

Report of the Chairman on the Work of the Audit Committee

The Audit Committee held a meeting on 23 July 2020 and considered the following items of business.

1. Draft Corporate Risk Management Policy

The Committee considered the draft policy which proposed a more focused approach, targeting corporate risks that will impact on the delivery of the corporate objectives. The Committee provided feedback to further refine the draft policy.

2. Covid-19 Risk Considerations

The Committee noted a report setting out the most significant risks and opportunities to the Council in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic.

3. Corporate Risk Management

The Committee considered the report and accompanying Corporate Risk Register. It was agreed that the Chairman and Vice Chairman would meet with officers to discuss potential improvements to the format of the Corporate Risk Register. The Committee noted the update on the Corporate Risk Register and recommended it to Cabinet for approval.

4. Update from External Auditors

The external Auditors BDO provided an update to the Committee on progress made on the 2018/19 accounts and arrangements for work on the 2019/20 accounts. They had been hampered partly by the delay in KPMG, the previous Auditors, signing off the previous accounts and Value for Money statement for 2017/18 and because not all the required information was available. BDO were however hopeful that the audit of both the 2018/19 and 2019/20 accounts would be completed in October.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised the Committee that a formal complaint had been made to KPMG regarding the delay in finalising the accounts and Value for Money Statement for 2017/18. A holding response had been received from KPMG and further information was awaited.

5. Internal Audit Annual Report 2019-20

The Committee considered and noted the Internal Audit Annual Report which sets out the independent audit opinion for the financial year 2019-20 on the Council's internal control environment, risk management and governance arrangements. It was agreed that the Chairman and Vice Chairman would meet with officers to discuss potential improvements to the format of the Internal Audit Annual Report.

6. Annual Governance Statement 2019-20

The Committee considered the draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS) and the improvement actions identified in the Statement. The Committee agreed the AGS in principle, subject to a number of amendments, and recirculation of the final version for approval.

7. Internal Audit Annual Plan 2020-21

The Committee noted the revised annual plan for 2020-21 which had been reviewed and reprioritised as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic to take account of emerging and evolving risks.

8. Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy

The Committee considered the Strategy and recommended the proposed changes to Cabinet, subject to amendments discussed and agreed.

9. Committee Work Programme

The Committee approved its Work Programme for the 2020-21 municipal year subject to the inclusion of training sessions for the Audit Committee before the next scheduled meeting in November 2020.

Councillor L. Nichols
Chairman of the Audit Committee

30 July 2020