

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 25 July 2019 at 5.00 pm.

Present Councillor David Harries BEM (Chairman)
 Councillor Hywel Davies (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Anthony S. Bagot-Webb
Councillor Phil Bignell
Councillor Chris Lofts

Apologies Councillor Sandra Barnes MBE
for
Absence:

Officers: Paul Hymers, Head of Finance and Procurement & Deputy Section
 151 Officer
 Geoff Kent, Assistant Director: Customers & Corporate Services
 Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

14 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

15 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 30 May 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendment:

Minutes 7: Delete "...and further amended"

16 Chairman's Announcements

That Chairman welcomed Paul Hymers, Head of Finance and Procurement, to his first meeting of the Committee.

17 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

18 **Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report - March 2019 / Quarter 4**

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

In presenting the report, the Assistant Director Customers and Corporate Services advised the Committee that there were no changes on the risk register this month. When the register was reviewed next month, the change of Prime Minister and Brexit would be taken into consideration.

In response to Members' comments regarding the format of the report, the Assistant Director Customers and Corporate Services agreed that future reports would include an executive summary at the start of the report highlighting finance and performance matters linked to risk, which was the focus of the committee's consideration of the report.

In response to Members' observations regarding budget variances with both overspends and reduced income, particularly in relation to planning fees, the Head of Finance and Procurement explained that planning was particularly difficult area to set a budget for. Whilst the most recently available information was used for budget setting, there were fluctuations in planning applications. The Head of Finance and Procurement assured the Committee that their comments would be taken on board for the 2020/21 budget setting.

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 for further consideration be identified.

19 **2018/19 Treasury Management Annual Report**

The Head of Finance and Procurement submitted a report which presented information on treasury management performance and compliance with treasury management policy during 2018/19 as required by the Treasury Management Code of Practice.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report in line with the Treasury Management Strategy be noted.

20 **Treasury Management Report - Q1 - June 2019**

The Head of Finance and Procurement 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.

In response to Members' questions regarding variance, the Head of Finance and Procurement explained that it had been anticipated interest rates would rise and budgets had been based on this. As the interest rates were relatively low, the difference was out of proportion to the figure with any change looking significant presented as a percentage.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the Q1 June 2019 Treasury Management Report be noted.

21 Review of Committee Work Programme

The Committee considered its work programme. Members noted that the Statement of Accounts 2018/19 would be submitted to the September meeting of the Committee and requested that an informal briefing be arranged between finance officers and the Committee prior to the meeting.

Resolved

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

22 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.

23 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 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 will have on future performance and income to the authority be noted.

24 **Treasury Management Report - Q1 - June 2019 EXEMPT Appendix**

Resolved

- (1) That the exempt appendix be noted.

The meeting closed at 5.40 pm

Chairman:

Date: