

STANDARDS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**Wednesday, 28th September, 2022**

Present:-

Councillor Caulfield (Chair)

Councillors Rayner
Brady
KellmanCouncillors T Murphy
Christian

*Matters dealt with under the Delegation Scheme

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

No declarations of interest were received.

14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Snowdon.

15 MINUTES**RESOLVED –**

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Standards and Audit Committee held on 27 July, 2022 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chair.

16 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 items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

17 SUMMARY OF INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS ISSUED AND

PROGRESS UPDATE ON THE 2022/23 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN

The Head of the Internal Audit Consortium submitted a report to provide Members with a progress update on the 2022/23 Internal Audit Plan.

Since the Committee last met in July, five reports had been issued with the following levels of assurance:

- 'Substantial assurance' – three
- 'Reasonable assurance' – one
- 'Limited assurance' – one

A summary of the reports issued was attached at Appendix 1 of the officer's report. The report with limited assurance related to housing rents and a full copy of the report was attached at Appendix 3 of the officer's report.

The Service Director – Digital, HR and Customer Services and the Head of Revenues attended the meeting to provide an update on the recommendations from the audit of housing rents. They explained that a re-shape of the service was taking place that looked at making improvements to processes and strengthening the staffing resource to provide more opportunities for staff progression and retention.

***RESOLVED –**

That the update be noted.

18 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - RE-ADMISSION OF THE PUBLIC

***RESOLVED –**

That the public be re-admitted to the meeting.

19 IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNAL AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Head of the Internal Audit Consortium presented a report on the progress made in respect of the implementation of internal audit recommendations.

A summary of the recommendations along with details of the progress towards implementation was attached at Appendix 1 of the officer's report. There were three medium priority recommendations and six low priority recommendations that remained outstanding, which was an improved position since the last update in February, 2022.

***RESOLVED –**

1. That the report be noted.
2. That a further summary of outstanding internal audit recommendations be submitted to the Standards and Audit Committee in April, 2023.

20

REVIEW OF THE INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER

The Head of the Internal Audit Consortium presented a report to inform Members of the review of the Internal Audit Charter and to seek approval to approve the Charter.

The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards require that the purpose, authority and responsibility of internal audit must be formally defined in an Internal Audit Charter. The Charter was formally reviewed every year to ensure that it was kept up to date and in accordance with CIPFA best practice.

The Internal Audit Charter, attached at Appendix 1 of the officer's report, had been reviewed and it was considered to be fit for purpose. One minor change was made to reflect a change of job title for the Head of the Internal Audit Consortium.

***RESOLVED –**

1. That the outcome of the review of the Internal Audit Charter be noted.
2. That the Internal Audit Charter, as attached at Appendix 1 of the officer's report, be approved.
3. That the Internal Audit Charter be reviewed in a years' time or sooner in the event of any significant changes being made to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

21 **OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL REVIEW LETTER**

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report informing Members of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review Letter.

Each year, the Council receives an annual review letter from the Ombudsman summarising statistics about complaints received by the Ombudsman and their outcome. The latest annual letter, received in July 2022, related to the Council's performance in the year ending 31 March, 2022.

The Annual Letter, attached at Appendix 1 of the officer's report, showed that 10 complaints had been made about the Council to the Ombudsman in the period 1 April, 2021 to 31 March, 2022. The complaints related to benefits and tax (1), environmental services and public protection and regulation (3), planning and development (1), housing (4) and other (1). Two complaints were referred back for local resolution, three were closed after initial enquiries, advice was given on three complaints and one complaint was incomplete/invalid.

One complaint, which related to planning and development, was upheld by the Ombudsman and the Council provided an apology as a satisfactory remedy.

***RESOLVED –**

That the report be noted.

22 **TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22 AND MONITORING REPORT 2022/23**

The Group Financial Accountant presented a report for Members to consider the Annual Treasury Management Report for 2021/22 and the Treasury Management activities for the first five months of 2022/23. The report also informed Members of the outturn prudential indicators for the financial year 2021/22.

The report confirmed that during 2021/22 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 2021/22 be approved.
2. The treasury management stewardship report for 2021/22 be approved.
3. The treasury management position for the first five months of 2022/23 be noted.

23 DECISIONS TAKEN BY OFFICERS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

The Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer presented a report informing Members of decisions made by officers under delegated powers from the start of the municipal year to date. The details of decisions were provided in a schedule attached at Appendix 1 of the officer's report.

***RESOLVED –**

That the report and schedule of officer decisions taken under delegated powers, attached at Appendix 1 of the officer's report, be noted.

24 STANDARDS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

The work programme for the Standards and Audit Committee for 2022/23 was considered.

***RESOLVED –**

That the work programme be noted.