

## **HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the Governance & Audit Committee held on 2 December 2015

Present

Councillor Smith K (Chairman)

Councillors Mackey, Hart, Perry, Pike, Rees and Shimbart

### **22 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Pierce Jones.

### **23 Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held on 23 September 2015 be approved as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

- i) Cllr G Shimbart be recorded as having attended the meeting; and
- ii) Cllr Mackey be recorded as having submitted apologies.

### **24 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **25 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interests from any of the members present.

### **26 Chairman's Report**

The Chairman thanked Helen Thompson of Ernst and Young LLP, who was attending her last Governance and Audit Committee, for all her hard work and assistance during her time as auditor of the Council. A welcome was also extended to Andrew Brittain who would be undertaking the 2015/16 audit.

### **27 External Audit Papers**

The Committee considered two papers and a verbal update presented by Helen Thompson of Ernst and Young LLP who joined the meeting for the debate on this item and answered members' questions in connection with the reports.

The Annual Audit Letter 2014/15 provided a summary of the key issues arising from the 2014/15 audit including an update on the final proposed fee.

The Audit Progress update provided the Committee with an overview of the progress made on the certification of the 2014/15 Housing Benefit Subsidy Claim.

The Local Government Audit Committee Briefing summarised some of the current issues facing the sector. The Committee was provided with an update on the Value for Money Conclusion guidance and expressed an interest in receiving a presentation on this subject at a future meeting.

RESOLVED that the reports and update be noted.

## **28 Internal Audit Progress Report**

The Committee considered a paper presented by Amanda Chalmers of the Southern Internal Audit Partnership who joined the meeting for the debate on this item and answered members' questions in connection with the report.

The paper provided an overview of internal audit activity against assurance work completed in accordance with the approved audit plan and a summary of the status of 'live' reports.

The Committee was pleased to note that good progress was being made on the audit plan and any actions classified as overdue were being progressed and implemented.

A question was raised regarding how future audit activity would be impacted if the Council entered into a Joint Venture Company agreement with NORSE. It was explained that the audit plan for next year had yet to be finalised and discussions were ongoing on how to progress this as the decision on whether to enter into the agreement had yet to be finalised.

In response to an enquiry over why the management action on the Land Charges audit was listed as overdue it was suggested the Business Services Team Leader circulate a response to the Committee.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

## **29 Southern Internal Audit Partnership - External Quality Assessment**

Amanda Chalmers presented the Committee with the outcomes arising from the Southern Internal Audit Partnership's External Quality Assessment.

The assessment had been undertaken by the Institute of Internal Auditors and the Committee was pleased to note that a positive outcome had been achieved. A list of recommendations for further development were noted.

RESOLVED that External Quality Assessment of the Southern Internal Audit Partnership be noted.

*Governance & Audit Committee (2.12.15)*

**30 Quarterly Update on Corporate Risks from the Executive Board**

The Committee noted a report from the Governance and Information Manager providing an update on the highest corporate risks reviewed by the Joint Executive Board on 10 November 2015.

RESOLVED that the most serious corporate risks reviewed by the Joint Executive Board on 10 November 2015 be noted.

**31 Dispensation For Councillors To Determine The Setting Of The Council Tax Precept And Councillor Allowances**

The Committee was asked to consider a report from the Monitoring Officer detailing the granting of dispensation to all Councillors to enable them to determine the Council Tax base and Councillors Allowances.

The Committee requested that the dispensation expiry period be altered to 30 May 2019 to ensure it was granted for a maximum period of four years.

RECOMMENDED to Council that it grant dispensation to all Councillors to enable them to:

- 1) Consider and determine the Council Tax base each year; and
- 2) Consider and determine Councillors Allowances each year.

These dispensations to expire on 30 May 2019.

**32 Sub-Committee Hearings - The Process**

The Committee was asked to consider a report from the Monitoring Officer detailing changes to the process followed by the Governance and Audit Committee at Hearings convened following an investigation into whether a Borough Councillor had breached the Council's Code of Conduct.

RECOMMENDED to Council that the Council's process for dealing with allegations be amended as follows:

- (i) Reference to the "Governance Committee" be amended so as to read "Governance and Audit Committee"; and
- (ii) The procedure for hearings be amended to ensure that a separate process for hearings convened following an investigation be added as Appendix 3 to the process.

**33 Code of Conduct Complaints**

There was no business to discuss under this item.

**The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and concluded at 6.01 pm**