

**CIVIC AFFAIRS**

20 March 2013

6.00 - 6.50 pm

**Present:** Councillors Boyce (Chair), Rosenstiel (Vice-Chair), Marchant-Daisley, Herbert, Benstead and Pitt

**Officers Present:**

Chief Executive – Antoinette Jackson  
Head of Corporate Strategy – Andrew Limb  
Head of Internal Auditor – Steve Crabtree  
Support Services Manager – Karl Tattam  
Principal Audit – Bridget Bishop  
Committee Manager – Martin Whelan

**Also Present:**

Representative of Ernst and Young

<b>FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL</b>
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**13/8/CIV Apologies for absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

**13/9/CIV Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous were approved as a true and accurate record subject to the following amendments

13/3/ CIV – Insert “no” between “were” and “declarations”

13/7/CIV – Amend the references to “Laughton” to read “Loughton”

The Chair agreed to sign the minutes once the changes had been made.

**13/10/CIV Declarations of Interest**

There were no apologies for absence.

**13/11/CIV Public Questions**

There were no apologies for absence.

Councillor Rosenstiel expressed concern about the proposed arrangements for the County Council election count. Councillor Rosenstiel suggested that the proposed arrangements were in his view contrary to the law and election good practice.

The Chief Executive responded and explained that the Returning Officer was personally responsible for the organisation of the election, and that the City Council had to administer the count in accordance with their instructions. The committee were advised that due to the practicalities of managing the count, it was intended that the count for the by-election for Abbey Ward would also be on Friday. The Chief Executive also highlighted the increasing complexity of electoral administration.

Councillor Rosenstiel reiterated his concerns about the count arrangements.

**13/12/CIV Internal Audit Plan / Strategy 2013**

The committee received the Internal Audit Plan/Strategy for 2013.

Prior to the debate, the Chair requested that references to consultation with the Chair should be updated to "Chair and Opposition Spokes". The comment was noted.

The committee made the following comments on the plan.

- i. The work undertaken by Internal Audit was welcomed by the committee.
- ii. Clarification was requested on the rationale for removing the proposed number of days allocated to each audit job. The Head of Internal Audit agreed to send the information regarding the number of days allocated to each audit job to members of the committee.
- iii. It was suggested the role of Internal Audit may need to be developed and reinforced depending on the outcome of the Ernst and Young review.

- iv. Future audit activity on the impact of the welfare and business rates was suggested. It was explained that both areas were already in the proposed plan.
- v. Future audit activity was also suggested on capital expenditure associated with car parks, specifically the forward planning of works and whether the authority was getting the best value for money through the current approach to works. It was agreed that there was likely to be a cross-over with Environment Scrutiny. The Head of Internal Audit agreed to develop a proposed audit remit for this suggestion.
- vi. Councillor Pitt welcomed the proposed activity associated with Clay Farm Community Centre, and suggested that the University Joint Venture at North West Cambridge should also be included in the same process. The Head of Internal Audit agreed to revise the proposed activity to include the Joint Venture at North West Cambridge.
- vii. In response to a question, the Head of Internal Audit explained how the list of proposed audit activities had been compiled.
- viii. In light of the budget forecast issues, the Head of Internal Audit was asked whether this would be included in future plans. The committee were advised that it had been intended to undertake this work in the current audit year, but that in light of the Ernst and Young Review it had been deferred to the first quarter of 2013/14.

**Resolved** (Unanimously) to

- i. Approve the draft audit plan
- ii. Note the impact of the new Public Sector Internal Audit Standards

**13/13/CIV External Audit Plan and Fees 2012-13**

The committee received a report outlining the proposed external audit plan and fees for 2012/13. The External Auditor addressed the committee and highlighted key elements of the report.

Clarification was requested on whether there was any clarity at this stage on the likely variation on the audit scale fee. The External Auditor advised that at this stage it was not possible to provide further clarity. The Chief Executive agreed to update members once there was more clarity.

**Resolved** (Unanimously) to note the external audit plan and fees 2012-13.

### **13/14/CIV Risk Management Strategy**

The committee received a report on the Risk Management Strategy.

The Support Services Manager and the Chief Executive outlined the processes which had been worked through to update the strategy.

Officers were also asked to comment on whether the issues with the budget forecasting should have been picked up through this strategy. The Chief Executive explained that the Council had enjoyed high levels of external assurance for a significant period of time, so it had not been recognised as a significant risk until the recent issues had emerged.

**Resolved** (Unanimously) to approve the revised Risk Management strategy

### **13/15/CIV Constitution Amendment : Review of Homelessness Decisions**

The committee received a report from the Head of Legal Services to amend the constitution regarding responsibility for homelessness decisions.

**Resolved** (Unanimously) To recommend:

- i. That the Council treats its functions relating to the review of homelessness applications under the Housing Act 1996 as executive functions.
- ii. That the Head of Legal Services is authorised to amend the Constitution to reflect this

**13/16/CIV Amendment to Standing Orders of Joint Development Control Committee (Cambridge Fringe Sites) to increase number of alternate members**

The committee received a report from the Head of Planning Services regarding the terms of reference for the Joint Development Control Committee (Cambridge Fringes Site) to increase the number of alternate members for each political group (per Council) represented on the committee. The committee noted that request had come from South Cambridgeshire District Council.

The Head of Legal Services was asked to clarify whether there was any opportunity for political groups to nominate alternates from other groups. The committee were advised that as the City Council appoints more than 3 members, it was subject to the rules on political proportionality.

**Resolved** (Unanimously)

- i. To recommend that Council agrees that Section 5.1 of the Standing Orders of the Joint Development Control Committee (Cambridge Fringe Sites) be amended to allow two alternate members to be appointed in respect of each political group which represents each of the three councils on the Committee

**13/17/CIV The Introduction of Bylaws on Cherry Hinton Chalk Pit Local Nature Reserve**

The committee noted that the proposed decision of the Executive Councillor for Arts, Sport and Public Places had been deferred at Community Services Scrutiny on 14<sup>th</sup> March. It was therefore noted that the item had also been withdrawn from the Civic Affairs agenda as a consequence.

The meeting ended at 6.50 pm

**CHAIR**