
AUDIT COMMITTEE

Monday, 9th December, 2024

Present: Councillor Bernard Dawson MBE (in the Chair), Councillors Ethan Rawcliffe (Vice Chair), Vanessa Alexander, Peter Edwards and Danny Cassidy

Apologies Councillor Heather Anderson

262 Apologies for Absence, Declarations of Interest, Dispensations and Substitutions

Councillor Heather Anderson was absent from the meeting.

Councillor Vanessa Alexander declared a personal interest regarding agenda item 6 due to being a previous council employee at the time of the backlogged reports.

263 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the 16th of September 2024 Audit Committee were submitted for approval as a correct record.

Resolved –That the minutes be received and approved as a correct record.

264 Risk Management Monitoring Report

Mrs Susan Gardner, Scrutiny and Policy Officer presented the report to the committee.

Mrs Gardner informed the Committee of the outcome of the Strategic, Generic and Operational Risk Registers review.

The Corporate Risk Register outlines the key strategic risks facing the Council and the controls currently in place to respond to these risks.

There are 17 Generic risks, 68 Operational risks and 23 Strategic risks.

There had been 3 changes made to the Strategic Risk Register and 1 to the Operational Risk Register since the 24th of June 2024.

Strategic:

Food Waste Collection (Operational/Reputational)

Town Centre Project (Financial)

Huncoat Garden Village (Financial/Reputational)

Operational:

Housing Benefit (Financial)

Further information is all outlined in appendix 1 and 2 of the report.

Resolved – That the Audit Committee noted the contents of the report and the changes made to the Risk Registers.

265 Audit Plan Progress Report - September 2024 to November 2024

Ms Angela Kelly presented the report to inform Members of the Audit reports issued during the period September 2024 – November 2024 and to bring to the key issues to their attention.

The following 3 Audits that have been completed;
Christmas Lights – Comprehensive Assurance – No issues arising
Homelessness – Substantial Assurance – Three recommendations made.
Business Continuity – Substantial Assurance – One recommendation was made.

Resolved – That the Audit Committee noted the report for information.

266 External Audit

Mr Daniel Watson, External Audit presented the following three reports to the Audit Committee;

- 267 Auditors Annual Report (Year end 31st of March 2022 and 31st of March 2023)**
- 268 Audit Completion Report (Year end 31st of March 2022)**
- 269 Audit Strategy and completion report (year end 31st of march 2023)**

Mr Watson summarised the reports provided which broke down the work of the External Auditors for the year end 31st of March 2022 and 31st of March 2023.

He clarified the backstop date for all outstanding external audits up to and including the financial year 2022/2023 was the 13th of December 2024.

The 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 accounts will be submitted with Disclaimed Opinions as the External Auditors have not been able to finish reviewing the accounts.
Mr Watson explained this was impacted by staff turnover at Hyndburn Borough Council and the implementation of a new financial system which led to delays in providing the accounts.

Final statements on the accounts cannot be made at this time as the reports are not completed. However Mr Watson explained that they were keeping in close contact with Hyndburn Borough Councils Management team throughout this process.

Resolved – The reports were noted for informational purposes.

270 Statement of Accounts 2021-2022 and 2022-2023

Miss Jody Spencer-Anforth, Head of Finance presented the Councils Statement of Accounts for 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 for the committees approval.

Miss Spencer-Anforth informed that these accounts would have a disclaimed opinion.

The Council's Statement of Accounts for 2021/22 were presented at Appendix 1 and the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2022/23 were presented at Appendix 2

Provided at Appendix 3 and Appendix 4 were the Letter of Representations for 2021/22 and 2022/23 respectively.

The Council is required to provide this letter to the External Auditors before they issue their audit report.

The Audit Committee was asked to approve the Letter of Representation following which the Head of Finance would sign it on behalf of the Council.

Resolved –

- 1) **The committee approved the Statement of Accounts for 2021/2022 as presented at Appendix 1 and the Chair signed the Statement of Accounts.**
- 2) **The committee approved the Statement of Accounts for 2022/2023 as presented at Appendix 2 and the Chair signed the Statement of Accounts.**
- 3) **The committee approved the letter of Representation for 2021/2022.**
- 4) **The committee approved the letter of Representation for 2022/2023.**

271 Update on External Audits

Miss Jody Spencer-Anforth presented the report to the committee and gave an overview of the work done to address external audit recommendations for the Accounts 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 and the councils VTM arrangements for 2021/2022 and 2022/2023.

Miss Spencer-Anforth clarified that the 8 deficits presented have been rolled over a number of years due to the backlog of accounts and that most of the recommendations have either been acted on already or are being worked on currently.

Miss Spencer-Anforth clarified to the committee that the next backstop deadline was the 28th of February 2025 for the 2023/2024 accounts. These accounts will also have disclaimed opinions.

The draft accounts for 2023/2024 were posted on Hyndburn Borough Council's website on the 28th June 2024.

Resolved – That the report be noted for informational purposes.

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
At which the minutes were confirmed