

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Audit and Governance Committee held at Online via the Zoom App on 24 September 2020

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 2.30 pm and ended at 4.29 pm

33 Public speaking

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

34 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 30 January 2020 were confirmed as a true record.

35 Declarations on interest

Statement of Accounts 2019/20.

Councillor Paul Hayward, Personal, Minute 47 is the clerk to various parish councils.

36 Matters of urgency

None

37 Confidential/exempt item(s)

None

38 Internal Audit Outturn Report 2019-20

The Audit and Governance Committee agreed the 2019-20 Internal Audit Plan at its March 2019 meeting. The report provided an update on the outturn position of the 2019/20 Internal Audit Plan.

RESOLVED:

that the content of the Internal Audit Progress Report be noted.

39 Internal Audit Annual Audit Opinion Report 2019-20

The report provided Internal Audits overall opinion on the systems of governance, risk and control at East Devon District Council. The Audit and Governance Committee agreed the 2019/20 Internal Audit Plan at its March 2019 meeting.

RESOLVED:

that the content of the Internal Audit Annual Report and Opinion be noted.

40 Internal Audit Plan & Charter 2020-21

Alastair Woodland, Assistant Director SWAP introduced the Internal Audit Plan for 2020/21 which incorporated the 'Internal Audit Charter' that set out the operational relationship between EDDC and the South West Audit Partnership (SWAP).

The Assistant Director for SWAP, together with the Council's S151 Officer and in consultation with the Senior Management Team and members of the Committee, had produced an Audit Plan for 2020/21 that required the approval of the Audit and Governance Committee. This was a flexible plan that could be amended during the year to deal with shifts in priorities or new and emerging risks. Any changes to the plan would be reported to the Committee.

RESOLVED:

that the Internal Audit Plan for 2020-21 and the Internal Audit Charter be approved.

41 **Internal Audit Progress Report 2020-21**

The report provided an update on the 2020/21 Internal Audit Plan as at September 2020. The Committee requested that SWAP consider the layout of their reports to help with member understanding and explore the possibility of links to previous reports when referenced in current updates.

RESOLVED:

that the progress made in delivery of the 2020/21 internal audit plan and significant findings be noted.

42 **Independent External Assessment May 2020**

Members were provided with the outcomes from the recent independent external assessment for SWAP Internal Audit Services.

RESOLVED:

that the Independent External Assessment be noted.

43 **External Audit Progress Report and Sector Update - GT**

Steve Johnson, Engagement Manager Grant Thornton, provided a report on progress in delivering their responsibilities as EDDC's external auditors. He wished it minuted that the Audit Plan would be resent out to the Committee members by email.

RESOLVED:

that the Progress report and Sector update be noted.

44 **Informing the audit risk assessment 2019-20 responses - GT**

Jackson Murray, Engagement Lead Grant Thornton stated the purpose of the report was to contribute towards the effective two-way communication between the Council's external auditors, Management and the Audit Committee, as 'those charged with governance'. The report covered some important areas of the auditor risk assessment

where they were required to make inquiries of the Audit Committee under auditing standards.

As part of the risk assessment procedures Grant Thornton required to obtain an understanding of management processes and the Council's oversight of the following areas:

- General Enquiries of Management
- Fraud
- Laws and Regulations
- Going Concern
- Related Parties
- Accounting Estimates

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

45 **Revenue and Capital Outturn Report 2019-2020**

The Finance Manager stated that the following report would be presented to Cabinet on 30 September 2020. The report was presented to Audit & Governance Committee to inform the Committee of the financial Outturn position for 2019/20 and to note the recommendations to Cabinet.

The draft accounts had been published along with the public inspection notice on the Council's website and were currently subject to external audit by the Council's appointed auditors Grant Thornton UK LLP and were presented elsewhere on the agenda.

RESOLVED:

that the Revenue and Capital Outturn position for 2019/20 and the recommendations to Cabinet on 30 September 2020 be noted.

46 **Review of Accounting Policies 2019/20**

The Finance Manager presented the report which stated the good practice for the Committee to approve the Accounting Policies to be adopted in advance of the preparation of the Accounts. It was explained that this report would have been presented to the March committee but unfortunately as a result of Covid-19 this meeting was cancelled.

RESOLVED:

that the Accounting Policies for the 2019/20 Statement of Accounts be approved.

47 **Statement of Accounts 2019/20**

The draft statement of accounts had been published along with the public inspection notice on the Council's website and were currently subject to external audit by the Council's appointed auditors Grant Thornton UK LLP in line with the amended regulation timetable as detailed in the report. The Accounts would be presented back to Committee for approval once this work was completed, this was envisaged to be at the Committee's next meeting in November.

In answer to a question of the arrangements for the public to visibly view the accounts during the present Covid-19 pandemic, the Strategic Lead Finance informed the Committee that all the documents were electronically scanned and were mostly shown or sent out in this format. If this was not a suitable form of viewing the accounts than printed hard copies would be posted out.

RESOLVED:

that the draft 2019/20 Statement of Accounts be received and the position on publishing the Accounts and audit opinion be noted.

48 **Risk Review**

Risk information for the 2020/21 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 2020.

RESOLVED:

that the current status of risks following the full risk review undertaken in May/June 2020 be noted.

49 **RIPA update**

At the meeting of 18 January 2018, Members agreed to receive an update on RIPA activity throughout the year (Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act). The RIPA Senior Responsible Officer advised that there had been no requests for RIPA authorisation since the last committee. Members asked for a simple written explanation of RIPA to be provided to the Committee at its next meeting this could then be used on the Council's website to inform the public of the powers available and any recent use made of them; this being in line with some other authorities practice.

50 **Audit and Governance Forward Plan**

Members noted the contents of the Committee Forward Plan for 2020/21.

Items to be considered at the November committee included:

- Statement of Accounts 2019/20 including Governance Statement
- Letter of Representation
- Audit Findings report
- RIPA update

Attendance List

Councillors present:

S Hawkins (Chairman)
P Millar (Vice-Chairman)
D Barrow
J Bailey
F Caygill
S Gazzard
P Hayward

F King
G Pook

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

P Arnott
S Jackson
J Loudoun

Officers in attendance:

Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance
Henry Gordon Lennox, Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing
Steve Johnson
John Symes, Finance Manager
Georgina Teale
Alastair Woodland
Jackson Murray, Grant Thornton

Councillor apologies:

P Twiss

Chairman

Date: