

AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE

06 December 2023

PRESENT:

Non-Grouped

Councillor A Wheelton (Chair)

Labour Group

Councillors D Shepherd (Vice-Chair) A Jones and A Tilley.

Conservative Group

Councillor N Atkin.

In Attendance

Councillor R Pearson

AS/23 **APOLOGIES**

The Sub-Committee was informed that no apologies had been received.

AS/24 **TO RECEIVE THE OPEN MINUTES**

The Open Minutes for the Meeting held on 06 September 2023 were taken as read, approved, and signed by the Chair.

The Chair referred to the above mentioned Minutes and sought clarification regarding the outstanding action for the enforcement issues information at item AS/18, to which the Head of Planning and Strategic Housing responded, referring to a response that had been provided by the Strategic Director (Service Delivery on 06 December 2023. The Chair requested further information to be reported back to the Sub-Committee about these cases by 01 February 2023.

RESOLVED:

The Sub-Committee approved that the outcomes of the seven Enforcement cases of damage to Tree Preservation Orders and conservation areas for the last twelve months be shared with this Sub-Committee by 01 February 2024.

AS/25 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Sub-Committee was informed that no declarations of interest had been received.

AS/26 **TO RECEIVE ANY QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO.10**

The Sub-Committee was informed that no questions from members of the public had been received.

AS/27 **TO RECEIVE ANY QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO.11**

The Sub-Committee was informed that no questions from Members of the Council had been received.

MATTERS DELEGATED

AS/28 **INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT 2023-24**

The Audit Manager presented the report to the Sub-Committee highlighting the dashboard and summary of progress since the last meeting.

Members raised queries regarding a commitment from Leadership Team for recommendations to be monitored, that a formalised escalation process was in place for unactioned recommendations, the status of the performance monitoring of grounds maintenance activities, the limits for procurement contracts, the costs of housing repairs and the provision of bereavement services.

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) informed the Sub-Committee that Leadership had agreed an escalation process for outstanding recommendations in the Audit Progress Report. The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) confirmed that Leadership had reviewed the recommendations of the Internal Audit Progress Reports prior to the meetings and that Heads of Service would be invited to the Audit Sub-Committee meetings to provide updates if no response had been noted in the report. The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) informed the Sub-Committee that the procurement framework was changing for the Public Sector and that a new internal working group would be formed to review contract matters, procedure roles and contract strategy.

The Audit Manager informed the Sub-Committee that once evidence of the manual system for monitoring grounds maintenance in operation was provided the recommendation would be signed off.

The Head of Planning and Strategic Housing informed the Sub-Committee that community facilities, such as cemeteries, would qualify under the Local Plan

Section 106 Agreement funding and this would be reviewed and debated in the Environmental and Development Services Committee.

The Chair proposed that a progress report of grounds maintenance be reviewed at the March 2024 Sub-Committee meeting.

RESOLVED:

1.1 The Sub-Committee considered the Audit Manager's Internal Audit Progress Report 2023-24 at Appendix 1 of the report and noted that any issues identified would be subject to a follow-up report.

1.2 The Sub-Committee approved that the Head of Service attends the March 2024 Sub-Committee meeting to provide an update and progress report of Grounds Maintenance.

AS/29 **INTERNAL AUDIT COVERAGE 2024-25**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) presented the report to the Sub-Committee confirming that there were no changes to Audit Coverage for the period 2024-25 highlighting that the two authorities that had reduced coverage were not included in the partnership with South Derbyshire District Council.

Members raised queries regarding good practice and the co-opting of an independent person to the Sub-Committee and whether this had been considered within the report.

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) informed the Sub-Committee that it hadn't been considered for this report, but would be reviewed as part of the Sub-Committee's self-assessment against the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) best practice.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the contents of the report and that the audit coverage would be formally reviewed again in two years' time.

AS/30 **2023-2024 ANTI FRAUD & CORRUPTION PLAN & COUNTER FRAUD PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

The Head of Customer Services presented the report to the Sub-Committee and introduced Michael Sergeant, the Counter Fraud Investigator from Derby City Council. The Head of Customer Services highlighted the successes of the

partnership with Derby City Council and the training that had been delivered to South Derbyshire District Council Officers.

Members asked how fraud was reported, types of fraud and if the results were published on social media.

The Head of Customer Services informed the Sub-Committee that all reporting of potential fraud could be done through the Council's web site and this link would be made available to Members.

The Counter Fraud Investigator informed the Sub-Committee that housing fraud was the most difficult to detect, Council Tax fraud was easier to investigate, the most common reason for reporting fraud was local disputes and disagreements and that fraud results were not usually published in the press.

RESOLVED:

1.1 The Sub-Committee noted the performance of the Counter Fraud Partnership with Derby City Council at Appendix 1 of the report and the cashable and value for money savings that had been delivered in 2022-23 and April – November 2023.

1.2 The Sub-Committee approved the Council's proposed Anti-Fraud and Corruption Action Plan at Appendix 2 of the report that directs the work of the partnership.

AS/31 **COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) presented the updated work programme and introduced Hayley Clark, Audit Partner from Ernst Young LLP.

The Audit Partner from Ernst Young LLP provided an update of upcoming audit items, priorities, fees, value for money and statutory obligations.

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) informed the Sub-Committee that the audit backlog was a priority and that all statutory deadlines needing to be met by the Council would be met on an ongoing basis.

The Chair requested information about timescales to complete the external audit.

The Audit Partner from Ernst Young LLP confirmed that guidance for timelines was expected in the New Year and an update would be provided at the March 2024 meeting of the Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED:

The Sub-Committee considered and approved the updated work programme.

AS/32 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT [ACCESS TO INFORMATION] ACT 1985)**

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraph of Part I of the Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in the header to each report on the Agenda.

AS/33 **EXEMPT QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO.11**

The Sub-Committee was informed that no questions from Members of the Council had been received.

The Meeting terminated at 17:10hours

COUNCILLOR A WHEELTON

CHAIR