

AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

Thursday, 14th April, 2016

Present:- Councillor Ms Sarah Pickup – in the Chair

Councillors Dymond, Owen, Waring and Hambleton

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Loades and Mr P Butters.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest stated.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 February, 2016 be agreed as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

With regard to item 4, Members had raised a query regarding the strategic risk of Increase in Insurance claims. Members had requested that the answer to the query be brought to this meeting.

Members were contacted by email by the Council's Business Improvement Officer (Risk and Insurance) on 23 February, 2016.

Resolved: That the information be received.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a report regarding the reviewed Risk Management Policy Statement and Strategy documents.

The documents had been brought to this Committee for information only.

Resolved: That the current Risk Management Policy and Strategy for the 2016/17 year be noted, subject to changes listed in the documents and that it be noted that the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council have agreed and signed the Risk Management Policy Statement.

6. AUDIT PLAN 2015-16

Consideration was given to a report regarding the Audit Plan for the year ending 31 March, 2016. John Gregory of Grant Thornton presented the report, bringing Members' attention to the section on Materiality where the report had been more explicit in the plans. Areas with low levels of Materiality, such as officers

remuneration, salary and exit packages and Members' allowances were also explained.

Two new significant risks had been added – the Valuation of Pension Fund net liability and the Valuation of Property, Plant and Equipment.

Members were advised that there was a new approach to Value for Money as the National Audit Office had taken over and had issued new guidance in November, 2015.

Resolved: That the Audit Plan report be received.

7. **CERTIFICATION WORK REPORT 2014/15**

Consideration was given to the Annual Report by Grant Thornton on the Certification Work Report 2014/15 for the Borough Council.

Mr Paul Harvey gave a summary of work done, on pages 78 and 79 of the agenda was explained to Members and their attention brought to a Housing Benefits subsidy claim.

Resolved: That Grant Thornton's Annual Report on the Certification of Claims be received.

8. **CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

Consideration was given to a report in respect of the Code of Corporate Governance. The Council's Audit Manager advised Members that this was a standard report which is brought to Committee on an annual basis. It was presently unchanged but new guidance is due later in the year and therefore there may be some slight changes.

A letter would be sent out to all Members advising them of the Code and where to view it on line.

Resolved:

- (i) That the requirements of the Code of Corporate Governance be noted.
- (ii) That a covering letter, signed by the Chair and Vice-Chair of this Committee be sent to all Members reminding them that a copy of the Code of Corporate Governance is available in the Members Area on the Council's Intranet site.

9. **COUNTER FRAUD ARRANGEMENTS**

Consideration was given to a report regarding Counter Fraud Arrangements and Members were asked to approve four documents:

- Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Framework
- Fraud Response Plan
- The Whistleblowing Policy
- Anti-Money Laundering Policy.

The above documents are reviewed every two years and were due for updates this year. There were no changes to the documents but the Council no longer does benefits fraud work.

Work was currently underway with Stoke on Trent City Council to form a North West Staffordshire Corporate Fraud Team which would include Staffordshire County Council and a number of housing associations and arrangements were being finalised.

Resolved: That the following policies which support the Counter Fraud function be approved:

- Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Framework
- Fraud Response Plan
- The Whistleblowing Policy
- Anti-Money Laundering Policy.

10. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Business.

COUNCILLOR MS SARAH PICKUP
Chair