

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS -

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| Meeting: | Audit Committee | |
| Date: | Wednesday, 24 March 2021 | |
| Place: | Virtual (via Zoom) | |
| Members Present: | Councillors: | Teresa Callaghan, John Gardner, Sandra Barr, Laurie Chester, Lizzy Kelly, Graham Lawrence and Geoffrey Gibbs |

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| 1 | APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST | |
| | <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Stephen Booth and David Cullen.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p> | |
| 2 | MINUTES - 9 FEBRUARY 2021 | |
| | <p>It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on Tuesday 9 February 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.</p> | |
| 3 | PROPOSED SAFS ANTI-FRAUD PLAN 2021/22 AND PROGRESS WITH 2020/21 ANTI-FRAUD PLAN | |
| | <p>Nick Jennings from the Shared Anti-Fraud Service (SAFS) presented the Anti-Fraud Plan for 2021/22. He provided details of the Council's Anti-Fraud and corruption arrangements for 2021/22.</p> <p>In response to a question from a Member, Nick Jennings advised Members that between April and December 2020 SAFS received 100 allegations of fraud affecting Council Services. SAFS carried forward 82 live cases from 2019/20 and currently 62 cases were open and under investigation.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> | |

- That the Anti-Fraud Plan for 2021/22 be approved.
- That the activity taken to protect the Council against fraud and corruption in 2020/21 be noted.

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SIAS INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2020/21 - PROGRESS REPORT

Simon Martin from Shared Internal Audit Service (SIAS) provided an update on the progress made by the SIAS in delivering the Council's 2020/21 Internal Audit Plan. He advised Members that the following final reports had been issued since the last Audit Committee meeting on 9 February 2021:

- Housing Repairs
- Cash and Banking
- Tree Management
- Landlord Health and Safety Compliance

It was **RESOLVED**:

- That the Internal Audit Progress report be noted.
- That the Status of Critical and High Priority Recommendations be noted.

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| | That the Proposed Changes to SIAS Audit Opinions be approved. | |
| 5 | PROPOSED SIAS INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2021/22 | |
| | <p>Simon Martin from SIAS presented the proposed Internal Audit Plan for 2021/22. He advised Members on indicative internal audit start periods.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the proposed Stevenage Borough Council Internal Audit Plan for 2021/22 be approved.</p> | |
| 6 | SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS | |
| | <p>The Assistant Director for Planning and Regulatory presented a report in relation to the breakdown of the Section 106 balances and the requirement of each specific scheme. He advised Members on the Section 106 spent for 2019/20, and informed Members that the Council was liaising closely with Hertfordshire County Council Highways to spend £148 on Parking/Transport and £35k for a pedestrian link in the next year.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report be noted. | |

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| 7 | JOINT ICT INVESTMENT STRATEGY - PROGRESS | |
| | <p>The Strategic ICT and Shared Partnership Manager provided an updated on the Joint ICT Investment Strategy. He outlined ICT challenges the Council faced at the start of the 2020. He informed Members that there had been progress on the improvement works with crucial months ahead. There had been a huge impact on the service because of the Covid-19 pandemic and the new ways of remote working.</p> <p>He further provided details of Paperless Committees Project, which would help the Council in running a smooth committee meetings and combat climate change.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Joint ICT Investment progress report be noted. | |
| 8 | REVIEW OF CORPORATE AND SERVICE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS | |
| | <p>The Senior Performance and Resilience Officer provided an update on the Review of the Corporate and Service Governance arrangement. She advised Members on the activity carried out in 2020/21 to strengthen the Council's corporate governance arrangements.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the progress on corporate governance enhancement activity during 2020/21 be noted. • That the corporate governance enhancement activity identified for 2021/22 to be included in the Council's 2020/21 Annual Governance Statement be noted. • That the progress of Service Governance Actions identified by the Service Assurance Review carried out in April 2020 be noted. | |

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| 9 | URGENT PART I BUSINESS | |
| | <p><u>Audit and Statement of Accounts for 2019/20</u></p> <p>The Strategic Director for Finance and Estate (CF) provided an update on the Audit and Statement of Accounts for 2019/20. She informed Members that the accounts had not been signed off as expected from Ernst and Young (E&Y), and she proposed a provisional date for the Audit and Statement of Account Committee meeting to be held on Monday 26 April 2021. The Assistant Director (NP) for Finance and Estate provided further update on the matter and explained that he was confident of getting the accounts signed off on time for 26 April.</p> | |
| 10 | EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS | |
| | <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That under Section 100(A) 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 involved 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. That 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. | |
| 11 | STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER | |
| | <p>The Senior Performance and Resilience Officer provided an update on the latest Strategic Risk Register.</p> | |

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| | <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the latest Strategic Risk Register be noted. • That the developments on risk management issues be noted. |
| 12 | URGENT PART II BUSINESS |
| | None. |

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