

Chairman - Councillor A M Loughran

Present (for all or part of the meeting):-

Councillors:

I D Fordham

R A James

E G R Jones

P W Jones

Also present:- Cabinet Member - Councillor R M Smith - Deputy Leader  
and Resources Portfolio

Officers in attendance:-

Mrs J Aupers	-	Head of Governance
Mr P Kendrick	-	Head of Technology
Mr J Dean	-	Democratic Services Officer
Mr A Hussain	-	Audit Manager, Grant Thornton

#### **AAC8 Minutes**

Minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2021, as previously circulated,  
were agreed as a correct record.

#### **AAC9 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M G Dodson  
(substituted by Councillor E G R Jones) and J A Nixon.

#### **AAC10 Internal Audit Progress Report - September 2021**

Considered the report of the Chief Internal Auditor and Risk Manager  
presenting for information a progress report on the work of Internal Audit  
up to 30 September 2021.

The Head of Governance provided a summary of the audits issued  
between 1 April 2021 and 30 September 2021 whilst acknowledging the  
continued impact of the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic.

Continuing, the audits completed to date were outlined, with the detail as  
set out in appendix 2 of the report noted.

Arising from consideration of the report specific reference was made to:-

- Percentage of plan completed to date
- Audit of Tree Management
- Leisure Contract key issues
- Cloud strategy and security update

On conclusion of the debate Members voted on the recommendation as set out, which was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee:-

(a) the report be noted;

(b) Members concerns regarding the Tree Management Audit be passed to the Head of Operations.

#### **AAC11 Verbal Update from the Head of Technology**

The Head of Technology attended the meeting as requested by Members at last meeting of the Committee.

Mr Kendrick appraised Members of those items previously identified as having partial assurance or being of high risk, namely:-

- IT systems set up outside of Technology shared service area;
- Provision of anti-virus software on all Council owned laptops;
- Use of 'own' PC when working from home

Continuing, Members sought clarification of a number of related IT issues, including:-

- Disposal of redundant IT equipment
- Network security protocols
- The risks associated with the use of personal IT equipment

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee the comments of the Head of Technology be noted.

Councillor Loughran thanked the Head of Technology for attending the meeting and providing the necessary detailed information as requested by the Committee.

## **AAC12 Stafford Borough Council Audit Progress Report and Sector Update**

Considered the report of Grant Thornton outlining progress in delivering those responsibilities of the External Auditors and providing a summary of emerging national issues and developments relevant to the Council.

Mr Aamar Hussain led Members through the report and in particular referred to:-

- Details of progress as at November 2021;
- Results of Audit Work to date, namely:-

Management override of controls  
Valuation of land and buildings (ppe)  
Valuation of the net defined benefit pension liability  
Other areas  
Value for money

- Audit Deliverables

Members were afforded the opportunity to raise any questions arising from consideration of the report, to which Mr Hussain responded accordingly.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee the Audit Progress Report and Sector Update for the ended 31 March 2021 be received.

## **AAC13 Informing the Audit Risk Assessment for Stafford Borough Council 2020/21**

Considered the report of Grant Thornton detailing important areas of the auditor risk assessment submitted to the Audit and Accounts Committee as required by the auditing standards.

Mr Aamar Hussain summarised the report for the benefit of Members and reported there were no areas of concern contained within or significant changes requiring specific actions.

Members were given the opportunity to raise any matters arising from consideration of the report, to which Mr Hussain responded appropriately, with specific reference made to the accounting for and disclosure of related party transactions and relationships (as detailed on page 45 of the agenda).

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee the Audit Risk Assessment for the Council for 2020/21 be received.

Councillor Loughran thanked Mr Hussain for attending the meeting and guiding Members through the associated reports.

#### **AAC14 Appointment of External Auditors**

Considered the report of the Head of Governance to determine whether to opt into the national scheme for external auditor appointments from April 2023.

The Head of Governance highlighted paragraph 3.1 of the report for Member's attention.

The Committee duly voted on the recommendation as set out, which was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee it be recommended Council approve the opting-in to the national scheme for external auditor appointments from April 2023 at its meeting on 23 November 2021.

#### **AAC15 Annual RIPA Review**

Considered the report of the Head of Law and Administration providing details of the use of powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) by the Council.

Members subsequently voted on the recommendation as set out, which was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee the report be noted.

CHAIR