

## **ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**5 FEBRUARY 2013**

### **PRESENT**

Councillor M. Whetton (in the Chair).

Councillors Mrs. L. Evans (Vice-Chairman), Mrs. J. Baugh, C. Boyes, B Brotherton, T. Ross and P. Lally.

#### In attendance

Director of Finance (Mr. I. Duncan),  
Audit and Assurance Manager (Mr. M. Foster),  
Investigations Manager (Mr. D. Wright),  
Records and Information Manager (Ms. P. Titterington),  
Principal Audit and Assurance Team Leader (Ms. H. Carnson),  
Democratic Services Officer (Mr. I. Cockill).

Also in attendance: Ms. H. Stevenson, Grant Thornton UK LLP.

### **30. MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **31. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2011/12 - UPDATE ON SIGNIFICANT GOVERNANCE ISSUE : RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**

The Records and Information Manager submitted a report providing an update on work undertaken to date and further work planned in respect of the introduction of an effective electronic records management solution and embedding the corporate records management policy within services.

#### RESOLVED

- (1) That the report and progress to date be noted.
- (2) That the Records and Information Manager be requested to explore the marketing opportunities of the Electronic Document and Records Management Solution that the Council is developing.
- (3) That, with regard to document scanning, the Records and Information Manager be requested to consider elected member access; and monitor scan on demand service requests to ascertain its cost effectiveness in comparison to alternative solutions.

### **32. TACKLING BENEFIT FRAUD**

The Committee received a presentation from the Investigations Manager on the effects of Benefit Fraud, the types of fraud investigated by the Council and the

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methods used. The presentation also advised on the outcome of investigations and the challenges ahead for the service.

The Investigations Manager highlighted the advantages of the team's stationing at Stretford Police Station and, responding to Members' questions, provided examples of working practices and the types of tactical decisions taken. The Committee was also informed that Trafford's performance compared well against other authorities.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the information be noted and the Investigations Manager be thanked for an informative and impressive presentation.
- (2) That the Committee be informed of developments relating to the Single Fraud Investigation Service proposals.

**33. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2013/14 - 2015/16**

The Executive Member for Finance and the Director of Finance submitted a joint report presenting the expected treasury operations and the prudential indicators for the period 2013/14 – 2015/16. The report also detailed the risks facing local authorities in Treasury Management operations and the measures to minimize these risks.

The Committee was advised that, in response to the continuing stagnant world economic climate, the recommended strategy would remain similar to that approved the previous year with only a minor change requested to the Investment criteria, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

In considering the report, Members of the Committee questioned the Director of Finance on the recommended limits and the security of the Council's investments.

RESOLVED: That the Council be recommended to approve:

- (a) the policy on debt strategy for 2013/14 to 2015/16 as set out in section 3 of the report;
- (b) the investment strategy for 2013/14 to 2015/16 as set out in section 5 of the report; and
- (c) the Prudential Indicators and limits, including the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary as required by Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2003, Minimum Revenue Provision Statement and Investment Criteria as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

**34. EXTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT - JANUARY 2013**

The Council's External Auditor, Grant Thornton, submitted a report detailing its planned audit work for the year and its audit fee for 2012/13. The report also drew

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Member's attention to a number of emerging national issues and developments and also suggested some key considerations for the Committee.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the questions highlighted in the report as key considerations for the Committee be assessed and considered for future meetings if appropriate.
- (3) That, in relation to the Audit Commission report 'Protecting the Public Purse' and mention of new frauds emerging in schools, the Committee notes that reference will be made to this at the next meeting, as part of the Committee's consideration of anti-fraud arrangements.

**35. AUDIT AND ASSURANCE REPORT FOR THE PERIOD OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2012**

The Audit and Assurance Manager submitted a report summarising the work of Audit and Assurance during the period October to December 2012 and providing ongoing assurance to the Council on the adequacy of its control environment.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

**36. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2012/13 - APPROACH / TIMETABLE**

The Audit and Assurance Manager submitted a report setting out a proposed action plan and timetable to ensure compliance with the statutory requirement to produce an Annual Governance Statement for 2012/13.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the action plan and timetable to enable the production of the Annual Governance Statement for 2012/13 be noted.
- (2) That the responsibility for reviewing the robustness of the 2012/13 Annual Governance Statement be delegated to the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Opposition Spokesperson.

**37. ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME - 2012/13**

The Audit and Assurance Manager submitted a report setting out the updated work plan for the Committee for the 2012/13 Municipal Year and outlining the areas to be considered at the remaining meeting.

Further to the report, Members were advised of an additional presentation to be made at the next meeting regarding Trafford Partnership and it was requested that reference be made to locality boards and their linkage with the structure.

RESOLVED –

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- (1) That the 2012/13 work programme, with the addition of a presentation on Trafford Partnership's Governance Arrangements at the next meeting on 20 March 2013, be noted.
- (2) That Members of the Committee be requested to notify the Audit and Assurance Manager of any further training needs or issues to be covered at future meetings.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 p.m. and finished at 8.32 p.m.