

## MINUTES OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

30 JANUARY, 2007

### Present:

*Councillor M.L. Bouquet (Chairman)*  
*Councillor J.D. Pinkerton (Vice-Chairman)*

Councillors *K. Chouhan, Mrs. M. Hyams* and *C.V. Strong*

**Apologies:** Councillor *E. O'Hara*

### Officers

Deanna Harris – Head of Audit Services

Punita Talwar – Senior Auditor

Nighat Sheikh – Auditor

Trevor Baker – Senior Committee Manager

Gillian Hobbs – Committee Manager

### 15/07 MINUTES

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2006 be approved as a correct record.

### 16/07 MATTERS ARISING

The Head of Audit Services updated Members on 4 items mentioned in Minute 320/06 of the 17 October meeting.

Audit Services had been working with Legal Services to resolve the discrepancy between car park income received and the amount banked by Securicor. The majority of the discrepancy had been resolved and it was hoped that the small amount outstanding would be paid shortly. The contract for collection was being reviewed.

The Head of Audit Services reported statistics for parking fines for on and off street parking offences. She gave details of an amount which need to be written off for on street parking offences due to a High Court ruling which had made tickets issued without a date of offence, illegal. The amount had been kept to a minimum due to the Parking Services Manager's vigilance.

As existing Members had already received some Risk Management training, it had been decided to take the opportunity of offering further training to the new Council after elections had taken place in May. Members that needed advice prior to this could access the Risk Pack on the Intranet or request guidance from the Head of Audit Services.

Following the theft of a purse and credit/debit cards from the Council Offices, all monies taken had been recovered from the banks. At the time of the theft the CCTV situated in the Council foyer had not been recording. It was

confirmed that all the cameras were now operating correctly and being backed up daily. For the moment, tapes of the backups would be stored indefinitely.

Cameras were currently situated in various locations internally and externally on the front entrance and within the horseshoe car park. A Member asked if any other internal areas of the offices were covered by CCTV. It was felt further cameras inside the Council Offices were unnecessary due to other security measures controlling access which were in place but this would be looked at when the next risk assessment of the building was carried out.

#### **17/07 OUTCOME OF RECOMMENDATION TO EXECUTIVE**

The Executive, at its meeting held on 16 January 2007, considered the recommendation from the 18 July 2006 meeting of the Audit Committee on “the removal of the words “if appropriate” in the second sentence of paragraph 15” of the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy and resolved not to accept the recommendation in its current form and invited the Audit Committee to reconsider the matter.

The Audit Committee having reconsidered its original recommendation still expressed concern and wished to emphasise that the reporting of fraud and corruption against the Council should not be left to the discretion of officers but reported directly to the police.

**RESOLVED** that the Audit Committee reaffirms its original recommendation to Executive: -

That the Audit Committee notes and approves the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy, subject to the removal of the words “if appropriate” in the second sentence of paragraph 15 of the policy.

#### **18/07 QUARTERLY AUDIT AND RISK REPORT**

The Head of Audit Services presented the report which outlined the work undertaken by Audit Services during the period October - December 2006 and responded to questions from Members. She highlighted work of particular interest including, Internal Audit partnership with Surrey Heath Borough Council, Risk Management, Business Improvement Programme and Day Centres.

#### **RESOLVED**

That the contents of the Audit Services' Quarterly Report for October – December 2006 be noted.

#### **19/07 CONFIDENTIAL (WHISTLEBLOWING) POLICY**

The Head of Audit Services explained that the Confidential Reporting Code (Whistleblowing Policy) formed part of the Council's Constitution and 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 Intranet, a leaflet had been placed on every notice board and regular reminders were given to staff of its existence.

No concerns had been raised by staff with specific reference to the 'Confidential Reporting Code'.

**RESOLVED** to note the Confidential Reporting Code (Whistleblowing) Policy as submitted.

### **20/07 MEETING DATES**

At the time the calendar of meetings for 2007 was drawn up, no dates were set aside for the Audit Committee between January and June, but two meetings arranged consecutively in June and July.

It had always been the intention that the Audit Committee met on a quarterly basis.

### **RESOLVED**

1. To include an additional meeting on the calendar of Thursday 19 April 2007 and
2. To remove the July meeting.

### **21/07 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2006/2007**

The Committee considered its Work Programme for the remainder of the Municipal year 2006/07.

**RESOLVED** that the Work Programme as submitted be approved.

### **22/07 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act indicated below.

### **23/07 CAR PARKS**

***(Paragraph 7 - Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime)***

The Head of Audit Services reported on an exempt matter relating to certain operational issues in car parks.

### **RESOLVED** to

- a) recommend to Executive that management should address audit recommendations relating to health and safety issues which include
  - Parking Attendants to work in pairs when dealing with cash jams and other maintenance matters in machines located in the Council's Car Parks,
  - each Parking Attendant to carry activated panic buttons for emergency use
  - CCTV to be installed.

b) a special meeting of the Audit Committee be called on Monday 19 March to review the position and discuss the management issues with the Head of Environment Services and the Parking Services Manager.

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_  
19 March 2007