



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 23rd JULY 2020

PRESENT: Councillor M Summers (Chair), Councillors M Bailey (Vice-Chair), C Cooke, J Faulkner, M Oates and R Rogers

Officers Stefan Garner (Executive Director Finance), Joanne Sands (Assistant Director Partnerships), Rebecca Neill (Head of Audit & Governance and Monitoring Officer) and Jodie Small (Legal, Democratic and Corporate Support Assistant)

Visitors Mark Stocks (Grant Thornton)

Apologies received from: Councillor(s) S Pritchard

50 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2020 were approved and signed as a correct record.

(Moved by Councillor J Faulkner and seconded by Councillor M Oates)

51 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of Interest.

52 UPDATE FROM EXTERNAL AUDITORS

Mark Stocks provided an update to the committee.

53 RISK MANAGEMENT QUARTERLY REVIEW UPDATE

The Executive Director Finance reported on the Risk Management process and progress to date for the current financial year.

Following the Committee's questions on a number of corporate risks, the Chair highlighted to Members that the Corporate Scrutiny Committee would be

recommending to Cabinet that the risks associated with future Council investment in property funds in light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, be brought to a subsequent meeting of the Audit & Governance Committee, as the Committee appointed by Council to scrutinise treasury management activities.

RESOLVED That the Committee;
Endorsed the Corporate Risk Register.

(Moved by Councillor M Summers and seconded by Councillor C Cooke)

54 REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000

The Assistant Director Partnerships presented her report which was to consider updates to the Council's Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2020 Policy, receive update on any activity to 30 June 2020 and move to annual reports on the usage of those powers. The Committee debated the report and in particular the usage of such powers in relation to fly tipping.

RESOLVED That Committee;

- Approved annual reporting of the use of RIPA powers (as outlined in IPCO guidance) and review the RIPA policy during the first meeting of the Committee in each financial year,
- Endorsed updates to the Council's RIPA Policy to include Social Media Policy,
- Endorsed the RIPA monitoring report for the quarter to 30 June 2020.

(Moved by Councillor J Faulkner and seconded by Councillor M Bailey)

55 INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT AND UPDATE

The Head of Audit & Governance and Monitoring Officer presented her report which comprised Internal Audit's Annual Report, including results for the quarter 4 to 31 March 2020 (as well as an update on progress during quarter 1 to 30 June 2020). The Committee sought assurance on those reports noted with a limited or no assurance opinion.

RESOLVED That the Committee;
Noted Internal Audit's Annual Report (Appendix 1), which includes results for the quarter 4 to 31 March 2020 (as well as an update on progress during quarter

1 to 30 June 2020).

(Moved by Councillor J Faulkner and seconded by Councillor C Cooke)

56 PROS AND CONS OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

The Head of Audit and Governance & Monitoring Officer briefed the Audit & Governance Committee on the 'pros and cons' of appointing independent member/s to the Audit & Governance Committee and a proposed roadmap for a potential appointment process should the Committee wish to proceed. The Committee debated in detail the pros and cons of independent member appointments and whether to remunerate.

The Committee requested that the 5 year time restriction on candidates eligibility in that they must not be a Councillor or officer of the Council in the preceding five years prior to appointment, be verified as to whether this was law or whether a shorter period could suffice.

RESOLVED

That the Committee;

Considered the report and decided to proceed with the process to appoint up to two independent member/s to the Audit & Governance Committee.

That those independent member positions be unremunerated, but subject to reasonable travel allowances.

(Moved by Councillor M Summers and seconded by Councillor C Cooke)

57 AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE TIMETABLE

The Chair summarised the Committee timetable which included the reports which had been previously circulated to the Committee during the Covid-19 restrictions, which now required formal endorsement.

The Head of Audit & Governance informed the Committee that the Local Government Association had recently issued a new member code of conduct for consultation. As member conduct was the domain of the Audit & Governance Standards Sub Committee, it would seem appropriate that this Committee provide input into the corporate response to the consultation, with an open invite to other Councillors who wished to contribute.

RESOLVED

That the Committee;

Formally endorsed the following previously circulated reports:

- Internal Audit Plan and Charter 2020/21
- Review of Financial Guidance

- Public Sector Internal Audit Standards; and Quality Assurance & Improvement Programme
- Audit & Governance Committee's Annual Report 2019/20
- Grant Thornton's External Audit Plan Update
- Grant Thornton's Informing the Risk Assessment
- Update on Audit Matters from Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited
- Future Procurement and Market Supply Options Review
- CIPFA Section 151 Update and Review of Financial Resilience Index
- Review of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Statement 2020/21 and the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy Mid-Year Review Report 2019/20
- Final Accounts 2019/20 – Accounting Policies and Action Plan

By virtue of Paragraph 1, 3 od Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972:

- Risk Based Verification (Exempt item).

Agreed the Committee Timetable.

Councillors M Summers, J Faulkner, M Bailey and C Cooke attend a code of conduct working group on behalf of the Audit & Governance Committee.

(Moved by Councillor M Oates and seconded by Councillor M Bailey)

Chair