

Enquiries to:
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Date: 4th July 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

Audit & Standards Committee – 11th July 2023

I refer to the meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee due to be held on Tuesday, 11 July 2023 and attach the 'Proposed Core Work Programme 2023-24' which was marked 'to follow' at Agenda Item 8.

Yours faithfully,

Brent Davis

Chief Executive

To: Members of Audit
and Standards
Committee

Councillors R Baxter-Payne (Chair),
J. Sheppard (Vice-Chair), B. Beetham,
D. Brown, T. Cooper, L. Cvetkovic,
L. Downs, J. Hartshorn, J. Kennaugh,
N. Phillips and R. Tromans.

NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to: Audit and Standards Committee – 11th July 2023

From: Assistant Director – Governance & Democracy & Monitoring Officer

Subject: Audit and Standards Committee Core Work Programme 2023/24

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To consider and approve the Audit and Standards Committee Core Work Programme for 2023/24 after taking into consideration the purpose and functions of the Committee.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Audit and Standards Committee Core Work Programme for 2023-24 at Appendix A be approved.

3. What is the Committee being asked to consider?

- 3.1 The Committee usually sets out its annual work programme for the year, which looks to ensure that the financial cycle of reports and accounts are approved in good time; and some of the best practice recommendations from the Committee on Standards in Public Life are met. In addition, the Committee are asked to consider whether the Core Work Programme is sufficiently robust and whether it accurately reflect the functions of the Audit and Standards Committee as set out in the Terms of Reference, which are attached at Appendix B.

4. Work Programme 2023-24

- 4.1 Five Committee meetings have been included in the municipal year Calendar for 2023/24. If necessary, additional meetings will be arranged as and when required.
- 4.2 The Core Work Programme includes both the annual letters and reports that either require the approval of or need to be reported to the Committee, and some other planned policy reviews for the year. Other reports will be presented to the Committee if appropriate during the year.

**MATTHEW WALLBANK
WAHEEDA SHIEKH**

Audit and Standards Work Programme 2023 – 2024						
Audit						
Item	11 July	5 Sept	7 Nov	9 Jan	12 Mar	Details
Internal Audit Charter		✓				To review and approve any changes required to the Internal Audit Charter
Consider the Council's corporate governance arrangements and policies to ensure that they demonstrate a strong ethical culture		✓	✓	✓	✓	These include the Contract and Financial Procedure Rules, Counter Fraud Policy, Risk Management Policy and Performance Management Policy along with other governance related policies as required.
Annual Report of Internal Audit		✓				To consider the Head of Audit and Governance annual report, which includes conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, outcomes from the quality assurance improvement programme, the Head of Audit and Governance opinion on the control environment and the work completed by internal audit to support that opinion
Statement of Accounts 2021-22		✓				To approve the Statement of Accounts for 2021-22

Item	11 July	5 Sept	7 Nov	9 Jan	12 Mar	Details
Annual Governance Statement 22-23			✓			To ensure that the Council's Annual Governance Statement properly reflects the control environment and any actions to improve it
Statement of Accounts 2022-23			✓			To approve the Statement of Accounts for 2022-23
Treasury Management Reports				✓		Reported quarterly to Cabinet but this report to provide oversight to the Audit and Standards committee after the initial 6 month period of the 23/24 FY.
Audit Findings Report		✓		✓		External auditor's opinion and findings on the 2021-22 & 2022-23 accounts and the value for money conclusion subject to completion of audit.
Internal Audit Plan progress report			✓			A report on progress against the audit plan
Annual External Audit Letter				✓		An overall summary of the external auditor's work at the Council.
External Audit grant claims report				✓		External auditor's report on the work completed to certify grant claims.
External Audit Plan			✓			Sets out the external auditors approach to the identification of audit risks.
Internal Audit Plan					✓	To consider and approve the content of the Plan for 2024/25

Standards						
Item	11 July	5 Sept	7 Nov	9 Jan	12 Mar	Details
Approval of 2022/23 Annual Report for Standards Committee		✓				Annual requirement
Reports from the Constitution Review party	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	To receive reports from the work of the working party
Dispensations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Ongoing item
Overview of Member complaints		✓			✓	Required every 6 months
Review of registration of interests, hospitality and gifts by members and officers			✓			Annual requirement
Annual report from the Ombudsman			✓			Annual requirement
Review of Publicity Protocol in anticipation of the 2024 Borough Council Elections				✓		In anticipation of the 2024 Elections
Member Induction Arrangements & Training Plan					✓	In anticipation of the 2024 Elections

ARTICLE 9: THE AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Audit and Standards Committee is to provide independent assurance of the accuracy of the risk management framework and the internal control environment. It provides an independent review of the Council's governance, risk management and control frameworks, and oversees the financial reporting and annual governance processes. It oversees internal and external audit, helping to ensure efficient and effective assurance arrangements are in place.

In order to ensure high standards of conduct and probity, the Committee will also have a key part to play in strengthening and maintaining the highest standards of ethical conduct which the public is entitled to expect from both Members and Officers of the Council.

This Article sets out the composition, role and function of the Audit and Standards Committee

A9.1 AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Council meeting will establish an Audit & Standards Committee.

