

Minute Extract from Joint Governance and Audit Committee – 20 March 2014

JGAC/047/13-14 Proposed Revision of the Financial Regulations

Before the Committee was a report by the Executive Head of Financial Services, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 7.

The report proposed a revision to the financial regulations used by both Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council. The revised financial regulations would form part of the Constitutions of both Councils. It was considered necessary to:

- Update the financial regulations in relation to new job titles;
- Review the approval processes with a view to reducing unnecessary bureaucracy in light of the streamlined democratic processes;
- Review the approved virement limits; and
- Address any recommendations raised by internal audit in the course of its work.

The main changes proposed were outlined in paragraph 3.2 of the report.

The Committee were informed that the provisions had been the subject of consultation with both Cabinet Members for Resources, and the feedback received from them had been built into the proposals.

The Committee noted that carry forward of unspent budget of up to £20,000 would be approved by the Councils' S151 Officer in consultation with the relevant cabinet member early in the new financial year once the outturn position was known. The Committee were informed that currently, officers had to wait until the Joint Strategic Committee meeting in late May / June before carry forwards could be approved. This had caused problems when work needed to be progressed early in the new financial year.

Members sought clarification in regards to the process associated with new capital schemes. Officers advised that the process was set out in section 5 of the regulations dealing with virement limits.

Members questioned the position in regards to write-offs, in particular, if there were large volumes of write offs, how would the Councils keep a check of the totals being written off?

Officers advised that nominated officers, who were responsible for collection income, would be able to write off small amounts of up to £100.00 where it was no longer economic to pursue the debt. The Committee noted that at present, all write offs had to be signed off by the section 151 officer. The proposals would provide a full audit trail and speed up the process.

Resolved,

The Joint Governance and Audit Committee recommended to both Adur and Worthing Councils that the revised Financial Regulations be approved.

Local Government Act 1972

Background documents:

Agenda and minutes of Joint Governance and Audit Committee – 20 March 2014