

**AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL CHAMBER -
COUNCIL OFFICES, LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER on
THURSDAY, 28 NOVEMBER 2024 at 7.00 pm**

Present: Councillor E Oliver (Chair)

Councillors A Armstrong, H Asker, S Barker, C Fiddy,
N Gregory, S Luck and R Silcock

Officers in attendance: P Holt (Chief Executive), P Evans (Head of Contract,
Performance and Risk), B Ferguson (Democratic Services
Manger), N Katevu (Monitoring Officer), P Honeybone (Audit
Manager), A Knight (Director of Business Performance and
People) and J Procter (Democratic Services Officer)

Independent Persons: G Butcher, D Paul, D Pearl and C Wellingbrook-Doswell.

AS19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Driscoll and Foley.
There were no declarations of interest.

AS20 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.

AS21 JOB DESCRIPTION FOR INDEPENDENT PERSONS

The Monitoring Officer presented the report to the committee on the Job
Description of Independent Persons. She said that the description gave more
clarity to the role of Independent Persons.

The recommendation was approved unanimously.

RESOLVED:

- I. That the contents of the report be noted by Committee and
- II. That the committee recommend to full Council the adoption of the
Independent Person job description.

AS22 RISK POLICY AND RISK REGISTER

Councillor Asker arrived at 7.04pm.

The Chair introduced the Risk Policy and Risk Register and asked members for comment.

Members expressed concern over the number of red and amber risks related to the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and the sale of Chesterford Research Park.

In response to questions over the timeframes of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and the sale of Chesterford Research Park, the Chief Executive said:

- The Council would likely know before Christmas whether offers received for the park had met the required selling threshold agreed by full Council. He commented that there had been a healthy amount of interest since the first bidding stage and the interested parties were likely in communication with the site's other shareholders which could have lengthened proceedings.
- Provision for the Housing Revenue Account business plan was to be included in the 30-year business plan that was due to come forward in January/February 2025. The plan would have been based on the findings of the stock condition survey.

Members noted the Risk Policy and risks set out in the Risk Register.

AS23 COUNTER FRAUD UPDATE AND PLAN 2024-26

The Audit Manager presented the Counter Fraud Update and Plan to committee. He said:

- There had been no significant change to counter fraud guidance or regulations.
- There had been one fraud instance of note. The funds had been recovered and actions had been taken to prevent recurrence.

Members commended the report.

The update and plan were noted.

AS24 FREEDOM OF THE DISTRICT

The Chief Executive presented the report, which recommended granting Freedom of the District to the 35 Engineer Regiment (EOD), stationed at Carver Barracks.

The Director of Business Performance and People and the Head of Contract, Performance and Risk left at 07:12pm.

Members expressed support for the proposal and discussed the creation of the scroll to mark the occasion.

Councillor Barker requested that care was taken to ensure its wording was spelled correctly, citing an existing similar document on display at the council offices that contained a spelling error.

The Chief Executive agreed and said he would undertake to have the existing document corrected.

The recommendation was approved unanimously.

RESOLVED to recommend to full council that:

- I. Members grant the 35 Engineer Regiment 9 (EOD) freedom to enter the district of Uttlesford with the right to march through the streets with due ceremony, bayonets fixed, colours flying and bands playing in appreciation of the services rendered to the country by its members in hazardous deployments throughout the world.
- II. The Council presents the regiment with a framed scroll to mark the grant of freedom of entry.
- III. That the freedom of entry be formally presented to the Regiment by the Chair of the Council at the Council meeting at which it is agreed.
- IV. That discussions begin with the Regiment to first exercise their new freedom by planning a march.

The meeting finished at 07:15pm.