

**A MEETING OF THE STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
WAS HELD ON 25 JUNE 2015
*Subject to Approval***

Councillors; Bateman (P), Carter (P), Chegwyn (P), Mrs Cully (P), Dickson, Forder, Gill (P) and Scard (P)

It was reported that in accordance with Standing Order 2.3.6, Councillor Burgess had been nominated to replace Councillor Dickson and Councillor Allen had been nominated to replace Councillor Forder for this meeting.

7. APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Dickson and Forder.

8. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

9. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Standards and Governance Committee held on 26 March 2015 and 21 May 2015 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

10. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations

11. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

PART II

12. ERNST & YOUNG – AUDIT PLANNING MEMORANDUM FOR 2014/15

Consideration was given to the audit planning memorandum the report of the External Auditors, Ernst & Young, setting out the work that was planned to be completed to enable the issue of the audit opinion on Gosport Borough Council's financial statements and the value for money conclusion for 2014/15. The audit opinion and value for money work will be completed in line with the requirements of the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice.

Members sought clarification regarding the uncorrected audit misstatements and the threshold figure. The Committee were advised that any fraudulent entry will be reported to Members and confirmed misstatements greater than £63,900 that remain uncorrected at the point of accounts being brought to members in September would also be highlighted.

RESOLVED: That

- The audit planning memorandum and the risks identified in the auditors work on the audit opinion and value for money conclusion, and their planned response to those risks be noted; and
- Audit Plan for 2014/15 be recommended to the Policy and Organisation Board as those charged with governance.

13. INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Internal Audit and Risk Assurance presenting an Annual Report to the appropriate body that has responsibility for both governance and the Internal Audit function In accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards 2013

A member questioned whether there had been any adjustments to the Risk Management scores since March 2015. The Committee were advised that there was no change and further informed that the mid-cycle meeting of the Corporate Risk Management Group was due to meet next week where the scores would be re-assessed and amended as necessary.

In answer to a further question from members the Committee were updated by the Head of Internal Audit and Risk Assurance that resourcing in the department had improved with two trainee posts filled. Support for the recruits was via one half day training on a weekly basis along with regular supervision; this was proving successful. Further to the aforementioned support Members were assured that reports were checked by senior staff prior to distribution.

In answer to a Member's question, the Committee were advised that Eastleigh Borough Council had removed themselves from the partnership due, it was believed, to cost cutting on their part.

The Committee were advised that from 1st September 2015 the responsibility for investigating benefit fraud would be taken over by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Although the workload of the section would reduce as a result this would be offset by the transfer of a member of staff to the DWP.

Members were advised that the level of fraud referrals had increased due to partially as a result of raising awareness within the Housing Service Unit. It was requested that the percentage of benefit fraud as a proportion of the total benefits paid for 2014/15 be provided to Members of the Committee.

Members were also advised that the two recommendations from the Office of Surveillance Commissioners, who undertook an inspection during December 2014, had been addressed by Management; and that resolution on RIPA powers and training for key officers would be held on 9th September 2015.

RESOLVED: That the Standards and Governance Committee note the report.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

The meeting concluded at 18:25

CHAIRMAN