

EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY (AUDIT AND VALUE FOR MONEY COUNCIL SERVICES) COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny (Audit and Value for Money Council Services) Committee held in the Coltman VC Room, Town Hall, Burton upon Trent on 20th November 2018.

Present:

Councillors D. Goodfellow (Chairman), G. Allen, A. A. Chaudhry, M. Fitzpatrick, D. Florence Jukes, H. Hall, G. Marjoram, L. Milner, C. Smith and Mrs B. Toon.

Officers Present:

Head of Service (Sal Khan), the Chief Accountant, the Corporate and Commercial Manager and the Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S. Andjelkovic, M. J. Bowering, D. F. Fletcher, S. Gaskin, P. Hudson and Mrs J. Killoran.

Also Present:

Mr T. Ridout (Internal Auditor) and Mrs R. Deo - (C W Audit) and Ms L. Griffiths (Grant Thornton)

147/18 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest at the commencement of the meeting.

149/18 **MINUTES**

Resolved:

That the Public Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny (Audit and Value for Money Council Services) Committee held on 24th September 2018 be approved and signed as a correct record.

150/18 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business submitted to the meeting pursuant to Rule 12.

151/18 **PROGRESS REPORT**

(CW Audit) The Internal Auditor gave a report summary of the work of internal audit, outlining the progress against the audit plan, the key findings and conclusions arising from their work, details of planned work and to update the Committee on the progress made in implementing previously agreed recommendations.

An opportunity for questions followed.

NOTED

152/18 **ANNUAL EXTERNAL AUDIT LETTER**

(Grant Thornton) The representative from Grant Thornton updated the Committee on their audit letter, summarising the findings year ended 31st March 2018. It included key issues arising from the audit and the results of the work they had undertaken to assess the way the Council managed their performance and arrangements to secure value for money.

An opportunity for questions followed.

NOTED

153/18 **EXTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE**

(Grant Thornton) The representative from Grant Thornton updated the Committee on their progress in delivering their responsibilities as the Council's external auditors. This included the requirement to issue a planned fee letter, their accounts audit plan, interim accounts audit, final account audit, their value for money conclusion, the annual audit letter and the certification of housing benefits claim year ended 31st March 2018.

An opportunity for questions followed.

NOTED

154/18 **MID YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT**

To comply with the Treasury Management Code of Practice, the Chief Accountant presented the Mid-Year Treasury Management Report to Members. It provided an update against the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, setting out current investment and borrowing portfolios and outlining any other treasury related matters.

An opportunity for questions followed.

Resolved:

That Members noted the Mid-Year Treasury Management Report and did not make any comments or observations to full Council.

155/18 **INDEPENDENT MEMBER**

The Corporate and Commercial Manager updated Members on the recruitment for independent members to serve on the Committee. He informed the Committee that subject to approval at full Council on 3rd December 2018, an appointment had been made to Mr Robert Elliott.

NOTED

156/18 **REVIEW OF INCOME GENERATION UPDATE**

It was agreed at the last meeting that Councillor Fitzpatrick would submit an interim report for Members consideration, which was circulated prior to the meeting.

Councillor Fitzpatrick requested that Members gave consideration to the three recommendations in the report:

- a) Future scrutiny sub-groups should have a minimum membership of eight elected Members;
- b) A single, larger income stream should be selected for a more detailed scrutiny review, possibly moving to a second when the first was completed; and
- c). Commence a scrutiny review should a service area or activity show a significantly below budget income forecast in any of the quarterly outturn reports presented to the Scrutiny (Audit and Value for Money Council Services) Committee.

A discussion and questions followed.

It was agreed that the Income Generation review be closed and placed on the work programme for the Committee's consideration in the future, as per the recommendations.

NOTED

157/18 **REVIEW OF MEMBERS REPRESENTATIONS ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

It was agreed at the last meeting that the Corporate and Commercial Manager would circulate an interim report for Members consideration. The report was circulated prior to the meeting.

The Corporate and Commercial Manager outlined the main issues in the report.

Discussions took place and an opportunity for questions followed.

It was agreed that the Corporate and Commercial Manager would circulate a survey with relevant Members who sit on Outside Bodies to gather their feedback on the organisations.

NOTED

158/18 **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

Members received an update on the scrutiny work programme circulated with the agenda.

Discussions took place and an opportunity for questions followed.

It was agreed that Members would undertake to review the Scrutiny processes of the Council. The Corporate and Commercial Manager would liaise with the Chairman and circulate a scoping paper prior to the next meeting of the Committee.

159/18 **PUBLIC EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORDS**

Members considered the Private Executive Decision Records.

An opportunity for questions followed.

NOTED

160/18 **QUESTIONS**

There were no questions submitted to the Committee prior to the meeting.

161/18 **DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

Resolved:

That the next meeting take place on Tuesday 18th December 2018 at 6.30pm in the Coltman VC Room, Town Hall, Burton upon Trent.

162/18 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Resolved:

That, in accordance with Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the Press and Public be excluded from the Meeting during discussion of the following items as it would likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in brackets before each item number on the Agenda:

PRIVATE MINUTES

PRIVATE EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORDS

163/18 **PRIVATE MINUTES**

Resolved:

That the Private Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny (Audit and Value for Money Council Services) Committee held on 24th September 2018 be approved and signed as a correct record.

164/18 **PRIVATE EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORDS**

Members considered the Private Executive Decision Records.

An opportunity for questions followed.

Councillor A A Chaudhry requested that Members of the Committee received a written response from the Leader regarding EDR 930/18, he stated that as the land was valued at between £175,000 and £182,438, why had the Council sold the land for only £140,000.

Councillor A A Chaudhry also requested a written response from the Deputy Leader (Regeneration) to EDR 925/18. He enquired about the Council working with Amey on the Station Street project, thus taking the same route as with the Pennycroft/Dove Way development, when there were so many problems. He also requested information as to why there was such urgency regarding the timescale for completing the project.

Councillor D. Goodfellow requested the running total of all of the Council's write-offs for this financial year to be made available to the Committee Members.

Resolved:

1. That the Leader provided a written response to EDR 930/18 prior to the next meeting of the Committee.
2. That the Deputy Leader (Regeneration) provided a written response to EDR 925/18 prior to the next meeting of the Committee.
3. That the Head of Service (Sal Khan) provided a written response regarding the Council's write offs for this financial year prior to the next meeting of the Committee.

Chairman