

Contact Officer: Nicola Sylvester

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Friday 19th April 2024

Present: Councillor James Homewood (Chair)
Councillor Harry McCarthy (Virtual)
Councillor John Taylor
Councillor Kath Pinnock

Co-optees Chris Jones

In attendance: Rachel Spencer-Henshall, Strategic Director, Corporate Strategy, Commissioning and Public Health,
Julie Muscroft -Service Director, Legal, Governance and Commissioning, (Virtual)
Leigh Webb - Acting Head of Governance
Martin Dearnley -Head of Risk & Internal Audit,
Councillor Graham Turner
Gareth Mills -Grant Thornton (Virtual)
Greg Charnley - Grant Thornton (Virtual)
Councillor Elizabeth Smaje (ex-Officio)

Apologies: Councillor Naheed Mather

1 Membership of the Committee

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Naheed Mather.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 8th March 2024 be approved as a correct record.

3 Declaration of Interests

Councillor John Taylor declared 'an other' interest as a Member of the Democracy Commission.

4 Admission of the Public

All items were considered in public, with exception to part of agenda item 8.

5 Deputations/Petitions

There were no deputations or petitions received.

6 Implementation of Democracy Commission Recommendations update

The Committee received an update on the implementation of Democracy Commission recommendations.

Leigh Webb, Acting Head of Governance advised that the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee were central in the oversight of the work in relation to the review and examination of alternative models of governance that the Democracy Commission undertook. The Democracy Commission recommended to Council that the current Leader and Cabinet model of governance arrangements be retained. In coming to this conclusion, the Commission highlighted a number of areas for further work, particularly in relation to the development and strengthening of the existing scrutiny function; increased dialogue with Cabinet Members on key strategic issues with Members to increase transparency and develop both formal and informal engagement with members; and that a consultation be undertaken with Group Business Managers and Members, to identify any potential barriers preventing some Members being appointed to Committees/Panels such as timing, frequency, location, format of meetings with any actions appropriately co-ordinated.

A review of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee also took place which set out a number of changes, with a new structure being adopted by Council in May 2023.

During consideration of this item, it was noted that pre-decision scrutiny and recommendations from scrutiny panels were imperative to decision making, which should be added into officer's reports, and that pre-decision scrutiny worked well when there was open and transparency in sharing information.

RESOLVED: That the Implementation of Democracy Commission Recommendations update be noted.

7 Proposed revisions to the terms of reference for the Kirklees Health and Wellbeing Board 2024/25

The Committee received the proposed revision to the terms of reference for the Kirklees Health and Wellbeing Board 2024/25 to be referred for final approval at Council on 22nd May 2024.

Rachel Spencer-Henshall, Strategic Director, Corporate Strategy, Commissioning and Public health advised that the updated terms of reference would ensure that the Health and Wellbeing Board would meet its statutory obligations and fulfil the local and national policy commitment to partnership-based approaches to improving health and wellbeing, whilst delegating authority to the Chair for the appointment of the Deputy Chair facilitated efficient leadership with the Board.

The following proposed changes to the Terms of Reference were noted:

- Removal of the Chief Executive, Kirklees Council as a Board member,
- To delegate authority to the Chair of Health and Wellbeing Board for the appointment of a Deputy Chair from amongst its members,
- Name changes within the membership,
- Change in language to reflect the new health and care strategies.

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During consideration of this item, it was noted that Colleges alongside schools should be represented on the Board.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the updated Terms of Reference for the Kirklees Health and Wellbeing Board for the year 2024/25 be approved and referred to Council on 22 May 2024,
- (ii) That delegated authority to the Chair of Health and Wellbeing Board for the appointment of a Deputy Chair from amongst its members be approved.

8 Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25 and Associated Matters

The Committee received the Internal Audit Plan for the first half of 2024/25, the Internal Audit Charter and Mandate.

Martin Dearnley, Head of Risk and Internal Audit advised the Committee that a risk-based audit plan was necessary to achieve maximum assurance from a limited level of resource and that the Internal Audit Mandate, Charter and Strategy document was in fulfilment of the requirements for the Institute of Internal Auditors Global, Internal Audit Standards and Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. It was anticipated that the proposed internal audit plan could be delivered within the envisaged resource availability.

The Committee noted that Internal Audit is a statutory obligation for local authorities and existed to provide independent assurance about the business processes for the Council. Internal Audit work was designed to provide assurance through following a programme of work to give coverage across the organisation areas of risk. The report covered the following areas:

- Audit Planning & Resourcing 2024/25
- Internal Audit Mandate, Strategy & Charter and the Global Internal Audit Standards
- Performance Standards
- Fraud Work

During consideration of this item, the Committee suggested that the housing system (CX) which was to be implemented should be included within the audit plan, and that the external audit recommendations should also be included. It was noted that the External Audit recommendations would be brought to a future meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the proposed audit plan for 2024/25 (April to September 2024/ draft October 2024 to March 2025) be approved,
- (ii) That the resourcing position of Internal Audit be noted,
- (iii) That the Head of Risk and Internal Audit be delegated authority to make changes to the Audit Plan as he considers reasonable, reflecting the needs of the organisation, subject to this being reported back to this Committee,
- (iv) That the Internal Audit Mandate, Charter and Strategy be approved,
- (v) That other matters raised in the report be noted.

(Note: at the conclusion of this item the committee resolved to move into private session to allow for further discussion of questions raised relating to individuals and passed the appropriate resolution under Section 100(A) of the Local Government

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Act 1972, as the information involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act)