

South Northamptonshire Council

Audit Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Audit Committee held at The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester, Northants NN12 6AD on Thursday 21 November 2019 at 5.00 pm.

Present Councillor Hywel Davies (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair)

Councillor Anthony S. Bagot-Webb
Councillor Sandra Barnes MBE
Councillor Phil Bignell
Councillor Chris Lofts

Substitute Councillor Steven Hollowell (for Councillor David Harries BEM)
Members:

Also Councillor Peter Rawlinson, Portfolio Holder for Finance,
Present: Governance and Performance
Anand Persaud, CW Audit Service (Internal Audit)

Apologies Councillor David Harries BEM
for
Absence:

Officers: Martin Henry, Executive Director: Finance (Section 151 Officer)
Andrew Hunkin, Executive Director: Resources (Monitoring Officer)
Geoff Kent, Assistant Director: Customers & Corporate Services
Rob Ducker, Senior Investigation Officer - Corporate Fraud Team
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

33 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

34 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19 September 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

35 Chairman's Announcements

There were no Chairman's announcements.

36 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

37 **Quarterly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report - September 2019**

The Assistant Director: Customers and Corporate Services and Head of Finance and Procurement submitted a report which summarise the Council's Performance, Risk and Finance monitoring position as at the end of each quarter.

In response to Members' comments regarding a potential review of S106 expenditure in relation to it being spent within South Northamptonshire rather than outside the district, the Executive Director Finance explained that monitoring of S106 expenditure currently sat with the Budget and Financial Strategy Committee.

In response to Members' comments regarding the risk level for Local Government Reform, the Assistant Director: Customers and Corporate Services explained that risk levels were reviewed monthly and this particular risk would be assessed in light of the snap General Election and delay to the Structural Change Order being passed through Parliament.

Resolved

- (1) That the monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report be noted.
- (2) That, having given due consideration, the Leadership Risk Register be noted and no issues identified for further consideration.

38 **Internal Audit Update 2019/20**

The Executive Director Finance submitted a report which presented the CW Audit Service Update report for 2019/20.

In response to Members' comments regarding the review of internal audit recommendations and the delays to implementation dates, the Executive Director Resources confirmed that there was resource now in place in key areas and the recommendations would be delivered to the revised deadlines.

The Committee thanks CW Audit Service for their ongoing internal audit work

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the 2019/20 internal audit progress report from CW Audit Services be noted.

39 Independent Review into Local Authority Audit

The Executive Director Finance submitted a report which presented information on the Government's call for views for an independent review into local authority audit.

Resolved

- (1) That, having given due consideration, the call for views relating to the review being carried out by the Government into local authority audit be noted and officers be requested to feedback the following points: consideration to be given to returning to a district auditor arrangement; addressing delays to account sign off with external audit resource issues.
- (2) That it be noted that any further Member comments for submission in response to the review should be submitted to the Executive Director Finance by Friday 13 December 2019.

40 Treasury Management Report - Q2 - September 2019

The Executive Director: Finance (S151 Officer) submitted a report which presented information on treasury management performance and compliance with treasury management policy for 2019/20 as required by the Treasury Management Code of Practice.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the Q2 September 2019 Treasury Management Report be noted.

41 Review of Committee Work Programme

The Committee considered its work programmes. The Executive Director Finance advised Members that there was currently no indicative date for the submission of the draft Statement of Accounts 2018/19. This was because the Northamptonshire County Council accounts had not been signed off meaning the district accounts could not be finalised and signed off. When they were ready for consideration, they would either be submitted to a scheduled meeting or a special meeting would be arranged if necessary.

Resolved

- (1) That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

42 **Exclusion of Press and Public**

Resolved

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that, if the public and press were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraphs 3 and 7 would be disclosed to them, and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

43 **Progress of Counter Fraud Service**

The Senior Investigation Officer – Corporate Fraud Team submitted an exempt report which provided an overview of the current progress of the Authority’s counter fraud response following the delegation of authority in July 2018 to Oxford City Council.

Resolved

- (1) That, having given due consideration, the current performance of the Corporate Fraud team be noted.
- (2) That, having given due consideration, the future work plans and the impact that this would have on future performance and income to the authority be noted.

44 **Treasury Management Report - Exempt Appendix**

Resolved

- (1) That the exempt appendix be noted.

The meeting closed at 5.55 pm

Chairman:

Date: