



MINUTES

Audit and Standards Committee

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| Date: | Thursday, 13 January 2022 |
| Venue: | Town Hall, St Annes. |
| Committee Members Present: | Councillor Ellie Gaunt (Chairman) Councillors Frank Andrews, Delma Collins, Peter Collins, Brian Gill, Paul Hayhurst, Viv Willder. |
| Other Councillors Present: | None |
| Officers Present: | Paul O'Donoghue, Tracy Manning, Allan Oldfield, Ian Curtis, Mark Evans, Fiona Hill (MIAA) and Sharon Wadsworth |
| Other Attendees: | Paul Hewitson, Nick Rayner (Deloitte) via remote access |

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 on 11 November 2021 as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

3. Substitute Members

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

Councillor Frank Andrews substituted for Councillor John Singleton.

Councillor Viv Willder substituted for Councillor Will Harris.

Audit Decision Items

4. Internal Audit Progress Report

Fiona Hill, Engagement Manager MIAA, presented the Internal Audit Progress Report. Members were updated in respect of the assurances, key issues and progress against the Internal Audit Plans 2021/22.

Mrs Hill confirmed that the Finance audits that was scheduled for quarter 4 would most likely now take place in quarter 1 2022/23 due to the impact on the delayed work being undertaken by the external auditors.

Following any queries from members being answered by Fiona Hill it was RESOLVED to note the Internal Audit Progress Report.

Audit Information Items

Prior to the next item Deloitte were given the opportunity to address the committee on progress in relation to the external audit. Paul Hewitson informed members that substantial progress had been made towards the end of last year and they were now reviewing the case file.

5. External Audit

At the last meeting of the committee, the chairman asked officers to use the PSAA complaints procedure to express the council's dissatisfaction that the external auditors had not been able to complete the 2020-21 audit on time. The complaint resulted in a virtual meeting with the PSAA representatives and officers and a written response that detailed the challenges with external audits nationally.

Paul O'Donoghue, Chief Financial Officer, confirmed to members that to comply with statutory requirements a statement had been published on the Council's website detailing the reasons for the delay in publishing the audited accounts.

6. Update to the Strategic Risk Strategy

Tracy Manning, Director of Resources, provided a brief update on the Strategic Risk Strategy, following an audit review of the Council's Strategic Risk Management function which led to the recommendation of a number of minor additions to the Strategic Risk Strategy. The Strategy would have a substantive review in 2023.

7. Update on the Strategic Risk Register

The committee was provided with an update on the Strategic Risk Register. It was noted that one new risk had been added since the committee last received an update in September 2021.

The new risk was in regard to climate change. It was advised that the actions had been updated to reflect mitigations or controls required. It was acknowledged at the meeting that the ongoing work around flood management and the sea defenses would also be valid control measures against the climate control risk.

Mark Evans, Planning and Housing Manager, provided an overview on the challenges and progress made to date on the current high risk in relation to the new planning ICT system.

Members acknowledged that recruitment for certain positions was a challenge locally and nationally. Consideration to forming a working group to look at the issues was voiced and it was acknowledged that this would more properly sit within the remit of one of the council's programme committees.

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 January 2022, there were no authorised operations.

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