

AUDIT COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 2008

PRESENT:- Councillors Michael Dickinson (Chair), Mark Edwards, Mary Martin, David Sammels and Peter Stoddart

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Steve Allsopp.

16. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matter to be considered at the meeting.

17. Public Question Time

No questions were asked under Standing Order 18.

18. Minutes

Resolved – That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 24th June 2008 be confirmed and signed.

19. Exempt Items - Exclusion of Press and Public

That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred to in the items listed below on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the respective paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Paragraph No.</u>	<u>Minute No.</u>
8 - 9	7	22-23

20. External Audit Report on the Statement of Accounts 2007/08

Paul Benfield, Martin Robinson, and Peter Smith of the Audit Commission, the Council's External Auditors, attended the meeting to present to the Committee their report in relation to the Annual Audit of the Council's Statement of Accounts and Value for Money conclusion. The Committee noted that the Council had received an unqualified audit opinion in relation to the Accounts with no material audit adjustments being required and an unqualified for Value for Money conclusion, which was an excellent outcome for the Council. The Auditors advised the Committee of the minor issues identified within the Appendices to the report, and confirmed that they were entirely satisfied with the management response to the issues raised. The Finance Team and External Auditors confirmed that the communications and relationship between both parties had been excellent.

Resolved – (1) That the Audit Committee notes the content of the External Auditors ISA260 Report and its findings in relation to the Audit of the Statement of Accounts for 2007/08 and the Value for Money conclusion.

(2) That the Committee approves the Auditor's Statement of Accounts for 2007/08 and the Chair of the Audit Committee sign the Statement of Accounts for 2007/08 on behalf of the Committee.

(3) That the Director of Finance be authorised as Section 151 Officer to sign the letter of representation to the Audit Commission.

(4) That the Finance Team, in particular Darren Stevens, be congratulated on their exceptional work on the Accounts for 2007/08 and on the achievement of unqualified Accounts.

(5) That the Audit Commission be thanked for their work in the first year as the Council's External Auditor.

21. Audit Committee: Member Training

The Head of Internal Audit circulated a list of possible areas for training for Audit Committee Members to assist them in their role. This training was to keep Members of the Audit Committee up-to-date with new legislation, policies and best practice to ensure the Committee was able to continue operating independently and effectively.

Resolved – That Members of the Committee consider the list of possible areas of training and inform the Head of Internal Audit what training they would like to receive from the list and any other training that they require.

22. Internal Audit Follow up Contracting of Works

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Internal Audit and presented by the Managing Director of Swindon Commercial Services and the Chief Executive, providing an update on the audit of Contracting of Works within Swindon Commercial Services and a management response to the findings of the audit. The Committee were pleased to note the significant progress which had been taken place on the implementation of the Action Plan, and the management assurance that it would be fully implemented.

Resolved – (1) That the Committee notes the report of the Head of Internal Audit and the improvements made by Swindon Commercial Services.

(2) That the Head of Internal Audit consider where the lessons learnt could be applied to other areas of the Council and report back to a future meeting of the Committee.

(3) That the Head of Internal Audit be consulted on the new Swindon Commercial Services Procurement Strategy currently in preparation.

23. Head of Internal Audit Update

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Internal Audit in relation to progress against the Annual Audit Plan, the number of reports finalised since June 2008 and progress to date on other audits. It was noted that the section was slightly behind on target due to carrying a number of vacancies but that the main financial systems audits were on target and would take place in the second half of the year.

The Committee expressed concern of the implications of the Financial Management Systems Audit on small primary schools and asked the Director of Finance to raise this issue with the Group Director for Children to understand where support could be provided and where schools can be encouraged to work in collaborative arrangements in order to reduce the workload created by this new

statutory duty.

Resolved – (1) That the Head of Internal Audit Update Report be noted.

(2) That the Head of Internal Audit bring back a report to the next Committee on progress on the implementation of the Benefits Claims Processing Audit Action Plan and invite the relevant Director and Lead Member to attend and answer any questions from the Committee.

(3) That the Director for Children report back to the Committee at a future meeting on support that can be provided to schools in relation to the Financial Management Systems Auditing requirements.

(4) That the Committee noted the new addition of the Internal Audit Fraud Bulletin as tabled at the meeting.