

# **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**Thursday 17 March 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

### **167/05 LGC Awards**

Councillor Turner referred to the fact that the Finance Team had received an award at the recent LGC Awards. He suggested that the award should be noted.

### **168/05 Minutes**

#### **Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2005, a copy having previously been circulated to each Member of the Committee, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **169/05 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **170/05 Deputations and Petitions**

No deputations were received or petitions submitted.

### **171/05 Late items to be introduced by the Chairman**

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

172/05 **Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985**

**Resolved**

That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the items 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**

173/05 **Introducing the New Corporate Integrated Planning and Performance Management Framework (CIPPF)**

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Helen Dudson reported that the Framework had been in place since 2002. The present document updated and improved the original scheme.

Councillor Robertson asked how Councillors could question performance management. Helen replied that the Beacon Index was reported to Cabinet, EMT and Scrutiny on a quarterly basis. The Social Care Team and the Regeneration Team carried out monitoring also. The Framework was subject to checks by the Inspectorate in June each year.

**Resolved**

That the report be noted.

174/05 **Audit Progress Report 2004/05**

A report of the District Auditor was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Brian Warwick reported that new developments were printed in bold type for ease of identification.

Councillor Turner thanked Brian for his work on behalf of the Local Authority.

Councillor Robertson asked if the delays referred to in the report created problems. Brian Warwick replied that there was slight slippage in a number of programmes, but no serious consequences should arise from that slippage.

**Resolved**

That the report be noted.

175/05 **Putting the Citizen First**

The report of the District Auditor was submitted:

(see annexed)

Brian Warwick reported that Senior Officers has assured him that the Council would not sign a contract that was not sufficiently detailed to ensure success. Any uncertainties would have to be resolved before the completion of the contract. He suggested that the client function should be put in place even before the contract was finalised to assist in the process. A large client function should be retained for the first twelve months of the contract, then reduced over time as necessary.

Councillor Turner referred to the governance arrangements which meant that contracts and sub-contracts could be twice removed from the Council client. Brian Warwick replied that the Council was aware of this possibility through the best and final offer (BAFO). He indicated that clauses in the contract would protect the Council in the event of a sub-contractor behaving incorrectly. Internal Audit and the Audit Commission could also investigate any irregularities.

Councillor Chambers asked what would happen if the contract proved not to be robust enough. Brian Warwick replied that there was no such thing as a perfect contract, but clauses would be put in place to enable the two partners to deal with unforeseen circumstances as they arose. It was only natural in a contract of this complexity for there to be some loose ends, but it was planned to keep them to a minimum.

Councillor Martin asked whether the monitoring staff would be strong enough to deal with any eventualities arising.. Brian Warwick replied that with the client side in place it should be robust enough to cope.

Councillor Chambers requested a copy of the risk assessment for the scheme.

Brian Warwick reported that the fact that auditors were challenging decisions now was concentrating minds and making people aware of what needed to be done.

After further discussion it was:-

**Resolved**

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That a further report on Putting the Citizen First be submitted to the additional Audit Committee to be held on 28 April 2005

## **Private Session**

### **176/05 Exclusion of public**

#### **Resolved**

That during consideration of the remaining items on the agenda, the Committee considers that the items for consideration are 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 those items in private.

### **177/05 Internal Audit: Internal Audit Workplan 2005/06**

The report of the Executive Director was submitted:

(see annexed)

David Blacker referred to page 3 of the report and indicated that the five year rolling programme was risk assessed. He requested the Committee to endorse the workplan.

Councillor Chambers commented that the methodology was tried and tested so he was happy to endorse the plan.

#### **Resolved**

That the Internal Audit Workplan for 2005/06 be endorsed.

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

### **178/05 Submission of Internal Audit Reports for Scrutiny**

The report of the Executive Director was submitted:-

(see annexed)

David Blacker reported that asylum seekers and Barr Beacon Community Association had been selected for scrutiny. Referring to Barr Beacon Community Association, he advised that there was a poor system in place. Thirty-two recommendations had been made. Several had been implemented, but the remainder could not be actioned as the Community Association would close at the end of March. He added that other Community Associations seemed to be working well.

After further discussion it was:-

**Resolved**

That the report be noted.

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

**Termination of meeting**

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 6.55 p.m.

Chairman: .....

Date: .....