
Minutes of the meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee, held in Committee Room 1 County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH on Monday, 26 March 2018

Present:

Members:

Councillor T Cutmore	Chairman
Councillor P Channer	
Councillor A Davies	
Councillor A Erskine	
Councillor M Hedley	
Councillor M Maddocks	(substitute for Councillor M Platt)
Councillor Dr R Moore	
Councillor A Sheldon	(substitute for Councillor R Mitchell)
Councillor K Smith	
Councillor A Turrell	

Also Present:

Dan Cooke	Ernst and Young (external auditors)
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ECC Officers:

Paul Turner	Director, Legal and Assurance (Monitoring Officer)
Paula Clowes	Head of Assurance
Christine Golding	Chief Accountant
Will Goodchild	Graduate Trainee
Andy Gribben	Senior Democratic Services Officer

1. Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest.

The report of Membership, Apologies and Declarations was received and it was noted that:

1. The membership of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee had changed since the last meeting with the appointment of Councillors Channer, Erskine and Smith.
2. Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Mitchell and Platt with Councillors Maddocks and Sheldon attending as substitutes.
3. No declarations of interest were made. The Chairman reminded members that any interests must be declared during the meeting if the need to do so arose.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on the 11 December 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising from the minutes

The Chairman advised members of the committee that regarding:

- **Minute 2** – an email update to members was sent in January 2018
- **Minute 6** – an email update to members was sent in January 2018.

3. Internal Audit Plan 2018/2019 (AGS/01/18)

The Committee **approved** the Internal Audit Plan 2018/2019 as shown at appendix 1 to the report

4. Internal Audit Progress Report (AGS/02/18)

In response to a question as to why there had been a lower than expected uptake of persons wishing to use Social Care Pre-Payment Cards and how many had been anticipated it was agreed that officers would seek clarification and send an email to all members of the committee.

The Head of Assurance agreed to contact Councillor Smith after the meeting concerning his request that there be an audit of Highways fees as Basildon had been quoted £2,500 for the installation of a metal handrail which he felt was excessive.

The Chairman noted that there were only four items identified in the report with 'limited assurance' and none that were 'critical' but requested that there be ongoing and timely reports to the committee in order to inform members of action taken to eliminate those concerns or progress being made to mitigate those that remained.

The Committee **noted** the report.

5. External Audit Plans 2017/2018 (AGS/03/18)

It was requested by members of the committee that there be arranged training to further explore and understand the concept of 'materiality' as it was acknowledged that it was a complex matter.

The Committee **noted** the report and appendices.

6. Arrangements for the closure of the 2017/18 Accounts (AGS/04/18)

The Committee **noted** the arrangements in place for closure and approval of the Council's Accounts for 2017/18.

7. External Auditor Appointment 2018/2019 (AGS/05/18)

The Committee **noted** that BDO LLP had been appointed by PSAA Limited as ECC's external auditor with effect from financial year 2018/19.

8. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 - review of activity on use of Directed Surveillance and Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS) (AGS/06/18)

In response to a question it was explained that the Council had not and did not routinely use the powers it had under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act but that cooperation with the Police and with District Councils did take place on operational matters, particularly in the areas of law enforcement spanning Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Licensing. In those circumstances there would be an appropriate sharing of intelligence.

The Committee **noted** the report.

9. Updating of Risk Management Strategy 2017 – 2021 (AGS/07/18)

The Committee **approved** the revised Risk Management Strategy 2017-2021 in the form appended to the report.

10. Response to Consultation on Standards in Local Government (AGS/08/18)

Members requested that there be:

- a Members' Development Session on the use of social media, live streaming and the use of digital technology both generally and in meetings and
- a report to this or another appropriate committee on how the Council ought to respond to intimidation or bullying (on social media or other means) by the public, between councillors, or of officers.

The Committee **agreed** that the Director, Legal and Assurance was authorised to send a response to the Committee on Standards in Public Life after consulting members of the Committee on the revised draft incorporating examples of where people had experienced poor behaviour or intimidation from members of the public, perhaps on social media.

11. Date of the next meeting

The Committee noted that the next meeting was scheduled for Monday 4 June 2018 at 10:00am in Committee Room 1, County Hall.

12 Exclusion of the Public

The Committee **resolved** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the remaining items of business on the grounds that consideration would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in paragraphs 3 and 7 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

13 Internal Audit Progress Report – confidential appendix 3

The Committee **noted** confidential appendix 3 to AGS/02/18 (item 4).

14 Internal Audit Progress Report – confidential appendix 4

The Committee **noted** confidential appendix 4 to AGS/02/18 (item 4).

15 Internal Audit Progress Report – confidential appendix 5

The Committee **noted** confidential appendix 5 to AGS/02/18 (item 4).

16 Counter Fraud Activity Report (AGS/09/18)

The Committee **noted** the report.

Chairman