

AUDIT COMMITTEE (SBDC)

Meeting - 16 March 2017

Present: Mr Bradford (Chairman)
Mr D Smith, Mr Hogan and Mr Sangster

Apologies for absence: Mrs Gibbs and Mr Hollis

40. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

41. UPDATE ON STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

Members of the Committee received a report detailing the compliance with requirements of the standards framework, alongside current notification documents.

The Committee noted that the documents were essentially unchanged from those used previously, and that officers are currently making arrangements for Members to update their interests' pages via the extranet, with guidance to be circulated closer to implementation.

The Members of the Committee therefore **RESOLVED** that the report - including the current position and reviews of the disclosable pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests - be noted.

42. REVIEW OF STANDARDS WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

The Audit Committee noted the Standards Work Programme for 2017/2018, and were informed by officers that an item regarding the appointment of an independent person would be brought to the 5 July meeting of the Committee.

43. UNDERSTANDING HOW THE AUDIT COMMITTEE GAINS ASSURANCE FROM MANAGEMENT

The Committee received a report which included, as an appendix, the response to the External Auditor's request for information regarding how the Audit Committee gains assurance from management. Ernst and Young clarified that this was a standard letter sent each year to the Council as an annual assurance used to sign off the Council's accounts.

RESOLVED that the proposed response to the External Auditor's letter, requesting information on how the Audit Committee gains assurance from Management, be agreed.

44. CERTIFICATION OF CLAIMS AND RETURNS ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16

The Committee received from Ernst and Young the Certification of Claims and Returns Annual Report 2015-16.

As is quite common, a qualification letter had been issued by Ernst and Young regarding Housing Benefit Claims. It was clarified that Ernst and Young had sample-tested claims, and that 1 underpayment had been found, with a net impact of an increase of £653, extrapolated to £13,713. Members wished to know how likely it was that DWP would recover these costs, with Ernst and Young advising that it would be likely.

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Section 2 of the report summarised the fees for the certification work and the Committee noted that the fee for 2015/16 was £19,280.

Ernst and Young wished to express their thanks to Northgate whose help and professionalism in carrying out the work had been much appreciated.

It was also explained to Members that the time had come for the Council to appoint auditors for the future Housing Benefit work, with officers aiming to take a pragmatic approach to this, adding an addendum to the Financial Statement contract for the grant claims work to also be undertaken.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

45. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT 2016/17

The Committee received a report from TIAA concerning the Internal Audit Progress, with TIAA informing Members that all draft reports – excepting ICT – will be completed by the end of March, with the assurance report being brought to the Committee on the 5 July 2017.

In response to a question from a Member, TIAA confirmed that although the Absence Management system report had been cancelled, in actuality it had been delayed to April 2017, so would not fall within the work undertaken for 2016/17.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

46. AUDIT STRATEGIC PLAN 2017/18 TO 2019/20 AND ANNUAL PLAN 2017/18

The Audit Strategic Plan 2017/18 to 2019/20 and Annual Plan 2017/18 were noted by the Committee.

47. AUDIT WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was noted by the Committee.

48. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

The meeting terminated at 6.20 pm