

Audit and Governance Committee

Monday 1 October 2018

PRESENT:

Councillor Kate Taylor, in the Chair.

Councillors Mrs Pengelly, P Smith, Stevens and Carson (Substituting for Cllr Dr Mahony)

Co-opted Representatives: Mr Clarke and Mr Stewart.

Apologies for absence: Councillor Dr Mahony (Cllr Carson substituting) and Geri Daly (Grant Thornton).

Also in attendance: Councillor Haydon (Cabinet Member for Customer Focus and Community Safety), Siân Millard (Oversight and Governance Manager), Andrew Hardingham (Director for Strategic Transformation and Change), Brenda Davis (Audit Manager), Julie Hosking (Corporate Risk Advisor), Carolyn Haynes (Financial Controller), Chris Flower (Finance Business Partner Capital Treasury and Management), Linda Torney (Assistant Head of Legal Services), Glenda Favor – Ankersen (Head of Electoral Services), Emmanuelle Marshall (Project Manager), Helen Cocks (Customer Liaison Manager), David Bray (Grant Thornton), Clare Cotter (Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing Assurance) and Jamie Sheldon (Democratic Advisor).

The meeting started at 16:00 and finished at 17:30.

Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

28. **Declarations of Interest**

The following declarations of interest were made in accordance with the code of conduct:

Councillor	Minute number	Reason	Type
Councillor Mrs Pengelly	Minute 40 – Councillor Long Service Award	Councillor Mrs Pengelly is a long serving Councillor over 25 years' service.	Personal
Councillor Kate Taylor	Minute 37 Analysis of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual report 2017/18	Councillor Kate Taylor is an employee of Livewell South West	Personal

29. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 July 2018 were approved as an accurate record.

30. **Chair's Urgent Business**

Under this item the Audit Completion Report was discussed.

Lisa Clampin (BDO) introduced the Audit Completion Report:

A draft report was presented at 30 July 2018 Audit and Governance Committee and this was a follow up report to give the audit certificate.

- This report gave an unmodified opinion;
- This report will bring to a close the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2017/18.

Members noted the report.

31. **Health, Safety and Wellbeing Annual Report**

Clare Cotter (Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing Assurance) presented the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Annual Report.

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing annual report for 2017-18 was an important aspect of the health, safety and wellbeing governance arrangements for the Council. The report identified the actions that had been taken in 2017-18 to improve management arrangements for health, safety and wellbeing and what was planned in 2018-19 in the spirit of continuous improvement. As part of this it included insights into the incidents and accidents which had occurred compared to previous years.

Members raised questions relating to the following areas:

- the benchmarking of accident and incident reporting;
- the collection of data and if there was a standardised approach;
- the viewpoint from trade unions representatives upon the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Annual report.

The Audit and Governance Committee noted the report.

32. **Internal Audit Progress Report**

Brenda Davis (Audit Manager) presented the Internal Audit Progress Report.

The report provided Members of the Audit and Governance Committee with a position statement on the audit work carried out since April 2018 and based on work performed to date during 2018/19, Internal Audit was able to provide reasonable assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Authority's internal control environment.

The Audit and Governance Committee noted the report.

33. **Internal Audit Follow Up Report**

Brenda Davis (Audit Manager) presented the Internal Audit Follow Up Report.

At the Audit and Governance Committee on 31 May 2018 members were presented with the 2017/18 Internal Audit Annual report which provided a summary of the work undertaken by Devon Audit Partnership during 2017/18 along with an audit opinion on the adequacy of internal control.

The aim of the report was to provide assurance to Members of the Audit and Governance Committee that where an audit has been undertaken and an opinion of 'Improvements Required' or less has been provided, Devon Audit Partnership had undertaken follow up audit reviews, wherever possible, or discussed progress with relevant officers. The results from this process were contained in the report. It should be noted that an opinion of 'Fundamental Weaknesses Identified' was not given for any of the audits undertaken in 2017/18.

The Audit and Governance Committee noted the report.

34. **Annual Audit Letter - To Follow**

This item was not discussed and would be scheduled to be discussed at a future meeting.

35. **Fee letter for 2018/19**

David Bray (Grant Thornton) presented the Fee Letter for 2018/19.

