



MINUTES

Audit Committee Meeting

Held in Council Chambers
Corner King & Barrack Street's, Merredin
Tuesday, 23 January 2024
Commencing 1:45pm



Common Acronyms Used in this Document	
WEROC	Wheatbelt East Regional Organisation of Councils
GECZ	Great Eastern Country Zone
WALGA	Western Australian Local Government Association
CEACA	Central East Aged Care Alliance
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
EMS&C	Executive Manager Strategy and Community
EMDS	Executive Manager of Development Services
EMES	Executive Manager of Engineering Services
EMCS	Executive Manager of Corporate Services
EO	Executive Officer
LPS	Local Planning Scheme
LGIS	Local Government Insurance Services
SRP	Strategic Resource Plan
CBP	Corporate Business Plan
CSP	Community Strategic Plan
MRCLC	Merredin Regional Community and Leisure Centre
CWVC	Central Wheatbelt Visitors Centre
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding

Shire of Merredin
Audit Committee Meeting
1:45pm Tuesday, 23 January 2024



1. Official Opening

The President acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today, and paid his respects to Elders past, present and emerging. The President then welcomed those in attendance and declared the meeting open at 1:45pm.

2. Record of Attendance / Apologies and Leave of Absence

Councillors:

Cr M McKenzie	President
Cr B Anderson	
Cr D Crook	
Cr M Simmonds	

Staff:

C Brindley-Mullen	A/CEO
L Boehme	EMCS
M Wyatt	EO

Observer:

Cr H Billing

Apologies:

Cr R Manning - Deputy President, L Clack, CEO

Approved Leave of Absence:

Nil

3. Public Question Time

Nil

4. Disclosure of Interest

Nil

5. Confirmation of Minutes of the Previous Meeting

5.1 Audit Committee Meeting held on 11 December 2023
Attachment 5.1A

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority

Absolute Majority

Resolution

Moved: Cr Crook

Seconded: Cr Anderson

83305

That the minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting held on 11 December 2023 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.


CARRIED 4/0

For: Cr McKenzie, Cr Anderson, Cr Crook, Cr Simmonds.

Against: Nil

6. Officer's Reports

6.1 Regulation 17 and Risk Action Plan Review January 2024

<h1>Corporate Services</h1> 	
Responsible Officer:	Leah Boehme, EMCS
Author:	As above
Legislation:	<i>Local Government (Audit) Regulations 1996</i>
File Reference:	Nil
Disclosure of Interest:	Nil
Attachments:	Attachment 6.1A – Reg 17 and Risk Action Plan Review January 2024
<div style="background-color: #92d050; padding: 5px;">Purpose of Report</div>	

Executive Decision

Legislative Requirement

The purpose of this report is to provide the Audit Committee with an update on the Shire of Merredin's (the Shire) progress toward the actions highlighted during the Chief Executive Officer's (CEO) review of Risk Management, Internal Controls and Legislative Compliance, which was presented to the Audit Committee and to Council in December 2022. The review document also provides updates on progress toward findings from the 2020/21 and 2021/22 Audits.

This will be the final time this document is presented to Council as it will be replaced by a new document that will include action items from the Shire's Financial Management Review (FMR) and 2022/23 Financial Audit.

Background

Regulation 17 of the *Local Government (Audit) Regulations 1996* requires the CEO to review the appropriateness and effectiveness of the local government systems and procedures in relation to risk management, internal control and legislation compliance.

The review may relate to any or all of the matters referred to the sub-regulation (1) (a), (b) and (c), but each of those matters is to be the subject of a review at least once every three (3) financial years.

The CEO is to report to the Audit Committee the results of that review and then provide updates on the progress toward identified actions on a regular basis. The Shire has provided quarterly updates to the Audit Committee and Council since the document was created.

Comment

Attachment 6.1A outlines the steps taken towards completing the actions identified during the Reg 17 and Risk reviews. Further items have been completed since the last review was presented to the Audit Committee in October 2023.

The progress toward the Risk Dashboard items has seen further growth, with a number of items progressing. There is still a number of actions to be commenced which involve long term changes requiring longer periods of time before they are expected to be completed.

Policy Implications

Policy 3.24 – Risk Management applies.

Statutory Implications

Regulation 17 of the *Local Government (Audit) Regulations 1996* applies.

