

EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY (AUDIT AND VALUE FOR MONEY COUNCIL SERVICES) COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny (Audit and Value for Money Council Services) Committee held in the Main Hall, Town Hall on 24th June 2021 at 6.30pm.

Present:

Councillors P. Hudson (Chairman), L. Beech, Mrs B. Brady, A. Clarke, M. Fitzpatrick, S. Gaskin, Mrs V. J. Gould, R. G. Grosvenor, H. Hall and C. Sylvester.

Officers Present:

Sal Khan (Head of Service), Mark Rizk (Head of Service), Lisa Turner (Chief Accountant), James Abbott (Corporate and Commercial Manager), Simon Allaway (Leisure Services Contract Officer), Geoff Bagnall (Principal Accountant) and Monica Henchcliffe (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

Also Present:

Ruby Deo (Internal Auditors – CW Audit) and Michael Green and Sarah Jassel (External Auditor - Grant Thornton).

196/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at the commencement of the meeting.

197/21 MINUTES

Resolved:

That the Public Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny (Audit and Value for Money Council Services) Committee held on 24th March 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

Voting concerning the above decision was as follows:

Those voting for the motion	Those voting against	Those abstaining
Councillor L Beech		Councillor P Hudson
Councillor B Brady		
Councillor A Clarke		
Councillor M Fitzpatrick		
Councillor S Gaskin		
Councillor V J Gould		
Councillor R Grosvenor		
Councillor H Hall		
Councillor C Sylvester		

198/21 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business submitted to the meeting pursuant to Rule 12.

199/21 **EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN**

(Grant Thornton) The representative from Grant Thornton gave an overview of the planned scope and timing of their audit. A report outlining the consequences of their work, to discuss issues of risk, the concept of materiality with them, and to identify any areas to undertake additional procedures, was submitted prior to the meeting for Members consideration.

An opportunity for questions followed.

NOTED

200/21 **INFORMING THE AUDIT RISK ASSESSMENT**

(Grant Thornton) The representative from Grant Thornton gave an overview regarding the effective two-way communication between auditors and the Council's Audit Committee, as 'those charged with governance'. The report circulated prior to the meeting covered some important areas of the auditor risk assessment where they were required to make inquiries of the Audit Committee under auditing standards.

An opportunity for questions followed.

NOTED

201/21 **HEAD OF INTERNAL AUDIT OPINION REPORT 2020/2021**

(CW Audit) Internal Auditor (R. Deo) gave a short presentation on the annual report of Head of Internal Audit Opinion 2020/21 to East Staffordshire Borough Council summarising the activities of Internal Audit for the period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2021.

The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards required that the Head of Internal Audit provided a written report to those charged with governance, to support the Annual Governance Statement.

Members considered the opinion, together with management assurances, its own knowledge of the organisation and assurances received throughout the year from other review bodies when producing its Annual Governance Statement. A summary of the work the internal audit performed and delivered against the plan was provided in the report.

An opportunity for questions followed.

NOTED

201/21 **REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORT 2020/2021**

Members considered the report of the Chief Finance Officer in accord with the Council's financial regulations, presenting the forecast outturn position in relation to the Council's revenue budget, capital programme of expenditure and treasury management activities.

The Chief Accountant gave a short presentation on the third and fourth quarterly report in the annual cycle of financial monitoring for the financial year 2020/2021.

An opportunity for questions followed.

Councillor Grosvenor requested details in Appendix D, 20k carried over by Legal, relating to ongoing Member conduct investigations.

He requested details of how many investigations were covered, were the costs for independent investigators, or for legal expertise, and when was the figure established as a requirement to be carried over.

He requested information on how the figure of £20k was arrived at to be carried over.

Lisa Turner (Chief Accountant) informed Members that she would respond outside of the meeting.

NOTED

202/21 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2020/2021

The Principal Accountant presented the Annual Treasury Management Report providing a review of treasury activities during the year against the approved Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS). The Committee recommended to review the report and associated indicators and make any comments or observations to full Council as they may see fit.

An opportunity for questions followed.

The Committee noted the report and did not have any comments or observations for full Council.

Voting concerning the above decision was as follows:

Those voting for the motion	Those voting against	Those abstaining
Councillor L Beech	Councillor R Grosvenor	
Councillor B Brady		
Councillor A Clarke		
Councillor M Fitzpatrick		
Councillor S Gaskin		
Councillor V J Gould		
Councillor H Hall		
Councillor P Hudson		
Councillor C Sylvester		

203/21 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2020/2021

Members were requested to consider the Annual Governance Statement along with the supporting process to ensure they were independently reviewed and approved.

An opportunity for questions followed.

A proposal was put forward by Councillor P. Hudson (seconded by Councillor A. Clarke) to **approve** the statement.

NOTED

Voting concerning the above decision was as follows:

Those voting for the motion	Those voting against	Those abstaining
Councillor L Beech	Councillor R Grosvenor	
Councillor B Brady		
Councillor A Clarke		
Councillor M Fitzpatrick		
Councillor S Gaskin		
Councillor V J Gould		
Councillor H Hall		
Councillor P Hudson		
Councillor C Sylvester		

204/21 **PERFORMANCE REPORT – QUARTER 4**

The Report of Sal Khan, Head of Service, regarding the Quarter 4 performance was considered. The Corporate and Commercial Manager provided an overview of the report to the committee.

An opportunity for questions followed.

NOTED

205/21 **SCRUTINY REVIEW PROGRESS UPDATES**

The Corporate and Commercial Manager gave a brief update on the ‘live’ reviews being undertaken at present by the Committee.

NOTED

206/21 **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chairman requested that the Corporate and Commercial Manager provide an update at the next meeting of the Committee on the Scrutiny Work Programme.

NOTED

207/21 **PUBLIC EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORDS**

Members considered the Public Executive Decision Records.

An opportunity for questions followed.

NOTED

208/21 **QUESTIONS**

There were no questions submitted to the Committee prior to the meeting.

209/21 **DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

Resolved:

That the next meeting take place on Thursday 23rd September 2021 at 6.30pm.

210/20 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Resolved:

That, in accordance with Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the Press and Public be excluded from the Meeting during discussion of the following items as it would likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in brackets before each item number on the Agenda:

PRIVATE MINUTES

LEISURE SERVICES CONTRACTOR PERFORMANCE CONTRACT REPORT

PRIVATE EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORDS

Chairman