

AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Monday, 15th July, 2024
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

[View the agenda here](#)

[Watch the meeting here](#)

Present:	Councillor Paul Waring (Chair)	
Councillors:	Burnett-Faulkner Whieldon	Stubbs Lewis
Apologies:	Councillor(s) Holland and Brockie	
Substitutes:	Councillor Simon Jones (In place of Councillor Mark Holland) Councillor Philip Reece (In place of Councillor Wendy Brockie)	
Officers:	Sarah Wilkes Anthony Harold Clare Potts	Service Director - Finance / S151 Officer Service Director - Legal & Governance / Monitoring Officer
Also in attendance:	Councillor Stephen Sweeney	Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder - Finance, Town Centres and Growth

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were shared as stated above.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Resolved: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 28th May 2024 be agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. **INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24**

The Head of Internal Audit (Stoke-on-Trent City Council) gave an overview of the Internal Audit Report.

Members submitted questions and responses were provided as follows.

Cllr Stubbs wished for officers to go through areas where a marginal opinion had been issued.

– Sundry Debtors had been transferred 18 months ago and was now managed by the Finance Team via the Civica Debtors System. A Debt Recovery Policy had also been fully implemented. About the General Project Governance, this audit had been

Audit and Standards Committee - 15/07/24

requested by the Director for Finance (S151 Officer) in relation to the various central government grants and Town Deal Funds managed by the Council. A Corporate Project Register had been implemented gathering all information about any specific project of which ownership, source of funding, project management, financial and legal approvals, priorities it is linked to, directorate, procedures and framework in place, monitoring etc. The recommendations were to do with the fact it was something completely new that had never been done before. The best way to use this document was still to be decided.

Cllr Stubbs asked if the grant procedures requirements were incorporated into the actual governance of the projects.

– Yes they were as demonstrated with the management of projects funded by the Town Deal and Future High Street Funds.

Cllr Stubbs asked if a finance officer was included in the project board.

– Indeed that was the case.

Cllr Stubbs enquired about the Decision Making audit which had a marginal opinion.

– A number of issues had been looked at by the auditor. A few points had been challenged, which had been taken into account. Assurance had been given by the appropriate chief officers that the actions required to improve the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control environment were being taken, which would be reflected in the Annual Governance Statement. Decisions were to be recorded in the right places and improvements were in hand to facilitate this and would be carried out by the end of September. A business plan was used by service directors listing all meetings and when the reports were due to go to each of them for decision.

The Chair thanked the Head of Internal Audit and expressed his regrets that she wouldn't be presenting the next audit, a new firm having been appointed. The Service Director for Finance (S151 Officer) wished for the thanks to be recorded and added that it had been very nice working with her for the past four years.

Resolved: That the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2023/24 be considered.

[Watch the debate here](#)

5. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

The Service Director for Finance (S151 Officer) went through the Treasury Management Report.

Cllr Stubbs commented that the report was worded in a way difficult for elected members to understand and being more aimed at a finance literate audience. A less technical jargon would be appreciated.

– This would be passed on to the team so that future reports be drafted in terms easier to understand for non-professionals.

The Chair suggested that a one-page overview would be helpful.

Cllr Whieldon supported Cllr Stubbs' comment and the response provided, adding that an executive summary in layman's terms rather than glossary terms would also benefit members of the public.

Resolved: That the Treasury Management Report for 2023/24 be received and be reported to Full Council on 25th September 2024.

[Watch the debate here](#)

6. **CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT**

The Service Director for Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer) presented the Corporate Risk Management Report.

Resolved:

1. That there were currently no risks that were more than 6 months overdue for a review up to end of Q4 2023/24, be noted.
2. That there had been no risk level increases, be noted.
3. That there had been no changes to the Corporate Risk Register, be noted.
4. That officers be advised of any individual risk profiles that the Committee would like to scrutinise in more details at its next meeting.
5. That whilst the likelihood of a risk materialising may be mitigated, the likely impacts may not change, be noted

[Watch the debate here](#)

7. **WORK PROGRAMME**

Resolved: That the work programme be received.

[Watch the debate here](#)

8. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

**Councillor Paul Waring
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 7.29 pm