

Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee

10.00am, Tuesday 3 November 2020

Present

Councillors Mowat (Convener), Bird, Jim Campbell, Child, Dixon, Doggart, Munro, Staniforth, Work and Young (substituting for Councillor Neil Ross),

1. Minutes

Decision

To approve the minute of the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee of 29 September 2020 as a correct record.

2. Outstanding Actions

Details were provided on the outstanding actions arising from decisions taken by the Committee.

Decision

1) To agree to close the following actions:

Action 5 (2) – City of Edinburgh Council – Sheltered Housing

Action 11 (1, 2, 3 and 4) – Internal Audit Annual Opinion for the year ended 31 March 2020

Action 12 (2) – Revenue Budget 2020/21 – month three position

2) To note that Action 1 would be updated to March 2021.

3) Action 2 – Committee Reporting – To note that the Governance, Democracy and Resilience team were working on reports to do with political governance and committee structures of reporting and that the Executive Director of Resources would clarify with the Democracy, Governance & Resilience Senior Manager whether the report would be available for Committee in December.

4) To otherwise note the outstanding actions.

(Reference – Outstanding Actions 3 November 2020, submitted.)

3. Work Programme

Decision

1) To note the Work Programme.

- 2) To note that the Principles to govern the working relationship between the City of Edinburgh Council Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee and the Edinburgh Integrated Joint Board Audit and Risk Committee report would be delayed. To note that NHS colleagues were invited to attend the IJB Audit and Assurance and the matter had been escalated the Chief Officer, Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership, for attention.

(Reference – Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee Work Programme 3 November 2020, submitted.)

4. Business Bulletin

Decision

To note the business bulletin.

(Reference – Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee Business Bulletin 3 November 2020, submitted.)

5. Internal Audit: Final Internal Audit reports supporting the 2019/20 Annual Opinion

Committee were provided with copies of three final Internal Audit (IA) reports that formed part of the 2019/20 IA annual opinion for their review and scrutiny.

Decision

- 1) To note the final Internal Audit reports.
- 2) To note the Head of Place Development would consider how Fire Safety measures are managed and communicated to Committee and Ward Councillors in the High-Rise Blocks within the Council's property estate.
- 3) To note that the Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) form would be removed from the intranet.
- 4) To agree that the Head of Customer and Digital Services would advise of the number of staff members with access to social media accounts.
- 5) To note that Councillor Young and the Head of Place Development would take discussions offline regarding feedback Councillor Young had received on the regarding the Council's compliance with policies when compared to private landlords.

(References – Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee, 18 August 2020 (item 5); report by the Chief Internal Auditor, submitted.)

6. City of Edinburgh Council - 2019/20 Annual Audit Report to the Council and the Controller of Audit

Details were provided of the principal findings arising from the City of Edinburgh Council's 2019/20 external audit, which focused primarily on the review of the financial statements, but also included consideration of the Council's financial management, financial sustainability, governance and transparency and arrangements to secure and demonstrate value for money.

Decision

- 1) To note that, following the audit process, it was anticipated that an unqualified audit opinion would be issued on the Council's annual accounts for 2019/20.
- 2) To refer the audited annual accounts to the Finance and Resources Committee for approval and thereafter to Council for noting.
- 3) To note that, following approval by the Finance and Resources Committee, the audited annual accounts would be signed and submitted to the external auditor.
- 4) To note the areas of strength identified within the wider scope audit work and that progress in the delivery of the remaining improvement actions set out in Appendix 5 of the auditor's report would be considered as part of the adaptation and renewal programme and reported to the committee over the coming year.
- 5) To note that, once approved, a summarised version of the annual accounts would also be published on the Council's website by 30 November.
- 6) To agree that the Head of Finance would keep Members abreast of appeals to UK and National Government for additional monies made by Officers and Elected Members

(Reference – report by the Executive Director of Resources, submitted.)

7. Annual Assurance Schedule - Resources Directorate

Each year the City of Edinburgh Council requires that Executive Directors complete Certificates of Assurance that represent their view of the effectiveness and appropriateness of controls in their areas of responsibility. The Resources Directorate Annual Assurance Schedule for 2019/20 was presented.

Decision

- 1) To note the Resources Directorate annual assurance schedule for 2019-20.
- 2) To note that the Resources Directorate annual assurance schedule 2020-21 would be submitted for scrutiny in 12 months' time.

(References – Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee 29 October 2019 (item 6); report by the Executive Director of Resources, submitted)

8. Enterprise Risk Management Policy – referral from the Policy and Sustainability Committee

The Policy and Sustainability Committee had referred a report on the Enterprise Risk Management Policy to the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee for consideration.

The Enterprise Risk Management Policy described the Council's overarching risk management approach and was supported by a more granular operational risk management framework that described how the policy would be applied by all Council directorates and divisions to ensure that the Council was adequately protected, where possible, from the adverse impacts of unexpected events

Decision

To note the report.

(References – Policy and Sustainability Committee, 6 October 2020 (item 17); referral from the Policy and Sustainability Committee submitted.)

9. Council’s Risk Appetite Statement – referral from the Policy and Sustainability Committee

The Policy and Sustainability Committee had referred a report on the Council’s risk appetite statement to the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee for consideration.

Decision

To note the report.

(References – Policy and Sustainability Committee, 6 October 2020 (item 18); referral from the Policy and Sustainability Committee submitted.)

10. Operational Risk Management Framework

A refresh of the Council’s current operational risk management arrangements over the next three years in response to the Council’s changing risk profile, ensuring that is more effectively aligned with the ‘three lines of defence’ model and good practice was presented for approval.

Decision

- 1) To approve the proposals set out in the paper for improving the Council’s operational risk management framework on a phased basis across the next three years, to enable more effective alignment with the ‘three lines of defence’ model and implementing good practice.
- 2) To note the response from the Chief Executive to the actions agreed at the August 2020 meeting of the Committee in relation to the Risk Management internal audit report

(References – Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee 3 December 2019 (item 10); report by the Executive Director of Resources, submitted)

11. Concurrent Risks Resilience Planning – referral from the Policy and Sustainability Committee

The Policy and Sustainability Committee had referred a report on the latest position with regard to the Council’s approach to resilience planning, which was being adapted following lessons learned from Covid-19 and the need to plan for a number of concurrent risks. to the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee for consideration.

Decision

To note the report.

(References – Policy and Sustainability Committee, 6 October 2020 (item 22); referral from the Policy and Sustainability Committee submitted.)

12. Corporate Governance Framework Self-Assessment 2019/20

Details were provided on the Council's Corporate Governance Framework (CGF) which was based on the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy and Society of Local Authority Chief Executives model framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government.

The Council's self-assessment of its compliance with the framework for the financial year 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 was presented.

Decision

- 1) To note the Corporate Governance Framework Self-Assessment 2019-20.
- 2) To note ongoing development of an effective framework for the Council, with a focus on continuous improvement.
- 3) To note that the full effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the design of the Council's control framework would be reported in the 2020-21 self-assessment period.
- 4) To agree that the Convener and any interested Committee Members would meet with Officers to consider how the Corporate Governance Framework Self-Assessment for 2020/21 could be refined to enhance the document.

(Reference – report by the Chief Executive, submitted.)

13. Impact of Sheltered Housing Support in reducing loneliness and isolation

Information on improvements made to tackle loneliness and isolation experienced by citizens living in sheltered housing managed by the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership, and how this would continually develop was provided.

The report also covered the Partnership's approach to supporting other vulnerable citizens during the pandemic.

Decision

- 1) To note the content of the report and the progress made to reduce loneliness and isolation for citizen's in City-wide Sheltered Housing communities.
- 2) To note that despite restrictions imposed by Covid-19, a programme of involvement and ongoing engagement with citizens had continued to see improvement for people whilst informing ongoing service development, for continually improving outcomes for people.
- 3) To note the briefing paper included as appendix 1 to the report, highlighting specific preventative activity during Covid-19 for those with dementia and their carers.
- 4) To note that Housing Officers who attended Sheltered Housing properties to test alarms would wear appropriate PPE and residents who were receiving tests would be warned prior.

(References – report by the Chief Officer, Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership, submitted.)