

BUSINESS EFFICIENCY BOARD

At a meeting of the Business Efficiency Board held on Wednesday, 23 September 2020 via Public Remote Access

Present: Councillors M. Lloyd Jones (Chair), Wall (Vice-Chair), E. Cargill, A. Lowe, MacManus, McDermott, N. Plumpton Walsh, Joe Roberts, G. Stockton and J. Stockton

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: E. Dawson, I. Leivesley, M. Murphy, A. Dalecki and G. Ferguson

Also in attendance: M. Green and S. Nixon (Grant Thornton)

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

		<i>Action</i>
BEB8	MINUTES	
	<p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 21st July 2020 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p>	
BEB9	ANTI FRAUD AND CORRUPTION UPDATE	
	<p>The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which provided an update on the Council's anti-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements.</p> <p>It was reported that the Board was responsible for the monitoring and review of the Council's anti-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements. The main areas of the Council's business thought to be susceptible to fraud and corruption were detailed in the report. In addition the report included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A commentary on the fraud risk landscape;• Details of a restructure of the Council's fraud investigation resource;• A summary of reported fraud and corruption activity from 2019/20;	

- Details of fraud investigation related information reported under the Transparency Code;
- A summary of the whistleblowing complaints received and action taken;
- An update on the National Fraud Initiative;
- Details of ongoing and planned anti-fraud work;
- Details of the review of the Council's suite of anti-fraud related plans and policies; and
- A new draft Council policy relating to the anti-facilitation of tax evasion.

Arising from the discussion, it was agreed that summary of detected frauds over the last 3 years would be circulated to Board members.

Operational
Director - Finance

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

BEB10 DRAFT ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2019-20

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which sought approval of the draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2019/20.

It was noted that the AGS, attached to the report at Appendix 1, provided an overview of the governance framework in place for 2019/20. A key aspect of the AGS was the identification of areas where the Council's governance arrangements would need to be developed.

The Board was advised that due to COVID-19, the timing for the statutory completion of the AGS had been changed this year as set out in the Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. The final version of the AGS must be approved by 30 November 2020.

The report detailed the process followed in producing the AGS; this was noted as being the same as in the previous year, being led by a group of Officers that had key roles in the maintenance and development of the Council's governance framework. Once approved, the AGS would be signed off by the Council Leader and the Chief Executive.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Governance Statement 2019/20 be approved.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

BEB11 EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2019-20-YEAR END

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which set out the 2019/20 year-end Audit Plan, presented by Grant Thornton UK LLP.

The Board was advised that the External Audit Plan was attached to the report and set out details of Grant Thornton's strategy and plan to deliver the 2019/20 audit of the Council's financial statements. It also provided details of their approach to the value for money conclusion.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the External Audit Plan for 2019/20 year-end be noted.

BEB12 EXTERNAL AUDIT LETTER TO THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE

The Board considered a report by the Strategic Director Enterprise, Community and Resources, which presented for information the response provided to the annual letter to the Board from Grant Thornton, the Council's external auditors, regarding their year-end audit of accounts work.

The Appendix to the report outlined the response provided to a number of questions contained in a letter from Grant Thornton to the Chair of the Board.

RESOLVED: That the response provided to the Council's external auditors shown in the Appendix, be noted.

Meeting ended at 7.43 p.m.