



Audit & Governance Committee

Thu 16 Jan
2014
7.00 pm

Committee Room 2
Town Hall
Redditch

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

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a
difference*

www.redditchbc.gov.uk

Access to Information - Your Rights

The Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 widened the rights of press and public to attend Local Authority meetings and to see certain documents. Recently the Freedom of Information Act 2000, has further broadened these rights, and limited exemptions under the 1985 Act.

Your main rights are set out below:-

- Automatic right to attend all Council and Committee meetings unless the business would disclose confidential or “exempt” information.
- Automatic right to inspect agenda and public reports at least five days before the date of the meeting.
- Automatic right to inspect minutes of the Council and its Committees (or summaries of business undertaken in private) for up to six years following a meeting.
- Automatic right to inspect lists of background papers used in the preparation of public reports.
- Access, upon request, to the background papers on which reports are based for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting.
- Access to a public register stating the names and addresses and electoral areas of all Councillors with details of the membership of all Committees etc.
- A reasonable number of copies of agenda and reports relating to items to be considered in public must be made available to the public attending meetings of the Council and its Committees etc.
- Access to a list specifying those powers which the Council has delegated to its Officers indicating also the titles of the Officers concerned.
- Access to a summary of the rights of the public to attend meetings of the Council and its Committees etc. and to inspect and copy documents.
- In addition, the public now has a right to be present when the Council determines “Key Decisions” unless the business would disclose confidential or “exempt” information.
- Unless otherwise stated, all items of business before the Executive Committee are Key Decisions.
- (Copies of Agenda Lists are published in advance of the meetings on the Council’s Website:
www.redditchbc.gov.uk

If you have any queries on this Agenda or any of the decisions taken or wish to exercise any of the above rights of access to information, please contact

**Debbie Parker-Jones
Democratic Services Officer**

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Welcome to today's meeting.

Guidance for the Public

Agenda Papers

The **Agenda List** at the front of the Agenda summarises the issues to be discussed and is followed by the Officers' full supporting **Reports**.

Chair

The Chair is responsible for the proper conduct of the meeting. Generally to one side of the Chair is the Committee Support Officer who gives advice on the proper conduct of the meeting and ensures that the debate and the decisions are properly recorded. On the Chair's other side are the relevant Council Officers. The Councillors ("Members") of the Committee occupy the remaining seats around the table.

Running Order

Items will normally be taken in the order printed but, in particular circumstances, the Chair may agree to vary the order.

Refreshments : tea, coffee and water are normally available at meetings - please serve yourself.

Decisions

Decisions at the meeting will be taken by the **Councillors** who are the democratically elected representatives. They are advised by **Officers** who are paid professionals and do not have a vote.

Members of the Public

Members of the public may, by prior arrangement, speak at meetings of the Council or its Committees. Specific procedures exist for Appeals Hearings or for meetings involving Licence or Planning Applications. For further information on this point, please speak to the Committee Support Officer.

Special Arrangements

If you have any particular needs, please contact the Committee Support Officer.

Infra-red devices for the hearing impaired are available on request at the meeting. Other facilities may require prior arrangement.

Further Information

If you require any further information, please contact the Committee Support Officer (see foot of page opposite).

Fire/ Emergency instructions

If the alarm is sounded, please leave the building by the nearest available exit – these are clearly indicated within all the Committee Rooms.

If you discover a fire, inform a member of staff or operate the nearest alarm call point (wall mounted red rectangular box). In the event of the fire alarm sounding, leave the building immediately following the fire exit signs. Officers have been appointed with responsibility to ensure that all visitors are escorted from the building.

Do Not stop to collect personal belongings.

Do Not use lifts.

Do Not re-enter the building until told to do so.

The emergency Assembly Area is on Walter Stranz Square.



Audit & Governance

Committee

16th January 2014

7.00 pm

Committee Room 2, Town Hall

Agenda

Membership:

Cllrs: Derek Taylor (Chair) Mark Shurmer
 Roger Hill (Vice-Chair) Yvonne Smith
 Roger Bennett Pat Witherspoon
 John Fisher

Independent Member: Dave Jones (non-voting co-opted)

1. Welcome - New Independent Member on Audit & Governance Committee	To welcome Mr Dave Jones as the new Independent Member on the Audit & Governance Committee. Mr Jones was appointed the role in December 2013 for a 12-month trial period. The Independent Member is a non-voting co-opted member of the Committee.
2. Apologies and named Substitutes	To receive apologies for absence and details of any Councillor nominated to attend the meeting in place of a member of the Committee.
3. Declarations of Interest	To invite Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and/or Other Disclosable Interests they may have in items on the agenda, and to confirm the nature of those interests.
4. Minutes (Pages 1 - 12)	To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Audit & Governance Committee held on 26th September 2013. (Minutes attached)
5. Audit & Governance Committee - Action List and Work Programme (Pages 13 - 18) Chief Executive	To consider the Audit & Governance Committee's ongoing Action List and Work Programme. (Action List and Work Programme attached) (No Direct Ward Relevance)

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6. Risk Monitoring & Reporting Exec Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)	To receive presentations from Heads of Service on the key operational risks identified within the following service areas: • Community Services; • Environmental Services; and • Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services. Also, to receive any additional Officer and/or Lead Risk Member (Councillors Bennett and Smith) oral updates in relation to risk monitoring activity which has taken place since the last meeting of the Committee. (Presentations and oral reports) (No Direct Ward Relevance)
7. Corporate Risk Register Exec Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)	To receive a presentation from the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Resources, on the Council's Corporate Risk Register. (Presentation) (No Direct Ward Relevance)
8. Fraud Monitoring & Reporting (Pages 19 - 26) Head of Customer Access and Financial Support	To receive a written report on the performance of the Benefits Services Fraud Investigation Service during the period 1st September 2013 to 30th November 2013. Also, to receive any additional Officer and/or Lead Fraud Member (Councillors Fisher and Hill) oral updates in relation to fraud monitoring activity which has taken place since the last meeting of the Committee. (Report attached and oral reports) (No Direct Ward Relevance)
9. Debt Recovery Update - Quarters 1 and 2 2013/14 (Pages 27 - 34) Head of Customer Access and Financial Support	To advise Members on the collection and recovery processes of the Council's Income Team and on outstanding debt levels. (Report attached) (No Direct Ward Relevance)

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10. Internal Audit - Monitoring Report (Pages 35 - 64) Exec Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)	To consider the Internal Audit Monitoring Report as at 30th November 2013. (Report attached) (No Direct Ward Relevance)
11. Internal Audit - Provisional Audit Plan 2014/15 (Pages 65 - 72) Exec Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)	To consider the provisional Internal Audit Operational Plan for 2014/15. (Report attached) (No Direct Ward Relevance)
12. Annual Governance Statement 2013/14 - Progress Update Exec Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)	To receive an oral update from Officers on current progress in relation to the drafting of the Annual Governance Statement for 2013/14 and to seek any required member input into this. (Oral report) (No Direct Ward Relevance)
13. Portfolio Holder update - Quarterly Budget Monitoring Councillor John Fisher	To receive an oral update from Councillor John Fisher, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management, on the latest Finance Monitoring Report referred to the Executive Committee. Note: This is a new regular item for the Audit & Governance Committee. As agreed at the 26th September 2013 meeting of the Committee the Finance Monitoring Reports which are referred to the Executive Committee will <u>not</u> be reproduced for the members of the Committee as all reports are available for viewing on the Council's website. Members are therefore requested to view any relevant reports online prior to meetings. The most recent Finance Monitoring Report, for Quarter 2 of 2013/14 (covering the period April to September 2013), was referred to the Executive Committee on 10th December 2013. (No separate report – see above) (No Direct Ward Relevance)

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14. Grant Thornton - Annual Audit Letter 2012/13 (Pages 73 - 90)	To present Members with the Annual Audit Letter for 2012/13 from the Council's External Auditors Grant Thornton. (Report attached) (No Direct Ward Relevance)
15. Grant Thornton - Grant Claims Certification Work 2012/13	To present Members with the Grant Claims Certification Work report for 2012/13 from the Council's External Auditors Grant Thornton. (Report to follow) (No Direct Ward Relevance)
16. Grant Thornton - Update Report 2013/14 (Pages 91 - 108)	To receive a progress report from Grant Thornton, the Council's External Auditors, including a summary of emerging national issues and developments of relevance to the Council. (Report attached) (No Direct Ward Relevance)
17. Grant Thornton - Review of Financial Resilience (Pages 109 - 148)	To receive a report from the Council's External Auditors, Grant Thornton, presenting their review of the financial resilience of the Council. (Report attached) (No Direct Ward Relevance)

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18. Exclusion of the Public

Should it be necessary, in the opinion of the Chief Executive, to consider excluding the public from the meeting in relation to any items of business on the grounds that exempt information is likely to be divulged, it may be necessary to move the following resolution:

“that, under S.100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matter(s) on the grounds that it/they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs (*to be specified*) of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act, as amended.”

These paragraphs are as follows:

Subject to the “public interest” test, information relating to:

- Para 1 – any individual;
- Para 2 – the identity of any individual;
- Para 3 – financial or business affairs;
- Para 4 – labour relations matters;
- Para 5 – legal professional privilege;
- Para 6 – a notice, order or direction;
- Para 7 – the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime;

may need to be considered as ‘exempt’.