

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Date and Time: Tuesday 23 March 2021 at 7.00 pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present:

Delaney, Makepeace-Browne (Chairman), Smith, Southern and Wildsmith

In attendance: Axam
Kevin Suter – Ernst & Young

Officers: Carpenter, Chapman and Foy

20 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2020 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillor Crookes.

22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations made.

23 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements.

24 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT 2020/21

The Committee was updated on Internal Audit work carried out between November 2020 and March 2021. The Audit Manager updated on current progress in Quarter 4, giving an idea of progress on the revised plan to take into account the Covid response and the impact in-house, the position on high risk issues and any outstanding issues, and where further work was needed.

Members considered:

- External contractors
- Target dates to be updated
- Capita contract – the service would be back in house as from 1 April.
- Plans for the Audit team in view of the retirement of the Audit Manager
- Additional support and mentoring for new staff

Members queried the cost of outside resources, and were reassured that this would be funded by the New Burdens fund from the government.

DECISION

That the Internal Audit work completed between November 2020 and March 2021 be noted.

25 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The Committee considered the Accounting Policies to be followed and complied with during the production of the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts.

Members discussed the outsourcing, its effectiveness and evaluation. The S151 Officer confirmed that the procurement regulations and contract standing orders had been recently updated, and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were tasked with considered KPIs and monitoring the performance of outside contracts. The Audit Manager added from an internal audit perspective the working relationship with Basingstoke was very positive.

DECISION

That the Accounting Policies be approved.

26 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2021/22

Members were asked to approve the Internal Audit Plan for 2021/22.

Members considered the plan, and the need to be flexible, especially in any response to issues around Covid, the work around business grants and ARG grants coming forward.

Members were informed that since the writing of the report joint working with Wokingham had been confirmed.

DECISION

That the Internal Audit Plan 2021/22 be approved.

27 ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

The Committee considered the 2019/20 Audit letter.

Kevin Suter, E&Y, summarised the findings after relative procedures were concluded. Issues highlighted included that the majority of the final fees had been agreed, and that this year's accounts timetable was being delivered by the deadlines.

Members queried property valuation, and were informed that this was revalued annually in March. It was suggested that, in view of the volatile markets and Covid issues, a review in six months may be needed because the market was so volatile and it was not known how Covid would affect these valuations.

The Chairman and Committee extended their thanks to the E&Y audit team, their support had been appreciated in a difficult year. The hard work of the audit and finance teams was also acknowledged, and good wishes were extended to the Audit Manager for his retirement.

DECISION

That the Annual Audit Letter for year ended 31 March 2020 be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.42 pm