

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

Meeting:	Audit Committee	
Date:	Tuesday, 7 February 2023	
Place:	Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage	
Members Present:	Councillors:	John Gardner (Vice-Chair in the Chair), Myla Arceno, Stephen Booth, Alex Farquharson, Jackie Hollywell, Graham Lawrence CC, Loraine Rossati and Tom Wren. Mr Geoff Gibbs (Independent Co-opted Non-voting Member)

1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
	<p>Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Teresa Callaghan (Chair) and Maureen McKay.</p> <p>There were no declarations on interest.</p>	
2	MINUTES - 9 NOVEMBER 2022	
	It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 9 November 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.	
3	2019/20 EXTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE	
	<p>The Committee received a verbal update from Karen Cunanan (Ernst & Young) in respect of the 2019/20 External audit of accounts.</p> <p>In reply to a Member's question, the Strategic Director (CF) commented that the issue with the Council not always meeting the Decent Homes standards could be due to access to properties and the timing of works. The Council had invested significantly in the stock via the Decent Homes and Major Works contracts. The level of decency was monitored via a Corporate Key Performance Indicator.</p>	

	<p>The Strategic Director (CF) agreed to provide the information on Decent Homes to the Committee as had been provided to Ernst & Young.</p> <p>Karen Cunanan confirmed that there were risks associated with the completion of all 5 outstanding areas of the 2019/20 audit, which all required finishing before the audit was signed off (anticipated in March 2023).</p> <p>The Committee Chair requested the Strategic Director (CF) to advise Members of the Audit Committee as soon as the 2029/20 audit had been completed and signed off.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED that the verbal update from Ernst & Young regarding the 2019/20 External audit of SBC accounts be noted.</p>	
4	2020/21 EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN	
	<p>The Committee received the proposed External Audit Plan for 2020/21, as submitted by Karen Cunanan (Ernst & Young).</p> <p>In reply to Members' comments, the Strategic Director (CF) explained that the 2020/21 external audit would be challenging for the SBC Finance Team, especially as work would be happening in tandem regarding the close down of the 2022/23 accounts.</p> <p>In response to a question, the Strategic Director (CF) confirmed that there had been 20 or so different COVID Grant schemes. Most of these schemes had now ended. The Council had acted as agents on behalf of the Government in distributing these grant funds, and Ernst & Young would need to check, as part of the 2020/21 audit, that these had been properly accounted for in the accounts.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED that the proposed External Audit Plan for 2020/21, as submitted by Ernst & Young, be approved.</p>	

5	INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2022/23 - PROGRESS REPORT	
	<p>The SIAS Client Audit Manager presented a progress report with regard to the SIAS Internal Audit Plan 2022/23 (up to 20 January 2023).</p> <p>In response to a Member's question, the SIAS Client Audit Manager advised that the two additional external partners appointed to assist in the work of SIAS for 2022/23 were BDO and Mazars. He added that he was confident that SIAS would have the necessary capacity to resource the existing (2022/23) and 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan.</p> <p>The Committee noted the comment made by the Strategic Director (CF) that the Shared Internal Audit Service provided a greater degree of audit resilience than would be the case should each of the partner authorities operated individual internal audit services.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the SIAS Internal Audit progress report be noted. 2. That the changes to the Internal Audit Plan be approved. 3. That the status of Critical and High Priority Recommendations be noted. 	
6	ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY INCLUDING PRUDENTIAL CODE INDICATORS 2023/24	
	<p>The Assistant Director (Finance) presented a report in respect of the Annual Treasury Management Strategy including Prudential Code Indicators for 2023/24.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED that the 2023/24 Treasury Management Strategy be recommended to Council for approval.</p>	

7	URGENT PART I BUSINESS	
	None.	
8	EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS	
	<p>It was RESOLVED that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in Paragraphs 1 - 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006. 2. Members considered the reasons for the following reports being in Part II and determined that the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighed the public interest in disclosure. 	
9	PART II MINUTES - AUDIT COMMITTEE - 9 NOVEMBER 2022	
	It was RESOLVED that the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 9 November 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.	
10	URGENT PART II BUSINESS	
	None.	