

AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
Tuesday 28th November 2023

PRESENT – Councillors Harling (in the Chair), Whittingham, Slater N, and Jon Baldwin and Jennifer Eastham (Independent Member)

OFFICERS – Dean Langton, Colin Ferguson, and Syeda Azmat.

The Councils External Auditors – Gareth Winstanley

RESOLUTIONS

58. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

59. Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 19th September

The Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 19th September 2023 were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 19th September 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

60. Declarations of interest

No Declarations of interest were made by Members of the Committee.

61. External Audit - Progress Update

Gareth Winstanley provided the Committee with a verbal update on the progress of the statutory audit work. Neil Slater requested the value amount in relation to the gap relating to property valuations. It was clarified the work is in relation fundamental. The consultant is looking at the methodology and approach used by the Council regarding the basis of the valuations. Any differences in values has not been quantified at this stage. May affect book value not market values and is not effecting the budgets. Any adjustments required would be noted in the Audit Findings Report if necessary

Jennifer Eastham requested clarification on the management of possible risks in relation to the value decreasing. It was clarified the concerns are only in relation to methodologies not value.

RESOLVED –

The Chair requested the next update be provided in the format of a written report than verbal as it's easier to scrutinise.

62. Update on the Statement of Accounts 2021/22 and 2022/23

Dean Langton provided the Committee with an update on the progress regarding completion of the 2021/22 and 2022/23 Financial Statements.

Jennifer Eastham requested clarification in relation to the upcoming change of auditors and the effect this will have on the work due to the application of various methodologies. Gareth Winstanley advised discussion will take place

with the new external auditors prior to the handover and guidance provided to them.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

63. Treasury Management Report - July to September 2023

Dean Langton provided the Committee with a report on Treasury Management activity, including a Mid-Year Strategy Review.

Jennifer Eastham requested clarification on if the early council tax collection provided interest. Dean Langton noted that collection rates are as expected and clarified it is the grants received that provide additional money to invest not the council tax collection.

The Chair requested clarification in relation to the loan provided to Birmingham Council has been returned.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

64. Audit & Assurance - Progress & Outcomes to October 2023

Colin Ferguson reported on the progress and outcomes achieved within Audit & Assurance.

Neil Slater requested clarification in regard to the Children's & Adults Social Care Budget performance. Colin Ferguson advised that the issue noted in the report related to social care demand management and that the overall Council budget position had recently been reported to Executive Board.

The Chair noted the amount of matches being picked up by the NFI exercise. It was clarified the data sets submitted to the Cabinet Office are at a point in time and some matches would be resolved subsequently as changes in details were processed by relevant departments. Further updates in relation to the progress to follow up data matches will be provided in due course.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

65. Risk Management - 2023/24 Quarter 2 Review

Colin Ferguson provided the Committee with a report on Risk Management activity in the period.

All committee members agreed to scrutinise Strategic Risk 7B – Business Continuity prior to the next meeting.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

66. **Annual Governance Statement - Progress on 2022/23 Actions and Plan for 2023/24**

Colin Ferguson provided the Committee with a report on the progress of actions relating to the significant issues identified in the 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement and the process for producing the 2023/24 Statement.

Neil Slater questioned if the Council has identified the cuts that needs to be made. It was clarified that various proposals have been made for Directors and Member consideration.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

Signed:

Date:

Chair of the meeting
at which the minutes were confirmed