

Meeting	Audit And Governance Committee
Date	29 June 2022
Present	Councillors Fisher (Vice-Chair), Lomas (Chair), Wann, Musson, Looker (Substitute) And Cuthbertson Officers Janie Berry Director Of Governance, Debbie Mitchell Chief Finance Officer, Lorraine Lunt Information Governance & Feedback Team Manager, Cath Murray Corporate Governance Operational Manager Max Thomas Head Of Internal Audit Veritau Limited, Mark Outterside Senior Manager Mazars
Apologies	Councillors Baker And Webb

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (17:32)**

Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, any prejudicial interests or any disclosable pecuniary interests which they may have in respect of business on the agenda. None were declared.

2. **MINUTES (17:33)**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2022 be approved and then signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (17:34)**

It was reported that there had been one registration to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Andy Mendus noted his hopes that the two new independent members are excellent in their roles. He made note that there were still fewer internal audits since the pandemic started

compared to prior. Finally he enquired whether the Committee were content with the Highways CDM (Construction, Design and Management) Regulations internal audit being given reasonable assurance considering the issues highlighted in the report.

4. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE REPORT (17:37)

The Committee considered the report providing an update on the Corporate Governance of the Council from April 2021 to March 2022. Members were informed that the pandemic had impacted responses in time to requests for information such as freedom of information requests. The Committee also discussed the Information Commissions Ombudsman report that the Council received which partially upheld a complaint. Members discussed whether a piece of work should be undertaken in relation to complaints received regarding parking and agreed to recommend this to the Council's Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee (CCSMC).

Resolved:

- i. That the Committee request that CCSMC review how the Council issues parking permits.

Reason: To ensure the Council is performing its governance duties effectively.

5. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE HEAD OF INTERNAL AUDIT (17:47)

The Committee were provided with both the annual internal audit report and annual counter fraud report. The Committee enquired about a number of the audit report assessments, such as, Highways CDM (Construction, Design and Management) Regulations. Members raised questions regarding why considering the report it achieved a reasonable assurance. It was confirmed in report the Highways CDM Regulations internal audit considered that while there were issues on balance they felt comfortable assigning a reasonable assurance, they also confirmed that they intended to perform a follow up audit.

It was confirmed that internal audit only gave an official opinion on audits which were wide enough in scope, therefore work on

absence management did not have an opinion provided. The Committee highlighted that the Council had recently been found to require improvement by Ofsted and asked why internal audit had given SEN Ofsted Inspection & written statement of action (WSoA) substantial assurance. Internal audit confirmed that their assurance was in relation to the delivery of the action plan not the service itself. In relation to Children's Services it was confirmed that the Council had provided the Department of Education and Ofsted a written statement of actions to improve which both were currently content with.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the results of internal audit and counter fraud work undertaken.

Reason: To enable members to consider the implications of internal audit findings, and inform their assessment of the effectiveness of counter fraud arrangements.

- ii. Noted the opinion of the Head of Internal Audit on the adequacy and effectiveness of the council's framework of governance, risk management and internal control .

Reason: To enable members to consider the implications of internal audit findings.

- iii. Noted the outcome of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme and the confirmation that the internal audit service conforms with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

Reason: To enable members to consider the opinion of the Head of Internal Audit.

- iv. Noted that no significant control weaknesses have been identified by internal audit during the year which are relevant to the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement.

Reason: To enable the Annual Governance Statement to be prepared.

6. TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN (18:01)

The Committee considered and noted the Treasury Management Annual report and reviewed of Prudential Indicators for 2021/22.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the Treasury Management Annual Report and Review of Prudential Indicators 2021/22.

Reason: That those responsible for scrutiny and governance arrangements are updated on a regular basis to ensure that those implementing policies and executing transactions have properly fulfilled their responsibilities with regard to delegation and reporting.

7. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2021/22 (18:03)

Officers introduced the statement of accounts for 2021/22, it was confirmed that the accounts were with external audit and should expect external audit to bring their assessment to the Committee later in the year. The Committee considered the accounts and raised several questions related to how pension liabilities are presented in the account. It was agreed that the Committee would benefit from a briefing with officers around Council pensions.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the draft pre-audit statement of accounts, for the financial year ended 31 March 2022.

Reason: To ensure that, in line with best practice, Members have had the opportunity to review the draft pre-audit Statement of Accounts.

8. MAZARS AUDIT STRATEGY MEMORANDUM (18:15)

The committee considered and noted Mazars audit approach.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the matters set out in the Audit Progress Report presented by the external auditor.

Reason: To ensure the proper consideration of the progress of the external auditor in respect of the annual audit of accounts and review of the council's arrangements for ensuring value for money.

9. AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE WORK PLAN (18:21)

It was agreed that the provisional 13 July 2022 meeting be cancelled as this date was now not required by the Committee. It was confirmed that the Local Government Association would be able to attend the Committee on 7 September 2022 and the report on Exit Strategies could also be considered on 7 September 2022. Finally the Committee agreed to merge the January meetings of the Committee with all items currently scheduled for 4 January 2022 to be added to the 18 January 2022 meeting.

Resolved:

- i. An updated work plan to be circulated to the Committee.

Reason: To ensure the Committee has a plan of work for 2022-23.

Cllr Lomas, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 6.30 pm].