

Report of the Chairman on the work of the Audit Committee

This report gives an overview of the main issues considered at the meeting of the Audit Committee on 18 March 2021.

1. External Auditors (BDO) update

- 1.1 The Committee received a verbal update from the external Auditors BDO on progress made on the 2018/19 accounts and arrangements for work on the 2019/20 accounts.
- 1.2 The Committee expressed their frustration at the ongoing delay in the finalisation of audit matters with KPMG.
- 1.3 The Committee noted that BDO had finalised a resourcing plan and specialist staff were ready to start the Housing Benefit Review in early April.

2. Report on the effectiveness of the system of internal audit

- 2.1 The Internal Audit Manager outlined the findings of the annual review into the effectiveness of internal audit and confirmed that the overall conclusion from the self-assessment undertaken in February 2021 was that Spelthorne's internal audit function largely conforms with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS).
- 2.2 The Committee expressed concern at the timeliness of management responses and agreed that they would like to receive an update on the timeliness of management responses at the next meeting
- 2.3 The Committee noted the report.

3. Annual Audit plan report 2021/22

- 3.1 The Committee considered a report outlining the Annual Internal Audit Plan 2021-22 which demonstrated how the authority would fulfil its statutory and professional requirements to maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper internal audit practices.
- 3.2 The Committee agreed that suitable members should be involved in setting the terms of reference of wider audits, where appropriate, without compromising the work, independence, or objectivity of internal audit.
- 3.3 The Committee approved the annual internal audit plan for 2021/22 and noted the update summary on the 2020/21 audit workplan.

4. MHCLG Pilot Survey on Capital Data

- 4.1 The Committee received an update from the Deputy Chief Executive on the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) pilot survey on Capital Data.
- 4.2 The Committee noted that it had been a very useful process for Spelthorne and other councils to engage in the pilot and as a result, the survey had been modified by the MHCLG and made more comprehensive and meaningful.

4.3 The Committee agreed that the final return for Spelthorne on the revised survey would be circulated to the Committee.

5. COVID-19 Risk Considerations update

5.1 The Committee considered a report setting out the most significant risks and opportunities to the Council in relation to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. The Committee considered the assessment to be a comprehensive assessment of the risks faced and mitigation measures.

5.2 The Committee requested that once the Economic Development team had undertaken the on the impact of COVID-19 on major businesses they would like to review the results.

5.3 The Committee agreed to note the updated COVID-19 Risk Management report and appendices.

6. Corporate Risk Management

6.1 The Committee received a report on Corporate Risk Management and noted that a significant amount of work had been undertaken to make the Corporate Risk Register more user friendly and thanked officers for their work.

6.2 The Committee agreed to note the report and recommend the Corporate Risk Register to Cabinet for approval.

7. Committee Work Programme

7.1 The Committee considered and agreed its Work Programme for the coming Municipal year

Councillor Lawrence Nichols
Chairman of the Audit Committee

22 April 2021