Strategic Implications

Ø Strategic Community Plan

Theme:	4. Communications and Leadership.
Service Area Objective:	4.2 - Decision Making. 4.2.2 – The Shire is progressive while exercising responsible stewardship of its built, natural and financial resources. 4.2.3 – The Council is well informed in their decision-making, supported by a skilled administration team who are committed to providing timely, strategic information and advice. 4.4.1 – The Shire is continuously working to maintain efficient communication, providing open, transparent and factual information, through a variety of channels.
Priorities and Strategies for Change:	Nil

Ø Corporate Business Plan

Theme:	4 – Communication.
Objective:	4.4 – Communications.
Timeline:	4.4.1 – The Shire is continuously working to maintain efficient communication, providing open, transparent and factual information, through a variety of channels.

Sustainability Implications

Ø Strategic Resource Plan

Nil

Risk Implications

By regularly reviewing the Shire's Risk Dashboard and Regulation 17 Review and providing updates to the Audit Committee and Council, the risk to the organisation should decrease.

Financial Implications

Nil

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority

Absolute Majority

Resolution

Moved:

Cr Anderson

Seconded:

Cr Crook

That the Audit Committee:

83306

1. **NOTES** the quarterly Reg 17 and Risk Action Plan Progress Report for January 2024 as presented in Attachment 6.1A; and
2. **RECOMMENDS** that Council **NOTES** the Reg 17 and Risk Action Plan Progress Report as tabled to the Audit Committee.

CARRIED 4/0

For: Cr McKenzie, Cr Anderson, Cr Crook, Cr Simmonds.

Against: Nil

Reg 17 and Risk Action Plan – January 2024 update

Completed In progress Ongoing Not yet commenced Reviewed elsewhere

Recommendations:	Actions:	Date completed/ comment:
Annual review of risk management policy, framework and register to be monitored through Attain.	- Relevant items added to Attain calendar.	10 January 2023.
Annual review of Business Continuity Plan to be monitored through Attain.	- Plan to be updated and reviewed annually.	Business Continuity Plan review commenced July 2023. Business Continuity Plan review completed September 2023 – presented to Council for noting.
Revalue Shire's Infrastructure Assets Early in 2023.	- Completion of revaluations. - Complete updates in software system. - Notify Insurers of any significant changes.	Completed March – June. In progress July 2023. Completed September 2023. No significant changes to report.
Employee Code of Conduct Reviewed.	- Code of Conduct reviewed, published and disseminated - HR Sessions conducted with staff.	December/ January Sessions completed.
Attain calendar maintained and updated.		Ongoing.
Review insurance cover.	- Review policies and schedules prior to each financial year.	Completed May 2023.
Policy review calendar to be developed.	- Develop a policy review calendar/ timeline.	Policy review document developed 2023 – this is being reviewed to ensure all policy updates that have occurred are recognised.
A focus placed on internal controls relating to Audit findings in 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years.	2020/21	
	- Credit card policy developed and implemented.	November 2022.
	- Process implemented for employee master file to be checked fortnightly.	October 2022.
	- All journals reviewed and signed by EMCS.	8 August 2022.
	- Compliance with procurement processes. *2022/23 Interim Audit completed – 1 Minor finding relating to payment of DFES ESL invoices. No other procurement findings noted.	Purchasing policy updated. Delegations register updated. Purchasing Authority Limits reviewed and communicated to staff.
	- Bank Reconciliations completed monthly and signed by EMCS.	December 2022.
	- Standardised and centralised HR practices implemented throughout the organisation. Ongoing phased process.	Position Descriptions and Classifications reviewed. Organisation Structure loaded into IT system.

		HR admin and consultant managing all processes.
	2021/22	
	- Bank rec/ employee master file/ procurement practices (on own lines above).	
	- Review of risk management system and procedures presented to Audit and Council. Annual review added to Attain calendar.	December 2022.
	- Process for end of day reconciliations implemented.	October 2022. Work instruction in development.
	- Money processed through trust bank account.	June 2023.
	- Fixed asset register not reconciling.	Auditors advised this would be corrected once Infrastructure Asset revaluations completed (these are currently in progress). Infrastructure Asset revaluations loaded into system and balanced for annual financial statements.
	- Fair value of Infrastructure assets.	Valuations completed.
	- Payroll practices: - Ensure signed contracts on file for all staff. - Higher duties work instruction to be created and disseminated to Executive Staff.	Implementation of digital payroll solution nearing completion. Employment contracts reviewed. Letter template created by HR July 2023.
	- Risk register.	December 2022.
	- Audit committee Terms of Reference.	Developed and endorsed December 2022.
	- Purchasing Policy review.	Completed March 2023, endorsed by Council May 2023.
	- Asset Management Policy review.	Endorsed by Council June 2023.
	- Rates reconciliation (signed by EMCS).	2022/23 sign off August 2022. 2023/24 reconciliation in progress.
Review of processes.	- Review of finance processes. - Creation of Work Instructions for all finance tasks.	Commenced February 2023. Will be ongoing throughout 2024.

Review of Delegation Register.	- Changes required to DL4.12.	May 2023.
Audit Committee involved in Risk Framework review.	- Audit Committee presented with regular reports on improvement/ action plans.	Presented March, July and October 2023.
Shire of Merredin Recordkeeping Plan review.	- Recordkeeping Plan reviewed and updated.	December 2022. Final acceptance by SRO May 2023.
Shire of Merredin Workforce Plan review.	- Workforce Plan review.	

Risk Dashboard Review

Asset Management			
Action	Completed Y/N	Date Due	Date Completed/ Notes
RAMMS Training.	Y	Nov-23	Completed May 2023.
Verification of Roads data into RAMMS.	Partial	Dec -23	Ongoing, process has commenced.
Quarterly stocktakes at works depot.	Y	Dec-23	Completed 30 June 2023.
Review and update Asset Management Policy.	Y	Jun-23	June 2023.
Create Asset Management Strategy.	Partial	Mar -24	Assessment of condition of sealed road network completed October 2023. Mapping of all road assets completed November 2023. Development of road hierarchy completed December 2023.
Business and Community Disruption			
Action	Completed Y/N	Date Due	Date Completed/ Notes.
Implement internal emergency management arrangements across Shire.	Y	ongoing	Business Continuity Plan reviewed and provided to Council October 2023.
Review LEMA annually.	Y	ongoing	Adopted at LEMC Meeting 26 October 2023.
Failure to Fulfil Compliance Requirements (statutory, regulatory)			
Action	Completed Y/N	Date Due	Date Completed/ Notes
Review Compliance Calendar within Attain.	ongoing	ongoing	
Review process for CAR completion.	Y	ongoing	2022 CAR presented to Audit and Council March.
Quarterly monitoring of Attain outcomes at SMG.	Y	ongoing	On agenda at all meetings.
Document Management Process			

Action	Completed Y/N	Date Due	Date Completed/ Notes
Digitise HR records.	Y	Dec-23	Records digitisation.
Digitise vital records.	Partial	Dec-23	Some records digitised.
Review policies and create Policy Index with 'last reviewed date' component.	Partial	Dec-23	A number of policies reviewed.
Review procedures and create Procedure Index with 'last reviewed date' component.	N	Jun-24	Commenced October 2023.
Creation of key secure documents that are unable to be edited (H Drive).	Partial	Mar-23	Most folders/ documents secured.
Continue to review archives of the Shire.	Partial	Ongoing	Records officer has commenced review.
Employment Practices			
Action	Completed Y/N	Date Due	Date Completed/ Notes.
Develop and implement Recruitment Process.	Partial	Jun-23	Mostly completed – PDs and Classifications reviewed and updated.
Updating HR Synergy Module.	Partial	Dec-23	Completed August 2023.
Review of qualification, licenses and tickets for required staff.	Partial	ongoing	In progress. Training register updated and reviewed regularly.
Engagement Practices			
Action	Completed Y/N	Date Due	Date Completed/ Notes
Review Engagement & Consultation Framework.	N	Jan-24	
Complete Community Scorecard Survey.	N	Dec-23	Not within budget, alternative methods under consideration.
Environment Management			
Action	Completed Y/N	Date Due	Date Completed/ Notes
Complete outstanding actions from waste water re-use audit.	Y	Dec-23	Audit carried out on 26/10/2023, overall audit score “Good.” Four recommendations for implementation by December 2024, will be finalised prior to that timeframe as part of CBD/Apex Park redevelopment.
Training to be completed for the waste water management program.	Y	ongoing	Inhouse training being provided by Shire EHO based on Department of Health Guidelines. Training is of suitable standard and undertaken in a timely manner as confirmed in the

