

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 23rd September 2021 at 6.30pm.

Present:

Councillors A. Clarke (Chairman), L. Beech, Mrs B. Brady, A. A. Chaudhry, M. Fitzpatrick, S. Gaskin, Mrs V. J. Gould, R. G. Grosvenor, T. Hadley, P. Hudson, S. McGarry and Mrs L. Walker.

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) and Monica Henchcliffe (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

Also Present:

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

Apologies for absence was received from Councillor C. Sylvester.

214/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor L. Beech declared an ordinary interest in the question asked from Councillor R. Grosvenor regarding Councillor Allen.

215/21 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Councillor C. Sylvester was appointed vice-chairman for the pursuing year.

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 T Hadley
Councillor Mrs B Brady		
Councillor A A Chaudhry		
Councillor A Clarke		
Councillor M Fitzpatrick		
Councillor S Gaskin		
Councillor V Gould		
Councillor T Hadley		
Councillor P Hudson		
Councillor S McGarry		
Councillor L Walker		

216/21 **MINUTES**

Resolved:

That the Public Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny (Audit and Value for Money Council Services) Committee held on 24th June 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 A Chaudhry
Councillor Mrs B Brady		Councillor T Hadley
Councillor A Clarke		Councillor S McGarry
Councillor M Fitzpatrick		Councillor L Walker
Councillor S Gaskin		
Councillor V Gould		
Councillor R Grosvenor		
Councillor P Hudson		

217/21 **URGENT BUSINESS**

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

218/21 **INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT**

((CW Audit) Internal Auditor (Ruby Deo) gave a report summarising the work of internal audit, outlining the progress against the audit plan, the key findings and conclusions arising from their work, details of planned work and to update the Committee on the progress made in implementing previously agreed recommendations.

An opportunity for questions followed.

Councillor R Grosvenor proposed that a vote of thanks be conveyed to Tim Ridout as Internal Auditor, who left the company, and also for all his work for East Staffordshire Borough Council over the past years.

The Committee also welcomed Mark Watkins as the new Internal Auditor (C W Audit).

NOTED

219/21 **EXTERNAL AUDIT FINDINGS**

(Grant Thornton) The representative from Grant Thornton updated Members on the external audit findings. The report, circulated with the agenda, highlighted the key matters arising from their audit of the Council's financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2021, and to report their audit findings to management and those charged with governance.

An opportunity for questions followed.

NOTED

220/21 **STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

The Chief Accountant gave a short presentation on the Statement of Accounts for 2020/21 following the work undertaken by the Council's external auditors, and requested that Members recommended their approval subject to any adjustments that may be necessary following the conclusion of the external auditors work and authority be delegated to the Chair to sign the accounts accordingly. Members were also asked to recommend the approval of the Letter of Representation, on behalf of the Authority.

An opportunity for questions followed.

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

Resolved:

That the Statutory Statement of Accounts for 2020/21 and the letter of representation, as appended to the report, are approved subject to any adjustments that may be necessary following the conclusion of the external auditors work and authority be delegated to the Chair to sign the accounts accordingly.

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 A Chaudhry		
Councillor A Clarke		
Councillor M Fitzpatrick		
Councillor S Gaskin		
Councillor V J Gould		
Councillor T Hadley		
Councillor P Hudson		
Councillor S McGarry		
Councillor L Walker		

An opportunity for questions followed.

NOTED

221/21 **REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORT – QUARTER 1**

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.

NOTED

222/21 PERFORMANCE REPORT – QUARTER 1

The Report of Sal Khan, Head of Service, regarding the Quarter 1 performance was considered. The Corporate and Commercial Manager provided an overview of the report to the committee.

An opportunity for questions followed.

NOTED

223/21 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Corporate and Commercial Manager gave a brief update on the ongoing reviews on the Scrutiny Work Programme.

He reported that:

1. Waste Management – close to completion, and would be aligned with the other review being undertaken by the other scrutiny committee.
2. Mayoralty – the review was ongoing and also close to completion.
3. Disabled Facilities Grants – the sub group had met and they envisage that the review would be completed by the end of the financial year.
4. ICT Infrastructure – this review should also be completed by the end of the financial year.

The Chairman requested consideration to Members joining the sub-groups due the Members being moved from the committee.

It was agreed that Councillors L. Beech and S. McGarry would join the Disabled Facilities Grants sub group and Councillor V. Gould would join the ICT sub-group.

NOTED

224/21 PUBLIC EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORDS

Members considered the Public Executive Decision Records.

An opportunity for questions followed.

NOTED

225/21 QUESTIONS

Two questions had been submitted prior to the meeting from Councillor R G W Grosvenor. A copy of the questions and the response are appended to these minutes.

226/21 **DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

Resolved:

That the next meeting take place on Thursday 18th November 2021 at 6.30pm.

227/20 **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