
Minutes of the meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee, held in Committee Room 1 County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH on Monday, 10 December 2018

Present:

Members:

Councillor P Channer	
Councillor T Cutmore	Chairman
Councillor A Davies	
Councillor A Erskine	
Councillor A Hedley	Vice-Chairman
Councillor R Mitchell	
Councillor Dr R Moore	
Councillor A Turrell	

Also Present:

David Eagles	BDO LLP (external auditors)
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ECC Officers:

Paula Clowes	Head of Assurance
Christine Golding	Chief Accountant
Andy Gribben	Senior Democratic Services Officer (clerk to the meeting)
Paul Turner	Director, Legal and Assurance (Monitoring Officer)

1. Welcome and Introduction

The Chairman welcomed members of the committee, officers in attendance, the representative from the external auditors and members of the public to the meeting. He also noted that Councillors Maddocks and Sheldon were observing.

He reminded members that the meeting was being broadcast live over the internet and that the full discussion would be publicly available on the County Council's website after the meeting.

2. 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 was as shown in the report.
2. Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Smith.
3. There were no declarations of interest. The Chairman reminded members that any interests must be declared during the meeting if the need to do so arose.

3 Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

There were no matters arising.

4 Welcome and Introduction

The Chairman introduced to the members of the committee, Mr David Eagles, Partner, Public Sector Assurance of BDO LLP, the Council's external auditors.

5 Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Progress Report

Members of the committee received from Paula Clowes – Head of Assurance, a report (AGS/24/18) that provides the current position regarding Internal Audit and Counter Fraud activity in relation to the 2018/19 Internal Audit Plan (approved by the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee in March 2018).

The report reflected the situation as at 30 November 2018 and the members noted the key issues that were:

- That there were no 'No Assurance' reports
- That there were two reports of 'Limited Assurance' regarding:

Personal Budgets: This had remained of 'Limited Assurance' but it was noted that there had been an improvement since the last audit in 2016. There were two major recommendations relating to policies and procedures and Monitoring and Review.

De la Salle School: There were three major recommendations relating to governance, financial management and income. Members noted that the school had an Interim Executive Board in place due to previous governance issues at the school.

- A full half year review of the Audit Plan had been undertaken leading to a number of changes or deferred audits.
- The number of outstanding Audit Recommendations had reduced in the last quarter and some new target dates were being agreed.
- The members of the committee were advised that the Council had reached a good level of performance against CIPFA standards for Counter Fraud Self-Assessment.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted.

The Committee also agreed that:

2. Officers would write on behalf of the Chairman of the Committee to those 'Owners' from whom an insufficient response has been received regarding Outstanding Audit Recommendations, advising them that unless a satisfactory response were received they would be invited to appear at a meeting of the committee in order to explain progress and why no updates had been provided.
3. A revised schedule of Outstanding Audit Recommendations, showing responses received should be circulated by email to all members of the committee by mid-January.
4. It was further agreed that, notwithstanding any response, a representative of EPUT should attend the March 2019 committee in order to answer questions.

6 Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000

Members of the committee received from Paul Turner, Director, Legal and Assurance, a report (AGS/25/18) updating the policy to reflect recent changes to the law.

The report also updated the Committee on the recent use (or non-use) of the powers.

Resolved:

1. That the updated policy at Appendix 1 to the report be approved.
2. That the Director, Legal and Assurance continue to have delegated authority to make minor amendments to amend the policy.
3. That the Committee note that no applications for directed surveillance or the use of a CHIS have been made by anyone at ECC since the last report to the committee in March 2018.

7 Date of Next Meeting

Members noted that the next meeting of the committee was scheduled to be on Monday 25 March 2019 at 10.00am in Committee Room 1

The meeting closed at 10.40am.

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Chairman
25 March 2019