

GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2020 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillor Simon Day (Chairman); Councillors Boyd, Braidwood, Campbell, Crittenden, Currie, Garner, Kup, Pat Moore and Shrubbs

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dexter and Towing.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Campbell proposed, Councillor Kup seconded and Members agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2019.

4. EXTERNAL AUDIT 2019/20 AUDIT PLAN

Ms Ironmonger, Grant Thornton UK LLP (GT), introduced the item which provided an overview of the scope and timing of the audit for the year ending 31 March 2020.

During consideration of the item it was noted that:

- The audit fee had increased because the audit regulators had raised the required audit standard for local government audits, therefore GT would need to undertake more work in order to complete the 2019-20 audit.

Members noted the report.

5. QUARTERLY INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE REPORT

Mr Webb, Deputy Head of East Kent Audit Partnership, introduced the report noting that six internal audit assignments and two follow up reviews had been completed since the last committee meeting.

During consideration of the item, it was noted that:

- The number of recommendations for the East Kent Housing – Compliance Indicators Data Quality audit, detailed in the table at paragraph 2.0 of the annex, should show one critical and two high recommendations.
- A follow up review usually took place between three and six months after completion of an audit.
- Overall a total of 30% of the satisfaction questionnaires had been completed across the East Kent Council's, however TDC managers had completed questionnaires for 63% of the Council's audits.
- The street cleaning audits had received a limited assurance. The Head of Maritime and Technical Services had accepted the action plan and a timeline for implementation of improvements. The full audit report would be made available to Members of the committee for further information.

- Staff transferring from East Kent Housing would be offered welfare reform training where needed. Democratic Services would look into the possibility of providing similar training to Members, particularly regarding Universal Credit.

Members agreed the recommendations in the report, namely:

- That the report be received by Members.
- That any changes to the agreed 2019-20 internal audit plan, resulting from changes in perceived risk, detailed at point 5.0 of Annex 1 of the attached report be approved.

6. INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER AND DRAFT 2020-21 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN

Ms Parker, Head of the East Kent Audit Partnership introduced the Internal Audit Charter and Draft 2020-21 Internal Audit Plan.

During consideration of the item, it was noted that:

- The Internal Audit Charter was reviewed every three years, if changes were required to the Charter during this time then it would be brought back to the committee for consideration.
- The strategic plan up to 2023-24 was also shown for indicative purposes.
- The Section 151 Officer would consider the suggestion to bring forward an audit of complaint monitoring.

Councillor Campbell proposed, Councillor Kup seconded and Members agreed to:

- adopt the Internal Audit Charter for delivery of the internal audit service for the next three years.
- approve the Council's Internal Audit Plan for 2020/21.

7. INTERNAL AUDIT STANDARDS SELF ASSESSMENT

Ms Parker introduced the report that summarised the results of the EKAP self-assessment against the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS).

Members noted the report.

8. CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT QUARTERLY UPDATE

Mr Blundell, Head of Financial Services, introduced the report that provided a quarterly update of progress since the last meeting.

During consideration of the item it was noted that:

- The risk scores had not changed since the last Committee meeting, however there had been a number of changes to the factors that led to these scores.
- The risk in relation to East Kent Housing now included risks associated with the transition of the management of the service the TDC.
- The risks around Brexit were mainly in relation to logistics and transportation.
- The report had been produced before Covid-19 had become so widespread. Although the risk of Covid-19 was not detailed in the report, the Council had taken a number of steps to mitigate the risks posed by the virus to the Council.

Members noted the report.

9. 2019-20 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

This item was withdrawn from the agenda and would be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

10. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT ACTION PLAN 2018/19 PROGRESS REPORT

Mr Howes, Director of Corporate Governance, introduced the item that provided a progress report on the Annual Governance Statement 2018/19 action plan.

During consideration of the item it was noted that:

- There had been eight actions, four of these actions had been completed and the remaining four would remain on the plan for completion in the following year.

Members noted the report.

11. HOMES ENGLAND AUDIT

Mr Willis, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer introduced the report which provided Members with a summary of the audit results.

During consideration of the item, it was noted that:

- The Council had received a green light rating with no adverse findings.

Members noted the report.

12. CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL

Members noted the Chairman's report.

Meeting concluded: 8.00pm