

Minutes

Name of meeting	AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE
Date and time	TUESDAY, 4 DECEMBER 2007 AT 6.00PM
Venue	COMMITTEE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT. IOW
Present	Cllrs Jonathan Fitzgerald-Bond, Mike Cunningham, Geoff Lumley, Brian Mosdell, Colin West (Chairman)
Cabinet Member	Cllrs Barry Abraham, George Brown, David Pugh
Officers Present	Jonathan Baker, Steve Beynon, David Burbage, Barry Cooke, George Hook, Heidi Marshall, April Ross
Apologies	Joe Duckworth
24	Election of Chairman for the Day Due to the absence of a Chairman it was necessary for the Committee to elect a Chairman for the day. Cllr West was nominated and seconded for the role of Chairman. <u>RESOLVED</u> : THAT Cllr West was elected as Chairman for the day. (Cllr West thereupon took the Chair)
25.	Minutes Members were concerned about the final paragraph on page 3 relating to Schroder Investment Management Ltd not being asked to re tender for the management of the pension funds. This was not the case and it was established that this was due to a mis note. It was agreed to remove this from the minutes. <u>RESOLVED</u> : THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2007 be agreed subject to the above.
26.	Declarations of Interest Cllr Colin West declared a Personal Interest as he was the Chairman of the Pension Panel.

Cllr West also declared Personal Interest in Paper D, Page 2 as he was a Justice of the Peace and also the Paper E Report as he was a close personal friend of the Author and Contact Point.

27. **Public Question Time**

There were no questions raised.

28. **Property Disposals/Capital Receipts Programme**

The Acting Head of Property Services and the Cabinet Member for the Economy, Planning and Property reported to the Committee that the Property Disposals / Capital Receipts Programme was regularly updated.

It was stated that the properties included in the CRP did not necessarily mean that they would automatically be disposed of, but were awaiting disposal pending approval.

It was reported that Capital Receipts are never ringfenced and are always placed in the Authorities Coffers.

There was some concern raised as to the quantity of properties for sale, whether the Authority was selling the family silver and if this was the best way to deal with assets. The Acting Head of Property Services reported that properties listed were on the premise of not being fit for purpose. This meant that properties were by and large below the standard currently required.

The Deputy Leader stated, as laid out in the Constitution, that the Authority was not and must not be seen as a Property Managing Company and that the Council must stick to the business of getting the best value for the cooperate coffers.

The environmental standards were also a factor to take into account. I.e. those at risk of flood would be categorized as Zone 3 and therefore not residential permitted and not of value to the Authority.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy, Planning and Property advised the Committee to look at this Programme as a dynamic opportunity for the Isle of Wight Council and recognise that Officers have acted in the best interests of the Authority.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy, Planning and Property and The Acting Head of Property Services both confirmed that plans were currently in place to look at centralising Council Services with the Police and PCT. This would involve moving away from the Current sites including County Hall. No site had been specifically identified, although two sites were seen as a possibility. It was anticipated that any move would not be during the life of the current administration. Both the Police and the PCT have shown positive interest for a centralised HQ.

It was also noted that the current County Hall site does fall partially in Zone 3.

The following questions that were raised at the meeting on the 18 September 2007 were asked again for consideration:

- (a) Newport – Parkhurst Road (former Library HQ) - concern was raised as to the length of time that this had been on the market and asked for reasons for the delay.

The Acting Head of Property Services replied that this was largely due to the need for a tree survey and that this would be recorded in the programme accordingly. It was also stated that the property was not currently on the market.

- (b) Newchurch – Sunnycrest Nursery Bungalow – whether there was an agricultural tie on the property and if that was the case should the Council seek to remove it before disposing of it.

The Acting Head of Property Services replied that the Authority had not yet declared the property as surplus to requirement but would look at the feasibility of removing the tie if required. Osel have the lease on the Property and any surplus money would have to be agreed with them.

- (c) Newport – New Street and South Street Car Parks – queried whether these should be seen as an asset to the Council by providing valuable parking space in the town and income.

The Acting Head of Property Services replied that New Street car park was not a Pay and Display car park but was an area which rented the parking spaces to the residents of the adjacent households.

South Street car park was currently a short stay Pay and Display facility and would be looked at regarding its potential.

The Committee questioned what the role of the Audit and Performance Committee was in relation to the Property Disposals/Capital Receipts Programme and what they could actually do. It was felt that such Papers as this would have gone to Cabinet and the Call In Period would have expired, leaving the Audit and Performance Committee in an ineffective position.

