

Contact Officer: Leigh Webb

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Friday 16 June 2023

Present: Councillor James Homewood (Chair)
Councillor Harry McCarthy
Councillor Kath Pinnock
Councillor Mel Stephen

In attendance: Julie Muscroft – Service Director, Legal, Governance and Commissioning
Martin Dearnley – Head of Internal Audit
James Anderson – Head of Accountancy (Virtual)
Rachel Firth – Finance Manager (Virtual)
Chris Read – Corporate Customer Standards Officer
Councillor Moses Crook (Ex-Officio)

Apologies: Councillor John Taylor
Councillor Yusra Hussain
Chris Jones (Independent Member)
Councillor Paul Davies (Ex-Officio)
Councillor Elizabeth Smaje (Ex-Officio)

1 Membership of the Committee

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor John Taylor, Councillor Yusra Hussain, Chris Jones (Independent Member), Councillor Paul Davies (Ex-Officio) and Councillor Elizabeth Smaje (Ex-Officio).

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2023 be approved as a correct record.

3 Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

4 Admission of the Public

It was noted that all agenda items would be considered in public.

5 Deputations/Petitions

There were no deputations or petitions received.

6 Public Question Time

No questions were asked under this item.

7 Annual Report on Treasury Management 2022/23

The Committee received the annual report on Treasury Management activities for the previous financial year. The report reviewed borrowing and investment performance.

Investments averaged £61.1 million and were largely deposited in instant access accounts earning an average interest rate of 1.92%. Total external borrowing at 31 March 2023 increased by £144.9 million to £613.8 million (£468.9 million as at 31 March 2022). The Council took £70 million new Government long term loans from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) and an additional £35 million Local Authority medium term loans (2-3 years). Temporary borrowing increased for the year by £60.5 million to £82 million (£21.5 million 31st March 2022). The average borrowing rate for 2022/23 relating to all long-term debt on the balance sheet was 3.67%, with short-term borrowing rates averaging 1.34%.

Following approval within the 2018/19 Treasury Management Strategy there was a further increase in the un-winding in the General Fund MRP for 2022/23. The maximum amount of un-wind in any one year cannot be more than the overall annual MRP calculation, as otherwise the Council would end up in a negative MRP position, which is not allowable under accounting rules. The calculation estimated for 2022/23 was £13.7 million. The actual MRP calculation for 2022/23 was £17.2 million and hence the maximum unwind allowable. However, in 2022/23 the actual unwind was in-line with the budget at £13.7 million.

It was reported that treasury management costs incurred in the year include £10.8 million on net interest payments and confirmed that the Council complied with its treasury management prudential indicators in the year.

RESOLVED – That the Committee note the treasury management performance as set out in the report.

8. Corporate Customer Standards Interim Report 2022/23

The Committee received an interim report on Corporate Customer Standards 2022-23. The report provided a commentary on ongoing performance and covered other areas of interest.

The report included statistical information from across West Yorkshire relating to the number of Ombudsman complaints received which highlighted that Kirklees had the lowest proportion of complaints received where the Ombudsman identified fault and error. The report set out detail of complaints by service area and provided a breakdown of third stage and pre-third stage complaints. In 2022/23 there were approximately 55 complaints at third stage of the internal complaints process, and it was reported that work was ongoing to support services at first and second stage to actively remedy complaints and prevent them from escalating to becoming a third stage complaint.

Corporate Governance and Audit Committee – 16 June 2023

During discussion of this item Members of the Committee welcomed the work being undertaken with the Restorative Practice Team to improve the approach to complaint handling.

RESOLVED

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the next report to this Committee provide further information in relation to restorative practices and provide comparative statistical information from further afield than West Yorkshire.