

Minutes

Audit Committee

- Venue: Committee Room 2
- Date: 29 June 2011
- Present: Councillor Mrs Casling (Chair), Councillor Cattanach, Councillor Crawford, Councillor Dyson, Councillor Mrs Mackman, Councillor Mrs McCartney, Councillor Packham and Councillor Reynolds
- Apologies for Absence: Councillor Nutt
- Officers Present: James Ingham, Head of North Yorkshire Audit Partnership; Karen Iveson, Executive Director; Jackie Humphreys, Human Resources and Richard Besley, Democratic Services

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

To receive and approve the minutes of the Audit Committee held on 29 March 2011 and they are signed by the Chair.

3. CHAIR'S ADDRESS AND INTRODUCTION TO THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Chair welcomed councillors of the new Audit Committee to their first meeting. The Chair highlighted the roles and responsibilities of the Committee in monitoring the internal control framework of Selby District Council and the need for robust systems. She urged the Committee to

read the reports put before it in the coming year and inform the Chair should they have any issues which would then be put to officers. With the introduction of the new structure and the new role of Access Selby there would be a lot to consider this year.

Executive Director, Karen Iveson, outlined the role of Audit as one of three Overview and Scrutiny Committees and its duty in scrutinising the Council's finances and risks.

The Executive Director explained how the Committee would now be responsible for approving the accounts of the Council.

The Committee would also receive reports on Selby District Council's control systems, monitor progress against the Action Plan and review the Corporate Risk Register.

4. TIMING OF MEETINGS

The Chair notified the Committee of the need to agree a suitable start time for the 2011/12 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED:

That future Audit Committee meetings commence at 5:00pm.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

To accommodate Councillors with work commitments.

5. AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT A/11/1 – WORK PROGRAMME 2011/2012

The Executive Director presented the report, outlining the constitutional requirements for the Work Programme.

James Ingham, Head of North Yorkshire Audit Partnership, was introduced to the Committee who explained the role of the Audit Partnership across North Yorkshire District Councils.

He informed the Committee that during the course of the year they would receive final Internal Audit reports completed by the Partnership to scrutinise and asked councillors to respect the confidentiality of the reports. He outlined that the single most important matter for the Committee would be the approval of the Statement of Accounts.

Other aspects to consider would be the Regulation 6 review, reports from External Auditors and fraud issues such as Counter Fraud measures and Housing Benefit Fraud.

He informed the Committee that the Regulation 6 Review would come in April 2012 and would need to be added to the Work Programme.

The Committee were informed that the current Audit Partnership arrangements run until March 2012 when plans to merge with Veritau would be considered.

The Chair asked the Committee if they wished to consider other issues to add to the Work Programme. Councillors felt that Access Selby should be a priority.

The Committee asked that a special meeting be held in September to include training, matters relating to the Regulation 6 review and to review risk registers for the Core and Access Selby.

RESOLVED:

To receive and note the report and to add the Reg 6 review to the work programme in April 2012

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

The Committee ensures the contribution of Audit is effective and in supporting service improvement and delivery against district wide and Council priorities.

6. AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT A/11/2 – INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11

The report was presented by James Ingham, Head of North Yorkshire Audit Partnership.

The Chair informed the Committee that there were two outstanding minor compliance issues from Internal Audit Reports for Human Resources and Land Charges included in the Annual Report. Jackie Humphries, Human Resource Officer, reported that the issues had been resolved and the report had now been signed off by the Audit Partnership.

The Head of the Partnership then introduced the Annual Report as a summary of the work done by the Partnership and an assurance that what had been audited was working well.

There had been a 5% reduction in the time taken to conduct the audits in line with ongoing improvements. He felt that the controls and processes in place were sound and felt it was a good report.

Councillors discussed the new structure and roles of the Core and Access Selby in future plans and whether there would be two reports in future and

whether the Audit Partnership would look at the relationship between the two.

Councillor J Cattnach thanked the Partnership for its work over the year.

RESOLVED:

To receive and note the report.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS

That the overall opinion of the Audit Partnership of the internal control environment in Selby District Council in 2010/11 is satisfactory.

7. AUDIT REPORT A/11/3 – INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2011/12

The report was presented by the Head of the Partnership. He referred to the Plan's Appendix identifying the areas to be audited in the next three years and highlighted the reduction in time taken to conduct the audits.

He identified earlier concerns and the requirement in the Plan to look at all parts of the Council, including the Core and Access Selby.

Councillor R Packham was concerned and questioned that, as Access Selby had its own Board, whether it would have its own audit provision. The Executive Director advised that as Access Selby was part of Selby District Council, it would be scrutinised by Audit Committee.

The Chair considered the ongoing reduction in audit time and whether the time allocated for 2013/14 could go any lower and what savings would be gained in the 25 day reduction. The Head of Partnership felt it unlikely and that 25 days equated to around £6k.

RESOLVED:

To receive and note the report.

REASONS FOR DECISION

To have in place and appropriate plan within the limitations of the budget for Internal Audit.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT TRAINING

The Head of the North Yorkshire Audit Partnership gave a short training session on Risk Management.

9. AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT A/11/4 – RISK MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT

The Executive Director presented the report to update councillors on Risk Management developments.

The Committee were informed that, Covalent, a new electronic performance management system, had been installed into which all the Council's risk registers have been stored. Selby District Council had a good track record risk management and this new system would aid this significantly.

The Chair, in supporting the report, stressed it was important that the Committee continued to monitor risks.

The Chair felt that with the new Council structure and the current financial position there was now greater risk to service delivery and the Committee is an important in achieving sound service delivery for our public.

RESOLVED:

To receive and note the report.

REASONS FOR DECISION

To ensure continuing proactive risk management around the Council under the new 'working together' regime.

The meeting closed at 5:17pm