

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING Monday 9th August 2021

PRESENT: Councillor Zaheer (Chair); Councillors Ali, Brett, Gartside, Aftab Hussain, Martin, Philip Massey and Donna Williams

OFFICERS: J. Murphy (Chief Finance Officer/Section 151 Officer), A. Ibrahim (Monitoring Officer), S. Knowles, T. Brown, R. Bennett, Y. Dunease and A. James (Resources Directorate)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: M. Carruthers-Watt (Independent Person), J. Sanderson (Independent Member), K. Murray (Mazars)

44 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ali Ahmed and C. Ainsworth (Independent Person).

45 MINUTES RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 28th June 2021 be approved as a correct record.

46 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

47 URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business.

48 EXTERNAL AUDIT COMPLETION REPORT

Consideration was given to a report of the Council's External Auditor, which highlighted the key matters arising from their audit of Rochdale Borough Council's financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2021. The External Auditors were also required to consider other information published together with the audited financial statements and whether it was consistent with the financial statements and in line with required guidance and whether the Council had made proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Members were reminded that under the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice the External Auditors were required to report whether, in their opinion, the Council's financial statements presented a true and fair view of the financial position and expenditure and income for the year and whether the statements had been prepared properly in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting.

The Committee noted that the Council had been given an unqualified report from the External Auditor and thanked all the staff involved in assisting with the Completion Report.

A further report would be submitted to the Committee to provide a further update in relation to some issues that had arisen as part of the process once they had been fully resolved.

RESOLVED

That the Completion Report from External Audit be noted.

49 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of the Annual Governance Statement. The Committee were informed that the Council was required under Regulation 4(3) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 to produce an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) to accompany the Annual Statement of Accounts which must be signed by the Leader of the Council, Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) and the Monitoring Officer.

The purpose of the AGS process was to provide a continuous review of the effectiveness of the Council's internal control and risk management systems so as to give assurance on their effectiveness and/or to produce a management action plan to address identified weaknesses in either process.

The Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31st March 2021 was submitted for approval, together with the annual audit opinion from the Chief Internal Auditor, the external review and inspection reports and an action plan to address issues raised and ensures that there is continuous improvement in the governance of the Authority.

RESOLVED

That the Annual Governance Statement be approved.

50 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Finance Officer that sought approval of the Council's audited statement of accounts for 2020/21.

The submission of the Council's Statement of Accounts was required for issue by the 30th September 2021 as a statutory requirement and therefore no alternatives were available.

Prior to audit completion, the accounts and supporting documents had been available for inspection by any person interested between 17th June 2021 and 19th July 2021. From the 7th June 2021, the District Auditor has been available to receive questions and objections relating to the accounts from local electors.

As a consequence of the audit a small number of changes to the statement of accounts had been made which have been agreed with the External Auditors and detailed in Appendix 1 of the submitted report. The management

representation letter and statement of accounts were detailed at Appendix 2 and 3 of the submitted report.

In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations it is intended that the audited accounts will be published on the Council's website by 30th September 2021.

RESOLVED

That the audited statement of accounts for 2020/21 and the management representation letter be approved.

51 AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Internal Audit advising that, in order to comply with best professional practice, the Audit and Governance Committee should complete an annual report to the Council on the work undertaken by the Committee during the previous year.

RESOLVED

That the Annual Audit and Governance Committee report be submitted to the next meeting of Council.