

The **STANDARDS COMMITTEE** met at **WARWICK** on the **3RD MAY 2006**.

Present :-

Independent Members

John Bridgeman (Chair)

Mark Magowan (in the Chair)

County Councillors

Sarah Boad

Gordon Collett

Marion Haywood

Mick Jones

Tim Naylor

John Vereker

Officers

David Carter, Strategic Director of Performance and Development.

Pete Keeley, Member Services.

Greta Needham, Head of Law and Governance.

Garry Rollason, Audit Services Manager.

1. General

(1) Apologies and Election of Chair for the Meeting

The Committee was advised that John Bridgeman, the Chair, would be late arriving.

It was then Resolved:

That Mark Magowan be elected as Chair for the meeting.

(2) Members Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Councillor Sarah Boad declared an interest in Agenda Item 7 Internal Audit Report, in particular in view of her husband's involvement in the Supporting people programme.

(3). Minutes of the meeting held on the 31st January 2006 and Matters Arising.

Resolved:-

That the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on the 31st January 2006 be approved and be signed by the Chair for the meeting.

There were no matters arising.

2. Standards Board Bulletins etc

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development which related to publications issued by the Standards Board since the last meeting of the Committee.

Members attention was drawn to recent changes to legislation relating to access to information and categories of exempt information.

Resolved:-

That the Committee notes the bulletin issued by the Standards Board for England.

3. Any Other Items

There were no urgent items.

6. Internal Audit Strategy 2006/2007

The Committee agreed to consider this report in public.

During his introduction of the report Gary Rollason indicated that more changes would be necessary to the audit terms of reference (Appendix A to the report) as it is anticipated that Cipfa will issue a revised Code of Practice during 2006.

The following points were raised during the discussion.

- A protocol was being drafted clarifying the relationship between the Strategic Director of Resources and internal audit
- The audits detailed in Appendix B to the report include audits themed on Directorates and on schools.
- The Authority was planning more work to further embed risk management into the work of the Council
- A Risk management officer was to be appointed
- The Audit Commission provided an external audit service to the council following a different style to the former auditors.
- IT audit was to be undertaken externally because of the level of experience needed for the work.
- The IT Audit contractor has been asked to prepare an IT Audit Plan and this should be available for the July meeting of the Committee.
- Guidance had been issued to managers about the best practice for the management of non council funds
- The internal audit function had been delegated to the Strategic Director of Performance and Development but this change did not negate the Committee's authority.

Resolved:-

That the Internal Audit Strategy 2006/07 be approved.

4. Report Containing Exempt Information

Resolved:-

That members of the public be excluded under Section 100(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 from the Standards Committee's 3rd May 2006 meeting for the following items on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act.

12. Exempt Minutes of the meeting held on the 31st January 2006 and Matters Arising

Resolved:-

That the Exempt Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on the 31st January 2006, having been circulated be approved.

6. Internal Audit Strategy 2006/2007

This item had been considered in the public part of the meeting.

7. Internal Audit Report for the Quarter ended 31st March 2006

Following introductory comments from Gary Rollason, Head of Audit, members discussed several aspects of the report. The following points were made:-

- The Strategic Director for Performance and Development was preparing an action plan relating to improvements to the arrangements for future project management. Subject to the availability of resources, it was intended that the Plan be prepared by the end of July.
- Increased work on financial systems had resulted from the change in the external auditors.
- Bearing in mind changing risks throughout the year it was intended that the Plan be reviewed on an ongoing basis. As the Risk Register was a driver for the Plan, reviews of the Plan would be easier when risk management was fully embedded.
- The Committee was to receive quarterly reports which would mention any significant changes. Members requested that the report should also include more details about the number of audits undertaken and the recommendations adopted. It was noted that currently 98% of recommendations were accepted.
- It was suggested that the value added by the suggested method of reviewing the Plan should be revisited at a later date.
- The authority was planning work to improve business continuity arrangements.
- The Committee were given an outline of the issues concerning the management of the Highways Maintenance Contract. The Cabinet had received regular reports on developments in the lead up to the contract starting. The Committee was advised that a follow up audit was being undertaken and that this would be reported to a future meeting.

- The Committee congratulated the Internal Audit on its continuing ISO accreditation.

The Chair concluded that audit situation was much better than in the previous year although it was not always easy to see this.

It was then Resolved:-

That the Committee recommends that the Cabinet be asked to endorse the Statement of Internal Control for the Council's approval.

The Committee rose at 11.10 a.m.

.....
Chair of Committee