

Agenda Item 12

Annual Audit report for 2013/14

Meeting of the 14th May 2013.

The first order of business was to re-elect Cllr Sarah Fox as Chair and Cllr Martin Bink as Vice Chair.

The internal audit charter was discussed and we were informed by Catherine Yendle (Audit team leader) that where the Charter referred to the “Board” that was actually the “Committee”, the “Management board” was actually “The management team” and the “audit executive” was indeed the “Audit team leader.”

At this point that the representative from the plain English campaign left the room.

There followed a debate on Motion 470 brought to council at the meeting on 6th March that had been referred to the audit committee to consider.

Include a provision for a shadow cabinet or include a provision for members of the opposition to appoint lead members.

The motion was discussed and although it was agreed had merit it was thought that it may be better placed to discuss following the next round of elections given the fragmentation of the current opposition.

It was resolved that council be recommended to reject the motion.

The all-important Audit fee`s for the 2013/14 year were discussed, council should note these fees are set by the audit commission, the Fee`s for 2013/14 had been set at £62,700 these were the same as the fee`s for 2012/13

Meeting of June 25th

Council will note the first of several committee member changes; the committee welcomed Cllr Frank Rosamond in replacement of Cllr Linda Holloway.

There followed a detailed report on the “Internal audit outturn report for 2012/13, members were reminded that we had received Two “Poor” reports, it was reported that both area`s had made improvements and that the general trend was a greater proportion of recommendations being completed on time across all areas.

Draft annual report and accounts for 2013/13:

All cash balances were as predicted

The general fund balance had closed at just over £2.6m and housing revenue at £2m, the committee were shown a table detailing numerous financial accounts and it was clear that the financial monitoring throughout 2012/13 had been extremely accurate.

It was concluded that overall the Council was in a strong financial position to deal with known challenges.

Committee were asked to note a possible £621k shortfall year on year of central government funding.

Special meeting 30th July 2013

This special meeting had been called so members could receive detail and assurances around required, **sources of assurance for the Annual Governance Statement**

The Head of Communities and Governance presented each of the objective areas used to compile the sources of assurances for the A.G.S. Members of the Committee questioned the HOCG on all opinions where it stated only a 'partial' reliance could be placed upon a particular control rather than a 'full' reliance.

Meeting of 24th September

It was at this meeting that the Committee was informed at the resignation of Cllr Sara Fox not only as Chair of the Audit Committee but from the council in general, it would be remiss of me not to remind council at this point of the excellent work Cllr Fox had undertaken and she was and is missed from not only the Audit meeting but from this chamber.

There followed a brief election where I was given the formidable task of following Cllr Fox as Chair of the committee, however at this point I still had the reasoned had of Cllr Martin Bink as vice chair.

The annual report and accounts were presented following known minor amendments to reflect accuracy in reporting and the accounts were approved

The annual governance statement was also presented in its final version and members also approved for acceptance and signature by the chief executive.

Grant Thornton's audit report was presented as a true and accurate report of the councils financial statements and that all measure to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness were sufficient.

There followed a progress report on the 2013/14 audit , were discussions took place around a number of specific reports, it was resolved that given concerns raised by Cllr Binks that the councils purchasing card system be monitored more closely so that committee could receive reports on a more regular basis.

Meeting 19th November 2013

The committee had received six internal audit updates on Housing Homeless persons, Development management, Gifts and Hospitality, Income and cash collection, Housing rents and Creditors all received a conclusion of adequately controlled.

Meeting 14th January 2014

More changes and a First for the Council

At the start of the meeting it was announced that the meeting was to be recorded I was told at the first meeting the recording had failed so Audit was the first meeting to be recorded, copies are available on the web page and all Audit committee members would be willing to sign any tapes members may have to hand at the end of this briefing.

Committee were informed that Cllr Martin Binks had been lost to the committee due to a political rebalancing requirement, again a sad loss to the audit family and I would like to thank Cllr Binks for his work whilst on the Audit Committee.

Cllr Ray Radford joined and Cllr Frank Rosamond was elected as Vice Chair.

Performance and risk

The Committee had before it, a report from the Head of Communities and Governance providing Members with an update on performance against the Corporate Plan and local service targets as well as providing an update on the key business risks.

Scrutiny Committee now had a working group in place to look at performance and how it was reported, to make sure that it was information that Members wanted to see and also looking at how the information was presented. Currently information reported was what Officers had decided to report, the working group would be debating what Members actually wanted to see.

Internal audit progress report

Core audits had commenced in September 2013 and seven had been completed so far, as well as nine systems audits.

Internal audit reports

The Committee had received two Internal Audit reports since their last meeting. These were Trade Waste and Council Tax & NNDR It was the overall opinion of the internal auditor that both were adequately controlled.

Certification work report

The Auditor confirmed that the report was good news, that all claims were submitted on time and that no claim required amending or qualification. The working papers and evidence provided were good, which had enabled certification within the deadlines. There were no recommendations, errors or problems identified.

I would like to Thank Andrew Jarrett and Amy Tregellas and their teams for not only the amount of work but the quality of work undertaken, this adds to the overall continuing trend of well maintained, well reported, accurate Audits and reports to the Committee and ultimately full council, also all member services officers and Audit committee members for their diligence, hard work and at times patience in an occasional fact based committee but one that is both valuable and appreciated by Council.