

Audit and Governance Committee

Minutes of meeting held in Court Room - Town Hall, Eastbourne on 18 September 2019 at 6.00 pm

Present:

Councillors Robin Maxted (Deputy-Chair, in the Chair), Helen Burton, Sammy Choudhury, Paul Metcalfe, Md. Harun Miah, Amanda Morris, Barry Taylor and Candy Vaughan (as substitute for Dean Sabri)

Officers in attendance:

Jackie Humphrey (Chief Internal Auditor) and Elaine Roberts (Committee Officer)

Also in attendance:

Councillor Robert Smart (Shadow Cabinet Member)

14 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2019 were submitted and approved and the Chair was authorised to sign them as an accurate record.

15 Apologies for absence/declaration of substitute members

Apologies were received from Councillor Dean Sabri, Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee. Deputy Chair, Councillor Maxted, acted at Chair for the meeting.

16 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) by members as required under Section 31 of the Localism Act and of other interests as required by the Code of Conduct.

None.

17 Questions by members of the public.

None received.

18 Urgent items of business.

There were none.

19 Right to address the meeting/order of business.

A request was received from Councillor Smart just before the start of the meeting, regarding the minutes of the last meeting.

Following an invitation by the Chair to address the Committee, Councillor Smart spoke for 10 minutes and voiced his concerns about the delay in publishing the statement of accounts and asked if the Council had met its obligation to publish a notice and provide explanation of the delay. He also raised concerns regarding levels of transparency, citing a £2m transaction from 2017 that he could not find in the 2018 reporting.

The Chair thanked Councillor Smart for his remarks. As the Chief Finance Officer was not present to respond, his comments would be reported to her after the meeting.

20 Internal Audit Report for the first quarter of the financial year 2019-2020

Jackie Humphrey, Chief Internal Auditor, presented the report and the Committee considered the summary of activities of Internal Audit and Counter Fraud for the first quarter of the financial year: 1st April – 30th June 2019.

The Committee raised a query around the figures for the National Fraud initiative. The Chief Internal Auditor explained that cases could vary widely in their complexity, with the more complex often requiring liaison with external bodies such as other local authorities.

The Chair thanked Jackie Humphrey and the Council for their work.

RESOLVED (unanimous) that the report be noted.

21 Strategic Risk Register Quarterly Review

Jackie Humphrey, Chief Internal Auditor, presented the report regarding the Strategic Risk Register, which provides a high level record of the key risks facing the Council.

Following the quarterly review of the Register by the Corporate Management Team, two risk scores were increased. The report and presentation noted and explained these increases to the Committee.

The Committee considered the report. It recognised the influence of the Brexit issue on decision making and noted an expectation that there would be more clarity later this year.

The Chair thanked Jackie Humphrey for the report.

RESOLVED (unanimous): that the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 6.34 pm

Councillor Maxted (Deputy Chair)