AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
29 November 2023

Report of the Audit Working Group 8 November 2023

Report by Executive Director of Resources

RECOMMENDATION

1.   The Committee is RECOMMENDED to note the report.

Executive Summary

2.   The Audit Working Group (AWG) met on 8 November 2023. The group received a briefing on IT governance arrangements for new system implementation and also an update on the Counter Fraud Team's activities.

Introduction

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

Officers: Full meeting: Shilpa Manek, Committee Officer, Sarah Cox Chief Internal Auditor, Paul Grant, Head of Legal, Ian Dyson, Assistant Director of Finance.

Officers: Part meeting: Tim Spiers Director IT, Innovation, Digital and Transformation, Declan Brolly, Counter Fraud Team Manager, Nick Stokes, Intelligence and Data Officer.

Apologies: Anita Bradley, Director of Law & Governance

Matters to Report:

IT governance arrangements for new systems implementation

4.   The group were provided with a briefing on the IT governance arrangements for the implementation of new IT systems across the council. This included an overview of the approval process for new IT projects, management of the delivery stages of implementation and oversight and management reporting procedures.

5. The group discussed some of the history around previous IT implementations and change management within the organisation. It was acknowledged that there can be technical challenges in getting systems to interact with each other and that closer involvement by IT at an early stage was needed. A robust IT Strategy for Change was implemented in 2019. The IT service has improved customer engagement with the services, ensuring the IT Business Partners are involved from the initial "idea" stage of any potential IT procurement and implementation.

6. The group were updated that organisation now has a newly formed strategic transformation board and that a new portfolio approach is being implemented to manage programmes and major projects. A new Data, Insights and Delivery Hub is being established which includes the creation of a new PMO (Project Management Office). IT are a key enabler in the delivery of these major projects.

7. It was agreed that the Audit & Governance Committee should receive a briefing on the new governance arrangements for managing programmes and major projects.

Counter Fraud Team Update

8. Officers provided a detailed report of the Counter Fraud Team's current case activity. The group noted the number of current investigations and discussed cases to note, including the current status of the investigations and the sanctions being sought / achieved. The importance of the work undertaken by the team with each investigation, to review any control weaknesses identified, which includes agreeing actions to improve controls and minimise the risk of reoccurrence was also noted.

9. The group were updated on the activities by the team in respect of blue badge enforcement, processes for the development of data analytics and review of fraud referral processes and routes to prosecution.

10. The group were satisfied with the activity and actions of the team and continued focus to protect, detect and investigate cases of fraud and irregularity.

Financial Implications

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

Comments checked by: Lorna Baxter, Executive Director of Resources
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Legal Implications

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

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

Annex: None
Background papers: None

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November 2023

Next AWG meeting: 31 January 2024.