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From: Cllr Dean  
Sent: 19 September 2012 10:48  
To: Cllr Howell  
Cc: Richard Auty; Stephen Joyce  
Subject: RE: UDC AUDIT COMMITTEE

Dear Simon

I attach for your information an audit committee handbook from the NHS. Whilst not tuned for local government, I believe that some of the principles it contains are relevant to UDC's audit committee. In particular, I would like to bring to the committee's attention the self-assessment section. You will notice that the words "independent" and "independence" occur many times throughout the document. I believe any committee needs to demonstrate independence in what it does and the way it operates.

An audit committee is no ordinary committee. It does not make executive decisions, so comparisons of the respective roles of individual members of the committee and the collective committee with those of an executive committee are not necessarily appropriate. In my experience, if an individual member of an NHS committee brought a specific concern to the audit committee, it would be given space to be considered.

You refer to committee minutes as a fair record of the meeting after which Cllr Knight resigned. I was not present, but it may be that the minutes are sufficiently opaque to hide Cllr Knight's specific concern. Please ask Cllr Knight for her views. You may recollect that I have complained in the past that minutes have not adequately reflected concerns raised. In my opinion audit committee minutes should provide an audit trail of issues raised, whether or not they are pursued at the time. An audit committee cannot simply record decisions and conclusions if it is to provide a transparent function.

I do not know whether my views are shared by any other current members of the audit committee. What I do wish to remind you is that, to the best of my knowledge, there has been no external training for members of Uttlesford's audit committee since the last election. I feel that training is essential and should be provided by a reputable external agency. Then members of the committee may be well equipped to make a judgment on whether any of my concerns are worthy of consideration.

I would like this correspondence added to the previous correspondence for the benefit of next week's committee meeting.

Kind Regards  
Alan

Cllr Alan Dean  
Member of Uttlesford District Council for Stansted South  
Tel: 01279 813 579  
blog: <http://alandean.mycouncillor.org.uk/>