

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE
HELD IN MEETING ROOM 1, GUILDHALL ON
THURSDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2019

MEMBERS

Independent Lay Member Jerry O'Keeffe*, Chair
Councillor Dana Davies, Vice-Chair

Councillor	* Trevor Bates	Councillor	* John McCusker
"	Sonia Benbow-Jones	"	Paul Roberts
"	* Mike Davies	"	Rondo Roberts
"	D J Griffiths	"	J R Skelland
	Frank Hemmings		* Nigel Williams
	Marc Jones		

*Absent

36 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Trevor Bates, Mike Davies, Nigel Williams, John McCusker and Jerry O'Keeffe (Chair).

37 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 13 December 2018 be signed as a correct record.

Matters Arising – Minute 27

The Head of Finance advised that he had circulated an update report from the Chair of Homes and Environment Scrutiny Committee on the outcome of its deliberations on the Council's environmental enforcement duties together with a note outlining a response to the Topic Request Form in relation to this matter.

A Member advised that he had already provided feedback in respect of the wording of recommendation iii) which he felt required further clarification. It was AGREED that this request would be reported back to the Scrutiny Facilitator.

38 WORK PROGRAMME

The Head of Finance submitted an updated Work Programme. He drew Members attention to the additional item on 'WAO Grants' which had been included for consideration at the March 2019 meeting. He advised that this would not be a major item and would reflect on works already carried out during the year.

It was agreed that Audit Committee training sessions would be reviewed on a meeting by meeting basis.

RESOLVED – That the Work Programme be noted.

39 INTERNAL AUDIT INTERIM REPORT APRIL 2018 - JANUARY 2019

The Head of Finance submitted a report (HF/15/19) which enabled Members to consider the Service Manager - Audit and Technical's Interim Report for April 2018 to January 2019.

The Audit Lead introduced the report and referred to the main findings of the audit work undertaken during this period. He responded to Members' questions accordingly thereafter.

During discussion, the following points were noted, in particular:

- 17/048 - the Head of Finance provided more background in respect of the complex issues relating to the collection of housing former tenant arrears (FTAs) which were now administered by Finance rather than Housing. He confirmed that FTAs were not written off and various methods were used to try and track individuals. Unpaid debts would be flagged up if a tenant re-entered the system. The Head of Finance AGREED to provide written details on the actual amount of rent arrears.
- The Service Manager Audit & Technical confirmed that Internal Audit had carried out their responsibilities by identifying that processes in respect of FTAs were not effective and drawing the matter to the Audit Committee's attention in the original audit and the 1st Follow-up audit. It was for the Head of Finance to provide confirmation that actions were in place to address the concerns raised by Internal Audit.
- The Service Manager Audit & Technical confirmed that rents in respect of industrial, commercial and agricultural properties may be covered as part of sample testing under the Debtors audit as there was no specific audit of these properties within the Audit Plan 18/19. .
- 18/705 - Occupational Road Risk Policy (ORRP) – 1st follow-up audit, the Head of Finance confirmed that any employee who drove their car on Wrexham CBC business had to comply with the ORRP and there should be checks to ensure the correct driving licence, MOT, tax and insurance were in place. He stated that the ORRP was in place to mitigate the Council's risks but the audit had identified that awareness and compliance were not as effective as they should be. New measures had been introduced to address these issues and the 2nd follow-up audit would provide the Audit Committee with assurance on this service area.
- 18/706 - the North Wales Adoption Service audit would be removed from the Follow-up Audits schedule in the next report as Green Amber assurance had now been provided.

AGREED – That the report be noted.

40 WALES AUDIT OFFICE PLAN 2019/2010

The Head of Finance submitted a report (HF/18/19) providing a copy of the Wales

Audit Office 2019/20 Audit Plan.

In discussing the report, the WAO officer responded to Members questions accordingly, providing further information, in particular, around the proposed audit response contained in the report. She also confirmed that a profit could not be made from the work undertaken.

The Head of Finance confirmed that new regulations would come into force later in the year and information would be presented to a future meeting detailing how these changes would impact on the Local Authority.

AGREED – That the Wales Audit Office Audit Plan 2019 be noted.

41 WALES AUDIT OFFICE NATIONAL REPORTS

The Head of Finance submitted an information report (HF/20/19) which updated Members on the national performance reports published by the Wales Audit Office.

In presenting the information report, the Head of Finance referred to a number of links which had been included as background papers.

In responding to a Member question the Audit Lead advised that although the updated Principal Risk Register, which is to be reported to the next Audit Committee, does not contain any separate risk concerning the UK leaving the EU, this is referenced to in the context of risks that have already been identified concerning social exclusion and the physical impact on the community of external events. The Head of Finance further clarified that existing service/continuity arrangements were in place and had been rated green/amber in a recent internal audit.

AGREED – That the Audit Committee notes the national reports published by the Wales Audit Office and the response made by the Council.

42 ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIR DECIDES ARE URGENT

The Chair invited a member of the public to ask a number of questions which Officers responded to accordingly. In particular the Head of Finance confirmed the following:

- The Council did not adhere to one single standard. Officers reported that a whole range of services were provided within the Council and the standard was dependent on the professional service being delivered.
- The Council has an independent Internal Audit team.
- Concerns regarding a procedure could be reported in a number of different ways e.g. email to the relevant Head of Department, access to the Complaints Procedure, email to the Service Manager Audit & Technical etc.

The Chair welcomed the attendee's questions and thanked him for his attendance at the meeting.

Councillor Dana Davies
Vice Chair