



Audit, Governance and Standards Committee

Thu 23 Apr
2015
7.00 pm

Committee Room 2
Town Hall
Redditch

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

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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**

**Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH
Tel: 01527 881411
Email: d.parkerjones@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk**

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 Democratic Services 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 Democratic Services Officer.

Special Arrangements

If you have any particular needs, please contact the Democratic Services 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 Democratic Services 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 and Standards Committee

Thursday, 23rd April, 2015

7.00 pm

Committee Room 2 Town Hall

Agenda

Membership:

Borough Councillors:	Roger Bennett (Chair) David Thain (Vice-Chair) Natalie Brookes John Fisher Jane Potter	Rachael Smith John Witherspoon Pat Witherspoon Vacancy (1)
Independent Member:	Dave Jones (non-voting co-opted – for Audit and Governance)	
Feckenham Parish Council Representative:	Kevin White (non-voting co-opted – for Standards)	

<p>1. Apologies and named Substitutes</p>	<p>To receive the apologies for absence and details of any Councillor nominated to attend the meeting in place of a member of the Committee.</p>
<p>2. Declarations of Interest</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 14)</p>	<p>To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee held on 22nd January 2015, subject to an amendment, as noted at the meeting of Full Council on 30th March 2015, to the final paragraph of Minute No. 36 v) (Ref 5 – Audit Findings Report 2013/14 – Unfilled vacancies) which should read:</p> <p>“Action: item to remain on Action List for reporting at the <u>April</u> 2015 meeting of the Committee, unless all required information available for circulation to members of the Committee any sooner.”</p> <p>(Minutes attached)</p>
<p>4. Monitoring Officer's Report - Standards Regime (Pages 15 - 18) Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services</p>	<p>To receive a report from the Monitoring Officer on any matters of relevance to the Committee.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</p>

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<p>5. Feckenham Parish Council Representative's Report - Standards Regime</p>	<p>To receive a report from the Feckenham Parish Council Representative on any matters of relevance to the Committee.</p> <p>(Oral report)</p> <p>(Astwood Bank & Feckenham Ward)</p>
<p>6. Audit, Governance and Standards Committee - Action List and Work Programme</p> <p>(Pages 19 - 24)</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>To consider the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee's Action List and Work Programme.</p> <p>(Action List and Work Programme attached)</p> <p>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>7. Grant Thornton Auditing Standards - Communication with the Audit & Governance Committee and Executive</p> <p>(Pages 25 - 54)</p>	<p>To present Members with the Auditing Standards – Communication with the Audit & Governance Committee and Executive report for 2014/15 from the Councils External Auditors Grant Thornton.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>8. Grant Thornton Audit Plan - 2014/15</p> <p>(Pages 55 - 72)</p>	<p>To present to Members the Grant Thornton Audit Plan 2014/15.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>9. Grant Thornton - Progress Update March 2015</p> <p>(Pages 73 - 88)</p>	<p>To update Members on Grant Thornton's progress as at March 2015 in delivering their responsibilities as the Council's external auditors.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>10. Risk Monitoring and Reporting</p>	<p>To receive any Officer and/or Lead Risk Member (Councillor John Witherspoon and Mr Dave Jones, Independent Member) oral updates in relation to risk monitoring activity which has taken place since the last meeting of the Committee.</p> <p>(Oral report(s))</p> <p>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</p>

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<p>11. Fraud Monitoring and Reporting</p>	<p>To receive any Officer and/or Lead Fraud Member (Councillor Thain) oral updates in relation to fraud monitoring activity which has taken place since the last meeting of the Committee.</p> <p>Note: Former Councillor Braley was one of the two Lead Fraud Members on the Committee. Members are therefore asked to consider whether they wish to appoint a replacement Lead Fraud Member at this point, or whether they prefer to do this at the first meeting of the 2015/16 Municipal Year when all Lead Member positions on the Committee are due to be considered.</p> <p>(Oral report(s))</p> <p>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>12. Benefits Investigations and Housing Benefits Overpayments - 1st October 2014 to 31st December 2014</p> <p>(Pages 89 - 98)</p> <p>Executive Director, Finance and Resources</p>	<p>To advise Members on the performance of the Benefits Fraud Investigation and Housing Benefits Overpayment Services for the 3rd quarter of 2014/15.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>13. Internal Audit - Progress Report</p> <p>(Pages 99 - 126)</p>	<p>To present a progress report of internal audit work with regard to the 2014/15 audit work.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>14. Internal Audit - Annual Audit Plan 2015/16</p> <p>(Pages 127 - 136)</p>	<p>To present to Members the Council's final Internal Audit Operational Plan for 2015/16, and to confirm the key performance indicators for the Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Service for 2015/16.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>15. Accounting Standards</p> <p>Executive Director, Finance and Resources</p>	<p>To consider an update to the Accounting Standards in preparation for the 2014/15 accounts.</p> <p>(Oral report)</p> <p>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</p>

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<p>16. Portfolio Holder's Update - Quarterly Budget Monitoring</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>(Oral report)</p> <p>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>17. Annual Review of the Operation of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee and the Committee's Procedure Rules</p> <p>(Pages 137 - 144)</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>To review the operation of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee during the 2014/15 Municipal Year and the Committee's Procedure Rules.</p> <p>(Chair's oral report)</p> <p>(Audit, Governance and Standards Committee Procedure Rules attached)</p> <p>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</p>
<p>18. Calendar of Meetings 2015/16</p>	<p>Members are asked to note the following meeting dates of the Committee for the 2015/16 Municipal Year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thursday 2nd July 2015;• Wednesday 30th September 2015;• Thursday 28th January 2016; and• Thursday 21st April 2016. <p>All meetings are due to commence at 7.00pm.</p> <p>Note: There will also be an Officer Briefing for all members of the Committee at 7.00pm on Thursday 10th September 2015 on the Statement of Accounts; prior to the Committee's formal consideration of the Statement of Accounts at the 30th September 2015 meeting.</p> <p>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</p>

19. Exclusion of the Public

Should it prove necessary, in the opinion of the Chief Executive, to exclude the public from the meeting at any point during the proceedings in relation to any item(s) of business on the grounds that either exempt and/or confidential information is likely to be divulged, the following resolution(s) will be moved:

"That under Section 100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, it/they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act, as amended, the relevant paragraphs of that part being (*...to be specified by the Chairman at the meeting*), and that it is in the public interest to do so.", and/or

"That under Section 100 A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, it/they involve the likely disclosure of confidential information which would be in breach of an obligation of confidence."

The paragraphs under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act 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'.