

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 a virtual environment on 24th March 2021 at 6.30pm.

Present:

Councillors C. Sylvester (Vice-Chairman), L. Beech, Mrs B. Brady, A. A. Chaudhry, A. Clarke, M. Fitzpatrick, D. F. Fletcher, S. Gaskin, R. G. Grosvenor, Mrs V. J. Gould, H. Hall and S. Sankey.

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:

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

177/21 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

178/21 **MINUTES**

Resolved:

That the Public Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny (Audit and Value for Money Council Services) Committee held on 11th February 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record, with the following amendments:

1. 169/21 – Councillor R. Grosvenor requested information in relation to the interest earned from funding provided by Central Government for the various COVID19 Grant Support packages to businesses and individuals being administered by the Council. Rather than the interest be swallowed up in the council's budget shortfall, he suggested that residents could have received extra council tax hardship support or more test and trace support. He suggested the cash should have been recycled instead of included in the Council's budget.

Sal Khan (Head of Service) informed Members that he would respond outside of the meeting.

2. 170/21 – Councillor S. Sankey requested that Members gave consideration to the review of the Disabled Facilities Grant at the next meeting.

Voting concerning the above decision was as follows:

Those voting for the motion	Those voting against	Those abstaining
Councillor L Beech		
Councillor B Brady		
Councillor A A Chaudhry		
Councillor A Clarke		
Councillor M Fitzpatrick		
Councillor D F Fletcher		
Councillor S Gaskin		
Councillor V J Gould		
Councillor R Grosvenor		
Councillor H Hall		
Councillor S Sankey		
Councillor C Sylvester		

179/21 **URGENT BUSINESS**

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

180/21 **ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2019/20**

(Grant Thornton) The Representative from Grant Thornton gave an overview regarding the annual external audit letter 2019/2020, summarising the key findings arising from their work carried out at the Council for the year end 31st March 2020.

An opportunity for questions followed.

NOTED

181/21 **EXTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE 2020/21**

(Grant Thornton) The representative from Grant Thornton gave an overview of the planned scope and timing of their audit. They outlined 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.

An opportunity for questions followed.

NOTED

182/21 **INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT**

(CW Audit) Internal Auditor (T. Ridout) 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.

NOTED

183/21 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2021/22

(CW Audit) Internal Auditor (R. Deo) gave a short presentation setting out the proposed plan of internal audit coverage for the period April 2021 to March 2022. The aim of the plan was to deliver a risk focussed audit programme, be proactive and forward looking, to add value and to provide assurance to management and the Audit Committee.

An opportunity for questions followed.

Resolved:

Members agreed to accept the plan.

184/21 REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORT 2020/2021 – QUARTER 3

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 quarterly report in the annual cycle of financial monitoring for the financial year 2020/2021.

An opportunity for questions followed.

Councillor A. Clarke enquired about forecasted pressure on the Waste Management budget by the hiring of an additional vehicle. Sal Khan (Head of Service) confirmed that he would circulate a response outside of the meeting.

NOTED

185/21 PERFORMANCE REPORT – QUARTER 3

The Report of Sal Khan, Head of Service, regarding the Quarter 3 performance was considered. The Corporate and Commercial Manager provided an overview of the report to the committee.

An opportunity for questions followed.

NOTED

186/21 SCRUTINY REVIEW PROGRESS UPDATES

The Corporate and Commercial Manager gave a brief update on the five 'live' reviews being undertaken at present by the Committee, namely:

- Digital Services – the final report was presented to the February meeting of the Cabinet.
- Leisure Centre Charges – the final report has now been completed and would be presented for approval in Part B.
- Waste Management – a joint meeting had been held with the sub-groups of the two scrutiny committees with the Waste Management team in attendance. A data gathering exercise had been undertaken, and a draft report would be circulated to the sub group as soon as possible.

- Council's IT Services – awaiting input from sub-group members in order to finalise the scoping paper.
- Mayoralty – in consultation with Councillor Grosvenor, a scoping paper had been drafted. Awaiting comments from the remaining sub-group members in order that the scoping paper could be finalised. It was noted that Councillor D. Fletcher would be joining the sub-group for this review.
- Disabled Facilities Grant – Members agreed to Councillor Sankey request that this topic be reviewed. The sub-group members would consist of Councillors A. Chaudhry, R. Grosvenor, H. Hall and S. Sankey,

NOTED

187/21 **OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

The Corporate and Commercial Manager updated the Committee on the Representations on Outside Bodies reports circulated with the agenda for Members information.

An opportunity for questions followed.

Councillor S. Sankey requested information on the CPRE organisation, as to whether they should be included as an outside body and involving the Council, as this was a lobbying organisation.

The Corporate and Commercial Manager informed Members that he would look into the matter and come back to the Committee accordingly.

NOTED

188/21 **PUBLIC EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORDS**

Members considered the Public Executive Decision Records.

An opportunity for questions followed.

NOTED

189/21 **QUESTIONS**

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

190/21 **DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

Resolved:

That the next meeting take place on Thursday 24th June 2021 at 6.30pm.

191/20 **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 CENTRECHARGES REVIEW FINAL REPORT

LEISURE SERVICES CONTRACT REPORT

PRIVATE EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORDS

Chairman