

Chairman's Report – Audit Committee 2021 – 2022

At the start of the civic year I had not envisaged writing the Chairman's annual report for the Audit Committee, our existing Chairman Cllr Stuart Penny and Vice Chairman Cllr Alex White were re-appointed to these positions. In December both resigned these positions due to other commitments and at our January meeting I was appointed chairman and Cllr Andy Wyer Vice Chairman. On behalf of the Audit Committee, I should like to thank Cllrs Penny and White for their work in these positions over the previous two and a half years. Thanks also to Cllr Wyer who on a couple of times found himself unexpectedly chairing the committee in the absence of the Chairman and Vice Chairman. Cllr Wyer will also chair the March meeting when I am away on a pre-arranged holiday.

During the course of the year the Audit Committee has continued its usual pattern of work considering performance and risk reports, annual governance statement and accounts. We receive regular reports from both our external auditors Grant Thornton and internal auditors the Devon Audit Partnership. My thanks to both for the support and advice they give. In particular we have considered lessons that can be learnt from the Council's sale of land at Park Nursery and reviewed the Council's development company 3 Rivers Development business plan. At our most recent meeting in January, we agreed updated financial regulations, which have subsequently been approved by full council.

Our current external auditors Grant Thornton's contract is due to expire after the 2022/23 financial year and an auditor appointed for a period from the start of 2023/24. We agreed we should opt into the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) scheme rather than go it alone appointing our own auditor. The PSAA scheme will appoint auditors for all councils opting into the scheme this will save the council both monetarily as well as officer time. Our decision has been ratified by full council.

It has been good to return to holding meetings at Phoenix House, albeit that non committee members together with some officers and external partners are able to join the meetings remotely via zoom.

I thank members of the Audit Committee for their work over the past year. Finally, but by no means least, may I thank our officers for all the work they do and support they provide, both to our committee and the Council. May I make specific mention to Catherine Yandle, Corporate Manager for Performance & Risk who has been providing reports and support to the committee over a good number of years and has left for pastures new, we wish her every success for the future. Thanks also to Paul Deal, Corporate Manager for Finance and his team, Andrew Jarrett, Deputy CEO & S151 officer, plus Sarah Lees and Member Services for their very efficient and helpful support.

Cllr Neal Davey

Audit Committee Chairman

March 2022

