

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Audit Committee** held at the **Main Committee Room, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil** on **Thursday 25 May 2017**.

(9.30 am - 10.40 am)

Present:

Members: Councillor Derek Yeomans (Chairman)

Jason Baker
Val Keitch
Tony Lock

David Norris
Colin Winder

Officers

Alex Parmley
Andrew Gillespie
Karen Gubbins
Kelly Wheeler

Chief Executive
Performance Manager
Principal Accountant (Exchequer)
Democratic Services Officer

1. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 27th April 2017 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

2. Apologies for absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies of absence were received from Councillors Mike Best, Anna Groskop, Graham Middleton and Carol Goodall.

3. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Public question time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of the public present during the meeting.

5. Date of next meeting (Agenda Item 5)

Members noted that the date of the next meeting of the Audit Committee was scheduled for 10am on Thursday 22nd June in Council Chamber B, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

6. **SSDC Transformation Programme (Agenda Item 6)**

The Chief Executive Officer presented his report to members with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation to explain how the savings would be achieved through the Transformation Project.

He explained that the Transformation Team had looked at all the activities which the council carried out and how much time was spent by the authority on each activity, such as leadership and management and specialist knowledge tasks.

He explained that the time spent carrying out each of these tasks could be reduced by applying 'benefit drivers' to each activity. These benefit drivers would include;

- Providing better information to the customer to reduce, increase or redirect demand from customers.
- Enabling customers to self-serve and to do more to help themselves
- Remodelling and reallocating work to ensure specialist staff use their time to carry out specialist tasks.
- Stripping out waste in processes
- Agile working, which will empower employees to take control of their work

He explained that the IT systems would enable customers to track things such as planning applications online and that information that we must have from customers would only need to be collected once. The new IT systems would also enable workflow and provide performance measures for managers.

He advised members that of the 480 staff, which was the equivalent of 420 full time members of staff, all 263 roles had been analysed. He clarified that by the end of 2019/20, staff costs will be reduced by £2.5 million per year.

During the discussion, members expressed concern over the risks which would be involved in the project such as the loss of knowledge from staff leaving or being made redundant.

The Chief Executive Officer advised members that he had been looking at options for an HR training specialist and at ways of investing more into supporting staff to help ensure that knowledge is retained. He further advised that the Council would become more efficient, and explained that this was not a plan to reduce services.

RESOLVED: that members noted the report.

7. **Audit Committee Forward Plan (Agenda Item 7)**

Members noted the Audit Forward Plan.

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Chairman