

EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting of the Audit Committee held in the Coltman VC Room, Town Hall on Wednesday 27th September 2023 at 6.30pm.

Present:

Councillors A. Mansfield (Chairman), G. Allen, A. Bailey, M. Huckerby, P. Hudson, S. Sankey, M. Slater

Officers Present:

Lisa Turner (Interim Chief Financial Officer), John Teasdale (Head of Legal and Regulatory Services), Anya Murray (Interim Chief Accountant), Andrea Davies (Principal Democratic Services Officer) and Daniel Caulkett (Democratic Services Officer)

Also Present:

Councillor A A Chaudhry (Cabinet Member for Finance and Treasury Management)

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

An apology for absence was received from: Councillor B. Peters.

In accordance with rule 7.3, Councillor B G Peters had appointed Councillor G Allen as his substitute.

15/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

16/23 URGENT BUSINESS

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

17/23 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public submitted.

18/23 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

There were no questions from members of the Committee submitted.

19/23 **PUBLIC MINUTES**

Resolved:

That the Public Minutes of the Meeting held on the 15th June 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 M. Huckerby Councillor P. Hudson Councillor S. Sankey Councillor M. Slater		Councillor G. Allen

20/23 **STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS UPDATE**

The Interim Chief Accountant provided an update on the situation surrounding the 2021/22 and 2022/23 Statement of Accounts. It was noted that the outstanding valuations and revised pension values had been agreed with the External Auditors regarding the 21/22 accounts, although it was understood that Pension Assurance figures from Ernst Young who are the pension fund auditors are still outstanding. In relation to the 22/23 accounts, the external audit has commenced and is currently on target to be delivered for approval by the end of November 2023. It was agreed that the Audit Committee would be kept informed of the position.

An opportunity for questions followed.

NOTED.

21/23 **REVISED INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2023/24**

The representatives from 360 Assurance provided an update on the Revised Internal Audit Plan, confirming that the plan has undergone some revisions following the Corporate Plan changes in July 2023, with the Internal Audit Plan considered by the Corporate Management Team on 20th September 2023. An update was provided to the Committee on the details which had changed from the previous plan.

NOTED.

22/23 **INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee received the progress report summarising 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 progress made in implementing previously agreed recommendations.

An opportunity for questions followed.

NOTED.

23/23 **EXTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE**

The committee noted that, subject to receipt of Ernst and Young assurance, the external auditor would be ready to issue an opinion on the 21/22 Statement of accounts in early November and that there had been no significant findings for the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts. It was the intention to present these to the November meeting of the Committee. With regards to the Value for Money audit, it was intended to submit this to a later meeting.

An opportunity for questions followed.

NOTED.

24/23 **REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORT 2023/24 – QUARTER 1**

Members considered the report of the Chief Finance Officer in accord with the Council's financial regulations, presenting the forecast outturn position in relation to the Council's revenue budget, capital programme of expenditure and treasury management activities.

The Interim Chief Accountant gave a short presentation on the quarter 1 report in the annual cycle of financial monitoring for the financial year 2023/24.

An opportunity for questions followed.

A discussion took place in relation to the Council's approach with particular reference to the Environmental, Social and Governance aspects of investments and it was agreed to consider this further at a future meeting.

NOTED.

25/23 **RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY**

The report of the Interim Chief Financial Officer on the updated Risk Management Policy superseding the existing Risk Management Strategy was considered. The following appendices had been circulated with the report:

- Appendix 1: Draft Risk Management Policy 2023
- Appendix 2: Revised Methodology applied to Corporate and Strategic Risks June 2023
- Appendix 3: Revised Operational Risk Template

The Committee noted the report would be submitted to the October meeting of the Cabinet for approval.

An opportunity for questions followed.

NOTED.

26/23 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 29th November 2023.

Chairman