

AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE

11th December 2019

PRESENT:-

Conservative Group

Councillors Atkin (Vice-Chairman) and Churchill.

Labour Group

Councillor Dunn and Shepherd.

AS/36 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies received from Councillor Whittenham

AS/37 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Sub-Committee was informed that no declarations of interest had been received.

AS/38 **TO RECEIVE ANY QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO.10**

The Sub-Committee was informed that no questions from members of the public had been received.

AS/39 **TO RECEIVE ANY QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO.11**

The Sub-Committee was informed that no questions from Members of the Council had been received.

MATTERS DELEGATED

AS/40 **LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE 2019/20**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services presented the report informing Members of the update on the new system in place to demonstrate compliance with the Council's Governance arrangements and highlighting the 6 principles underpinning the arrangements.

Councillor Shepherd asked if the changes to the system meant that anything would be lost. The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) assured Members that this was not the case as the principles were the same with the

evidence presented being more succinct and easier to follow. Councillor Dunn enquired whether there would be an on-going review in case we leave the EU without a deal. The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) informed Members that this is being kept under review and there is the possibility of a slowdown of supplies coming into the District. In addition, it is understood that current investments in Money Market Funds domiciled in the EU would need to be recalled but as they were instant access, it was not anticipated it would cause any issues.

Councillor Churchill raised concern that there was no mention of GDPR in the assessment (Appendix 1) and that it was not explicit that the onus is on the Council. The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) informed the Committee that GDPR is covered under the Data Quality and Security Frameworks but Appendix 1 can be amended to make reference to this.

Councillor Shepherd raised a concern regarding “openness” contained in 3.7 of the Core Principles and he wished to be noted that he felt that there was neither openness nor stakeholder involvement in relation to the Infinity Garden Village. Under Item 7 of the Scheme of Delegation, he considered that the Constitution was ignored by officers and therefore he could not vote for this motion.

RESOLVED:-

Members considered and approved the updated Local Code of Corporate Governance for 2019/20 as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

Members approved the progress regarding on-going work to maintain good governance as detailed in the report.

Abstention: Councillor Shepherd.

AS/41 **INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT**

The Audit Manager presented the report giving an overview of its content and the detailed recommendations contained in each Audit.

The Chairman enquired about when it comes to officer expenses would there be an audit against a green travel policy? The Audit Manager informed the Members that we make sure a travel policy is in place and ensure that the Council pays consideration to it regarding the travel by employees.

Councillor Dunn raised concerns regarding the fact that the ‘Right to Buy’ Valuer was unqualified and the significant risk of insufficient consideration of the potential fraud throughout the Right to Buy Process. The Head of Legal

and Democratic Services explained to Members that that Council had always used a qualified Valuer and since that person had left we have used an experienced officer who did not have the qualifications expected by the Auditor. In accordance with the Audit recommendation, this was being addressed.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services explained that nationally fraud is most prevalent in the London Boroughs but in this District we do have a duty to check that applicants are eligible and do fulfil the criteria of Right to Buy and whilst these checks are carried out by officers they were not as robust as the Auditor would like. This was also being addressed.

The Chairman and Councillor Dunn requested that an update on the Park and Open Spaces recommendations be brought back to this committee following the 4 month extension requested to allow the Open Space and Facility Team the time to deal with capacity issues. The Cultural Services Manager informed Members that a report was due in early 2020 regarding resources to enable the Council to carry out the necessary checks etc. and put in place from September 2020 a rolling programme of checks.

The Chairman requested an update on the PCI compliance recommendation. The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) informed Members that a new system to deal with card payments made over the telephone was being investigated to enable payments to be dealt with separately so the call handler will not be dealing with the payment details

The Chairman enquired why there was no update regarding the Orchard IT Application. The Head of Housing confirmed that there is now access to the system for all service users. There is also housekeeping being undertaken including the removal of stale accounts.

RESOLVED:-

Members considered the report of the Audit Manager and agreed that any issues identified will be referred to the Finance and Management Committee or subject to a follow-up report as appropriate.

AS/ 42 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUDIT COMMITTEE BRIEFING : QUARTER 3 SEPTEMBER 2019**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) presented the report on behalf of the Auditor Jason Burgess who sent his apologies.

RESOLVED:-

Committee considered the key questions highlighted by the Council's External Auditors as contained in their latest sector update.

AS/43 **COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

RESOLVED:-

Members considered and approved the updated work programme.

AS/44 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT [ACCESS TO INFORMATION] ACT 1985)**

RESOLVED:-

That in accordance with Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraph of Part I of the Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in the header to each report on the Agenda.

EXEMPT QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO.11

The Sub-Committee was informed that no questions from Members of the Council had been received.

The Meeting terminated at 5 pm.

COUNCILLOR ATKIN

VICE CHAIRMAN