

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Audit and Governance Committee held at Axe and Tale Room, Blackdown House on 27 July 2023

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 2.30 pm and ended at 3.30 pm

1 Public speaking

There were no public speakers.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 23 March 2023 were confirmed as a true record.

3 Declarations on interest

None.

4 Matters of urgency

None.

5 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There are no items which officers recommend should be dealt with in this way.

6 Internal Audit Progress report - SWAP

Lisa Fryer, Assistant Director, SWAP provided an update on the 2022/23 Internal Audit Plan on the 2022/23.

RESOLVED:

That the progress made in delivery of the 2022/23 Internal Audit Plan and findings be noted.

7 Housing - Property & Asset Compliance Position Statement

The Compliance & Cyclical Servicing Manager presented the report which had been requested at the previous Committee. The report provided assurance to the position with compliance for the council's housing stock which was managed by the Property & Asset team.

RESOLVED:

That the current position with compliance for the council's housing stock be noted.

8 Internal Audit Annual Opinion Report 2022/23 - SWAP

Lisa Fryer, Assistant Director, SWAP explained to members how the Internal Audit function played a central role in corporate governance, by providing assurance to the

Committee, looking over financial controls and checking on the probity of the organisation.

The 2022-23 Annual Audit Plan provided independent and objective assurance on EDDC Internal Control Environment. This work supported the Annual Governance Statement.

RESOLVED:

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

9 **Revenue and Capital Outturn Report 2022-2023**

The Director of Finance presented the report which had been debated at Cabinet on 12 July 2023. He informed the Committee of the financial outturn position for 2022/23 and to note the recommendations to Council.

RESOLVED:

That the Revenue and Capital Outturn position for 2022/23 and the recommendations to Cabinet on 12 July 2023 be noted.

10 **South West Mutual Regional Bank**

The Director of Finance provided a committee requested update on the South West Regional Bank proposal in which the council; along with a number of other South West Local Authorities, provided investment funding in order to set up a regional bank.

RESOLVED:

That the position on the update of South West Regional Bank be noted.

11 **Risk Management Review**

Risk information for the 2023/24 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 2023. Most of the reviews were completed by the responsible officers with the Management Information Officer.

During discussions the Committee asked that items on the risk register be presented starting from the high-risk scores following on to lower scores. It was important to understand any risks and how these impacted the council and that actions taken to lower any risk scores were reported back to the Committee. The Management Information Officer said she would present future risks scores in a 'now and then' format in order for this information to be useful to Members. She said she would ask the Responsible Officers to provide further information on the reasons for the scores provided. She acknowledged that this information would be useful feedback to SMT with more detail and scrutiny of risks and would look into getting the Risk Register documents onto a system that Members could access.

RESOLVED:

That the current status of risks following the full risk review undertaken in May/June 2023 be noted.

12 **Request from Council - Review of record keeping**

Following on from an Extraordinary Council meeting on 11th July 2023 to consider a report commissioned by Council into the actions of East Devon District Council following allegations and then criminal charges against former Councillor John Humphreys. The draft minutes of that meeting referred to the Audit and Governance Committee to instigate a requirement for a review of record keeping by the Council.

The Director of Finance stated it was appropriate that the Audit & Governance Committee request SWAP to undertake an audit on its behalf into this topic.

RESOLVED:

1. That SWAP is requested to undertake an audit into the Council's recording keeping and to make any necessary recommendations for improvements, this to be scheduled for the 3rd quarter of the 2023/24 audit plan.
2. That taking into account the views of the Committee, the Chair and Vice Chair agree the final audit scope following discussions with SWAP, the Director of Finance and the Director of Governance & Licensing (Monitoring Officer).

13 **Audit and Governance Forward Plan**

Items to be considered at the 21 September 2023 committee included:

- Audit Committee Update
- Auditor's Annual Report 2021-22
- Internal Audit Activity – Quarter 2 2022/23
- Internal Audit Plan - October 2023 to March 2024
- Strata Annual Internal Audit report
- Statement of Accounts

Attendance List

Councillors present:

K Bloxham
C Burhop (Vice-Chair)
C Fitzgerald
M Goodman
S Hawkins (Chair)
Y Levine
C Nicholas
T Olive

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

I Barlow

Officers in attendance:

Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer
Jo Avery, Management Information Officer
Michelle Davidson, Compliance and Cyclical Servicing Manager
Graham Baker, Property and Asset Manager
Beth AC Bowers, Grant Thornton
Simon Davey, Director of Finance
Lisa Fryer, SWAP

Amy Gilbert-Jeans, Assistant Director Housing

Councillor apologies:

S Gazzard
D Haggerty

Chair

Date: