



AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES

21 FEBRUARY 2012

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**CITY OF GREATER GERALDTON**  
**AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**ON TUESDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2012 AT 1.45PM**  
**IN THE CATHEDRAL AVENUE FUNCTION ROOM**

**MINUTES**

**1 DECLARATION OF OPENING**

**2 ATTENDANCE**

Present:

Mayor Carpenter  
Cr Van Styn (Chairman)  
Cr Thomas  
Cr Brick (Proxy)

Officers:

Cheryl Wood, Director of Corporate Services  
Kim Chua, Manager Financial Services

Others:

Nil.

Apologies:

Tony Brun, Chief Executive Officer

Leave of Absence:

Nil

**3 CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

**COMMITTEE DECISION:**

**Moved Mayor Carpenter, Seconded Cr Thomas**

**That the minutes of the City of Geraldton-Greenough Audit Committee meeting held on 6 December 2011, as attached be accepted as a true and correct record of proceedings.**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4 A06 FINANCIAL & RISK POLICIES

<b>AGENDA REFERENCE:</b>	<b>D-12-07218</b>
<b>AUTHOR:</b>	<b>C Wood, Director of Corporate Services</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE:</b>	<b>C Wood, Director of Corporate Services</b>
<b>DATE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>17 February 2011</b>
<b>FILE REFERENCE:</b>	
<b>APPLICANT / PROPONENT:</b>	<b>City of Greater Geraldton</b>
<b>ATTACHMENTS:</b>	<b>Yes</b>

#### **SUMMARY:**

The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement from the Audit Committee on the following policies:

CP034	Fraud Control Policy
CP035	Writing Off Bad Debts Policy
CP036	Risk Tolerance & Appetite Policy

#### **PROPONENT:**

City of Greater Geraldton.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

Three new policies have been developed to provide direction for the organisation and comply with good governance principles. These policies are attached and include:

##### **CP034 Fraud Control Policy**

This policy sets out the meaning of fraud, where is to monitor, detect and report fraud and what will be done when fraud is uncovered.

##### **CP035 Writing Off Bad Debts Policy**

This policy provides guidance on who can write off bad debts and the delegated levels at which this can happen.

##### **CP036 Risk Tolerance & Appetite Policy**

This policy sets out the levels of risk that the Council will accept to achieve its objectives, and how it will be considered in determining the overall risk assessment.

#### **COMMUNITY CONSULTATION:**

There has been no community consultation on this matter.

#### **COUNCILLOR CONSULTATION:**

There is no councillor consultation on this matter.

#### **STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS:**

The Local Government Act requires that Councils establish good governance principles through the introduction of policies and guidelines.

#### **POLICY IMPLICATIONS:**

These policies build on the current council and operational policies in place.

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Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

**FINANCIAL AND BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no financial and budget implications.

**STRATEGIC & REGIONAL OUTCOMES:****Strategic Community Plan Outcomes:**

Goal 5: Leading the Opportunities.

Outcome 5.1: Leadership and Good Governance.

Strategy 5.1.3: Implement business, governance, legislative and compliance frameworks.

**Regional Outcomes:**

There are no regional outcomes from the consideration of this matter.

**ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL & CULTURAL ISSUES:****Economic:**

There are no economic impacts associated with this matter.

**Social:**

There are no social impacts associated with this matter.

**Environmental:**

There are no environmental impacts associated with this matter.

**Cultural & Heritage:**

There are no cultural or heritage impacts associated with this matter.

**RELEVANT PRECEDENTS:**

There are no relevant precedents associated with this matter.

**DELEGATED AUTHORITY:**

There is no delegated authority.

**VOTING REQUIREMENTS:**

Simple majority is required.

**OPTIONS:****Option 1:**

As per Executive Recommendation in this report.

**Option 2:**

That the Audit Committee not ENDORSE CP034 Fraud Control Policy; CP035 Writing Off Bad Debts Policy; CP036 Risk Tolerance & Appetite Policy.

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Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

**Option 3:**

That the Audit Committee DEFERS endorsement of CP034 Fraud Control Policy; CP035 Writing Off Bad Debts Policy; CP036 Risk Tolerance & Appetite Policy.

**EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Audit Committee ENDORSE CP034 Fraud Control Policy; CP035 Writing Off Bad Debts Policy; CP036 Risk Tolerance & Appetite Policy.

