

Contact Officer: Andrea Woodside

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Friday 7th September 2018

Present: Councillor Hilary Richards (Chair)
Councillor Kath Pinnock
Councillor Mohan Sokhal

Apologies: Councillor Ken Sims
Councillor Julie Stewart-Turner

1 Membership of the Committee

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Sims and Stewart-Turner.

Councillor Sokhal substituted for Councillor Pattison.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 July 2018 be approved as a correct record.

3 Interests

No interests were declared.

4 Admission of the Public

It was noted that all Agenda Items would be considered in public session.

5 Deputations/Petitions

None received.

6 Annual Corporate Emergency Planning And Business Continuity Report

The Committee received the annual update of Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Report for the 2017/2018 financial year. The report sought to provide assurance that the Council was compliant with legislative requirements and that satisfactorily robust processes were in place in order to provide protection in the event of an emergency or business disruption.

The Committee noted the content of the report and discussion took place with regards to the need to update Councillors, by way of a training session, as to who to contact within the Council in the event of various types of emergency, and how to deal with local emergency situations. The Committee also discussed the implications for the potential of a no-deal Brexit and how this was being planned for across the region.

RESOLVED -

- 1) That the report be received and noted.

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- 2) That arrangements be put in place for an Elected Member training session on Emergency Planning matters to be held.

7 Information Governance Annual Report

The Committee received the Information Governance Annual Report 2017/18, which provided an overview on matters relating to (i) information governance matters (ii) information access requests under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (iii) Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (iv) subject access requests made under the Data Protection Act 1998 and (v) an outline of improvements and developments planned for 2018/2019.

The Committee were informed that the learning from the past 12 months, along with planned activity for the next reporting period, would form the basis of the work programme for the Information Governance Board, with a focus upon compliance with the new General Data Protection Regulation.

The Committee welcomed the update report and discussion took place with regards to the frequency of future update reports, GDPR training for Council employees and Councillors, and external email user privacy notices. It was requested that a further report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee to support a discussion on progress against GDPR compliance.

RESOLVED -

- 1) That the report be received and noted.
- 2) That a further report be submitted to the next meeting to provide an update on progress against GDPR compliance, and that six monthly updates be scheduled thereafter.

8 Corporate Customer Standards Annual Report 2017-2018

The Committee received a report which set out an update on complaint handling for the year 2017-2018, a review of Ombudsman and third stage complaints and details of whistleblowing complaints.

The report advised that, during 2017-2018, there had been no formal Ombudsman reports recorded against the Council and 11 upheld cases of complaint, several of which related to Adult Care Services.

The Committee noted the content of the report and discussion took place with regards to the figures of complaints received by the Ombudsman in relation to Council service areas and as a proportion across the West Yorkshire region. The Committee also noted the issues that had been highlighted by users of the Special Educational Needs service, and welcomed the proposed changes supported by additional funding, which had been put in place to enable the users of the service to have an improved experience.

The Committee also gave consideration to issues relating to dealing with inappropriate behaviour and managing complaints regarding Council staff. It was requested that a further paper be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee to

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support a further discussion on approaches towards dealing with persistently unreasonable behaviour.

RESOLVED -

- 1) That the report be received and noted.
- 2) That a further discussion be scheduled for the next meeting regarding dealing with complaints.

9 External Audit - Progress Report And Sector Update

The Committee received a progress report, as submitted by Grant Thornton external audit, which set out progress made in terms of delivering external audit responsibilities, along with a summary of relevant emerging national issues and developments. The Committee noted that a handover process from KPMG was in transition and the progress that had been made as at 24 August 2018, as detailed within the report, specifically with regards to financial statements audit, value for money and certification of claims and returns. The report set out a timetable for deliverables, and the proposed dates for the submission of the accounts audit plan, interim audit findings, the audit findings report, the auditor's report and the annual audit letter.

RESOLVED - That the External Audit Progress report be received and noted.

10 External Assessment Of Internal Audit (As Required By Public Sector Internal Audit Standards)

The Committee received the Internal Audit external assessment report, which had been carried out in accordance with the requirements of Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. The report, which had been prepared by Julie Gill, Audit Manager at Wakefield Council, following an assessment undertaken in January and February 2018, provided an overall opinion that the Council's internal audit function 'generally conformed' to Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and Code of Ethics, which was the highest on a scale of three ratings.

The accompanying report, submitted by the Head of Audit and Risk, highlighted the recommendations that had been made, and set out a response to the recommendations at paragraph 2.2. It was noted that the recommendations and proposed actions would be incorporated into a Quality Improvement Programme to be submitted to the Committee on 25 January 2019. The Committee were also asked to approve the revised Audit Strategy and Charter, which was largely the same as the previous version (2017) but incorporating minor changes, which were attached at Appendix B of the considered report.

The Committee noted the content of report, and noted that there would be the opportunity for further discussion regarding the impact of the recommendations to take place at the meeting to be held in January 2019.

RESOLVED -

- 1) That the External Assessment of Internal Audit be received and noted.

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- 2) That the recommendations as set out at paragraph 2.2 of the report, and the proposed response, as set out at paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4, be noted.
- 3) That the Internal Audit Strategy and Charter 2018-2020 be approved.