

AUDIT COMMITTEE

7 March 2019

Attendance:

Councillors
Cutler (Chairman)

Bentote
Huxstep

Mather
Power

Deputy Members:

Councillor Cunningham (Standing Deputy for Councillor Stallard)

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors Burns and Stallard

Other Members in attendance:

Councillor Ashton – Portfolio Holder for Finance

1. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 29 NOVEMBER 2018**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 November 2018 be approved and adopted.

2. **GOVERNANCE QUARTERLY UPDATE QUARTER 3 (REPORT AUD225 REFERS)**

The Strategic Director: Resources and Mr Harvey from the Southern Internal Audit Partnership presented this item.

Mr Harvey updated the meeting that 54% of Audits were now finalised and a further eight (from 13) audit reviews were at or near draft report stage and would be published in the next week. This gave confidence that the remaining audits would be completed and would inform the annual internal audit report and opinion.

The Strategic Director: Resources and Corporate Business Manager answered questions from Members as summarised below:

- i. The signing of leases by the Hampshire Cultural Trust was progressing and they had now appointed a new member of staff who would take responsibility for completion of the leases.

ii. The overdue actions on Information Governance related to implementation of the Records Management Policy for the Council, which included a review of the Council's retention schedule for documents. As this involved automatic deletion of records that were older than set in the retention schedule, the Council was being cautious so as not to lose key documents in any disposal.

iii. The eight pending actions for Business Continuity would be removed when the review of business critical functions took place. This was imminent, and the actions would be completed before the next meeting of the Committee.

iv. Officers responded to questions relating to Appendix 3 – LGA Peer Challenge – Follow up Action Plan, No1 – Develop evidence based approach to the Council's understanding of the views and needs of the whole community – and how could it be demonstrated that resident's views were actioned. It was stated that Council did have a long tradition in responding to consultations and endeavoured to keep its website up to date by publishing the results of surveys and any action taken thereafter. There was the Citizens Hub, the Residents Survey and the Young Persons Survey to inform the Council Strategy and it did take time to populate these pages on the website. The Corporate Business Manager would also give this matter further consideration.

Councillor Ashton also referred to the 'You said, We did' initiative and communication involved on the output from consultation on the major projects, for example on the new Sport and Leisure Centre. A solution to the points raised could be improved indexing on the website to indicate where to search for the outputs from consultation.

RESOLVED:

That the content of the Report and the progress against the Internal Audit Plan and Annual Governance Statement as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 of the Report be noted.

3. INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2019 - 20 (REPORT AUD227 REFERS)

Mr Harvey from the Southern Internal Audit Partnership presented this item.

Mr Harvey answered Members' questions as follows:

(i) There was regular contact with City Council officers to ensure that priority areas were identified for audit and that these reflected the needs of the organisation and addressed significant developments. Common themes were looked at across organisations, for example, bank account mandate fraud.

(ii) The Planning and Open Spaces audit would consider the effective utilisation of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and developer contributions from Section 106 agreements.

The future audit of Human Resources and Absence Management and issues in relation to personal and workplace stress were welcomed by the Committee.

The Chairman commented that workshops on training and awareness organised by the Southern Internal Audit Partnership (SIAP) for Audit Committee Chairs and Members would be of benefit. Mr Harvey stated that he would take up this suggestion with the Head of Partnership at SIAP (Mr Pitman) and with the Strategic Director: Resources.

RESOLVED:

That the Internal Audit Plan for 2019/20 as set out in Appendix 1 to the Report be approved.

4. **INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER 2019 - 20 (REPORT AUD226 REFERS)**

Mr Harvey from the Southern Internal Audit Partnership presented this item.

RESOLVED:

That the Internal Audit Charter for 2019/20 as set out in Appendix 1 to the Report be approved.

5. **LOCAL CODE OF GOVERNANCE 2019 - 20 (REPORT AUD228 REFERS)**

The Corporate Business Manager introduced the report.

RESOLVED:

That the Local Code of Corporate Governance as set out in Appendix 1 to the Report be approved

6. **PLANNING FOR AND THE AUDIT OF 2018 - 19 ACCOUNTS (REPORT AUD229 REFERS)**

The Finance Manager and Kevin Suter from Ernst and Young (EY) introduced the Report.

Mr Suter answered questions from Members on the timetable for the audit of accounts and how Winchester's audit would be accommodated by EY.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2018/19 be noted.
2. That the amendments to the disclosure of accounting policies be approved.
3. That the Audit Planning Report be noted.

7. **CERTIFICATION OF CLAIMS AND RETURNS ANNUAL REPORT (REPORT AUD230 REFERS)**

Mr Mathers from EY presented this item.

RESOLVED:

That the Annual Report 2017/18 attached to the Report as Appendix 1 be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 7.45 pm

Chairman