**COMMITTEE DECISION:**

**Moved Mayor Carpenter, Seconded Cr Thomas**

**That the Audit committee ENDORSE CP034 Fraud Control Policy; CP035 Writing Off Bad Debts Policy; CP036 risk Tolerance & Appetite Policy, subject to the following changes:**

- a) **CP034 Fraud Control Policy – Scope to include the Mayor**
- b) **CP035 Writing Off Bad Debts Policy**
  - i. **Debt level for Director Corporate Services changed to \$5,000.**
  - ii. **Debt level for Chief Executive Officer changed to \$10,000.**
  - iii. **Clause 4 to be rewritten for amounts over \$10,000 to be approved by Council.**
- c) **CP036 Risk Tolerance & Appetite Policy**
  - i. **Moderate Risk to be changed to reflect responsibility of the Director of Corporate Services.**
  - ii. **Extreme Risk to include the words “with advice to Council”.**
  - iii. **Appendix 1 to include lettering and numbering of cells in the Risk Appetite and Tolerance matrix.**

**CARRIED**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

## 5 A07 CONDUCT OF AUDIT 2010/11 AND AUDIT PROGRAM FOR 2011/12.

<b>AGENDA REFERENCE:</b>	<b>D-11-07261</b>
<b>AUTHOR:</b>	<b>C Wood, Director of Corporate Services</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE:</b>	<b>C Wood, Director of Corporate Services</b>
<b>DATE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>2 February 2011</b>
<b>FILE REFERENCE:</b>	
<b>APPLICANT / PROPONENT:</b>	<b>City of Greater Geraldton</b>
<b>ATTACHMENTS:</b>	<b>Yes</b>

### SUMMARY:

The purpose of this report is to update the Audit Committee on the discussions with the auditors regarding the delayed delivery of the audit report for 2010/11.

### PROPONENT:

City of Greater Geraldton.

### BACKGROUND:

As the audit committee is aware there were delays in delivering the audit opinion and report for 2010/11.

The Director Corporate Services and Manager Financial Services met with Grant Thornton and discussed the issues surrounding the delays.

Issues raised by Grant Thornton included the delivery of reports and mapping of the general ledger. The inability of the auditor's email system to handle large files was an issue and was only noticed when the auditor's advised that they were not receiving information. The issue with the mapping was due to a change in the input format of the statements and the inability of the auditors to adapt to this change.

Issues raised by the City included the repeated requests for information which had been supplied and the experience of the auditors on site. There was no senior auditor provided this year as the person assigned to the City's audit had been sent to another audit which resulted in lack of continuity and expertise. As a result there seemed to be requests for reports which had previously been provided and a lack of understanding of the audit file.

It was agreed that there was omissions on both sides and there was a commitment to ensure that this year the City would provide a draft set of accounts by the end of September and the audit will be completed by the end of October. The auditors have agreed to ensure that the City is certain on the items to be delivered to the auditors through the use of a checklist which is provided well in advance of the audit.

The auditors will be undertaking an interim audit in April. The interim audit allows the auditors to be comfortable with the internal controls in the

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Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

organisation. It has been requested that they also review the carry over balances for the two amalgamated councils to ensure accuracy.

**COMMUNITY CONSULTATION:**

There is no requirement for community consultation on this matter.

**COUNCILLOR CONSULTATION:**

There is no councillor consultation on this matter.

**STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS:**

Part 7 Division 4 of the Local Government Act 1995 requires that:

A local government is to do everything in its power to —

- (a) assist the auditor of the local government to conduct an audit and carry out his or her other duties under this Act in respect of the local government; and
- (b) ensure that audits are conducted successfully and expeditiously.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no policy implications.

**FINANCIAL AND BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:**

**STRATEGIC & REGIONAL OUTCOMES:**

**Strategic Community Plan Outcomes:**

- Goal 5: Leading the Opportunities.
- Outcome 5.1: Leadership and Good Governance.
- Strategy 5.1.3: Implement business, governance, legislative and compliance frameworks.

**Regional Outcomes:**

There are no regional outcomes from the consideration of this matter.

**ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL & CULTURAL ISSUES:**

**Economic:**

There are no economic impacts associated with this matter.

**Social:**

There are no social impacts associated with this matter.

**Environmental:**

There are no environmental impacts associated with this matter.

**Cultural & Heritage:**

There are no cultural or heritage impacts associated with this matter.

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**RELEVANT PRECEDENTS:**

There are no relevant precedents associated with this matter.

**DELEGATED AUTHORITY:**

There is no delegated authority.

**VOTING REQUIREMENTS:**

Simple majority is required.