			October 2023 Water Corporation Audit.
Develop Landfill Closure Plan.	Partial	Jun-24	Funds allocated in 2023/24 budget. Tender for consultancy services issued December 2023.
Errors, Omissions and Delays			
Action	Completed Y/N	Date Due	Date Completed/ Notes
Identify key procedures for ALL areas, to be documented.	N	Dec-23	
Create Procedural/Internal Management procedures and policies.	Partial	Dec-23	Some initial procedures created.
Consider a 'Knowledge Management' system for procedures (intranet).	Partial – intranet in place but not well utilised	Dec-23	
Regularly review key information on website for accuracy.	Y	ongoing	Completed on an ongoing cycle.
Consider implementing a process to track complaints/ work requests.	Partial	Dec-23	A spreadsheet is in place currently to log requests/ Snap Send Solves.
External Theft, Fraud or Damage			
Action	Completed Y/N	Date Due	Date Completed/ Notes
Review Admin Security Procedure to include changing of the 4-digit access system every 6 months or when staff leave.	Y	ongoing	Staff assigned personal PINs for alarm system as required.
Review of contractor access and induction processes, including assessment of effectiveness and consistency.	Partial	ongoing	Inductions of staff following commencement of employment with the Shire of Merredin. Use of VELPIC (now DAMSTRA) training module and assistance from LGIS Regional Risk Coordinator for induction of contractors.
Management of Facilities/ Venues/ Events			
Action	Completed Y/N	Date Due	Date Completed/ Notes
Review internal procedures for events and bookings - communication focus.	N	Sep-23	Delayed due to staff turnover.
Review facility/ venue hire forms created for Cummins Theatre & other external facilities.	N	Jan-24	Review underway.
IT or Communications Systems and Infrastructure			
Action	Completed Y/N	Date Due	Date Completed/ Notes

Develop an IT equipment register and replacement plan.	Partial	Dec-23	Commenced.
Develop and implement ICT Framework.	N	Dec-23	Has been included in IT Contract scope for 2024 onward.
Review performance of IT vendors.	Partial	Dec-23	Request to quote sent out to IT contractors December 2023.
Implement staff and councillor training for enhanced IT security.	N	Dec-23	Has been included in IT Contract scope for 2024 onward.
Review staff IT access profiles on shared drive and in SynergySoft.	Partial	Dec-23	Commenced.
Misconduct			
Action	Completed Y/N	Date Due	Date Completed/ Notes
Review of Induction Procedure.	Partial	ongoing	Commenced.
Review Fraud & Corruption Control Plan.	N	Dec-23	
Authorised officers letters of appointment (unions).	Partial	Dec-23	Register created.
Ethical and Accountable Decision-Making training.	Yes	ongoing	Part of staff reinduction March, further training completed November 2023.
Projects/ Change Management			
Action	Completed Y/N	Date Due	Date Completed/ Notes
Develop project management plans for the management of major projects (i.e. CBD).		As required	Kept as live documents, updated as required.
Safety and Security Practices			
Action	Completed Y/N	Date Due	Date Completed/ Notes
Determine contractor/ site inspection procedural approach.	Y	ongoing	Use of VELPIC training module and assistance from LGIS Regional Risk Coordinator for induction of contractors.
Review OHS and new guidelines as identified.	Partial	Nov-23	Senior management training - roles and responsibilities under new WHS legislation completed by members of executive.
Conduct Annual Risk Assessment for BFB and SES.	N	Jun-23	Planned for completion prior to December 2023.
Supplier/ Contract Management			
Action	Completed Y/N	Date Due	Date Completed/ Notes

Regular review of Tenders, Contracts, Agreements and Grants SynergySoft module.	Y	ongoing	Contract and Grant milestones emailed weekly.
Procurement and Disposal			
Action	Completed Y/N	Date Due	Date Completed/ Notes
Review local panel of suppliers.	Partial	Mar -24	Meeting conducted with WALGA 12 July 2023. Two tenders will be issued early 2024: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suppliers & Trades. - Plant Hire – Contractors.
Review the Disposal of Assets Policy to include updated regulations.	Partial	Mar-24	Reviewed policy to be presented to Council January 2024.
Training for requisitions and purchase orders.	Partial	ongoing	Completed one on one as required presently. All staff signed up to complete WALGA Procurement basics training. This will form part of all staff inductions moving forward.

2. Closure

There being no further business, the President thanked those in attendance and declared the meeting closed at 1:50pm.

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