

**MINUTES OF THE AUDIT & STANDARDS COMMITTEE
HELD ON**

4 March 2015

7.30pm - 9.04 pm

PRESENT

Committee Members

Councillor Manny Doku (Chairman)
Councillor Waida Forman (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Simon Carter
Councillor Jean Clark
Councillor Eddie Johnson
Councillor Edna Stevens

Officers

Brian Keane, Interim Head of Governance
Sarah Marsh, Internal Audit Manager
Jo Maskell, Governance Support Officer

External Auditor Representatives

Steve Bladen, Ernst & Young
Debbie Hanson, Ernst & Young

APOLOGIES

Councillor Jacqui Cross
Councillor Russell Perrin
Councillor Terry Spooner

36. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

37. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2015 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

38. **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

39. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**

None.

40. **NON CONTENTIOUS BUSINESS**

RESOLVED that no items are taken as non-contentious business.

41. **EXTERNAL AUDITOR- ANNUAL AUDIT PLAN 2014/15**

The Committee received the external auditor's proposed annual audit plan for 2014/15.

RESOLVED that the Ernst & Young report and the planned audit work to be undertaken by them, are noted.

42. **EXTERNAL AUDITOR - CERTIFICATION OF CLAIMS AND RETURNS ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14**

The Committee received the annual Certification of Claims and Returns report from the external auditor, which included the 2013/14 certification fees charged to the Council.

The Committee was gratified to note the exceedingly low level of errors identified (ie: 0.134% of the £41,987,311 total value of the claims audited) and wished to record their appreciation to the Revenues and Benefits Team.

RESOLVED that the Council's external auditors report and the significant improvements made in the Council's processes to have achieved this positive review, are noted.

43. **INTERNAL AUDIT COMPLIANCE WITH THE PUBLIC SECTOR INTERNAL AUDIT STANDARDS**

Further to the last self-assessment against the Public Sector Internal Audit Standard (PSIAS) (*Minute 13, 26/613*) and following the introduction of a shared internal audit service with Broxbourne Borough Council, a review had been undertaken to ensure continued compliance with this Standard.

The Committee received a report on this review, together with an action plan for improvement.

RESOLVED that

- (a) it is acknowledged that the Shared Internal Audit Service is compliant with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and relevant legislation;
- (b) the Action Plan, contained within the report, is agreed subject to references in the report to the 'Head of Internal Audit' being amended to read 'Internal Audit Manager'.

44. **INTERNAL AUDIT STRATEGY AND PLAN 2015/16**

The Committee received the Internal Audit Strategy and Plan for the coming municipal year.

Members of the Committee considered the effectiveness and contribution of the Audit Strategy and Plan within the Council's assurance framework.

RESOLVED that

- (a) 'and appropriate legislation' is added to the end of the fourth bullet point in paragraph 2 of the report; and any reference to the 'Head of Internal Audit' in the report, Strategy and Plan is substituted with 'Internal Audit Manager';
- (b) the Audit Strategy and Plan for 2015/16, as amended above, is approved;
- (c) consideration is given to introducing separate Key Performance Indicators to monitor budgets against planned days delivered;
- (d) the Committee's Work Plan is submitted to each meeting of the Committee.

45. **PERIOD 11 INTERNAL AUDIT ACTIVITY REPORT**

Contrary to the agenda, the Committee received the Period 11 Internal Audit Activity Report for 2014/15 in open session, with the proviso that any discussion regarding the first two bullet points in paragraph 3 of the report would be taken in private session.

The Committee was concerned that the introduction of a reporting regime to CMT/Heads of Service and Councillors regarding Insurance risks was overdue (*Recommendation Tracker Ref: 1.1-1.3*). It was agreed that the Head of Finance would let members of the Committee know the outcome of recent discussions about this issue.

The Committee resolved to move into private session solely to pose a question regarding an issue which was likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as specified under Paragraph 2 of Part One of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (Paragraph 2: Information is such that it is likely to reveal the identity of an individual).

Following which, the Committee returned into open session to complete its consideration of this report.

The year-end report on progress against the 2014/15 Audit Plan would be reported to the next meeting of this Committee.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report are noted.

46. **REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

None.

47. **MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chairman ruled the following item as a matter of urgent business.

(a) **Councillor Training**

The Committee was reminded that there was a shared training session with Broxbourne Borough Council on Tuesday, 17 March 2015.

CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE