

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY,
KIDDERMINSTER**

21ST MARCH 2016 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: J Phillips (Chairman), T A Muir (Vice-Chairman), P Dyke, A T Hingley and J D Smith.

AUD.18 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

AUD.19 Appointment of Substitutes

There were no appointments of substitutes.

AUD.20 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

AUD.21 Minutes

Agreed: The minutes of the meeting held on 30th November 2015 be confirmed as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

AUD.22 Audit Update

The Committee considered a report from Grant Thornton which updated Members on the progress made in delivering their responsibilities as the Council's external auditors.

The Manager, Zoe Thomas, led Members through the report and outlined the progress made. In response to a question regarding the increasingly important role Members play in ensuring good governance and effective management of change and risk, the Associate Director, Richard Percival assured Members that they would receive appropriate training and support from both Council Officers and the External Auditors.

Agreed: The update be noted.

AUD.23 Certification Report

The Committee received a report from Grant Thornton on the certification work for year ended 31st March 2015. Richard Percival presented the report and advised that no significant matters had been raised during the audit.

Agreed: The report be noted.

AUD.24 Informing the Audit Risk Assessment

The Committee received a report from Grant Thornton which informed the audit risk assessment for the Council.

Zoe Thomas led Members through the report and was assured by the responses received from the Authority's management. The Chairman thanked the Auditors for the huge amount of work which had gone into producing the report.

Agreed: The report be noted.

AUD.25 Grant Thornton – The Audit Plan for Wyre Forest District Council

The Committee received a report from Grant Thornton on the Audit Plan for the Council. Richard Percival presented the report and advised that the plan set out an overview of the planned scope and timing of the audit.

The Members were led in depth through the report and advised that the audit findings would be presented to the Audit Committee in September 2016.

Agreed: The report be noted.

AUD.26 Presentation on the Accelerated Accounts Closedown

The Committee received a presentation from the Finance Manager on the accelerated accounts closedown.

The presentation set out the various steps involved in the approval and publication of the final accounts. Members were advised the acceleration of the accounts closedown would cut 2 months out of the process, and would be achieved by taking the volume out of the year end process. The roles of the Finance Team, budget holders and External Auditors in achieving this was outlined, and the importance of having full co-operation and continuous input from Senior Managers was emphasised.

Richard Percival advised that the Council had a good track record of reconciling their accounts and had built up a strong working partnership with Grant Thornton.

Agreed: The presentation be noted.

AUD.27 Internal Audit – Annual Audit Plan 2016/17

The Committee received a report from the Section 151 Officer and the Audit Manager which informed Members of the Internal Audit – Annual Audit Plan 2016-17, which had been prepared in accordance with the UK Public Sector Internal Audit Standards as endorsed by the Audit Committee on 2nd December 2013.

Members were led through the report and advised that the areas in the plan had been identified by an objective risk assessment and the Section 151 Officer had discussed the plan with the Corporate Leadership Team for their requirements for the forthcoming year.

Agreed:

- 1. The Internal Audit – Annual Audit Plan 2016-17, set out as Appendix 1 of the report, be approved.**
- 2. Approve that the Chief Financial Officer as Section 151 may amend the plan in consultation with the Audit Manager in light of developments arising during the year as described in paragraph 3.6 of the report.**

AUD.28 Internal Audit Monitoring Report Quarter Ended 31st December 2015

The Committee received a report from the Audit Manager which informed Members of the work undertaken by the Internal Audit Team in the quarter ended 31st December 2015.

Members were advised that since November 2015, the Corporate Apprenticeship fund had provided the resource for an Internal Audit Apprentice which was proving to be a very valuable asset to the team.

Agreed: The Internal Audit Monitoring Reepport for the quarter ended 31st December 2015, as set out in the appendix to the report, be noted.

AUD.29 Annual Governance Statement

The Committee received a report from the Chief Financial Officer which presented the current position in relation to the action plan which had been developed to address the issues identified within the 2014/15 Annual Governance Statement.

Members were led through the report and considered each page of the action plan in turn. It was noted that the newly created Corporate Fraud Investigator/Corporate Debt Recovery Offier was proving very effective.

Agreed: The progress against the Annual Government Statement Action Plan 2014/15, as set out at Appendix 1 of the report, be approved.

AUD.30 Risk Management

The Committee considered a report from Chief Financial Officer which informed Members of the current Corporate Risk Register and the Budget Risk Matrix.

The Chief Financial Officer led Members through the report and appendices. It was noted that the Council had done well with the savings programme however there were challenging times ahead.

Agreed: The Corporate Risk Register and the associated mitigating actions as at 31st January 2016 and the 2016/19 Budget Risk Matrix be noted.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7.07pm.