



# Audit, Governance and Standards Committee

Thu 2 Jul  
2015  
7.00 pm

Committee Room 2  
Town Hall  
Redditch

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

*making  
a  
difference*

[www.redditchbc.gov.uk](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk)

# Access to Information - Your Rights

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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](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk)**

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**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**

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

# Welcome to today's meeting.

## Guidance for the Public

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### ***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, 2nd July, 2015

7.00 pm

Committee Room 2 Town Hall

## Agenda

### Membership:

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| Cllrs:                                   | David Thain (Chair)<br>Jane Potter (Vice-Chair)<br>Natalie Brookes<br>Michael Chalk<br>John Fisher | Andrew Fry<br>Gareth Prosser<br>Rachael Smith<br>Pat Witherspoon |
| Independent Member:                      | Dave Jones (non-voting co-opted – for Audit and Governance)  |  |
| Feckenham Parish Council Representative: | Pat Dormer (non-voting co-opted – for Standards)   |  |

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| <b>1. Apologies and named Substitutes</b>  | To receive the apologies for absence and details of any Councillor nominated to attend the meeting in place of a member of the Committee.   |
| <b>2. Declarations of Interest</b>   | 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. |
| <b>3. Minutes</b><br>(Pages 1 - 14)  | To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee held on 23rd April 2015.<br><br>(Minutes attached)                               |
| <b>4. Monitoring Officer's Report - Standards Regime</b><br>(Pages 15 - 18)<br>Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services | To receive a report from the Monitoring Officer on any matters of relevance to the Committee.<br><br>(Report attached)<br><br><b>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</b>                             |

# Audit, Governance and Standards Committee

Thursday, 2nd July, 2015

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| <p><b>5. Feckenham Parish Council Representative's Report - Standards Regime</b></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><b>(Astwood Bank &amp; Feckenham Ward)</b></p>  |
| <p><b>6. Localism Act 2011 - Standards Regime - General Dispensations</b></p> <p>(Pages 19 - 22)</p> <p>Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services</p> | <p>To consider the re-granting of general dispensations previously granted by the former Standards Committee and, since July 2014, the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p><b>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</b></p> |
| <p><b>7. Audit, Governance and Standards Committee - Action List and Work Programme</b></p> <p>(Pages 23 - 36)</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><b>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</b></p>  |
| <p><b>8. Grant Thornton - Audit Fee Letter 2015/16</b></p> <p>(Pages 37 - 42)</p>   | <p>To present Members with the Audit Fee Letter for 2015/16 from the Council's external auditors Grant Thornton and to approve the level of fee.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p><b>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</b></p>                                  |
| <p><b>9. Grant Thornton - Update June 2015</b></p> <p>(Pages 43 - 56)</p>   | <p>To update Members on general issues and developments that may impact on the Council in future.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p><b>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</b></p>   |
| <p><b>10. Corporate Risk Register</b></p> <p>Executive Director, Finance and Resources</p>  | <p>To receive a presentation on the Council's Corporate Risk Register.</p> <p>(Presentation)</p> <p><b>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</b></p>   |

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| <p><b>11. General Risk Monitoring and Reporting and Appointment of Lead Risk Members on the Committee for 2015/16</b></p>                               | <p>To receive any Officer and/or Lead Risk Member (Mr Dave Jones, Independent Member and previously Councillor John Witherspoon) oral updates in relation to any risk monitoring activity which has taken place since the last meeting of the Committee.</p> <p>The Committee is also asked to consider which two Lead Members it wishes to appoint as the Lead Risk Members on the Committee for the 2015/16 Municipal Year.</p> <p>(Oral report(s))</p> <p><b>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</b></p> |
| <p><b>12. Benefits Investigations - 1st January 2015 to 31st March 2015</b></p> <p>(Pages 57 - 68)</p> <p>Executive Director, Finance and Resources</p> | <p>To advise Members on the performance of Benefits Fraud Investigation and Housing Benefits Overpayment for the 4th quarter of 2014/15.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p><b>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</b></p>   |
| <p><b>13. General Fraud Monitoring and Reporting and Appointment of Lead Fraud Members on the Committee for 2015/16</b></p>                             | <p>To receive any Officer and/or Lead Fraud Member (Councillor Thain and former Councillor Braley) oral updates in relation to any fraud monitoring activity which has taken place since the last meeting of the Committee.</p> <p>The Committee is also asked to consider which two Lead Members it wishes to appoint as the Lead Fraud Members on the Committee for the 2015/16 Municipal Year.</p> <p>(Oral report(s))</p> <p><b>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</b></p>                             |
| <p><b>14. Internal Audit - Annual Report 2014/15</b></p> <p>(Pages 69 - 82)</p>   | <p>To present to Members the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2014/15 and the 2014/15 Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Services Manager's annual opinion on the overall adequacy of the Council's internal control environment.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p><b>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</b></p>  |

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| <b>15. Annual Governance Statement 2015/16</b><br><br>(Pages 83 - 90)<br><br>Executive Director, Finance and Resources | To seek approval of the draft Annual Governance Statement for signature by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive, for inclusion in the Statement of Accounts 2014/15.<br><br>(Report attached)<br><br><b>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</b> |
| <b>16. Portfolio Holder's Update - Quarterly Budget Monitoring</b>   | 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.<br><br>(Oral report)<br><br><b>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</b>        |



## 17. 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'.