

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
MONDAY 25 JANUARY, 2010 AT 4.00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK
PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors

Burnett, G. (Chairman)
Easton, Mrs. D. M. (Vice-Chairman)

Burnett, J. Molineux, G.N.
Easton, R.

Also Present: Mr. G. Patterson, District Auditor, Audit Commission
 Ms. E. Mayne, Audit Manager, Audit Commission

33. Apologies

No apologies were submitted.

34. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restriction on Voting by Members

No declarations of interests were submitted

35. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November, 2009 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

36. Annual Audit Letter 2008/09

Consideration was given to the Annual Audit Letter (Enclosure 4.1 – 4.21 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

Mr. G. Patterson, District Auditor presented the Annual Audit Letter 2008/09 to Members of the Committee.

In response to a question raised by a Member, he stated that the assessment was more difficult this year. It had been the first year in which the Council had been assessed using the more demanding and outcome focussed approach for Use of Resources, and advised that this had reflected for most Local Authorities in the national scores. Ms. E. Mayne, Audit Manager stated

that other Local Authorities scores had been made public and a document was available on the Audit Commission's website. She stated that a greater focus on outcomes was now within the assessment and as an example referred to the Council's Streetwarden's services stating that it was important for the Council to evidence and target certain areas.

Mr. S.G. Brown, Chief Executive concurred with this and discussed this point with Members of the Committee. He stated that he had raised concerns with the Audit Commission as it gave the impression that the Council's performance was worse this year than last year when in reality it was the assessment process that had changed.

Mr. B. Kean, Head of Financial Management raised a number of concerns and referred to the Financial Statement and annual governance statement section of the Annual Audit Letter and its reference to concessionary fares. He reported that the press had misinterpreted the situation in respect of this authority and as stated by Mr Patterson he advised that the issue related to assurance from the County Council and not the work undertaken by the Council. He confirmed that checks were made in respect of the payments, and stated that the Council was doing all that was required. An up to date assurance had now been received from the County Council

With regard to the Housing and Council Tax Benefit claim, the Head of Financial Management stated that a positive qualification had been received and although there was a potential error on how the subsidy had previously been claimed, this had been identified by Officers before Audit. He stated that by working with the Audit Commission a grant of 100% had been received opposed to the original 40%, and thanked the auditors for their assistance.

The Chief Executive referred to the Council's Corporate Priority Delivery Plan and stated that the Council had come under Scrutiny in respect of certain areas that needed to be responded to such as equality and diversity; however he stated that the Directors Management Team had met and were trying to address the areas.

RESOLVED:

That the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter be received and noted.

CHAIRMAN