

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of Audit Committee

Date: Wednesday, 21st October, 2020

Place: Virtual Meeting via MS Teams

- Present:** Councillor P Collins (Chair)
Councillors L Burton (Vice-Chair), B Ayling, T Cox, M Davidson,
N Folkard, S Habermel, M Kelly, I Shead and Mr K Pandya
- In Attendance:** C Gamble, A Barnes, E Allen, R Gill, P Bates, J Chesterton,
Czerwinke, C Fozzard and V Smith
- Start/End Time:** 6.30 - 8.04 pm

479 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from C Wisdom (Deloitte)

480 Declarations of Interest

The following interest was declared at the meeting:

Councillor Shead – Agenda Item 5 (Deloitte: Update on Statement of Accounts Audit 2019/20 – Non-pecuniary Interest – In receipt of Pension from Essex County Council

481 Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 12th August 2020

Resolved:-

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 12th August 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed.

On consideration of the minutes, the Head of Internal Audit referred to an email he had sent to members of the Committee addressing two matters raised at the last meeting. Firstly, he explained that the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) audit had been deferred because of the planned changes to the DoLS arrangements. Secondly, in respect of the Adult Social Care Financial Assessments audit, the officer advised that the outstanding cases had been completed which had been achieved by re-engineering the financial assessment process and making use of the functionality offered by the new financial system.

482 Data Protection Report

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Transformation) on the measures being taken by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council concerning data protection in the context of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Committee asked a number of questions which were responded to by officers.

In response to a question on test and trace data collected from visitors to the Council's buildings, the Knowledge and Data Privacy Manager undertook to write to members of the Committee to clarify the arrangements for the recording of data destruction.

Resolved:-

That the measures taken to protect personal data during the coronavirus pandemic, be noted.

483 Deloitte: Update on Statement of Accounts audit 2019/20

The Chair of the Committee agreed to take this item of business in conjunction with the next item on the agenda.

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) summarising the final results of the work completed for the 2019/20 financial year with regard to:

- the opinion on the Statement of Accounts; and
- the conclusion on the adequacy of the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources (the VFM conclusion).

On behalf, of the External Auditor, the Executive Director explained that the Statement of Accounts had now been signed off. He added that the report before the Committee was substantially the same as the one submitted to the previous meeting but had been updated to reflect the Auditor's conclusions on the remaining work that needed to be undertaken.

The Committee asked a number of questions which were responded to by officers.

In noting the position on the Statements of Accounts, the Committee conveyed their thanks and appreciation to the Executive Director and his staff for their sterling work in producing the Accounts which had been compiled to a high standard.

Resolved:-

That the updated report on the audit for the year ended 31st March 2020, be accepted.

484 Deloitte: Update on Annual Audit Letter and Whole of Government Accounts 2019/20 (verbal update)

Resolved:-

That the verbal update provided by the Executive Director (Finance and Resources), be noted.

485 Internal Audit Plan 2020/21 Update

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) presenting the updated Internal Audit Plan for 2020/21 following further consideration as a result of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the consequent change in risk and priorities.

The Committee asked a number of questions which were responded to by officers.

On consideration of Appendix 1 to the submitted report, the Head of Internal Audit undertook to provide an assessment of the items in the Risk Watch List for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee.

Resolved:-

That the updated Internal Audit Plan for 2020/21, be approved.

486 Internal Audit Service Quarterly Performance Report

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) providing an update on the progress made in delivering the Internal Audit Strategy for 2020/21.

The Committee asked a number of questions which were responded to by officers.

On consideration of audit review of the arrangements to deliver financial assistance duties under section 17 of the Children's Act, the Head of Internal Audit undertook to report back to the April meeting of the Committee on the progress made on the implementation of the audit recommendations.

Resolved:-

That the progress made in delivering the 2020/21 Internal Audit Strategy, be noted.

487 Counter Fraud & Investigation Team Quarterly Performance Report

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) providing an update on the progress made by the Counter Fraud & investigation Team in delivering the Counter Fraud Strategy and Work Programme/Work Plan for 2020/21.

The Committee asked a number of questions which were responded to by officers.

On consideration of the report, the Acting Senior Investigations Officer undertook to consider offering the e-learning fraud awareness course to other appropriate organisations in the Borough.

Resolved:-

That the performance of the Counter Fraud & Investigation Team over the last three months, be noted.

488 Information Item

The Committee noted the following information item:

- Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) Quality of Audit Service feedback Survey.

Chair: _____