

AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 25TH APRIL, 2016

Present Councillor Brian Coates in the Chair

Councillors N Weatherley (Vice-Chair), P Dillon, J Green, L Green,
J McClurey and J McElroy

Independent Members: Mr G Clark, Mrs J Common and Mr B Jones

18 Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting held on 7 March 2016 were approved as a correct record.

19 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

20 External Auditor: Audit Progress Report

The external auditor's progress report has been presented showing progress against planned work. The report also summarised the following:

- Accounts workshop for officers.
- North East Governance Forum.
- Changes impacting on the Statement of Accounts, Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and Audit Regulations 2015.
- National publications and other updates.

In response to a query regarding the appointment process for the Council's external auditor from 2018/19, the Committee was advised that further details would be brought back to it as more details were published on the proposed arrangements.

The Committee was also informed that a comprehensive training programme was being developed. Training sessions have been organised for 6 June 2016 on Treasury Management. Details would be circulated to all members of the Committee.

RESOLVED - That the contents of the external auditor's report be noted.

21 The Internal Audit Strategy Statement and Annual Plan 2016/17

The Committee received a report setting out the proposed Audit Strategy Statement and annual plan of work to be undertaken by the Internal Audit and Risk Service in 2016/17.

In response to a question regarding the risk ratings in appendix 1 to the report, the Committee was advised that in future a post audit review would be undertaken to ensure that the scoring was accurate.

A member referred to the effectiveness of the Council's ICT systems and web information. Members were informed that a team of IT auditors were due to review these and the results would be shared with the Committee. In addition, this area of work was being addressed through the Digital workstream of the Council's Change Programme.

- RESOLVED – (i) That the Audit Strategy Statement and the annual plan of work to be provided by the Internal Audit and Risk Service for 2016/17 be noted.
- (ii) That quarterly monitoring reports be received showing progress made against the plan.

22 Corporate Risk Management 2015/16 - Quarterly Report to 31 March 2016

The Committee received a report detailing the developments in Corporate Risk Management during the period 1 January 2016 to 31 March 2016.

An Action Plan for the delivery of the Development Objectives for 2015/16 was also presented. This incorporates details of progress made.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted

23 Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the remaining business in accordance with paragraph 7 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

24 Internal Audit Plan 2015/16 - Quarterly Monitoring Report to 31 March 2016

The progress made by the Internal Audit and Risk Service against the audit plan for the financial year 2015/16 was presented to the Committee together with a summary of the main findings arising from audit activity throughout the period 1 January 2016 to 31 March 2016.

A total of nine audit reports were issued during the period and the findings of these were presented to the Committee. The internal Audit and Risk Service also completed one grant certification.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

25 Councillor Brian Coates

Members were advised that the Chair, Councillor Brian Coates, was attending his last meeting of the Committee before stepping down as a councillor following the local elections on 5 May 2016.

RESOLVED - That the Committee place on record its thanks and appreciation of Councillor Coates' work as Chair of the Committee.