

Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting held on 30 January 2017 at 10:00 am in the Elisabeth Room, Endeavour House, Ipswich.

Present: Councillors Michael Bond (Chairman), Jenny Antill (Vice-Chairman), David Busby, Len Jacklin, Bert Poole and Chris Punt.

Supporting officers present: Louise Aynsley, Chief Accountant (Strategy and Accounts)
Chris Bally, Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Information Officer (for Minute No. 35)
Hayley Clark, Ernst & Young
Paul Emeny, Business Development Specialist (for Minute No. 35)
Peter Frost, Head of Audit Services
Mark Hodgson, Ernst & Young
Peter Knight, Head of Performance and Information Management (for Minute No. 35)
Linda Pattle, Democratic Services Officer

The Chairman welcomed Ms Hayley Clark, of Ernst & Young, who would be taking on the external auditing role previously undertaken by Mrs Tina Meyers.

31. Public Participation Session

There were no applications to speak in the Public Participation Session.

32. Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

There were no apologies for absence.

33. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations.

34. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

35. Performance and Risk Management Annual Report 2016

At Agenda Item 5 the Committee considered a report by the Director of Resource Management, providing the Committee with an update on the Council's performance and risk management arrangements and external inspection activity during 2016. Chris Bally, Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Information Officer, Peter Knight, Head of Performance and Information Management, and Paul Emeny, Business Development Specialist, presented the report and answered members' questions.

Decision: The Committee noted the content of the report at Agenda Item 5 and agreed:

- a) That satisfactory arrangements were in place for the effective management of performance and risk within the Council.
- b) To ask the Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Information Officer to write to the Chairman providing details about performance information already available to councillors and suggestions as to how councillors might be provided with regular updates on performance management information relating specifically to their divisions.

Reason for decision: The Committee considered that the report described satisfactory operational arrangements for performance and risk management. The Committee was content with the information provided about the latest developments for the main “business as usual” areas of the Council.

Members were pleased to hear that Internal Audit Services were represented on the Contracts Management Board, and that through the Board good practice was shared among officers. Staff responsible for contracts were being strongly encouraged to attend training focussed on a more commercial approach to contract management. There was evidence that this training was having a positive effect.

The Committee heard that directorates were able to access information about performance on both a monthly and a quarterly basis. Members of the Audit Services team were engaged in discussions with Assistant Directors aimed at ascertaining what assurance could be given that risks and performance were being appropriately managed.

The Committee noted that there were high risks associated with the Fire Service’s Integrated Risk Management Plan, but these were not highlighted in the most recent Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service Annual Statement of Assurance (considered by the Committee at its meeting on 29 November 2016). Members were aware that legislation currently passing through Parliament was likely to mean that in future the Fire Service would be subject to a Home Office inspection regime.

Members were aware that some performance information was already available to councillors. They considered that if in addition councillors could have access to performance data relating specifically to their divisions, that would be helpful, particularly in their dealings with parish councils and area committees.

Alternative options: None considered.

Declarations of interest: None declared.

Dispensations: None noted.

36. Audit Services Charter

At Agenda Item 6 the Committee considered a report about the Audit Services Charter, as required by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

Decision: The Committee:

- a) approved the Internal Audit Charter for 2017/18 as set out in the report at Agenda Item 6; and

- b) formally congratulated the Internal Audit team on its brilliant performance, which had resulted in the team being judged “Outstanding Team, Public Sector” at the Audit and Risk Awards 2016.

Reason for decision:

Members were aware that one of the core functions of the Audit Committee, as defined within its terms of reference, was to approve and monitor delivery of the internal audit activity of the Council. They wished to place on record their appreciation of the quality of work produced by the Audit Services team, especially with regard to the team’s innovative approach to planning audit activities.

Alternative options: None considered.

Declarations of interest: None declared.

Dispensations: None noted.

37. Forward Work Programme

The Committee approved its Forward Work Programme at Agenda Item 7.

38. Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 10:57 am.

Chairman

