

AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Monday, 11th November, 2019
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

Present:	Councillor Paul Waring (Chair)		
Councillors:	K.Owen S. Dymond	S. Pickup G. Burnett	B Panter
Officers:	Annette Bailey	Business Improvement Officer (Risk and Insurance)	
	Nesta Barker	Head of Environmental Health Services	
	Geoff Durham	Mayor's Secretary / Member Support Officer	
	Jan Willis	Interim Executive Director - Resources and Support Services and Section 151 Officer	
	Caroline Elwood	Interim Head of Legal / Monitoring Officer	
Also in attendance:	Clare Potts	Stoke on Trent City Council	
	Phil Butters	Keele University	
	Helen Kent	Independent Person for Standards	

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Simon Sowerby – Business Improvement Manager and Graham Payne – Independent Member.

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 23 September, 2019 be agreed as a correct record.

4. **MATTERS ARISING**

The Chair advised that under item 8 – the final line before the resolution, it would be Grant Thornton who would produce the note. This was awaited and once received, would be circulated to Members.

5. **REVIEW AND UPDATE OF RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COUNCIL, ITS COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES**

Consideration was given to a report advising Members of proposed changes to the Terms of Reference for the Committee.

The Council's Interim Head of Legal / Monitoring Officer referred Members to the papers that had been handed out at the meeting which showed the tracked changes to the document. A report on this would be going to the Full Council meeting on 20 November, 2019.

Mrs Elwood advised that the name of the Committee had been updated to Audit and Standards and that the existing Terms of Reference relating to risk had been deleted. These had been replaced with Best Practice Terms of Reference from CIPFA.

The terms of reference from the former Standards Committee had been brought across in their entirety but future complaints would be considered by a sub-committee consisting of three Members appointed as and when required.

Resolved: That the proposed changes to the current Terms of Reference as set out in Appendix A be noted and that Full Council be advised that this Committee recommends their approval.

6. **HEALTH AND SAFETY SIX MONTH REPORT - 2019-20**

Consideration was given to a report informing Members of issues and trends regarding health and safety at the Council.

The Council's Head of Environmental Health Services drew Members' attention to the report at page 21 of the agenda which outlined the current health and safety matters.

The Chair asked if the software update would be significant. Mrs Barker advised that it would not be a significant change. It would actually bring back features of a previous version and training would be provided.

Councillor Panter asked for progress on the ground floor remedial works that were currently underway.

Mrs Barker advised that Staffordshire County Council were commissioning the work and they would be asked for an update.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

7. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICAL STANDARDS - REVIEW BY COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE**

Consideration was given to a report updating members on the report from the Committee on Standards in Public Life on ethical standards in local government.

Mrs Elwood advised Members that there was a 108 page document available on the review.

Twenty six recommendations had been made and these were outlined at paragraph 2.2 of the agenda report.

Members' attention was drawn to the two appendices attached to the report.

The Independent Member, Helen Kent asked if the two year appointment of independent members would commence alongside the new Code of Conduct. Mrs Elwood advised that the time already served by the current independent members would be taken into account.

- Resolved:
- (i) That the list of recommendations from the Committee on Standards in Public Life at Appendix A of the report, be noted.
 - (ii) That the adoption of the list of Best Practice recommendations at Appendix B of the report be agreed and the draft action plan approved.
 - (iii) That the intention to bring a revised Code of Conduct to the next meeting of the Committee, together with an updated Action Plan, be noted.

8. CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT Q2

Consideration was given to a report informing Members of the progress made by the Council in enhancing and embedding risk management for the period July to September, 2019.

The Council's Business Improvement Officer (Risk and Insurance), Annette Bailey advised Members that there were no overdue risk reviews, no risk level increases and no new risks had been identified.

Members' attention was drawn to Appendix A of the report which answered queries raised at the previous meeting of this Committee. In addition, Members Were referred to Appendix B showing notable High and Medium Risks.

Mrs Bailey advised Members that several of the identified risks would not appear on this list next time.

Councillor Panter asked whether identified risk 7 referred to First Buses only or if it included D & G. It was confirmed that it was just First Buses.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That point 2.1.1 showing that there were no overdue risk reviews be noted.
 - (ii) That point 2.2.1 advising that there were no risk level increases be noted.
 - (iii) That point 2.2.2 regarding no new risks being identified between July to September, 2019 be noted.
 - (iv) That the issues from the previous meeting be noted.

- (vi) That it be noted that a comprehensive review of all risk registers reporting to this Committee will be undertaken.
- (vii) That Appendix B be noted.

9. TREASURY MANAGEMENT HALF YEARLY REPORT

Consideration was given to a report to receive the Treasury Management Half Yearly Report for 2019/20 and to review the Treasury Management activity for the period.

The Council's Head of Finance Sarah Wilkes introduced the report, drawing Members' attention to Appendix 1.

Resolved: That the Treasury Management Half Yearly Report for 2019/20 be received.

10. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT - QUARTER TWO - JULY TO SEPT, 2019

Consideration was given to a report updating members on the work undertaken by the Internal Audit Section during the period 1 July to 30 September, 2019.

A summary of overdue audit recommendations was tabled at the meeting.

Claire Potts of Stoke on Trent City Council introduced the report drawing Members' attention to Table 1 showing the planned audit activity and Table 2 showing the proposed audits to be deferred.

Councillor Panter asked when the Director for Commercial Development and Economic Growth would be in post and was advised that this would be the beginning of December.

Councillor Panter asked, in reference to the deferral of the audits at J2, what was being looked at.

Ms Potts advised that there were no specific areas in mind and that a risk assessment would be done for next years' Plan.

Councillor Pickup asked Jan Willis if she was happy to leave the J2 Audits until next year. Ms Willis advised that she was content to go along with the proposal but the Committee needed to ensure that all of the other planned audits were delivered.

Resolved: (i) That the report be received.
(ii) That deferral of the audits listed in Table 2 of the report, be agreed.

11. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Business.

COUNCILLOR PAUL WARING
Chair

Meeting concluded at 7.50 pm