



AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

BURNLEY TOWN HALL

Wednesday, 18th September, 2019 at 6.30 pm

PRESENT

MEMBERS

Councillor Paul Campbell, In the Chair.

Councillors S Graham (Vice-Chair), T Commis, S Hussain, M Lishman, A Newhouse and A Tatchell

OFFICERS

Ian Evenett	– Internal Audit Manager
Iyas Ismail	– Internal Auditor
Imelda Grady	– Democracy Officer

CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Councillor Kathryn
Haworth
Councillor Gill Smith

**EXTERNAL
AUDITORS** Aaron Gouldman,
Grant Thornton

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14. Apologies

Apologies were received from Louise Gaskell and Councillor Wajid Khan .

15. Minutes

To Minutes of the meeting held on 17th July 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

16. Standards Complaints Update

Members received for information the decision of the Audit and Standards Sub Committee Hearing Panel held on the 23rd July 2019 in relation to the conduct of Councillor Hosker.

The Chair commented that all council members ought to support and co-operate with the hearing process.

IT WAS AGREED;

That the report be noted.

17. Annual Audit Letter 2018-19

The Committee received for information the Annual Audit letter for the year ending 31st March 2019. The External Auditor summarised the key findings of the audit and confirmed that the Council had in place proper arrangements to ensure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources and that no issues had been identified.

The External Auditors letter also thanked the Council staff for their assistance and co-operation during the audit and for the timely manner in which working papers had been provided.

IT WAS AGREED

That the report be noted.

18. Internal Audit Progress Report Q1

Members were informed of the work undertaken by Internal Audit for the period 1st April to 30th June 2019.

During the period there had been 9 audit reports produced.

The comparison between actual and planned audits showed that some had been completed and others had been started but due to timing issues would be included in future quarter statistics reports.

The report also confirmed that the Council had reviewed its arrangements for the appointment of an auditor for the Housing Benefit Assurance Process to the Department of Work and Pensions and had appointed Grant Thornton to the role for three years until 2022.

Members commented that the performance indicators relating to Liberata Property Services needed to be improved and Councillor Lishman said that she had been appraised of the issues and had asked for the PIs to be monitored on a monthly basis.

IT WAS AGREED;

That the report be noted.

19. Strategic Risk Register

The Committee received an update on the Strategic Risk Register.

The Register had been revised and the new approach had reduced the range of impact assessments from 6 to 3; that is 3 assessments with 3 possible risk impacts (High, Medium and Low) and 3 possible likelihoods (Virtually certain, Likely and Very Unlikely) which was more aligned to RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rankings of risk.

The Committee was also informed of a new risk on the Register for Environmental impact which would also be recorded in both National and Regional Risk Registers.

The report referred to the uncertainty associated with the possible impact of leaving the European Union. The Council had reviewed the advice that had been prepared by Central Government for Local Government and the appropriate sector advice had been reviewed for its various services. As such it was considered not appropriate to record this as a separate risk within the register but rather to recognise it as a potential trigger for risk.

Councillor Lishman asked if any neighbouring authorities had included leaving the EU within their risk registers. She felt that there might be some areas that the Council would need to look at in order to be as prepared as possible and to recognise the impact that leaving the EU might have on Burnley's residents.

The Internal Audit Manager said it was difficult to quantify what risks would be associated with BREXIT but that the Council's Chief Operating Officer had the responsibility of organising a response to issues relating to leaving the EU.

Councillor Graham spoke about the new risk on the register for Environmental events. She said that Climate Change Working Group might identify actions that could impact on other risks on the register and that the risks might need to be expanded to take account of this. The Internal Audit Manager said that this was the first time environment had been placed on the register and that additional triggers would be taken on board if identified by the Climate Change Working Group.

The Chair said that it would be useful for members to have a briefing on the issues around BREXIT and asked for this to be considered by officers.

IT WAS AGREED;

That the report be noted.

20. Investigation of Regulatory Powers Act - OSC Inspection and Annual Return
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The Committee received an update of the authorisations issued under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) and the outcome of the latest inspections made by the Office of Surveillance Commissioners (OSC) to ensure the Council's policies and procedures were operated in a lawful manner.

The report confirmed that there had been no surveillance activity necessitating authorisation in the 2018/19 financial year.

IT WAS AGREED;

That the report be noted.

21. Work Programme

Subject to an item on the Strategic Risk Register being added to each meeting, the work programme for 2019/20 was noted.