

**AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

**MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, BOOTLE  
ON 18 DECEMBER 2019**

PRESENT: Councillor Robinson (in the Chair)

Councillors Brennan, Cluskey, McGinnity, O'Hanlon,  
Pugh, John Sayers, Shaw and Sir Ron Watson

**24. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Roche.

**25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of any disclosable pecuniary interests or personal interests were received.

**26. MINUTES**

Councillor McGinnity indicated that he had been unable to attend the previous meeting due to his having been admitted into hospital and had informed the Labour Group secretary and therefore, requested that his apologies for that meeting be recorded.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Councillor McGinnity's apologies for the previous meeting be noted and recorded; and
- (2) subject to the above amendment, the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2019 be approved.

**27. SUBMISSION OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP FINAL REPORTS TO COUNCIL**

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer which sought approval of the submission of Overview and Scrutiny Working Group Final Reports and recommendations to Cabinet and then Council for final approval.

The Chief Legal and Democratic Officer presented the report and answered questions on provision of background papers and the difficulties scrutinising decisions where reports are exempt.

RESOLVED:

That approval be given for Overview and Scrutiny Working Group Final Reports and recommendations to be submitted to Cabinet and then Council for final approval and that the Constitution be amended accordingly.

## **28. TREASURY MANAGEMENT POSITION TO OCTOBER 2019**

Further to Minute No. 20 of 9 September 2019, the Committee considered the report of the Head of Corporate Resources which provided a review of the Treasury Management activities undertaken to 31 October 2019. This was the second of the ongoing quarterly monitoring reports provided to the Audit and Governance Committee whose role it is to carry out scrutiny of treasury management policies and practices.

The Service Manager – Finance, presented the report and answered questions thereon.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Treasury Management update to 31 October 2019 be noted;  
and
- (2) the effects of decisions taken in pursuit of Treasury Management Strategy and the implications of changes resulting from regulatory, economic and market factors affecting the Council's treasury management activities, be noted.

## **29. CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT**

Further to Minute No. 22 of 9 September 2019, the Committee considered the report of the Head of Corporate Resources on the updated Corporate Risk Register, indicating that since the last meeting the Corporate Risk Register had been fully updated with no new risks identified or escalated from the service risk registers and no changes in the risk scores.

The Committee also considered the Corporate Risk Management Handbook which had also been updated to include a revised scoring assessment and was presented for annual approval.

The Chief Internal Auditor presented the report and answered questions thereon.

Arising from discussion, Members indicated that it would be helpful if Heads of Service could be invited to future meetings of the Audit and Governance Committee where significant risks were identified in their service area. The Chief Internal Auditor indicated that he would consult with the Head of Corporate Resources on the feasibility of this suggestion.

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In addition, Members requested that the format of the risk register be reviewed to improve the internal and external accessibility of the document.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the contents of the Corporate Risk Register, particularly the nature of the major risks facing the Council and the controls and planned actions in place to mitigate these be noted; and
- (2) the updated Corporate Risk Management Handbook be approved.

### **30. RISK AND AUDIT SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Further to Minute No. 23 of 9 September 2019, the Committee considered the report of the Head of Corporate Resources which provided details of the performance and key activities of the Risk and Audit Service for the period 6 September 2019 to 6 December 2019.

The Chief Internal Auditor presented the report and answered questions thereon.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the progress of the delivery of the 2019/20 Internal Audit Plans and the activity undertaken for the period 6 September 2019 to 6 December 2019 be noted;
- (2) the revisions in the Annual Internal Audit Plan be approved; and
- (3) the contributions made by the Health and Safety, Insurance, Assurance and Risk and Resilience Teams in managing key risks be noted.

### **31. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED: That in respect of the following item of business:

- (1) the press and public be allowed to remain in the room during consideration of the **report** which was not exempt; and
- (2) under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of **appendices 1, 2 and 3 to the report** on the grounds that they would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 7A of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act. The Public Interest Test has been applied and favoured exclusion of the information from the press and public.

**32. WRITE OFF OF IRRECOVERABLE DEBTS >£10,000**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Corporate Resources outlining outstanding debts over £10,000 and requesting authorisation from the Committee to write off the debts detailed in Appendices 1-3 of the report in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

The Customer Centric Services Manager, Corporate Resources, presented the report and answered questions thereon.

She advised the Committee that following advice from the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer one of the debts, detailed in Appendix 1 of the report, amounting to £44,131.58 had been removed from the list of Business Rates Write-Offs pending further checks and investigation.

Arising from discussion, Members suggested that further investigations be undertaken in respect of a Sundry Debt amounting to £46,240.57, listed in Appendix 2 to the report.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) it be noted that following advice from the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer, a debt amounting to £44,131.58 had been removed from the list of Business Rates Write-Offs listed in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (2) the Head of Corporate Resources be requested to undertake further investigations into the debt recovery of one of the debts amounting to £46,240.57; and
- (3) subject to (1) and (2) above, authorisation be given for the debts detailed within Appendices 1-3 to the report, amounting to £198,111.35, to be written off.