

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE

13 NOVEMBER 2024 AT 6.30 PM

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

Also in attendance: Councillor KWP Lynch, Chris Brown (Azets), Helen Parks
(Azets) and Ashley Stewart (Mazars)

Officers in attendance: Ilyas Bham, Julie Kenny, Rebecca Owen and Ashley
Wilson

249. **Apologies and substitutions**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Gibbens with the
substitution of Councillor Green authorised in accordance with council procedure
rule 10.

250. **Minutes of previous meeting**

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

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 18 September be
confirmed as a correct record.

251. **Declarations of interest**

No interests were declared.

252. **Internal Audit progress report 2023/2024**

Consideration was given to the internal audit progress report. It was moved by
Councillor Webber-Jones, seconded by Councillor Allen and

RESOLVED – the report be approved.

253. **Main Accounting final report**

Members received the main accounting final report from the internal auditor. It
was moved by Councillor Webber-Jones, seconded by Councillor Allen and

RESOLVED – the report be approved.

254. Budgetary control final report

The committee considered the budgetary control final report. It was moved by Councillor Webber-Jones, seconded by Councillor Allen and

RESOLVED – the report be approved.

255. External Audit Backlog

An update was provided on the position in relation to the backlog in the publication of audited accounts and the national proposals to deal with the delay. It was noted that because the delays were caused by the centrally appointed external auditors, there were hundreds of other councils in the same position and members were not confident that the external auditor would meet the backstop date of 13 December to enable publication of audited accounts.

It was noted that the delays would result in a further two years of unqualified accounts. In response to a member's question, assurance was given that members wouldn't be held liable for any issues as a result of the accounts being unqualified.

Discussion ensued on the recommendation contained within the statement of accounts report about delegation of the decision to approve the accounts to the chair of the committee and whilst members were comfortable with this, it was suggested that they may wish to arrange a further meeting. The external auditor agreed to keep the chair updated on progress up to 13 December.

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

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

256. Unaudited Statement of Accounts 2020/21 to 2022/23

Members received the statement of accounts and annual governance statements for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23. Attention was drawn to a system error which had created an error in the accounts but had not affected the bottom line. It was moved by Councillor Webber-Jones, seconded by Councillor Flemming and

RESOLVED –

- (i) The statement of accounts and annual governance statements for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 be approved;
- (ii) Authority be delegated to the chair of the Audit Committee to formally approve the accounts or approve any changes required when the external audit work is concluded.

257. Value For Money Interim Report - Ernst & Young LLP - Years ended ended 31 March 2021 - 31 March 2023

Members received a report of the outgoing external auditor in relation to value for money arrangements. Discussion ensued on frequency of meetings and it was agreed that this would be reviewed after a period of stability. It was moved by Councillor Webber-Jones, seconded by Councillor Flemming and

RESOLVED – the report be approved.

258. Azets - Audit Progress Report - November 2024

The new external auditor presented the audit progress report. It was noted that due to the lack of assurance on previous years' accounts following the external auditor's backlog, a disclaimed opinion would also be provided on the 2023/24 and 2024/25 accounts, but the auditors would work with officers on a recovery plan. It was moved by Councillor Webber-Jones, seconded by Councillor Flemming and

RESOLVED – the report be approved.

259. Items to be referred to council

None.

(The Meeting closed at 7.32 pm)

CHAIR