

HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Audit and Finance Committee held on 23 March 2023

Present

Councillor: Inkster (Chairman)

Councillors: Linger (Vice-Chairman) and Wade

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Diamond and Guest.

2 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Finance Committee held on 20 October 2023 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

3 Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interests relating to matters on the agenda.

4 21/22 Outline Audit Plan

The Committee considered the report presented by Mr Suter and Mr Jones of Ernst & Young, Mr Suter and Mr Jones answered questions in connection with the report.

The Outline Audit Plan set out how the External Auditors intended to carry out our responsibilities as auditor. Its purpose is to provide the Committee with a basis to review their proposed audit approach and scope for the 2021/22 audit in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the National Audit Office's new 2020 Code of Audit Practice, the Statement of Responsibilities issued by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) Ltd, auditing standards and other professional requirements. It would also to ensure that our audit is aligned with the Committee's service expectations.

A proposal by Councillor Wade and seconded by Councillor Linger to approve the submitted plan was agreed by the Committee. It was therefore

RESOLVED that submitted external audit plan for 21/22 be approved.

5 The Internal Audit Progress Report for 2022/23

The Committee considered the report presented by Antony Harvey of the Southern Internal Audit Partnership, who joined the meeting for the debate on this item and answered member's questions in connection with the report.

The paper provided an update on the progress of internal audit activity completed in accordance with the approved audit plan and summarised the status of 'live' reports.

A proposal by Councillor Linger seconded by Councillor Wade to accept the recommendation set out in the report was agreed.

It was therefore

RESOLVED that submitted Internal Audit Progress Report, reflecting progress to 28th February 2023 be noted.

6 Options for Internal Audit Days for 2023/24

The Committee was given an opportunity to comment on a suggestion by the Management Team to reduce the number of internal audit days ("audit days") for 2023/24.

Mr Harvey of the Southern Internal Audit Partnership outlined the risks of the suggested change and advised that the Council could either retain the current number of audit days or reduce the number of days by 10%. He advised that he did not recommend a reduction in the number of audit days as this could impact the internal auditor's ability to give an assurance opinion and would limit the scope of the internal audit.

The Interim Section 151 Officer advised that in view of size and complexity of the Council, the current number of audit days could not be justified. The Management Team was concerned that some areas covered by the audit were not perceived as a risk and about the amount of management time currently devoted to the internal audit.

Mr Harvey and the Officers answered questions raised by Members of the Committee.

The Committee noted that a final decision on whether to reduce the number of audit days in 2023/24 would be taken under delegated powers.

7 Quarterly Governance & Risk Report

The Committee was given an opportunity to comment on the Quarterly Governance and Performance Report. The Officers presented the report and answered questions.

A proposal by Councillor Wade, which was seconded by Councillor Linger to agree the recommendation set out in the report was agreed.

It was therefore,

RESOLVED that submitted report be noted.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and concluded at 5.46 pm

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Chairman