

Audit and Standards Committee

Monday, 14 October 2019

2.00 pm

Oak Room, County Buildings, Stafford

John Tradewell
Director of Corporate Services
4 October 2019

A G E N D A

1. **Apologies**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Minutes of the meeting held on 30 July 2019** (Pages 1 - 12)
4. **Local Government Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Investigation resulting in a Formal Report** (Pages 13 - 26)
Report of the Director of Health and Care
5. **Report to those Charged with Governance (ISA 260)** (To Follow)
Report of Ernst & Young
6. **Annual Audit Letter 2018/19** (To Follow)
Report of Ernst & Young
7. **Code of Conduct** (Pages 27 - 52)
Report of the Director of Corporate Services (Monitoring Officer)
8. **National Fraud Initiative (NFI) 2018 - Update** (Pages 53 - 66)
Report of the County Treasurer
9. **Forward Plan** (Pages 67 - 78)
10. **Exclusion of the Public**

The Chairman to move:

“That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972 as indicated below

PART TWO

(reports in this section are exempt)

11. **Exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 30 July 2019** (Pages 79 - 84)
12. **SEND Joint Inspection - Initial Review - Final Position Statement 2019/20** (Pages 85 - 100)

Report of the County Treasurer
13. **Update on Cyber Security Essentials Audit** (Pages 101 - 104)

Report of the Director of Corporate Services
14. **Prisons and Approved Premises Assessment and Care Management - Special Investigation Update** (Pages 105 - 138)

Report of the Director of Health and Care
15. **Questions arising from reports circulated outside the Agenda**
 - a) Review Requested by the Chair of the Committee - Fixed Assets Register, Substantial Assurance

Verbal Report of the County Treasurer

Membership

Derek Davis, OBE	Jill Hood
Michael Greatorex	Paul Northcott
Martyn Tittley (Chairman)	Susan Woodward
Colin Greatorex	Alastair Little
Carolyn Trowbridge (Vice-Chairman)	Ann Edgeller
Ross Ward	Jonathan Price
Bernard Williams	David Williams
Victoria Wilson	

Note for Members of the Press and Public

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Recording (including by the use of social media) by the Press and Public is permitted from the public seating area provided it does not, in the opinion of the chairman, disrupt the meeting.

Minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee Meeting held on 30 July 2019

Present: Martyn Tittley (Chairman)

Attendance

Derek Davis, OBE	Victoria Wilson
Michael Greatorex	Paul Northcott
Colin Greatorex	Susan Woodward
Carolyn Trowbridge (Vice-Chairman)	Jonathan Price
Ross Ward	David Williams
Bernard Williams	

Also in attendance: Lisa Andrews, Rob Salmon, Ann-Marie Davidson, John Tradewell, Debbie Harris and Stephen Clark (Ernst & Young, External Auditors).

In attendance (part meeting): Melanie Stokes (Item 6b); James Bailey and David Walters (Items 8 and 11); Stephen Broughton (Item 12); Andrew Jepps and Bev Jocelyn (Item 13); Bronya Jeffries (Item 14).

Apologies: Jill Hood, Alastair Little and Ann Edgeller

PART ONE

90. Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 June 2019

RESOLVED – The Director of Corporate Services agreed to verify with the Leader of the Opposition the accuracy of the statement that ‘no other local authority’ had been able to comply with the Regulations in respect of Deprivation of Liberty Standards’.

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2019 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

91. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

92. Annual Governance Statement 2018-19

The interim Head of Audit and Financial Services asked Members to approve the Annual Governance Statement 2018-19 which forms part of the Annual Accounts and is overseen by the external auditor. Following approval by the Audit and Standards Committee, the Statement was required to be signed off by the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council.

The Statement followed the same format as in 2017-18. It had been prepared in line with guidance issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy

(CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE). The document described what the Council was responsible for; the aim of the governance framework; the governance framework; a review of how effective the Council's governance framework is and significant governance issues. Annex 1 to the Statement reproduced "The Annual Review of the Effectiveness of the Governance Framework including the system of internal control – 2018-19".

Details of the way in which the Annual Governance Statement had been prepared were detailed in the report. Six key questions had been agreed and approved by the Corporate Governance Group to act as a guide on what constituted a **significant** governance issue to inform the completion of the 2018-19 statement. These were detailed in paragraph 7 of the Statement.

Details were given of the arrangements for monitoring and evaluation of the Statement. The annual review of effectiveness was explained and attached to the Statement. This explained the key governance issues and actions taken to complete them against the Code of Corporate Governance and Annual Review. Some governance issues in the 2017-18 Statement were ongoing and had been carried forward into the 2018-19 Statement. The interim Chief Internal Auditor's Annual Report had given an adequate assurance opinion on the overall control environment and this had been reported to the June meeting of the Committee. An unqualified opinion had been given by the external auditor in 2017-18. The external auditor had indicated their intention to give a qualified opinion by exception, based on the SEND Ofsted report that had been received in November 2018.

As reported to the Committee as part of the Annual Outturn Report the Council has an effective system of internal audit; during 2018-19 the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Finance Officer have not had to use their official powers; the Council has effective processes in place and scrutiny arrangements that reflected the Council's key priorities; Children's Services maintained a 'Good' rating from Ofsted; there was positive feedback regarding the Council's governance processes from the Peer Challenge in September 2018; an Action Plan in regard to SEND had been put in place and would be overseen by the Families Strategic Partnership Board; the Audit and Standards Committee had received an Annual Report on the management of elected member related complaints and 'unconscious bias' training had been arranged for Members. Moving forward detailed Member Code of Conduct reports would be included where appropriate. Finally, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman did uphold a complaint regarding the management of the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards.

The remainder of the report highlighted the key elements of the Governance Framework and the principles, statutory obligations and organisational objectives were described on a 'Single Sheet'. The key roles of those responsible for developing and maintaining the framework were described. These reiterated management and employee compliance. The key governance matters in 2017-18 and actions taken were described and were listed on pages 51-54. The ten key governance issues for 2018-19 were summarised and were listed on pages 55-56.

Members asked if the Corporate Governance Group was happy with the progress being made regarding AGS 1-5, in particular the transformation of Children's Services "ongoing" (AGS 4) and questioned the pace in regard to the digital road map (AGS 6) as

there was no sign of any material projects for Members to see. The interim Head of Audit and Financial Services responded that positive responses had been received from the individual Lead Officers, including the Chief Executive. Digital was a key enabler in the Council's Corporate Strategy and would continue to be monitored and actions taken where necessary.

Members asked if the Council had adequate capacity and capability to deliver transformational change (AGS 5), given the reference to "issue of capacity" identified last year, on page 27 of the report. Given further reductions in staffing this would give less flexibility to make transformational change. Members asked how focussed the organisation was on the issue of capacity. The Director of Corporate Services responded that the Council must live within its means. He added that the issues raised were not capacity issues. The work regarding Digital was ongoing. A great deal had been achieved with the roll out of Office 365, the improvements to the Council's website; the introduction of agile working and the Council was now switching off some of its phone services as the online service was available. Transformation was ongoing.

In regard to Children's Services, the place-based approach had led to some overall successes and the number of children coming into the care system had more or less stabilised. The main issue was the numbers coming into the 'higher end' of care which was costlier.

The issue regarding SEND was in regard to demand. He stated that it was important to work closely with parents and schools to enable them to understand why it was important that pupils remained in mainstream education and how they would be supported in that system. It may be necessary to inject extra capacity into SEND in order to deliver the transformation.

The Leader of the Opposition stated that the SEND Ofsted report had come as a surprise to herself and others and she had concerns that a reduction in capacity across the whole system may mean that there may be other issues that the Council is not currently aware of that may become significant cost pressures. The Chairman reminded Members that the Committee had written to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People last year expressing concerns regarding SEND.

RESOLVED – That the report be approved.

93. Statement of Accounts 2018-19

The County Treasurer introduced the Statement of Accounts 2018-19. He explained that the Accounts were signed on time and he expected an audit opinion that would meet the deadline. He reminded Members that the sign off of the Accounts' deadline had been brought forward to 31 May for the second year and this meant that the Council had to produce the accounts for sign off by 31 July, whereas the production of accounts had previously been 30 September. This impacted on the whole Finance and Audit Teams and the deadline clashed with other accounting deadlines in the public sector. This year the Accounts had been further complicated because of the number of notional adjustments that the Council had been required to make. There had been changes to the rules, one of which impacted on notional adjustments. Specifically, the McCloud judgement Court Case that had not been concluded until the end of June/early July after

the Accounts had been prepared, and this meant that the accounts had to be redone. The County Treasurer also drew Members' attention to the capacity of the Council to deliver. The external audit had produced some areas for improvement that the Team would be working with the external auditors to address. Finally, the County Treasurer drew Members' attention to the external auditors' Value for Money opinion judgement in regard to the SEND Ofsted position.

a) Training Session - Understanding the Statement of Accounts

The Corporate Finance Manager gave a presentation on Understanding the Statement of Accounts.

The background to the presentation of the Statement of Accounts to Members of the Audit and Standards Committee was that the Council is required to approve the Statement of Accounts in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the Chairman of the relevant Committee (the Audit and Standards Committee) was required to sign and date the accounts.

The Statement of Accounts were the formal accounts of the Council and showed what the Council's services cost in the year of the account, where the Council's income comes from and what the Council's assets and liabilities were at the year-end. The Accounts must cover the period 1 April 2018-31 March 2019 and must be drafted by 31 May and finalised and audited by 31 July. During the period from 31 May to 31 July they are open to a six-week period of public inspection (3 June – 12 July), by any member of the public, Members, employees and other interested parties.

The Accounts had been prepared according to a range of principles and practices and governed by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting and had to be signed off by the responsible financial officer (the County Treasurer) who was responsible for agreeing that the Accounts presented a 'true and fair view'. The external auditors, Ernst & Young, were appointed independently of the Council, by the Public Sector Audit Appointments. The main accounting principles to note were materiality (gross expenditure over £1bn) and accruals (to ensure that all income and expenditure is included in the year to which it relates). Notional transactions may take place. This meant that no cash was leaving or being received by the Council for those transactions, but an amount needed to be included in the financial statement to comply with the financial regulations.

There were four main sections to the accounts. The narrative statement provided an overview of the financial position. The accounting policies were the rules used in the preparation of accounts. There were four main financial statements followed by 47 notes and finally, the Pension Fund accounts. A comprehensive income and expenditure statement was included that reported the net costs for services for the year (2018/19) and the principal sources of financing (amounts to be funded from taxation) to give the net surplus/deficit for the year.

The Accounts showed a net deficit on provision of services is £16.8m. This was because of the number of notional transactions and represented a smaller deficit than in 2017/18. The main points to note were the net cost of services were less than 2017/18, in line with MTFs expectations. There has been an increased loss on disposal of school

assets due to the number of schools transferring to academies (a notional transaction). The net pensions liability was slightly larger due to the impact of the McCloud judgement and other assumptions made by the actuary. The McCloud judgement came about following a recent Court case where an individual complained about age discrimination in pension transition arrangements. The Government had accepted the judgement of the Court but because of the recent nature of this case local authorities have not been able to quantify the financial impact across the public sectors. The actuary had predicted an increase in the pension liability for Staffordshire of £11.2m. Finally, the Accounts showed an increase in income due to additional Council tax and capital grants being received in 2018/19.

An explanation was given of Prior Period Adjustments. These were required where there had been either a change in accounting policies, only made through changes in accounting practices, or where material errors had been found. Changes had been made retrospectively by amending opening balances and comparative accounts. During the 2017/18 accounts it was found that there were timing differences in the disposal of school assets when the school converted to academy status. This was reported to the Committee last year. An exercise had been undertaken to cleanse the data in the asset register and ensure assets were disposed of in the correct financial year and a prior period adjustment had been made to ensure all disposals were shown in the correct year. This was a notional adjustment and had not had an impact on reserves or cash balances.

The balance sheet summarised the Council's financial position for the year indicated by the value of its assets less its liabilities (£89.4m), the level of balances and reserves at its disposal and its reserves (usable and unusable). The impact of the McCloud judgement was a small percentage of the pension liability (a totally hypothetical figure) which had increased from £947.9m to £1,128.2m. There had been an increase in cash and short-term investments at the year end to ensure liquidity around Brexit.

In total the Council's usable reserves had increased by £67.0m. General balances were now at £30.4m. This level would be reviewed as part of the MTFS process. Schools' reserves had decreased by £1.4m. The Movement in Reserves Statement showed more detail on changes to the reserves during the year.

Details of the Pension Fund are given on pages 175-212 of the papers. These were separate accounts for which the County Council was the administering authority. The pension fund accounts must be included in the County Council's Statement of Accounts and had increased in value by 7.4% during 2018/19. There had been a net increase in the fund value of £353.3m. The Pension Fund also produced its own Annual Report.

b) Statement of Accounts 2018-19

Members asked for an explanation of the treatment of the transformational payments on page 62 of the report. The Corporate Finance Manager stated that the Council has used the flexibility given to it by the Secretary of State to use capital receipts to capitalise transformational spend (£13m). Separately the Council had transferred £5m to the exit and transition fund as part of the one-off funding required by the MTFS report in February.

Members asked for an explanation of the rate of the Lender Option Borrower Option (LOBO) as compared with borrowing from government. The Head of Treasury and Pensions explained that the Council had a portfolio of loans that cost an average interest rate of around 4% p.a. When the LOBO loans were taken out the Council always made sure that the structure of the loan at the back end was around the PWLB (Public Works Loan Board) rate and at the time this was 4.5%. There would be some loans that are less than the PWLB at the time they were taken out. There was a profit to be made at the time the Council borrowed them but given where interest rates are currently they are more expensive than where the market could borrow them today. However, to get out of them there would be a large penalty, so it made financial sense to leave them as they were.

Members asked if the Council charged a handling fee for managing education endowments and trust funds. The Head of Treasury and Pensions explained that in the main the Council did not charge a handling fee. Some were land only and if a fee was charged for these small endowments or trust funds they would have no income to pay for such charges.

Members stated that they observed that Reserves had increased at a time when services had been cut and this may appear inconsistent to local residents. The County Treasurer explained that pages 63-64 set out details regarding the movement of reserves. A variety of funding was received for capital schemes, but if the Council did not deliver on those schemes, the money was carried forward. In respect of international standards, the Council was required to recalculate the way in which we charge out those loans, so there was a windfall benefit in the first instance as a consequence, that then gets charged out over the next 30 years. The reserve is a mechanism to equalise this. Balances went up by the amount of the underspend £3.5m. on the general fund.

Members asked about the unpaid debt with Stoke City Council, and the amount owed to the Council from Entrust of £0.9m (page 147) and asked when these debts would be repaid. The Corporate Finance Manager stated that the debt with Stoke City Council was historic and went back to 1997. Stoke City Council do pay the costs of servicing that debt and they paid it off over time. The debt with Entrust just represented a snapshot as at 31 March 2019.

Note by Clerk: The external audit of the draft statement of accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019 has not yet been completed by the external auditors, EY LLP, due to a small number of audit procedures still due to be concluded upon. This situation is allowed for by Regulation 10, paragraph (2a) of the [Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015](#). Therefore, this notification explains, as per paragraph (2a), that the County Council are not yet able to publish their audited 2018/19 final statement of accounts in line with deadline of 31st July 2019, as per paragraph (1). The accounts published on the Council's website are those being audited and once the audit opinion is received the final audited accounts will be published.

RESOLVED – a) That Members approve the 2018/19 Statement of Accounts b) that Members approve the letters of representation from the County Treasurer c) that Members delegate authority to the County Treasurer and the Chairman to make any final amendments to the accounts as deemed necessary by the external auditors.

94. Report of those charged with governance (ISA 260)

Stephen Clark introduced the two reports from Ernst & Young.

a) Staffordshire County Council

Stephen Clark, Ernst & Young referred Members to the Executive Summary in the draft audit results report, specifically to the changes in materiality and adjustments and reporting an extension to the scope of the work regarding pensions following the McCloud judgement and the impact of Guaranteed Minimum Pensions. The effect was summarised in the Audit Differences on page 243 of the papers. He stated that he hoped to be able to sign off the Accounts by close of play on 31 July 2019.

Turning to the areas of Audit Focus, Ernst & Young had completed their audit regarding Capital Receipts Flexibility and had no concerns. The auditors had no concerns regarding Misstatements due to Fraud or Error. In respect of Valuation of Land and Buildings, there had been some challenges last year regarding schools' recognition assets. This has led to a prior adjustment this year.

In regard to Pension Liability Valuation, this continued to be an area of Audit Focus. Ernst & Young were happy with the local authority's adjustments which showed a relatively large movement of £23,443m. There were two financial reporting standards, IFRS 9 – Financial instruments and IFRS 15 – Revenue contracts with customers. Ernst & Young were happy with the Council's assessment in respect of both standards. In regard to the Accounting for the PFI scheme – there were no adjustments to report.

Moving on to Audit Differences, Ernst & Young were happy with the adjustments made, and the number of minor disclosure adjustment changes. There was one adjustment that the Council had not made of £1.3m in respect of a buildings' valuation. Ernst & Young were happy that this was not material and that no adjustment had been made.

In regard to Value for Money Risks, three key risks had been identified by the external auditors.

Ernst & Young were satisfied that the Council had put in place adequate arrangements in place to address the risks in regard to the MTFs.

In relation to working with partners and third parties, the external auditors had concluded that they were satisfied with the establishment of Nexxus Care to deliver reablement, provider of last resort and home care services.

However, the Council had received a joint Ofsted and CQC report in January 2019 on SEND service provision. The external auditors acknowledged the work being done to address the significant weaknesses identified in the report but offered a qualified opinion in this area and hoped that this would be removed in due course.

Ernst & Young concluded that they were happy with 'Other reporting issues' and continued to work with the County Treasurer and his team on the control environment to look to how these might be improved.

Members asked if the £25.4m reclassification adjustment referred to in the Audit Differences and the creditor and debtor value being increased by £1.05m should have been picked up by the Finance Team or external audit. Ernst & Young explained that in ideal world this should have been the case, however the area of disposals was particularly challenging. This related to the issue of disposals of schools' assets referred to in last year's report and a prior period adjustment had to be made and the auditors had to confirm that it had been done in the right period.

Members asked what the £1.3m buildings valuation related to and asked why it was not in the report. Ernst & Young responded that there had been an error in the valuation basis. The County Treasurer explained that this was as a result of human error in that the wrong index had been used to calculate the valuation. This was materially insignificant, and it had been decided not to adjust the figure. He stated that he would ensure that this did not happen again.

Members raised concerns regarding the comments made in regard to partnership working and asked for Ernst & Young's suggestions as to how the Council could ensure that proper governance arrangements and visibility was in place. Ernst & Young stated that in regard to the joint Ofsted and CQC report regarding SEND, many other local authorities had received similar judgements and the way in which Ofsted and the CQC had based their inspections had changed, so schools could move from a judgement of 'Outstanding' to 'Requires Improvement' rapidly. SEND partnership working was complicated in that it involved the local authority, Clinical Commissioning Groups and schools, some over which the authority had relatively little direct control, but for which the Council were still statutorily responsible. His view was that the strength of the partnership depended on the strength of the partners. He concluded that the external auditors had seen the SEND action plans and they seemed timely and appropriate. The challenge would be bringing the partners to the table.

The Chairman thanked Ernst & Young for their report and the County Treasurer and his team for their efforts.

RESOLVED – That the report be approved.

b) Staffordshire Pension Fund

Stephen Clark, Ernst & Young stated that the external auditors key focus for the audit of the Pension Fund's financial statements had identified two risks regarding the risk of manipulation of investment income and assets and valuation of unquoted investments. Other areas of key focus included the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Asset Pooling Arrangements and Ernst and Young and they were happy with the basis for the management of these funds.

Members asked if the £4.2m misclassification between Contributions Receivable and Investment Income in the Pension Fund Account had been identified during the year or by the external auditors. This misclassification had been identified during the audit.

RESOLVED: That the report be accepted.

95. Forward Plan

The interim Head of Audit and Financial Services asked Members to note that the 9 March 2020 meeting had been rearranged and would now take place on 20 April 2020 to consider the Internal Audit Plan for 2020-2021.

The next meeting was scheduled to take place on 14 October and every effort would be made to ensure that it took place within the allotted time.

The Chairman stated that SEND was very important and should be on the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED - The Forward Plan was received.

96. Infrastructure+ Risk Management

The Commissioner for Highways and the Built County gave an update on how risk was managed within the Infrastructure+ strategic partnership contract and asked Members to consider whether additional measures would be beneficial in ensuring risk was adequately managed. The background to this was the collapse of Carillion that had highlighted the risks of public sector infrastructure projects, including the financial health of principal contractors.

Infrastructure+ was a 10-year overarching agreement between Staffordshire County Council and Amey LG providing an outcome focused approach to the delivery of highway and non-property infrastructure services across Staffordshire. The contract went live on 1 October 2014 and since this time had successfully delivered £150m of highway operations and projects; achieved over £30m of front-line service cost savings and implemented over £100m of inward investment highway and transport infrastructure improvements to support the creation of over 10,000 new jobs and 8,500 new houses across Staffordshire. The core element of the Infrastructure+ partnership was the Term Service Contract for maintenance, management and improvement of over 6,300Kms of highway network.

The Governance Framework operated at three tiers: The Strategic Partnership Board (SPB) involving Directors, Cabinet Members and the County Treasurer; the Operational Commissioning Board, of which he was a member, and Delivery Project Teams and Outcome Groups (made up of operational managers). The representation on these groups was described. In regard to the Risk Management, details were given at Appendix 2 of the report. This was periodically reviewed and updated. Infrastructure+ Risk Registers were regularly reviewed and updated. Individual call-off contracts had their own specific risk registers.

A significant risk had been identified (PR0015) relating to the financial stability of Amey, particularly considering the recent, now resolved, dispute with Birmingham City Council and the announcement that Amey was also to be included in parent company Ferrovial's sale of its services business. This risk was identified in the Council's risk register and was regularly monitored. Additionally, these risks were minimised by payments only being made for completed works or goods received; closely monitoring Amey's company accounts in terms of Amey's credit rating and supply chain payment

performance to provide early warning of insolvency risks; and suitable Business Continuity Plans being in place. The SPB had requested that operating manuals be developed that set out the necessary step-by-step Business Continuity Plan in the event of Amey becoming insolvent.

Members stated that they found the measures taken reassuring and emphasised the reputational risk, stating that all Councillors had the interface with customers. They asked how customer satisfaction and the impact on reputational risk was managed. Furthermore, they asked if Amey's financial plans were robust. The Customer Outcomes Group (COG), that included eight local Members, was responsible for managing customer satisfaction and reputational risk. In addition, results of MORI national highways and satisfaction survey, and customer satisfaction surveys were taken into account and these were fed into the COG, and issues were addressed, and concerns mitigated.

Members asked if the drive for value for money and greater efficiencies had caused the collapse of Carillion. The Commissioner for Highways and the Built County stated that Carillion was working in the high-risk PFI market. The Council were operating a service contract and were paying regularly. The Council were monitoring Amey's financial health and had collaborative arrangements in place with them.

Members asked if Amey was up for sale and what contingency arrangements were in place if Amey suddenly went into administration. The Commissioner responded that Amey was up for sale as part of the Ferrovial's business decision. The Council had business continuity plans in place to support business critical decisions. If Amey went into administration, the expectation would be that the administrator would continue to operate the contract until an alternative buyer could be found. Amey's staff could be TUPE transferred back in-house and the contract could continue to be operated in this way for a short period. Alternatively, if a large construction contract was halfway through, the site could be mothballed to ensure that services were safe and secure until an alternative provider could be found. Budget contingency was built into those schemes to allow for this eventuality.

Members asked if the contract could be brought back in-house. The Commissioner explained that this could happen as the contract was flexible and this could be done on a short or long-term basis.

RESOLVED: The report was received.

97. Exclusion of the Public

The Chairman to move:-

"That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972 as indicated below".

98. Infrastructure+ Quality & Management Systems and Financial Compliance - Final Audit Report

Report of the County Treasurer
(Exemption paragraph 3)

99. Deputyships - Final Audit Report

Report of the County Treasurer
(Exemption paragraph 3)

100. Brokerage: Non-Residential Pathway - Final Audit Report

Report of the County Treasurer
(Exemption paragraph 3)

101. My HR System Security - Final Audit Report

Report of the County Treasurer
(Exemption paragraph 3)

**102. Financial Assessments and Property (Follow up of Recommendations) -
Final Audit Report**

Report of the County Treasurer
(Exemption paragraph 3)

103. Questions arising from reports circulated outside the Agenda

Report of County Treasurer
(Exemption paragraph 3)

- a) Cyber Assurance – Patch Management Final Report
- b) Cyber Assurance – Data Breach Incidents and Response Plans
- c) Commercial Services – Procurement Final Report
- d) Liberata Payroll System Audit Report

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Local Members Interest
N/A

Audit and Standards Committee - Monday 14 October 2019

Local Government Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Investigation resulting in a Formal Report

Recommendation

- a. Following the recommendations made within the Formal Report of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman dated August 2019, it was agreed that the report should not only be agreed by Cabinet (on 16 October 2019) but would also be considered by the Audit and Standards Committee.

