

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Thursday 14 July 2005 at 6.00 p.m.

Conference Room at the Council House, Walsall

Present

Councillor David Turner (Chairman)
Councillor Rose Martin (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Keith Chambers
Councillor Albert Griffiths
Councillor Desmond Pitt
Councillor Ian Robertson
Councillor Mrs. Doreen Shires

192/05 Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2005, a copy having previously been circulated to each Member of the Committee, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

193/05 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Turner declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in any matter relating to Watling Street JMI School.

Councillor Martin declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in any item relating to Park Hall Community Association or Queen Mary's High School.

Councillor Chambers declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in any item relating to Pool Hayes Community School or Willenhall School Sports College.

Councillor Robertson declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in any item relating to New Deal.

Councillor Pitt declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in any item relating to Abbey Primary School.

19405 Deputations and Petitions

No deputations were received or petitions submitted.

195/05 **Late items to be introduced by the Chairman**

There were no late items to be introduced by the Chairman.

196/05 **Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985**

Resolved

That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the item set out in the private part of the agenda for the reasons set out therein and by reason of Section 100A of the Local Government Act, 1972.

Non-Executive Functions

197/05 **The Roles and Responsibilities of the Audit Committee**

A report was submitted:

(see annexed)

The Head of Corporate and Strategic Finance (Vicky Crowshaw) explained that the remit of the Committee remained the same and requested Members to approve the work programme set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

Resolved

That the report be noted and the work plan set out at Appendix 1 be approved.

198/05 **Internal Audit - Performance for the year ending 31 March 2005**

The report of the Executive Director was submitted:

(see annexed)

David Blacker drew attention to the main points contained in the report.

Resolved

That the Committee notes the service's high level of achievement during the year against its performance indicators and targets.

199/05 **Putting the Citizen First**

The report of the Audit Commission was submitted:

(see annexed)

Brian Warwick drew attention to the main conclusions contained in the report. With regard to the service specifications, he indicated that Officers were doing everything they could to set them as precise as possible. It was important that they were precisely worded and clearly identified the point at which the Council's responsibilities ended on those of the contractor began.

With respect to the client function, Brian Warwick reported that the Client Manager would be appointed soon. He referred to the setting up of the Client Arrangements Task Team which was considering practical issues.

With regard to contracts and negotiations, Brian felt that the experience the Council had obtained in negotiations over PFI and LSVT would stand it in good stead.

Councillor Robertson asked whether Members would be able to examine the contract before its signing. Brian Warwick replied that the process had been arranged so that Members would have an opportunity to discuss the contract before the final signing took place.

After further discussion it was:-

Resolved

That the report be noted.

200/05 **Audit Progress Report**

The report of the Audit Commission was submitted:

(see annexed)

Brian Warwick drew the Committee's attention to the main points contained in the report.

Following detailed discussion it was:-

Resolved

That the report be noted.

201/05 **Partnership and Governance**

The report of the Audit Commission was submitted:

(see annexed)

Clive Mitchell (District Audit) drew attention to the main points contained in the report. Referring to the scope of the audit, he drew attention to the three Partnerships – Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership, Health and Social Care Partnership and Walsall New Deal for Communities - which had been studied in depth and drew attention to the problems that had arisen from the lack of clarity in decision making.

After detailed discussion it was:-

Resolved

That the report be noted.

Private Session

202/05 **Exclusion of public**

Resolved

That during consideration of the remaining item on the agenda, the Committee considers that the item for consideration is exempt information by virtue of the appropriate paragraph(s) of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972, and accordingly resolves to consider this item in private.

203/05 **Internal Audit: Report for the year ending 31 March 2005**

The report of the Executive Director was submitted:

(see annexed)

David Blacker explained the background to the report. Referring to the sickness level of 54 days, he reported that long-term illness of 1 individual accounted for 45 of those days.

After further consideration, it was:-

Resolved

That the Committee:-

- (1) notes the service's high level of achievement during the year against performance indicator targets;
- (2) selects Street Lighting PFI and the contracting process for detailed scrutiny.

(Exempt information under paragraphs 1, 5, 7 and 14 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972)

Termination of meeting

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 7.20 p.m.

Chairman:

Date: