

Minutes

Meeting name	Audit and Standards Committee
Date	Tuesday, 17 January 2023
Start time	6.30 pm
Venue	Parkside, Station Approach, Burton Street, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire LE13 1GH

Present:

Chair Councillor D. Pritchett (Chair)

Councillors C. Fisher (Vice-Chair) S. Atherton
P. Chandler J. Douglas
P. Posnett MBE T. Webster
J. Wilkinson

Observers

Officers Director for Corporate Services
Assistant Director for Governance & Democracy
Chief Internal Auditor
Senior Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officer
Democratic Services Officer (CT)

Minute No.	Minute
24	<p>Apologies for Absence No apologies were received.</p> <p>Councillor Wood and Councillor Holmes were not in attendance.</p>
25	<p>Minutes The Minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2022 were approved.</p>
26	<p>Declarations of Interest Councillor Posnett declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Leicestershire County Council due to her role as a County Councillor.</p>
27	<p>Internal Audit Progress Report The Chief Internal Auditor, Rachel Ashley-Caunt, introduced the report which set out the progress made in delivering the 2022/23 Internal Audit Plan and key findings arising from audit assignments completed.</p> <p>The Chief Internal Auditor highlighted the Internal Audit Progress Report at Appendix A, which set out all the assignments within the current years Internal Audit Plan, the status of the assignments at the time of reporting and the outcomes of the assignments that have been completed. Members were informed that good progress against the delivery of the Internal Audit Plan had been made, with some good outcomes and the positive assurance opinions should provide reassurance to Members on key areas.</p> <p>The Chair commented that any audit reports finalised after the March meeting would be reported on at the first meeting after the elections in May.</p> <p>A concern was raised that the report stated that Service Area Business Continuity Plans were not held centrally, and Members wanted to know where they were held. It was confirmed that the Service Lead held copies of the plans, but they were not held centrally. A recommendation had been made to address this.</p> <p>With regard to the outstanding audit recommendations relating to the Housing and Communities directorate the Chair would like to see the relevant officer give an update as to where they are with these at the March meeting.</p> <p>The Chair congratulated Officers, as HRA has come a long way after many staff changes over the last few years.</p> <p>With regard to the audit of the Leisure Vision project, a concern was expressed that the report stated the project meetings had not taken place in June, July, September or October 2022, it was also commented that the Project Support Officer was only contracted to work one day a week on this project. The Director for Corporate</p>

Services said that the audit report is more about the management and not the delivery of the project, the project is being looked at by Scrutiny and they will decide if this needs to come back onto the Agenda.

RESOLVED

The Committee **NOTED** the report and progress made by the Internal Audit team in the delivery of the Audit Plan was by the Committee.

28

Fraud Update Report

The Chief Internal Auditor, Rachel Ashley-Caunt, introduced the report to give the committee a six-monthly update on counter fraud activity.

The Chief Internal Auditor explained about the participation in the Cabinet Office's Social Housing Fraud pilot data matching exercise. It is a trial which the Council volunteered to participate in. Further update on the work done would be presented to the Committee at the next counter fraud update.

Following a question on whether this was a mandatory exercise, the Chief Internal Auditor advised that the Council had volunteered to participate but if the trial is successful, it could become mandatory in the future for all councils.

The Chair said this is a positive step and ensures we are doing the necessary checks against this type of activity.

RESOLVED

The Committee **NOTED** the Internal Audit counter fraud activity.

29

2020/21 Housing Benefit Subsidy Claim

The Director for Corporate Services, Dawn Garton, introduced the report which gave a summary of the 2020/21 Housing Benefit Audit.

The Director for Corporate Services said the outcome of the audit showed an improvement from previous years in terms of the number of and level of errors identified. Due to the number of transactions, it would be unrealistic to expect no errors to be found.

Members were informed of the local scheme policy, which dates back some considerable time, but had been approved by Council in the past. This scheme disregards 100% of any war widows/widowers, war disablement scheme and

armed forces compensation scheme payments, in any benefits assessment. To make sure this is implicit it has been recommended this is included in this year's budget report.

The comment was made that the report was clear and easy to understand.

RESOLVED

The Committee **NOTED** the findings of the 2020/21 Housing Benefits Audit and action being taken in response to the audit findings.

30	Urgent Business There was no urgent business.
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The meeting closed at: 7.00 pm

Chair