

AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Monday, 24th September, 2018
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

Present:- Councillor Paul Waring – in the Chair

Councillors Dymond, Butters, Burgess, Stubbs, Burnett and Panter

Officers Executive Director (Resources and Support Services) - Kelvin Turner, Annette Vacquier- Business Improvement Officer (Risk and Insurance) and Geoff Durham - Mayor's Secretary / Member Support Officer

Also in Attendance P. Butters – University of Keele

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Pickup.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 30 July, 2018 be agreed as a correct record.

4. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL REVIEW LETTER 2017/18**

Consideration was given to a report informing Members of the Council's performance in relation to complaints made to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Reference was made to paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2 of the report.

Councillor Stubbs asked which budget the 'financial redress/other remedy' came from, as referred to in the appendices.

The Council's Executive Director – Resources and Support Services, Kelvin Turner advised that there was no specific budget for this and it would therefore come from The Planning Department's budget. Members requested further information on this and it was agreed that a paragraph would be put together and forwarded to members of the committee.

This was an information item and Members attention was brought to the three appendices attached to the report.

Resolved: That the report be received.

5. CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT - APRIL -JUNE, 2018

Consideration was given to a report informing Members of the progress made by the Council in enhancing and embedding risk management for the period April to June, 2018.

Members were advised that there were no overdue risks and there had been no 'significant' risk level increases. Overall there had been thirty three risk level changes.

There had been two new risks at service level.

Members' attention was drawn to the risks outlined at Appendix A.

Councillor Stubbs asked if the Council's Head of Environmental Health Services, Nesta Barker could come to a future meeting to give an explanation on the pollution risk. The Chair explained that the risk refers to not submitting a report on pollution and not the pollution itself – which the council does not have control over.

Councillor Stubbs also stated that having Planning decisions down as a red risk put a lot of pressure onto members of the Planning Committee when it should be above reproach.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That point 2.1.1 showing the number of overdue risks be noted.
 - (ii) That point 2.2.1 advising of the risk level increases be noted.
 - (iii) That point 2.2.2 regarding the new risks identified between April to June 2017 be noted.
 - (iv) That point 4 be noted.
 - (v) That Appendix A be noted and the progress that has been made in managing the risks identified within the Strategic, Operational, Project and Partnership Risk Registers, be noted

6. ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER

Consideration was given to the Annual Audit Letter that had been received from Grant Thornton.

Members were advised that there was nothing new in the Annual Audit Letter as it was almost a repeat of the previously received Audit Findings report.

Members' attention was brought to the Executive summary on page 29 of the agenda.

- Resolved:** That the Annual Audit Letter be received.

7. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT - QUARTER ONE - 2018/19

Consideration was given to a report updating members on the work undertaken by the Internal Audit section during April to June, 2018.

Members were advised that the Audit and Elections Manager who had been on suspension would not be returning to the Authority and various options would now be considered on the way forward.

A new Elections Manager had commenced work with the Council this week and therefore a 'Head of Audit' role needed addressing.

Resolved: That the information be received.

8. **QUARTERLY REPORT: ADOPTION OF INTERNAL AUDIT HIGH RISK RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUMMARY OF ASSURANCE - APRIL TO JUNE, 2018 KT**

Consideration was given to a report regarding any outstanding high risk recommendations for Quarter 1 – April to June, 2018 and requesting approval to requested actions and target dates. Also to provide Members with an assurance opinion on internal controls.

Members attention was drawn to page 51 of the agenda which outlined where the thirty six outstanding recommendations were – although some of the recommendations may not be outstanding at this point in time.

Councillor Panter and Stubbs queried the high level of recommendations in the chief Executive's directorate and Mr Turner was asked to circulate this information to Members.

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

9. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Business.

COUNCILLOR PAUL WARING
Chair

Meeting concluded at 7.28 pm