
Audit Committee

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT on Monday, 23 October 2023 from 7.00 pm - 7.21 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Simon Clark (Chair), Angela Harrison, Tara Noe, Chris Palmer (Substitute for Councillor Derek Carnell), Richard Palmer and Dolley Wooster.

PRESENT (VIRTUALLY): Councillor Rich Lehmann.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Billy Attaway, Lisa Fillery, Mark Goodwin and Claire Stanbury.

OFFICERS PRESENT (VIRTUALLY): Matt Dean and Richmond Nyarko (Grant Thornton).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE (VIRTUALLY): Councillors Ann Cavanagh and Tony Winckless.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Andy Booth, Derek Carnell and Mike Henderson.

380 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 July 2023 (Minute Nos. 211 – 215) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

381 Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

Part B Minutes for Information

382 Annual Financial Report 2022/23 and Audit Findings Report

The Head of Finance and Procurement introduced the report which outlined the Council's Annual Financial Report for 2022/23 and included the external Auditor's Audit Findings Report for consideration.

The Head of Finance and Procurement thanked the Council's Finance team and the external Auditors, Grant Thornton, for their hard work to get the Annual Financial Report ready for the Committee.

The Chair invited Matt Dean, Grant Thornton, to speak. He started by thanking the council's Finance team for their hard work on the accounts and assisting them in completing the Audit. He added that all the field work had been completed and Grant Thornton hoped to have the final review prepared by the end of the month. He said that the value for money report was underway and hoped to have the report prepared for the next committee meeting in January 2024.

Members asked if the colouring on page 12 of Grant Thorntons report could be changed to make the assessments clearer and easier to understand. Grant Thornton agreed to review the layout of their report so that it was easier to read and interpret.

Councillor Richard Palmer proposed the recommendations, and this was seconded by Councillor Dolley Wooster.

Resolved:

- (1) That the external Auditor's Audit Findings Report (Appendix I to the report) be noted.**
- (2) That the letter of Representation (Appendix II to the report) be approved on behalf of the Council.**
- (3) That the Annual Financial Report for the year ended 31 March 2023 (Appendix III to the report), including the adjustments set out in the Audit Findings Report be approved.**
- (4) That the Chief Executive and Leader sign the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2023.**
- (5) That the Chair of the Audit Committee signs and dates the Annual Financial Report for the year ended 31 March 2023.**

383 Audit Committee Annual Report 2022/23

The Audit Planning Manager introduced the report which assured that the Committee had successfully monitored and addressed issues of governance, risk management and internal control throughout 2022/23.

The Chair thanked Councillor Derek Carnell for the hard work he had put into chairing the Audit Committee during the 2022/23 civic year and congratulated members of the Audit Committee for successfully carrying out the duties of the committee.

Councillor Chris Palmer proposed the recommendations, and this was seconded by Councillor Tara Noe.

Resolved:

- (1) That the Audit Committee Annual Report for 2022/23 (Appendix I of the report) be agreed.**
- (2) That the Chair of Audit Committee presents the Audit Committee Annual Report 2022/23 to a meeting of Full Council to demonstrate how the Committee had discharged its duties.**

Chair

Copies of this document are available on the Council website <http://www.swale.gov.uk/dso/>. If you would like hard copies or alternative versions (i.e. large print, audio, different language) we will do our best to accommodate your request please contact Swale Borough Council at Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT or telephone the Customer Service Centre 01795 417850.

All minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel