

GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 18 MAY 2020

Present: Councillor E Williamson, Chair

Councillors: S A Bagshaw (Vice-Chair), R H Darby,
M Handley, H G Khaled MBE, J M Owen,
J P T Parker, M Radulovic MBE, P D Simpson,
I L Tyler and D K Watts

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E Cubley and M Hannah

35 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

36 **MINUTES**

The minutes were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

37 **SCALE FEE**

Councillors received an update on the Scale Fee.

38 **ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT (CORONAVIRUS) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2020**

Members noted the amendments to the Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015) which had been introduced following the coronavirus outbreak and how the Council intended to comply with these when producing the Statement of Accounts 2019/20. It was confirmed that audit fee charges were broadly the same as those in previous years.

39 **EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2019/20**

An update was received on the External Audit Plan for 2019/20. It was agreed that the terms of reference would be shared with members in advance of the LG Peer Review.

40 **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

To Committee discussed the actions taken to develop and comply with statutory obligations regarding corporate governance. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require authorities to conduct a review of the effectiveness of its system of internal control and to include an Annual Governance Statement report on the review with its statement of accounts.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The draft Annual Governance Statement as shown in appendix 3 be approved in principle for inclusion in the Council's Statement of Accounts.**

2. Responsibility be delegated to the Chief Executive and the Chair of this Committee to make any further amendments deemed necessary.

41 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2019/2020 - ACCOUNTING

Members discussed the Council's accounting policies in relation to the production of the 2019/2020 financial statements. It is considered good practice that Members are given the opportunity to discuss and comment on the accounting policies to be used in the production of the financial statements.

RESOLVED that the Accounting Policies for 2019/2020 be approved.

42 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2019/2020 - UNDERLYING PENSION ASSUMPTIONS

To Committee considered the assumptions made by the pension fund actuary in calculating the IAS 19 (International Accounting Standard 19 - Employee Benefits) figures to be reported in the 2019/2020 Statement of Accounts. Employee Benefits is one of the financial reporting standards with which the Council must comply when producing its annual Statement of Accounts. The basic requirement of IAS 19 is that an organisation should account for retirement benefits when it is committed to give them, irrespective of when they are paid out.

43 GOVERNANCE DASHBOARD - MAJOR PROJECTS

Members had previously requested that a regular governance dashboard report be provided to Committee on major projects, such as the Beeston Square Development, Stapleford Town Fund and Housing Delivery Programme. As a consequence of the Covid 19 lockdown, it was agreed to defer these governance reviews to a future meeting. Members were updated on the work done by the Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services team to deter fraud with the Covid 19 Business Grant process.

Councillors requested that the grants process during the pandemic be scrutinised both internally and externally.

44 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee received an update on the Procurement Management Framework. Further updates would be brought to the July meeting of this committee.

45 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2020/21

Councillors were updated on the Internal Audit Plan for 2020/21. The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards requires the Chief Audit and Control Officer to prepare an annual risk based audit plan. The Internal Audit Plan governs the activity for the year. An audit report is produced at the completion of each assignment with recommendations for improvement. Regular progress reports covering all internal audit activities are submitted to this Committee for scrutiny. The impact of employees working from home was discussed, with no negative consequences so far.

RESOLVED that the Internal Audit Plan for 2020/21 be approved.

46 REPORT OF THE INTERIM MONITORING OFFICER

Councillors were updated on The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) decision of finding an injustice regarding the lack of repairs undertaken to a garage site.

47 CANVASS REFORM

The Committee noted the new approach to carrying out the annual canvass to be introduced this year. The success of the online registration service had demonstrated a clear public acceptance of moving to a more digital approach.

48 WORK PROGRAMME

It was agreed to include a Governance Statement of Compliance and a Grants Process Review to the work programme.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme be approved.