

DEVON AUDIT PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

15 November 2021

Present:-

Councillors Scott, Craigie, Hackett, Loxton, Penny, Davies, Spencer and Roome

Apologies:-

Councillors Hall, Bingley, Mahony, Kennedy and Austen

In Attendance:-

Councillor Ewings

Members attending in accordance with Standing Orders 8 and 25

9 Meeting Quorum

The meeting of the Partnership was not quorate, however members discussed informally the matters on the agenda and the views of the Committee would be taken to the next meeting in March to ratify any decisions made.

10 Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2021 be signed as a correct record.

11 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

12 Updated Business Plan 2021 to 2026

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Finance (DF/21/02) providing a summary of the direction of the Partnership for the coming five years.

Members noted:

- the key role that technology will play in the future, along with the risk that cyber security and data security present.

- the transition to hybrid operating models that balance remote and on-site working arrangements.
- the need to invest in both staff and technology to continue to provide the level of assurance partners and clients need.
- that growth is likely to be limited, however officers will continue to seek out new opportunities that will both strengthen the Partnership and provide better quality services to the wider not-for-profit sector.
- the strength of the apprenticeship programme, the need to balance the staff profile with retirements and continue to attract a workforce from different backgrounds.
- Members commended the Head of Devon Audit Partnership for the number of apprenticeship opportunities the Partnership continues to create.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Davies, **SECONDED** by Councillor Roome and

RESOLVED

that the Committee notes the updated Business Plan covering the five-year period 2021 to 2026.

13 Staff Survey Results

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Finance (DF/21/03) providing an extract of the key results from the 2021 staff survey.

Members noted:

- that while the results are pleasing overall DAP Management need to continue to work on those areas that require improvement.
- the importance of surveying staff, and welcomed the continued focus from the Partnership on improvement but expressed some concern about how anonymous staff surveys can always be.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Scott, **SECONDED** by Councillor Loxton and

RESOLVED

that the Committee notes the extract of staff survey results from 2021, and the comparison to the 2018 results.

14 Six Month Update Report 2021/22

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Finance (DF/21/04) summarising activity in the first six months of 2021/22. The report recognises the continuing challenges brought about by the Covid pandemic and the impact that this has had on the work of the team.

Members noted:

- the extension of the contract with Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service.
- the Partnership has been unsuccessful in 3 recent bids to academies. Feedback indicates that the bids were competitive, but others were able to offer delivery in less days, and thus less cost. Officers will look further at the feedback and see how to react to this.
- customer service surveys continue to show very positive feedback with a near 99% being "satisfied" or better across the Partnership's services.
- indicators show a slight deteriorating in performance from the previous year, but this should be considered against the backdrop of the ongoing need to respond to the Covid pandemic, and also a relatively high level of staff turnover in the period.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Scott, **SECONDED** by Councillor Roome and

RESOLVED

that the Committee notes the six month update report from the Head of Devon Audit Partnership.

15 **Budget Monitoring 2021/22 - Month 6**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Finance (DF/21/05) monitoring the Budget of the Partnership at month 6 indicating a small surplus at the year end (circa 1k).

Members noted:

- staff Costs £120k increase – mainly due to additional staff required to support additional income gained.
- some plans from last year slipped into April / May 2021, with probably some work from 2021/22 moving into 2022/23. Members expressed concern that things that need to be looked at may get missed and that it was too important to delay some of these items.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Scott, **SECONDED** by Councillor Hackett and

RESOLVED

(a) the projected financial outturn position of DAP be noted.

(b) the variances and reasons be noted.

16 **Updated Risk Register November 2021**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Finance (DF/21/06) setting out the updated Strategic and Operational risks facing the Partnership.

Members noted:

- the key risks that the Partnership currently faces includes a partner leaving; and the ongoing impact of Covid on the Partnership's plans and on the ability to provide an annual audit opinion.
- the need for Partnership management continue to monitor its mitigating actions to ensure that these risks do not materialise.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Penny, **SECONDED** by Councillor Hackett and

RESOLVED

- (a) the updated Strategic and Operational risk register be noted.
- (b) the actions in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level be noted.

17 **Quality Assurance & Improvement Plan**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Finance (DF/21/07) setting out the areas for advancement in the coming 12 months.

Members noted:

- Recent Public Sector Internal Audit Standards Excellence assessment which the Partnership has passed, but along with forthcoming customer service external assessment these will both feed into the development plan.
- the new Deputy Head of DAP has been appointed.
- the importance of whistleblowing.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Scott, **SECONDED** by Councillor Hackett and

RESOLVED

- (a) the current Quality Assurance & Improvement Plan Action Plan be noted.
- (b) the challenges for the future, and the actions being taken by management to react to these challenges be noted.

18 **Future Meetings**

The next meeting is scheduled for 8 March 2022.

NOTES:

1. *Minutes should always be read in association with any Reports for a complete record.*
2. *If the meeting has been webcast, it will be available to view on the [webcasting site](#) for up to 12 months from the date of the meeting*

* **DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 11.28 am