

MINUTES OF THE AUDIT & STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON

4 March 2020

7.30 - 9.10 pm

PRESENT

Committee Members

Councillor Stefan Mullard (Chair)
Councillor Shannon Jezzard (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Jean Clark
Councillor Jodi Dunne
Councillor Eddie Johnson
Councillor Frances Mason
Councillor Russell Perrin
Councillor Chris Vince

Officers

Simon Freeman, Head of Finance and Deputy to the Chief Executive
Simon Hill, Head of Governance
Natalie Hook, Senior Auditor
Sarah Marsh, Internal Audit Manager
Stuart Moseley, Senior Insurance Officer
Adam Rees, Governance Support Officer

Also Present

Francesca Palmer, External Audit Manager - BDO

40. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Simon Carter.

41. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Chris Vince declared a pecuniary interest as a remunerated Council appointed Director of HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd.

42. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2019 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to the addition of Councillor Eddie Johnson to the list of those who gave apologies.

43. **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

44. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**

None.

45. **NON CONTENTIOUS BUSINESS**

None.

46. **COMMITTEE WORK PLAN**

The Committee received its current work plan. Simon Freeman, Head of Finance and Deputy to the Chief Executive, said there was no requirement for the annual report on the Certification of Grant Claims and Returns to be considered by the Committee. It was agreed that the qualification letter would be circulated to the Committee members instead.

RESOLVED that the work plan is noted.

47. **ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER**

It was agreed that items 8, 9 and 10 would be considered together.

Francesca Palmer, External Audit Manager - BDO, said that the audit letter was not ready as the audit had not been completed and there were a number of material errors which needed to be resolved. The issues were technical adjustments and did not affect the headline figures within the accounts.

48. **ANNUAL REPORT ON THE CERTIFICATION OF GRANT CLAIMS AND RETURNS**

This item was considered as part of Minute Item 47.

49. **EXTERNAL AUDITOR - AUDIT PLAN 2019/20**

This item was considered as part of Minute Item 47.

50. **INTERNAL AUDIT STRATEGY AND PLAN 2020/21**

The Committee received a report proposing the Internal Audit Strategy and Plan for the 2020/21 municipal year.

Members of the Committee considered that the effectiveness and contribution that the Strategy and Plan made, met the criteria within the Council's assurance framework.

RESOLVED that:

A The Internal Audit Strategy and Plan for 2020/21 is approved.

51. **PERIOD 11 INTERNAL AUDIT ACTIVITY REPORT 2019/20**

The Committee received the Period 11 Internal Audit Activity Report which showed the progress being made against the Audit Plan since the last meeting of this Committee.

Noting the various delays relating to external data transfers between the Council and HTS. It was agreed that the Chair would write to HTS requesting an update including a date for final implementation.

RESOLVED that:

A The report be noted.

52. **AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORK PLAN AND TRAINING PROGRAMME**

The Committee received its proposed 2020/21 work plan and proposed training programme for Councillors.

RESOLVED that the work plan and training programme for the 2020/21 municipal year are agreed.

53. **RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee received a report on the Risk Management Appetite. The Committee noted the moderate risk appetite currently assigned to a Clean and Green Environment. In light of the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency it was agreed that the Senior Management Board should look at how the risk appetite could be adjusted to 'hungry'. This would be reported back to the Committee.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

A Noted Senior Management Board revisions to the corporate Risk Appetite General Statement (attached as Appendix 1 to the report).

B Noted the amended Risk Rating Matrix (attached as Appendix 2 to the report) which further defines impact ratings by type of risk.

C Noted the introduction of risk appetite definition thresholds in respect of risks reported to Senior Management Board for review.

D Approved the updated Risk Strategy Version 3.1, as set out in Appendix 3 to the report, which includes the amended Risk Matrix and revised 'Risk Appetite' section.

54. **AMENDMENTS TO CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Committee considered a report which set out a number of amendments to the Code of Conduct for Councillors.

The Committee discussed the threshold for declarations to be included on the Register of Gifts and Hospitality. It was agreed that the limit should be £25, or £50 over a year from a single source.

RESOLVED that the Committee recommended to Full Council that the revised Code of Conduct (attached as Appendix A to the report) be adopted, subject to the amendment of paragraph 14.1 of the Code to set a limit of £25 or totalling £50 over a year from a single source.

55. **REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

None.

56. **MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE