



MINUTES

Audit and Governance Committee

Date:	Thursday, 1 February 2024
Venue:	Town Hall, St Annes.
Committee Members Present:	Councillor Michael Withers (Chairman) Councillor Andrew Redfearn (Vice-Chairman) Councillors Peter Anthony, Liz Bickerstaffe, Ellie Gaunt, Joanne Gardner, John Kirkham, Ed Nash.
Other Councillors Present:	None
Officers Present:	Paul O'Donoghue, Fiona Hill (Mersey Internal Audit Agency (MIAA)), Tracy Manning, Stephen Benson and Katharine McDonnell. Paul Hewitson (Deloitte) and Debra Chamberlain (KPMG) attended remotely.
Other Attendees:	Councillor Julie Brickles and one member of the public

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 Governance Committee meeting held on 30 November 2023 as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

3. Substitute Members

There were no substitutes on this occasion.

4. Internal Audit Progress Report

Fiona Hill, Engagement Manager MIAA, reported that good progress was being made against the planned delivery of the Internal Audit Plan.

Fiona provided an overview of the three reports that had been issued since the last progress report, specifically Financial Controls – Cash, Beach Safety and Payroll. She highlighted the audit opinion for each and the recommendations offered against each one. She further advised that all the recommendations had been accepted by officers, and had either been actioned or were in progress.

Following a brief discussion it was RESOLVED to note the contents of the Internal Audit Progress Report.

5. Update on the Strategic Risk Register

Tracy Manning, Deputy Chief Executive, presented an update and progress report on the risks contained within the Strategic Risk Register (SRR). She also advised that a refreshed Strategic Risk Strategy was presented for confirmation to the committee. Stephen Benson the council's risk management advisor was also in attendance to assist with any points of clarification.

Tracy advised that the Strategic Risk Management Strategy had been reviewed because of governance changes resulting in a few revisions. However, the framework itself remained unchanged.

The Strategic Risk Register had been reviewed by the Strategic Risk Management Group. It was reported that the Covid 19 risk had been removed as the Group felt that the Council had now moved into a period of business as usual.

Two new risks had been added around leisure provision, one in regard to rural swim provision at Kirkham Pool which focused on unbudgeted financial implications because of the undefined scope of the council resolution. The second risk concerned St Annes Pool with the current operator's contract period coming to an end and the consequent tendering. The risk also reflected that the building was an ageing asset.

It was RESOLVED to:

1. Note the progress update of the risks contained within the Strategic Risk Register
2. Approve the updated Risk Management Strategy following updates to reflect the new committee structure.

6. Corporate Governance Action Plan

Tracy Manning, Deputy Chief Executive, provided an update on progress towards completion of actions within the Corporate Governance Action Plan.

She advised the actions were identified by the Corporate Governance Group and reported in the Annual Governance Statement. Tracy advised that the actions were in progress, with commentary provided in the report as to progress to date.

It was RESOLVED to note the progress on actions to date.

7. Review of Compliance with CIPFA Financial Management Code

Paul O'Donoghue, Chief Financial Officer, provided an update on the Council's compliance with CIPFA's Financial Management Code.

He advised that the report detailed the results of a self-assessment undertaken in accordance with the CIPFA financial management code. The report detailed the list of CIPFA's requirements and the council's assessment of its compliance with the code. The council was compliant with every aspect of the code with the exception of the production of a long-term financial plan. Paul advised that a suggested 10 year plan was unrealistic, as the council's current financial plan for 5 years contained some significant estimates and assumptions for the later years, and was consistent with the financial planning timeframe utilised by the vast majority of councils.

It was RESOLVED to note that;

1. That a review of the self-assessment exercise (designed to measure the level of compliance with the standards as set out in the CIPFA Financial Management Code) has been undertaken for the 2024/25 financial year; and
2. That the self-assessment and the actions to ensure continuing compliance with the code are set out in Appendix A of the report.

8. Treasury Management Report on Performance for 3rd Quarter 2023/24

Minutes – Audit and Governance Committee – 1 February 2024

Paul O'Donoghue, Chief Financial Officer, presented the Treasury Management report on performance for the 3rd Quarter of 2023/24 which had been prepared in accordance with the recommendations of CIPFA's (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) Code of Practice on Treasury Management 2021. It covered Treasury Management activities to the period ending 31st December 2023.

Paul advised that CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice had recently recommended moving to quarterly reporting and this would be the case going forward. The report detailed the council's debt management, financing of capital expenditure and details of the council's underlying need to borrow, together with details of the council's investments, the current rate of return on which was 5.1%.

There was an increase in the estimate of investment income from £947k to £1.2m for the year. This would be reflected in the next financial forecast report to Council.

In response to questions, Paul advised the council had a range of investments across a range of local authorities and that there had never been a default on inter authority lending. Advice was always sought from the Treasury Management advisors before making an investment.

It was resolved to note the Treasury Management report on performance for the third quarter of 2023/24.

Fylde Council copyright 2024

You may re-use this document/publication (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium. You must re-use it accurately and not in a misleading context.

The material must be acknowledged as Fylde Council copyright and you must give the title of the source document/publication.

Where we have identified any third party copyright material you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This document/publication was also available on our website at www.fylde.gov.uk
any enquiries regarding this document/publication should be sent to the Town Hall, St Annes Road West, St Annes FY8 1LW, or to listening@fylde.gov.uk.