

ACCOUNTS AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE

28 SEPTEMBER 2010

Present :- Councillor Christopher Arnold (Chairman)
Councillors Nick Cope, Scott Greenhill, Sue Lissimore,
Jon Manning, Colin Mudie, Kim Naish and Colin Sykes

Substitute Member :- Councillor Pauline Hazell for Councillor Dennis Willetts

Also in Attendance :- Councillor Paul Smith

10. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2010 was confirmed as a correct record.

11. Annual Statement of Accounts

Ms. Debbie Hanson, District Auditor, attended the meeting for this item and presented the Audit Commission's Annual Governance Report.

Ms. Hanson drew members' attention to the key messages, the unqualified audit opinion, the financial statements presented for audit free from material error, the adequate internal control environment and the adequate arrangements to secure value for money. The panel were also advised of the unadjusted misstatement in the accounts for the amount of £31,000 to be reflected in the representation letter to be signed off by the Committee Chairman and Section 151 Officer following approval by the Committee.

Ms. Hanson thanked the Council's finance team for producing a good quality set of accounts, saying she was very pleased with the progress made by the Council for a positive, well prepared approach.

Ms. Hanson concluded by recommending that the full set of accounts should from next year onward, be presented to the June meeting.

In response to Councillor Manning, Ms. Hanson said there was a statutory requirement for the committee to review a full set of accounts prior to approval, and the auditors needed to be sure that this was the case. It was accepted that more innovative ways to present the accounts to members could be done rather than the need to provide a full hard copy set of accounts for each member.

Councillor Arnold expressed disappointment at the need to provide individual printed copies to members, which is not the 'house style' anymore at Colchester.

Ms. Hanson said the auditors required evidence that members are informed about the accounts in detail, therefore a member's presentation would suffice, as would a PDF copy sent by email to members. In each case members would need to acknowledge an endorsement of the information provided.

Mr. Steve Heath, Finance Manager, presented the report Annual Statement of

Accounts, bringing to the members' attention amendments to the accounts as highlighted in paragraph 2.6 of the report.

RESOLVED that the Committee accepted the auditors report, noted the comments in the officer's covering report and approved the amended Statement of Accounts and Letter of Representation, subject to the amendments outlined in the covering report.

12. Financial Regulations Update

The report on the Financial Regulations Update was presented by Ms. Elfreda Walker, Finance Manager.

Ms. Walker said this was the first update to the Council's regulations since 2004. Members were provided with details of the amendments made within the revised regulations. The revised regulations complied with CIPFA requirements.

Councillor Manning thanked officers for providing the amendments sheet in advance of the meeting and which allowed members to observe the actual amendments made.

RESOLVED that the Committee approved the revised Financial Regulations, and recommended to Council the adoption of the revised Financial Regulations.