

Contact Officer: Leigh Webb

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Friday 10th March 2023

Present: Councillor Yusra Hussain (Chair)
Councillor Harry McCarthy
Councillor Elizabeth Reynolds
Councillor John Taylor

In attendance: Richard Parry – Strategic Director for Adults and Health
Julie Muscroft – Service Director, Legal, Governance and commissioning
Emily Parry-Harries, Head of Public Health
Samantha Lawton – Head of Governance
Martin Dearnley – Head of Internal Audit
Erin Wood – Information Governance Manager and DPO
Aaron Gouldman – Grant Thornton
Councillor Habiban Zaman
Councillor Paul Davies (Ex-Officio)
Councillor Elizabeth Smaje (Ex-Officio)
Councillor Jo Lawson (Ex-Officio)

Apologies: Councillor Ammar Anwar
Councillor Joshua Sheard

1 Quorum

Due to adverse weather the meeting was inquorate. A number of Members had been able to attend virtually and it was agreed that the meeting would go ahead informally with any potential recommendations or decisions reported to the next scheduled meeting for ratification.

2 Membership of the Committee

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Ammar Anwar and Joshua Sheard. Councillor Paola Davies substituted for Councillor Kath Pinnock.

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10th February 2023 be noted and submitted to the next Committee meeting.

4 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Yusra Hussain and Councillor Jo Lawson declared an other interest in respect of item 10, Primary Care Networks and Local Health Improvement, as NHS employees.

5 Admission of the Public

It was noted that Agenda item 11 would be considered in private session.

6 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

7 Public Question Time

No questions were asked.

8 Annual Report - Information Governance

The Committee received a report providing an update on the Information Governance service, outlining key events and activities over the year.

Information Governance connected all the relevant standards, requirements, and best practice for appropriate and legal information handling, which allowed the Council to manage information in an appropriate way that balanced the importance of maintaining confidentiality and privacy for individuals, whilst ensuring openness and transparency for the organisation. The Information Governance Board held the Information Governance Team and their practices to account, ensuring that personal data was processed to the highest standards, and in line with legislation.

The report set out how the Council had performed in key areas; Organisational Culture Change, Legal Compliance, Information Sharing and Processing, and Records Management. It was important that the Council continued to have a strategic approach to information governance that ensured legislative compliance whilst realising the opportunities and benefits of best practice. The report also outlined the next steps and future plans for information governance in service and across the Council, supporting compliance and service delivery.

RESOLVED: That the Information Governance Annual Report be noted.

9 Quarterly Report of Internal Audit Quarter 3 2022-23 October 2022 to December 2022

The Committee received a report which set out the activities of the Internal Audit Quarter 3 of 2022/23.

The report provided information regarding nineteen audits and two investigations completed during the period. The routine audits for eleven schools were substantial or adequate, with the work in respect of other financial systems and business processes less satisfactory. Two had adequate assurance, the others relating to catering income at a residential facility, school exclusions, employee attendance management and lone working were all rated as having limited assurance. The two follow up audits still had limited assurance, although in both areas some progress had been made. The investigations related to two direct payment frauds.

Internal Audit continued with its activity to support several governance areas and had reviewed certain grant and payment regimes, work had also been done to review IT access controls on core systems.

Corporate Governance and Audit Committee - 10 March 2023

The Council's Fraud Investigation Team had been party to denying 7 Right to Buy applications with a further 16 Right to Buy investigations ongoing. The Council Cabinet had approved a new Counter Fraud Strategy, which restated the expectation that everyone acted with integrity when dealing with the Council, the arrangements and systems looked to prevent and detect fraud, with action being taken against offenders.

The Committee acknowledged that there had been no Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act activity during the period quarter 3 2022/23.

RESOLVED: That the Internal Audit Quarter 3 2022-23 report be noted.

10 **Lead Councillor Role - Primary Care Networks and Local Health Improvement**

The Committee received a report on the learning, experience, and accountability to date of the role of Lead Councillor – Primary Care Networks and Local Health Improvement.

Annual Council at its meeting on 25th May 2022 approved the incorporation of the role of Lead Councillor – Primary Care Networks and Local Health Improvement into the Members Allowance Scheme. Annual Council determined that a review of the new role profile be undertaken after 6 months and that the review included the accountability of those in lead roles, having regard to any learning from the Place Based working role and that a report be submitted to this committee.

The report captured key points from discussion with the Lead Councillors at their meeting in January 2023 in terms of that they thought had gone well so far, and what they thought had gone less well along with recommendations going forward.

During discussion the Committee raised concerns with regards to the Lead Councillor role and the work that had been undertaken with Place Partnerships as well as questioning whether the new roles had added any significant value since being introduced. It was also noted that Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee had submitted recommendations in progressing the Lead Councillor role and the need for engagement with all relevant Ward Councillors. Councillor Smaje, Chair of Scrutiny, outlined details of the recommendations at the meeting.

Richard Parry, Strategic Director for Adults and Health suggested that following a discussion with Governance to map out reporting lines in relation to the issues and points discussed. A conversation with the Chairs of Scrutiny and Corporate Governance and Audit would take place to determine a timeline to when the report should be considered by this Committee.

Councillor John Taylor expressed his disappointment that the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care and The Leader was not present at the meeting. The Chair advised that the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care was unwell and that The Leader had an engagement which meant he was unable to attend the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Lead Councillor Role – Primary Care Networks and Local Health Improvement report be noted.

Corporate Governance and Audit Committee - 10 March 2023

11 Exclusion of the Public

RESOLVED: That acting under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as specifically state in the undermentioned minute.

12 Quarterly Report of Internal Audit Quarter 3 2022-23 October 2022 to December 2022

Exempt information within Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information (Variation) Order 2006, namely Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the exempt information, which was an appendix to Agenda item 8.