

MCA - AUDIT, STANDARDS AND RISK COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:

WEDNESDAY, 22 MARCH 2023 AT 1.00 PM

SOUTH YORKSHIRE MCA, 11 BROAD STREET WEST,
SHEFFIELD, S1 2BQ



Present:

Councillor Phillip Lofts (Chair)
Rhys Jarvis (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Ian Auckland
Councillor Austen White
David Phillips
Paul Schofield

Barnsley MBC
(Independent Member)
Sheffield City Council
City of Doncaster Council
Independent Member
Independent Member

In Attendance:

Gareth Sutton	Chief Finance Officer/S73 Officer	SYMCA Executive Team
Mike Thomas	Assistant Director of Finance & Deputy s73 Officer	SYMCA Executive Team
Claire James	Head of Corporate Governance	SYMCA Executive Team
Felix Kumi-Ampofo	Director of Corporate Policy	SYMCA Executive Team
Lyndsey Whitaker	Head of Assurance & Evaluation	SYMCA Executive Team
Ellen Hinsley	Minute Taker	SYMCA Executive Team
Rob Barnett	Internal Auditor	RSM
Aaron Macdonald	Internal Auditor	RSM
Anna Mullen	Internal Auditor	RSM

Apologies:

Cllr Sophie Castledine-Dack Rotherham MBC

131 Internal Audit Approach 2023/24

(The meeting resumed at 1:00pm.)

The Chair welcomed the incoming Internal Audit Team from RSM to the meeting and invited introductions.

The Internal Audit outlined their approach to the development of the 1 year internal audit plan and the 3 year strategy.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the Internal Audit Approach 2023/24.

Updated Assurance and Accountability Framework

The Director of Corporate Policy presented the updated Assurance and Accountability Framework for 2023.

The MCA was required to update and publish the Assurance Framework on a yearly basis. The key amendments that had been made to the 2023 Framework were intended drive efficiency and streamline the funding approval processes without affecting the quality of submissions. The changes make use of internal practices within each authority to avoid unnecessary duplication. A new Project Management Office team had also been set up within the MCA to provide additional support to local authorities. The new processes had been trialled on a few projects and early indications were positive.

It was noted that the MCA Board had approved the Assurance Framework at its meeting on 6 March and it was intended to be submitted to Government shortly.

In response to questions, the Director of Corporate Policy advised that where projects were complete, they were able to progress through the system within 6 weeks. The Executive Director of Resources & Investment added that due to these improved processes, the MCA had been able to identify some 'delivery ready' projects to put forward for additional Government funds. In cases where other funding had originally been earmarked for these projects then the use of this additional Government funding would free up these monies to be used on other activity.

RESOLVED that Committee Members:

1. Note the amendments to the Assurance Framework to ensure compliance with the Government's requirements and most recent issued guidance.
2. Agree the updated draft Assurance Framework for onward publication and submission to the relevant government departments.

Governance Improvement Plan Update

The Head of Corporate Governance updated the Committee on progress against the 2022/23 Governance Improvement Plan.

The report sought approval to conclude the Governance Improvement Plan for 2022/23.

RESOLVED that the Committee note progress against the plan and approve the recommendation that the plan be concluded at the end of the financial year, with any outstanding actions being transferred to the 2023/24 plan where appropriate.

(The Director of Corporate Policy and Head of Assurance & Evaluation left the meeting.)

134 **Code of Corporate Governance Review**

The Committee received the Code of Corporate Governance for the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority.

The existing MCA Code of Corporate Governance had been reviewed against the CIPFA Framework. Minor amendments had been made in the introduction and at 7.2.

The Code would be presented to the MCA Board on 5 June.

RESOLVED that the Committee consider the Code of Corporate Governance (appendix A).

135 **Initial Findings of the Annual Governance Review 2022/23**

The Head of Corporate Governance reported on the initial findings of the Annual Governance Review.

An assessment of compliance with the Code of Corporate Governance was undertaken during February and March to gain assurance of the effectiveness of current governance arrangements and to identify any opportunities for improvement.

The draft annual governance statement including the governance improvement plan was due to be presented to the MCA Board in June.

ACTION: The Head of Corporate Governance to include the high level Corporate Risks in the Annual Governance Statement.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the initial findings of the Annual Governance Review and consider and contribute to the draft the governance improvement plan.

136 **Committee Effectiveness**

The findings of the annual committee effectiveness survey undertaken during February were outlined along with proposed actions to address any areas of concern.

Members expressed concerns around the lack of a relationship between the Audit, Standards & Risk Committee and the MCA Board and Mayor.

The Head of Corporate Governance informed Members that an annual report was due to be presented to the June meeting of the MCA Board. The Mayor had also confirmed his attendance at the next Audit, Standards & Risk Committee meeting in June.

The Committee looked forward to meeting the Mayor at the June meeting and further developing this relationship.

ACTION: The Head of Corporate Governance to explore the possibility of a mid-year update from the Committee to the MCA Board in addition to the Annual Report.

ACTION: The Head of Corporate Governance to research best practice between the MCA Board, Mayor and the Audit, Standards & Risk Committee to ensure its effectiveness.

The Assistant Director of Finance informed the Members that continued professional development, in the form of treasury management training would be required to comply with the revised prudential code. The survey had also found that the Committee would appreciate some sessions on anti-fraud and corruption.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the findings of the annual effectiveness survey and recommend any further actions.

137 **Breach of Controls Report**

The Executive Director of Resources & Investment informed Members that no breaches of the contract procedure rules, or financial regulations had been identified.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

138 **Work Plan**

The Head of Corporate Governance noted that the possibility of an additional, single-item meeting was currently being explored to agree the Internal Audit Plan & Strategy for 2023/24.

Members were invited to put forward any items for consideration to the 2023/24 Work Plan.

The Head of Corporate Governance noted that a new Member would need to be nominated should the Committee wish to continue with the Transport Risk Working Group, as the current Chair's term came to an end on 31 March.

RESOLVED that:

1. Members note the work plan and agree any changes or additional items to be scheduled.
2. Paul Schofield be nominated to Chair the Transport Risk Working Group.

As this would be his last meeting, the Chair thanked Vice Chair, Rhys Jarvis for his invaluable contribution to the Audit, Standards & Risk Committee over the last few years. The Vice Chair commented that he had been impressed with the progress and development that he had seen during this time.

I, the undersigned, confirm that this is a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Signed _____

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Name

Position

Date