

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Audit and Governance Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House on 30 January 2020

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 2.30 pm and ended at 3.19 pm

23 Public speaking

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

24 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 24 October 2019 were confirmed as a true record.

25 Declarations on interest

Minute 31. Annual Internal Audit report - STRATA.
Councillor Phil Twiss, Personal, Chairman of Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee.

Minute 32. Internal Audit Activity - Quarter 3 2019/20 SWAP.
Councillor Paul Hayward, Personal, Undertakes internal audit services for Town and Parish councils.

26 Annual Audit letter - Grant Thornton

Steve Johnson, Audit Manager Grant Thornton presented the Annual Audit letter which summarised the key findings from their work for the year ending March 2019.

RESOLVED:

that the content of the Annual Audit Plan be noted.

27 Audit update - Grant Thornton

Steve Johnson, Audit Manager presented the report on progress in delivering our responsibilities as the external auditors.

Financial Statements Audit

Grant Thornton commenced the planning for the 2019/20 audit and would issue a detailed audit plan, setting out our proposed approach to the audit of the council's 2019/20 financial statements to the March Audit Committee.

Value for Money

The scope of this work was set out in the guidance issued by the National Audit Office. The Code requires auditors to satisfy themselves that; "the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources".

Audit Fees

Grant Thornton stated that work in the Local Government sector in 2018/19 had highlighted areas where financial reporting, in particular, property, plant and equipment and pensions, needed to improve. There was also an increase in the complexity of Local Government financial transactions and financial reporting.

Grant Thornton were currently reviewing the impact of these changes on both the cost and timing of audits. They would discuss this with the S151 Officer including any proposed variations to the Scale Fee set by PSAA Limited, before communicating fully with the Audit and Governance Committee.

RESOLVED:

that the Audit update report be noted.

28 **Annual Internal Audit report - STRATA**

The statement of assurance was provided by the Head of Audit Partnership, the provider of Internal Audit Services to Strata Service Solutions for audits in relation to the 2018-19 internal audit plan. The provision of ICT services was the responsibility of Strata Services Solutions under the arrangements specified within the original Partnership Agreement between Exeter City Council, East Devon District Council and Teignbridge District Council.

The assurance statement consisted of the following elements:

- Overall Assurance Statement;
- Governance;
- ICT Service operations.

Overall, based on work performed during the year and experience from the current year progress, the Head of Internal Audit's Opinion was of "Substantial Assurance" on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control framework in the Strata Service Solutions.

Craig Moodie from DAP was thanked for his informative and interesting report and it was hoped that similar audit reports would be made to future meetings of the Committee.

29 **Internal Audit Activity - Quarter 3 2019/20 SWAP**

Alastair Woodland, Assistant Director SWAP reminded members that the Audit and Governance Committee agreed the 2019-20 Internal Audit Plan at its March 2019 meeting. The report was to provide an update on the 2019/20 Internal Audit Plan as at end of December 2019. There were no adverse audit opinions.

RESOLVED:

that the Internal Audit Progress Report be noted.

30 **Risk Management review - half year review**

Risk information for the 2019/20 financial year was supplied to allow the Audit and Governance Committee to monitor the risk status of Strategic and Operational Risks. This followed the full review of risks by responsible officers during November/ December 2019.

RESOLVED:

that the current status of risks following the full risk review undertaken in November/December 2019 be noted.

31 **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.

32 **Audit and Governance Forward Plan**

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

Items to be considered at the March committee included:

- Annual Audit Plan 2020/21 and Review of Internal Audit Charter
- Internal Audit Plan Progress
- External Audit Plan
- Audit Committee update
- Accounting Policies Approval
- RIPA update
- Relocation project close-out report

Attendance List

Councillors present:

S Hawkins (Chairman)
D Barrow
P Hayward
M Rixson
P Twiss
C Wright

Officers in attendance:

Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance
Steve Johnson, Grant Thornton
Craig Moodie, DAP
John Symes, Finance Manager
Georgina Teale, SWAP
Alastair Woodland, SWAP

Councillor apologies:

G Pratt
F Caygill
S Chamberlain
S Gazzard

Chairman

Date: