

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE 20 MAY 2022
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MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD ON FRIDAY, 20 MAY 2022 AT 1300 HOURS IN COMMITTEE ROOM C, COUNCIL HOUSE EXTENSION, MARGARET STREET, BIRMINGHAM

PRESENT:-

Councillor Grindrod in the Chair;

Councillors Bore, Bridle, Jenkins (Via MS Teams), Morrall, Quinnen and Tilsley

NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

465 The Chair advised and the meeting noted that this meeting would be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's You Tube site (www.youtube.com/channel/UCT2kT7ZRPFCXq6_5dnVnYlw) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there are confidential or exempt items.

The business of the meeting and all discussions in relation to individual reports was available for public inspection via the web-stream.

APOLOGIES

466 There were no apologies for absence.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

467 There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTES – AUDIT COMMITTEE – 26 APRIL 2022

468 The Committee noted that the minutes from the 26 April meeting were to follow and would be submitted for Committee consideration and signing by the Chair at a future meeting.

2020/21 AUDITORS ANNUAL REPORT

469 The following report of the Director of Council Management was submitted: -

(See document No.1)

Officers spoke to the report and responded to questions from Members of the Committee.

The Committee noted that the report outlined that the number of technical staff working at the Council had been increased and financial management was improving.

Members noted that the document was technically still in a draft format due to the accounts audit having not yet been finalised. However, the Committee noted that all of the work relating to the audit had been completed.

The report had been presented in a revised format this year which sought to provide more detail and an improved narrative.

The audit process had been a collaborative exercise between the Council and the external auditors.

The Committee noted that no significant weaknesses had been identified in the report. Some improvements were suggested by the external auditors.

Members noted that the Council was working towards improvements around home to school transport and some of the Councils IT systems.

The Committee noted that no concerns had been raised in relation to the financial sustainability of the Council.

Members noted that the Council's key performance indicators were regularly reviewed.

The Committee agreed that it would remain important to invite Cabinet Members to attend future meetings (where appropriate) so that Members could be provided with assurances around any ongoing performance issues and the mitigative steps being taken to address these.

The Committee were provided with assurances that although this report covered the year 2020/21, steps had been taken to manage the issues highlighted. The progress made against each issue could be tracked via future external audit annual reports.

The Committee expressed a view that it was important to benchmark the performance of Council group companies to ensure they were operating effectively.

It was also important to benchmark performance across all Council directorates with comparable authorities.

The Committee noted the importance of ensuring that the security of the Council's IT network was robust and effective to mitigate against any potential cyber-attacks and/or data breaches.

The Committee further noted the importance of regular updates being provided by senior Officers in relation to any potential areas of concern around service area performance.

The Committee noted that wherever possible, it was important to retain officers in senior positions within the business and to retain as much corporate memory and knowledge as possible where long-serving members of senior staff left the organisation.

470 **RESOLVED:-**

That the Audit Committee:

- a.) Noted the Value for Money findings in the attached Draft Auditors Annual Report at appendix 1 to this report.
- b.) Noted the Council's action plan, at appendix 2 to this report.
- c.) Agreed that the action plan and progress on implementing the recommendations made by the Auditor is presented back to Audit Committee on a quarterly basis.

SCHEDULE OF OUTSTANDING MINUTES

471 The following Schedule of Outstanding Minutes was submitted:-
(See document No.3)

472 The Committee noted the Schedule of Outstanding Minutes.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

473 The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 28 June 2022.

OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

474 None.

AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS

475

RESOLVED:-

That in an urgent situation between meetings the Chair, jointly with the relevant Chief Officer, has authority to act on behalf of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 1425 hours.

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CHAIR