

## **Corporate Governance Committee – 1 March 2011**

Present: Councillor Denington (Chairman)  
Councillor Coles (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillors Beaven, Hall, Henley, Miss James, Thorne, A Wedderkopp,  
and Mrs Wilson.

Officers: Mrs S Adam (Strategic Director), Mrs T Meers (Legal and Democratic  
Services Manager), Mr M Daly (Strategy Lead) and Mrs G Croucher  
(Democratic Services Officer)

Also Present: Councillors House and Morrell and Mr B Bethell and Mr P Lappin (Audit  
Commission)

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

### **1. Apology**

Councillor Govier.

### **2. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2010 were taken as read  
and were signed.

### **3. Declaration of Interests**

Councillor Henley declared a personal interest as a Member of Somerset  
County Council. Councillor Miss James declared a personal interest as an  
employee of Viridor.

### **4. Audit Commission Annual Audit Letter 2009/2010**

Mr Brian Bethell and Mr Peter Lappin of the Audit Commission introduced  
Taunton Deane Borough Council's Annual Audit Letter.

The report set out an overall summary of the Audit Commission's assessment  
of the Council and outlined the following:-

- A conclusion on the Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance  
Statement;
- A conclusion on Value for Money;
- The fees charged by the Audit Commission compared to those  
budgeted;
- Current and future challenges; and
- Action Plan.

A major challenge for the Council was to identify and take action to preserve  
priority services while achieving the budget savings needed to balance  
spending with the reduced resources likely to be available in the medium term.

More work was also necessary to implement the key controls in the SAP based financial systems to ensure the accuracy and integrity of data, to prevent unauthorised access and to stop duplicate payments.

**Resolved** that the report be noted.

## **5. Action Plan – Annual Governance Report**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the Annual Governance Report Action Plan.

The Action Plan had been prepared to meet the recommendations set out in the Annual Governance Report presented to the Committee in September 2010. The progress of the Action Plan would be monitored by the Strategic Director and a further report would be made to the Committee in May 2011.

**Resolved** that the report be noted.

## **6. Grants Claims Report**

Mr Brian Bethell and Mr Peter Lappin introduced the Certification of Claims and Returns Report 2009/2010 reviewing the Council's arrangements to prepare grant claims.

The Council received funding from various grant paying departments and had to demonstrate that the conditions attached to the grants had been met.

Reported that six claims had been certified in 2009/2010 with a total value of £45m. A full review of five claims and a limited review of one claim had been carried out. Four claims requiring full certification for errors were amended and one claim could not be fully certified and a qualification letter to the grant-paying body had been issued.

The fee for the audit of grant claims in 2009/2010 was £32,500.

**Resolved** that the report be noted.

## **7. Value for Money Report 2009/2010**

Mr Brian Bethell and Mr Peter Lappin introduced the Value for Money Report 2009/2010 giving details of the Audit Commission's review of Taunton Deane Borough Council's arrangements.

The review found that the Council had proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness of its use of resources.

The review also found that the Council had made proper arrangements and were embarking on an ambitious programme of joint working to provide financial and other services including finance and IT. Some teething problems

had been met in the operation of some of the joint services, including the financial systems based on SAP. However, despite these problems, the Council had maintained proper arrangements to achieve economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

**Resolved** that the report be noted.

#### **8. Audit Commission Audit Plan 2010/2011**

Mr Brian Bethell and Mr Peter Lappin introduced the Audit Commission's Audit Plan 2010/2011 setting out the audit work the Audit Commission proposed to undertake for the audit of Taunton Deane Borough Council's financial statements and the value for money conclusion 2010/2011.

The Plan was based on the risk-based approach to audit planning and reflected the audit work specified by the Audit Commission for 2010/2011, the current national risks relevant to Taunton Deane Borough Council and also our local risks.

**Resolved** that the report be noted.

#### **9. Localism Bill Response**

Mrs Meers reported that the Localism Bill had been released in December 2010 and would introduce a number of changes to local authority arrangements.

The Bill was currently with the House of Commons Parliamentary Scrutiny Committee and the Council had the opportunity to submit evidence on a number of proposals including changes to Standards, Governance Procedures, Community Empowerment and Predetermination.

Members discussed the proposals and made a number of comments that included the roles and powers of the Standards Committee; the financial cost of any changes to the governance procedures; a local referendum on community empowerment and the lack of detail on predetermination.

Mrs Meers reported that a range of consultation documents would be released over the coming months to enable a more detailed response to be submitted.

**Resolved** that the response of the Corporate Governance Committee be submitted to the Parliamentary Scrutiny Committee.

#### **10. Update of Part 3 of the Constitution**

Reported that a number of changes to the planning delegation scheme had been agreed by the Planning Committee on 25 February 2009. However, the Constitution had not been updated to reflect the agreed amendments.

**Resolved** that Council be recommended to agree the proposed amendments to Part 3 of the Constitution.

**11. Forward Plan**

Submitted for information the proposed Forward Plan of the Corporate Governance Committee.

**Resolved** that the Corporate Governance Committee Forward Plan be noted.

(The meeting ended at 8.25 pm).