

AUDIT COMMITTEE

24th October, 2018

PRESENT - Councillor Baldwin (in the Chair); Councillors Crudass and McEwan. (3)

APOLOGIES –

OFFICERS – Luke Swinhoe Assistant Director Law and Governance, Ian Miles Assistant Director Xentrall Shared Services, Peter Carrick, Finance Manager Central/Treasury Management, Peter McCann Information Security Manager, Joanne Skelton Health and Safety Manager and Andrew Barber, Audit and Risk Manager, Stockton Borough Council.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Nicola Wright, Ernst and Young LLP

A13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

A14. MINUTES - Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of a meeting of this Audit Committee held on 26th July, 2018

RESOLVED – That the Minutes be approved as a correct record.

A15. ICT STRATEGY – IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS REPORT – The Assistant Director Xentrall Shared Services submitted a report (previously circulated) on the progress in relation to the implementation of the approved ICT Strategy.

It was reported that the Strategy, which had been approved by the Chief Officers Board in 2017, focussed on three strategic priorities of ICT Governance and Service Development, ICT Strategic Architecture; and Council Service Development and Transformation.

Details of the progress against each of the strategic priorities was included in the submitted report.

RESOLVED – That the progress on the implementation of the ICT Strategy be noted.

A16. INFORMATION GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME PROGRESS REPORT - The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) on the progress and planned developments of the Information Governance Programme.

It was reported that information governance remained an ‘above the line’ risk on the corporate register, however delivery of the programme would provide the reassurance required and would reduce the information risks to an acceptable level.

The submitted report outlined the most recent work undertaken, together with those areas of highest priority within the programme, with particular reference being made to the delivery of the compliance programme for GDPR and the effective utilisation of the HSCN link for data transfer and information sharing.

RESOLVED – That the progress on the Information Governance Programme be noted.

A17. CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT 2017/18 – The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) updating Members on the Authority's performance in relation to health and safety for the financial year 2017/18, which, overall showed an improvement on the previous year.

It was reported that health and safety continued to be a high priority for the Authority and the focus had again been to embed the health and safety management system and improve health and safety compliance.

A full review of the Corporate Health and Safety Policy had also been undertaken, which reflected the commitment of elected Members and senior management to health and safety within the organisation and that the Council's General Statement of Intent poster had also been updated and was displayed at various locations throughout the organisation.

RESOLVED – (a) That the 2017/18 achievements and health and safety performance statistics be noted.

(b) That the health and safety objectives for 2018/19 be noted.

A18. ETHICAL GOVERNANCE AND MEMBER STANDARDS – UPDATE REPORT – The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) updating Members on issues relevant to Member standards and ethical governance.

The submitted report set out a number of datasets of ethical indicators to assist in monitoring the ethical health of the Authority and it was reported that, by reviewing and monitoring the indicators, it was anticipated that any unusual or significant changes in the volume of data recorded for the period concerned would alert the Authority to any deterioration in its ethical health and enable any necessary action to be taken at an early stage.

It was reported that there were no particular areas of concern that had been identified from reviewing the data.

RESOLVED – That the report and the statistical information contained therein be noted.

A19. ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2017/18 – The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) together with a copy of the Annual Audit Letter for 2017/18.

It was reported that the Letter provided a high level summary of the results from the 2017/18 audit work undertaken by Ernst and Young LLP (EY), the Council's external auditors, for the benefit of Members and other interested parties and confirmed that the Council's accounts gave a true and fair view for the year ending 31 March, 2018 and that the Council had put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in its use of resources.

RESOLVED – That the Annual Audit letter 2016/17 be noted.

A20. AUDIT SERVICES ANNUAL AUDIT PLAN 2018/19 – PROGRESS REPORT –

The Audit and Risk Manager submitted a report (previously circulated) outlining the progress against the 2018/19 Annual Audit Plan.

The submitted report outlined the progress to date on audit assignment work, consultancy/contingency activity and performance indicators.

RESOLVED – That the progress report against the 2017/18 Annual Audit Plan be noted.