

Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee

Minutes

12 October 2021

Present:

Chair: Councillor David Perry

Councillors: Philip Benjamin Amir Moshenson
Niraj Dattani Kanti Rabadia
Kairul Kareema Marikar Antonio Weiss

Apologies received: Dean Gilligan

176. Attendance by Reserve Members

RESOLVED: To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Member:-

Ordinary Member

Councillor Dean Gilligan

Reserve Member

Councillor Niraj Dattani

177. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that there were no declarations of interests made by Members.

178. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2021, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

179. Public Questions

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were received.

180. Petitions

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions had been received.

181. Deputations

RESOLVED: To note that no deputations were received at the meeting under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rule 16.

182. References from Council and other Committees/Panels

None received.

Resolved Items

183. Information Report - Corporate Anti-Fraud Team Year-End Report 2020/21

The Committee received an information report from the Director of Finance and Assurance, which set out the 2020/21 year-end report for the Internal Audit and Corporate Anti-Fraud Team. The report also set out the progress made against the agreed annual plans, to meet with the requirement set out in the Committee's Terms of Reference.

The Anti-Fraud Service Manager introduced the report and outlined the corporate anti-fraud work carried out during the year 2020-21. He added that:

- of the 14 work streams contained within the plan, 8 (57%) were achieved, 3 (22%) were substantially achieved, 1 (7%) was partially achieved, 1 (7%) was not achieved and 1 (7%) was re-evaluated and changed for 2021/22;
- in terms of the key performance indicators, 3 (60%) were achieved and 2 (40%) were substantially achieved.
- performance against the Fraud Plan during 2020/21 was below expectation due to the challenges of the Covid-19 Pandemic, because Investigating Officers could not be as proactive as normal with site visits and interviewing of suspects being suspended.

Officers were confident that performance would improve with 'normal life' being resumed and plans would be put in place to recommence face-to-face interviews at the Civic Centre once a thorough risk assessment had been completed and approved.

Members were informed that a formal form of virtual interviewing had been explored during the year but a decision was taken not to proceed after the

legislative challenges of PACE interviewing virtually became too burdensome, also coupled with the variable nature of officers' internet connection.

In response to questions, Members were advised as follows:

- the lack of virtual interviewing had not resulted in any offloading of the cases to the police;
- the Fraud Loss Methodology referred to in the report was currently in draft form and would be presented to the November 2021 meeting of the Committee;
- the Cifas Pilot Membership Project had been extended for another year and there were plans to extend it further so long as it continued to add value. Officers were also in the initial stage of exploring the Internal Fraud Data Bases to allow for the vetting of staff. Both the Council's Human Resources (HR) service and the Unions would need to be involved and/or consulted;
- in relation to the query regarding Fraud Liaison, the Council worked with the Metropolitan Police and this agency had been captured within the report.

A Member sought clarification in respect of the Corporate and anti-fraud corruption strategy (page 17 of the agenda) where the objective shown had not been achieved and how it related to the information contained on page 23 of the agenda where it had been achieved. In response, the Anti-Fraud Service Manager explained that the KPIs were different to the Work Streams. Alongside the KPIs were Work Streams but not all Work Streams warranted KPIs. Only KPIs 1-5 had been included in the Work Streams.

The Chair welcomed the report which he considered to be a positive one. He acknowledged the transparency from the Corporate Anti-Fraud Manager that performance was below par and applauded the savings achieved by the service, but raised a point that the positive work around fraud should be publicised and that there was a lack of this during the year according to the report. Members were informed that this suggestion would be taken forward.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

184. Urgent Business

Referring to the Committee's previous meeting and the discussion in relation to the Draft Annual Governance Statement, a Member expressed concern that he had not received the information requested under Minute 171.

The Chair reminded the Member that he had been asked to submit this information in writing for his consideration which had yet to be received. A written request had been sought to ensure that officers could provide a detailed response. Whilst this was not urgent business, the Member's concerns about having to email information requests to officers following meetings and agenda length were noted.

185. Exclusion of the Press Public

RESOLVED: That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of confidential information in breach of an obligation of confidence, or of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972:

<u>Agenda Item No</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Description of Exempt Information</u>
11.	Information Report - Q2 Corporate Risk Register 2021/22	Exempt from publication under paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) as it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
12.	Review Briefing	Exempt from publication under paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) as it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

186. Information Report - Q2 Corporate Risk Register 2021/22

The Committee received a confidential report of the Director of Finance and Assurance, which set out the Council's 2020/21 Corporate Risk Register for Quarter 2 of the financial year to enable the Committee to monitor the progress made on risk management in accordance with its Terms of Reference.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

187. Information Report - Review Briefing

The Committee received a confidential verbal report from the Head of Internal Audit and Corporate Anti-Fraud.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 6.32 pm, closed at 7.40 pm).

(Signed) Councillor David Perry
Chair