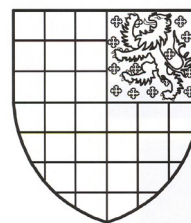


Town Hall
High Street
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 2QS

☎ 01273 471469 Fax: 01273 480919

✉ info@lewes-tc.gov.uk

🌐 www.lewes-tc.gov.uk



**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

MINUTES

of the **Audit & Governance Panel** held on **Thursday 17th October 2019**, in the **Yarrow Room, Town Hall, Lewes at 7:00pm.**

PRESENT Cllrs Bird; Catlin; Lamb; Maples; Milner (*Chairman*).

In attendance: S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*)

AudPan2019/10 **QUESTIONS:** There were none at this point.

AudPan2019/11 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** There were none.

AudPan2019/12 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** There were none.

AudPan2019/13 **MINUTES:** The minutes of the meeting held on 14th August 2019 were received and signed as an accurate record.

AudPan2019/14 **BUSINESS OF THE MEETING:**

Routine financial monitoring: Members were furnished with detailed information (*copies in minute book*) following the end of the second quarter of the financial year 2019/20.

Budget monitoring update – this showed actual expenditure and income values as posted to the Council's Sage accounting system for all transactions processed in the period. There was some discussion on salient points of detail, and TC responded with reference to the identified sources. Apparent variations were related to known events, such as specific payments in respect of works and purchases, or perceived 'overspend' which are attributable to Reserves in the final accounts prepared at year-end. There were no items of concern.

Oversight as required by the Governance & Accountability Code of Practice: TC introduced the file of periodic bank reconciliations, for review of the scrutiny already conducted. The Chairman appended his signature to verify this.

Internal and external Auditors reports - TC reported that the External Auditor's signed certificate for the accounts year ended March 2019 had been received with no comments recorded, and this was now published with the other sections of the Annual Governance & Accounting Return as required. The Internal Auditor had conducted the interim audit for year ending March 2020 the previous week and had submitted his report; which found no items of note, all 'control objectives' met, and was complimentary regarding Council systems and operation.

Complaint(s) received: Members considered complaints received from a past-Councillor regarding processing of data and the delay in responses received from the Chairs of both the Personnel and Audit Panels. In both instances, the complainant had made requests which were not unreasonable in themselves, but the ways in which they had been registered with the Council were unorthodox and impractical and had resulted in protracted delay and some confusion. In the matter of a request for personal data contained in a confidential consultant's report to Council, this had been submitted as a file attachment sent direct to the Chair of the Personnel Panel in a format which her personal computer's software had treated as suspicious and would not open. After an admittedly lengthy delay, this had been investigated and the content identified and a redacted copy of the report requested had been prepared and subsequently sent to the complainant, who was presumed to be now satisfied in that regard.

A separate demand for other personal data had been initially sent to the Chair of the Audit Panel, who had explained the reasons that that he was unable to comply

personally and that the request should be redirected. This had not been accepted and the complainant had distributed a complaint to all members of the Panel. TC was not aware of the details of the request but was the only person able to address it. The data that could be requested was that held about an individual personally, or from which they could be identified *eg* by reference or description of a role. Such requests were for the Town Clerk to deal with in the normal course of his duties as the Council's data processor and system administrator. He advised that the originator of a data subject access request had no rights to demand how or by whom the request must be handled.

Members agreed that the Chairman should write to the complainant accordingly, and if his request was to be pursued then TC should be provided with the details.

AudPan2019/15 CONCLUSIONS:

1 Members considered information on the Council's financial status and management and found no items of concern.

2 In accordance with the national audit and governance guidelines: where member oversight is required, the Chairman of the Panel signed to attest the veracity of reconciliation records presented.

3 In the matter of two complaints received, the complainant had made requests which were not unreasonable in themselves, but the ways in which they had been registered with the Council were unorthodox and impractical and had resulted in protracted delay and confusion. One request was believed to be now satisfied and the Chairman would write regarding the other to explain these conclusions and to determine if the request was to be pursued.

AudPan2019/16 There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and declared the meeting closed.

The meeting closed at 8:35pm

Signed

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date