AUDIT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 AUGUST 2025

Present: Councillors Leggett (Chair), Evemy and Whitbread

Apologies: Councillors Chapman

9. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING)**

RESOLVED: that the minutes for the Committee meeting on 30th June 2025 be approved and signed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Minute 4 – Draft Statement of Accounts.

It was noted that the Schools Forum had not agreed to attribute the Dedicated Schools Grant to meeting the equal pay claims therefore this had been referred to the Secretary of State to adjudicate which was being discussed and an outcome awaited.

10. **ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT OPINION 2024-25**

The Committee received and noted the report of the Chief Internal Auditor detailing the Annual Internal Audit Opinion for 2024-25. It was noted that the Standards of which Internal Audit must abide by had changed on 1st April 2025.

The Committee noted that within the 2024-25 Financial Year Internal Audit & Counter Fraud had completed 25 full audits, 6 audits without assurance opinions (following management request or consultancy), 8 follow ups, 2 analytics work and 8 grant reviews. Internal Audit results had been mixed with full audit results highlighting 10 new 'limited assurance' areas which was equivalent to 40% of full audits. It was further noted that of the 8 follow up reports undertaken, 7 (88%) remained at 'limited assurance'. Whilst the audit action tracker had shown progress in mitigating risk exposure more generally it was noted that some persistent and legacy issues remained unresolved.

The Committee also noted that the opinion was also informed and influenced by wider factors, including but not limited to, the financial position of the authority together with the pace required to meet transformation savings, the Housing Regulator judgement of 'serious failings in the landlord delivering the outcomes' and the findings from the corporate peer review conducted by the Local Government Association. Considering all these factors and the additional details outlined in the appendix of the report, a 'limited assurance' opinion had been provided for 2024-25.

11. **EXTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS UPDATE**

The Committee received and noted the report of the External Auditor detailing the External Audit 2024-25 Interim Progress Report which had seen July gathering and populating information and data quality and providing questions to management. There would be a 6-week period of work over September and October reviewing information, there had been good collaboration and positive direction of travel to date with the

expectation that November's progress report would have the answers to the questions that had been posed to management.

The Committee referred to the forthcoming Local Government Re-organisation and the need for overlay and alignment of budgets each year leading up to this, together with the progression of the equal pay claim which would need significant oversight and further analysis before final payments were made.

12. **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC - EXEMPT PAPERS INCLUDED IN THE FOLLOWING ITEM**

RESOLVED: that in accordance with the Council's Constitution, specifically the Access to Information Procedure Rules contained within the Constitution, the press and public be excluded from the meeting in respect of any consideration of the exempt appendix to the following item.

Appendix 5 was exempt from publication by virtue of category 3 of rule 10.4 of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules i.e. information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person. It was not in the public interest to disclose this information due to commercial sensitivity. If the information was disclosed, then the council's financial position would be available to other parties and prejudice the council's ability to achieve best value

13. **REVIEW OF PRUDENTIAL LIMITS AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN 2024-25**

The Committee received and noted the report of the Executive Director Enabling Services and S151 Officer detailing the Review of Prudential Limits and Treasury Management Outturn 2024-25 against the approved Prudential Indicators for External Debt and Treasury Management.

The Committee noted the Treasury Management Performance and the outturn on the Prudential indicators and the continued proactive approach to Treasury Management that had led to reductions in borrowing costs and safeguarded investment income during the year.