



MINUTES

AUDIT AND STANDARDS Committee

Date:	Thursday, 21 July 2022
Venue:	Town Hall, St Annes.
Committee Members Present:	Councillor Ellie Gaunt (Chairman) Councillor Ed Nash (Vice-Chairman) Councillors Paula Brearley, Delma Collins, Peter Collins, Will Harris, Gavin Harrison.
Other Councillors Present:	None
Officers Present:	Paul O'Donoghue, Tracy Manning, Ian Curtis, Sharon Wadsworth Louise Cobain (MIAA),
Other Attendees:	Nick Raynor (Deloitte) attended remotely

1. Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded that any disclosable pecuniary interests should be declared as required by the Localism Act 2011 and any personal or prejudicial interests should be declared as required by the Council's Code of Conduct for Members. No interests were declared on this occasion.

2. Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee meeting held 26 May 2022 as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

3. Substitute Members

The following substitution was reported under Council Procedure Rule 23(c):

Councillor Gavin Harrison for Councillor John Singleton.

Audit Decision Items

4. Internal Audit Annual Report and Head of Internal Audit Opinion 2021/22

Louise Cobain, Assurance Director at MIAA, presented the report which summarised the work undertaken by the Internal Audit Service delivered by Mersey Internal Audit Agency (MIAA) during 2021/22 and gave a Head of Internal Audit Opinion (HoIAO) as required by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control.

Overall, a moderate opinion had been achieved and Mrs. Cobain, thanked those involved in helping to deliver the opinion. She asked the committee to note that such an assurance rating was consistent with others delivered by MIAA for 2021/22 given that councils had been responding to the demands of the pandemic during the year.

The Chairman, Councillor Gaunt, thanked MIAA for their comprehensive report and welcomed the opportunity to build on the opinion going forward.

It was RESOLVED to note the contents of the Internal Audit Annual Report and Head of Internal Audit Opinion 2021/22 report.

5. Internal Audit Charter 2022-23

Louise Cobain introduced the Internal Audit Charter that was a requirement of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. Mrs. Cobain further advised that the charter was a formal document, which set out the standards Mersey Internal Audit Agency (MIAA) were required to comply with and demonstrated how this was going to be achieved.

It was RESOLVED to approve the Internal Audit Charter 2022-23.

6. Internal Audit Progress Report

Prior to the introduction of the report, the Chairman, informed the committee that a briefing would be held prior to the next meeting to allow for an update on Mobile Devices and Cyber Security reviews.

Councillor Gaunt then invited Louise Cobain to present her report that provided an overview of Internal Audit activity for the period 17 May to 12 July 2022.

The key areas included the completion of the Treasury Management review, which had achieved a High assurance rating and checks on the COMPF submissions and compliance. Mrs Cobain confirmed that checks on follow up performance indicators continued and a summary of the current status of follow-up activity was included within the report. The Chairman expressed her wishes that any follow-up actions concerning the Heritage Assets are progressed before any art work is removed for display at Lytham Hall.

It was RESOLVED to note the Internal Audit Progress report and to congratulate the Finance team on achieving a High assurance rating on the Treasury Management audit.

7. Annual Governance Statement

Tracy Manning, Deputy Chief Executive, presented the Annual Governance Statement that had been prepared under the CIPFA/SOLACE framework, the local code of corporate governance. The statement provided a commentary on the governance framework, reviewed the effectiveness of the governance system and identified improvements for the coming year.

It was RESOLVED to approve the Annual Governance Statement for signature by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council.

Audit Information Items

8. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000: Authorisations

The committee received information regarding the review of the use of covert surveillance and covert human intelligence sources by the council at least quarterly. It was noted that in the quarter up to July 2022, there had been no authorised operations.

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