

# AUDIT AND CORPORATE SERVICES REVIEW COMMITTEE

11 May 2016

Present: Councillor M Williams (Chair)  
Mr D Ellis, Mrs G Hayward, Councillor M James, Councillor L Jenkins and Councillor R Owens.

(NPA Offices, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock: 10.00am – 11.55am)

## 1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mr A Archer, Councillor RM Lewis and Councillor DWM Rees

## 2. Disclosures

There were no disclosures of interest.

## 3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 24 February 2016 were presented for confirmation and signature.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2016 be confirmed and signed.

*[Councillor R Owens was not present when the following item was discussed]*

## 4. Internal Audit Annual Report 2015/16

The Chair welcomed Mr Robin Pritchard, the Engagement Director at Gateway Assure, the Authority's internal auditors, and invited him to present the report. Mr Pritchard explained that the report summarised the outcome of work completed against the 2016/17 operational audit plan approved by the Committee. The overall opinion for the year was that the Authority had adequate and effective risk management, governance and control processes.

Members were reminded that the internal audit service had reviewed a number of areas during the year – risk management, budgetary control, health and safety, corporate governance and income generation and that the outcomes had been presented to the Committee in two tranches earlier in the year. The main findings were appended to the report and these would be followed up as part of the 2016/17 audit.

There was some discussion regarding the recommendation that the Authority undertake a member skills audit as it was noted that even if particular skillsets were identified as being needed, the Authority had very



little influence over who was appointed to it, either by the County Council or by Welsh Government

**NOTED.**

**5. Internal Audit Strategy 2016/17 to 2018/19**

The internal auditor explained that the internal audit strategy set out an assessment of audit need, directing resources to those aspects of the organisation that were assessed as generating the greatest risk to the achievement of the its objectives. The report set out the process for establishing that need and as a result the areas upon which the internal audit would focus over the period 2016/17 to 2018/19. It was noted that the strategy before the Committee rolled forward plans considered in the draft strategy for 2015/16 to 2017/18.

The annual plan for 2016/17 was set out in appendix B to the report and would look at a review of back office functions, key financial controls, information governance, performance management, corporate governance and pre-application planning fees, together with a follow up on the 2015/16 audit. This would again be undertaken in two tranches and it was anticipated that the results would be reported to the Committee in November 2016 and February 2017.

Members felt that a review of pre-application planning fees would be useful as there was some concern over the introduction of the fee structure and how this would impact on both the advice sought by members of the public and pressure on staff. Nevertheless, the requirement for the Authority was to implement the new system was acknowledged. Members also questioned whether a surcharge could be imposed on retrospective applications, and while officers noted that this would require legislation, it was agreed that this would be explored through officers' engagement with Welsh Government and the Planning Officers' Society for Wales.

**NOTED.**

**6. Annual Governance Statement 2015/16**

It was reported that the Annual Governance Statement provided the vehicle for demonstrating the Authority's success in delivering continuous improvement in performance, identified control systems and processes and highlighted governance issues to be addressed. The Statement had been considered by the Committee at its previous meeting, and as a result amendments had been made within the document with regard to electronic agendas/paperless meetings and on the impact of the Welsh Language Standards and the Authority's ability to comply with them. The Statement had therefore come back to the Committee before being reported to a future meeting of the Authority for approval.



No further comments on the Statement were made.

**NOTED.**

**7. Performance Report for the Year Ending 31 March 2016**

The Business and Performance Manager presented the performance for the Authority's Corporate Services for the financial year to date.

Appended to the report, and also presented at the meeting, were the key actions and measures within Corporate Services, and these showed that good progress had been made on almost all the measures and actions, with only one showing 'red', although this was not a reflection of performance being related to an increase in Health and Safety incidents due to encouragement of greater levels of reporting. Those few actions shown as 'amber' were either limited due to other priorities or dependant on actions outside the Authority.

The measures relating to Development Management were also reported to the Committee, and these showed a slight decrease in the number of applications determined within 8 weeks however the team had been operating without a Head of Development Management during this period and overall the figures did not cause any concern.

It was **RESOLVED** that the performance report be received.

**8. Risk Register**

The Business and Performance Manager presented the latest risk register which had recently been reviewed by both the Authority's Management and Leadership Teams when recent progress and changes had been noted.

