



## **Minutes of the Audit Committee**

**20 March 2013**

**-: Present :-**

Councillor Hill (Chairman)

Councillors Addis, Bent, Brooksbank, Stocks and Pountney (Vice-Chair)

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### **23. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 19 December 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **24. Audit Committee Update for Torbay Council**

Members noted the Audit Committee update from Sue Hicks of Grant Thornton. The purpose of this update was to provide the Audit Committee with a report on progress in delivering their responsibilities as the council's external auditors. The report also highlighted key emerging national issues and developments which may be of interest to members of the Audit Committee.

Members wanted assurance that the challenge questions within the report were being fulfilled.

#### **Action:**

Paul Looby, Executive Head – Finance, to draw up a template with responses to questions and provide Audit Committee with a briefing note.

### **25. Torbay Council's Whistleblowing Policy**

Members considered a report which outlined changes that have been made to the Torbay Council Whistleblowing Policy which would avoid inappropriate use of the policy, to signpost to other Council policies that are available and to make clear accountability for action and to reflect legal changes taking effect in April 2013.

#### **Resolved:**

- i) that the Whistleblowing Policy as out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved;
- ii) that minor changes to the Whistleblowing Policy, arising as a result of changes to the Council's top tier structure be delegated to the Executive Head of Business Services in consultation with the Chairman of the Audit

Committee; and

- iii) that the Chairman of the Audit Committee be notified, as soon as practical, when Whistleblowing incidents occur and if appropriate, for an Audit Committee to meet to be briefed of incidents at an early stage.

## **26. Progress Report on Strategic Risk Management**

Members considered a Progress Report on Strategic Risk Management. The Council has developed a new approach to risk management. The new approach reflects the changing operating position that local government now works within following the comprehensive spending review and a 30% cut in local government by 2014/15.

The aims of the approach are to develop a more strategic approach and to achieve greater clarity on the level of risk the Council is willing to accept and to embed this approach in day to day activity.

### **Action:**

For a report to be brought to June Audit Committee to highlight Risk Management.

## **27. Public Sector Internal Audit Standards**

Members noted the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards report from Rob Hutchins of Devon Audit Partnership (DAP).

It was noted that the numbering on the submitted report at 5.1 and 5.2 were duplicated and Alun Williams from Grant Thornton advised that note 5.2 of the submitted report was incorrect

### **Action:**

**For a joint note from Devon Audit Partnership and Grant Thornton to be circulated to Members within the next few weeks to clarify points 5.2 and 5.3. of the submitted report.**

## **28. Internal Audit Charter/Terms of Reference**

Members noted the Internal Audit Charter/Terms of Reference which described the purpose, authority, and principal responsibilities of the Council's Internal Audit Service, which is provided by the Devon Audit Partnership (DAP).

## **29. Internal Audit Plan**

Members considered a report on the Internal Audit Plan 2013/14 and noted that all principal Local Authorities, including Torbay Council, are subject to the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 (as amended), and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2006 and 2011, which require that the Authority should make

provision for Internal Audit. From April 2013, organisations in the UK public sector are required to adhere to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

Rob Hutchins, Devon Audit Partnership, informed Members that 1,321day of internal audit input will be required for Torbay Council in 2013/14 but this remains flexible and the days allocated are a rough guide in order to be proactive and reactive.

**Resolved:**

That the Committee agreed in principle to the proposed Audit Plan for 2013/14.

**30. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

(**Note:** Prior to consideration of the item in Minute 31 the press and public were formally excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the item involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).)

**31. Breakdown of Fee's**

Members noted a detailed breakdown of the hourly rates for auditors, which made up the total fees, as requested at Audit Committee on 19 December 2012.

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Chairman