



Rutland County Council

Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP

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Minutes of the **MEETING of the AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham, LE15 6HP on Tuesday, 26th September, 2023 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor K Payne (Chair) Councillor R Ross (Vice-Chair)
Councillor R Payne Councillor R Powell
Councillor L Stephenson Councillor A West

ABSENT: Councillor S Lambert

OFFICERS PRESENT: Kirsty Nutton Strategic Director for Resources
Rachel Ashley-Caunt Chief Internal Auditor
Andrew Merry Head of Finance
Penny Sharp Strategic Director of Places
Angela Wakefield Strategic Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)
David Ebbage Democratic Services Officer
Paul Harvey Grant Thorntons

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor A Johnson Portfolio Holder

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor S Lambert.

2 MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meetings held on 27 June 2023.

It was moved by Councillor K Payne and seconded that the minutes of the 27 June meeting be approved.

RESOLVED

- a) That the minutes of the meetings held on 27 June 2023 be **APPROVED**.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

No petitions deputations or questions had been received.

5 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

No questions with notice from Members had been received.

6 NOTICES OF MOTION

No notices of motion had been received.

7 HIGHWAYS PROGRESS

Penny Sharp, Strategic Director for Places provided a verbal update to Members on the issues currently being faced within the Highways Department around resourcing and capacity.

Members then had the opportunity to ask questions to the Strategic Director for Places.

8 LEVELLING UP FUND - GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

Report No.143/2023 was introduced by Penny Sharp, Strategic Director for Places and Kirsty Nutton, Strategic Director for Resources.

The report was presented to the Audit and Risk Committee following from the Committee to consider the governance arrangements put in place for the management of the Rutland Melton Levelling Up Fund administration and delivery of the programme.

The report brought the governance approach developed by Officers in accordance with the Council's project management framework.

It was proposed by Councillor Stephenson, and this was seconded to move into an exempt session to ask a question which was not deemed to be appropriate in the public meeting. Upon being put to the vote, with six votes in favour, the motion was unanimously carried.

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At 7.40pm the meeting entered into an exempt session.

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At 7.43pm, the meeting returned into a public session.

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A question was asked to officer's on whether the Council had a total cost on temporary staff in any year. Officers agreed that they would respond to the question separately outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED

That Committee:

- a) **CONSIDERED** the governance arrangements for the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) and that the arrangements provided the Committee with assurance for the management of the LUF Programme.

9 INFORMATION GOVERNANCE ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

Report No.142/2023 was introduced by Angela Wakefield, Strategic Director of Law and Governance.

The annual report provided an overview of the Council's activity in respect of how it had discharged its responsibilities in matters relating to Information Governance, including information regarding Compliments, Comments and Complaints over the last financial year from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

RESOLVED

That Committee:

- a) **NOTED** the information contained in this report.

10 INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE

Report No.141/2023 was introduced by Rachel Ashley Caunt, Chief Internal Auditor.

The report updated the Committee on the progress made in delivering the 2023/24 Internal Audit plan. The progress made to date in delivering the 2023/24 audit plan was set out in Appendix A to the report. At the time of reporting, 32% of the planned assignments were underway. The outcomes of completed audits would be reported to the Audit and Risk Committee throughout the financial year.

The Internal Audit plan for 2023/24 did not currently include any allowance for Internal Audit work relating to the Levelling Up Fund (LUF). Given the values and risks associated with this programme, there would be value in engaging Internal Audit as part of the assurance framework.

It was highlighted to Members that given the recent Ofsted inspection on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), it was considered that this provided a source of independent assurance over SEND in 2023/24 and reduced the value of an Internal Audit review. As such, it was recommended that the 15 days allocated within the Internal Audit Plan for an audit on SEND be postponed to 2024/25 and the days in 2023/24 be re-allocated to assurance on the LUF project – including joint assurance work with Melton Borough Council.

Members were concerned to hear that there were currently two high priority audit recommendations overdue by more than three months related to Asset Management.

It was proposed by Councillor R Powell that an additional recommendation expressing the Committees concerns to be raised to Cabinet. This was seconded and upon being put to the vote, with 6 votes in favour, the motion was unanimously carried.

It was moved by Councillor A West and seconded that the recommendations be approved. Upon being put to the vote, the motion was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED

That Committee:

- a) **NOTED** the Internal Audit update report (Appendix A).
- b) **APPROVED** an amendment to the Internal Audit Plan 2023/24, to postpone the planned audit of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and reallocates the 15 days to assurance work on the Levelling Up Fund programme.
- c) Noted the important work carried out by Internal Audit and **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet that realistic delivery dates are set for all agreed actions arising from Internal Audit recommendations and that these actions were delivered by the due deadlines.

11 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Kirsty Nutton, Strategic Director for Resources provided the Committee with a verbal update on the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts which had now been completed. An additional meeting in October had been confirmed for them to come to the Committee for sign off.

In terms of the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts, the public inspection of the accounts which took place over the summer had been completed. Next steps were for the Audit to commence and to be finished by the end of the year.

12 2022/23 EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN

Report No.145/2023 was introduced by Kirsty Nutton, Strategic Director for Resources and Paul Harvey from Grant Thorntons.

Paul Harvey went through the audit plan with Members who then were able to ask questions on the audit plan.

RESOLVED

That Committee:

- a) **NOTED** the External Audit 2022/23 Audit Plan.

13 REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA)

Kirsty Nutton, Strategic Director for Resources verbally confirmed to the Committee that there had been no use of the provisions of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act since the last update.

14 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 31st October 2023.

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The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.36pm.

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