

Minutes

Audit Committee

Venue: Committee Room

Date: 18 June 2014

Present: Councillor C Pearson (Chair), Councillor Mrs C Mackman (Vice Chair), Councillor J Cattanach, Councillor J Crawford, Councillor M Dyson and Councillor I Nutt

Apologies for Absence: None

Officers Present: John Barnett, Roman Pronyszyn, Judith Elliott, all Veritau; Gavin Barker, Mazars, Karen Iveson, Executive Director (S151); and Richard Besley, Democratic Services

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

7. MINUTES

7.1 RESOLVED:

To receive and approve the minutes of the Audit Committee held on 16 April 2014 and they are signed by the Chair.

7.2 RESOLVED:

To receive and approve the minutes of the Special Audit Committee held on 14 May 2014 and they are signed by the Chair.

8. CHAIR'S ADDRESS

The Chair waived his address.

9. A/14/3 – ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2013/14

John Barnett, Audit Manager at Veritau North Yorkshire, presented the Internal Audit Report for 2013/14. He informed the Committee that the overall opinion on the controls operated in Selby District Council was that they provided Substantial Assurance.

The Committee discussed the Audit on Information Governance which had resulted in an opinion of Limited Assurance and noted that the matter had been reported at the last meeting of the Committee and is being addressed in the Annual Governance Statement.

The Audit Manager reported that the periodic external assessment of the Internal Audit practice had been carried out and that although early prediction is good a full report would be submitted to the Committee in September.

RESOLVED:

To receive and approve the report

10. A/14/4 – EXTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

Gavin Barker from Mazars presented the report which gave an update on progress in meeting its responsibilities as the Council's external auditor.

The interim work on the financial systems had been completed and where necessary appropriate action had been agreed with Officers.

The Auditor updated the Committee on Mazars's work with the Council in the production of the end of year financial statements. He felt that the on-going dialogue with the Council finance team working on the production of the accounts had again been a positive process and he felt assured that this will help the audit of the accounts run smoothly.

The Committee also discussed the Value for Money (VFM) conclusion. Mazars had compared the VFM profiles to those of other similar authorities which presented a positive picture of the Council's position.

The Auditor confirmed that Mazars maintained their positive view of SDC and its practices.

The report outlined emerging issues, including the pending closure of the Audit Commission an outcome of which is a sizeable rebate already distributed across all locally audited bodies, with further fee reductions likely.

RESOLVED:

To receive and note the report

11. PRIVATE SESSION

RESOLVED:

In accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, to exclude the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following item as there is likely to be disclosure of exempt information. The exempt information is that defined in paragraph 3 of schedule 12A being information relating to the financial or business affairs of any person, including that of the authority holding the information. It is in the public interest to exempt this information as it includes information about how the Council manages risk and specifically the risks that are being actively managed (including their likelihood, impact and mitigating actions) which, if disclosed, could allow third parties to use this information against the Council – for example targeting fraudulent activity in an area perceived to be low risk and therefore not actively managed – as such disclosure of the detail of risk management is not considered to be in the interests of taxpayers although inclusion on Audit Committee agendas and the coverage of the Annual Governance Statement, should provide assurance that risk is being managed effectively.

12. A/14/5 RISK MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT

The Executive Director (S151) presented the report which provided an update on Risk Management developments throughout 2013/14 and the proposed actions to be taken in 2014/15 to further the process.

The Executive Director assured the Committee that stringent project management was in place for Council Tax billing.

RESOLVED:

To receive and endorse the actions of officers in furthering the progress of risk management

13. A/14/6 REVIEW OF THE CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

The Executive Director (s151) presented the report and confirmed that a fundamental review of the Council's corporate risks had been undertaken and a new register produced.

The Committee heard that the risks were formally reviewed by the Council's senior officers on a quarterly basis and by this Committee twice a year.

RESOLVED:

To receive and endorse the actions of officers in furthering the progress of risk management

14. A/14/7 – REVIEW OF THE ACCESS SELBY RISK REGISTER

On behalf of Access Selby the Executive Director whose role as (S151) Officer provides financial control for the Access Selby Board, presented an update on the key risks identified within Access Selby.

The Director confirmed that a similar refresh of the Access Selby Risk Register as the Corporate Register had also been undertaken.

RESOLVED:

To receive and endorse the actions of officers in furthering the progress of risk management

The meeting closed at 6.03pm