

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE

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

27 SEPTEMBER 2023 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: N J Desmond (Chairman), A Sutton (Vice-Chairman), J F Byng, G Connolly, K Gale, J Griffiths, M Rayner and P W M Young.

AUD.22 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

AUD.23 Appointment of Substitutes

No substitutes were appointed.

AUD.24 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

AUD.25 Minutes

Agreed: The minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2023 be confirmed as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

AUD.26 Sector Update

Apologies had been received from the Director GT and the Audit Manager GT attended in her place. The Committee received a verbal report from the Audit Manager GT, who explained there was no detailed Sector Report, as the contract is coming to an end and it is hoped that sign off of the financial statements will be completed this week. The opportunity was given for members to ask questions.

AUD.27 Audit Findings Report 2022-23

The Committee received a report from the Audit Manager GT presenting the observations arising from the audit that are significant to the responsibility of those charged with governance to oversee the financial reporting process and which informs the process for the audited accounts. Two key areas were highlighted by the Audit Manager GT – the Pension Fund, and how it is managed; and Property, Plant and Equipment, which had not yet been finalised but should be complete by the end of this week. She also thanked the team at WFDC for their support in progressing the audit, which had gone well.

The Committee considered the report and were given the opportunity to ask

questions to which the Audit Manager GT, Principal Accountant and the Head of Resources and S151 Officer were able to provide responses.

Agreed: The report be noted.

AUD.28 Final Accounts 2022-23

The Committee considered a report, which presented the changes that have been required to the Pre-Audit Statement of Accounts for 2022-23, so far, as a result of the ongoing audit undertaken by Grant Thornton UK LLP, and provided an update on the current status of the external audit work. Members also considered an updated version of the Letter of Representation to the auditors, draft wording attached at Appendix 1 of the report.

The Head of Resources and S151 Officer and Principal Accountant presented the report to the Committee, along with additional pages which had been sent out electronically, and which detailed minor changes to the accounts since the Committee had considered the draft accounts at the meeting in July.

The Committee discussed the report and the Head of Resources and S151 Officer and the Principal Accountant were able to provide verbal responses to their questions on the Final Accounts 2022-23.

Agreed: The Audit Committee DECIDED that:

- 2.1 The Audited Statement of Accounts for 2022-23 are approved and authorised the Head of Resources and s151 Officer to make any minor changes that are appropriate as part of resolution of the final external audit queries should this be necessary.**
- 2.2 The draft Letter of Representation for 2022-23 attached at Appendix 1 is approved. They also authorised the s151 Officer (Head of Resources), and the Chair of the Audit Committee to make any minor changes that are appropriate as part of the resolution of the final external audit queries should this be necessary.**

AUD.29 Risk Management – Corporate Risk Register progress update

The Committee considered a report on the current Corporate Risk Register, which informed members of an update of progress against actions and the Budget Risk Matrix attached as Appendices 1 and 3.

The Head of Resources and S151 Officer presented the report and highlighted key areas to be noted. Members were then given the opportunity to ask questions and were satisfied with the responses the Head of Resources and S151 Officer provided.

Agreed: The Audit Committee CONSIDERED AND NOTED the Corporate Risk Register and the associated mitigating actions as at 31st July 2023 and the 2023-26 Budget Risk Matrix.

AUD.30 Internal Audit Resourcing

The Committee received a verbal report from the Head of Resources and S151 Officer, and she was able to confirm good progress had been made with the procurement process to provide continuity for the internal audit. There had been 3 good applicants and the 2-year contract has been offered to BDO.

The Head of Resources and S151 Officer received questions from members, who welcomed the news that the procurement had been successful, and the framework had delivered the resource required.

Agreed: The verbal report be noted.

AUD.31 Counter Fraud Arrangements 2023-24

The Committee considered a report on Counter Fraud Arrangements 2022-23, which updated Members on the Counter Fraud arrangements in place for 2022~23 and into 2023~24.

The Audit Manager presented the annual report which continues to raise awareness, drawing out the outcomes in respect of the response to fraudulent activity around cyber-crime and meeting the mandatory National Fraud Initiative, with , the Fraud Response Plan and Strategy for Dealing with Theft, Fraud and Corruption as reminders of corporate documents in place.

The Committee were invited to ask questions and the Head of Resources and S151 Officer and Audit Manager provided verbal responses.

Agreed: The Audit Committee CONSIDERED and NOTED the report on the counter fraud arrangements within the Council.

AUD.32 Internal Audit Position Statement as at 30th September 2023

The Committee received a report from the Audit Manager to update them on work completed by Internal Audit as a contribution towards the completion of the approved 2023~24 Internal Audit Plan.

The Audit Manager presented her last report to the Committee prior to her retirement at the end of the month, which detailed the progress against the Audit Plan 2023-24 to date, including the special projects she has undertaken in the last 3 months.

The Committee were offered the opportunity to ask questions.

The Chairman thanked the Audit Manager for her dedicated service over 33 years, and for all her hard work and dedication. The Committee is grateful that she is leaving the Audit department in a very healthy position.

Agreed: The Audit Committee CONSIDERED the outline of work completed by Internal Audit as a contribution against the approved 2023~24 Internal Audit Plan.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7.10pm.