

Report of the Chairman on the Work of the Audit Committee

The Audit Committee held a meeting on 29 July 2021 and considered the following items of business.

1. Recruitment of Independent Person

- 1.1 The Committee welcomed the proposal to recruit an independent person to sit on the Audit Committee and agreed a selection panel of Cllrs Boughtflower, Fidler and John Doran to make a recommendation on the appointment of an independent member.
- 1.2 To expedite the recruitment process, it was agreed to delegate authority to the Group Head of Corporate Governance to approve the recommendation of the selection panel and recommend thereon to Council for consideration at their meeting on 14 October 2021.

2. Establishment of the Value for Money Working Group

- 2.1 Following the change to the Committee system form of governance, it was necessary to reconstitute the working group working on the outstanding issue of the Value for Money Opinion for 2017/18.
- 2.2 The Committee agreed the appointment of Councillors Boughtflower, Fidler, Nichols and Mitchell to the group and the Terms of Reference.

3. Covid-19 Risk Considerations

- 3.1 The Committee noted a report setting out the most significant risks and opportunities to the Council in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 3.2 The Committee considered that it was an appropriate time for the Internal Audit Manager to review whether significant Covid related risks should now be incorporated into the Corporate Risk Register and linked to the corporate recovery objectives.

4. Corporate Risk Management

- 4.1 The Committee considered the report and accompanying Corporate Risk Register and requested that, where possible, external and internal risk factors were identified as this would be beneficial when measuring the success of actions taken.
- 4.2 The Committee agreed to note the report.

5. Annual Internal Audit Report 2020-21

- 5.1 The Committee considered and noted the Internal Audit Annual Report which summarised the team's findings from their work during the year and set out the Internal Audit Manager's independent opinion for the financial year 2020-21 on the Council's internal control environment.

6. Annual Governance Statement 2020-21

- 6.1 The Committee considered the draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS) and the improvement actions identified in the Statement. The Committee agreed the AGS, subject to the inclusion of information about the LGA Finance Peer Review and the resultant action plan.

7. Counter Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy

- 7.1 The Committee considered the minor changes proposed to the Strategy and recommended it to the Council for adoption.

8. Forward Plan

- 8.1 The Committee approved its Forward Plan for the 2021-22 municipal year subject to changes as discussed and agreed at the meeting.

9. Update from External Auditors

- 9.1 The external Auditors BDO advised they were unable to progress further on the accounts for 2018/19 to 2020/21 until the previous auditor, KPMG, had finalised the Value for Money Opinion for 2017/18.
- 9.2 The Chief Finance Officer provided an update on communications with KPMG regarding outstanding matters.
- 9.3 BDO provided an update on work carried out on the housing benefit assurance procedures and the Council's 2019/20 housing subsidy claim form.

Councillor J. Boughtflower
Chairman of the Audit Committee

29 July 2021