



MINUTES

CONSTITUTION AND ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2007

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Vic Kerr
Councillor Reg Lovelock M.B.E. (Vice-
Chairman)

Councillor Peter Martin-Mayhew
Councillor Mrs. Linda Neal (Chairman)

OFFICERS

Strategic Director (Ian Yates)
Corporate Head of Finance and Resources
Monitoring Officer
Democratic Officer

44. MEMBERSHIP

None.

45. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor John Hurst.

46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The question as to whether membership of the Development Control Committee required a declaration was again raised. The Monitoring Officer reiterated what she had indicated at the previous meeting that no declaration of interest was required.

47. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 13TH DECEMBER 2006

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th December were agreed as a correct record.

48. ESTABLISHMENT OF A GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Decision

The Constitution and Accounts Committee recommends to Council the following:

- 1) *That a Governance and Audit Committee be established with the terms of reference contained in Appendix 1 to report CHFR034.*

- 2) ***That the Governance and Audit Committee be comprised of five members and be subject to political balance with the Chairman retaining a casting vote. A quorum of the committee to be three members. An external individual to be co-opted to the committee with voting rights.***
- 3) ***Membership of the Committee will be subject to having the appropriate skills as set out in Appendix 2 to report CHFR034 and there will be a requirement for mandatory training of members of the Committee.***
- 4) ***That the role and function of the Constitution and Accounts Committee, as set out in article 10 of the Constitution be amended to delete points f) to j) and the name of the committee to be changed to 'Constitution Committee'.***

The Corporate Head of Finance and Resources informed the Committee that if the council wished to progress to level 3 in the Audit Commissions Use of Resources assessment the key lines of enquiry for level 3 relating to internal control included "the council has arrangements in place to maintain a sound system of internal control". It also stated that the council needed to be able to demonstrate that it can effectively deliver the core functions of an audit committee as identified in the CIPFA guidance; that it had provided for the ability to challenge the executive when required and provided for effective leadership on government, financial reporting and audit issues.

The report gave the background on the current arrangements in place and the Corporate Head of Finance and Resources referred members to section 3.2 of the report which listed the core functions of an audit committee as described in CIPFA guidance. Paragraph 3.3 dealt with membership of a Governance and Audit Committee and the CIPFA guidance suggested a membership of between three and five with an appropriate quorum set within the terms of reference. A short discussion followed on how many members the new Governance and Audit Committee should have. One Member felt that five was too low a number and it should be between seven and nine; other members felt that due to the need to understand both financial and accounting issues that was too high a number even with the mandatory training that would be required. The issue of a co-opted member was then raised and the Monitoring Officer said that they would be advertised externally much in the same way as members for the Standard Committee had been. Allowances would also be calculated in the same way as external members of the Standards Committee. Advice was then given by the Monitoring Officer on political balance. The name of the Committee was then discussed and the need for it to be both a Governance and Audit Committee with clarification being given about the work undertaken by the Governance and Audit Committee and the Constitution Committee. The recommendations were then individually put to the Committee. Recommendation 1 was agreed. Further discussion took place with regard to recommendation 2, the number of members within the new committee. Seven members was proposed, however this proposal did not receive a seconder and therefore the vote for five members with one external

co-opted member, a quorum of three and the Chairman retaining the casting vote was put forward and carried. Recommendations 3 and 4 were both agreed.

49. CHANGES TO THE DELEGATION SCHEME & TERMINATION OF THE PLANNING PANEL

Members noted the extract from the minutes.

50. DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

Members noted the extract from the minutes.

51. ANY OTHER BUSINESS, WHICH THE CHAIRMAN, BY REASONS OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, DECIDES IS URGENT

None.

52. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 3.10pm.