

Contact Officer: Nicola Sylvester

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Friday 21st February 2025

Present: Councillor John Taylor (Chair)
Councillor James Homewood
Councillor Angela Sewell
Councillor Caroline Holt
Councillor Kath Pinnock

Co-optees Chris Jones

In attendance: Steve Mawson, Chief Executive
Samantha Lawton, Service Director, Legal, Governance
and Commissioning,
Andy Simcox, Service Director for Strategy and
Innovation,
Leigh Webb, Head of Governance,
Martin Dearnley, Head of Risk,
Terence Hudson, Head of Technology,
Chris Read, Corporate Customer Standards Officer,
Alice Caruthers, Senior Risk Officer,
Greg Charnley, Grant Thornton.

Apologies: Councillor Tyler Hawkins (ex-Officio)

1 Membership of the Committee

Apologies were received from Councillor Tyler Hawkins (ex Officio)

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED- That the minutes of the meeting held 31st January 2025 be approved as a correct record.

3 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

4 Admission of the Public

It was noted that Agenda item 15 would be considered in private session.

5 Deputations/Petitions

No Deputations/Petitions were received.

6 Public Question Time

No questions were asked.

7 Corporate Customer Standards Annual Report 2023-24

The Committee received a report on Corporate Customer Standards 2023/24. The report provided a commentary on ongoing performance and covered other areas of interest.

The report included statistical information from across West Yorkshire relating to the number of Ombudsman complaints received. It was highlighted that Kirklees had not received any formal reports in 2023/24. The report set out details of Ombudsman complaints considered across West Yorkshire along with the headline figures for the first 6 months of the 2024/25 year. Appendix 2 to the report showed a summary of the Council's complaints process, in total 920 cases passed through the Corporate Customer Standards Section in 2023/24, which was a similar number to the previous year. The report set out detail of complaints by service area and provided a breakdown of third stage complaints. There had been a significant increase in the number of complaints received, with complaints for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Waste Collection being the variation in numbers. Council Tax also saw an increase in complaints.

During discussion, the Committee felt that a committee of the Council should have oversight of all complaints and procedures, and that Members were frequently left out of the loop with regards to complaints/service changes. It was noted that the Chair would liaise with the Portfolio Holder to gain an understanding of the information that Cabinet Members receive and would engage with scrutiny regarding local issues that ward members felt they should be informed about.

RESOLVED- That the Corporate Customer Standards Annual Report 2023-24 be approved.

8 Risk Management Annual Report 2024/25

The Committee received a report which provided information on the Council's strategy and approach to Risk Management and its governance arrangements to deliver in line with the approved strategy, and to outline priority actions for development during 2025-26.

The report explained that Service Directors and Heads of Service were responsible for assessing and monitoring risks and implementing effective and proportionate mitigation to control identified risks, where required. Risk registers were used to record and track information, and the Service and/or directorate level risk registers were submitted on a quarterly basis for review and challenge by risk officers and then used to update and inform the Corporate Risk Register, along with significant Emerging Risks and Issues under Management. The corporate risk report had been reformatted, to coincide with the beginning of the 2024/25 report cycle. A new Service Risk Register template had been introduced and was in the process of being rolled out across the Council.

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The report advised that at the end of Q3 2024/25, the Corporate Risk Register listed 24 risks, nine were reported as red rated risks, thirteen amber and two were green.

During consideration of this item, the Committee asked for confirmation of their role regarding risk. The Chief Executive advised that the Corporate Governance and Audit committees' responsibility was to consider the system of internal control and risk, considering if the system and approach was correct, but not the risks themselves as this should be considered at Cabinet/Scrutiny. The Committee requested that background risk reports provided to other committees be provided or linked in future reports to the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee. The Committee indicated that they would consider inviting service directors to attend future meetings of this committee to discuss the process of risks identification. The Committee noted the Chair of OSMC was an ex officio of this committee and noted his attendance would be helpful to consider matters such as this.

RESOLVED- That the Risk Management Annual Report 2024/25 be noted.

