

Audit and Governance Committee

Held at: Council Chamber, Civic Centre

Date: Thursday, 28 July 2022

Present: Councillors Mrs Ann Berry (Chairman), Laura Davison, Gary Fuller, Philip Martin (Vice-Chair), Terence Mullard and Rebecca Shoob

Apologies for Absence

Officers Present: Amandeep Khroud (Assistant Director), Sue Lewis (Case Officer (Committee)), Derrick Miller (Corporate Health & Safety Officer), Mrs Christine Parker (Head of Audit Partnership), Mr Chris Parker (Deputy Head of Audit), Susan Priest (Chief Executive) and Charlotte Spendley (Director of Corporate Services)

Others Present: Andy Vanburen, Independent Member and Paul Dossett, Grant Thornton
Councillor David Godfrey, Cabinet Member for Housing and Special Projects

39. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Gary Fuller declared a voluntary announcement in that he is a Council Tenant. He remained in the meeting for discussions and voting.

Councillors Mrs Ann Berry and Terence Mullard informed they are Directors of Oportunitas and elected members of the main shareholder.

Councillor Rebecca Shoob informed she is a Director of Otterpool Park LLP.

40. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2022 were submitted, approved and signed by the Chairman.

41. Corporate Health and Safety Annual Report

This report detailed the performance of Corporate Health and Safety over the last calendar year and looks into future work.

Members were informed of the particular type of accidents that have occurred during the past year paying particular attention to the incidents at the coastal park.

Following any incidents repeat safety alerts are issued to staff, along with any additional training requirements.

Fire wardens are in place for all civic buildings and working spaces for grounds maintenance.

Proposed by Councillor Laura Davison
Seconded by Councillor Terence Mullard and

Resolved:
To receive and note Report AuG/22/05.

(Voting: For 6; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

42. **Quarterly Code of Conduct Complaint complaints update**

This report provided an update to the Committee on Member Code of Conduct complaints received during the final quarter of 2021/22 (1 January to 31 March 2022).

It was agreed that future reports would include "Action Taken" to update members on what has been agreed.

Proposed by Councillor Laura Davison
Seconded by Councillor Rebecca Shoob and

Resolved:
To receive and note report AuG/22/04.

(Voting: For 6; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

43. **Review of Corporate Risk Register**

This report provided an update to the Corporate Risk Register.

Particular attention was paid to the key changes at 2.3 of the report, specifically the cost of living pressures and demands on council services, together with the issues surrounding the traffic gridlock recently experienced in the town.

Although this was exceptional recent M20 travel chaos has impacted residents and officers will continue to work with agencies to monitor and improve the situation.

Proposed by Councillor Terence Mullard
Seconded by Councillor Philip Martin and

Resolved:
To receive and note report AuG/22/11 and the updated Corporate Risk Register.

(Voting: For 6; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

44. **Grant Thornton Update Report**

Grant Thornton's report provided an update on recent audit work undertaken, progress against key deliverables and a brief technical update.

Paul Dossett, Grant Thornton updated members on the delays surrounding CIPFA Code requirements for infrastructure assets. More information should be available around September following CIPFA consultations with local authorities on how to move forward.

Proposed by Councillor Gary Fuller
Seconded by Councillor Laura Davison and

Resolved:
To receive and note Report AuG/22/06.

(Voting: For 6; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

45. **Quarterly Internal Audit Update Report from the Head of East Kent Audit Partnership**

This report included the summary of the work of the East Kent Audit Partnership (EKAP) since the last Audit and Governance Committee meeting together with details of the performance of the EKAP to the 31st May 2022.

The Deputy Head of Audit presented the report paying particular attention to the progress plan set out informing that 14.7% of planned days had been completed to the end of May.

The summary of work completed forms part of the report and the item in respect of Housing Planned Maintenance Contract Management will be reported back once the draft report is complete.

Members paid particular attention to:

- Ross House and the fire safety issues,

- Covid Grants and how monies are recovered,
- Climate Change and the recommendations made,
- Software systems and testing issues.

Proposed by Councillor Rebecca Shoob
Seconded by Councillor Laura Davison and

Resolved:

- 1. To receive and note Report AuG/22/08.**
- 2. To note the results of the work carried out by the East Kent Audit Partnership.**

(Voting: For 6; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

46. Internal Audit Annual Report 2021-22

This report provided a summary of the work undertaken by the East Kent Audit Partnership to support the annual opinion. The report included the Head of Audit Partnership's opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the system of internal control in operation and informs the Annual Governance Statement for 2021-22, together with details of the performance of the EKAP against its targets for the year ending 31st March 2022.

The Head of Audit Partnership explained this was a backward look at work to March 2022 and work completed to this point. Some items from the Audit Plan were deferred to accommodate higher priority work taking place and this is reflected within the report.

The Council has embraced the findings emerging from the reports, engaging with Audit to ensure the work is delivered and the agreed action plans are implemented, any areas escalated to the Committee during the year were highlighted in the report.

Proposed by Councillor Terence Mullard
Seconded by Councillor Rebecca Shoob and

Resolved:

- 1. To receive and note the Opinion of the Head of Audit Partnership in Report AuG/22/09.**
- 2. To receive and note the Annual Report detailing the work of the EKAP and its performance to underpin the 2021-22 opinion.**

(Voting: For 6; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

47. Annual Governance Statement 2021/22

Under the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015, local authorities are required to produce an Annual Governance Statement. This report described

the process followed and sought approval for the draft Annual Governance Statement for the year 2021/22.

Members were given assurances on the content of the report and will be notified of any changes in the final report that forms part of the Annual Statement of Accounts.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs Ann Berry
Seconded by Councillor Philip Martin and

Resolved:

1. **To receive and note report AuG/22/07.**
2. **To approve the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2021/22.**
3. **To approve the council's corporate action plan outlined in Appendix 1 for 2022/23.**

(Voting: For 4; Against 1; Abstentions 1)

48. **Exclusion of the Public**

Proposed by Councillor Mrs Ann Berry
Seconded by Councillor Philip Martin and

Resolved:

To exclude the public for the following item of business on the grounds that it is likely to disclose exempt information, as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 –

'Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). "Financial or business affairs" includes contemplated as well as current activities.'

(Voting: For 4; Against 2; Abstentions 0)

49. **Confidential Excerpt to Quarterly Internal Audit Update Report from the Head of East Kent Audit Partnership**

This report included the confidential summary of the work of the East Kent Audit Partnership (EKAP) since the last Audit and Governance Committee meeting to 30th June 2022.

Members discussed a number of issues relating to timescales for public reporting and were informed that a further report will be brought to the committee as soon as possible bearing in mind the need to respect HR legislative requirements, and to minimise any risk of legal challenge. Therefore a definitive date could not be confirmed.

Proposed by Councillor Terence Mullard
Seconded by Councillor Philip Martin and

Resolved:

- 1. To receive and note Report AuG/22/10.**
- 2. To note the results of the confidential extract covering work carried out by the East Kent Audit Partnership to 30th June 2022.**

(Voting: For 6; Against 0; Abstentions 0)