

West Dunbartonshire Council
Audit Committee
2023/24 Annual Report from the Chair

Introduction

This annual report has been prepared to inform West Dunbartonshire Council of the work carried out by the Council's Audit Committee during the financial year 2023/24.

Meetings

The Audit Committee met four times during 2023/24 comprising meetings on 8 June, 9 August, 13 December and 15 February to consider reports relevant to the Audit cycle and other matters as deemed appropriate. Pre-Agenda meetings were also held ahead of Committee involving the Chair and appropriate officers.

The purpose and remit of Audit Committee as detailed in the Council's Standing Orders is to:

- Monitor, and make recommendations on the development of the Audit activity of the Council.
- Scrutinise the monitoring and review activity of the thematic and regulatory committees.

To fulfil this remit, the Audit Committee sought assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's systems of governance, risk management and internal control to ensure efficient operations and the highest standards of probity and accountability. This was achieved through reports received from Internal Audit, other Council functions and External Audit with focus in particular on internal control and governance.

At each meeting of the Audit Committee it considered significant findings from Internal Audit reports together with monitoring the progress made by management in completing agreed actions to improve the Council's control environment. It also considered the external audit strategy memorandum for the 2022/23 audit from the newly appointed external auditors (Mazars).

The Audit Committee also received reports on:

- Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management.
- Risk Management.
- National Fraud Initiative.
- Annual Complaints Report 2022-2023.
- Code of Good Governance and the Annual Governance Statement.
- Responses to External Audit Enquiries to Those Charged With Governance.

The minutes of Audit Committee meetings are first confirmed as a correct record at the next Audit Committee before being remitted to Council for approval.

Membership of the Audit Committee

In accordance with West Dunbartonshire Council's Standing Orders membership of the Audit Committee comprises eight Elected Members and one Lay Member who is not a member of any political party. The quorum of the Audit Committee is three Elected Members. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Audit Committee are members of the Opposition.

Attendance by members of the Committee at Audit Committee meetings in 2023/24 was as follows:

	<u>8/06/23</u>	<u>9/08/23</u>	<u>13/12/23</u>	<u>15/02/24</u>
Cllr K Conaghan (Chair)	Present	Present	Apologies	Present
Cllr I Dickson	Apologies	Present	Present	Present
Cllr J McColl	Present	Apologies	Present	Apologies
Cllr J McElhill	Apologies	Apologies	Apologies	Apologies
Cllr M McGinty	Apologies	Present	Apologies	Present
Cllr J Millar	Apologies	Apologies	Apologies	Present
Cllr M Rooney	Present	Present	Present	Present
Cllr H Sorrell	Apologies	Apologies	Apologies	Apologies
Lay Member Chris Johnstone (from 12/12/18)	Apologies	Present	Apologies	Present

Every meeting of the Audit Committee during 2023/24 was quorate.

Attendance by Officers

All meetings were attended by the Chief Executive, Chief Officer – Resources and the Shared Service Manager - Audit & Fraud.

Other senior officers also attended meetings as appropriate for items on the Agenda for which their presence was relevant. Representatives from the Council's external auditors - Mazars - were present at relevant meetings.

Assurance Statement to the Council

The Audit Committee provides the following assurance to the Council:

- The Council has received the Minutes of the Audit Committee meetings throughout the year.
- The Audit Committee has operated in accordance with its agreed terms of reference, and accordingly with the audit committee principles in the CIPFA Position Statement relating to its Audit functions.
- It did this through reports received from Internal Audit, External Audit, and assurances from Management. It focussed on matters of governance, risk management and internal control; giving advice to the Council on the value of the audit process; on the integrity of financial reporting; and on governance arrangements.
- For all audit reports, the Audit Committee considered whether it was satisfied that an adequate management response was in place to ensure action would be taken to manage risk and address concerns on governance, risk management and internal control arrangements. The Committee acknowledges that all the audit recommendations are input to Pentana, the Council's performance

management system, and that there is a system in place of ongoing follow-up by Internal Audit and reporting thereon.

- The Audit Committee has received and considered material to fulfil its scrutiny role on treasury management activity.

Conclusion

Based on the reports received and reviewed by the Committee they are in agreement with the Shared Service Manager – Audit & Fraud’s annual audit report which confirms that reasonable assurance can be placed upon the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council’s internal control system in 2023/24. I am satisfied that active monitoring and follow up of recommendations is in place in respect of agreed management action.

Councillor Conaghan
Chair of the Audit Committee
12 June 2024