

Report to: Governance Committee

Date of meeting: 25 June 2024

By: Assistant Chief Executive

Title: Scrutiny Activity Update

Purpose: To provide an overview of scrutiny activity being undertaken by the People, Place and Health Overview Scrutiny Committees and an update on the work of the Audit Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Governance Committee is recommended to note the updates on Scrutiny and Audit Committee activity and the current work programmes at appendices 1-4.

1 Background

1.1 These six-monthly reports aim to provide the Governance Committee with a summary of activity across the People, Place and Health Overview Scrutiny Committees and the work of the Audit Committee to support the visibility and effectiveness of the Council's scrutiny activity.

1.2 This report outlines developments since the last update, particularly from the committee meetings held in November 2023 and in March 2024. The current work programmes for the committees are attached at appendices 1-4. An overview of planned Scrutiny Review and Reference Group activity over the coming months across the three scrutiny committees is attached at appendix 5.

1.3 All committees continue to develop their scrutiny practice and to deepen their understanding of the context for services and issues within their remit. Members of People and Place Scrutiny have requested that further scrutiny training is delivered primarily through 'bite-sized' sessions and topics for these sessions continue to be explored with the committees. As part of this programme People Committee Members have received short briefings on suicide prevention strategy and on the role of Healthwatch and how this relates to scrutiny. Audit Committee also continues to participate in a programme of ongoing training, and is currently exploring upcoming training in areas identified during its recent self-assessment exercise including:

- Awareness of the key principles of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and the Local Government Application Note, knowledge of the arrangements for the delivery of the Internal Audit service in the Council and how the role of Chief Internal Auditor is fulfilled.
- Awareness of the financial statements that the Council must produce and the principles it must follow to produce them, understanding of good financial management principles and knowledge of how the Council meets the requirements of the role of Chief Finance Officer, as required by the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Finance Officer in Local Government.
- Knowledge of the Seven Principles of Public Life, knowledge of the Council's key arrangements to uphold ethical standards for both Members and staff and knowledge of the whistleblowing arrangements in the Council.
- Skills and practice – including focusing on strategic issues and questioning techniques.

2 People Scrutiny Committee

2.1 The latest version of the committee's work programme (attached at appendix 1) captures the full range of activity underway or planned. Key elements are outlined below.

Committee meetings

2.2 The committee met on 13 November 2023 to consider:

- **Elective Home Education (EHE)** – the committee received an update on the numbers of EHE children in East Sussex and the Children’s Services Department’s (CSD) response to increased cases and concerns related to vulnerable children. The committee discussed the Department for Education consultation on proposals to introduce a voluntary registration scheme and enquired about the support in place to support families with vulnerable children, including those with a Child Protection Plan, as well as children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The committee requested that their concerns about the proposal for a voluntary register were included in the department’s response to the consultation.
- **Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR)** – the committee discussed the RPPR update report considered by Cabinet earlier in the month. The committee discussed the challenging financial outlook for the Council, in particular the pressures facing Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) and Children’s Services.
- **Scrutiny Review of School Exclusions** – the committee received the final report from the Review Board. The committee welcomed the report, discussed the challenges schools were facing post-pandemic, and the move towards inclusive policies in response to these, and recognised the ongoing focus of the Department on delivering effective support.
- **Work programme update** – the committee considered feedback from scrutiny activity undertaken since the September committee, and agreed updates to the work programme, including a request for information on current SEND pressures.

2.3 On 11 March 2024 the committee met to consider:

- **Loneliness Stewardship Group** – the committee received a report and presentation on the ASCH Connecting People and Places project to combat loneliness in East Sussex. The committee sought clarification on the project’s expected outcomes and enquired about the ongoing sustainability of the work.
- **RPPR** – the committee reviewed scrutiny input into the RPPR process, including ensuring relevant topics were incorporated into the scrutiny work programme to support the committee’s ongoing contribution to RPPR.
- **Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services (ILACS) report** – the committee received a report on the recent Ofsted inspection of Children’s Services. The committee welcomed the positive findings in the report and discussed the Department’s response to Ofsted’s recommendations, including its approach to reporting and neglect.
- **Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) Annual Report** – the committee received a report on the recent work of SACRE including the implementation of a new syllabus. The committee discussed the membership of SACRE and arrangements for collective worship.
- **Work programme update** – the committee considered feedback from scrutiny activity undertaken since the November committee, including an update on the school attendance Scrutiny Review, which was deferred until summer 2024 to enable the impact of existing initiatives to be assessed, and agreed to undertake a scoping board for a Scrutiny Review on healthy ageing.

2.4 Future committee agenda items include:

- An update on the Equality and Inclusion in ASCH Scrutiny Review - a 6 month monitoring report on progress to be considered by the committee at its July 2024 meeting.
- An update on the Use of Digital and Technology in ASCH Review – a 12 month monitoring report on progress to be considered by the committee at its July 2024 meeting.
- An update on Children’s Services work with IMPOWER - to be considered by the committee at its July 2024 meeting.
- Work on the 2024/25 RPPR process.

Reference Groups and Briefings

2.5 People Scrutiny Reference Groups have continued their work to provide Member input to areas of work being led by departments. The membership of Reference Groups will be updated at the July committee meeting following recent changes to committee membership:

- **Health and Social Care Integration Programme (HASCIP) Reference Group** membership: Councillors Clark, di Cara, Geary (Chair), Ungar and Webb). This group meets as required to review the latest developments in local health and social care integration. The Group met in February 2024 to consider a progress update on the Joint Sussex Integrated Care Strategy Shared Delivery Plan (SDP) and Integrated Community Teams. The Group welcomed the update and discussed partnership working with district and borough councils and digital inclusion and sought clarification on project timelines. The Group agreed to further support the ASCH department as the SDP progressed.
- **Prevention in Children's Services Reference Group:** Councillors Adeniji, Howell (Chair), Cross, and John Hayling (Parent Governor Representative). This group provides the committee with an opportunity to consider work to develop preventative approaches including Family Hubs and the Family Safeguarding model, providing ongoing scrutiny challenge. The group met in February 2024 to consider the latest developments and discussed future sustainability, including future programme funding, and noted the early reported positive outcomes. The next meeting is taking place in June 2024, with a focus on support for older children.
- **Educational Attainment and Performance Reference Group** (membership: Councillors Field, Howell, Adeniji and Nicola Boulter – Parent Governor Representative). This group meets annually to provide the committee with an opportunity to have a focused approach to reviewing results and trends. The Group met in March 2024 to consider attainment results for the 2022/23 academic year. Members discussed the impact of Covid on attainment for all key stages, the role of Multi Academy Trusts in providing local support to communities, and the impact of short term government funding. The committee agreed the Department was working to support schools through a range of challenges.
- **Care Quality Commission (CQC) Assessment Reference Group** (membership: Councillors di Cara, Geary (Chair), Howell and Webb). This group was established to support ASCH with the upcoming CQC inspection and Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review. The Group met on 13 December 2023 to understand the CQC assessment process, including scrutiny involvement, and consider work underway to prepare for this, including participating in an LGA Peer Review. The Group discussed and commented on the ASCH self-assessment framework.
- **RPPR Board** - The committee forms an RPPR Board annually to agree detailed comments and any recommendations on the emerging portfolio plans and spending and savings proposals to be put to Cabinet on behalf of the scrutiny committee. The Board met on 16 December 2023 and considered the financial outlook for the Council, relevant department portfolio plans, and the interim results of the 2023 public survey. The Board expressed concerns about the financial challenges facing the Council, particularly ASCH and Children's Services, including increased pressures facing ASCH due to the changing demography of East Sussex and increased resources needed to support migrants, and the ongoing need for mental health support for young people.

2.6 Briefings were provided to the committee on the following topics:

- **Suicide Prevention** – The committee received a briefing in January 2024 which outlined the national and local context around suicide, and work underway and planned on suicide prevention in East Sussex.
- **ASCH LGA Peer Review** – The committee received a briefing in February 2024 ahead of the LGA Peer Review of ASCH. The briefing outlined the Peer Review and CQC process, as well as the expected role of the committee.

Scrutiny Reviews

2.7 The committee's programme of Scrutiny Reviews is currently as follows:

School exclusions	<p>The committee undertook a review of CSD’s work to reduce the number of children and young people excluded from school. The Review Board explored whether the Council could do more to develop understanding amongst school leaders of preventative strategies, and appropriate responses to pupils at risk of exclusion, and whether the Council could do more to join up early help and education services to support reduction in school exclusions.</p> <p>The review considered a range of evidence including the perspective of service managers, young people, parents, and staff at East Sussex schools. The final report was agreed by the committee in November, reported to Cabinet in December and agreed by County Council in February. The committee will consider updates on progress with the review at approximately 6 and 12 months on, in September 2024 and March 2025.</p> <p>Review Board membership was Councillors Adeniji (Chair), Field, Maples and Howell and John Hayling (Parent Governor Representative).</p>
School attendance	<p>The committee undertook scoping in 2022 for a potential review of school attendance to understand more about the drivers of school absences, the impact of absences on children and young people, the work Children’s Services is undertaking in response, and whether there are areas where scrutiny could make recommendations for change or improvement. The Scoping Board agreed to defer proceeding with this review until 2023 when there would be a clearer understanding of the long-term impact of COVID on school absences.</p> <p>A further Scoping Board took place in December 2023 which explored current data and issues on attendance. The Board agreed that whilst the topic was still appropriate for a Scrutiny Review, significant work had recently commenced to address this, and it would be beneficial to wait until later in the academic year to establish which approaches were proving successful and to identify any gaps in provision which would benefit from scrutiny input.</p> <p>A final Scoping Board is taking place in July 2024 with the outcome to be considered at the July committee meeting.</p>
Healthy ageing	<p>The committee heard at its March 2024 meeting that a key priority for ASCH was responding to the needs of an increasing older population in East Sussex, including people in single households and those with complex needs, and that the Department would welcome scrutiny input into how preventative approaches could support people to age well in the county.</p> <p>A Scoping Board took place in May 2024 which recommended progressing this review. Evidence gathering will take place from June-August, with the aim to present a report to the committee at its September 2024 meeting.</p> <p>Review Board membership: Cllrs Geary, Pragnell, Ungar and Webb</p>

3 Place Scrutiny Committee

3.1 The committee’s latest work programme (attached at appendix 2) outlines the full range of activity underway or planned. Key elements are outlined below.

Committee meetings

3.2 The committee met on 23 November 2023 to consider reports on:

- **Southern Water Storm Overflows and Reduction of Discharges update** – Members received a presentation from Southern Water on its work to reduce the use of Storm Overflows (Combined Sewer Overflows), investment in infrastructure, and updates on Hastings town centre flooding and Bulverhythe/West St. Leonards sewer pipe leak incidents.

- **Scrutiny Review of Pothole Management** – The committee discussed the report and the recommendations made by the Review Board to improve the management and repair of potholes and the actions the Council is taking to tackle this issue. There was an acknowledgement that all councillors would like to see more money spent on pothole repairs, but the council was constrained by the current financial position. The committee agreed the report of the Review Board, which was subsequently considered by Cabinet and Full Council.
- **RPPR** – as with People Scrutiny, the committee reviewed the RPPR update report which had been considered by Cabinet earlier in the month. The committee discussed the implications of the announcements made in the Autumn Budget Statement and the financial outlook for the Council including the pressures on social care for children and adults. The committee also discussed the transition of funding and responsibilities from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) to ESCC and what would happen to the ongoing programmes.
- **Work programme update** – the committee considered feedback from scrutiny activity undertaken since the September committee meeting and agreed to carry out a work prioritisation exercise to update the work programme.

3.3 The committee met again on 12 March 2024 to consider reports on:

- **Scrutiny Review of Procurement: Social Value and Buying Local update** – The committee received an update on the implementation of the recommendations made by this Scrutiny Review. Good progress was being made against all the recommendations, which included a trial of a more qualitative approach to Social Value, and improved monitoring of the delivery of Social Value commitments.
- **Update on the SPACES Programme** – Members received a report providing an overview of the activities undertaken by the SPACES (Strategic Property Asset Collaboration in East Sussex) programme and an outline of current projects and funding bids that had been made with partners, including under the One Public Estate and Brownfield Land Release Fund programmes.
- **Community Assets** – the committee considered a report on the Council's Community Asset Transfer (CAT) policy and the process by which council assets can be disposed, leased or transferred to community groups. The report contained suggestions for improvements to the process, which the committee endorsed. This included providing a process map and further information about the decision making procedure and the requirements of Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Government Act 1972 General Disposal Consent Order 2003.
- **Food Waste and Environment Act 2021 requirements** – the committee received an update on the implications for ESCC of the introduction of weekly food waste collections by 31 March 2026. No additional funding is being provided by the Government to ESCC as the Waste Disposal Authority, and there may be additional costs related to the modification of waste transfer facilities, provision of sealed containers and vehicles to store and transport food waste, and the composting of additional volumes of food waste at the Woodlands composting facility.
- **Scrutiny Review of Road Markings update** – the committee received the final update report on the implementation of the recommendations from this review and the use of £500k additional funding subsequently agreed by Cabinet to renew road markings across the county. All the recommendations from the review had been implemented and were now part of business as usual arrangements.
- **RPPR update** – the committee reviewed scrutiny input into the RPPR process, including ensuring relevant topics were incorporated into the scrutiny work programme to support the committee's ongoing contribution to RPPR.
- **Work programme update** - the committee agreed an updated work programme following a prioritisation of items on the work programme and agreed the the next scrutiny review topics. The committee agreed to scope a review of speed limit policy, following the debate on a Notice of Motion on this subject at Full Council last year. The committee also agreed

to re-establish the Climate Emergency Action Plan Working Group to provide scrutiny input into updating of the corporate action plan for 2025-30.

3.4 Future committee agenda items include:

- The committee's work on the 2024/25 RPPR process, commencing with consideration of the Q4 year-end Council Monitoring report and the State of the County report in July.
- Update reports to monitor the implementation of the recommendations from the Scrutiny Review of Pothole Management. This will be combined with an examination of the Highways Maintenance Contract year 1 Key Performance Indicators at the July meeting.
- Scrutiny Review of Procurement: Social Value and Buying Local. A second monitoring report on the implementation of the recommendations from this review, including the outcomes of the Social Value pilot of a more qualitative approach.
- Update reports on the Flexibus Services, which is part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), and the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).
- Reports on Flood Risk Management and the Climate Adaptation measures the Council is undertaking including the work with partners.
- Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) Road Collisions - an update report on the effectiveness of the interventions that have been put in place to try and reduce the number of KSI collisions.
- Water Supply Issues and Future Demand Planning - to receive a report from South East Water and Southern Water about their longer terms plans for supplying water to East Sussex residents and businesses.

Reference and Working Groups

3.5 Place Scrutiny Reference Groups continued their work to provide Member input to areas of work being led by departments:

- The **Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP)** Working Group (membership: Councillors Hilton, Redstone (Chair) and Tutt). It has been agreed to re-establish the CEAP Working Group to provide scrutiny input into the development of an updated corporate Climate Emergency Action Plan for 2025-30.
- The **Local Transport Plan (LTP) 4** Reference Group (membership: Councillors Beaver, Collier, Hilton, Hollidge, Lunn, Redstone (chair) Stephen Shing and Tutt) has continued engagement work with officers and the Council's transport consultants Steer on the key stages of the development of the revised LTP. The Group met in January to review the interim feedback from the public consultation exercise, and further meetings in May and September to consider the draft LTP document and to comment on the final draft LTP prior to consideration by Cabinet and agreement by Full Council in the autumn.
- **East Sussex Economic Growth Strategy (EGS)**. The Reference Group comprised of Councillors Collier, Hilton, Hollidge, Redstone and Tutt met on four occasions to provide input into key stages of the development of a new Economic Growth Strategy for East Sussex alongside other stakeholders. This has included reviewing the feedback from the stakeholder workshops and the narrative for the strategy; hearing directly from stakeholder representatives on the evidence base and content of the strategy; and commenting on the draft strategy document.
- **RPPR Board** – As with the People Scrutiny Committee, the Place Scrutiny Committee forms an RPPR Board annually to agree detailed comments and any recommendations on the emerging portfolio plans and spending and savings proposals to be put to Cabinet on behalf of the committee. The Board met on 6 December 2023 and considered the financial outlook of the Council, relevant department portfolio plans, and the interim results of the 2023 public survey. The Board noted that the announced increase in the National Living Wage was likely to have an impact on the Council's financial position through increased wage costs, particularly for commissioned services in Adult Social Care. It also commented on the Autumn Statement announcement of plans for public sector productivity measures and Level 2 devolution deals for county local authority areas.

