



AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

BURNLEY TOWN HALL

Wednesday, 8th March, 2017 at 6.30 pm

PRESENT

MEMBERS

Councillor Jean Cunningham, In the Chair.

Councillors T Harrison (Vice-Chair), G Birtwistle, J Greenwood, W Khan and M Lishman

OFFICERS

Nadeem Ukadia – Senior Auditor
Asad Mushtaq – Head of Finance

CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Gill Smith

EXTERNAL AUDITORS

Karen Murray – Grant Thornton - External Auditor

69. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Andy Tatchell, Kathryn Haworth, Louise Gaskill and Marianne Dixon.

70. Minutes

That subject to the inclusion at Minute 67 that members had asked for a report to the next meeting on the audit of an outside body that had been rated unsatisfactory, the Minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2017 were approved as a correct record.

71. Internal Audit Q3 report

Members received information on the work undertaken by Internal Audit for the period 1st October to 31st December 2016.

During that period two audit reports had been produced, one of which was for Burnley Leisure.

A number of audits had been completed and these would be reported in the quarter four statistics. The performance indicators for Internal Audit showed 11 audit reports against an annual target of 22 and the 100% of high-priority actions had been implemented.

Other activity in quarter 3 included delivery of a training session to Council officers on Financial Procedure Rules; participation in a peer review of a neighbouring authority's Internal Audit section; continued provision of audit services to Burnley Leisure; and continued support to projects and working groups including the Financial Transformation Project, risk management, business continuity management, information governance and in the selection of a Housing joint venture partner.

Members noted that Burnley's Internal Audit was planned for a peer review in May 2017 as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. This approach had been agreed with other Lancashire Authorities and met the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

A member referred to the previous meeting at which the unsatisfactory audit score of an outside body had been discussed. She was concerned that the information requested had been declined. Members were informed that it was not possible to disclose any information regarding this matter at this meeting.

IT WAS AGREED That the report be noted.

72. Annual Accounts 2016/17 Arrangements

Members received an update on the arrangements to date and the implications of the changes required ahead of the closure of the 2016/17 accounts and the production of the Statement of Accounts.

The Committee was informed that a provisional date for a final accounts workshop was for all Council members and that the date was Wednesday 19th July 2017.

IT WAS AGREED

1. That the report and the arrangements that the Council is making in advance of the closure of accounts for the year 2016/17 be noted.
2. That approval be given to the proposed accounting policies to be followed in producing the Statement of Accounts as shown in Appendix 1.
3. That the provisional date for the final accounts workshop be confirmed as Wednesday 19th July 2017.

73. Annual Governance Statement

Consideration was given to the proposed arrangements to provide assurance for the Annual Governance Statement for the financial year 2016/17.

Planning for the AGS had commenced and was in line with CIPFA (Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy) and SOLACE (Society of Local Chief Executives) guidelines and would take the same format as the 2015/16 AGS.

IT WAS AGREED

That the report be noted.

74. External Audit Plan

Karen Murray submitted the External Auditor's plan for the Council for the year ending 31st March 2017 and appraised members of matters that needed to be reported as part of the audit planning process including any significant risks and other risks identified and confirmed that there was nothing to be overly concerned.

In respect of value for money assessment Karen said that this was work in progress and results would be reported in due course and be including in the Annual Audit letter.

Karen concluded that the work to day had not identified any issues which she felt needed to be brought to the Committee's attention.

IT WAS AGREED

That the report be noted.

75. Audit and Standards Committee Update Report

Karen Murray presented the external audit progress report and said at this stage there was nothing to draw members' attention to. She said that at the Certification for the year end would be presented at the next meeting.

She drew members' attention to the changes to the CIPFA code and a series of publications on responsibilities for the governance of the Council.

IT WAS AGREED

That the report be noted.

76. Standards Complaints Updates

The Democracy Officer reported on the complaints statistics for members and the complaint handling arrangements. She said that there were currently two complaints about members that were being investigate by the Independent Person and the outcome would be reported to a future meeting.

IT WAS AGREED

That the report be noted.

77. Work Programme

Members considered the Work Programme and noted that this was the last meeting in the 2016/17 municipal year. The Democracy Officer said that the work programme for 2017/18 would reflect the earlier audit completion date of 31st July 2018.

IT WAS AGREED

That the report be noted.