

Minutes

Audit and Scrutiny Committee Tuesday, 7th December, 2021

Attendance

Cllr Nolan (Chair)	Cllr Jakobsson
Cllr Tanner (Vice-Chair)	Cllr McLaren
Cllr Mrs Fulcher	Cllr Naylor
Cllr Haigh	Cllr Mrs Pound
Cllr Hirst	

Apologies

Substitute Present

Also Present

Cllr Hossack
Cllr Barber
Cllr White
Cllr Poppy

Officers Present

Steve Summers	-	Strategic Director (Deputy Chief Executive)
Jacqueline Van Mellaerts	-	Corporate Director (Finance & Resources)
Janine Combrinck	-	Internal Audit, BDO
Zoe Borman	-	Governance and Member Support Officer

LIVE BROADCAST

[Live broadcast to start at 7pm and available for repeat viewing.](#)

211. Apologies for Absence

No apologies had been received.

212. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the Audit & Scrutiny meeting held on 28th November 2021 were approved as a true record.

213. Internal Audit Progress Report 2021/22

This report is intended to inform the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of progress made against the 2021/22 internal audit plan.

The following report has been finalised since the last Committee:

- Planning (Moderate/Substantial)

Ms Janine Combrinck, Internal Auditor, was present at the meeting and summarised the report.

Following a full discussion Members noted the report.

214. Risk Management

The report updated members of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee on the status of the Council's 2021/22 Strategic Risk Register and high-level operational risks.

Cllr McLaren raised that the target of the General Fund reserve risk looked low. Mrs Van Mellaerts said she would take away and review.

Cllr Naylor asked whether the Council's wholly owned company, Seven Arches Investment Limited (SAIL), should have its own risk status. Mr Summers advised that SAIL undertakes its own risk assessments, and these are reported through its Business Plan to Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee.

Following a full discussion, Members noted the report.

215. Formal Complaints & Performance Indicator Working Group

This report submits the report and recommendations of the Formal Complaints and Performance Indicators Working Group for consideration by the Audit & Scrutiny Committee.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Nolan and **SECONDED** by Cllr Tanner to approve the recommendations in the report.

Following a full discussion a vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**:

To note the Formal Complaints and Performance Indicators

Working Group report, as attached at Appendix A, and agree the recommendations contained within it.

Reasons for Recommendation

To ensure the Council provides quality customer services.

216. Scrutiny Work Programme 2021/22

The Constitution requires that the Audit & Scrutiny Committee agrees its Scrutiny work programme at each meeting of the Committee. This report provides an update of the current scrutiny work programme and is set out in Appendix A.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Nolan and **SECONDED** by Cllr Tanner to approve the recommendations in the report.

Following a full discussion a vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**:

That the Committee considers and agrees the 2021/22 Scrutiny work programme as set out in Appendix A.

Reasons for Recommendation

The Constitution requires that the Audit & Scrutiny Committee agrees its Scrutiny work programme at each meeting of the Committee.

217. Arrangements to Appoint external auditors from 2023/24

This item has been withdrawn.

218. External Audit Plan 2020/21

The External Audit Plan sets out how the Council's external auditors, Ernst & Young intend to carry out their responsibilities in auditing the final accounts for the financial year 2020/21.

Mrs Van Mellaerts gave apologies for Mr Harris' absence at the meeting but had given Members an opportunity before and during the meeting to raise any concerns, and for these to be answered accordingly.

Members raised concerns regarding the reported pension fund deficit of £43.2m and securities around the funds. Mrs Van Mellaerts assured Members this deficit was accounted for according to CIPFA Code of Practice but said she would seek guidance from the Actuaries report from Essex County Council and refer back to Members.

Members also raised concerns regarding audit fees and would welcome feedback following management's discussions with PSAA.

Members noted the report.

219. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting concluded at 20:00
