

MINUTES OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

14 DECEMBER 2009

Present:

Councillor S.J. Rough (vice-Chairman – in the Chair)

Councillors:

L.E. Nichols

E. O'Hara

H.A. Thomson

Apologies: Councillors H.R. Jaffer and D.L. McShane

In attendance: Councillor J.D. Packman

392/09 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2009 were approved as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of the revised wording to Minute 309/09 as follows:-

“£1,031k of expenditure was agreed by KPMG as non enhancing capital expenditure i.e. expenditure which is capital in nature but does not increase the value of the assets held (an impairment of the asset).

The increase in the recorded value of the fixed assets for both enhancing and non enhancing expenditure is transferred to the fixed asset account. Non enhancing expenditure (£1,031k) is treated as an impairment of the asset and charged to the Income and Expenditure (I&E) account to reduce down the value of the fixed assets account.

The £1,031k is charged, as part of the total cost to the authority, in the I+E but gets offset by a transfer to the Capital Adjustment Account (CAA - a non financial reserve) through the statement of movement in the general fund (SMOGF).

The value of the assets impaired is included in the reconciliation statement which is the adjustment that ensures there is no change in the overall revenue spend and therefore no effect on the Council Tax requirement

All entries that were required by KPMG were required for completeness and did not affect either the draft I+E or balance sheet as they had both been correctly charged in the draft statement of accounts”.

393/09 CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT

Contaminated Land

Arising from Minute 310/09 of the last meeting, the Head of Environmental Health and Building Control Services appeared before the Committee and

explained in detail the reasons for the continuing delay in completing a risk assessment in respect of contaminated land.

Members then asked the officer questions on his report.

RESOLVED that the information be noted and the Officer be thanked for his attendance and explanation.

Asset Management

Arising from Minute 310/09 of the last meeting, the Head of Asset Management had been requested to attend this meeting to explain the continuing delay in completing actions on high level risks. The Head of Asset Management was unable to attend due to personal commitments but had agreed with the Chairman of the Committee to submit a written report.

The Chairman of the meeting informed Members of the Committee that the report was being withdrawn as it was unsatisfactory and did not address the issues raised by the Committee.

RESOLVED that the Head of Asset Management be asked to appear before the Committee to explain the reasons for the delay in completing actions identified in the Corporate Risk Register relating to leased properties.

Corporate Risk Register

The Senior Auditor reported that the Corporate Risk Register had undergone its quarterly review and update by the Corporate Risk Management Group to ensure actions were being taken on identified risks. The revised register was considered to be an accurate reflection of the high level risks affecting the authority as well as the progress made on actions previously proposed.

She summarised the progress which had been made in a number of areas on actions proposed at the last review to address high risks. Where target dates were overdue an explanation for this had been provided with a revised target date.

RESOLVED that the contents of the Corporate Risk Register be noted, accepted and recommended for approval by Cabinet.

394/09 AUDIT SERVICES QUARTERLY REPORT

The Head of Audit Services presented her report which summarised the work undertaken by Audit Services during the period July – November 2009 and responded to questions from Members. Details of recommendations made by Audit Services as a result of completed audits were attached to the report.

RESOLVED that the Audit Services quarterly report for the period July – November 2009 be noted and approved.

395/09 CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING CODE (WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY)

The Head of Audit Services submitted the Confidential Reporting Code (Whistleblowing Policy) which formed part of the Council's Constitution for review. The Code set out how to raise serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's work and the legal protection against reprisals under the Public Interest Disclosure Act.

The Code was available on the Council's intranet, a bright orange leaflet was posted on every internal notice board and regular reminders were given to staff of its existence.

RESOLVED to note and approve, without amendment, the Confidential Reporting Code (Whistleblowing Policy) as submitted.

396/09 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2009/10

The Committee considered its Work Programme for the remainder of the 2009/10 Municipal year. Issues raised at this meeting would be incorporated into the programme.

RESOLVED that

1. the Work Programme as submitted and amended be approved and
2. in future update reports will be provided by Audit Services on a six monthly basis – (Audit Committee meetings in December/June.)