

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PANEL held in Meeting Room 1, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 25th September 2007.

PRESENT: Councillor C J Stephens – Chairman.
Councillors K J Churchill, T V Rogers,
L M Simpson and G S E Thorpe.

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Miss L Sandford of Grant Thornton, the Council's External Auditors.

12. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 26th June 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

13. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

14. INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE ANNUAL AUDIT 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 2006/07 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 he understood the rate at which agreed actions were implemented generally matched that of other district councils. Having discussed the methodology used to monitor the audit service's performance, it was

RESOLVED

that the report and annual opinion statement be noted.

15. RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

With the aid of a report by the Internal Audit and Risk Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel was acquainted with progress made to embed risk management within the Council. Members noted the requirements to improve the Council's

current rating to level 3 against the risk management standard, one of which was to require all Members of the Panel to receive training on risk management awareness. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted.

16. CODE OF GOVERNANCE

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Policy and Strategic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was appended a revised Code of Governance. Having noted that the Code complied with the new Good Governance in Local Government Framework published by CIPFA/SOLACE and represented current good practice, it was

RESOLVED

that the revised Code of Governance be adopted.

17. GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Policy and Strategic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on the outcome of the annual review of the Council's governance arrangements. Members were acquainted with the Council's current position with regard to the Code of Governance referred to at Minute No. 06/16 *ante*. Having discussed the Annual Statement on Governance, which summarised the corporate governance work carried out in 2006/07 and identified matters to be addressed during 2007/08, 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 Leader of the Council, the Chief of Executive and the Director of Commerce and Technology be authorised to sign the Statement on behalf of the Council.

18. APPROVAL FOR PUBLICATION OF THE 2006/07 ACCOUNTS

The Panel considered the draft accounts for the year 2006/07 (a copy of which are appended in the Minute Book). Having endorsed the Council's letter of representation, Members were informed by Miss Sandford, that an unqualified opinion would be provided on the accounts.

Members were advised of the matters contained in the Action Plan, including those where Officers had taken a different view to that of the auditor. 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 to the report now submitted be approved for publication.

Chairman