

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE

17 JANUARY 2024 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Cllr DS Cope - Chair
Cllr A Pendlebury – Vice-Chair
Cllr CM Allen, Cllr REH Flemming, Cllr E Hollick, Cllr C Lambert, Cllr MJ Surtees,
Cllr BE Sutton, Cllr R Webber-Jones, Cllr P Williams and Cllr C Gibbens

Also in attendance:

Officers in attendance: Chris Brown (Azets), Julie Kenny, Sarah Knowles, Helen Parks (Azets), Rebecca Valentine-Wilkinson and Ashley Wilson

235. **Apologies and substitutions**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Walker, with the following substitution authorised in accordance with procedure rule 10.

Councillor C Gibbens for Councillor Walker

236. **Minutes of previous meeting**

It was moved by Councillor Flemming, seconded by Councillor Webber-Jones and

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 26 July be confirmed as a correct record.

237. **Declarations of interest**

There were no interests declared at the meeting.

238. **Annual Audit Plan - External audit**

Members were presented with the annual external audit plan which gave highlights of the key elements of the proposed audit strategy and an overview of the planned scope and timing of the external audit.

In a response to questions from members it was confirmed that:

- the audit work would be going ahead as planned even though there was a backlog from previous years;
- the risks identified in the plan were standard across the board, and set by the audit approach;
- once the statement from the minister was received regarding how the country were to deal with the backlog, it was confirmed that this wouldn't make significant changes to their processes.

It was moved by Councillor Flemming, seconded by Councillor Webber-Jones and

RESOLVED – the report be approved and noted.

239. Housing Benefit subsidy claim audit 2021/22

Members received a report on the audit results of the housing subsidy audit.

Members noted the report.

240. Local Authority audit framework

Members received a copy of a letter from Government regarding proposals to re-establish the local authority audit framework on a more sustainable basis.

In response to questions from members it was confirmed that:

- there wasn't any additional funding for this;
- members were pleased that things had moved forward and were more productive but also found it unacceptable that a public sector organisation had been treated in this way;
- additional resources may need to be bought in resourced from the general fund to manage the workload as there may be multiple audits being worked on at the same time.

It was proposed by Councillor Flemming, seconded by Councillor Pendlebury and

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

241. 2022/23 Report on the National Fraud Initiative

Members were informed of the results of the 2022/23 report on the National Fraud Initiative.

In a response to a question from members asking if the authority prosecuted on the undeclared cases:

- it was confirmed that the authority did go for recovery of the overpayment and consideration be given to prosecute, and
- an administrative penalty had been given to the cases highlighted.

It was proposed by Councillor Webber-Jones, seconded by Councillor Flemming and

RESOLVED - the report be noted.

242. Audit Committee Self Assessment

Members were presented with a summary of CIPFA's Audit Committees practical guidance for Local Authorities and the Police which was updated in October 2022.

It was proposed by Councillor Webber-Jones, seconded by Councillor Allen

RESOLVED – the report be noted and

- i. Audit Committee meet to assess themselves against the CIPFA criteria; and
- ii. with officers support draft an action plan to address areas of weakness noted in the self-assessment.

(The Meeting closed at 8.00 pm)

CHAIR