Report of the Director of Health and Care

Reasons for Recommendations:

1. During 2019 the LGSCO launched several investigations in relation to the care and support provided to a citizen who has mental health and physical health problems.
2. This lady was the subject of previous recommendations from the LGSCO after delays in completing a Care Act assessment last autumn. Two recommendations, that were accepted, were that the Chief Executive would write to apologise for the distress caused and provide compensation of £500. The apology and payment were made through MPFT but unfortunately were delayed, which resulted in a further complaint and the current report.
3. The Council has been at odds with the Ombudsman over this case: whilst we acknowledge that there were some failings with the initial assessment and the delays in apology and compensation, the citizen has been very difficult to engage despite best efforts both directly and through MPFT.
4. The findings of the LGSCO investigation were published in September 2019. The report states:
5. The Council was at fault because:
 - a. For a second time it failed to send the apology or payment within the agreed timescale; and
 - b. It has failed to identify adequate service improvement to prevent the problems Ms X has experienced from being repeated.
6. The report acknowledges that comments were received by the Council and considered before the LGSCO completed the report. However, we are surprised and disappointed that this did not result in any change to the draft report previously received.

7. The Conclusions of the LGSCO are set out on Page 8 of their report (replicated below for ease of reference):

a. Apology and Payment

- i. Neither the apology nor the payment was made within the agreed timescale. The Chief Executive's letter was not written until 1 March, over four weeks late. That was a fault by the Council. This is the second time this has happened to Ms X. Given her mental health problems, this added unnecessarily to her distress and resulted in a further loss of confidence in the Council and its agent, the Trust.

b. Care and Support Plan

- i. We do not find fault with the Council. Its agent, the Trust, updated Ms X's assessment to reflect recent changes in her circumstances. It also completed a care and support plan and discussed it with her on 16 January. It was her choice to complete a self-assessment form before agreeing the care and support plan. The Council has confirmed it will implement the care and support plan and backdate payments to 16 January, if Ms X agrees to this.

c. Self-assessment Form

- i. Ms X believes the Trust has received her self-assessment forms and is not telling the truth when it says they have not arrived. However, there is not enough evidence for us to say the Council is at fault over this. While we cannot rule out the possibility that, having received one or more of her forms, it mislaid them, we also cannot rule out the possibility that they never arrived. Ms X has no proof of postage. It is therefore not possible to say what happened to her self-assessment forms.
- ii. Ms X still wants to submit a self-assessment form. The Council has sent her another one and has provided evidence that Ms X signed for it. When she has completed it, she will arrange a meeting with her ASWP and Advocate so she can deliver it.

d. Someone's else's Personal Data

- i. We do not find fault with the Council, as Ms X has not provided evidence that she received someone else's personal data. Similarly, the Trust cannot be expected to take more action unless Ms X returns the personal data. If she does this and it confirms what she has said, the Council needs to send a further apology and pay financial redress for the distress caused by receiving disturbing information about someone else and by the possibility that her personal data could have been shared with someone else.

e. Service Improvements

- i. The response to the service improvements is inadequate. It does not address the specific issues raised and does not take account of the fact responsibilities are shared between the Council and the Trust. Ms X's initial problems arose when the Council did not accept the Trust's proposals for a personal budget and care and support plan. Although the Trust had identified eligible care needs, Ms X was left without any support at all.
8. The LGSCO made a series of recommendations. These are set out on Page 9 of their report and are listed below with the Council's comments. They are that the Council:
 - a. Meets with the citizen and her Advocate if she completes another self-assessment form, so she can deliver it and discuss it with her Advanced Social Work Practitioner.
 - i. The Council will continue to make all best efforts to meet with the citizen and her Advocate both directly and through MPFT, although the citizen has been very difficult to engage. We are therefore content to accept this recommendation.
 - b. Within four weeks apologises to the citizen and pays her a further £500 for the distress it has caused and the trouble she has been put to.
 - i. The Council acknowledges the delay in making the apology and payment. We believe that payment of a further £500 is disproportionate and not a justifiable use of taxpayer's money. However, to formally challenge this recommendation would cost considerably more than £500 in time and legal fees and therefore we reluctantly accept this recommendation.
 - c. Apologies to Ms X and pay her £250 for the distress caused to her, if she returns the personal data about someone else and confirms what she has said.
 - i. There is no evidence that there has been any data breach. If evidence is provided, then this would be investigated under the information governance protocols and procedures of the Council and/or MPFT. These do not routinely include provision for payments to third parties. We do not therefore believe that this recommendation is appropriate. However, to formally challenge it recommendation would incur considerably costs in time and legal fees and therefore we reluctantly accept this recommendation.
 - d. Within eight weeks meet with MPFT to agree an Action Plan, including timescales for ensuring agree remedies are completed within the required timescales and assessments and care and support plans meet the requirements of the Care and Support Statutory Guidance, including:
 - i. eliminating unnecessary delay over assessments, care and support planning and decisions on personal budgets;
 - ii. ensuring assessments adequately identify care needs;

- iii. providing estimated personal budgets as the basis for care and support planning;
- iv. providing people with copies of their assessments and care and support plans, and
- v. ensuring care and support plans include the final personal budget.

9. This work is already underway as part of service improvement plans and we are therefore content to accept this recommendation.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Appendix A - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Report dated 15 August 2019

Contact Details

Report Commissioner: Dr Richard Harling
Job Title: Director for Health and Care
Telephone No.: 01785 278700
E-Mail Address: richard.harling@staffordshire.gov.uk

**Report by the Local Government and Social Care
Ombudsman**

**Investigation into a complaint against
Staffordshire County Council
(reference number: 18 018 592)**

15 August 2019

The Ombudsman's role

For more than 40 years the Ombudsman has independently and impartially investigated complaints. We effectively resolve disputes about councils and other bodies in our jurisdiction by recommending redress which is proportionate, appropriate and reasonable based on all the facts of the complaint. Our service is free of charge.

Each case which comes to the Ombudsman is different and we take the individual needs and circumstances of the person complaining to us into account when we make recommendations to remedy injustice caused by fault.

We have no legal power to force councils to follow our recommendations, but they almost always do. Some of the things we might ask a council to do are:

- > apologise
- > pay a financial remedy
- > improve its procedures so similar problems don't happen again.

Section 30 of the 1974 Local Government Act says that a report should not normally name or identify any person. The people involved in this complaint are referred to by a letter or job role.

Key to names used

Ms X The complainant

Report summary

Adult Social Care

Ms X, complains the Council has failed to complete the actions it agreed to take following her previous complaint.

Finding

Fault found causing injustice and recommendations made.

Recommendations

We recommend the Council:

- meet with Ms X and her Advocate if she completes another self-assessment form, so she can deliver it and discuss it with her Advanced Social Work Practitioner (ASWP);
- within four weeks apologise to Ms X and pay her a further £500 for the distress it has caused and the trouble she has been put to;
- apologise to Ms X and pay her £250 for the distress caused to her, if she returns the personal data about someone else and it confirms what she has said;
- within eight weeks meet with the Trust to agree an action plan, including timescales, for ensuring agreed remedies are completed within the required timescales and assessments and care and support plans meet the requirements of the Care and Support Statutory Guidance, including:
 - eliminating unnecessary delay over assessments, care and support planning and decisions on personal budgets;
 - ensuring assessments adequately identify care needs;
 - providing estimated personal budgets as the basis for care and support planning;
 - providing people with copies of their assessments and care and support plans; and
 - ensuring care and support plans include the final personal budget.

The complaint

1. The complainant, whom we shall refer to as Ms X, complains the Council has failed to complete the actions it agreed to take following her previous complaint.

Legal and administrative background

2. We investigate complaints about ‘maladministration’ and ‘service failure’. In this report, we have used the word fault to refer to these. We must also consider whether any fault has had an adverse impact on the person making the complaint. We refer to this as ‘injustice’. If there has been fault which has caused an injustice, we may suggest a remedy. (*Local Government Act 1974, sections 26(1) and 26A(1), as amended*)
3. If we are satisfied with a council’s actions or proposed actions, we can complete our investigation and issue a decision statement. (*Local Government Act 1974, sections 30(1B) and 34H(i), as amended*)
4. We investigate complaints about councils and certain other bodies. Where an individual, organisation or private company is providing services on behalf of a council, we can investigate complaints about the actions of these providers. (*Local Government Act 1974, section 25(7), as amended*)

How we considered this complaint

5. We have produced this report after examining the relevant files and documents, and discussions with Ms X.
6. We gave Ms X and the Council a confidential draft of this report and invited their comments. The comments received were taken into account before we completed the report.

What we found

What happened

7. Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Partnership NHS Trust (the Trust) carries out adult social care assessments and produces care and support plans for the Council. Because of paragraph 4 above, the Council is accountable for the Trust’s actions.
8. Ms X has mental as well as physical health problems.
9. When investigating Ms X’s last complaint ([18 005 920](#)), we found the Council had not completed all the actions it had agreed to take following an earlier complaint ([17 016 883](#)). This was because it did not apologise or pay financial redress within the agreed timescale. It also delayed in assigning a social worker to reassess Ms X’s needs. It therefore took 15 weeks to complete an assessment and produce an “*indicative*” care and support plan, rather than the six weeks the Council had agreed to take to do this. This followed an earlier failure to produce a care and support plan explaining how to meet Ms X’s eligible care needs after the Council turned down the Trust’s request for a personal budget.
10. Before we issued the final decision on Ms X’s last complaint in January 2019, the Council agreed:

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- its Chief Executive would, by 30 January, write to Ms X apologising for the fact she has had to complain again, the distress it had caused her and the failure to complete a care and support plan;
 - to pay Ms X £500 by 30 January for the distress she had been caused and the trouble she has been put to, and a further £350 so she could make her own arrangements for care until the Council agreed a care and support plan with her;
 - to agree a care and support plan with Ms X by 13 February, which meets her eligible care needs;
 - to reconsider its response to the service improvements identified in paragraph 11 below by 27 February, and consider what it needs to do to make sure care and support planning does not end when the Brokerage Team does not accept an indicative care and support plan.
11. The Council had previously agreed to consider what action it needed to take to ensure assessments and care and support plans meet the requirements of the Care and Support Statutory Guidance, including:
- eliminating unnecessary delay over assessments, care and support planning and decisions on personal budgets;
 - ensuring assessments adequately identify care needs;
 - providing estimated personal budgets as the basis for care and support planning;
 - providing people with copies of their assessments and care and support plans; and
 - ensuring care and support plans include the final personal budget.
12. In December 2018 the Trust assigned an ASWP to reassess Ms X. The ASWP asked Ms X's Advocate to provide some dates to do this.
13. The ASWP met Ms X with her Advocate on 16 January 2019. They discussed her needs and what to include in a care and support plan. The ASWP updated an assessment from August 2018. But Ms X said she did not want the ASWP to send the assessment on until she had completed another self-assessment. She said she had returned a self-assessment form in October and was disappointed the Trust had lost it. The ASWP said Ms X's Advocate had told her she would not complete another assessment, as she found it too distressing. The ASWP gave Ms X another self-assessment to complete. The ASWP said she would complete her assessment, an indicative support plan and an application for funding when she had Ms X's completed self-assessment.
14. On 31 January Ms X told us she would complete the self-assessment over the coming weekend and take it to the Trust herself. She said she returned the first self-assessment in October in a pre-addressed envelope addressed to the Ambulance Service. She said she could not understand why the envelope was not addressed to the office the ASWP works in.
15. On 6 February the Council told us Ms X's decision to complete a self-assessment had delayed agreeing her care and support plan. It said it would check what had happened to the apology and payment to Ms X from her previous complaint.

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16. On 7 February Ms X told the Trust she had completed the self-assessment and posted it on 4 February. She said the ASWP should forward her assessment with Ms X's self-assessment when seeking approval for her personal budget.
 17. The Trust's Director of Adult Social Care sent an apology to Ms X on 15 February and said she would receive a cheque for £850 "*shortly*". We pointed out the Council had agreed to get its Chief Executive to apologise to Ms X, not an officer from the Trust.
 18. Ms X left a message for the ASWP to call her on 20 February.
 19. On 21 February the Council told us the form needed to arrange payment to Ms X had been passed to the Director of Finance for signature on 19 February.
 20. On 28 February Ms X told us she had not received an apology or cheque. She said she had received another self-assessment form to complete that day. Ms X agreed we would ask the Council to collect the self-assessment when she had completed it and at the same time deliver the apology and the cheque. The Council agreed to this and to Ms X calling its Complaints Team when she had completed the self-assessment.
 21. The Council's Chief Executive signed an apology to Ms X on 1 March, saying she would receive the £850 "*shortly*".
 22. On 5 March Ms X told us that what she had assumed was a self-assessment form when we spoke on 28 February, was the personal file for another person, which included very sensitive information. She said there was a letter from the ASWP saying she had enclosed a self-assessment. But it only contained one page with her personal details saying she lives alone. She said she felt vulnerable and concerned that she could be burgled, as the Council could have shared her personal details with someone else. She said she had received calls from someone who would hang up before speaking and a car had been stopping by her home. Ms X said she wanted the Council to deliver the apologies from her two previous complaints and to pay further financial redress for the distress it was causing her.
 23. The ASWP called Ms X on 6 March but she put the phone down when the ASWP said who she was. The ASWP tried calling again but Ms X did not answer.
 24. The Council posted another self-assessment form to Ms X.
 25. On 12 March a Neighbourhood Manager left a message for Ms X, saying she and the ASWP would hand deliver the cheque and apology letter at 2pm on 13 March. The ASWP also sent an e-mail to Ms X's Advocate asking her to pass the same message on to her.
 26. On 13 March Ms X's Advocate told the Council she did not want anyone coming to her home as she felt ill and was stressed. She said to post the cheque and apology to her. The Council posted the apology, cheque and another blank self-assessment form to her on 15 March.
 27. Ms X says she returned another completed self-assessment form to the Council on 14 March, using a pre-addressed envelope addressed to the Ambulance Service. The Council has not received this.

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28. The Council is proposing a personal budget for Ms X of £149 a week. This includes funding to:
- employ a personal assistant for eight hours a week to help with washing; and
 - access day services one day a week.
29. Ms X received the cheque and apology on 20 March.
30. When the Council replied to our enquiries on 4 April, it said:
- the Trust had contracted with the Ambulance Service to manage its post;
 - the Ambulance Service would sort all the mail and forward it unopened to the relevant Trust department;
 - post would then be opened, date stamped, uploaded onto the system and delivered to the intended recipient;
 - many departments used the pre-addressed envelopes and no other problems had been reported;
 - the Trust no longer contracts with the Ambulance Service and now receives all post at its Headquarters;
 - the Trust had written to Ms X with a stamped addressed envelope on 14 March asking her to return the personal data about someone else, but she had not done so;
 - the Trust could not take any other action over the personal data unless Ms X returned it. It would then be able to tell the individual and report a data breach to the Information Commissioner's Office; and
 - it posted the apology and cheque to Ms X on 13 March as Ms X asked the Council not to hand-deliver them.
31. We had asked the Council to say what action it was taking to ensure agreed remedies are completed within the agreed timescales. It said:
- *"The Trust acknowledges there had been some initial delays in completing the remedies identified, however, it is the Trust's understanding that all outstanding actions have been completed, any further remedies would be addressed by the Trust's internal performance management processes"*.
32. With regard to the service improvements identified in paragraph 11 above, the Council says:
- *"The Trust have advised that they now have a comprehensive quality assurance process implemented in [the Trust]. This will enable the Trust to monitor the length of time assessments are taking and address this with individual assessors where necessary. This is supported by the caseload management tool. That is used in supervision which all assessors have at least monthly. The support plan is incorporated in the assessment and should therefore be addressed by the improved quality assurance process. The assessment is linked to a Resource Allocation System that identifies the personal budget but this is then confirmed and agreed by Staffordshire County Council who hold the funding budget. This is managed through Staffordshire County Council's Brokerage Service."*
 - *"All service users should have a copy of their assessment once agreed between the assessor and the individual. This is good practice and expected of*

all staff. The quality assurance can be reviewed to include this as a standard request.”

33. On 15 April Ms X told us she would not return the personal data for someone else to the Council.

Conclusions

Apology and payment

34. Neither the apology nor the payment was made within the agreed timescale. The Chief Executive’s letter was not written until 1 March, over four weeks late. That was fault by the Council. This is the second time this has happened to Ms X. Given her mental health problems, this added unnecessarily to her distress and resulted in a further loss of confidence in the Council and its agent, the Trust.

Care and support plan

35. We do not find fault with the Council. Its agent, the Trust, updated Ms X’s assessment to reflect recent changes in her circumstances. It also completed a care and support plan and discussed it with her on 16 January. It was her choice to complete a self-assessment form before agreeing the care and support plan. The Council has confirmed it will implement the care and support plan and backdate payments to 16 January, if Ms X agrees to this.

Self-assessment form

36. Ms X believes the Trust has received her self-assessment forms and is not telling the truth when it says they have not arrived. However, there is not enough evidence for us to say the Council is at fault over this. While we cannot rule out the possibility that, having received one or more of her forms, it mislaid them, we also cannot rule out the possibility that they never arrived. Ms X has no proof of postage. It is therefore not possible to say what happened to her self-assessment forms.
37. Ms X still wants to submit a self-assessment form. The Council has sent her another one and has provided evidence that Ms X signed for it. When she has completed it, she will arrange a meeting with her ASWP and Advocate so she can deliver it.

Someone’s else’s personal data

38. We do not find fault with the Council, as Ms X has not provided evidence that she received someone else’s personal data. Similarly, the Trust cannot be expected to take more action unless Ms X returns the personal data. If she does this and it confirms what she has said, the Council needs to send a further apology and pay financial redress for the distress caused by receiving disturbing information about someone else and by the possibility that her personal data could have been shared with someone else.

Service improvements

39. The response to the service improvements is inadequate. It does not address the specific issues raised and does not take account of the fact responsibilities are shared between the Council and the Trust. Ms X’s initial problems arose when the Council did not accept the Trust’s proposals for a personal budget and care and support plan. Although the Trust had identified eligible care needs, Ms X was left without any support at all.

Recommended action

40. When a council commissions another organisation to provide services on its behalf (in this case, the Trust) it remains responsible for those services and for the actions of the organisation providing them. So we have just made recommendations to the Council.
41. We recommend the Council:
 - meets with Ms X and her Advocate if she completes another self-assessment form, so she can deliver it and discuss it with her ASWP;
 - within four weeks apologises to Ms X and pays her a further £500 for the distress it has caused and the trouble she has been put to;
 - apologises to Ms X and pays her £250 for the distress caused to her, if she returns the personal data about someone else and it confirms what she has said;
 - within eight weeks meets with the Trust to agree an action plan, including timescales, for ensuring agreed remedies are completed within the required timescales and assessments and care and support plans meet the requirements of the Care and Support Statutory Guidance, including:
 - eliminating unnecessary delay over assessments, care and support planning and decisions on personal budgets;
 - ensuring assessments adequately identify care needs;
 - providing estimated personal budgets as the basis for care and support planning;
 - providing people with copies of their assessments and care and support plans; and
 - ensuring care and support plans include the final personal budget.

Decision

42. The Council was at fault because:
 - for a second time it failed to send the apology or payment within the agreed timescale; and
 - it has failed to identify adequate service improvements to prevent the problems Ms X has experienced from being repeated.
43. The Council must consider the report and confirm within three months the action it has taken or proposes to take. The Council should consider the report at its full Council, Cabinet, or other appropriately delegated committee of elected members and we will require evidence of this. (*Local Government Act 1974, section 31(2), as amended*)

Local Members Interest
N/A

Audit and Standards Committee – Monday 14 October 2019

Committee for Standards in Public Life – Report on Review Ethical Standards in Local Government

Implications for Staffordshire County Council/Members’ Code of Conduct and Standards Complaints System

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- a. Support and recommend to full Council:
 - i. The inclusion in the Code of Conduct of an additional Undertaking relating to the use of Social Media as detailed in paragraph 11 of this report and the adoption of the criteria for determining alleged breaches of that Code in relation to Social Media (as shown at Appendix 3)
 - ii. The update to the Declarations of Interest Form completed by Members to include a section on ‘Other Interests’ as shown at Appendix 4 to this report
 - iii. The updates to the Process chart for dealing with allegations of breaches of the Code of Conduct, as shown at Appendix 5.
- b. Give views on additional proposals detailed at paragraphs 16 and 19 of this report

Report of the Director of Corporate Services (Monitoring Officer)

Background

1. The March 2019 meeting of this Committee considered my annual report on the handling of complaints about breaches of the Code of Conduct by County Councillors. At that time I also briefly referred to a Report by the Committee for Standards in Public Life (CSPL) on their Review of Ethical Standards in Public Life. (That report is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-government-ethical-standards>)
2. Members asked for further information on the CSPL report and its implications for Staffordshire County Council.
3. The CSPL’s Report, published in January 2019 detailed 26 recommendations, the Government’s response to which is still awaited. Those recommendations cover the full range of Code of Conduct/Standards Complaints provisions currently in place.

Current Position

4. To date this Council's Code of Conduct for Members has reflected a 'light touch' approach however following an increase in the number of complaints made against members and the recent need to hold our first Standards Panel to consider one of those complaints, the CSPLs report presents a timely opportunity to review our Code and processes.

Key Proposals

5. The CSPL Recommendations are appended to this Report (Appendix 1) with comment on each in relation to the County Council's current and suggested future position.
6. Detailed consideration of the Recommendations has highlighted three main areas where our Code and arrangements for dealing with complaints might benefit for amendments/updating:

Reference in the Code to Social Media (Recommendation 3)

7. Of note in my annual report was the increase in references to issues around the use of social media and the content of posts by elected members.
8. Separately the CSPL has issued a report on Intimidation in Public Life. The call for that report originally stemmed from increasing problems during election campaign periods but one of its main focusses is on the effect which social media has had on political life. The report acknowledges the importance of social media as a vehicle for the free expression of opinion, giving instant, direct access to those sectors of the community who have not traditionally engaged in politics. However, in addition to acknowledging that social media facilitates freedom of speech, the Report also highlights the importance of protecting that freedom from abuse.
9. The 'General Undertaking' section of our current Code includes:

'Contributing to making the authority's decision making processes as open and transparent as possible to enable residents to understand the reasoning behind those decisions and to be informed when holding me and other members to account but restricting access to information when the wider public interest or the law requires it (*Being aware of the potential for information passed through social networking media to be distributed much more widely than intended by the author*)'
10. The above focuses on the management of information through social media but is no longer sufficient. The use of social media now needs to be considered in relation to the majority of the Seven Principles of Public Life which are the lynchpins of the Code of Conduct, most specifically the principles of: Honesty, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability and Leadership.

11. It is therefore suggested that a new/additional General Undertaking be added to the Code:

Ensuring that my use of social media is at all times respectful to the audience (both intended and co-incidental) and does not portray the actions or views of either the County Council or me as a member of that Council, as offensive, discriminatory, abusive, inflammatory or defamatory. Furthermore, I will endeavour to maintain a clear distinction between any actions and views that I publish via social media in a private, personal capacity from those published in my role of elected member.

12. To assist members in adhering to this new Undertaking, the Guidance to Members on the use of Social Media has been updated. A copy is appended to this report (Appendix 2).
13. As mentioned earlier, issues around the use of Social Media by members has partly contributed to the increase in the number of complaints received over the past year. When considering whether such a complaint should be entered into the system the Monitoring Officer has not had the benefit of any clear criteria to help form a view. Attached at Appendix 3 is a suggested list of criteria against which any complaint relating to the use of Social Media could be assessed. The criteria is broadly based on Public Interest Guidance used by the Crown Prosecution Service in relation to Social Media cases.

The need to require Declaration of 'Other Interests' (Recommendation 5)

14. As mentioned above, the Council's current Code is light touch in nature, limiting its focus on the need for Members to register and declare their Disclosable Pecuniary Interests. Whilst our current Declarations form includes an optional section for 'other interests' the Localism Act 2011 gave a more specific definition for the type of interest which should be listed.
15. Whilst supporting the retention of responsibility for ethical standards by each individual Authority, the CSPL report calls for consistency amongst the Codes of Conduct for local authorities in the same geographical area. All District and Borough Councils in Staffordshire include in their Declarations of Interest a section on 'Other Interests' which covers wider pecuniary interests. Section B of the revised Declarations Form attached at Appendix 4 mirrors the forms of the District and Borough Councils.
16. In general, Local Authorities also provide for the declaration of Personal Interests by members. Should this Committee decide to take that step further amendments could be made to the Declarations form. Members' views are requested.

Review of the Processes for consideration of Alleged Breaches of the Code of Conduct and Sanctions available (Recommendations 16 and 17)

17. Earlier this year, for the first time since the Localism Act 2011 a Standards Panel met to consider an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct by a member. The administration of that meeting highlighted the need for a review of the complaints

handling process itself and for further consideration of the sanctions available. An updated version of that Process is attached at Appendix 5 for approval. Changes are proposed to better set out the communication lines between the Monitoring Officer and parties affected, the entitlement of the member being complained about to seek the views of an Independent Person (IP), and the involvement of the IP consulted by the Monitoring Officer in the Panel meeting itself.

18. The Process chart also includes additional sanctions which could be recommended by the Standards Panel. These are:
- a. Recommendation to the Group Leader on the removal of the member from any position with special responsibility
 - b. Recommendation to the Group Leader on the removal of the member from all Outside Bodies

Other Proposals

19. Members' views are requested on the following:
- a. **Period of Office for Independent Persons (Recommendation 8)** The CSPL advocates a fixed term of two years, renewable once.
 - b. **Role of Independent Person in formal decision making (Recommendations 9 and 11)** – whether to formally consider the views of the Independent Person as part of a Panel's decision-making process on an alleged breach of the Code and. If so, whether to provide indemnity.
 - c. **Publication of statistics on Code of Conduct complaints (Recommendation 15)** -Relating to the expansion of detail in the Annual Report to this Committee on Code of Conduct complaints.

