

AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

Monday, 16th February, 2015

Present:- Councillor John Taylor – in the Chair

Councillors Loades, Mrs Burgess, Jones, Sweeney and Mrs Hambleton

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr Phil Butters from Keele University.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 November, 2014 be agreed as a correct record.

4. CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR THE PERIOD OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2014

The Council's Business Improvement Officer (Risk & Insurance) updated Members on the current position regarding risk management for October to December 2014.

A risk report and action plan were attached to the report. Members were advised that there had been no risk level increases during this period, although there were 18 new risks which fell into the Medium Amber rating.

Members discussed the items contained within the report and made observations. An objection was made to the risk of 'Members not adhering to Officers advice'.

Resolved:

- (i) That the new risks be noted.
- (ii) That the overdue risks and risk rating changes be noted.

5. CERTIFICATION WORK REPORT 2013/2014

Consideration was given to Grant Thornton's Report regarding the Certification of Claims for the Borough Council for 2013/14.

Appended to the report was a letter giving brief comments on the findings of Grant Thornton's work.

The letter stated that there were no issues arising from the work and that they were 'satisfied that the Council had adequate arrangements to compile, complete, accurate and timely claim for audit certification'.

Resolved: That the information be received.

6. ADOPTION OF INTERNAL AUDIT HIGH RISK RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUMMARY OF ASSURANCE

Consideration was given to a report regarding high risk recommendations.

The outstanding high risk recommendations which had twice changed the target dates were appended to the report. Also attached was a summary of Outstanding Audit Recommendations and Levels of Assurance for Quarter 3.

Members were advised that the Draft Driving at Work Policy was complete and Officers were satisfied that all of the points had been incorporated into the document along with recommendations for the Draft Vehicle Management Policy.

Resolved: That the actions of the officers and levels of assurance be noted.

7. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

Consideration was given to a report updating Members on works being undertaken by the Internal Audit Section for Quarter three.

The Performance Indicators were all on target and recommendations implemented.

The Internal Audit Plan for 2014/15 was attached to the report and listed the areas that had been completed in Quarter three.

Members queried the Website Content review which was referred to in the report which was attached at Appendix A. It was stated that the team either needed external help or extra members of staff. Within the report, reference was made to the skill set which was required. Members suggested that this implied that there were not enough technical staff. Members were advised that this was in relation to training conditions and that it would be part of the recommendations. The Audit Manager was then asked if there was an action plan? This would be reported back to the next meeting.

A further query was raised regarding sundry debtors. Day book sheets were currently being produced manually and sent to the Finance Section. Within the new system these could potentially be produced electronically but there could be some security issues. The Council's Executive Director – Resources and Support Services would update the Committee on this matter at a future meeting.

Finally, Members were advised that the refuse collection staff would be moving over to Mitrefinch – the electronic time recording system by the end of the current financial year.

Resolved:

- (i) That the information be received and the comments noted.
- (ii) That Members receive feedback on the action plan with regard to the 'skill set' for the implementation of a new Content Management System for the Council's website.
- (iii) That Members receive feedback on the matter regarding issues in relation to raising Sundry Debtor accounts

- (iv) That Members receive an update regarding refuse collection staff moving over to the electronic time recording system.

8. INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN

Members considered a report regarding the proposed Internal Audit Plan for 2015/16 and seek approval for the contents.

A copy of the Plan was attached to the report at Appendix A as was the methodology used (Appendix B).

There were some new areas included for next year – safeguarding, transparency and ethical governance.

A new system was in the process of being installed with a view to this being operational by quarter two of 2015/16. A number of authorities were using the package but it could be tailored to this authority.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the Internal Audit Plan for 2015/16 be approved.
 - (ii) That the continuation of the reporting arrangements, as set out in the report, be agreed.

(a) Audit and Risk Committee Update

A copy of the Audit and Risk Committee Update had been sent to Members in a supplementary agenda. The report updated Members on Grant Thornton's progress in delivering services to the Borough Council as the external auditor.

Appendix A gave brief comments on the findings of Grant Thornton. Members were advised that there were no actions or recommendations arising from the report.

- Resolved:** That Grant Thornton's Report be received.

9. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

COUNCILLOR JOHN TAYLOR
Chair