The Interim Director of Finance stated that the procedure of Audit and Performance reviewing a report that had previously gone to Cabinet / Council and prior to going to Scrutiny was the correct order.

The Director of Children's Services stated that Other Authorities adopt the same procedure and Cabinet, as the Executive, are responsible for approving / noting such documents initially. The role of the Audit and Performance Committee was to note, see if the process is appropriate, follows the Constitution and ensures that the Authority picks up on any recommendations given.

The Cabinet Member for Residents and Resources reiterated that this was normal procedure and that with some Authorities, the Audit and Performance Committee meet only 4 times a year.

It was requested if future reports of this nature could be presented in a more user friendly way, in order to give the public a better impression and understanding of the Capital Receipts Programme and Property Disposal Procedure. This was duly noted.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Property Disposals/Capital Receipts Programme be noted.

29. **To consider the following Reports as agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 20 November 2007:**

I. **Quarterly Finance Report (Paper C)**

The Committee was informed that the high figure of contribution to savings target was as a result of there being more grant than anticipated. Also on some of the savings on reduced spend on the Capital Programme there was savings on interest that was applied that were both Corporate and Direct.

The Interim Director of Finance confirmed that the Adjusted Budget figure for Tourism of £797, 619 was the net Budget Cost of Tourism after income had been taken into account.

The Interim Director of Finance stated that he would provide a detailed analysis of the Chief Executive's Office budget figure.

The Interim Director of Finance also stated he was confident that despite various concerns including Concessionary Fares, the Authority would come in on Budget for 2007/08.

The Cabinet Member for Residents and Resources reported that the Authority was currently paying more than anticipated on Concessionary Fares due to a high increase in usage.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Quarterly Finance Report be noted.

II. **Quarterly Performance Report (Paper D)**

The Corporate Performance Manager and The Director for Children's Services confirmed that the actions in the reports were those that the Cabinet Members had signed up and agreed to.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy answered to comments made by the Committee with regards to the below target figures regarding the major and minor Planning Applications. Although it was not the intention to provide excuses, this was due in part to the increasing matter of environmental hurdles. It was recognised that the

targets were given to increase the speed in which planning is approved.

It was not anticipated that this area would improve greatly in the near future, but the Pan Development Project was expected to be on time.

It was also noted that Appeals are not listed and that this could also be an area that the Authority could fall down on.

The Director of Children's Services corrected a misprint on Annex 10 of Paper E that stated that the end of year target for the number of fixed school exclusions for all Schools (Monthly) should read 1230 and not 123.

The Committee agreed that the Quarterly Performance reports were a valuable tool that could be used to hold individual Cabinet Members to account with the possibility of inviting Members to future Scrutiny Meetings if required.

The Director of Children's Services wished to clarify that the targets for Sickness for Human Resources were based on a national average and should not be seen as an entitlement. All sickness within the Authority would be dealt with using the same procedure. Whilst the figure of 4% is below the target set it does represent an upward trend and has therefore been marked in red to highlight that the Authority will fail in this area should the trend continue.

The Cabinet Member for Residents and Resources wished to clarify that the Housing and Community Support figure given for the Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Leisure and Governance was below target largely due to the lack of houses built in the previous 3 months.

The Committee wished to state that the figures for Crime and Disorder would prove to be a big issue and one that needed to be addressed.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Quarterly Performance Report be noted.

III. Quarterly Strategic Risk Report (Paper E)

The Interim Head of Compliance reported that this report was presented at Cabinet and highlights risks that were identified 12 months previously. There would be a need to re-visit the register to identify any relevant risks to the Authority. An update would be provided at a future meeting.

The Interim Director of Finance reported that it was hoped the Finance figure would be below the target of 13 once all relevant actions were taken.

Concern was raised by the Committee in relation to the Risk Reference SR5 that fell under the Director of Community Services and its Connection with the Monthly Performance Report for the Cabinet of Health and Wellbeing. It was felt that the performance achieved against target could potentially pose a risk to life. The Director of Children's

Services drew to the Committees attention the comment which stated that work was underway in this key area of improvement to safeguard against this risk, but noted the concerns.

The Director of Children's Services wished to point out that this was the first time in the last 12 months that the Committee had received the Authorities Strategic Risks and that the Councils ratings had increased from 2 to 2.64 which demonstrated a move in the right direction. The Authority was now ready to prepare for the next phase for Strategic Risk.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Strategic Risk Report be noted.

CHAIRMAN