



Meeting GOVERNANCE AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

Date Wednesday 27 November 2024 (commencing at 10.30am)

membership

### **COUNCILLORS**

Philip Owen (Chairman)  
Callum Bailey (Vice-Chairman)

Chris Barnfather  
Samantha Deakin - **Apologies**  
Errol Henry JP -  
Andy Meakin - **Apologies**  
Michael Payne - **Apologies**

Sue Saddington  
Helen-Ann Smith - **Apologies**  
Nigel Turner  
Roger Upton

### **SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Councillor Jim Creamer (substitute for Councillor Michael Payne MP)

### **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Richard Elston - Chief Executives  
(remote)  
Glen Bicknell  
Keith Ford  
Andrew Howarth  
Simon Lacey  
Gareth Moss  
Noel McMenamin  
Dom Monahan  
Ejaz Patel  
Nigel Stevenson  
Marjorie Toward

Alistair Newhall - Mazars  
Bethan Vance

### **1. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 16 October 2024, having been previously circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

## **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Councillor Sam Deakin (other reasons)
- Councillor Andy Meakin (other reasons)
- Councillor Helen-Ann Smith (other reasons)
- Councillor Michael Payne MP (other reasons)

## **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

None.

## **4. UPDATE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN DECISIONS (SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2024)**

The report set out information about Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman decisions relating to the Council since the previous report to Committee. On this occasion, there were no investigations nor fault found with any of the cases under consideration, and therefore no further actions arising.

### **RESOLVED: 2024/44**

That the findings of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman be noted

## **5. EXTERNAL AUDIT – AUDIT COMPLETION REPORT 2023-24**

The report highlighted the content of the external auditors' Audit Completion Reports for 2023-24 in respect of the County Council and Pension Fund and sought approval to delegate approval of the Statement of Accounts for 2023-24 on completion of all external audit work.

During debate, it was confirmed that an unqualified audit opinion was expected to be signed off in early December 2024, once residual external audit work had been completed. No significant weaknesses had been identified and the both the County council and Pension Fund were considered to be in a strong position for audit going forward.

The Committee placed on record its thanks to the Service Director (Finance, Infrastructure and Improvement) and his teams for their work in delivering a positive outcome for the Audit Completion Report process.

### **RESOLVED 2024/45**

That:

- 1) The External Auditors' Audit Completion reports 2023-24, and Committee's comments on them, be noted;

- 2) Responsibility be delegated to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Governance and Ethics Committee to approve the Statement of Accounts 2023-24 on completion of all external audit work.

## **6. GOVERNANCE UPDATE**

The report provided an update on the progress being made with the Governance Action Plan for 2024-25.

During debate, it was agreed that responses to questions raised about transformation and recruitment and retention in Adult Social Care would be requested via Overview Committee and Adults Select Committee respectively.

### **RESOLVED: 2024/46**

That the actions highlighted in the report be noted.

## **7. INTERNAL AUDIT TERM 1 PROGRESS AND TERM 3 PLAN 2024-25**

The report provided an update on the work carried out by the Internal Audit function in Term1 of 2024-25 and consulted with the Committee on the Internal Audit plan for Term 3 of 2024-25.

During discussion, it was explained that where opinion- based assurance work had identified limited assurance it was primarily within the accounts of small schools

### **RESOLVED: 2024/47**

That the outcome of the Internal Audit work carried out in Term 1 of 2024-25, and the planned coverage of Internal Audit's work in Term 3 of 2024-25 to be progressed to help deliver assurance in priority areas be noted.

## **8. FOLLOW-UP OF INTERNAL AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS**

The report highlighted the management actions taken to address Internal Audit recommendations since the previous update.

### **RESOLVED: 2024/48**

That:

- 1) The report contents and the progress made against the internal audit recommendations be noted;
- 2) A further progress report and update on those outstanding actions be included in the next six-monthly review.

## **9. CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

The report highlighted developments in the Council's arrangements for corporate risk management.

It was confirmed that future reports would include trend/direction of travel information – the current report was a baseline report in a revised format so did not feature trend analysis.

**RESOLVED: 2024/49**

That:

- 1) The report contents be noted and the Risk Management Framework be endorsed;
- 2) A further progress report and update be presented to the Committee in six months.

**10. ENABLING REMOTE ATTENDANCE AND PROXY VOTING AT LOCAL AUTHORITY MEETINGS - CONSULTATION**

The report proposed a response on behalf of the Council to the Government's open consultation on remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings.

There was strong support for the issue of remote attendance to be a 'local choice' issue for local authorities. The Committee was not supportive of proxy voting at local authority meetings.

**RESOLVED: 2024/50**

That:

- 1) The recommendation of the cross party members working group response at Appendix A to the report to the Government's consultation on remote attendance and proxy voting report contents and the progress made against the internal audit recommendations be noted;
- 2) That the draft response be updated by the Team Manager, Democratic Services to reflect the relevant views agreed by the Committee in their discussions and, following further consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, be finalised and submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government ahead of the 19 December 2024 deadline.

**11. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION – RESPONSIBILITY FOR SCRUTINY OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

The report set out the findings of a cross party working group of councillors with responsibility for providing input on amendments to the Constitution on the future scrutiny of Public Health matters.

**RESOLVED: 2024/51**

That:

- 1) The recommendation of the cross party members working group that Overview Committee is the most appropriate location for scrutiny of Public Health matters be agreed; and
- 2) The proposed changes to the Constitution as detailed at Appendix A to the report be recommended to Council for approval.

## **12. GEDLING COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

### **RESOLVED: 2024/52**

That the Chief Executive be authorised to submit the letter at Appendix A to the report as a courtesy response to the consultation on Gedling Borough Council's draft proposals, reserving its position for any formal response to phase 2 of the consultation.

## **13. WORK PROGRAMME**

### **RESOLVED: 2024/53**

That the work programme be approved.

The meeting closed at 11.23am

CHAIRMAN