

AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Monday, 29th September, 2025
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

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Present:	Councillor Paul Waring (Chair)		
Councillors:	Burnett-Faulkner Holland	Whieldon Lewis	Reece
Apologies:	Councillor(s) Stubbs		
Officers:	Sarah Wilkes	Service Director – Finance / S151 Officer	
	Craig Turner	Service Director – Finance / S151 Officer	
	Georgina Evans-Stadward	Service Director – Strategy, People and Performance	
Also in attendance:	Councillor Stephen Sweeney	Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder – Finance, Town Centres and Growth	
	Alex Canon	Audit Manager – Staffordshire County Council	
	Richard Lee	External Auditor – KPMG	
	Robert Fenton	External Auditor – KPMG	

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were shared as listed above.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Chair recalled that Cllr Stubbs asked about why certain risks had been increased in relation to the Bribery Act.

The Service Director for Finance (S151 Officer) responded that these referred to Business Partnership Risks relating to regeneration projects that were about to be undertaken. The risks had been increased due to the value.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 14th July be agreed as a true and accurate record.

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4. HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

The Service Director for Strategy, People and Performance presented the Health and Safety Annual report.

The Chair asked what the TTC (Trusted Training & Compliance) Continuum quoted in paragraph 2.3 referred to.

The Service Director for Strategy, People and Performance responded that this related to the driving at work policy system. Officers were submitting their details to a database which checked that they were up to date with their insurance, driving license etc.

Cllr Lewis enquired about the table in paragraph 5.3 and the increase in non-reportable incidents due to the cold weather. Clarification was required as higher increases could be noted in the warmer months.

The Service Director for Strategy, People and Performance advised that people were encouraged to report incidents all through the year and increases in near misses were also positive.

Cllr Reece asked if the RIDDOR summary and incident type were rated depending on the severity of the injury and if any compensation claims had been received.

The Service Director for Strategy, People and Performance confirmed that the severity of the injury was taken into account. Data about compensation claims could be shared with members.

Cllr Reece also wondered whether there would be any gap in relation to the lone working procurement process and change of provider.

The Service Director for Strategy, People and Performance said the current contract was running until end of October allowing for an overlap with the new provider.

Cllr Whieldon asked if the fire brigade was involved with the training provided on Evac chairs and breathing apparatus.

The Service Director for Strategy, People and Performance responded that they were not however the training was accredited and approved. Health and safety officers were qualified professionals and able to deliver the same advice the fire brigade had offered in the past. A fire strategy was also being developed, which would cover more details about exits etc.

Cllr Whieldon added that doors should open outwards on fire exit routes so that people don't get trapped in and questioned that this requirement was met on the ground floor of the building.

The Service Director for Strategy, People and Performance advised that she would look into it.

Resolved: That the content of the report be noted.

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5. **Q1 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS UPDATE 2025/26**

The Audit Manager presented the Internal Audit Progress Update.

Resolved: That the progress against the 2025/26 Internal Audit Plan be noted.

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6. **Q1 CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT 2025/26**

The Service Director for Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer) presented the Corporate Risk Management Report for 2025/26. New risks were highlighted including the corporate risk for supported accommodation currently in the red due to unregulated providers claiming inflated rent costs, and the failure to deliver town centre regeneration projects, which was in amber.

Cllr Whieldon asked if there were still a disaster recovery plan and how often it was updated and checked.

The Service Director for Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer) responded that there would be one and the corporate risks would be scheduled accordingly. A copy would be shared with members.

Resolved:

1. That there were currently NO risks that were more than 6 months overdue for a review up to end of Q1 2025/26, be noted.
2. That there had been NO risk level increases, be noted.
3. That there had been 2 new risks added, be noted.
4. That the Corporate Risk Register profile be noted.
5. That officers be advised of any individual risk profiles that the Committee would like to scrutinise in more details at its next meeting.
6. That whilst the likelihood of a risk materialising may be mitigated, the likely impacts may not change, be noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

7. **AUDITED STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2024/25**

The Finance Manager (Deputy S151 Officer) introduced the Audited Statement of Accounts for 2024/25. The appointed external auditors (KPMG) presented the audit findings and value for money assessment.

Cllr Whieldon thanked officers for the readability of the report.

Resolved:

1. That the final Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2024/25 be received and authority to sign off the Statement of Accounts be delegated to the Service Director for Finance (S151 Officer), and the Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee once the audit has been completed.

Audit and Standards Committee - 29/09/25

2. That the Draft Audit Findings Report (ISA 260 report) for the financial year 2024/25 be received.

3. That the Value for Money Risk Assessment for the financial year 2024/25 be received.

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8. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair informed members of the suggestion that going forward the Audited Statement of Accounts would be submitted to the Committee in November instead of September to ensure that all the work had been completed.

Resolved: That the work programme be noted.

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9. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

The Chair advised members that the Service Director for Finance (S151 Officer) would be leaving on the 14th October and thanked her for her hard work over the years which had been appreciated.

Members shared their sadness to see her go, including Cllr Whieldon who said she would be missed and the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth who took the opportunity to also introduce the current Finance Manager (Deputy S151 Officer) as her successor.

The Chair congratulated the newly appointed Service Director.

Councillor Paul Waring
Chair

Meeting concluded at 7.30 pm