

Medway Council
Meeting of Audit Committee
Thursday, 9 May 2013
7.00pm to 9.35pm

Record of the meeting

Subject to approval as an accurate record at the next meeting of this committee

Present: Councillors: Clarke (Chairman), Griffiths, Jarrett, Mackness and Maple

In Attendance: Robin Cooper, Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture
Neil Davies, Chief Executive
Stephen Gaimster, Assistant Director Housing, Development and Transport
Perry Holmes, Assistant Director Legal and Corporate Services/Monitoring Officer
Farley Norman, Innovation Centre Manager
Anthony Law, Democratic Services Officer
Tricia Palmer, Assistant Director, Organisational Services
Alison Russell, Audit Services Manager
Kevin Woolmer, Finance Manager, Business Support & Regeneration, Community & Culture

1112 Apologies for absence

There were none.

1113 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting on 21 March 2013 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The Committee took this opportunity to discuss the actions agreed at the last meeting. It was noted, in relation to minute 933/2012 (Fraud Resilience Strategy), that the Monitoring Officer would submit the draft Money Laundering Policy to the next meeting of the Audit Committee and, in relation to minute 935 (Outcomes of Internal Audit Activity), that one of the first tasks of the new performance hub within the Regeneration, Community and Culture directorate was to provide the evaluation information requested regarding the events programme.

In relation to minute 936 (Investigations Relating to External Fraud) the Committee requested an update on when the trend analysis for the outcome of benefit investigations, beyond that of the previous year, would be available.

Audit Committee, 9 May 2013

Members also requested that the Chief Finance Officer provide further information specifying the timescales for the valuation of heritage assets and the potential impact on the 2012/2013 Statement of Accounts (minute 930 External Audit Annual Audit Plan 2012/2013 relates) and explore further with legal services whether the imposition of automatic checks to safeguard against large overpayments could be deemed to be discriminatory towards any particular groups, as had been suggested within the briefing paper submitted to Committee Members since the last meeting. The Chairman advised that he had written to the Local Government Association highlighting the Committee's concerns as to the costs involved in undertaking a valuation of the Council's entire heritage assets.

1114 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were none.

It was noted that the covering report for agenda item 5 had been circulated separately from the main agenda.

1115 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

1116 Exclusion of the press and public

Decision:

The press and public were excluded from the meeting during consideration of the exempt material contained within the appendix to agenda item 5 (Irregularity Report) because consideration of this matter in public would disclose information falling within paragraphs 1, 2 and 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as specified in agenda item 6 (Exclusion of Press and Public) and, in all the circumstances of the case, the Committee considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

1117 Investigations Relating to Financial Irregularities

Discussion:

This exempt report and supporting appendices informed Members of the outcome of an investigation. The submission of this report followed consideration of this investigation by the Audit Committee on 21 March 2013, when Members had noted the outcome and requested further information.

Following initial introductions, Members discussed the outcomes of this investigation in detail and reflected on the additional information provided and the recommendations to strengthen control arrangements. Officers responded to Members' questions explaining council policies and procedures and how they were applied in this instance.

Audit Committee, 9 May 2013

It was noted that a follow-up audit would be undertaken later in the year.

Decision:

The Committee agreed that the Chief Executive take forward actions identified to strengthen control arrangements.

Chairman

Date:

Anthony Law, Democratic Services Officer

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