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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE Virtual Meeting 28 October 2020 (Times Not Specified)

Present:

COUNCILLORS:

Conservative Group	Roger Ramsey, Judith Holt and Robby Misir (In place of Viddy Persaud)
Residents' Group	Gerry O'Sullivan
Upminster & Cranham Residents' Group	Gillian Ford
North Havering Residents Group	Martin Goode (Chair)

Apologies were received for the absence of Councillors Persaud.35 members of the public and a representative of the Press were present.

Unless otherwise indicated all decisions were agreed with no vote against.

Through the Chairman, announcements were made regarding emergency evacuation arrangements and the decision making process followed by the Committee.

54 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28 July 2020 were agreed as a correct record and, due to COVID-19, will be signed by the Chairman at a later date.

55 **HEAD OF ASSURANCE - PROGRESS REPORT QUARTERS ONE AND TWO 2020/21**

The report presented to the Committee outlined the work that had been undertaken by the Assurance Service during the period of 1st April to 30th September 2020.

It was noted by the Committee that as schools had been closed due to COVID-19, the audit had to be completed remotely and the audit of housing was ongoing with high risk recommendations having been implemented with updates being tracked through the Governance and Assurance Board. A full list of updates from the Board would be brought to the next Audit Committee meeting.

The members noted that the Council's fraud work had been disrupted due to COVID-19 but internal referrals had stayed steady. Issues relating to cyber security was then presented to the Committee and it as noted that the Council had some issues with regards to the resilience of the firewall but fixes had been implemented.

The Committee **noted** the report.

56 **TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID YEAR REPORT 2020-21**

The report presented to the Committee was an update on the mid-year Treasury Management which had been approved by full council on 26th February 2020. Members noted that this report was to ensure investment of surplus cash and to have an adequate for borough funding. Members noted that £90million had been invested in other Local Authorities as they provided better rates. It was also noted that the PWLB fund's rate was high and the consultation with the requirement of long-term borrowing had been published. Members were updated that the cash balance was £120.9million and Rockfire Capital Ltd had repaid their amount early with accrued interest.

The Committee **noted** the report.

57 **WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY**

The report presented to the Committee gave an update on the Council's Whistleblowing Policy which had been agreed in January 2020 but last reviewed in 2015. The document was updated and included newer contact details. The Committee noted that all new staff receive training on whistleblowing as part of the induction and updated training for managers had been rolled out. Members commented that the document gave residents and staff the confidence to contact relevant officers confidentially.

The Committee **noted** the report and **approved** the updated Confidential Reporting Policy.

58 **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

59 **PREPARATIONS FOR THE END OF THE EU TRANSITION PERIOD**

The report presented to the Committee advised Members on the ongoing preparations for the end of the European Union (EU) Transition Period.

The Committee **noted** the report.

Chairman