

EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting of the Audit Committee held in the Coltman VC Room, Town Hall on Thursday 8th February 2024 at 6.30pm.

Present:

Councillors A. Mansfield (Chairman), A. Bailey, T. Hadley, M. Huckerby, P. Hudson (via Zoom), B. G. Peters (via Zoom), S. Sankey (via Zoom), M. Slater

Officers Present:

Lloyd Haynes (Chief Financial s151 Officer), Daniel Caulkett (Democratic Services Officer)

Also Present:

Bethany Hincks (Azets), Sarah Jassal (Grant Thornton), Tracy Barnard-Ghaut and Ruby Deo (360 Assurance)

36/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

37/24 URGENT BUSINESS

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

38/24 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public submitted.

39/24 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

There were no questions from members of the Committee submitted.

40/24 PUBLIC MINUTES

Resolved:

That the Public Minutes of the Meeting held on the 29th November 2023 be approved by the Committee and signed as a correct record.

Voting concerning the above decision was as follows.

Those voting for the motion	Those voting against	Those abstaining
Councillor A. Mansfield Councillor A. Bailey Councillor T. Hadley Councillor M. Huckerby Councillor M. Slater		Councillor P. Hudson* Councillor B. G. Peters* Councillor S. Sankey*

* Attended via Zoom so were not able to vote on this matter

41/24 **INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE & HEAD OF INTERNAL AUDIT OPINION**

The representatives from 360 Assurance provided an oral update, outlining that 61% of actions had been implemented, an increase of 15% as well as confirming there were no high risk actions currently outstanding.

An opportunity for questions followed.

Committee requested that the relevant Chief Officer(s) be asked to attend the next Audit Committee meeting to provide an update on the implementation of any outstanding Internal Audit actions relating to (i) the 2021/22 Leisure Contract Monitoring Audit, and (ii) the 2022/23 Commercial Property Management Audit.

NOTED.

42/24 **EXTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE 2021/22 AND 2022/23 – INCLUDING AUDITOR’S ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23**

The representative from Grant Thornton provided an update to members, outlining that Grant Thornton were still awaiting the assurances from Ernest and Young with an updated expected towards the end of February. However, the representative from Grant Thornton confirmed to members that they don’t foresee any significant findings for both the 2021/22 and 2022/23 Accounts.

An opportunity for questions followed.

NOTED.

43/24 **EXTERNAL AUDIT UPATE 2023/24**

The representative from Azets gave a short presentation on their progress in delivering their responsibilities as external auditors for the 2023/24 Statement of Accounts.

An opportunity for questions followed.

The Chief Financial s151 Officer agreed to arrange for a response to be provided outside of the meeting in relation to the following query:

- VFM approval / certificate for Carling Park

NOTED.

44/24 **TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The Chief Financial s151 Officer presented the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the Annual Investment Strategy 2023/24, which fulfils various statutory requirements and best practice guidelines in respect of the Council's Treasury activities and also its capital investment plans.

An opportunity for questions followed.

The Chief Financial s151 Officer, Democratic Services Officer and Chairman of the Committee agreed to arrange for a Work Plan ahead of the 2024/25 municipal year, which will include a training plan, identifying any training which would be relevant to the Committee (including a session from LINK on the role of approving the Treasury Management Strategy).

RESOLVED:

That members recommended that full Council approve the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy, and Annual Investment Strategy 2024/25 set out in Appendix A to the report.

Voting concerning the above decision was as follows.

Those voting for the motion	Those voting against	Those abstaining
Councillor A. Mansfield Councillor A. Bailey Councillor T. Hadley Councillor M. Huckerby Councillor M. Slater		Councillor P. Hudson* Councillor B. G. Peters* Councillor S. Sankey*

* Attended via Zoom so were not able to vote on this matter

45/24 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Committee is 14th March 2024.

Chairman