

# **GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY, 20 MAY 2024**

Present: Councillor S J Carr, Chair

Councillors: P Bales (in attendance)  
M Brown  
R Bullock  
G Bunn (in attendance)  
K Harlow  
G S Hills  
A Kingdon  
J M Owen  
P J Owen (ex-officio)  
M Radulovic MBE (ex-officio)  
C M Tideswell (substitute)  
S Webb

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Paterson.

## 1 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor R Bullock declared an other registerable interest in agenda item 4 due to being a Councillor in the area affected by the ward changes. A dispensation was granted by the Monitoring Officer to enable them to vote on the item. Minute number 3 refers.

Councillor M Brown declared an other registerable interest in agenda item 4 due to being a Councillor in the area affected by the ward changes. A dispensation was granted by the Monitoring Officer to enable them to vote on the item. Minute number 3 refers.

Councillor G Hills declared an other registerable interest in agenda item 4 due to being a Councillor in the area affected by the ward changes. A dispensation was granted by the Monitoring Officer to enable them to vote on the item. Minute number 3 refers.

Councillor J Owen declared an other registerable interest in agenda item 4 due to being a Councillor in the area affected by the ward changes. A dispensation was granted by the Monitoring Officer to enable them to vote on the item. Minute number 3 refers.

Councillor P J Owen declared an other registerable interest in agenda item 4 due to being a Councillor in the area affected by the ward changes. Minute number 3 refers.

2 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2024 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW - CONSIDERATION OF FINAL RECOMMENDATION

The Committee consider the draft recommendations to be put forward for consultation as part of the Community Governance Review (CGR) which started in January 2024.

At its meeting on 27 November 2023, the Governance, Audit and Standards Committee approved the Consultation Proposals for the Community Governance Review. Following a three-month consultation, the proposals were reviewed by a Task and Finish Group in light of the comments received and alternative proposals put forward by Parish/Town Councils and members of the public.

**RESOLVED that option 1 be approved.**

4 EXTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE

The Committee noted the update provided by the Council's external auditors, Mazars.

5 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2024/25

The Committee note the Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25.

The Internal Audit Plan governs the activity for the year. An audit report is produced at the completion of each assignment with recommendations for improvement. Regular progress reports covering all internal audit activities are submitted to this Committee for scrutiny.

The plan has recognised the Council's priorities as outlined in the Corporate Plan and links closely to the corporate risk management and business planning processes having been prepared with due consideration to the identified strategic risks.

**RESOLVED that the Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25 be approved.**

6 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee noted the recent work completed by Internal Audit.

Internal Audit has also reviewed progress made by management in implementing agreed actions within six months of the completion of the respective audits. Where agreed actions to address significant internal control weaknesses have not been implemented this may have implications for the Council.

## 7 ANNUAL CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW

Members considered the draft amendments to the Constitution and in particular to the Council Procedure Rules and the Scheme of Delegation.

An annual review which included consulting the Member and Officer Task Group, inviting all Members and Senior Management team to input was carried out in 2023. The Governance, Audit and Standards Committees recommendations were adopted to ensure the Constitution remained fit for purpose. The Constitution has since continued to be regularly reviewed to ensure it is refreshed as considered necessary to ensure good governance arrangements are in place.

A further annual review of the Constitution had been undertaken again in 2024 in which Officers have been engaged and commented and a proportional Task & Finish group had met on two occasions, and all Members have been invited to input into the review. At the meetings, the Group considered amendments to the Council Procedure Rules, in particular start times, duration and number of meetings, the role of Ex-Officio Members, reports on Outside Bodies, time allowed for public questions and considering supplementary questions by the public being permitted during Council meetings, the petition scheme, Call-In Process, revisions to the criteria for Extraordinary Council meetings, changes to allow for Budget Council meetings to consider items of urgency and amendments to the Scheme of delegation.

**RECOMMENDED to Council that the amendments in to the Constitution, as detailed in the change table at appendix 1, be approved.**

## 8 ANNUAL CODE OF CONDUCT REVIEW

Members were updated on the annual review of the Code of Conduct, training provided to the Borough and Parish/Town Members and to update on Member Code of Conduct Complaints.

**RECOMMENDED to Council to adopt the revisions to the Code of Conduct at Appendix 2.**

## 9 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee were informed of action taken to develop and comply with statutory obligations regarding corporate governance and to seek approval for the Annual Governance Statement for inclusion in the Council's published Statement of Accounts for 2023/24.

1. **RESOLVED that the draft Annual Governance Statement be approved in principle for inclusion in the Council's Statement of Accounts.**
2. **RESOLVED that responsibility be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of this Committee and leader of the Council to make any further amendments deemed necessary.**

10 WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the Work Programme. It was requested that an item on the Combined Authority Arrangements be added to the Work Programme.

**RESOLVED that the Work Programme, as amended to include an item on the Combined Authority Arrangements, be approved.**