Conclusion

20. The Recommendations contained in the CSPL Report cover all aspects of the Standards Regime. Some of the recommendations have assisted in a Review of the County Councils' Code of Conduct, revisions to which are submitted for Members consideration and recommendation to council for approval.

Legal Implications

21. The County Council is required to have a formal Code of Conduct for Members and a complaints procedure for the handling of complaints about elected members.

Risk Implications

22. Compliance with the arrangements addresses the risk of challenge to the governance arrangements of the Council.

Resource and Value for Money Implications

23. The proposals in the report do not generate any additional resource implications for the Authority

Climate Change Implications

24. There are no Climate Change Implications arising from this report.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

CSPL Report on Review of Ethical Standards in Public Life
CSPL Report on Review of Intimidation in Public Life.

Appendix 1 – Committee for Standards in Public Life – Recommendations

Appendix 2 – Social Media Guidance DRAFT

Appendix 3 – Assessment Criteria

Appendix 4 – Register of Interests Form

Appendix 5 – Proposed Decision Making Procedure Flowchart

Contact Details

Report Author: Julie Plant/Mandy Pattinson
Job Title: Governance and Support Manager/Scrutiny and Support Officer
Telephone No.: 01785 276135/01785 278502
E-Mail Address: Julie.plant@staffordshire.gov.uk
mandy.pattinson@staffordshire.gov.uk

Committee for Standards in Public Life – Report on Review of Ethical Standards in Public Life

RECOMMENDATIONS

	Recommendation (Lead Body as per CSPL)	Comment
1	The Local Government Association should create an updated model Code of Conduct, in consultation with representative bodies of Councillors and officers of all tiers of local government (LGA)	Action awaited.
2	The government should ensure that candidates standing for or accepting public office are not required publicly to disclose their home address. The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs)) Regulations 2012 should be amended to clarify that a Councillor does not need to register their home address on an authority' register of interest (Government)	<p>Regulations introduced in readiness for the May 2019 local elections removed the requirement for candidates to publish their home address on ballot papers and associated election documentation</p> <p>Currently, Members are required to include their home address under the 'Land' category of DPIs. Legislation would be required to remove that need.</p> <p>The Monitoring Officer has the authority to permit the withholding of an individual member's address if that information is deemed to be sensitive (ie its disclosure could cause the member or person associated with him/her to be subjected to violence or intimidation). The Monitoring Officer has exercised his discretion in this respect for a small number of cases, in the main involving persistent complainants.</p>
3	Councillors should be presumed to be acting in an official capacity in their public conduct, including statements on publicly accessible social media. Section 27(2) of the Localism Act 2011 should be amended to permit local authorities to presume so	<p>The widening of the capacity in which the member's actions can be judged against the Code would need legislative changes.</p> <p>This report proposes updates to the Code of Conduct in</p>

	when deciding upon code of conduct breaches (Government)	relation to the use of social media and is accompanied by detailed guidance on acceptable use and the criteria against which alleged breaches of the Code due to the use of social media will be assessed.(Appendices 2 and 3)
4	Section 27(2) of the Localism Act 2011 should be amended to state that a local authority's code of conduct applies to a member when they claim to act, or give the impression they are acting, in their capacity as a member or as a representative of the local authority (Government)	As above, the widening of the scope of the Code would require legislative changes
5	The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 should be amended to include unpaid directorships, trustees, management roles in a charity or a body of a public nature and membership of any organisation that seeks to influence opinion or public policy (Government)	<p>This list of additional roles essentially mirrors the 'Other Interests' included in the 2012 Model Code of Conduct produced by the LGA.</p> <p>When the County Council's Code was approved in 2012 there was a clear wish to adopt a 'light touch' approach therefore these additional interests were not included. One of themes of the CSPL report is the need for consistency amongst local authorities in the same geographical area in order to avoid confusion amongst the general public.</p> <p>As all of the Districts and Boroughs in Staffordshire have 'Other Interests' included in their Codes, it is proposed to amend the County Council's Code to include that section. More details are given in the body of this report and at Appendix 4.</p>
6	Local authorities should be required to establish a register of gifts and hospitality, with Councillors required to record any gifts and hospitality received over a value of £50 or totalling £100 over a year from a single source. This requirement should be	Since 2000 we have published a Register of Gifts and Hospitality received by Members and Senior Officers. The monetary threshold for declaration is 'above the value of £25'.

	included in an updated model code of conduct. (Government)	The Gifts and Hospitality Register is being reviewed as a separate exercise.
7	Section 31 of the Localism Act 2011 should be repealed, and replaced with a requirement that Councils include in their code of conduct that a councillor must not participate in a discussion or vote in a matter to be considered at a meeting if they have any interest, whether registered or not, 'if a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard the interest as so significant that it is unlikely to prejudice your consideration or decision-making in relation to that matter'(Government)	<p>Section 31 prohibits members participating in discussions on matters which they have listed on their Register of Interests as a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI). The Council's own Standing Orders add the further requirement for the member to physically leave a meeting after making a Declaration.</p> <p>This more general proposal is similar to the requirement which existed in relation to personal/prejudicial interests under the Code of Conduct applicable before the Localism Act.</p>
8	The Localism Act 2011 should be amended to require that Independent Persons are appointed for a fixed term of two years renewable once (Government)	<p>The CSPL Report refers to the varying degrees of involvement which Independent Persons (IPs) have in dealing with conduct matters and highlights the expertise which many possess. It proposes a two year fixed term appointment period to give security of tenure.</p> <p>The procedure for handling complaints requires a minimum of 2 Independent Persons (we currently have 3).</p> <p>Two years is a relatively short period of time for any IP to gain knowledge of the role and develop their expertise. For authorities such as the County Council where few Code of Conduct complaints are received, it is questionable whether a two year term of office would provide sufficient opportunities for all IPs to develop their knowledge and expertise. Two yearly appointments might also pose potential problems in terms of recruitment.</p>

		<p>However, in feedback on the recommendation one of our IPs expresses support taking the view that the regular recruitment of new IPs clearly demonstrates to the general public the independence of the role and avoids the risk of public perception being that a close relationship exists between the IPs and the Council.</p> <p>One IP also queries the advisability of paying them an Honorarium as this may also be perceived as a link to the Council.</p>
9	The Local Government Transparency Code should be updated to provide that the view of the Independent Person in relation to a decision on which they are consulted should be formally recorded in any decision notice or minutes (Government)	<p>The CSPL suggest that whilst the decision maker may ultimately reach a different view than the IP, the safeguard that they provide would be stronger if their view was made transparent. In order for this to be practical and acceptable to IPs protection would be required (see 11 below re indemnity).</p> <p>IP feedback is in support of this proposal and also calls for details of the process followed in handling Code of Conduct complaints to be easily accessible to the public.</p>
10	A local authority should only be able to suspend a councillor where the authority's Independent Person agrees both with the finding of a breach and that suspending the councillor would be a proportionate sanction. (Government)	This would require legislative changes.
11	Local authorities should provide legal indemnity to Independent Persons if their views or advice are disclosed. The government should require this through secondary legislation if needed. (Government/All local authorities)	If revisions were made to the decision making procedures for Code of Conduct matters such that Independent Persons had an increased and more formal involvement in that process, the County Council could indemnify those IPs regardless of any statutory requirement. The Council's Insurance Officer and Brokers advise that indemnity could be provided to

		<p>protect IPs against challenges to the influence which their views/report may have on a complaint decision.</p> <p>IPs have indicated that they would assume that formal indemnity would be provided as a matter of course if the system involved their comments contributing to the formal decision making process and being published.</p>
12	<p>Local authorities should be given the discretionary power to establish a decision-making standards committee with voting independent members and voting members from dependent parishes, to decide on allegations and impose sanctions. (Government)</p>	<p>Currently legislation provides for the inclusion of non-voting Independent Members on a Standards Committee (NB this is not the Independent Person).</p> <p>This proposal suggests that the Independent Member be given full voting rights to enhance the independence of the formal decision making process. This would be in addition to changes proposed above in relation to formalising the contribution of Independent Persons to the decision making process.</p> <p>At present Staffordshire's Audit and Standards Committee does not have any Independent members.</p> <p>Attached to this Report is a revised process map for handling Standards complaints. Revisions have been made in the light of experience at the only Standards Panel convened since the introduction of the current Code of Conduct. The revisions include stipulating that the Independent Person consulted by the Monitoring Officer be formally invited to attend and to contribute to the Panels discussions (at this stage it falls short of formalising the consideration given to the IPs views _ as referred to at items 9 and 11 above)</p>

		The references to Parish Council representation are not applicable to the County Council.
13	Councillors should be given the right to appeal to the Local Government Ombudsman if their local authority imposes a period of suspension for breaching the code of conduct. (Government)	This would require legislative changes in relation to the role of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.
14	The Local Government Ombudsman should be given the power to investigate and decide upon an allegation of a code of conduct breach by a councillor, and the appropriate sanction, on appeal by a councillor who has had a suspension imposed. The Ombudsman's decision should be binding on the local authority. (Government)	<p>This would require legislative changes in relation to the role of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.</p> <p>Of note is that whilst it would be unusual for a local authority to not comply with decisions/recommendations of the Ombudsman, those decisions are not legally binding on a local authority. This proposal therefore goes beyond the 'normal' powers of the Ombudsman.</p>
15	The Local Government Transparency Code should be updated to require councils to publish annually: the number of code of conduct complaints they receive; what the complaints broadly relate to (e.g. bullying; conflict of interest); the outcome of those complaints, including if they are rejected as trivial or vexatious; and any sanctions applied. (Government)	<p>Rather than await changes to the Transparency Code, The annual (open) report to Audit and Standards Committee on complaints handled could be expanded to include the detail suggested in the recommendation.</p> <p>A link to that report could then be added to the 'contact, compliments and complaints' section of the County Councils website. This section already includes links to the formal process for reporting alleged breaches of the code of conduct.</p>
16	Local authorities should be given the power to suspend councillors, without allowances, for up to six months (Government)	<p>This would require legislative changes.</p> <p>Feedback from one of our IPs supports the strengthening of sanctions, considering the current arrangements to have minimal effect on deterring</p>

		<p>unacceptable behaviour.</p> <p>The proposed amended Process chart for dealing with standards complaints includes two new sanctions relating to recommendations to the Group Leader on removal from positions with Special Responsibility and from Outside Bodies.</p>
17	<p>The government should clarify if councils may lawfully bar councillors from council premises or withdraw facilities as sanctions. These powers should be put beyond doubt in legislation if necessary. (Government)</p>	<p>The CSPL report explains that to date statute/case law only specifies less severe sanctions.(eg training, censure, publicising a breach of the Code). The legality of sanctions such as a ban for the Council's premises has not been tested.</p> <p>This recommendation seeks clarity on the level of sanctions deemed to be acceptable.</p>
18	<p>The criminal offences in the Localism Act 2011 relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests should be abolished. (Government)</p>	<p>The criminal matters referred to are: participating in matters in which you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and knowingly or recklessly providing false or misleading information in relation to DPIs. These offences are subject to criminal penalties, including a fine of up to £5000 and disqualification from being a Councillor for up to 5 years.</p> <p>Feedback from an IP suggests that unless general sanctions are strengthened, these offences should be retained as the only sanctions.</p>
19	<p>Parish council clerks should hold an appropriate qualification, such as those provided by the Society of Local Council Clerks.(Parish Councils)</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>
20	<p>Section 27(3) of the Localism Act 2011 should be amended to state that parish councils must adopt the code of conduct of their principal authority, with the necessary amendments, or the new</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>

	model code. (Government)	
21	Section 28(11) of the Localism Act 2011 should be amended to state that any sanction imposed on a parish councillor following the finding of a breach is to be determined by the relevant principal authority. (Government)	Not applicable
22	The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 should be amended to provide that disciplinary protections for statutory officers extend to all disciplinary action, not just dismissal. (Government)	This would require legislative changes. The intention of this proposals is to improve the protection given to statutory officers following action/decisions against an elected member.
23	The Local Government Transparency Code should be updated to provide that local authorities must ensure that their whistleblowing policy specifies a named contact for the external auditor alongside their contact details, which should be available on the authority's website. (Government)	External auditors are 'prescribed persons' under the Public Interests Disclosure Act (employment protection is provided for whistleblowers when disclosures in the public interest are made to prescribed persons). This recommendation calls for the authority's Whistleblowing Policy to include contact details for the relevant representative from our external auditors to make it easier for whistleblowers to report issues. The County Councils Internal Auditors support this proposal with the proviso that a mechanism is in place for keeping up to date with External Auditor's contact details as they change from time to time.
24	Councillors should be listed as 'prescribed persons' for the purposes of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. (Government)	This recommendation aims to widen the options for a whistleblower to make a disclosure beyond the Council's Officers. Whilst supporting this in principle, the Internal Auditors raise concerns at the security and management of the information passed to and held by Councillors, the risk that such a number of prescribed persons would lead to inconsistency in approach and difficulty in monitoring

		and reporting on cases.
25	Councillors should be required to attend formal induction training by their political groups. National parties should add such a requirement to their model group rules.(Political Groups/National political parties)	<p>The CSPL highlight the importance of providing training on standards of conduct and the ethical culture of the Authority as early as possible however their research has shown that political parties/groups have an important role to play in ensuring their members' participation in that training.</p> <p>The Leaders of the 2 Political Groups here at the County Council have both queried the appropriateness of Groups being called on to act, taking the view that this is a matter on which their national parties should lead.</p>
26	Local Government Association corporate peer reviews should also include consideration of a local authority's processes for maintaining ethical standards.(LGA)	Action awaited

Social Media Guidance DRAFT

Social Media provides the public with the opportunity to enjoy freedom of speech and share their views and thoughts to the widest of audiences.