No risks had altered sufficiently to warrant a change in risk level, however since the last report three risks had reduced slightly, indicated by the down arrow, but not sufficiently to change the coloured risk level.

Members were pleased to note that the failure to comply with the new Welsh Language Standards was considered to be a low risk, and the Chief Executive added that processes had been put in place to try to ensure the Authority complied with the Standards, however no system was completely failsafe.

With regard to the risk of major IT failure or virus attack, Members asked that the target for the risk be changed from red, to amber, to aim for a more positive outcome.

In conclusion, the Chair noted that this was the last meeting of the Committee that the Business and Performance Manager would attend



and he thanked him for his hard work in sometimes difficult circumstances.

**NOTED.**

**9. Electronic Point of Sale (EPOS) System Implementation Report 2015/16**

The Finance Manager explained that this report was an end of project completion review provided by KCPOS who had installed the system at the Authority's Information and Heritage Centres. The report reviewed the project performance against the original project objectives and, as well as looking at whether these had been met, it detailed any unfinished work or on-going risks to the continued use of the EPOS system.

It was concluded that existing tills had been successfully replaced, allowing the EPOS system to integrate directly with the Authority's finance system, removing the need for data to be re-keyed. It was noted that minor outstanding issues would be resolved when further training was provided in the near future.

**NOTED.**

**10. Budget Performance**

The Finance Manager explained that the end of year statement had not yet been finalised but it would be complete by the end of June deadline. Looking at figures relating to income, merchandise sales were up against budget overall, although figures for Oriell y Parc were down; further analysis on this had shown that this was due to increased income relating to the Peter Blake exhibition the previous year. Admissions fees were up at the centres particularly at Carew. Car park income was also up and these elements, together with increased income for estates, planning fees, advertising revenue for Coast to Coast and significant savings, had contributed to a budget surplus for the year of £494,000.

Members asked about the poor performance of Newport Car Park, and officers explained that previously land had been leased from the golf club, however this had not been renewed and instead they operated their own car park on the beach. The Authority had a long term aspiration to stop beach parking, however discussions with the community would continue regarding this complicated situation.

Turning to the capital budget, £147,000 had been spent in the financial year to 31 March. This included expenditure in addition to budget for fleet replacement, purchase of a flail and mower and Carew Mill roof. Members were not happy with the contractor who had undertaken the roofing work as the cost was significantly greater than the tender



submitted. Officers agreed that they were aware of the situation and would be reviewing the Authority's tendering process.

The final slide presented showed the position of the Authority's reserves. The budget surplus would be added to earmarked reserves relating to staff restructuring, and the Sustainable Development Fund. Also a new reserve had been created for planning enforcement.

**NOTED.**

## **11. Media Monitoring**

The Chair welcomed the Communications Officer who gave a presentation on the Authority's media monitoring. He explained that 'media monitoring' was a term used to describe how the Authority monitored and analysed online (digital), print (mainly newspapers and magazines), radio and TV coverage of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and the Authority. Social media monitoring (mainly Facebook and Twitter) was a sub-area of digital coverage that was monitored. This was undertaken through the use of a service provided by Gorkana which searched the media for key words provided by officers. In addition staff monitored the local newspapers on a daily basis. Reports could subsequently be provided to officers of media coverage on a particular issue. Clippings could also be shared with staff as the Authority purchased licences from the Newspaper Licensing Authority and the Copyright Licensing Authority allowing them to do so.

The tone – positive, negative or neutral – of that coverage was also recorded, and in the past year it was reported that there had been a low number of negative media items, with an average of 1.3 articles per month, however in the past 12 months there had been four months with no negative coverage of the Authority.

Much use was made of social media, which was effectively a free form of promotion. It was monitored in-house throughout the day, including over the weekend, as a great deal of damage could be done in a short time if negative posts were made to which the Authority did not respond. The number of 'likes' and 're-tweets' were also analysed.

Members thanked the officer for an interesting presentation.

**NOTED.**

## **12. Delegation of any issues for consideration by the Continuous Improvement Group**

It was **RESOLVED** that there were no issues of concern that the Committee wished to delegate to the Continuous Improvement Group for consideration.