**CONCLUSION:**

The timely completion of the audit of the City's financial statements is important to ensure early reporting to the community of the financial position of the council and staff will continue to work with its auditors to achieve the appropriate timeframes.

**EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Audit Committee by Simple Majority and in accordance with Part 7 of the *Local Government Act 1995* RESOLVES to note the update on the delivery of the audit report for 2010/11.

**COMMITTEE DECISION:**

**Moved Mayor Carpenter, Seconded Cr Thomas**

**That the Audit Committee by Simple Majority and in accordance with Part 7 of the *Local Government Act 1995* RESOLVES to note the update on the delivery of the audit report for 29/10/11.**

**CARRIED**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

**6 A08 STRUCTURE OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE.**

<b>AGENDA REFERENCE:</b>	<b>D-11-07262</b>
<b>AUTHOR:</b>	<b>C Wood, Director of Corporate Services</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE:</b>	<b>C Wood, Director of Corporate Services</b>
<b>DATE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>2 February 2011</b>
<b>FILE REFERENCE:</b>	
<b>APPLICANT / PROPONENT:</b>	<b>City of Greater Geraldton</b>
<b>ATTACHMENTS:</b>	<b>Yes</b>

**SUMMARY:**

The purpose of this report is to seek the Audit Committee's consideration of the expansion of the role of the Audit Committee.

**PROponent:**

City of Greater Geraldton.

**BACKGROUND:**

An amendment to the Local Government Act 1995 in 2005 introduced a requirement that all local governments establish an audit committee. Such committees are charged with providing an independent oversight to the financial systems of a local government on behalf of the Council. As such, the committee operates to assist Council to fulfil its corporate governance, stewardship, leadership and control responsibilities in relation to the local government's financial reporting and audit responsibilities.

The Local Government Act and Regulations provide that:

- a. The audit committee must comprise of three or more persons;
- b. At least three of the members and the majority of the members, are to be elected councillors; and
- c. The powers and duties of the committee are provided through Part 7 of the Act and the committee cannot on-delegate those powers and duties.

The role of the committee is to support Council in its endeavours to provide effective corporate governance and fulfils its responsibilities in relation to directing and controlling the affairs of the local government. The essential role of the audit committee is oversight for all matters that relate to the conduct of audits.

**BEST PRACTICE FOR AUDIT COMMITTEES**

As mentioned above, historically the role of the audit committee focussed on the financial report, accounting, internal control matters and the integrity of accounting systems. Audit committees are generally now given a broader mandate that covers a wide range of activities. This includes risk management (including fraud prevention) strategies, financial and non-financial compliance requirements and other audit and assurance activities not directly related to the financial report.

It is suggested that the City take the lead in achieving best practice by expanding the role and membership of its committee. It is recommended that

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Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

the membership of the audit committee be expanded to five with the addition of two external members who will be appointed through a public invitation process and who will have the skills required to sit on an audit committee.

Further to this, it is recommended that the scope of the role of the audit committee be expanded to include the following:

- Corporate governance generally;
- Oversight of risk management activities;
- Internal and external audit;
- Compliance with the Local Government Act and other applicable laws and regulations;
- Internal control frameworks including accounting policies and procedures as they apply to financial reporting council policies;
- Oversight of activities to control and report on fraud;
- Quarterly financial reports; and
- Reviewing external reporting – both financial and performance.

As part of these changes it is proposed that the audit committee meet on a quarterly basis and as required for matters such as endorsement of budget practices and financial statements.

**COMMUNITY CONSULTATION:**

There is no requirement for community consultation on this matter.

**COUNCILLOR CONSULTATION:**

This recommendation was put to the City of Geraldton-Greenough Council in May 2011 with the following outcome:

**COUNCIL DECISION**

**MOVED CR BRICK, SECONDED CR ASHPLANT**

**That Council by Simple Majority in accordance with Part 7 of the Local Government Act, RESOLVES to:**

- 1. INCREASE the membership of the audit committee to include two external members;**
- 2. BROADEN the audit committee's role to include financial and nonfinancial matters; and**
- 3. ADOPT the Terms of Reference.**

**LOST 5/6**

**REASON FOR VARIATION TO THE EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATION:**

**That Council did not see the need of increasing the workload within the current payment for Councillors and further that it would be unlikely to attract a community member with the right skill set without payment.**

**STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS:**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_



**VOTING REQUIREMENTS:**

Absolute majority is required.

**OPTIONS:****Option 1:**

As per Executive Recommendation in this report.

