

AUDIT COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Wednesday, 18 November 2009 commencing at 11.00 am and finishing at 12.45 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor David Wilmshurst – in the Chair

Councillor Ray Jelf (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor Alan Armitage
Councillor Roy Darke
Councillor Tim Hallchurch MBE
Councillor A.M. Lovatt
Councillor Charles Mathew
Councillor Larry Sanders
Councillor Lawrie Stratford

**Non-voting
Co-optees:** Dr Geoff Jones

**Other Members in
Attendance:** Councillor Jim Couchman (for Agenda Item 5)
Councillor Louise Chapman (for Agenda Item 7)
Councillor Keith R. Mitchell CBE (for Agenda Item 6)

Officers:

Whole of meeting P. Clark, I. Dyson, G. Malcolm (Corporate Core)

Part of meeting

Agenda Item	Officer Attending
5	Dr I. Alvi (Corporate Core) S. Collins (Shared Services) S. Kearey (Social & Community Services)
6	S. Stapley (Social & Community Services) N. Shovell (Corporate Core)
7	M. Wheeler (Children, Young People & Families)

The Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and decided as set out below. Except as insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda and reports, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

48/09 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 3)

The Minutes were approved and signed subject at Minute 42/09(a), paragraph 3 line 2 to the deletion of the word 'import' and substitution of 'important'.

49/09 AUDIT WORKING GROUP - 22 OCTOBER 2009

(Agenda No. 5)

The Committee considered a report (AU5) which summarised the matters arising from the most recent meeting of the Audit Working Group (AWG).

Members noted in particular the following matters:

- Fairer Charging System - Update on Performance:
Officers updated the Committee and, with Councillor Couchman and Councillor Mitchell responded to questions and comments on the actions being taken to address ongoing performance issues and the timetable for completion.
The Audit Working Group would consider progress in January 2010 and report to a subsequent meeting of the Committee.
- Risk Management:
Officers confirmed that the AWG Work Programme included progress reports.

RESOLVED: to adopt the report and to thank the officers for their work.

50/09 COUNTER FRAUD SELF-ASSESSMENT & ACTION PLAN

(Agenda No. 6)

Internal Audit had assessed the current process for counter fraud arrangements against best practice guidance issued by the Audit Commission and CIPFA. The Committee considered a report (AU6) which summarised the outcomes from this assessment and the updated counter fraud action plan.

Mr Shovell and Mr Dyson introduced the report and drew Members' attention to the main areas being addressed in the Counter Fraud Work Plan, namely to raise awareness of counter fraud arrangements, the collation of a counter fraud manual and identification of the Council's fraud profile and key risks to inform future work and awareness raising opportunities. In response to questions they confirmed that the Council's whistle blowing policy was included. Ms Scane reported on the huge amount of work which had been undertaken for improvements in the Council's IT security.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) note the self assessment outcome; and
- (b) request the Audit Working Group to monitor progress against the action plan via quarterly audit performance reports.

51/09 SAFEGUARDING AND CHILDREN PROTECTION SERVICES IN OXFORDSHIRE

(Agenda No. 7)

Further to the report on 21 January 2009, the Committee considered a report (AU7) which updated members on the action which was being taken in Oxfordshire to minimise the risk of a case occurring similar to that of the tragedy of Baby Peter in Haringey.

Mr Wheeler and Councillor Chapman introduced the paper and outlined the key points and the investment which had been made in the Safeguarding and Children Protection Services in Oxfordshire. An independent assessment had found a good standard and that excellent (ongoing) progress was being made and monitored. It was of course impossible to provide complete reassurance that safeguarding and child protection service provision was entirely free of risk as was the case for all other similar authorities. They outlined the role of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Board and mechanisms in place for liaison and communication and liaison between agencies, multi agency working and locality working initiatives.

The Committee then had a wide ranging discussion including the reliable flow of information between agencies, confidentiality issues, the recording and analysis of information, the volume of data input, staff recruitment and retention, the provision of resources and training, skill acquisition and staff support.

The Committee supported a suggestion by the Chairman of the Audit Working Group that the Group consider the 'management of risk' element as part of its regular Risk Management Progress work at its next meeting and report to the Committee as and when necessary.

Mr. Wheeler and Councillor Chapman were thanked for their report and the Service team for their work.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) note the content of this report; and
- (b) acknowledge that provision of child protection services is inherently a process of management of risk, and the importance of implementing an effective quality assurance framework.

52/09 AUDIT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2009/10

(Agenda No. 8)

RESOLVED: to adopt the Work Programme (AU8) subject to:

- a) the addition of the Treasury Management Governance Annual Report when appropriate; and
- b) the deletion of 'Annual Audit & Inspection Letter 2005/06' (as it was already in the Programme).

..... in the Chair

Date of signing