

Corporate Governance Committee – 24 September 2007

Present: Councillor Williams (Chairman)
Councillor A Wedderkopp (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Denington, Meikle, Mrs Smith, Mrs Waymouth,
Mrs Whitmarsh and Miss Wood

Officers: Mr J Thornberry (Strategic Director)
Mr K Toller (Strategic Director)
Mr C Gunn (Group Auditor, South West Audit Partnership)
Mrs G Croucher (Democratic Services Officer)

Also Present: Councillors Mrs Herbert, Thorne and Watson, Mr T Bowditch and Mr S
Haworth (Audit Commission) and Mr D Wilson (Standards Committee)

(The meeting commenced at 5.00 p.m.)

20. Apologies/Substitutions

Apologies: Councillors Govier, Hall and Paul

Substitutions: Councillor Mrs Waymouth for Councillor Hall
Councillor Miss Wood for Councillor Paul

21. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2007 were taken as read and were signed.

22. Corporate Governance Workshop

Reported that the Audit Commission was piloting new Corporate Governance Review Arrangements with the Council. As part of this Review, Steve Haworth of the Audit Commission presented a Corporate Governance Workshop that outlined the Good Governance Framework.

Mr Haworth explained the Good Governance Framework which was made up of the following six issues:-

- Focusing on the organisation's purpose and on outcomes for citizens and users;
- Performing effectively in clearly defined functions and roles;
- Promoting values for the whole organisation and demonstrating the values of good governance through behaviour;
- Taking informed, transparent decisions and managing risk;

- Developing the capacity and capability of the governing body to be effective; and
- Engaging stakeholders, partnership working and making accountability real.

Through interactive voting handsets, the workshop also gave Members the opportunity to give their views on this Council's governance arrangements and to identify areas for improvement and prioritising actions.

The Chairman thanked Mr Haworth for his very interesting presentation.

23. Annual Governance Report

Mr Terry Bowditch, Audit Manager, the Audit Commission (AC) introduced Taunton Deane Borough Council's Annual Governance Report 2006/2007.

The Statement of Internal Control – this was near completion, although there were still outstanding issues to be resolved on:-

- Reconciliation of control accounts for Council tax and non-domestic rates;
- Analytical review of payroll; and
- Movements on reserves

The draft Management Representation letter was presented for the approval of Members.

Mr Bowditch reported on the unadjusted misstatements, adjustments to the financial statements and accounting practices.

The systems of internal control had identified weaknesses in the new systems introduced in 2006/2007. These weaknesses included:-

- Non-domestic rates;
- Council Tax;
- Benefits; and
- Payroll.

The Value for Money Conclusion for the year 2006/2007 would be issued shortly and would confirm that the Council had met the 12 criteria required.

RESOLVED that approval be given to the Strategic Director and Section 151 Officer, Shirlene Adam, to sign the Letter of Representation.

24. Review of the Internal Audit Charter

Considered report previously circulated, setting out the revised terms of reference of the Internal Audit Charter. The Charter governed the work of the South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) at Taunton Deane Borough Council

and was a requirement of the 2003 Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government that the terms of reference for delivering the Internal Audit service should be developed and maintained.

Details of the proposed terms of reference were submitted for consideration by Members.

RESOLVED that the revised Internal Audit Charter be adopted.

25. Internal Audit Plan 2007/2008 – Progress Review

Considered report previously circulated, which provided an update on the progress made against agreed audit recommendations from 2005/2006.

Reported that the three follow-up reviews that had been undertaken since April 2007 had resulted in 29 recommendations being made. The majority of the recommendations due at the time of the review had now been completed. Details of the outstanding recommendations were submitted.

Details were also reported of the audits completed for the period between April and September 2007 which included any significant findings or recommendations.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(The meeting ended at 7.01 p.m.)