

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Audit Committee held on Tuesday, 2 October 2018 at 6.00pm in Meeting Room G3-G4, Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford

PRESENT: Councillors R J Sloan (Chair), I T W Fletcher, K S Sahota C F Smith, W L Tomlinson and D G Wright

IN ATTENDANCE: K Clarke (Assistant Director: Finance & Human Resources), R Montgomery (Audit & Governance Team Leader), T Drummond (Principal Auditor) and J Clarke (Democratic & Scrutiny Services Officer).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

R Percival and E Mayne (from Grant Thornton, External Auditors)

AUC 23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

A D McClements

AUC 24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

AUC 25 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 24 July 2018 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

AUC 26 2018/19 INTERNAL AUDIT & INFORMATION GOVERNANCE UPDATE REPORT

The Principal Auditor informed Members of the work that had been undertaken by Internal Audit between 30 June 2018 and 7 September 2018 and gave an update on the progress of the previous audit reports issued. During this period five final reports had been issued which were either Yellow or Green. No Red or Amber reports had been issued. She was pleased to report that after following up previous issued reports that there were no remaining Red or Amber reports remaining. Some follow ups were currently in progress.

During the ensuing discussion, some Members felt encouraged that there were no red or amber reports, but noted that there were some Yellow reports still outstanding. A question was raised as to whether there were any recurring features ie procedures not being followed. A further question was raised asking if the Red or Amber reports issues prior to March 2017 were still outstanding.

The Principal Audit confirmed that there were currently no concerns and although there were a few minor procedures not being followed, this was part of the role of the audit.

The Audit & Governance Team Leader gave an update on the work of the Information Governance (IG) Team from April to August 2018. The programme of work for IG had been approved at Committee in June 2018 and good progress had been made in completing the agreed task and he was confident that the remaining work would be completed in full by the end of 18/19. He reported that the GDPR and DPA 2018 had taken up a lot of team resources. During this period the Council had received 643 Freedom of Information requests (FOIs), an average of 20-25 per week, with an 84% response rate within the 20 day statutory period. Although this was currently below the Information Commissioners Office target, it was expected that this rate would improve. Six Environmental Information Regulation Requests (EIRs) had been received during the reporting period and 100% had been responded to within the 20 day statutory period. Some 16 Subject Access Requests (SARs) had been received under the Data Protection Act, out of five responses four (80%) had been completed within one calendar month with the remaining 11 responses not due to be responded to within the reporting period. There had been six data breaches during the reporting period which had been an improvement on the previous year. The breaches had been risk assessed and graded in line with the ICO procedure. One breach had been referred to the ICO but had come back with no action required. The lessons learnt from any breach were acted upon and, if necessary, disciplinary action taken. GDPR training had gone well with 1,300 employees accessing 10,000 online training courses which was a positive result.

During the ensuing debate, Some Members asked if other Councils considered that the 90% statutory deadline was a challenging figure and if the 634 FOI requests were up or down on last year's figures. Other Members noted that the reports used a number of acronyms and members of the public may find it difficult to understand the report.

The Audit & Governance Team Leader confirmed that the benchmark across other Councils on statutory deadlines was around 80%. With regard to the FOI requests this remained in line with the last two years.

RESOLVED – that the information contained within the report in respect of Internal Audit Work between 30 June 2018 and 7 September 2018 and the Information Governance work be noted.

AUC 27 REPORT FROM THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE

R Percival introduced himself and the representative from Grant Thornton, External Auditors, to the meeting and gave a brief introduction to the Company and the work that they undertook. He felt that the times ahead remained challenging, especially around the work of Social Care which was a challenge to all Local Authorities. He felt there were four key things that his role could bring to the Committee which were to communicate clearly and unequivocally, deliver targets, be supportive but to also bring challenge as and when required.

E Mayne also gave a brief introduction to her work as an External Auditor and updated the Committee on the support they could expect from her Team. There would be a dedicated Team Leader to support the relationship with the Finance Team to give as much continuity as possible to the work. The Value for Money work would be undertaken by Senior Managers who would gain an understanding of the business and bring regular updates to the Committee.

R Percival expressed that the Council were currently in a good place with regard to the accounts and their production and delivered robust financial statements. The Audit was due to start and would broadly be a planning process up to Christmas. In the New Year they would look at the Audit Plan and key risks and an interim visit would take place in January/February which much of the work taking place between visits prior to the Accounts being ready for a health audit at the end of May. Value for Money work would be undertaken in the Winter/Spring months.

The meeting ended at 6.37pm

Chairman:

Date: