

Cherwell District Council

Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4AA, on 28 September 2022 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Donna Ford (Chairman)

Councillor Patrick Clarke
Councillor Andrew Crichton
Councillor Ian Middleton
Councillor Chris Pruden
Councillor Sean Woodcock
Councillor Barry Wood

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Hugo Brown

Also Present:

Councillor Adam Nell, Portfolio Holder for Finance

Also Present (virtual)

Maria Grindley, Audit Partner, Ernst & Young (External Audit)
Alison Kennett, Audit Manager, Ernst & Young (External Audit)

Officers:

Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance & S151 Officer
Joanne Kaye, Strategic Finance Business Partner
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

Officers (virtual)

Sarah Cox, Chief Internal Auditor
Celia Prado-Teeling, Interim Assistant Director Customer Focus
Liam Semugabi, Interim Democratic Services Officer

28 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

30 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27 July 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

31 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chair announced that there would be a Fraud Awareness training session directly after the conclusion of the committee meeting.

32 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

33 **External Audit - Audit Planning Report 2021/22**

The Assistant Director submitted a report which set out the External Audit Planning Report for 2021/22. The report was duly presented by the Audit Manager (External Audit).

In response to comments from the Committee regarding delays on the part of External Audit to starting the audit of the council's accounts, the Audit Partner (Eternal Audit) explained that there had been delays with the previous year's accounts which had an impact on scheduled. The council's Finance Team had worked hard to respond to all queries and the timing of the audit was agreed between the External Auditor and the Assistant Director of Finance. The Audit Manager confirmed that the Committee would be kept updated on the timetable.

Resolved

- (1) That the External Audit Planning Report for 2021/22 from our External Auditors, Ernst & Young (EY) be noted.

34 **August 2022 Risk Monitoring Report**

The Interim Assistant Director submitted a report which summarised the Councils Risk monitoring position of August 2022.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked officers for the revised report format which separated that risk aspects of the report. In response to

comments regarding the poor accessibility of the appendix, the Assistant Director Customer Focus advised that the format was under review.

In response to Members' questions regarding Business Continuity and Graven Hill, the Assistant Director Customer Focus undertook to liaise with the lead officers and update the Committee accordingly.

Resolved

- (1) That, having given due consideration, the Risk Monitoring report be noted.

35 **Treasury Management Report - April to August 2022**

The Assistant Director and the Strategic Finance Business partner submitted a report which provided an update on Treasury Management performance and compliance from April to August 2022 as required by the Treasury Management Code of Practice.

In response to Members' questions regarding whether the changes in interest rates were reflected in the report, the Strategic Finance Business Partner confirmed that a forecast had been released by the council's treasury advisers and the plan would be adapted to minimise risk moving forward.

Resolved

- (1) That the Treasury Management Report be noted.

36 **Internal Audit Progress Report 2022/23**

The Assistant Director presented an update on Internal Audit Progress for 2022/23.

Resolved

- (1) That the progress with the 2022/23 Internal Audit Plan and the outcome of the completed audits be noted.

37 **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Report 2021/22**

The Interim Monitoring Officer submitted a report which presented the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Annual Report for Cherwell District Council for the financial year 2021/22.

Resolved

- (1) That, having due consideration, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Annual Review of Cherwell District Council for 2021/22 be noted.

38 **Work Programme**

The Strategic Finance Business Partner provided a Work Programme update and confirmed that the Committee's meetings with the Chief Internal Auditor and External Auditor would be held in private at the conclusion of the next meeting, 16 November 2022.

Resolved

- (1) That the work programme update be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.25 pm

Chairman:

Date: