

Minutes of the **Audit Committee**
of the **Test Valley Borough Council**
held in Conference Room 1, Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover
on Monday, 17 February 2025 at 5.30 pm

Attendance:

Councillor C Borg-Neal
(Chairman)

Councillor S Hasselmann
(Vice-Chairman)

Also in attendance:

Councillor Z Brooks

Councillor M Flood

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Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors K Brooks, Hughes, Kohli and Leech.

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Public Participation

There was no public participation.

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Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

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Urgent Items

There were no urgent items for consideration.

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Minutes of the previous meeting

Councillor Borg-Neal proposed and Councillor Hasselmann seconded the motion that the minutes of the previous meeting were an accurate record. Upon being put to the vote, the motion was carried.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2024 were signed as a correct record.

External Audit Update

The Head of Finance and Revenues reminded members that at the previous Audit Committee meeting it had been agreed to discuss the Statement of Accounts 2023/24 ahead of the Central Government imposed backstop date of 28 February 2025 to give an update and talk about the process for closing the audit for the 2023/24 financial year.

Given the proximity to the 28 February deadline it was recommended that the Audit Committee approve the 2023/24 Statement of Accounts, with the flexibility for the Head of Finance and Revenues to be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Audit Committee Chairman, to make any changes that may be required to the accounts between the date of the meeting and the date that Ernst & Young issue their final opinion. Any such changes will also be shared with the Committee.

Ernst & Young gave an update on progress so far and advised councillors that it had not been possible to provide a substantial assurance opinion for the year in question. This was expected as part of the national re-setting of local authority audits and is not an indication of weaknesses in the Test Valley Borough Council accounts. A planning report for the 2024/25 audit will be shared with councillors at a future meeting.

Ernst & Young thanked the accountancy team for their support throughout an unprecedented time.

Councillor Borg-Neal proposed and Councillor Hasselmann seconded the following recommendations. Upon being put to the vote, the motion was carried.

Resolved:

- 1. That Ernst & Young's Draft Audit Results Report, as shown in Annex 1 to the report, be received.**
- 2. That the 2023/24 Statement of Accounts, as shown in Annex 2 to the report, be approved.**
- 3. That the Head of Finance and Revenues, in consultation with the Chairman of the Audit Committee, be authorised to make any required changes to the 2023/24 Statement of Accounts resulting from the conclusion of Ernst & Young's audit work.**

Self-Assessment of the Audit Committee

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Finance and Revenues which provided feedback on a self-assessment evaluation of the Audit Committee that had recently been undertaken by committee members.

At its meeting in December, the Audit Committee agreed to carry out a self-assessment. A questionnaire was circulated to members and 4 responses were received, which identified several areas of strength and some development opportunities.

The results of the questionnaire will be reviewed at an awayday and a development plan will be scoped.

Councillor Borg-Neal proposed and Councillor Hasselmann seconded the following recommendations. Upon being put to the vote, the motion was carried.

Resolved:

- 1. That the summary responses of the Audit Committee members to the self-assessment evaluation be noted.**
- 2. That an action plan be developed and reported to a later meeting, to identify opportunities to strengthen the work of the committee.**

(The meeting terminated at 6.08 pm)