

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PANEL held in MEETING ROOM 1, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARYS STREET, HUNTINGDON on Wednesday, 27th September 2006.

PRESENT: Councillor C J Stephens – Chairman.
Councillors P J Downes, J A Gray,
T V Rogers, L M Simpson and R J West.

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor K J Churchill.

15. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 27th June 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

16. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received

17. COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT: USE OF RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

Pursuant to Minute No. 7 and with the aid of a report by the Head of Policy (a copy of which is appended in the minute book) the Panel was acquainted with progress towards the achievement of the Use of Resources Action Plan. Members were reminded that the Performance Management Framework would continue to be used pending the completion of the review of the Corporate Plan.

The report also informed the Panel that as part of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment process, the Council was required to complete a value for money self assessment by the end of September each year. Having been acquainted with the subjects that would be included in the self assessment, it was

RESOLVED

- a) that progress in the achievement of the Use of Resources Action Plan be noted;
- b) that the areas of change to be incorporated into the value for money self assessment be noted; and
- c) that the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Chairman of the Panel, be authorised to approve and submit the value for money self assessment.

18. INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

The Panel received and noted a report by the Internal Audit Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which contained his opinion on the Council's systems of internal control and which summarised the progress made against the 2005/06 Annual Audit Plan and the performance standards achieved.

Members noted the Internal Audit Manager's conclusions in relation to the level of assurance provided by the Council's internal control environment in terms of the effective exercise of its functions. In response to a question by a Member, the Internal Audit Manager informed the Panel that the Internal Audit Service carried out random checks to verify reported. Having noted the measures considered to improve the rate at which agreed actions were being implemented, it was

RESOLVED

that the report and annual opinion statement be noted.

19. ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE ON CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Having considered a report by the Director of Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was appended the Statement of Assurance, summarising corporate governance work carried in 2005/06 and identifying matters to be addressed during 2006/07, it was

RESOLVED

- a) that the Statement of Assurance on Corporate Governance for 2005/06 be approved, and
- b) that the Chairman of the Panel, the Chief Executive and the Director of Commerce and Technology be authorised to sign the Statement on behalf of the Council.

20. PUBLICATION OF THE 2005/06 ACCOUNTS

(Mr P Winrow of RSM Robson Rhodes LLP, the Council's external auditors, was in attendance for consideration of this item)

The Panel considered the draft report and accounts for the year 2005/06 (a copy of which are appended in the Minute Book). Having endorsed the Council's letter of representation, Members were informed by Mr Winrow that an unqualified opinion had been provided on the accounts and that confirmation that the Council had achieved the required standards for all of the Use of Resources Code of Practice criteria now had been provided.

Members were advised of those matters contained in the Action Plan where officers had taken a different view to that of the auditor and the reasons therefor. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- a) that the letter of representation attached at Annex A to the report now submitted be approved and the Director of Commerce and Technology authorised to sign it on behalf of the Council;
- b) that the Auditor's report be received and the appended action plan for dealing with the matters highlighted noted; and
- c) that the revised accounts at Annex B be approved for publication.

21. INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN PLAN 2006-07

Pursuant to Minute No. 10, the Panel received and noted a report by the Internal Audit Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was appended the Internal Audit and Assurance Plan 2006/07. Having noted the way in which areas for audit were identified and the importance of linking the Plan to the Risk Register, it was

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted.

22. RISK REGISTER

With the aid of a report by the Internal Audit Manager (a copy of which appended in the Minute Book) to which was appended the Risk Register, the Panel was acquainted with the basis on which the Register had been compiled and the work remaining to be completed before it became fully operational.

The Panel discussed the need for training for Members on the Register and for the Council to review its "appetite" for risk. Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED

- a) that the work undertaken on the risk register so far be noted; and
- b) that training be provided for Members on the Risk Register.

23. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains information which would enable the identity of an individual to be obtained.

24. LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN - SETTLEMENT OF COMPLAINT

The Panel received and noted a report by the Director of Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the annex to the Minute

Book) on a complaint against the Council by a member of the public and the terms of a compensatory payment negotiated by way of a local settlement.

25. SPECIAL MEETING

Members noted that a special meeting of the Panel would be held on 29th November 2006.

Chairman