

AUDIT AND CORPORATE SERVICES REVIEW COMMITTEE

15 May 2019

Present: Mr A Archer (Chair)
Councillor D Clements, Mrs G Hayward, Dr R Heath Davies,
Councillor M James, Councillor R Owens and Councillor M Williams

(NPA Offices, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock: 12.15pm – 13.20pm)

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P Baker and Councillor P Kidney.

2. Disclosures

There were no disclosures of interest.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 13 February 2019 were presented for confirmation and signature.

Members enquired about (minute 4) Building Fire (incident 825) The Chief Executive explained that a fire had occurred in a small outbuilding located in Sageston which the Authority owned at the time. This land had since been sold to the Housing Association Ateb.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2019 be confirmed and signed.

4. Health and Safety Group: report of meeting

Members considered the report of the meeting of the Health and Safety Group held on 12 July 2018.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report of the meeting of the Health and Safety Group held on 18 October 2019 be received.

5. Wales Audit Office Audit Plan 2019

The Chair welcomed Mr Deryck Evans from the Wales Audit Office. Mr Evans confirmed that the financial audit had followed the usual process as in previous years. He stated that no specific issues had been identified, that they were currently ahead of time and would be looking to sign off the Audit. Mr Evans also confirmed that the plan set out the audit fees for the forthcoming year and that any monies overpaid would be returned to the Authority.



One Member pointed out a typographical error with regards the fees on page 23 of the report and also that the Authority had been referred to in the report as a 'Council', Mr Evans confirmed that these items had been noted and would be corrected. Members felt that it would be useful to have a table at the end of the report which showed how the fees charged were reached. Mr Evans was happy to agree to this request.

NOTED

6. Internal Audit Report 2018/19

The Chair introduced Mr Robin Pritchard from Gateway Assure, he summarised the outcome of the work completed by the Authority's Internal Auditors against the 2018/19 operational audit plan approved by the Authority's Audit and Corporate Review Committee. The areas that had been reviewed were, Corporate Governance, Castell Henllys, Risk Management, Key Financial Controls-Exchequer Software, Carew Castle and Performance Development. He confirmed that they had formed generally very positive conclusions regarding the policies, procedures and operations in place.

NOTED

7. Internal Audit Report Block 2

The report was the outcome of work completed against Block 2 of the 2018/19 operational audit plan. The Internal Auditors had reviewed, Exchequer Software, Carew Castle and Performance Management. Mr Pritchard advised that the Exchequer Software was deemed adequate with no need to change unless there was a cost advantage. An overarching review had been undertaken for Carew Castle with a move back to budget planning. Members asked about staff safety when going to the bank, it was confirmed that routes and times of banking were regularly changed. With regards Performance Management, Mr Prichard felt that there was a balance to be achieved on the amount of information received in terms of bringing key issues to Members attention rather than just good news.

NOTED

8. Draft Internal Audit Strategy 2019/20 to 2021/22

Members were asked to receive the draft internal audit strategy for 2019/20 to 2021/22. The Plan from last year was brought forward with thought given to areas that had not been looked at in the past 5 years. Appendix B showed suggestions for 2019/20. One Member asked what the Auditors had in mind with regards business continuity, Mr Pritchard



stated that they were looking at the policy to see if it had to be revised and if it was still fit for purpose. The Chief Executive stated that the new IT Manager would be involved in the future.

NOTED

9. Annual Governance Statement 2018/19

Members were reminded that the Authority is required to produce an Annual Governance Statement and were invited to contribute to and shape the contents of the attached draft 2018/19 statement.

Members asked if the clearing of the backlog of Enforcement Cases had been achieved, it was confirmed that with the exception of a couple of cases this had been done. The Chief Executive highlighted the fact that one Member had suggested that the Authority apply for Advanced Member Charter Status and with this in mind the Member Support & Development Committee had been set up. Members felt that it was a good report which showed exactly how much work goes on. There was some concern that with so much reporting it was spreading the Authority too thinly. The Wales Audit Office had promised to send tools to assist with this but this had not been forthcoming, it was decided that a reminder would need to be sent requesting further assistance.

NOTED

10. Performance Report for the Period Ending 31st March 2019

The report followed the structure of the Corporate and Resources Plan for 2018/19, following the approach of the Well-being of Future Generations Act with seven well-being objectives. The report presented the performance for the full financial year April to March 2018/19 and included Quarter 4 data (January-March) for the majority of data sets. A number of actions remained in amber, these related to areas where further work is needed to progress activities or actions as part of a longer term plan.

(Councillor Michael Evans left at this juncture)

One Member asked if the Authority had a benchmark for making the fleet greener. The Chief Executive confirmed that this was not the case but this would be looked at once the new fleet management arrangement was in place. The Performance and Compliance Co-ordinator noted that the Authority did audit carbon emissions and figures can be used for year on year comparison, however wider work being carried out by Welsh Government and Carbon Trust may impact on the calculation used. She also stated that funding had been secured which would assist with the Outdoors Schools Project. Members felt that a report on GDPR was needed to show if the Authority was compliant.



NOTED

11. Risk Register

Members were asked to consider the latest Risk Register, which had been amended in accordance with an Internal Audit recommendation.

The Finance Manager highlighted the impact of medium to short term funding on the Authority's base National Park grant. There was an error made by Welsh Government which occurred when National Parks moved departments within the Welsh Government. The Chief Executive confirmed that this had been resolved for 2019/20. A meeting for all Wales National Parks was scheduled for Monday 20th to resolve longer term issues.

One Member asked what the future held for Cilrhedyn. The Chief Executive noted that net operating costs were less than renting alternative premises for the Wardens but this would be looked at again. It was felt that any complaints relating to Welsh Language Standards should be a trigger point. . Also, that the Biodiversity Plan seemed more passive that it should be.

(Councillor Michael James left at this Juncture)

Members expressed concern at the amber rating for the Authority's phone system. The Chief Executive noted that whilst the system was old, the Authority could use mobiles in the event of a system failure.

NOTED

12. To Receive a Verbal Update by the Finance Manager on Budget Performance for the twelve months ending March 2019.

Whilst a nil budget had been set up, the Authority was looking at a surplus of £250,000 due to extra money received from the Welsh Government, vacant posts and increased planning fees. There was a need to make an earmarked reserve to counteract the future reduction. The Accounts should be finalised within the next few weeks and it was expected that these would be presented to the Authority in July.

13. 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.

