

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**Minutes** of the meeting of the Audit Committee held at the County Borough Council Offices, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale on Monday, 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2014 at 3.30 p.m.

**Present:**

R.Hull – in the Chair

**County Borough Councillors**

J.Bunnage	B.Stephens
(Mrs.)A.Calvert	P.Wasley
M.Griffiths	E.Webster
K.Montague	D.Weeks
R.W.Smith	M.J.Watts

**Welsh Audit Office:**

Mr.J.Saunders

**Officers in Attendance:**

Mr.P.Griffiths – Service Director, Performance & Resources

Mr.M.Crumbie – Operational Audit Manager

Mr.C.Jones – Service Director, Legal & Democratic Services

Mr.C.Bradshaw – Director, Education and Lifelong Learning (for Agenda Items 2 & 3)

**50 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors L.M.Adams and C.Davies.

**51 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, County Borough Councillor (Mrs.)A.Calvert declared a personal interest in respect of Agenda Item 3 – "I am a Governor of Capcoch School".

**52 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – to approve as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on the 6<sup>th</sup> January, 2014.

## 53 MATTERS ARISING

- (a) Minute No.46(b) – the Operational Audit Manager confirmed that the concerns and comments of the Committee had been conveyed to the DBS Service.
- (b) Minute No.48(b) – the Operational Audit Manager informed the Committee that there are three types of Grants:-
  - 1. Disabled Facilities Grant – target timescale of 270 days starting from the enquiry to the completion of works
  - 2. Renovation Grant – target timescale of 12 months for completion following the approval.
  - 3. Maintenance and Repairs Grant – target timescale of 6 months for completion following the approval.
- (c) Minute No.48(c) – the Operational Manager confirmed that for all relevant grants the applicant is advised as part of the application process and details are also included on the application form that a local land charge may be applied to the property in question, there is also a statement provided on the certificate of occupation.
- (d) Minute No.48(d) – the Committee received Mr. C Bradshaw, Director, Education and Lifelong Learning, who reported on the issue surrounding Trallwng Infants School. He advised the Committee, that discussions had taken place with the Head Teacher prior to this matter being reported to Members.

Mr. Bradshaw informed the Committee that the Headteacher confirmed a DBS check was in place from a different employer and that reliance was placed on this as an interim measure. However, in line with Council policy, the Headteacher was required to seek specific approval from the Director Education & Lifelong Learning and Human Resources for this interim measure to take effect. The Director Education & Lifelong Learning indicated that on this particular occasion the required approval had not been sought.

Mr. Bradshaw concluded by indicating he was satisfied that all Head Teachers within Rhondda Cynon Taf were aware of the Council's procedures in respect of DBS checks and it was **RESOLVED** – to note the comments made by the Director, Education and Lifelong Learning.

## REPORTS OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, CORPORATE SERVICES

### 54 DBS CHECKS

With reference to Minute No.48(e) of the Audit Committee held on the 6<sup>th</sup> January, 2014 and Minute No.53(d), above, the Operational Audit Manager reported on the review that had been undertaken in respect of members of staff commencing duties within a school environment without the necessary processes having been followed.

The Operational Audit Manager reported, that whilst Estyn advise that the Council is permitted to place reliance on an existing DBS check from another organisation, the Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate has opted to

increase the control environment further by requiring a cleared DBS check (processed by the Council's Human Resources Service) be in place prior to a staff member commencing in post.

He informed Members of the review undertaken by Internal Audit of all 961 employees who commenced in their post in a school environment between the 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 and the 6<sup>th</sup> February, 2014, the analysis undertaken showed that 956 instances out of 961 where staff recruitment met the requirements identified by Estyn.

Details and reasons of the remaining five instances where non compliance had been identified were outlined in the report and in conclusion, the Operational Audit Manager indicated that whilst non compliance with the requirements of Estyn and the Council's procedures had been identified in the five instances, he did not consider there to be a systematic failure in the application of DBS checks as part of the recruitment process for school based staff and that the departments concerned would continue to rigorously monitor this matter.