The successful enjoyment of that freedom is however dependent on users having a clear understanding and recognition of what can be the fine line between sharing views and causing offence.

The following Guidance aims to help members stay on the right side of the fine line:

- The first and most overriding point to make is that anything shared on Social Media is legally deemed to be 'published'. Do not publish anything that you would not consider saying to an individual or group of persons.
- What you've 'said' on the web is written down and it's permanent.
- Never put an entry on a social media site that you wouldn't want to see printed in a local newspaper attributed to you.
- Remember that whenever you act or appear to act in your official capacity on social media you should not bring the County Council into disrepute.
- Don't present your personal views, or those of any political party or interest group you belong to, as being those of the council.
- Respect the commitment in the code of conduct. In particular, treat others with respect; comply with equality laws; don't bully, intimidate or harass; don't bring the council into disrepute; or disclose confidential information.
- Remember that information and comments that you make can be broadcast to a large number of people more quickly than other media.
- Libel, copyright and data protection all still apply online.
- Own up: Social media is transparent – The best bloggers admit mistakes rather than try to cover them up (which isn't possible on-line). Amending your text and acknowledgement your mistake – perhaps by putting a line through the offending words, inserting a correction or providing an update section at the bottom of a blog post – shows you are not pretending it never happened, and is much better than just deleting it when dealing with on-line misfires.

General Tips

- The best social media tool is common sense.
- Keep arguments off line
- Don't write in haste. Avoid writing when you are angry, upset, tired or have been drinking.
- Don't retaliate to offensive or defamatory remarks made against you, ask the owner/person making them to remove them.
- Keep an eye on defamatory, untrue or abusive posts from others on your blog or page and remove them as soon as possible to avoid the perception that you condone such views and to prevent any potential libel action being taken against you.
- Don't hide your identity or use a pseudonym when making comments.

And finally.... Stop and think for a few minutes before you press 'post'

COMPLAINTS RE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY ELECTED MEMBER
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

1. The likelihood of a repeat occurrence by the same Member
2. The extent of offence/harm/reputational damage caused to the complainant and the degree to which such effect was intentional
3. The context of the action complained about (eg whether the complainant is a public servant, whether the action took place during an election period)
4. Whether or not the action was directed to an individual or intended for a wide audience
5. Whether the member has shown remorse and/or acted swiftly and effectively to remove or prevent further circulation of the information being complained of

I, xxxxxxxx as a Member of Staffordshire County Council agree to abide by the Members' Code of Conduct, including the General Undertaking, as approved on 19 July 2012 and updated on xxxxxx and give notice of:

Section A: The following disclosable interests in accordance with Section 30 of the Localism Act 2011

1. **Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation** (Note: Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit and gain.)

Details of Employment	Self or Partner*

2. **Sponsorship** (Note: Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the County Council) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by me or my partner in carrying out duties as a member or towards my election expenses in the last 12 months.)

Details of Name of party, person or body making payment	Self or Partner*

3. **Contracts** (Note: Any contract which is made between the me or my partner (or a body in which I or my partner has a beneficial interest) and the County Council- (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.

Details of Contract	Self or Partner*

4. **Land** (Note: Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the County Council)

Address of Land	Nature of Interest (including if Self or Partner*)

5. **Licences** (Note: Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the County Council for a month or longer)

Address of Land	Nature of Interest (including if Self or Partner*)

6. Corporate Tenancies (Note: Any tenancy where (to my knowledge) – (a) the landlord is the County Council and (b) the tenant is a body in which I or my partner have a beneficial interest.)

Address of Land	Nature of Interest (including if Self or Partner*)

7. Securities (Note: Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where –

(a) that body (to my knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the County Council; and

(b) either -

(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or

(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which I or my partner have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

Name of Body or Company	Self or Partner*

Section B: The following ‘Other Interests’ in accordance with Section 28(2) of the Localism Act 2011 (ie ‘other interests’ where I or my Partner* have an interest in any business of the authority where it relates to, or is likely to affect any Body listed below where I/my Partner*are a member of, or hold a position of general control or management:

8. A body(ies) to which you have been appointed or nominated by the authority

Self	Partner*

9. A public authority(ies) or body(ies) exercising functions of a public nature:

Self	Partner*

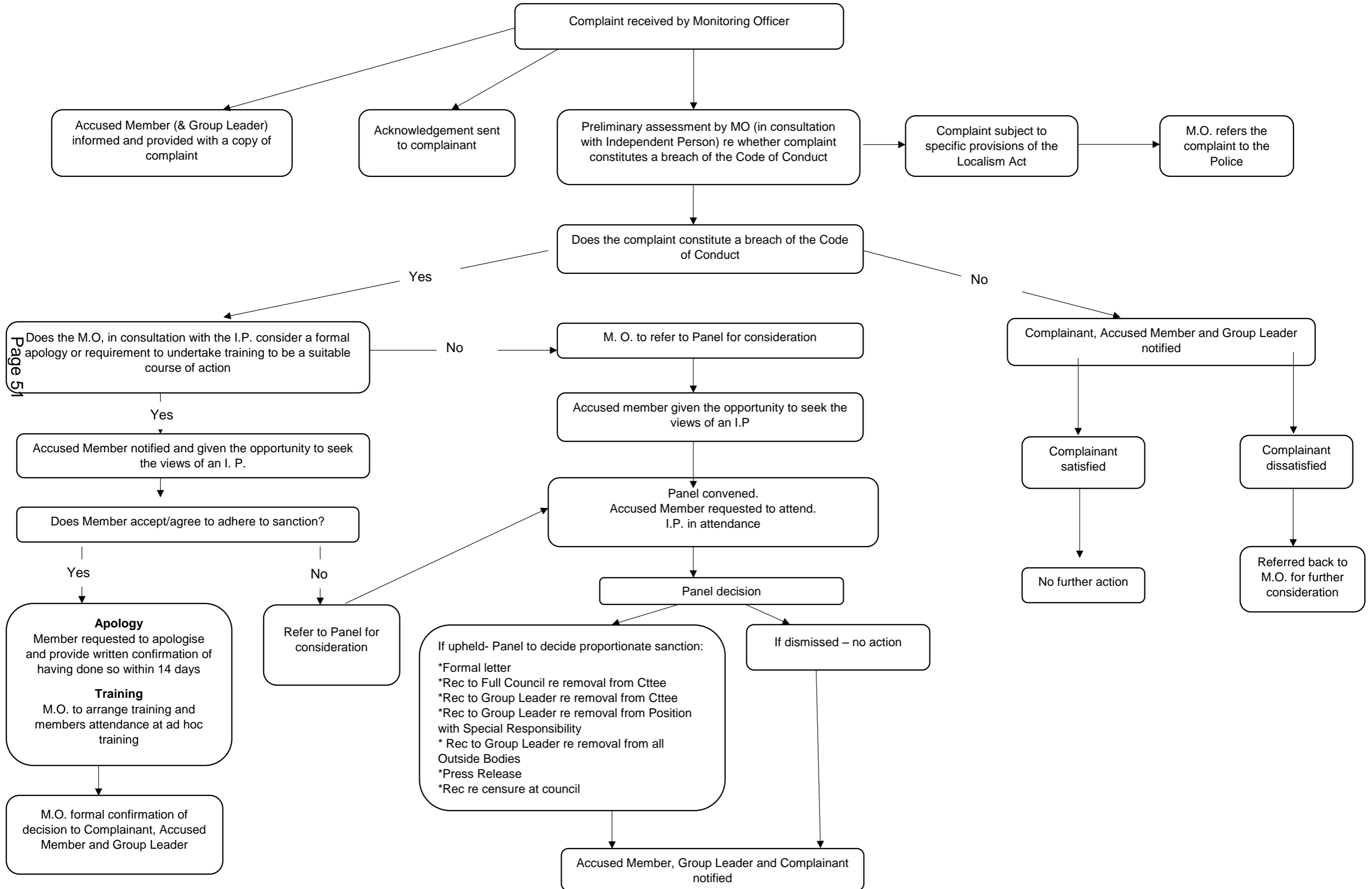
10. A body(ies) directed to charitable purposes:

Self	Partner*

11. A body(ies) whose principal purposes include the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or Trades Union)

Self	Partner*

***For the purposes of this form, 'Partner' is defined as your spouse, or civil partner, a person with whom you are living as husband and wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners (but only where you are aware that your partner has the interests)**



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Local Members Interest

Audit and Standards Committee - Monday 14 October 2019

National Fraud Initiative (NFI) 2018 - Update

Recommendation

I recommend that:

- a. The Audit and Standards Committee note the progress made to date on investigating the data matches received from the Cabinet.

Report of the County Treasurer

Report

Background

1. The NFI is a data matching exercise, designed to help participating bodies to detect and deter fraudulent and erroneous payments. It began in 1996 and is run every two years. It compares information held by and between approximately 1,200 organisations including Councils, police forces, NHS establishments and private companies. The core of the NFI is the matching of data to help reduce levels of housing benefit fraud, occupational pension fraud and tenancy fraud. The most recently completed exercise (2016/17) resulted in the detection (nationally) of £301.2 million of fraud and error across the UK bringing a total to date over two decades of £1.69 billion.
2. The NFI data matching exercise involves Staffordshire County Council (the 'Council') submitting the following data sets to the Cabinet Office for matching against relevant data from other participating organisations, including the Department for Work and Pensions (the 'DWP').
3. Data sets submitted by the Council were:
 - a. Payroll
 - b. Pensions
 - c. Creditors & creditor payments
 - d. Blue badge holders
 - e. Concessionary travel passes
 - f. Council funded private residential care home residents
 - g. Personal budget recipients
4. The data used in the NFI was produced in early October 2018. The Payroll, Pensions and Direct Payment data sets covered the period from April 2018 to September 2018. Private Care Home Residents, Blue Badge, and Concessionary

Travel Pass data sets comprised extracts as at 30 September 2018. Creditor data covered the period 1 October 2017 to 30 September 2018¹.

5. It should be noted that individuals whose data was to be included in the exercise were notified prior to the commencement of the 2018 exercise. This was in line with NFI guidance to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act (2018) incorporating the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679.
6. Further details of the types of data matches carried out as part of the NFI and the number of potential data matches returned, together with the progress made to date in investigating these are included at **Appendix 1**.
7. The exercise to date has identified total overpayments of £51,510 that have been recovered from private residential care homes, occurring when the Council was not promptly notified of the death of residents. We have identified an additional £32,356 similar overpayments, although further confirmation is required before recovery action can be taken.
8. A summary of recovered funds and anticipated recoveries is detailed below. Potential duplicate creditor payments have been identified, however at the time of reporting Internal Audit are seeking confirmation from budget holders prior to categorising these as requiring recovery.

Match Type	Recovered to date	No. of Cases	Further Overpayments identified and recovery ongoing	No. of Cases
Private Residential Care Homes to Benefits agency deceased persons	£51,510	2	£32,356 (provisional)	6
Total	£51,510	2	£32,356	6

9. All outstanding overpayments continue to be actively pursued by the Council.
10. The final results of the NFI must be sent to the Cabinet Office by 31st March 2020 and will be reported to a future meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee.
11. In addition to the tangible benefits identified above, during the course of reviewing the matches Internal Audit will consult with colleagues across the organisation. During this process we have identified minor issues not considered fraud or error, for example in September 2019 a potential undeclared conflict of interest was identified. Enquiries found that the interest had been declared, but the school's website had not been updated to reflect this; the website was updated soon after the issue being raised.

¹ The period used for the Creditor Payments is from the commencement of My Finance and as per NFI guidance.

Equalities Implications

12. There are no direct implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

13. Participation in the 2018 data matching exercise was mandatory under part 6 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Resource and Value for Money Implications

14. The Cabinet Office fee for participating in the exercise is £3,750 excluding VAT. With the NFI exercise running over a period of two financial years, the Authority is invoiced in two equal annual instalments. Internal Audit has also allocated 30 days within the internal audit plan 2019-20 to carry out the investigations in relation to the potential data matches.

Risk Implications

15. Work supports the strategic risks identified by the Authority.

Climate Change Implications

16. There are no direct implications arising from this report.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Cabinet Office National Fraud Initiative Report March 2018
National Fraud Initiative Guidance Handbook
National Fraud Initiative Protocol

Appendix A – Summary of Matches by Group Type (as at September 2019)

Contact Details

Report Commissioner: David Fletcher
Job Title: Audit Manager (Counter Fraud)
Telephone No.: 01785 895408
E-Mail Address: david.fletcher@staffordshire.gov.uk

Appendix 1.

NATIONAL FRAUD INITIATIVE 2018 - SUMMARY OF MATCHES BY GROUP TYPE (as at 16 September 2019)

The Cabinet Office provides suggested approaches to dealing with the match types and for certain match types provides risk ratings, which relate to the likelihood that the match reflects fraud or error. The Council has in many instances sought to expand the sample sizes beyond the recommended filter value where it is considered desirable. The method of selecting matches to investigate falls into 3 categories:

- A Full check – where risk of erroneous payment is high or previous problems identified;
- B By Tranche – Volume of matches necessitates filtering by value of individual match. Where problems encountered a lower filter level is then used; and
- C By category of match – some types of matches have unique elements which make them a specialist search.

The sampling method used may vary during the course of match processing, depending on the outcomes identified. Where possible, higher risk matches, selected by value and/or quality of the match are investigated first.

Further detailed information relating to the types of data matches along with progress to date on investigating potential matches arising from the 2018 NFI exercise is given below:

Report Name (NFI reference)	Total Matches	Internal Audit Review category	Our sample for review	Matches Closed (no issue)	Matches Closed: Fraud/Error Identified	Matches with Enquiries Ongoing	Fraud/Error value recovered to date	Fraud/Error value, recovery ongoing	Comments
Pensions and Pension Gratuity to Benefits Agency Deceased Persons (52)	388	A	388	356	0	32	0	0	<p>The Pension Payroll to Deceased Persons match identifies instances where an occupational pensioner has died, but the pension is still being paid as a result of the Pensions Section not being informed of their death. Data is matched between pension records maintained by the Council and those held by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) of deaths.</p> <p>356 matches related to deaths notified to the Council following the submission of NFI data. These deaths have now been recorded. Death certificates have been requested in the first instance for the remaining 32 matches and enquiries are still on-going.</p>
Deferred Pensions to benefits agency deceased persons (53)	133	A	133	33	0	100	0	0	<p>This match identifies where members of the Local Government Pension Scheme have left employment prior to reaching pensionable age, have passed away but payment of any widow or dependant entitlement has not commenced due to the Authority not being notified by the family.</p> <p>33 matches related to deaths notified to the Pensions Section following the submission of NFI data and before the NFI results were released. The 100 outstanding matches all relate to deferred pensioners so there has been no financial loss. The Council is seeking death certificates in the first instance in order to verify the matches and update Council records.</p>
Pensions to payroll within The Council (54)	241	A	241	235	0	6	0	0	<p>The pension's payroll to payroll data match identifies pensioners who may have gone back into employment within the Council, which could result in an abatement of their pension.</p> <p>235 of these matches have been reviewed it has been confirmed that no fraud or error has been found. These matches have been closed. Further enquiries are required on the remaining six matches prior to closing this report.</p>

Report Name (NFI reference)	Total Matches	Internal Audit Review category	Our sample for review	Matches Closed (no issue)	Matches Closed: Fraud/Error Identified	Matches with Enquiries Ongoing	Fraud/Error value recovered to date	Fraud/Error value, recovery ongoing	Comments
Pensions to other bodies Payroll (55)	374	A	374	248	0	126	0	0	<p>The pension's payroll to payroll data match identifies pensioners who may have gone back into employment within external organisations, which could result in an abatement of their pension. These investigations have to take account of the changes to the pension regulations affecting abatement agreed by the Pensions Committee in September 2006. These matches also include employees who take flexible retirement and therefore can receive a salary and pension benefits.</p> <p>248 matches have been reviewed, and no issues found. These matches have been closed. 11 matches have been reviewed but further investigation will be required before we can conclude enquiries.</p> <p>The remaining 115 matches have yet to be reviewed as at 12 September 2019.</p>
Payroll to payroll within SCC (65)	31	A	31	11	0	20	0	0	<p>The payroll to payroll matches identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Individuals who may be contravening their conditions of service by taking a second paid post; and / or ii) Staff who are failing to work their contracted hours because they are employed elsewhere. <p>All of the match data has been subject to a high-level screening, and we can confirm that no individual is being paid for more than 37.5 hours per week between two roles, so it is feasible that the individuals identified have two part time roles with the Council.</p> <p>Once higher priority areas are reviewed, we will seek to verify the validity of all individuals with two roles.</p>
Payroll to Payroll, between bodies (66)	117	B	67	6	0	61	0	0	<p>All matches identified where the standard hours of the individual roles total more than 30 per week, and standard hours for SCC are greater than zero will be reviewed.</p> <p>Enquiries are being raised with outside bodies where the data indicates an individual may hold two roles. To date, six matches have been cleared. Investigations in to the remaining 61 matches are still on-going.</p>
Payroll to Payroll – Phone Numbers Within Body	5	A	5	3	0	2	0	0	<p>This is a new report where payroll to payroll matches (as described above) are based on individuals sharing a phone number.</p> <p>Of the five identified, three have been resolved. We are awaiting information regarding the remaining two matches.</p>

Report Name (NFI reference)	Total Matches	Internal Audit Review category	Our sample for review	Matches Closed (no issue)	Matches Closed: Fraud/Error Identified	Matches with Enquiries Ongoing	Fraud/Error value recovered to date	Fraud/Error value, recovery ongoing	Comments
(67.1)									
Payroll to Payroll – Email Address Within Body (67.2)	28	B	5	0	0	5	0	0	This is a new report where payroll to payroll matches are based on individuals sharing the same email address. These matches have not been reviewed to date, however due to the low risk rating identified by the Cabinet Office for these matches we will initially review a sample of in order to assess their usefulness.
Payroll to Payroll – Phone Number Between Bodies (67.3)	5	B	5	0	0	5	0	0	This is a new report where payroll to payroll matches are based on individuals sharing a phone number. A high-level review of the matches appears to indicate that individuals identified in each match are different people, however prior to closing our NFI work we will seek to conduct enquiries to establish the value of the matches.
Payroll to pensions between bodies (78)	1	A	1	0	0	1	0	0	The pension's payroll to payroll data match identifies pensioners who may have gone back into employment, with another local government body, which could result in an abatement of their pension. These matches also include employees who take flexible retirement and therefore can receive a salary and pension benefits. The individual listed is employed by the Council but in receipt of a Pension from another body, it is therefore expected that the Pensions provider takes the lead resolving the match. Appropriate details of the individual's employment have been provided within the NFI's secure portal, although no response has been received to date.
Payroll to creditors same bank account, within bodies (80)	41	A	41	35	0	6	0	0	The payroll to creditors matches highlight those employees whose home address or bank account is shared with a business used by the Council. The results have so far produced a sample of 101 potential matches. Work on these matches has commenced and so far, no issues have arisen from the 43 matches cleared. Enquiries have commenced for the remaining 58 matches.

Report Name (NFI reference)	Total Matches	Internal Audit Review category	Our sample for review	Matches Closed (no issue)	Matches Closed: Fraud/Error Identified	Matches with Enquiries Ongoing	Fraud/Error value recovered to date	Fraud/Error value, recovery ongoing	Comments
Payroll to creditors address quality, within bodies (81)	92	B	60	8	0	52	0	0	
Blue badge parking permit to blue badge parking permit between bodies (170)	24	A	24	24	0	0	0	0	This report identifies individuals potentially holding two blue badges with different Authorities. All matches have been reviewed and no concerns identified (typically the one badge expired before, or very shortly after a second badge had been issued by another authority).
Blue badge parking permit to blue badge parking permit between bodies (170.1)	4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	0	Responsibility for processing matches lies with the Council who issued the earliest badge. This report identifies the same issues as those identified by report 170, above, and is provided for information, and the organisation on the other side of the match is expected to lead enquiries.
Blue badge parking permit to benefits agency deceased persons within bodies (172.1)	3,802	C	1,936	1,936	0	0	0	0	This report identifies blue badge holders recorded as deceased by the DWP. As the matches are processed, they are cancelled on our systems. This allows traffic wardens to seize such passes if their use is detected. Applications for renewal of cancelled passes will be declined. All matches where both the quality of the match (i.e. certainty it is a genuine match) and quality of the death verification is high have been reviewed. Where the death was not reflected in our records, the blue badge has been cancelled.
Concessionary travel passes to benefits agency deceased persons within bodies (172.2)	1,911	A	1,911	1,911	0	0	0	0	This report identifies holders of concessionary travel passes who are recorded as deceased by the Department for Work and Pensions. All recommended matches have been resolved, and where appropriate passes have been cancelled.

Report Name (NFI reference)	Total Matches	Internal Audit Review category	Our sample for review	Matches Closed (no issue)	Matches Closed: Fraud/Error Identified	Matches with Enquiries Ongoing	Fraud/Error value recovered to date	Fraud/Error value, recovery ongoing	Comments
Private Residential Care Homes to Benefits agency deceased persons (173)	216	A	216	208	2	6	£51,510	£32,356 (est)	<p>The above data match identified 216 cases where individuals were shown on the Care Director as having their accommodation funded by the Council but were shown as deceased on the DWP records.</p> <p>Following investigation of the 216 matches, eight matches have been identified where an overpayment had arisen as a result of the Council not being notified of the resident's death, each of which was from a different care home. As at the time of preparing this report £51,510 has been recovered (relating to two matches). It is estimated £32,356 is outstanding relating to the remaining 8 matches and Internal Audit will continue to work with colleagues to ensure this is verified and recovered promptly.</p> <p>We had either been notified of the remaining deaths prior to the NFI report being published/reviewed, or the match was identified as a false match (i.e. the resident and the death related to different people).</p>
Private Residential Care Homes to HMRC Property Ownership (487)	11	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc	Tbc	0	0	This is a new pilot report released on 14 August 2019, which will help the Council identify failure to disclose assets by citizens undergoing a financial assessment. The findings in this report will be reviewed alongside colleagues in ACFS in the Autumn of 2019. The method of sampling will be determined during the review.
Private Residential Care Homes to HMRC Earnings and Capital (487.1)	41	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc	0	0	This is a new pilot report released on 14 August 2019, which will help the Council identify failure to disclose assets by citizens undergoing a financial assessment. The findings in this report will be reviewed alongside colleagues in ACFS in the Autumn of 2019. The method of sampling will be determined during the review.
Personal Budgets to benefits agency deceased persons within bodies (400.1)	35	A	35	35	0	0	0	0	This report identified where recipients of personal budgets were recorded as deceased by the Department of Work and Pensions. All of the related Direct Payments had ceased prior to the matches being processed.

Report Name (NFI reference)	Total Matches	Internal Audit Review category	Our sample for review	Matches Closed (no issue)	Matches Closed: Fraud/Error Identified	Matches with Enquiries Ongoing	Fraud/Error value recovered to date	Fraud/Error value, recovery ongoing	Comments
Personal budgets to pensions between bodies (413)	62	A	62	0	0	62	-	-	This report identifies variances between pensions paid by outside bodies and financial declarations made in the application for personal budgets. These matches have not been reviewed to date but will be investigated in -year.
Personal budgets to pensions within bodies (415)	42	A	42	0	0	42	-	-	This report identifies variances between pensions paid by the Council and financial declarations made in the application for personal budgets paid by the Council. These matches have not been reviewed to date but will be investigated in-year.
Personal budgets to pensions within bodies (416)	2	A	2	0	0	2	-	-	This report is identical to the above; however, the matches are of a lower quality. These matches have not been reviewed to date but will be investigated in-year.
Duplicate creditor by creditor name (701)	328	C	0	0	0	0	-	-	It is known that the Council has a number of duplicate creditor files due to the structure of My Finance. As a result, these matches are not reviewed. Reliance is placed on the duplicate payments check performed by the Payments Team and Internal Audit's Continuous Controls Monitoring work programme in year.
Duplicate creditors by address detail (702)	221	C	0	0	0	0	-	-	
Duplicate creditors by bank account number (703)	193	C	0	0	0	0	-	-	

