

AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT TO COUNCIL

Council - 21 February 2023

Report of: Cllr McGarvey, Chair of the Audit Committee

Status: For Consideration

Introduction and Background

- 1 This is our report to the Council on the work of the Audit Committee since November 2022.
- 2 The Audit Committee is responsible for discharging the functions conferred by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. The key responsibilities include approving the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts, approving the Annual Governance Statement, approving the Annual Internal Audit Plan and monitoring and reviewing the work of Internal Audit, and reviewing the arrangements for the management of business risks.
- 3 In line with its Terms of Reference, the Audit Committee meets four times per year and has met once since the last report to Council.
- 4 As Chair of the Committee, I have continued to hold monthly briefings with Officers.
- 5 Details of the range of issues considered by the Committee on 24 January are set out below:

Internal Audit

Date of Meeting	Agenda Items
24 January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internal Audit Progress Report 2022/23

Governance, Risk & Anti-Fraud

Date of Meeting	Agenda Items
	No items

Accounts and External Audit

Date of Meeting	Agenda Items
24 January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="584 365 1114 398">• Appointment of External Auditors

- 6 Training of Audit Committee Members is important to ensure that they can add value to the discussions at the Committee. A Member Development Plan has been agreed by the Committee and a number of training sessions have taken place over recent years.
- 7 There remains an issue nationally with Statement of Accounts not being agreed by the deadline. This is largely due to the increased requirements and complexity of the accounts and the available resources of the external auditors. This is also true for Sevenoaks DC.
- 8 The Audit Committee maintains a constructive dialogue and effective working relationship with the Council's external auditors, Grant Thornton.
- 9 Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) have completed the tender process for future audits and have reappointed Grant Thornton as the external auditors for this council for five years from 2023/24 to 2027/28.
- 10 As mentioned previously, two independent members are now on the Committee, Lynda McMullan and Mr Mo Chughtai. Both attended the meeting on 24 January.
- 11 It is my opinion that the work of the Committee has a positive impact on the overall control environment within the Council and has developed good working relationships with officers and External Audit, and has offered constructive comments on a range of issues. The Committee continues to develop and improve its understanding of the many technical issues presented to it.
- 12 I thank all members of the Audit Committee for their personal contribution to the work of the Committee. I also thank Officers, in particular Adrian Rowbotham, Jennifer Warrillow, Alan Mitchell and Jessica Booth for the help and support they have given the Committee.

Cllr Philip McGarvey, Chairman, Audit Committee