

SPECIAL AUDIT COMMITTEE

Friday, 29 September, 2006 at 6.00 p.m.

Conference Room at the Council House, Walsall

Present

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

323/06 Apology

An apology for non-attendance at the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor Rose Martin.

324/06 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

325/06 Deputations and Petitions

No deputations were received or petitions submitted.

326/06 Late Items to be introduced by the Chairman

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

327/06 Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)

It was agreed that the remaining item on the agenda could be considered in public session so there was no need for a reference to the private session.

Non-Executive Functions

328/06 Statement of Accounts 2005/06 (Post Audit)

The report of the Executive Director was submitted:

(see annexed)

Vicky Crowshaw reported that John Gregory and Brian Warwick would deal with the Annual Governance Report. She referred to Appendix 6 to the report which related to the letter of representation and to Appendix 7 regarding the Action Plan.

Referring to the statement of accounts, she advised that there was a net £35,000 adjustment to the general reserves.

Referring to the Annual Governance Report, John Gregory (Audit Commission) advised that the report was in a slightly different format to previous years in that the letter of representation was now signed by the Chairman of the Audit Committee as well as the Chief Finance Officer. He added that it was a good report and an unqualified opinion on the accounts had been given.

Brian Warwick referred to page 7 of the report and indicated that there were no non-trivial uncorrected mis-statements in the accounts. He referred to a number of other paragraphs for Member's information and concluded that the Authority had taken a positive and constructive approach to the audit which had included some robust discussions with officers. He thanked the Authority for the assistance and co-operation afforded to the Audit Commission and indicated that the quality of working papers had improved considerably.

Councillor Chambers stated that he was pleased that the report was so positive.

Councillor Turner commented that this showed how much hard work had gone into the preparation of the annual accounts.

Councillor Robertson referred to litigation and tribunal claims. Carole Evans replied that these were covered in the relevant parts of the statement of accounts and supporting documentation.

Vicky Crowshaw reported that there had been a significant improvement on last year supported by the action plan which contained only four recommendations. She added that every effort would be made to ensure that working papers were error-free and was pleased with the interaction with the Audit Commission.

Carole Evans stated that the Authority took great pride in putting the accounts together and officers worked hard to make them as accurate as possible.

Vicky Crowshaw reminded the meeting that the letter of representation had to be signed by the Chairman of the Committee as well as the Chief Finance Officer following agreement by all members present. Councillor Turner indicated that he would be happy to sign the letter.

After further discussion it was,

Resolved

That the Committee:

- (1) Receives the Annual Governance Report from the Audit Commission on their audit of the 2005/06 statement of accounts and notes the key messages;
- (2) Notes that there have been agreed amendments made to the accounts during the audit, the financial impact of which is minimal;
- (3) Approves the letter of representation attached with Appendix 1 to the report;
- (4) Approves the Action Plan set out in Appendix 1 to the report addressing the recommendations set out in the Annual Governance Report;
- (5) Receives and approves the final post-audit statement of accounts for 2005/06;
- (6) Authorises the Executive Director (Chief Finance Officer) to distribute copies of the audited statement of accounts to all partners and stakeholders.

Councillor Turner requested the Executive Director to thank all those staff involved in the work on the statement of accounts.

Termination of Meeting

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 6.35 p.m.

Chairman:

Date:

