

Chairman - Councillor A M Loughran

Present (for all or part of the meeting):-

Councillors:

M G Dodson

R A James

I D Fordham

P W Jones

Also present - Councillor R M Smith, Resources Portfolio

Officers in attendance:-

Mrs J Aupers - Head of Governance

Mr S Baddeley - Chief Internal Auditor and Risk Manager

Mrs E Fullager - Deputy Head of Finance

Mr J Dean - Democratic Services Officer

Prior to commencing proceedings, the Chairman was pleased to welcome Councillor R M Smith to his first meeting of the Committee following a period of illness.

AAC7 Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2022, as previously circulated, were agreed as a correct record.

AAC8 Auditor's Annual Report for Stafford Borough Council 2020 - 2021

Considered the report of Grant Thornton which was required for consideration under Section 20(1)(c) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to satisfy that the Council had made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

In introducing the report, the Head of Governance reported that the Council's External Audit function would be undertaken by a new supplier from 2023/24.

Members reviewed the improvement recommendations as set out in the report, with Officers responding to queries where required. Specific reference was made to:-

- Increases in reserves
- Financial sustainability

- Governance (findings to be reported to a future meeting of the Committee)
- Move to new financial system

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee the report be received.

The Chairman and fellow Members looked forward to representatives of Grant Thornton attending the next meeting of the Committee.

AAC9 Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2022/2023

Considered the report of the Deputy Head of Finance updating Members on Treasury Management activity and performance during the first half of the 2022/23 financial year and providing an economic update and a background to the latest economic forecasts of interest rates.

The Deputy Head of Finance provided Members with details of current investments as at 10 November 2022 and confirmed that the report would also be considered by Council at its meeting on 22 November 2022.

On conclusion of the debate Members voted on the recommendation as set out, which was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee the treasury activity and the Prudential Indicators for 2022/23 be noted.

AAC10 Strategic Risk Register

Considered the report of the Head of Governance setting out details of the Council's Strategic Risk Register as at 30 September 2022.

The Chief Internal Auditor and Risk Manager referred Members to the associated appendices to the report prior to addressing queries regarding:-

- Process for amending risk scores
- Risk C5 - The Councils key contractors remain sustainable and continue to provide value for money
- Risk C6 - Reduced organisational resilience

On conclusion of the debate Members voted on the recommendation as set out, which was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the Strategic Risk Register be received and progress made in the identification and management of the strategic risks be noted.

AAC11 Internal Audit Annual Progress Report - November 2022

Considered the report of the Chief Internal Auditor and Risk Manager presenting progress on the work of Internal Audit up to 31 October 2022.

The Chief Internal Auditor and Risk Manager referred Members to the associated appendices to the report before responding to questions concerning:-

- IT Strategy Resources and operational plans/shared services
- Cyber and Network Security - provision of training for Members

Continuing, Members were asked to consider pages 86 - 89 of appendix 2 with rationale provided for the associated levels of assurance given.

Members then voted on the recommendation as set out, which was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee the report be noted.

AAC12 Internal Audit External Quality Assessment 2022

Considered the report of the Head of Governance presenting for information the External Quality Assessment Report recently completed for the Internal Audit Function.

The Head of Governance introduced the report referring Members to the EQA Improvement Plan as detailed in Appendix 2, specifically noting PSIAS1110 and PSIAS2420.

Members then voted on the recommendations as set out, which were declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee:-

- (a) the content of the External Quality Assurance Report be noted and the Action Plan agreed;
- (b) the conclusion of the Assessor that the section "generally conforms" with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards be noted.

Members congratulated the Chief Internal Auditor and his Team for their efforts in this area of work.

AAC13 Annual RIPA Review

Considered the report of the Head of Law and Administration providing details of the use of powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) by the Council.

The Head of Governance reported that said powers had not been used by the Council since 2015.

Members subsequently voted on the recommendation as set out, which was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee the report be noted.

CHAIR