

GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 30 NOVEMBER 2020

Present: Councillor S A Bagshaw, Vice Chair in the Chair

Councillors: S J Carr (substitute)
E Cubley
D A Elliott
J M Owen
J P T Parker
P D Simpson
D K Watts

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Hannah, M Handley, H G Khaled MBE, M Radulovic MBE, I L Tyler and E Williamson.

21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

22 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

23 REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

The Committee noted the Monitoring Officer's report.

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25 AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS 2019/20 AND ASSOCIATED MATTERS

The Committee considered letter of representation and the process for the approval of the Statement of Accounts for the 2019/20 financial year and received an update on the Audit Completion Report for the year ending 31 March 2020 from the Council's external auditors.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the Statement of Accounts 2019/20 as circulated and the letter of representation as attached be approved and**
- (ii) delegation be given to the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer along with the Chair of this Committee to approve any further changes required to the Statement of Accounts 2019/20.**

26 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The Committee considered the revised Annual Governance Statement.

RESOLVED that the revised draft Annual Governance Statement in appendix 1 of the report be approved for inclusion in the Council's Statement of Accounts 2019/20.

27 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee were informed of recent work completed by Internal Audit. It was noted that the level of performance in terms of audits completed is below what should have been achieved at this stage. The main impact has been from the Covid-19 pandemic and the urgency of diverting Internal Audit resources towards supporting other areas.

RESOLVED that revisions to the Internal Audit Plan for 2020/21, as set out in appendix 2 of the report, be approved.

28 REVIEW OF STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

The Committee considered amendments to the Strategic Risk Register and the action plans identified to mitigate risks.

RESOLVED that the amendments to the Strategic Risk Register and the actions to mitigate risks as set out in appendix 2 of the report, be approved.

29 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Committee were updated on the Council's requirement to enhance its complaints procedure, following notification from the Housing Ombudsman.

The Housing Ombudsman introduced a new complaint handling Code in July 2020, which was subsequently revised in September 2020. The new Code is a legal requirement for all landlords to adopt following the findings of the Grenfell White Paper report.

RESOLVED that the non-housing related complaints be administered in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman's Code.

30 REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEALING WITH STANDARDS COMPLAINTS

The Committee were updated on the arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints. It was noted that the review would consult with other district and borough Councils to establish best practice and Members would be consulted.

RESOLVED that that a politically proportionate task and finish group be set up to review the arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints and that the same task and finish group be set up to review the new National Code of Conduct.

31 REVIEW OF WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

The Committee noted the review of the Whistleblowing Policy and the outcome of the recent internal audit report relating to this policy.

32 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee consider the Work Programme. It was requested that a report on the audit of business support grants be included at a future meeting.

RESOLVED that, with the addition of an item to consider an audit trail for business support grants, the Work Programme be approved.