

REPORT OF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

1. This report summarises the business transacted at the Governance Committee meeting held on 21 November 2018.

Audit Progress and Update

2. The External Auditor, Grant Thornton, presented the Audit Progress Report and Sector Update for information. The audit of the Council's 2017/18 financial statements is completed and the audit opinion, including value for money conclusion and certificate of audit closure was issued on the 31 July 2018. This includes an unqualified opinion on the Council's financial statements and an unqualified value for money conclusion on the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.
3. Grant Thornton have begun the planning processes for the 2018/19 financial year audit and the plan will be presented to the meeting of Governance Committee in January. Detailed work and audit visits will take place in February and March 2019. The current focus of work relates to the certification the Council's annual Housing Benefit Subsidy claim in accordance with procedures agreed with the DWP.
4. We noted the Audit Progress Report and Sector Update.

Chorley Borough Council Annual Audit Letter 2018

5. The External Auditor, Grant Thornton, presented the Chorley Borough Council Annual Audit Letter 2018. The Letter provides a commentary on the results of work undertaken for the Council and external stakeholders, and highlights issues that Grant Thornton wish to draw to the attention of the public, of which there are none.
6. Grant Thornton gave an unqualified opinion on the Council's financial statements on 31 July 2018, a Value For Money (VFM) conclusion and have certified completion of the audit of the accounts of the Council in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Audit Practice.
7. We noted the Chorley Borough Council Annual Audit Letter 2018.

Internal Audit Interim Report as at 28 September 2018

8. Janice Bamber, Interim Audit and Risk Manager, presented the report of the Head of Shared Assurance Services which advises the Committee of the work undertaken in respect of the Internal Audit Plans for Chorley Council and Shared Services for the period April 2018 to September 2018.
9. Work is currently in progress on the risk registers and the team is supporting a number of key projects for the Council. We noted the report and that an update report will be presented to the next meeting

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) Update

10. Chris Moister, Monitoring Officer, presented the report of the Director (Policy and Governance) which informs the Committee of the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulations.

11. The General Data Protection Regulations came into force on 25 May 2018. The aim of the Regulations is to give control to individuals over their personal data and provide a simplified regulatory regime. As a local authority, Chorley Council has been compliant with both Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation for many years. There are already strong policies and processes in place which demonstrate how the Council discharges its obligations.
12. It has been challenging to ensure the identified differences with the old legislation were communicated properly with staff and to embed new roles within the organisation and ensure an understanding of the new responsibilities that went with them. The role of the SIRO (Senior Information Risk Owner) is retained and the responsibilities attached to that role continue. The Council have appointed the Monitoring Officer to the role of Data Protection Officer.
13. Data Controllers have been identified within services and work has been done with each service to prepare an Information Asset Register which details the data held by each team, what it is used for and the period it needs to be retained. This included both digital and paper based data. No distinction was drawn between personal data caught by the Regulations and none personal data. It is entirely consistent with the Council's information management approach to reduce all unnecessary data held so the strict approaches directed by the Regulations meet the Council's priorities.
14. Training has been undertaken by staff and Councillors and this will be included on the induction programme. Compliance has been confirmed with third party contracts and processes have been introduced to enable residents to "opt in" to receive information about other Council services. The vast majority of the personal data held by the Council has been provided under legislation or in order for the Council to deliver a service.
15. We noted that it is easy for residents to "opt out" if they no longer wish to receive information. In their role Members receive a lot of personal data, but noted that as long as they are using it for the purposes it has been given and take reasonable steps to keep the information safe this is compliant.
16. Compliance will be monitored by the Data Protection Officer and performance indicators will be introduced to assist with this. The focus initially will be high risk areas, such as Customer Services. We noted the report and that a report will be presented to the next meeting with a further update.

RIPA Application Update

17. Chris Moister, Monitoring Officer, reported that no RIPA applications have been made.

Recommendation

18. To note the report.

COUNCILLOR PAUL LEADBETTER
CHAIR OF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

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