

DECISIONS OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

17 FEBRUARY 2011

COMMITTEE:

*Councillor Monroe Palmer OBE, BA, FCA (Chairman)
Councillor Brian Schama (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

* Alex Brodkin * Sury Khatri BSc (Hons), MSc * Andreas Tambourides
* Geof Cooke * Graham Old

Independent Members:

Richard Harbord * Debra Lewis

*denotes Member present

1. MINUTES:

RESOLVED – That the decisions of the meeting held on 7 December 2010 be approved as a correct record.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Brian Schama and from Mr Richard Harbord.

3. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS:

There were no interests declared.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME:

There were no public questions received.

5. MEMBERS' ITEMS (Agenda Item 5):

There were no Members' Items.

6. INTERNAL AUDIT STRATEGY (Report of the Assistant Director of Finance, Audit and Risk Management – Agenda Item 6)

The Assistant Director of Finance, Audit and Risk Management introduced the report. She informed the Committee that the Audit Strategy provides a revision of the Internal Audit Strategy from the previous financial year as it is good practice to revise yearly. She advised that the strategy sets out the objectives of the Service and how they will be achieved.

RESOLVED – That the Committee notes the Internal Audit Strategy for the year beginning April 2011 to March 2012.

7. AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS – 2009/10 (Report of the Assistant Director of Finance, Audit and Risk Management – Agenda Item 7)

The Assistant Director of Finance, Audit and Risk Management introduced the report. She informed the Committee that the report lists all the priority 1 (high) recommendations raised from the internal audits carried out in 2009/10 and the first two quarters of 2010/11, and notes the progress directorates have made addressing these areas of weakness. Where some recommendations have been part implemented or not implemented, a response and revised implementation dates has been agreed with the relevant officers. The recommendations where action is still required will continue to be reported to the Audit Committee until the action has been implemented. She informed the Committee the report included, as requested by the Committee, an update on the position with the external audit recommendations in regards to the One Barnet review carried out in 2009/10. Progress against these recommendations had been provided by officers in Appendix B.

A member of the Committee asked when the contract for cashless parking was signed and when the contract commenced. The Assistant Director of Finance, Audit and Risk Management advised that the information will be reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

Mr Paul Hughes of Grant Thornton LLP (External Auditors) informed the Committee that since December 2010, progress has been made on the One Barnet Programme and actions have been taken and progress made on a number of the recommendations that were made by Grant Thornton in the report. Mr Hughes advised the Committee that Grant Thornton will report back to the Committee in June 2011 on the progress the Council has made in respect of these recommendations; in the meantime Internal Audit will continue to include the recommendations within their papers with officer comments.

The Committee requested that where a priority 1 recommendation has been rated as red twice (not implemented), a senior officer from the relevant service area be invited to attend the next meeting of the Committee to explain why the recommendations have not been implemented and that the relevant Cabinet Member be informed of the request for the senior officer to attend.

The Committee also requested that the table of priority 1 recommendations should in future indicate what date recommendations were made to service areas and the implementation date.

RESOLVED – That the Committee notes the contents of the report and the actions being taken to address some cases of non implementation of recommendations; and the progress against the External Audit recommendations from their One Barnet audit, as updated by officers.

8. AUDIT PLAN 2010/11 (Report of the Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Finance Officer – Agenda Item 8)

Mr Tom Foster of Grant Thornton LLP introduced the report. He advised the Committee that the purpose of the audit plan for the financial year 2010/11 is to communicate the work that Grant Thornton will carry out in discharging their responsibilities to give an opinion on the Council's financial statements and a conclusion on the Council's arrangements for achieving value for money.

RESOLVED – That Grant Thornton's Audit Plan for 2010/11 be noted.

9. GRANTS REPORT 2009/10 (Report of the Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Finance Officer – Agenda Item 9)

Mr Tom Foster of Grant Thornton LLP introduced the report. He informed the Committee that although there was a slight deterioration in the way grants are managed, this should be seen in the context of the fact that there is zero tolerance with grants management. The Committee requested whether a break down of the Council's performance could be included against the five points in the Action Plan.

RESOLVED –

1. That the matters raised by the External Auditor relating to the grants submission and certification process be noted.
2. That the Officer response to the matters raised by the External Auditors be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.28pm.