

Minutes of Accounts & Audit Committee

Meeting Date: Wednesday, 24 November 2010 starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor J Hill (Chairman)

Councillors:

R Sherras	N Walsh
M Thomas	A Yearling

In attendance: Director of Resources, Principal Auditor and Clive Portman (Audit Commission).

523 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillor D Eccleston and Georgia Jones (Audit Commission).

524 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 July 2010 and 15 September 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

525 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at the meeting.

526 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

527 REFERENCES FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no references from Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

528 ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2009/2010

The Director of Resources submitted a report for Committee's information on the Audit Commission's Annual Audit Letter for 2009/2010. She informed Committee that each year the Audit Commission provides an overall assessment of the Council drawing on the audit inspection and performance assessment work that has been carried out by their staff and the Council's external auditor.

Clive Portman highlighted various issues in the Annual Audit Letter including the future challenges for the local authority and the outcome of the spending review which was imminent. He informed Committee that it was a very positive letter and that the Council had good financial practice. He informed Committee that he would submit his opinion planning to the next meeting.

Clive Portman also gave a brief update on the abolition of the Audit Commission which was scheduled for 2012. He reported that a decision on the audit side was expected in January/February 2011 and that over the next two years, staff numbers would be reduced or subject to Tupe transfer. However, they would continue to carry out audits for Ribble Valley Borough Council for 2010/2011 and 2011/2012.

The Chairman asked that the thanks of the Accounts and Audit Committee be conveyed to the Council's staff involved.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

529 UPDATE ON INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL REPORTING STANDARDS (IFRS)

The Director of Resources submitted a report for Committee's information on the progress that had been made to date on the adoption of the International Financial Reporting Standards and to provide Members with information of the new layout that must be adopted for the Council's future financial statements. She reminded Committee of the main changes for the Council, what the main changes for the Council would be under the new system, and that good progress had been made on many of these areas of change with amendments being made internally to financial systems in order to assist in the future publication of the Council's Statement of Accounts on an IFRS basis and in the restatement of past financial statements. The report gave an insight of the new presentation that would be required under the IFRS system. She informed Committee that it was proposed to bring a recast version of the financial statements to the next meeting in March 2011 and that a training session would be held so that Councillors understood fully the new system.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

530 REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports from representatives on Outside Bodies.

531 LANCASHIRE RESILIENCE FORUM COMMUNITY RISK AND EMERGENCY PLANNING

The Chairman invited Chris Shuttleworth, the Emergency Planning Officer, to give a presentation. He informed Committee that the Forum was there in order to prioritise and identify risks likely to happen in Lancashire and more importantly in Ribble Valley, for example flooding, severe weather, terrorism etc, some being far more than others. He informed Committee that the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 stipulates that we must have a community risk register in order to assimilate this local risks need to be assessed and emergency plans put in place. This was very much an information sharing exercise. He reported that the District Risk Register needed to be Ribble Valley specific and as such, had gone about identifying risks, their likely location and an action plan eg local flood plan for Ribchester. New profiles with the current software had been developed to

examine every risk and a register had now been produced specifically for Ribble Valley.

Another problem that had been tackled within the Lancashire area was communications in a crisis. The interoperability was very important between the different agencies especially in an emergency and Chris had been working on a telecommunications plan, whereby audio had been caught and channelled on to the Internet. Chris had sought sponsorship in order to finance the development of appropriate software for this project which was proving successful.

Committee thanked Chris Shuttleworth for his outstanding presentation and acknowledged the development of the Ribble Valley Risk Register and development of the communication setup.

RESOLVED: That by virtue of the fact that the next items of business be exempt information under Category 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be now excluded from the meeting.

532 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT 2010/2011

The Director of Resources submitted a report outlining progress on the internal audit work to date for 2010/2011. The Principal Auditor highlighted in particular the issues surrounding car mileage claims and the fact that all staff had been reminded of the requirements for such. Reference was also made to other audit work which had been carried out and resulted in a dismissal.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

533 INSURANCE CLAIMS ANALYSIS

The Director of Resources submitted a report for Committee's information with an update on the number and types of claims submitted to our insurers over the last 12 months. The Principal Auditor gave a detailed breakdown of the claims along with details of the settlements. He reminded Committee that a total of 20 claims submitted was not excessive. He informed Committee that an annual update would be given.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.35pm.

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact Jane Pearson (414430).