

AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

10 May 2023

Report of the Audit Working Group 5 April 2023

Report by Director of Finance

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Committee is RECOMMENDED to note the report.

Executive Summary

2. The Audit Working Group (AWG) met on 5 April 2023. Officers attended to provide a further update on the new payment arrangements for the new Living Well at Home Contract. The group received an update on the implementation of actions from the previous internal audit of Fleet Management Compliance 2021/22, and the implementation of the new One Fleet Strategy.

Introduction

3. Attendance:
Full Meeting: Chairman Dr Geoff Jones. Councillors: Roz Smith, Brad Baines, Judy Roberts, Yvonne Constance OBE

Officers: Full meeting: Jonathan Deacon, Committee Officer, Sarah Cox, Chief Internal Auditor, Paul Grant, Head of Legal

Officers: Part meeting: Karen Fuller, Corporate Director, Adults, Pippa Corner, Deputy Director Commissioning, Mark Smith, Strategic Fleet Manager, Vic Kurzeja, Director of Property.

Matters to Report:

Payments to Home Care Providers

4. At the September 2022 Audit and Governance meeting, it was noted through the review of the internal audit report executive summaries of recently finalised audits, that there have been recent changes for the checking and monitoring of payments to home care providers under the new Live Well at Home contractual arrangements. The Audit and Governance Committee asked for an update on those changes to be considered by the Audit Working Group.

5. Due to agenda timings of the December 2022 AWG meeting, the AWG requested that a paper to be submitted for review by AWG members, no officers were invited. The paper was considered, and the AWG reported back to the January 2023 Audit & Governance Committee, that they had invited officers back to the April 2023 AWG meeting to provide a further update, with officers attending to address AWG member's questions.
6. The group noted that Living Well at Home (LWAH) is a 5-year contract, which is a new strategic and innovative approach for the commissioning of reablement and long-term care, in Oxfordshire, which went live on 1 October 2021. Working differently with the market has seen an increase of weekly home care hours from approximately 20,000 hours per week to 27,000 hours since 2020. There is an improved relationship with the providers, working with Strategic Partners and Zonal Providers. Performance on reablement has also significantly improved.
7. Under the terms of the LWAH contract, providers are paid based on planned / commissioned care. In the contract there is a requirement that providers report actual hours so that the Council can assure the delivery of care from a quality point of view. The group discussed the move from a transactional based approach for the delivery and payment of care and the mechanisms and oversight now in place to provide assurance over the quality of care being delivered. The Quality Assurance, Safeguarding and Operations teams work closely together in monitoring providers. The service is also in the process of reviewing the year 1 data, to ensure outcomes of the new arrangements are being achieved.
8. The Audit Working Group noted that an audit of the new payment arrangements is planned within the 2023/24 internal audit plan, and the results of the audit will be reported back to the Audit & Governance Committee through the internal audit routine quarterly reports.

Internal Audit of Fleet Management Compliance 2021/22

9. Officers attended the AWG to provide an update on the implementation of actions from the audit of Fleet Management Compliance 2021/22 and the implementation of the One Fleet Strategy.
10. The audit had identified instances of non-compliance with both legal and safety requirements, supporting the need for the new approach. It also highlighted that due to the uncoordinated approach to fleet management, there is no Council-wide assurance or information available on the management and safety of the Council's fleet.
11. The AWG were satisfied with the actions taken by officers to address the weaknesses identified with the "One Fleet" approach to fleet management going forward, including the implementation of a new fleet management IT system, and a new procurement strategy. The AWG noted that the implementation of "One Fleet" will facilitate improved oversight of fleet assets and ensure greater consistency in relation to vehicle procurement, management and disposal.

12. The group requested that officers attend the September 2023 working group to provide a further update on implementation of “One Fleet”

Financial Implications

13. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by: Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance
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Legal Implications

14. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by: Paul Grant, Head of Legal
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Lorna Baxter
Director of Finance

Annex: None
Background papers: None

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April 2023

Next AWG meeting: 13 September 2023