

Minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee Meeting held on 12 April 2021

Present:
Carolyn Trowbridge (Vice-Chairman) (In the Chair)

Attendance

Derek Davis, OBE	Ann Edgeller
Ross Ward	Richard Ford
Bernard Williams	Helen Fisher
Paul Northcott	Philip Atkins, OBE
Susan Woodward	Keith Flunder
Alastair Little	Keith James
	Bryan Jones

Also in attendance: Mike Sutherland (Cabinet Member for Finance).

Apologies: Martyn Tittley (Chairman)

PART ONE

58. HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh

Members and Officers of the Committee stood in silent tribute to HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh whose death had been announced on Friday 9 April 2021.

59. Declarations of Interest

Mr Flunder placed on record his receipt of a small business loan via Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.

60. Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 February 2021

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

61. Annual Report on the Work of the Audit and Standards Committee

The Committee considered the first Annual Report on its work which had been produced in compliance with CIPFA good practice. The report detailed the role of the Committee in monitoring and reviewing the Council's Governance, Risk Management and Audit functions and listed a number of key areas considered through internal audit reports, counter fraud and corruption work, policy reviews and the evaluation of risks from both internal practices and procedures and potentially from outside influences such as cyber attacks.

The report particularly referred to members' involvement in furthering changes to the delivery of major services including SEND Services and various aspects of Adult Social

Care. Both the Committee and the Internal Audit Team had been responsive to additional pressures during 2020/21 due to COVID 19, with the latter extending their work programme to facilitate involvement in a range of functions including systems design and contract monitoring.

Reference was made to the Committee's previous consideration of the Council's Health, Safety and Well-Being Performance Annual Report for 2019/20, particularly in relation to furthering mental well-being, with members calling for the development of liaison and joint working with other councils and agencies to progress this agenda.

RESOLVED - That the Annual Report be noted.

62. Internal Audit Charter 2021

Under Public Sector Standards and Guidance, the Authority was required to have an Audit Charter detailing the internal audit function's position within the Council, its reporting lines, access to personnel and information, scope of internal audit activities and its governance arrangements.

In accordance with the requirement to regularly review the Charter, the Committee considered a number of minor changes to its content which were proposed to ensure that it reflected the Council's current organisation and governance and the responsibilities of the Internal Audit Service.

RESOLVED – That the updated Internal Audit Charter 2021 be approved.

63. Forward Plan 2021/22

The Committee considered the outline Forward Plan for 2021/22 noting that its content would be determined by a new Committee, taking account of identified risk areas.

RESOLVED – That the Forward Plan be noted.

64. Exclusion of the Public

RESOLVED – 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 paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972 as indicated.

65. Exempt minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2021 (exemption paragraph 3)

66. Special Guardianship Payments Arrangements - Progress Report (exemption paragraph 3)

67. Review of Joint Funding and Billing CCGs - Progress Report (exemption paragraph 3)

68. SEND Services - Further Progress Report (exemption paragraph 3)

69. Proactive Counter Fraud - Purchasing Card Cash Withdrawals (exemption paragraph 3)

70. Strategic Property Asset Management and Governance - Follow-Up Final Audit Report (exemption paragraph 3)

Chairman