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**REPORT OF GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**


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**(SPECIAL) MEETING HELD ON 24 NOVEMBER 2008**


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Chairman: \* Councillor John Cowan

Councillors: \* Archie Foulds \* Eric Silver (1)  
 \* Thaya Idaikkadar \* Dinesh Solanki  
 \* Manji Kara (2) \* Bill Stephenson  
 \* Anthony Seymour

\* Denotes Member present  
 (1) and (2) Denote category of Reserve Members

**PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL**
**PART II - MINUTES**
**58. Attendance by Reserve Members:**

**RESOLVED:** To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Members:-

<u>Ordinary Member</u>	<u>Reserve Member</u>
Councillor Richard Romain Councillor Jeremy Zeid	Councillor Eric Silver Councillor Manji Kara

**59. Declarations of Interest:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that Councillor Bill Stephenson declared a personal interest in Item 14 (Exempt Appendix 3) but considered that he could still speak and vote thereon.

**60. Minutes:**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2008, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

**61. Public Questions, Petitions & Deputations:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no public questions, petitions or deputations were received under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rules 19, 16 and 17 respectively.

**62. References from Council and other Committees/Panels:**

There were none.

**63. Mid-Year Governance Report 2008/09:**

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director of Finance detailing the mid-year Corporate Governance position and progress against the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) Action Plan. It was noted that specific areas of assurance had been agreed to be added to the new governance framework to cover arrangements for dealing with Freedom of Information Act and Data Protection; arrangements for absence management and equalities.

Members were further advised that an assimilation of actions within the previous framework had been added to the current Action Plan.

During discussion Members commented that:

- within training the issue of Member development need further consideration and opportunity;
- point 3.13 – there was no separate mention of trade unions and their statutory responsibility in respect of health and safety. Officers advised that this was not an area that was considered a gap but noted this for future plans;
- the Kier Review report should be submitted to the next committee;

- should consideration be given to the Primary Care Trust being identified separately from the Harrow Strategic Partnership group as a significant partner to the authority;
- the Quarter 3 update report be submitted to the next committee;
- point 3.3 – had the whistleblowing arrangements been communicated to staff. Officers confirmed that this had been achieved and that the issue of monitoring was currently under consideration.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted and the identified actions and improvements be agreed, subject to obtaining the necessary consents.

64. **Audit & Risk Group Functions - Update:**

Members were advised of the current and future work streams being undertaken by the Audit & Risk Group relating to Insurance Service; Internal Audit Service; Business Risk Management; Business Continuity Planning & Emergency Planning and Health & Safety.

In response to questions officers confirmed that the Decent Homes Asbestos report would be submitted to the next Committee. It was similarly also agreed that the report concerning the Stanley Road incident should also be considered at the next meeting. Members referred to these significant incidents impacting upon individual Wards, noting that it was essential that Ward Members were kept abreast of the issues. It was also noted that there was a training need to be met in respect of Members role in ensuring that the community were aware of the situation.

Referring to the non-appointment to the post of Insurance Manager officers confirmed that a job evaluation exercise had now been completed and it was anticipated the post would be readvertised shortly.

In considering the Interim Health & Safety statistics half-year position Members requested that the figures be compiled in terms of the percentage rate of the workforce which would assist in identifying vulnerable workforce areas within future reports.

**RESOLVED:** That the current work areas and planned key improvements, as set out in the report, be noted;

(2) the current position with respect to addressing the asbestos issues be noted and the full Decent Homes Asbestos report be submitted to the next Committee;

(3) the similar report in respect of the incident at Stanley Road also be submitted to the next Committee.

65. **Internal Audit Mid-Year Report 2008/09:**

The Corporate Director of Finance submitted her report setting out progress against the 2008/09 Annual Plan and the work undertaken by the Internal Audit team in the first half of the year. The arrangements for the completion of the IT Plan were outlined and it was confirmed that in respect of schools officers advised the internal audit process had been completed, with the external FMSIS assessments to commence during February 2009.

In response to a request the Corporate Director agreed to send the S106 report identified in the item to the Members who expressed an interest. Members then congratulated the Audit Team on the work programme undertaken.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

66. **Role of Lead Members & Officers:**

Members discussed a report which considered the current role of Lead Members of the Committee and potential changes to those arrangements. Following an examination of the various options available it was agreed that the individual Lead Member roles identified be retained but, that where such Lead Members held briefings with officers these should be communicated to the full membership of the Committee should any Councillor wish to sit in on the briefing. The Committee confirmed that it did not wish to establish formal sub-committees at this time.

The Corporate Director advised that a Lead Member for Anti-Fraud work would also be welcome and Members considered who should undertake this work area.

**RESOLVED:** That (1) the working arrangements be agreed to continue as currently operating with Lead Member's acting for the Committee's main areas of responsibility, subject to future briefing to Lead Members being communicated to all Members of the Committee;

(2) Councillor Anthony Seymour be confirmed the Lead Member for Anti-Fraud work.

67. **Exclusion of the Press and Public:**

**RESOLVED:** That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item for the reasons set out below:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Reason</u>
10	Internal Audit Mid-Year report 2008/09 – Appendix 3	Paragraphs 1 (information relating to individuals) and 7 (information relating to actions taken in connection with the prevention. Investigation and prosecution of crime) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

68. **Internal Audit Mid-Year - Appendix 3:**

The Committee noted the content of Appendix 3 in relation to Minute 65 above.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.30 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR JOHN COWAN  
Chairman