



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 15th NOVEMBER 2023

PRESENT: Councillor D Maycock (Chair), Councillors B Clarke, S Daniels, S Doyle, B Price (Vice-Chair), R Pritchard and P Thurgood

Officers Rebecca Smeathers (Executive Director Finance (S151)), Andrew Wood (Audit Manager), Joanne Goodfellow (Assistant Director Finance), Nicola Hesketh (Monitoring Officer), Tracey Pointon (Legal Admin & Democratic Services Manager) and Tracey Smith (Democratic Services Assistant)

Visitors Bethany Hincks and Laura Hinsley, Azets, External Auditors

39 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

40 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th October 2023 were approved and signed as a correct record.

(Moved by Councillor S Doyle and seconded by Councillor B Clarke)

41 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

42 INTRODUCTION OF AZETS AS COUNCIL'S EXTERNAL AUDITORS FOR 2023/24 AND AUDIT PLAN

Azets were introduced as the Council's external auditors for 2023/24. Bethany Hincks and Laura Hinsley gave an update on the Audit Plan for 2023/24.

43 COUNTER FRAUD UPDATE

Report of the Audit Manager to provide Members with:

- An update of counter fraud work completed this financial year, including an updated fraud action and fraud risk register;
- A refreshed and updated Counter Fraud & Corruption Strategy;
- A refreshed and updated Whistleblowing Policy; and
- A refreshed and updated Anti Money Laundering Policy.

RESOLVED That the Committee:

1. Endorsed this update report including the updated fraud action plan at **Appendix 1** and the fraud risk register at **Appendix 2**.
2. Endorsed the refreshed Counter Fraud & Corruption Policy Strategy at **Appendix 3**.
3. Endorsed the refreshed Whistleblowing Policy at **Appendix 4**.
4. Endorsed the refreshed Anti Money Laundering Policy at **Appendix 5**.
5. Provided delegation to the Audit Manager to make minor changes to the above policies in respect of job titles, name changes and contact details.

(Moved by Councillor D Maycock and seconded by Councillor S Doyle)

44 RISK MANAGEMENT QUARTERLY UPDATE QT2 2023/24

Report of the Assistant Director, Finance, to report on the Risk Management process and progress for Quarter 2 of the 2023/24 financial year.

RESOLVED That the Committee:

Endorsed the Corporate Risk Register.

(Moved by Councillor D Maycock and seconded by Councillor B Price)

45 REVISED COUNCILLOR CODE OF CONDUCT PROCEDURES

Report of the Monitoring Officer to provide revised arrangements for dealing with complaints in relation to Councillors for an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct and to ensure that the Council's Code of Conduct is, and continues to be, fit for purpose.

RESOLVED That the Committee:

1. Recommend to Council the adoption of the revised Councillor Code of Conduct set out in **Appendix 1**, with delegated authority to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the A&G Committee, to make any minor changes in order to finalise a version for adoption.
2. Recommend to Council the use of the updated Code of Conduct Form (**Appendix 2**) and procedures (**Appendix 3**).

(Moved by Councillor D Maycock and seconded by Councillor Ben Clarke)

46 CONSTITUTION & SCHEME OF DELEGATION UPDATE

Report of the Monitoring Officer to provide an update on the Council's Constitution and Scheme of Delegation, presenting the necessary changes made to the Constitution following a number of changes as identified within the report and its appendices to improve the Council's governance.

This item was deferred to be discussed at Audit & Governance at its February meeting, following a working group discussion to be held in December.

47 AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE TIMETABLE

The Committee reviewed the timetable.

The Constitution & Scheme of Delegation Update to be re-scheduled to 8th February, Audit & Governance meeting.

Chair