

Minutes of a Meeting of the Audit & Governance Committee held in the Council Chamber at Knowle, Sidmouth on 27 September 2018

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 2.30pm and ended at 3.05pm.

***15 Chairman's welcome**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

***16 Public Speaking**

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

***17 Minutes**

The minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee meeting held on 26 July 2018 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

***18 Matters arising**

None

***19 Declarations of Interest**

None

***20 Audit Committee Technical update report**

Sam Harding - Engagement Manager Grant Thornton, provided the Committee with a report on progress in delivering their responsibilities as the Council's new external auditors. The report also included:

-) a summary of emerging national issues and developments that could be of relevance; and
-) a number of challenge questions in respect of the emerging issues.

RESOLVED:

that the content of the report be noted.

***21 Audit Fee letter**

The Audit Fee Letter set out the proposed audit work and fee for the 2018/19 financial year. The Council's scale fee for 2018/19 had been set by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) at £39,132. Members discussed the ever-decreasing fee for the audit fee. Geri Daly – Engagement Lead, Grant Thornton reported that this did not affect the quality of the audit and that there had been internal efficiencies made to cover the reduction in fees achieved. Geri Daly, Engagement Lead, Grant Thornton also reported that firms did not receive the full fee due to a complicated and financially sensitive formula.

RESOLVED:

that the Audit Fee letter be noted.

***22 Expenditure on consultants and agency staff 2017/18**

As requested by the Audit and Governance Committee, the report detailed capital and revenue spend on consultants and specialist advice and agency staff for 2017/18. The

Chairman, Councillor Mark Williamson, circulated figures detailing consultancy and agency expenditure from 2013/14 to 2017/18.

Councillor Robert Longhurst, raised an issue regarding Strategic Plan costs totaling £50,000 and Simon Davey, Strategic Lead – Finance reported that he would investigate these costs and update members on the details.

It was noted that the use of consultants and agency staff would depend on what project the Council was undertaking at what time. SWAP had recently undertaken a report on this and also the governance aspect. Part of the Committee's audit function was to have this data so it could be monitored on a regular basis.

RESOLVED:

that the details of expenditure on consultants and agency staff in 2017/18 be noted.

***23 RIPA update**

At the meeting of 18 January 2018, Members agreed to receive an update on RIPA activity throughout the year. The RIPA Senior Responsible Officer advised that there had been no requests for RIPA authorisation since the last committee.

***24 Audit and Governance Forward Plan**

Members noted the contents of the Committee Forward Plan for 2017/18.

Items to be considered at the November 2018 committee included:

-) Annual audit letter
-) Grants/Certification Report
-) Internal Audit Activity – Quarter 2 2018/19
-) Partnership Register
-) RIPA update
-) Report on outcomes against the Corporate Counter Fraud and Compliance strategy

RESOLVED:

that the Forward Plan be noted.

Attendance list

Councillors:

Mark Williamson (Chairman)
John Dyson (Vice Chairman)
John Humphreys
Cherry Nicholas
Ben Ingham
Rob Longhurst
Simon Grundy
Steve Hall
Steve Gazzard

Apologies:

Dean Barrow
Bill Nash
Ian Thomas

Officers present:

Simon Davey, Strategic Lead – Finance
Chris Lane, Democratic Services Officer

Sam Harding, Engagement Manager Grant Thornton
Geri Daly, Engagement Lead Grant Thornton

Apologies:

Mark Williams, Chief Executive
Henry Gordon Lennox, Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing

Chairman Date.....