

Minutes

Audit and Scrutiny Committee Tuesday, 6th July, 2021

Attendance

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

Apologies

Cllr McLaren	Cllr Mrs Pound
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Substitute Present

Cllr Barber
Cllr White

Also Present

Cllr Dr Barrett

Officers Present

Phoebe Barnes	- Corporate Finance Manager
Steve Summers	- Strategic Director (Deputy Chief Executive)
Zoe Borman	- Governance and Member Support Officer
Janine Combrinck	- Internal Audit, BDO
Neil Harris	- External Audit, E&Y
Greg Rubins	- BDO, Internal Audit
Greg Campbell	- Corporate Director (Environment & Communities)
Daniel Cannon	- Community Safety Manager
Amanda Julian	- Corporate Director (Law and Governance) and Monitoring Officer

LIVE BROADCAST

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

68. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Pound and Cllr McLaren. Cllrs Barber and White were substituting respectively.

69. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee held on 11th March were agreed as a true record.

70. Annual Audit Letter 2019-20

This report presented the Committee with the Annual Audit Letter issued by the external auditors, Ernst & Young, following the completion of the audit of the 2019/20 accounts.

Mr Harris, External Auditor, was present at the meeting and summarised the report.

Members raised concerns regarding Section 114 and whether this was within the external auditor's remit to monitor and report upon. Mr Harris assured Members they had a critical responsibility towards the Council's financial resilience and that safeguarding processes were in place.

Members noted the report.

71. Unaudited Statement of Accounts 2020-21

This report presented the Council's unaudited Statement of Accounts for 2020/21, the accounts will be signed by the Corporate Director (Finance & Resources) by 31st July 2021 in line with requirements of the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2015. They will be published on the Council's website and will be subject to public inspection under section 26 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

The Group accounts have been compiled with Seven Arches Investment Limited (SAIL) draft accounts. If the audited version is returned in time for publication, officers will make appropriate changes to the Council's group accounts by the publication deadline.

The Annual Governance Statement is an annual review and published alongside the statement of accounts. The Statement is also subject to external audit.

Ms Barnes was present at the meeting and introduced the report. Ms Barnes thanked her team for their hard work in completing the draft statements whilst remote working during the pandemic.

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

A vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY** that Members:

- 1, **Note the unaudited Statement of Accounts for 2020/21 in Appendix A.**
2. **That the Annual Governance Statement 2020/21 attached in Appendix B is endorsed and signed by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council and delegated authority is given to the Corporate Director (Finance & Resources) in consultation with the Chair of Audit & Scrutiny Committee to make any appropriate changes before publication and following External Auditors review should it be required.**

Reasons for Recommendation

The approval of the unaudited Accounts contributes to effective financial management and governance and meets statutory requirements.

72. Internal Audit progress Report 2020-21

This report intended to inform the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of progress made against the 2020/21 internal audit plan.

The following reports had been finalised since the last Committee:

- Risk Management (Substantial/Moderate)
- Main Financial Systems (Moderate/Moderate)
- Financial Planning and Monitoring (Substantial/Substantial)
- Covid-19 related grants (Substantial/Substantial)
- Licensing. (Moderate/Limited)

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

Members were asked to note the report.

73. Internal Audit Annual Report 2020-21

This report intended to inform the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of the annual internal audit opinion.

Overall, Internal audit have been able to provide moderate assurance that there is a sound system of internal control, designed to meet the Council's objectives and that controls are being applied consistently. The full report is attached in Appendix A.

Mr Rubins, Internal Auditor, was present at the meeting and summarised the report.

Following discussion, Members were asked to note the report.

74. Risk Management

The report updated members of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee on the status of the Council's 2021/22 Strategic Risk Register.

The Risk Registers are under review to align them to the Corporate Strategy, as well as presenting them in a more appropriate format.

Ms Barnes presented the report, and advised Members of the improved layout.

Following a full discussions Members were requested to note the report.

75. Community Safety Partnership Report

Each year the partnership has a statutory duty to carry out a strategic intelligence assessment which reviews existing priorities and identifies any new or emerging priorities that the partnership should focus on.

All partners agree the Strategic Priorities and sets out in their Partnership Plan (Appendix A) how the partnership will work together over the next twelve months to tackle crime and disorder and achieve its priorities.

The CSPs Strategic Priorities for 2020/21 are:

- Safer Community
- Safer Future

A set of action plans were developed which underpins delivery of the above priorities and sets out how the partnership will work together to stimulate activity across the Borough, focusing on those activities that add value because of being delivered in partnership.

Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 requires every Local Authority to have a Crime and Disorder Committee with the power to review, scrutinise, and make reports and recommendations regarding the functioning of the CSP. Under the scrutiny arrangements in place the Committee are asked to

consider the work of the CSP as outlined in the annual report attached at Appendix A and refer any comments or concerns to the partnership.

Mr Cannon was present at the meeting and summarised the report. Members welcomed this report and acknowledged the ongoing preventative work with Essex Police and other partners in tackling crime.

76. LDP member working group update

The Local Development Plan (LDP) Member Working Group is an established engagement between Officers and Councillors focussed on delivery of the Council's Local Plan and related work. Its purpose was approved by Policy, Projects and Resources Committee in September 2017.

The work of the working group is monitored by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee as part of the committee's work programme. This report provided Members with an update on the most recent meetings of the working group.

Members were asked to note the update provided in the report together with appendices.

77. 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 provided an update of the current scrutiny work programme and is set out in Appendix A.

In addition to this there were a number of matters to be considered by the committee as follows.

- Attached at appendix B was a request from Cllr Tim Barrett regarding a report on the progress of Motions made at Ordinary Council.
- Review of member representation on outside organisations.
- Members were aware that the Chair of the committee proposed that a review of the Council's Housing Repairs and Maintenance contractor, Axis, be undertaken and this has been added to the work programme. Members now need to be nominated to the working group so the meetings can be arranged.

Mr Summers presented the report.

Cllr Naylor **MOVED** and Cllr Haigh **SECONDED** a motion to add a further recommendation to the report:

“That the Minutes of the Brentwood Leisure Trust Working Group be reported at the following Audit & Scrutiny meetings”

A vote was taken by a show of hands it was **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY** to add the recommendation to the report.

Cllr Barratt, not a member of this Committee, thanked Members for accepting his report on the progress of Motions made at Ordinary Council.

Cllr Fulcher confirmed her attendance to form part of the Access Working Group alongside Cllrs Nolan and Tanner.

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

A vote was taken by a show of hands and Members **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

1. That the Committee considers and agrees the 2021/22 Scrutiny work programme as set out in Appendix A with the following additions:
 - A regular report on the progress of Motions presented at Ordinary Council.
 - A report on the review of member representation on outside organisations.
2. That the Minutes of the Brentwood Leisure Trust Working Group be reported at the following Audit & Scrutiny meetings.

Reason for Recommendation

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

78. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting concluded at 20:30