9 Dates of Council Meetings - Proposal for Additional Council Meeting (Reference to Council)

The Committee received a report proposing an additional meeting of Council during the current Municipal Year. Following discussion at the last Committee meeting held on 31st January 2025, it was proposed to hold an additional meeting in April 2025. As there would be no elections scheduled for May 2025, the proposed date did not conflict with rules and guidance in respect of the pre-election period which was normally considered for meetings proposed in April.

Council Procedure Rule 2 (1) advised that the dates of ordinary Council Meeting in each Municipal Year would be determined by the Council following recommendations made by Corporate Governance and Audit Committee. The dates of Council meeting for 2024/25 were approved by full Council following consideration by this Committee on 19th January 2024. Council Procedure Rule 2 (1) further advised that any changes to the agreed schedule of Council meetings required agreement of Full Council following a proposal from the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee.

RESOLVED- That an additional meeting of Council be agreed to be scheduled to take place on 23rd April 2025 and be recommended to Council.

10 Update to Corporate Code of Governance

The Committee received a report of Corporate Code of Governance with updates intended to provide clarification around how Kirklees measured its performance and demonstrated compliance with the code.

The Code of Corporate Governance set out arrangements by which the Council ensures effective governance. The code was drafted with reference to guidelines published by Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and SOLACE.

During discussion the committee thanked officers for a comprehensive report and asked a question on how performance was judged. The Service Director, Legal,

Governance and Commissioning advised that performance data, audit reports, and complaints judged the outcome. The Committee suggested that the Code of Corporate Governance report be included in Councillors induction.

RESOLVED- That the suggested updates to the Code of Corporate Governance be recommended to Council.

11 Update on representations on Outside Bodies

The Committee received an update on the Representation on Outside Bodies.

The Service Director, Legal, Governance & Monitoring had delegated authority, in consultation with Group Business Managers, to receive and process nominations to the Outside Bodies. Any Changes in the Council's representation on Outside Bodies were reported to Corporate Governance and Audit Committee for Information.

Since the last update to Committee, changes to the Council's Outside Body representation had occurred and had been incorporated into the Council's database of outside body representation. An update report on the changes would normally be presented to this Committee in September each year, however, due to a number of Member changes which affected the nominations during the 2024/25 Municipal year, there report could not be finalised until recently.

During consideration of this item the committee suggested that a link to representatives of outside bodies be published on the Councils transparency page.

RESOLVED-

- 1) That the update on representation on Outside Bodies as Appendix 1 be noted.
- 2) That Outside Body representation be continued to be monitored and any changes following the Annual General Meeting be reported to this Committee in September each year.

12 Cyber Security Assurance

The Committee received a report on Cyber Security which provided information about the Council's existing cyber control and processes in line with UK Government standards.

The report advised that the Council carried out rigorous annual testing and external assessment to achieve Public Sector Network accreditation. The Council had started a process to adopt the National Cyber Security Centre's Cyber Assessment Framework which would be independently assessed during 2025. The Councils Data Security Protection Toolkit submission strictly followed NHS England's guidance for Standards Met, but the controls had not been directly audited.

During discussion of this item the Committee suggested that a second report which addressed practical information be considered at an informal meeting of this committee.

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RESOLVED- That the cyber security technical controls and process already in place which meet UK Government expectations be noted.

- 13 Internal Audit Quarterly Report 3 2024/25, October 2024 to December 2024**
The Committee received a report relating to the internal audit work in quarter 3 of 2024/25.

The report set out the work of Internal Audit completed October to December 2024. All work had reached a finalised state. Except where shown otherwise, management had accepted the findings and agreed to implement the recommendations. A number of audits were awaiting finalisation and were to be reported in the next quarter.

RESOLVED- That the Internal Audit Quarterly Report 3 2024/5, October 2024 to December 2024 be noted.

- 14 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 stated in the undermentioned minutes.

- 15 Internal Audit Quarterly Report 3 2024/25, October 2024 to December 2024**

RESOLVED- That the Committee noted the exempt information, which was an appendix to agenda item 13.