

**MINUTES OF THE AUDIT & STANDARDS COMMITTEE
HELD ON**

26 June 2024

7.00 - 8.24 pm

PRESENT

Committee Members

Councillor Matthew Siggers (Chair)
Councillor Dr. Emma Ghaffari (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Jodi Dunne
Councillor Michael Garnett
Councillor Michael Houlihan
Councillor Stefan Mullard- Toal
Councillor Aiden O'Dell
Councillor Russell Perrin
Councillor Stacy Seales
Laura Kirman

Officers

Natalie Hook, Senior Auditor
Sarah Marsh, Head of Internal Audit
Adam Rees, Senior Governance Support Officer
Yvonne Rees, Interim Chief Executive
Jacqui Van Mellaerts, Assistant Director - Finance

Also Present

Dean Gibbs, KPMG

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

None.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Jodi Dunne declared a pecuniary interest as a council appointed director of HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2024 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

5. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**

None.

6. **NON CONTENTIOUS BUSINESS**

None.

7. **COMMITTEE WORK PLAN**

The Committee received its current work plan.

It was agreed that Laura Kirman would be invited to finance training being provided to Councillors in July.

RESOLVED that the work plan is noted.

8. **EXTERNAL AUDITOR HARLOW COUNCIL AUDIT PLAN 2023/24**

The Committee received an update on the external auditor (KPMG) audit plan for 2023/24.

RESOLVED that the Committee noted the report and the planned audit work to be undertaken by KPMG, the council's new external audit provider for 2023/24.

9. **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2023/24**

The Committee received a report on the Annual Governance Statement 2023/24.

RESOLVED that the Committee approved the Council's draft Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24 (attached as Appendix A to the report).

10. **AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24**

The Committee received its annual report for 2023/24.

RESOLVED that:

A The Annual Report of the Audit Committee for 2023/24 be agreed and recommended to Council for approval.

B The Committee's Terms of Reference be agreed.

11. **INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24**

The Committee received the internal audit annual report for 2023/24.

RESOLVED that the Committee noted the Internal Audit Annual report and the Head of Internal Audit's opinion.

12. **PERIOD 2 INTERNAL AUDIT ACTIVITY REPORT 2024/25**

The Committee considered the period 2 internal audit activity report for 2024/25.

It was agreed that the Assistant Director – Planning and Environment would be requested to attend the next meeting of the Committee to discuss progress on the waste contract.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

- A** Reviewed the outcomes of the work of the Internal Audit service for the period April to June 2024 and identified any issues for further consideration.
- B** Approved the Covert Surveillance and the Acquisition of Communication Data Policy (RIPA Policy) attached as Appendix C to the report.

13. **RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee received the risk management progress report.

It was agreed that GDPR and cyber-security training would be arranged for Councillors.

A headline total of all risks would be presented at future meetings.

RESOLVED that the Committee noted the current strategic risk register for the council's operations included in Appendix A to the report.

14. **REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

None.

15. **MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE