

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Audit and Governance Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House on 24 October 2019

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 2.35 pm and ended at 3.50 pm

12 Public speaking

There were no member of the public wishing to speak.

13 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee meeting held on 25 July 2019 were confirmed as a true record.

14 Apologies

15 Declarations on interest

SWAP Internal Audit Activity - Quarter 2 2019/20.

Councillor Paul Hayward, Personal, He has undertaken internal audit services for parish councils.

16 Matters of urgency - External Audit Findings report 2018/19 and Letter of Representation

External Audit Findings report 2018/19

Geri Daly from Grant Thornton summarised the key findings in relation to the 2018-19 external audit (Audit Standards ISA260 report). The report focused on the on-site work which was completed on site during June, August, September and October 2019. No adjustments to the financial statements had been identified that would have resulted in an adjustment to the Council's Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

The anticipated audit report opinion would be unqualified, subject to the satisfactory completion of all outstanding matters and an unqualified value for money conclusion.

There were discussions around additional audit fees being requested which was to be challenged by the council and a discussion on the audit contract which was a national issue.

RESOLVED:

that the report be received and noted.

Letter of Representation

Members were asked to note the letter to Grant Thornton in respect of the audit of the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2019 confirming the council's position, documents produced and the sound processes in place.

RESOLVED:

that the letter be noted and signed by the Strategic Lead Finance and the Chairman of Audit and Governance.

17 **Partnership Register**

The EDDC's Partnership Policy required all partnerships identified by the council to be reviewed annually. There were currently 12 active partnerships as defined by the policy which stated that EDDC uses the following as the definition of a partnership: "An agreement between two or more independent bodies to work collectively to achieve an objective."

Also a partnership must reflect the following criteria:

- critical to the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities
- strategic in nature
- require significant resource input from the Council
- have constitution and governance arrangements in place
- have multi-agency membership

For this year-end review for 2018/19 all lead officers involved with a partnership were asked to assess the overall partnership, reviewing budget issues, achievements, forward plans and the ongoing benefit of continuing engagement with the partnership.

RESOLVED:

1. that the status of partnerships until March 2019 be noted, and
2. that the adoption of the reviewed Partnership policy be agreed.

18 **SWAP Internal Audit Activity - Quarter 2 2019/20**

Alastair Woodland, Assistant Director, SWAP provided an update on the 2019/20 Internal Audit Plan as at end of September 2019. The Audit and Governance Committee agreed the 2019-20 Internal Audit Plan at its March 2019 meeting. Primarily the work included:

- Operational Audit Reviews
- Cross Cutting Governance Audits
- Annual Review of Key Financial System Controls
- IT Audits
- Grants
- Other Special or Unplanned Review

The Service Lead Environmental Health and Car Parks discussed a partial opinion on Corporate Health and Safety and the measures in place to improve this.

RESOLVED:

that the progress made in delivery of the 2019/20 internal audit plan and significant findings since the previous update in July 2019 be noted.

19 **Expenditure on consultants and agency staff 2018/19**

At the Committee's request, the report detailed capital and revenue spend on consultants and specialist advice and agency staff for 2018/19.

RESOLVED:

that the details of expenditure on consultants and agency staff in 2018/19 be noted.

20 **Statement of Accounts 2018/19 including Governance Statement**

The Strategic Lead, Finance presented Statement of Accounts for 2018/19. The accounts were presented to the July meeting of Audit and Governance along with a report explaining the delay in the ability for the Committee to approve the 2018/19 Statement of Accounts. The Committee should have adopted the Accounts before the 31 July deadline. Unfortunately the external audit had not been concluded or an opinion issued for members to consider. The audit was now complete, this did not alter the financial position already presented to the Committee.

Governance Statement

The Accounts & Audit (England) Regulations 2015 required the Council to prepare and publish an annual governance statement. This was a public document that reported on the extent to which the council complied with its own code of corporate governance. The Annual Governance Statement explained how the council makes decisions; managed its resources in line with the council's priorities; and achieved the required outcomes for service users and communities.

The Chairman thanked Grant Thornton, Simon Davey and his team for getting the audit opinion and Statement of Accounts finalised.

RESOLVED:

that the 2018/19 Statement of Accounts including the Governance Statement be approved.

21 **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.

22 **Audit and Governance Forward Plan**

Members noted the contents of the Committee Forward Plan for 2019/20.

Items to be considered at the November 2019 committee included:

- Audit Committee update
- Annual audit letter
- Annual Internal Audit Report - DAP
- Report on outcomes against the Corporate Counter Fraud and Compliance strategy
- RIPA update
- CIL & Section 106 update
- Internal Audit on Strata

Attendance List

Councillors present:

S Hawkins (Chairman)
G Pratt (Vice-Chairman)
D Barrow
S Gazzard
P Hayward
M Rixson
P Twiss

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

S Bond
A Moulding

Officers in attendance:

Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer
Geri Daly
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance
Andrew Ennis, Service Lead Environmental Health and Car Parks
Alison Ferrero, Principal Environmental Health Officer
Sam Harding
Georgina Teale
Alastair Woodland
John Symes, Finance Manager

Councillor apologies:

F Caygill
C Wright

Chairman

Date: