

LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES 22 SEPTEMBER 2022

Members Present: David Gardner (Chairman) Terry Wheeler
John Bevan Ian Kemp (Deputy for Suzanne Rutland-Barsby)
Lesley Greensmyth (in remote presence)

Apologies Received From: Suzanne Rutland-Barsby (Vice Chairman), Mike Garnett, Dilip Patel

Officers Present: Shaun Dawson - Chief Executive
Dan Buck - Corporate Director
Keith Kellard - Head of Finance
Vince Donaldson - Senior Contracts & Quality Manager
Michael Sterry - Senior Accountant
Sandra Bertschin - Committee & Members' Services Manager

In remote presence: Debbie Hanson - Ernst & Young (external auditors)

Also present: James Newman - S151 Officer (London Borough of Enfield)

Part I

239 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

240 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Chairman advised that he and 2 members of the Audit Committee, with officers, had met with the internal auditors (Mazars) at their request to consider risk management. A number of comments had been made including the provision of audit training which will be followed up.

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2022 be approved and signed.

241 PUBLIC SPEAKING

No requests from the public to speak or present petitions had been received for this meeting.

242 EXTERNAL AUDIT 2020/21

Debbie Hanson, Ernst & Young (EY), gave an oral update on the 2020/21 audit, key points included:

- conclusion of the 2020/21 audit was subject to resolution of queries around property, plant and equipment, review of holdings identified as community assets and finalisation of the EY Real Estate team's evaluation of ten assets; and
- it was anticipated that the audit would be completed by the end of October with signing of the accounts in November.

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In response to the Chairman it was advised that:

- a review of the asset base was completed annually given the complexity of the Authority's holdings. However the review for 2020/21 was more granular than in the past to reflect the greater focus on this area across local authorities over the last few years; and
- the audit file would need to be reviewed by Debbie Hanson but she had confidence in the team which had done the work so she was not expecting any issues. Finalisation of queries around property, plant and equipment could result in changes but this would not mean the opinion was not true and fair.

In response to the S151 Officer, it was advised that given the Authority's size it was not included in the EY QCR processes.

The Chairman thanked Debbie Hanson for the update and looked forward to receiving the auditor's report and letter in November.

243 RISK REGISTER 2022/23

Paper AUD/129/22

The report was introduced by the Corporate Director, including that energy prices was the area of impact which could be severe, however officers were working on putting measures in place to mitigate the risk.

In response to Members it was advised that:

- the Business Continuity Policy was underpinned by numerous Business Continuity Risk Assessments, one of which was for the Ranger team which included the risk of unauthorised swimming in the Authority's open waters;
- the Authority has appropriate mitigation measures in place and works with the Robbie Lea Water Safety Partnership to educate young people on the dangers of open water swimming;
- senior officers had met with Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) and British Canoeing to discuss venue programming and energy costs;
- currently there was uncertainty around energy costs and the extent of direct government support but actions would be put in place to secure some certainty around utility costs going forward; and
- the risk score in regard to failure of the Leisure Services Contractor does not indicate any failure by GLL, but reflects the current situation on energy costs and possible knock-on effect of utility costs affecting the management fee as utility costs are a shared risk for the first 2 years of the contract.

A Member endorsed the importance of educating young people about the dangers of open water swimming.

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The Chairman commented that the Authority's Strategic Risk Register was one of the best he had seen.

- (1) the Corporate Risk Register included at Appendix A to Paper AUD/129/22 was approved.**

Chairman

Date

The meeting started at 1.30pm and ended at 2.00pm