

Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee

Monday 28 June 2021

Actions from an Informal meeting held on 28 June 2021 via Teams

Members in attendance:

David Lane (Chair)
Councillor Ram Lakha (Coventry City Council)
Councillor Dave Borley (Dudley MBC)
Councillor Alan Butt (City of Wolverhampton Council)
Councillor Charna Padda (Sandwell MBC)
Councillor Tom Baker- Price (Worcestershire)
Councillor Chris Schofield (Shropshire)
Councillor Hayden Walmsley (Warwickshire)

Apologies: Councillor Carl Rice (Birmingham City Council), Councillor Gary Flint (Walsall MBC), Councillor Ken Meeson (Solihull MBC)

1. Chair's Remarks

The Chair reported that he had invited the new interim Chief Executive, Laura Shoaf to attend this meeting before it was changed to a 'virtual meeting' and he hoped she would be able to attend the next meeting on 26 July.

2. Minutes - The minutes of the meeting held on 19 April were agreed.

3. Matters Arising – Recruitment of Independent Chair

Dan Essex reported that interviews for the Independent Chair would be held week commencing 19 July to allow for a transitional handover to the new Chair in time for 21 September meeting of ARAC and for the appointment to be agreed by the WMCA Board on 23 July. It was hoped that the new Chair would be able to attend ARAC on 26 July.

It was agreed that the nominations for the position of the Vice- Chair would be added to the agenda for 26 July.

4. Forward Plan - noted.

5. Introduction to the annual accounts

Louise Cowen and Linda Horne provided an update on the annual accounts for 2021/22. A report had been circulated for information.

6. Presentation: Audit Process and Accounts

Grant Patterson (Grant Thornton) gave a presentation on the external audit process. This included the reasons why an external audit is undertaken, key highlights from 2020/21 Audit Plan and the purpose of an audit committee. A copy of the slide presentation was circulated to the committee following the meeting.

6. Internal Audit Update

Peter Farrow and Sandra Kalyan (Internal Audit) outlined the key audit recommendations in relation audits undertaken on risk management and a digital retraining Fund. Both audits had a final status that was rated satisfactory.

7. WMCA Strategic Risk Register

Victoria Harman presented the Strategic Risk Register that provided an update on the high level risks as of mid-June.

The Chair asked to be notified of all risks rated amber and for these to be included in future reports.

8. WMCA Strategic Risk Management Framework V.01

Victoria Harman presented the new WMCA Strategic Risk Management Framework that would be submitted to the next meeting of ARAC on 26 July for formal approval.

9. Equalities Statistics and General Equalities Update

Anna Sirmoglou outlined a report that provided an annual update on equalities and equalities statistics.

It was noted that update on Equalities Scheme would be submitted to ARAC following approval by the WMCA Board in January.

10. Health and Safety Ways of Working (Post Covid-19) and Data Security and Post Protection Lone Working Update

Ben Gittings presented a report that provided an update on health and safety ways of working post- Covid-19 Update. Gurmit Sangha provided an update on data security and post protection lone working.

11. Presentation: Annual Delivery Plan

Fiona Bebbington provided an update on the process for developing the Annual Business Plan and Corporate Strategy for 2021-24. It was noted that a Plan was not published for 2020/2 due to the pandemic. However, the end of year delivery report to the WMCA Board on 25 June indicated that most milestones and targets for last year had been met

The Chair asked that an update on the resource to support the business planning process/ organisation be submitted to ARAC in November.

12. Terms of Reference - Whistleblowing Panel

Lorraine Quibell outlined a report that set out the draft terms of reference to the recently created Whistleblowing Panel and Fraud Panel.