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED** –to note the contents of the report.

**Note:** At this juncture in the proceedings, the Chairman thanked the Director, Education and Lifelong Learning for addressing the Committee and he left the meeting.

## **55 PROGRESS AGAINST THE 2013/14 AUDIT PLAN**

The Operational Audit Manager provided Members with an update on the progress by the Internal Audit Service in delivering the Audit Plan 2013/14, together with performance against targets for the Service up to 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2014.

It was reported that as at the 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2014, 69% of the Audit Plan had been completed to report stage and it was projected that 80% of the 2013/14 Audit Plan would be completed by year end.

At the meeting the Operational Audit Manager verbally reported that at the next meeting of this Committee, Members would be provided with the Head of Internal Audit's Annual Report. The report will provide a summary of the performance of Internal Audit for 2013/14 and also provide a summary of all planned and unplanned work undertaken.

Following a discussion, the Committee **RESOLVED** – to note the contents of the report.

**56 DRAFT ANNUAL AUDIT PLAN 2014/15**

The Operational Audit Manager, informed Members that in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, the Council has drafted an Annual Audit Plan for 2014/15 as shown at Appendix A to the report; and in line with the Terms of Reference of this Committee, Members have responsibility for reviewing the content of the draft plan, and where deemed appropriate, recommend amendments or approve its content for the forthcoming year.

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED –**

1. To note the contents of the report.
2. To approve the draft Annual Audit Plan for 2014/15 in accordance with Performance Standard 2010 of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

**57 FINALISED AUDIT ASSIGNMENT 2013/14**

The Operational Audit Manager provided Members with a summary of audit assignments completed between 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2013 and 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2014.

The Committee considered the summarised audit assignments in respect of:

***Corporate Services***

- General Ledger
- Tell Us Once
- Treasury Management

***Community & Children's Services***

- Mobility Shops
- Integrated Family Support Team

***Education & Lifelong Learning***

- Mountain Ash Comprehensive School (follow up)
- S.S.Gabriel & Raphael R.C.(Cheque Book)
- Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg
- Pontypridd High School
- Safeguarding

Following consideration of the above mentioned summaries, it was **RESOLVED –**

1. To note the contents of the report.
2. That the Operational Audit Manager investigates whether the administration of school trips via the personal banks accounts of members of staff at the school has ever been approved by the School's Management Team.

**58 RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The Service Director, Performance and Resources reported on the Council's Risk Management Strategy which was attached to the report and which had been approved by Cabinet at its meeting held on the 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2014.

It was reported that the Council has in place a range of processes and procedures to identify, manage and mitigate risk as far as is reasonably practicable in the delivery of its services. At the meeting the Service Director reported that work is underway to compile a Strategic Risk Register the content of which will also be included into the Council's improvement priority plans for 2014/15. The Service Director added that the Strategic Risk Register would be reported to the Audit Committee during the year in line with its Terms of Reference.

**RESOLVED** – to note the information.

**59     INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER**

The Operational Audit Manager reported that in line with the Public Sector Internal Audit standards (PSIAS), the Council is required to draft an Internal Audit Charter which is to be approved by the Audit Committee each financial year.

For the consideration of Members, a copy of the Internal Audit Charter was attached to the report at Appendix A, defining the purpose, authority and responsibility of the Council's Internal Audit Service.

Following consideration of the Internal Audit Charter, it was **RESOLVED** – To approve the Internal Audit Charter for 2014/15 as required by Attribute Standard 1000 of the Public Section Internal Audit Standards, subject to the Internal Audit Structure and Reporting Arrangements as shown in the Chart at Figure 1 being amended to make reference to the Council and Cabinet.

**MR.ROGER HULL  
CHAIRMAN**

**The meeting closed at 4.40 p.m.**

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