

Minutes of the meeting of the Audit,
Governance and Standards Committee held
at 9.30 am on Tuesday, 21st March, 2023
at Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Stone
Cross, Rotary Way, Northallerton, DL6 2UU

Present

Councillor N A Knapton (in the Chair)

Councillor	P Atkin	Councillor	Mrs B S Fortune
	D B Elders		K G Hardisty

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Bardon and R W Hudson

AGS.19 **Minutes**

The decision:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24 January 2023 (AGS.17 - AGS.18), previously circulated, be signed as a correct record.

AGS.20 **Head of Internal Audit Opinion and Counter Fraud Update 2022/23**

All Wards

The subject of the decision:

The Chief Executive submitted a report which provided an update on the audit and counter fraud work undertaken in 2022/23. The annual report attached at Annex 1 to the report summarised the outcomes of audit work undertaken in 2022/23. The report provided an opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Authority's framework of governance, risk management and control. An annual report setting out counter fraud activity and performance was also attached at Annex 2 to the report.

The Committee noted that the overall opinion of the Head of Internal Audit on the framework of governance, risk management and control operating within the Council was that it provided Substantial Assurance.

The Interim Head of Finance wished to record thanks to the Internal Auditors, Veritau, for their continued hard work and support.

Alternative options considered:

None.

The reason for the decision:

In accordance with chapter 5 of the Council's Audit Charter, the Head of Internal Audit is required to provide an annual report to the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee. The report is used by the Committee to inform its consideration of the Council's annual governance statement.

The decision:

That:-

- (1) the results of the audit and counter fraud work undertaken in 2022/23 be noted; and
- (2) the opinion of the Head of Internal Audit on the framework of governance, risk management and control operating within the Council be accepted.

AGS.21 **Annual Governance Statement 2022/23**

All Wards

The subject of the decision:

The Interim Director of Finance presented a report which set out the findings of a review of the governance framework, incorporating systems of internal control operating within the Council during 2022/23 and sought approval of the Annual Governance Statement.

The Interim Director of Finance wished to record thanks to all the members of the Finance Team for their continued hard work and support which was endorsed by members of the Committee.

Alternative options considered:

None.

The reason for the decision:

The preparation and publication of an Annual Governance Statement in accordance with the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework was necessary to meet the statutory requirements set out in Regulation 4(2) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations which required authorities to "conduct a review at least once in a year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control" and to prepare a statement on internal control "in accordance with proper practices".

The decision:

That:-

- (1) the conclusion of the review of the system of internal control be agreed;
and
- (2) the content of the Annual Governance Statement for publication with the annual Statement of Accounts be approved.

AGS.22 Audit Planning Report for 2020/21

All Wards

This report sought consideration of the Council's statutory auditor, Ernst & Young LLP, to provide the Committee with the External Audit Plan which set out how they intended to carry out their responsibilities as auditor. The Audit Plan's purpose was to provide the Committee with a basis to review the proposed audit approach and scope for the 2020/21 audit in accordance with regulations.

The Committee asked a number of questions in relation to the risk regarding the merger of Hambleton District Council into the new North Yorkshire Council which were responded to at the meeting.

The decision:

That the Audit Plan, the audit approach, the scope for the 2020/21 audit and the proposed fee structure for the 2020/21 audit be noted.

AGS.23 Chairman's Announcement

The Chairman wished to thank all the Members and Officers who had supported him during his time in office as Chairman of the Committee and wished to thank Councillor Elders for all his continued support as Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

The meeting closed at 10.16 am

Chairman of the Committee