

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL

Meeting of Audit Committee

Date: Wednesday, 17th July, 2024

Place: Committee Room 1 - Civic Suite

Present: Councillor R McMullan (Chair)
Councillors M O'Connor (Vice-Chair), S Allen, S Nadeem,
K Robinson, M Terry and C Campbell

(*Substitute in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 30.)

In Attendance: Councillors P Collins and D Cowan
S Zeiss, C Shuter, A Barnes, R Harris, S Dutton and C Thomas

Start/End Time: 6.30 - 7.50 pm

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T Cox (substitute: Cllr C Campbell), M Davidson and S Habermel.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this meeting.

3 Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 24 April 2024

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 24 April 2024, be confirmed as a correct record.

4 Information Governance and SIRO Annual Report 2023/24

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Strategy and Change) presenting a summary of the Council's key actions concerning information governance and information risk management during 2023/24.

The Committee asked questions which were responded to by officers. The Committee requested that the data/figures for Freedom of Information (FOI) and Subject Access Requests (SAR) was included in future reports.

Resolved:

1. That the Senior Information Risk Owner submitted report on Information Governance for 2023/24, be noted.

2. That the breach notified to the ICO in 2023, together with the actions taken in mitigation, as set out in the submitted report, be noted.

3. That it be noted that the Council has strengthened the structures in place to manage information lawfully as a result of the data breach.

5 Counter Fraud & Investigation Annual Performance Report 2023/24

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) presenting an update on the work of the Counter Fraud & Investigation Team (CFIT) in delivering the Counter Fraud Strategy and Work Programme for 2023/24 and updating on progress made by CFIT in delivering the Counter Fraud Strategy and Work Programme for 2024/25.

The Committee asked questions which were responded to by officers.

Resolved:

That the achievements of the Counter Fraud & Investigation Team during 2023/24 and the first quarter of 2024/25, be noted.

6 Head of Internal Audit Annual Report 2023/24

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) providing the following information for the 2023/24 financial year:

- The rationale for and an audit opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of Southend-on-Sea City Council's (the Council's) risk management, control and governance processes; and
- a statement on conformance with the UK Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (the Standards) and the results of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme.

The Committee asked questions which were responded to by officers.

Resolved:

That the Head of Internal Audit's Annual Report for 2023/24, be accepted and confirmed that the opinion of the Head of Internal Audit can be relied upon as a key source of evidence to support the Annual Governance Statement.

7 Audit Committee Annual Report 2023/24

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) presenting the Audit Committee Annual Report 2023/24.

The Committee asked questions which were responded to by officers.

Resolved:

That the Annual Report for the Audit Committee for 2023/24, be approved and referred to the Council for information.

8 Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) presenting the Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24, together with actions planned for 2024/25 and an update on progress made with the 2023/24 action plan.

The Committee asked questions which were responded to by officers.

Resolved:

That the Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24, subject to any further views expressed by External Audit, be approved and be recommended to the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive for authorisation and signature, and incorporation in the Statement of Accounts 2023/24.

9 Updated Local Code of Governance

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Strategy and Change) presenting the Council's updated Local Code of Governance.

The Committee asked questions which were responded to by officers.

Resolved:

1. That Cabinet be recommended to approve the revised Local Code of Governance, as set out in Appendix A and Appendix B to the submitted report.
2. That, following Cabinet approval, the Council's Constitution be updated to reflect the revised Local Code of Governance.

Chair: _____