

Report of:	Meeting	Date
Councillor Lesley McKay (Chairman) and Clare James, Corporate Director Resources (Section 151 Officer)	Council	11 March 2021

Audit Committee: Periodic Report

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The periodic consideration of the current position on issues being dealt with by the Audit Committee.

2. Audit Committee meetings

- 2.1 Since the last periodic report, which was discussed at the Council meeting on the 14 November 2019, the Audit Committee has met a further five times. Two of these meetings (16 June and 4 August 2020) were held under emergency powers following the decision by the Chief Executive to declare a major incident in Wyre in April 2020.

A link to the website for further details on the reports and minutes is included here: <https://wyre.moderngov.co.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=149>

- 2.2 In summary, the following issues and reports have been considered by the Committee;

At the 19 November 2019 meeting:

- Compliance with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)
- Internal Audit and Risk Management - Progress Report
- Annual Review of Financial Regulations and Financial Procedure Rules
- Annual Review of Council's Counter Fraud Policies
- Approval of the Council's Data Protection Policy and Procedures
- Annual Audit Letter 2018/19
- Role of the External Auditor

At the 10 March 2020 meeting:

- Review of Audit Committee's Terms of Reference
- Internal Audit Strategy and Audit Plan 2020/21
- Internal Audit Charter
- Letter from the Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA)

- External Audit Plan 2019/20
- Periodic private discussion with the Chief Internal Auditor

At the 16 June 2020 meeting (emergency powers):

- Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit
- Internal Audit Annual Report 2019/20
- Annual Governance Statement 2019/20
- Risk Management Policy: Annual Review

At the 4 August 2020 meeting (emergency powers):

- Statement of Accounts Training 2019/20
- Statement of Accounts (Pre-Audit) 2019/20

At the 26 November 2020 meeting:

- Compliance with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)
- Internal Audit and Risk Management- Progress Report
- Annual Review of Financial Regulations and Financial Procedure Rules
- Annual Review of the Council's Counter Fraud Policies
- Approval of the Council's Data Protection Policy and Procedures
- Annual Review of the Audit Committee's Performance

2.3 A provisional meeting has been arranged for the 16 February 2021, when the Committee will be considering:

- Statement of Accounts 2019/20 (Post Audit)
- Management Representation Letter 2019/20
- Report to those charged with Governance (ISA 260) 2019/20

3. Key activities

3.1 The three main documents considered by the Audit Committee annually are the Annual Governance Statement (AGS), the Statement of Accounts (SOA) and the Report to those charged with Governance (ISA 260). With the exception of the AGS which was considered and agreed in line with statutory deadlines, at the time of writing this report, the Committee have yet to consider in detail the SOA and ISA 260 owing to delays caused by the pandemic.

3.2 In line with legislation, a notice has been published on the council's website to the effect that: "Owing to the coronavirus pandemic, financial reporting deadlines for the 2019/20 accounts have been extended, with the deadline for publication of a draft set of accounts moving from 31 May to 31 August and the deadline for audited accounts moving from 31 July to 30 November. The council has produced its draft set of accounts and provided these to the External auditors in July, prior to the deadline at the end of August. The draft set of accounts was approved by Audit Committee under emergency powers at their meeting on 4 August 2020.

3.3 At the council's Audit Committee, held on 26 November 2020, the external auditors informed the committee that the audit of the 2019/20 Statement of Accounts had overrun and that they would not be in a position to provide an opinion on the accounts by this deadline. Whilst every effort had been made by the external auditors to complete their audit by 30 November, owing to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, resourcing pressures and auditor delays, work will continue. It is the expectation that the outstanding work will be completed in February.

3.4 With regards to the AGS, there were no significant governance issues which needed to be identified in the SOA for 2019/20. Whilst it was reported at the November 2019 meeting that steady progress was being made in relation to addressing a number of minor AGS issues identified whilst, owing to the on-going pandemic, progress has stalled. It is hoped that once normal business activities resume, the issues identified can be addressed or they will be picked up as part of the AGS minor issues action plan for 2020/21.

4. Comments and questions

4.1 In accordance with Procedure Rule 13.4, any Member of Council will be able to ask a question or make a comment on the contents of this report or any issue, which falls within the Audit Committee's area of responsibility. In accordance with Procedure Rule 13.6 any such comments or questions will be answered accordingly.

Financial and legal implications	
Finance	None arising directly from the report.
Legal	None arising directly from the report.

Other risks / implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

risks/implications	✓ / x
community safety	x
equality and diversity	x
sustainability	x
health and safety	x

risks/implications	✓ / x
asset management	x
climate change	x
ICT	x
data protection	x

Processing Personal Data

In addition to considering data protection along with the other risks/ implications, the report author will need to decide if a 'privacy impact assessment (PIA)' is also required. If the decision(s) recommended in this report will result in the collection and processing of personal data for the first time (i.e. purchase of a new system, a new working arrangement with a third party) a PIA will need to have been completed and signed off by Data Protection Officer before the decision is taken in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

report author	telephone no.	email	date
Joanne Billington	01253 887372	Joanne.billington@wyre.gov.uk	13/01/2021

List of background papers:

name of document	date	where available for inspection
None		

List of appendices

None

dems/cou/21/1103jb1