

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL

Meeting of Audit Committee

Date: Wednesday, 20th July, 2022

Place: Council Chamber - Civic Suite

Present: Councillor M Dent (Chair)
Councillors H Boyd, K Buck, T Cox, M Davidson, R McMullan,
K Murphy, K Pandya and *M O'Connor

*Substitute in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 31.

In Attendance: A Barnes, R Harris, J Burr, J Chesterton and S Dutton

Start/End Time: 6.30 - 8.25 pm

173 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Shead (no substitute) and Councillor Line (substitute: Cllr O'Connor).

174 Declarations of Interest

The following interests were declared at the meeting:

Councillor Davidson – Minute 176 (Head of Internal Audit Annual Report – Non-Executive director of South Essex Homes (SEH)).

175 Minutes of the Meeting held on 27th April 2022

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 27th April 2022, be confirmed as a correct record and signed.

176 Head of Internal Audit Annual Report 2021/22

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) providing the following information for the 2021/22 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 2021/22, 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.

177 Counter Fraud and Investigation Annual Performance Report 2021/22

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) presenting the Counter Fraud & Investigation Team (CFIT) Annual Report 2021/22 and updating on progress made by CFIT in delivering the Counter Fraud Strategy and Work Programme for 2022/23.

The Committee asked questions which were responded to by officers.

Resolved:

That the performance of the Counter Fraud & Investigation Team over 2021/22 and the first quarter of 2022/23, be noted

178 Annual Governance Statement 2021/22

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) presenting the Annual Governance Statement for 2021/22 together with actions for 2022/23 and an update on progress made with the 2021/22 action plan.

The Committee asked questions which were responded to by officers.

Resolved:

That the Annual Governance Statement for 2021/22, 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 2021/22.

179 Deloitte: External Audit 2020/21 and 2021/22 Progress Report

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) setting out the status of the 2020/21 external audit of the Statement of Accounts and the early headline planning intentions for the 2021/22 audit.

The Committee asked questions which were responded to by officers and the representative from the external auditor.

180 Audit Committee Annual Report 2021/22

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) presenting the Audit Committee Annual Report 2021/22.

The Committee asked questions which were responded to by officers.

Resolved:

That the Annual Report for the Audit Committee for 2021/22, be approved and referred to the Council for information.

181 Vecteo Update

The Committee considered a report of The Executive Director (Finance and Resources) setting out the progress made in delivering the work required in respect of the special educational needs and disability (SEND) passenger transport provision provided by Vecteo, that was agreed by resolutions of Council held on 25 November 2021.

On consideration of the matter the Committee agreed to move into Part 2 to discuss the confidential aspects and on conclusion came back into Part 1 for decision and general questions.

The Committee asked questions which were responded to by officers. However, there were some questions that could not be responded to at the meeting and officers undertook to provide a written response to the Committee as soon as practicable.

Resolved:

1. That the findings from the review work requested in respect of the SEND passenger transport contract and the progress made with the Council's arrangements for working with Vecteo, be noted.
2. That a further update on progress and delivery of the agreed actions contained within the different reports as detailed in Council Minute 486 of the meeting held 25 November 2021, be brought back to the Committee in September 2022.

182 Information Items

The Committee noted the recent publication of the latest issue of the Audit Committee Update from the CIPFA Better Governance Forum, which aimed to support members of audit committees in their role.

183 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved:

That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the item of business set out below, on the grounds that it would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

184 Vecteo - Confidential matters

During consideration of Minute 181 concerning Vecteo the Committee moved into Part 2 so that the confidential matters could be discussed. The Committee moved back into Part 1 for the decision.

Chair: _____