

AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT TO COUNCIL - 22 FEBRUARY 2022

Council - 22 February 2022

Report of: Cllr McGarvey, Chair of the Audit Committee

Status: For Consideration

Introduction and Background

- 1 This is our report to the Council on the work of the Audit Committee since Council last met in November 2021.
- 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 once since the last report to Council.
- 4 As Chair of the Committee, I have continued to hold monthly briefings with Officers.
- 5 Details of the range of issues considered by the Committee on 25 January are set out below:

Internal Audit

Date of Meeting	Agenda Items
January 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internal Audit Progress Report 2021/22

Governance, Risk & Anti-Fraud

Date of Meeting	Agenda Items
January 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Risk Management Strategy• Audit Committee Independent Members - Update

Accounts and External Audit

Date of Meeting	Agenda Items
January 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Future Appointment of External Auditors

- 6 The Audit Committee maintains a constructive dialogue and effective working relationship with the Council's external auditors, Grant Thornton.
- 7 Training of Audit Committee Members is important to ensure that they can add value to the discussions at the Committee. A Member Development Plan has been agreed by the Committee.
- 8 The 2020/21 Statement of Accounts are now due to be presented at the next Audit Committee in March. Recent correspondence has been received from DLUHC which highlighted the national issue regarding completing the accounts.
- 9 At the July Audit Committee, a report on having independent member(s) on the committee was discussed. It was agreed that the Chairman would attend Audit Committee meetings at other councils that have independent members and report back in January. An update was provided at the January Committee where Members *approved* recommending to Council the principle of recruiting Independent Member(s). A separate report is being presented at this Council meeting.
- 10 It is my opinion that the work of the Committee has a positive impact on the overall control environment within the Council and 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.
- 11 I thank all members of the Audit Committee for their personal contribution to the work of the Committee. I also thank Officers, in particular Adrian Rowbotham, Fran Chivers and Alan Michell, for the help and support they have given the Committee.
- 12 Fran Chivers, Audit Manager, left the Council in December to take on a role at the London Borough of Bromley and I am pleased to inform you that Jen Warrillow has been appointed as the new Audit Manager and is due to start on 21 February.

Cllr Philip McGarvey, Chairman, Audit Committee