

GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

24 SEPTEMBER 2018

Present: Councillor J W Handley, Chair

Councillors: E H Atherton
S A Bagshaw
M Brown (substitute)
D Elliott (substitute)
J C Goold
J C Patrick
J M Owen
P J Owen (substitute)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T P Brindley, R I Jackson, M Radulovic and R S Robinson.

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Patrick declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of proposals for the future of the Town Hall, minute no * refers.

16. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2018 were confirmed and signed, subject to the addition of apologies from Councillor J C Patrick.

17. ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2017/18

The Committee considered the annual audit letter issued by the Council's external auditors, KPMG, for 2017/18.

The following comments were made:

- (i) In respect of the Procurement Officer post, an interim appointment was the most appropriate solution for the time being given the difficulty in making a permanent appointment. The salary scale of the post would be considered before the interim contract ended to encourage interest from high calibre applicants to the established post.
- (ii) A report would be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee on the improvements which had been made in respect of contract management and the plans for developing the service going forward.

18. 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 2018/19.

The following points were raised:

- (i) Serious organised crime is a risk and should be included in the risk register. A risk and impact assessment was not required.
- (ii) The risk of fraud had already been identified and included in the register.
- (iii) The on-going issue of the number of cases and the total value of outstanding debt not being reconciled was of concern. The Business Support Unit was therefore looking into this and a report would be submitted to the next meeting on progress which should demonstrate the progress which was being made.
- (iv) The Head of Public Protection has responsibility for Houses in Multiple Occupation as they are private sector dwellings.

19. REVIEW OF STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

The Committee considered amendments to the Strategic Risk Register and the action plans which had been recommended to mitigate risks.

The following comments were made:

- (i) A copy of the Strategic Risk Register was available in the members' room and on the intranet. This contained full details of key controls, risk indicators and action points for each risk.
- (ii) A report would be submitted to the Finance and Resources Committee in October on the latest position of the Council's finances. Further information would be given to this Committee at its meeting in December.
- (iii) The risks as listed in the report were not in order of significance. This would be changed in future reports.

RESOLVED that the amendments to the Strategic Risk Register and the action plans to mitigate risks as set out in the appendix to the report be approved.

20. VOTER ID PILOTS 2019

The Committee were informed of the voter ID pilots run in May 2018 and the opportunity to take part in further pilots in May 2019. A formal application had been submitted to Cabinet Office on the basis of voters being required to produce poll cards before they can vote. It was recommended however that the application should be for a photographic pilot to prevent personation.

RESOLVED that the application to take part in the 2019 voter ID pilots be approved on the basis of a photographic pilot.

21. LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN AND HOUSING
OMBUDSMAN SERVICE ANNUAL REVIEW LETTERS

The Local Government Ombudsman's and the Housing Ombudsman Service's annual review letters to the Council were presented. It was noted that further detail on the complaints considered by the Ombudsmen would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

Reference was made to an outstanding decision from the Ombudsman. It was explained that at this stage, only a draft decision had been issued and the Council had been asked to submit comments on it. Full details would however be included in the report to the December meeting.

22. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Work Programme for future meetings.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme be approved, subject to the inclusion of the items referred to above.