

Minutes

Meeting name	Audit and Standards Committee
Date	Tuesday, 19 November 2019
Start time	6.30 pm
Venue	PERA Business Park, Nottingham Road, Melton Mowbray, LE13 0PB

Present:

Chair Councillor J. Douglas (Chair)

Councillors J. Wilkinson (Vice-Chair) R. Bindloss
R. Browne R. Child
R. de Burle A. Hewson
D. Pritchett R. Smedley

Officers Democratic Services Manager
Chief Executive
Director for Corporate Services
Director for Growth and Regeneration
Director for Governance & Regulatory Services
Head of Internal Audit
Democratic Services Officer (HA)

Minute No.	Minute
28	<p>Apologies for Absence Apologies were received from Councillor Lumley.</p>
29	<p>Minutes The minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2019 were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the Chair. Councillor Wilkinson abstained as he was not in attendance at the meeting.</p>
30	<p>Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest received for this meeting.</p>
31	<p>Internal Audit Update The Head of Internal Audit submitted a report to update Members on the progress made in delivering the 2019-20 Internal Audit plan and the key findings arising from the audit assignments now completed.</p> <p>During the discussion the following points were noted:</p> <p>Since the last meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee, three further audits had been completed. As the audit of Landlord Health & Safety had received an opinion of lower than ‘Satisfactory Assurance’, and a rating of ‘Major’ organisational impact, a full copy of this audit report was provided for the committee’s attention.</p> <p>The Chief Executive assured Members that quarterly meetings would be reinstated for Senior Management to have oversight of all Section 106 agreements and associated payments due and that there were now additional resources in place to support Planning to secure developer contributions. Consideration would be given to the establishment of a group (incorporating Planning, Legal and Finance) who could meet on a regular basis to check any issues and ensure due diligence.</p> <p>Members requested quarterly updates following the Landlord Health and Safety Audit around the immediate remedial actions being implemented to address the situation and ensuring that the required improvements are delivered in a timely manner. The Chief Executive advised Members that, following the Council’s referral to the Social Housing Regulator, the Regulator had agreed to the Council’s request for an extension to 29 November 2019 to allow the Council further time to provide the information requested.</p> <p>The Head of Internal Audit advised Members that the overdue audit recommendation on travel expenses was due to be marked as implemented.</p> <p>A member enquired whether there was adequate separation of duties in place for the ordering and payment of goods and services; The Director for Corporate Services advised Members that when a contract is signed off it is now completed by a number of different personnel: one person</p>

employs the contractor; another places the order; another manages the contract and a senior officer signs off the work. This allows budget control and provides a substantive check. Alongside this there is an annual audit to test compliance with the contract procedure rules.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The Committee **NOTED** the report and the progress that has been made by the Internal Audit team in the delivery of the 2019/20 Audit Plan.
- 2) The Committee **APPROVED** replacing the planned Housing Repairs Contract Audit with a Consultancy Review.

32

Counter Fraud Update

The Head of Internal Audit provided a report to update the Committee on counter fraud activity at the Council.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

Following recent legislation the Anti Money Laundering Policy had been reviewed. A new dedicated mailbox had also been set up reportfraud@melton.gov.uk which would be promoted on the website to enable members of the public to report suspicions of fraud against the Council.

The Director for Corporate Services advised Members that due to being in Purdah the Council was awaiting confirmation from the Communications department about a press release and external advertising of this. Members could view the information on MIKE.

The Head of Internal Audit advised Members that an LGSS Counter Fraud Officer would be coming to work with the Council to provide advice on the investigation of housing related fraud, including right to buy applications.

RESOLVED that:

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

33

Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) Policy and Update

The Director for Governance and Regulatory Services provided a report to ask for Members' approval for the updated Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) Policy.

The Director for Governance and Regulatory Services updated Members in relation to the Council's use of powers under RIPA from April 2018 – March 2019.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

The Director for Governance and Regulatory Services advised that the Council had not used RIPA in the last year.

The policy is reviewed annually in consultation with the Internal Audit Team.

The Legal and Governance Manager, is the Council's RIPA officer and the Director for Governance and Regulatory Services is the Senior officer.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The Committee **NOTED** the updates to the RIPA Policy for the period April 2018-March 2019.
- 2) The Committee **APPROVED** the policy for implementation to take immediate effect.

34

Establishment of Member Development Group

The Director for Governance and Regulatory Services provided a report to seek Members' approval for the establishment of an informal Member Development Group to ensure that elected Members receive timely and appropriate support and training to deliver the Council's statutory and corporate priorities and to carry out their role as a Ward Councillor.

The Director for Governance and Regulatory Services requested Members' approval of the Terms of Reference for the Member Development Group to define the scope and remit of the group.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

The Director for Governance and Regulatory Services advised that the group would be led by Members and proposed the group meet quarterly and report back to the Committee annually.

The Group would plan a programme of training events on an annual basis using both internal and external training providers.

Consideration would be given for online learning and/or evening learning as appropriate.

RESOLVED that:

The Committee **APPROVED** the establishment of a cross-party informal Member Development Group which would lead on the Member Development Framework for the Council as per the terms of reference in Appendix A.

35

Urgent Business

There was no urgent business to discuss.

The meeting closed at: 7.45 pm

Chair

