

14 May 2015

14. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

(a) SUMMARY OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Use of Agency Workers

1. The Committee has received and noted a report on the engagement of agency workers. The engagement of agency workers is managed via the Matrix System. This system was procured and the current contract for service is due to expire in November 2015 with an option to extend for two further years.

2. Matrix is a Managed Service Provider and it acts as a 'middle man' and manages the supply chain on the Council's behalf. Matrix is not an agency in its own right. The introduction of Matrix provides an on on-line end-to-end process of engagement of agency workers in order to achieve maximum cost savings and process efficiencies.

3. Following the publication of an audit report, the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development has reviewed and updated the guidance ensuring that recruiting managers are fully aware of their responsibilities for both the process of engagement and managing agency workers on site.

4. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development has also strengthened the approval mechanisms for:

- the setting up of users in the system,
- seeking extensions to a placement and
- requests for increasing pay rates.

All of which now require the approval of the appropriate Director or Head of Service.

Retention and Disposal of Records

5. The Council has a Disposal Schedule, which was adopted as the principal source of information regarding the retention and disposal of records in all formats by the Chief Officers Management Board in June 2001.

6. An overarching review of the Disposal Schedule has not been undertaken for some years; it is therefore

Sales, Fees and Charges

planned to include a regular review process of the Disposal Schedule in the business plan for Corporate Information Management Unit in the next financial year (2015-16). This is part of the ongoing work following the recommendations from the Information Commissioners Office following their audit into Data Protection compliance.

7. A policy outlining the Council's approach to Information and Records Management, including the retention and disposal of records is currently in draft, supporting the Information Governance Strategy recently agreed by the Corporate Information Governance Board (CIGB).

8. The Committee has noted the work to date and the plan for review of the Retention and Disposal of Records, and requested that an update report be received at its September 2015 meeting following the review of the Disposal Schedule by CIGB.

9. Further to a request made at a previous meeting, the Committee has received a report that provided further information in relation to the Revenue Outturn (RO) returns in Adult Social Care where Worcestershire County Council's income was low in the table of comparator counties.

10. The initial high level analysis completed by Council officers showed that in respect of Adult Social Care, income generated through sales, fees and charges as a percentage of total service expenditure had increased from 10.3% in 2008/09 to 10.92% in 2012/13. However, it was noted that in terms of ranking with other local authorities, Worcestershire's 2012/13 ranking was 26th out of 27 authorities. In 2008/09 it was 19th out of 34 authorities.

11. A number of areas were investigated to determine potential reasons why Worcestershire should be ranked low in comparison to other comparator counties including: consistency of return completion; charging policies/people paying higher rates; and collection rates.

12. The investigation has confirmed the assertion that there are inconsistencies in return completion. In terms of Worcestershire's completion, the issue with incorrect code classification has been identified and resolved for this financial year. The investigation has confirmed that charges for care are not subsidised but the amount of income will be influenced by the numbers of people assessed as being able to contribute towards their services. Collection rates and methods are very good and the Council maximises income for this service area. The Committee has noted the report.

External Audit Plans

13. Kyla Bellingall, Engagement Lead, and Helen Lillington, Engagement Manager presented audit plans for the Council and its Pension Fund to the Committee on behalf of Grant Thornton, the Council's external auditor.

14. The Committee has noted the Audit Plans for Worcestershire County Council and its Pension Fund for 2014/15. The Committee has also noted that some aspects of the Council's web site did not reflect the changes to the Pensions scheme therefore it was requested that the web site be updated as soon as possible.

Internal Audit Progress Report 2014/15

15. The Committee has approved the content of the draft Internal Audit progress report 2014/15.

16. The Committee has requested that a report be brought to a future meeting to explain how the Superfast Broadband Project was tracking performance and assessing customer feedback.

Internal Audit Commissioning Update

17. A Business Case has been written which shows the main options and consequences of setting up a shared service hosted by Warwickshire County Council. Both councils are in the process of agreeing a set of underlying commercial principles which covers a number of areas including contract period, level of audit coverage, payments, TUPE and the sharing of costs.

18. The proposal needs to be formally agreed by both Councils before the shared service could be confirmed. It is intended that once appropriate due diligence and staff consultation has been completed and formal approval has been obtained that the new arrangements will commence on 1 May 2015. The Committee has noted the update on the Commissioning arrangements for Internal Audit.

Work Programme

19. The Committee has noted its future work programme with the following changes:

- a) An update report on Internal Audit Commissioning be brought to the meeting on 26 June; and

- b) The approval of the shared service arrangements for Internal Audit be timetabled on an annual basis.

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Vice-Chairman

Contact Points

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Head of Legal and Democratic Services) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Agenda papers for the meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 20 March 2015