

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM
2/3, CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND ON THURSDAY, 25 AUGUST 2005
AT 2.15PM

Present:-

Councillor A E Davies - Chairperson

Councillors

Councillors

D A D Brett
G Davies
R M Granville
M Mathias

W May
M L Simmonds
W H C Teesdale
M C Voisey

Officers:

Mr G Doak
Mr L M James
Mr D MacGregor
Mr N Meredith
Mr S Clark
Mrs R Harries

45 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Audit Committee dated 29 April 2005, be approved as a true and accurate record.

46 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P A Evans and J C Spanswick.

47 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

48 COMPLETED AUDITS

The Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director - Resources submitted a report, outlining a summary of recently completed Audits of the following, which were shown in tabular form:-

- Personal Services:- Cross client Bridgend County Borough Council maintained establishments (residential and day care);
- Tourism and Marketing;
- Roundabout Sponsorship Scheme
- Housing Benefit

The Head of Internal Audit confirmed that satisfactory conclusions had been reached for all completed reports.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

49 CONTROL RISK SELF ASSESSMENT IN SCHOOLS

The Group Auditor introduced an update report on the progress of the Control Risk Self Assessment in Schools project. He explained that the long-term aims of the project were to:-

- (i) Increase awareness of Headteachers of the risks and controls needed;
- (ii) Increase assurance to the Authority and Governors regarding the standard of controls and measures in place.
- (iii) Move further in to a long-term "lighter touch" with schools having more focus on their approach to work.

The Group Auditor advised that half of the Authority's primary schools were invited to complete the CRSA toolkit in the last academic year and the remaining half will be invited to complete this in the forthcoming academic year. The slow response from comprehensive schools was more to do with staff resources than a reluctance to complete the toolkit. Overall, the response rate from schools had been high, they had found it to be a worthwhile exercise and unlike a similar national questionnaire, the system had not collapsed. He added that the toolkit would need to be refined over time as, for example, some questions were missed out by schools filling in electronic versions of the toolkit.

The Chairperson advised that the high response rate from schools raises awareness of risks and controls in place and confirmed that a future audit review will look at the role of Governors.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and a further report be awaited on this item at the next meeting of the Audit Committee.

50 POLICY ON CRB CHECKS

The Head of Internal Audit submitted a report, produced at the request of the Audit Committee, to update Members as to the current position with regard to the procedures used across the Authority for the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checking of employees. He confirmed that responses had been received from all directorates and that the summary of the procedures used by each directorate showed great variance between them.

Members expressed their concerns at the variance in procedures used for the CRB checking of employees between the different directorates. They suggested that a set standard be established and followed across the Authority, and they felt that serious investigation was needed to follow-up this report. Discussions ensued in which the various options for follow-up action were discussed.

The Chairperson agreed with the concerns expressed and commented that owing to the risks that the Authority could be exposed to, swift action was needed and that Cabinet should be made aware of the concerns raised from this report.

RESOLVED: That the policy of CRB checks be presented to Cabinet for consideration under the Human Resources Flagship Project.

51 CIPFA STATEMENT ON AUDIT COMMITTEES

The Head of Internal Audit submitted a report, outlining the CIPFA position statement on audit committees, as contained within the attached Appendix 1 to the report, for Members information.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

52 ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT OPINION

The Head of Internal Audit presented the Committee with his annual opinion on the Council's internal control arrangements, by means of a statement contained within the report in which he confirmed that he was of the opinion that "the Council's internal control arrangement provide a satisfactory level of assurance"

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 3.05pm.