

Cherwell District Council

Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee held at Virtual meeting, on 20 January 2021 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Mike Kerford-Byrnes (Chairman)
Councillor Hugo Brown (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Hannah Banfield
Councillor Conrad Copeland
Councillor Tom Wallis
Councillor Sean Woodcock
Councillor Barry Wood

Substitute Members:

Councillor Barry Wood (for Councillor Mawer)

Also Present:

Councillor Tony Illott; Lead Member for Financial Management and Governance
Maria Grindley, Associate Partner, Ernst & Young (external audit)
Sue Gill, Ernst & Young (external audit)

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Nathan Bignell
Councillor Nicholas Mawer

Officers:

Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer
Anita Bradley, Director Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance
Sarah Cox, Chief Internal Auditor
Gillian Douglas, Assistant Director: Social Care Commissioning and Housing
Ian Dyson, Assistant Chief Finance Officer
Rob Ducker, Senior Investigation Officer
Joanne Kaye, Strategic Business Partner
Shaista Moughal, Strategic Business Partner
Sharon Hickson, Democratic and Elections Officer

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

44 **Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

45 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18 November 2020 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

46 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no chairman's announcements.

47 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

48 **Progress of Counter Fraud Service**

The Senior Investigation Officer – Corporate Fraud submitted a report which provided an overview of the current progress of the Authority's counter fraud response following the delegation of authority in July 2018 to Oxford City Council.

Resolved

- (1) That the current performance of the work of the Corporate Fraud team be noted.
- (2) That the future work plans as described and the impact that this will have on future performance and income to the authority be noted.

49 **Internal Audit 2020/21 Progress Report**

The Director of Finance submitted a report which presented the Internal Audit Progress for 2020/21.

The Chief Internal Auditor highlighted the significant reduction of outstanding management actions for 2018/19 and 2019/20, informing Members that the remaining outstanding actions would continue to be reviewed and followed up with senior management.

The Chief Internal Auditor and Assistant Director Social Care Commissioning and Housing responded to all questions regarding the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) Processes 2020/21 raised by the Committee. The Committee

requested updates to be given at future meeting on the progress on the new Disabled Adaptations Policy currently being drafted.

Resolved

- (1) That the progress with the 2020/21 Internal Audit Plan and the outcome of the completed audits be noted
- (2) That, having given due consideration the recommended best practice within CIPFA Audit Committee Guidance (2018) and additions to the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee work programme be agreed.

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Capital, Investment and Treasury Management Strategies 2021-22

The Director of Finance submitted a report which presented the draft Capital and Investment Strategy and the Treasury Management Strategy for 2021-22.

The Assistant Director Finance provided an overview of each strategy and proposed changes within:

Capital Strategy;	table 1, correction of column heading dates. mitigation table, alteration of text in upward only rent reviews to rent reviews to maximise income.
Investment Strategy;	paragraph B3.5, additional bullet point. paragraph B5.4, be removed.

Resolved

- (1) That, subject to the inclusion of the amendments, full Council be recommended to adopt the draft Treasury Management Strategies 2021-2022.

51

2019/20 Accounts

The Director of Finance advised the Committee that due to uncertainty of whether a revised set of accounts would be available for the meeting this item has been listed as a verbal update on the agenda. A written report had subsequently been submitted requesting that the Committee consider changes to be incorporated to the draft statement of accounts.

The Director of Finance highlighted the most significant change, which was due to the adjustment of an asset and it now being classed as a different type of asset which meant it had a different valuation.

Ernst & Young, the council's external auditor updated members on the status of the audit, advising that two areas requiring third party responses remained before the audit could be completed.

Resolved

- (1) That the Statement of Accounts 2019/20 be endorsed and once the final audit opinion was received the Director of Finance (S151 Officer), in consultation with the Chairman of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee (or Vice Chairman in case the Chairman was unavailable) be authorised to sign the accounts and it be noted that if any material changes to the accounts were required, then an additional committee meeting would be convened to consider the changes.
- (2) That it be agreed that the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Chairman of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee (or Vice Chairman in their absence), can make any further changes to the letters of representation that may arise during completion of the audit.

52 **Work Programme**

The Committee considered the workplan for the coming year.

Resolved

- (1) That the work programme be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.38 pm

Chairman:

Date: