'standards' issues would not be diminished by the increased audit responsibilities.

### **4. Statement of Internal Control 2005/2006**

Joanna Rhodes introduced the report and explained the aims of the statement.

The following points were raised during the discussion.

- Warwickshire County Council adopts a different approach to other Authorities whilst still complying with the legal requirements.
- The Committee were satisfied that the approach adopted was sound and purposeful.
- It was recognised that partnership working was constantly changing and that there was a need for clear and robust governance arrangements.
- The Committee will be responsible for monitoring areas of concern and to advise the Cabinet on appropriate action.
- Human Resource functions across the County Council will be centralised although individual Directorates will retain some administrative responsibilities.
- The Committee agreed that a report on the need for a business continuity plan for emergency planning.
- It was also agreed that a more detailed report on reviews and inspections which were carried out in relation to Adult Social Care Services should be considered by the Committee at their next meeting.
- The Committee supported the issues to be addressed as set out in Appendix 5 to the report.

### **5. Annual Audit and Inspection Plan**

Sandy McMillan (Audit Commission) attended for this item.

Sandy McMillan introduced the Plan and explained the reasoning behind increased audit fee required by the Audit Commission. He pointed out that, as the County Council were no longer in the top quartile of local authorities, the Audit Commission would be required to undertake additional work around performance which largely accounted for the increase in the fee against the previous year.

The following points were raised during the discussion.

- It was likely that the high cost of the fee may be negated by additional government support. It was agreed that the County Council should be made aware of the Committee's concerns about the increased fees.
- One of the main reasons were no longer in the top quartile was due to performance levels in Adult Social Care Services which was an area for further scrutiny by the Audit Commission.
- The Audit Commission will be carrying out inspection work around the community safety governance arrangements.
- Any additional work flagged up by the Audit Commission would be discussed with the County Council before work commenced.

Resolved:-

That the Committee adopts the Audit Commission's Annual Audit and Inspection Plan for Warwickshire County Council for 2006/07.

## **6. Programmes and Dates for Future Meetings**

As the suggested date for the next meeting of the 27<sup>th</sup> September was not convenient to all members, it was agreed that Members Services should canvas Members for their availability in order to finalise a date around that time.

It was noted that all future meetings would be agreed as part of the County Council's Programme of Meetings.

The Committee rose at 11.30 a.m.

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Chair of Committee