



**Audit & Scrutiny Committee**  
**Thursday 6 July 2017 at 6.30pm**

Present: Councillors A Hickman (Chairman), G Bell, Mrs. W Clark, J Dawson, Mrs. P Heseltine and J Kerr.

Also present: Cllr P Madeley and Steven Briggs (Windle & Bowker)

Officers: Dave Parker (Chief Officer) and Les Chandler (Estate Manager).

1. To accept representations from the Public between 6.30pm and 6.45pm.

None.

2. To accept apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were accepted from Cllrs C Dow and M Emmerson: work commitments.

3. To record declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in items on the agenda.

Councillor Kerr declared a non-pecuniary interest with regard to agenda item 8 (Internal Audit Report for year ending 31 March 2017) as he is a client of Windle and Bowker, the Council's Internal Auditors.

4. To consider the recommendations of the Chief Officer relating to requests for dispensations to Members on items requiring a declaration of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests.

None.

5. To approve the minutes from the previous meeting held on 13 April 2017.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes from the Audit and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 13 April 2017 as a true and accurate record of what transpired at that meeting subject to the following amendment: in item 12 (Ongoing Complaints) "regrading" should read "regarding".

6. To report information arising from the minutes of items not on the agenda from Members and the Chief Officer.

Council Committee Structure: given that Members have yet to submit proposals for changes to the Council's committee structure it was **AGREED** that the Chief Officer should write to all Council members to seek their views and submit these in due course to the Finance and Policy Committee for consideration.

7. To consider any Freedom of Information requests/complaints/compliments received by the Council.

Freedom of Information requests: none.

Complaints, all dealt with by officers:

- two complaints about vans being left on the High Street;
- two complaints from the Vegan Society about Sheep Day, arguing that "sheep are not food, clothing or entertainment";
- one complaint about the frequency of highways verge grass-cutting on the Greatwood estate;
- one complaint about the state of the ground at Shortbank Recreation Ground following the completion of Yorkshire Housing's drainage scheme; and
- one complaint about the funeral parlour on Swadford Street featuring coffins in its shop window display.

Compliments: several about Sheep Day and several more about the quality of Coach Street public toilets.

8. To consider the Council's Internal Audit Report for year ending 31 March 2017.

Given that a high value transaction, although approved by Council, had not been dealt with in accordance with established financial control procedures it was **RESOLVED** that in future the Council should ensure that Full Council and the Council's staff are notified of the value of any financial commitments entered into by individual Members.

Councillor Madeley joined the meeting.

Members **NOTED** that the Council's debt collection procedures have now been reviewed and the issues surrounding the collection of debts from market traders have been resolved.

Members **NOTED** that staff contracts of employment are being reviewed as part of the ongoing staffing review and that full contracts will be issued for all

of the posts identified in the new staffing structure.

Mr Briggs left the meeting.

9. To review the Council's Complaints Procedure.

To avoid long-running and vexatious complaints - which can be time-consuming, wasteful, and stressful for all concerned - it was **RESOLVED** that the Chief Officer should prepare a re-draft of the Complaints Procedure, for consideration by the Council's Finance and Policy Committee, incorporating:

- a deadline for the submission of complaints in the first instance;
- time limits for each stage of the complaint consideration process; and
- provision for vexatious complaints similar to that relating to 'Freedom of Information Act' requests.

Given the importance of the Council adhering to its Complaints Procedure in all cases, and therefore of ensuring the procedure covers all eventualities, it was **RESOLVED** to defer consideration of the arrangements for dealing with complaints about one of the parties involved in the Complaints Procedure until the other issues with the procedure have been resolved.

Since Members' concerns about individual aspects of Council business need to be dealt with as quickly and effectively as possible it was **AGREED** that Members should try to resolve any issues with the officers concerned in the first instance and raise matters at Council meetings only where this is not possible.

10. To consider any reports from the Financial Transactions Monitoring Group concerning the Council's Bank Reconciliations and/or invoices.

Members noted that:

- the recently filled Events Manager and Administration Assistant posts are temporary appointments; and
- the current staffing structure demands a significant amount of overtime but hopefully this will be resolved in the ongoing review of the Council's staffing structure.

Given that the Council is out of pocket because the Mayor's Civic Dinner did not raise sufficient income to meet its costs in providing accommodation for the function it was **AGREED** that the Chief Officer should provide the next meeting of the Committee with a detailed financial statement for the event.

11. To consider excluding press and public for consideration of item 12 on the grounds that it relates to confidential matters.

It was **RESOLVED** that in accordance with Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable and in the public interest that the press and public be asked to withdraw.

12. To consider and report back on progress regarding two ongoing complaints.

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The meeting returned to public session.

13. To receive notification on matters that Members would like included on a future agenda.

None.

Meeting Closed at 8.31 pm.

Chairman: .....

Signature: .....