



Minutes of the Audit Committee

22 March 2017

-: Present :-

Councillor Tyerman (Chairman)

Councillors Bent, O'Dwyer (Vice-Chair), Stocks and Darling (S)

81. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Barnby.

82. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 18 January 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

83. Urgent Items

The Committee considered the items in Minutes 84 and 90 and not included on the agenda, the Chairman being of the opinion that they were urgent by reason of special circumstances i.e. the matter having arisen since the agenda was prepared and it was unreasonable to delay a decision until the next meeting.

84. Report Admitting New Partners to the Devon Audit Partnership

Members noted a report that set out the process for Devon Audit Partnership Committee to agree the inclusion of new members. The inclusion of new members is subject to approval by both the Management Board and Partnership Board and terms and conditions determined by the Partnership.

85. Internal Audit Plan 2017-18

Members noted the Internal Audit Plan for 2017-18 which represents the proposed internal audit activity for the year and an outline scope of coverage. The scope of each audit is discussed and agreed with management with a view to providing management, the Head of Finance and members with assurance on the control framework to manage the risks identified. Members noted that the number of days allocated to Transformation had increased. The Head of the Devon Audit Partnership advised that Internal Audit had been involved with the Transformation agenda from the outset as a trusted advisor providing assurance throughout. The Assistant Director of Corporate and Business Services advised that the implementation of MyView was a good example of Internal Audit testing processes as the decisions were made.

Members referred to fraud prevention and detection in particular fraud related to Blue Badges. Members were advised that Blue Badge fraud had not been investigated for a number of years a situation which had also been raised by the Executive Head of Business Services. Members welcomed the suggestion that the Council's Fraud Officer, be invited to attend a future meeting of the Audit Committee to present the Fraud Strategy and provide details of priority work areas.

86. Internal Audit Strategy

Members noted the Internal Audit Strategy, the strategy is a high-level statement of how the internal audit service will be delivered and developed in accordance with the Internal Audit Charter and how it links to the organisational objective and priorities. The Head of Devon Audit Partnership informed Members that following completion of a self-assessment checklist against the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and external validation of the partnership, the overall opinion was that the Devon Audit Partnership 'generally conforms', which Members noted, was the top rating for the assessment.

87. Internal Audit Charter

The Audit Committee noted the Internal Audit Charter which formally described the purpose, authority and principal responsibilities of the Council's Internal Audit Service. Members requested that a future iteration be more explicit in referencing its responsibility to Members as well as management.

88. The Audit Plan for Torbay Council

Members noted the Audit Plan for Torbay Council. Members were informed that the Audit Plan sets out an overview of the planned scope and timing of the audit, aids understanding of the consequences of the work undertaken by the Council's External Auditors, and discusses issues of risk and the concept of materiality. Members noted that the plan set out the key risks regarding the Value for Money (VFM) conclusion, these risks include the Ofsted inspection of Children's Services and the medium term financial planning reviews of key documents such as the Efficiency Plan. The conclusion of this piece of work will be included in the Audit Findings Report and Annual Audit Letter.

89. Audit Committee Update

Members noted the submitted report which set out the progress made by Grant Thornton in delivering their responsibilities as the Council's external auditors.

Members made particular reference to the Apprenticeship Levy and requested the Human Resources Manager to present a report to a future meeting of the Audit Committee in order for Members to gain assurance that the Council will be in a good position to make the best use of the £15,000 allowance provided to offset against payment of the levy.

90. Work Programme

At the Audit Committee on 18 January 2017, Members requested officers to realign the work programme in order to try and reduce the number of meetings for the year. A work programme was circulated and Members requested the Annual Calendar be updated in line with the circulated work plan.

Chairman/woman
