AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING
Monday 21st March 2016

PRESENT: Councillor O’Rourke (Chair); Councillors Bell, Butterworth, Dutton, James Gartside, Heakin, Joinson, Rashid; A. Taylor and A. Underdown (Independent Persons)

OFFICERS: D. Wilcock (Assistant Director – Resources), V. Crossland (Assistant Director – Resources), I. Corbridge, M. Nixon, J. Murphy and A. James (Resources Directorate)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: S. Robson (STAR Procurement) G. Mills and D. Watson (Grant Thornton)

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
26 There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTES
27 DECIDED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 7th December 2016 be approved as a correct record.

STAR PROCUREMENT - PRESENTATION
28 The Committee received a presentation from Sharon Robson, Director of Procurement at STAR (Stockport, Trafford and Rochdale) Procurement.

The presentation gave detailed information in relation to the following areas:-
- STAR update;
- Update from the last year;
- Working with Partners;
- Delivering for Rochdale – Balanced Scorecard
  - Compliance
  - Savings
  - Social Value
  - Customer Satisfaction
- Opportunities for Rochdale;
- The future;
- Leading for Rochdale;

Members of the Committee asked that copies of the presentation be circulated for information.

DECIDED – that Sharon Robson be thanked for her presentation on STAR procurement.

GRANT THORNTON - 2014-2015 RBC GRANTS LETTER
29 The Committee considered a letter issued by Grant Thornton, which provided details of the Certification work for Rochdale Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2015.

DECIDED – that the letter from Grant Thornton relating to Certification work for Rochdale Borough Council for year ended 31 March 2015 be noted.
GRANT THORNTON - RBC AUDIT COMMITTEE UPDATE
30 The Committee considered a report on the progress being made by Grant Thornton in delivering their responsibilities as the Council’s external auditors.

The report also included a summary of emerging national issues and developments for the Committee to consider.

DECIDED – that (1) the report on the progress Grant Thornton in respect of their responsibilities as the Council’s external auditors be noted; (2) the summary of emerging national issues and developments be noted.

INTERNAL AUDIT - QUARTER 3 REPORT 2015/16
31 The Committee considered the report of the Director of Resources which summarised the work of the Internal Audit team during the third quarter of 2015/16.

This report was submitted to enable the Audit and Governance Committee, in accordance with their work programme and overall responsibility for governance, to scrutinise Internal Audit coverage during the third quarter of 2015/16 on all Services within RBC. The work of RBC Internal Audit was governed by the UK Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

DECIDED – that the Internal Audit – Quarter 3 Report 2015/2016 be noted.

INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2016/17
32 The Committee considered the report of the Director of Resources which set out the proposed Internal Audit Plan for 2016/17 which had been developed in accordance with the Internal Audit Charter and with close liaison with both the Leadership Team and Senior Management to identify and evaluate the key areas of risk. This would provide appropriate coverage of Council services in order to ensure that an independent opinion can be given on the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes at the end of the year. The Audit Plan also provided for flexibility to allow for new and emerging areas of risk to be evaluated during the course of the year. The report therefore sought to inform Audit and Governance Committee, in the context of the Members being charged with the overall responsibility for governance, of the proposed work programme of Internal Audit to facilitate approval of the Internal Audit Plan for 2016/17.

DECIDED – that the Internal Audit Plan 2016/17 be approved.

RISK MANAGEMENT - QUARTER 3 2015/16 PROGRESS REPORT
33 The Committee considered the report of the Director of Resources which summarised Risk Management activities during the period from the date of the previous committee meeting on 7 December 2015.

The report was to enable the Audit and Governance Committee, in accordance with their work programme and overall responsibility for governance, to scrutinise Risk Management activities. The work of RBC Risk Management was an ongoing requirement from the Accounts and Audit Regulations to produce an Annual Governance Statement (AGS), with Risk Management processes being an integral part of the AGS.

DECIDED – that the Risk Management – Quarter 3 2015/16 progress report be noted.
EMPLOYEE CODE OF CONDUCT UPDATE
34 The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director (Legal, Governance and Workforce) which provided an update on the current position on implementation of the revised Employee Code of Conduct.

As part of a review of the Council’s Constitution, it became apparent that the Council’s Code of Conduct for Officers had not been reviewed since 2002 and there was a need for a fundamental review of the Code. The Monitoring Officer and officer colleagues prepared a simplified Code, in a user-friendly format which addressed the Nolan Principles, Equality Act duties, political neutrality, personal interests and outside commitments, electronic communications, information security.

On 7th December 2015, the Committee had approved the amended Employee Code of Conduct and authorised its implementation. The revised code had now been incorporated into the Council’s published Constitution and included in HR Policies and Procedures published on the Council’s intranet and in the Council’s Policy Centre. Employees were informed of the requirements of the revised Employee Code of Conduct by a global email circulated on 3rd March 2016 with a link to the Employee Code of Conduct, a copy of which was appended to the report.

Members of the Committee suggested that it would be useful to have sight of the Communications and Engagement Plan for the revised Code of Conduct at a future meeting.

DECIDED – that the implementation of the revised Employee Code of Conduct be noted.

MEMBER’S CODE OF CONDUCT: UPDATE ON CURRENT COMPLAINTS
35 The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director (Legal, Governance and Workforce) which provided an update in relation to complaints made pursuant to the Members’ Code of Conduct.

Under the Council’s Constitution, the Audit & Governance Committee is responsible for monitoring the operation of the Members’ Code of Conduct. The report was intended to provide an overview of the complaints received in terms of numbers, brief details and outcomes.

DECIDED – that the update on complaints made in relation to the Members Code of Conduct be noted.

SCHEME OF DELEGATION
36 The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director – Legal, Governance and Workforce which sought confirmation of the Scheme of Delegation to Officers as it related to the initiation of Traffic Regulation Order procedures.

The Scheme of Delegation to Officers provides for the “Initiation of the Traffic Regulation Order Procedures, on all category of highway, for all types of traffic regulation order” to be delegated to Director of Neighbourhoods in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for strategic roads or the Township Chair and local ward Councillors on non-strategic roads.

It had recently come to light that the delegations as listed omit reference to off street car parking locations, even though the off street element is suggested at by the inclusion of the words “for all types of traffic regulation order”. It was interpreted that these words were indicative of the delegation covering all traffic regulation orders,
whether on the highway or not. It was also considered that the appropriate level of delegation be to the Director of Neighbourhoods in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, as the fee levels for car parks are established by the Cabinet through the annual consideration of discretionary fees and charges process. It was therefore recommended that the Scheme of Delegation to Officers be amended accordingly for clarification purposes.

DECIDED – that the Scheme of Delegation to Officers as it relates to the initiation of Traffic Regulation Order procedures be amended as detailed within the submitted report.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC
37 DECIDED – that this item be withdrawn.

APPENDIX 1 - MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT
38 DECIDED – that this item be withdrawn.