

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Audit and Governance Committee held at Online via the Zoom app. on 28 July 2022

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 2.30 pm and ended at 3.44 pm

1 Public speaking

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 16 March 2022 were recommended for approval.

3 Declarations on interest

None

4 Matters of urgency

None

5 Confidential/exempt item(s)

None

6 Internal Audit Plan 2021-22 Outturn - to include Seaton Jurassic Centre Lessons Learnt report

Adam Williams from SWAP provided an update on the outturn of the 2021/22 Internal Audit Plan and highlighted to members any significant findings identified through the audit work that impacted on governance, risk and control.

The Chair agreed to meet with the Leader and Strategic Lead Finance to discuss in more detail the Whistleblowing item in the Audit Plan, and if appropriate would request a further report to come back to the Committee.

Seaton Jurassic Centre Lessons Learnt report

This was a non-opinion 'Lessons Learnt' review offered by SWAP Internal Audit in its consultancy role. SWAP had been asked to review the governance and management of the initial build project for the Seaton Jurassic Centre and determine whether future lessons could be learnt from this.

Discussions around the Seaton Jurassic Centre report included the following;

- To look into past years document management and digital data retention
- the need to discuss the matter further between the Chairs of Audit & Governance and Scrutiny Committees to consider if a more detailed review was required.

Having received the report and noted the contents, members;

RECOMMENDED:

noted the outturn made in delivery of the 2021/22 internal audit plan and significant findings and to agreed to review the Whistleblowing Policy.

7 **Internal Audit Annual Audit Opinion 2021-22**

Adam Williams from SWAP updated members of the Internal Audit function which played a central role in corporate governance by providing assurance to the Annual Audit, Governance and Standards Committee, looking over financial controls and checking on the probity of the organisation. The 2021-22 Annual Audit Plan provided independent and objective assurance on EDDC Internal Control Environment. This work supported the Annual Governance Statement.

Having received the report and noted the contents, members;

RECOMMENDED:

noted the Internal Audit Annual Opinion on the effectiveness of governance, risk and control in the delivery of EDDC Objectives.

8 **Revenue and Capital Outturn Report 2021-2022**

The Finance Manager informed the Committee of the financial outturn position for 2021/22.

Discussions included the following;

- Why had there been an underspend on the maintenance of the council's housing stock?
- Any workload slippage from the contractor had a knock-on effect on residents
- Residents reporting maintenance requirements needed to be followed up quickly
- Any future contractual work would go through the procurement process allowing for possibly multiple contractors working for the council
- There was a housing stock condition survey going ahead with data collect from this being used to improve services.

Having received the report and noted the contents, members;

RECOMMENDED:

To note the Revenue and Capital Outturn position for 2021/22 and the recommendations to Cabinet on 13 July 2022.

9 **Risk Management Review**

Risk information for the 2022/23 financial year was supplied to allow the Committee to monitor the risk status of Strategic and Operational Risks. This followed the full review of risks by responsible officers during May/June 2022.

Having received the report and noted the contents, members;

RECOMMENDED:

To note the current status of risks following the full risk review undertaken in May/June 2022.

10 **Auditor's Annual Report 2020-21 - Grant Thornton**

Jackson Murray from Grant Thornton presented the Annual report for 2020-21. During discussions the matter of continuing virtual meeting was raised after 31 October as well as the subject of Cabinet members sitting on the Committee, which went against CIPFA's (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) best practise for good governance and effective audit committees.

Having received the report and noted the contents, members;

RECOMMENDED:

Members noted the Auditor's Annual Report 2020-21.

RECOMMENDED to Council;

To remove Cabinet members from sitting on the Audit and Governance Committee to ensure independence of the executive function.

11 **Contract Standing Orders update**

The Strategic Lead Finance explained that there was an updated version of the Council's Contract Standing Orders for the Committee to consider and if in agreement to recommend adoption by Council. The Government was introducing new procurement legislation, Transforming Public Procurement /the Procurement Bill, but it was not expected to be in place until mid-2023. Contract Standing Orders would be amended to incorporate this legislation once enacted, but in the meantime an interim update was required to reflect the UK having left the EU and the transition period having ended.

RECOMMENDED to Council that;

the updated version of Contract Standing Orders was adopted.

12 **RIPA update**

The RIPA Senior Responsible Officer advised that there had been no requests for RIPA authorisation since the last committee.

13 **Audit and Governance Forward Plan**

RECOMMENDED that;

Members note the contents of the Committee Forward Plan for 2022/23.

Items to be considered at the September 2022 committee included:

- Audit Committee Update
- External Audit Plan 2021/22
- Review of the Local Code of Corporate Governance
- RIPA update
- Strata Annual Internal Audit report
- Internal Audit Activity – Quarter 2 2021/22
- Partnership Register

Attendance List

Councillors present:

S Hawkins (Chair)
D Barrow
P Hayward
N Hookway (Vice-Chair)
J Kemp
C Brown
R Lawrence
P Millar

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

P Arnott
P Faithfull
D Ledger
J Rowland

Officers in attendance:

Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer
Graham Baker, Property and Asset Manager
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance
Jackson Murray, Grant Thornton
John Symes, Finance Manager
Adam Williams, SWAP
Steve Gammon, Housing Systems Manager

Councillor apologies:

S Gazzard
P Twiss

Chair

Date: