

Meeting GOVERNANCE AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

Date Wednesday 4 March 2020 (commencing at 10.30 am)

membership

Persons absent are marked with `A`

COUNCILLORS

Bruce Laughton (Chairman)
Andy Sissons (Vice-Chairman)

Nicki Brooks
Steve Carr
Kate Foale
John Handley
Errol Henry JP

Rachel Madden
Phil Rostance **A**
Keith Walker
Jonathan Wheeler

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

John Longdon for Phil Rostance

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Cherry Dunk Adult Social Care and Public Health Department
Paul Johnson
Ainsley Macdonnell

Caroline Agnew Chief Executive's Department
Heather Dickinson
Keith Ford
David Hennigan
Simon Lacey
Keith Palframan
Marjorie Toward
Nigel Stevenson

Neil Gamble Place Department

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

John Gregory Grant Thornton – External Auditors
Lorraine Noak

Phil Johnstone KPMG

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 22 January 2020, having been previously circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The following apologies for absence were reported:-

Phil Rostance – on other Nottinghamshire County Council business

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

None

4. UPDATE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT & SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN (LGSCO) DECISIONS NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2019

Heather Dickinson, Group Manager, Legal, Democratic and Complaints, introduced the report which detailed the LGSCO decisions received in this latest monitoring period.

Ainsley Macdonnell, Service Director – Community Services (Living Well) responded to Members' queries and concerns about the cases referred to in paragraphs 8-11 of the committee report and outlined how lessons learnt from these cases were informing improved practice across the Adult Social Care and Health department.

RESOLVED: 2020/007

That no further actions were required in relation to the issues contained within the report.

5. INFORMATION GOVERNANCE – PROGRESS REPORT

Carline Agnew, Data Protection Officer / Programme Manager, introduced the report which provided an update on progress with the Council's Information Governance Action Plan for 2019/20 and the second phase of the Information Governance Improvement Programme.

RESOLVED: 2020/008

- 1) That an allocation of £60,000 from contingency in 2020-21 be sought from Finance and Major Contracts Management Committee to fund a project for a pilot document management site in Legal Services and at least one further targeted project relating to document management in order to progress the objectives of the Information Governance Improvement Programme.
- 2) That a cross cutting review be undertaken with input from colleagues in ICT, Information Governance and the Digital Development Programme as set out in paragraph 14 of the committee report, with the options reported to a future meeting of this Committee.
- 3) That a follow up / update report on the Information Governance Action Plan be included in the work programme for submission to the June 2020 meeting of the Committee.

6) GRANT THORNTON – EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2019-20

John Gregory, Engagement Lead, Grant Thornton introduced the report (which detailed the proposed External Auditors' Action Plan for the 2019-20 Audit and explained the proposed increase in audit fees arising from the revised expectations of the Financial Reporting Council) and responded to Members' comments and questions on the Plan and the fees.

RESOLVED: 2020/009

- 1) That Members' comments on the Audit Plan for 2019-20 be noted by the external auditors.
- 2) That the increase to the 2019-20 audit fees in light of the revised expectations of the Financial Reporting Council be agreed.

7) OBJECTION TO THE ACCOUNTS

Keith Palframan, Group Manager, Finance Strategy & Compliance introduced the report which set out the external auditor's findings on the objection to the accounts for 2015-16. Neil Gamble, Group Manager Property and Asset Management highlighted the subsequent significant developments in practice within the Property team. Phil Johnstone, Director of KPMG (the Council external auditors for the period in question) summarised his findings.

RESOLVED: 2020/010

That no further information was required in respect of this issue.

8) INTERNAL AUDIT 2019-20 TERM 2 REPORT AND 2020-21 TERM 1 PLAN

Rob Disney, Group Manager – Assurance, introduced the report which outlined work undertaken in the current financial year's Term 2 and sought Members' views on Term 1 of the Internal Audit Plan for 2020-21.

RESOLVED: 2020/011

- 1) That no further actions or follow-up reports were required by the Committee.
- 2) That the planned coverage of Internal Audit's work in Term 1 of 2020-21 would deliver assurance in priority areas to the Committee.

9) QUARTERLY GOVERNANCE UPDATE

Rob Disney, Group Manager – Assurance, introduced the report which sought Members' feedback on the Governance Action Plan for 2019-20 and any further actions required to address the most significant governance issues facing the Council.

During discussions, Members requested that further updates on consistency of practice with Equality Impact Assessments across the Council be included within the Plan.

In response to a suggestion from Members that the effectiveness of public consultation be audited, it was clarified that Policy Committee had previously

agreed for Improvement and Change Sub-Committee to review the Council's current approach.

Members also queried the links between the work of Governance and Ethics Committee and Improvement and Change Sub-Committee, and the means for auditing transformational work approved by the latter.

RESOLVED: 2020/012

That Officers give further consideration to the issues raised by Members during discussions, providing updates to the Committee as appropriate.

10) REVIEW OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES STAFFING STRUCTURE

Heather Dickinson, Group Manager, Legal, Democratic and Complaints, introduced the report which sought approval for amendments to the staffing structure for Democratic Services to better meet current and future demand.

RESOLVED: 2020/013

- 1) That the revised staffing structure for Democratic Services, as set out in Appendix 1 to the committee report, be approved.
- 2) That a request be made to the Finance and Major Contracts Committee for the £87,082 costs to be funded from contingency.

The requisite number of Members requested a recorded vote and it was ascertained that the following 6 Members voted '**For**' the motion:

John Handley	Bruce Laughton
John Longdon	Andy Sissons
Keith Walker	Jonathan Wheeler

The following 2 Members voted '**Against**' the motion:-

Steve Carr	Rachel Madden
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The following 3 Members **abstained** from the vote:

Nicki Brooks	Kate Foale
Errol Henry JP	

It was confirmed that the above motion was therefore carried.

11) WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: 2020/014

That the work programme be agreed, with no further changes required.

The meeting closed at 11.45 am.

CHAIRMAN