

SOUTH HAMS AUDIT COMMITTEE



Minutes of a meeting of the **South Hams Audit Committee** held on **Thursday, 30th July, 2020 at 2.00 pm at the via Skype**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Holway
Vice Chairman Cllr Austen

Cllr Brazil
Cllr McKay
Cllr Taylor

Cllr Pennington
Cllr Spencer

In attendance:

Councillors:

Cllr Abbott
Cllr Hawkins
Cllr Rowe

Cllr Bastone
Cllr Pearce

Officers:
Chief Executive
Section 151 Officer
Head Of Finance
Head of Strategy & Projects
Democratic Services Manager
Grant Thornton Representative

6. **Declarations of Interest**

A.6/20

Members and officers were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of the meeting, but none were made.

7. **Draft Statement of Accounts 2019/20 and Draft Annual Governance Statement 2019/20**

A.7/20

A report was considered that presented the draft Statement of Accounts for 2019 and the draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the financial year ended 31 March 2020.

In discussion, reference was made to:

- (a) an update from the Grant Thornton representative. By way of an update on the External Audit, the representative informed that, whilst the work was proving to be more difficult to undertake remotely, the Audit was now almost 70% completed. Whilst the more significant corporate risks still needed to be signed off by the External Auditor, it was noted that no issues of concern had yet been identified;
- (b) the shortfall in Housing Benefit overpayment recoveries. Officers advised that this shortfall was attributed to the Council now being in receipt of real time information from the Department for Work and Pensions;
- (c) the anticipated £4 million borrowing on Capital Expenditure contained within the Capital Programme. At the request of the Committee, the Section 151 Officer agreed to provide additional information on the anticipated £4 million borrowing to Members outside of the meeting;
- (d) the Community Housing initiative. A Member expressed his disappointment at the apparent lack of Community Housing being generated through this initiative. In reply, the Section 151 Officer advised the Committee that an update report on this initiative was to be presented to the Executive at its meeting to be held on 17 September 2020;

In conclusion, a number of those Members in attendance wished to put on record their thanks to the finance officers for their hard work in producing both the draft Statement of Accounts and the draft AGS.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the draft Statement of Accounts and the draft Annual Governance Statement for the financial year ended 31 March 2020 be noted.

8. Annual Report 2019/20

A.8/20

The Committee considered a report that presented the Council's draft Annual Report for 2019/20.

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- (a) With regard to the average house price and annual average income information, officers advised that there was an error on the draft Annual Report. Prior to being finalised, it was noted that the average house price in the South Hams was in fact 13 times the annual average income;
- (b) Once approved by Council, it was felt that the Annual Report should be circulated to all town and parish councils in the South Hams.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the progress and achievements made by the Council be noted; and
2. That Council be **RECOMMENDED** to adopt its draft Annual Report for 2019/20, subject to the ratio between the average house price and annual average income information being updated.

The Meeting concluded at 3.00 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
