

AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Monday, 27th June, 2022
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

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Present:	Councillor Paul Waring (Chair)		
Councillors:	Panter Holland	Stubbs Brockie	Talbot
Also present:	P Butters		
Apologies:	Councillor Whieldon		
Substitutes:	Councillor David Hutchison (In place of Councillor Joan Whieldon)		
Officers:	Sarah Wilkes Denise French Craig Turner Georgina Evans	Head of Finance / S151 Officer Democratic Services Team Leader Finance Manager Head of Strategy, People and Performance	

21. **APOLOGIES**

22. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

23. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 April 2022 be agreed as a correct record.

24. **HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22**

The committee considered the annual health and safety report covering the period 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022.

The report summarised that various policies had been reviewed including the Employer Protection Policy and Alcohol, Drugs and Substance Misuse Policy. Training had been carried out in various IOSH courses on Leading Safely and Managing Safely, along with training in Risk Assessments, lone working and first aid refresher training.

Accidents during the reporting period were lower than usual which was likely to be partly due to altered working procedures during Covid lockdowns. The number of reportable accidents was 4 but none involved significant injuries.

Resolved: that the annual update on health and safety be noted.

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25. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2021/22

The committee considered the Annual Governance Statement (AGS). The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 required the council to publish an AGS to emphasise the importance of embedding internal control, including risk management, throughout the council.

The AGS included the following headings which still included reference to the Covid pandemic:

- Scope of responsibility
- Delivering governance in Local Government: framework
- The governance framework
- Review of effectiveness
- Significant governance issues
- Reflecting the challenges and impact of Coronavirus.

The AGS was prepared taking into account the guidance document 'Delivering Good Governance Framework' produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance (CIPFA).

Resolved: that the Annual Governance Statement for 2021/22 be approved.

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26. PROPOSED ACCOUNTING POLICIES, CRITICAL ACCOUNTING JUDGEMENTS AND SOURCES OF ESTIMATION UNCERTAINTY FOR THE 2021/22 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The committee considered the proposed accounting policies used by the council in preparing the Statement of Accounts; best practice recommended that these be approved by the Audit and Standards Committee.

Resolved: that

- (a) The proposed Accounting Policies that will form part of the Statement of Accounts 2021/22 be approved;
- (b) The council's critical judgements in applying Accounting Policies and its assumptions made about the future and other major sources of estimation uncertainty that will form part of the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts be approved; and
- (c) The Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) be granted delegated powers to make further changes to the proposed Accounting Policies to reflect the release of new or updated guidance if applicable and will notify the Members of this Committee if any such changes are made.

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27. DRAFT STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2021/22

The committee considered the draft Statement of Accounts 2021/22. The draft Statement set out the council's final outturn position at 31 March 2022. Once approved the accounts would be published as draft and be available for public inspection between 4 and 15 July. The accounts would be subject to external audit by Grant Thornton and this would commence during the week of 11 July. The final audited statement of accounts would be submitted to the committee for approval on 14 November. This would enable publication by the deadline date of 30 November 2022.

The draft statement showed a favourable variance of c£4k on the Revenue Budget. The Head of Finance referred to figures in the accounts relating to movements of short and long term investments of around c£0.5bn, this was not money the council was holding but referred to in and out transactions. In relation to the pensions' fund, the pension liability had increased last year due to a revaluation and remeasurement by the actuary because of Covid, for the 2021-22 accounts the liabilities had again been re-evaluated and the liability figures had reduced back down to their previous level.

Members raised a query around paragraph 2.13 which referred to repaying the deficit on the Collection Fund. The committee was advised that the current position was now a small surplus for council tax. For Business Rates there was a cumulative net deficit of £3.7m, the council had received Section 31 funding last year from Government which would be used leaving a total net deficit of £1.512 which the council would meet from the Business Rate reserves.

Resolved: that

- (a) The General Fund outturn and key issues in respect of the council's financial position as at 31 March 2022 be noted; and
- (b) The draft Statement of Accounts for 2021/22 be approved for publication and audit.

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28. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

The committee considered the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2021/22. CIPFA Code of Practice recommended that Members review treasury management performance at least twice yearly.

Treasury management included management of the council's investments and cash flows, banking and effective control of risks. The council used Arlingclose Ltd for advisory services for treasury management.

Resolved: that the Treasury Management Report for 2021/22 be received and will be reported to Full Council on 28 September 2022.

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29. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Business.

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30. COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

The committee considered the current Work Plan. There were no items for the next meeting and the Chair suggested it be cancelled.

Resolved: that:

- (a) the Work Plan be received; and
- (b) the meeting scheduled for 25 July be cancelled.

**Councillor Paul Waring
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 7.34 pm