

Decisions of the Audit Committee

30 April 2015

Members Present:-

Councillor Brian Salinger (Chairman)
Councillor Sury Khatri (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Geof Cooke
Councillor Kathy Levine
Councillor Arjun Mitra

Councillor Gabriel Rozenberg
Councillor Peter Zinkin

Also in attendance

Mr Richard Harbord (Independent Member)

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2015 be approved as a correct record.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS (IF ANY)

None.

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

None.

4. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (IF ANY)

None.

5. MEMBERS' ITEMS (IF ANY)

None.

6. PUBLIC QUESTION AND COMMENTS (IF ANY)

None.

7. INTERNAL AUDIT EXCEPTION RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT AND PROGRESS REPORT UP TO 31ST MARCH 2015

The Head of Internal Audit introduced the report. The Committee discussed the report and asked questions on items where it was noted that limited assurance had been given.

The Committee noted that it considered that the management responses provided by St Andrews CE School were unsatisfactory. The Committee also noted that the audit of Pardes House had delivered a limited assurance rating since the Audit Committee papers were published.

In both cases the Head teacher and / or the Chairman of the Board of Governors should be requested to attend the Audit Committee meeting in July.

RESOLVED –

- 1. That the Committee note the progress against internal audit recommendations and work completed to date on the Internal Audit Annual Plan 2014-15 & high priority recommendations.**
- 2. That the Head teacher and / or the Chairman of the Board of Governors of St. Andrews and Pardes House schools be requested to attend the next Audit Committee meeting in July if officers were not satisfied with the response from St Andrews and Pardes House schools.**
- 3. The committee asked officers to clarify the procedures for escalating actions in the event of schools failing to respond to actions requested by audit staff following two audit visits.**

8. INTERNAL AUDIT, CAFT AND RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2015-16 AND INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER UPDATE

The Head of Internal Audit introduced the report.

The Committee requested clarification as to whether the authority of Internal Audit to 'enter any Council land or premises' includes Capita, and if not, whether Internal Audit has any concerns about access to information. The Head of Internal Audit assured that there have been no issues concerning access to information. The Acting Assurance Director and Head of Internal Audit also undertook to check the wording within relevant contracts to clarify the legal position.

The Committee also requested an addition to the introduction of the Plan to clarify how any disagreements would be escalated and resolved.

RESOLVED –

- 1. That the Committee approves the Internal Audit, Anti-Fraud and Risk Management Plan for 2015-16.**
- 2. That the Committee approves the updated Internal Audit Charter.**

9. CORPORATE ANTI-FRAUD TEAM (CAFT) ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15

The Acting Assurance Director introduced the report. Following consideration by the Committee it was:

RESOLVED – That the CAFT Annual Report 2014 -15 be noted.

10. AUDIT PLAN 2014-15

The Assistant Director of Finance CSG introduced the report.

The Committee requested that paper copies of the draft Financial Statements be made available to Committee members on their publication on 31 May. It was noted that members would also be provided with an overview of the contents of the draft Financial Statements at the Audit Committee training to be held on 22 June, and external audit amendments will be incorporated into the final version to be approved by the Committee on 31 July. Officers noted the expectation that the Explanatory Foreword to the Financial Statements would be written in plain English and easily accessible to members of the public with no specialist knowledge

RESOLVED – That

- 1. The Audit Committee are asked to note Grant Thornton’s Audit Plan for 2014/15.**
- 2. The Audit Committee are asked to note the audit fee of £226,700 for the 2014/15 Council Audit as set out in paragraph 6.11.**

11. EXTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS - VERBAL UPDATE

Mr Nick Taylor of Grant Thornton LLP (External Auditors) informed the Committee that the external audit process is progressing as planned and there are no other issues to report.

12. COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme 2015-16.

Councillor Kathy Levine raised an issue concerning the process for the collection of rental service charges at Barnet Homes, and queried the potential for fraud activity. The Assistant Director of Finance, CSG noted that he was aware of the issue and that it was being addressed.

Councillor Kathy Levine MOVED a motion, which was seconded by Councillor Arjun Mittra that the Committee receive a report on this matter at a future meeting.

RESOLVED - That an item be added to the work programme to receive a report at the next Committee meeting on issues concerning the process for the collection of rental service charges at Barnet Homes.

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

None.

The meeting finished at 9.07 pm