



Audit Committee

Date: Thursday, 11 November 2021

Time: 10:00

Venue: Council Chamber

Present: Councillor Mrs Ann McKerrell, Councillor Keith Meller, Councillor Mrs Linda Mitchell, Councillor Ms Lucy Patrick, Councillor Mrs Valerie Tarbitt

Also Present: Key Audit Partner / Director of Finance, Grant Thornton
Councillor Ellis: Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder

Officers: Corporate Director of Governance and Regulatory Services
Financial Services Manager (Deputy S.151)

AUC.54/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs Pamela Birks and the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources.

AUC.55/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest affecting the business to be transacted at the meeting.

AUC.56/21 PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED – That the Agenda be agreed as circulated.

AUC.57/21 EXTERNAL AUDIT FINDINGS REPORT

The Key Audit Partner presented the External Audit Findings Report. In relation to the Council's Value For Money (VFM) arrangements and the Key Audit Partner noted that there was a degree of work to be undertaken to complete this aspect of the audit which was subject to a number of challenging deadlines, it was anticipated that the work would be finalised by January 2022; the External Auditor had not had to exercise any of its additional statutory duties in respect of this part of the audit.

The Key Audit Partner summarised the section of the report relating to Valuation of Property, Plant, Equipment and Investment Property, and advised that a significant improvement had been seen in the valuations for which he commended the Council. There had been a material emphasis of matter including in the report regarding Land and Building Valuations material valuation uncertainty, however, the External Auditor's assessment was that the Council's management processes were appropriate.

The Financial Statements audit was complete and it was anticipated that work would be signed off the following day. Recommendations from the External Auditor were set out in Appendix A to the report with follow up action(s) detailed in Appendix B. The Key Audit Partner described the Council's overall audit position as good and he advised that an unqualified opinion had been issued; he extended his thanks to Officers in their assistance with the audit in what had been a challenging time.

A Member commented that there were a number of positives in the report, she was pleased that the important work relating to Valuation of Property, Plant, Equipment and Investment Property was resolved. She welcomed the unqualified opinion from the Key Audit Partner and thanked all those involved in the work to deliver the audit.

RESOLVED - That the Audit Committee welcomed the unqualified external audit opinion and looked forward to receiving the Value For Money audit opinion in due course.

AUC.58/21 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2020/21

The Financial Services Manager (Deputy S.151) reported (RD.45/210) that the audit process for the Council's Statement of Accounts 2020/21 had been delayed due to the lateness of the completion of the 2019/20 accounts. The audit of the Statement of Accounts for 2020/21 was substantially complete with the Auditors' Audit Findings Report (ISA260) having been considered earlier in the meeting. Following approval of that report, the External Auditors would issue their formal opinion and the audit process for 2020/21 would conclude. However, in accordance with Auditing Standards, a Letter of Representation (a copy of which was appended to the report) must also be considered and approved by the Audit Committee prior to the Audit Opinion being provided. Once approved by the Committee it would be signed by the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources on behalf of the City Council.

The Financial Services Manager noted that the audit had been conducted in a period of challenging circumstances for the team, he thanked the Key Audit Partner for his assistance in the process.

In conclusion, the Financial Services Manager requested that the Committee approve the Statement of Accounts 2020/21 including the Annual Governance Statement.

The Committee thanked the team for its work in the preparation and completion of the Statement of Accounts 2020/21.

RESOLVED - That the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts, including the Annual Governance Statement, be approved.

AUC.59/21 LETTER OF REPRESENTATION 2020/21

The Financial Services Manager (Deputy S.151) reported (RD.44/21) submitted the Letter of Representation 2020/21 which set out the adjustments made to the accounts and confirmed the Council's fulfilment of its auditing obligations. Members were asked to approve the Letter of Representation 2020/21.

RESOLVED – That the Audit Committee approved the Letter of Representation for 2020/21.

The Meeting ended at: 10:25