

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PANEL held in the Aquarius Room, St Ivo Leisure Centre, Westwood Road, St Ives, Cambridgeshire, PE27 6WU on Wednesday, 9 December 2009.

PRESENT: Councillor C J Stephens – Chairman.

Councillors M G Baker, P L E Bucknell,
S J Criswell, P J Downes and T V Rogers.

26. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 22nd September 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

27. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor P L E Bucknell declared a personal interest in respect of Minute No. 09/31 by virtue of being a Member of the Licensing and Protection Panel.

28. CALCULATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE 2010/11

In accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended), the Panel was acquainted with a report by the Head of Customer Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) setting out the general principles for the calculation of the tax base, which was based on the number of Band D equivalent properties within the District. Having been reminded that recent parish boundary changes would come into effect on 1st April 2010 and in noting the implications this would have for the affected Wards, the Panel

RESOLVED

- (a) that the report by the Head of Customer Services regarding the calculation of the District Council's tax base for the year 2010/11 be approved; and
- (b) that in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended), the amount calculated by Huntingdonshire District Council as the tax base for the whole District for the year 2010/11 be 58,580 and shall be as listed below for each Parish of the District:

Abbotsley	240
Abbots Ripton	128
Alconbury	553
Alconbury Weston	280
Alwalton	124

Barham & Woolley	27
Bluntisham	739
Brampton	1795
Brington & Molesworth	106
Broughton	85
Buckden	1150
Buckworth	50
Bury	605
Bythorn & Keyston	142
Catworth	144
Chesterton	58
Colne	344
Conington	73
Covington	42
Denton & Caldecote	25
Diddington	30
Earith	575
Easton	75
Ellington	235
Elton	295
Farcet	580
Fenstanton	1160
Folksworth & Washingley	347
Glatton	130
Godmanchester	2371
Grafham	240
Great & Little Gidding	122
Great Gransden	455
Great Paxton	370
Great Staughton	320
Haddon	25
Hail Weston	240
Hamerton & Steeple Gidding	52
Hemingford Abbots	327
Hemingford Grey	1150
Hilton	445
Holme	238
Holywell-cum-Needingworth	975
Houghton & Wyton	785
Huntingdon	7255
Kimbolton & Stonely	595
Kings Ripton	80
Leighton Bromswold	82
Little Paxton	1250
Morborne	11
Offord Cluny & Offord D'Arcy	508
Old Hurst	98
Old Weston	87
Perry	265
Pidley-cum-Fenton	153
Ramsey	2890
St Ives	5725
St Neots	10195
Sawtry	1730
Sibson-cum-Stibbington	210
Somersham	1385
Southoe & Midloe	158

Spaldwick	229
Stilton	785
Stow Longa	65
The Stukeleys	415
Tilbrook	108
Toseland	37
Upton & Coppingford	85
Upwood & The Raveleys	420
Warboys	1365
Waresley-cum-Tetworth	146
Water Newton	42
Winwick	40
Wistow	215
Woodhurst	150
Woodwalton	85
Wyton-on-the-Hill	414
Yaxley	2910
Yelling	<u>140</u>
	<u>58580</u>

29. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

With the aid of a report by the Audit and Risk Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel gave consideration to an updated Risk Management Strategy. Having noted that no changes were required to be made to the main body of the Strategy, the Panel were advised that minor textural amendments had been proposed for the definitions within the environment and environmental risk categories to reflect the wording within the Council's Environment Strategy. Some concern was expressed at the proposed exclusion of "Crime and Disorder Act implications" and "Incorrect storage/disposal of waste" under the operational environmental risk category and Members concurred with a suggestion that reference to this should remain within the Strategy. It was therefore

RESOLVED

that the revised Risk Management Strategy be approved, subject to the inclusion of "Crime and Disorder Act implications" and "Incorrect storage/disposal of waste" under the operational environmental risk category proposed within the report.

30. REVIEW OF THE ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION STRATEGY

By means of a report by the Audit and Risk Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Panel was acquainted with the outcome of the annual review of the Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy. Members' attention was drawn to the changes being proposed to paragraph 6.3 of the Strategy. Further amendments were proposed to the effect that the Chairman of the Corporate Governance Panel, together with the External Auditors, should also be informed of all cases of significant fraud and corruption.

RESOLVED

that the revised Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy be adopted, subject to reference being made to the Chairman of the Corporate Governance Panel and the External Auditors being informed of all cases of significant fraud and corruption.

31. EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORTS: USE OF RESOURCES 2009 AND THE ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER FOR 2008/09

(Mrs L Sandford and P Winrow of Grant Thornton UK LLP, the Council's External Auditors, were in attendance for consideration of this item).

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) detailing the Council's Use of Resources Report 2009 and Annual Audit Letter 2008/09.

In introducing the Use of Resources Report, Mrs L Sandford from Grant Thornton informed Members that the Council had performed adequately in all areas, had arrangements in place consistent with established professional practice and guidance and was meeting statutory requirements and operating effectively. The Panel's attention was also drawn to the content of an action plan designed to assist the Council further improve its performance. A brief discussion ensued on the External Auditor's recommendation that the Council should review its decision not to publish an annual report and Members discussed the possibility of utilising the Districtwide publication in this respect. The Panel was informed of the launch of the "One Place" website which provides an independent overview of local public services in England and in so doing, was encouraged to note that Huntingdonshire's performance compared favourably against other District Councils.

In respect of the Annual Audit Letter, the Panel was acquainted with the performance of the Council in 2008/09 and noted the key areas for action by the Council over the 2009/10 financial year. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Use of Resources Report 2009 and the Annual Audit Letter 2008/09 be noted and the recommendations in Annex A endorsed.

32. CODE OF PROCUREMENT

Pursuant to Minute No. 09/22, the Panel gave consideration to a joint report by the Directors of Central Services and Commerce and Technology (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on the actions taken and the plans to promote compliance with the Council's Code of Procurement, with a view to encouraging better procurement practices across the Council's organisation. Having had their attention drawn to the types of breaches that had occurred, Members were advised that there was no suggestion of corruption or collusion between contractors and Officers. In noting that a series of actions had been proposed to ensure future compliance with the Code, the

Panel

RESOLVED

that the actions proposed within the report be endorsed by the Panel.

Chairman