

AUDIT AND MEMBER STANDARDS COMMITTEE

22 MARCH 2018

PRESENT:

Councillors Tittley (Chairman), Awty (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Boyle, Marshall, Mosson, Strachan, Mrs Tranter

Observer: Councillor Spruce (Cabinet Member for Finance and Democracy), Councillor Pritchard (Deputy Leader of Cabinet and Cabinet Member for Economic Growth, Environment & Development Services) and Councillor Wilcox (Leader of the Council)

Officers in attendance: Ms B Nahal, Mrs A Struthers, Mr A Thomas and Miss W Johnson

Also Present: Mr J Gregory and Miss L Griffiths from Grant Thornton (External Auditors)

8 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rayner and Councillor Mrs Woodward.

9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

10 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2018

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 January 2018, as printed and previously circulated, were taken as read and approved as a correct record.

11 REVIEW OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Members considered the Report of the Head of Finance & Procurement setting out the Council's proposed Accounting Policies to be adopted in completing the 2017/18 Statement of Accounts. Very small changes had been made which were tracked throughout the document for ease of reference. These key changes were:-

- The removal of the policy on prior period adjustments as there are no such items related to changes in accounting policies or fundamental errors within the 2017/18 accounts. It was explained following a question that this Accounting Policy only needed to be included if there was a change in Accounting Policies or if there was a fundamental error. The decluttering the Accounts Agenda meant if this was not the case then it could be removed.
- The Business Rates Appeal provision related to the 2017 valuation list will be calculated using the Government's allowance in the multiplier for appeals of 2.1p due to the lack of robust information on appeal numbers following the introduction of the check, challenge and appeal process.
- The policy on Fair Value Measurement is now shown in alphabetical sequence.

RESOLVED: That the Audit and Member Standards Committee approves the Council's proposed Accounting Policies that will form part of the 2017/18 Statement of Accounts.

12 INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER AND PROTOCOL

Members considered the Internal Audit Charter and Protocol Report from the Audit Manager for the 2018/19 financial year.

RESOLVED: The Audit and Member Standards Committee considered the performance report and no issues were raised.

13 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2018/19

Members considered the Internal Audit Plan 2018/19 from the Audit Manager. Consideration was given to the 2018/19 Work Programme of the Internal Audit Section which took in to account the resources available – Annual Planned Audit Work Programme at Appendix 1.

RESOLVED: The Audit and Member Standards Committee approved the Annual Planned Audit Work Programme as detailed in the report.

14 PUBLIC SECTOR INTERNAL AUDIT STANDARDS/QUALITY ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

Members considered the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards/Quality Assurance & Improvement Programme Report from the Audit Manager. This was to ensure compliance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and the Quality Assurance & Improvement Programme as required by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. The External Quality Assessment (EQA) was completed last year and an update on the progress against the recommendations made was detailed at Appendix 1, the current internal annual assessment against the standards was detailed at Appendix 2 and an overview of the Quality Assurance & Improvement Programme (QAIP) in place for the Authority's Internal Audit Service at Appendix 3.

RESOLVED: The Audit and Member Standards Committee endorsed:
(1) The Internal Quality Assessment; and
(2) The Quality Assurance & Improvement Programme.

15 AUDIT COMMITTEE LDC PROGRESS REPORT AND UPDATE - YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2018

Members considered the Audit Progress Report and Sector Update from the External Auditors (Grant Thornton). This provided the Committee with a report on progress in delivering their responsibilities as External Auditors and summarised many recent developments in local government.

Grant Thornton explained that when the plan came before Committee previously the Value for Money Initial Risk Assessment had not been done. Attention was drawn to page 98 where the Friarsgate development had been identified as a significant VFM risk requiring some further work. The auditors commented that they had not identified the Council's financial position as a significant risk and that, overall, district councils tend to be in a better place financially than either County Councils or Unitary Councils because they do not have the pressures which arise from social care.

RESOLVED: The Audit and Member Standards Committee noted the Report.

16 WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the Work Programme and it was noted that the Annual Governance Statement would be available at the next meeting on Wednesday 9 May 2018 along with the External Auditor's Presentation on costs of Benefits work.

17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members thanked the Head of Finance & Procurement and his team for the recently received budget book which summarised LDC's budget in a 29 page document with graphics. Mr Thomas said this had been put together as an informed document for all members and could also be seen on the website by members of the public and our partners.

Councillor Tittley was also thanked for his hard work throughout the year as Chairman of the Audit & Member Standards Committee.

(The Meeting closed at 6.28 pm)

CHAIRMAN