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GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

5 NOVEMBER 2013

(19.15 - 20.07)

PRESENT Councillors Peter McCabe (in the Chair), Agatha Mary Akyigyina, Laxmi Attawar, John Dehaney, Lewis-Lavender, Ian Munn, Rod Scott, Debbie Shears, David Williams and Henry Nelles

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Councillor Janice Howard (Councillor Henry Nelles substituting)

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

None were made

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2013 (Agenda Item 3)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2013 are agreed as a correct record.

4 S106 AGREEMENTS/UNDERTAKINGS - DELEGATION TO OFFICERS (Agenda Item 4)

Members agreed that the efficiency being produced should be quantified and targets reviewed as required.

RESOLVED: 1) That the General Purposes Committee endorses the officer's recommendation to widen the scope of planning applications that can be determined under delegated powers by amending Part 3F of the Council's Constitution as set out in Appendix 2 so that certain planning applications where standard heads of terms of S106 agreements or undertakings are proposed need not be referred to the Planning Applications Committee.

2) That the General Purposes committee recommends to Council that it agrees the necessary constitutional amendments

5 REPORT OF THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR: MERTON COUNCIL ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER (Agenda Item 5)

Members discussed the letter with the External Auditors and the Director of Corporate Services.

The overprovision for bad debt on NNDR – this provision was in the collection fund and would be used to close the gap for 2013/14;
The risks previously unidentified related to older assets. The council had drawn the attention of the auditors to this;
The scope of the external auditors' work related to the statement of accounts – although they had identified some internal control issues it was a matter for Merton to determine its own internal control regime;

The letter was noted.

6 REPORT OF THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR: MERTON COUNCIL AUDIT RESULTS REPORT (Agenda Item 6)

Noted that this was an updated version of the report discussed at the September meeting.

7 REPORT OF THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR: MERTON PENSION FUND AUDIT RESULTS REPORT (Agenda Item 7)

Noted that this was an updated version of the report discussed at the September meeting.

8 PUBLIC SECTOR INTERNAL AUDIT STANDARDS (Agenda Item 8)

RESOLVED: 1) That the General Purposes Committee notes the Internal Assessment and the action plan

2) That the General Purposes Committee agrees the External Assessment

9 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2012/13 – IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE (Agenda Item 9)

Members discussed the update with the Director of Corporate resources:
Management behaviours – The director agreed to circulate the themes to members
The director agreed to provide timelines and target dates for items on the plan;
Members were concerned that IT strategy issues was being scrutinised. They noted that a report was due to go to Overview and Scrutiny Commission in March/April 2014 and asked to be notified of the outcome of this;

10 WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda Item 10)

March

Constitutional issues – Financial Regulations and procedures, GP Committee terms of reference

Report of the external auditors: Audit plan

June

Update on reporting of IT issues (minutes of OSC meeting to be circulated to members)

Public sector internal audit standards – external assessment and action plan

September

Report of the external auditor: Audit results report (Merton)

Report of the external auditor: Audit results report (Pension fund)

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