

AGENDA ITEM: 4

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

HELD: 29 SEPTEMBER 2015

Start: 7.00pm

Finish: 8.10pm

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Bullock (Chairman)

Mrs Baybutt Mee
Blane Pendleton
Delaney Pope
Dereli Whittington
Gagen Wright

Officers:

Borough Treasurer (Mr M Taylor)
Borough Solicitor (Mr T Broderick)
Audit Manager (Mr M Coysh)
Principal Member Services Officer (Mrs S Griffiths)

In attendance:

Paul Thompson of Grant Thornton (External Auditors)

14. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Pryce-Roberts.

15. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4, the Committee noted the termination of membership of Councillors G Hodson and L Hodson and the appointment of Councillors Delaney and Wright for this meeting only, giving effect to the wishes of the Political Groups.

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

17. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 30 June 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

18. GRANT THORNTON - AUDIT PLAN FINDINGS REPORT

Consideration was given to the report of the Borough Treasurer, as contained on pages 135 – 136 and 233 - 264 of the Book of Reports, which set out the report received from the External Auditors setting out their findings on the audit of the accounts and value for money.

The Chairman invited Paul Thompson from Grant Thornton (External Auditors) to present the report to the Committee.

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

19. APPROVAL OF STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Consideration was given to the report of the Borough Treasurer, as contained on pages 137 – 142 and 265 - 360 of the Book of Reports, which sought approval of a Letter of Representation and the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts.

RESOLVED A That the Letter of representation set out in Appendix 1 to the report be endorsed.

 B That the Statement of Accounts set out in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.

20. INTERNAL AUDIT ACTIVITY - QUARTERLY UPDATE

Consideration was given to the report of the Borough Treasurer, as contained on pages 143 - 150 of the Book of Reports, which advised of progress against the 2015/16 Internal Audit Plan.

The Audit Manager advised that 36% of the items were currently in progress compared with 38% for the same period in 2014/15.

During the ensuing discussion Members raised questions regarding the item payroll - variations to pay and the Audit Manager gave an undertaking that a further update on this item together with the revenues reconciliations item will be submitted to the meeting of the Committee on 26 January 2016.

RESOLVED That progress in the year to date be noted.

21. ANNUAL REVIEW - ANTI-FRAUD, BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION POLICY

Consideration was given to the report of the Borough Treasurer, as contained on pages 151 - 168 of the Book of Reports which provided a summary of the fraud, bribery and corruption issues facing the Council and the action being taken to deal with them.

Comments and questions were raised in respect of the following items within the "Fraud Self-Assessment Checklist":-

- General (Controls/procedures in regard to bogus e-mails etc.)
- Fighting Fraud with reduced resources (implementation of SFIS/DCLG challenge funding)

- RESOLVED
- A. That the self-assessment of fraud and corruption issues, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.
- B. That the Counter Fraud Plan, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, be endorsed.

22. FRAMEWORK FOR DELIVERING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Borough Solicitor and Borough Treasurer, as contained on pages 169 – 200 & 361 of the Book of Reports, which advised Members of the consultation undertaken by the CIPFA/SOLACE Joint Working Group on Good Governance in Local Government on the revised framework for delivery of good governance in local government.

Members were advised that the report had been considered by the Standards Committee at its meeting on 17 September 2015 and the minute of that meeting was circulated.

During the ensuing discussion Members raised questions/queries in relation to the principle within the consultation relating to Implementation of good practices in transparency, reporting and audit in order to deliver effective accountability.

- RESOLVED
- That the resolution of the Standards Committee as set out in Appendix 3 to the report be noted.

23. REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT - ANNUAL SETTING OF THE POLICY AND REVIEW OF USE OF POWERS

Consideration was given to the report of the Borough Solicitor on the Council's use of its powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) and presented a revised RIPA Policy document.

A revised report was circulated and contained on pages 363 to 365 of the Book of Reports.

RESOLVED That the Council's RIPA Activity be noted.

24. WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the Committee's work programme as set out at page 361 of the Book of Reports.

It was proposed that future topics for training sessions would be "National Budget – Implications for tenants and HRA" for January 2016 in place of "Housing Options Process" and Procurement for September 2016.

RESOLVED A. That the topics for the following training sessions be approved.

January 2016 – National Budget – Implications for Tenants and HRA
September 2016 - Procurement

B. That the Work Programme as revised (taking account of A. above) be approved.

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CHAIRMAN