

**MINUTES of the meeting of Audit and Governance Committee held at Committee Room 1, Shire Hall, St. Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX on Monday 23 January 2017 at 10.00 am**

**Present:** Councillor PD Newman OBE (Chairman)  
Councillor FM Norman (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: ACR Chappell, EPJ Harvey, JF Johnson, RL Mayo, RJ Phillips, AJW Powers and J Stone

**Officers:** Annie Brookes, Steve Hodges, Anthony Sawyer, Mark Taylor and Claire Ward

**178. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor LC Tawn.

**179. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)**

In accordance with paragraph 4.1.23 of the council's constitution, Cllr AJW Powers attended the meeting as a substitute member for Cllr TC Tawn.

**180. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**181. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the chairman.**

**182. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT PROGRESS**

The head of corporate governance presented the report on the progress of the annual governance statement.

It was explained that the annual governance statement was a summary of the effectiveness of the governance arrangements and had been approved by committee at its meeting on 4 July 2016. The action plan which was attached as appendix A of the report was intended to address areas for improvement and progress on the identified actions had been tracked.

In response to Members' questions, it was agreed that a briefing note on commissioning would be circulated to Members. The briefing note would cover:

- The findings of the commissioning review and any agreed actions.
- Confirmation that the review covered joint commissioning arrangements and assurance that such arrangements are robust.
- Details of contract management processes, other than the contract procedure rules, together with evidence that they are being applied to best effect.

- Details of the revised timetable for the commercial and commissioning strategy review.

It was confirmed that the partnership assurance framework included significant contracting arrangements. The first self evaluation frameworks (SEF) will include significant contracts, e.g. Balfour Beatty.

In response to a Member's question, it was confirmed that there would be a SEF for the LEP under the partnership assurance framework. The self evaluation would be undertaken by council officers but the views of the partners would inform the SEF. It was agreed that the next annual governance statement would mention the LEP explicitly.

It was noted that new statutory guidance had been issued for the production of the next annual governance statement.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the report be noted.**

**183. WORKING GROUP UPDATE: STANDARDS WORKING GROUP**

The solicitor to the council presented the standards working group update.

It was noted that the first meeting of the working group would take place on 30 January 2017.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the scope of the work for the standards working group, timescales and membership be approved**

**184. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER**

The directorate services team leader presented the corporate risk register report.

The committee's role was to seek assurance that the risk framework was working well. It was noted that as part of the performance, risk, opportunity and management (PROM) framework, the risk register is reviewed monthly by management board and quarterly by Cabinet. The corporate risk register is updated on the council's website on a quarterly basis. It was confirmed that the corporate risk register had formed part of the quarter 2 corporate performance and budget report that had been approved by Cabinet on 3 November 2016. It was clarified that if Members or members of the public identify a risk that they feel should be on the corporate risk register, but isn't, they can email asking for the risk to be considered.

Members asked that consideration be given to adding the following to the corporate risk register:

- Water quality issues;
- Fracking; and
- Flood alleviation.

The directorate services team leader would liaise with colleagues on those issues.

Councillor Johnson left the meeting at 11.00 am.

Members' queried the risk rating calculations and sought assurance that the ratings after controls were appropriate for:

- Economic resilience;
- Short breaks; and
- System resilience.

Councillor Mayo left the meeting at 11.45 am.

Members' queried the numerical ratings used and the methodology behind this. They also requested that there were no acronyms. It was also requested that the risks be grouped into different categories.

Following a query from a Member, consideration to be given to how the committee receives updates on the controls which are in place.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the report be noted.**

**185. ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

The information access and records manager presented the access to information report.

It was noted that freedom of information (FOI) and environmental information regulations (EIR) requests tend to reflect events which are happening at a local or national level.

Cllr Johnson re-joined the meeting at 11:57.

In response to a Member's question, it was confirmed that at the moment information requested under FOI requests is not automatically published on the website. This was being investigated as part of redesign of the new council website. It was noted that with some requests information released would need to be subject to checks that no personal data of the requester was disclosed.

With regard to complaints, it was confirmed that directors are given information which is broken down by type of complaint and the lessons learnt. It was suggested that the relevant scrutiny committee may wish to receive such general details of complaints on a quarterly basis.

It was noted that for future reports, it would be helpful to see the trend of complaints, e.g. time of year, etc.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the report be noted.**

**186. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The committee's updated work programme was presented.

**RESOLVED**

**That the work programme be agreed.**