

COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE

30TH APRIL 2018

Present:

Councillor LR Wilkins	-	Chairman
AW Berry		PCB Coleman
T Cheung		

Apologies:

R Theodoulou

Observers:

SI Andrews

AUD.47 SUBSTITUTION ARRANGEMENTS

No substitution arrangements had been put in place for this Meeting.

AUD.48 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest under the Code of Conduct for Members or Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

There were no declarations of interest under the Code of Conduct for Officers.

AUD.49 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 30th January 2018 be approved as a correct record.

Record of Voting - for 4, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 1.

AUD.50 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements from the Chairman.

AUD.51 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions had been received.

AUD.52 MEMBER QUESTIONS

No questions had been submitted by Members.

AUD.53 COUNTER FRAUD UNIT REPORT AND REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA) UPDATE

The Committee considered a report detailing recent Counter Fraud Unit activities and an update in relation to the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA).

The Counter Fraud Manager amplified various aspects of the circulated report, including the work plan and results. It was noted that at the end of the 2017/18 financial year, there was an underspend on the Unit's finances, and as such, £2,248 would be returned to this Council (together with returns to the other partner Councils). In addition to working directly for partner Councils, it was explained that the Unit had grown and now provided support to other public sector bodies. The Counter Fraud Manager explained that the Work Plan would be circulated in due course and, additionally, county-wide bids had been submitted for pilot schemes in relation to join investigation work with the Department Work Pensions (DWP) and business rates matching with the National Fraud Initiative (NFI).

The Counter Fraud Manager also explained that, with regard to the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA), the directed surveillance and communication data policies were under review and a social media policy had been drafted.

Officers responded to various questions from Members, including the Unit's workload in relation to work on behalf of partner Councils, Publica and Ubico; Counter Fraud Unit support to the Planning and Development, Environmental and Regulatory, and Revenues and Benefits Services; the Unit's staffing arrangements; and the associated requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Record of Voting - for 4, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 1.

AUD.54 INTERNAL AUDIT MONITORING REPORT

The Committee considered a report summarising work undertaken to date by South West Audit Partnership Internal Audit Services), including progress against the current Audit Plan.

The SWAP Assistant Director amplified aspects of the circulated report, including in relation to progress against each of the auditable areas. Officers then responded to various questions from Members, including in relation to Audit recommendations in respect of Food Safety and Licensing, Capital Spend and use of Capital Receipts, Accounts Payable, Council Tax Reduction Scheme and National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR. It was also reported that, since November 2017, the SWAP Internal Audit Services had been providing internal audit services to Publica and that since the transfer of Council staff to the SWAP Internal Audit Services in April 2017, there was no lead Council for internal audit services.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Record of Voting - for 4, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 1.AUD.55 INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL PLAN 2018/19

The Committee considered the Internal Audit Annual Plan 2018/19 and the updated Internal Audit Charter. The SWAP Assistant Director amplified various aspects, in relation to recommendations in respect of Food Safety and Licensing and confirmed that follow-up work was already in hand. The Assistant Director also explained that the Plan had been drawn up in consultation with Senior Management Officers and Members of the Committee.

In response to various questions from Members, it was reported that SWAP Internal Audit Services worked across Publica and that all reports were shared with Publica Directors; Cyber Security and Members' ICT were not confirmed items at present and an update would be presented at a future Committee Meeting; reference to Audit Committee Audit was explained as being Officer time spent on preparing reports for Committee Meetings and the Internal Audit Charter set out the governance arrangements and the arrangement with SWAP.

RESOLVED that Internal Audit Plan for 2018/19 and the Internal Audit Charter be approved.

Record of Voting - for 4, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 1.AUD.56 DRAFT ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The Committee considered the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2017/18 and the updated Local Code of Corporate Governance.

The Chief Finance Officer amplified various aspects of the circulated report and explained that the Statement presented was the first draft, prior to the Committee being presented with the formal document at its Meeting in July 2018.

A Member drew attention to the fact that a quarterly reminder was issued regarding updates to Registers of Interests. An appropriate amendment would be made in the document.

RESOLVED that, subject to the amendment identified, the Committee approves the updated Local Code of Corporate Governance.

Record of Voting - for 4, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 1.AUD.57 EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

Ms J Masci (Engagement Lead) of Grant Thornton, the Council's external auditor, was present for this item.

The Committee considered a series of reports detailing general progress, a report of the Audit Plan for the 2017/18 financial year, and the planned audit fee for 2018/19. Ms. Masci responded to various questions from Members.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

Record of Voting - for 4, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 1.

AUD.58 EXTERNAL AUDIT ASSURANCE REPORT

The Committee considered a suggested response to a letter from the Council's external auditors (Grant Thornton) regarding how the Committee gained assurance on matters such as fraud, breaches of internal control and compliance with laws and regulations.

RESOLVED that the response to the letter from Grant Thornton be approved for signature by the Chairman of the Committee (on behalf of the Council).

Record of Voting - for 4, against 0, abstentions 0, absent 1.

AUD.59 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee Officer explained that, contrary to the information contained within the published Agenda, the next 'business' Meeting of the Audit Committee would be held on 24th July 2018.

The Chairman also commented that this would be the last Meeting of this Committee in the current municipal year, and he thanked Members and Officers for their work, and support.

AUD.60 OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business that was urgent.

The Meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and closed at 11.55 a.m.

Chairman

(END)