



**MINUTES of
PERFORMANCE, GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE
21 JULY 2022**

PRESENT

Chairman	Councillor W Stamp, CC
Vice-Chairman	Councillor Mrs J L Fleming, CC
Councillors	M R Edwards, A S Fluker, A L Hull, J V Keyes, E L Stephens, Mrs J C Stilts and Mrs M E Thompson
In Attendance	Councillor Mrs P A Channer

1. CHAIRMAN'S NOTICES

The Chairman welcomed all present and took the Committee through some housekeeping arrangements for the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor N J Skeens.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED by assent that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 June 2022, be approved and confirmed.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs J L Fleming declared a registrable interest as a Member of Essex County Council on any agenda items pertaining to that organisation.

Councillor W Stamp declared that she was a Member of Essex County Council but there was nothing registrable on the agenda for this meeting.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No requests had been received.

6. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Resources and associated Internal Audit reports from BDO LLP, attached on the agenda at 6a to 6g, *Progress Report; Follow-up of Recommendations; Workforce Management; Customer Relationship Management (CRM); Internal Audit Annual Report and Annual Statement of Assurance, Risk Maturity and Corporate Governance.*

The Chairman introduced the reports and deferred to the Internal Audit Partner to present the detail. He advised the Committee that he would present the seven reports in three tranches, dealing with 6a) and b) first and any questions arising, followed by 6c) d) and e) and finally 6f) and g). It was noted that the *Progress* report covered four reports on the agenda, two from the 2020/21 programme of work and two from 2022/23 programme. Internal Audit was finalising management responses on two further draft reports for 2020/21 covering Contract Management and Commercialisation,

The *Follow-up* report showed overall reasonable progress and the recommendations outstanding, namely Flood Risk Management and Safeguarding, would be covered in new audits on the 2022/23 programme of work. It was noted that a lot of work had been undertaken in respect of affordable housing.

In response to issues raised Officers provided the following information:-

- That the data on affordable housing had been collated, the next step was to report upwards to CLT via the balance scorecard.
- That the Housing Strategy due date would slip slightly, many issues will be delivered. A report was due to Strategy & Resources on 15 September 2022 when the timeline will be extended, The Strategy is still valid and ongoing.
- That Management of Property will be linked to the Asset Management Working Group. The work will not be completed by the current due date; however, the groundwork will have been laid.
- That work on Flood Risk carried on in the background, there was no specific strategy for Maldon District as Essex County Council, the Lead Local Flood Authority determined the strategy working with the Environment Agency and supported by Maldon District Council. It was agreed that the Flood Strategy Masterplan be circulated to the Committee following the meeting.

The Internal Audit Partner then addressed reports 6c), d) and e). The *Workforce Management Audit* attained a level of assurance of substantial on both design and effectiveness. It was noted that this was very positive and of significance for the Council. *Customer Relationship Management* achieved moderate in both design and effectiveness. This had been impacted by some issues with Firmstep, work was underway to address those which was a positive sign and management had a clear Action Plan in place. The overall assurance in the *Annual Report* was moderate which was the second highest assurance allocated by BDO and given the challenging circumstances over the past year this was considered a good performance.

At this point, and in response to a query regarding potential problems with the Dash system, the Director of Resources said he would review and report back outside of the meeting.

The Internal Audit Manager then took the Committee through the final two reports. The *Risk Maturity* report noted that the Council scored above average against the key indicators when compared to other Councils, which demonstrated that risk management was being taken seriously. Finally the *Corporate Governance* review achieved substantial on design and moderate on design effectiveness. A number of areas of strength were highlighted including adoption of the new Model Councillor Code of Conduct, Members' Onboarding process, Member training etc. An area of concern was the limited consideration given to the recommendations in the Planning Advisory Service report. It was noted that this would be brought back to Council for review.

The Chairman then moved the recommendations which were duly seconded and the Committee agreed them by assent.

RESOLVED that the committee considered, commented, and approved the following:

- (i) Internal Audit Progress Report – July 2022 at **6a**;
- (ii) Follow-up of Recommendations Report – July 2022 - **6b**;
- (iii) Workforce Management – May 2022 – **6c**;
- (iv) Customer Relationship Management (CRM) – March 2022 – **6d**;
- (v) Internal Audit Annual Report and Annual Statement of Assurance – 21/22 – **6e**;
- (vi) Risk Maturity – June 2022 – **6f**;
- (vii) Corporate Governance – July 2022 – **6g**.

7. INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT (IFS)

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance that provided Members with an update on the monitoring of Section 106 planning obligations and sought approval of the Maldon District Infrastructure Funding Statement for the financial year 2021/22, in accordance with the Council's legal duties.

The Chairman introduced the report and deferred to the Lead Specialist, Planning, Policy and Implementation to present the detail. She took the Committee through the report and advised that in order to align with the Council's monitoring processes and the financial year it was best going forwards to submit the Infrastructure Funding Statement at this point for approval as opposed to previously in December. It was noted that the layout had been changed with more visual information included. The Chairman then opened the discussion.

In response to issues raised the Lead Specialist, Planning Policy and implementation advised as follows:-

- That the only funding gap at the moment related to the South Maldon Relief Road and that the size of the funding gap would not be known until the design had been agreed.
- That the monies received for health were historic and that a large spend was imminent in this area.

It was further agreed that the Lead Specialist, Planning Policy and Implementation circulate information on the following outside of the meeting:-

- Clarification from Essex County Council (ECC) regarding the s106 Toucan Crossing spend;
- A breakdown of the health monies in respect of where it was generated and where it had been spent;
- The net figure on parking spend;
- Clarification from ECC regarding the investment in Burnham-on-Crouch primary school;
- A breakdown of s106 spend on youth facilities. It was noted that spend had been delayed due to Covid however capacity was now in place to move forward

She concluded by advising that meetings were now taking place on a 6 weekly cycle with NHS, Education and Highways which was a much better way of interacting and encouraging funding coming forward.

The Chairman then moved the recommendations, duly seconded by Councillor Fleming, and the Committee agreed these by assent.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Committee considered the update on Section 106 planning obligations.
- (ii) That the Committee approved the Maldon District Council Infrastructure Funding Statement for the financial year 2021 - 2022 for publication as set out in appendix 1.

8. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ACTION UPDATE- ANNUAL REVIEW

The Committee considered the report of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officers that updated Members on the progress towards achieving the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) objectives set out within the EDI Policy.

The Chairman introduced the report and deferred to the Director of Resources to present the detail. He drew Members' attention to the three objectives outlined in the report, the Action Plan at appendix 1 and highlighted the recommendation to Council. The Chairman then opened the discussion..

A brief debate ensued around the preferred title to be used when running a meeting. The general consensus was that it was good to have choices which both the recommendation to Council and section 3.1 of the report provided. Councillor Fluker said that Councillor Siddall, as the EDI Member Sponsor, should be commended for bringing this issue forward.

At this point Councillor Stephens raised an issue regarding public access to the Council phone system and the Director of Service Delivery, referring to the Customer Strategy, said he would liaise with her outside of the meeting to address the matter.

The Chairman then moved the recommendations, duly seconded by Councillor Fleming and the Committee agreed these by assent.

Councillor Thompson asked that it be noted she did not assent.

RESOLVED that the Committee reviewed the report, and noted progress and the EDI action plan;

RECOMMENDED that the Council's constitution be updated to reflect gender neutral terms rather than him/chairman from the options as set out in section 3.5 of this report, and member salutations are removed as standard practice.

9. ANY OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE DECIDES ARE URGENT

There were none and the Chairman thanked all present for their contributions.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

W STAMP, CC
CHAIRMAN