

MINUTES

meeting: **AUDIT/STANDARDS COMMITTEES JOINT MEETING**

date: **14 JUNE 2012**

PRESENT:-

Councillors Claymore, Hardacre, Holdcroft, Inston, Jaspal, Mrs Mills, O'Neill, Simkins, Mrs Thompson and Wynne
Mr R Aithal and Mr R C Tyler-Morris (Independent Members)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:-

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Jones, T Singh and Turner; Mr J Harris, Mr G W Hurd, Mr A W Lee and Mr W A Parker

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:-

Delivery Directorate

L Banbury	-	Democratic Support Officer
F Davis	-	Head of Service (Regeneration & Governance)
P Farrow	-	Head of Audit Services
D Johnston	-	Head of Risk Management and Insurance
S Kembrey	-	Assistant Director (Governance)
P Main	-	Assistant Director (Corporate Services)
R Morgan	-	Senior Audit Manager

Wolverhampton
City Council



PART I – OPEN ITEMS

Election of Chair

- 1 Resolved:-
- (a) That Mr W A Parker be elected as Chairman for the ensuing municipal year.
 - (b) That, in the absence of Mr Parker, Mr Aithal be elected as Chair for this meeting.

Mr K R Aithal in the Chair

Declarations of Interest

- 2 No interests were declared.

Annual Governance Statement 2011/2012 (Appendix 1)

The Assistant Director (Corporate Services) presented a report, which sought Members' consideration of the Annual Governance Statement for the year 2011/2012 prior to signature by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council.

The Assistant Director (Corporate Services) and Assistant Director (Governance) provided the following responses to Members' questions:-

- It was acknowledged that Welfare Reform would have an impact on a range of Council services and that the Council could potentially be required to establish arrangements for appeal hearings. Arrangements were currently being made for a briefing for Councillors in conjunction with the Citizens' Advice Bureau and the Voluntary Sector.
- With regard to Academies it was acknowledged that the Council had a lot of expertise to offer in partnership with these educational establishments.
- The Assistant Director (Governance) was now responsible for the Council's Scrutiny processes and a project plan was in place to support this area of work and to tackle any outstanding issues.
- A report was due to be presented to the next meeting of Cabinet to provide an update on Single Status.
- The consideration and decision making process for making changes to the Constitution was Officer Constitution Review Group → SAG → Standards Committee → full Council. The new Constitution would come into force on 1 July 2012 and training had been arranged for Councillors and officers.
- With regard to paragraph 4.2, the Head of Risk Management and Insurance advised that the Council was in fact legally compliant but not necessarily in line with CIPFA guidance on the role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government.

- 3 Resolved:-
That the contents of the Annual Governance Statement 2012/2012 be noted, prior to signature by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council.

Partnership for Customer Service and Efficiencies (Axon)
(Appendix 2)

The Assistant Director (Governance) presented a report, which outlined the recommendations of the Lessons Learned Review carried out by Patricia Hughes and Robert Coomber. It was acknowledged that the recommendations had been in the public domain for some time and that, since the publication, the Council had embarked on an Improvement Plan to take forward the recommendations.

With regard to recommendation 1 (Undertake Strategic Options Analysis and a Business Case), Officers took on board Members' request that the principles should apply to all projects, irrespective of financial cost.

Members stressed the importance of establishing a firmly embedded understanding of the roles of the Statutory Officers.

- 4 Resolved:-
(a) That the recommendations produced following the Lessons Learned Review be noted.

(b) That a further report be presented on the implementation of Recommendation 10(c) on the establishment of a protocol for Statutory Officers.