

Minutes of the meeting of Audit and governance committee held at Online meeting on Tuesday 4 May 2021 at 10.15 am

Present: Councillor Nigel Shaw (chairperson)
Councillor Christy Bolderson (vice-chairperson)
Councillors: Dave Boulter, Peter Jinman, Bob Matthews, Diana Toynbee and Yolande Watson

Officers: Head of corporate finance, head of corporate performance, interim head of legal services, assistant director all ages commissioning, assistant director adult social care, assistant director talk community and head of educational development

62. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

63. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

There were no named substitutes.

64. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

65. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the chairman.

66. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

67. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

There were no questions from councillors.

68. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

The head of corporate performance introduced the report, details of which are outlined in the agenda pack for the meeting.

It was noted that the interim director of children's services will be reviewing the children and families risk registers which will be taking place during May 2021 after the forensic deep dive.

A new risk performance framework had been implemented last year and was due to be reviewed over the next couple of months. There had been changes over

the 3 months and the risk registers look different to those presented last year. The position was improving but further work will be required.

The head of corporate performance agreed to provide a written statement on what the wording in paragraph 6 of the report (*"The improving position with COVID-19 locally since the last report to committee, as well as the updated Local Outbreak Management Plan and financial commitments for some dedicated staff for the coming year"*) was in relation to.

Where there were changes, updates or amendments on the risk registers, it was agreed that these were highlighted to aid the committee to see them.

It was explained that the transformation work should be identified in the mitigating actions for the relevant risks.

There would be further work on the horizontal and vertical aggregation of the risks to ensure that they are captured appropriately.

It was commented that the corporate services risk CS22 looked like a copy of CS21. It was noted that the public health department and Fastershire sat in the corporate centre and that was the reason why their risks were set out in that risk register.

There were a number of risks in connection with budgets across the risk registers and a longstanding budget risk in children's services. There would be work undertaken on these risks to see if the risks should be aggregated and then sat on just the corporate risk register rather than individual risk registers. The deputy S151 officer also explained that performance and budget were reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis but that consideration would be given to the role of the audit and governance committee.

The committee indicated that they would welcome further training on the risk framework, either as a joint session with the Leadership Team or just for the committee.

It was noted that having a risk register means that risks have been identified which should assist the management team in dealing with them. It was felt that ensuring there was wider communication of the risk register(s) would aid awareness.

The risk registers should be aligned to service business planning and then risks are escalated / de-escalated as appropriate.

The committee agreed that there would be need to be further consideration of identifying 1 or more risks in the directorate risk registers and undertake a deep dive to provide assurance that the risk management framework was being applied appropriately.

RESOLVED that

Consideration be given to the committee identifying one or more risks to undertake a deep dive on a directorate risk register.

69. UPDATE ON INTERNAL AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 70.** The chairperson used his discretion and moved this item to the first substantive item for discussion.

The head of corporate performance introduced the report, details of which are outlined in the agenda pack for the meeting.

In respect of the outstanding actions which are as set out in appendix A to the report, the head of educational development, assistant director all ages commissioning, assistant director adult social care and assistant director talkcommunity were present to answer committee member questions.

Property maintenance for schools

An update was provided and it was confirmed that the action would be completed by the revised completion date of September 2021.

It was noted that the head of educational development had only been in post for approx. 1 year and the internal audit action had not been brought to their attention. The head of corporate performance and interim deputy monitoring officer agreed to look at the processes for ensuring internal audit actions are brought to the attention of new post holders.

Domiciliary Care (Re-tendering of HomeCare)

This was a long standing piece of contract and the contract had been extended to October 2021. The work was ongoing and there had been an all members' briefing, there would be a report to scrutiny and then cabinet would be taking the decision.

It was confirmed that there was a comprehensive review of income charging being undertaken. Income charge was defined as any revenue coming into the council from, e.g. service users.

Continuing Health Care (CHC)

It was acknowledged that there had been a delay due to Covid-19.

The dispute process was being finalised and there was no indication that the deadline could not be met. There will be a report to scrutiny on how CHC assessments would be undertaken in the future.

Healthy Lifestyles

An update on the actions was provided and all bar 1 had now been completed and would be completed by the revised target date.

It was noted that the healthy lifestyles team had been re-deployed as link workers during the Covid-19 pandemic.

General

It was confirmed that where any internal audits identified priority 1 or 2 recommendations, then there was a planned follow up process to review the completion of the actions.

It was commented that it may be helpful for the scrutiny committees to receive details of internal audit actions and follow up actions.

The committee suggested that a discussion with internal audit take place at the next meeting with regard to sampling of priority 3 actions are followed up by internal audit in line with the same way as priority 1 or 2 recommendations.

RESOLVED:

The status of current audit recommendations be reviewed and the committee determine any recommendations it wishes to make in order to provide further assurance that risks identified by audit activity are being actively managed

70. RE-THINKING GOVERNANCE WORKING GROUP

The interim head of legal services introduced the report, the details of which are included within the agenda pack.

The request to move the audit and governance committee meeting from 16 June to 28 June at 10.30 am was agreed which would mean that re-thinking governance working group's recommendations could be presented to Council in July 2021.

RESOLVED that

The recommendations from the re-thinking governance working group in connection with changes to the Council's constitution be deferred until later in the municipal year 2021/22.

71. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

As part of the recent high court judgement in children's services, it had been raised that the whistleblowing process and policy was not sufficiently robust. The monitoring officer was requested to consider how she could provide further assurance to the committee that the process, as updated last October, is functioning appropriately. It was agreed that an update on the whistleblowing policy be added to the work programme for the meeting to be held on 30 July 2021.

RESOLVED that

Subject to any updates made by the committee, the work programme for the audit and governance committee be agreed.

The meeting ended at 12.21 pm

Chairperson