

## **AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, 19th April, 2017  
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

**Present:-** Councillor Ms Sarah Pickup – in the  
Chair

Councillors Dymond, Waring and Cooper

Officers Executive Director (Resources and  
Support Services) - Kelvin Turner,  
Liz Dodd - Head of Audit and Elections  
(and Monitoring Officer)  
Geoff Durham and  
Annette Vacquier

Also in Mr John Gregory – Grant Thornton  
Attendance Mr Paul Harvey – Grant Thornton

Apologies Mr P Butters – Keele University

### 1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Mr P Butters – Keele University.

### 2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

### 3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

**Resolved:** That, subject to the inclusion of the Head of Audit and Elections (and Monitoring Officer) - Mrs Liz Dodd as being in attendance and, under Apologies, Mr R Butters being amended to Mr P Butters, the minutes of the meeting held on 13 February, 2017 be agreed as a correct record.

### 4. **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 2017/18 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.

**5. CERTIFICATION WORK 2015/16**

Consideration was given to the Annual Report by Grant Thornton on the Certification Work Report 2015/16 for the Borough Council.

Mr Paul Harvey gave a summary of work done and drew Members attention to the letter appended to the report.

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

**6. AUDIT PLAN 2016/17**

Consideration was given to a report regarding the Audit Plan for the year ending 31 March, 2017. John Gregory of Grant Thornton presented the report bringing Members' attention to the section on Materiality. Members were advised that the overall materiality had been calculated at just over £1.2 million.

There was nothing particularly unusual in the identified risks. A risk had been identified at page 9 of the agenda report regarding changes to the presentation of local authority financial statements.

**Resolved:** That the Audit Plan report be received

**7. CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

Consideration was given to a report in respect of the Code of Corporate Governance. The Council's Head of Audit and Elections (and Monitoring Officer), Mrs Liz Dodd advised Members that this was a standard report which is brought to Committee on an annual basis. It had been re-written this year because of changes to the CIPFA Regulations and was presently in draft form. Page 82 of the agenda report summarised the 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 electronic format.

**8. COUNTER FRAUD ARRANGEMENTS**

Consideration was given to a report regarding Counter Fraud Arrangements:

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

The above documents are regularly reviewed and Members were advised that the only changes made to the documents were in respect of job titles.

The Council iws continuing to work 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. Service level agreements had now been agreed and during 2017/18 the joint venture would see the set up of a data hub allowing the organisations to share information

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

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

9. **EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF NEWCASTLE BOROUGH COUNCIL'S INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE**

The Council's Executive Director for Resource and Support Services, Mr Kelvin Turner briefed Members on an External Quality Assessment that had been carried out on Newcastle's Internal Audit Standards to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

It was the assessors opinion that "...Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough council's Internal Audit Service generally conforms to the requirements of the Public Sector Internal audit standards. It is also our opinion that they generally conform to the requirements of the Local Government Application Note".

Members attention was drawn to the Summary findings and recommendations commencing on page 104 of the agenda.

Mr Turner congratulated Mrs Dodd and her team on this result.

**Resolved:** That the information be received.

10. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Business.

**COUNCILLOR MS SARAH PICKUP**  
**Chair**

Meeting concluded at 7.20 pm