

Audit and Corporate Governance Committee – Meeting held on Thursday, 10th December, 2015.

Present:- Councillors Chohan (Chair), Matloob (Vice-Chair), Ajaib, Nazir, Sandhu, Davies and Roberts

Apologies for Absence:- Councillors Amarpreet Dhaliwal and Mansoor. Mr Kwatra and Mr Sunderland

PART 1

21. Declarations of Interest

None were received.

22. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 24 September 2015

Resolved - That the minutes of the last meeting held on 24th September 2015 be approved as a correct record.

23. Appointment of Monitoring Officer

Gurpreet Anand introduced himself to the meeting, stating that he had been appointed as the Council's Monitoring Officer at the Council meeting on 24 November 2015. It was noted that Linda Walker, who had been appointed as interim Monitoring Officer, would conclude matters that she was currently dealing with and support Gurpreet in his new role to the end of December 2015.

Resolved - That the appointment of Gurpreet Anand, Assistant Director, Procurement and Commercial Services, as the Council's Monitoring Officer with effect from 25th November 2015, be noted.

24. Audit and Risk Management Update - Quarter 2 2015/16

The Assistant Director, Audit and Finance introduced the Quarter 2 Audit and Risk Management Update report. Members were informed that the overall internal audit reports continued to be finalised at an effective rate. Of the 2014-15 internal audits, although four remained in draft form it was anticipated that these would be finalised shortly. No reports in respect of schools remained outstanding for longer than a two month period. The number of implemented recommendations following Internal Audit reports had stabilised at approximately 70%, with a further 22% of recommendations either being superseded or having made partial progress.

A summary of all fraud activity with a value of over £10,000 was highlighted. Members were informed that the Fraud Team were also reviewing National Fraud Investigation data matches.

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Revisions to the Corporate Risk Register were brought to Members attention and included the removal of the transition to the Children's Trust as this had been completed. Two further risks were added to the register – the need to monitor the Children's Trust to ensure it delivers the required service improvements and the Better Care Fund risk had been amalgamated into the 'Failure to deliver a Balanced Budget' risk.

The Committee were reminded that the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy had been revised and details of the updated policy were outlined for Members consideration. It was confirmed that the Council's Money Laundering Reporting Officer was the Monitoring Officer. A Member queried what measures were in place to ensure that individuals did not claim housing benefit from more than one local authority. Matthew Chugg, Risk and Assurance Manager explained that all housing benefit was now tracked through one system via the Department for Work and Pensions.

Members raised a number of queries relating to the implementation of recommendations relating to school audits. Referring specifically to those schools that had not responded to high level recommendations, it was clarified that whilst these schools accepted the recommendations the reasons as to why they had not been implemented were unclear. It was agreed that letters would be sent to Chalvey and Khalsa Primary Schools requesting that they respond to the audit recommendations tracker. A Member also requested that details of the two outstanding recommendations relating to Our Lady of Peace Junior School be sent to him.

Details of the number of internal audit reviews that had been completed and those that were still in draft form were outlined. Good progress had been made with only 5 reviews remaining in draft form compared to 15 from the same time period two years ago. It was brought to the Committee's attention that following a referral from CMT an internal audit review was commissioned in relation to the Hire of Council Buildings. The review had identified a lack of an adequate policy framework to govern the hire of council buildings, which included certain hire charges not being recorded on the charges spreadsheet maintained by the bookings team. Furthermore, reconciliations between income received and the artifax booking systems were not undertaken. Details of the recommendations proposed were outlined and it was agreed that an update on the implementation of these would be reported at the March Committee meeting.

Resolved - i) That details of the Audit and Risk Management Update Quarter 2 2015/16 report be noted.
ii) That the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy be approved.

25. Local Government Governance Review 2015

Details of the Local Government Governance Review 2015 were noted.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

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26. Members Attendance Record

Resolved – That details of the Member's Attendance record be noted.

27. Date of Next Meeting - 10 March 2016

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday, 10th March 2016.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.25 pm)