

At a Meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee of the Richmondshire District Council held at Mercury House, Station Road, Richmond, North Yorkshire on Thursday, 27 September 2018 at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Geoffrey Linehan (Chairman).
Councillors John Amsden, Richard Blows, Campbell Dawson (as substitute for Sam Gibbs), Louise Dickens, Richard Ormston, Caroline Thornton-Berry, Clive World and Stephen Wyrill (as substitute for Karin Sedgwick).

Officers: Callum McKeon (Corporate Director (Monitoring Officer)), Sian Moore (Corporate Director (S151 Officer)) and Katie Cullum (Democratic Services Manager).

In

Attendance: Ian Morton and Jonathan Dodsworth (Veritau North Yorkshire– Internal Auditor) and Mark Outterside (Ernst & Young – External Auditor).

Apologies: Councillors Paul Cullen, Sam Gibbs, Russell Lord and Karin Sedgwick.

AG15/18 Minutes

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 July 2018 be approved and signed as an accurate record.

AG16/18 Public Speaking and Question Time

There were no public questions or statements submitted for consideration at the meeting.

AG17/18 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

AG18/18 Work Programme Update

Senior Management Team submitted an up to date Audit, Governance and Standards Committee Work Programme.

Resolved: That the Audit, Governance and Standards Work Programme be noted.

AG19/18 Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Progress

The Corporate Director (s151 Officer) presented the progress made to date in delivering the 2018/19 internal audit and counter fraud work.

Audit work carried out to date against the audit plan to 7 September, which included a summary of key issues from two completed audits and the level of assurance attained, was set out in Appendix 1 of the report. The plan had been revised to reflect that the proposed Section 106 audit had been

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changed and would now cover development control to look specifically at planning applications where an extension of time had been granted.

The fraud team had achieved £3.3k in savings for the Council as a result of investigative work and as at 28 August 2018, 66% of investigations completed had resulted in a successful outcome. There were currently 16 ongoing investigations and a summary of the counter fraud activity was set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

It was reported that as a result of data matching an identified council tax fraud had resulted in a successful prosecution. Currently a further 6 cases were under investigation.

Resolved: That the progress on the delivery of the audit and counter fraud plans, and the arrangements for the external assessment, be noted.

AG20/18 Review of Counter Fraud Strategy and Policy

The Corporate Director (s151 Officer) presented a written report seeking approval of the updated counter fraud and corruption strategy action plan. Key work highlighted within the plan included raising awareness to tackle the increase in cybercrime and measures to combat the increase in council tax fraud.

Resolved: That the updated counter fraud and corruption strategy action plan be approved.

AG21/18 External Audit - Annual Audit Letter

The Council's External Auditor, Ernst & Young, presented the Annual Audit Letter for the year ended 31 March 2018, highlighting the key issues arising from its work during the 2017/2018 audit.

Mr M Outterside confirmed that Ernst and Young was satisfied with the proper arrangements the Council had put in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. As a result an unqualified value for money conclusion had been issued. It was also noted that an unqualified audit opinion on the Council's Statement of Accounts had been issued on 30 July 2018.

Resolved:

- (a) That the contents of the Annual Audit Letter for the year ended 31 March 2018 be noted.
- (b) That the thanks of the Committee be conveyed to officers in the finance and improvement team in appreciation of their efforts in relation to the audit and to produce accurate accounts within the required deadline and to Ernst and Young for its work undertaken for the audit.

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AG22/18 Partnership Governance

The Corporate Director (s151 Officer) presented details of the significant partnerships that the Council is involved with and the governance arrangements currently in place. The current register of partnerships, which had been updated to reflect the latest position, was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

Resolved: That the progress made on partnership governance be noted.

AG23/18 Risk Management

Senior Management Team provided an update on risk management following a revised approach to identifying, assessing and monitoring key corporate and operational risks. A revised risk register identifying the key corporate risks was appended to the report. Risk registers were now in place for all service areas with actions and updates monitored on a six monthly basis in line with service plan updates.

Resolved: (a) That the change in approach to risk management be noted.
(b) That the updated risk assessments, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be confirmed as the key corporate risks for the Council.

AG24/18 Review of the Constitution

The Monitoring Officer presented a written report seeking agreement on a proposed course of action, proposed timetable and approval of proposed consultation arrangements for a review of the Council's Constitution.

Resolved: (a) That the commencement of a review of the constitution be endorsed.
(b) That a working group of 6 members of this Committee, comprising 3 Conservative and 2 grouped Independent representatives and 1 ungrouped member nomination be established to support the review and report back to the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee at its meeting on 29 January 2019.

AG25/18 Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act – Review of Activity

The Corporate Director (Monitoring Officer) presented a written update on Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act activities undertaken since the last meeting. At the time of the meeting no activities had been undertaken.

Resolved: That it be noted that no Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act activity had been undertaken by the Council from 1 July 2018 to 30 August 2018.

The meeting concluded at approximately 7.34 pm.