

AUDIT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 20 JANUARY 2025

Present:

Councillor Christine Smith (Chair) (in the Chair)
Councillor David Cheetham (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Derrick Skinner

Councillor Martin E Thacker MBE JP

Also Present:

J Dethick	Director of Finance and Resources & (Section 151 Officer)
J Wells	Corporate Finance Manager / Deputy S151 Officer
J Williams	Head of Internal Audit Consortium
C Cattarall	Auditor
T Scott	Governance and Scrutiny Officer
J Collins	Engagement Lead - Forvis Mazars

AC/31 Apologies for Absence **/24-25**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Alex Dale.

AC/32 Declarations of Interest **/24-25**

Members were requested to declare the existence and nature of any disclosable pecuniary interest and/or other interest, not already on their register of interest, in any item on the agenda and withdraw from the meeting at the appropriate time.

No declarations of interest were made.

AC/33 Minutes of Last Meeting **/24-25**

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Audit Committee held on 30 September 2024 be approved.

AC/34 External Audit Progress Report - Verbal Update **/24-25**

The Engagement Lead of Forvis Mazars delivered a verbal update on the work being undertaken by the External Auditor in auditing the Council.

Members were informed that a special Audit Committee meeting had been scheduled for 26 February 2025 for the sign-off of the External Auditor's Audit Completion Report 2024/25.

Forvis Mazars were also carrying out an ongoing piece of work on pensions, because pensions had been identified as a liability for the Council.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

AC/35 **Internal Audit Progress Update**
/24-25

The Head of the Internal Audit Consortium presented a progress report in respect of the 2024/25 Internal Audit Plan.

Members discussed fraud and if Internal Audit were ever struggling to identify it. The Head of the Internal Audit Consortium explained that to counteract this, Internal Audit refreshed their schedule every time they carried out an audit.

Members discussed the Council's Agile Working Policy and asked if a Freedom of Information request had ever been made relating to it. The Director for Finance and Resources confirmed the Council had not received any.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

AC/36 **Global Internal Audit Standards**
/24-25

The Head of the Internal Audit Consortium presented a report to Members with the intention of making them aware of the Global Internal Audit Standards (GIAS), the CIPFA Application Note: Global Internal Audit Standards in the UK Public Sector Applicable from 1 April 25 and the CIPFA Consultation document Code of Practice for the Governance of Internal Audit (the Code).

In the context of these documents, the report aimed to ensure that the Committee understood its governance role in as set out in the new Code, and included an action plan to achieve full compliance with the GIAS and the Code.

Members discussed the part of Appendix 1 about an Internal Audit Plan, and referring to the paragraph which stated “consider coverage of information technology governance, fraud risk, the effectiveness of the organization’s compliance and ethics programs, and other high-risk areas,” asked if this could include cyber security. The Head of the Internal Audit Consortium explained that a cyber audit was due to be carried out in the current quarter.

Members agreed that they would like to add an additional recommendation to the recommendation in the report to note its contents, which was for the Audit Committee to add to its next annual Work Programme 2025/26 an update on all of the areas identified in the Appendix 4 Action Plan.

RESOLVED –

(1) That the report was noted.

(2) That the Audit Committee adds to its next annual Work Programme 2025/26 an update on all of the areas identified in the Appendix 4 Action Plan.

AC/37 **Treasury Management Training**
/24-25

The Corporate Finance Manager delivered a training presentation to Members on Treasury Management. The training included information on what

Treasury Management involved, the codes that must be followed, and the reports on it Audit Committee received.

RESOLVED – That the training presentation was noted.

AC/38 **Treasury Management Strategies 2025/26 - 2028/29**
/24-25

The Director of Finance and Resources presented a report to enable the Audit Committee to consider the attached treasury strategies prior to them being taken to Council for approval.

Members discussed the Government's devolution and Local Government reform white paper, and hoped the Committee would monitor any potential risks this could present to the Council.

RESOLVED – That the report was noted.

AC/39 **Proposed Accounting Policies 2024/25**
/24-25

The Director of Finance and Resources presented a report to approve the accounting policies for the current financial year in the preparation of the Statement of Accounts 2024/25.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the Audit Committee approved the Accounting Policies detailed at Appendix 1 to the report.
- (2) That the Audit Committee noted that any proposed amendments or changes to these policies will be reported back to this Committee, together with an explanation for the reasons a change is considered to be appropriate and detailing any financial implications of the amendments.

AC/40 **Work Programme 2024/25**
/24-25

The Director of Finance and Resources presented a report to enable the Audit Committee to approve the Work Programme for the municipal year 2024/25.

Based on their earlier discussions during the 'Treasury Management Strategies 2025/26 - 2028/29' agenda item, Members agreed to add an item to the 2024/25 draft Work Programme about the Government's devolution and Local Government reform white paper, to allow the Committee to monitor any potential risks this could present to the Council.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That an item be added to the 2024/25 draft Work Programme about the Government's devolution and Local Government reform white paper, to allow the Committee to monitor any potential risks this could present to the Council.
- (2) That the draft Work Programme 2024/25 be approved with this addition.

AC/41 Urgent Matters
/24-25

None.

AC/42 Exclusion of Public
/24-25

RESOLVED – That the public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of the following item of business to avoid the disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006).

AC/43 Risk Management Update
/24-25

The Director of Finance and Resources presented a report to update Members on the current position regarding Risk Management arrangements and the Strategic Risk Register as at January 2025.

RESOLVED – That the Audit Committee noted the report and Strategic Risk Register as at January 2025 as set out in Appendix 1.

AC/44 Date of Next Meeting
/24-25

The next meeting of the Audit Committee was scheduled to take place on 26 February 2025 at 3.00 pm.