



AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

MEETING : Monday, 21st January 2019

PRESENT : Cllrs. Gravells (Chair), Melvin (Vice-Chair), Smith, Stephens, Wilson and Lewis

Others in Attendance

Councillor H. Norman, Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources
Councillor Watkins, Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods
Corporate Director
Head of Communities
Head of Policy and Resources
Housing Team Leader (Private Sector Housing)
Deloitte's
Democratic and Electoral Services Team Leader

APOLOGIES : Cllrs. Brooker and D. Norman

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

43.1 There were no declarations of interest.

44. MINUTES

44.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 19th November 2018 were agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

45. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

45.1 There were no public questions.

46. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

46.1 There were no petitions or deputations.

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47. AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN

- 47.1 The Committee considered the Action Plan. Members were made of aware of the management update in respect of Disabled Facility Grants (DFGs) which was included in the papers for the meeting. The Head of Communities advised that the number of Occupational Therapists who were able to conduct assessments for DFGs would be provided in due course.
- 47.2 **RESOLVED that:-** The Audit and Governance Committee **NOTE** the Action Plan.

48. MANAGEMENT UPDATE REPORT - DFG

- 48.1 Councillor Watkins, Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods, provided an update on the allocation of funding for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs). She advised that there were just eight applications awaiting a decision and that the housing team would be examining how DFGs can be marketed to those who needed them.
- 48.2 The Head of Communities informed Members of an ombudsman investigation into a case of a family which had applied for a DFG but where the process had broken down at points. She advised that such processes would be reviewed and that she was supporting the family while the work was being carried out.
- 48.3 Councillor Stephens noted that, in previous years,, spending against budget had remained somewhat in line but the budget had subsequently increased. He further stated that there was still an issue with there being a six month wait from the submission of an application until the decision being made. The Head of Communities noted that the funding was not just the City's Council and that Officers had been proactive in remedying the underspend.
- 48.4 The Private Sector Housing Officer advised that important discussions with the County Council had taken place to remedy the underspend. He stated that there were indications that there was a downward trend in the take up of DFGs, possibly due to earlier interventions and better rehabilitation services.
- 48.5 Councillor Wilson acknowledged that there would be an underspend this fiscal year and that it may improve. Councillor Watkins stated that conversations with the County Council needed to continue and advised that if the full DFG allocation was not spent, the funds would revert to the Better Care Fund and would therefore still be used in the community.
- 48.6 In response to an intervention from Councillor Melvin, the Head of Communities stated there were a number of actions which could be done to promote DFGs including sharing marketing materials with GPs and other health professionals.
- 48.2 **RESOLVED that:- (1)**The Audit and Governance Committee **NOTE** the update and; **(2)** a report on DFGs be circulated after the conclusion of the county-wide review.

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49. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT 2018/19

- 49.1 The Principal Auditor presented the report and highlighted key aspects and findings. Members were informed that the Internal Audit team was able to provide either sufficient or substantial assurance in all areas.
- 49.2 Councillor Stephens queried why the audit into leavers' processes had been cancelled. The Principal Auditor advised that it was originally a separate audit such as for the return of IT equipment and network access controls. He further advised that this was duplication and was now included as part of the 2019/20 plan.
- 49.3 With regard to Counter Fraud activities, Councillor Stephens asked whether the associated report would be considered by the Committee. The Head of Policy and Resources advised that the report would be shared with the Audit and Governance Committee.
- 49.4 **RESOLVED that:-** The Audit and Governance Committee **NOTE** the Internal Audit Progress Report 2018/19.

50. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2017/2018

- 50.1 The Committee considered the Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan.
- 50.2 **RESOLVED that:** - The Audit and Governance Committee **NOTE** the Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2017/18.

51. DELOITTE - EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2018/19

- 51.1 The Committee considered the External Audit Plan as prepared by Deloitte's.
- 51.2 **RESOLVED that:** - The Audit and Governance Committee **NOTE** the External Audit Plan.

52. AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

- 52.1 The Committee considered the Work Programme and what could be examined in the future.
- 52.2 A discussion took place in relation to transparency of Members' work and the input Members had when they sat on outside bodies. Councillor Lewis suggested that included in this work could be an assessment as to why Members sat on particular bodies. Councillor Stephens suggested that such work should cover the duration of the current Committee's constitution and, as such, it was agreed the remit of the work would be since the Committee had sat (since May 2016).

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- 52.3 Councillor Stephens queried whether recommendations that are made by the Committee are acted upon. The Corporate Director suggested that the Committee could undertake a piece of work to examine whether recommendations and action had led to implementation and also that a review could be conducted in terms of the governance aspect of Members taking on different roles.
- 52.4 A discussion took place suggesting that Chairs from other Councils be invited to share aspects of work programmes that are considered by other Audit Committees.
- 52.5 **RESOLVED that:-** (1) The Audit and Governance Committee undertake work to examine the efficacy of its recommendations since May 2016; (2) the Audit and Governance Committee scope a piece of work to examine the contribution of Members appointed to outside bodies by the Council; (3) to invite Audit Chairs from other Gloucestershire districts to discuss what matters make up their work programmes and; (4) The Audit and Governance Committee **NOTE** the Work Programme.

53. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

11th March 2019 at 6.30pm in the Civic Suite, North Warehouse.

Time of commencement: 6.30 pm hours
Time of conclusion: 7.05 pm hours

Chair