

Audit and Governance Committee

Held at: Council Chamber - Civic Centre Folkestone

Date: Tuesday, 28 September 2021

Present: Councillors Mrs Ann Berry (Vice-Chair), Laura Davison, Philip Martin (Chairman), Terence Mullard and Rebecca Shoob and Andy Vanburen (Independent Member)

Apologies for Absence

Officers Present: Sue Lewis (Committee Services Officer), Mrs Christine Parker (Head of Audit Partnership) and Charlotte Spendley (Director of Corporate Services)

Others Present: Paul Dossett (Grant Thornton)

10. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

11. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 July 2021 were submitted, approved and virtually signed by the Chairman.

12. **Quarterly Internal Audit Update Report from the Head of East Kent Partnership**

The report included the summary of the work of the East Kent Audit Partnership (EKAP) since the last Audit and Governance Committee meeting together with details of the performance of the EKAP to the 31st August 2021.

The Head of Audit Partnership presented the summary of work along with the appendices.

The summary of reports shows one providing substantial, two reasonable, one limited and one not applicable for an assurance, details of which are provided within the report. In addition, one follow up report was highlighted as remaining

partially limited assurance with regards to Licensing and the outstanding high risk action is due to a staff vacancy.

Members paid particular attention to the following:

- Community Infrastructure Levy and S106 had an assurance level of limited assurance applied– full details are covered within the report concluding that adjustments are minor therefore no revisions are to be made to previously calculated CILs, rates have now been amended. Members were assured that the planning team had taken on the recommendations, with some actions already complete and management have invested in the team who are now focussing on improving the service and are making great strides.
- Covid grants – work commenced in quarter 2 is current work in progress and will hopefully be reported back to members in December.

Proposed by Councillor Laura Davison
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Ann Berry and

Resolved:

- 1. To receive and note Report AuG/21/12.**
- 2. To note the results of the work carried out by the East Kent Audit Partnership.**

(Voting: For 5; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

13. Grant Thornton Audit Progress Report

Grant Thornton's report gives a progress update on recent audit work undertaken and highlights topical issues.

Paul Dossett, Grant Thornton, informed members that there is still work to be done by them before the Financial Statements audit can be signed off. The delay is disappointing but circumstances have led to this, particularly around audit staffing issues and the wider regulatory framework. He explained that the Council had provided all that was required to meet the statutory deadlines.

The Director, Corporate Services informed members that there are no direct implications for the Council of being unable to meet the statutory deadline, however there were resourcing implications for the finance team who also need to focus on in year monitoring, MTFs and budget setting. Grant Thornton confirmed no additional charges will be made for this audit. She said it was very disappointing, particularly as the staff had worked so hard to finalise the audit. The Council understands Grant Thornton's position but will be writing to them with regards to the delay.

An additional meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee will need to take place to sign off the audit and members will be notified of a date in due course.

Proposed by Councillor Laura Davison
Seconded by Councillor Terence Mullard and

Resolved:

- 1. To receive and note report AuG/21/13.**

(Voting: For 5; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

14. Auditor's Annual Report 2020/21

Grant Thornton are required to undertake a review annually to satisfy themselves that the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Following review they prepare the Annual Report to provide commentary relating to the arrangements in place.

Mr Paul Dossett, Grant Thornton, informed members that there were 3 improvement recommendations to note and these are set out within the report but that he had no significant matters to bring to the committees attention. He informed that it is a positive report and the Council had been excellent in responding to the audit.

Members paid particular attention to the following:

- Risk management/actions – Council has a process for dealing with risks identified and the approach to mitigation could be made clearer in future reports.
- Gifts and hospitality – a request to extend the proposed amendment to include senior officers was made.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs Ann Berry
Seconded by Councillor Terence Mullard and

Resolved:

- 1. To receive and note report Aug/21/14.**
- 2. To receive and note Grant Thornton's draft Annual Report.**

(Voting: For 5; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

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