**Option 2:**

That the Audit Committee by Simple Majority and in accordance with Part 7 of the *Local Government Act 1995* RESOLVES to DEFER the consideration of the audit structure at this stage.

**CONCLUSION:**

It is important that all of the City's activities are carried out in a best practice environment and with minimal risk. The audit committee can provide the Council with a high level of assurance that the processes involved are transparent and relevant.

**EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Audit Committee by Simple Majority and in accordance with Part 7 of the *Local Government Act 1995* RESOLVES to:

1. INCREASE the membership of the audit committee to include two external members;
2. BROADEN the audit committee's role to include financial and non financial matters; and
3. ADOPT the Terms of Reference.

**COMMITTEE DECISION:**

**Moved Mayor Carpenter, Seconded Cr Thomas**

**That the Audit Committee by Simple Majority and in accordance with Part 7 of the *Local Government Act 1995* RESOLVES to:**

1. **INCREASE** the membership of the Audit Committee to four elected members and two external members.
2. **The two external members be appointed through a public advertisement process.**
3. **BROADEN** the Audit Committee's role to include financial and non financial matters; and
4. **ADOPT** the Draft Audit Committee Charter.

**CARRIED**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

**7 A09 COMPLIANCE AUDIT RETURN 2011**

<b>AGENDA REFERENCE:</b>	<b>D-11</b>
<b>AUTHOR:</b>	<b>T Mbirimi, Coordinator Governance &amp; Risk</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE:</b>	<b>C Wood, Director of Corporate Services</b>
<b>DATE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>2 February 2011</b>
<b>FILE REFERENCE:</b>	<b>INSERT FILE REFERENCE</b>
<b>APPLICANT / PROPONENT:</b>	<b>City of Greater Geraldton</b>
<b>ATTACHMENTS:</b>	<b>Yes</b>

**SUMMARY:**

The purpose of this report is to review the Compliance Audit Return 2011 (CAR).

Amendments to Regulation 14 of the *Local Government (Audit) Regulations 1996* requires that the Audit Committee now reviews the Compliance Audit Return and reports the results of that review to Council prior to adoption by Council and the March submission to the Department of Local Government.

Further complimentary changes to the *Local Government (Audit) Regulation 1996* are proposed for early 2012 to expand the current role of local government audit committees. It is proposed the audit committees' role will additionally encompass the annual review of areas such as risk management, internal control and legislative compliance.

**PROponent:**

City of Greater Geraldton.

**BACKGROUND:**

In accordance with section 7.13(1) of the *Local Government Act 1995* and the *Local Government (Audit) Regulations*, the City is required to complete a compliance audit in relation to the period 1 January 2011 to 31 December 2011 against the requirements set out in the CAR.

While the structure of the CAR is generally similar to that of previous years, areas of compliance covered by the 2011 CAR have been restricted to those considered high risk, resulting in a CAR that contains substantially fewer questions, reducing the size of this CAR from the previous 27 pages to 8 pages for 2011.

Amendments to regulation 13 of the *Local Government (Audit) Regulations 1996*, which were gazetted on 30 December 2011, allowed these changes to occur.

These changes address issues raised in a number of reports that proposed a review of the Department's Compliance Audit Program, including the Public Accounts Committee Report No. 4 into Local Government Accountability (2006), the Department of Treasury and Finance's Red Tape Reduction

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Group Report (2010) and the Local Government Reform Steering Committee (2010). These reports raised issues regarding the compliance reporting burden placed on local governments resulting from the requirement to complete a comprehensive CAR and submit it to the Department by 31 March each year.

The reduction to the CAR and proposed associated transfer of responsibilities to the Audit Committees of each local government will enable local governments to better manage legislative compliance with their own timeframes and with increased transparency and involvement for elected members. However, the requirement for local governments to comply with relevant legislation will not change.

**COMMUNITY CONSULTATION:**

There is no requirement for community consultation on this matter.

**COUNCILLOR/OFFICER CONSULTATION:**

Several Officers, managers and Directors provided their input in order to complete the CAR.

**STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS:**

As per Section 7.13(1) of the *Local Government Act 1995* and the *Local Government Audit Regulations*.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no policy implications.

**FINANCIAL AND BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no financial or budget implications.

**STRATEGIC & REGIONAL OUTCOMES:**

**Strategic & Plan for the Future Outcomes:**

Key Result Area 4:	Leading the Opportunities.
Outcome 4.4:	Achieving and exceeding statutory compliance.
Strategy 4.4.3:	Effect a comprehensive framework for audit and compliance.

