

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Audit and Governance Committee** held in the Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, NG24 1BY on Wednesday, 22 November 2023 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor P Harris (Chair)
Councillor S Forde (Vice-Chair)

Councillor S Crosby, Councillor A Freeman, Councillor S Haynes,
Councillor J Kellas, Councillor J Lee, Councillor C Penny, Councillor
M Shakeshaft and Councillor T Thompson

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor R Cozens, Councillor S Michael and Mr C Richardson (Non-Voting Co-Optee)

31 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

That no Member or Officer declared any interest pursuant to any statutory requirement in any matter discussed or voted upon at the meeting.

32 NOTIFICATION TO THOSE PRESENT THAT THE MEETING WILL BE RECORDED AND STREAMED ONLINE

Other than the Council recording in accordance with usual practice, there were no declarations of intention to record the meeting.

33 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 SEPTEMBER 2023

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

34 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT 2023/24

The Committee considered the report from the Business Manager for Financial Services providing a summary of Internal Audit work undertaken during 2023/24 against the agreed audit plan.

The Internal Auditors TIAA's representative Amanda Blakey was present at the meeting providing progress made and any changes to the plan. The report provided details of all reports issued within the first part of the financial year 2023/24.

Progress against the Annual Plan included Key Control Testing, Payroll, Grant Fund Spend and Administration and Contractual relationship with Active4Today.

AGREED (unanimously) that Members considered and commented upon the latest internal audit progress report and noted its content.

35 TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR REPORT 2023/24

The Committee considered the report from the Assistant Business Manager for

Financial Services providing an update on the Council's Treasury Activity and Prudential Indicators for the first half of 2023/24.

The mid-year report was in compliance with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management, providing:

- An economic update for the first part of the 2023/24 financial year;
- A review of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy;
- The Council's capital expenditure, as set out in the Capital Strategy, and prudential indicators;
- A review of the Council's investment portfolio for 2023/24;
- A review of the Council's borrowing strategy for 2023/24;
- A review of any debt rescheduling undertaken during 2023/24;
- A review of compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits for 2023/24.

Councillor Lee highlighted in the report the referral to scrutiny as part of the primary requirements of the Code of Practice:

- Delegation by the Council of the role of scrutiny of treasury management strategy and policies to a specific named body. For this Council the delegated body is the Audit and Governance Committee.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) the Treasury Management activity be noted and recommended to Full Council on 12 December; and
- b) the Prudential Indicators detailed in Section 6 & 7 of the report were noted.

36 COUNTER-FRAUD ACTIVITIES FROM 1 APRIL 2023 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

The Committee considered the report from the Business Manager for Financial Services informing Members of counter-fraud activity undertaken since the last update reported on 14 June 2023.

The report explained how an element of the Audit and Governance Committee was to provide assurance to the Council that its anti-fraud arrangements were operating effectively. Therefore counter-fraud activity reports are brought to the Committee twice a year showing the number of cases detected, amounts lost, the outcome of cases and amounts recovered, as well as any other counter-fraud that has taken place.

A table was provided providing progress of the Fraud Risk Register against the identified actions last reported to the Committee in June 2023.

The Chairman suggested an interim update report be provided for Members.

AGREED (unanimously) that Members noted the report.

37 STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT

The Committee considered the report from the Safety and Risk Manager providing an update on the status of the Council's 2023/24 Strategic Risk Register.

The Safety and Risk Manager reminded the Committee that an update is provided on a 6 monthly basis having last received an update in April.

A table in the report provided the current risk scores and their location and risk score travel since last reported to the Audit & Governance Committee and within the agreed corporate risk matrix.

The Committee were advised that a risk workshop is expected to take place in January 2024. The workshop will lead SLT through the regional, national and international issues that may impact on the likelihood of new risks developing. SLT will then review all the current risks to ensure they are still applicable to the Council and will identify any additional emerging risks that will need to be added to the register.

The Safety and Risk Manager informed Members that a new register is to be devised, to go live in April for the 2024-25 register.

AGREED (unanimously) that Members noted the content of the report and highlighted any issues of concern.

38 HOUSING GAS COMPLIANCE

The Committee considered the update provided at the meeting by the Business Manager for Housing Maintenance & Asset Management on behalf of the Director of Housing, Health and Wellbeing for Housing Gas Compliance received as a verbal item.

The Committee were informed that currently there was a breach of 26 properties with no current gas certificate with a legal injunction taken out on 13 and waiting on another 13.

99.58% of all properties with gas have a valid certificate, meetings take place monthly with the Regulator and a written report to be taken to the next Audit & Governance Committee.

The Committee were informed that 3 attempted visits are taken out as part of the legal process to gain access before an injunction is requested.

AGREED (unanimously) that Members noted the verbal update.

39 CONSTITUTION UPDATE - PUBLIC SPEAKING AT PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Committee considered the report from the Assistant Director Legal & Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer seeking the Committee's endorsement of updates to the Council's Constitution to enable Planning Committee to revise the Council's Protocol for Dealing with Planning Matters to allow for public speaking at Planning Committee.

The report advised that the Audit & Governance Committee is asked to consider

recommending that Full Council approve some minor amendments to the Council's Constitution to approve the principle of public speaking. It will be for the Planning Committee to finalise arrangements and, if adopted, keep them under review.

The Appendix to the report showed the proposed amendments to the Constitution as tracked changes.

AGREED by 9 Members of the Committee and 1 against that the report be recommended to Full Council that the Council's Constitution is amended as set out in paragraphs 2.2 to 2.4 of the report to enable Planning Committee to make provision for public speaking.

40 MEMBER TRAINING

The Committee considered the Member Training update provided by the Assistant Director Legal & Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer as a verbal item.

This verbal update followed the update from the last meeting, with further information to follow including an annual training programme.

It was noted that all Committee Members have been invited to a Treasury Management and Investment Strategies Workshop on 5 December 2023.

AGREED (unanimously) that Members noted the verbal update.

41 AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

The Committee considered the joint report of the Assistant Director Legal & Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer and the Business Manager for Financial Services which attached the Committee's Work Plan for consideration.

The Committee were concerned that additional reports proposed could result in the agenda for the meeting being too heavy to allow for sufficient consideration of each item. .

It was also noted that the LGA Newark and Sherwood District Council Cyber 360 Report, is to be updated for every agenda, rather than annually as listed on the current work plan.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Work Plan be noted.

42 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Audit & Governance Committee meeting to be held on Wednesday 21 February 2024.

Meeting closed at 7.00 pm.

Chairman