

AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

HELD: Wednesday, 31 July 2024

Start: 7.00 pm

Finish: 7.52 pm

PRESENT:

Councillor: N Hennessy (Chairperson)

Councillors: P Hogan
I Rigby
E Pope

J Mee
S Patel

Officers: James Pierce, Director of Finance and Corporate Resources
(Section 151 Officer)
Alison Wood, Corporate Finance Manager (Deputy 151)
Jacqui Pendleton, Corporate Compliance & Governance Manager
Catherine Kirwan, Procurement Manager
Claire Kelly, Principal Solicitor and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Katherine Westby, Internal Auditor
Jacky Denning, Democratic Services Manager

In attendance: Georgia Jones, Grant Thornton

18 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Coughlan and Molloy.

19 **MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4, the Committee noted the termination of Councillor A Owen, and the appointment of Councillor Rigby for this meeting only, thereby giving effect to the wishes of the Political Groups.

20 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no urgent items of business.

21 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

22 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 May 2024 be received as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

23 **PUBLIC SPEAKING**

There were no items under this heading.

24 GRANT THORNTON - AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT AND SECTOR UPDATES

Consideration was given to the Audit Progress Report from our External Auditors Grant Thornton.

The Chairman welcomed and invited Georgia Jones, of Grant Thornton, to present the report to the Committee.

The Committee considered the Audit Progress Report as contained on pages 21-38 of the Book of Reports, which had been presented to Members for approval.

Comments and questions were raised in respect of the following:

- Backstop legislation
- "Pooling leverage with local NHS bodies, the third sector and community organisations?" Referred to in "the smart regeneration journey to 2030" page 12
- Organic waste collections (food and garden)

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the Assistant Director of Environmental Services be asked to submit a report to a future Policy & Resources Committee in respect of the new recycling requirements and the implications for West Lancashire.

25 INTERNAL AUDIT ACTIVITIES - PROGRESS REPORT

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report to provide Members with the Internal Audit Activities Progress Report.

The Chairman invited the Internal Audit Manager to present the report.

The Committee considered the report as contained on pages 30-50 of the Book of Reports, which had been presented to Members for approval.

Questions were raised in respect of the outstanding issues relating to payroll reconciliations.

RESOLVED: That the progress in the year to date be noted.

26 INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT AND OPINION 2023/24

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report to provide Members with the Internal Audit Annual Report and Opinion 2023/24.

The Chairman invited the Internal Audit Manager to present the report.

The Committee considered the report as contained on pages 51-66 of the Book of Reports, which had been presented to Members for approval.

RESOLVED: That the Internal Audit Annual Report and Opinion for 2023/24 be noted.

27 OUTSTANDING AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report to provide Members with the Outstanding Audit Recommendations.

The Chairman invited the Internal Audit Manager to present the report.

The Committee considered the report as contained on pages 67-76 of the Book of Reports, which had been presented to Members for approval.

Comments and questions were raised in respect of the following:

- Agency staffing
- Monitoring of outstanding audit recommendations

RESOLVED: A. That the status of outstanding audit recommendations and the progress to date to ensure they are implemented be noted.

B. That a further update be reported to the next meeting.

28 REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT - USE OF POWERS

The Chief Legal & Democratic Services Officer submitted a report on the Council's use of its powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Power's Act (RIPA).

The Committee considered the RIPA Activity as contained on pages 77-78 of the Book of Reports, which had been presented to Members.

RESOLVED: Members noted that the Council has not had cause to use its powers under RIPA during the last 12 months.

29 SENIOR INFORMATION RISK OWNER (SIRO) – ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report, which provided an overview of the Council's obligation in meeting statutory regulatory requirements relating to the processing of personal, confidential, or identifiable data under the UK General Data Protection Regulation, the Data Protection Act 2018 and its duty to be transparent through compliance within the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The Corporate Compliance and Governance Manager outlined the report.

The Committee considered the report as contained on pages 79-97 of the Book of Reports.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Report of the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO), as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be noted.

30 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of that Act and as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption under Schedule 12A outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information

31 QUARTERLY EXEMPTION REPORT

The Director of Finance and Resources (151 Officer) submitted a report on the Council's grants of exemptions from Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and/or the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

The Chairman invited the Procurement Manager to present the report.

The Committee considered the Quarterly Report on Procurement Exemptions as contained on pages 99-140 of the Book of Reports, which had been presented to Members.

A question was raised in respect of the tender for stray dogs and kennels.

RESOLVED: That the Council's exemption activity be noted.

32 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the Committee's 2024/25 Work Programme as set out on page 141 of the Book of Reports.

RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted.

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Chairman