

**MINUTES OF A JOINT MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEES
HELD AT FOLLATON HOUSE, TOTNES ON TUESDAY, 5 APRIL 2011**

MEMBERS

* Cllr J T Pennington - Chairman

* Mr R Allison	* Mr P Dredge
* Cllr B F Cane	* Mr S Dunham
* Cllr B E Carson	∅ Cllr M Hannaford
* Cllr P Coulson	∅ Mr J O'Connell
∅ Mr C Cox	* Cllr J A Westacott
∅ Cllr R F Croad	* Mr M Winterton

* Denotes attendance

∅ Denotes apology for absence

Officers in attendance:

All Agenda Items: Internal Audit Manager, Monitoring Officer and Member Support
Services Manager

Also in attendance:

Cllr M J Hicks

A.43/10 & **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**
S.36/10

RESOLVED

That Cllr J T Pennington be appointed Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

A.44/10 & **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
S.37/10

Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of the meeting, but none were made.

A.45/10 & **CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE 2010/11 – COMPLIANCE**
S.38/10 **REVIEW**

Consideration was given to a report which informed Members of the results of the compliance review of the Code of Corporate Governance. The report found that the result of the compliance review was considered to be generally satisfactory.

The report stated that overall responsibility for Governance rested with the Council, but monitoring of compliance with the Code was carried out on its behalf by the S151 Officer, Monitoring Officer and Internal Audit Manager, who reported annually to the Audit and Standards Committees.

In discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) the fundamental importance of the Medium Term Resource Strategy;
- (b) the current shared working arrangements with Teignbridge District Council (TDC). In reply to a question, it was confirmed that whilst TDC was not a partner in terms of the current senior management review, there were still some shared working arrangements in place between the two authorities (e.g. a shared Procurement Officer and elements of the tourism and building control services);
- (c) assurances that the Member/Officer protocol had been adopted and was integrated into the Council Constitution;
- (d) the need to recognise the governance risks associated with the senior management review. A Member commented that, in governance terms, the Council was entering a particularly complicated and hazardous period. It was the perception of the Member that there was an insufficient understanding of the risks associated of sharing services between two different local authorities. Whilst acknowledging the current financial pressures, it was felt critical for Members to be aware that there were significant risks involved in the process.

The Member proceeded to inform that the Scheme of Delegation would need to be revised rapidly and it was his belief that there was currently a lack of information on the management of the risk process. The Member therefore considered it incumbent upon the Audit and Standards Committees to highlight this matter. As a consequence, the following addition to both recommendations was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED**:

'That, jointly, the Committees share reservations regarding the associated risks in respect of the revised management arrangements and wish for this concern to be reflected in the Annual Governance Statement (AGS).'

When put to the vote, this addition was declared **CARRIED** by both Committees. Whilst supporting this addition, Members did also wish to emphasise that they were not seeking to condemn the process and in accepting the very sound reasoning behind the review, it was nonetheless felt important to recognise the associated risks;

- (e) Development Management (DM) Training. The importance of regular DM Training for Members was emphasised. In reply to a question, it was also confirmed that three Members had been prevented from taking part in the planning process during 2010/11 due to their failure to attend the required amount of training;
- (f) the disbanding of the Scrutiny Shadowing role;
- (g) the Community Engagement Strategy being scheduled for consideration at the next Executive meeting on 7 April 2011;
- (h) child protection. For clarity, it was noted that whilst the Council did not have direct responsibility for Child Protection issues, it still had a duty to ensure that it was not undertaking any functions or activities which could affect their vulnerability;
- (i) the impact of the Localism Bill. Officers advised the Committees that the CIPFA guidance was likely to be amended to reflect any relevant legislative changes arising from the adoption of the Localism Bill.

In respect of the Audit Committee only, it was then:

RESOLVED

That the Audit Committee note the findings of the Compliance Review of the Council's Code of Corporate Governance 2009, and significant governance issues to be taken to the 2010/11 Annual Governance Statement.

In respect of the Standards Committee only, it was then:

RESOLVED

That the Standards Committee note the findings of the Compliance Review of the Council's Code of Corporate Governance 2009, the significant governance issues to be taken to the 2010/11 Annual Governance Statement and grants its approval to the action plan.

In respect of both Committees, it was also then:

RESOLVED

That, jointly, the Committees share reservations regarding the associated risks in respect of the revised management arrangements and wish for this concern to be reflected in the Annual Governance Statement.

A.46/10 & **CHAIRMAN'S CONCLUDING REMARKS**
S.39/10

Since this was to be the last meeting of the two Committees before the local elections, the Chairman concluded the meeting by thanking all Members and officers for their commitment and diligence during their respective terms of office.

(Meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.15 pm)

Chairman