



# Walsall Council

## **Audit Committee**

Meeting to be held on: **23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021 AT 6.00 P.M.**

Meeting to be held via: **Microsoft Teams**

Public access to meeting via: <https://youtu.be/nFLy0aVnPwk>

### **MEMBERSHIP:**

Mr A Green (Chairman and Independent Member)

Councillor Rasab (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Ali

Councillor J. Fitzpatrick

Councillor Johal

Councillor Neville

Councillor Robertson

Councillor Young

Vacancy (Independent Member x 2)

### **Quorum:**

Three Members

## **A G E N D A**

### **PART I – PUBLIC SESSION**

1. Welcome and Apologies.
2. To approve the minutes of meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021 – enclosed.
3. Declarations of Interest.
4. Deputations and Petitions.
5. Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended):
6. Notification of any issues of importance for consideration at a future meeting.
7. Committee Decision Tracking Chart – Report enclosed.
8. Internal Audit Work Plan 2021/22 – Report enclosed.
9. Update on Internal Audit Actions requested at 25 January 2021 Audit Committee – Report enclosed.
10. External Audit – Audit Planning Report for the Year Ending 31 March 2021 and Sector Update – Report enclosed.
11. External Audit - Informing the Audit Risk Assessment – Report enclosed.

### **PART II – PRIVATE SESSION**

(Exempt information under Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972) (as amended)

12. Update on internal audit priority 1 recommendations requested at 25 January 2021 Audit Committee – Report enclosed.
13. Saddlers Centre Internal Audit Report – Report enclosed.
14. To approve the minutes of meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021 – Enclosed.

## The Relevant Authorities (Discloseable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012

### Specified pecuniary interests

The pecuniary interests which are specified for the purposes of Chapter 7 of Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 are the interests specified in the second column of the following:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Prescribed description</b>
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	<p>Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by a member in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of a member.</p> <p>This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Regulations (Consolidation) Act 1992.</p>
Contracts	<p>Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority:</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	<p>Any tenancy where (to a member's knowledge):</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the relevant authority;</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.</p>
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where:</p> <p>(a) that body (to a member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) either:</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.</p>

## **Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended)**

### **Access to information: Exempt information**

#### **Part 1**

#### **Descriptions of exempt information: England**

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes:
  - (a) to give any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
  - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.
8. Information being disclosed during a meeting of a Scrutiny and Performance Panel when considering flood risk management functions which:
  - (a) Constitutes a trades secret;
  - (b) Its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the risk management authority);
  - (c) It was obtained by a risk management authority from any other person and its disclosure to the public by the risk management authority would constitute a breach of confidence actionable by that other person.

## **Terms of Reference of the Audit Committee**

### **Membership**

7 Members of the authority as determined by the Council with a maximum of 3 independent members (non-voting) appointed by the Council.

### **Substitutes**

Substitute members may be nominated to the Committee in accordance with paragraph 4 of the Council procedure rules (Part 4).

### **Chairman and Vice-Chairman**

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman will be appointed at the Annual Council meeting for the municipal year.

### **Quorum**

The quorum of the Committee shall be one third of the membership, subject to a minimum of two.

### **Meetings**

The Committee will meet five times per year and will usually meet at the Council House, Walsall at 6.00 p.m.

### **Access to information**

The Committee will comply with the Access to Information Rules set out in Part 4 of the Constitution.

### **Purpose**

To act as the Council's Audit Committee, the purpose of which is to provide independent assurance to members on the adequacy of the risk management framework and internal control environment. To provide an independent review of governance, risk management and control frameworks, which include the council's arrangements for performance management and oversee the financial reporting and annual governance processes. To oversee internal audit and external audit, helping to ensure efficient and effective assurance arrangements are in place.

### **Delegations**

To exercise the following powers and functions of the Council:

## **Governance, risk and control**

- (1) To review the Council's corporate governance arrangements against a good governance framework and consider annual governance reports and assurances.
- (2) To review the annual governance statement prior to approval and consider whether it properly reflects the risk environment and supporting assurances, taking into account internal audit's opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control.
- (3) To consider the Council's arrangements to secure value for money and review assurances and assessments on the effectiveness of these arrangements.
- (4) To consider the Council's framework of assurance and ensure that it adequately addresses the risks and priorities of the Council.
- (5) To monitor the effective development and operation of risk management in the Council.
- (6) To monitor progress in addressing risk related issues reported to the committee.
- (7) To consider reports on the effectiveness of internal controls and monitor the implementation of agreed actions.
- (8) To review the assessment of fraud risks and potential harm to the Council from fraud and corruption.
- (9) To monitor the counter fraud strategy, actions and resources.

## **Internal Audit**

- (10) To approve the internal audit charter.
- (11) To commission work from internal audit.
- (12) To approve the risk-based internal audit plan, including internal audit's resource requirements, the approach to using other sources of assurance and any work required to place reliance upon those other sources.
- (13) To approve significant interim changes to the risk-based internal audit planning resource requirements.
- (14) To make appropriate enquiries of both management and the head of internal audit to determine if there are any inappropriate scope or resource limitations.
- (15) To consider reports from the head of internal audit on internal audit's performance during the year, including the performance of external providers of internal audit services. These include:

- a. Updates on the work of internal audit including key findings, issues of concern and action in hand as a result of internal audit work.
- b. Regular reports on the results of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme.
- c. Reports on instances where the internal audit function does not conform to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and Local Government Application Note, considering whether the non-conformance is significant enough that it must be included in the Annual Governance Statement.

(16) To consider the head of internal audit's annual report:

- a. The statement of the level of conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and Local Government Application Note and the results of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme that supports the statement.
- b. The opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control together with a summary of the work supporting the opinion.

(17) To consider summaries of specific internal audit reports as requested.

(18) To receive reports where the head of internal audit has concluded that management has accepted the level of risk that may be unacceptable to the authority or there are concerns about progress with the implementation of agreed actions.

(19) To contribute to the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme and in particular, to the external quality assessment of the internal audit that takes place at least once every five years.

(20) To consider a report on the effectiveness of internal audit to support the Annual Governance Statement, where required to do so by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

(21) To support the development of effective communication with the Head of Internal Audit.

## **External audit**

(22) To consider the external auditors annual letter, relevant reports, and the report to those charged with governance.

(23) To consider specific reports as agreed with the external auditor.

(24) To comment on the scope and depth of external audit work to ensure it gives value for money.

(25) To commission work from external audit.

(26) To advise and recommend on the effectiveness of relationships between external and internal audit and other inspection agencies all relevant bodies.

## **Financial reporting**

- (27) To review the annual statement of accounts. Specifically to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from financial statements from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the Council.
- (28) To consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts.

## **Accountability arrangements**

- (29) To report to those charged with governance on the committee's findings, conclusions and recommendations concerning the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance, risk management and internal control frameworks; financial reporting arrangements, and internal and external audit functions.
- (30) To report to full Council on a regular basis the committee's performance in relation to the terms of reference and effectiveness of the committee in meeting its purpose.