



AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

MEETING : Monday, 13th November 2023

PRESENT : Cllrs. Wilson (Chair), Gravells MBE (Vice-Chair), Bowkett, Durdey, Morgan and Patel

Others in Attendance

Monitoring Officer
Head of Finance and Resources
Financial Services Manager
Head of Audit Risk and Assurance (ARA)
Principal Auditor
Democratic and Electoral Services Team Leader

APOLOGIES : Cllrs. Brooker, Sawyer and Mr Tervet

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

30. MINUTES

RESOLVED that:- The minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2023 be agreed and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

31. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

There were no public questions.

32. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

There were no petitions nor deputations.

33. INTERNAL AUDIT ACTIVITY QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

33.1 The Head of Audit, Risk and Assurance (ARA) introduced the report and outlined that four audits had been completed; three of which did not require an assurance level with the one remaining being of reasonable assurance. As part of counter fraud activity, five irregularities had been reported with

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four still active. He also introduced the addition of a recommendation monitoring report which would be further developed in the future.

- 33.2 The Chair noted that additional work had been undertaken in regard to gaining further grant funding from the Arts Council for the Guildhall. It was confirmed that this additional grant funding had been achieved.
- 33.3 In relation to a query regarding the health and safety audit, The Head of Finance and Resources confirmed that a new recording solution was being populated and that progress was being made. The Head of Finance and Resources also confirmed that the process for the return of IT assets was being updated.
- 33.4 Councillor Patel asked what was being done to ensure that Members' queries to officers were being responded to within five days. Councillor Norman (ex-officio) advised that the detail of a protocol was being drawn up and that management had made clear to officers that there was a clear expectation that Members be responded to within five days. System processes were being examined as to what could assist in response monitoring. It was suggested that the Head of Transformation and Commission could advise on what base-line data could be obtained.
- 33.5 **RESOLVED that:-** The Audit and Governance Committee accept the progress against the Internal Audit Plan 2023/24.

34. TREASURY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE 2023/24 SIX MONTHLY UPDATE

- 34.1 The Head of Finance and Resources introduced the report which updated Members on treasury management activity in accordance with the CIPFA Code. He noted that the report detailed investments achieved over the period and that they were all close to or below the benchmark detailed. It was noted that there had been interest rate changes throughout the period. The Head of Finance and Resources also advised that no new long term borrowing had been undertaken.
- 34.2 The Chair noted borrowing undertaken from the PWLB and queried under what repayment basis this had been. The Head of Finance and Resources confirmed that this was under a fixed rate interest arrangement and that any future borrowing would have to be undertaken on increased rates.
- 34.3 **RESOLVED that:-** The Audit and Governance Committee **NOTE** the report.

35. S. 106 AGREEMENTS - UPDATE

- 35.1 The Head of Finance and Resources outlined the update and advised that Internal Audit would commenced its follow up audit in January 2024 for reporting to Committee in March 2024.
- 35.2 Officers had reviewed the five agreements in question and all allocated funds had been spent or committed within their individual deadlines. The Chair noted that the use of the new recording and monitoring system to

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reconcile with the finance systems would assist with central oversight alongside a dedicated s. 106 officer.

35.3 Councillor Gravells conveyed his thanks to the finance team and that it had taken time and patience to resolve the matter. He was assured that the final audit would be complete by the end of the financial year.

35.4 In answer to a query from Councillor Morgan as to what constituted funds being committed, the Head of Finance and Resources confirmed that the commitments made and deliver were to specific projects rather than a general commitment to spend the funds.

35.5 It was confirmed to Councillor Patel that the resolution of land charges was to be completed and that there would be a dedicated officer who would have oversight of the operation of s. 106 agreements.

35.6 **RESOLVED that:-** The Audit and Governance Committee **NOTE** the update.

36. 2021/22 ACCOUNTS

36.1 The Head of Finance and Resources provided a verbal update on the 2021/22 accounts. Following a query from the Chair on possible timeframes, he advised that unaudited draft accounts would be published and available by the end of November 2023. The external auditors would then begin their work and it was anticipated that this would be completed by the end of the calendar year ready for consideration by the Committee in January.

36.2 **RESOLVED that:** - The Audit and Governance Committee **NOTE** the update.

37. AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED that:- The Audit and Governance Committee **NOTE** the work programme.

38. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

15 January 2024 at 6.30pm in the Civic Suite, North Warehouse.

Time of commencement: 6.30 pm hours

Time of conclusion: 7.15 pm hours

Chair