

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE - 13 MARCH 2023

SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL MEETING – 18 JULY 2023

(To be read in conjunction with the Agenda for the Meeting)

Present

Cllr Peter Marriott (Chair)
Cllr Jerome Davidson (Vice Chair)
Cllr Stephen Mulliner

Cllr Richard Seaborne
Cllr Julian Spence

Apologies

Cllr Sally Dickson and Cllr George Wilson

Also Present

AUD 42/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda item 1.)

Apologies were received from Cllrs Sally Dickson and George Wilson.

AUD 43/21 MINUTES (Agenda item 2.)

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2022 was agreed as a correct record.

Issues raised:

- It was noted that an informal session on the Corporate Risk Register had not happened yet and it was requested this is organised ASAP for the members.

Members were advised that Robin Taylor, Executive Head of Organisation development was currently bringing together a joint risk paper and would be asked to brief the committee at the next meeting.

- Concern was raised regarding the External Auditors being unable once again to deliver audited accounts within the timescale expected and the implications to WBC.

Officers advised that the papers were scheduled to be available by the end of March and would be circulated as soon as available. The delay had been due to a lack of resources available within the external auditors. There was a national consultation current being carried out on changing the auditors. It was agreed to convene an extra Audit Committee meeting once the accounts were available to discuss.

- On 16th January an informal discussion was held with Members along with the IT Manager and Strategic Director of Community Wellbeing around the issues with the implementation of Horizon and the processes for backups and disaster recovery. It was suggested that in future members would like informal briefings

and discussions to be clerked and notes circulated outlining the discussion and actions agreed.

AUD 44/21 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (Agenda item 3.)

There were no disclosure of interests submitted for this meeting.

AUD 45/21 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda item 4.)

There were none.

AUD 46/21 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS (Agenda item 5.)

There were none.

AUD 47/21 ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Agenda item 6.)

Rosie Plaistowe-Melham, Financial Services Manager, advised that the Accounting Policies were reviewed annually in line with the CIPFA Code of Practice. She explained there had been very little changes to standards over the last 3 years and there were no major accounting changes for 2023/24. The only small change proposed was to the asset measurement policies to split them out. This change was proposed to ensure the assets in each of the previously collated category were given their own consideration. This would not have a material impact on the asset values and would not impact on the overall accounts.

The Committee considered the adequacy of the accounting policies and AGREED they were adequate for preparing the financial statements.

AUD 48/21 RISK MANAGEMENT (STANDING ITEM) (Agenda item 7.)

There were no updates on risk management to report to this meeting.

AUD 49/21 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT - CONSIDERATION OF POTENTIAL GOVERNANCE ISSUES. (Agenda item 8.)

The following Governance issues were raised for noting:

1. Cllr Jerry Hyman had registered to speak on this item.

Cllr Hyman asked for an answer to the following question: "How do Senior Officers ensure the integrity of information given at Planning Appeals?"

Cllr Paul Follows responded advising that Senior Management were happy with the information supplied at appeals and that at no time had any inspector identified any misinformation provided.

2. Members asked that the delays in the approval of the accounts is a governance issue and that it was important work with the government and auditing authorities to come up with a better way of working as this was a reputational risk.

3. Our Freedom of Information process has not been updated as yet due to a lack of resource.

AUD 50/21 REVIEW OF THE PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING THE AUDIT PLAN FOR 2022-23
(Agenda item 9.)

Gail Beaton gave an update on the progress in achieving the Audit Plan for 2022-23. She advised that good progress had been made with most reviews having started. A few had been deferred to 2023-24 as set out in the report.

Members asked for information as to what the green spaces audit entailed and this was provided.

Members noted that some reviews started in Q2 had still not got to report stage and asked why this was. It was explained that do to the collaboration heads of service had taken on new responsibilities as well as covering two authorities and there had been a 'bedding down' period whilst they got used to their new roles and responsibilities.

The Committee NOTED the progress of the Internal Audit Progress report.

AUD 51/21 PROPOSED INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2023-24 (Agenda item 10.)

Gai Beaton outlined the proposed Internal Audit Plan for 2023-24.

It was noted that the diagram in the report highlighting the reporting paths for internal Audit had changed showing the internal Audit Manager just reporting to the Executive Head of Finance whereas previous they had also been shown as reporting to the CEO and Audit Committee. It was agreed this would be added.

The Committee asked that an additional line be put in under Procurement, Tendering and Contract documentation to focus on the process for high value evaluations.

It was highlighted by the members that the plan needed to be married to the Strategic Risk Register which was not completed yet.

Members asked that a review of the risk register be brought to each meeting.

AUD 52/21 AUDIT COMMITTEE RECURRENT ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda item 11.)

Members NOTED the recurrent Annual Work Programme.

It was highlighted that Internal Audit Charter would be added to the June agenda.

'if required' to be removed from Risk Register as it was to be brought to each meeting.

AUD 53/21 REVIEW OF PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGREED INTERNAL AUDIT ACTIONS (Agenda item 12.)

Gail Beaton outlined the Progress in the implementation of agreed Internal Audit Actions. She advised that 2 actions had target dates of 31 March and would be completed by then. Some actions had already progressed since the publication of the agenda.

There were three actions set out in annexe 2 of the report which the relevant Heads of Service had requested extensions.

The Committee felt the requests for extensions were reasonable and AGREED the requests.

AUD 54/21 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (Agenda item 13.)

The Chairman moved the meeting into exempt session pursuant to Procedure Rule 20 and in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, and the webcast was terminated for the final part of the meeting.

AUD 55/21 REVIEW OF PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGREED ACTIONS (EXEMPT ANNEXE 3) (Agenda item 14.)

AUD 56/21 ANY OTHER ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED IN EXEMPT SESSION (Agenda item 15.)

There were no further items to discuss in exempt session so the Chair closed the meeting.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm and concluded at 8.46 pm

Chairman