**Regional Outcomes:**

There are no regional outcomes from the consideration of this matter.

**ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL & CULTURAL ISSUES:**

**Economic:**

There are no economic impacts associated with this matter.

**Social:**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

There are no social impacts associated with this matter.

**Environmental:**

There are no environmental impacts associated with this matter.

**Cultural & Heritage:**

There are no cultural or heritage impacts associated with this matter.

**RELEVANT PRECEDENTS:**

There are no relevant precedents associated with this matter.

**DELEGATED AUTHORITY:**

There is no delegated authority.

**VOTING REQUIREMENTS:**

Absolute majority is required.

**OPTIONS:**

**Option 1:**

As per Executive Recommendation in this report.

**Option 2:**

That the Audit Committee by Absolute majority and in accordance with Section 7.13(1) of the *Local Government Act 1995* and the *Local Government Audit Regulations* RESOLVES to DEFER review of the 2011 Compliance Audit Return pending further information.

**CONCLUSION:**

The CAR is a statutory compliance requirement for local governments and requires a review first by the Audit Committee and then a report to Council for adoption before being submitted to the Department of Local Government. The City is required to provide this to the Department prior to 31 March 2012. The City does not have the option not to adopt the Return as it would therefore be non-compliant with the Local Government Act.

**EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Audit Committee by Absolute Majority and in accordance with Section 7.13(1) of the Local Government Act 1995 and the Local Government Audit Regulations RESOLVES to REVIEW and REPORT to Council on the 2011 Compliance Audit Return.

**COMMITTEE DECISION:**

**Moved Mayor Carpenter, Seconded Cr Thomas**

**That the Audit Committee by Absolute Majority and in accordance with Section 7.13(1) of the *Local Government Act 1995* and the *Local Government Audit Regulations* RESOLVES to REVIEW and REPORT to Council on the 2011 Compliance Audit Return.**

**CARRIED**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_



**8 A010 AUDIT OVERVATIONS 2010/11**

<b>AGENDA REFERENCE:</b>	<b>D-12-07327</b>
<b>AUTHOR:</b>	<b>C Wood, Director of Corporate Services</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE:</b>	<b>C Wood, Director of Corporate Services</b>
<b>DATE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>17 February 2011</b>
<b>FILE REFERENCE:</b>	
<b>APPLICANT / PROPONENT:</b>	<b>City of Greater Geraldton</b>
<b>ATTACHMENTS:</b>	<b>Yes</b>

**SUMMARY:**

The purpose of this report is to update the Audit Committee on the progress of the audit observations for 2010/11.

**PROPONENT:**

City of Greater Geraldton.

**BACKGROUND:**

Attached is a list of the audit observations for 2010/11. Staff are proceeding with the recommendations of the auditors and it is expected that all issues will be satisfied by the end of the financial year.

**COMMUNITY CONSULTATION:**

There is no requirement for community consultation on this matter.

**COUNCILLOR CONSULTATION:**

There is no councillor consultation on this matter.

**STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS:**

Part 7 Division 4 of the Local Government Act 1995 .

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no policy implications.

**FINANCIAL AND BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:****STRATEGIC & REGIONAL OUTCOMES:****Strategic Community Plan Outcomes:**

Goal 5:	Leading the Opportunities.
Outcome 5.1:	Leadership and Good Governance.
Strategy 5.1.3:	Implement business, governance, legislative and compliance frameworks.

**Regional Outcomes:**

There are no regional outcomes from the consideration of this matter.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

**ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL & CULTURAL ISSUES:****Economic:**

There are no economic impacts associated with this matter.

**Social:**

There are no social impacts associated with this matter.

**Environmental:**

There are no environmental impacts associated with this matter.

**Cultural & Heritage:**

There are no cultural or heritage impacts associated with this matter.

**RELEVANT PRECEDENTS:**

There are no relevant precedents associated with this matter.

**DELEGATED AUTHORITY:**

There is no delegated authority.

**VOTING REQUIREMENTS:**

Simple majority is required.

**CONCLUSION:**

The audit observations from 2010/11 are being attended to by staff and are expected to be completed by June 2012.

**EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Audit Committee by Simple Majority RESOLVES to note the update on the audit observations for 2010/11.

**COMMITTEE DECISION:**

**Moved Mayor Carpenter, Seconded Cr Thomas**

**That the Audit Committee by Simple Majority RESOLVES to note the update on the audit observations for 2010/11.**

**CARRIED**

**9 MEETING CLOSURE**

With no further business, the meeting closed at 3.15pm.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_