

## AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT TO COUNCIL - 17 NOVEMBER 2020

Report of: Cllr McGarvey, Chairman of the Audit Committee

Status: For Consideration

### Introduction and Background

- 1 This is my report to the Council on the work of the Audit Committee since July 2020.
- 2 The Audit Committee is responsible for discharging the functions conferred by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. The key responsibilities include approving the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts, approving the Annual Governance Statement, approving the Annual Internal Audit Plan and monitoring and reviewing the work of Internal Audit, and reviewing the arrangements for the management of business risks.
- 3 In line with its Terms of Reference, the Audit Committee meets four times per year and has met twice (via Zoom) since the last report to Council. As Chair of the Committee, I have additionally held almost monthly briefings with Officers.  
Details of the range of issues considered by the Committee since the last report are set out below:

#### Internal Audit

Month	Issues considered:
July 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• External Quality Assessment</li><li>• Internal Audit Annual Opinion 2019/20</li><li>• Internal Audit Plan 2020/21</li><li>• Internal Audit Charter 2020</li></ul>
November 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Internal Audit Update Report</li></ul>

#### Governance, Risk & Anti-Fraud

Month	Issues considered:
July 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Annual Governance Statement 2019/20</li><li>• Counter Fraud and Compliance Report 2019/20</li><li>• Audit Committee Terms of Reference</li></ul>

- Review of the Effectiveness of the Audit Committee 2019/20

November 2020

- Counter Fraud Policies
- Strategic Risk Register
- Members' Allowance Scheme Monitoring 2019/20

### Accounts and External Audit

Month

Issues considered:

July 2020

- Statement of Accounts 2019/20 - Establishment of Member Working Group
- External Audit - Annual Audit Plan 2019/20

November 2020

- Statement of Accounts 2019/20

- 4 The Audit Committee maintains a constructive dialogue and effective working relationship with the Council's external auditors, Grant Thornton. The audit partner and/or audit manager from Grant Thornton attend the majority of the Audit Committee meetings during the year.
- 5 Training of Audit Committee Members is important to ensure that they can add value to the discussions at the Committee. A questionnaire has recently been sent to Audit Committee Members which will lead to a training programme to build on the training provided last year.
- 6 In addition to the core work of the Committee, a Member Working Group took place in August 2020 to review the draft Statement of Accounts. Its findings were reported back to the full Audit Committee at its meeting in November.
- 7 Fran Chivers commenced as the Audit Manager in May 2020. The recently restructured Internal Audit Service is now fully staffed and I expect Fran and the team will push on to deliver a service that continues to provide the Audit Committee with the assurances required to enable the Committee to operate effectively.
- 8 It is my opinion that the work of the Committee has had a positive impact on the overall control environment within the Council. The Committee has developed good working relationships with officers and External Audit, and has offered constructive comments on a range of issues. The Committee continues to develop and improve its understanding of the many technical issues presented to it.
- 9 I should like to thank all members of the Audit Committee for their personal contribution to the work of the Committee over the past year. I should also

like to thank Officers, in particular Adrian Rowbotham and Fran Chivers for the help and support they have given the Committee.

**Cllr Philip McGarvey**  
**Chairman of Audit Committee**