

Corporate Governance Committee - 3 December 2018

Present: Councillor N Cavill (Chairman)
Councillors J Hunt, C Booth, T Hall, J Horsley and D Webber

Officers: Peter Barber, Nick Hammacott, Tracey Meadows, Andrew Stark and Alastair Woodland

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

46. **Apologies.**

Apologies were received from Councillors M Adkins, Nicholls and Smith-Roberts.

47. **Minutes of the previous meeting of the Corporate Governance Committee held on 17 September 2018 (attached).**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Governance Committee held on 17 September 2018 were taken as read and were signed.

48. **Declaration of Interests.**

Councillor Hunt declared a personal interest as a Member of Somerset County Council, Exmoor National Park Authority Member, and Tacchi Morris Management Committee Member.

49. **Grant Thornton External Audit - Progress Report. Report of the Interim Finance Manager (Deputy S151 Officer). (attached).**

Members considered the report previously circulated, concerning the Grant Thornton External Audit – Progress Report.

The Council's external audit function is undertaken by Grant Thornton. This report provided Members with an update on the progress as at November 2018 in delivering their responsibilities as the Council's external auditors as well as providing a summary of relevant emerging national issues and developments.

The report deliverables, Internal Audit Plan Progress, sector update and latest trends were set out in the report.

During the consideration of this item, the following points were made:-

- Peter Barber announced that he would be leaving to work alongside another local authority, with his successor Geraldine Daly replacing him in supporting Taunton Deane and the New Council.
- Discussion took place around the existing pension arrangements. Existing employees remained in the scheme.

- Questioning took place around the pension funds for Local Government Authority Trading Companies.
- It was requested if audit resources could be set aside for Councillors to measure and flag up risks.
- There were concerns over auditors being unable to ascertain the true cost of transformation.

Resolved that the Corporate Governance Committee noted the Grant Thornton External Audit – Progress Report.

50. **SWAP Internal Audit – Progress Report 2018/19. Report of the Assistant Director, SWAP (attached).**

Members considered the report previously circulated, concerning the SWAP Internal Audit – Progress Report 2018/19.

The Internal Audit function played a central role in corporate governance by providing assurance to the Corporate Governance Committee, monitoring financial controls and checking on the probity of the organisation.

The 2018-19 Annual Audit Plan provided independent and objective assurance on TDBC's Internal Control Environment. The report summarises the work of the Council's Internal Audit Service and provides:

- Details of any new significant weaknesses identified during internal audit work completed since the last report to the committee in September 2018.
- A schedule of audits completed during the period, detailing their respective assurance opinion rating, the number of recommendations and the respective priority rankings of these.

Internal Audit provided an independent and objective opinion on the Authority's control environment by evaluating its effectiveness. Primarily the work included:

Operational Audit Reviews
 Cross Cutting Governance Audits
 Annual Review of Key Financial System Controls
 IT Audits
 Grants
 Follow Up
 Non-Opinion / Advisory Review

During the consideration of this item, the following points were made:-

- An information report was requested before the next meeting detailing who would be leaving the organisation.
- GDPR feedback was requested for Member awareness.
- A follow up of the crematorium review would be conducted in the New Year.
- Concerns were expressed that the reports were difficult to follow

- The costs of temporary staff was questioned, it was requested if a figure could be obtained.
- The Member Case manager post was considered, there had been difficulty in getting responses to requests.

Resolved that the Corporate Governance Committee noted the SWAP Internal Audit 2017/18 progress report

51. **Report on Health and Safety Performance. Report of the Environmental Health Manager (attached).**

Members considered the report previously circulated, concerning the Report on Health and Safety Performance.

During the consideration of this item, the following points were made:-

- The number of recorded accidents for members of the public was questioned along with that has been done to improve this, The Health and Safety Manager would report back on this.

Resolved that the Corporate Governance Committee noted the report.

52. **Forward Plan**

Submitted for information the proposed Forward Plan of the Corporate Governance Committee.

Resolved that the Corporate Governance Committee Forward Plan be noted.

(The Meeting ended at 7.05 pm)