

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of: **AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting: 11 December 2002

Present: Councillor F Chaudhry (in the Chair);
 Councillors T P Chamberlain, G Sharkey, B Vincent and J F Walton.

Apologies for absence: Councillors E B Briggs, Y Creswell and W Ramsey.

SP.857 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No members of the public were present to ask questions under this item.

SP.858 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

SP.859 MINUTES

Delegated decision:

- 1. That the Minutes of the meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 25 September 2002 be approved as a correct record, subject to the report number in Minute SP.490 being amended to read 1556/01 instead of 1657/02.*
- 2. That in respect of Minute SP487(1) the Director of Finance and E-Government be requested for his comments as to why the consultations with Councillor Walton on the Statement of Accounts for 2001/02 did not take place.*

SP.860 PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report by the Assistant Chief Executive on a review of Partnership Governance arrangements, which was included within District Audit's Audit Plan for this year. This area is recognised as a key aspect of the change agenda in the public sector, and this Council is carrying out a Best Value Review of Corporate Governance arrangements during 2002/03, in the context of the Council's Corporate Governance framework, which addresses the areas of openness, integrity and accountability.

Concern was expressed about ensuring that the Council's Partners, such as the Health Trusts, provided the necessary data on time to ensure that the Authority is able to provide information required by the Audit Commission.

It was agreed:

- 1. That the report be noted.*
- 2. That the Assistant Chief Executive be requested to report to the next meeting of the Sub Committee on the partnership arrangements relating to the provision of data by outside agencies.*

SP.861 AUDIT PROGRESS 2001/2002

The District Auditor submitted a progress report on the District Audit Plan for 2001/2002.

Delegated decision:

That the report be noted.

SP.862 DISTRICT AUDIT PLAN 2002/2003

The District Auditor, as the Council's appointed Auditor, submitted a report giving details of the Audit Plan for 2002/2003. It was reported that the audit year is being changed so that it runs from April to March with effect from April 2003, so as to correspond with the Council tax year.

The main aim of the Audit is to design a programme of work to address the significant operational and financial risks which the Council faces.

In addition, the Audit needs to review whether the Council has adequate arrangements for the following:-

- *Ensuring the legality of transactions with a significant financial consequence.*
- *Ensuring the Council's financial standing is soundly based.*
- *Being satisfied that the Council has systems of internal financial control which are both adequate and effective.*
- *Ensuring proper standards of financial conduct and to prevent and detect fraud and corruption.*
- *Securing economy efficiency and effectiveness in the use of the Council's resources.*

Delegated decision:

That the report be noted.

SP.863 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Delegated decision:

That in accordance with Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration the following items of business since they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information in respect of action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention and investigation or prosecution of a crime.

SP.864 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT – MUSIC SERVICE

Further to Minute SP.490(2) of this Sub Committee held on 25 September 2002, the Director of Education and Culture submitted a report on the present system that exists for providing subsidised music lessons and equipment loans to children/students. The Director acknowledged that the existing mechanism is unsatisfactory and needs to be reviewed, and a number of options to resolve the problem were suggested.

It was suggested that further consideration be given to the issue of who should be entitled to free tuition, and also to the possibility of producing a Service Level Agreement.

Delegated decision:

That the Director of Education and Culture, together with the Music Service Advisory Board, after consultation with the Chief Internal Auditor, be requested to discuss this issue further in more detail, with a view to submitting proposals to the next meeting of this Sub Committee.

SP.865 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

The Chief Internal Auditor submitted a Progress Report on the work of the Internal Audit Section and the progress of Internal Audit Reports through the system.

Further to Minute SP490(3) of this Sub-Committee held on 25 September 2002, the Chief Executive had requested Chief and Borough Officers to respond to Audit Reports within a reasonable timescale.

Delegated decision:

That the report be noted.

SP.866 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT – MEMBERS FEEDBACK

The Chief Internal Auditor submitted a report providing feedback to members in respect of specific queries raised in relation to Audit Reports. Details of Internal Audit follow up work were also circulated.

Concern was expressed at the meeting about the difficulties which Unsworth and Sunnybank Youth Centre were experiencing in attracting youth workers to the Centre.

Delegated decisions:

1. *That the report be noted.*
2. *That the Chief Internal Auditor be requested to make enquiries about the problems referred to at the Unsworth and Sunnybank Youth Centre, and investigate in particular whether changes/improvements could be made to the terms of employment of youth workers in order to address this problem.*

F CHAUDHRY
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and finished at 8.35 pm)

