

STANDARDS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 25th September, 2019

Present:-

Councillor Rayner (Chair)

Councillors Brady
Kellman

Councillors T Murphy
Snowdon

*Matters dealt with under the Delegation Scheme

11 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' AND OFFICERS' INTERESTS
RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

Councillor Mark Rayner announced that he was a member of the board of Tapton Innovation Centre as a council appointed role with a non-pecuniary interest.

12 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Caulfield and A Brittain.

13 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED –

The Minutes of the previous meetings of the Standards and Audit Committee held on 17 July 2019 were approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

14 **TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19 AND
MONITORING REPORT 2019/20**

The Chief Finance Officer presented a report for Members to consider the Annual Treasury Management Report for 2018/19 and the Treasury Management activities for the first five months of 2019/20.

The report confirmed that during 2018/19 the Council had complied with its legislative and regulatory requirements.

RESOLVED –

That it be recommended to Full Council that:

1. the outturn Prudential Indicators for 2018/19 be approved;
2. the treasury management stewardship report for 2018/19 be approved;
3. the treasury management position for the first five months of 2019/20 be noted.

15 SUMMARY OF INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS ISSUED 2019/20

The Internal Audit Consortium Manager presented a report summarising the internal audit reports issued during the period 1 June 2019 to 16 August 2019, in respect of reports issued relating to the 2019/20 internal audit plan.

It was noted that six reports had been issued during this period and had been given the following levels of assurance:

- 'Substantial Assurance' – 2
- 'Reasonable Assurance' – 4

The committee was informed that no fraud had been discovered.

New members of the committee asked for clarification on what checks are in place to ensure that the recommendations are acted upon. The Internal Audit Consortium Manager explained that officers are required to determine timescales for the recommendations to be implemented and then any outstanding recommendations are presented to this committee every six months. The senior leadership team and corporate management team are committed to ensuring that the work of the audit team is acted upon without delay. It was agreed that a full audit report be included with the agenda pack of the next committee meeting to enable members to observe the whole process.

*** RESOLVED –**

That the report be noted.

16 OUTSTANDING INTERNAL AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Internal Audit Consortium Manager presented a report summarising the outstanding internal audit recommendations.

The committee raised concerns around three particular areas with outstanding recommendations. It was agreed that officers from each of the three service areas be invited to the next meeting of the committee to give a full overview of the progress that has been made.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the Assistant Director for Customers, Commissioning and Change, the Client Officer and the Executive Director attend the next Standards and Audit Committee to provide further updates in relation to specific areas of concern.
3. That a further summary of outstanding internal audit recommendations be submitted to the Standards and Audit Committee in April 2020

17 ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2018/2019

The Annual Audit Letter from Mr Michael Norman of Mazars had been received for the year 2018/19.

The Annual Audit Letter summarised the outcome from the external auditor's work at the Council during 2018/19, including reference to:

- The unqualified conclusion on the authority's arrangements to secure value for money;
- The unqualified opinion on the authority's financial statements; and
- Confirmation of the audit fee for 2018/19 as £40,383 excluding VAT.

It was noted that Mazars had not found it necessary to make any recommendations in this letter. Mr Norman explained that councils have a statutory requirement to set a balanced budget and Mazars maintain an open dialogue with officers to advise on budget plans.

*** RESOLVED –**

That the Annual Audit Letter for 2018/19 be received.

18 CIPFA STATEMENT ON THE ROLE OF THE HEAD OF INTERNAL AUDIT

The Head of the Internal Audit Consortium presented a publication to the committee that had been republished by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) on the role of the Head of Audit. It was noted that although there had been no major changes since 2010 there would be value in reacquainting members with the statement.

The statement highlighted five key principles for the Head of Internal Audit and the committee was assured that the Consortium abide by these principles.

RESOLVED –

That the arrangements and processes set out in the report meet the requirements of the CIPFA statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit.

19 RIPA - IPCO INSPECTION

The Monitoring Officer presented a report on the outcome of a routine inspection by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office into the Council's compliance with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA).

It was heard that the last inspection had taken place in 2016 and the recommendation at that point was for all authorising officers to be regularly trained. This training had been carried out but as yet the Council had not exercised its RIPA powers.

The outcome of this report was a recommendation concerning best practise for online activity. Officers' personal social media profiles should

not be used for investigatory purposes, particularly because this practice puts welfare and safety of those officers at risk. Any such investigations should be carried out in line with relevant Codes of Practice and with properly authorized council profile.

It was noted that the inspection had been useful in terms of reviewing processes and the next one would be scheduled for three years time.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the Local Government and Regulatory Law Manager (RIPA Senior Responsible Officer) be authorised to make the relevant changes to Council RIPA policy and procedures.

20 LOCAL GOVERNMENT & SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL REVIEW LETTER 2018/2019

The Monitoring Officer presented a report to the committee informing members about the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review Letter.

It was confirmed that there had been no complaints upheld by the Ombudsman against the Council in the last five years which was significantly less than the national average of 43% a year.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

21 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

***RESOLVED –**

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

22 APPOINTMENT TO INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

The Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer presented a report to the committee to seek approval for the appointment of the Independent Remuneration Panel for 2019-2023.

It was advised that a vacancy for the panel had been advertised and a suitable candidate had been identified. It was recommended to the committee that the two existing members of the panel remain and that the candidate who had been interviewed by the Monitoring Officer and the Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer be appointed.

The deadline for written representations to the panel was highlighted as 14th October 2019.

RESOLVED –

That the following individuals be appointed to the Independent Remuneration Panel for 2019-2023;

Tim Nye
Andy Watterson
Nick Chischniak