

AUDIT & REGULATORY COMMITTEE

Meeting: Wednesday, 5 June 2024 at 6.30 pm in The Board Room, Pavilion Gardens, Buxton

Present: Councillor O Cross (Chair)

Councillors A Benham, J Collins, M Hall, A Hopkinson (substitute for Reddy), C Payne and J Todd (substitute for Bell)

Councillors A McKeown and Barrow were also in attendance.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Taylor, P Bell, N Gourlay, P Reddy and Mrs H Burbidge

25/46 TO RECEIVE DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST ON ANY MATTERS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE
(Agenda Item 2)

There were no interests declared.

25/47 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
(Agenda Item 3)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2024 be approved as a correct record.

25/48 INDEPENDENT MEMBER
(Agenda Item)

The Chair informed the Committee that Mr Martin Thomas had resigned as an Independent Member of the Committee. Councillors paid tribute for his valuable insight brought to the Committee. Arrangements would be made to recruit to the vacant independent positions on the Committee.

25/49 EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S ANNUAL REPORT
(Agenda Item 4)

Under the National Audit Office Code of Practice, External Auditors are required to consider whether the Council has in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. As part of this work, auditors are required to consider whether there are any risks of significant weakness in the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources and to make recommendations on improvements if any significant weaknesses are identified. The 2022/23 Auditor assessment had not identified any

significant weaknesses and had made some recommendations for improvement across the areas of financial stability, governance and improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness. No risks of significant weakness had been identified across the areas.

Members discussed an number of issues that included inflationary pressures faced by the Council in relation to the Housing Revenue Account and repairs/disabled facilities grants being carried out by Alliance Norse and opportunities to expand the business. The Committee also considered the level of communication between service areas for cross-cutting areas of work and how this may be improved (e.g. planning enforcement and environmental health).

RESOLVED:

That the Auditors Annual Report 2022/23 be noted.

25/50 **EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2023-24**
(Agenda Item 5)

The Audit Plan for the year ending 31 March 2024 provided an overview of the planned scope and timing of the statutory audit of the High Peak Borough Council for those charged with governance. Consideration was given to significant risks, materiality, value for money arrangements and audit logistics. Councillors debated valuations with regards to buildings and the pension fund which was based on a three year rolling programme.

RESOLVED:

That the Audit Plan 2023-24 be noted.

25/51 **INFORMING THE AUDIT RISK ASSESSMENT**
(Agenda Item 6)

The report contributes towards the effective two-way communication between the external auditors and the Audit & Regulatory Committee as 'those charged with governance.' The reports covers some important areas of the audit risk assessment where in queries are made of the Audit & Regulatory Committee under auditing standards. As part of the risk assessment procedures, the auditors are required to obtain an understanding of management processes and the Council's oversight of a number of areas, and the report includes a series of question on each of those areas and the responses received from management.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

25/52 **INTERNAL AUDIT PERIODIC REPORT FEBRUARY 2024 TO MAY 2024**
(Agenda Item 7)

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requires the Council to 'undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk

management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards to guidance.’ In accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, the Head of Audit must report periodically to the Audit Committee on the internal audit activity’s performance relative to its plan.

A limited assurance had been issued with regards to the internal audit of Taxi Licensing which would be followed by a mini review of the service which had recently appointed a new member of staff.

RESOLVED:

That the progress information contained within the report be noted.

25/53 INTERNAL AUDIT - ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24
(Agenda Item 8)

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requires the Council to ‘undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance.’ In accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, the Head of Audit must deliver an annual internal audit opinion and report that can be used by the organisation to inform its governance statement.

It was reported that three audits had been rolled forward due to staff vacancies in the Audit team. The number of recommendations implemented for audits relating to taxi licensing and car parking were discussed by the Committee.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Audit Service’s 2023/24 year end performance information contained within the report be noted;
2. That the opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council’s internal control environment be noted.

25/54 INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER
(Agenda Item 9)

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requires the Council to ‘undertaken an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance.’ The Audit Charter provides a framework for the operation of the Internal Audit services and is required by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) which require the Charter to be approved by the ‘Board’, which for the Council’s purpose is the Audit & Regulatory Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Council’s Internal Audit Charter be approved.

25/55 INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL AUDIT PLAN 2024/25
(Agenda Item 10)

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requires the Council to 'undertaken an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance.' In accordance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, the Audit Manager should establish a risk based audit plan to determine the priorities of the internal audit activity, consistent with the Council's goals. The audit plan must be based on a document risk assessment undertaken at least annually.

Members raised matters relating to the audit of agreed policies (e.g. use of inflatables) and with regards to the Council controlled companies.

RESOLVED:

That the Council's annual Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25 be approved.

25/56 REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTION
(Agenda Item 11)

The Committee considered revisions to Executive Procedure Rules and the delegations to officers, following consideration by the Constitution Sub-Committee and Full Council. Members referred to two typographical errors within the revised documents which would be corrected.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive Procedure Rules and delegations to officers be ratified, as amended, following consideration by the Constitution Sub-Committee and Full Council.

25/57 WORK PROGRAMME
(Agenda Item 12)

The Committee considered the Audit & Regulatory Committee Work Programme 2025/26.

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme 2025/26 be noted.

The meeting concluded at 8.15 pm

CHAIRMAN