

GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 20 JULY 2020

Present: Councillor E Williamson, Chair

Councillors: S A Bagshaw
S J Carr (ex-officio)
E Cubley
T A Cullen (Substitute)
T Hallam (Substitute)
M Handley
H G Khaled MBE
J M Owen
J P T Parker
M Radulovic MBE
P D Simpson
I L Tyler
D K Watts

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R H Darby and M Hannah

1 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held 18 May 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

3 **INTERNAL AUDIT REVIEW 2019/20**

The Committee was informed of the recent work completed by the Council's Internal Audit function in 2019/20.

4 **INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT**

Members were updated with the recent work completed by Internal Audit. Many of the audit reports have taken place during the coronavirus pandemic lockdown and the audit process adapted accordingly to enable it to be completed successfully.

5 GOVERNANCE DASHBOARD - MAJOR PROJECTS

The Committee was updated with the Governance Dashboard report relating to the Council's major and key projects. Internal Audit confirmed an established appropriate framework for the governance, administration and processing of emergency grants were provided to ensure compliance and fairness with all the government schemes relating to Covid-19. The officers involved were thanked with all the work carried out especially under the current restrictions.

6 AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS 2019/2020 UPDATE

Members noted the progress in producing the Council's accounts for 2019/20 two months ahead of the revised statutory deadline due to Covid-19. The audit of the accounts were currently taking place with the Council's external auditors (Mazars) and the final, audited accounts will be presented for approval at the next committee.

7 COMPLAINTS REPORT 2019/2020

Members were updated with a summary of complaints made against the Council 2019/20. Housing complaints were noted to have seen an increase following the extreme weather conditions and the Covid-19 pandemic. It was agreed to follow up recommendations suggested to departments after stage two and report these to Committee and to recommend to departments who are responsible for stage one complaints to be more proactive and suggest improving communications and training to prevent the complaint in the first instance.

8 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REPORT 2019/2020

The Committee was updated with an overview of Freedom of Information requests made to the Council in 2019/20

9 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Committee was informed of the proposed arrangements for the Community Governance Review. Members were presented with an amended recommendation to grant the Chief Executive delegated authority to postpone to CGR until October 2021. The amended recommendation was proposed and seconded by Councillor E Williamson and Councillor I L Tyler. An additional amendment was suggested to amend the date to June 2021. This amendment was proposed and seconded by Councillor P D Simpson and Councillor J M Owen and when put the vote was carried.

RESOLVED that the Community Governance review be postponed until June 2021.

10 THE DRAFT MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

Members considered the draft model code and the associated draft response. It was requested that the Code be amended to include the declarations of properties, land holdings, corporate tenancies, tenancies, easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land as appropriate for individual members. Additionally, members requested that the Code be amended to include a declaration on the beneficial or negative interest in land which is in the area of the Council. It was suggested that the Code of Conduct should be applied to Councillors outside their Council duties as well.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The Council's response to the Consultation on the Draft Model Code of Conduct, as amended, be approved.**
- 2. The best practice guidance be approved.**

11 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Work Programme.

RESOLVED that the Work programme be approved, subject to the inclusion of a Governance report for Discretionary Grant Aid and Council Tax Support scheme in relation to Covid-19 response.