A9.2 COMPOSITION - POLITICAL BALANCE

- a) The composition of the Audit and Standards Committee has to reflect the political balance of the Council;
- b) No member of the Cabinet or Chair of an Overview & Scrutiny Panel shall be a member of the Audit and Standards Committee;
- c) The Audit and Standards Committee will be composed of 11 Members;
- d) Council shall appoint the Chair of the Committee;
- e) The quorum will be five;
- f) The Committee shall have the power to co-opt up to four Independent Members to assist the Committee in fulfilling its purpose and they shall be appointed for a period of up to four years and shall be appointed for no more than two terms.

A9.3 ROLE AND FUNCTION

The Audit and Standards Committee will have the following roles and functions:

Governance, Risk and Control

- a) To review the Council's corporate governance arrangements against the Good Governance framework, and consider annual governance report and assurances;

- b) To review the Annual Governance Statement prior to approval and consider whether it properly reflects the risk environment and supporting assurances, taking into account Internal Audit's opinion on the overall adequacy and control;
- c) To consider the Council's arrangements to secure value for money, and review assurances and assessments on the effectiveness of these arrangements;
- d) To consider the Council's Strategic Risk Register and ensure that it adequately addresses the risks and priorities of the Council;
- e) To monitor the effective development and operation of risk management across the Council;
- f) To monitor progress in addressing risk related issues reported to the Committee;
- g) To consider reports on the effectiveness of internal controls, and monitor the implementation of agreed actions;
- h) To review the assessment of fraud risks and potential harm to the Council from fraud and corruption;
- i) To monitor the Council's Anti-Fraud Strategy;
- j) To maintain an overview of the Council's Constitution.

Internal Audit

- a) To approve the Internal Audit Charter;
- b) To review proposals made in relation to the appointment of external providers of IT internal audit services;
- c) To approve the risk based on Internal Audit Plan, including Internal Audit's resource requirements;
- d) To approve significant interim changes to the risk based Internal Audit Plan and resource requirements;
- e) To consider the Audit & Governance Manager's Annual Report, which will include:-
 - A Statement on the level of conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards;
 - The results of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme that supports the Statement – these will indicate the reliability of the conclusions of Internal Audit;
 - The Audit & Governance Manager's opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control, together with the summary of the work

supporting the opinion. These will assist the Committee in reviewing the Annual Governance Statement

- f) To contribute to the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme and, in particular, to the external quality assessment of internal audit that takes place at least once every five years;
- g) To support the development of effective communication with the Audit & Governance Manager and commission work as necessary;
- h) To receive the Annual Ombudsman Report and make recommendations to Full Council as necessary.

External Audit

- a) To consider the external auditor's Annual Letter, relevant reports, and the report to those charged with governance;
- b) To consider specific reports as agreed with the external auditor;
- c) To comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and ensure it gives value for money;
- d) To commission work from external audit as necessary;
- e) To advise and recommend on the effectiveness of the relationships between external and internal audit, and other inspection agencies or relevant bodies.

Financial Reporting

- a) To approve the Annual Statement of Accounts;
- b) To consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts.

Treasury Management

To review the Council's Treasury Management activities, and monitor the performance against the approved Treasury Management indicators.

Members Code of Conduct

- a) Promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Members, Independent Members and any other representatives;
- b) Assisting Members and Independent Members to observe the Councillors' Code of Conduct;
- c) Advising the Council on the adoption or revision of the Councillors' Code of Conduct;
- d) Monitoring the operation of the Councillors' Code of Conduct;

- e) Advising, training or arranging to train Members', Independent Members and any other representatives on matters relating to the Councillors' Code of Conduct;
- f) Making assessments of misconduct allegations;
- g) Dealing with any reports from the Monitoring Officer on any matter;
- h) Establishing Sub-Committees; and
- i) Granting exemptions for politically restricted posts.

Dispensations

Granting dispensations to Elected and Independent Members, having regard to all relevant circumstances, in the following circumstances:

- a) That so many Members of the decision-making body have Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in a matter that it would impede the transaction of the business;
- b) That, without the dispensation, the representation of different political groups on the body transacting the business would be so upset as to alter the outcome of any vote on the matter;
- c) That the Council considers that the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Authority's area;
- d) Where, but for a dispensation, all Members of Cabinet would be prohibited from participating in any particular business to be transacted by Cabinet; or
- e) That the Council considers that it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

In granting a dispensation, the Committee shall specify the period of the dispensation, which shall not exceed four years.

Sanctions

The Committee shall have the following sanctions delegated to it by Council, and shall delegate those powers to its hearings Sub-Committees:

- a) Censuring or reprimanding the Member;
- b) Reporting its findings to Council for information;
- c) Recommending to the Member's Group Leader (or in the case of un-grouped Members, recommend to Council or to Committees) that he/she be removed from any or all Committees or Sub-Committees of the Council;
- d) Recommending to the Leader of the Council that the Member be removed from the Cabinet, or removed from particular Portfolio responsibilities;
- e) Instructing the Monitoring Officer to arrange training for the Member;

- f) Removing from all outside appointments to which he/she has been appointed or nominated by the Authority;
- g) Withdrawing facilities provided to the Member by the Council, such as a computer, website and/or email and internet access; or
- h) Excluding the Member from the Council's offices or other premises, with the exception of meeting rooms as necessary for attending Council, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings.

Accountability Arrangements

- a) To report to those charged with governance on the Committee's findings, conclusions and recommendations concerning the adequacy and effectiveness of their governance, risk management and internal control frameworks; financial reporting arrangements, and internal and external audit functions;
- b) To report to Full Council on a regular basis, on the Committee's performance in relation to the Terms of Reference and the effectiveness of the Committee in meeting its purpose.