

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held at County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 7 March 2007.

PRESENT: Mr C G Findlay (Chairman), Mr R L H Long, TD (Vice-Chairman), Mr D L Brazier, Mr A R Chell, Mrs T Dean, Mr C J Law, Mr J F London, Mr T A Maddison (substitute for Mr D Smyth), Mrs M E Newell, Mr W V Newman, Mr R J Parry, Mr M V Snelling and Mr R Tolputt.

OFFICERS: The Head of Audit and Risk, Mr A Wood; the Director of Law and Governance, Mr G Wild; the Director – Finance and Corporate Services, Mr K Abbott (with Mr R Semens and Miss R Chapman); the Director – Operations, Dr I Craig; the Director of Property, Mr M Austerberry; the Head of Corporate Performance, Mrs S Garton and the Democratic Services Officer, Mr A Tait.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs J Eilbeck and Mr S Brown of PricewaterhouseCoopers; Mr D Wells, Mr S Mead and Mr M Stevenson from the Audit Commission.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Minutes – 5 December 2006 (Item 2)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2006 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

2. Update on Pre-Employment Checks (Item 3 – Report by Managing Director – Children, Families and Education)

(1) A video entitled “People You Know” was shown to the Committee. This was part of a training package for e-Safety produced on behalf of the County Council in partnership with the Child Exploitation and On-line Protection Centre.

(2) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the responses contained in the report to queries raised at the meeting on 20 September 2006 be noted;
- (b) a further report be made to the next meeting of the Committee incorporating the views of the three Group Leaders, who are invited to agree an approach to be taken to those Members who have not completed CRB Check Forms; and
- (c) the Chairman write on behalf of the Committee to the Government expressing concern that current Governors are not required to be CRB checked.

3. Value for Money and the Review of School Clusters

(Item 4 – Report by Head of Audit and Risk)

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the approach to delivering Value for Money reviews be noted;
- (b) the outcomes of the School Clusters review be noted; and
- (c) the report be forwarded to the Children and Families Policy Overview Committee together with the Committee's view that there is a democratic deficit within the Cluster system.

4. Enterprise Property Database

(Item 5 – Report by Director of Property)

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

5. Appointment of External Auditors

(Item 6 – Report by Head of Audit and Risk)

RESOLVED that the proposed appointment of the Audit Commission (Southern Region) as the County Council's external auditors with effect from 1 April 2007 be endorsed.

6. External Audit Plan and Fee

(Item 7 – Report by Head of Audit and Risk)

- (1) A covering report was tabled, which included recommendations to the Committee. These were agreed.
- (2) RESOLVED that the Chief Executive or his nominated representative be authorised to approve the Audit and Inspection Plan and fee for 2007/08 in consultation with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Labour and Liberal Democrat Spokesman of the Committee. This authority is on the assumption that the Audit Commission (Southern Region) will be appointed as the County Council's external auditor.

7. KCC Annual Plan

(Item 8 – Report by Director of Business Solutions and Policy)

RESOLVED that approval be given to the Director of Business Solutions and Policy in consultation with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Labour and Liberal Democrat Spokesman of the Committee to discharge the County Council's responsibility to check the compliance of the KCC Annual Plan with statutory reporting requirements prior to its publication by 30 June 2007.

8. Risk Management – Revised Directorate Risk Registers

(Item 9 – Report by Head of Audit and Risk)

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the revised Directorate Risk Register, and the resulting highest ranked risks set out in Table 1 of the report be noted; and

- (b) the Directorate Risk Registers be considered by the appropriate Policy Overview Committees, with a report back to the Committee on any resulting issues.

9. Governance of Partnerships

(Item 10 – Report by Head of Audit and Risk)

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the revised definition of “Partnership” be agreed as a basis for further consideration in the light of comments made during the meeting; and
- (b) the milestone dates set out in paragraph 13 of the report be agreed.

10. Auto-Forwarding of Emails

(Item 11 – Report by Head of Audit and Risk)

- (1) Mr R J Parry moved, seconded by Mr R Tolputt the motion set out in (2) below. This was agreed with no opposition.
- (2) RESOLVED that the Director of Business Solutions and Policy be advised of the Committee’s recommendation that the auto-formatting of KCC e-mails from the KCC mailbox to individuals’ own mailboxes should be made available for Members of the Council.

11. 2007/08 Internal Audit Plan

(Item 12 – Report by Head of Audit and Risk)

RESOLVED that approval be given to the Internal Audit Plan for the first six months of 2007/08 as proposed in the report.

12. Internal Audit Reporting

(Item 9 – Report by Head of Audit and Risk)

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

13. Internal Audit Reporting - Irregularities

(Item 13 – Report by Head of Audit and Risk)

- (1) The Committee agreed to take this item under Open Business.
- (2) RESOLVED that the report be noted.