

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Monday, 23 September 2024

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A meeting of the Governance Committee was held on Monday, 23 September 2024 at the Civic Centre, Ridley Street, Redcar, Yorkshire, TS10 1TD.

PRESENT Councillor C Morgan (Chair)
Councillors N Bendelow, S Martin, J McCue,
M O'Donoghue, V Rider, G Cutler, I Hart
Co-optees Lavelle, C Monson
Parish Councillor L Welburn .

OFFICIALS D Clubb, J Collins, C Dearden, P Jeffrey, S
Fenwick, A Phillips, V Smith, P Winstanley and
J McCulloch.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Berry (Vice-Chair), G Nightingale and C Richardson.

30 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

Councillor Rider declared an interested in all matters relating to Saltburn, Marske and New Marske Parish Council

31 **TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 JULY 2024**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Governance Committee held on 22 July 2024, subject to the following amendments, be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

I Lavelle and C Monson to be recorded in the list of those present as Co-opted Members

Minute No 24 to read:-

- An explanation relating to the pension scheme asset ceiling was requested; and,
- Actions being taken to improve levels of debt collection were requested.

Monday, 23 September 2024

32 **MONITORING OFFICER DECISIONS - CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Monitoring Officer decisions were reported to Governance Committee for transparency purposes. As outlined in the revised Code of Conduct Officer Protocol, the decisions of the Monitoring Officer were **NOTED**.

33 **INTERNAL AUDIT AND COUNTER FRAUD PROGRESS REPORT (VERITAU)**

The Assistant Director of Veritau presented an update on internal audit work undertaken to date and gave verbal updates on audit priorities, work planning and the Key Issues as set out in Appendices C, D and E (not reproduced).

As part of the ensuring discussions the following questions/comments were made:

- A Member requested further information in relation to the number of Agency staff in Children and Families. Members were advised that discussion was ongoing with management and this figure was expected to reduce soon.
- A Member referred to the Limited Assurance opinion given to CCTV and asked what issues had arisen. Members were advised that the report which was presented at the July meeting would be circulated.
- A suggestion was made by the Chair that Council Officers responsible for progressing audit priorities be invited to attend the Committee to go over any reports with Members. Discussion took place on whether they would be invited by the Committee Members or Veritau and this would be clarified at the next meeting.

The Assistant Director (Corporate Fraud – Veritau) presented an update on the Counter Fraud Progress Report 2024/25 which covered work undertaken between April and July this year. Members were advised that the Council had participated in a national Day of Action in relation to the mis-use of Blue Badge Parking Permits. Checks were made on 51 badges and no fraudulent use was recorded.

It was also highlighted that the Counter Fraud Team had been involved in the successful return of monies to service users who had been subject to financial abuse. **NOTED**

Monday, 23 September 2024

34 **ANNUAL AUDIT STRATEGY MEMORANDUM 2023-24 (MAZARS)**

The Senior Audit Manager (Mazars) presented the Audit Strategy Memorandum for the year ending 31 March 24, which summarised the audit scope, approach and timeline and advised that there were no significant changes. Significant audit risks and areas of key judgement were highlighted and the only outstanding report was from the auditor of the Teesside Pension Fund.

A Member queried whether the auditor of the Teesside Pension Fund had been given a deadline for the report to be submitted. The Officer advised that Teesside Pension Fund were aware of the deadline and that the report was expected in February 2025. **NOTED**

35 **ANNUAL BUSINESS CONTINUITY UPDATE**

The Assistant Director (Corporate Services), on behalf of the Managing Director (Head of Paid Service), presented the annual update of the Business Continuity arrangements within the Council, and sought approval of the revised Business Continuity Policy.

As part of the ensuring discussions the following questions/comments were made:

- A Member thanked the Officer for the comprehensive report and asked how the service areas were selected to participate in the business continuity exercises and who set the scenarios. Members were advised that Teams were identified from the strategic list of critical service areas and would be subject to a range of incidents. The Teams would be changed on a yearly basis.
- A Member asked whether there was any input from external organisations when the scenarios were being set. It was confirmed that the exercises contained within the report and most of the others were in-house and that external organisations were only involved in much bigger national operations. **NOTED**

36 **ANY ITEMS THE CHAIR CERTIFIES AS URGENT.**

There were no issues certified as urgent.