

MINUTES OF AUDIT AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

2 FEBRUARY 2023

PRESENT:

Mr P Dudfield (Chairman), Mr J Eves (Vice Chairman), Councillors Roodhouse and Willis

40. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2022 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

41. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillors Mistry and Mrs Roberts.

42. MEMBER COMPLAINTS AND ETHICAL GOVERNANCE UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Officer for Legal and Governance (Part 1 – Agenda Item 4) concerning an update on the number of complaints investigated during the first three quarters of the 2022/23 financial year and overall ethical governance.

For future meetings, the report would include parties involved and outcomes achieved to provide a more detailed breakdown of complaints.

An audit of complaints and Freedom of Information requests was planned for 2023/24. The Member complaints process would be included in the planned audit work to provide further assurances to the Committee.

RESOLVED THAT – the report to be noted.

43. 2023/24 CAPITAL STRATEGY AND THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY INCORPORATING THE ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Officer for Finance and Performance (Part 1 – Agenda Item 5) concerning the latest Capital Strategy and the Treasury Management Strategy. The Treasury Management Strategy included limits and indicators that embody the risk management approach that the Council believed to be prudent. The strategies were set against the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, the context of the UK economy and projected outlook on interest rates.

RESOLVED THAT –

- 1) The Property Manager be invited to the next meeting of the Committee to provide an update on the work of Caldecott Developments Limited; and

2) IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL THAT:

- a) The Treasury Management Strategy incorporating the Annual Investment Strategy including associated limits and specific indicators be approved.
- b) The Minimum Revenue Provision Policy be approved (Section A of strategy).
- c) The Capital Strategy including continuation capital programme for 2023/24 be approved.

44. APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Officer for Finance and Performance (Part 1 – Agenda Item 6) concerning the appointment of external auditor from 2023/24.

RESOLVED THAT –

- 1) the change of auditor to Azets Audit Services and the increase in fee as a result of the exercise be noted; and
- 2) an invitation to meet with the Committee be extended to Azets Audit Services in the near future.

45. ACCOUNTING POLICIES UPDATE 2022/23

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Officer for Finance and Performance (Part 1 – Agenda Item 7 – Appendix A) concerning the proposed accounting policies to be used in preparing the 2022/23 financial statements.

RESOLVED THAT – the council's accounting policies underpinning the production of the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts be approved.

46. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Officer for Finance and Performance (Part 1 – Agenda Item 8) concerning the progress toward delivery of the annual internal audit plan, the proposed in year amendments to the plan and a service performance update.

RESOLVED THAT –

- 1) the internal audit progress update be noted; and
- 2) the amendment to the internal audit plan be approved.

47. DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN FOR 2023/24

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Officer for Finance and Performance (Part 1 – Agenda Item 9) concerning the proposed arrangements for developing the Internal Audit Plan for 2023/24.

The Committee was encouraged to consider areas in which Members required assurances from Internal Audit during 2023/24.

RESOLVED THAT –

- 1) the process for developing the Internal Audit Plan for 2023/24 be approved;
- 2) an update be provided at the next meeting of the Committee on the Rugby First audit undertaken by an external auditor; and
- 3) the draft Internal Audit Plan for 2023/24 be circulated to the Committee for comments by end of February.

48. MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC UNDER SECTION 100(A)(4) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

RESOLVED THAT – under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of information defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

49. WHISTLEBLOWING INCIDENTS – STANDING ITEM – TO RECEIVE ANY UPDATES

The Corporate Assurance Manager and Transformation Lead provided a verbal update on two cases reported at previous meetings and stated that one matter was concluded and required no further investigation and one matter remained ongoing.

RESOLVED THAT –

- 1) the verbal update be noted; and
- 2) the Committee be provided with an update at the next meeting.

50. FRAUD AND CORRUPTION ISSUES – STANDING ITEM – TO RECEIVE ANY UPDATES

The Corporate Assurance Manager and Transformation Lead provided a verbal update on two cases reported at previous meetings and stated that both matters remained ongoing.

RESOLVED THAT –

- 1) the verbal update be noted; and
- 2) the Committee be provided with an update at the next meeting.

CHAIRMAN