



Minutes

Audit Committee

Date: 22 April 2022

Time: 10:30

Venue: Function Room, FSHQ

Present: Cllrs K Renshaw (in the Chair), J Illingworth, S Tulley, D Hall and R Downes

In Attendance: Caroline Jamieson – Deloitte (external audit). P Hewitson – Deloitte (external audit), S Straker - Kirklees KMC (internal audit)

Apologies:

32 Minutes of last meeting held on 28 January 2022

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2022 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

33 Matters arising

None

34 Urgent items

None

35 Admission of the public

There were no items which required the exclusion of the public and press.

36 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest made in any matter under consideration at the meeting.

37 Abridged Performance Management Report

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Service Delivery which outlined the Authority's performance against key performance indicators for the period 1 April – 31 December 2021.

Members considered an updated Service Delivery report covering the period to 31st March 2022. It was noted that malicious false alarm reports evidence underachieving targets against the 3-year average, Members were informed that specific issues have now been addressed.

Members sought clarification that incident figures are as expected and on trend for year to date.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

38 Accounting Policies

The Chief Finance and Procurement Officer presented a report which outlined the accounting policies that will be applied in the preparation of the Statement of Accounts 2021/22.

It was explained that subject to consultation the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) will introduce secondary legislation to extend the deadline for publishing 2021/22 audited local authority accounts to 30th November and the statutory deadline for the publication of the accounts on the website is 31st July 2022. WYFRA accounts will be presented to the Audit Committee to be held on 25th November 2022 for approval.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

39 Internal Audit Quarterly Report

The Chief Finance and Procurement Officer submitted a report which provided a summary of the audit activity for the period January to March 2022. Members were informed that in that period two audits have been completed; Contract Procedure Rules Compliance, which received a substantial assurance opinion and Payroll processing, which received an adequate assurance opinion. In 2021/22, ten of the thirteen planned audits have been completed, one is currently in progress (Severe Weather (non-flooding) Risk) and two audits have been slipped into 2022/23 (Treasury Management and Bank Reconciliation)

In response to a Members query regarding connections between severe weather incidents and the climate emergency, it was reported that risks associated with adverse weather conditions are addressed within business continuity processes.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted

40 Risk Management Strategy Group Update

Members were presented with a report from the Chief Employment Services Officer giving details of the risk management activity and developments that had been reported to the Risk Management Strategy Group (RMSG) in January 2022. It was noted that two new risks have been created, one has been given a high-risk factor score and one a medium risk factor score but that the six areas given a very high-risk factor score remained the same as October 2021.

In response to a Members query with regards to the efficiency of the Risk Factor scoring within the report, the Risk Management Strategy Group will review the current rating methodology and report back their findings to the Fire Authority. Members also sought clarification as to how the Fire and Rescue Service would respond to chemical plant incidents, Members were informed of the control measures in place, and collaboration with resilience teams were outlined.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted, and the updated Risk Management Strategy and Policy be approved.

41 Internal Audit Annual Report

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Finance and Procurement Officer which requested members to endorse the effectiveness of the system of internal audit, to note the audit opinion, to approve the Audit Charter and Strategy and to approve the Audit Plan.

Members raised a concern regarding the areas of focus within the internal audit procedure, requesting a review of governance to be considered. Members were advised that the draft audit plan has suggested a refocus on aspects of governance monitoring.

RESOLVED

That the report to be noted and the following points to be approved -

- a) That the Chief Finance & Procurement Officer's conclusion as to the effectiveness of the system of internal audit is endorsed.
- b) That the audit opinion on governance, risk management arrangements and the internal control environment be noted, thereby providing assurance for the Annual Governance Statement.
- c) That the 2022/23 Internal Audit Charter and Strategy at appendix 1 of the report now submitted, be approved
- d) That the Internal Audit Plan for 2022/23 as endorsed by Management Board, at appendix 3 of the report now submitted, is approved.

42 External Audit Annual Report

The Chief Finance and Procurement Officer presented the External Audit Annual Report 2020/21. Members were pleased to note there were no significant weaknesses in the Authority's VfM arrangements identified in the Audit and asked for further clarification of the following:

- Aspects of governance identified that arrangements are prudently managed with minimal associated risk. Considerations to improve current systems and staff resourcing was advised.
- Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness confirmed a solid structure is in place with no critical requirements.
- Members confirmed that continuous improvement measures are welcomed.
- Members thanked WYFRS and Deloitte for their efforts.

RESOLVED

That the Auditor's Annual Report 2020/21 be approved.

Chair