



AUDIT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY, 5TH FEBRUARY 2014 AT 10 A.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor D. Rees - Chair
Councillor D. Havard - Vice Chair

Councillors:

Mrs E.M. Aldworth, Mrs K. Baker, N. Dix, N. George, S. Morgan, Mrs. G.D. Oliver and J.A. Pritchard.

Lay Member - Mr N. Yates.

Together with:

N. Scammell (Acting Director of Corporate Services & Section 151 Officer), G. Hardacre (Head of Workforce and Organisation Development), R. Harris (Manager Internal Audit), R. Roberts (Performance Manager) C. Evans (Committee Services Officer).

Also present:

Ian Davies (PricewaterhouseCoopers)
Non Jenkins (Wales Audit Office)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors D.G. Carter, Mrs D. Ellis and J.E. Fussell.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the beginning or during the course of the meeting.

3. MINUTES - 11TH DECEMBER 2013

RESOLVED that subject to it being noted that Councillor D. Rees tendered his apologies and had been recorded as being present, the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 11th December 2013 (minute nos. 1 - 13; page nos. 1 - 5) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. REQUEST FOR REPORT TO A FUTURE MEETING

Councillor N. Dix requested a report on the Cinema proposals in Blackwood and Bargoed and the implications on the Authority of the direct competition and lease of the Odeon Cinema. Officers advised that this Committee was not the best forum for the request; and as such it would be referred to the chair of Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

5. SCRUTINY CONFERENCE LEGACY- SHARING THE KNOWLEDGE

Members agreed to defer this item to a future meeting.

6. IMPROVEMENT ASSESSMENT

N. Jenkins (Wales Audit Office) provided an overview of the Improvement Assessment report which summarised the conclusions of the Auditor General's performance assessment for Caerphilly and whether the Council has discharged its duties in respect of improvement reporting and meeting the requirements of the measure. WAO noted that improvements have been made and this is a positive report. The report conclusion was that the Council has discharged its improvement reporting duties under the measure although there is potential to strengthen its arrangements further.

R. Roberts (Performance Manager, CCBC) agreed that the improvements that had been made were positive and agreed with the 3 further proposals for improvement.

Members agreed that the 3 proposals for improvement should be monitored by Corporate Management Team and will be evidenced by the Annual Performance Report 2014, which is published in October.

Members noted that, based on audit work undertaken to date and as well as summarising the work of the Wales Audit Office (WAO) and other relevant regulators during 2013-14, the Annual Improvement Report will contain more detailed work on WAO's findings of the arrangements and supports the Council's performance management and reporting processes. The Annual Improvement Report will be issued by the end of March.

Arising from the debate, Members sought confirmation on the reporting regularity as highlighted in the report and appendix and whether the Financial Annual Letter had now been signed off. Officers confirmed that the letter has been signed off but the certificate is outstanding and that reporting will take place during the course of the year.

The Committee thanked the Officers for the hard work, which had resulted in the positive feedback and unanimously endorsed the recommendation to note the report.

7. COLLABORATION

N. Jenkins (Wales Audit Office) provided the Committee with an overview of the report, which detailed the conclusions, as part of the programme of works for the Year 2012-2013, the findings of this review of collaborative working across four councils in Gwent: Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire and Torfaen. The Auditor General's assessment for Caerphilly sought to assess whether the councils' approaches to collaboration were robust and delivering what they intended.

The Committee noted that Caerphilly CBC were involved in a number of collaborative projects and identified issues with the planning and management of some projects, particularly in the rationale for collaborating, nominating a lead officer and specifying clear timescales for the project.

Members were assured that work is underway to address this recommendation and going forward, more robust business cases and reporting processes have been implemented. Officers are working to identify a list of all collaborations and partnerships and assessing whether they are following the correct process.

Members queried whether a definition of collaboration and best practice tool kits were available for future projects. Members were informed that the Williams Report should help to a degree with the definition and that there are a number of best practice documents available.

The Audit Committee noted the report.

8. OFFICERS DECLARATION OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

The report advised of the gifts and hospitality declared by officers for the period October to December 2013.

Members noted that a new system of monitoring has been implemented and Heads of Service are providing data on a monthly basis to the Head of Workforce and Organisational Development for collation and monitoring purposes.

Members considered the report and Appendix and queried the data. Officers clarified that this is a new process and there is room for development, and as a result of the comments made, the items declared require review.

Members were reminded that this refers to Officer declarations of Interest and that Members have a separate procedure to follow in relation to their declarations.

The Audit Committee noted the report.

9. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Members discussed the Forward Work Programme and noted that the Special Inspection Report is used by Internal Audit to determine areas of work. It was agreed that a further workshop would be beneficial for Members to discuss the work programme for Internal Audit and identify any areas for concern.

Members discussed outstanding reports and the process of monitoring them through this Committee. Officers confirmed that the new Forward Work Programme should eliminate any previous issues with reports being presented.

In addition, Members requested that reports on how the Local Authority measures and monitors treasury management and the Role of the S151 Officer be presented to the next meeting.

A Member requested a report on Demographics and the increased demand on support and Social Services and impact on budgets. Following discussion, it was agreed that this would be more suitable for Health, Social Care and Well Being Scrutiny and the Member was advised to email Democratic Services with a request that it be placed on the Forward Work Programme.

The meeting closed at 11.22am.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 5th March 2014, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIRMAN