

<b>Minutes of</b>	<b>Governance Committee</b>
<b>Meeting date</b>	<b>Tuesday, 6 February 2024</b>
<b>Committee members present:</b>	Councillors Colin Sharples (Chair), Wesley Roberts (Vice-Chair), Damian Bretherton, Peter Gabbott, Pete Pillinger and Will King
<b>Officers present:</b>	Chris Moister (Director of Governance), Louise Mattinson (Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer), Jean Waddington (Principal Financial Accountant), Dawn Highton (Head of Audit & Risk), Jacqui Murray (Senior Auditor), Hollie Walmsley (Head of Human Resources) and Clare Gornall (Democratic and Member Services Officer)
<b>Other attendees (in person):</b>	Georgia Jones, External Auditor (Grant Thornton)
<b>Attending virtually:</b>	Councillor Kath Unsworth; and  Adam Nickson, Head of Property and Development
<b>Apologies:</b>	Councillor Mrs Margaret Smith and Councillor Ange Turner
<b>Public:</b>	0

A video recording of the public session of this meeting is available to view on [YouTube here](#)

### **35 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs Margaret Smith and Councillor Angela Turner.

It was noted that Councillor Will King was present as a substitute for Councillor Mrs Smith.

### **36 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **37 Minutes of the Last Meeting**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 28 November 2023 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

### 38 Internal Audit Progress Report

Jacqui Murray, Senior Auditor presented a report advising members of the work undertaken in respect of the Internal Audit Plan from September 2023 to December 2023 and to give an appraisal of the Internal Audit Service performance to date.

It was noted that the Internal Audit Reviews, Physical Security and Environmental Controls (Appendix C) and Driving Licence Checks (Appendix D) were given a "Limited" assurance rating and the Heads of Service were in attendance to answer questions from the Committee. The report detailed the relevant management actions and deadlines for implementation arising from the review.

Adam Nickson, Head of Property and Development, was asked about implementation of actions for Physical Security and Environmental Controls. He explained that they were just waiting for more quotes in order to be able work out costs, which should be in the next week or so. He reassured the Committee that the actions should be implemented as soon as possible.

**Resolved:** - That the position with regard to the Internal Audit Plan.

### 39 External Auditor's Report

Georgia Jones, External Auditor (Grant Thornton) presented the External Auditor's Annual Report 2022/23.

A question was asked about the Civica Property Assets Management System which had been recently introduced. It was agreed that written feedback would be provided after the meeting.

With regard to the key recommendations in respect of procurement (page 12), Chris Moister, Director of Governance explained that officers were looking to address under resourcing as part of a restructure and would be changing the approach to procurement in preparation for new legislation coming into force this year. He indicated that specialisms would be built into the team e.g. for ICT procurement. So far four posts had been filled and there was one outstanding vacancy (the manager post).

**Resolved:** That the Auditor's Annual Report 2022/23 be noted.

### 40 Final Audit Findings Report

Georgia Jones, External Auditor (Grant Thornton), presented the Final Audit Findings Report for year end 31 March 2023.

**Resolved:** That the report be noted.

### 41 Statement of Accounts 2022/23

Jean Waddington, Principal Financial Accountant, presented the final Statement of Accounts 2022/23, updating the Committee on the adjustments made to the accounts since 28 November 2023, following completion of the external audit by Grant Thornton.

Since 28 November 2023 Grant Thornton identified four adjustments required to the accounts which had been discussed with the Director of Finance and her team. These amendments had now been agreed and the 2022/23 accounts updated accordingly. The full list of adjustments were set out at paragraph 12 of the report and also at Appendix D of the Audit Findings Report.

**Resolved:** Further to the approval of the Draft 2022/23 Statement of Accounts at the Governance Committee on 28 November 2023, the Committee approve the statements which have been amended during the completion of the external audit to include the adjustments detailed in paragraph 12 of the report.

## 42 Risk Management Strategy

The Head of Audit and Risk, Dawn Highton presented a report requesting approval to a revised Risk Management Strategy which had been reviewed and updated to include the Council's risk appetite and escalation processes. The report indicated that the Strategy had last been updated and presented to the Committee in March 2021.

Following a member query, Dawn Highton indicated that the Corporate Risk Register is considered at Committee twice a year.

**Resolved:** That the revised Risk Management Strategy be approved.

Chair

Date