Scrutiny Reviews

3.6 The committee's current programme of scrutiny reviews is as below:

Scrutiny Review of Pothole Management	<p>This review focused on the Council's policies and procedures for defects/pothole repairs; the asset management approach and targets for road condition; communication with the public and the planned investment in highways maintenance. It also included the techniques used to repair potholes and quality assurance measures used to ensure repairs last and are carried out to the correct standard.</p> <p>The Board's report was agreed by the Place Scrutiny Committee in November 2023, considered by Cabinet in January 2024 and agreed by County Council in February 2024. The committee will consider updates on progress with the review at approximately 6 and 12 months on, in July 2024 and March 2025.</p> <p>The membership of the Review Board was Councillors Beaver, Hilton, Hollidge (Chair), Kirby-Green and Lunn.</p>
Speed limit policy	<p>The committee agreed to establish a scoping board to explore a potential Scrutiny Review of Speed Limit Policy. This followed the consideration of a Notice of Motion on speed limit policy at County Council in July 2023, where it was suggested that Place Scrutiny could look at this issue in more detail. The Council has developed speed limit policy PS05/02 to guide the process of assessing and setting speed limits on local roads.</p> <p>The scoping board met during May and recommended proceeding with a scrutiny review on this topic which is now underway.</p> <p>Review Board membership: Councillors Beaver, Hilton, Hollidge (Chair), Kirby-Green, Murphy, Redstone and Wright.</p>

4 Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)

4.1 Key work priorities for HOSC are set out in the attached work programme (appendix 3) with highlights below:

Committee meetings

4.2 The HOSC met on 14 December 2023 to consider reports on:

- **Paediatric Service Model Development at Eastbourne District General Hospital (DGH)** – to receive a report on the proposed changes to paediatric services provided at Eastbourne DGH, following concerns raised by committee members, members of the public and staff about the proposed changes.
- **NHS Sussex Winter Plan 2023/24** – the committee considered a report on the local NHS organisations' preparations and plans for the winter period.
- **Hospital Handovers at the Royal Sussex County Hospital (RSCH)** – a further report on the work being undertaken to reduce hospital handover times between ambulances and the Emergency Department (ED) at the RSCH, which serves the west of the County.
- **HOSC future work programme** – the committee considered and agreed its future work programme priorities.

4.3 The committee met again on 7 March 2024 to consider:

- **Future location of Specialised Cancer Services for Children** – a presentation and report from NHS England (London and the South East) on the outcomes of the public consultation on the proposed relocation of the Principal Treatment Centre for children's specialised cancer Services.
- **Changes to Paediatric Services at the Eastbourne DGH** – the committee received and agreed the report of the Review Board established by HOSC to undertake a scrutiny

review of the changes to paediatric services. The report of the Board was also accompanied by an update on the implementation of the new services.

- **NHS Sussex Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service (NEPTS)** – the committee received an update report on the recommissioning of the NHS Sussex contract for the provision of NEPTS. This included patient transport to and from hospital for appointments and planned procedures, as well as inter-hospital transfers and enhanced services to facilitate hospital discharges.
- **University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust (UHSx) Care Quality Commission (CQC) report** – this report provided the committee with an update on the re-inspection of the trust by the CQC and the actions being taken to address the findings and recommendations of the inspection that rated services overall as 'Requires Improvement'. In particular, there was a focus on the Royal Sussex County Hospital which East Sussex residents frequently use.
- **HOSC Terms of Reference** – the committee considered a report on an updated terms of reference for HOSC to reflect the changes made to health scrutiny arrangements by the Health and Social Care Act 2022 and the updated statutory guidance published in January 2024.
- **HOSC future work programme** – the committee considered its future work programme priorities and requested a report on the provision of Audiology Services, a further update report on the UHSx CQC inspection, and a position paper from NHS Sussex on the provision of continuous and flash diabetes monitoring technology for people with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes.

4.4 Key future committee agenda items include:

- Update reports to monitor the impact of the changes made to paediatric services at Eastbourne DGH following the completion of the review.
- A report on the provision and commissioning of Audiology Services in East Sussex, including the provision of NHS audiology appointments, NHS hearing aid equipment and servicing, and ear wax removal services.
- Access to GPs and Primary Care Network (PCN) services - an update report on the work being undertaken to improve access to GP services and appointments in East Sussex, including Primary Care Network (PCN) performance and services provided, including enhanced hours services.
- Access to NHS Dentistry Services - an update report on the progress being made to improve access to NHS Dentistry services in East Sussex.
- A further update report on UHSx response to the August 2023 CQC inspection and an update on the improvements being made to tackle hospital handovers and ED waiting times at the RSCH.
- NHS Sussex Winter Plan - a report on the NHS Sussex Winter Plan 2024/25 and associated risks, covering the preparations that are being made for the peak demand winter season.