Members were advised that Grant Thornton would be the Council's auditors from 1 April 2018; the letter set out the theme for the work to be carried out.

The Audit and Governance noted the Fee Letter for 2018/19.

36. **Housing Benefits fee quote for 2018/19**

David Bray (Grant Thornton) presented the Housing Benefits fee quote for 2018/19.

Members were advised that the housing benefits audit was normally in the core audit work however was split out for 18/19; one group of auditors would do both audits and the fee was historically set.

The Audit and Governance Committee noted the Housing Benefits Fee quote for 2018/19.

37. **Analysis of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Report 2017/18 - To Follow**

Councillor Haydon (Cabinet Member for Customer Focus & Community Safety) introduced the report.

Members were advised that every year the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) sends each council an annual review letter which outlines the Ombudsman's position in relation to complaints monitoring. The publication of the 2017/8 annual report provided an opportunity to review and discuss complaints that had been received about Plymouth during the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. After investigation, the LGSCO upheld only fifteen complaints of the one hundred and twenty one (12.4%) complaints they made decisions about in relation to Plymouth City Council. This was an improvement on the rate upheld for 2016/17 which was 14.7%.

Members agreed to:

1. address the comments made by the LGSCO in respect of statutory children's complaints procedures;
2. work with Livewell South West to strengthen the complaints handling process and ensure lessons learned are driving service improvements across organisations in respect of Adult Social Care;
3. work with Street Services to improve the customer experience (complaints are included in the LGSCO category Environmental Services and Public Health and Regulation);
4. further develop the monitoring of corporate performance in respect of customer feedback and ensure customer feedback is used to resolve any issues through the implementation of lessons learned;
5. note the progress made to date and approve the proposals set out in paragraph 2.4 of the report.

38. **Strategic Risk Register**

Julie Hosking (Corporate Risk Advisor) presented the Strategic Risk Register.

Members were advised that the report provided a summary of the latest formal monitoring exercise completed for the Strategic Risk and Opportunity Register for the period March 2018 to August 2018.

The Audit and Governance Committee noted and endorsed the current position with regard to the Strategic Risk and Opportunity Register.

39. **Polling District Review - To Follow**

Glenda Favor-Ankersen (Head of Electoral Services) and Emmanuelle Marshal (Project Manager) presented the Polling District Review.

Members were advised that the Council was statutorily required to undertake a review every five years of the polling district. The last review for Plymouth City was conducted in November 2014 and so the next compulsory review must be undertaken and completed between 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020; the review would be started on 5 November 2018.

Members endorsed the approach proposed.

40. **Councillor Long Service Award**

Siân Millard (Oversight & Governance Manager) presented the Councillor Long Service Award.

There was currently a long-service award for officers, but not for Councillors. Officers are employees of the Council and Councillors are elected Members of Council with a democratic mandate from the local electorate.

Councillors' long-service was currently recognised on retirement from office, or as a former Lord Mayor, by being awarded the title of Honorary Alderman.

A long-service award would recognise the service of Councillors still engaged as an elected Member.

This was proposed to recognise the significant contribution of those Councillors during their period of office.

The Audit and Governance Committee agreed to note the proposed criteria within the report and proposed recognition and to recommend implementation of these proposals to the Leader in consultation with the Shadow Leader.

41. **Delegation of functions to Audit and Governance Committee**

Linda Torney (Assistant Head of Legal Services) presented the Delegation of functions to Audit & Governance Committee.

The purpose of this report was to recommend that Council authorise the Audit and Governance Committee to approve changes to the Constitution, subject to Council retaining responsibility for those functions set out in Appendix One to the report.

This would improve the efficiency of the decision making process, and maintain open and transparent decision making.

The Audit and Governance Committee agreed to recommend that Council authorises the Audit and Governance Committee to approve changes to the Constitution, set out in Appendix One to the report; subject to Council retaining responsibility for the core documents in the Constitution.

42. **Tracking resolutions**

Members noted the report.

43. **Work Programme**

Members were invited to email the Chair with any items they would like included on the Work Programme.

44. **Exempt Business**

Agreed that under Section 100(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 of Part 1 Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

45. **Information Governance Report (EI)**

John Finch (Information Governance Manager) presented the Information Governance Report to the Audit and Governance Committee.

Members noted the report.