

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY,
KIDDERMINSTER

28TH NOVEMBER 2016 (6.00PM)

Present:

Councillors: A T Hingley (Chairman), S J Chambers, S Miah, T L Onslow,
C Rogers and J A Shaw.

AUD.23 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

AUD.24 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor N J Desmond attended as an observer.

AUD.25 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

AUD.26 Minutes

Agreed: The minutes of the meeting held on 26th September 2016 be confirmed as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman announced that she had recently attended a Grant Thornton Members' Governance Training session hosted by Redditch Borough Council, which she found very useful and informative. She suggested that it would be beneficial for the Committee Members if a training session could be incorporated into the work programme as it was important to ensure that Members were fully appraised on their governance role particularly as the Council was moving towards new ways of working.

AUD.27 Audit Update

The Committee received a report from Grant Thornton which provided an update on the progress in delivering their responsibilities as the Council's external auditors for the year ended 31st March 2017.

Zoe Thomas, Manager, Grant Thornton advised that work on the Final Accounts Audit was scheduled to be completed by the end of July 2017 as part of the transition to the earlier closedown and audit cycle from 2018. In relation to the Grant Claims Audit, there were no significant matters to report at the present time.

Agreed: The update be noted.

AUD.28 Annual Audit Letter and Audit Opinion

The Committee received the Annual Audit Letter from Grant Thornton for the year ended 31st March 2016.

Richard Percival, Engagement Lead, Grant Thornton, advised that the authority had produced a good set of accounts which reflected the acknowledgement of the scale of the financial challenge in future years and plans were being put in place to respond effectively.

Agreed: The report be noted.

AUD.29 Audit Charter Update

The Committee received a report from the Chief Financial Officer and the Audit Manager which informed Members of the updates to the Internal Audit Charter in compliance with the UK Public Sector Internal Audit Standards {UKPSIAS} as revised from April 2016.

The Audit Manager led Members through the report and outlined the proposed revisions. Members were advised that compliance with the UK Public Sector Internal Audit Standards were a requirement of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

The Chairman complimented Officers on the revised document which was appropriate for the changing times the authority was moving into and asked the Committee to support the recommendation.

Agreed: The updated Internal Audit Charter as attached at Appendix 1 of the report be approved.

AUD.30 Internal Audit Monitoring Report Quarter Ended 30th September 2016

The Committee received a report from the Audit Manager which informed Members of the Internal Audit Monitoring Report for the quarter ended 30th September 2016.

The Audit Manager led Members through the report and a discussion ensued. Members welcomed the consultancy work undertaken by the team, in particular the involvement in the Council's Wyre Forest Forward Systems Thinking reviews, as it was important that key controls were not compromised as part of any proposed system changes.

Agreed: The Internal Audit Monitoring Report for Quarter ended 30th September 2016 as detailed in the appendix of the report be noted.

The Solicitor to the Committee, Richard Percival and Zoe Thomas from Grant Thornton, left the meeting at this point, (6.29pm).

AUD.31 Appointment of External Auditors

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Financial Officer which set out the new arrangements for the appointment of external auditors, following the demise of the Audit Commission.

The Chief Financial Officer led Members through the report and advised that the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 required authorities to either opt into the appointing person regime or to establish an auditor panel.

A discussion ensued and a Member stated that being part of a national scheme would maintain the Council's high integrity in this area and asked that the recommendation be supported. Members agreed that it would be more cost effective and produce better outcomes for the Council to opt into the appointing arrangements than undertaking its own procurement.

Agreed: Recommend to Council:

Wyre Forest District Council opts in to the appointing person arrangements made by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) for the appointment of external auditors for 5 years commencing from 2018/19.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 6.50pm.