

Decisions of the Audit Committee

31 January 2018

Members Present:-

Councillor Hugh Rayner (Chairman)
Councillor Sury Khatri (Vice-Chairman)

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| Councillor Geof Cooke | Councillor Peter Zinkin |
| Councillor Kathy Levine | |
| Councillor Arjun Mittra | |

Independent members

Geradline Chadwick
Richard Harbord

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Anthony Finn

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd November 2017 were approved as an accurate record.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS (IF ANY)

Apologies were received from Councillor Anthony Finn.

3. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON PECUNIARY INTERESTS (IF ANY)

None.

4. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (IF ANY)

None.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION AND COMMENTS (IF ANY)

A document containing six questions from Mr Dix and responses from officers was received. Supplementary questions were asked and answers were provided verbally.

6. MEMBERS' ITEMS (IF ANY)

None.

7. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT 1 OCTOBER - 31 DECEMBER 2017

The Head of Internal Audit presented the Progress Report (Q3, 1 October-31 December 2017). The Committee discussed the report and asked questions to the relevant Director(s), or their representatives, on the audits that received limited or no assurance reports, including Pensions Administration, S106 and CILS Expenditure and Transformation - Benefits Realisation. Follow ups of high-priority actions were discussed including Highways Programme, Contract Register Maintenance, Purchase Cards Follow Up, HR Eligibility to Work and CSG Invoicing and Monitoring Arrangements.

The Head of Business Assurance (Chris Dixon, Capita) offered to carry out an analysis of the pensions administration data further to a request from Cllr Zinkin.

Action

Cllr Cooke asked whether the outcome of the reconciliation process could be made public and provided in advance of the meeting. The Deputy CEO (Cath Shaw) stated that it would be published shortly after 31 March.

Action

The Committee discussed the Annual Canvass Management Review. Cllr Mittra enquired about the properties that had been left out of canvasser rounds and whether there was any geographic basis for this. The Assurance Director would find out and respond to him but those properties were included on later canvassing rounds.

Action

RESOLVED:

That the Committee noted the work completed to date on Internal Audit Q3 progress report – 1st October to 31st December 2017.

8. CORPORATE ANTI-FRAUD TEAM (CAFT) Q3 REPORT

The Assurance Director (Clair Green) presented the report.

Cllr Cooke asked what proportion of fly-tipping investigations led to perpetrators being brought to justice. The Assurance Director (Clair Green) commented that she would ask the relevant service to provide the information to the committee.

Action

The Chairman congratulated the CAFT team in their success in recovering a further 16 houses due to tenancy fraud after visiting 500 properties during Fraud Awareness week. A total of 49 houses had been recovered in Barnet in the past year.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Committee note the CAFT Progress Report covering the period 1 October – 31 December 2017.**

9. ACCOUNTS CLOSURE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Interim Director of Finance (Kevin Bartle) presented a report (which included at Appendix A Accounts Closure Improvement Plan) which updated on the actions being taken on the timelines and quality of the Statement of Accounts and Pension Fund accounts.

- Additional resource had been provided in the closing team
- Closure was being closely monitored; key statements would be provided from the soft close as part of the interim audit.
- A month 9 close was in progress for the Pension Fund accounts
- Weekly meetings were being held with the external auditor, BDO.

The Chairman asked to see a copy of each update, given that these were now weekly or fortnightly. The Assistant Director of Finance (CSG) (Gillian Clelland) agreed. She would also share this with the Chief Executive and Cllr Cooke.

Action

RESOLVED:

That the Audit Committee noted progress against the accounts closure improvement plan.

10. EXTERNAL AUDITOR - GRANTS CERTIFICATION WORK REPORT 2016/17

The Director of Finance presented the Grant Claims and Returns Certification Report 2016/17.

The Director of Finance (Kevin Bartle) would ask for some management responses in the item on pensions in the report to be changed; this had been agreed with Capita colleagues. This would be available in around a week's time and the Director of Finance would circulate it.

Action

RESOLVED (subject to the above amendment)

1. That the Committee noted the report;
2. That the matters raised by the external auditors relating to the grant submission and certification process were noted by the Committee; and
3. That the Committee consider whether there are any areas on which they require additional information.

11. EXTERNAL AUDITOR - ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER

The report was received.

RESOLVED

1. That the external auditor's Annual Audit Letter for 2016/17 be received; and
2. That the Committee consider whether there are any areas on which they require additional information.

12. AUDIT COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME, JANUARY-JULY 2018

This was noted.

13. ANY ITEM(S) THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

None.

14. MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

None.

15. ANY OTHER EXEMPT ITEM(S) THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

None.

The meeting finished at 8.50pm