

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Held at Member's Lounge, Ryedale House, Malton
on Thursday 15 October 2009

Present

Councillors Andrews, Clark, Cottam, Cussons (Vice-Chair), Raper, Mrs Shields (Chairman) and Windress

In Attendance

Audrey Adnitt, John Barnett, Paul Cresswell, Gary Housden, James Ingham, Jane Robinson and Clare Slater

Minutes

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs Wilford and Councillor Jackson.

2 Minutes of the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 6 August 2009

The minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 6 August 2009 (previously circulated) were presented.

Resolved

That the minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 6 August 2009 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the addition of Councillor Raper to the list of apologies for absence on the 6 August 2009.

3 Urgent Business

The Chairman declared that there would be no items to be considered as a matter of urgency by virtue of Section 100(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

4 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

5 Matters Referred for Decision in Relation to Call In

There were no items to report.

6 **Annual Governance Report (Deloittes)**

The Corporate Director (S151) submitted the Annual Governance Report for 2008/09 (previously circulated) as prepared by Deloitte, and Mr Alistair Lince from Deloitte presented the report to Members.

Mr Lince reported that carrying out the audit had proved to be a good experience with help and assistance received from the management team, he highlighted the key audit risks that had been identified, and was pleased to report that the audit was generally very satisfactory.

The Chair thanked Mr Lince on behalf of the Committee for presenting the comprehensive report.

Resolved

That the report be received

7 **Half Year Internal Audit Report**

The Audit Partnership Manager submitted a report (previously circulated) in order to present the Interim Internal Audit Report from the North Yorkshire Audit Partnership for the period to 31 August 2009.

The full report was appended, and summarised the work done by Internal Audit during the period. The report highlighted issues that the audits had identified and provided a summary of these.

The Audit Partnership provided the Council in its report with a clear statement of assurance reflecting its opinion of the Internal Control Framework. This was based upon the audits completed, complemented by its existing knowledge and understanding of the control framework.

Members discussed the report in detail and Councillor Clark requested an update on a special audit relating to repairs and maintenance, which had been undertaken recently, and requested that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have the opportunity to revisit this audit at a future meeting.

Councillor Andrews requested an update regarding the roof repairs and maintenance project at Malton Town Hall. A discussion followed, with concerns raised in relation to the timescales involved and Members were of

the opinion that a detailed update on progress in relation to this project would prove useful.

Resolved

- a. That the report be noted.
- b. That an update on the repairs and maintenance audit be provided to a future meeting.
- c. That a report on the Town Hall roof repairs contract (including repairs to the stonework) be presented to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee covering the following:
 - What had caused the delay
 - When would the work be taking place
 - What were the financial impacts?

Reasons

The Cipfa Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government identified that the shared interests of the audit committee and internal audit require an effective working relationship. Part of that was the approval of, and monitoring of progress against, the internal audit strategy and plan.

8 Service Risk Register - Planning

The Head of Planning submitted a report (previously circulated) in order to present the Service Risk Register for those services within the Planning team.

Service risk registers were originally established from work undertaken by the Audit Partnership in conjunction with Service Unit Managers however since the management restructure the number of registers had been reduced and were now the responsibility of the Heads of Service and their managers.

Annex A outlined the Service Risk Register for the Head of Planning, and was presented to the Committee in order to highlight changes to risks and work undertaken to mitigate those risks.

The Committee thanked the Head of Planning for the report.

Resolved

That the report be received

Reason

Risk identification and management was an integral element of organisational management to secure the achievement of the Council's corporate objectives. Risk Management should form a key part of budget making decisions.

9 Half Year Risk Management Actions Monitoring Report

The Head of Transformation presented a report (previously circulated) in order to present the latest actions being undertaken to monitor corporate risks.

The Corporate Risk Register should identify those risks which would prevent the Council from achieving the Council Plan, and therefore ultimately the Sustainable Community Strategy – Imagine Ryedale.

Monitoring of actions was an important part of the risk management cycle and enabled the Corporate Risk Register to be a living document. Detailed actions and monitoring also assisted in the revision of the register, which would be required during the year.

The report at annex A outlined the actions being undertaken to mitigate those corporate risks which were not within acceptable tolerance as outlined within the Risk Management Strategy.

Resolved

That Members endorse the actions taken by officers in monitoring and mitigating the risks within the Corporate Risk Register.

Reason

Risk identification and management was an integral element of organisational management to secure the achievement of the Council's corporate objectives. Risk Management should also form a key part of any budget making decisions.

10 Annual Governance Statement Action Plan

The Corporate Director (s151) submitted a report (previously circulated) in order to inform Members on progress with the actions identified in the 2008-09 Annual Governance Statement Action Plan.

The purpose of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) was to provide a continuous review of the effectiveness of the organisation's internal control and risk management systems so as to give assurance of their effectiveness.

The action plan was detailed at annex A, and set out the current position with comments on the actions proposed in the plan since the last consideration by the Committee.

Members were advised that the AGS for 2009/10 which would be reported to the Committee in June 2010, would complete the reviews of this action plan as they would be incorporated into the action plan for the 2009/10 AGS.

The review of the AGS action plan and the involvement of the Audit Committee would also be seen as an important component by Audit Commission in their Use of Resource assessment.

The report was discussed in detail, and Members highlighted the need for tight controls when exploring options for partnership working.

Resolved

That the progress with identified actions in the 2008-09 AGS action plan be noted.

Reason

Monitoring progress with identified actions in the AGS was good practice, and it demonstrated to the Audit Commission that the Audit Committee was properly exercising its role. This would also contribute to the assessment of the Council in the Commission's Use of Resources evaluation as part of the Comprehensive Area Assessment process.

11 Customer Complaints

The Customer Services & Benefits Manager submitted a report (previously circulated) in order to inform Members of the number and type of complaints received under the Council's complaint procedure for the period July – September 2009.

The report included complaints monitored under individual service complaints systems and a summary of customer feedback to Community Leisure Ltd (CLL) for the period July – September 2009 together with the action taken where appropriate.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

12 **Sickness Absence Review - Management Information**

The Head of Organisational Development submitted a report (previously circulated) in order to present to Members the management information currently supplied to the Corporate Management Team.

Members were reminded that the Authority was currently in the process of reviewing the sickness absence policy and procedures.

The annex to the report provided a narrative and statistical reports in relation to sickness absence at August 2009. Information was provided in this format to the Corporate Management Team on a monthly basis, following which Corporate Management Team may seek further information or intervention by Heads of Service and/or Service Unit Managers.

Members were invited to consider whether adjustments were required to the information provided to the Corporate Management team, in order to improve the authorities ability to monitor and manage sickness absence at Ryedale.

Members discussed the report in detail, and were of the opinion that the information had proved useful, and it was suggested that future reports include a comparison with the sickness figure in other authorities. The Corporate Director (s151) advised that consultation regarding proposed changes to the current sickness policy was underway with both Unison and the staff focus group.

Resolved

- a. That the future sickness absence statistics brought to the committee include a comparison with other local authorities.
- b. That a report be brought to the Committee following the consultation with unison and staff focus group on proposed changes to the current sickness policy.

Reason

It was agreed at the previous meeting that Members would find this information useful in reviewing sickness absence policy and procedures.

13 **Decisions from Other Committees**

List of decisions from the following Committees were submitted:

- Community Services Committee held on 24 September 2009
- Policy & Resources Committee held on 1 October 2009

Councillor Clark referred to decisions of the Community Services Committee held on 24 September 2009, and requested that in future, the Licensing Committee minutes be brought to the Overview and Committee. Councillor Andrews referred to the decisions of the Policy & Resources Committee held on the 1 October 2009, and expressed concern that there had been little debate in relation to the Draft Flood and Waste Management Bill. Councillor Andrews also referred to "Revitalise Malton" and suggested that it should be a part B item and referred to the next council meeting.

Resolved

- a. That the list of decisions of the Community Services Committee held on the 24 September 2009, and the Policy & Resources Committee held on the 1 October 2009 be received.
- b. That clarification be sought from the Council Solicitor on the constitutional implications of bringing licensing committee minutes to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

14 Any other business that the Chairman decides is urgent.

There were no items of urgent business

The meeting closed at 9.00pm