Reference Groups and briefings

4.5 The committee continued with engagement work with NHS England on the proposals for changes to the children's specialist cancer services Principal Treatment Centre which is located in South London and serves most of the south east. A formal response to the public consultation was submitted and an update report was received on the outcomes of the public consultation at the March HOSC meeting. Subsequent to this, NHS England published its decision to move the Principal Treatment Centre to the Evelina Children's Hospital, which is part of Guys and St. Thomas' in central London. The committee will continue to monitor the implementation of these changes and has requested a future report from NHS England when services move in 2026.

Scrutiny Reviews

4.6 HOSC completed a rapid review of changes to paediatric services provided at Eastbourne DGH. The review was established at the December 2023 HOSC meeting, and the Review Board

was comprised of Councillors Azad, Belsey, Robinson (Chair) and Shuttleworth. This followed concerns raised by the committee, members of the public, and staff about the impact of the changes on services for children at the hospital. The review made 13 recommendations to mitigate the impact of the changes on patient care and to suggest improvements to the services provided at Eastbourne DGH for urgent and emergency care and planned services. Key changes included moving to an Advanced Paediatric Nurse Practitioner led model of care for urgent and emergency services and locating services so that they are adjacent to the ED at the 'front door' of the hospital. The committee will monitor the implementation of the changes carefully, together with Healthwatch East Sussex, to ensure the anticipated patient benefits are realised and any negative impacts mitigated.

4.7 HOSC is awaiting further detail on forthcoming NHS service changes which may require review and considering potential other topics for detailed review.

Other Issues

4.8 Following provisions in the Health and Social Care Act 2022 that allow the Secretary of State to intervene directly in local service reconfigurations, updated national regulations and guidance were issued by the Department of Health and Social Care in January 2024, which took effect from 31 January. Under the revised process for service reconfigurations, HOSC's specific powers to refer NHS decisions to the Secretary of State no longer apply but HOSC remains the statutory consultee on significant NHS service changes and has a number of roles in the new process. To reflect these changes, updated Terms of Reference for the committee were endorsed by HOSC in March and the Governance Committee in April and agreed by County Council on 7 May.

5 Audit Committee

5.1 The committee's future areas of focus are set out in the work programme attached at appendix 4.

Committee meetings

5.2 The Audit Committee met in November 2023 and March 2024 to discuss reports on:

- Internal Audit Progress Report Quarter 2, 2023/24
- External Audit - Audit Progress Report and Sector Update
- Review of Annual Governance Report & 2022/23 Statement of Accounts
- Review of Annual Pension Fund Governance Report & 2022/23 Statement of Accounts
- Auditor's Annual (VFM) Report on East Sussex County Council 2022/23
- Treasury Management Annual Report & Mid-Year Report 2023
- Modernising Back Office Systems (MBOS) Update
- Annual Update on Property Investment Strategy and Key Sites 6 monthly Update
- Internal Audit Progress Report - Quarter 3 (01/10/23 - 31/12/23)
- Internal Audit Strategy and 2024/25 Annual Audit Plan
- External Audit - 2021/22 and 2022/23 Audit Update
- External Audit Plan 2023/24
- External Audit Plan for the East Sussex Pension Fund 2023/24
- Strategic Risk Monitoring - Quarter 3 2023/24
- Audit Committee Self-Assessment
- Audit Committee work programme

5.3 The item on External Audit - 2021/22 and 2022/23 Audit Update included confirmation that the 2021/22 external audit had now been signed off and the committee noted that the 2022/23 external audit was due to be signed off in April 2024. The item on the Audit Committee Self-Assessment provided a focus to consider the recruitment of two co-opted independent members

to the committee, future training to be arranged for committee members and the committee noted the proposal to review its Terms of Reference and proposal to introduce an annual report of the Audit Committee.

5.4 The committee's future agenda items include the usual quarterly consideration of Internal Audit reports and the Strategic Risk Register, together with Assessment of the Corporate Governance Framework and Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24, Counter Fraud Annual report, Audit Committee Annual Report and Financial Management Code.

Briefings and working groups

5.5 The working group which provides oversight of the MBOS programme implementation met on in November 2023 to discuss the programme's current position. The sub-group noted the current status of the programme and the independent review which was being undertaken. The MBOS sub-group held a further meeting on 9 May 2024 following the conclusion of the independent review.

5.6 Audit Committee Members attended a planning session with Internal Audit in January 2024 to plan for the next financial year of Internal Audit work. This session helped inform the annual Internal Audit plan which was endorsed by the Audit Committee in March 2024.

6 Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

6.1 This report provides an overview of recent scrutiny and Audit Committee work and a look forward at planned activity for the Governance Committee to note. The next update will be in December 2024.

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