

AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Monday, 16th April, 2018
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

Present:- Councillor Ms Sarah Pickup – in the Chair

Councillors Dymond, P Waring, Cooper and Butters

Officers Executive Director (Resources and Support Services) - Kelvin Turner,
Geoff Durham - Mayor's Secretary / Member Support Officer and
Simon Sowerby- Business Improvement Manager

Also in Attendance Phil Butters – Keele University
Phil Jones – Grant Thornton
Paul Harvey - Grant Thornton

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Hambleton and S White.

2. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 November, 2017 be agreed as a correct record.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

4. **CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT**

The Council's Business Improvement Manager, Mr Simon Sowerby introduced a report informing Members of the progress made by the Council in enhancing and embedding risk management for Quarter three (October to December, 2017).

Members were informed that there were two overdue risks . These were outlined in Paragraph 2.1.1 of the report. There were also two risk level increases and were shown in Appendix A.

Members were advised of an error in Appendix A. Item 2 on the report refers to an item going to Cabinet in December 2017 and this should read January, 2018.

Members were advised that there had been minor changes made in the Risk Management Strategy and Policy documents. These had been changes to dates and the title change from Audit and Risk to Audit and Standards.

Resolved: (i) That the progress made in managing the risks identified within the Strategic, Operational, project and partnership Risk Registers be noted.

- (ii) That the number of overdue risks be noted.
- (iii) That the risk level increases be noted.
- (iv) That the new risks identified between October and December, 2017 be noted.
- (v) That the minor changes made in the Risk Management Strategy and policy documents and associated Appendices be agreed.

5. EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN

Mr Phil Jones of Grant Thornton explained the External Audit Plan for the year ending 31 March, 2018.

Members' attention was drawn to page 64 of the agenda which gave an overview of what was happening within the Council. Mr Jones explained the financial pressures that would be faced by the Council up to and including 2022/23, totalling £3.43m.

One of the key challenges identified was that of the move to Castle House.

The report also identified significant risks, possible risks, materiality and value for money.

It was hoped that the Audit Findings Report would be received by the council by July, 2018.

Resolved: That the report be received and the comments noted.

6. INFORMING THE AUDIT RISK ASSESSMENT

Mr Jones introduced this report, drawing members' attention to the purpose of the report on page 80 of the agenda – to contribute towards effective two way communication.

The report looked at fraud, laws and regulations, going concern, accounting estimates and related parties.

Members were informed that Grant Thornton were content with the Management Response Statement.

Resolved: That the information be received and the comments noted.

7. GRANT CLAIMS CERTIFICATION WORK 2016/17

Mr Paul Harvey of Grant Thornton gave a verbal update on this item advising that there was no large financial impact on the Council and that a report would be brought to the next meeting.

Resolved: That the information be received.

8. INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE

The Council's Executive Director – Resources and Support Services gave a verbal update on this item.

The Audit Plan for last year was about to be completed. Audits had been carried out on, amongst others, business rates and the Newcastle lottery and all had emerged as either being well or adequately controlled'.

The new audit system had been rolled out and training was being given to officers for its use.

Temporary cover was being sought to help with the current staffing issues and with the departure of Paul Washington who was the council's Monitoring officer – this would be discussed at the next meeting of the Executive Management Team.

Resolved: That the information be received.

9. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Business.

COUNCILLOR MS SARAH PICKUP
Chair

Meeting concluded at 7.40 pm