

**MINUTES OF A JOINT MEETING OF THE
AUDIT COMMITTEE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE
HELD ON 1ST APRIL 2011 AT 10.00 AM.**

AUDIT COMMITTEE:

P Councillor Brain
P Councillor Blythe
P Councillor Emmett
P Councillor Gollop
P Councillor Hassell
P Ken Guy
P Brenda McLennan

STANDARDS COMMITTEE:

P Councillor Bailey
A Councillor Goulandris
A Councillor Jackson
A Mr. Bob Maggs
P Mrs. Anne Foot
A Mr. Trevor Green
P Mrs. Sheila Ottewell
A Mrs. Rachel Sellers

**ACSC
01.4/11**

ELECTION OF CHAIR

**RESOLVED - that Councillor Brain be elected Chair
for the joint meeting.**

**ACSC
02.4/11**

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, SUBSTITUTIONS AND
INTRODUCTIONS**

Apologies were received from Bob Maggs, Councillor Goulandris,
Trevor Green and Rachel Sellers.

**ACSC
03.4/11**

PUBLIC FORUM

There were none

**ACSC
04.4/11**

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

**ACSC
05.4/11**

MINUTES OF THE JOINT AUDIT/STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING ON 9TH APRIL 2010

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the joint meeting of the Audit Committee and standards Committee held on the 9th April 2010 be confirmed as a correct record.

In response to a query regarding deposits lodged with the Icelandic Banks, officers agreed to email Members of the Joint Committee to update them (and a copy attached to the draft minutes).

Officers agreed to confirm changes to the Standards Committee Terms of Reference to include the whips as members of the Committee.

The Joint Committee remained concerned about behaviour at full Council meetings and welcomed any opportunity to make meetings more productive. The Head of Legal Services suggested he meet with the incoming Lord Mayor for 2011/12 municipal year to develop a proposal. Following that, the Standards Committee would consider a report and recommendations as a result of a review completed by Bevan Brittan.

RESOLVED - (a) that officers update Members of the Joint Committee regarding deposits lodged with the Icelandic Banks.

(b) that changes to the Standards Committee Terms of Reference be confirmed.

(c) that the Head of Legal Services meet with the Lord Mayor (2011/12) to discuss how to improve behaviour at full Council, and

(d) further to the meeting in (c) that the Standards Committee readdress the issue.

**ACSC
06.4/11**

WHIPPING

None

**ACSC
07.4/11**

CHAIR'S BUSINESS

An Internal Audit investigation regarding Bishop Road Primary School was ongoing. A wide range of information had been received and there was some concern that the work would not be completed in time for the statutory Access To Information publication deadline for the proposed meeting date of the 20th April 2011. It was understood that there was public interest in the debate and any delay would be disappointing.

It was confirmed that 20th April 2011 would be during the purdah period and although it was not outwardly a political issue and the Audit Committee was a-political there was some concern regarding the potential nature of the debate.

Following a discussion, it was agreed that the special meeting planned for the 20th April 2011 would be deferred to allow additional time for the completion of a thorough investigation and production of a comprehensive report.

The Head of Legal Services confirmed that all Committees continued to be constituted with the current membership and Chairman until the Annual General Meeting of full Council on the 17th May 2011.

It was advised that the proportionality of the Committee could be altered following the elections on the 5th May 2011 and it was agreed agreement should be sought from the whips and leaders to any meeting that took place within the period between the election and Annual Council.

Councillor Gollop would seek advice regarding whether he could attend, taking into consideration his nomination for Lord Mayor for the 2011-12 municipal year. Councillor Brain sought re-election.

There remained the need for consideration of the information to be presented in the report and whether some information would need to be categorised as exempt.

**RESOLVED - (a) that the meeting planned for the 20th April 2011 be deferred
(b) that a meeting take place between the election and Annual Council, if agreed by the Whips and Group Leaders.**

**ACSC
08.4/11**

AUDIT COMMITTEE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (INCLUDING TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORK PROGRAMMES)

The Joint Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director: Corporate Services (agenda item 8) which related to the respective roles and responsibilities of the two committees.

It was confirmed that following the proposed Localism Bill, the role of the Standards Committee remained unclear and a discussion would be required when the bill was enacted.

It was suggested that the work programme for the coming municipal year could also be helpful. Officers confirmed that some items on the work programme were cyclical and others arose as the year developed. It remained a responsibility for the first meeting of a Committee to agree their work programme although some recommendations could be made beforehand.

RESOLVED - that the report be noted.

**ACSC
09.4/11**

LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

The Joint Committee received a report of the Strategic Director: Corporate Services (agenda item no. 9) which requested comments on the revised local Code of Corporate Governance. An Annual Governance Statement would be signed by the Chief Executive and Section 151 officer. The Council then measured itself against the Code.

With reference to the Local Code of Corporate Governance (LCCG) draft presented, the following suggestions were made;

- 1.1 – Capital letters should be consistent when referring to Council.
- 2.1.1 – Sixth bullet point and subsequent references to Our City could be more generic as there was no certainty as to the future of the publication.
- 2.1.2 – Third bullet point – It was important to ensure high quality of service during procurement especially with regards to joint procurement and partnerships.
- 2.1.2 – Fifth bullet point –the terminology of ‘Access to Bristol’ should be checked.
- 2.1.3 – Fourth bullet point – should read ‘increasing’.
- 2.1.3 – Eighth bullet point – should read ‘economic well being’
- 2.2.1 – Second bullet point – should read ‘on a regular basis’.
- 2.2.1 - The changes to the Scrutiny structure in the upcoming municipal year could make some of the elements of the Code more difficult to achieve.
- 2.2.2 – Last bullet point – should read ‘officers provide Executive Members with fortnightly briefings’.
- 2.4.1 – Second bullet point - It was noted that the Members Information Service no longer insisted.
- 2.4.1 – Fourth bullet point – should read ‘members of the public and Councillors’.
- 2.4.1 – Seventh bullet point - There was concern that the Leaders Forward Plan was not fit for purpose and should be reviewed.
- 2.4.2 – Second bullet point – should read ‘call in a decision’.
- 2.4.3 – Seventh bullet point – should read ‘officers’ not offices.
- 2.5.1 – Sixth bullet point – It was noted that Bristol City Council no longer took part in the Investors In People accreditation scheme.
- 2.5.1 – Fourth bullet point – It was suggested that the LCCG could be included in the Members training package, and/or one hour set aside for Governance issues as part of the Members induction training. It was noted that a summary of training provided through the year could be requested. Members confirmed the importance of an officer responsible for the training function.
- 2.6.1 – First bullet point should read ‘Supporting Neighbourhood Partnerships’.

As the proposed changes would not be considerable, it was not advised that the Code be presented to full Council for approval. It was suggested that the Code could be submitted to Council every three years after a fuller review.

It was suggested that with the abolition of the Standards For England in 2012 there was an opportunity to devise a local Code of

Conduct and regime as a way forward for the Council to monitor Member's behaviour.

RESOLVED - that the comments on the revised local Code of Corporate Governance be noted

**ACSC
10.4/11**

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2010/11

The Joint Committee received a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate Services (agenda item no. 10) which presented initial officer views emerging from the Annual Governance review process. As per previous practice it was planned that the final proposed Annual Governance Statement (AGS) statement would be presented to the Audit Committee at the end of June 2011 for final approval.

Of those items not suggested for retention within the AGS the following reasons were proposed for keeping them;

- Transformation within the Health and Social Care (HSC) Directorate had been significant and was at risk due to the loss of established senior officers. There was a reduction in the number of Directors in HSC as well as the Strategic Leadership Team overall.
- There was a potential impact of land issues picked up from the Regional Development Agency, due to a perceived lack of central control and guidance.
- There was concern that the Performance Management and Development (PMDS) system did not accurately reflect the key performance indicators going forward.
- Although training had taken place to ensure compliance with Procurement Regulations, the process is still not embedded, and it was therefore suggested that it was a risk that should remain in the AGS.
- There was a concern that the public and Councillors did not have a good understanding of how Neighbourhood Partnerships operated as different structures and processes operated in different areas. It was suggested that the constitution and structure should be clearer. On the other hand, it was suggested that as long as law and audit purposes were not

breached then it was to be expected that variances would exist between the Partnerships. Officers were asked if there should be an audit of the Neighbourhood Partnership system in terms of the governance of decision making and value for money.

RESOLVED - that the comments on the revised Annual Governance Statement be noted.

**ACSC
11.4/11**

MEMBERS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, GIFT AND HOSPITALITY INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The Joint Committee received a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate Services (agenda item no.11) which presented the results of the Internal Audit work with regards to Members Declarations of Interest and Gifts and Hospitality.

It was reported that the audit had concluded that procedures were satisfactory. All Members had completed the required annual Declaration of Interests form and systems were in place within the Democratic Services Team to contact those not who had not returned forms in a timely fashion.

Minor areas for improvement had been identified within the administration systems and an action plan had been devised.

**ACSC
11.4/11**

DATE OF NEXT MEETNG

RESOLVED - that the next meeting will be a joint meeting with the Standards Committee and is to be held on Friday 30th March 2012 at 10.00 am.

(The meeting ended at 12.00pm)

CHAIR