

Minutes

Meeting name	Audit and Standards Committee
Date	Tuesday, 26 September 2023
Start time	6.30 pm
Venue	Parkside, Station Approach, Burton Street, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire LE13 1GH

Present:

Chair Councillor L. Higgins (Chair)

Councillors J. Mason (Vice-Chair) J. Adcock
M. Brown S. Carter
T. Webster A. Thwaites (Substitute)

Officers Director for Corporate Services
Interim Assistant Director for Governance & Democracy
Interim Information Governance Lawyer
Democratic Services Officer (CB)

Minute No.	Minute
8	<p>Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence were received from Councillors I. Atherton, S. Lumley, J. Orson Councillor Thwaites substituted for Councillor Lumley. Councillor S. Orson did not attend and was therefore absent.</p>
9	<p>Minutes The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2023 were approved.</p>
10	<p>Declarations of Interest No declarations of interest were received.</p>
11	<p>Internal Audit Progress Report Due to technical problems, the Chief Internal Auditor was unable to join remotely. Members therefore agreed to defer the item.</p>
12	<p>Risk Management Annual Report 2023 The Director for Corporate Services introduced the Risk Management Annual Report.</p> <p>Concerns were raised that four major projects are red in the report, which is the highest category. It is a big concern with inflationary costs and questions were asked if the Council is confident with these risks or should further action be taken. Members were advised that finance is always a big risk to Council, but these projects are necessary for the growth and regeneration of the town.</p> <p>The Levelling Up Fund (LUF) has good governance on the project and an internal audit has just commenced, along with Rutland County Council, as this is a joint project. Audit will update on the outcomes of the review.</p> <p>UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) some projects are already being delivered and there are good controls in place.</p> <p>Asset Development Programme (ADP) these risks will be determined depending on which project is chosen as some will have more risks than others. The key objective with the ADP is to support long term financial stability.</p> <p>Members asked several questions relating to the financial sustainability risks. It was said that any increase in housing should increase the amount of revenue generated from Council Tax, however more houses create more demand for services, so there is only a net benefit. Part of the increased income is needed to offset costs elsewhere.</p>

It was questioned if Business Rates are more beneficial, and a higher income is generated. Members were advised it is difficult to gauge income as the business rates system is complicated. The highest income generally is from Warehouses and Supermarkets, followed by large industries. It was asked if figures of income from business rates were available, Members were advised that the top ten business ratepayers could be made available for them to see, if that helped with understanding. Melton Borough Council (MBC) has not benefited from high levels of income in comparison to other areas with large warehouses, however we are above the baseline. Members felt that the public should be made aware that these rates are not set by MBC but centrally.

The Chair thanked the report writer for the report, it had been well written.

RESOLVED

The Committee **NOTED** the content of the report and the updated Strategic Risk Register and associated risk management action plan, as attached at Appendix A

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Information Governance Framework

The Monitoring Officer introduced the Information Governance Framework Report and introduced Tim Cousins, the Interim Information Governance Lawyer who explained he has been updating the existing document and putting in place practical procedures to deal with Data protection and Freedom of Information.

Members commented that Data protection awareness is very important as it can lead to criminal prosecution and can impact Members individually, so they do need to be aware. It was felt that a training session would be beneficial to all Members and will be arranged.

It was asked if the work has found any areas of risk or gaps in the policies. There have mainly been improvements to make it more practical for Officers and to make procedures less complicated and easier to understand to ensure compliancy.

Members were advised the training should cover any areas they may have concerns about.

Members asked if the report could be produced every six months instead of annually if it would not be too much of a burden.

RESOLVED

- 1) The Committee **APPROVED** the draft Information Governance Framework.
- 2) The Committee **NOTED** all necessary actions to be undertaken in relation to

	<p>implementation of the Framework and the actions arising including review of the policies and procedures referred to in this report and that this is to be done in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair.</p> <p>3) The Committee RECOMMENDED that all Members attend Information Governance training.</p> <p>4) The Committee AGREED that the reporting data, as outlined in section 9 of the Information Governance Framework, should be presented to the Audit and Standards Committee every six months.</p>
14	<p>Urgent Business There was no urgent business.</p>

The meeting closed at: 7.48 pm

Chair