

GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

23 JULY 2018

Present: Councillor J W Handley, Chair

Councillors: J S Briggs (substitute)
T P Brindley
D Elliott (substitute)
J C Goold
S Kerry (substitute)
W J Longdon (substitute)
J M Owen
M Radulovic
K E Rigby

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E H Atherton, R S Robinson and A W G A Stockwell.

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

8. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2018 were confirmed and signed, subject to the deletion of Councillor J Briggs as being in attendance as a substitute.

9. AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS AND ASSOCIATED MATTERS

Members were informed that the external auditors, KPMG, had examined the Council's draft Statement of Accounts 2017/18 and set out their findings in their External Audit Report 2017/18. The external auditors were present at the meeting and reported that the Council had produced a complete set of accounts by the 31 May 2018 deadline. Subject to all outstanding queries being resolved to their satisfaction, KPMG anticipated that an unqualified opinion would be issued before 31 July 2018.

In response to a question regarding the level of the Council's reserves, it was confirmed that the General Fund balance at 31 March 2018 was in excess of £6m.

The Chair thanked KPMG and officers for their work in producing and auditing the accounts in line with the deadlines.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The Statement of Accounts 2017/18 as circulated be approved.**
- 2. The letter of representation be approved.**
- 3. The response to those matters identified within the External Audit Report 2017/18 be approved.**

10. INTERNAL AUDIT REVIEW

In accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, developed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors, the Chief Audit and Control Officer must deliver an annual internal audit opinion and report which can be used by the Council to inform its Annual Governance Statement. The Committee considered the report which detailed the work undertaken by Internal Audit during 2017/18 and stated that it is the opinion of the Chief Audit and Control Officer that the current internal control environment is satisfactory such as to maintain the adequacy of the governance framework. In terms of the audits completed, it was found that services are operating with appropriate internal controls and, where actions have been agreed, progress is largely being made for their implementation.

A question was raised regarding the audits of stores and procurement the Interim Procurement and Contracts Officer was looking into Stores contracts which needed to be updated. The Chief Audit and Control Officer explained that an updated Procurement Strategy and contracts register were being prepared.

11. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee noted a report on the recent work completed by Internal Audit and progress against the agreed Internal Audit Plans for 2017/18 and 2018/19.

Regarding the review of the systems and procedures operating in respect of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015, officers stated that online training had been launched which would be undertaken by all officers with responsibilities for procuring and commissioning construction related work. The Intranet page had also been updated and the matter had been raised at a team briefing.

In response to a question regarding the checking of benefits claims, officers explained that this had stopped due to the member of staff who had been trained to carry out this work leaving the Council. However, the Head of Revenues and Benefits Shared Service was keen to reinstate the second checks as soon as possible.

The Interim Deputy Chief Executive explained in relation to CCTV management and control that an apprentice had been appointed to Parking Services who would undertake some of the section's more routine work. This would enable the Parking Services Manager to progress the outstanding actions from the audit.

12. COMPLAINTS REPORT 2017/18

The Committee noted a report detailing the complaints which had been made against the Council in 2017/18. Further information was requested on the complaints about unacceptable standards of service and whether social media had had an influence on the number of complaints received over the last 10 years. This would be circulated to members of the Committee.

13. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACES

The Committee considered a report on the arrangements for the review of polling districts and polling places to be carried out later in the year. Suggestions as to alternative venues which could be used as polling stations instead of the temporary units would be welcome.

The working group which had considered these issues previously would not be reconvened. Members would however be able to raise concerns about proposed changes and these would be reported back to the Committee in December for consideration before a recommendation is made to full Council.

14. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Work Programme for future meetings.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme be approved.