

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

1ST DECEMBER 2014 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: T L Onslow (Chairman), J A Hart (Vice-Chairman), J Holden, M B Kelly, B McFarland, J W Parish, J Phillips and C Rogers.

Observers:

Councillors: M J Stooke, P Wooldridge and M J Wrench.

AUD.20 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor L Hyde.

AUD.21 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor B McFarland was appointed as a substitute for Councillor L Hyde.

AUD.22 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

AUD.23 Minutes

Agreed: The minutes of the meeting held on 29th September 2014 be confirmed as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

AUD.24 Audit Update

The Committee received the Audit Update report from Grant Thornton.

Members were taken through the report and advised that the 2013/14 audit had been completed. The 2013/14 Housing and Council Tax Benefits audit had also been completed and a detailed report would be presented to the next meeting of the Audit Committee. The work had been qualified. It was pointed out to Members that part of the audit process had been set by Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) and there had not been many benefit claims not qualified for authorities across the country.

Agreed: The report be noted.

AUD.25 Annual Audit Letter and Audit Opinion

The Committee received the Annual Audit Letter and Audit Opinion from Grant Thornton.

Members were informed that the audit has been clean and efficient and Grant Thornton were pleased with the Council's resilience. There were very challenging times ahead for the Council and he reiterated that reserves should be protected. He congratulated the Finance team and stated that the Council were in a good place moving forward but had a challenging future.

Agreed: The report be noted.

AUD.26 Internal Audit Monitoring Report Quarter Ended 30th September 2014

The Committee received a report from the Principal Auditor that informed Members of the Internal Audit Monitoring Report for the quarter ended 30th September 2014.

Members were taken through the report and the Principal Auditor and advised of a change in presentation. The Principal Auditor reported that four audit reports had been finalised with three at a level of Some assurance.

In response to a Member query, the Principal Auditor advised that the small difference that had been identified in the Council Tax Reconciliations for 2013/14 had been £238 and this was due to the timing and differences at month end. She pointed out that the way cash was collected was now different resulting in changes to the reconciliation procedure which had been addressed as part of the 2014 reviews.

With regard to a previous Payroll Audit for 2013/14, the overall conclusion had been to give it a "limited" assurance level, this had related to the establishment including employees and this had been done on spreadsheets. However, Human Resources were part of an implementation team working to introduce an electronic database known as HR21 which will provide complete establishment records. In the meantime Internal Audit had performed full cross checks of the establishment using the accountancy pay estimates and this had been satisfactory, therefore the assurance level had improved to "some".

Members were informed that payroll services were provided by Redditch Borough Council & Bromsgrove District Council with Human Resources services being provided by Worcestershire County Council. It was hoped that going forward the new software developments would ease some of the processes and not so many audit days would have to be spent on the system, but the system would be closely monitored also including continuation of to cross checking.

In response to a Member question with regard to Worcestershire Regulatory Service debtors, the Chief Financial Officer advised that a member of the Audit Team attended regular meeting of the Finance Intervention working groups and this area was currently being reviewed.

Agenda Item No. 4

Agreed: The Internal Audit Monitoring Report for the Quarter ended 30th September 2014 as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report to the Audit Committee be considered.

The meeting ended at 6.23 pm.