

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL

Meeting of Audit Committee

Date: Wednesday, 23rd November, 2022

Place: Council Chamber - Civic Suite

Present: Councillor M Dent (Chair)
Councillors I Shead (Vice-Chair), H Boyd, K Buck, M Davidson,
A Line, R McMullan, K Murphy, *B Beggs and Mr K Pandya

*Substitute in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 31.

In Attendance: Councillors T Cowdrey
A Barnes, R Harris, P Bates, J Chesterton, S Dutton, C Fozzard and
G Gilbert
Also in attendance: M Ramzan and M Marais (Deloitte)

Start/End Time: 6.30 pm - 8.00 pm

486 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Cox (substitute: Cllr Beggs).

487 Declarations of Interest

The following declaration of interest was made:

(a) Cllr Davidson – All minutes in so far as they relate to South Essex Homes – Non-Executive Director on South Essex Homes.

488 Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 20th July 2022

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 20 July 2022, be confirmed as a correct record and signed.

489 Annual Report on Comments, Complaints and Compliments 2021/22

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Strategy, Change and Governance) presenting the annual report on general comments, complaints and compliments received across the Council for 2021/22 and the findings of certain Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman investigations.

The Committee asked questions which were responded to by the Director of Legal Services. However, there were some detailed questions that could not be responded to and the Director undertook to liaise with the relevant Executive Directors to provide written responses to the Committee as soon as practicable.

Resolved:

That the Council's performance in respect of comments, complaints and compliments and Ombudsman investigations for 2021/22, be noted.

490 Information Governance Update and Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) Annual Report 2021/22

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Strategy, Change and Governance) presenting a summary of the Council's key actions in regard to information governance and management during 2021/22 and the opportunities and challenges during 2022/23.

The Committee asked questions which were responded to by the Director of Legal Services. However, there were some detailed questions that could not be responded to and the Director undertook to provide written responses to the Committee as soon as practicable.

Resolved:

1. That the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) report on Information Governance for 2021/22, be noted.
2. That the key actions taken during 2021/22, and the opportunities and challenges for 2022/23, be noted.

491 CIPFA Financial Management Code Action Plan Progress Report

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) presenting a six monthly update on the action plan that resulted from the Council's self-assessment undertaken in March 2022 against the expectations of CIPFA's Financial Management Code.

The Committee asked questions which were responded to by officers.

Resolved:

1. That the progress against the Financial Management Code action plan that was reported to the Audit Committee on 27 April 2022, be noted.
2. That it be noted that the next annual self-assessment of the Council's compliance status against CIPFA's Financial Management Code would be undertaken and reported to the Audit Committee in April 2023.

492 Deloitte External Audit 2020/21 status update

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) presenting an update on the status of the 2020/21 external audit of the Statement of Accounts and the updated planning intentions for the 2021/22 audit.

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

Resolved:

That the submitted report be noted and that a further update on progress be provided to the January 2023 meeting of the Audit Committee.

493 Deloitte: Report to the Audit Committee on the audit for the year ended 31 March 2021

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) presenting a summary of the results of the work completed to date for the 2020/21 financial year with regard to the opinion on the Statement of Accounts and the commentary on the Council's Value for Money arrangements.

The Committee asked questions which were responded to by officers and the representatives of the external auditor.

Resolved:

That the submitted report on the audit for the year ended 31 March 2021, be accepted.

494 Counter Fraud & Investigation Team Quarterly Performance Report

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) setting out the progress made by the Counter Fraud and Investigation Team (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 and Investigation Team over the last three months, be noted.

495 Internal Audit Service Quarterly Performance Report

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) setting out progress made in delivering the Internal Audit Strategy for 2022/23.

The Committee asked questions which were responded to by officers.

Resolved:

That the progress made in delivering the 2022/23 Internal Audit Strategy, be noted.

496 Information Item

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.

Chair: _____