

CIVIC AFFAIRS

5 July 2023
5.30 - 6.30 pm

Present: Councillors McPherson (Chair), Davey (Vice-Chair), Bennett, Healy, Sheil and Young

Officers:

Chief Financial Officer: Caroline Ryba
Head of Shared Internal Audit Service: Jonathan Tully
Democratic Services Manager: Gary Clift
Meeting Producer: Sarah Steed

Others Present:

Ernst & Young Audit Partner: Mark Hodgson

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

23/18/Civ Apologies

Apologies were received from the Council's Independent Person, Rob Bennett.

23/19/Civ Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

23/20/Civ Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 15 and 25 May 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

23/21/Civ Public Questions

There were no public questions.

23/22/Civ To Note Officer Delegated Decision

5a To implement the Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Officers of Local Authorities Pay Award for 2023-24
The decision was noted.

23/23/Civ Update on the timing of the external audit of the Council's statement of accounts 2022/23

The Committee received an oral report from the Council's External Auditor.

The following was noted by Committee:

That Audits of 2022/23 Accounts will not begin before 1st November 2023 and as yet there is no timetable for commencing the Council's Audit as the focus is on historical audits nationally (of which there are over 1,000 to be concluded).

It was confirmed following a question submitted by the Independent Person that the small grant claim CFB06 did not apply to the city council.

The Committee noted the update and that a further update would be provided by the External Auditor to the next meeting.

23/24/Civ Internal Audit Plan 2023/24

The committee received a progress report from the Head of Internal Audit regarding the Internal Audit Plan 2023/24.

The Committee and the Independent Person asked questions concerning:

Current staffing levels in the Audit Team

Resources for pre-Audit work

Horizon scanning for reviews/no scheduled look at SCDC 4 day week or the proposed STZ.

Any concerns on the audits reported to Committee

In response to members' questions the Head of Internal Audit said the following:

- i. Noted supportive comments on how to retain/develop the audit team
- ii. Pre-audit work covers looking at key systems
- iii. A six month audit plan allows the service to be agile-a long list can be risk appraised and be brought forward
- iv. There was no concerns that the service was unable to audit any service that it should be.
- v. Other than the Health and Safety Asbestos Management audit, there were no significant concerns on the work undertaken and reported.

Resolved (unanimously) to:

- i. Approve the draft Audit Plan and Strategy;

- ii. Approve the supporting Charter and the Code of Ethics

23/25/Civ Review of Budget Process Timetable for 2023/24 and General Constitutional Updates Governance Review

The Committee received a report from the Chief Financial Officer.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. It would be helpful if the officers produced a narrative on what the various meetings in the new sequence will be for and who will be invited to attend.
- ii. Supported an extended consultation period of 8 weeks and requested work with the communities team to encourage participation.
- iii. Circulate the new timetable to all Councillors and the narrative (to first be circulated to the Leader, Executive Cllr for Finance and Resources and committee spokes).

The Chief Financial Officer noted the Committee's comments and would act accordingly.

Resolved (unanimously)

To recommend to Council the changes to Council Procedure Rules and Budget Framework Rules as set out in Appendix A

To agree:

The additions and changes to meetings November 2023-February 2024 and to note that there is still the issue of a second Council meeting (non-budget) to resolve in February/March 2024, which should be addressed in the Governance Review Group as soon as possible.

To note:

That Financial Procedure Rules have been updated to reflect the Senior Management Structure effective from 25 May 2023 (appendix B)

That the Scheme of Delegation has been updated to reflect the Senior Management Structure effective from 25 May 2023.

The meeting ended at 6.30 pm

CHAIR

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