



Meeting **GOVERNANCE AND ETHICS COMMITTEE**

Date **Tuesday 21 July 2020 (commencing at 2.00pm)**

membership

Persons absent are marked with 'A'

COUNCILLORS

Bruce Laughton (Chairman) **A**
Kevin Rostance (Vice-Chairman)

Nicki Brooks
Steve Carr
Kate Foale
John Handley
Errol Henry JP

Rachel Madden **A**
Phil Rostance
Keith Walker
Martin Wright

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Andy Sissons for Bruce Laughton

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mark Davies Chief Executive's Department
Heather Dickinson
Rob Disney
Keith Ford
Kaj Ghattaora
Keith Palframan
Marjorie Toward
Nigel Stevenson
Linda Walker

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

John Gregory Grant Thornton – External Auditors

1. CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED 2020/015

That the appointment by Full Council on 11 June 2020 of Councillor Bruce Laughton as Chairman and Councillor Kevin Rostance as Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the 2020-21 municipal year be noted.

2. MEMBERSHIP

RESOLVED 2020/016

That the membership of the Committee for the 2020-21 municipal year be noted as follows:

Councillors Bruce Laughton, Kevin Rostance, Nicki Brooks, Steve Carr, Kate Foale, John Handley, Errol Henry JP, Rachel Madden, Phil Rostance, Keith Walker and Martin Wright.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 4 March 2020, having been previously circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The following apologies for absence were reported:-

Councillor Bruce Laughton – other reasons
Councillor Rachel Madden – other reasons.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

None

6. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS WAIVERS 2019 20

Kaj Ghattaora, Group Manager, Procurement, introduced the report which informed Members of the outcomes of requests to waive Financial Regulations in the last financial year and those received in relation to the Council's COVID-19 response.

RESOLVED: 2020/017

That the continued progress in keeping Financial Regulations waivers to a minimum be noted, with no further actions were required at this stage.

7. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2019-20 – ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Nigel Stevenson, Service Director, Finance, Infrastructure and Improvement, introduced the report which explained the proposed Accounting Policies used in creating the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2019-20 and sought the Committee's support to recommend them to Policy Committee for approval.

RESOLVED: 2020/018

That the amended Accounting Policies be recommended to Policy Committee for approval.

8. INFORMING THE AUDIT RISK ASSESSMENT - 2019-20 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

John Gregory, Engagement Lead, Grant Thornton (the Council's external auditors) introduced the report which informed Members of the requirement for the external auditors to provide information regarding the Council's approach to dealing with fraud, litigation, laws and regulations as part of their audit of the Council's accounts.

RESOLVED: 2020/019

That no further actions or information was required at this stage.

9. LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT – 2019-20

Rob Disney, Group Manager – Assurance, introduced the report which sought approval for the Annual Governance Statement 2019-20.

In response to issues raised by Members in discussion, it was clarified that:

- further work was being undertaken around the training offer to the Council's elected Members;
- the technical and legal restrictions around hybrid meetings (whereby Members could attend a meeting in person or virtually) would be further explored, with reference to any changes in the lockdown rules and existing practice from other Councils;
- seats on committees were allocated to non-aligned Councillors in accordance with the legal requirements.

RESOLVED: 2020/020

- 1) That the Annual Governance Statement 2019-20, as appended to the report, be approved.
- 2) That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make any updates required to the Statement prior to its final publication in November 2020, with any significant changes reported back to a subsequent meeting of the Committee.

10. HEAD OF INTERNAL AUDIT'S ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20

Rob Disney, Group Manager – Assurance, introduced the report which included his opinion on the adequacy of the Council's arrangements for governance, risk management and control.

RESOLVED: 2020/021

That no further actions or follow-up reports were required by the Committee.

11. UPDATE ON THE NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE CYBER SECURITY AND INFORMATION RISK GUIDANCE FOR AUDIT COMMITTEES

Mark Davies, Interim Head of ICT, introduced the report which provided an update review of the Council's assessment against the National Audit Office's cyber security requirements.

RESOLVED: 2020/022

- 1) That the Council's compliance with the National Audit Office's cyber security requirements be agreed.
- 2) That no further actions or information were required on this issue at this stage.

12. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION – CONSULTATION ON DRAFT MODEL MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT

Heather Dickinson, Group Manager, Legal and Democratic, introduced the report which sought approval for the general content of the consultation response and for authority to be delegated to the Monitoring Officer to finalise the response in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee.

During discussions, Members raised the following issues:-

- a clearer definition of 'civility' in this specific context would be helpful;
- with regard to complaints processes, the importance of setting out timescales and a means of confirming, in a transparent way, that appropriate actions are being taken in response to complaints, was underlined;
- a lack of meaningful sanctions against conduct breaches remained.

RESOLVED: 2020/023

- 1) That the general content of the Council's proposed response to the Draft Model Member Code of Conduct be updated to reflect Members' discussions and authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer to finalise the detailed response in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, for submission to the Local Government Association.

13. WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: 2020/024

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

The meeting closed at 3.05 pm.

CHAIRMAN