

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL

Meeting of Audit Committee

Date: Monday, 27th January, 2025

Place: Committee Room 1 - Civic Suite

Present: Councillor R McMullan (Chair)
Councillors M O'Connor (Vice-Chair), Sam Allen, J Courtenay,
M Davidson, S Nadeem and *N Folkard

(*Substitute in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 30.)

In Attendance: Councillors P Collins and D Cowan
A Barnes, R Harris, P Bates, J Chesterton, S Dutton, C Fozzard, E
Larcombe (KPMG)

Start/End Time: 6.30pm - 7.33 pm

21 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Habermel (substitute: Cllr Folkard), Norman and Terry (no substitutes).

22 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this meeting.

23 Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 23 October 2024

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 23 October 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed.

24 KPMG: Report to the Audit Committee on the External Plan and Strategy for the year ending 31 March 2024

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) presenting the external auditors risk assessment and planned audit approach for the 2023/24 financial year with regard to the audit of the Statement of Accounts and commentary on the Council's value for money arrangements conclusion.

Resolved:

That the KPMG External Audit Plan and Strategy for the year ending 31 March 2024, be supported.

25 KPMG: Final report to the Audit Committee on the audit for the year ended 31 March 2024

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) presenting the summary of the results of the work completed to date for the year ending 31 March 2024 with regard to the opinion on the Statement of Accounts and the commentary on the Council's Value for Money arrangements conclusion.

The Committee asked questions which were responded to by officers and the Cabinet Members and the KPMG representative.

Resolved:

That the report on the audit for the year ended 31 March 2024, be accepted.

26 Adoption of the final Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 and Statement of Accounts 2023/24

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) presenting the Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24 and the statement of Accounts for 2023/24.

On consideration of the report a minor amendment was made to paragraph 13.2 to insert the words '*if there were losses both companies have financial guarantees from the Council to underwrite these losses to enable them to continue to be regarded as going concerns.*'

The Committee asked questions which were responded to by the Cabinet Members and officers. The Committee sought clarification regarding the Kursaal and officers would provide a written response to the Committee.

1. That the Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24 be recommended to the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive for authorisation, signature, and incorporation in the Statement of Accounts 2023/24.

2. That the Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 be adopted and approved for publication, subject to any final review and amendments required as a result of the remaining external audit matters outstanding.

27 Treasury Management Policy for 2025/26

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) outlining the treasury management policy for 2025/26 comprising the following documents:

- Treasury Management Policy Statement for 2025/26;
- Treasury Management Strategy for 2025/26; and
- Annual Treasury Management Investment strategy for 2025/26.

The Committee asked questions which were responded to by the Cabinet Members and officers.

Resolved:

That the Treasury Management Policy for 2025/26, be endorsed.

28 Counter Fraud & Investigation Team Quarterly Performance Report and updated Counter Fraud Policies

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) presenting an update on the progress made by the Counter Fraud and Investigation Team (CFIT) in delivering the Counter Fraud Strategy and Work Programme for 2024/25.

The Committee asked questions which were responded to by Cabinet Members and officers.

Resolved:

1. That the performance of the Counter Fraud & Investigation Team over the last three months, be noted.
2. That the Counter Fraud and Corruption Policy and Strategy be recommended to Cabinet for approval.
3. That the Counter Money Laundering Policy and Strategy be recommended to Cabinet for approval.
4. That the Fraud Response Plan be recommended to Cabinet for approval.

29 Internal Audit Service Quarterly Performance Report

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) presenting an update on the progress made in delivering the Internal Audit Strategy and Plan for 2024/25.

The Committee asked questions which were responded to by officers.

Resolved:

That the progress made in delivering the 2024/25 Internal Audit Strategy and Plan, as set out in the submitted report, be noted.

Chair: _____