Report Name (NFI reference)	Total Matches	Internal Audit Review category	Our sample for review	Matches Closed (no issue)	Matches Closed: Fraud/Error Identified	Matches with Enquiries Ongoing	Fraud/Error value recovered to date	Fraud/Error value, recovery ongoing	Comments
Duplicate records by, invoice amount and creditor reference (708)	959	C	959	48	0	911	-	-	<p>This report identifies potential duplicate invoices from suppliers. Detailed review of matches has not commenced to date. A high-level screening of any matches valued over £2,000 with identical invoice numbers has been performed and one match has been highlighted for priority review. The invoices, valued as £11,297 have been sent to the appropriate budget holder for consideration in the first instance, however until an overpayment is confirmed we will not categorise this as a loss.</p> <p>Detailed review of the lesser priority matches has commenced with 48 matches closed to date with no adverse findings.</p> <p>On an ongoing basis, matches meeting these criteria should be identified by our CCM programme, although not all transactions may be selected in our risk-based sample.</p>
VAT overpaid (709)	88	C	88	88	0	0	-	-	<p>This report compares invoice amounts and VAT values recorded in My Finance. All matches have been subject to review, and valid reasons for VAT not being equal to 20% of the invoice value have been identified. A common example was for school lunch providers, where pupil contributions are deducted from the invoice value.</p>
Duplicate records by creditor name, supplier invoice number and invoice amount but different creditor reference (710)	15	C	15	4	0	11	0	0	<p>This report identified potential duplicate payments. Review of the seven matches identified with a value of £1,000 has commenced. Four have been closed, in each case credit notes having been obtained prior to the NFI results being released. We have raised 3 queries with budget holders regarding a further three opened matches.</p> <p>The final 8 potential matches with a value of less than £11,000 will be reviewed in the Autumn 2019.</p>

Report Name (NFI reference)	Total Matches	Internal Audit Review category	Our sample for review	Matches Closed (no issue)	Matches Closed: Fraud/Error Identified	Matches with Enquiries Ongoing	Fraud/Error value recovered to date	Fraud/Error value, recovery ongoing	Comments
Duplicate records by supplier invoice number and invoice amount but different creditor reference and name (711)	77	C	77	0	0	77	0	0	<p>This report identified potential duplicate payments, although the quality of matches is lower than in report 710, and it expected that there will be a significant volume of false positives as many of these payments will relate to regular payments for the same amount made to different organisations (e.g. schools).</p> <p>These matches will be reviewed prior to the deadline date for the NFI 2018 in March 2020.</p>
Duplicate records by postcode invoice date and invoice amount but different creditor reference and supplier invoice number (712)	8	C	8	7	0	1	0	0	<p>This report identifies potential duplicate payments. Review of the eight matches has identified one potential duplicate. Internal Audit are awaiting responses to enquiries with the relevant budget holder.</p>
Duplicate records by postcode, invoice amount but different creditor reference and supplier invoice number and invoice date (713)	25	C	25	6	0	19	0	0	<p>This report identifies potential duplicate payments. To date we have reviewed the "higher risk" matches as identified by the Cabinet Office, and in each case have cleared the matches with no fraud or error found. Review of the remaining 19 matches is ongoing.</p>

Report Name (NFI reference)	Total Matches	Internal Audit Review category	Our sample for review	Matches Closed (no issue)	Matches Closed: Fraud/Error Identified	Matches with Enquiries Ongoing	Fraud/Error value recovered to date	Fraud/Error value, recovery ongoing	Comments
Procurement - payroll to companies' house (Director) within bodies (750)	34	A	34	26	0	8	0	0	These reports identify employees or individuals they live with who are Directors of Suppliers used by the Council, or who share an address with a Director of a Supplier used by the Council. Review of these matches has commenced, and to date 26 matches have been cleared. Review of employees who are also directors of our suppliers is almost complete, after which review of matches featuring Directors of Suppliers who live at the same address as our employees will commence.
Procurement - Payroll to companies' house (Director), address quality, within bodies (752)	20	A	20	0	0	20	0	0	
Totals	9,574		6,805	5228	2	1575	£51,510	£32,356 (est)	

Audit and Standards Committee Forward Plan 2019/20

If you would like to know more about our work programme, please get in touch with Tina Gould, Scrutiny and Support Manager, 01785 276148 or tina.gould@staffordshire.gov.uk

Item and lead officer	Date of meeting	Links with Council strategic commissioning priorities	Detail	Action/Outcome
21 March 2019				
Annual Report of the Management of Complaints made under the Members' Code of Conduct Lead Officer: Ann-Marie Davidson				
New item: Review of the Effectiveness of Audit and Standards Committee Report of Director of Corporate Services Lead Officer: Debbie Harris				
External Audit Plan 2018/19 Report of Ernst & Young				
Staffordshire Pension Fund Audit Planning 2018-19 Report of Ernst & Young				

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Item and lead officer	Date of meeting	Links with Council strategic commissioning priorities	Detail	Action/Outcome
Local Government Audit Committee briefing Report of Ernst & Young				
Part Two: Cyber Essentials Update: Tracy Thorley/Natalie Morrisey			Follow up of uncompleted actions proposed at meeting on 30.10.18.	Item deferred from December meeting
Part Two (new item): Use of Data, Analytics and the Development of Continuous Controls Monitoring Report of Director of Corporate Services Lead Officer: Debbie Harris				
Forward Plan for the Audit and Standards Committee	All meetings			
Proposed changes to the Constitution	As required			
Internal Audit Special Investigation/limited/ Top Risk Areas reports (<i>Part 2 items</i>)	As required			Part 2 items - Exemption paragraph 3.
12th June 2019				
Appointment of Independent Remuneration Panel Members 2019-20 Report of Director of Corporate Services Lead Officer: Ann-Marie Davidson				

Item and lead officer	Date of meeting	Links with Council strategic commissioning priorities	Detail	Action/Outcome
Annual Information Governance Statement Report of Director of Corporate Services Lead Officer: Tracy Thorley, Head of Business Support & Compliance				
Code of Corporate Governance Report of the Director of Corporate Services Lead Officer: Lisa Andrews Head of Audit and Financial Services				
Report of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman – Investigation into a complaint against Staffordshire County Council. Report of the Director of Corporate Services				
Internal Outturn Report 2018-19 Report of the County Treasurer Lead Officer: Debbie Harris				
Internal Audit Charter 2019 Report of the County Treasurer				

Item and lead officer	Date of meeting	Links with Council strategic commissioning priorities	Detail	Action/Outcome
Lead Officer: Debbie Harris				
Internal Audit Plan 2019/20 Report of the County Treasurer Lead Officer: Debbie Harris				
Correspondence received from Ernst & Young re audit fee 2019-2020				
Interim update report 2018/19 Report of Ernst & Young				
Local Government Audit Committee Briefing - Update Report of Ernst & Young.				
PART TWO EXEMPT Internal Audit Special Investigations/Reports of Limited Assurance/Top Ten Risk Areas (<i>Part 2 of agenda</i>)				Part 2 Exempt items
New item: - Report of the Standards Panel Report of the Director of Corporate Services				
Forward Plan for the Audit and Standards Committee 2019/20 Lead Officer – Lisa	All meetings			

Item and lead officer	Date of meeting	Links with Council strategic commissioning priorities	Detail	Action/Outcome
Andrews Head of Audit & Financial Services				
30th July 2019				
Annual Governance Statement 2018-19 Report of the Director of Corporate Services Lead Officer: Lisa Andrews				
Training on Statement of Accounts				
Statement of Accounts 2018-19 Presentation and Report of County Treasurer Lead Officer: Rachel Spain				
Report to those charged with Governance (ISA 260) a) Staffordshire County Council Report of Ernst & Young				
Report to those charged with Governance (ISA 260) b) Staffordshire Pension Fund Report of Ernst & Young				

Item and lead officer	Date of meeting	Links with Council strategic commissioning priorities	Detail	Action/Outcome
Forward Plan for the Audit and Standards Committee	All meetings			
<p>New Item: Infrastructure + Risk Management</p> <p>Report of the Director of Corporate Services Lead Officer: Lisa Andrews/James Bailey</p>				
PART TWO EXEMPT Internal Audit Special Investigation/limited/ Top Risk Areas reports (<i>Part 2 items</i>).	As required			Part 2 items - Exemption paragraph 3.
<p>PART TWO EXEMPT</p> <p>New Item Questions Arising from reports Circulated to Members outside the Agenda</p>				
14th October 2019				
<p>New item: Annual Report of the work of the Audit & Standards Committee Report of the Director of Corporate Services Lead Officer: Lisa Andrews</p>				
<p>Strategic Risk Register - Update Report of the Director of Corporate Services Lead Officer: Lisa Andrews</p>				

Item and lead officer	Date of meeting	Links with Council strategic commissioning priorities	Detail	Action/Outcome
<p>New item: Development of an assurance framework Joint Report of Director of Corporate Services & County Treasurer Lead Officer: Debbie Harris</p>				
<p>Proposed changes to the Constitution As required</p>	As required			
<p>New Item: Appointment of Independent Member to Audit and Standards Committee Report of the Director of Corporate Services Lead Officer: Lisa Andrews</p>				
<p>Annual Audit letter 2018/19 Report of Ernst & Young</p>				
<p>New item: Potential use of automation in audit and use of Artificial Intelligence Report of Ernst & Young</p>				
<p>Forward Plan for the Audit and Standards Committee</p>	All meetings			Part 2 items - Exemption paragraph 3.
<p>PART TWO EXEMPT Cyber Essentials Update: Tracy Thorley/Natalie Morrisey</p>			Regular Update to members on simulation results	PART TWO EXEMPT Cyber Essentials Update: Tracy Thorley/Natalie Morrisey

Item and lead officer	Date of meeting	Links with Council strategic commissioning priorities	Detail	Action/Outcome
PART TWO EXEMPT National Fraud Initiative (2018) – Update				
PART TWO EXEMPT Internal Audit Special Investigation/limited/ Top Risk Areas reports (<i>Part 2 items</i>)	As required			Part 2 items - Exemption paragraph 3.
PART TWO EXEMPT Update– Prisons and Approved Premises Team – Care Assessment and Management - Implementation of previous recommendations	October 2019		At its meeting on 24.9.18 Members asked that a further update be brought to the Committee in 12 months' time.	
2nd December 2019				
Health, Safety and Wellbeing Performance Annual Report Report of Director of Corporate Services Lead Officer: Becky Lee				
Internal Audit Plan 2019/20 - Update				
Local Government Sector Update Report Report of Ernst & Young				
Proposed changes to the Constitution As required	As required			
Forward Plan for the Audit and Standards Committee	All meetings			

Item and lead officer	Date of meeting	Links with Council strategic commissioning priorities	Detail	Action/Outcome
PART TWO EXEMPT Update on Data Centre Environmental & Physical Security Controls – Implementation of previous recommendations				
PART TWO EXEMPT Update on Approved Mental Health Professionals – Implementation of previous recommendations				
PART TWO EXEMPT Internal Audit Special Investigation/limited/ Top Risk Areas reports (<i>Part 2 items</i>)	As required			Part 2 items - Exemption paragraph 3.
PART TWO EXEMPT Cyber Essentials Update: Tracy Thorley/Natalie Morrisey			Regular Update to members on Multi agency exercise in November 2019	
20th April 2020				
Annual Information Governance Statement Report of the Director of Corporate Services Lead Officer: Tracy Thorley				
Amendments to the Strategic Risk Register				

Item and lead officer	Date of meeting	Links with Council strategic commissioning priorities	Detail	Action/Outcome
Report of the Director of Corporate Services Lead Officer: Lisa Andrews				
Review of the effectiveness of the Audit & Standards Committee – Update Report of the Director of Corporate Services Lead Officer: Debbie Harris				
Internal Audit Charter 2020/21 Report of the County Treasurer Lead Officer Debbie Harris				
Internal Audit Plan 2020-21 Report of the County Treasurer Lead Officer: Debbie Harris				
Annual Report of the Management of Complaints made under the Members' Code of Conduct Report of the Director of Corporate Services Lead Officer: Ann-Marie Davidson				

Item and lead officer	Date of meeting	Links with Council strategic commissioning priorities	Detail	Action/Outcome
External Audit Plan 2019-20 Report of Ernst & Young				
Staffordshire Pension Fund Audit Planning Report 2019/20 Report of Ernst & Young				
Proposed changes to the Constitution As required	As required			
Forward Plan for the Audit and Standards Committee	All meetings			
PART TWO EXEMPT Internal Audit Special Investigation/limited/ Top Risk Areas reports (<i>Part 2 items</i>)	As required			Part 2 items - Exemption paragraph 3.

Membership

Derek Davis, OBE
Mike Davies
Michael Greatorex
Martyn Tittley (Chairman)
David Brookes - (*Until 23rd May 2019*)
Ann Engeller - (*from 23rd May 2019*)
Colin Greatorex
Jill Hood

Paul Northcott
Jeremy Oates
Jonathan Price- (*from 23rd May 2019*)
Carolyn Trowbridge (Vice-Chairman)
Ross Ward
Bernard Williams

Calendar of Committee Meetings

(All meetings at 10.00 a.m. unless otherwise stated)

11 March 2019
12 June 2019
30 July 2019
14th October 2019 - ****14:00
2nd December 2019 ****14:00
20th April 2020

Meetings usually take place at County Buildings, Martin Street,

Ian Lawson - *(Until 23rd May 2019)*

Victoria Wilson
Susan Woodward

Stafford ST16 2LH

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