

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
AUDIT COMMITTEE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY,
KIDDERMINSTER
30TH NOVEMBER 2015 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: J Phillips (Chairman), T A Muir (Vice-Chairman), P Dyke, A T Hingley, J A Shaw and J D Smith.

AUD.11 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

AUD.12 Appointment of Substitutes

There were no appointments of substitutes.

AUD.13 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

AUD.14 Minutes

Agreed: The minutes of the meeting held on 28th September 2015 were confirmed as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

AUD.15 Audit Update

Mark Stocks, Engagement Lead of Grant Thornton advised the Committee that Richard Percival had been promoted to Associate Director and will therefore take over the Engagement Lead role. Zoe Thomas will attend future meetings in the role as manager. Mark Stocks explained that due to these changes he would no longer be attending the Audit Committee meetings and wanted to express his thanks to Members and the teams that he has worked with over the past few years and wished Wyre Forest District Council well for the future. The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Mark for all his work with the Council.

Richard Percival led the Committee through the Audit update. Although there was not currently much to report, Richard did highlight the following:

- Summary of key events on page 5 of the update
- Revenues/Benefits claim – gave thanks for the support of the team

Agenda Item No. 4

- Making Devolution Work – looking at progress made nationally
- Turn up the Volume Business Index – data analysis
- Growing Healthy Communities Health and Wellbeing Index
- Audit Committee Effectiveness Review
- Code of Audit Practice

Councillor Hingley queried the reference that Worcestershire has a lot to do to meet the NHS deficit. Richard Percival advised that there is a national issue around social care/Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) that the Working Together Agenda is trying to address. Worcestershire County Council is an example where the financial challenge is quite severe and there is a lot of work to be done. Councillor Hingley wanted it noted that she considered Worcestershire County Council to be handling a difficult situation very well and commended the CCGs in Wyre Forest for their often forward thinking approach.

Councillor Shaw questioned the usefulness of Devolution and the Business Link Index for a small, local authority such as Wyre Forest. Richard Percival confirmed that, in terms of Devolution, it is useful to be able to feed into processes such as these. Also, in terms of the Business Link Index, the quality and cost analysis advises authorities how best to make an area more attractive to firms/businesses. Councillor Shaw said he considered the Business Link Index to be the more useful of the two.

Councillor Shaw commented that consideration needs to be given to our location when trying to attract businesses into the area and what can be done about the existing transport problems. Councillor Hingley remarked that this work had already started in the form of business plans for Worcestershire.

Decision: The Audit Update was noted.

AUD16. Annual Audit Letter and Audit Opinion

Richard Percival advised the Committee that the Audit Letter was very short due to there being no key findings to report on this occasion. Attention was drawn to the certification of the housing benefit grant claim. This has not yet been certified for 14/15 but the work is currently in progress.

Councillor Shaw queried the reference to Place Analytics and asked for an explanation as to what it was. Richard Percival advised it is a service Wyre Forest District Council subscribes to which provides a broad range of demographic data.

Decision: The Annual Audit Letter and Audit Opinion was noted.

AUD17. Internal Audit Monitoring Report Quarter Ended 30th September 2015

Agenda Item No. 4

The Audit Manager led Members through the report. The following aspects in the report were highlighted and briefly explained:

- Council Tax Reconciliation
- Housing Benefits Reconciliation
- Work in progress on the Annual Audit Plan 2015/16

Councillor Shaw queried the performance of the annual plan and in particular the reference to 47.5%. The Audit Manager confirmed that the 47.5% is half of the 95% annual target. Although it is slightly below target at the moment (44.65%), this is expected due to the time of year (summer period). The new Audit Apprentice will also help to progress the workload and the benefits of this role should start to show in quarter 3.

The Internal Audit Monitoring Report was noted.

The meeting ended at 6.39 pm.